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LG: Will Break Back Of Drug Networks In 100 Days

'63 Arrests In 5 days; Cases Registered Triple After April 11'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday joined a padyatra and addressed a public rally in Rajouri as part of the ongoing Drug-Free Jammu and Kashmir campaign, asserting that the administration is determined to dismantle drug networks and free society from addiction.



ADDICTION IS A WOUND IN OUR SOCIETY.

For years, families across Jammu and Kashmir have fought this menace within their homes, and many have lost loved ones."

Calling Rajouri a sensitive border district prone to cross-border drug smuggling, Sinha said the government would "crush these challenges" through sustained enforcement and community mobilisation. Highlighting recent action, the Lieutenant Governor said that since April 11, Jammu and Kashmir Police have launched an intensified crackdown across the Jammu division. "More than 45 FIRs have been registered, 63 smugglers arrested and massive quantities of drugs seized between April 11 and 15," he said, adding that cases registered after April 11 have seen a threefold

increase in the past week.

Sinha said the anti-drug campaign, launched from Jammu's MA Stadium on April 11, is a 100-day mission

Budget Session Ends With Key Women's Bill Defeat

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: A turbulent Budget Session of Parliament concluded on Saturday, marked by repeated disruptions, sharp confrontations between the government and the opposition, and the unprecedented defeat of a key Constitution Amendment Bill seeking to introduce 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures.

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which aimed to implement women's reservation by 2029 and proposed increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha to 816 seats, failed to secure the required two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. While 298 members voted in favour, 230 opposed the Bill, falling short of the 352 votes needed for passage.



The setback marked the first time a constitutional amendment has been defeated under the government led by Narendra Modi. Following the Bill's defeat, both Houses of Parliament were adjourned sine die within minutes on the final day, with no business transacted during the special sitting convened to consider the legislation.

The session, which began on January 28 and was later extended by three days beyond its scheduled April 2 conclusion, witnessed a mix of legislative activity and persistent political deadlock. Despite the acrimony, Parliament passed the Union Budget for 2026-27, along with demands for grants and supplementary grants for various ministries.

BILLS PASSED

- Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2026
- Transgender Persons (Amendment) Bill, 2026
- CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026
- Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026 (Amaravati as capital)

KEY BILLS STALLED OR DEFERRED

- Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill was not taken up due to opposition resistance.
- Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill was sent to a parliamentary committee.

2% DA, DR Hike For Central Govt Employees

Major Gift To Employees, Says Amit Shah

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union Cabinet on Saturday approved a 2 per cent increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) for central government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners, benefiting around 50.46 lakh employees and 68.27 lakh pensioners.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the hike would impose an additional annual burden of Rs 6,791.24 crore on the exchequer.

The revised DA and DR will come into effect from January 1, 2026, marking a 2 per cent increase over the existing 58 per cent rate of basic pay and pension. With this revision, the DA and DR will rise to 60 per cent. The hike has been approved to offset the impact of rising prices.

Officials said the revised rates have been calculated in accordance with the accepted formula based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.

Reacting to the decision, Union Home Minister Amit Shah described it as a "major gift" to central government employees and

Opposition Crushed Women's Dreams: PM



Press Trust Of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said opposition parties had "mercilessly crushed" the dreams of women by not allowing the

women's reservation bill to pass in Parliament despite the government's best efforts. In an address to the nation, a day after a bill to implement women's reservation in legislatures was defeated in the

Inaugurates Museum And Library In Rajouri

Jammu- Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday inaugurated the Dr Raj Kumar Thapa memorial museum and library, dedicated to the legacy of the additional district development commissioner, in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district. Thapa lost his life on May 10 last year when a Pakistani artillery shell hit his residential quarters in the border district during unprovoked shelling linked to Operation

J&K Spent Rs 73,548 On RS Polls In Oct 2025

Agencies

Srinagar: Authorities spent Rs 73548 on conducting the Rajya Sabha elections in the Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory in October 2025.

According to official documents, the J&K Election Department had transferred Rs 1 lakh for the exercise, out of which Rs 73548 was utilized to make necessary arrangements

for polls to four vacant Rajya Sabha seats.

The documents reveal that Rs 21150 was spent on honorarium and refreshments for officers and officials deployed on election duty. The remaining Rs 52398 was utilized to cover other essential arrangements required for the electoral process.

The Rajya Sabha polls in Jammu & Kashmir were held on October 24,



Emotional Send-Off As 431 Haj Pilgrims Depart From J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The first batch of 431 Haj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir departed for Saudi Arabia on Saturday, with Chief Minister

Omar Abdullah seeing them off at Srinagar airport.

The pilgrims, comprising 230 men and 201 women, left in three separate flights to undertake the annual Haj pilgrimage.

Officials said all necessary arrangements were put in place at the Haj House in Bemina to ensure a smooth departure. These included transportation, baggage handling and

J&K Govt Takes Over 58 Jel-Linked Schools Across Kashmir

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday assumed control of 58 schools across the Kashmir Valley that were directly or indirectly affiliated with the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel), officials said.

The institutions were being run under the umbrella of the Falah-e-Aam Trust (FAT), which has long been under the scanner of security agencies. With the latest move, the administration has extended its oversight to a fresh set of schools spread across multiple districts.

An official said district administration teams, assisted by police, visited the campuses and formally took over their management on Saturday. "The process was carried out smoothly, with local authorities

assuming charge of the institutions," the official added.

This is the second major such intervention in less than a year. In August last year, the government had taken over the management of 215 schools linked to Jel across the Valley's ten districts. Officials said the latest action is a continuation of that process.

Under the arrangement put in place earlier, the management of these institutions is vested in the respective district magistrates or deputy commissioners. They are tasked with constituting fresh managing committees after due verification, ensuring that academic activities continue without disruption.

Authorities have maintained that the move is aimed at safeguarding the educational future of students enrolled in these schools. "The decision has been taken in the

Iran Reimposes Hormuz Curbs After Trump Insists On Blockade

Trans Asia News

Tehran: A fragile opening in the Gulf collapsed on Saturday after Iran reinstated strict control over the Strait of Hormuz and fired on vessels attempting to transit, following Donald Trump's decision to press ahead with a naval blockade despite Tehran's earlier move to reopen the waterway.

The escalation has renewed fears for the global economy,



with roughly a fifth of the world's oil supply passing through the strait, and comes days before a ceasefire deadline that diplomats are scrambling to extend.

Iran's Khatam-al-Ambiya joint military command said "control of the Strait of Hormuz has returned to its previous state ... under strict management and control of the armed forces", warning that restrictions would remain as long

'Hormuz Rules Set on Battlefield, Not Social Media'

Iranian officials have made clear that access now comes with conditions. Chief negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf

India Summons Iran Envoy

India on Saturday summoned Iranian envoy Mohammad Fathali and conveyed its strong protest after two Indian-flagged vessels had to reverse course in the

HC Bench Strength Set To Rise Soon

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The Bench strength of J&K and Ladakh High Court is all set to increase soon as collegium headed by Chief Justice Arun Palli has recommended 11 names to fill vacant posts of the Judges.

The recommendations include 10 candidates from the Bar and one from the judicial service. While all 11 may not be elevated, a significant number are expected to make it to the Bench, thereby boosting the judges' strength in the near future.

The proposed names from the Bar include Vishal Sharma, Namgyal Wangchuk, Jahangir Iqbal Ganai, Pawan Kumar Kundal, Tahir Majid Shamshi, Tabasum Zafar, Anupam Raina, Vikram

Kumar Sharma, Amit Gupta, and Pranav Kohli. Senior judicial officer Yash Paul Bourney, currently a member of the J&K Tribunal, has been recommended from the Bench quota.

Notably, the inclusion of Tabasum Zafar is being seen as a significant step towards gender representation. If approved, she would become the first woman from Kashmir to be elevated to the High Court of J&K and Ladakh.

The appointments will now be examined by the Supreme Court collegium, following which the names will be processed by the Union Law Ministry, cleared by the Prime Minister's Office, and finally sent to the President of India for issuance of

HC Moves to Srinagar from May 4

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has ordered the annual Darbar Move for the Summer Season, directing that its main wing and several key offices will shift from Jammu to Srinagar. As per the order by Registrar General M.K. Sharma, the Main Wing of the High Court, along with the office of the Principal Secretary to the Chief Justice, Registrar Vigilance, Director of J&K Judicial Academy, Registrar Rules, Registrar Computer (IT), and Central Project Coordinator (CPC) e-Courts, shall close at Jammu on April 30, after office hours.

These offices will reopen in Srinagar on May 4 (Monday) in the forenoon. The order further states that a Special Move Travel Allowance (T.A.) of Rs 25,000 will be paid



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Government of Jammu & Kashmir
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
 MECHANICAL & HOSPITALS DIVISION SRINAGAR**
 -----Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- mechhospsgr@jk.gov.in -----
 Gist of e-tender
 e-NIT No: M&HDS/TS /2026-27/03/e-tendering,
 Dated: 18.04.2026
 (Short Term)

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from Original Equipment manufacturers /registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of completion (in days)	AA Accorded Vide No:	TS No	Earnest Money	Position of Funds
1. SITC of Fire Alarm system at State Guest House East, Srinagar	8.007/-	500	30	Order No:38-DH&P of 2026 Dt:15.04.2026	MHED/K/T S/05 DT:- 17.04.2026	2% of the estimated cost	Available with intending department
2. SITC of Fire Alarm system at State Guest House West, Srinagar	8.007/-	500	30	Order No:38-DH&P of 2026 Dt:15.04.2026	MHED/K/T S/02 DT:- 17.04.2026	2% of the estimated cost	Available with intending department
3. SITC of Fire Alarm system at VIP Guest House at Dachigam	7.325/-	500	30	Order No:38-DH&P of 2026 Dt:15.04.2026	MHED/K/T S/04 DT:- 17.04.2026	2% of the estimated cost	Available with intending department
4. SITC of Fire Alarm system at Nehru Guest House Cheshmashahi, Srinagar	15.491/-	1000	30	Order No:38-DH&P of 2026 Dt:15.04.2026	MHED/K/T S/03 DT:- 17.04.2026	2% of the estimated cost	Available with intending department

- Downloading of Bids:** The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 18.04.2026 (18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 18.04.2026 (18.00 hrs).
- Uploading:** The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site 18.04.2026 (18.00 hrs) to 30.04.2026 (13:00hrs) in two (02) covers.
- Opening of Bids :-** The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 30.04.2026 at 15.00 (hrs)

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
M&HD, Srinagar
Dated: 18.04.2026

No: M&HDS/TS/344-48
DIPK-544/26 dated 18-04-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the name of my ward has been wrongly recorded in official records. The incorrect name is recorded as "Ruyida mudsir", whereas the correct name is "Aysha Mudasir." Henceforth, the correct name "Aysha Mudasir" shall be used for all legal, official, and personal purposes. If any person has any objection to this change, they may file the same within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice; failing which, no objection shall be entertained.
 Mudasir Ahmad Dar
 R/o Pahnoo, Shopian
 fko_r

**OFFICE OF THE WARDEN KASTURBA
 GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV)
 BUDIPORA, TANGMARG (9622828072)**
 No: KGBV/B/TMG/26/10 Dated: 17/04/2026
 NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders affixed with revenue stamps are hereby invited from reputed, registered, and authorized dealers/suppliers for the supply of food items to Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Budipora Tangmarg, for the period w.e.f 01-05-2026 to 31-03-2027

- Scope of Work**
 The supplier shall be responsible for the supply of quality food items for hostel use, including but not limited to:
 • Rice, Flour (Atta)- Pulses (Dal)- Cooking Oil- Vegetables & Fruits- Milk & Milk Products- Spices & Condiments- Sugar, Salt, Tea, etc.
- Eligibility Criteria**
 • The bidder must be a registered dealer/supplier.
 • Must possess a valid GST Registration Certificate.
 • Should have experience in supply of food items to institutions (preferred).
 • Must ensure quality and timely delivery of items.
- Tender Submission**
 The tender should be submitted in a sealed envelope superscribed as: "Tender for Supply of Food Items – KGBV Budipora"
 The tender must reach the office within 07 days from publication.
 Late or incomplete tenders shall be rejected.
- Rate Quotation**
 Rates should be quoted item-wise inclusive of all taxes, transportation, and delivery charges. Rates shall remain valid for one year.
- Terms & Conditions**
 • Items must be of standard quality.
 • Institution reserves right to reject substandard material.
 • Supply shall be made as per requirement.
 • Payment after verification.
 • Authority reserves right to accept/reject any tender.
- Documents to be attached**
 • GST Registration copy
 • PAN Card
 • Registration Certificate
 • Experience certificate (if any)
- Opening of Tenders**
 Tenders will be opened on 29-04-2026 at 11:30 am in presence of bidders.
 Sd/-
Warden
KGBV Budipora
Zone Tangmarg
fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
 This is to inform the general public that my name as mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. 5586 2983 4021 has been incorrectly recorded as "Syed Ajaz Hussain", whereas my correct name is "Syed Aijaz Hussain." I intend to apply for correction of my name in the Aadhaar records from "Syed Ajaz Hussain" to "Syed Aijaz Hussain." If any person has any objection regarding this change, they may file the same within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice; failing which, no objection shall be entertained.
 Deponent
 Syed Aijaz Hussain
 R/o Goom Ahmadpora, Baramulla, J&K - 193401
 bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the name and date of birth of my ward have been wrongly recorded in the Aadhaar Card bearing No. 5964 1032 6755. The incorrect details are recorded as: Name: Hamna Irfan D/o Rifat Irfan Date of Birth: 01-04-2014 Whereas, the correct details are as under: Name: Hamna Jan D/o Irfan Ahmad Wani Date of Birth: 03-03-2012 Henceforth, the correct name and date of birth i.e., Hamna Jan D/o Irfan Ahmad Wani and 03-03-2012 shall be used for all legal, official, and personal purposes. If any person has any objection regarding this change, they may file the same with the concerned Aadhaar Centre at Jammu/ Srinagar within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice; failing which, no objection shall be entertained.
 Deponent
 Rifat Irfan
 W/o Irfan Ahmad Wani
 R/o Bongam, Shopian, J&K
 fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
 I, Mohammad Yousuf Paray S/o Muzamil Yousuf Paray, R/o Allowpora, Shopian, hereby inform the general public that the name and date of birth of my ward have been wrongly recorded in Aadhaar (No. 6102 8287 5892) as "Muzamil Ah, D.O.B: 10/05/2008." The correct particulars are "Muzamil Yousuf Paray, D.O.B: 23/03/2009" as per school records. I have applied for correction in the concerned records. If anyone has any objection, they may raise it within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.
 Deponent
 Mohammad Yousuf Paray
 fko-r

PUBLIC NOTICE
 I am applying for a D-Class Contractor Card in the office of SE PWD (R&B) Circle Baramulla. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may contact the above-mentioned office within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice; failing which, no objection shall be entertained.
 Name: Firdous Akther
 W/o: Mir Showket Qadri
 R/o: Kreshama, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla
 Cell: 6005807191
 fko

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
Royal Springs Golf Course, Srinagar
 NOTICE INVITING TENDER E-NIT No. 02 of 2026-27 Dated 17.04.2026

For and on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer GDA, e-tenders are invited on two cover system by Executive Engineer Royal Springs Golf Course Srinagar by e-tendering mode on Percentage basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State UTI, PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Govt. for the following works:-

S No	Name of work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Earned Money (in Rs)	Cost of T/Doc	Time of Completion	Class of Contract	Major Head of Account
1	Manpower for Operation, Upkeep and Maintenance of Gulmarg Golf Course.	15.12 lacs	Rs. 30,240/- in shape of CDR or FDR in favour of Executive Engineer RSGC	Rs. 1500/= Non Refundable in shape of Bank Challan in favour of Secretary RSGC SB-0229040100012341 J&K Bank Brain Branch Nishat Sgr	07 Months	A OR B OR C OR D OR Registered Firms / Agencies with valid Labour Licence with Valid EPF registration, ESI registration	3452 Tourism

Position of AA: Accorded Position of TS: Obtained
 Special conditions:-
 I. No exemption is allowed and so all bidders must Upload Proof of EMD and Tender Processing Fee.
 II. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any tender or all tenders without assigning any reason at any stage.
 III. The bidder shall upload all requisite documents on the e-tendering portal during the bidding process. The documents shall include: valid EPF Registration Certificate; valid ESI Registration Certificate; Labour Registration Certificate issued by the competent authority; valid Registration/License Certificate of the firm/agency; Permanent Account Number (PAN) Card in the name of the individual Proprietorship or firm or agency applying for the bidding process; valid GST Registration Certificate along with the latest GST return (monthly/quarterly) duly filed; CDR/FDR (Call Deposit Receipt / Fixed Deposit Receipt) pledged in favour of the concerned authority as per tender conditions; and Tender Document Fee in the form of a valid bank receipt, as specified in the tender document.
 Note: If any document is found missing or mismatched, the bidder shall be disqualified from the bidding process.
 vi. Intending bidders shall upload scanned copies of documents of valid registration card with renewal of 2026-27 /PAN/GST registration with latest receipt for the month of February 2026 or 4th Quarter (i.e Jan-March 2025). However successful bidders shall produce the original copies of same before issuance of contract.
 vii. The typographical error in the BOQ like Unit of item Quantity of item etc, if any found during e- NIT or after end date of NIT shall be rectified in the allotment as per the estimate.
 The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

S No	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	18.04.2026 3:00 PM
1	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 18.04.2026 to 29.04.2026 (3.00 PM on wards)
2	Bid submission Start Date	18.04.2026 3:00 PM on wards
3	Bid Submission End Date	29.04.2026 upto 03:00 PM
4	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids(Online)	30.04.2026 at 10:00 AM in the office of the Executive Engineer RSGC Sgr
5	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids(Online)	To be notified after Technical Bid Evaluation is completed

General Conditions:
 1. The financial bid (BOQ) of only eligible, responsive bidders shall be opened on line on the date mentioned above in the office of Executive Engineer, Royal Springs Golf Course Srinagar. In case of any avoidable circumstances the tenders shall be opened on the next working day or any subsequent date convenient to the Authority.
 2. The 1st lowest bidder (Successful) has to submit performance security @ 5% of the Contract Value or Below %age of un-balanced cost to be deposited on quoted bid by L1 in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer, Royal Springs Golf Course Srinagar drawn from nationalized/ Scheduled bank preferably J&K Bank which should reach to the office of Executive Engineer, Royal Springs Golf Course Srinagar within 05 days from the date of opening of on line bids. In case of failure the bid shall be treated as non-responsive.
 3. The bids for the works shall remain valid for 90 days from the date of opening of tenders.
 4. The department shall not be responsible for any technical error or delay in submission of on line bids due to any reason.
 5. Every participating contractor to mandatorily disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payments shall be released by the Government Department/Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder.
 6. The department can modify the terms and conditions, specification of work if need arises before the dead line date of receipt of tenders.
 7. The bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ down loaded should be used for filling the item rate/ Percentage inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
 8. Un-balanced Bid: In case of un-balanced bids, the intending bidders shall have to deposit an additional performance Security in the shape of CDR or FDR, as per following scale. The performance security shall be released after successful completion of work. Or as per circular No:- FD-Code/441/2021-05-158 dated 08-08-2025

S No	Percentage of Unbalanced Bid viz: Advertised cost on account flow rates	Additional Security (as a Percentage of Advertised Cost on L1 Basis)
1	Up to and including 10% below	Nil
2	Greater than 10% up to 20% below	1%
3	Greater than 20% up to 30% below	3%
4	Greater than 30% up to 40% below	5%
5	Greater than 40% up to 50% below	7%

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Royal Springs Golf Course
Srinagar

No: RSGC/EE/2026-27/17-20
DIPK-NB-202/26 Dated: 18 /04/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that I, Showkeena Maqbool, w/o Ishaq Ahmad Rashid R/o Parriwani Tehsil Kawahama, District Baramulla, am a permanent resident of J&K. That my name has been wrongly recorded as Showkeena Begum in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 24158.3461.640. I intend to correct my name to Showkeena Maqbool as per my school records. If anybody has any objection to this correction, they may file the same before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.
 Sd/-
Showkeena Maqbool
 fko_r

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that Shaista Bano W/o Arshid Ramzan War, R/o Budi Pora, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, intends to correct her name in her Aadhaar record (7574 1599 7615). The correction is as follows:
 Incorrect Name: Towseena Sheikh
 Correct Name: Shaista Bano
 If any person has any objection to this correction, they may file the same with the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.
 Sd/-
Shaista Bano
 fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
 It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that Sumeera Akhter D/o Mohd Ramzan Wani, R/o Tajpora Osan Bangil, Tehsil Kwarhama, District Baramulla, intends to correct her name in Aadhaar records (3563 0217 0264). The correction is as follows:
 Incorrect Name: Sumaira Akhter
 Correct Name: Sumeera Akhter
 If anyone has any objection to this correction, they may file the same before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.
 fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
 I, Adnan Bashir Mir S/o Bashir Ahmad Mir, R/o Archanderhama, Pattan, Tehsil Singhpora, District Baramulla, hereby inform that I intend to apply for a D-Class Contractor Card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may file the same with the concerned authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice; failing which, no objection shall be entertained.
 Adnan Bashir Mir
 fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan
 Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth.
 Public Notice
 The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Hasnain Ali sofi s/o Ali Mohammad sofi R/o Diver Yakhmanpora Tehsil Singapora with verified date of birth 13/05/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
 Sd
 Naib Tehsildar Pattan
 fko

NOTICE
 It is to inform that I want to change the name in the PDD connection bearing Consumer ID: 0204040013706 and Installation Number: 66921 in the name of Gulam Ahmad Wani R/o: Mehmood Abad Srinagar and it needs to be transferred in the name of Farooq Ahmad Wani S/o: Gulam Ahmed Wani R/o: Mehmood Abad Buchpora Srinagar. Anybody having objection in this regard may contact Executive engineer Sub Division Hawal Srinagar Within seven (07) days, after that no objection will be entertained.
**Farooq Ahmad Wani S/o Gulam Ahmed Wani
 R/o: Buchpora Mehmoodabad Srinagar**

از نیابت یومی زینگیگر
 عنوان:- درخواست منجانب نصرت مقبول دختر محمد مقبول زوجہ مسما سائزہ اودہ برادر
 اجرائی Property Certificate
 اشتہار ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدمیں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بعض پراپرٹی ٹریفیکٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں فیڈ بک سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ موضع ہردن شہر تشرہ 756, 757, 764/1, 748 زیر قریب 5 مرلہ 6 مرلہ 2 مرلہ موجود ہے جس کی ملکیت فی سال 600000 ہے اور کل رقبہ کی ملکیت 2446250 روپے تک ہے اب ساکن نصرت مقبول دختر محمد مقبول اپنے حق میں Property Certificate حاصل کرنے کا خواہاں ہے۔
 ٹریفیکٹ زبردست اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا ہتھیار ہو تو وہ بعد مشورہ اختیار سات دن کے اندر اندر آئے عذر یا اعتراض عدالت حداً کو پیش کرنا اور اس وقت کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے عین عدالتی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار FKO

از عدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول تحصیلدار ڈاگنر پورہ
 درخواست منجانب عنوان:- عبدالحمید گنائی ولد غلام رسول گنائی ساکن مقام شہید میر تحصیل داگنر پورہ برادر اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش جن جن پسر محمد عتیقی بن حسین
 اشتہار ہر خاص و عام
 چونکہ معاملہ زیر بحث کے نسبت ساکن نے تحصیل دار ڈاگنر پورہ کو نے ایک درخواست برادر حصول اندراج کرنے یوم پیدائش جن پسر پیش کی ہے اس معاملہ میں ساکن نے تاریخ پیدائش سند اجراء شدہ MPE M HIGH SCHOOL پیش کی ہے جس کے مطابق ساکن کے پسر کی تاریخ پیدائش 16-10-2016 ہے لہذا اس بارے میں ہر خاص و عام کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو مطلع پسر پیدائش کی تاریخ کے بارے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ چار دن کے اندر اندر دفتر مذکور میں پیش کریں۔
 نائب تحصیلدار fko

Sgr Traffic Court Jails Driver for 3 Months for Driving Without License

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Court of Special Mobile Magistrate (Traffic), Kashmir has convicted a motor vehicle violator for driving without a valid licence, sentencing him to three months' simple imprisonment along with a fine of 5,000 under Section 181 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

The challan was taken up for hearing in the presence of the violator and his counsel, while Assistant Public Prosecutor Chasfeeda Shafi represented the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The case pertained to an offence under Section 3/181 of the Motor Vehicles Act, after the violator was found driving a vehicle bearing registration number JK04K-6597 without holding a valid driving licence.

During the proceedings, the statement of the violator was recorded, and he pleaded guilty to the offence.

The court, after considering the plea and the nature of the violation, observed that the accused did not seek to defend himself despite being given adequate opportunity, and proceeded to convict him.(KNT)

EdRAAK Marks 15 Years with 'Haft Seen' Initiative

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar- Amid the bloom and fragrance of Kashmir's spring, the Foundation of Education Revival Through Arts and Aesthetics in Kashmir (EdRAAK) has rolled out its annual "Sou'lich Mashq" series—a decade-old initiative aimed at engaging schoolchildren and young minds through art, culture, and heritage.

This year, the initiative has been marked by the revival of the traditional "Haft Seen" dastarkhan at Badam Va'er, bringing together participants in a symbolic and immersive cultural experience rooted in Kashmiri and Persian traditions.

At a time when the age-old practice of sharing meals on the traditional dastarkhan is gradually fading—replaced by hurried dining routines and screen distractions—EdRAAK's initiative seeks to rekindle the essence of togetherness. Organisers noted

that the culture of sitting together as a family, sharing tea or meals, and engaging in meaningful conversations is being eroded in modern lifestyles where time constraints and mobile devices dominate daily routines.

The "Haft Seen" workshops and accompanying heritage walks form part of EdRAAK's broader effort to sensitise the younger generation about the importance of preserving art, culture, and heritage. The initiative also aligns with the observance of World Heritage Day 2026, themed "Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Context of Conflicts and Disasters."

Highlighting the urgency of safeguarding cultural memory, EdRAAK founder and crafts and heritage consultant Ilyas Rizvi said that while conflicts and natural disasters visibly damage physical structures, their deeper impact lies in erasing collective memory.

Infertility, Oncology Centre at LD Hospital Gets Push As CM Reviews Work

- 118-Cr Extension to Boost Specialised Maternal, Neonatal Care
- World Bank-Funded Project to add 117 Specialised Beds, Modern Facilities

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inspected the ongoing construction of the Extension Block at Government Lalla Ded Hospital and conducted a comprehensive review of the project's progress, execution strategy and infrastructure development.

The upcoming facility, being developed at the premier maternity care hospital, is designed as a dedicated Infertility and Gynaecological Oncology Centre and will significantly strengthen specialised maternal and neonatal healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the visit, the Chief Minister assessed the pace and quality of construction, reviewed augmentation of critical facilities and emphasised adherence to timelines. He directed the concerned authorities to ensure expeditious completion of the project while maintaining the highest standards of quality.

He was accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Principal and Dean Government Medical College Srinagar Dr. (Prof) Ifat Hassan, Administrator GMC Srinagar Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Medical Superintendent LD Hospital, and senior officers from PWD (R&B), J&KERA Kashmir, among others.

The Chief Minister was briefed on the project, which is being executed under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) by the PWD (R&B) Department at an estimated cost of 118.22 crore. The facility is being constructed as a G+5+attic structure with a total built-up area of about 11,640 square metres and will house around 117 specialised beds (65 adults and 52 infants) for



advanced care.

Officials informed that the centre will feature state-of-the-art infrastructure including modular operation theatres, ICU, HDU, NICU, Labour, Delivery and Recovery (LDR) suites, IVF laboratories and advanced fetal intervention facilities, in line with modern hospital standards followed at national and international levels.

Highlighting the project's structural resilience, it was given put that the building is being developed using advanced base isolation technology with 43 friction pendulum isolators, ensuring high seismic safety in Zone-V. The design and engineering components have been vetted by premier technical institutions to ensure quality and safety.

Reviewing the progress, the Chief Minister was informed that the foundation works and ground floor structural framework are

fully in place. Installation of base isolators is at an advanced stage, while pre-engineered building (PEB) structural works are underway across multiple zones. Procurement of major medical equipment, as well as mechanical and electrical systems, has also been initiated.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholder departments, particularly the Health Department, to ensure uninterrupted fund flow, timely approvals and clearances, and smooth operationalisation of the facility upon completion.

Emphasising the importance of the project, he said that the new facility will mark a major milestone in upgrading healthcare infrastructure and providing specialised, accessible and high-quality care to women and newborns across Jammu and Kashmir

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 941993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Registration of Non-Institutional Birth Event

This is for information to the general public that I want to register the Birth Event of my Child namely, Hashim Nabi Seh S/o Ghulam Nabi Seh, distric Anantnag with date of birth as 15-07-2013 at Block Development Office Hiller Shahabad (Registrar Birth & Death). The said Birth event has occurred at my home and not in any Hospital. Anybody having any objection in this regard, can file his/her objection in the office of BDO Hiller Shahabad within 07 days from the publication this notice.

Name: Ghulam Nabi Seh
S/o: Abdul Rehman Seh
R/o: Hiller Shahabad
Contact No: 9906733398 fzko

PUBLIC NOTICE

Registration of Non-Institutional Birth Event

This is for information to the general public that I want to register the Birth Event of my Child namely, Aayan Nabi Seh S/o Ghulam Nabi Seh, distric Anantnag with date of birth as 20-02-2017 at Block Development Office Hiller Shahabad (Registrar Birth & Death). The said Birth event has occurred at my home and not in any Hospital. Anybody having any objection in this regard, can file his/her objection in the office of BDO Hiller Shahabad within 07 days from the publication this notice.

Name: Ghulam Nabi Seh
S/o: Abdul Rehman Seh
R/o: Hiller Shahabad
Contact No: 9906733398 fzko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Aalim Gulzar Dhobi s/o Gulzar Ahmad Dhobi R/o Khambiyar Tehsil Pattan With verified date of birth 07/05/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Suhaib Alijaz s/o Alijaz Ahmad Gojri R/o Dildarpora Chichilora Tehsil Kwarhama with verified date of birth 26/10/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.



IAPMDepartment,Zonal Office Srinagar,
M. A. Road, (Opposite Women's College), Srinagar-190001, Kashmir.
0194-2452658, Ext.:132;japmd.kmr@jkbmail.com

POSSESSION NOTICE

Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 01.03.2024 thereby calling upon the Borrower namely 1) M/s Khazir Dealers Proprietorship Concern of Mr.Nissar Ahmad Wani S/O Ghulam Mohiud din Wani R/O Malla Bagh Naseem Bagh Srinagar (Borrower/Mortgagor) and his guarantors namely 2) Mst. Shabnam Nisar and 3) Mr. Sajad Ahmad Rather to repay an amount of Rs.25,55,543/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lacs Fifty Five Thousand Five Hundred and Forty Three only) being the balance outstanding as on 29/02/2024 in the accounts of the Borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized officer of the J & K Bank Ltd. has taken possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on this the 18th day of April 2026.

The said borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount in aggregating to Rs 916754.21 (Rupees Nine Lac Sixteen thousand Seven hundred fifty four and paise twenty one only) as on 31.03.2026 together with future interest thereon from 01.04.2026 and other charges incurred or to be incurred.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

Commercial building along with land measuring 02 Kanals 03 Marlas (16 marlas falling under Khasra No.1435/828, Khata No.579, Khawat No.114; 1 Kanal 07 Marlas falling under Khasra No.1436/828, Khata No. 579, Khawat No.114) situated at Mouza Zakura, Tehsil North, District Srinagar.

Authorized Officer



The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.

IAPMDepartment,Zonal Office Srinagar,
M. A. Road, (Opposite Women's College), Srinagar-190001, Kashmir.
0194-2452658, Ext.:132;japmd.kmr@jkbmail.com

POSSESSION NOTICE

Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas Mr.Tajammul Ahmad Qadri, as the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under Section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 13.11.2024 thereby calling upon the Borrowers namely 1) Mr. Kaka Naqeeb S/O Ghulam Qadir Matta R/O Kaka Road, Nai Sarak, Barbarshah, Sgr. Proprietor of M/s Ayaan Builders and his guarantor namely Mohammad Younis Matta to repay an amount of Rs. 13,14,880.38 (Rupees Thirteen Lacs Fourteen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty and Paise Thirty-Eight only) being the balance outstanding as on 13.11.2024 in the account of the borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrowers having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrowers in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized officer of the J&K Bank Ltd. has taken possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on 18.04.2026.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount in aggregating to Rs.14,48,240.96 (Rupees Fourteen lacs forty eight thousand two hundred forty and paise ninety six only) together with future interest thereon from 01.04.2026 and other charges incurred or to be incurred.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

Residential house along with land underneath measuring 1600 Sft falling under Khasra No.1993 min, Khata No. 628 and Khawat No.208 situated at Kaka Road, Nai Sarak, in Mouza Maisuma Tehsil and District Srinagar standing in the name of Mr. Kaka Naqeeb (Borrower).

Tajammul Ahmad Qadri
Authorized Officer

چوتھی برسی - نازیہ حسن
(19 اپریل 2022)

دل میں تیری یاد کا ہر رخ آج بھی ملتا ہے
ہر گھر کا تیرا نور اور ہر جگہ ہے
تیری بدلتی ہے ہمیں پھر اس طرح توڑ دیا
جیسے کوئی خواب آنکھوں میں ہی بکھرتا ہے
تیری مسکراہٹ ابھی تک دل میں بسی ہوئی ہے
غاموش لوگوں میں بھی تیرا عکس ابھرتا ہے
ہم نے کیا ہاتھ تیرے خوش نصیب ہو
پر منتظر رکھا آخر کون کتنا ہے
تو صبر کی ایک مثال بن کے چلی گئی
تیرا وصل آج بھی دل کو سنہاتا ہے
رہستان کی وہ گودی آج بھی یاد آتی ہے
جب ہر آنسو ماں کی کہلوں پر ٹہرتا ہے
اب دعا ہے کہ خدا تجھے جنت میں بگردے
تیرا نام لوگوں پہ آتے ہی دل روتا ہے :
نیزہ آج بھی معافی کی صدا دیتا ہے
ایک بھائی کو دل تجھے یاد کر کے کرتا ہے

Beyond the Studio Debate

When mainstream media narrows the story, citizen voices on social media restore nuance and truth.



Seema Sangra

“
If not for the counter-narratives on social media, the world might have accepted a one-dimensional version of events, reinforcing stereotypes rather than revealing truth.

The power of media lies in its ability to shape public perception, all the more during the crisis.

It has the power to intensify the situation during any crisis, mitigate its impact, or distort the truth.

In times of crisis, the risks of misinformation and manipulated narratives grow significantly, making the threat of information disorder more severe.

Consequently, the need to prevent and combat such disorder becomes increasingly urgent.

Media's responsibility grows manifold during such times, and it must empower its citizens to think critically and behave mindfully by providing access to multiple perspectives, and positive stories.

Media must check the tone of its reporting and refrain from any angle that can instigate unrest.

As a journalism student, we were taught that media must uphold their independence and prioritise the public interest, as they play a vital role in fostering social cohesion, integrating diverse communities, and serving as an inclusive platform for pluralistic debate.

Unfortunately with the emergence of private players, breaking news culture, consistent need to stay ahead from each other, desire for high TRPs, lack of monitoring of ethical journalistic practices, and the wrong precedent set by some of successful journalists and TV anchors have created a culture that is turning the reporting, mostly biased and presents a single story.

During the TV panel discussions, a staple of our modern media landscape, the anchor's role become significant. The anchor's responsibility is to ensure a balanced debate, presenting diverse viewpoints, keeping discussions on track, and verifying facts to prevent misinformation.

Unfortunately, the role in present scenario is misunderstood by the reporters. They believe to advocate a single perspective and anyone that does not agree with it is treated with aggression and disrespect. This unethical conduct not only disrupts the studio environment but also influences



viewers at home, who rely on these debates for information, specially during times of crisis.

A good example of media narrative and perception building can be culled out from the Vietnam war. It is often said that America lost the war not on the battlefield, but at home, a defeat significantly shaped by journalism.

When CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite declared in 1968 that he believed the U.S. could not win the war, his words carried immense weight, fueling political divisions and shifting public opinion. The war, many argue, was not only misreported at the time but is also misremembered today.

A thought-provoking piece in The Washington Post once asked: "Did the News Media, Led by Walter Cronkite, Lose the War in Vietnam?" The very question underscores the enduring power of media framing, a reminder that how a story is told can be as consequential as the events themselves.

In today's scenario, another major player is social media. From 2006 onwards, with the rise and popularisation of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), and TIKTok (presently banned in India), there is a surge of citizen journalism, where by users also become the content creators.

The community size of some of the bloggers is larger than most popular

news houses and publications. This gives enormous power to these bloggers, besides individual posts at times of crisis bring in firsthand information in real time, sometimes difficult for larger cities based news channels.

Also sometimes reports by citizens and bloggers bring in the other perspective to larger audiences who are otherwise dependent on conventional media narrative.

In the recent Pahalgam terror attack, while the most of the conventional media specifically TV Channels reported a single narrative, and diverted the discussions to a divisive tone, social media brought forward a different narrative. Shared citizens, tourists, and bloggers shared videos, photos, and firsthand accounts that painted a picture of resilience, compassion, and unity.

Locals opened their homes to stranded tourists, offering free food and shelter. Taxi drivers provided rides to the airport without charge. Youth from the valley organised protest marches condemning the violence, while the business and artist communities voiced their anguish. Prominent bloggers shared heartfelt messages, highlighting the solidarity of Kashmiris in the face of adversity.

If not for the counter-narratives on social media, the world might have accepted a one-dimensional version of

events, reinforcing stereotypes rather than revealing truth.

This brings to my mind Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's powerful 2009 TED Talk, where she warned of the perils of a single story. Though in a different context, she says: "All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them."

Her most striking insight was: "When we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."

Today, social media acts as that liberating force, challenging dominant narratives, amplifying marginalised voices, and restoring the lost 'paradise' of nuance. In a world still prone to oversimplification, that multiplicity of stories remains our greatest defense against misunderstanding.

This time social media changed the single story of Kashmiris!

The author is an academic and writer who leads the Media Studies program at Amity University Dubai. Originally from Jammu and Kashmir, her work explores the convergences of food, media, and culture.

The Price of Handmade

Behind Kashmir's celebrated crafts lies a workforce struggling for fair wages, recognition, and survival in a changing economy.



Malik Daniyal

In Srinagar's old alleys, the clatter of looms has grown faint. Once-bustling karkhanas now stand locked or turned into storage spaces.

For centuries, Kashmiri handicrafts have carried history, preserved identity, and sustained families. From Pashmina and Kani shawls to papier-mâché and walnut woodwork, these crafts supported generations.

Today, they stand at the edge of decline, pressured by globalization, technology, and neglect.

Handmade with patience and precision, each Kashmiri craft is a cultural heirloom. The warmth of a Pashmina, the delicate Sozni embroidery, and the vivid strokes of papier-mâché tell a story.

Yet in today's fast-paced markets, their prestige is slipping, leaving artisans to fight for survival.

For decades, handicrafts were cultural expression as well as economic backbone. At their peak, government records estimate more than 2.5 lakh artisans were engaged directly or indirectly in the sector. Whole communities revolved around these crafts, where weaving, carving, or embroidering was both livelihood and legacy.

Now, signs of revival are emerging.

In traditional craft clusters, like Nawa Kadal, Zaina Kadal, and Kanihama, the hum of charkhas is being heard again. A major reason is the growing use of Geographical Indication (GI) tags, which give authenticity new economic value.

From only 175 GI labels in 2014, the number rose to over 13,900 by 2022-23. Exports, too, nearly doubled in two years, from 563 crore in 2021-22 to around 1,162 crore in 2023-24.

For many artisans, this has brought not just hope but steady earnings.

But beneath the upbeat figures lies a harsher reality. While 92% of artisans rely almost entirely on handicrafts, many barely make enough to cover daily needs. Wages remain stagnant, unchanged for decades, and payments are often delayed.

Intermediaries profit while loom workers struggle. Cheap, machine-made imitations further undercut original work, hitting Pashmina, carpets, and shawls the hardest.

The toll is heavier on women.

Once nearly half the workforce, their participation has dropped sharply. By 2017, some 10,000 women spinners had left the craft because of low pay. Traditional spinning and dehairing, once their domain, had nearly gone silent. Recent revival efforts, however, are pulling some back.

At initiatives like "Zaevuyil," spinners now earn around 14,000 a month, while weavers can make about 20,000, a sharp rise from earlier rates.

Grassroots interventions are also reshaping the craft. The Centre for Excellence in Narwara, backed by the Aditya Birla Group and led by entrepreneur Mujtaba Kadri, has revived women's work with better



pay and new opportunities.

QR-coded GI tags, about 20,000 on Pashmina shawls and 9,800 on carpets, let buyers trace products back to the artisans, strengthening both trust and markets.

Yet, these gains remain fragile. Only about 1% of all Pashmina items carry a GI label. The absence of modern wool-processing units is a major hurdle. Raw fleece sells for just 20/kg, while processed wool fetches 140/kg.

Without local facilities for washing, spinning, and yarn processing, much of the value is lost outside Kashmir.

Government policies have laid groundwork, through GI certification and the 2020 Handicrafts and Handloom Policy, but im-

pact is uneven.

Subsidies and microcredit schemes exist but remain hard to access due to red tape and poor awareness. Welfare measures like health camps or guaranteed prices are irregular and underfunded.

Even so, examples of sustainable models are visible.

The Looms of Ladakh cooperative, powered by women's self-help groups, has helped 427 rural women move from subsistence to fair wages, turning them into "farm-to-fashion" producers. Their model - local value addition, collective bargaining, and design innovation - offers lessons for Kashmir.

For a true revival, a balanced strategy is

needed. Policymakers must make GI certification central to exports and push e-commerce platforms to feature only verified products.

Setting targets of 10-20% certified output can scale authenticity. Investment in cluster-level processing infrastructure, through public-private partnerships, is equally urgent.

NGOs can focus on design-led training and capacity building. Collaborations with institutes like NIFT or global fair-trade bodies can introduce modern design language without eroding tradition. Women artisans need targeted skilling, social security, and financial inclusion to remain in these value chains.

Academia, too, has a role: documenting artisan histories, mapping economic flows, and assessing GI's real impact to guide smarter policies.

Consumers hold perhaps the most immediate power: choosing authentic, QR-labeled crafts through verified channels. Each purchase strengthens livelihoods and signals to global markets that Kashmir's handmade goods deserve their value.

Kashmiri handicrafts are living carriers of identity and resilience, bridges between generations of artisans and the world.

If policies, markets, and consumers align, then Pashmina, papier-mâché, Kani shawls, carpets, and wood carvings will thrive.

And with them, so will the dignity and future of Kashmiri artisans.

The author studies at the University of Delhi and writes on Jammu and Kashmir's economy. He tweets at @daniyaal_tweets and can be reached at mdaniyal.054@gmail.com.

The Carpenter of the Lake

In the backwaters of Dal Lake, an ageing craftsman fights time, decline, and neglect to preserve one of Kashmir's most iconic traditions.



Wasim Nabi

In a misty March day, Ghulam Rasool Najar sits steady to craft a new houseboat with a grand artist's devotion. Frequent hammer thuds on wood echo his derelict houseboat yard in Kashmir capital, Srinagar's famed Dal Lake.

Najar's snow-white beard, parched face and intense looks give away his gravity as a veteran craftsman struggling to retain the vintage hook in houseboats, the floating marvels, called a shimmering specimen of Kashmir's rich artistry.

The feisty octogenarian occupies a quintessential carpentry workplace in the middle of the lake bereft of tourists. The long-faced locals here own houseboats, having no match in the world.

Many call this part of Srinagar as an 'amphibian world'. It houses the famous Hanji community of Kashmir in a loose cluster of hutments and houseboats. A meandering corridor from the bustling Dalgate side, a prominent sightseeing area in the mountainous region, takes one into the backwaters filled with a sense of pity and site of pollution, forcing many to give up on their glorious vacant vassals.

But one man, Najar, standing tall beyond his retirement age is making it sure to continue to make houseboats as the pride of Kashmir.

Much before Najar's birth, the art of houseboat-making had started when the World War-I was ravaging the empires across the globe. Somewhere in 1918, a bunch of war-weary Imperial British had arrived in Kashmir as duck-hunters



and sightseers.

To live closer to the lake full of ducks, they constructed houseboats. Construction process needed the local manpower and expertise. Srinagar being an artisan hub played its great role in beautifying these floating houses. Among those artists were the houseboat carpenters.

"Houseboat carpenters are completely different from other carpenters," Najar says, between his intermittent silences and frequent metal thuds. "The art of making houseboats involves three different teams who work in tandem. One team forms the base, other one makes the whole structure, while the third team chips in with the interior designs."

One among those pioneering carpenters was Najar's father, Mohammad Hanief. "My father was considered as the finest artist of his times," he says, with a faint smile.

Among Hanief's craft marvels is a Sufi shrine in Srinagar, the place known for housing some revered

and carpentry-rich shrines. But after his sudden death, Najar as a Class 2 student, had to step into his father's 'big' shoes.

It was 1952, and Najar got his first gig as an apprentice of his father's friend for a shrine-repairing in Srinagar. It was the beginning of his long carpentry journey, which would shortly pass through the lake for houseboat-making.

"I made my first houseboat in Srinagar's picturesque Nigeen Lake," Najar recalls.

Being a relatively less crowded water body, the Nigeen Lake was famous among foreigners of yore for its meditative calm. Later Najar would make a houseboat called Khyber in the Dal Lake. After that, there was no looking back.

Today, nearly 70 years after Najar started his rare carpentry, houseboats in the Dal Lake have become mesmerizing art-pieces. But at the same time, the perpetual political problem in the region has taken a huge hit on the industry.

Kashmir being the UN-recognised dispute between India and Pakistan saw the two nuke-armed South Asian neighbours waging three wars on it. By late eighties, as political tensions erupted in Kashmir, the region's high-end foreign tourism, the lifeline of houseboat industry, collapsed, more so, in the face of a torrent of travel advisories shot by western countries.

As the armed conflict dragged on, the government imposed a ban on building new houseboats 'to prevent pollution' in the Dal Lake.

"It was a bizarre decision," Najar says. "Instead of coming to the rescue of the conflict-battered houseboat community, the government imposed sanctions on it and shattered the once thriving industry."

With the result, many houseboat carpenters were forced to switch over to other means of living. However, a handful of carpenters, including Najar, stayed put. His obscure tribe managed to prolong

IN THE YEAR OF 1983, ON ONE FOREIGN TOURIST'S DESCRIPTION, NAJAR MADE A FAMOUS BUTTERFLY HOUSEBOAT IN NIGEEN LAKE. "It took me four years to complete it," he recalls with a glint in his eyes. "That is one of my masterpieces." Today, only a few good looking houseboats, a symbol of rich Kashmiri artistry, are left in the lake. And most of them are Najar's creation.

their ties with the fading art by sustaining on the occasional houseboat repairing work orders.

But for his amazing skill and dogged resilience to keep the heritage promise intact, Najar, the elderly 'wouste' (master) holds a great sway and admiration over the houseboat community.

To his credit, he says, are around 45 percent of the houseboats in the lake. It usually takes him around 15 months to make one houseboat.

"Back in the day, when Kashmir was peaceful and packed with tourists and travellers, we used to work endlessly, without compromising on quality," he says. "Even today houseboat owners seek my services. Yes, the demand is less, but I'm still very much passionate about my work."

His keenness as a craftsman saw him producing some exceptional floating artifacts.

In the year of 1983, on one foreign tourist's description, Najar made a famous Butterfly Houseboat in Nigeen Lake. "It took me four years to complete it," he recalls with a glint in his eyes. "That is one of my masterpieces."

Today, only a few good looking houseboats, a symbol of rich Kashmiri artistry, are left in the lake. And most of them are Najar's creation.

"From once 2500, the number of houseboats has now come down to 915," says Manzoor Pakhtoon, owner of group of houseboats in the Dal Lake. "The houseboat decline can be prevented by supporting

the skillful houseboat carpenters, like Najar. These veterans should be engaged in training sessions and workshops, so that the next generation grappling with a biting unemployment could earn their decent living and take their legacy forward."

But inside the houseboat yard, Najar sulks over the state of affairs.

"We're into different times now," he breaks a fleeting silence. "Earlier, foreign tourists knew the value of art and artists. But today, this craft has just become a mere formality."

Sadly, even the lake he helped shine with his skill is fast losing its sheen.

There're rampant constructions going on at certain places right under the nose of the regional authorities. Residential houses, concrete buildings and black tops have already made inroads in the water body.

"Dal Lake was once a cleanest water body in the valley, but its slow death and the government's apathy has marred its beauty," Najar laments.

However, in the lake lacking the yesteryears' buzz and business, the 'wouste' continues to hold the fort. But what happens next, after the master departs and abandons the yard completely, is the question haunting the already distressed houseboat community of Kashmir today.

— The author is a Srinagar-based scribe.

A House Divided by Labels

From jokes to judgement, everyday regional bias in Kashmir reveals a troubling shift in values and social cohesion.



Muskan Shafi Malik

I arrived in Srinagar with the feeling of coming home, where lanes, liveliness, and language offered a familiarity that settled around me with ease.

Living here for several months brought me into close contact with Kashmiris from many districts, from the north, the south, and the centre, each carrying distinct stories and accents shaped by place and experience.

It was during these everyday encounters that I began to notice something unfamiliar to me from my years outside the valley, a pattern revealed slowly through lived moments rather than theory or textbooks, a phenomenon I eventually recognised as regionalism.

My early years shaped a different understanding of belonging.

At university, meeting another Kashmiri meant asking a single question: Are you Kashmiri?

Conversations followed in our mother tongue, help came easily, and an unspoken bond formed without reference to district or background.

A decade later, returning home placed me inside a social atmosphere where labels moved fast and cut deep. Stereotypes travelled freely. Casual insults passed as humour. Prejudices appeared inherited, rehearsed, and delivered with ease.

What troubled me most was not disagreement. What disturbed me

was contempt becoming ordinary.

North versus south turned into a language of judgement, used to question intelligence, character, faith, and even lineage.

Hearing this from people expected to uphold ethical responsibility, including those working within institutions meant to safeguard public discourse, forced me into months of reflection.

The conclusion arrived with clarity.

This pattern points to a moral collapse rather than harmless rivalry. It stands in direct contradiction to everything Kashmir claims to cherish, including Islamic brotherhood, shared culture, and a long history of collective suffering.

Before Baramulla or Anantnag, Kupwara or Pulwama, there exists a deeper identity that precedes geography.

We belong to the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ.

This stands as theology, scripture, and principle. The Qur'an speaks clearly when it says that this community stands as one, bound by worship and accountability to one Lord.

Districts hold no spiritual rank. But when geography claims superiority over faith, the moral order turns upside down.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ addressed this danger centuries ago in his final sermon, declaring that superiority flows only through righteousness, never through race, tribe, or origin.

Islam dismantled tribal arrogance long before modern borders appeared.

Witnessing its revival through regional pride in Kashmir feels tragic, especially within a society that speaks often of faith and unity.

Kashmir exists as a shared civilizational space rather than a collection of fragments. We speak one language with gentle variations. We carry one cultural memory shaped by Rishi Sufi traditions, adab, and hospitality. We remember one history marked by conflict, loss, and endurance. We pray



within one religious ethos.

Despite this, regional mockery thrives.

I have heard south Kashmir described as aggressive, its people ridiculed for speech, accent, and village life. Mountain communities face portrayals as uncivilised. North Kashmiris endure slurs that question belonging and ancestry.

These claims hold no sociological truth, but they do function as caricatures, erasing individuality and replacing understanding with laughter.

Such thinking reflects intellectual emptiness rather than cultural insight.

Social science offers language to understand this pattern. Regionalism grows where identity insecurity meets moral emptiness. Individuals

lacking ethical grounding often cling to collective labels to feel superior.

Constant exposure to stereotyping causes real emotional harm, especially for young people who often choose silence instead of confrontation. Over time, that silence turns into mistrust. Trust between people thins, and social cohesion begins to weaken from within. Divisions take root early, long before politics step in to harden them.

Islam recognises this danger with precision.

The Prophet ﷺ warned against *abiyyah*, a form of tribal loyalty that breeds division and conflict.

Regionalism today wears the same impulse in modern dress, carrying forward an old sickness that fractures communities from within.

I faced such hostility myself and often responded with a smile and silence.

That silence came from restraint rather than agreement, inspired by the Qur'anic guidance that calls believers to answer harshness with words of peace.

Restraint, however, does not equal surrender. Prejudice that settles into systems demands naming, questioning, and intellectual dismantling.

Conversations with scholars and thinkers led me to a shared conclusion. This behaviour reveals a lack of upbringing, civic sense, and ethical grounding rather than regional identity.

A person anchored in values shows respect without weighing someone's origin. A society shaped by adab treats its own people with care and restraint.

Civic sense extends beyond laws or public cleanliness into the ethics of speech, everyday empathy, and the ability to disagree without turning difference into humiliation.

Kashmir's spiritual heritage speaks powerfully here.

Sheikh Noor ud Din and Lal Ded taught humility, inner purification, and humaneness. District pride would have felt alien to their worldview. They spoke of *insaaniyat*, a value far larger than geography.

Regional hatred weakens society in practical ways as well. Fragmented communities remain easier to control. History teaches that internal division drains collective strength.

While Kashmiris argue among themselves, larger injustices escape scrutiny. Regionalism harms both soul and strategy.

Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory explains how people seek belonging through group identity, often elevating their own group while distancing others.

This theory explains how districts have begun to act as competing identities, pushing aside a shared Islamic and Kashmiri sense of belonging, and it shows up every day in conversations, jokes, and quick judgements.

Healing demands correction of priorities rather than denial of diversity. Humanity must rise above habit, and ethics must stand above ego.

Kashmir requires moral reflection. Laughter at regional insult signals something deeply wrong in how people treat one another.

Before speaking of injustice or enlightenment, a harder question waits: How do we treat our own?

We follow Muhammad ﷺ first. We belong to Kashmir next. Districts hold minor relevance within this order.

— The author is an MA History student at Aligarh Muslim University. She can be reached at muskanshafimalik@gmail.com.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG: Will Break Back

aimed at decisively weakening narcotics networks. "In 100 days, we must completely break the back of drug networks. When the power of society and the might of the administration come together, neither smugglers nor criminals will be spared," he said.

Emphasising the broader impact of substance abuse, the Lieutenant Governor noted that not all battles are fought on borders. "Addiction is a wound in our society. For years, families across Jammu and Kashmir have fought this menace within their homes, and many have lost loved ones," he said.

He also linked drug trafficking to larger security concerns, alleging that cross-border networks are using narcotics as a tool to fund and fuel destabilising activities. "This is not just a social issue but a deliberate attempt to weaken the nation from within," he said.

Sinha stressed that prevention would remain the cornerstone of the campaign. He called for intensified awareness efforts in schools, colleges, playgrounds and community spaces to ensure that young people are reached before they fall prey to drugs.

Directing law enforcement agencies to ensure strict action, the Lieutenant Governor said exemplary punishment must be delivered to those involved in trafficking. He added that a standard operating procedure has been put in place to dismantle drug networks and ensure swift justice.

On rehabilitation, Sinha said the administration is adopting a comprehensive approach ranging from detection and counselling to detoxification, rehabilitation and aftercare. He directed officials to conduct weekly audits of progress, including data on rehabilitated individuals and arrests, and to shut down any fake de-addiction centres.

Calling for wider participation, he urged civil society groups and non-governmental organisations to support the campaign. "This mission demands collective resolve. Every section of society must come forward to protect our youth and secure our future," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor administered an anti-drug pledge and launched the Rajouri Premier League and Rajouri Football Club under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan. Cultural performances, including a musical opera, were also held to raise awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

Budget Session

Several key legislations were also cleared during the session, including the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026, and the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which designates Amaravati as the state's capital.

However, other proposed laws faced hurdles. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, was not taken up amid strong opposition resistance, while the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, was referred to a parliamentary committee for further scrutiny.

The session was repeatedly disrupted by protests and walkouts, reflecting deepening tensions between the treasury benches and the opposition. Early flashpoints included an uproar after Rahul Gandhi was prevented from citing excerpts from an unpublished book, leading to the suspension of eight opposition MPs, a decision later revoked.

In another rare development, Prime Minister Modi was unable to reply to the Motion of Thanks on the President's address due to continued disruptions. The opposition also moved a notice seeking the removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, which was defeated after a debate. A separate notice to remove

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar was rejected by the presiding authorities.

Despite the disruptions, productivity remained high. The Lok Sabha recorded 93 per cent productivity, while the Rajya Sabha functioned at around 110 per cent efficiency. Over the course of the session, 31 sittings were held, spanning more than 151 hours of work.

Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan described the Budget Session as the most consequential in shaping the country's growth trajectory, highlighting the extensive discussions and legislative output. The Upper House also re-elected Hariwansh as Deputy Chairman during the special sitting.

The session concluded with the rendition of all six stanzas of 'Vande Mataram' in both Houses, marking another first.

Overall, the Budget Session combined significant legislative business with intense political confrontation, but will be chiefly remembered for the defeat of the women's reservation bill and the continuing standoff between the government and the opposition.

Opposition Crushed

Lok Sabha, Modi said the self-serving politics of parties like the Congress, the DMK, the TMC, and the Samajwadi Party has come at the expense of the nation's women, and that they had foiled efforts to grant 33 per cent reservation to women in legislatures.

"I seek forgiveness from all women of the country," he said.

The prime minister said opposition parties that opposed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in Parliament were taking women's power for granted.

"Today, every citizen of India is witnessing how the march of India's women has been halted. The dreams of the country's women have been mercilessly crushed, and despite our utmost efforts, we could not succeed," he said.

Modi said women had seen how parties like the Congress, the TMC and the DMK "celebrated their selfish politics" against women's empowerment.

"The opposition has committed a sin by opposing women's reservation, and they will surely be punished for this. Opposition parties have insulted our Constitution by defeating the bill," he said.

The prime minister said the bill was aimed at giving wings to women's empowerment without taking anything away from anyone.

"I expected the Congress to correct its past mistakes, but it missed an opportunity to script new history. The family-run parties do not want women to move forward as that could end their selfish politics," he said.

He also accused the Congress of pursuing divisive politics, alleging it spread falsehoods about a North-South divide.

"A woman forgets everything, but not her insult; this insult by the Congress and its allies will always remain in every woman's heart," he said.

Modi said the amendment to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam was the need of the hour and an honest effort to ensure balanced empowerment across north, south, east and west.

"Congress has always opposed all attempts for nation-building, betterment of our country," he said.

Inaugurates Museum

2025 to fill seats that had remained vacant since 2021 - the year when the last members from the Union Territory completed their tenures. The vacancies could not be filled earlier due to the non-availability of an electorate (MLAs).

In the Rajya Sabha polls, the National Conference won three seats and the Bharatiya Janata Party one seat, despite being short of numbers.

As many as eight MLAs, who had pledged support to the ruling NC-led alliance, cross-voted or cancelled their votes to help the BJP win a seat.

It is rumoured in political circles that the BJP also managed to secure support from legislator(s) belonging to a party considered its arch-rival.

Emotional Send-Off

documentation facilities for the pilgrims. Hundreds of family members and relatives gathered outside the Haj House and at the airport to bid an emotional farewell, with scenes of prayers and goodbyes marking the departure.

Authorities said a total of 4,764 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir are scheduled to undertake the pilgrimage this year.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah saw off the first batch of pilgrims at Srinagar International Airport. The CM extended his best wishes to the departing pilgrims for a safe and fulfilling journey and urged them to pray for peace and prosperity in the region.

Children waved goodbye to elders, women stood in prayerful silence, while elderly pilgrims recited verses, holding prayer beads and reading documents close to their hearts.

"It feels like Allah has invited us to His house. We waited many years for this moment," an elderly pilgrim said.

Executive Officer of the Haj Committee, Dr Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi said that all arrangements, including transport, baggage handling, medical screening and documentation, had been put in place to ensure smooth departures.

"We have made all necessary arrangements for the comfort and convenience of pilgrims. The process remained smooth since morning," he said.

J&K Govt Takes

larger interest of students, so that their studies are not affected," an official said.

The Centre had declared Jamaat-e-Islami an unlawful organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in February 2019, a ban that was extended again in February 2024. Intelligence agencies had subsequently flagged several institutions for alleged links with the outfit and its affiliated trust.

Officials said the managing committees of the schools taken over had either completed their term or were "reported adversely" in intelligence assessments. The government's intervention, they added, was necessary to bring administrative clarity and ensure regulatory compliance in the functioning of these institutions.

Despite the administrative shift, officials stressed that day-to-day academic operations would continue as usual, with no immediate changes for students or teaching staff.

HC Moves to

uniformly to each moving employee. However, the allowance will not be admissible to employees who fail to move before or within the stipulated timeline.

HC Bench Strength

appointment warrants. At present, the High Court is functioning with 13 judges against a sanctioned strength of 25, leaving 12 vacancies. The current exercise aims to address this shortfall and reduce case pendency.

The sitting judges include Chief Justice Arun Palli, Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Sanjay Dhar, Justice Mohammad Akram Chowdhary, Justice Rahul Bharti, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal, Justice Rajesh Sekhri, Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani, Justice Sanjay Parihar, and Justice Shahzad Azeem.

The strength had been reduced to 13 following the superannuation of Justice Javed Iqbal Wani on March 23 this year.

Iran Reimposes

as the US continued to disrupt Iranian shipping. Command spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Ebrahim Zolfaqari accused Washington of "banditry and piracy under the guise of a so-called blockade".

Tehran's move marked a sharp reversal from Friday, when foreign minister Abbas Araghchi announced a limited reopening of the strait to commercial traffic as part of a broader ceasefire framework linked to Lebanon. Iranian officials said the arrangement would allow only designated routes under naval authorisation - a controlled concession intended to support negotiations.

That opening quickly unravelled. Trump said the US blockade would remain "in full force and effect" until a comprehensive agreement with Iran was finalised and claimed Tehran had agreed never to close the strait, an assertion Iranian officials flatly rejected.

The US stance drew an immediate backlash in Tehran. Deputy foreign minister Saeed Khatibzadeh warned Washington was "risking the international community" and jeopardising the entire ceasefire package, while lawmakers said the strait would return to its previous restricted status, including requirements for authorisation and tolls.

Within hours, tensions spilt into direct confrontation. Iranian Revolutionary Guards gunboats opened fire on a tanker in the strait, while a container vessel was struck by an unidentified projectile, damaging cargo. Two Indian-flagged ships, including a supertanker carrying Iraqi oil, were forced to turn back after coming under fire, according to maritime tracking data.

Shipping through the chokepoint has since been confined to narrow corridors requiring Iranian approval, according to data firm Kpler, while US Central Command said it had turned back 21 vessels since the blockade began earlier in the week.

The renewed standoff underscores how both sides are seeking leverage ahead of negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme and a broader settlement to end hostilities. For Washington, the blockade is a means of sustaining pressure without returning to full-scale war. For Iran, controlling Hormuz remains its most powerful countermeasure, capable of driving oil prices higher and amplifying global pressure on Washington.

Friday's brief reopening had triggered a drop in oil prices, but the latest reversal threatens to prolong the energy shock already rippling through markets.

Diplomatic efforts are intensifying to prevent a full breakdown. Pakistan has stepped in as a mediator, with foreign minister Ishaq Dar saying officials were working to "bridge" differences between the two sides and prepare a new round of talks expected early next week. Senior Pakistani officials have been holding meetings in Tehran and with regional leaders in Turkey and Qatar.

But prospects for progress remain uncertain. Khatibzadeh said Iran was not ready for direct talks while the US maintained what he called a "maximalist position" and dismissed Washington's demand that Iran surrender its stockpile of enriched uranium as "a non-starter". Trump, meanwhile, said the US would "go into Iran and get all the nuclear dust", referring to material believed to be stored at heavily damaged nuclear sites.

In a further show of defiance, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, said the country's navy stood ready to deliver "bitter defeats" to its enemies, praising recent strikes against US and Israeli interests.

With ships under fire, oil flows constrained, and diplomacy under strain, the Strait of

Hormuz has once again become the focal point of a confrontation with global consequences - and diminishing room for compromise.

'Hormuz Rules Set

pushed back forcefully against statements made by Trump, who had claimed on social media that Iran had "agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again" and that a US "naval blockade will remain in full force and effect as it pertains to Iran, only, until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100% complete".

In a sharply worded response posted on X, Qalibaf wrote: "The US president made seven claims in the span of one hour, all seven of which are false."

He warned that "if the blockade continues, the Strait of Hormuz will not remain open," and stressed that any passage would be tightly regulated: "Passage through the Strait of Hormuz will take place based on a 'designated route' and with 'Iran's authorization.'" He added: "Whether the strait remains open or closed and the rules governing it will be determined on the battlefield, not on social media."

The remarks reflect a broader shift in tone from Tehran, where officials have increasingly framed control of the strait as both a strategic necessity and a demonstration of sovereignty. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy reinforced that message, announcing what it described as a "new order" governing maritime traffic.

Under the new rules, all commercial vessels must travel along routes designated by Iran and receive explicit authorisation from its naval forces, while military vessels are barred entirely. The measures, the IRGC said, were being implemented in line with ongoing ceasefire arrangements and reflect Iran's control over the northern stretch of the waterway.

India Summons

Strait of Hormuz following an incident of firing by Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri conveyed to the envoy India's "deep concern" at the shooting incident involving the two ships, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The foreign secretary noted the "importance that India attached to the safety of merchant shipping and mariners and recalled that Iran had earlier facilitated the safe passage of several ships bound for India," it said.

"Reiterating his concern at this serious incident of firing on merchant ships, the foreign secretary urged the ambassador to convey India's views to the authorities in Iran and resume at the earliest the process of facilitating India-bound ships across the Strait," the MEA said in a statement.

It said that Ambassador Fathali "undertook to convey these views to the Iranian authorities".

Several commercial vessels tried to cross the Strait of Hormuz after Iran on Friday announced that it has opened the waterway for commercial traffic.

Tehran on Saturday said it has again closed the Strait of Hormuz, alleging that the US violated certain understanding reached between the two sides.

A vessel tracker earlier reported that two Indian vessels had to reverse course in the Strait of Hormuz following the incident of gunfire from Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Earlier this week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar underlined India's strong commitment to "safe and unimpeded" transit passage of maritime shipping, even as he emphasised that attacks on merchant shipping are "completely unacceptable".

Jaishankar made the remarks while participating in an online meeting convened by Japan to discuss supply chain disruptions in the energy markets.

PUBLIC NOTICE

REGISTRATION OF NON-INSTITUTIONAL BIRTH EVENT

This is for information to the general public that I want to register the Birth Event of my Child namely, Hashim Nabi Seh S/o Ghulam Nabi Seh, district Anantnag with date of birth as 15-07-2013 at Block Development Office Hiller Shahabad (Registrar Birth & Death). The said Birth event has occurred at my home and not in any Hospital. Anybody having any objection in this regard, can file his/her objection in the office of BDO Hiller Shahabad within 07 days from the publication this notice.

Name: Ghulam Nabi Seh
S/o: Abdul Rehman Seh
R/o: Hiller Shahabad
Contact No: 9906733398

PUBLIC NOTICE

REGISTRATION OF NON-INSTITUTIONAL BIRTH EVENT

This is for information to the general public that I want to register the Birth Event of my Child namely, Aayan Nabi Seh S/o Ghulam Nabi Seh, district Anantnag with date of birth as 20-02-2017 at Block Development Office Hiller Shahabad (Registrar Birth & Death). The said Birth event has occurred at my home and not in any Hospital. Anybody having any objection in this regard, can file his/her objection in the office of BDO Hiller Shahabad within 07 days from the publication this notice.

Name: Ghulam Nabi Seh
S/o: Abdul Rehman Seh
R/o: Hiller Shahabad
Contact No: 9906733398



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OR SCAN



Kashmir Transporters Call Chakka Jam On April 20 Over Smart Bus Expansion

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Kashmir's transport sector on Saturday announced a complete valley-wide chakka jam on Monday, April 20, escalating concerns over the government's expansion of Smart City buses beyond Srinagar city limits to directly threatening the survival of thousands of families dependent on buses, sumos, taxis and mini-passenger vehicles.

The protest, called by the All Jammu and Kashmir Transport Welfare Association, comes amid growing resentment among private transport operators who say the extension of Smart City buses beyond Srinagar city limits is directly threatening the survival of thousands of families dependent on buses, sumos, taxis and mini-passenger vehicles.



decisions taken without proper consultation with stakeholders.

He alleged that the introduction of Smart City buses in routes covering Pulwama, Kangan, Sopore, Magam and other districts has created unequal competition, particularly for small and mid-scale transporters already burdened by loan liabilities, fuel prices, maintenance costs and

declining passenger volume. He said many operators had hoped the government would regulate route allocations in a balanced manner, but instead, public buses were introduced on routes where private operators had traditionally depended for income.

Matta further said the transporters are not opposing development or modern public transport

systems, but are demanding a policy framework that protects those already working in the sector.

Repeated assurances from authorities regarding permit rationalisation, fleet regulation and operational coordination were never implemented, leading to frustration among unions," he said.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SMART CITY BUSES IN ROUTES COVERING PULWAMA, KANGAN, Sopore and other districts has created unequal competition, particularly for small and mid-scale transporters,"

The association said Monday's shutdown is only the first step and warned that if authorities fail to respond, transport bodies from north, south, and central Kashmir will jointly decide the next phase of agitation. "That could include indefinite strikes, route blockades, coordinated demonstrations and legal action," he said.

Transport leaders appealed to the public for understanding, saying their protest is aimed at highlighting "policy failures" rather than creating inconvenience.

With the strike expected to affect buses, minibuses, taxis and other passenger services, commuters across the Valley may face serious travel disruption on Monday. Students, office-goers, patients and daily wage workers are likely to be the most affected, particularly in areas with limited alternative transport.

172 Govt Employees Absent During Surprise Inspection

JAMMU: As many as 172 government employees were absent from duty during a surprise inspection in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, prompting authorities to order immediate withholding of their salaries, officials said.

In a firm step towards strengthening administrative discipline and accountability, Poonch Deputy Commissioner, Ashok Kumar Sharma, constituted dedicated teams to conduct surprise inspections across government offices in the border district. Acting on these directions, the teams carried out surprise visits across the entire district, including the district headquarters and found 172 employees absent from duty without authorisation, the officials said.

Consequently, show-cause notices have been issued to all such employees, directing them to explain their position before disciplinary proceedings.

Furthermore, all Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) have been directed to withhold the salaries of the absentee employees until further orders, the officials said.

According to PTI, the deputy commissioner has reiterated the administration's zero-tolerance approach towards absenteeism and emphasised strict adherence to duty, punctuality and accountability in public service delivery. (Observer News Service)

Retired Army Man Found Hanging from Tree

SRINAGAR: The body of a retired army man was found hanging from a tree in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara on Saturday, officials said. The deceased was identified as Riyaz Ahmad Badana (45), a resident of Hatchmarg village in the Handwara area, they said. A police team brought down the body, which was then sent for medico-legal formalities, they added.

According to PTI, a case has been registered and an investigation taken up, the officials said. (Observer News Service)

Former Ladakh MLA Released After 7 Months of Detention

LEH: Two Congress leaders, including a former MLA, were released from the Leh district jail on Saturday after spending nearly seven months in detention in connection with the September 2025 violence that left four persons dead and scores injured, officials said.

Former J-K Member of Legislative Assembly Deldan Namgyal and LAHDC Leh Councillor Smanla Dorje were accorded a traditional welcome by a large number of locals, led by leaders of the Leh Apex Body (LAB), soon after they walked out of prison following the grant of bail by the high court on Friday.

The Leh Apex Body (LAB), along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been engaged in dialogue with the Central government over demands including statehood for Ladakh and safeguards under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, while consistently pressing for their release following their detention in the aftermath of the September 24 violence in Leh.

The duo's release comes over a month after climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was released from the Jodhpur Central Jail on March 14, after the Union government decided to revoke his detention with immediate effect. (Observer News Service)

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that I, Sadiya Adil, W/o Adil Ahmad Shuloo, R/o Narwar Khaiwan, Srinagar, have lost the number plate of my Scooty TVS Jupiter bearing Registration No. JK01BB-6463. I intend to apply for issuance of a duplicate number plate. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same with the RTO Srinagar within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I Mohammad Sadiq Awan S/o Habibullah Awan R/o Mayan Mohara Baramulla J&K intend to correct the particular in my driving license bearing No JK052016005596 from Mohamed Sadiq Awan and DOB 10-11-1995 to Mohammad Sadiq Awan and DOB 10-01-1995 as per my aadhar card. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with ARTO Baramulla within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

Fatty Liver Grips Nearly One-Third of Valley Population

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A worrying rise in fatty liver disease cases across Jammu and Kashmir has been linked to drastic lifestyle changes, unhealthy eating habits, and declining physical activity among residents. Doctors warned that nearly one in every three individuals in the Valley is now affected—a condition once considered relatively uncommon but now emerging as a widespread health concern cutting across age groups. Speaking to KNO, Prof Dr Iqbal Saleem, Head of the Department of Surgery at GMC Srinagar, described the liver as the body's largest and most vital organ, responsible for carrying out most metabolic processes essential for survival. "However, as a society, we have drifted away from simple foods and active lifestyles. The increasing dependence on processed and ultra-pro-



cessed foods, along with high-sugar drinks, is one of the main reasons behind the rising trend of fatty liver in our Valley," he said. He further said that the shift from physically demanding routines to sedentary lifestyles has compounded the problem. "We were once a hardy people who worked diligently.

Today, we have become armchair-bound, giving up physical work. People must stay away from alcohol and other bad habits and return to healthier habits," he added. Doctors said that non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and its more severe form, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH),

are witnessing a rapid increase, particularly among younger populations. Dr Ubaid Ahmad, a gastroenterologist, explained that fatty liver is closely associated with modern dietary patterns and inactivity. "High-calorie processed foods combined with lack of exercise contribute to obesity, hypertension, and diabetes, all of which significantly increase the risk of fatty liver," he said.

He warned that untreated fatty liver can progress to serious complications, including liver fibrosis, chronic liver disease (CLD), and even liver cancer. "We are now seeing liver cancer cases rise, in some instances overtaking hepatitis as a leading cause of liver-related deaths," he noted. Doctors highlighted a major dietary transition in Kashmir, where traditional home-cooked meals are increasingly being replaced by fast food and ready-to-eat options.

5 Drug Peddlers Arrested

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its efforts under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, J&K Police arrested 05 drug peddlers in multiple operations in Anantnag, Sopore and recovered a significant quantity of contraband substances from their possession.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, in Anantnag, J&K Police has intensified its drive against drug peddling and narcotics smuggling, leading to the arrest of four accused persons and recovery of significant quantities of contraband substances. A Police party of Police Station Utrasoo, during naka checking at Chatergul Chowk intercepted a vehicle (Alto) (JK03K-9820).

During the search, 1 kg Charas powder and 100 grams Charas balls were recovered. Accused namely Farooq Ahmad Khan son of Fazil Khan resident of Poshnari is a government employee and is working as class 4th in Vailoo court. Moreover, Acting on reliable information, a police



Kandroo resident of Adder Bijbehara.

During the search, 5.03 kgs of charas powder-like substance was recovered from his residential house.

In Sopore, J&K Police apprehended a drug peddler under the jurisdiction of Police Station Panzalla. During naka checking at Tarbal Rohama, a suspicious individual was intercepted and apprehended. Upon personal search, contraband charas-like substance was recovered and seized as per due procedure. The accused has been identified as Shahid Ahmad Mir son of Abdul Rashid Mir resident of Mirpora Rohama, Rafiabad.

All the accused have been arrested and accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective Police Stations, and further investigation is underway to unearth the broader network involved.

J&K Police reiterates its firm commitment to eradicate the drug menace and urges the general public to cooperate by sharing any information related to drug peddling or illegal activities.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rutba Shabir, D/o Shabir Ahmad Wani, R/o Srinagar, hereby state that I intend to correct my name in my J&K Bank account bearing Account No. 0249040150000071, Branch Nawakadal, Srinagar, from "Rutba Shabir Wani" to "Rutba Shabir". If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same with the concerned authorities within a period of one week from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Rutba Shabir
D/o Shabir Ahmad Wani

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I Mohammad Sadiq Awan S/o Habibullah Awan R/o Mayan Mohara Baramulla J&K intend to correct the particular in my driving license bearing No JK052016005596 from Mohamed Sadiq Awan and DOB 10-11-1995 to Mohammad Sadiq Awan and DOB 10-01-1995 as per my aadhar card. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with ARTO Baramulla within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, KULGAM
(COLLECTOR LAND ACQUISITION/ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER REVENUE, KULGAM)
Email: - acr.kulgam@jk.gov.in Phone/Fax: (01931)-260499, 260500,260380

FORM VI

Preliminary Notification

[See sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-11(1) of the Act-30/2013]

No: DCK/NLA-05/2026/44 of 2026 Dated: 18 /04/2026.

Whereas, it appears to the appropriate Government that a total of 08 Marlas 7.5 sirsai, 38 Sq feet of land is required for Construction of 1x33 Span Intermediate Steel Girder Bridge RCC Decked at Sakharsum, Kawaki Bazaar Khudwani (EPC Mode), Tehsil Qaimoh & District Kulgam for public purpose.

Whereas, a committee was constituted by this office under sub rule (1) of rule 4 of the Jammu and Kashmir Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Social Impact Assessment and Consent) Rules 2023 vide No.: DCK/NLA-05/2025/41 dated 24/11/2025 to visit the spot along with the representatives of Requiring Body to make a preliminary enquiry.

The Summary of the Preliminary enquiry report is as follows:

- I. State/Common land was available in village Qaimoh, and the same has been acquired by the indenting department, keeping in view the feasibility of the proposed construction.
- II. The extent of land acquired is the absolute bare minimum required for the purpose/project.
- III. Although State/Common suitable unutilized land existed in the area, the department acquired the said portion of State/Common land as it was most suitable and the bridge already existed at the said location.
- IV. There is no acquired unutilized land available which may be used for the said purpose.
- V. The requisition is consistent with the provisions contained in Section 10 and other relevant provisions of the Act.
- VI. As verified on the spot, no major displacement or rehabilitation is involved in the said construction; however, certain shops and a mosque fall under the proposed alignment.

No families are likely to be displaced due to the said land acquisition with no adverse impact and rehabilitation involved.

The said report was considered SIA report as envisaged in Chapter III Rule 8 of the Jammu and Kashmir Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Social Impact Assessment and Consent) Rules 2023.

Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Villages Tehsil & District Kulgam, a piece of land measuring, 08 Marlas 7.5 sirsai, 38 Sq feet, whose detail description is as following, is under acquisition.

S#	Khasra No. (Survey No.)	Type of Title Private/ Govt./Common	Type Land Rural/Urban	Area Under Acquisition				Trees		Structure	
				K	M	S	Sq.Ft	Variety	Number	Type	Plinth area
1	624 Min	Private Land (Aabad-e-Deh)	Rural	0	0	4.5	0	-	-	-	-
2	656 Min	Private land (Aabad-e-Deh)	Rural	0	1	0	10	Poplar	11	-	-
3	667 Min	State land	Rural	0	2	4	4	-	-	Shops	686.76 Sq. Ft.
4	667 Min	State land	Rural	0	4	8	24	-	-	Masjid (Mosque)	1470 Sq. Ft.
Total				0	8	7.5	38				

This notification is made under the provisions of Section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Act no. 30/2013), to all whom it may concern.

A Plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Collector on any working day during the working hours. The Government authorizes Collector and his Revenue field staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section 12 of the Act.

Under sub section (4) of section 11 of the Act, no person shall make any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objections to the acquisition, if any, may be filed by the person interested within 60 (Sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section 15 of the Act before Collector.

Place: Kulgam
Dated: 18-04-2026

DIPK-541-26
DT: 18/04/2026

Collector, Land Acquisition
Assistant Commissioner Revenue
Kulgam

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE ZONAL EDUCATION OFFICER KANGAN
Subject: Extension of tender notice published for procurement of dietary items
EXTENSION NOTICE
This office has published a tender notice on 25/03/2026 on Daily newspaper Morning Kashmir Vide No. ZEO/K/3584 DATED 12/03/2026 for procurement of dietary items for KGBV Satrina Kangan. In view of poor response/limited suppliers, it is hereby notified for information to all concerned that the last date for submission of tender /quotations for procurement of dietary items has been extended up to 21/04/2026 in order to ensure wider/healthy participation/competition.
All other terms and conditions shall remain intact as laid down in previous notification
NO: ZEO/K/89
DT: 17/04/26
DIPK-523-26
DT: 18/04/2026
Zonal Education Officer
Kangan

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
CIVIL SECRETARIAT, J&K.

Subject: Compassionate Appointment of Ms. Ayeisha Khatoon D/o Late Mohd Suliman Akhoo R/o Krawa, Tehsil Banihal, District Ramban Jammu under SRO-43 of 1994 read with SRO-120 of 2018 dated 05.03.2018.

NOTICE

Consequent upon the approval of the Competent Authority conveyed by the General Administration Department, vide O.M. No. GAD-SRO/30/2026-09-GAD(7730976) dated 01.04.2026, the below mentioned candidate, who has been recommended for appointment in Health & Medical Education Department under SRO-43 of 1994 read with SRO-120 of 2018 dated 05.03.2018, is hereby informed through the medium of this notice to submit her e-mail ID(s) and Mobile Number(s) before the Nominated Nodal Officer, Special Secretary to the Government (A) Health & Medical Education Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu, either in person or through online mode, within a period of 21 days from the date of issuance of this notice, positively, for filling up of e-Verification Rolls for obtaining Character and Antecedents clearance from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

In case the candidate fails to submit her Personal Verification Roll (PVR) within the stipulated period of 21 days, she shall, in terms of Government Order No. 1003-JK(GAD) of 2021 dated: 27.09.2021 read with Circular No. 18-JK(GAD) of 2022 dated 20.05.2022 issued by General Administration Department, forfeit her right to appointment under SRO-43 of 1994 read with SRO-120 of 2018 dated 05.03.2018, forthwith and without any further notice.

ANNEXURE

S.NO.	Name	Father's Name	Address	DOB	Disability	Category	Remarks
01	Ms. Ayeisha Khatoon	Late Mohd Suliman Akhoo Ex- Lab Technician	R/o Krawa Banihal Tehsil Banihal District Ramban	01.12.2001	-NA-	-	Fill up personal details within the period of 21 days.

No. HD-NG-J/86/2022-02 (CC- 7021612)
Dated: 15.04.2026

DIPK-516-26
DT: 18/04/2026

Under Secretary to the Government
Health & Medical Education Department

Trump orders probe into mysterious deaths of US nuclear scientists

Trans Asia News

The White House has launched an investigation into the unexplained deaths and disappearances of nearly a dozen elite US scientists, raising concerns within national security and scientific circles as officials seek to determine the circumstances behind the cases.

US President Donald Trump ordered the investigation into the mysterious deaths and disappearances of scientists with access to some of the nation's most closely guarded nuclear and space secrets. The cases have fuelled online speculation ranging from foreign espionage to a government cover-up of classified research.

White House Press Secretary

Karoline Leavitt confirmed the administration is seeking answers, noting that the situation is "definitely something I think this government and administration would deem worth looking into."

While half of the scientists remain missing, others have met violent or unexplained ends. Two prominent researchers were killed in shootings.

Five of the 10 scientists vanished without a trace, often under abrupt circumstances and leaving behind essential personal belongings.

Among the most high-profile cases is retired Air Force Maj. Gen. William "Neil" McCasland, 68, who disappeared from his Albuquerque home on Feb. 27, 2026.

McCasland, who previously oversaw highly classified re-



search programmes, left his phone behind, though his wallet and a .38-calibre revolver were missing, according to American media reports.

Authorities stressed there was no indication he was disorient-

ed, with one police lieutenant noting, "Arguably, he would still be the most intelligent person in the room."

"I hope it's random, but we're going to know in the next week and a half. Some of them were very important people, and we're going to look at it over the next short period," the president said.

Since 2023, at least ten individuals with ties to advanced research have died or vanished under puzzling circumstances. Among them:

Steven Garcia, 48, a government contractor at the Kansas City National Security Campus, which produces over 80% of non-nuclear components for US nuclear weapons, vanished from his Albuquerque home in August 2025, leaving behind his phone, wallet, and keys and taking only a handgun.

Anthony Chavez, a former Los Alamos National Laboratory employee, and Melissa Casias, an administrative assistant at the same nuclear weapons lab, both disappeared in 2025, leaving

their homes on foot and abandoning their belongings.

Monica Jacinto Reza, 60, a director at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, vanished while hiking in California in June 2025.

Two other scientists at the lab have reportedly died since 2023: Frank Maiwald and Michael Hicks. No foul play has been alleged in the latter two cases, and no cause of death has been made public, according to the Daily Mail.

Nuno Loureiro, 47, director of MIT's Plasma Science and Fusion Center, was shot dead at his home in December 2025.

Carl Grillmair, 67, a Caltech astrophysicist, was gunned down on his porch in February 2026.

The body of missing cancer research scientist Jason Thomas was reportedly discovered in a Massachusetts lake last month.

A possible 11th case also emerged on Thursday as the Daily Mail reported that Amy Eskridge, a 34-year-old scientist allegedly researching anti-gravity technology, was found dead in Alabama in 2022 from a self-inflicted gunshot. However, the outlet found that neither the police nor medical examiners had released a public investigative report on the incident. Before her death, Eskridge stated on a podcast that her life was in danger.

Former FBI assistant director Chris Swecker previously told the Daily Mail the cases warrant scrutiny, noting that "they are all suspicious, and these are scientists who have worked in critical technology."

The authorities have so far not established any confirmed link among the cases.

Pakistan Returns USD 2 Bn to UAE, Confirms Central Bank

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan has returned USD 2 billion it owed in debt to the United Arab Emirates, the country's central bank said Saturday.

The announcement by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) comes two days after Saudi Arabia deposited USD 2 billion, part of the USD 3 billion aid, with the SBP.

"The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Saturday confirmed that the government has returned USD 2 billion in debt to the United Arab Emirates (UAE)," Geo News said, quoting the central bank's spokesperson.

The amount was kept with the central banks as a safe deposit, the SBP spokesperson said.

The UAE had provided the fund to support the balance of payment, and it was being rolled out until recently.

The UAE recently asked for the immediate return of the funds in the wake of the recent situation in West Asia following the US-Israel war on Iran, Geo News said, quoting sources, in a report earlier in the month.

Saudi Arabia reached an agreement -- announced on Friday -- with the SBP which allows for an extension in the maturity of a USD 3 billion deposit with it.

On Thursday, the SaudiA Fund for Development deposited USD 2 billion



of the USD 3 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), bringing a major boost to the country's skewed foreign reserves.

"The agreement, signed between the SaudiA Fund for Development (SFD) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), provides for the extension in the maturity of a USD 3 billion deposit placed by SFD with the State Bank of Pakistan," said a post on X by the Ministry of Finance.

The insiders said Pakistan has been paying around 6 per cent interest on the amount it owed to the UAE. In the past, the UAE used to roll over the deposit on a yearly basis. However, in

December 2025, the amount was extended first for one month and then for two months until April 17.

For the current fiscal year, Pakistan needed a rollover of approximately USD 12 billion in external deposits, including USD 5 billion from Saudi Arabia, USD 4 billion from China and USD 3 billion placed by the UAE.

According to official figures, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves stood at USD 16.4 billion as of March 27, which officials said was sufficient to cover close to three months of imports. The repayment requirement from the UAE was met amid fresh pressure on the country's external buffers.

Pope Leo: 'Not in My Interest' to Debate Trump

AP

Pope Leo XIV said Saturday that it was "not in my interest at all" to debate US President Donald Trump about the Iran war, but that he would continue preaching the Gospel message of peace.

Leo spoke to reporters aboard the papal plane flying from Cameroon to Angola.

He addressed the spiralling back-and-forth saga of Trump's critiques of his peace message, which have dominated news headlines this week. But the American pope also sought to set the record straight, insisting that his preaching isn't directed at Trump, but reflects the broader Gospel message of peace.

"There's been a certain narrative that has not been accurate in all of its aspects, but because of the political situation created when, on the first day of the trip, the president of the United States made some comments about myself," he said.

"Much of what has been written since then has been more commentary on commentary, trying to interpret what has been said."

Trump launched the criticism on his social media platform Truth Social on the night of April 12, when he criticised Leo's preaching about peace as the war, which began with joint US-Israeli strikes on Feb 28 and followed



by Iran's retaliation, rages on.

Trump accused Leo of being soft on crime, cozy with the left and said that the first American pontiff owed his election to Trump.

Leo has issued consistent calls for peace and dialogue, and has denounced the use of religious justification for war. Specifically, he called Trump's threat to annihilate Iranian civilisation "truly unacceptable".

The Vatican has stressed that when Leo preaches about peace, he is referring to all wars ravaging the planet,

not just the Iran conflict. The Russian Orthodox Church, for example, has justified Moscow's invasion of Ukraine as a "holy war".

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Leo referred specifically to his remarks earlier this week to a peace meeting in Bamenda, Cameroon. The city is the epicentre of a separatist conflict that has been raging in the western, Anglophone region of the country for nearly a decade.

Leo said that his remarks, in which he blasted the "handful of tyrants" who were ravaging Earth with war and exploitation, were written two weeks ago, long before Trump's criticisms began.

"And yet as it happens, it was looked at as if I was trying to debate again the president, which is not in my interest at all," he said.

Looking ahead, however, he said that he would continue preaching the Gospel.

"I primarily come to Africa as a pastor, as the head of the Catholic Church to be with, to celebrate with, to encourage and accompany all the Catholics throughout Africa," he said.

He drew attention to some upcoming liturgical readings about what it means to be Christian and to follow Christ, promote fraternity and brotherhood, "but also looking for ways to promote justice in our world, promote peace in our world," he said.

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