

Srinagar Airport Plan Raises Tourism Concerns

Stakeholders Push for Alternate Arrangements To Avoid Disruptions



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: A proposed runway closure at Srinagar International Airport later this year has triggered concern across Kashmir's tourism industry, with stakeholders warning that the move could disrupt travel plans for thousands of passengers and deal a blow to the Valley's tourism-dependent economy during the peak season.

Tourism bodies, hoteliers and travel operators have urged the authorities to put alternative arrangements in place, including the use of Awantipora airport for civilian flights and additional train services, to minimise

inconvenience during the maintenance period.

According to a proposal issued by Srinagar Airport, the runway may remain unavailable every Monday and Tuesday from July 1 to September 30, 2026, while a complete shutdown of operations has been proposed from October 1 to October 16 for maintenance work to be carried out by the Indian Air Force.

The proposed restrictions are expected to affect more than 12,000 passengers who use the airport daily during the busy summer tourism season.

Srinagar Airport currently handles an average daily footfall of over | [More on P11](#)



Officials trek through hilly terrain in Srinagar's Dara belt to conduct Census 2027 house-listing operations. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Amarnath Yatra Maintain Highest Standards Of Preparedness: IGP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir V.K. Birdi on Thursday reviewed security and logistical arrangements for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra at the Baltal base camp and directed officials to ensure the timely completion of all preparations ahead of the annual pilgrimage.

Birdi, accompanied by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Central Kashmir Range Rajiv Pandey and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal Sudhanshu Dhama, inspected facilities being put in place for the smooth conduct of the yatra, scheduled to begin on July 3.

According to a police spokesperson, the officers assessed the pace of security and logistical preparations and reviewed facilities established for Jammu and Kashmir Police and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel deployed for the pilgrimage.

The team inspected accommodation, communication facilities, security infrastructure and other essential arrangements at the base camp to evaluate the overall level | [More on P11](#)

Rains Across J&K; Cloudburst Damages Houses In Reasi

No casualties reported; LG orders immediate relief for affected families

MeT warns of thunderstorms, hail and gusty winds

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Widespread rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday brought much-needed relief from the recent spell of hot weather, while a cloudburst in Reasi district damaged several houses. No casualties were reported.

The cloudburst struck Bathoi village in Reasi, prompting authorities to

assess the situation and initiate relief measures.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said he had spoken to the Deputy Commissioner of Reasi following the incident.

"Spoke with the DC Reasi to assess the situation following a cloudburst at Village Bathoi. While several houses suffered damage, fortunately, no casualties have been reported. I have directed the DC to immediately provide relief and assistance to the affected families," Sinha said in a post on X.

Meanwhile, light to moderate rainfall | [More on P11](#)

Religious Harmony Is Rooted In India's Traditions: LG Sinha

Calls For Strengthening Legacy of Coexistence At Srinagar Conference

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said religious harmony and mutual respect have been deeply embedded in India's traditions for centuries, stressing the need to preserve and strengthen the country's legacy of coexistence and unity.

Addressing the 'Rishiwar' Inter-Faith Conference 2026 in Srinagar, the Lieutenant Governor said the philosophy of equal respect for all religions has been an integral part of India's civilisational ethos for millennia.

"While many societies continue to grapple with the challenge of coexistence, India has long embraced unity in diversity as a way of life," Sinha said.

Highlighting the teachings of Sanatan Dharma, he said India's ancient scriptures, saints and seers have consistently advocated harmony,



mutual respect and the welfare of humanity.

The Lieutenant Governor described the principle of "Sarva Dharma Sambhava" or equal respect for all faiths as India's greatest contribution to the world and called for collective efforts to preserve this enduring legacy.

He also lauded the public

response to the Vande Mataram initiative and the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan, urging citizens, educational institutions and social organisations to work together towards building a united, prosperous and drug-free society.

Sinha said social cohesion and shared responsibility were essential for addressing contemporary challenges and ensuring sustainable progress.

The inter-faith conference brought together religious leaders, academics, students and public representatives to deliberate on the values of harmony, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence.

Among those present on the occasion were Justice Sanjay Dhar, Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, University of Kashmir Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan, senior civil and police officers, academicians and students.

From Rs 2 Cr To Rs 5 Cr

J&K Raises Spending Approval Limits For Departments

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has enhanced the financial powers of Administrative Departments by increasing the limit for according technical sanction to development projects from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore.

The change has been made through an amendment to the Delegation of Financial Powers issued under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, according to a notification issued by the Finance Department.

As per the notification, Administrative Departments will now be empowered to accord technical sanction to projects costing up to Rs 5 crore. Earlier, departments could approve technical sanctions only

for projects up to Rs 2 crore. Projects exceeding Rs 5 crore will continue to require approval under the higher sanctioning mechanism prescribed by the government.

The amendment has been carried out in Annexure-I of the Delegation of Financial Powers relating to powers for according Administrative Approval, Technical Sanction and Award of Contracts. The notification substitutes the existing limits of "Up to Rs 2,00 Crores" and "Above Rs 2,00 Crores" with "Up to Rs 5,00 Crores" and "Above Rs 5,00 Crores" respectively under the category dealing with powers to accord Technical Sanction.

The notification was issued by the Finance Department in exercise of powers conferred under Section 67 | [More on P11](#)

Writer, Physician Dr Javid Iqbal Passes Away At 80

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Dr Javid Iqbal, a noted physician, scholar, writer and former president of the Jammu and Kashmir Urdu Council, passed away in Srinagar on Thursday after a prolonged illness. He was 80.

Widely regarded as one of Kashmir's prominent intellectual voices, Dr Iqbal left behind a rich legacy spanning medicine, literature, scholarship and public discourse. Over several decades, he earned recognition not only as a medical practitioner but also as a prolific columnist, author and public intellectual whose writings | [More on P11](#)



Kashmir Cherries Defy Weather Losses, Fetch Premium Rates

New varieties gain popularity for rain resistance and staggered ripening

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir's cherry season is unfolding on a promising note despite weather-related setbacks, with growers and traders reporting strong prices driven by robust demand and the growing popularity of imported cherry varieties.

While erratic weather during the flowering stage and recent hailstorms have reduced overall production this year, the market has remained buoyant, offering growers hope of better returns from a smaller crop.

Early-ripening cherry cultivars imported from countries such as Italy and Bulgaria have already arrived in wholesale and retail markets across | [More on P11](#)



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Institutional Deliveries Up From 88.6% To 90.6% In 2023-24: NFHS-6

Press Trust Of India

Institutional deliveries in India have increased from 88.6 per cent in 2019-2021 to 90.6 per cent in 2023-24, moving closer towards universal coverage, according to the National Family Health Survey-6 released on Friday.

the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai as the nodal agency. Covering nearly 6.79 lakh households across 715 districts, the survey provides vital evidence on population, health, nutrition and family welfare indicators and supports evidence-based planning and programme implementation up to the district level.

mortality by providing access to emergency obstetric care, hygienic conditions and specialised medical equipment. Births attended by health personnel improved from 89.4 per cent to 91.3 per cent, while post-natal care for newborns by Doctor/Nurse/Lady Health Visitor (LHV)/Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)/Midwife/other health personnel within two days of delivery improved from 79.1 per cent to 85.3 per cent, the data showed.



"These gains reflect strengthened public health infrastructure and improved access to maternal and child healthcare services across the country, driven by focused implementation of initiatives such as Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN), Facility Based New-born Care, Home-Based New-born Care, and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY 2.0)," the health ministry said.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, SONAMARG

Email:-sdaofficial@yahoo.com

E-Bid Document (Auction ID: 25292)

Outsourcing of Sonamarg Club building at Thajiwas Sonamarg "as is where is basis" excluding conference hall for a period of 03-years through GeM Portal.

No: CEO/SDA/2026/701-09

Dated: 03 /06/2026.

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-bids are invited online through GeM Portal for Outsourcing of Sonamarg Club building at Thajiwas Sonamarg "as is where is basis" excluding conference hall for a period of 03-years through GeM Portal. The details are as under:-

S.No	Particulars	Date/Time	Remarks
1	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Submission Start Date	03/06/2026 at 01.00 PM	-NIL-
2	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Submission End Date	12/06/2026 at 02.00 PM	-NIL-
3	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Assessment End Date & PM	13/06/2026 at 02.30 PM	-NIL-
4	EMD Start Date	15/06/2026 at 10.00 AM	-NIL-
5	EMD End Date	16/06/2026 at 11.30 AM	-NIL-
6	EMD (Bid Security) Amount in shape of CDR/FDR/DD	Rs. 50000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only)	To be pledged in favour of Accounts Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority
7	Bid Submission/Auction Start Date	16/06/2026 at 11.35 AM	-NIL-
8	Bid Submission/Auction End Date & Time	17/06/2026 at 02.00 PM	-NIL-
9	Reserve bid amount	Rs. 07.00 Lacs (Rupees Seven Lacs)	-NIL-

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

- The bidder should be a domicile of J&K and shall upload a valid domicile certificate.
- The bidder shall have to upload a Character Certificate from the concerned Police Station or alternatively copy of a valid Passport.
- The bidder shall have to upload self-attested PAN Card, Aadhar Card.
- The bidder shall upload Average Annual Financial Turnover Statement of last three years ending of previous financial year & should be at least 50% of basic bid amount.
- The bidder shall have to upload Income Tax return of last three financial years.
- The bidder shall have to upload undertaking that if found successful after the culmination of auction process as per following:
 - That I shall abide by the all terms & conditions of the contract.
 - That I will deposit the offered bid amount within a period 07 days after culmination of auction, failing which result in automatic cancellation without notice along with forfeiture of CDR.
 - That I will handover the asset in good condition as received from the department on the day of expiring of auction contract.
 - That I will not approach the Courts for extension of contract period.
 - The bidder has to upload FSSAI & GST registration certificate/return.

Terms and Conditions:

- The interested parties should compulsorily visit & inspect the asset before participating in the e-bidding process and the physical position of the site/asset shall stand on "as is where is" basis. As such, no claim of any deficiency, addition, alteration, rectification in the asset would be entertained during/after bidding process.
- The bidder participating in the e-bid process must apply in his name or the firm name duly registered in his name.
- Eligible persons shall be allowed to participate in the e-bidding process only after uploading of relevant documents mentioned in the Eligibility Criteria and EMD (after qualifying Pre-Qualification) in the shape of CDR, amounting to Rs. 50000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only) pledged in favour of Accounts Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority.
- There will be an escalation of 15% compounding on the offered bid amount of previous years for each successive year and thereafter to be deposited before two months from the start of every year. The bid offers should be above the minimum reserve bid.
- The minimum reserve bid has been fixed at Rs. 07.00 Lacs (Rupees Seven Lacs only). However, the bidder has to pay GST @ 18% of the offered bid and also for the successive years on compounding amounts including 15% escalation every year. All other applicable taxes shall be paid by the bidder on its own under an intimation to this office.
- Previous defaulters shall not be allowed to participate in the bidding process.
- The period of outsourcing shall be on license basis for a period of 03-years which will commence from the date of issuance of the formal allotment letter.
- The successful bidder shall have to deposit 100% of the offered bid for the 1st year within a period of three days with 50% on the culmination of bidding process.
- The successful bidder has to install amusement and other recreational activities in the park (pollution free) and has to take prior permission before start of the operation. Without the explicit permission of CEO Sonamarg Development Authority, the successful bidder shall not install any other activity within the premises of the parks.
- The contract shall be awarded for one year in the first instance and renewal of the same shall be subject to depositing of rentals for the each successive year in advance including 15% escalation on compounding amount before the expiry of the 1st year contract.
- In case the successful bidder fails to fulfill the term of contract, or leaves the contract half way or the contract is cancelled due to any disqualifications/non-payment of advance rent, the CDR

shall be forfeited.

12. The safety, security and upkeep and watch & ward of the asset shall be sole responsibility of outsourcee during the period of contract. The successful bidder shall ensure all safety measures like firefighting equipments, first aid kit etc. Sonamarg Development Authority shall not be responsible for any loss of life and property within the asset during the period of the contract.

13. The out-sourcing committee reserves the right to reject any or all the e-bids without assigning any reason thereof.

14. The successful bidder shall have to charge rates for various allotted services as per approval of the SDA from time to time.

15. The electric/water consumption charges shall be payable by the outsourcee & CDR shall be released after obtaining NOC from PHE & PDD.

16. The bidder should not be employee in any Govt. Deptt. or a Public Sector undertaking.

17. The successful bidder shall have to execute an agreement with CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority regarding adherence to the terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Department during the course of the contract period. The bidder shall have to bear all the costs and expenses for executing this agreement/license deed.

18. The successful bidder shall have to handover the property to the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority after completion of contract period with the list of inventory, received by him at the time of allotment/taking over.

19. The licensee shall not make any alterations or additions to the space/unit allotted, without seeking written permission from the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority.

20. The successful bidder shall arrange on his own all necessary stationery, staff or any other requirements for providing efficient services to the clients.

21. The licensee shall provide necessary uniform & name plates to the staff working in the premises & shall be responsible for any unfair act of the staff member for which, he shall be liable for criminal/civil action under rules/law if any required.

22. The Watch and ward of the property, maintenance of lawns and other subsidiaries and landscape, if any, shall be the sole responsibility of the licensee.

23. The licensee shall not, in any case, sub-let the premises to any other party.

24. The successful bidder shall have to provide services to the best satisfaction of tourists/locals. The bidder shall have to ensure that there isn't any complaint of misbehavior with the visitors/locals or by any of the staff member employed by the bidder in this regard. In case any complaint is received, action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against the bidder and penalty shall be imposed upon the defaulters.

25. In case of any negligence in running the service or compliant pertaining to bad performance, the contract shall be terminated without any notice by the department.

26. The allotted premises shall be inspected periodically by the departmentally authorized officers and in case the services of the licensee are not found satisfactory, the contract shall be liable for cancellation without any notice.

27. Any damage caused to the Government property at the site will invite penalty amounting to double the cost of damage or replacement of the same whatever the case may be, as per assessment to be made by the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority.

28. The Department shall reserve the right for using the space for any purpose or function or event as it may deem fit and no fee shall be charged by the licensee in this regard.

29. The Department shall reserve the right for installation and outsourcing of any other activity within the premises of the park.

30. The successful bidder will have to abide by all the orders/communications issued by Department from time to time during the period of contract as may necessitated in light of public unrest and law & order, security and in case of any other Administrative requirements.

31. The successful bidder shall ensure arrangement of furniture, electricity back up and availability of standard crockery/cutlery in the unit, on his own.

32. During the contract period the maintenance of the asset/area, watch and ward as well as upkeep and daily cleaning/sweeping shall be the sole responsibility of the licensee.

33. The successful bidder/License shall strictly adhere to all rules and regulations regarding commercial establishment, sanitation in vogue with focus on preservation of environment etc. within the territorial area and shall clear all applicable taxes like GST/IT etc. within the stipulated time. Any default on this account will be the sole responsibility of the successful bidder.

34. Any dispute arising out of or in connection with the contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, shall be referred Arbitration of Administrative Secretary Incharge Tourism Department, Government of J&K, whose decision shall be final & binding upon the parties. The proceedings of the Arbitration shall be conducted under the provisions of the J&K, Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1997 & rules and its amendment if any, framed there under.

35. Any natural or Anthropogenic/manmade calamity occurs. The highest bidder/ licensee shall not seek extension of lease or relaxation, nor such claims shall be entertained by Sonamarg Development Authority.

36. If the bidder intends to withdraw the agreed contract, he shall have to notify the Chief Executive Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority before three months without claim for refund of existing contract year.

37. If any minor repairs of the assets such as electrification, sanitary maintenance etc are to be done and these will be carried out by the licensee at his own cost, however, after seeking permission from the competent authority as per the direction of the inspecting authority from time to time which will help in maintenance of the asset.

38. No extensions shall be granted. The asset shall be outsourced afresh at the end of the license term.

39. The successful bidder has to run the asset as per the norms and conditions as prescribed within Tourist Trade Act in vogue.

40. The successful bidder shall follow the regulations of FSSAI and any other regulations framed in this regard.

41. The Authority shall not be responsible for any monetary loss due to any climate untowardness or due to any other reason.

42. The selected bidder shall be permitted to operate battery/electric carts for ferrying of guests categorically for Sonamarg Club, subject to prior permission granted by the Sonamarg Development Authority.

DIPK-NB-654/26
dated: 04-06-2026

Sd-
Chief Executive Officer
Sonamarg Development Authority

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing adhaar no : 9364 1141 9357 Rukeena Akhter while my correct name is Rakeena Begum. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned adhaar centre within seven days. After that no objections shall be entertained.
Rakeena Begum
W/o Bilal Ahmad Bhat

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing adhaar no : 387986275649 Ashiq Hussain Sheikh S/o Ghulam Qadir Sheikh while my correct name is ASHAQ HUSSAIN SHEIKH S/o GH QADIR SHEIKH. 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 adhaar centre within seven days. After that no objections shall be entertained.

ASHAQ HUSSAIN SHEIKH
S/o GH QADIR SHEIKH
R/o Dadora Hamchipora Budgam

bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform general public that my name as mentioned in my Aadhaar Card has been incorrectly recorded as RAFIT ZEHRA while as my actual name is RIFAT IBRAHIM. Now I want to change my name from old name (RAFIT ZEHRA) to new name (RIFAT IBRAHIM). In future I will be known as RIFAT IBRAHIM. Any person who has any objections or concerns regarding these changes is requested to raise them within 07 days from the date of this notice.

Rifat Ibrahim
D/O-Mohd Ibrahim Malik
Iskanderpora Budgam J&K 193411

bmg

THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

New Campus Bemina Srinagar

I have passed/appeared in Secondary School Examination under class 10th Roll No.: 339431session 2002 , class 11th Roll No.:1025/3732. session Oct Nov 2003, & class 12th Roll No ... 306309. Session:annual 2004 through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed by the concerned School/Board/parent against my Father's as Gh Gulam Hassan Bhat instead of Ghulam Hassan Bhat Now, I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, New Campus Bemina, Srinagar, if any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Certificates-KD within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained.
Mudasir Hassan Bhat
S/o Ghulam Hassan Bhat (correct) instead
Mother's name: Misra Bagum.
R/o.watargam wagoora baramulla.
10class Roll 339431 number=session BI Annual 2002
DoB: 06-09-1987
Mobile no: 7006261857



fko_r

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that I intend to change my name in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. 693371019428 from Fehmeeda Aslam to Fehmeeda. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified by my new/correct name Fehmeeda for all purposes and official records. If any person has any objection regard he/she may contact the concerned department within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. Thereafter, no objection shall be entertained.

Fehmeeda
W/o Late Mohammad Aslam Bhat
R/o Bilal Colony, Zakura, Srinagar
Mobile: 7006099781

Media line advt

PUBLIC NOTICE



It is notified for the information of the general public that the name of the father and Date of Birth of my daughter have been wrongly recorded in the school records of Al Noor Model School, Dhobiwan, Rafiabad.

- The correct particulars are:
- Student Name: Sham Su Nisa
 - Father's Correct Name: Javeed Ahmad Ganaie
 - Incorrect Father's Name in School Record: Javid Ahmad Ganaie
 - Correct Date of Birth: 15-09-2017
 - Incorrect Date of Birth in School Record: 06-01-2017

Now, I have applied before the concerned school authorities for correction of the above entries in the school records. If anybody has any objection to this correction, he/she may file the same before the concerned authorities within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Javeed Ahmad Ganaie
S/o Abdul Ahad Ganaie
R/o Peth Kanihama, Tehsil Magam,
District Budgam, J&K.

bmg

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कार्य नं./Event No. (GeM)	काम/सद विवरण / Job / Item Description
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GEM/2026/B/7614923	Mineral Bagging & Handling

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عنوان درخواست منجانب سید شہیناز ولد مرحوم محمد شہیناز لون ساکنہ موضع واگ تختیل
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اشتیہار ہمدرد واگ تختیل ہر خاص و عام
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اشخاص کو حذا یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر دفتر حذا میں پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرنے
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نائب تحصیلدار

fko

Srinagar Police Demolish ₹2-Crore Property of Drug Peddler

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police on Thursday demolished a three-storeyed residential structure worth approximately ₹2 crore belonging to an alleged drug peddler in the Rainawari area of Srinagar as part of the ongoing campaign against narcotics trafficking in Jammu and Kashmir.

The action was carried out by Srinagar Police in coordination with the Revenue Department under the ongoing anti-drug campaign aimed at dismantling networks associated with narcotics-related crimes.

According to police, the demolished structure belonged to Sheikh Tasaduq, son of Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, a resident of Mumkhan Mohalla, Rainawari.

Police said the accused is involved in multiple cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, including FIR No. 112/2019 at Police Station Awanti-

pora and FIR No. 81/2023 at Police Station Budgam. Authorities also stated that his spouse is involved in a separate NDPS case registered at Police Station Pulwama.

During an inquiry into the assets owned by the accused, police said it was established that the three-storeyed concrete structure had been constructed on encroached State land and was allegedly raised using proceeds derived from narcotics trafficking.

Officials said the demolition also resulted in the recovery of valuable government land that had been under unauthorized occupation.

After completion of legal formalities and verification procedures, the structure was demolished in the presence of Revenue Department officials.

Police said the action forms part of a broader strategy to target assets allegedly acquired through unlawful narcotics activities and to dismantle the financial infrastructure supporting the drug trade. [KNT]

LG Sinha Highlights Kashmir's Cultural Legacy at Rang-e-Kashmir Festival



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday attended the 'Rang-e-Kashmir Cultural Festival' in Srinagar today. This week-long event showcases J&K's priceless handlooms and handicrafts and draws both art lovers and buyers. Speaking on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor said that Jammu Kashmir is a living canvas, painted with centuries of wisdom, innovation, artistry, and craft.

"A nation's true strength lies not only in its wealth or might, but also in richness of its spirit, depth of its traditions and the vitality of its culture. India is a land where knowledge blossomed, traditions endured, and culture remained the soul that bound its people together," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor applauded the efforts of Pumbuch Cultural Heritage Foundation and its Director Superna Sapru, for conserving, nurturing, and reviving Jammu Kashmir's abundant cul-

tural heritage. He said the mission of foundation, injects new energy into traditions so the voices of our artisans, craftsmen, and traditional artists will continue to resonate for generations to come.

Culture is not the static artifact of history but in fact it is a living force that shapes our present and guides our future. Jammu Kashmir is home to exceptional artisans who can turn an ordinary piece of wood into something timeless. There are hundreds of esteemed craftspeople who weave thousands of years of cultural stories into fabric. There are papier-mache artisans who carve the very soul of Jammu Kashmir into each piece," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that there are renowned musicians in Jammu Kashmir who are carrying the region's melodic traditions.

"These musicians are guardians of our identity, keepers of our memories, and the makers of our tradition's continuity. This event is a vibrant classroom where tradition and innovation converge,

where the old inspires the new, and where people come together to celebrate the diversity that defines us. I believe one of our foremost responsibilities is to connect Jammu Kashmir's youth with handloom, handicraft, and the arts. The future of our culture rests in youth's hands and they must be made aware of the invaluable heritage," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor felicitated various renowned artists for their significant contribution at the event organised by Pumbuch Cultural Heritage Foundation in collaboration with Department of Tourism J&K.

Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce; Superna Sapru, Director, Pumbuch Cultural Heritage Foundation; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Masrat-ul-Islam, Director Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir; senior officials of police and civil administration, members of Pumbuch Cultural Heritage Foundation and prominent artists and artisans were present.

Four Houses Guttled in Fire Incident

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A massive fire broke out in the Kalwal Mohalla area of Rainawari in Srinagar on Thursday evening, damaging at least four residential houses and triggering panic in the densely populated locality.

Officials told KNO that the blaze erupted late in the evening, following which teams from the Fire and Emergency Services department and police rushed to the spot to launch rescue and firefighting operations.

According to officials, at least four houses were involved in the

incident, while efforts were underway to prevent the flames from spreading to adjacent structures in the congested neighborhood.

"Fire service personnel and police teams are actively engaged in dousing the flames. More details will be shared once the situation is brought under control," an official said.

Locals also joined the rescue efforts and were seen assisting authorities in evacuating residents and controlling the fire.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known, while no casualties had been reported at the time this report was filed.

Health, Education, Civic Issues Raised at Srinagar Outreach

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo on Thursday presided over a Mega Public Outreach Programme at Banquet Hall here during which scores of public delegations, individuals and representatives of civil society organizations projected their grievances and developmental demands.

MLA Eidgah, Mubarik Gul; MLA Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagor; MLA Lal Chowk, Sheikh Ahsan Pardesi; MLA Chanapora, Mushtaq Ahmad Guroo; Director School Education Kashmir, ADDC Srinagar, Director Colleges, other senior officers of district administration and large number of locals and public delegations were also present on the occasion.

Interacting extensively with the participants, Minister Sakeena Itoo patiently listened to their concerns and assured them that the Government remains fully committed to addressing genuine public issues in a prompt and effective manner. "Public outreach programmes serve vital platforms for strengthening the connection between the administration and the people while ensuring that governance remains accessible and responsive to citizens needs", she stated.

The Minister directed the officers present to maintain a proactive approach in resolving public grievances and stressed the importance of ensuring timely disposal of complaints.



She said that every grievance must be treated with seriousness and sensitivity, adding that responsive governance is essential for building public confidence in Government institutions.

"Public welfare remains the foremost priority of the Government. Officers must ensure that issues brought before them are addressed within stipulated timelines and citizens do not face unnecessary delays in availing government services," she stated.

Sakeena Itoo further underscored the need for enhanced coordination among various departments to facilitate swift resolution of public issues. She instructed the concerned officials to undertake regular field visits, monitor developmental works on the ground and maintain continuous engagement with the people to better understand and address their concerns.

During the programme, several delegations sought augmentation of healthcare services, upgradation of educational institutions, upgradation of roads, filling of vacant posts in

health and education departments, improvement of civic amenities and inclusion of deserving beneficiaries under various welfare schemes. The Minister issued on-the-spot directions in a number of cases and instructed the concerned departments to submit action taken reports on issues requiring further examination.

Highlighting the Government's vision of inclusive development, the Minister reiterated that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen healthcare delivery systems, improve educational infrastructure and expand the reach of social welfare programmes across Jammu and Kashmir. "Government is working tirelessly to ensure that the benefits of developmental schemes reach every section of society without discrimination", she remarked.

The Minister also urged the public to actively participate in developmental initiatives and maintain close coordination with local administrations for effective implementation of welfare programmes and public projects.

Support Trust Launches ROTI BANK KASHMIR - Humanitarian Food Distribution Initiative

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Support Trust on Thursday inaugurated a landmark humanitarian initiative at its Srinagar office. The initiative aims to provide ready-to-eat, hygienically prepared food packets to needy individuals across Kashmir, with a special focus on hospitals, orphanages, and charitable institutions.

The formal inauguration was graced by Tasleema, Veteran Social Activist, and G. N. Var, a well-reputed public figure of the valley, in the presence of noted social activists, veteran representatives from diverse fields, and energetic volunteers of Support Trust. Their participation underscored the collective spirit of community service and the shared vision of compassion and dignity that this initiative embodies.

The first lot of food distribution was carried out at Lalla Ded Hospital, where beneficiaries warmly welcomed the effort and expressed that such initiatives are the need of the hour. Their appreciation highlighted the immediate impact of the program and reinforced the importance of extending such services to vulnerable sections of society.

Briefing the media, representatives of Support Trust emphasized that the initiative in collaboration with the noble Roti Bank movement of Mr. Yousuf Mukati - Roti Bank Sewa Trust. They clarified that this is only the beginning, launched on a pilot basis, and with the support of the general public, the program will expand to reach all needy platforms and locations beyond hospitals. The underlying principle guiding this effort is simple yet profound: "Support by the People, For the People."

TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
PDD: 0194-2450213
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES :
2479488,2452222,2452155
CAPD: 18001807011
SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
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)

PRAYERS

FAJR 3:37
ZUHR 12:29
ASR 5:28
Magrib 7:41
ISHA 9:22

From KO Archives

- 754 - Friezen murders bishop Boniface & over 50 companions
- 1257 - Kraków, Poland, receives city rights.
- 1284 - Charles of Salerno is captured by Roger of Lauria during a naval battle in the Gulf of Naples, part of the Sicilian Vespers uprising
- 1288 - Battle of Woeringen: Reinold I vs Jan I
- 1305 - Archbishop Bertrand the Got of Bordeaux elected Pope Clement V
- 1507 - England and Netherlands sign trade agreement
- 1625 - Spanish troops under Spinola conquer Breda
- 1716 - England and Emperor Karel VI signs military treaty
- 1752 - Prince William of Orange becomes Knight of Garter
- 1794 - US Congress passes the Neutrality Act, banning Americans from serving in foreign armed forces
- 1798 - The Battle of New Ross: The attempt to spread United Irish Rebellion into Munster is defeated.
- 1827 - Turks capture the Acropolis and take Athens during Greek War of Independence
- 1832 - Anti-monarchist forces launch an uprising in Paris, starting the unsuccessful June Rebellion
- 1882 - Storm & floods hits Bombay; about 100,000 die
- 1902 - Emperor Wilhelm II responds to growing demands from Polish and other Slavic peoples living within German territory by calling for more 'Germanization' of the slavs
- 1916 - The Sheriff Hussein proclaims a revolt of the Arabs in the province of Hejaz, an action that undermines the Turkish Empire
- 1917 - 10 million US men begin registering for draft in WW I
- 1940 - Battle of France begins in WW II
- 1942 - USA declares war on Bulgaria, Hungary & Romania
- 1945 - USA, UK, USSR, France declare supreme authority over Germany
- 1959 - The first independent government of the State of Singapore is sworn in with Lee Kuan Yew as Prime Minister
- 1963 - State of siege proclaimed in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini arrested

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR,
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, KASHMIR

MESSAGE FOR FARMERS

All the orchardists/farming community of the valley are advised not to Purchase/ use the below mentioned batch Nos of pesticide products in their fields, which has been declared as Misbranded by the Quality Control Laboratory Lalmandi Srinagar

The details of Misbranded Pesticide products are as under:-

S.No	Name of the Product	Active Ingredient	Batch No	Date of Manufacture	Date of expiry	Manufactured/Marketed by
1	Fixapp	Alpha Naphthyl Acetic Acid 4.5% SL	TANAA/004	07.03.2026	06.03.2028	M/S Tyrone Agro Chemicals Pvt. Ltd
2	Saifo 505	Chloropyrifos 50% + Cypermethrin 5% EC	JSPF/CC2526/002	05.03.2026	04.03.2028	M/S Saifum Pesticides & Fertilizers
3	Alpha Rix	Alpha Naphthyl Acetic Acid 4.5% SL	ANAA-01	Apr-26	Mar-28	Adicon Pesticide Pvt Ltd

All the Enforcement Officers/ Inspectors are directed to seize stocks of the above said pesticide product under Batch No: TANAA/004, JSPF/CC2526/002 & ANAA-01 proceed further as per the provisions of Insecticides Act-1968 and Rules made there under.

Sd/-
Deputy Director Law Enforcement
Kashmir

DIPK-1823-26
DT: 04/06/2026

Government of Jammu and Kashmir,
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, KASHMIR

MESSAGE FOR FARMERS

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The details of Misbranded Pesticide products are as under:-

S.No	Name of the Products	Active Ingredient	Batch Nos	Date of Manufacture	Date of expiry	Manufactured/Marketed by
1	SY 505	Chlorpyrifos 50%+ Cypermethrin 5% EC	PCS/107-25/24	25.02.2026	24.02.2028	Prism Crop Sciences Pvt Ltd
2	OVATE	Chlorothalonil 75 % WP	P1225BN046	15.08.2025	14.08.2027	B R Agrotech Ltd mkted by FMC India Pvt Ltd
3	OVATE	Chlorothalonil 75 % WP	P1225BN003	29.05.2025	28.05.2027	B R Agrotech Ltd mkted by FMC India Pvt Ltd
4	RATNALUX	Quinalphos 25% EC	RILRLX25407	27.03.2026	26.03.2028	M/S Ratnakar India Pvt Ltd
5	THIME	Thiophanate Methyl 70% WP	ASTH26D004	18.04.2026	17.04.2028	Albaugh India Pvt Ltd
6	Super premim 505	Chlorpyrifos 50% + Cypermethrin 5% EC	RILSRP25409	16.01.2026	15.01.2028	M/S Ratnakar India Pvt Ltd
7	Super premim 505	Chlorpyrifos 50% + Cypermethrin 5% EC	RILSRP25409	16.01.2026	15.01.2028	M/S Ratnakar India Pvt Ltd

All the Enforcement Officers/ Inspectors are directed to seize stocks of the above said pesticide product under Batch Nos: PCS/107-25/24,P1225BN046,P1225BN003,RILRLX25407, ASTH26D004, RILSRP25409 & RILSRP25409 proceed further as per the provisions of Insecticides Act-1968 and Rules made there under.

Sd/-
Deputy Director Law Enforcement
Kashmir

DIPK-1824-26
DT: 04/06/2026

Pakistan Denies Dar Shared Iran Nuclear Information

By Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad, Jun 4 (PTI) Pakistan on Thursday rejected reports that Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar shared any information about Iran's nuclear programme with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during their recent meeting in Washington.

Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi was asked about reports that Dar, who is also the foreign minister, shared Iran's nuclear information with Rubio during their meeting on May 29.

Pakistan rejected reports of the deputy premier "exchanging any kind of information about Iran's nuclear programme," Andrabi said.

"No such information was shared," he added.

Former Central Intelligence Agency analyst Larry Johnson, quoting an unnamed source, claimed that Dar had a conversation with Rubio that "revealed what Iran is prepared to do to preserve its in-

dependence", which allegedly "alarmed" the top US diplomat.

Dar's meeting with Rubio during his brief visit to Washington came days after the Quad foreign ministerial meeting in New Delhi.

After their meeting, Rubio said the two sides agreed upon the importance of working together to further strengthen a meaningful partnership for better security and more prosperity for our two nations.

The two sides agreed to strengthen the bilateral co-operation in all areas of mutual interest, including trade and investment, security, and counter-terrorism, the Pakistan Foreign Office said.

The US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28. The conflict was halted when a ceasefire was brokered on April 8. Since then, the two sides have been exchanging messages through Pakistan for peace talks.

In April, Pakistan hosted the first direct talks between the US and Iran, but the two countries failed to reach a deal.



Scene of ceremony at the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in southern Tehran, Iran June 4, 2026. Photo/WANA

US, Israel Have a Problem with Independent Iran: Khamenei

Iran Leader Warns Against Divisions After 'Enemy's Defeat on Battlefield'

Trans Asia News

Tehran - Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday that the United States and Israel oppose the emergence of a strong and independent Iran and are using all available means to hinder the country's progress, while warning that actions that create public disappointment ultimately serve the interests of Iran's adversaries.

In a message marking the 37th anniversary of the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic, Khamenei said Iran's enemies had shifted their focus to "hybrid warfare" after suffering setbacks in confrontations with the country's armed forces.

In a message marking the 37th anniversary of the death of Islamic Republic founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Khamenei called for national unity and vigilance, warning that actions that fuel public pes-

simism or disappointment effectively aid Iran's enemies.

The message was read on his behalf during ceremonies attended by millions of Iranians at Khomeini's mausoleum in southern Tehran, where mourners gathered to commemorate the architect of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and renew their allegiance to its ideals.

"The malicious enemy, having been defeated in its confrontation with your brave sons in the Armed Forces and having experienced a profound and meaningful humiliation both on the battlefield and in the public arena, has concentrated its efforts on two objectives in the framework of hybrid warfare: weakening the people's resilience and creating miscalculations among the country's officials," Mojtaba Khamenei said.

He said Iran's adversaries were seeking to compensate for military setbacks by pursuing non-military means to under-

mine the country from within.

"The system of domination that created a military outpost, called Israel, nearly 80 years ago cannot accept the existence of a strong and independent Iran, endowed with numerous advantages and capabilities, on the eastern border of the false and fictitious geography of Greater Israel, that is, the east of the Euphrates, so it spares no effort to prevent its (Iran's) progress," he said.

Khamenei warned that Iran's enemies were attempting to spread doubt, frustration, fear, mistrust and discord among the population.

He urged Iranians to counter such efforts through unity, cohesion and mutual trust.

The Supreme Leader also stressed the role of government officials in maintaining public confidence.

"Any act that causes pessimism and disappointment among the people is considered a kind of aid to the enemy of this country and its people," he said.

15 'Illegal' Mosques in Itanagar Shut Down

Press Trust Of India

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sonu on Thursday said the 24-hour bandh called by an indigenous body from June 5 over illegal mosques was "no longer relevant" as the authorities have identified and shut down all 15 such structures operating in the Itanagar Capital Region without required approvals.

The Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation (APIYO) called for a 24-hour capital bandh from 5 am on Friday to 5 am on Saturday to press for action against alleged unauthorised mosques and to highlight concerns over illegal immigration in the northeastern state.

Addressing a press conference here, Sonu, who is also the government spokesperson, said the district administration had already sealed or closed 12 such mosques, while the remaining three, reportedly functioning on private lands, were also closed on Wednesday.

With all 15 identified structures no longer operational, the government believes the primary demand raised by APIYO has been addressed, he said.

"The issue that led to the bandh call has been resolved. Since all the identified mosques have been closed, there is no reason for the agitation to continue," Sonu said.

He said the action followed verification by the authorities, which found several of the structures lacking mandatory clearances and compliance with legal provisions, including registration, building permissions, development approvals and other statutory requirements.

The minister reiterated that the government remains committed to ensuring that all institutions and establishments function within the framework of the law while maintaining peace and communal harmony in the state.

APIYO had claimed that repeated appeals to the authorities

“The issue that led to the bandh call has been resolved. Since all the identified mosques have been closed, there is no reason for the agitation to continue”

on the issue had failed to yield adequate results, prompting it to launch the agitation.

APIYO leaders asserted that the stir was aimed at safeguarding indigenous interests and ensuring strict enforcement of laws governing land use, settlement and the construction of religious structures.

The organisation had also expressed concern over what it termed demographic and security challenges arising from alleged illegal immigration.

Referring to illegal immigration, another key demand raised by APIYO, Sonu said the state government is actively engaging with various stakeholders on the issue.

"Taking the matter seriously, Chief Minister Pema Khandu on May 27 convened a seven-hour high-level consultative meeting attended by student bodies, community-based organisations, legal experts, political parties and civil society groups to deliberate on several related issues," he said.

Sonu said the chief minister had also announced the creation of a dedicated department for the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system to strengthen its enforcement and safeguard indigenous tribal rights.

The minister said the government had decided to constitute four high-powered committees to examine issues relating to re-verification of APST certificates, non-APST offspring, strengthening of the ILP framework and illegal immigration in the state.

Malviya Nagar Fire

Govt to Pay Rs 10 Lakh to Kin, 5 Lakh to Seriously Injured

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Delhi government on Thursday announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 10 lakh to the next of kin of people who died in the Malviya Nagar fire after chief minister Rekha Gupta met injured people at a hospital.

A fire in a bread-and-breakfast establishment in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar on Wednesday morning claimed 21 lives, including 12 foreigners, and left 25 other people injured.

In a post on X, the Delhi CMO said Gupta interacted with the injured and their family members. He said the medical expenses of the injured will be facilitated in coordination with

After meeting people admitted to the Max Saket hospital, Gupta directed the administration to ensure that the best possible medical care is provided to all patients and to ensure necessary coordination regarding the cases of foreign nationals.

BJP MLA from Malviya Nagar Satish Upadhyay, who accompanied Gupta, said the condition of all the injured persons admitted to the hospital is better now.

"The chief minister talked to them, and the government's priority is that they receive the best treatment and recover. The condition of the patients has markedly improved over the last twenty-four hours," Upadhyay said.

The MLA said 17 injured per-



the hospital authorities, ensuring every patient receives the best possible care.

"An ex gratia of Rs 10 lakh will be provided to the next of kin of each deceased, and those who have been seriously injured will receive Rs 5 lakh in assistance," said the CMO.

The chief minister said some patients are in critical condition, while others have been placed on ventilator support.

"The affected individuals include citizens from various countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Cameroon, and Libya, in addition to those from India," she said.

sons were admitted at Max Saket hospital, out of which seven were on ventilators. All were receiving proper treatment, he said.

Officials said Gupta praised people for their efforts and courage in relief efforts and directed officials to identify and honour such people. "She directed officials to identify and honour citizens, police personnel and employees who made contributions to the relief and rescue efforts," the official said.

It said arrangements are being made to transport the mortal remains of the deceased to their native homes.'

Who Is Lavkesh Bajaj, Arrested in Delhi Fire Case?

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Until Wednesday morning, Lavkesh Bajaj was known locally as the owner of three hotels tucked inside the narrow lanes of Malviya Nagar in south Delhi, catering to a steady stream of visitors, including foreign nationals seeking medical treatment in the capital.

However, 21 deaths in a fire at one of those establishments, Flourish Stay B&B in Hauz Rani, have now brought the businessman and his operations under public scrutiny.

Bajaj, who lives with his wife in a multi-storey house in Saket, kept his personal life largely away from the bed-and-breakfast (B&B) business.

His children live abroad, while locals said he was not a frequent presence at the properties he owned in Malviya Nagar, leaving much of the day-to-day operations to his employees.

Police arrested Bajaj on Wednesday evening, and booked him for culpable homicide and other charges.

According to police sources, the businessman acquired the building housing Flourish Stay from a private contractor in 2022.

At the time, the structure had two-and-a-half floors. He later added another one-and-a-half floors and initially rented out rooms while also obtaining a licence to run a tea shop from the premises, they said.

Over the years, Bajaj built a hospitality network in the area. Besides Flourish Stay, he also owns Flourish Inn and Green Residency, all located within the congested lanes of Hauz Rani, an area that has emerged as a preferred location for patients and attendants seeking accommodation near the Max Hospital in the vicinity.

Those familiar with the operations said Bajaj largely stayed away from the daily management of the properties. That responsibility rested with Jai Mishra, who joined him in 2022 after working as an accountant with a private firm in Malviya Nagar.

Mishra handled operations, accounts, and administrative affairs across the establishments, according to sources.

Documents being examined

“Documents being examined by the authorities indicate that licences linked to the bed-and-breakfast establishment were obtained in Mishra's name, showing him as the owner.”

by the authorities indicate that licences linked to the bed-and-breakfast establishment were obtained in Mishra's name, showing him as the owner.

Mishra has not been traced since the fire.

The deadly fire at Flourish Stay on Wednesday morning also cast attention on the manner in which Bajaj's establishments were operating.

Questions have been raised over building approvals, room capacity and safety infrastructure, with authorities scrutinising the records related to the three properties.

Activities at Bajaj's other establishments came to a halt after the fire incident, with both Flourish Inn and Green Residency remaining shut on Thursday.

Several occupants packed their belongings and left, while the staff at Green Residency were seen removing items from the building's basement on Wednesday evening.

Locals alleged that complaints regarding illegal constructions, poor ventilation, and inadequate fire-safety infrastructure at some of the guest houses in the area had been raised in the past but they did not result in any visible action.

NEWS MAKERS

NEET Aspirant's Note Blames Retest Pressure Before Suicide

Nagpur, Jun 4 (PTI) Days after an 18-year-old female NEET aspirant hailing from Madhya Pradesh allegedly ended her life in Maharashtra's Nagpur, her family stumbled upon a note written by her, in which she apologised to them, saying she did not have the courage to appear for a retest of the medical entrance.

In the emotional note, the student, Akanksha Chaturvedi, said there was "no guarantee" that she would score good marks in the retest, and said she had "ruined everything" for them.

Akanksha had appeared for the NEET-UG exam on May 3. After the test, she was upbeat and confident that she would score good marks. But the cancellation of that exam following allegations of a paper leak dashed her hopes and left her anxious and upset, according to her family members.

On May 12, the National Testing Agency cancelled the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET UG)-2026 held on May 3 after paper leak

allegations. A re-examination was then scheduled for June 21. Nearly 23 lakh candidates had registered for the test.

Akanksha, a native of Maunanj district in MP, was preparing for the NEET



at a coaching institute in Nagpur.

However, a week after the announcement about cancellation of the May 3 exam, she was found hanging in her room at their home in Nagpur on May 20.

When the family sat for lunch around noon that day, Akanksha told them that she would eat later as she was not hungry, and retired to her room. Around 3

pm, her family found her hanging inside the room, but no suicide note was found at that time, the police said.

Her death devastated the family. Days later, when they were going through her books and study material, they found her hand-written note, which they subsequently submitted to the Ambazari police on June 1.

The note said, "Mummy, Papa... you had trust in me that I would study and become a doctor. But I do not have the courage to appear for a retest. In the first test, I was about to score good marks. But there is no guarantee that I will score good marks again. Sorry, Mummy, Papa, I have ruined everything for both of you."

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone II) Nityanand Jha said they have received the note, which is now part of the investigation.

"The girl ended her life in Nagpur, where the entire family was residing. The note surfaced when the family members were rummaging through her books. It has

been submitted to the police, and investigation is now underway to ascertain all circumstances related to the case," Jha said.

According to police, Akanksha's note reflects her anxiety about appearing for the examination again. She apologised to her parents and wrote that although she expected good marks in her first attempt, she no longer felt confident about going through the process all over again.

Her father, Krishna Kumar Chaturvedi, a small farmer who also worked as a cook in Nagpur to support the family, told the police that his daughter had returned from the examination feeling optimistic and expected to score more than 650 marks.

However, the family members later noticed a significant change in Akanksha's behaviour as she appeared increasingly disturbed following reports of paper leak and exam rescheduling.

An official of the Ambazari police station said the statements of her family members have been recorded, and further probe was on.



CM Omar Hands over Disbursal Letters to Beneficiaries

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today handed over disbursal letters to 6 beneficiaries worth ₹1.12 crore under Mission YUVA here at the Civil Secretariat.

Under Mission YUVA, ₹209 crore has been disbursed in 3,367 cases during April and May, reaffirming Government's focus on youth entrepreneurship and employment generation.

During the event, it was informed that out of a total of 5,016 sanctioned cases amounting to ₹269 crore, ₹209 crore covering 3,367 cases have been disbursed between April 1 and May 31.

The programme was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani.

Senior officers present on the occasion included Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, ACS APD Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, ACS Finance Shailendra Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Planning, Development and Monitoring Alice Vaz, Secretary Labour & Employment Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Mission Director Mission YUVA, Director IIM Jammu, representatives of

J&K Bank, and other concerned officers.

The Chief Minister congratulated the beneficiaries and expressed hope that the financial assistance would enable them to establish and expand sustainable business ventures, thereby generating employment and contributing to the region's economic growth.

Speaking on the broader vision of Mission YUVA, the Chief Minister said the initiative represents a transformative step towards building a robust ecosystem for youth entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that the government is committed to ensuring that young people are not job seekers alone, but job creators who drive innovation and economic progress.

He emphasized that Mission YUVA is designed to provide structured hand-holding, access to credit, skill development, and mentorship support to aspiring entrepreneurs. The Chief Minister said the programme is intended to bridge the gap between ideas and execution by simplifying access to institutional finance and improving coordination between banks, government departments, and training institutions.

CS Reviews Impediments, Steers Measures to Accelerate Solarisation across J&K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting of all the concerned Government stakeholders to review the progress of large-scale solarization initiatives being undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir and to resolve the bottlenecks identified by the Science & Technology Department in advancing these efforts across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Commissioner Secretary, Science & Technology Department; Managing Director, JPDCL/KPDCL, besides representatives of several other concerned departments.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for sustained and result-oriented follow-up by the Science & Technology Department on the issues deliberated upon, observing that a clear road map for addressing the challenges

had emerged through collective consultations with all stakeholders.

He underscored that the department should fully leverage the support being extended by the Finance Department and other agencies to achieve the solarization targets within defined timelines.

Emphasizing the immense potential of renewable energy in Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Secretary advised the department to undertake a comprehensive review of the land parcels identified on the PM Gati Shakti Portal and assess their suitability for establishment of mega solar parks under Government of India-supported programmes.

He called for a focused and mission-mode approach, directing the department to set measurable targets for the next six months, one year and two years, and ensure visible progress on the ground at each stage.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on a range of issues critical to the successful implementation of solar projects, including land acquisition and transfer, obtaining statutory clearances from various departments, execution of Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with distribution

companies for evacuation of power generated from solarized buildings, and measures required to maintain grid stability for optimal utilization of solar energy assets.

Discussions also centred on the installation of Virtual Net Metering systems in Government buildings, adoption of a Unified Billing System for departments in place of separate billing for individual buildings, and provision of fresh power connections wherever required to facilitate seamless implementation of solar projects.

The stakeholders further deliberated upon the need for rationalization and levelization of rates for projects being implemented under the Renewable Energy Service Company (RESCO) model to ensure greater efficiency of solar energy solutions across departments.

The meeting also reviewed the long-term roadmap for development of mega-scale solar power infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. Detailed discussions were held on issues relating to land transfer, execution of PPAs and feeder segregation, which are considered essential for efficient integration and utilization of future solar power assets in the Union Territory.

NC Using Statehood for Political Mileage: BJP MP

SRINAGAR: BJP Rajya Sabha MP Gulam Ali Khatana on Thursday termed the National Conference's proposed protest for restoration of statehood to J&K as a "political stunt".

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Pattan village in North Kashmir, Khatana, as per KNO said, "The National Conference had relied on political theatrics during the Assembly election campaign and was now attempting to divert attention from what he described as its failure to fulfil promises made to the people."

"The National Conference was high on dramas during the election campaign and made tall promises to the people. They cannot give statehood. It is the Centre that has to restore statehood and both the Prime Minister and Home Minister have already made their position clear on the issue," he said.

BJP MP alleged that the ruling party secured electoral support through political rhetoric but had failed to address key public concerns during its nearly two years in office.

"It has been close to two years and people are not happy with the promises made in the party's manifesto. The situation in education and healthcare sectors remains unsatisfactory," he said.

Khatana claimed that several schools continue to face an acute shortage of teaching staff, with some institutions functioning with only one or two teachers despite having hundreds of students. He also alleged that many hospitals are struggling due to a shortage of doctors and cited Banihal as an example.

He claimed that dissatisfaction existed within the ruling party itself and said even some of its legislators were unhappy with the leadership. "The Omar Abdullah-led government has left people on God's mercy and failed to address their day-to-day issues," he alleged.

Highlighting the role of youth, Khatana said young people in Jammu and Kashmir were increasingly focusing on education, sports, entrepreneurship and social reform initiatives. (Observer News Service)

BJP Picks Tarun Chugh for Rajya Sabha

SRINAGAR: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced its National General Secretary and J&K & Ladakh in-charge, Tarun Chugh, as a candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections from Madhya Pradesh. The polls are scheduled for June 18, 2026.

As per KNO, Chugh has been nominated as BJP's candidate from Madhya Pradesh where his win is certain.

Born in Amritsar, Punjab, Chugh holds an MBA in Human Resources and began his political journey with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Over the years, he has emerged as a prominent figure in national politics.

He is credited with playing a crucial role in BJP's 29-seat tally in the 2024 J&K Assembly elections. (Observer News Service)

Kashmir Regaining Its Sufi-Rishi Legacy: Andrabi

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR — Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi on Wednesday said Sufism represents the soul of Kashmir and stressed the need to strengthen interfaith harmony, communal peace and coexistence in the Union Territory.

Addressing an interfaith conference, "Reshi-waer", at the SKICC here, Andrabi said Jammu and Kashmir has emerged from a difficult phase and is witnessing a renewed atmosphere of peace and social cohesion.

"We have come out of the darkest period of our modern history, and now, while we have established peace in J&K, we have rebuilt the bridges between communities and are on the path of erasing all black spots of division and animosity from society," she said.

The Waqf Board chairperson said the J&K was "rewriting itself through communal harmony and

peace" and witnessing "a new dawn".

She said members of different communities, including Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, were strengthening bonds of mutual respect and cooperation.

"We are now enthusiastically and heartily celebrating interfaith harmony. Such gatherings let people speak, inspire youth and mark a future they lacked for 35 years," Andrabi said.

Referring to Kashmir as "Reshiwaer" — the abode of saints, rishis and sufis — she said the region was gradually regaining its historic cultural and spiritual identity.

Andrabi said ideologies promoting hatred, division and violence had no place in society and emphasised the importance of preserving the traditions of inclusivity and coexistence.

The interfaith conference was attended by religious scholars, social leaders, academics and members of civil society from different communities.

4 Drug Peddlers Arrested in Sopore

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a major breakthrough under the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, police achieved significant success against drug trafficking networks by arresting 04 drug peddlers in separate operations in Sopore besides, apprehended a drug consumer in Baramulla.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, in Sopore, a police party of Police Station Sopore, while conducting patrolling in the Badambagh area, intercepted three suspicious persons carrying bags who attempted to flee into nearby orchards but were tactfully apprehended. During their search, police recovered a total of 150 bottles of Codeine-based syrup from their possession. They have been identified as Irfan Ahmad Peer son of Khurshid Ahmad Peer, Ajaz Ahmad Mattoo son of Gh. Nabi Mattoo, Umer Zahoor Najar son of Zahoor Ahmad Najar, all residents of Badambagh. Similarly, during routine night naka checking at Sangrama-

Seer Crossing, a party of Police Post Putkha intercepted one suspicious person identified as Majid Ashraf Khan son of Mohammad Ashraf Khan resident of Peth Seer. During his personal search, police recovered Spasmo-Proxyvon Plus capsules from his possession.

In Baramulla, Police apprehended a drug consumer during routine checking in Tangmarg and registered a case under the NDPS Act. A police party of Police Station Tangmarg at a checkpoint established near DFO Office Tangmarg intercepted a suspicious person identified as Ikhlaq Ahmad Khatana son of Gulam Mohammad Khatana resident of Darakassi, appeared to be under the influence of intoxicating substances. Upon his personal search, incriminating articles associated with narcotic substance consumption were recovered from his possession. The accused was subsequently subjected to medical examination, during which he tested positive for Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), indicating recent consumption of cannabis-based narcotic substances.

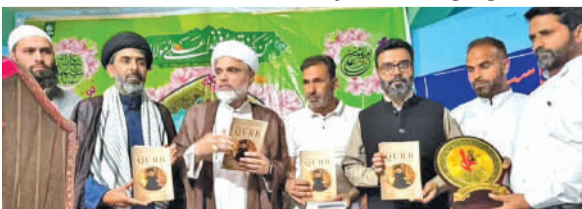
Religious Gatherings Mark Eid-e-Ghadeer Celebrations across Kashmir

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: Shia Muslims across the Kashmir Valley celebrated Eid-e-Ghadeer with religious fervour on Thursday, organising rallies, congregations and commemorative programmes to mark one of the most important occasions in the Shia Islamic calendar.

portraits of revered Islamic personalities while chanting slogans in praise of Imam Ali (AS) and expressing their devotion to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (AS).

A major congregation was held at Jamia Imam Reza (AS), at Gund Hasi Bhat in the outskirts of Srinagar where religious scholars and community leaders highlighted the



The celebrations were held in several parts of the Valley, with a rally taking place in Srinagar, where hundreds of men, women and children participated along the scenic Foreshore Road on the banks of Dal Lake. Participants carried religious banners and

historical and spiritual significance of Eid-e-Ghadeer. Among those who attended the event were Member Parliament Agha Syed Ruhullah, Moulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, Moulana Abdul Hussain and others. People from other faiths also joined the event.

Thousands in Kargil Commemorate 37th Death Anniversary of Imam Khomeini



Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: Thousands of people from across the Kargil region of Ladakh on Thursday gathered to commemorate the 37th death anniversary of Imam Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a solemn ceremony marked by tributes, prayers, and renewed commitment to the ideals he championed.

Imam Khomeini, who led Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and passed away on June 3, 1989, is widely revered by millions around the world for his advocacy of justice, resistance against oppression, and promo-

tion of Islamic values. More than three decades after his passing, his legacy continues to resonate among many communities, including in Kargil, which shares deep religious and cultural ties with Iran.

The commemoration drew large crowds of men, women, and children, alongside religious scholars, community leaders, and representatives of various social and religious organizations. Participants paid homage to Imam Khomeini's life and legacy, describing him as a transformative religious and political figure whose influence transcended national boundaries.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER PAHLOO.

e-mail : bdopahloojk@gmail.com, jk-pahloo@nic.in

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

For Door-to-Door Collection, Segregation & Transportation of Solid Waste within Panchayat Halqas of Block Pahloo for the financial year 2026-27, The Office of the Block Development Officer, Pahloo invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from eligible, experienced and registered individuals/agencies/organizations/NGOs/SHGs for undertaking Door-to-Door Collection, Segregation, Transportation and Scientific Disposal of Solid Waste generated within the Panchayat Halqas falling under Block Pahloo, District Kulgam under SBM-G.

Scope of Work

The successful agency shall be responsible for the following works:

Door-to-Door Collection of Solid Waste from all identified households, commercial establishments, shops, institutions, hotels, markets and other establishments within the notified Panchayat Halqas. Segregation of Waste at Source and transportation of:

Bio-degradable waste to designated Compost Pits/Segregation Sheds/Processing Units. Non-bio-degradable waste to designated PMWU/Segregation Centres identified by the Department. Collection shall be carried out on a regular and systematic basis, ensuring cleanliness and sanitation in all assigned Panchayats.

The agency shall ensure that no waste is dumped in open areas, roadsides, water bodies, riverbanks or any public place.

The agency shall maintain:

Segregation sheds/community compost pits/assets handed over by the Department.

Vehicles and equipment deployed for collection and transportation.

The agency shall deploy:

Sufficient trained manpower,

Drivers/helpers/sanitation workers,

Supervisory staff for smooth operation of services.

Garbage collection vehicles shall visit each household/establishment not less than four times a week or as directed by the Department.

The agency shall provide a proper time schedule/route plan for waste collection in the allotted Panchayats.

User charges/collection fee from households and establishments shall be collected strictly as approved by the Panchayat /Department against proper receipts or online mode only. No unauthorized fee shall be charged.

The agency shall ensure proper handling, transportation and disposal of waste in accordance with SBM-G guidelines and directions issued by competent authorities from time to time. The agency shall remain responsible for sanitation arrangements during public gatherings, festivals, marriage functions and other events wherever required within the allotted area.

The agency shall maintain complaint/contact mechanism for grievance redressal regarding waste collection and sanitation issues. The agency shall ensure operation of services on all working days including holidays, if required by the Department.

Eligibility Criteria

Interested agencies/individuals shall submit: Registration certificate (if applicable) Experience in similar works Manpower details Vehicle/equipment details Financial capability documents PAN/Aadhar/GST (where applicable)

CDR amounting Rs 30000/ in favour of Block Development Officer Pahloo. Any other relevant supporting documents

Preference shall be given to agencies having prior experience in Solid Waste Management/Sanitation Services.

Terms & Conditions

The agency shall work under overall supervision of the Block Development Officer, Pahloo.

The Department reserves the right to:

Accept or reject any EOI without assigning any reason.

Modify the scope of work as per requirement.

The selected agency shall execute an agreement with the Department before commencement of work. Any negligence, irregularity, non-performance or violation of guidelines may lead to cancellation of allotment/contract.

The agency shall be solely responsible for safety and conduct of deployed staff. Fuel, maintenance and operational expenses of vehicles/manpower shall be borne by the engaged agency unless otherwise specified.

Submission of EOI

Interested parties shall submit their EOI along with all requisite documents in a sealed envelope super scribed as:

"EOI for Door-to-Door Collection of Solid Waste - Block Pahloo"

The same shall be submitted in the office of the undersigned within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice during working hours.

Opening of EOI

The EOI/Tenders shall be opened on 11/06/2026 at 02:00PM in the office chamber of the undersigned in presence of the interested bidders who may wish to attend.

Further details regarding terms & conditions, Panchayat coverage and operational modalities can be obtained from the office of the Block Development Officer, Pahloo during office hours.

No: BDO/PHL/SBM/2026-27/ 426-428

Date: 04/06/2026

DIPK-1846-26

DT: 04/06/2026

Block Development Officer

Pahloo

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KO VIEW

Kashmir's Success Syndrome

A young man in Srinagar recently posted photographs from a gleaming co-working space. His social media feed showed business meetings, motivational quotes and snapshots from cafés that signal ambition and upward mobility.

Friends congratulated him on his apparent success, but what they did not see was the reality behind the images: an uncertain income, borrowed money and constant anxiety about keeping up appearances.

That story has become increasingly familiar in Kashmir.

Success has always occupied an important place in society. Families celebrate educational achievements, professional milestones and financial progress. Ambition pushes people to work harder and dream bigger. A troubling shift, however, has entered public life.

Success now functions as something people must display, promote and constantly prove.

Social media has accelerated that transformation. A generation ago, achievements spread through chats among relatives, neighbours and friends. Today, success appears on screens hundreds of times a day.

Promotions, start-ups, foreign trips, expensive gadgets and carefully staged lifestyles compete for attention in an endless stream of images.

Most people understand that social media presents selected moments rather than complete lives. Even so, repeated exposure creates powerful impressions.

A student preparing for examinations sees peers announcing scholarships and placements. A young entrepreneur watches competitors celebrate funding rounds and business launches. A recent graduate scrolls through photographs of friends working in major cities. Comparison soon becomes a daily habit.

Kashmir's young people face this pressure with particular intensity.

Employment opportunities remain limited, competition remains fierce and social expectations remain high. Families invest heavily in education and hope for visible signs of progress.

Social media amplifies those expectations and turns private aspirations into public performances.

The consequences reach far beyond individual stress. Some families spend beyond their means to maintain a certain image. Young professionals pursue prestigious titles rather than meaningful careers. Entrepreneurs invest heavily in branding while struggling to build sustainable enterprises.

Public perception gains influence while substance receives less attention.

A deeper problem emerges when appearance becomes the standard by which people judge themselves. Accomplishments lose their value because someone else seems to have achieved more. Satisfaction becomes temporary, and the next comparison waits only a few scrolls away.

Strong societies grow when people feel comfortable defining success in personal and realistic terms. A teacher improving students' lives, a farmer expanding production, a craftsman building a small business or a graduate supporting a family contributes something valuable, whether or not those achievements attract online applause.

Kashmir's ambition is clearly growing, and so are its opportunities. And that is a positive sign. The only challenge is to value genuine achievement over public display.

Success built on hard work, skill and purpose lasts far longer than the image projected on a screen.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Hidden Wealth

A guide to unlisted shares, where patient investors can back emerging businesses before they reach the stock market.

Irshad Mushtaq

Unlisted shares offer exciting opportunities to grow wealth and support local businesses. Kashmiri investors can explore these shares to join the journey of small companies becoming big success stories.

Unlisted shares come from businesses not traded on major stock exchanges like BSE or NSE. You buy them directly from the company or from existing shareholders. Imagine a local mineral water brand or an education institute gaining popularity. These businesses can grow, and investing early allows you to become part of their journey.

Angel investors play a key role in this growth. A talented entrepreneur in Kashmir may need funding to expand. An angel investor provides money in exchange for shares in the company. This investment needs careful planning. It can take years to see results, and finding a buyer for your shares takes time and effort.

Investing in unlisted shares teaches valuable lessons. Selling requires strategy and timing. Financial information relies on transparency and trust. Valuing a business encourages careful observation of performance. Regulatory guidelines from the Companies Act 2013 and some SEBI rules guide investors. Checking alignment with Shariah principles ensures ethical and responsible investment.

Understanding financial metrics strengthens confidence. Earnings per share show profitability. Price-to-earnings ratios highlight growth expectations. Official records reveal assets and liabilities clearly. Staying aware of inflated valuations or unrealistic promises ensures safe investment decisions.

Unlisted shares reward patience, research, and local insight. Investors gain firsthand experience of market dynamics and company growth.

The author is a Srinagar-based financial educator.

The Slow Death of Kashmir's Rice Bowl

This World Environment Day, Kashmir's disappearing paddy fields demand as much attention as glaciers and forests, carrying profound consequences for food security, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Mir Nabeena & S. Ilyas Rizvi

Kashmir is losing thousands of hectares of fertile farmland as paddy fields yield to concrete. Far more than a shift in land use, this transformation is reshaping the valley's food security, ecological balance and centuries-old agrarian heritage.

The slow disappearance of paddy lands ranks among the most significant environmental and social changes unfolding in Kashmir today.

Rice has occupied a central place in valley's history for centuries. It feeds households, sustains farming communities and anchors cultural traditions that have passed through generations.

Vast paddy fields once spread through Kashmir like green carpets, creating a landscape that blended agricultural productivity with natural beauty.

Those fields also performed ecological functions that rarely enter public debate.

They regulated water flow, reduced soil erosion, stored carbon, supported biodiversity and preserved traditional knowledge tied to farming cycles.

Their disappearance signals much more than a reduction in cultivated acreage. It shows the gradual weakening of an entire ecological and cultural system.

Kashmir possesses a remarkable heritage of traditional rice varieties. Names such as Mushqubudj, Zag, Kamad, Koshkar, Jhelum and Shalimar remain known to many Kashmiris.

These varieties evolved through generations of local adaptation and agricultural wisdom. Historical records indicate that more than one hundred rice varieties once flourished in the valley.

Today, only a small number remain under cultivation.

Modern lifestyles, changing farming practices, urban expansion and climatic pressures have gradually reduced their presence. Several traditional varieties face serious survival challenges. Their decline narrows genetic diversity and weakens the long-term adaptability of agriculture.

Agricultural biodiversity serves as insurance against future environmental stress. When diversity shrinks, vulnerability grows.

Rice also belongs to the Poaceae family, one of the most important plant groups on Earth. Beyond feeding people, grasses support livestock systems through fodder, pastures and silage.

The decline of paddy cultivation therefore reaches beyond rice production itself and influences broader agricultural systems.

Land conversion remains the most visible force behind the decline of Kashmir's paddy fields.

Population growth and urban expansion have transformed fertile agricultural land into residential colonies, commercial complexes and infrastructure projects. Areas surrounding Srinagar and its expanding suburbs illustrate this transformation with striking clarity.

Official figures reveal that Kashmir lost nearly 34,000 hectares of cultivable farmland between 1996 and 2023. That figure alone should command public attention.

Fertile land formed over centuries, but concrete replaces it within months.

The consequences already appear in food production. Local agricultural output struggles to keep pace with growing consumption.

Reports indicate that Kashmir now faces an overall food grain deficit of approximately 0.89 million tonnes. Supplies from Punjab, Haryana and other states help bridge that gap.

Dependence on external food sources introduces risks that deserve serious consideration.

Transportation disruptions, market fluctuations and climate-related shocks elsewhere can influence local food availability. Agricultural land therefore serves a strategic function alongside its economic value.

Climate pressures compound these challenges.

Farmers confront fluctuating temperatures, changing humidity patterns, declining rainfall and increasing water scarcity. Deforestation influences local ecological conditions, while human-wildlife conflict creates additional burdens for agricultural communities.

Research on grass diversity highlights the importance of maintaining balanced landscapes that include both forested and open habitats.

Conservation planning gains strength when it protects representative ecosystems rather than focusing exclusively on a single habitat type. Grasslands and agricultural landscapes support substantial biodiversity and deserve attention equal to forests.



Rice also belongs to the Poaceae family, one of the most important plant groups on Earth. Beyond feeding people, grasses support livestock systems through fodder, pastures and silage. The decline of paddy cultivation therefore reaches beyond rice production itself and influences broader agricultural systems.

Management practices that sustain ecological processes contribute to stronger and more diverse species communities.

These findings have direct relevance for Kashmir.

Paddy fields function as living ecosystems in the valley. Birds feed and nest within them, aquatic organisms thrive in their waters, and microorganisms support soil health and nutrient cycles.

Agricultural land and biodiversity exist in close partnership rather than opposition.

Our concern with this issue extends beyond academic research.

One of us studies botany and conservation biology, the other examines cultural heritage and social change.

Both perspectives point toward the same conclusion: Kashmir's paddy fields represent a living heritage whose value extends far beyond agricultural production.

Personal memory often reveals social change more clearly than statistics.

There was a time when travelling along the 90-foot road linking Srinagar and Ganderbal felt like moving through an open-air gallery of Kashmir's agrarian landscape. School journeys unfolded beside vast green fields stretching toward the horizon. Poplar trees marked field boundaries. The majestic peaks of Mahadev and Lidwas stood prominently in the distance. The Zabarwan Range embraced the entire landscape.

Those scenes communicated something fundamental about Kashmir. Agriculture existed at the centre of everyday life. Land, community and identity remained deeply connected.

The same route presents a different picture today.

Buildings emerge where fertile fields once stood. Commercial establishments appear beside housing colonies. Construction continues with remarkable speed. Agricultural land fragments into smaller patches surrounded by concrete.

This transformation has emotional significance because landscapes shape collective memory.

Kashmiris associate paddy fields with childhood experiences, seasonal change, family livelihoods and community life. Their disappearance alters

how people experience and understand the valley itself.

Economic calculations alone cannot capture that loss.

The story of Kashmir's paddy fields also belongs to the story of Kashmir's civilization.

Rice cultivation in the region traces its roots deep into history. Scholars connect its development to agricultural transitions that followed the decline of urban cultures associated with the Indus Valley between 2000 and 1500 BC. Historical evidence indicates that rice cultivation spread through Punjab, the principal route linking the Gangetic plains and Kashmir.

Archaeological findings from sites such as Gufkral provide additional evidence regarding early agricultural practices. Cultural historians and linguists have also pointed to interactions that influenced language, farming methods and social customs over long periods.

Rice farming evolved into far more than an economic activity. It became a social institution.

Traditional cultivation relied upon collective participation. Families, neighbours and communities worked together through successive stages of cultivation, transplantation, harvesting and storage. Cooperation strengthened social bonds while generating local employment.

Oral traditions preserve memories of these practices.

Agricultural work frequently included songs, storytelling and shared gatherings. Farming seasons encouraged social interaction that enriched community life throughout spring, summer and autumn.

Labour division within farming households created complementary responsibilities. Women played particularly important roles.

Many Kashmiris still recall scenes of women carrying beautifully crafted samavars and handmade wicker Za'ens filled with tea and homemade food for family members working in the fields. Meals became moments of fellowship. Songs known locally as Ne'and Be'ath formed part of the cultural atmosphere surrounding agricultural life.

These traditions connected work with community, creativity and belonging. Such scenes appear less frequently today.

Non-local labour now performs much of the seasonal agricultural work visible during planting periods. Labour mobility forms part of contemporary economic life, but this shift produces consequences that need instant attention.

Oral traditions linked to farming lose opportunities for transmission when local participation declines. Cultural practices rooted in agricultural life gradually fade from public experience. Employment opportunities connected to cultivation also move beyond the valley at a time when many young Kashmiris seek meaningful work.

Agriculture and culture have always existed side by side in Kashmir. The weakening of one influences the strength of the other.

Public awareness of these interconnected challenges remains limited.

Discussions about development often focus on immediate economic gains while overlooking environmental and cultural costs that emerge over decades. A broader understanding of environmental health can help bridge that gap.

Environmental change influences

food systems, water resources, biodiversity, public health and cultural continuity. Traditional knowledge systems also hold practical insights developed through generations of close interaction with local conditions. Their preservation strengthens future adaptation efforts.

Universities, research institutions and cultural organizations can contribute significantly by documenting agricultural heritage, examining environmental trends and evaluating long-term consequences of land conversion.

Strong research can support better policy decisions and informed public discussion.

Development and preservation do not represent competing goals. Successful societies pursue both simultaneously. Kashmir possesses the opportunity to follow that path.

Community-based conservation can strengthen local participation in land-use decisions. Awareness campaigns can help citizens understand the ecological and cultural importance of paddy ecosystems. Research institutions can support climate-resilient agriculture through improved rice varieties suited to changing conditions.

Public-private partnerships can encourage sustainable farming technologies and strengthen agricultural productivity. Strong legal enforcement can deter illegal encroachments on fertile land.

Such measures would help safeguard agricultural land while supporting economic growth.

World Environment Day provides an opportunity to ask a simple question. What kind of landscape will future generations inherit?

A valley covered with fertile fields, thriving biodiversity and living traditions represents one possibility. A landscape dominated by unchecked expansion and disappearing agricultural land represents another.

Choices made today will determine that outcome.

Kashmir's paddy fields constitute the Green Heritage of the valley. They feed people, support ecosystems, preserve history and sustain cultural memory. Their value reaches well beyond market calculations and land prices.

Protection of this heritage demands public awareness, political commitment and collective action.

Future generations should inherit living fields rather than photographs of fields. They should experience the landscape that shaped Kashmir for centuries rather than learn about it through nostalgia alone.

The clock continues to move. Action taken now can secure a future where development advances alongside environmental stewardship and cultural continuity.

Otherwise, Kashmir's Green Heritage may survive only as a cherished memory.

Mir Nabeena is a postgraduate in Botany from Islamia College of Science and Commerce, Srinagar, and works on conservation initiatives through her campaign "GrassRoot Girl." S. Ilyas Rizvi is a cultural heritage consultant, founder of "EdRAAK," and a student of Kashmir Handicrafts at the Department of Innovation and Community Action, Central University of Kashmir.

Inside Kashmir's Creator Boom

Kashmir's new creative class is claiming digital space and global attention, but the streets where ordinary enterprise should grow remain empty.



Mohammad Anamul Haque Ahanger

Through fogged windows of a Downtown Srinagar café, the Jhelum flows as it always has, indifferent. Inside, three young women film a fashion reel for a local brand that pays them. They laugh, reset, begin again. The scene is polished, almost cinematic.

But the reel hides months of volunteer practice before this first compensated gig, family members asking when real jobs will come, and algorithms that favour them today and may turn elsewhere tomorrow.

These women fill their hours with purpose. They build portfolios, craft careers that existed only elsewhere five years ago, proving valley talent elevates its standing at home. Their success rests on a thin foundation.

And that thinness poses a question Kashmir must face: does this signal genuine economic transformation, or digital distraction from structural gaps?

The blank space persists in the outside mind. Someone outside Kashmir asks, with genuine curiosity or calm contempt: do you even have a network there?

A classmate in Delhi once asked about Amazon delivery. A colleague in Bangalore wondered about proper internet or mobile connections alone. A colleague in Noida, upon learning my origin, asked about fire-arms.

These questions bear hostility on rare occasions, and wear ignorance as innocence. The accumulation tells you that your home is imagined as a blank space. Escape provided the sole path out of that blank space. They departed in droves, seeking recognition elsewhere.

Local opportunity remained scarce for decades, forcing Kashmir's astute minds into modern exile. Annually, a silent harvest takes place: the export of Kashmiri intellect. Engineers fill neon-lit cubicles in Bangalore, and graduates work graveyard shifts in Noida and Gurugram BPO hubs.

The service-class diaspora exchanged Himalayan air for NCR smog.

A Kashmiri engineer in a Noida BPO earns twenty-five to thirty-five thousand rupees monthly. A shared room costs eight to ten thousand. Food, transport, and phone bills take another ten thousand. The remainder, perhaps ten thousand, goes home or saves for an Eid flight.

The margin is thin: one late salary or one medical emergency topples the entire arrangement.

Job insecurity haunts these workers constantly. My flatmate once worked for ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok. He excelled at his work. Then, one quarter, the company reduced its Indian operations. The reason lay elsewhere, far from performance.

Geopolitics intervened. A policy change blocked Indian workers from handling United States client data. A boardroom decision thousands of miles away erased his livelihood overnight.

Advance notice vanished, parting compensation disappeared, and he spent months watching his savings drain.

This precarious existence has roots in what valley institutions struggled to provide.

Decades passed with schools and universities operating amid repeated disruptions: strikes, shutdowns, curfews, political unrest. Academic calendars shredded and reassembled so often that a lost semester became familiar phrase.

When classes happened, they prioritized rote learning and colonial-era syllabi over the digital literacy demanded by twenty-first-century markets. The result is a tragic paradox: thousands of post-graduates and PhDs are overqualified for manual labour but underskilled for the modern economy.

They memorized textbooks that saw updates rarely, and wrote exams that tested recall instead of reasoning. Then they graduated into a world that had moved on.

Unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir stands at nearly seven per cent, almost double the national average. For a region with a bursting youth population, this leaves the



social contract in tatters.

The traditional ladder, school, college, government job, snapped. Spells of unrest knocked rungs loose one by one. Prolonged shutdowns pushed batch after batch of students further behind.

By graduation time, many were competing against other candidates and their own stolen years.

The vacuum left by the state and a stagnant private sector sent youth elsewhere. Some became software exiles, others stayed, hoping the government would deliver. Many held a different weight: the hope of a government job that remained forever pending.

In the cramped flat I shared in Noida, talk turned constantly to exam forms and delay notices. Friends who applied for posts under the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board watched months turn into years. The exams were postponed repeatedly, leaving all candidates in the dark about explanation, new dates, and clarity.

A rejection brings closure, a flatmate used to say. This waiting is its own punishment.

The new generation is now choosing a third path, bypassing both the precarious exile and the endless wait. They are turning to the screen.

Today's digital industry in Kashmir is a loud pushback against forced migration. It declares that valley talent will enrich the home market first. Meta reports a three hundred per cent increase in creator accounts from Kashmir in two years.

With 5G, a young person in Baramulla or Kupwara can earn in a month what a Noida BPO worker might make in three. The digital screen has become a new form of economic sovereignty, bypassing the logistical blockades that have historically strangled valley commerce.

Saadath Mohi Ud Din from Anantnag quit his job as a Creative Designer to launch "The Aapa Podcast," a twenty-second comedy series starring his grandmother, Taja Begum. Within a month, it crossed one crore views.

Leaving a stable job was hard, he said, but the love received proves the choice was right.

His story repeats itself throughout the valley. Idrees Mir built a digital empire through tech reviews. Imad Clicks moved the valley's visual narrative beyond shikara and snow clichés. Umar Iqbal uses travel vlogs to promote Kashmiri culture globally.

In Jammu, vlogger Jatin Sharma, known as Baba to millions, blends local culture with high-energy content. By hiring editors and scriptwriters from the valley, they are proving that survival now permits staying home.

A friend in Pune saw a Kashmiri travel vlogger's reel and messaged: "Wait, this is Srinagar? I thought it was some European village."

A colleague in Bengaluru, after watching a Kashmir tech reviewer, said: "You guys are doing this from there? I assumed all the talent had left."

Some encounters carry knowledge and warmth. A small barbershop in Pune became

the stage for a different kind of encounter.

A barber trimmed my hair, stopped, and said: "You must be from Kashmir." I asked how he knew. "The way you are groomed. Kashmiris have a specific style." Then he murmured, voice softening: "Agar buroyee zameen ast, hami asto, hami asto. Visiting Kashmir is my dream. One day, InshaAllah."

These reactions expose a script that has run for decades: Kashmir as a landscape, beautiful, troubled, waiting for outside direction.

The idea that Kashmiris are building from inside the valley breaks that script. The barber's dream and the colleague's ignorance are two sides of the same coin.

But there is a danger. The outside world's curiosity is fickle. Today, they marvel at a Kashmiri creator, and tomorrow, they scroll past. The shift is real, though it remains superficial.

To see this digital explosion as a democratic escape route is to fall for an illusion. The digital refuge has its own walls, checkpoints, and gatekeepers.

When we celebrate three hundred per cent growth, we must ask: who is being left out?

First, infrastructure. High-speed 5G means little in pockets of Kupwara or Kishtwar, where winter power cuts last for days and a smartphone battery is a resource that depletes fast. Digital work needs cameras, software, and steady data packs, costs that families on subsistence farming can prioritize rarely.

Second, the refuge is heavily gendered and classed. For one young woman filming a fashion reel in a Srinagar café, there are a hundred others whose families treat on-screen visibility as a risk to social standing.

To put your face on an algorithm invites surveillance, trolling, and social friction.

A nineteen-year-old from Baramulla wanted to start a cooking channel. She had the phone, the data. Her father said: "If your face appears online, marriage prospects will shrink."

Her story is exceptional only to outsiders. It is the norm in her homeland.

Digital work needs a fallback fund, social capital to withstand judgment, and financial capital to absorb months of volunteer content.

For many young Kashmiris, the screen is a frontier they watch others explore.

This exposes the deepest irony: the digital refuge is a sanctuary for a select handful precisely because the physical landscape provides alternatives to a lucky few.

All the excitement aside, an uncomfortable question persists: why is the screen the only frontier?

Drive to Lonavla, near the ghats. A woman runs a small café out of a container, serving coffee, chai, and snacks to tourists. She built this alone, drawing on personal savings and sheer will. She saw traffic, an empty stomach, and took the chance. Her café is physical, messy, and real.

Near Mulshi Lake, another woman runs an eatery from a shack. The location is remote, with a patchy signal, and malls distant. She built something from scratch anyway because the surrounding culture said: why not?

A friend in Pune started a food cart selling coffee and momos outside a tech park. She failed, adjusted, and grew. She bypassed the notification and permission. She simply started.

Now ask: where is the equivalent of these enterprises in Kashmir? Where is the small food stall near the Sindh River in Ganderbal? Where is the family-run café for apple traders in Bijbehara? Where are the young entrepreneurs taking physical risks on Kashmir's highways?

The answer is uncomfortable. They exist in significant numbers only in the imagination because the system blocks them at every turn. Capital is out of reach, and permits lie buried under bureaucracy.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation's food-cart licensing process is notorious for delays. Applications languish for months or years. People who see a food cart as a means of survival are left stranded, waiting for a signature.

The women in Lonavla and Mulshi can open their outlets because the state permits them freely. Kashmir demands that even a small roadside stall clear a bureaucracy designed to exhaust. So the youth turn to the screen.

The digital economy becomes the only economy because the physical one has been choked by decades of neglect, insecurity, and administrative paralysis.

This is the real tragedy of the digital refuge. The tragedy lies beyond the quality of digital work. The tragedy is that for most young Kashmiris, it is the only option.

This is the question the women of Lonavla and Mulshi force us to ask: why is the screen the only frontier Kashmir presents its youth?

The digital explosion is real, but it fills a vacuum.

When the path to a physical business is choked with paperwork and indifference, the internet becomes a refuge, often a last resort.

There is a hidden risk. The shine of going viral can distract from the slower, harder work of rebuilding damaged institutions. Several hundred creators will find visibility. Several thousand may earn a living. But what of the rest, the ones for whom editing a reel, buying data, and chasing algorithms remain distant prospects?

The education system is still playing catch-up. The physical economy is still waiting for permission. Can the screen accommodate everyone?

The digital refuge amounts to digitised stagnation alongside a physical economy that remains closed.

If Kashmir wants a real economy alongside a digital one, it must ask harder questions.

Why do food carts on the Boulevard op-

erate as though they are trespassing? Why do small eateries survive on borrowed time, waiting for paperwork that remains forever pending?

The machinery of permission stays slow, opaque, and indifferent. The screen will remain the only welcoming frontier while that machinery grinds on.

The government maintains a presence. In 2025, the National Film Development Corporation announced plans to host a film festival in Srinagar and launch training courses with local universities.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has also begun engaging Mumbai's film industry to promote the valley as a premier shooting destination. More structural support exists.

Mission YUVA, with a budget of one thousand eight hundred thirty crore rupees, aims to establish one lakh thirty-five thousand nano-entrepreneurship units, individual units requiring investments under ten lakh rupees with collateral requirements waived.

A scheme on paper differs from a stall on the street. The government should explicitly recognize content creation as a micro-enterprise category under Mission YUVA.

That one change could unlock credit, startup incentives, and training, turning a volatile hustle into a stable sector.

All of this requires digital safety. Kashmir needs robust cybercrime laws, data protection, and mental health support for creators whose self-worth is tied to the volatility of a like button.

The youth of Kashmir have built the engine. Fibre-optic cables now outpull the gravity of forced migration. The barber in Pune dreams of visiting the valley, quoting poetry about heaven on earth. The three women in the Srinagar café film their reels. Saadath and his grandmother, Aapa, make the valley laugh. The software exiles in Noida call home and say, I am fine. The two acquaintances who came to Delhi, tired of waiting, look for something that depends on a delayed notification.

While the outside world dreams of Kashmir, it haunts its own youth.

An engine needs roads, fuel, and destinations. Mission YUVA can build the roads. Transparent licensing can open the streets, cyber laws can provide safety, and education reform can fill the hollow rooms.

The question is whether the system will act before the digital refuge becomes another illusion, a beautiful screen hiding a hollow room, a generation waiting for a promise that remains forever pending.

Kashmir's greatest strength lies beyond its mountains and lakes. It is the talent that has finally decided to stay.

Now the question is: will the system decide to stay with them?

— The author is a Political Science graduate from Amar Singh College, Srinagar, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree at Jamia Millia Islamia. He can be reached at inamah-angar29@gmail.com.



THE WOMEN IN LONAVLA AND MULSHI CAN OPEN their outlets because the state permits them freely. Kashmir demands that even a small roadside stall clear a bureaucracy designed to exhaust. So the youth turn to the screen. The digital economy becomes the only economy because the physical one has been choked by decades of neglect, insecurity, and administrative paralysis.

One Day Of Extreme Heat Causes 3,400 Excess Deaths Across India: Study

Press Trust Of India

A single day of extreme heat causes about 3,400 excess deaths across India, while a five-day heatwave causes nearly 30,000, a study has estimated.

Researchers Piyush Narang and Ashok Gadgil from the India Energy and Climate Center at the University of California Berkeley, US, said that even though global studies highlight a surging heat-related mortality, granular spatial-temporal data on how heatwaves affect mortality in India's districts remain inaccessible to common researchers.

The team adapted findings from a multi-city analysis of heat-related mortality across 10 cities in India to estimate excess deaths across all districts in the country.

'Excess deaths' is a public health metric that refers to the difference between total deaths over a specific period and deaths that could be expected to occur based on historical data.

The study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Environmental Health*, integrated district-level mortality rates from the Civil Registration System and population projections for 2024 to obtain district-level excess death estimates under one-day and five-day heatwave scenarios.

"We estimate that a single day of extreme heat causes approximately 3,400 excess deaths nationally; a five-day heatwave causes nearly 30,000,"



the authors wrote.

Heatwave to severe heat conditions were prevailing in north, central and east India, with temperatures consistently exceeding 45 degrees Celsius in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana over past few days.

Mapping heat-induced mortality risk to individual districts revealed that the state of Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for about 8,100 excess deaths during a five-day heatwave, while excess deaths in districts, including Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Surat, each exceed 250 in a single event.

A 2.3-fold disproportion between mortality burden and economic capacity was found in the five highest death-burden states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar,

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, which together accounted for 66 per cent of the country's excess deaths while contributing only 29 per cent of India's GDP.

The result has direct and urgent implications for how India designs and funds its heat resilience architecture, the researchers said.

"The 2.3x GDP disproportion documented here provides a quantitative basis for arguing that federal adaptation investment, including funding under the National Disaster Management Authority and the National Action Plan on Climate Change, should be weighted toward high-burden, low-GDP states rather than allocated in proportion to population or administrative capacity," they wrote.

Vitamin B12, Folate Deficiencies Could Be Related With Fatigue, Reduced Motivation: Study

Press Trust Of India

Deficiencies in vitamin B12 and folate (vitamin B9) is linked with higher homocysteine levels in blood, which could be associated with a greater physical fatigue in men and decreased motivation in women, according to a study.

"This suggested relationship between vitamin B12, folate, and fatigue in healthy individuals may represent the first report of its kind. Blood homocysteine levels have traditionally raised concerns in relation to

cardiovascular disease, dementia, and fractures," lead researcher Hiroaki Kanouchi, from Osaka Metropolitan University in Japan, said. "However, our findings suggest that attention should also be paid to fatigue and motivation in the future," Kanouchi said.

Fatigue that does not resolve with rest, and reduced motivation can impair one's daily functioning and quality of life. Chronic fatigue, in which exhaustion is severe and unexplained and can last for months, is linked to a reduced productivity at work and an elevated utilisation of healthcare.

The study, published in the journal *Nutrients*, focused on nutritional status and water-soluble vitamin deficiencies found in unbalanced diets.

Researchers hypothesised that a lack of folate and vitamin B12 may be related to fatigue, and centered their study around homocysteine (Hcy), a biomarker known to increase when these deficiencies are present.

Blood concentrations of Hcy, folate, and vitamin B12 in over 600 healthy Japanese participants were measured and fatigue and motivation were assessed using questionnaires.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer ID no: 02060300024673 from Ab Ahad Kumar S/o Mohd Subhan to Javid Ahmad Kumhar S/o Ab Ahad Kumhar. 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. Javid Ahmad Kumhar S/o Ab Ahad Kumhar R/o Wani Mohalla Magam Budgam bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rome Akhtar W/o Nazir Ahmad Bhat, R/o Dhoiwan, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby inform the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded as "Rumi Akhter" in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. XXXX XXXX 8403 and my Date of Birth has been wrongly recorded as 25/11/1980. My correct name is "Rome Akhtar" and my correct Date of Birth is 17/03/1979. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified by the name Rome Akhtar with Date of Birth 17/03/1979 for all official purposes. If any person has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within the stipulated period. Otherwise, the correction shall be deemed genuine and valid for all purposes. Sd/- Rome Akhtar R/o Dhoiwan, Kunzer, Baramulla fko

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI PHE DIVISION BIJBEHARA

E-mail: xenphe.bij@jk.gov.in
e-NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS (STAGE CONTRACT)

NIT No: 16/PHE/BIJ OF 2026-27 ISSUED UNDER ENDORSEMENT No.2622-35 dated:- 03.06.2026

For & on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders of Stage Contract in single cover system are invited on item rate basis from registered Transport Company whose registration Certificates are valid in terms of standing rules for the following works:-

S.No.	Name of work	Earnest Money (in Rupees)	Class of Contract	Validity of Contract	Cost of tender Document
1	Carriage / handling charges of store items for One financial year complete 2026-27 (Under NRDWP / MNP Distt Sector / NABARD / M&R/ JIM/ Languishing/Shri Amarnath Yatra Ji)/2055 internal security/2215 NP tanker service, capex, AMRUT,2, SDRF, DMRRR, SASCI	50,000/-	Regd. Transport Company	Up to 31/03/2027	1000/-

1. The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, Bill of Quantities (BOQ), terms & condition of contract can be seen/downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the dates shown below:-

i	Download start date	04.06.2026 from 02.00 PM
ii	Download end date	04.06.2026 from 02.00 PM
iii	Bid submission start date	04.06.2026 from 02.00 PM
iv	Bid submission end date	09/06/2026 from 04.00 PM
v	Bid opening date	10/06/2026 from 11.00 AM

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan shown against each item advertised & credited to MH:0215-PHE Government Account as per the format devised / attached with this NIT & earnest money in the shape of CDR pledged to the Executive Engineer PHE Division Bijbehara.

3. It is mandatory upon the bidder to upload "Bidders Address Format" duly filled in under his seal and signature for future correspondence, which is attached with this NIT.

4. The bids shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer PHE Division Bijbehara on above mentioned date in presence of the bidders who may wish to be present.

5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents like CDR/Cost of Tender document in the form of Treasury Challan / demand Draft / PAN/GST Registration /Latest ITR /Bidders Address Format /Registration card duly renewed. In case of any clarification, the bidders have to produce original documents in support of hard copies if need arises.

6. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reason.

7. The tenders shall remain valid for 180 days.

8. As soon as the contract is fixed with the successful bidder, he has to enter into an agreement with the department. However, non-draw of agreement will not prevent the contract from being enforced upon him.

9. The earnest money shall be forfeited if:-

- 1) Any bidder withdraws his bid during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in terms & condition of the bid.
- 2) The successful contractor fails to execute an agreement with the department within 10 days after fixation of contract.
- 3) The successful bidder fails to start the work within one week from the date of fixation of contract.

10. The tender opening authority reserves the right to accept/reject the bid without assigning any reason thereof.

11. Any kind of damage which may occur to material during the course of transportation due to natural calamities, shall be the responsibility of the bidder till the material is finally handed-over to the Department at the designated site / store.

12. The taxes viz. Income tax, Service tax/GST & Cess shall be deducted from the bidder's claims as per standing Govt. instructions.

13. The bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities). In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling item rate inclusive of all taxes & it should be saved with the same name as it contains.

14. The unit rates & prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of work unless otherwise specified. The intending tenderers will have to quote rates as per unit rate as advertised for each item considering quantity as one for every item and comparative shall be generated for sum total of all items to arrive at L1, L2 and L3 in the overall and shall be accordingly negotiated with successful bidder to arrive at a reasonable/negotiated rate. However, in case of the rate of any particular item is exorbitant to such an extent that it contradicts with the wisdom of the evaluator, the rate of such item shall be considered in accordance with the prevailing market rate with some reasonable contractors profit for evaluating the comparative rate.

15. If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the BOQ, such item/items shall be deemed to be the part of the overall/total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item/items.

16. Bidders should note that the terms and conditions of the contract circulated by the tender inviting authorities from time to time shall be applicable on the contract even if not incorporated in this NIT.

17. The work done claim of the successful bidder shall be entertained only after production of proper check certificate of in-charge concerned.

18. No mobilization advance/equipment advance shall be paid.

19. It shall be mandatory for the contractor to ensure safety of material from source upto dumping site of work.

20. Insurance cover as admissible under rules shall be provided to all the workers skilled/unskilled deployed and the necessary premiums shall be borne by the executing agency/contractor itself.

21. The successful bidder shall have to respond within the minimum possible time (Not more than three hours) to execute the requisite job failing which, the Engineer incharge or the Authorized Supervisory Staff shall be at liberty to get the job executed/completed through 2nd, lowest bidder on the rates allotted to 1st. Lowest bidder. If the allottee fail to respond in time continuously for three times, his contract shall be deemed to have been cancelled besides, his CDR shall be forfeited and he shall be barred to take part in any other tendering process in the Division.

22. The contract shall remain in force w.e.f the date of fixation of contract up to 31/03/2027.

23. The rates quoted by the successful bidder shall be scrutinized and compared with the rates of similar works executed/allotted during the previous three financial years. The allotment of the work shall be considered and processed only after establishing the reasonability of the quoted rates based on such comparative analysis, and the decision of the tender committee authority in this regard shall be final and binding.

24. Other terms & conditions shall be the same as laid down in the PWD Form-25 double/Tender document.

DIPK-1831/26 dated: 04-06-2026

Executive Engineer PHE Division Bijbehara

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No: 04-2026-DEMU-BDGM Dated: 03/06/2026

For and on behalf of President of India, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Northern Railway, (J&K) invites open Tender through e-tendering system from reputed contractors with adequate experience and financial capability for the under mentioned work.

Name of Work: Finish painting with full glass Polyurethane Enamel with dressing, touching repair, writing and stencilling work of DMU Coaches at DEMU Car shed Budgam for a period of 02 Years

Estimated Cost of Work (Approximate): Rs.68,36,717.60 (Rs. Sixty-Eight Lakh thirty-six Thousand Seven Hundred seventeen and sixty Paise Only)

Tender Security Amount (Earnest Money Deposit): Rs. 1,36,700.00 (Rs. One Lakh thirty-six Thousand Seven Hundred Only)

Tender document available on website 03/06/2026

Bidding Start Date As per www.ireps.gov.in

E-Tender closing Date & Time 25/06/2026 at 15:00 Hrs.

Date and time of opening of E-Tender on IREPS website 25/06/2026 at 15:15 Hrs.

Validity of Tender 60 Days from the last date of submission of tender

Type of Tender Open Tender (Single Packet System).

Contract Period Two Years (24 months) 1894/2026

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NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

Corrigendum & Tender Details

Corrigendum No. 1 | Corrigendum Publish Date as per IREPS 03/06/26 18:20

Tender No. 433-Sig-JAT-38-25-26 (Open Tender)

Name of Work Comprehensive Annual Maintenance contract (AMC) of EI Make MEDHA under the jurisdiction of SR,DSTE/JAT over JAMMU division for three (3) years.

Tender Closing Date Time	Date Time of Uploading Tender
24.06.2026 15:00	03.06.2026 18:20

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Bidding Start Date as per IREPS
4999542.00	10.06.2026

Earnest Money (Rs.)	Period of Completion
100000	36 Months

ITEMS MODIFIED NIT HEADER

Field Name	Existing Value	Modified Value
Earnest Money	84700.00	100000.00
Advertised Value	4236900.00	4999542.00

Tender No: 433-Sig-JAT-38-25-26 Date:- 03.06.2026 Closing Date/Time : 24.06.2026 15:00 1898/2026

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

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IndiGo Suspends Operations To 6 International Destinations



Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- India's largest airline IndiGo on Thursday said it has temporarily suspended operations to six international destinations, including Hong Kong and Krabi, as part of network optimisation.

The budget carrier has decided to temporarily suspend services to Langkawi, Krabi, Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong, and Siem Reap effective July 1 until September 30, IndiGo said in a statement.

The decision has been taken in view of a traditionally softer demand in the upcoming quarter and an incredibly challenging cost environment, it said. IndiGo will resume bookings for all impacted services starting October 1, subject to

an improved environment, it said, adding that the airline stands prepared to reinstate these services earlier than scheduled, in appropriate lead time.

The carrier also stated that it has managed to retain majority of its international operations -- over 1,800 weekly international flights -- despite this realignment.

"These measured changes are designed to align capacity with current market conditions and demand trends, while ensuring the airline maintains reliability and network integrity across its global destinations," the statement said.

The airline will continue to monitor the situation, given the elevated operating costs and continued airspace restrictions, it added.

India Fixes Jet Fuel Benchmark At ₹115/Litre Under New ATF Plan

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Domestic airlines will be able to buy aviation turbine fuel (ATF) at a fixed price of Rs 86.32 per litre for up to three years under a new government-backed price stabilisation scheme aimed at shielding carriers and passengers from a surge in global fuel costs.

Under the voluntary scheme, participating airlines will pay the fixed free-on-board (FOB) benchmark price plus airport charges, oil company margins and applicable taxes, taking the effective selling price to about Rs 115 per litre in Delhi, Rs 114.5 in Mumbai and Rs 139 in Chennai, according to government officials.

The benchmark compares with the current effective ATF price of about Rs 105 per litre in Delhi, which has remained frozen for more than two months after the government allowed only a partial pass-through of soaring global fuel costs triggered by the outbreak of the West Asia conflict in late February.

While participating airlines will pay the fixed price, those not opting for the scheme will be charged prevailing international rate, which is currently around Rs 142 a litre.

This is as part of the Union Cabinet-approved Rs 10,000-crore fuel price stabilisation programme for airlines that provides financial support to state-owned oil retailers to cap ATF prices and shield carriers from soaring fuel costs linked to the ongoing West Asia crisis.

Under this, a one-time, in-

terest-free advance of up to Rs 10,000 crore will be provided to oil marketing companies (OMCs), enabling them to supply jet fuel to scheduled Indian airlines at a fixed price for both domestic and international operations.

Briefing reporters, Rohit Raj, Director in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, said the benchmark has been fixed at Rs 86.32 per litre at the FOB level for domestic operations and Rs 104.49 per litre for international operations.

After adding airport charges, margins and applicable taxes, the effective selling price in Delhi works out to about Rs 115 per litre for both domestic and international operations.

The rate compares to about Rs 105 a litre cost of ATF in Delhi currently. The current rate was capped in April when prices were raised by 25 per cent instead of 100 per cent.

Since then oil marketing companies have been supplying jet fuel to airlines at these capped prices, incurring losses.

The new benchmark replaces the temporary fuel-price capping arrangement introduced earlier this year after international ATF prices surged following the West Asia crisis, he said.

H&H Launches Major Carpet Skill Upgradation Drive For Women

180 Women Trainees To Benefit From MoT Sponsored SAMARTH Programme

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- As a major initiative to strengthen Kashmir's traditional carpet weaving sector and enhance artisans' skills, Department of Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir, through its state-of-the-art Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), has launched a skill upgradation training programme under the Ministry of Textiles-sponsored SAMARTH Scheme.

SAMARTH (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector) is a flagship Ministry of Textiles initiative aimed at providing demand-driven and industry-oriented training to improve employability and promote sustainable livelihoods in the handicrafts sector. The programme is aligned with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), ensuring nationally recognized training and certification standards.

In a press handout issued here today, a spokesperson of the Handicrafts & Handloom Department stated that under the programme, 180 women beneficiaries from eight districts of Kashmir are scheduled to receive training in Silk Carpet Weaving on Modern Steel Carpet Looms over a period of two months. "Twenty trainees have been enrolled from 8 districts, while Srinagar, a major carpet weaving hub, will accommodate 40 trainees," the



spokesperson said.

Speaking on the occasion, Zubair Ahmad, Director, IICT, said that trainees maintaining at least 80 percent attendance will be eligible for a stipend of ₹5,000 per course, providing both skill enhancement as well as financial support. "The experienced Master Trainers engaged to impart specialized training under the programme will receive an honorarium of ₹20,000 per month, with a total training facilitation cost of approximately ₹3.60 lakh," he added.

Highlighting the scheme's robust monitoring framework, Director IICT further stated that the programme will undergo third-party audit and verification by auditors appointed by the Ministry of Textiles to assess compliance, training quality, attendance

records and implementation outcomes. "To ensure transparency and effective monitoring, the programme incorporates an Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system" he added.

Department of Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir continues to undertake focused interventions for the revival, preservation and promotion of the world-renowned Kashmir Carpet Craft. Through modernization of weaving infrastructure, skill upgradation, artisan welfare initiatives, market linkages, GI protection and capacity-building programmes such as SAMARTH, the Department remains committed to safeguarding this centuries-old heritage craft while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, particularly for women artisans across the Valley.

RBI Governor To Announce Interest Rate Decision Today

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday will announce the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) amid expectations that the key interest rate will be left unchanged at 5.25 per cent, as the central bank adopts a cautious approach in view of the West Asia conflict posing challenges for inflation as well as economic growth.

The six-member MPC started its three-day deliberations on Wednesday.

A PTI poll of economists and treasury heads showed that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to keep the benchmark repo rate unchanged this time. Most of the respondents expect the central bank to resume policy tightening later in FY27 amid mounting inflation risks.

Of the respondents surveyed, 11 expect the MPC to maintain the status quo on rates, while four foresee a 0.25



per cent hike.

Most participants expect at least two rate hikes during the fiscal year, while some anticipate more than two increases if inflationary pressures intensify.

Addressing an event on Wednesday, State Bank of India Chairman C S Setty said the economic growth process will stabilise if the RBI opts for a status quo in policy rates amid inflation challenges.

He said market expectations broadly point towards a pause in rates. Shishir Bajjal, International

Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India, too, expects the MPC to keep policy rates unchanged.

"A stable interest rate environment is particularly important for the real estate sector, where affordability and buyer sentiment remain closely linked to borrowing costs. Continued rate stability would support housing demand, sustain momentum in residential sales, and encourage investment across the broader real estate ecosystem," Bajjal added.

The central government has tasked the RBI to ensure that consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation stays at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent).

Chaired by Malhotra, other MPC members are Nagesh Kumar, (Director and Chief Executive, ISID), Saugata Bhattacharya (Economist), Ram Singh, (Director, Delhi School of Economics), Poonam Gupta (Deputy Governor, RBI), and Indranil Bhattacharyya (Executive Director, RBI).

Gold's Seesaw Ride Goes On As Oil Retreat Spurs Recovery

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices resumed its seesawing movement in the national capital, rebounding above the Rs 1.6 lakh per-10-gram-mark on Thursday as easing crude oil rates offered support amid persistent uncertainty over developments in West Asia.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity rose Rs 700 to Rs 1,60,300 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes), according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The gain partially reversed Wednesday's Rs 1,850 fall and followed a Rs 1,050 rise on Tuesday, highlighting the volatile trading pattern that has gripped precious metals during this week.

The rebound in gold came as crude oil eased following a conditional ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. However, the broader geopolitical backdrop remained uncertain.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Iran has yet to agree to remove enriched uranium, while negotiations involving Tehran remained unresolved.

However, silver prices moved in the opposite direction, extending losses for the second straight session by Rs 3,800, or 1.14 per cent, to Rs 2,65,700 per kilogram after declining Rs 1,500 in the previous session,



as per the association.

"Gold prices remained range-bound after finding mild support from a decline in crude oil prices," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

In the international markets, spot gold gained nearly 1 per cent to quote at USD 4,471.79 per ounce, and silver rose 1.14 per cent to USD 73.56 per ounce.

Gold prices recovered after crude oil rates eased, though expectations of tighter US monetary policy and lingering uncertainty surrounding US-Iran negotiations could limit further gains, Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

Investors are awaiting the Reserve Bank of India's policy decision, along with US non-farm payrolls and unemployment numbers, due on Friday, for fresh cues on interest rates and the next move in precious metals, Trivedi said.

Stock Markets End Flat Ahead Of RBI's Monetary Policy Decision

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended almost flat in a choppy trade on Thursday, as investors stayed on the sidelines amid uncertainty in West Asia and relentless foreign fund outflows.

Caution also prevailed in the market ahead of the RBI's monetary policy decision on Friday, an expert said.

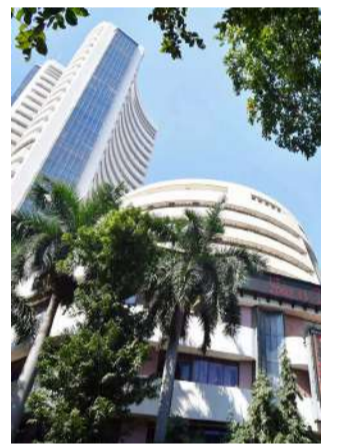
The 30-share BSE Sensex went up marginally by 13.84 points, or 0.02 per cent, to settle at 74,360.01. During the day, it hit a high of 74,544.24 and a low of 73,807.30, gyrating 736.94 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty eked out a marginal gain of 10.95 points, or 0.05 per cent, to end at 23,416.55.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Titan, Eternal, ITC, Tech Mahindra, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were among the major gainers. Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech and Adani Ports were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,616.56 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

"Indian equities delivered a decent recovery today, overcoming a weak start to finish largely unchanged. The market opened under pressure as weak global cues, elevated crude oil prices, and persistent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East weighed on sentiment."



"However, the selling failed to sustain, with buyers stepping in near key support levels and helping benchmarks erase most of their intraday losses," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said.

Despite the recovery, sentiment remained cautious ahead of tomorrow's RBI monetary policy committee decision, he added.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 1.68 per cent to USD 96.17 per barrel.

"The market oscillated between gains and losses during the session, ultimately closing on a flat note, as persistent tensions in West Asia weighed on investor risk appetite. Despite this, the broader market continued to outperform following the recent correction, indicating underlying resilience in select segments," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Rupee Rises 2 Paise To Close At 95.74 Against US Dollar

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The rupee rose 2 paise to settle at 95.74 against the US dollar on Thursday, as the global crude oil prices eased and market participants keenly awaited the RBI's MPC decision on June 5.

Heightened geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran drove energy volatility and aggressive safe-haven buying capped sharp gains in the local unit.

Forex traders said the prolonged West Asia crisis poses a major risk for India, which relies heavily on energy imports.

Market participants are now turning their attention to the Reserve Bank of India's MPC rate decision on June 5, as inflation, growth and the rupee are under focus. The six-member MPC, headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, will announce its decision on Friday.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.70 against the US dollar, then touched an intra-day low of 95.87 and a high of 95.59 before closing at 95.74, up 2 paise from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 40 paise to close at 95.76 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.31, down 0.21 per cent.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 2.04 per cent at USD 95.81 per barrel in futures trade.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on geopolitical tensions and firm US treasury yields. Any bounce back in the US dollar may also pressurise the rupee. Crude oil prices continue to remain elevated," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

Hyundai Motor India To Roll Out Its First Mass-Market EV This Year

Press Trust Of India

CHENNAI- Hyundai Motor India Ltd on Thursday said it will roll out two new models from the Chennai manufacturing facility, including its first mass-market EV, within this year, and said it is committed to making Tamil Nadu its 'Flagship EV Hub for India'.

The company said it is well-positioned to further expand coverage across all major cities and highways over the next 2-3 years backed by a strategically distributed network of high-capacity chargers across key urban and transit corridors, in line with its plans to broaden affordable EV offerings in India.

The Tamil Nadu government and Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) also jointly announced a skill development collaboration to enhance the global employability of the state's youth. The initiative will kick off operations in December 2027.

Tarun Garg, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, said, "We will roll out two new models from the Chennai facility, including our first mass-market dedicated EV within this year, marking a significant step towards accelerating EV adoption and building a strong EV ecosystem."

"Alongside advancing EV localisation, we are equally focused on developing a future-ready skilled workforce, enabling talent to support future automotive technologies."

HMIL has so far exported over 3.9 million vehicles made in Tamil Nadu to more than 150 countries.

The company has established Tamil Nadu's first battery sub-assembly plant for EV powertrains and is localising power electronics and other key components.

Maruti Suzuki Launches India's 1st Flex Fuel Car

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Maruti Suzuki India Ltd on Thursday launched India's first flex-fuel car, Wagon R, engineered specifically for ethanol-blended fuel compatibility.

A flex-fuel car gives the flexibility to customers to run on any blend of ethanol and petrol from E20 to E100.

The car comes with advanced ECU calibration capable of adapting to any ethanol blend between E20 (20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol) to E100 (which would allow vehicles to run on nearly pure ethanol).

Maruti Suzuki in a statement said it is introducing flex-fuel technology in the Wagon R, a favourite brand that has long pioneered alternate fuel vehicles in the country, including CNG and LPG.

With the launch of India's first flex-fuel car, Maruti Suzuki said it is bringing innovation aligned with national energy security and sustainability goals.

Speaking at the launch event, Road Transport and Highways minister Nitin Gadkari said India imports a large quantity of crude oil every year, and biofuels like ethanol are an important pathway towards reducing this dependence while strengthening our rural economy.

"Flex-fuel vehicles can create a strong and sustainable demand for ethanol, benefiting our farmers, industry, and the environment together," Gadkari added.

The minister said he is confident that the initiative will encourage other car manufacturers to launch their flex-fuel models and oil industry to enhance ethanol distribution infrastructure. Also, speaking at the event, Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri said India's ethanol journey is unstoppable.

"We have transformed our farmers from 'annadatas' to 'urjadatas', while strengthening India's energy security," Puri said.

Concern Expressed At Par Panel Meeting Over Rupee, Sluggish Pvt Investment

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Members expressed concern at a parliamentary standing committee meeting on Thursday over the falling value of the rupee and sluggish private investment in the country even as the government said despite challenges India's economy was emerging stronger.

At a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on finance, headed by BJP leader Bhartruhari Mahtab, Economic Affairs Secretary Anuradha Thakur and Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran made a presentation about the economic situation of the country and discussions took place on the evolving dynamics.

"Issues such as rising prices, inflation, the conflict in West Asia, and China's recent stringent laws aimed at protecting its industries were deliberated upon. While there are still certain headwinds, I would say that despite these serious challenges, India's economy is emerging in a stronger position," committee chairman Mahtab told reporters after the meeting.

He said there are several encouraging indicators as household savings have increased compared to last year, and investment is also rising.

"However, the challenge is that while the government investment and capital expenditure are increasing, private investment has not been picking up at the same pace. This is an issue that we need to address," he said.

Mahtab said the committee decided to meet again in the third week of the month.

"We will also prepare a report that will not only describe the challenges we face but will also provide recommendations on what the government should consider to address them," he said.

India Men Face Pakistan, Women Meet China in Semis

Press Trust Of India

KAKAMIGAHARA (JAPAN): The Indian men's hockey team will look to address its weaknesses when it faces Pakistan, while the women's side will aim to continue its dominant run against China in the semifinals of the U-18 Asia Cup here on Friday.

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Captain Ketan Kushwaha leads the scoring charts for India with

seven goals, while Ashish Tani Puri has scored six goals. Gazeer Khan and Shahrukh Ali have contributed three goals each.

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Will Rashid Play Tests Again?

It is between him and selectors, says skipper Shahidi

Press Trust Of India

MULLANPUR: Rashid Khan has done extremely well in the six Tests that he has played but he donning the whites again for Afghanistan is something between him and the national selectors, skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi said ahead of one-off game against India.

Shahidi, by far Afghanistan's best Test batter with two double hundreds and a healthy average of 48 plus, also spoke about how their nation needs to play more red ball games to measure up with the best.

"Rashid has done well in the Tests (45 wickets in 6 Tests) that he has played. Personally I haven't spoken to Rashid about whether he would play Test again or not. He had discussions with selectors and I don't want to talk about that," Shahidi said at a press conference on Thursday.

However, he did concede that playing two Tests a year on an average has been the bane for Afghan cricket since they made their debut in 2018.

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When asked if the best talent in Afghanistan only want to make a career out of franchise based T20 leagues, Shahidi begged to differ.

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Temperature was 35 degrees there so we are well equipped to handle the heat," he said.

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Mourinho Backs Pérez as Madrid Race Heats Up

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BARCELONA (SPAIN): Real Madrid's two presidential candidates have stepped up their campaigning, with incumbent Florentino Pérez featuring prospective new coach Jose Mourinho in promotional material and challenger Enrique Riquelme angering Manchester City with comments about under-contract star Erling Haaland.

The tossing around of the big names comes ahead of the vote by club members on Sunday.

Mourinho was reportedly already lined up for a second spell in charge of Madrid before the 79-year-old Pérez called for elections last month. Now it appears that Mourinho's return is contingent on Pérez winning another term as president of the Spanish giant.

"MOUcha historia por hacer ('So MOUch history to make')," read the caption on a post by Perez on X published late Wednesday that included a video of Mourinho saying "SI" ("Yes").

Mourinho, who coached Madrid from 2010-2013, would replace Alvaro Arbeloa after the club finished a second straight campaign without a major trophy.

Riquelme, meanwhile, announced his intention of

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"Haaland has a clause (in his contract) and wants to come to Madrid," said the 37-year-old businessman who has made his career in renewable energy.

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In January 2025, Haaland signed a new contract with City through 2034 in one of the most lucrative deals in soccer — and the longest by a Premier League player. City has never made public the details of any buyout clause in Haaland's contract.

The City statement made no mention of Rodri, the 2024 Ballon d'Or winner whose contract expires in 2027.

Iran vs. USA at the 2026 World Cup?

WANA

The potential qualification of Iran's national football team for the 2026 World Cup, co-hosted by the United States, has drawn significant international media attention, given the ongoing geopolitical conflict between the two nations. In a recent report, three potential scenarios that could lead to a high-stakes match between Iran and the U.S. during the tournament.

According to the report, should such a fixture materialize, it could easily be labeled the "most significant match of the 2026 World Cup."

Historically, the two nations have faced each other three times. Their first meeting at the 1998 World Cup—dubbed the most politically charged match in tournament history—ended in a 2-1 victory for Iran. Their second encounter was a friendly that ended in a 1-1 draw, while their most recent matchup at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar saw the U.S. secure a 1-0 victory.

The Three Scenarios for a 2026 Matchup

TRT World detailed the following pathways for a potential clash in the expanded tournament format:

Scenario 1: Round of 32



Encounter

The most realistic scenario for a matchup, assuming specific conditions are met, lies in the Round of 32. Based on FIFA's fixed knockout stage bracket, both Iran and the United States would need to finish as runners-up in their respective groups to set up a direct elimination match in Arlington, Texas.

Scenario 2: Round of 16 Showdown

Another path would see the two teams meet in the Round of 16. For this to happen, both the U.S. and Iran would need to top their respective groups and subsequently win their Round of 32 matches. If the U.S. wins Group D, it will face a third-place finisher from Groups B, E, F, I, or J in the Round of 32 (Match 81).

If Iran tops Group G, it will face a third-place finisher from Groups A, E, H, I, or J in the Round of 32 (Match 82). Victories for both teams in these matches would set up a head-to-head battle in the next round.

Scenario 3: Quarterfinal Clash

While a quarterfinal meeting is mathematically possible, it presents a far more complex trajectory. This pathway requires one of the teams to advance through the knockout phase via a wildcard spot rather than the standard group winner or runner-up tracks.

For instance, if the U.S. finishes second in Group D and Iran advances to the knockout stage as one of the best third-place teams, they could be placed on the same side of the bracket. Both teams would then need to win their Round of 32 and Round of 16 matches to meet in the quarterfinals.

Gulf War Hits India's Sports Infra Industry

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Worth over USD 2.5 billion (Rs 23,000 crore) in multiple estimates, India's Sports Infrastructure Industry is currently facing a crisis of cost escalation as the ongoing Gulf war disrupts supply chain of petroleum products which are essential raw material for the companies involved in developing such facilities.

The cost of raw material for athletic track systems, artificial sports turf, polyurethane-based components, and PVC vinyl sports flooring systems has gone up by 15 to 20 per cent thanks to the war.

All these raw materials are petro-chemical and natural gas byproducts and due to the disruption in supply chain, which has caused a surge in oil and gas prices globally, their procurement too has become difficult and expensive.

"The impact is significant. We import a large portion of the raw materials used in athletic tracks, artificial sports turf systems, and PVC vinyl sports flooring. Over the last few months, material costs have increased by nearly 15 per cent, while the strengthening of the dollar has added another 10 per cent impact on procurement costs," said Nasir Ali, founder and CEO of Gallant Sports & Infra, told PTI.

"Many of these (raw materials) products are petroleum-based and are directly affected by fluctuations in global commodity prices and



currency exchange rates.

"...projects awarded or executed in the last few months, particularly those dependent on imported materials and asphalt-bitumen-based infrastructure, could benefit from temporary support mechanisms or relief measures to absorb the sudden increase in input costs," he added.

Ali's Gallant Infra built the FIFA-certified Tawang Stadium in Arunachal Pradesh which is used for training the Indian Football team for high altitude play. His company is also involved in several other government sports infrastructure projects, including the ones under its flagship Khelo India Scheme.

"For a highly price-sensitive market like India, these increases put pressure on project viability, margins, and execution time-lines. Companies are often locked into contracts signed months earlier, making it difficult to pass on these additional costs to clients," he said.

A sports ministry source said government contracts already have the Force Ma-

jeure clause, which allows companies to revise their quotations during circumstances which are beyond anyone's control, including natural calamities and wars.

"The provision is there from the tendering process stage and the government is there to absorb the pressure if cost goes up due to something like war. (Industry) would not be allowed to suffer," the source said.

The government is also working towards formulating a sports code for manufacturing that would lay down the framework for the industry's operations.

Gallant is currently involved in a Sports Authority of India (SAI) project in Mizoram, and an athletics track project for the Indian Navy, among others.

"One of our most significant ongoing developments is at Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), where we are nearing completion of what will be one of India's largest integrated university sports infrastructure projects," Ali elaborated.

"The facility includes a

full-sized cricket ground, World Athletics-standard track, FIFA-standard football field, FIH-standard hockey field, basketball courts, volleyball courts, cricket practice facilities, and multiple supporting sports amenities within a single integrated sports ecosystem," he added.

Gallant is one among the growing number of sports infra companies in the country, the other prominent names being SE Transstadia Limited, 4K Sports Infra and the Hyderabad-based Great SportsTech Limited among others.

Ali said India's sports infrastructure industry has the potential to grow exponentially but "gaps" remain in maintenance standards, and manufacturing self-reliance. The industry is expected to be worth USD six billion by 2030.

Globally, the industry is worth USD 132 billion with North America having the largest market share of over 30 per cent, followed by China.

"While demand for sports facilities is increasing rapidly, there is still a shortage of certified, international-standard venues across many parts of the country," Ali said.

"The industry would also benefit from greater investment in indigenous manufacturing capabilities, quality benchmarks, and long-term maintenance frameworks to ensure facilities continue performing at international standards throughout their life-cycle," he added.

Iran Squad Grapples With War Ahead of World Cup

AP

ANTALYA (TURKEY): Iran is heading to the World Cup while the country is at war with the primary host nation, a situation that is unique in the tournament's history.

In exclusive interviews with The Associated Press during a team camp in Turkey, two members of Iran's squad described how the conflict is affecting its World Cup preparations.

"Well, to be honest, it's not easy," said Saeid Ezatollahi, a 29-year-old midfielder who also played for Iran in the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

"That's going to be my third World Cup. So for me and some of the other players, it might be easier to manage these kind of things," he said in English on the sidelines of a training session on Wednesday. "But at the end ... it is going to be difficult for us because at the same time, we are following the news in our country and the political things, of course, can affect the mind of the players and the people."

The Iran team has spent more than two weeks in Turkey, mostly practicing at the coastal resort Antalya, and some went to the capital Ankara to submit visa applications at the U.S. embassy. Media access to their World Cup preparations has been limited, and



the players rarely speak to international journalists.

Iran will be based in Mexico during the World Cup

The team is set to travel to Mexico this weekend after receiving visas from the Mexican embassy in Ankara. The team said Thursday that the process of obtaining entry permits had been finalized for all members of the squad. Problems with visa processing meant Iran's World Cup training base was moved from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, on Mexico's border with California.

Iran will play its first two games near Los Angeles, which has a large Iranian community, many of whom oppose the current government.

"So for sure, we are expecting to have a lot of fans during our games at the stadium," Ezatollahi said. "And this is going to be a lot of pressure for us because

the expectation is going to be high. I just wish we can make them proud and show them that Iranians, they are prepared for every hard job in the world," he said.

Mohammad Ghorbani, 24, is going to his first World Cup for Iran.

"It's true that we are facing special circumstances right now but we are football players and we have to play, practice, and prepare ourselves for the competitions we have ahead," the Abu Dhabi-based player told the AP in Farsi.

"On the other hand, we know that our people have been going through a lot of difficulties throughout the war, and we are going there for them, to get the best results for their joy and the joy of the people of our country."

The U.S. and Israel launched its war against Iran on Feb. 28, killing its supreme leader and other top officials. Iran responded

ed with strikes targeting Israel, U.S. forces and the Gulf Arab states. It also has maintained a chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, imperiling global energy supplies.

Despite a nominal ceasefire being in place, Iran and the U.S. have yet to negotiate a permanent end to the war and attacks continue in the region.

Iran is in Group G with New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt

Iran's team is not required to enter the United States until June 14, one day before its first match against New Zealand at the Los Angeles Rams' stadium in Inglewood.

Iran returns to Inglewood to face Belgium on June 21 and completes Group G in Seattle, against Egypt on June 26.

"I'm really proud to be part of my national team," said Ezatollahi, whose career has taken him to play for clubs in Spain, Russia, England, Belgium, Denmark, Qatar and now Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

"We need to clear up our minds and be fresh because our target and our duty is to fight for our people, to represent our country and to show how good we are," he said.

Ghorbani agreed, saying the team wants to bring joy to Iranians.

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Press Trust Of India

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Scenario 1: Round of 32



Encounter

The most realistic scenario for a matchup, assuming specific conditions are met, lies in the Round of 32. Based on FIFA's fixed knockout stage bracket, both Iran and the United States would need to finish as runners-up in their respective groups to set up a direct elimination match in Arlington, Texas.

Scenario 2: Round of 16 Showdown

Another path would see the two teams meet in the Round of 16. For this to happen, both the U.S. and Iran would need to top their respective groups and subsequently win their Round of 32 matches.

If the U.S. wins Group D, it will face a third-place finisher from Groups B, E, F, I, or J in the Round of 32 (Match 81).

If Iran tops Group G, it will face a third-place finisher from Groups A, E, H, I, or J in the Round of 32 (Match 82).

Victories for both teams in these matches would set up a head-to-head battle in the next round.

Scenario 3: Quarterfinal Clash

While a quarterfinal meeting is mathematically possible, it presents a far more complex trajectory. This pathway requires one of the teams to advance through the knockout phase via a wildcard spot rather than the standard group winner or runner-up tracks.

For instance, if the U.S. finishes second in Group D and Iran advances to the knockout stage as one of the best third-place teams, they could be placed on the same side of the bracket. Both teams would then need to win their Round of 32 and Round of 16 matches to meet in the quarterfinals.

Gulf War Hits India's Sports Infra Industry

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Worth over USD 2.5 billion (Rs 23,000 crore) in multiple estimates, India's Sports Infrastructure Industry is currently facing a crisis of cost escalation as the ongoing Gulf war disrupts supply chain of petroleum products which are essential raw material for the companies involved in developing such facilities.

The cost of raw material for athletic track systems, artificial sports turf, polyurethane-based components, and PVC vinyl sports flooring systems has gone up by 15 to 20 per cent thanks to the war.

All these raw materials are petro-chemical and natural gas byproducts and due to the disruption in supply chain, which has caused a surge in oil and gas prices globally, their procurement too has become difficult and expensive.

"The impact is significant. We import a large portion of the raw materials used in athletic tracks, artificial sports turf systems, and PVC vinyl sports flooring. Over the last few months, material costs have increased by nearly 15 per cent, while the strengthening of the dollar has added another 10 per cent impact on procurement costs," said Nasir Ali, founder and CEO of Gallant Sports & Infra, told PTI.

"Many of these (raw materials) products are petroleum-based and are directly affected by fluctuations in global commodity prices and



currency exchange rates.

"...projects awarded or executed in the last few months, particularly those dependent on imported materials and asphalt-bitumen-based infrastructure, could benefit from temporary support mechanisms or relief measures to absorb the sudden increase in input costs," he added.

Ali's Gallant Infra built the FIFA-certified Tawang Stadium in Arunachal Pradesh

which is used for training the Indian Football team for high altitude play. His company is also involved in several other government sports infrastructure projects, including the ones under its flagship Khelo India Scheme.

"For a highly price-sensitive market like India, these increases put pressure on project viability, margins, and execution time-lines. Companies are often locked into contracts signed months earlier, making it difficult to pass on these additional costs to clients," he said.

A sports ministry source said government contracts already have the Force Ma-

jeure clause, which allows companies to revise their quotations during circumstances which are beyond anyone's control, including natural calamities and wars.

"The provision is there from the tendering process stage and the government is there to absorb the pressure if cost goes up due to something like war. (Industry) would not be allowed to suffer," the source said.

The government is also working towards formulating a sports code for manufacturing that would lay down the framework for the industry's operations.

Gallant is currently involved in a Sports Authority of India (SAI) project in Mizoram, and an athletics track project for the Indian Navy, among others.

"One of our most significant ongoing developments is at Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), where we are nearing completion of what will be one of India's largest integrated university sports infrastructure projects," Ali elaborated.

"The facility includes a

full-sized cricket ground, World Athletics-standard track, FIFA-standard football field, FIH-standard hockey field, basketball courts, volleyball courts, cricket practice facilities, and multiple supporting sports amenities within a single integrated sports ecosystem," he added.

Gallant is one among the growing number of sports infra companies in the country, the other prominent names being SE Transstadia Limited, 4K Sports Infra and the Hyderabad-based Great SportsTech Limited among others.

Ali said India's sports infrastructure industry has the potential to grow exponentially but "gaps" remain in maintenance standards, and manufacturing self-reliance. The industry is expected to be worth USD six billion by 2030.

Globally, the industry is worth USD 132 billion with North America having the largest market share of over 30 per cent, followed by China.

"While demand for sports facilities is increasing rapidly, there is still a shortage of certified, international-standard venues across many parts of the country," Ali said.

"The industry would also benefit from greater investment in indigenous manufacturing capabilities, quality benchmarks, and long-term maintenance frameworks to ensure facilities continue performing at international standards throughout their life-cycle," he added.

Iran Squad Grapples With War Ahead of World Cup

AP

ANTALYA (TURKEY): Iran is heading to the World Cup while the country is at war with the primary host nation, a situation that is unique in the tournament's history.

In exclusive interviews with The Associated Press during a team camp in Turkey, two members of Iran's squad described how the conflict is affecting its World Cup preparations.

"Well, to be honest, it's not easy," said Saeid Ezatollahi, a 29-year-old midfielder who also played for Iran in the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

"That's going to be my third World Cup. So for me and some of the other players, it might be easier to manage these kind of things," he said in English on the sidelines of a training session on Wednesday. "But at the end ... it is going to be difficult for us because at the same time, we are following the news in our country and the political things, of course, can affect the mind of the players and the people."

The Iran team has spent more than two weeks in Turkey, mostly practicing at the coastal resort Antalya, and some went to the capital Ankara to submit visa applications at the U.S. embassy. Media access to their World Cup preparations has been limited, and



the players rarely speak to international journalists.

Iran will be based in Mexico during the World Cup

The team is set to travel to Mexico this weekend after receiving visas from the Mexican embassy in Ankara. The team said Thursday that the process of obtaining entry permits had been finalized for all members of the squad. Problems with visa processing meant Iran's World Cup training base was moved from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, on Mexico's border with California.

Iran will play its first two games near Los Angeles, which has a large Iranian community, many of whom oppose the current government.

"So for sure, we are expecting to have a lot of fans during our games at the stadium," Ezatollahi said. "And this is going to be a lot of pressure for us because

the expectation is going to be high. I just wish we can make them proud and show them that Iranians, they are prepared for every hard job in the world," he said.

Mohammad Ghorbani, 24, is going to his first World Cup for Iran.

"It's true that we are facing special circumstances right now but we are football players and we have to play, practice, and prepare ourselves for the competitions we have ahead," the Abu Dhabi-based player told the AP in Farsi.

"On the other hand, we know that our people have been going through a lot of difficulties throughout the war, and we are going there for them, to get the best results for their joy and the joy of the people of our country."

The U.S. and Israel launched its war against Iran on Feb. 28, killing its supreme leader and other top officials. Iran respond-

ed with strikes targeting Israel, U.S. forces and the Gulf Arab states. It also has maintained a chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, imperiling global energy supplies.

Despite a nominal ceasefire being in place, Iran and the U.S. have yet to negotiate a permanent end to the war and attacks continue in the region.

Iran is in Group G with New Zealand, Belgium and Egypt

Iran's team is not required to enter the United States until June 14, one day before its first match against New Zealand at the Los Angeles Rams' stadium in Inglewood.

Iran returns to Inglewood to face Belgium on June 21 and completes Group G in Seattle, against Egypt on June 26.

"I'm really proud to be part of my national team," said Ezatollahi, whose career has taken him to play for clubs in Spain, Russia, England, Belgium, Denmark, Qatar and now Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

"We need to clear up our minds and be fresh because our target and our duty is to fight for our people, to represent our country and to show how good we are," he said.

Ghorbani agreed, saying the team wants to bring joy to Iranians.

SC Says Public Jobs Must Be Filled as Per Eligibility Criteria

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Observing that public employment must be made available to eligible candidates in accordance with the prescribed qualifications, the Supreme Court has held that allowing a person with higher qualifications to secure a job intended for those with lower qualifications deprives a genuinely eligible and deserving candidate.

A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and R Mahadevan made the observation while setting aside a Madras High Court order that had reinstated a temporary bank attendant.

The top court said the high court had overlooked that the employee had secured an appointment to a post earmarked exclusively for candidates with qualifications up to Class 10 by concealing the fact that he was a graduate.

"Public employment must be made available to all eligible candidates in accordance with the prescribed qualifications...."



"When the post was specifically intended for candidates possessing lower educational qualifications, permitting a person with higher qualifications to secure such employment would necessarily result in depriving a genuinely eligible and deserving candidate of the opportunity," the bench said.

The top court said the rationale behind prescribing an upper limit of qualification is both reasonable and equitable, namely, to provide employment opportunities to persons who, owing to

circumstances of life, could not pursue higher education.

"The State, as a model employer, is justified in reserving certain categories of posts for such persons so that they are not compelled to compete with more highly-qualified candidates against whom they would ordinarily stand little chance of selection. Such a policy has consistently been upheld by the courts," the bench said while upholding the bank's decision to dismiss the employee.

Aamir Khan to Marry Gauri Spratt in Third Marriage

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai - Bollywood actor Aamir Khan, who has been married twice before, said he will marry partner Gauri Spratt on July 5, marking a new chapter in a relationship that became public last year.

"The news about the marriage is true. It's on July 5," Khan told Variety in an interview while travelling in the United States. The 61-year-old actor had previously said marriage was not a priority for the couple, who were living together, but said their views had evolved.

"Yes, that is true. But now we both feel we are ready to take our relationship to the next level," Khan said.

Reflecting on their relationship, the actor added: "I am at peace." Gauri and I are serious about each other, and we are in a very committed space. We are partners; we are together."

"In my heart, I'm already



married to her. So, to formalise our togetherness just seems like a natural progression of our partnership," he said.

Media reports said the couple plans to have a registered marriage ceremony at home rather than a large public celebration, with only family members and close friends expected to attend.

Spratt, who has roots in Bengaluru and works in the wellness and beauty industry, was introduced to the public by Khan during his 60th birthday celebrations in March 2025.

Khan said at the time that the two had known each other for years before reconnecting after a long gap and gradually developing a romantic relationship away from public scrutiny.

CBI Books Man for Posing as PMO Undersecretary

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Jun 4: The CBI has filed charges against a man for impersonating an undersecretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), officials said Thursday. The accused, identified as P Elangovan, became the subject of an investigation initiated following a complaint from the PMO.

The complaint originated from a wedding invitation card that was received at the PMO, which stated that Elangovan was employed as an under secretary.

"The assistant director, PMO, has mentioned in his letter that prima facie this appears to be a case of impersonation as an official of the Prime Minister's Office because as per official records, no individual with the name 'Thiru P Elangovan' has worked in PMO till date," the complaint from the PMO said. Based on the complaint, the CBI registered a preliminary enquiry on January 8, which showed that in 2023, Elangovan had called V Kumaresan, the Joint Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR-CE), over the phone and falsely introduced himself as a PMO officer.

5 Ways to a Healthy Diet

1. **Plenty of Water**
2. **Adequate Whole Grains**
3. **Moderate Dairy and Meat**
4. **Many Fruits & Vegetables**
5. **No Alcohol and Tobacco**

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