

Fuel Price Hikes Spark Inflation Fears

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Residents across Kashmir on Saturday voiced concern over the repeated increase in petrol and diesel prices over the past 10 days, saying the hikes would further fuel inflation and put additional pressure on already stretched household budgets.

Petrol and diesel prices were raised again on Saturday by 87 to 91 paise per litre, taking the cumulative increase in fuel rates to nearly Rs 5 per litre since May 15.

Locals said the back-to-back hikes would not only make daily commuting expensive but also lead to a rise in prices of essential commodities and transportation costs.

"This is the third hike in the last 10 days. Prices are being increased gradually and it is affecting common people badly," said Owais Ahmad, a resident of Srinagar.

He said people were already struggling financially and the increase in fuel prices would worsen the | [More on P6](#)

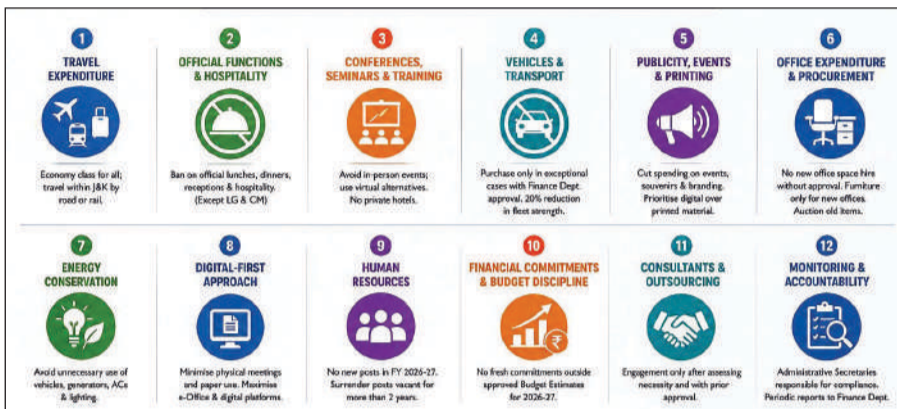
No Dinners, No New Posts: J&K Govt's Austerity Push

Restricts Travel, Vehicle Purchases; Orders 20% Fleet Cut

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has rolled out a sweeping set of austerity measures for the financial year 2026-27, imposing curbs on official spending that include restrictions on travel and vehicle purchases, a ban on official dinners and hospitality functions, and a freeze on the creation of new posts.

The Finance Department has directed all departments and government agencies to enforce fiscal prudence and rationalise expenditure, stressing the need for "utmost economy" in administrative functioning.



Under the new measures, departments have been asked to avoid unnecessary expenditure on conferences, seminars, workshops and

training programmes and instead explore virtual alternatives wherever possible. The government has also barred departments from holding

meetings and conferences in private hotels or commercial venues, directing them to use government buildings and conference halls instead.

In a major clampdown on ceremonial spending, the government has imposed a complete ban on official lunches, dinners, receptions and similar hospitality functions, except those hosted by the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister.

Expenditure on commemorative events, souvenir printing, branding and promotional activities has also been curtailed, with departments instructed to prioritise digital dissemination over printed publicity material.

The order further "strictly discourages" the purchase of new vehicles, allowing it only in exceptional cases involving | [More on P6](#)

Search Ops Trigger Encounter In Rajouri

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: An encounter broke out between security forces and terrorists on Saturday following a major cordon-and-search operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district after reports of suspected movement, officials said.

According to preliminary reports, the movement of two to three terrorists was suspected in the area.

"Today at around 11.30 AM, contact was established with terrorists in the general area of Gambhir Mughlan in Rajouri district after reports of suspected movement, officials said.

It said that troops responded swiftly with calibrated action. "A firefight ensued, and a cordon has been effectively established. Operations, named 'Op Sheruwalli', remain underway," it said.

According to officials, the cordon-and-search operation was launched in the Dormal-Gambhir Mughala belt following inputs about the | [More on P6](#)

Every Drug Sold Is Like A Bullet Against Our People: LG

» Warns Officials And Public Figures Linked To Drug Networks Of Strict Legal Action » Says Narco-Terrorists Will Be Driven Out From Every Corner of J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said narco-terrorists would be driven out from every corner of Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that people across the Union Territory have united against the growing drug menace and its links with terrorism.

The Lieutenant Governor made the remarks while joining the "Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Padyatra" in Shopian, where citizens from different walks of life participated in the anti-drug campaign.

Addressing the gathering, Sinha said the anti-drug movement that began 43 days ago in Jammu had now transformed into a powerful grassroots campaign across the Union Territory.

"From every lane and by-lane of UT, voices are rising in unison, demanding that not a single drug smuggler be spared. What began 43 days ago in Jammu has now surged into a powerful grassroots movement, echoing across communities with unstoppable force," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said



DURING THE PAST 43 DAYS, 797 FIRs had been registered and 894 drug smugglers and peddlers arrested.

millions of people across Jammu and Kashmir were now united with a common resolve to eradicate narcotics-terrorism from the "land of paradise".

"It is now firmly etched in the minds of our people that this is not a distant issue but a challenge confronting us at our very doorstep,

one we must face head-on with courage and resolve," he said.

Sinha said the growing drug menace was diverting the youth from the path of progress and warned that proceeds from narcotics were being used to fund terrorism.

Full story on [kashmirobserver.net](#)

Centre Offers Art 371 Safeguards, Legislative Body For Ladakh

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Centre has made an offer for constitutional safeguards under Article 371, instead of the Sixth Schedule, and a legislative body for Ladakh, activists from the region said

on Saturday, while stressing that discussions were still underway and no final agreement had been reached.

Talking to PTI a day after their meeting with a sub-committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), activist Sonam Wangchuk said the

government had proposed safeguards for Ladakh on the lines of Articles 371A and 371G and agreed in principle to a governance structure for the entire region rather than limiting powers to district councils.

Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) member Sajjad Kargili

told PTI that the Centre had also proposed legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers for Ladakh and had been asked to share a formal draft for consultations with legal and constitutional experts.

The | [More on P6](#)

Properties Worth Crores Attached By Police

Police on Saturday attached multiple properties worth around Rs 5 crore belonging to individuals allegedly involved in drug trafficking and related unlawful activities across Srinagar and adjoining districts of Kashmir. The action was carried out as

part of the intensified crackdown on narcotics networks under the ongoing "Nasha Mukht J-K Abhiyan", officials said. A police spokesperson said investigations had revealed that the attached properties were allegedly acquired through proceeds | [More on P6](#)

Trump Invites PM To White House

Modi, Rubio discuss bilateral ties, West Asia crisis



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India and the US will continue to work closely for the global good, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday, after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio briefed him on the West Asia crisis and bilateral

cooperation in defence, strategic technologies, trade and energy security.

Rubio, who met Modi shortly after landing in New Delhi, invited the prime minister on behalf of President Donald Trump to visit the White House in the "near future." | [More on P6](#)

Undue Delay In Trials Erodes Public Confidence: HC

Says Fairness In Criminal Justice Demands Timely Conclusion Of Trials

M Ahmad

Srinagar: Underlining that the criminal justice system does not operate on a presumption of guilt and that undue delay in trials erodes public confidence in the justice delivery mechanism, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh has held that criminal proceedings must be concluded within a reasonable time to ensure fairness in the administration of justice.

"Criminal justice is founded on the principle of fairness. Such fairness is not limited only to providing opportunity of hearing to the parties, but also requires that proceedings are concluded within a reasonable time," said a bench of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal while directing a Special Court to expedite trial proceedings in a UAPA case registered in 2020 at Bomai police station in Baramulla district.

"Unnecessary delay in criminal trials affects public confidence in the justice delivery system and defeats the very object of fair adjudication," the court said.

The petition had been filed by under-trial prisoner | [More on P6](#)

Munir In Tehran As Diplomacy Overtakes War Rhetoric

Trans Asia News

Tehran: Pakistan's army chief held talks with Iran's top leadership in Tehran as diplomatic activity intensified around efforts to secure a broader | [More on P6](#)

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Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: Kotak Junior Scholarship Program 2026-27

Description: The Kotak Junior Scholarship Program 2026-27, an initiative of Kotak Education Foundation (KEF), the CSR implementing agency of Kotak Mahindra Group, provides financial and academic support to deserving students from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) who have completed Class 10 from SSC/CBSE/ICSE boards. Selected scholars will receive INR 3,500 per month for 21 months, totalling INR 73,500, along with mentorship, academic support, career guidance, and exposure visits to help them continue their education with confidence.

Eligibility: Applicants must score an overall 85% or above in their Class 10 Board Examination (SSC/CBSE/ICSE) in 2026. Must have secured admission in Class 11 at junior colleges/schools for Arts, Commerce or Science streams in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) for the academic year 2026-27.

Prizes & Rewards: Annual parental income of applicants must be INR 3,20,000 or below.

Application mode: Online applications only

Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2026

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/AIUG1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/all-india-under-graduate-scholarship-entrance-exam-aiugsee-20261779164461.png>

Note: MMR regions include Mumbai Suburban & Mumbai City, Thane District-Thane, Kalyan, Dombivli, Ulhasnagar, Bhiwandi, Ambernath, Badlapur, Murbad, Shahapur, Vasai, Virar, Palghar, Raigad District - Panvel, Uran, Karjat, Khalapur, Pen, Alibag, Mira Bhayandar & Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation Areas.

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarship of INR 3,500 per month during Class 11 and Class 12, totalling INR 73,500 for 21 months, along with mentorship support, academic assistance, career guidance, and exposure visits.

Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/KJSP4

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/kotak-junior-scholarship-program-2026-271779164354.png>

Scholarship Name 2: All India Under Graduate Scholarship Entrance Exam (AIUGSEE) 2026

Description: The All India Under Graduate Scholarship Entrance Exam (AIUGSEE) 2026 is a national test designed to award government scholarships to undergraduate students. It is applicable to those students, who are enrolled in the first-year of their engineering (B.Tech, B.E.) and medical courses (MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BHMS, B.Sc Nursing) including courses in arts and commerce.

Eligibility: Application is open to students, who have achieved a minimum percentage and grades in Class 12 from an accredited board.

Prizes & Rewards: Annual scholarship up to 2,00,000 and a certificate.



Scholarship Name 3: CBPS Research Fellowship 2026-27

Description: CBPS Research Fellowship 2026-27 is being offered by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS) to undergraduate students. It aims to help scholars enhance their research skills in areas such as education, gender, governance, health and nutrition, public finance, livelihoods, and social security.

Eligibility: Application is open to students, who have completed a Bachelor's degree or are in their final year of undergraduate degree course.

Prizes & Rewards: A monthly stipend of 25,000 with other benefits.

Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2026

Application mode: Offline to: fellows@cbps.in

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/CBPS1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/cbps-research-fellowship-2026-271779164405.png>

Scholarship Name 4: Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Transgender Scholarship Program 2026-27

Description: The Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Transgender Scholarship Program 2026-27 is a CSR initiative of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Limited, implemented through its Implementation Partner, Buddy4Study. It aims to empower talented and deserving transgender students across India. This scholarship is open to students

enrolled in Classes 9-12 or pursuing undergraduate/postgraduate courses at recognised government or private open schools and universities.

Eligibility: Open to pan-India transgender students pursuing secondary, senior secondary, or undergraduate/postgraduate studies through any government or private open school or open university. A minimum score of 35% in Class 10 and/or Class 12 is required.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected candidates will receive a one-time scholarship of up to INR 40,000.

Note: Scholarship funds can be utilised for academic-related expenses, including exam fees, admission fees, tuition fees, etc.

Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/USFB2

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ujjivan-small-finance-bank-transgender-scholarship-program-2026-271779164218.png>

Scholarship Name 5: vivo Punjab Vidya Setu Scholarship Program 2026

Description: The vivo Punjab-Vidya Setu Scholarship Program 2026, a CSR initiative by Vigour Mobile India Pvt. Ltd., offers financial support to undergraduate students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (EWS Category) across Punjab/Chandigarh. Open to students in general and professional courses at government or government-aided colleges, the program aims to foster academic excellence and provide equal educational opportunities.

Eligibility: The scholarship is open to residents of Punjab/Chandigarh (with domicile or eligibility from Punjab/Chandigarh) who are enrolled in full-time undergraduate programs (general or professional) at government or government-aided colleges, irrespective of the year of study.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will receive scholarships as mentioned below. General Graduation: INR 30,000 Professional Graduation: INR 60,000

Last Date to Apply: 08-06-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/VPVSSP1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/vivo-punjab-vidya-setu-scholarship-program-20261779164616.png>

Scholarship Name 6: Masters' Union: Scholarship Aptitude Test 2026

Description: Masters' Union: Scholarship Aptitude Test 2026 is specifically designed for high-merit, high-potential candidates pursuing careers in Tech & Business Management, Psychology & Marketing, Finance & Economics, Design, Sustainability, Data Science & Artificial Intelligence by providing financial assistance and direct admission opportunities, along with tuition fee scholarships.

Eligibility: Applicants must be currently enrolled in Class 12 (any recognised education boards) or have completed it in 2025.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected candidates will receive a one-time scholarship of up to INR 40,000.

Note: Scholarship funds can be utilised for academic-related expenses, including exam fees, admission fees, tuition fees, etc.

Last Date to Apply: 30-05-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MUS-CASP1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/masters-union-scholarship-aptitude-test-20261773114910.png>

Eligibility: The scholarship is open to residents of Punjab/Chandigarh (with domicile or eligibility from Punjab/Chandigarh) who are enrolled in full-time undergraduate programs (general or professional) at government or government-aided colleges, irrespective of the year of study.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will receive scholarships as mentioned below. General Graduation: INR 30,000 Professional Graduation: INR 60,000

Last Date to Apply: 08-06-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/VPVSSP1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/vivo-punjab-vidya-setu-scholarship-program-20261779164616.png>

Scholarship Name 6: Masters' Union: Scholarship Aptitude Test 2026

Description: Masters' Union: Scholarship Aptitude Test 2026 is specifically designed for high-merit, high-potential candidates pursuing careers in Tech & Business Management, Psychology & Marketing, Finance & Economics, Design, Sustainability, Data Science & Artificial Intelligence by providing financial assistance and direct admission opportunities, along with tuition fee scholarships.

Eligibility: Applicants must be currently enrolled in Class 12 (any recognised education boards) or have completed it in 2025.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected candidates will receive a one-time scholarship of up to INR 40,000.

Note: Scholarship funds can be utilised for academic-related expenses, including exam fees, admission fees, tuition fees, etc.

Last Date to Apply: 30-05-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MUS-CASP1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/masters-union-scholarship-aptitude-test-20261773114910.png>

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that the [Front/Rear] vehicle registration number plate of my Truck, bearing Registration No. RJ19GE1314, registered with Jodhpur Rto has been lost while travelling from Mirgund to Narbal on 18-05-2026. Despite best efforts, the same could not be traced. If anyone finds the above-mentioned number plate, they are requested to kindly contact:
 Manohar Lal Bishnoi fsko
 7889471508

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the number plate of my vehicle bearing regd no: AN 5603 . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the RTO Srinagar within seven days. After that no objections shall be entertained.
 Firdous Ahmad Mir bmg
 /o Farooq Ahmad Mir
 R/o Mazhama Magam

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the number plate of my vehicle bearing regd no: AN 5603 . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the RTO Srinagar within seven days. After that no objections shall be entertained.
 Firdous Ahmad Mir bmg
 /o Farooq Ahmad Mir
 R/o Mazhama Magam

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Rafique Ahmad Lone To New Name Rafiq Ah Lone In future I will be known as Rafiq Ah Lone . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the passport office Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing adhaar no 5470 4848 99520 as Javed Ahmad Shah S/o Najam Din Shah while my correct name as per docomil certificate is Jawaid Ahmad S/o Najam Din . Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Jawaid Ahmad FKO
 S/O Najam Din
 R/O Kalampora Shadimarg

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of the general public that my name, father's name and date of birth have been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 0342 as KULSUMA HASSAN D/o GH HASSAN PARRAY with DOB 01-11-2000 instead of my correct particulars KULSOOMA AKHTER D/o GHULAM HASSAN PARRAY with DOB 13-09-1999 as per my school records.

Now, I have applied for correction of my name, father's name and date of birth in the Aadhaar records before the concerned Aadhaar authorities. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

KULSOOMA AKHTER
D/o: GHULAM HASSAN PARRAY
R/o: KHAI PORA PAYIN, Tangmarg
District: Baramulla FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 9805 as NASEEM AKHTER instead of my correct name NASEEMA AKHTER as per my Domicile Certificate record.

Now, I have applied for correction of my name in the Aadhaar records before the concerned Aadhaar authorities. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

NASEEMA AKHTER
W/o: MUSHTAQ AHMAD MIR
R/o: FEROUZ PORA, Tangmarg
District: Baramulla FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that I MUNWAR DIN S/O ABDUL GANI R/O Near Mohalla Masjid, Upper Thathri Doda, Jammu and Kashmir have applied for upgradation of my class B contractor card issued vide No. PWDJNK-CONT-2025-119958 to Class A. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.
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Search for Missing Youth in Jhelum Enters Fourth Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The search operation to trace the youth who allegedly jumped into river Jhelum from Budshah Bridge in Lal Chowk here entered its fourth day on Saturday, with MARCOS deep divers joining the rescue efforts alongside teams from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and River Police.

An official told KNO that the Quick Response Team (QRT) of SDRF River Jhelum resumed the operation early Saturday morning and launched extensive searches across multiple stretches of the river.

He said Army's MARCOS deep divers were also pressed into service to intensify the operation amid challenging river conditions, while River Police personnel also assisted in the rescue efforts throughout the day.

"The search operation was carried out from Budshah Bridge to several downstream locations, including Chattabal Weir, where rescue

teams conducted thorough scanning operations in an attempt to trace the missing youth," the official said.

An official associated with the operation said that despite continuous efforts, no trace of the missing youth had been found till late evening. He said the operation was later suspended due to darkness and low visibility, and will be resumed on Sunday morning.

The incident has once again raised concerns over the absence of protective fencing at Budshah Bridge, with locals demanding immediate installation of safety barriers to prevent such incidents in future.

Several residents said that repeated incidents at the spot have highlighted the urgent need for fencing and other preventive measures along the bridge.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo recently said the process for the installation of fencing at the bridge would be taken up soon.

Ahead of Eid, KTMF Urges Traders to Keep Markets Open on Sundays

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As Eid-ul-Azha approaches, Kashmir Traders & Manufacturers Federation (KTMF) has appealed to traders across the Valley to keep markets open on Sundays to ease the shopping rush and revive business activity.

The federation also urged the public to prefer local markets over online shopping and support thousands of families dependent on trade and commerce.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a spokesperson said that in view of the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha and the prevailing economic situation, KTMF President Mohammad Yaseen Khan has appealed to traders across Kashmir to keep their establishments open on Sundays in the days leading up to Eid-ul-Azha to facilitate shoppers and provide greater convenience to consumers.

The spokesperson said Khan stated that the business sector has already been facing a prolonged period of sluggishness and uncertainty, with market activity remaining below expectations.

"He expressed concern that the rapid rise of online shopping platforms has further dealt a severe blow to local businesses and traditional markets, adversely affecting the livelihood of thousands of traders, shopkeepers and associated families."

He said Khan stressed that while online commerce continues to expand aggressively, physical markets remain the backbone of the local economy and generate direct employment opportunities for a large section of society. He appealed to people to prefer physical shopping and support local businesses, particularly during the festive season.

"Every purchase made from local markets strengthens our economy and supports thousands of families dependent on trade. We urge shoppers to visit markets and choose physical shopping over online modes, especially during Eid preparations," Khan said.

The spokesperson added that Khan also called upon traders and business establishments to offer genuine discounts and fair pricing to customers during the festive period.



KO Photo : Abid Bhat

Thousands Converge at Khanqah-e-Moula to Observe Shah-e-Hamdan Urs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: At the revered Khanqah-e-Moula on Saturday, age appeared to be just a number as 80-year-old Mohammed Salam sat in the front row among devotees, immersed in prayers and devotion to Hazrat Ameer Kabir Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (RA).

The historic shrine witnessed thousands of devotees offering prayers and seeking blessings in an atmosphere filled with spirituality, emotion and unity.

According to KNO, devotees from different parts of Kashmir reached the shrine from early morning hours, participating in special prayers and religious gatherings while remembering the teachings of Shah-e-Hamdan (RA).

Amid the rush of worshippers, Mohammed Salam emerged as a symbol of unwavering faith and devotion. Despite being in his 80s, he sat quietly inside the shrine premises with prayer beads in his hands, deeply lost in devotion and remembrance of Shah-e-Hamdan (RA).

"I have been coming here every year for more than 40 years now. No matter how difficult the situation was, I never stayed away from this sacred place," Salam told KNO in a soft voice, his eyes fixed on the prayer beads in his hands.

He said the Urs is not merely a ritual for him, but a lifelong spiritual connection. "Whenever I come here, I feel peace in my heart. I pray for my family, for Kashmir and for humanity. This place gives strength to the soul," he said.

Meanwhile, the shrine reverber-

ated with recitations, supplications and spiritual chants as devotees prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being. Religious scholars highlighted the teachings, spirituality and contributions of Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (RA), whose influence continues to shape Kashmir's religious and cultural identity.

People from all walks of life were seen sitting together in devotion, reflecting the spirit of brotherhood, unity and communal harmony associated with the annual Urs.

Notably, popularly known as Shah-e-Hamdan, Hazrat Ameer Kabir Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (RA) was a renowned 14th-century Sufi saint, scholar and preacher who played a pivotal role in spreading Islam and introducing art, culture and craftsmanship in Kashmir.

Mirwaiz Pays Rich Tributes to Shah-e-Hamadan on 661st Urs Anniversary

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Paying glowing tributes to the revered Sufi saint Mir Syed Ali Hamadani on his 661st annual Urs, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday remembered the saint as Kashmir's great spiritual benefactor whose contributions transformed the religious, cultural and socio-economic landscape of the region.

In his message on the annual Urs of Shah-e-Hamdan, Mirwaiz said that Kashmiris continue to remain eternally indebted to the revered saint for illuminating

their lives with the light of Islam and guiding generations towards faith and spirituality.

He noted that the contribution of Shah-e-Hamadan was not confined to religious teachings alone but extended to the enrichment of Kashmir's cultural and economic life. Mirwaiz observed that through arts, crafts and traditions of dignified livelihood introduced and promoted through his mission and companions, the saint laid the foundations of a flourishing civilisational ethos in Kashmir.

Highlighting the enduring influence of the great saint, Mirwaiz stated that the spiritual, cultural and civilisational legacy of Shah-e-Hamadan continues to inspire and guide the people of Kashmir every day.

Praying for the revered saint, Mirwaiz said, "May Allah elevate his darajat and enable us to uphold his noble teachings."

The annual Urs of Shah-e-Hamadan is observed with religious devotion and reverence across Kashmir, with people remembering his immense contributions to the spiritual and cultural identity of the region.

Hawal Chowk Set for Widening, No Forced Evictions: MLA Tanvir Sadiq

Assures Compensation to Affected Families; Roads Across Zadibal to Be Macadamised Before Muharram

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Efforts are underway to widen the busy Hawal Chowk junction in Srinagar's old city to ease chronic traffic congestion, with MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq stating that authorities are in talks with several families whose properties fall within the proposed road expansion plan.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Sadiq said the widening of Hawal Chowk has become a necessity due to the severe traffic bottlenecks witnessed daily at the junction, which serves as a key link for several densely populated localities.

"There are around eight to nine families whose properties are affected by the proposed widening. We have already held discussions with them. Some owners have agreed, while a few still need to be persuaded," Sadiq said.

He stressed that the government does not intend to carry out any forced evictions and would instead seek a consensual resolution.

"We do not want any forceful eviction. The objective is to improve public infrastructure while ensuring that the concerns of affected families are addressed in a humane manner," he said.

The MLA said all necessary formalities for the project have

already been completed and the administration is now focused on securing the cooperation of the remaining property owners.

Sadiq acknowledged the difficulties associated with rehabilitation in Srinagar's congested urban landscape, saying the scarcity of available land makes alternate land allotment nearly impossible.

"Because of land constraints and the non-availability of government land in the city, it will not be possible to provide alternate plots. However, affected owners will be compensated monetarily in accordance with the applicable norms," he said.

He expressed optimism that the remaining stakeholders would come on board, paving the way for the long-pending project aimed at reducing traffic congestion and improving mobility in the area.

Meanwhile, with Muharram fast approaching, residents of several localities in the Zadibal constituency have urged authorities to expedite macadamisation works on damaged roads to facilitate the smooth movement of mourners and commuters during the forthcoming religious observances.

Residents of Sazgaripora, Gasiyar, Alamgari Bazar and adjoining areas said several roads

continue to remain in poor condition despite repeated requests for repairs. They noted that the issue assumes greater significance during Muharram, when thousands participate in religious gatherings and processions across the constituency.

"We are just weeks away from Muharram, but several roads in our area are still damaged and uneven. These routes witness heavy movement during the month, and if repairs are not completed on time, people will face immense inconvenience," said a resident of Sazgaripora.

Another resident from Alamgari Bazar said people were only seeking basic infrastructure. "The roads should be macadamised before Muharram so that mourners, elderly people and children can move without difficulty," he said.

Responding to the concerns, Sadiq assured residents that all identified roads in the constituency would be repaired and macadamised before Muharram.

"There has been some scarcity of macadam due to the ongoing Iran-related situation, which has affected the availability of material. However, we have taken up the matter with the concerned departments and have been assured that sufficient macadam will be made available," he said.

Two Carpenters Injured After Falling From Rooftop

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Two carpenters were injured after falling from a rooftop in Gogji Bagh area of Srinagar and were shifted to Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla for treatment, officials said on Saturday.

The accident occurred while the two men were reportedly working on a rooftop in the Gogji Bagh locality, resulting in injuries to both workers.

The injured were identified as Ubaid Yatoo, son of Ghulam Mohammad Yatoo, aged about 22 years, and Shabir Ahmad, both residents of Hassipora Chadoora, aged about 30 years.

Officials said Ubaid sustained an injury to his right leg and his condition was stated to be stable.

Shabir Ahmad suffered multiple injuries in the fall and was undergoing treatment at Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla.

According to KNT, the circumstances surrounding the incident were being looked into.

48-Year-Old Kargil Native Found Unconscious, Dies before Treatment

Observer news Service

Srinagar: A 48-year-old man was declared brought dead at SMHS Hospital, Srinagar after he was shifted there in an unconscious condition by a police party.

Hospital sources told KNT that the deceased was identified as Sonam Namgiyal, son of Ching Dorgi, a resident of Panchirah, Kargil, presently residing at Hyderpora in Srinagar.

According to available information, a police party from Police Post Humhama brought the man to SMHS Hospital after he was found unconscious. However, attending doctors declared him brought dead upon arrival at the hospital.

The immediate cause and circumstances surrounding the death were not known at the time of filing this report.

As per standard medico-legal procedure, police are expected to take further legal and medical steps to establish the exact cause of death.

The incident has been taken up for necessary proceedings.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
7 Zil-Hajj
1447

PRAYERS	
FAJR	3: 45
ZUHR	12:28
ASR	5: 24
Magrib	7:35
ISHA	9: 11

This Day In History

- 1153- Malcolm IV becomes King of Scots
- 1218 - The Fifth Crusade leaves Acre for Egypt.
- 1370-Hanzesteden signs peace treaty with Danish king Waldemar IV
- 1595- Nomenclator of Leiden University Library appears, the first printed catalog of an institutional library.
- 1621- The Protestant Union is formally dissolved.
- 1658-Battle of Dunes (Spanish-French War) fought
- 1667- French troops attack into Southern Netherlands
- 1689 - English Parliament guarantees freedom of religion for Protestants
- 1697 - English King William III travels through northern Europe
- 1738 - John Wesley is converted, launching the Methodist movement; celebrated annually by Methodists as Aldersgate Day
- 1775 - John Hancock is unanimously elected President of the Continental Congress
- 1798 - Irish Rebellion of 1798 led by the United Irishmen against British rule begins
- 1809 - Dartmoor Prison opens to house French prisoners of war
- 1815- George Evans discovers Lachlan River, Australia
- 1818- General Andrew Jackson captures Pensacola Florida
- 1822- Battle of Pichincha, Bolivar secures independence of Quito from Spain
- 1832-The First Kingdom of Greece is declared in the London Conference.
- 1846- General Zachary Taylor captures Monterey in Mexican War
- 1861- Alexandria, VA occupied by Federal troops
- 1862- Burdette field telegraph used for 1st time
- 1881- Turkey cedes Thessaly and Arta back to Greece.
- 1887- Sultan Bargash of Zanzibar grants E Afr Association at East African harbors
- 1890- Geo Train & Sam Wall circle world in record 67 days, Tacoma-Tacoma
- 1915- Thomas Edison invents telescribe to record telephone conversations
- 1916- Last British-Indian contract workers arrive in Suriname
- 1918- British officer General Poole lands at Murmansk, the Russian port on the Barents Sea
- 1921-British Legion forms
- 1922- Russian-Italian trade agreement signed
- 1926- Paavo Nurmi runs world record 3000 m (8:25.4)
- 1930-1st woman to fly from England to Australia solo, lands (Amy Johnson)
- 1931- 1st air-conditioned train installed-B&O Railroad
- 1934- Colombia & Peru sign accord about harbor city Leticia
- 1940- Dutch army demobilizes
- 1940- German tanks reach Atrecht France
- 1941- German athlete Rudolf Harbig runs world record 1,000m in 2:21.5 at Dresden, Germany
- 1941- German battleship Bismarck sinks British battlecruiser HMS Hood; 1,416 die, 3 survive
- 1943- U-441 shoots Sunderland seaplane down over Gulf of Biskaje
- 1954- First rocket to reach 150 miles (241 km) in altitude blasts off from White Sands, New Mexico
- 1954- IBM announces vacuum tube "electronic" brain that could perform 10 million operations an hour
- 1958- United Press Association and International News Service merge to form United Press International
- 1961- Cyprus joins the Council of Europe.
- 1961- NASA Explorer Ionsphere research mission fails to reach Earth orbit
- 1962- US astronaut Scott Carpenter aboard Aurora 7 (Mercury-Atlas 7) orbits the Earth three times in a flight just under five hours
- 1972- US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1975- Soviet spacecraft Soyuz 18 launches from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, destined for the Salyut 4 space station
- 1977- USSR President Podgorny resigns
- 1980- Iran rejects a call to World Court to release US hostages
- 1982- Liberation of Khorramshahr; Iranians recapture of the port city of Khorramshahr from the Iraqis during the Iran-Iraq War

Kashmir's Public Failure

Street harassment has turned ordinary journeys into daily anxiety for women, and silence now carries a social cost.



Tajamul Islam Salroo

A young woman boards an auto in Srinagar after college. A group of men standing near a roadside tea stall pass obscene comments as she walks by. A mother traveling with her daughter lowers her eyes during a crowded bus ride because the driver and his friends laugh loudly at women on the road. A working woman chooses longer routes and earlier hours simply to avoid harassment near busy market areas.

These scenes have become familiar in parts of Kashmir, and that familiarity itself signals a deeper social failure.

Recent incidents involving autodrivers making obscene remarks toward women sparked public anger. Public anger alone, however, cannot solve a problem that has settled into daily life.

Kashmir faces a serious erosion of public conduct, and women pay the heaviest price for it.

Roads, markets, bus stops, and public transport belong to everyone. Women should move through public spaces with confidence and ease.

A society that restricts women through fear weakens its own future.

Students struggle to focus on studies when ordinary travel feels humiliating. Working women plan their day around unsafe routes and hostile corners. Families spend entire evenings worrying about daughters returning home.

Public harassment damages far more than one moment on a street. It alters behaviour, freedom, and participation in public life.

Kashmir often speaks proudly about culture, hospitality, and respect for women. Such values hold meaning only when they appear in everyday conduct.

Public decency begins on roads, inside buses, near schools, and around marketplaces. Civilized behaviour cannot survive as a slogan alone.

Several factors fuel this growing problem.

Moral instruction inside homes and schools has weakened over time. Children absorb lessons through observation long before they hear lectures about ethics.



Society's silence has perhaps caused the deepest damage. People witness harassment openly and continue walking. Shopkeepers avoid involvement. Passengers inside buses pretend nothing happened. Bystanders choose distance over intervention. Silence grants protection to offenders and isolation to victims. Communities build standards through collective action, not passive observation.

Young boys who witness abusive language, mocking behaviour, and casual disrespect often repeat the same conduct in public spaces.

Parents spend enormous energy securing academic success for children, while basic civic behaviour receives far less attention.

Social media has escalated the problem. Vulgar content circulates freely through phones and internet platforms, shaping attitudes toward women in dangerous ways. Many young men consume content that celebrates humiliation, aggression, and objectification.

Such material slowly normalizes harassment and strips public interaction of restraint and decency.

Unemployment has further worsened the crisis. Large groups of idle young men gather for hours near

roadsides, transport stands, and street corners. Frustration, boredom, and peer pressure often create an environment where harassment becomes a form of entertainment.

Economic hardship alone does not create abusive behaviour, though prolonged idleness can sharpen social disorder when discipline disappears.

Weak enforcement has also encouraged repeat offenders. Public misconduct thrives where consequences remain uncertain.

Women regularly report staring, verbal abuse, and intimidation in transport areas, but many offenders continue without interruption. Visible law enforcement in sensitive locations remains inconsistent, and complaints often fade without strong follow-up.

Fear of legal action changes public behaviour far faster than moral speeches.

Society's silence has perhaps caused the deepest damage.

People witness harassment openly and continue walking. Shopkeepers avoid involvement, passengers inside buses pretend nothing happened, and bystanders choose distance over intervention.

Silence grants protection to offenders and isolation to victims. Communities build standards through collective action.

Kashmir has reached a point where symbolic concern no longer holds water. Authorities need sustained and visible action. Police patrols should increase near schools, colleges, transport hubs, and crowded marketplaces. CCTV surveillance can strengthen accountability in harassment-prone areas.

Fast legal action against offenders would send a direct message that public spaces cannot serve as playgrounds for intimidation.

Public transport demands stricter regulation as well. Drivers and transport workers hold positions of public trust. Uniforms, visible identity cards, and conduct monitoring would strengthen accountability. Transport unions should actively discipline members involved in harassment instead of protecting them through silence and internal compromise.

Schools also hold a crucial responsibility. Education extends beyond textbooks and examinations. Young people need serious civic education that teaches consent, public conduct, and respect for women. Religious leaders, teachers, and community elders should address this issue openly rather than treating harassment as minor misbehaviour.

Public indecency grows when communities dismiss it as routine.

Women should never calculate safety before stepping onto a road. Girls should never inherit anxiety as part of growing up. Public spaces should welcome women with freedom and respect rather than humiliation and intimidation.

Kashmir's roads belong to women as much as they belong to anyone else.

Authorities, families, schools, transport workers, and ordinary citizens now face a simple test of character. The answer will emerge through action visible on the streets themselves.

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Hearts Under Pressure

Sudden cardiac arrests among young Kashmiris point to a mental health crisis that medicine alone cannot solve.



Amaan Mir

A young man collapses during a cricket match in Srinagar. A doctor in his early thirties suffers a fatal cardiac arrest after a long shift. A gym-going professional with no visible illness dies without warning.

Such stories now travel through Kashmir with frightening frequency, turning private grief into a public fear.

Cardiac arrests among people under 35 once seemed rare in the valley. Today, families discuss them with growing alarm.

Hospitals continue to examine cholesterol levels, blood pressure, diabetes, smoking habits, and hereditary conditions. Those medical causes remain important.

But a larger truth now demands attention: emotional stress and depression have entered the center of this crisis.

Many of the young people dying suddenly do not fit the traditional image of cardiac patients. Several hold professional jobs, maintain active routines, and come from financially stable households.

Their lives appear successful on the surface, but beneath that appearance sits a culture of relentless pressure that has tightened its grip on Kashmiri youth during the past decade.

Young Kashmiris now grow up inside a system that glorifies achievement while giving little guidance on emotional survival. Schools train students to secure ranks and degrees. Families push children toward prestigious careers. Social circles celebrate wealth, property,

luxury cars, foreign education, and visible success. Social media amplifies that pressure daily through carefully curated images of prosperity and happiness.

A generation raised under constant comparison begins to internalize exhaustion as normal life.

Many young people live with academic strain, shrinking employment opportunities, unstable career paths, and uncertainty about the future.

Those pressures continue long after graduation.

Marriage expectations, financial obligations, and social competition deepen the burden further. People who already possess stable incomes and comfortable lifestyles still feel trapped inside endless comparison with others who seem richer, happier, or more accomplished.

That emotional strain does not remain confined to the mind. Medical science increasingly links chronic stress with severe cardiovascular complications.

Research published in The American Journal of Emergency Medicine found a strong connection between severe mental stress and sudden cardiac arrest. Other medical reviews have shown that anxiety, depression, and prolonged emotional distress can disturb heart rhythms and increase vulnerability to cardiovascular disease.

A major Danish study reached a similar conclusion, showing that stress-related disorders raised the likelihood of sudden cardiac arrest outside hospital settings.

Those findings match what many doctors in Kashmir now witness in daily practice.

Long-term stress pushes the body into a constant state of alarm. Cortisol and adrenaline levels remain elevated for extended periods. Heart rate rises, blood pressure increases, sleep cycles break down, inflammation grows inside the body, and the cardiovascular system functions under continuous strain. Gradually, the human body begins to absorb



Kashmir has spent decades discussing political conflict, economic uncertainty, and unemployment. Another crisis now unfolds inside homes, classrooms, hospitals, and workplaces. Many young people live under invisible psychological pressure that rarely receives serious public attention until tragedy strikes.

emotional suffering as physical damage.

Perhaps the most revealing part of this crisis involves doctors themselves.

Medicine traditionally stands as one of Kashmir's most respected professions, associated with financial security and social prestige.

Recent reports show increasing levels of burnout, anxiety, depression, and chronic stress among healthcare workers.

Young doctors often work punishing hours

while carrying enormous emotional and professional pressure. Their experiences expose a wider reality: professional success does not guarantee psychological well-being.

Kashmir therefore faces a public health challenge that extends far beyond cardiology wards.

Hospitals alone cannot confront a crisis rooted in emotional exhaustion. Schools, colleges, universities, offices, and families all hold

responsibility here. Mental health services need stronger institutional support. Counseling should become accessible and routine rather than reserved for emergencies. Stress-management programs deserve space inside educational institutions and workplaces. Conversations about anxiety and depression should happen openly within families instead of remaining trapped behind shame and silence.

Society also needs a more humane definition of success.

A culture obsessed with status symbols creates permanent dissatisfaction. Wealth and recognition alone cannot sustain emotional stability. Good health, meaningful relationships, inner calm, and a sense of balance hold equal value in human life. Young people need space to fail, recover, pause, and rebuild without feeling socially diminished.

Kashmir has spent decades discussing political conflict, economic uncertainty, and unemployment. Another crisis now unfolds inside homes, classrooms, hospitals, and workplaces. Many young people live under invisible psychological pressure that rarely receives serious public attention until tragedy strikes.

The rising number of sudden cardiac arrests among Kashmiri youth should push society toward a deeper conversation about emotional health.

Physical illness rarely develops in isolation from social conditions and psychological strain. Human hearts respond to stress, fear, exhaustion, and despair with devastating consequences.

Kashmir's young generation needs a social environment that values mental peace as strongly as material achievement.

Without that shift, the valley may continue losing young lives to a crisis hiding in plain sight.

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Driving Deep Into Kashmir's Milk Country

Deep in Baramulla's forests, a village built on milk, mountain water, and old world charm holds onto a way of life that modern Kashmir rarely stops to see.



MODERN LIFE CELEBRATES SPEED CONSTANTLY, BUT THIS MILK VILLAGE PRESENTED ANOTHER POSSIBILITY ALTOGETHER. The village moved with the mountains rather than against them. Its systems grew through intimacy with the landscape.



Farah Zaidi

By the time we crossed Boniyar in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, the road had already begun to thin into the mountains.

Srinagar felt far behind us. Traffic disappeared first, and then came long silences between scattered homes, army bunkers, and roadside shops. Dense deodar forests slowly closed around the road, turning the journey into something slower and more intimate.

My husband Sajid drove carefully through the sharp bends while our son Salman pressed his face against the window, trying to follow the streams that appeared and vanished beside the road.

We had heard people call Dudran Kashmir's "Milk Village," though the phrase sounded too simple for a place hidden this deep inside the forests.

Mountain villages often get reduced to labels that fit neatly into tourism brochures. Dudran resisted that immediately.

A shepherd appeared briefly be-

side the road with a flock moving through the trees. A woman walked uphill carrying a bundle of firewood larger than herself. Schoolchildren crossed narrow paths with the calm balance mountain childhood teaches early.

Walking here formed the center of daily life. Distance and terrain meant little. The body simply adjusted itself to the mountains.

The farther we moved into Boniyar's upper reaches, the more the outside world loosened its grip. Phone signals weakened, the road narrowed again, and forests thickened. Wind moved through the trees with a deep rushing sound that stayed with us the entire journey.

Then Dudran emerged almost suddenly from the green slopes.

Slate-stone homes rested against the mountainside in uneven rows. Thin streams cut through the settlement like veins feeding the village. Smoke rose gently from wooden rooftops. Women worked in terraced fields with calm concentration while children ran barefoot through narrow paths lined with grass and wildflowers.

Nothing in Dudran appeared designed for spectacle. That gave the village its power.

Our local contact, Shabeer, greeted us warmly before pointing toward his home lower in the valley. Reaching it required a steep walk down through the forest beside a fast-moving stream.

That short descent changed the texture of the journey completely.

Towering deodar trees covered the trail in shade while walnut branches stretched overhead. Wildflowers spread beneath our feet in thick patches of yellow and white. Birds called from somewhere deep inside the canopy. Cool air carried the scent of wet earth, wood smoke, and mountain water.

We halted repeatedly along the path, drawn less by fatigue than by the need to absorb the place slowly. Dudran encouraged attention. Small details demanded time.

At the bottom of the trail stood a modest wooden home beneath an enormous walnut tree. Glacier water rushed past only a few feet away, cold and clear enough to see the stones beneath the current.

We spent much of that evening sitting outside while wind moved gently through the valley. Speech slowed naturally there, while silence felt full rather than empty.

Then came the first gesture of Dudran's hospitality.

Large bowls of fresh cream and yogurt appeared before us instead of tea.

Milk forms the center of life in Dudran. It feeds households, supports incomes, anchors customs, and defines hospitality. Guests enter homes through dairy long before formal conversation begins.

Lunch followed soon after: makki ki roti, fresh saag grown nearby, and cold homemade lassi. The meal carried none of the polished performance that often accompanies tourism in mountain destinations.

Food here came directly from the land surrounding the house. Preparation followed habit rather than presentation.

Later that afternoon, Shabeer led us deeper into the village to see the structures that made Dudran famous: the traditional Doud Khots.

Those small wooden and stone chambers stood beside naturally cold streams flowing through the village. Local families have used them for generations to preserve milk, butter, curd, and cream without electricity. Water runs continuously beneath the chambers, creating natural refrigeration powered entirely by the mountain itself.

Metal containers filled with fresh dairy rested inside the cool interiors.

Standing beside those structures, I found myself thinking about the strange arrogance modern life often develops toward older knowledge systems. Urban conversations frequently treat technology as the beginning of intelligence. Dudran dismantled that assumption through practice refined over generations.

Mountain communities solved problems through observation long before machines entered their valleys.

The Doud Khots carried another lesson too. Sustainability here did not emerge through fashionable language or policy discussions. Daily life itself produced systems built around restraint, adaptation, and closeness to the environment.

As we walked further through the village, Dudran revealed itself gradually through ordinary moments.

Children laughed while racing along narrow footpaths. Women worked patiently in fields. Elderly men sat outside old wooden homes watching another afternoon pass through the valley.

The pace of life struck me more deeply than the scenery itself.

Life in Dudran moved fully, though never hurriedly. Work continued constantly, animals needed tending, fields demanded labour, water had to be fetched, and meals required preparation.

Still, nothing held the restless speed that dominates city life.

Toward evening, strong winds swept through the valley, pushing cold air down from the upper slopes. We returned to the homestay where noon chai and fresh makki ki roti waited for us inside.

Darkness settled early around the house.

Without mobile networks or television noise, conversation became the evening's center. We spent hours speaking with the women and children of the household while water rushed gently outside beside the walnut tree. Stories moved easily through the room, and laughter followed often.

Mountain hospitality has warmth without ceremony. Dudran embodied that beautifully.

That night, we slept inside a glass-covered room overlooking the stream below. Wind moved softly through the trees while moonlight touched the rushing water outside. Even during the darkest hours, the

valley felt awake and breathing.

Morning arrived with cold air and the smell of wood smoke drifting through the house.

After breakfast prepared by the family, we visited a century-old mosque and an equally old traditional home nearby. Both structures stood with remarkable grace despite age and weather. Wooden beams, carved details, and stone foundations spoke of generations who built patiently and built to last.

Heritage in Dudran survives through use rather than preservation campaigns. People continue living inside history there.

Before leaving, another spread of curd, butter, and lassi appeared before us. Milk welcomed guests at the beginning of our stay and again at the end. The gesture captured the spirit of the village more clearly than any formal explanation could.

Many places leave travellers with photographs, Dudran left me with questions.

Modern life celebrates speed constantly, but this milk village presented another possibility altogether. The village moved with the mountains rather than against them. Its systems grew through intimacy with the landscape.

That understanding remained with me long after we returned to Srinagar.

— The author is co-founder of Kashmir Off Road. She can be reached at farahzaidiali@gmail.com.



Scorching Days, Restless Nights: Heatwave Grips India

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Blistering heat and scorching summer winds swept across several parts of India on Saturday, pushing temperatures past 44 degrees Celsius in several regions. The punishing weather forced hospitals in Punjab to operationalise heat stroke management units, while the IMD issued a heatwave alert for three districts

of Jharkhand for Monday.

The extreme conditions have begun to strain not just people, but also animals and birds, with veterinarians and animal rescuers in Delhi reporting exhausted pigeons dropping unconscious from the sky, dehydrated eagles being picked up from roadsides, and street animals suffering from stomach toxicity amid the capital's relentless heatwave.

Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said 16 people have died in seven districts of the state due to heatwave conditions prevailing in the state during the current summer.

He directed officials to identify villages recording very high temperatures, issue heat alerts to such villages and ensure availability of drinking water, buttermilk, and ORS packets at

public places and work sites.

In Rajasthan, Chittorgarh emerged as the hottest place in the state in the last 24 hours at 44.2 degrees Celsius, as the meteorological department warned that temperatures were likely to rise further from Sunday, with severe heatwave conditions expected in isolated pockets.

According to the weather department, the weather in most

parts of the state is likely to remain dry over the next week, and the temperatures are likely to rise by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius from Sunday. In the last 24 hours, the weather remained largely dry across Rajasthan.

Delhi, too, remained trapped in intense summer conditions despite strong winds, thunderstorms, and light rain early morning, bringing temporary

relief to parts of the city after days of searing heat.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) warned that temperatures across Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh are likely to rise further from Sunday onwards. The heat's impact in the national capital has extended beyond humans.

Across the city, veterinarians and rescuers say that distress calls

involving birds and stray animals suffering from dehydration, heat strokes, and infections have risen sharply over the past few weeks as prolonged dry conditions and extreme temperatures continue to batter Delhi and the NCR.

Delhi has been reeling under heatwave conditions over the past few days, with temperatures crossing the 45 degrees Celsius mark in several areas.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

No Dinners,

critical operational requirements and subject to concurrence from the Finance Department. Departments have also been directed to auction condemned vehicles before seeking replacements and ensure a 20 per cent reduction in fleet strength.

Travel expenditure has also come under scrutiny. According to the order, all officers travelling within the country will have to travel in economy class irrespective of entitlement, while foreign travel will require specific approval from the Finance Department.

Departments have been advised to maximise the use of video conferencing and digital communication platforms to minimise avoidable travel and operational costs. Travel within the Union Territory has been advised preferably by road or rail.

As part of energy conservation measures, offices have been directed to avoid unnecessary use of official vehicles, generators, air-conditioning systems and lighting equipment.

The government has also barred the hiring of new office accommodation without prior approval and restricted procurement of furniture except for newly established offices. Old furniture and condemned vehicles are to be disposed of through public auction.

Emphasising a "digital-first" approach, the order asked departments to minimise physical meetings, reduce printing of bulky documents and cut paper consumption through maximum use of e-Office and virtual platforms.

In another significant decision, the government said no new posts would be created during the financial year. Departments have instead been asked to identify posts lying vacant for more than two years for surrender.

The engagement of consultants, outsourcing agencies and contractual staff will now require assessment of necessity and prior approval from the competent authority.

The government has also barred departments from making fresh financial commitments on schemes or proposals that are not included in the approved Budget Estimates for 2026-27.

Administrative Secretaries have been made personally responsible for ensuring compliance with the austerity measures, while Directors Finance and Financial Advisors have been tasked with submitting periodic compliance reports to the Finance Department.

Fuel Price Hikes

situation further.

"The government should reduce taxes to provide some relief. Otherwise, how will the common man survive?" he asked.

Many commuters expressed fear that fuel prices may continue to rise if tensions in West Asia persist and global crude oil prices remain high.

"The crisis is continuing and the government may keep increasing fuel prices regularly. It will directly affect our daily commute and household expenses," said Mehraj Ahmad, a commuter.

Residents said inflation was already high and the latest hike would trigger further increase in the prices of food items and other essentials.

"This will disturb household budgets even more. Low and middle-income families will suffer the most," said Irfan Nazeer, a local resident.

Some commuters said the repeated hikes had made them consider switching to electric vehicles.

"Daily travel is becoming expensive. Students, poor families and middle-class people will feel the pinch the most. I think shifting to electric vehicles is a better option now," said Mohammad Shahnawaz.

According to industry sources, the latest revision increased petrol prices by 87 paise per litre and diesel prices by up to 91 paise across the country.

The hikes come after state-owned oil marketing companies resumed fuel price revisions on May 15 following a prolonged freeze. Petrol and diesel prices were first increased by Rs 3 per litre each on May 15 and again by around 90 paise per litre on May 19.

Industry officials attributed the increase to rising global crude oil prices, tightening refining margins and the weakening rupee, which has increased the cost of imports.

Global crude prices have reportedly surged by more than 50 per cent since late February amid escalating tensions in West Asia, including US-Israel strikes on Iran and disruption of shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit route.

Search Ops

presence of suspected terrorists in the area.

A joint team of the police, Army and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) cordoned off the area and launched extensive searches, they said.

Additional reinforcements have been deployed to the scene, and the operation was continuing when reports last came in, officials informed.

Centre Offers

meeting between representatives of the Leh Apex Body (LAB), KDA and the MHA sub-committee on Friday focused on constitutional protection for Ladakh, democratic representation and the long-pending demand for statehood.

According to Wangchuk, the discussions centred on Ladakh's demand for inclusion under the Sixth Schedule and statehood, while the government suggested safeguards under Article 371.

"The government said it has some issues with the Sixth Schedule but is willing to consider

protections under Article 371," Wangchuk said.

Article 371 grants temporary, transitional and special provisions to some states to accommodate their unique socio-cultural and regional developmental needs.

Under the Sixth Schedule, special administrative and legislative protections are given for tribal areas in certain northeastern states through Autonomous District Councils with powers over land, forests, local governance customs and certain civil and judicial matters.

No formal statement has been issued by the Centre.

Wangchuk noted that earlier proposals had envisaged powers remaining confined to district councils in Leh and Kargil, with major decisions continuing to rest with the Lieutenant Governor and bureaucracy.

"Yesterday, they agreed that whatever constitutional arrangement is created will be at the level of the whole of Ladakh and not at the district level," he said, calling it a significant departure from earlier proposals.

Explaining the demands, Wangchuk divided them into three broad categories -- legislative, executive and financial powers.

Under the proposed framework, he said, an elected institution representing the whole of Ladakh would have powers to make laws, oversee administration and exercise financial authority.

"This is a very big change," Wangchuk said, pointing out that elected representatives currently exercise limited control over Ladakh's annual budget while most decisions are taken by officials and the Lieutenant Governor.

"The best arrangement in India is a state. We are moving in the direction of a UT with legislature or statehood," he said.

Wangchuk indicated that the Centre's main reservation regarding statehood related to Ladakh's financial viability and ability to sustain administrative expenditure through its own revenue.

"Their objection was mainly about income and resources," he said, adding that studies were being undertaken to assess Ladakh's economic capacity and future revenue potential.

At the same time, Wangchuk cautioned against treating the latest discussions as a final settlement.

"There is no reason either for disappointment or excitement. This is a work in progress. There is an in-principle understanding, not an agreement," he said.

Kargili, meanwhile, underscored that the government had placed a proposal before the delegation but that its contents needed careful examination.

"A proposal has been submitted by the government. It says safeguards will be given to Ladakh under Articles 371A and 371G, and legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers will also be given," he said.

Article 371A applies to Nagaland and provides that the Parliament cannot legislate on matters relating to the Naga religion, social practices, customary law, land rights, and civil and criminal justice, without the consent of the state assembly. Similar protections have been given under Article 371G to Mizoram.

Kargili said the LAB and KDA had requested the government to provide a written draft similar to the memorandum already submitted by Ladakh representatives.

"We asked the government to give us a draft so that we can discuss it with our legal and constitutional experts and then give our response," Kargili said.

While welcoming continued engagement, Kargili stressed that the process remained at a preliminary stage.

"There is neither disappointment nor excitement. This is only a dialogue, and we can speak further once we receive the draft," he said.

He described the continuation of the talks itself as encouraging.

"Dialogue is also positivity. It is not positive to stop talking," Kargili said, adding that both sides appeared committed to finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Referring to the atmosphere of the meeting, he said the MHA had emphasised that discussions were not taking place "as two opposing sides but as one", with the shared objective of addressing concerns of Ladakh's people.

"The people of Ladakh should maintain regional sensitivity, diversity and balance. People should get representation and respect," Kargili said, outlining the broader concerns raised during the talks.

No date has yet been fixed for the next round of discussions, though Kargili said the delegation had requested the government to share the draft before convening another meeting.

The two prominent civil society groups from Ladakh -- Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) -- have been jointly demanding statehood for Ladakh, constitutional safeguards for land and jobs, and greater democratic powers since Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislature in 2019.

In a joint statement, after the sub-committee meeting here, both groups said they have reached an "in-principle understanding" with the Government of India on restoring democracy in Ladakh and providing constitutional safeguards on the lines of Nagaland, Sikkim and Mizoram under Article 371.

Properties Worth

generated from illicit drug trafficking.

Among the properties attached were two

residential houses belonging to Bilal Ahmad Sheikh and Aneek Ahmad Sheikh, residents of Larbal Beerwah in Budgam district.

The spokesperson said the duo were named in FIR No. 37/2024 registered under Section 8/20 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Saddar Srinagar.

"One single-storey and one double-storey residential house valued at approximately Rs 30 lakh and Rs 50 lakh respectively were attached under Section 68(F) of the NDPS Act after completion of legal formalities," the spokesperson said.

Section 68(F) of the NDPS Act empowers investigating officers to seize or freeze properties suspected to have been acquired through proceeds of drug trafficking.

In another action, police attached a double-storey residential house belonging to Suhaib Farooq Khan, a resident of Mini Colony Chanapora, who is involved in FIR No. 15/2023 under Section 8/21 of the NDPS Act registered at Police Station Chanapora.

The property, valued at nearly Rs 1 crore, was attached under Section 68-F(1) of the NDPS Act, the spokesperson said.

Police also attached a three-storey residential house belonging to Mohsin Ibrahim Naqash of Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar, in connection with FIR No. 42/2026 registered under Sections 8/21 and 29 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Saddar Srinagar.

The property is estimated to be worth around Rs 1 crore.

In a separate action, a three-storey residential house belonging to Farhan Manzoor Pandit of Kursoo Rajbagh was attached in connection with FIR No. 18/2026 registered under Section 8/21 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Rajbagh.

The attached property has an estimated market value of approximately Rs 50 lakh, police said.

Additionally, Police Station Karan Nagar attached a double-storey residential house belonging to Fayaz Ahmad Rather, a resident of Pato Mohalla Ajas in Bandipora district.

The spokesperson said Rather was involved in FIR No. 01/2025 registered under Sections 8/21 and 29 of the NDPS Act along with Section 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

In another action, Srinagar Police attached a double-storey residential house situated at Bakshiabad Bemina belonging to Abid Hassan Dar, who was named in FIR No. 18/2022 registered at Police Station Batamalo under Sections 8/21, 29 and 27-A of the NDPS Act besides Sections 468, 471 and 473 of the IPC.

The property, valued at approximately Rs 1.7 crore, was attached under Sections 68-F(1) and 68-E of the NDPS Act for alleged forfeiture of illegally acquired property.

Police said the attachment proceedings were conducted strictly in accordance with legal provisions as part of the ongoing anti-drug campaign in the Valley.

Trump Invites

according to US Ambassador Sergio Gor.

The US Secretary of State's four-day India trip is largely seen as an attempt to recalibrate bilateral relations that have faced headwinds since mid-last year.

"Happy to receive the US Secretary of State, Mr Marco Rubio. We discussed sustained progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and issues related to regional and global peace and security," Modi said on social media.

"India and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good," he said.

The US State Department said Secretary Rubio and PM Modi agreed to deepen trade and defence cooperation and accelerate collaboration on critical and emerging technologies.

After the meeting with the prime minister, Rubio, addressing an event at the US embassy, described India as an "incredibly important partner" for the US and indicated that the two sides are planning to make certain important announcements in the coming months to further solidify relations.

US State Department Spokesperson Tommy Pigott, referring to Rubio's meeting with Modi, said the Secretary of State underscored the strategic importance of the US-India partnership, the strong personal ties between the US President and Prime Minister Modi, as well as the profound economic and commercial opportunities for the two sides.

"The Secretary and the Prime Minister discussed the current situation in the Middle East. The Secretary emphasised that the United States will not let Iran hold the global energy market hostage and affirmed that US energy products have the potential to diversify India's energy supply," Pigott said.

Modi and Rubio also reflected upon bilateral achievements including significant investments that advance the President and the Prime Minister's "Mission 500" to double trade by 2030, he said.

According to an Indian readout, Rubio briefed PM Modi on the "sustained progress in bilateral cooperation across a wide range of sectors, including defence, strategic technologies, trade and investment, energy security, connectivity, education and people-to-people ties".

The US Secretary of State shared the US perspective on various regional and global issues, including the situation in West Asia, it said.

PM Modi reaffirmed India's consistent support for peace efforts and reiterated the call for peaceful resolution of the conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy, it said.

The readout from the Prime Minister's Office

said Modi requested Secretary Rubio to convey his warm greetings to President Trump and said that he looked forward to their continued exchanges.

Pigott said the Secretary of State shared his appreciation for India hosting the upcoming Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting and looked forward to advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific region alongside Australia, India, and Japan.

US Ambassador Gor, who was also part of the Rubio-led delegation, described the meeting with PM Modi as "productive".

"We had a productive discussion on ways to deepen US-India cooperation across security, trade, and critical technologies - areas that strengthen both our nations and advance a free and open Indo-Pacific. India is a vital partner to the United States!" he said on 'X'.

The US Secretary of State arrived in Kolkata this morning, visiting the Mother House -- the headquarters of Saint Teresa's Missionaries of Charity -- before flying to the national capital.

On Sunday, Rubio is scheduled for bilateral talks with Jaishankar. The Secretary of State will travel to Agra and Jaipur on Monday before returning to Delhi on Tuesday morning for the Quad foreign ministers meeting.

Rubio's trip to India comes over five weeks after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri undertook a three-day visit to Washington DC that focused on stabilising the ties after a spell of uncertainty and strain.

The relations between the two countries witnessed a major downturn after Washington imposed punitive tariffs on India and President Trump made controversial assertions regarding his role in de-escalating the India-Pakistan military clashes last May.

Over the next few months, the US president repeatedly and publicly claimed that he had resolved the military conflict between the two neighbours and saved millions of lives as it was heading toward a full-scale war.

New Delhi stoutly maintained that the cessation of the hostilities was a result of talks between India and Pakistan, and the US involvement had nothing to do with it.

However, both sides made efforts in the last few months to repair the ties.

The two sides have resolved to firm up a mutually beneficial trade deal soon.

Munir In Tehran

Iran-U.S. understanding, with Tehran signalling cautious optimism that negotiations were narrowing differences even as officials warned substantial disputes remained unresolved.

Field Marshal Asim Munir, who arrived in Tehran on Friday on what Pakistan described as part of "ongoing mediation efforts", separately met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, according to Iranian media and Pakistani officials.

The visit comes amid a flurry of regional diplomacy that has raised hopes negotiations are gaining momentum, reducing the immediate risk of renewed hostilities even as key disagreements continue to cloud prospects for a final settlement.

Munir's trip, his second to Iran in little over a month, follows several days of consultations by Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who has been in Tehran holding meetings with senior Iranian officials.

Pakistan, increasingly emerging as a key intermediary between Tehran and Washington, says its outreach is aimed at preventing a return to conflict and sustaining diplomatic channels opened after a fragile ceasefire paused weeks of confrontation.

According to a statement issued by Iran's presidency, President Pezeshkian told Munir that Tehran sought only the restoration of its legitimate rights and remained deeply cautious because of previous experiences with Washington.

"The Islamic Republic seeks only to restore its rights," Pezeshkian said, while adding that Iran distrusted the United States because of what he described as repeated breaches of commitments, attacks during negotiations and the killing of Iranian officials.

"Under such circumstances, the Islamic Republic of Iran -- relying on brotherly relations with friendly countries including Pakistan -- has entered the path of negotiation," he said.

Munir, according to Iran's Press TV, said the negotiation process was "proceeding well" and praised efforts aimed at reducing tensions. He also accused Israel of benefiting from divisions in the Muslim world and seeking instability in the region.

Iran's official IRNA news agency reported that Munir also held lengthy discussions with Foreign Minister Araqchi and later met Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf to discuss regional developments and bilateral relations.

The meetings took place as Tehran offered its clearest indication yet that diplomatic discussions with Washington may be advancing, albeit slowly.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said on Saturday that an agreement appeared simultaneously "very far and very close", reflecting both progress and lingering mistrust.

He said Pakistan's role had been central in facilitating exchanges between Tehran and Washington and confirmed that Munir's visit formed part of efforts to continue transmitting messages between the two sides.

Baqaei said Iran was currently focused on finalising a proposed 14-point memorandum of understanding aimed at ending what he described as an imposed war and creating a framework for

broader negotiations.

He said the document had been exchanged multiple times and discussions over wording and disputed provisions were continuing.

"Over the past week the trend has been toward reducing points of disagreement," Baqaei said, while cautioning that unresolved issues still required further discussion and mediation.

The spokesman suggested that while a final agreement remained distant, recent diplomacy had moved discussions toward narrowing differences rather than widening them.

He said Iran hoped first to finalise a framework agreement focused on ending hostilities before moving within 30 to 60 days toward broader negotiations covering more complex issues.

Iran's priorities in the current phase include ending conflict across multiple fronts, lifting sanctions, securing the release of frozen Iranian assets and addressing maritime disputes linked to the Strait of Hormuz, Baqaei said.

He described restrictions affecting Iranian shipping as unlawful and accused the United States of actions amounting to "maritime aggression".

Baqaei also said Iran and Oman were discussing mechanisms for managing security and navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy chokepoints.

"The Strait of Hormuz has nothing to do with the United States," he said, adding that Tehran expected international support for arrangements intended to safeguard maritime traffic.

He declined to discuss details relating to Iran's nuclear programme, saying Tehran had deliberately shifted focus toward ending conflict first before addressing other sensitive issues.

Nuclear questions remain among the most difficult obstacles in negotiations, along with sanctions relief, guarantees and access to Iranian assets frozen abroad.

Analysts say diplomacy now appears to be moving along two parallel tracks: one seeking an immediate understanding to prevent renewed war and another attempting to build a framework for a longer-term settlement.

The renewed momentum follows reports that U.S. President Donald Trump is considering military action if talks fail to produce results.

Yet despite such warnings, the latest round of diplomacy appears to have shifted the immediate trajectory from escalation toward negotiation.

Whether that momentum can survive long-standing distrust and unresolved disputes may become clearer in the coming days.

Undue Delay In

Arif Billa Sheikh, who has remained in custody since his arrest in 2020 in connection with offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Explosive Substances Act and IPC provisions.

Sheikh submitted that although the chargesheet had been filed in October 2020 and charges framed in March 2021, the trial had not concluded despite substantial recording of prosecution evidence.

He argued that prolonged incarceration and delay in conclusion of the trial violated his fundamental right to speedy trial guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

While considering the plea, the court reiterated that the right to speedy trial is an inseparable facet of Article 21 and applies not only to the actual court proceedings but also to investigation and inquiry stages.

The court observed that although allegations under the UAPA are grave and concern national security, constitutional guarantees cannot be eclipsed solely because of the seriousness of accusations.

"The criminal justice system does not proceed on presumption of guilt. Every accused continues to enjoy presumption of innocence till guilt is established in accordance with law through a fair trial," the court said.

Therefore, the court said, where an accused remains incarcerated for a prolonged period without the trial reaching its logical conclusion, it becomes the constitutional obligation of the courts to examine whether such continued delay amounts to infringement of the fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

"This Court is of the view that even in cases arising under stringent statutory provisions, prolonged delay in trial cannot be ignored and constitutional courts are duty bound to balance national security concerns with individual liberty," the court said, adding, "If trials under such enactments remains pending, the process itself may become punitive. Therefore, while safeguarding societal and national interests, courts must equally ensure that undertrial prisoners are not subjected to endless incarceration without timely adjudication."

Referring to Section 19 of the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008, the court observed that provides that trials before Special Courts shall be conducted on day-to-day basis.

"The legislative intent behind Section 19 is clear and unambiguous. Parliament, while creating a special mechanism for trial of serious offences affecting sovereignty and integrity of the nation, simultaneously ensured that such prosecutions are not permitted to linger endlessly," the court said, adding, "The mandate of day-to-day trial is intended to strike a balance between societal interest and individual liberty."

Without commenting on the merits of the allegations against the accused, the Court directed the Special Court to accord priority to the case and make all possible efforts to conclude the trial expeditiously.

At a 14th-Century Shrine, Kashmir's Women Mystics Turned to Iran

Female faith healers turned the Urs at Khanqah-e-Moula into a spiritual bond with a troubled homeland.

Haziqah Showkat

SRINAGAR: Nusrat stood near a walnut-wood pillar inside Khanqah-e-Moula, her fingers moving slowly over a worn rosary as hundreds of worshippers pressed through the shrine on the banks of the Jhelum River. She remained near that same spot for hours.

Incense smoke hung beneath the sanctum's sloping ceilings while men recited verses near the entrance. Women sat shoulder to shoulder along the carved interiors, as loudspeakers broadcast collective prayers into the old quarters of Srinagar.

A faded grey shawl covered Nusrat's head, and her eyes stayed closed through long stretches. Words escaped her lips in fragments of whispered supplication as several women sat behind her in silence, following her lead.

"This day belongs to him," she said later, referring to Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, the beloved Persian saint known in Kashmir as Shah-e-Hamdan or Amir Kabir. "People remember saints through gratitude, and gratitude reaches Allah too."

This year's Urs at the shrine drew the usual crowds of devotees, merchants, clerics and families. A separate gathering unfolded within the shrine's inner spaces, largely hidden from the wider public.

Female faith healers known locally as Pirr Bae had come from villages and towns throughout Kashmir

for what many described as a special spiritual assembly tied to Iran, the homeland of Shah-e-Hamdan.

News of war and conflict in Iran had deeply affected many of them. Several women described their prayers as personal acts of devotion linked to the saint whose influence still runs through Kashmir's religious and cultural life.

Shah-e-Hamdan reached Kashmir in the 14th century with a group of disciples and scholars from Persia and Central Asia. Historical accounts credit him with spreading Islam in the valley while introducing Persian arts, calligraphy, shawl weaving and craft traditions that transformed Kashmiri society.

His shrine, known widely as Khanqah-e-Moula, remains one of the valley's most important spiritual sites.

Many women at the Urs viewed the conflict in Iran through that historic connection.

Groups of Pirr Bae occupied corners of the shrine through much of the day. Several wore dark robes and held prayer beads wrapped tightly around their wrists. Some stayed seated near lattice windows overlooking the river. Others stood facing the shrine's interiors with eyes closed and palms raised.

Many of these women maintain small circles of disciples in their home districts. Local residents often seek them for prayers, spiritual guidance and



Kashmir Observer

faith healing.

"They prefer solitude over public attention," says Muzamil Tariq, a regular at Khanqah-e-Moula. "The Urs gatherings here carry deep meaning for many people because of Shah-e-Hamdan and his enduring place in Kashmir's spiritual tradition."

Fatima, a faith healer who had travelled with several followers, described the gathering as an emotional response to events unfolding in Amir Kabir's homeland.

"People help through money and aid when countries suffer," she said while seated near the

shrine's river side. "Prayer also has its place. We came here because this shrine connects us spiritually to that land."

Crowds flowed through the Khanqah during the day. Vendors sold merchandise outside the shrine complex. Volunteers distributed food to devotees near the riverbank. Cops guided worshippers through narrow lanes leading toward the shrine. Several elderly women recited Persian verses from memory while younger visitors recorded videos on their phones.

The female faith healers remained detached from much of that movement. Many of them intended to gather this year with Persia in mind. One from Anantnag described the decision as instinctive.

"Shah-e-Hamdan gave Kashmir a spiritual inheritance linked to Iran," she said. "People feel that connection strongly during difficult times."

Kashmir's religious culture has long preserved traces of Persian influence through language, devotional poetry, shrine architecture and ritual practice. Older Srinagar neighbourhoods still refer to Kash-

mir as Iran-e-Sagheer, Little Iran, a phrase rooted in centuries of cultural exchange between Kashmir and Persia.

That historical memory seemed especially visible inside Khanqah-e-Moula during the Urs.

Persian inscriptions adorned the walls, while the architecture itself reflected Central Asian design traditions brought by the saint's followers.

The 661st Urs also brought life to the local economy around the shrine. Many families rely on these days to earn seasonal income. Cooks prepared food in huge vessels, cleaners spent the night washing the stone floors, and drivers ferried pilgrims from far-off towns. For traders along the Jhelum River, the Urs often brings the busiest days of the year.

Religious gatherings on this scale sustain an informal social infrastructure alongside official institutions throughout the region. Shrine networks provide employment, food security and spiritual anchoring for communities throughout the valley.

The female faith healers operate within that ecosystem, guiding women in villages and towns far from Srinagar's formal institutions.

The spiritual bond with Iran holds political weight within this context.

Shah-e-Hamdan's legacy created a cultural bridge between Kashmir and Persia that persisted through language,

poetry and faith.

That connection now exists within a complex regional landscape where Iran faces international pressure and Kashmir responds with solidarity.

The female faith healers focused on prayer, though their presence underscored how religious ties continued linking Kashmiri society to wider Islamic civilization.

Late in the afternoon, many worshippers began leaving after congregational prayers ended. The shrine gradually grew calmer. Several female faith healers stayed seated in small clusters. Some entered prolonged meditative states that fellow devotees described as spiritual absorption. Lips continued moving through whispered invocations. Prayer beads clicked softly through their fingers.

Nusrat stayed near the same pillar where she had spent most of the afternoon.

Women approached her briefly for blessings before stepping away again. A young girl kissed her hand and returned to her family. Older women touched her shoulder and murmured their own prayers. Nusrat acknowledged people with slight nods while maintaining long intervals of silence.

Her thoughts kept returning to Iran.

"Saints build links between places," she said in a low voice. "People protect those links through prayer."

Nasha Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan Sees Widespread Public Support

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The ongoing anti-drug campaign, 'Nasha Mukt JK Abhiyaan' has recorded remarkable achievements and impact across awareness generation, rehabilitation, law enforcement, treatment, surveillance and prevention initiatives, reflecting an unprecedented whole-of-government approach against the menace of substance abuse in Jammu and Kashmir.

As on today, the campaign has mobilized lakhs of citizens, strengthened institutional response mechanisms, intensified anti-narcotics operations and expanded rehabilitation support systems throughout J&K.

Under the Drug free J&K -100 days campaign, massive Public Outreach and Awareness Drives are being held across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir.

As part of the extensive awareness and outreach campaign, authorities conducted an extraordinary 16,37,484 awareness events across Jammu & Kashmir, with a staggering public participation of over one crore people, indicating widespread community engagement and growing public support for the anti-drug movement.

The outreach programmes included Mega pad-yatras, road shows, school and college campaigns, village-level awareness drives, signature campaigns, community meetings, youth engagement activities, sports events, cultural events, seminars, counselling sessions, and social media advocacy initiatives aimed at sensitizing society about the dangers of drug addiction.

Under this campaign, Mental Health



and Counselling Support services have also been strengthened as through Tele-MANAS and Counselling Support initiative, around 3,572 calls were received from individuals seeking psychological support, counselling, and guidance related to mental health and substance abuse issues. Strengthening of accessible counselling services has become a critical pillar of the Administration's strategy to ensure early intervention and emotional support for vulnerable individuals and families affected by addiction.

Treatment and Rehabilitation Services have also been expanded across J&K. Addiction Treatment Facilities (ATFs) of Health department have reported substantial patient engagement during the campaign period. 58,603 patients were received at treatment facilities, with 58,138 patients availing OPD treatment services, 465 patients IPD intensive inpatient care, besides 192 patients were cured and released.

Simultaneously, the Social Welfare Department-operated DDAC Rehabilitation Centres provided Treatment and Rehabilitation Services to affected in-

dividuals. 634 patients received treatment support, 1,055 individuals underwent counselling sessions, 29 patients successfully recovered and 851 active patients continue to receive rehabilitation support in these centres.

Police department is also providing substantial Counselling and Rehabilitation Support services. Under Police run DDAC and counselling support initiatives, 451 patients were registered, 786 patients received counselling and 138 patients recovered successfully, besides 363 active cases remain under monitoring and rehabilitation support.

Under this ongoing campaign, an Aggressive Crackdown on Drug Networks has also been launched by the enforcement agencies. Police Department's NDPS operations witnessed extensive action against drug trafficking networks and peddlers across J&K.

During the ongoing campaign, 850 FIRs were registered under NDPS-related offences, 942 persons were arrested, 293 drug peddlers were apprehended and 49 drug hotspots were identified for focused intervention.

The enforcement agencies have also intensified financial investigations against narcotics syndicates as authorities carried out major action against illegally acquired assets linked to drug traffickers.

As on date, 55 drug trafficker houses were sealed or demolished, 71 immovable properties were seized or attached valuing approximately ₹4,632.17 lakh, 34 immovable properties were demolished valuing around ₹1,648.50 lakh, besides 42 movable properties were seized or attached valuing around ₹214.93 lakh.

Jmu-Sgr Vande Bharat Carries Over 1 Lakh Passengers in 22 Days

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Marking a historic milestone for Indian Railways and Jammu & Kashmir, the state-of-the-art Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express has successfully carried more than 1,01,050 passengers within just 22 days of its commercial operations, reaffirming its growing popularity as a fast, safe and reliable transport link between Jammu and the Kashmir Valley.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, the indigenous semi-high-speed train commenced regular commercial operations on May 2, 2026, after being flagged off by the Union Railway Minister on April 30. Since then, the Vande Bharat Express has rapidly emerged as a preferred mode of travel for passengers, setting a new benchmark in seamless rail connectivity in the region.

The achievement is being viewed as a landmark moment in the history of rail connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir, where travel between Jammu and Srinagar traditionally depended on National Highway-44, frequently disrupted by landslides, snowfall and adverse weather conditions.

Over the last 22 days, the train has maintained



remarkable punctuality and operational reliability, providing commuters with a comfortable, efficient and dependable all-weather travel alternative.

Expressing satisfaction over the achievement, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit Singhal said the overwhelming public response reflects the trust passengers have placed in the service.

"Carrying over one lakh one thousand fifty passengers in just 22 days is a moment of immense pride for Northern Railway.

This remarkable figure is not merely a statistic, but a reflection of our commitment to providing world-class rail infrastructure and services to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Singhal added that passengers have responded positively to the train's comfort, hospitality, safety standards and travel efficiency, significantly reducing the fatigue traditionally associated with the Jammu-Srinagar journey.

Woman Delivers Baby in Ambulance

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A concerning incident at District Hospital Bandipora has raised serious questions over patient management and medical decision-making after a pregnant woman unexpectedly delivered her baby inside an ambulance moments after being referred for advanced treatment in Srinagar.

The incident, which occurred within the hospital premises shortly after the ambulance left the emergency gate, has sparked outrage among the patient's family, who have alleged negligence on the part of the doctors on duty and demanded a fair and transparent investigation.

The relatives of Kulsooma Begum, wife of Azad Ahmad Dar, resident of Laharwalpora in north Kashmir's Bandipora district, told KNO that she

was brought to District Hospital Bandipora after developing complications related to pregnancy.

She said Kulsooma was taken to the labour room where the medical staff examined her. However, instead of conducting the delivery at the district hospital, doctors referred her to Srinagar for further treatment, they said.

Family members alleged that the patient was already experiencing severe labour pain and was in a critical stage of pregnancy when the decision to shift her was taken.

"Within minutes of leaving the hospital, she delivered the baby normally inside the ambulance itself. If the delivery could happen there, why was she referred in such a condition?" a family member questioned, demanding accountability from the doctors concerned.

Another relative al-

leged that the woman was shifted "without proper assessment", claiming that the patient's labour condition was evident before the referral was made.

The incident has triggered concern among locals as well, with many questioning whether adequate medical judgment was exercised before the referral decision.

Following the incident, the Medical Superintendent of District Hospital Bandipora initiated action by seeking written explanations from the two doctors who were on duty at the time of the incident — Dr Fency Bulbul, Consultant Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Dr Bazila, Medical Officer.

In an official order issued by the Medical Superintendent, the doctors were directed to submit separate written explanations within three days

detailing their role, duties performed, and actions taken in connection with the patient's care and referral.

"The explanation shall specifically address the circumstances under which the delivery occurred during transit in the ambulance and the actions taken by the concerned doctors in relation to the management of the patient," the order stated, warning that failure to submit the explanations within the stipulated timeframe would invite action under relevant service rules.

The hospital administration has also constituted a formal enquiry committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident and determine whether there was any lapse in patient care or negligence by the medical staff.

The enquiry commit-

tee will be headed by Dr Javid Ahmad Bhat, Consultant Physician, with Dr Nadeem Ali, Consultant Orthopaedics, Head Assistant Ishtiyaq Ahmad Para, Accounts Manager Tafazul Yousuf, and a representative deputed by the Chief Medical Officer Bandipora as members.

According to the order, the committee has been tasked with examining all facts related to the delivery that occurred during transit and assessing the role and responsibility of the officials and medical staff involved.

The Chief Medical Officer Bandipora has been requested to depute a representative for the enquiry proceedings scheduled on May 26.

The committee has been directed to submit its detailed report, along with findings and recommendations, within three days.

Short-Term Power Markets to Rescue 'J&K's 300 MWs Gap'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With authorities projecting power deficit Upto 300 Megawatts (MWs) on the horizon, J&K State Load Despatch Center (SLDC) has decided to rely on short-term power markets to bridge the gap.

According to KNO, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) in a meeting held in April, said that the authorities from Jammu and Kashmir have indicated that the region may face a minor power deficit of 100-300 MW. "SLDC indicated a minor deficit (~100-300 MW) to be managed through short-term markets. Revised figures to be submitted," NRPC said.

J&K SLDC has further informed the regulatory commission that J&K may face a power deficit of 152 MWs in the ongoing month and 103 MWs in the month of June. The NRPC was further informed that there was a 79 MWs power deficit in the month of April.

Earlier in April KNO reported that in the peak winters of 2025-2026, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were utilizing nearly 1,000 Megawatts (MWs) of coal and gas energy amid dip in hydel power generation.

Govt Announces Summer Break for Jammu Schools

SRINAGAR: The government Saturday announced summer vacation for schools in summer zones of Jammu division from June-01 for primary level. The government also said that the classes from 6th to 12th standard shall observe the vacation from June-08.

According to KNO, Education Minister Sakina Itoo on X posted, "Keeping in view the prevailing weather conditions, summer vacations for schools falling under Summer Zone of Jammu Division shall commence w.e.f. 01.06.2026 for Primary Classes and w.e.f. 08.06.2026 for students of Classes 6th to 12th." The minister wished a safe and enjoyable vacation to the students.

Pertinently, on May-18, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) issued a heat wave advisory post rise in temperatures.

In this regard, authorities in Jammu had urged the people, particularly the elderly and small children, to stay indoors. (Observer News Service)

J&K Prisoners Held Without Trial a Tragedy: Mehbooba

SRINAGAR: PDP President Mehbooba Mufti said on Saturday it is a "tragedy" that many prisoners from Jammu and Kashmir are in jails away from their families without a trial.

Speaking to reporters, Mufti, who visited the residence of Lok Sabha MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid, alias Engineer Rashid, in north Kashmir's Kupwara to pay condolences on his father's demise, said many families like the Rashids have suffered due to the prolonged detention of their kin.

"Engineer Rashid's story is the story of most households in Jammu and Kashmir, as thousands of our people are in jails and most of whom are in jails outside the UT," she said, as per PTI.

Rashid was recently released on bail to attend the last rites of his father, who passed away at AIIMS in New Delhi.

The MP from north Kashmir's Baramulla, who defeated Omar Abdullah and Sajad Lone in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, is facing trial in the terror-funding case with allegations that he funded separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

He has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since 2019 after the NIA arrested him in the 2017 terror-funding case.

"Engineer Rashid is a sitting Member of Parliament. The court perhaps allowed him some relief due to pressure to see his father and attend the funeral. But many others have been jailed since 2019 whose parents passed away without seeing their sons even once," the PDP chief said.

She said such a situation reflects the hardships faced by families across J-K, "as many people continue to remain behind bars without trial". "What can be a bigger tragedy than this?" she said. (Observer News Service)

229 Receive Appointment Letters at Jammu Rozgar Mela

JAMMU: The Jammu division of Northern Railway organised a Rozgar Mela on Saturday, during which 229 selected candidates from Jammu and Kashmir received appointment letters for various government jobs.

The event was part of the Centre's mega employment drive aimed at inducting youth into government services through a transparent and merit-based recruitment process, officials said. More than 5,100 candidates were selected across the country in the latest recruitment round, including 229 from Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

Divisional Railway Manager, Jammu, Vivek Kumar, and Railway Recruitment Board Jammu Chairman Sanjay Tyagi distributed appointment letters to the selected candidates at the Convention Centre here.

The programme commenced with Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing newly recruited candidates across the country through video conferencing.

In his address, Modi said the occasion reflected a renewed commitment towards empowering the youth and building a developed India, while highlighting transparency in government recruitment.

Following the virtual interaction, officials said appointment letters were distributed to candidates selected for various posts in banks, the armed forces, medical services, railways and departments of the Jammu and Kashmir administration. (Observer News Service)



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Free health check-up

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Rider for both Individual & Family Floater Basis**



24*7 Unlimited Tele-Consultation



Investigations Cover

**Based on the variant opted in health plan

To Know More Contact your J & k Bank's Relationship Manager

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