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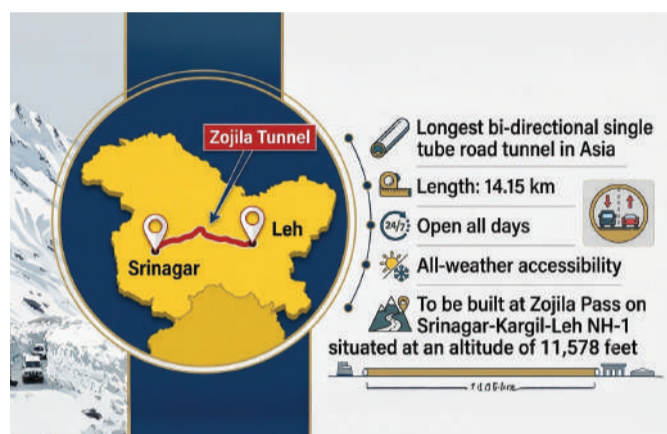
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Zojila Tunnel Set For Major Breakthrough Today



Observer News Service

Srinagar: India's longest road tunnel project at Zojila is set to achieve a major milestone on Tuesday, with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari scheduled to attend the breakthrough ceremony of the main tunnel being constructed between Kashmir and Ladakh.

Officials said Gadkari will visit Sonamarg to trigger the breakthrough blast, marking a significant stage in the Rs 6,500-crore strategic infrastructure project that is expected to provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Ladakh.

The 13.15-km-long tunnel, being constructed at an altitude of 11,578 feet by Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL), has witnessed excavation of more than 13 kilometres. The project is now nearing the

crucial stage where the excavation faces from the Baltal and Minamarg ends meet.

Located about 24 kilometres from Sonamarg and 103 kilometres from Srinagar, the tunnel is expected to transform connectivity to Ladakh by ensuring year-round access to Drass, Kargil and Leh, which remain cut off for several months each year due to heavy snowfall and avalanches at the Zojila Pass.

In a statement, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways described the project as one of the most challenging engineering undertakings in the Himalayas and said it was set to achieve a historic milestone with the breakthrough blasting of the main tunnel.

Earlier, Harpal Singh, Joint Chief Operating Officer of MEIL, said excavation work had entered its final phase, with only a few metres remaining before the two ends of | [More on P6](#)

Trump Secures Pause After Iran-Israel Exchange Redraws Deterrence Lines

Agencies

Tehran/Jerusalem — Iran launched ballistic missiles at Israel on Sunday in retaliation for Israeli airstrikes on Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiyeh, marking the first time Tehran has directly attacked Israel in response to an Israeli strike on a third country.

Air raid sirens sounded across northern Israel as Iranian missiles targeted military sites, including the Ramat David Airbase, according to Iranian media. Israel responded with limited strikes on targets inside Iran, raising fears of a broader regional conflict.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the attack was retaliation for Israeli violations of ceasefire arrangements in Lebanon and warned that any further



WE'RE VERY CLOSE. I WOULD SAY AN AGREEMENT would be signed on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of this coming week. And now this takes place."

aggression would trigger a broader response.

"We had previously warned that if crimes expand in Beirut's Dahiyeh, we will strike targets within the occupied territories," Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya military headquarters said.

Israel vowed retaliation, with military spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin saying

referring to ongoing diplomatic efforts.

Trump also criticised Israel's earlier strike on Beirut, saying, "I'm not happy about it."

Following U.S. mediation, both sides signalled a pause in military operations, although each warned it would respond to future attacks.

Beyond the military exchange, analysts said the strike could represent a major strategic shift. Iran's response signalled that attacks on Lebanon could now trigger direct Iranian retaliation against Israel, effectively linking multiple regional fronts.

"What the Iranians were trying to do, and what really worries the Israelis, is that they were trying to extend their deterrence," said Trita Parsi of the Quincy Institute. "It would be | [More on P6](#)

Fresh Advisory: India Asks Nationals To Leave Iran

KO Web Desk

India on Monday reiterated its warning to its nationals in Iran to avoid any travel to the country and exit the region by available means of transport.

The advisory comes in view of the latest developments in the region.

In the urgent advisory, the Indian Embassy in Iran reiterated its earlier advice to all Indian nationals to avoid travel to Iran.

"In view of the latest developments in the region, the Embassy reiterates its earlier advice to all Indian Nationals to avoid any travel to Iran," the advisory stated on X. "Indian Nationals presently | [More on P6](#)

AMARNATH YATRA Enhanced Services, Tight Security Planned

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Monday said the administration is making extensive preparations for the annual Amarnath Yatra, assuring that all arrangements will be in place before the commencement of the pilgrimage next month.

The 57-day pilgrimage to the holy Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir is scheduled to begin on July 3 and conclude on August 28, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan.

Speaking to reporters, Dulloo said the administration is working on multiple fronts, including security, transportation, healthcare, accommodation, electricity and water supply, to ensure a smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage for devotees.

"All necessary administrative and security arrangements are being made and will be fully completed before the start of the pilgrimage. Various aspects such as electricity supply, water supply, accommodation for pilgrims, transportation, security and healthcare arrangements are being worked on," he said.

The Chief Secretary said efforts are underway to provide facilities better than those available during | [More on P6](#)

CM Seeks INDIA Bloc Support for Statehood Protest In Delhi

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday sought the support of opposition parties for the National Conference's proposed protest in New Delhi demanding the restoration of statehood to the Union Territory.

Addressing a meeting of INDIA bloc leaders at the Constitution Club in New Delhi, Abdullah urged alliance partners to join the National Conference's planned agitation during the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament.

According to the National Conference, the chief minister informed opposition leaders about the party's decision to stage a protest in the national capital and appealed for their participation.

"In the INDIA bloc meeting held today, CM Omar Abdullah asked all the



participants to join JKNC when we come to Delhi to protest for the restoration of statehood. He also informed them that we would be writing to each of them individually as well," the party said in a post on X.

The National Conference had announced last week that its legislators and senior leaders would hold a protest in New Delhi on the opening day of Parliament's Monsoon Session,

pressing for the immediate restoration of statehood and constitutional guarantees for Jammu and Kashmir.

The demand stems from the Centre's decision of August 5, 2019, when the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

During the INDIA bloc meeting, opposition leaders discussed | [More on P6](#)

LG Reviews Mubarak Mandi Projects 'Ensure Quality, Speed Up Work'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday visited the historic Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex here and reviewed the progress of ongoing conservation and restoration works, including repair efforts at the centuries-old Gadadhar Ji Temple, a portion of whose wall recently collapsed.

Accompanied by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and other senior officials, the Lieutenant Governor inspected various heritage structures undergoing restoration and took stock of works being executed under the comprehensive revival plan for the iconic Dogra-era complex.

The visit comes days after a portion of the wall and an adjoining slab of the nearly 200-year-old Gadadhar Ji Temple, located adjacent to the heritage complex, collapsed



following rainfall. The incident had triggered concerns among local residents, some of whom linked the damage to excavation work being carried out nearby as part of the construction of a multi-level parking facility.

During the inspection, Sinha directed officials to expedite restoration works while maintaining | [More on P6](#)

Police Finalise Security Plan For Muharram In Kashmir



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir Zone Inspector General of Police (IGP) V K Birdi on Monday reviewed security and traffic arrangements for the upcoming Muharram observances across the Valley and stressed the need for coordinated

efforts to ensure their peaceful conduct.

The review was held during a high-level meeting attended by all Range Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs) of Kashmir Zone and other senior police officers, officials said.

According | [More on P6](#)



Tourists on horseback traverse the rugged trails of Sonamarg against a backdrop of snow-capped peaks and towering conifers. KO photo by Abid Bhat

Railway Employee Awarded 10 Yrs Jail In Minor Rape Case

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A court here on Monday sentenced a railway employee to ten years of rigorous imprisonment after convicting him of kidnapping, wrongful confinement and raping a minor girl at his official residential quarters in Hamray area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district in 2012.

The Court of Additional Sessions Judge Srinagar, Farooq Ahmad Bhat, sentenced the convict Imtiyaz Ahmad Rather, a resident of Gotapora, Budgam, presently employed with the Railways at Hamray, after finding him guilty under Sections 363 (kidnapping),

376 (rape) and 342 (wrongful confinement) of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC).

Pronouncing the verdict, the court said that the aggravating circumstances outweighed the mitigating factors, particularly because the victim was a minor and the convict had misused government accommodation allotted to him for the commission of the offence.

According to the prosecution, the victim, then a student of Class IX and below 14 years of age, was lured by the accused on the false promise of marriage. He allegedly took her to his government residential quarter at Hamray Railway Station Pattan, where he confined her for two days | [More on P6](#)

Ujjwala Subsidised LPG Quota Cut To 4 Cylinders

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: The government has reduced the number of subsidised cooking gas cylinders available annually to beneficiaries of its flagship Ujjwala scheme to four, aligning support with average household consumption levels, a senior government official said on Monday.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), launched in May 2016 to provide deposit-free LPG connections to adult women from poor households, beneficiaries were initially entitled to 12 subsidised 14.2-kg cylinders a year. The subsidised quota was reduced to nine cylinders last year and has now been | [More on P6](#)

Osteoarthritis Cases Surge In People In Their 30s, Experts Call for Personalised Care

Press Trust Of India

Osteoarthritis (OA), long considered a wear-and-tear disease of old age, is increasingly being diagnosed in patients as young as 30 years, according to a review by researchers published in the journal *International Orthopaedics*. The review, published on May 15, reframes osteoarthritis as a heterogeneous syndrome rather than a single disease, driven by diverse biological, biomechanical, metabolic, genetic and molecular mechanisms. The findings suggest that the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach to treatment often fails because patients present with different underlying disease drivers. More than 500 million people worldwide live with OA, ac-

counting for 7.6 per cent of the global population. Prevalence has surged 132 per cent in the past 30 years and is projected to rise by another 60 per cent by 2050, according to Global Burden of Disease estimates. Women, individuals with obesity, and those with joint injuries are disproportionately affected. "Osteoarthritis is no longer confined to the elderly. We are now seeing patients as young as 30, often driven by obesity and sedentary lifestyles. "This research makes clear that osteoarthritis is not a single disease but a spectrum of conditions, and recognising the specific phenotype in each patient allows us to deliver far more effective, personalised treatment than a one-size-fits-all approach," said Dr Raju Vaishya, senior consultant Orthopaedic and Joint Replacement Surgeon at Indraprastha

Apollo Hospitals. The review identifies six disease subtypes, including inflammatory, metabolic and pain-sensitisation variants, and recommends MRI-based tools alongside biomarker panels to guide treatment decisions. Researchers cited examples illustrating the need for personalised care. A 33-year-old IT professional with persistent knee pain was found to have vitamin D deficiency, elevated body mass index and early joint degeneration. Treated as a case of metabolic osteoarthritis with weight management, supplementation and structured exercise, the patient showed significant improvement. In another case, a 60-year-old woman with severe burning knee pain and disrupted sleep experienced little relief from standard medication. Further assessment revealed a pain-

sensitisation phenotype, and treatment with neuromodulators targeting nerve pain pathways brought substantial relief. The study also highlighted that MRI-based structural phenotypes, including inflammatory, meniscus-cartilage, subchondral bone, atrophic and hypertrophic forms, along with molecular endotypes such as low tissue turnover, structural damage and systemic inflammation. These tools, combined with biomarkers, including COMP, CTX-II and hsCRP, are expected to help clinicians make more precise treatment decisions, the authors said. Emerging technologies such as AI-assisted MRI scoring and PET-MRI with ¹⁸F-NaF are enabling earlier detection and patient clustering, though wider clinical adoption will require standardised protocols, validation across joints and large-scale clinical trials, the review noted.

Heat, Humidity Of India's Monsoon Could Extend Summer Heat Stress As Climate Warms: Study



Press Trust Of India

Hot and humid conditions prevailing during India's monsoon season could extend the duration of uncompensable heat stress of the summer season under a global warming of 2 degrees Celsius, a study has found. Findings published in the journal *American Geophysical Union (AGU) Advances* highlight a "surge of UHS (uncompensable heat stress) during the monsoon season (July-October) as the climate warms". Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar and the US' Stanford and Purdue universities said long-lasting uncompensable heat stress across both the seasons -- summer and monsoon -- could pose critical challenges to public health, labour productivity, and climate resilience in densely populated and vulnerable regions. Uncompensable heat stress occurs when one's body is unable to cool down through sweating or other mechanisms due to extreme heat and humidity. A sustained accumulation of heat can endanger human health, including causing heat-related illness, organ failure, and death. The study shows that over the period of 1979-2021, uncompensable heat stress has become more frequent and is affecting significantly more areas across India -- from less than 0.01 million square kilometres during the 1980s to 0.04 million square kilometres by 2020. Uncompensable heat stress was found to be more prevalent during the summer months of March-June, affecting eight per cent of India and more strongly associated with yearly heat-related mortality -- only one per cent was found to be impacted during the monsoon season. "However, the monsoon season (July-October) UHS, predominantly characterised by hot-humid conditions, is projected to increase rapidly with climate warming and affect nearly equivalent areas of the country as the summer season (60 per cent in summer and 53 per cent in the monsoon season) under 2 degrees Celsius warming relative to the preindustrial period

tion of the World dataset, while heat-related mortality data for the Indian states during 1980-2019 were obtained from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Spatially, the uncompensable heat stress during summer primarily occurs in the Indo-Gangetic plain and coastal regions of India, potentially due to high temperatures and an inland moisture transport by pre-monsoon winds from the Bay of Bengal, among other factors. In contrast, the researchers found that the monsoon season primarily experiences humid uncompensable heat stress within a narrower air temperature range between 35 degrees Celsius and 38 degrees Celsius. The monsoon-season uncompensable heat stress has occurred in the Punjab state of the northwestern parts of the country, the team said. The presence of high humidity during the monsoon season, combined with moderately high air temperatures, especially during the monsoon breaks, makes favourable conditions for extreme heat stress occurrence, they said. The Gangetic Plain, northwestern India, and eastern coastal regions were identified as hotspots that experienced uncompensable heat stress primarily during the summer season. "However, northwestern and Gangetic plain regions will face more frequent occurrences of UHS during the monsoon than in summer under the warming cli-

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION PATTAN.
 NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
 Fresh NIT No: 19 /R&B of 2026-27/ 965-70 Dated: 06.06.2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Projecting Authority
1	Macadamisation of inner links at Novlari by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	30.98 lacs	1100/-	61960/-	25 days	5054-C&T	A/B	R&B
2	Macadamisation of Rehmatnagar road at Shirpora by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	31.02 lacs	1100/-	62040/-	25 Days	5054-C&T	A/B	R&B
3	link roads of singhpura by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	58.26 lacs	1600/-	116520/-	35 days	5054-C&T	A	R&B
4	Macadamization of Tapper inner inner links by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal	38.92 lacs	1100/-	77840/-	25 days	5054-C&T	A/B	R&B
5	Macadamization of Tapper Poshnag Road by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	38.86 lacs	1100/-	77720/-	25 days	5054-C&T	A/B	R&B
6	Macadamization of Wanigam Bala inner links by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	38.89 lacs	1100/-	77780/-	25 days	5054-C&T	A/B	R&B
7	Link Roads of Wussan Village (Balance) by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	19.43 lacs	800/-	38860	20 days	5054-C&T	B/C	R&B

Position Of AAA: **Accorded**
 Position of T.S: **Accorded**

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	06.06.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	08.06.2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	08.06.2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	16.06.2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	17.06.2026 11:00 AM Office of The Executive Engineer RnB Division Pattan

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No., Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender inviting authority) Falling under three Competence of under sign.

3. All the bidders must upload Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender receiving authority) (The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, as per PWD norms).

4. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender receiving authority). The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP/ maintenance period for different nature of works i.e. for M&R works six months (6 months) Bituminous works Three Years (03 Years) and Building works Eighteen Months (18 months) etc as per Physical nature of work.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender receiving authority).

6. The Additional Performance Security deposit if any shall be released after the completion of work.

7. The bidder must be registered on JKPWDOMS portal, while participating in the tendering process it should be ensured that all bank account of contractors mapped on JKPWDOMS must be linked with PAN No, GST No and ADHAAR No as per the circular instructions issued by the Finance Department.

8. The earnest money/ Bid security in favor of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of original Treasury Challan.

9. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

10. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-
 i. Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 ii. Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
 iii. Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Pattan

Computer operator/ Camp/ Draftsman/ Head Draftsman/ Technical Officer /
 No: R&B / Divn./ 965-70

DIPK-1928/26
 Dated:08.06.2026

OFFICE SPACE REQUIRED

A reputed Media House based in Srinagar is seeking 800 SFT to 1200 SFT office accommodation purely on rental basis, preferably in and around Lal Chowk, Dalgate / Boulevard, Bund. The premises should have a car parking facility to meet operational requirements.

Interested property owners or parties willing to offer space are kindly requested to get in touch at: +91 70062 91370

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have change my name from old name Sheik Nisar Ahmed to new name Shiekh Nisar Ahmad in future I will be known as Shiekh Nisar Ahmad
 If anybody having any objection may file to REGIONAL PASSPORT OFFICE within 7 days
 NAME: Shiekh Nisar Ahmad
 R/O: Samboora Pulwama. ard

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Ms. Kushboo Qadir, D/o Ghulam Qadir Najar, R/o Hardushoora, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby inform the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded as "Shahzada Bano" in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 1428. My correct name is Kushboo Qadir. Further, my Date of Birth has been incorrectly recorded as 10/06/2005 in the said Aadhaar Card, whereas my correct Date of Birth is 13/08/2006. It is hereby declared that Kushboo Qadir and Shahzada Bano refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified by the name Kushboo Qadir with Date of Birth 13/08/2006 for all official purposes. Any person having any objection to the above correction may convey the same within seven days from the date of publication of this notice.
 Sd/-
 Kushboo Qadir
 Hardushoora, Kunzer
 District Baramulla, J&K (UT)
 FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my driving licence bearing dl no: JK0520210001135 from Dhoiban to Mamoosa on 25-05-2026 . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the ARTO Sopore Baramulla within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Danish Ahmad Bhat
 S/O Ghulam Mohi ud din Bhat

NOTICE

It is for general information that I intend to change my name and date of birth in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 5799 6056 6946 from Sahiba Tariq, Date of Birth 04-04-1976, to Farooza Akhtar, Date of Birth 02-04-1976. Anybody having any objection in this regard may contact the concerned authority within one week from the date of publication of this notice.
 Farooza Akhtar

NOTICE

I, Shabeer Ahmad, S/o Late Mohd Sidiq Sheikh, R/o Syed Colony, Zakura, Srinagar, do hereby declare that Raja, Widow of Late Abdul Hamid Mir, R/o Syedpora Hamchi, Ganderbal, is my real sister and is fully dependent upon me. I intend to obtain a Dependent Certificate from the competent authority in her favour. Any person having any objection to this may file the same before the concerned authority within a week at the most.
 Shabeer Ahmad
 R/o Syed Colony, Zakura, Srinagar

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my DOB certificate Bearing Admin no 4406 issued by Govt Girls Higher Secondary School Magam. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within even dasy. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Rubena Akhter
 D/o Mohd Qasim Tantray BMG

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information of the general public that the name and date of birth of my son have been wrongly recorded in his Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. XXXX XXXX 3884 as "RAHSHID MAJEED" with Date of Birth 06/10/2006, which is incorrect. That the correct name of my son is "RAASHID MAJEED GANAIE" and his correct Date of Birth is 25/10/2008 as per his school records. Henceforth, RAASHID MAJEED GANAIE and RAHSHID MAJEED shall refer to one and the same person. The correction is being made for all official and legal purposes. If anybody has any objection to the above correction of name and date of birth, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within the stipulated period from the date of publication of this notice. Otherwise, no objection shall be entertained thereafter.
 NASEEMA BEGUM
 W/o Abdul Majeed Ganaie fko
 Mother of Raashid Majeed Ganaie
 R/o Awalawa, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT)

GMC Srinagar Issues Public Advisory on Dangers of Elevated Cortisol

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In an effort to raise awareness about the growing impact of stress-related health issues, the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar has issued a public advisory highlighting the dangers of persistently elevated cortisol levels and the simple lifestyle measures that can help keep the stress hormone under control.

The awareness message, issued in the public interest by Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan, Professor and Head of the Department of Community Medicine, GMC Srinagar, highlights that chronic stress is not merely an emotional issue but a biological response that can significantly affect both physical and mental health if left unmanaged.

Cortisol, often referred to as the body's primary stress hormone, plays a vital role in regulating metabolism,

blood pressure, immune function, and the body's response to stress. However, experts warn that prolonged elevation of cortisol levels can lead to a wide range of health complications.

According to the advisory, accessed by Kashmir Observer, chronic high cortisol contributes to increased inflammation in the body and has been linked to conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses. It can also raise blood sugar and blood pressure levels, increasing the risk of metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular diseases.

Health experts said that excessive cortisol weakens the immune system, making individuals more vulnerable to infections such as colds and flu while slowing down wound healing. "Persistent stress can also disrupt sleep patterns, resulting in insomnia, poor-quality sleep, and daytime fatigue," they said.

Police Attach Properties in Fresh Blow to Drug Networks

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police on Monday attached immovable properties worth approximately 4 crore in separate actions under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, intensifying efforts to target the financial infrastructure allegedly linked to narcotics trafficking in the Valley.

The action forms part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan, under which law enforcement agencies have increasingly focused on identifying and attaching assets suspected to have been acquired through proceeds generated from the illegal drug trade.

In one of the major actions, Police Station Sangam attached assets worth around 3 crore belonging to Gulam Ahmad Dar of Srinagar in connection with a case registered under the NDPS Act earlier this year.

The attached assets include a residential house, land and commercial shops. According to police, investigation into the case indicated that the properties were allegedly acquired through proceeds generated from narcotics-related activities.

In another action, Police Station Nowhatta attached a residential property valued at approximately 1 crore belonging to Mohd Shafi Sheikh in connection with a narcotics case registered in 2018.



Admin Gears Up for Muharram; DC Reviews Facilities at Major Imambaras

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In preparation for the forthcoming holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram 1448 Hijri, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, undertook an extensive visit to various prominent Imambaras in the City, including Imambaras at Zadibal, Hasanabad Rainawari and Baghwanpora Lalbazar, to take a firsthand appraisal of the arrangements being made for the smooth and peaceful observance of Muharram.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Nuzhat Khurshid, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad, Superintending Engineer SMC, Sajad Kawasa, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tahir Sajad, Executive Engineers of R&B, KPDC, Water Works, and senior Officers from the Departments of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Social Welfare, Fire & Emergency Services, Forest and other line departments.

On the occasion, the DC passed several onspot directions to the line Departments and stressed on elaborate arrangements and sustained efforts facilitating the observance of important

proceedings & processions.

Regarding essential services, the DC instructed officers of the KPDC and Water Works Department to ensure uninterrupted electricity and drinking water supply. He directed the Executive Engineer Water Works to keep adequate arrangements for water tankers at locations where additional water supply may be required.

The DC asked the SMC and allied Departments to ensure all Street lights including High Mass lights around Imambaras are functional well before the start of the Holy month. He also stressed on ensuring cleanliness of lanes and drains inside the compounds of Imambaras, Shrines and roads enroute Procession routes. He also emphasized deployment of dog catching teams around key points.

The officers of the Health Department were asked to keep first aid facilities, Medical teams and Ambulances available in the areas and also accompany the processions to ensure immediate first aid/ medical treatment.

At Hasanabad Imambara, the DC took stock of similar arrangements and reiterated the importance of completing all works well in advance. He stressed that every Department must work in close coordination to ensure that devotees and mourners face no difficulties during the observance of Muharram.

The DC also visited Imambara Baghwanpora, Lalbazar, where he again interacted with local representatives and members of the community. He patiently listened to their concerns and developmental demands and issued on-the-spot directions to Officers of various Departments for prompt redressal of issues raised.

At Zadibal Imambara, the DC held a detailed interaction with the local community representatives to have first-hand feedback of the arrangements to be put in place during the Holy Month of Muharram-ul-Haram.

He directed the concerned departments to ensure adequate sanitation, lighting, water supply, and other essential services around the shrine premises.

During all visits, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of coordination between the Administration and local committees for the seamless conduct of Muharram observances. He assured community representatives that the District Administration would continue to monitor preparations closely and ensure that all necessary arrangements are completed within the stipulated timeframe.

Meanwhile, the DC also discussed several long-term measures being taken by the Administration to address the major infrastructural requirements of the areas in a phased manner

- 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
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI CALENDAR
23 Zil-Hajj
1447

PRAYERS	
FAJR	3: 34
ZUHR	12:30
ASR	5: 30
Magrib	7:44
ISHA	9: 25

This Day In History

- 641 - Arabic/Islamic army contrasts with the Hippo over Alexandria
- 1898 - China leases Hong Kong's new territories to the United Kingdom for 99 years
- 1915 - US President Woodrow Wilson sends 2nd Lusitania note to Germany protesting sinking of the Lusitania and refuting German claim British blockade illegal
- 1931 - First rocket-powered aircraft design patented by Robert Goddard
- 1940 - General Charles de Gaulle's 1st meeting with Winston Churchill
- 1946 - Bhumibol Adulyadej becomes King of Thailand after the death of his brother King Ananda Mahidol
- 1956 - Heavy earthquake strikes Afghanistan, 400 killed
- 1957 - First ascent of Broad Peak (the world's 12th highest mountain).

From KO Archives

5th Relaunch Of Kashmir Channel To Cost Rs 5 Crore

Observer News Service

Srinagar - The much-hyped Kashmir channel of Doordarshan is poised for 'relaunch' for the umpteenth time on Friday. A neat Rs five crore is likely to be spent to mark the occasion.

Reliable sources told Observer News Service two chartered plane loads of senior government officials from the union ministries of home and information and broadcasting besides scores of Bollywood celebrities were expected to descend on this capital city, otherwise resonant with screams and shrieks emanating from the unabated violence. The VVIP guests, who include Amitabh Bachan and Shahrukh Khan, would be lodged in Grand Palace hotel.

Sources said the Doordarshan authorities would organise a 2-day extravaganza at the world famous rendezvous, SK International Convention Centre. It will be marked by several cultural pageants and musical concerts. A team of Doordarshan officials is already in town lining up the arrangements for the big occasion.

It may be recalled the Kashmir channel is being relaunched for the fifth time, ostensibly by way of commissioning of a new transmitter. It was first launched during the erstwhile Congress government in 1996 by the then minister, K P Singh Deo, from Delhi as a satellite channel. A year later, Sushma Swaraj of the BJP government performed its fresh inauguration as a terrestrial channel to facilitate direct reception with 'out cable or dish antenna'.

Again, in 1999, Pramod Mahajan launched the channel with enhanced power transmitter. And, for the fourth time, on this year's Republic Day, the govt-ernor and the chief minister launched the channel with great fanfare only to extend the duration of its telecasts to 16 hours.

Well placed Doordarshan sources told Observer News Service the qualitatively poor channel with hardly any viewership has allegedly assumed the dubious of being a money spinner for the mandarins in Delhi and Srinagar.

At present, the director general of news, AIR, Harish Awasthi, is holding the additional charge of Kashmir channel. His joint director, Anurag Mishra, alleged to be Awasthi's blue-eyed boy, holds the additional charge as controller programmes of Kashmir channel. He has been seen in a well-known hotel here almost on every weekend.

Over the years, sources said, the channel had enriched a number of people, including an employee of the state forest corporation whose house was raided by the vigilance organisation in 1998 in an alleged corruption case. Among other things, around 120 empty cases of jewelry had been seized. It has been alleged more than Rs two crore worth of assignments were given to the kith and kin of the official.

(Kashmir Observer, June 09, 2000)

Labourer Dies after fall from Under-Construction House

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 38-year-old labourer died after falling from an under-construction house in the Habbak area of Srinagar outskirts on Monday, officials said.

The deceased has been identified as Tariq Ahmad Kathoo, son of Ghulam Nabi Kathoo, a resident of Khawaja Bagh, Tailbal.

According to information available, Tariq was engaged in construction work at an under-construction residential build-

ing in Habbak when he allegedly fell from a height and sustained critical injuries.

As per KNT, family members said the labourer was immediately shifted for medical treatment following the accident. However, he succumbed to his injuries before he could be saved.

Doctors at Primary Health Centre Hazratbal declared him dead on arrival.

Subsequently, a police party shifted the body to SMHS Hospital for necessary medico-legal and radiological examinations.

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Tanveer Ahmad Dar S/o: Tariq Ahmad Dar R/o: Tengpora Srinagar have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Nabreema Begum W/o: Mohammad Maqbool Rather R/o: Tailagam Kreeri Baramulla have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Mehraj ud Din Bhat S/o: Muzaffar Ahmad Bhat R/o: Banbazar Margam Shopian have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Firdous Ahmad Ganie S/o: Ghulam Mohammad Ganie R/o: Hariwatnoo Tangmarg Distt Baramulla have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Mohammad Sameer Choudhary S/o: Nazir Hussain R/o: Raipur Jammu have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Dilshada Akhter D/o: Gh Mohd Malik R/o: Kolipora Sabidan Budgam have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore

M/S Shaan Constructions
Owner: Mr Farooq Ah Paul
R/O: Summerbugh Lasjan Budgam

No: 2233-37
Dated: 08-06-2026

Subject: Beautification of Sopore Town and allied works

Sir,

Whereas, the work of Beautification of Sopore Town was allotted to your firm vide this office No: 449-50 Dated: 13/04/2026 with the clear understanding that the same would be executed with utmost urgency and diligence considering its public importance and visibility

Whereas, despite repeated notices, directions and communications issued by this office vide No: 522-25 Dated: 15/04/2026, 1450-54 Dated: 14/05/2026, you have failed to mobilize adequate resources and commence the work at the pace commensurate with the importance, urgency and stipulated timelines of the project

Whereas, you were repeatedly called upon to furnish a comprehensive work programme, bar chart and methodology of execution so that this office could assess the timeframe and strategy adopted by you for completion of this prestigious public project. However, no satisfactory response or actionable plan has been received from your end

Whereas, it has been observed that instead of deploying sufficient manpower and machinery, you have been intermittently deploying merely one or two labourers at the site, apparently with the sole intention of creating an impression that the work is under execution, while in reality no meaningful progress has been achieved on the ground

Whereas, a substantial portion of the footpath and pedestrian along the historic Main Chowk, Sopore, carrying heavy pedestrian traffic on a daily basis, has been dismantled and left in an unsafe condition by your agency. The unen and hazardous surface created by your inaction poses a serious threat to public safety and there is every apprehension of accidents and casualties arising therefrom, for which your firm shall be held solely responsible

Whereas, the undersigned personally inspected the site on Saturday at about 8:30 PM and was shocked to find that only two labourers were deployed by your agency. It was further observed that even the limited work being executed was not in conformity with the prescribed specifications and quality standards. Consequently, the concerned officials were directed to immediately stop the on-going defective work to prevent further violations and wastage of public resources

Whereas, despite repeated opportunities, meetings and directions issued by this office, your casual, indifferent and unprofessional approach towards a project of immense public significance has continued unabated. The people of Sopore and its adjoining areas have been eagerly awaiting completion of this project for a considerable period, but your conduct demonstrates a complete lack of seriousness and commitment towards fulfilling your contractual obligations.

Now, therefore, through the medium of this Final Show Cause Notice, you are hereby called upon to explain within two (02) days from the date of issuance of this notice as to why action under the relevant provisions of the Contract Agreement, Standard Bidding Documents (SBD), and other applicable rules shall not be initiated against your firm, including but not limited to:

1. Termination of the contract.
 2. Execution of the balance work at your risk and cost.
 3. Imposition of penalties as admissible under the contract conditions.
 4. Recommendation for blacklisting/debarment as warranted under rules.
 5. Any other action deemed appropriate by the competent authority.
- You are further directed to attend this office personally, along with all relevant documents, work programme, deployment schedule and execution plan, for a detailed discussion regarding the matter. Your written reply must reach this office within two days, failing which it shall be presumed that you have nothing to state in your defence. Consequently, this office shall be constrained to proceed with termination of the contract and initiation of further action under rules, at your risk and cost, without any further notice or correspondence. This matter shall be treated as MOST URGENT.

DIPK-1909/26
dated: 08-06-2026

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Sopore

NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Manzoor Ahmad Ganie S/o: Ab Aziz Ganie R/o Gokhama Kunzer have applied for upgradation of my contractor card. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemina Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

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KO VIEW

Pedaling New Paths

A cyclist glides past the still waters of Dal Lake as the first light touches the mountains.

A few years ago, such a scene would have attracted curious glances. Today, it has become part of a larger story unfolding across Kashmir.

Roads that once saw mostly cars and motorcycles are increasingly welcoming groups of cyclists, runners, and fitness enthusiasts who are changing how the region sees itself and how others see it.

Cycling clubs have multiplied across Kashmir, drawing students, professionals, business owners, and retirees. Early morning rides through Srinagar's Boulevard, countryside roads lined with poplar trees, and mountain routes around Gulmarg and Pahalgam have become common sights.

Social media has amplified this movement, turning local riders into ambassadors who showcase Kashmir as a destination for outdoor activity and healthy living.

This growing fitness culture is giving Kashmir a fresh identity that extends beyond its famous landscapes. Adventure seekers and cycling enthusiasts across India are beginning to view the valley as a place where sport, nature, and community come together.

Many cycling groups from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chandigarh now include Kashmir in their annual riding calendars, attracted by challenging terrains and stunning scenery.

Marathons and walkathons have added momentum to this transformation. Large public events held in Srinagar and other districts have brought thousands of participants onto the streets. Families, students, government employees, and athletes often take part side by side. Such gatherings send a powerful message that fitness is becoming a shared community value rather than a niche pursuit.

These events are also helping break long-held perceptions about life in Kashmir. Popular imagination has often portrayed the region as a place where harsh winters encourage indoor living and limited physical activity. Recent years tell a different story.

Running clubs meet before sunrise, cycling groups organize weekend expeditions, young people track fitness goals through mobile apps and share achievements online, and public parks and walking tracks attract growing crowds throughout the year.

Tourism planners have started taking notice. Fitness tourism is among the fastest-growing segments globally, and Kashmir possesses many advantages.

Scenic roads, mountain climbs, pleasant summer weather, and a rich cultural landscape create ideal conditions for cycling tours, endurance races, and recreational events. Local businesses, hotels, guides, and equipment providers stand to benefit as participation grows.

Kashmir has long been known for its beauty. A new image now sits beside it: a region on the move, powered by bicycles, running shoes, and a growing belief that fitness can connect people and welcome a new generation of visitors.



Dr. Waseem Ahmad

Bees in Kashmir have always worked by touch and instinct. They lift hive lids at dawn, listen to the pitch of the colony, and watch the sky for signs of coming rain. Generations passed down this knowledge in the valley where apple orchards and saffron fields depend on these pollinators.

But today that tradition stands at a crossroads. Artificial intelligence now delivers precision beekeeping, a set of tools that read hives in real time, spot trouble early, and help keepers protect their colonies against mounting threats.

The change matters deeply for Kashmir and for the world's food supply.

Honey bees pollinate roughly one-third of the crops people eat. Fruits, vegetables, and oilseeds all rely on their work.

Healthy bees support local economies and mountain ecosystems in a place like Kashmir, where agriculture anchors rural life. But colonies continue to face relentless pressure.

Habitat loss, shifting climate patterns, heavy pesticide use and disease place bee populations under growing strain.

The Varroa destructor mite stands out as a major driver of decline, weakening bees and spreading viruses that can wipe out entire hives within months.

Traditional checks for mites and infections such as American foulbrood and Nosema rely on repeated hive inspections, a process that disrupts colonies and often introduces error.

Smart beehives change the old equation. Sensors placed inside the hive track temperature, humidity, bee movement, and sound without constant human interference.

AI models process this stream of information and flag problems long before they become visible. A dip in core temperature or erratic humidity signals disease risk. Unusual acoustic patterns reveal a missing queen or an approaching swarm.

Keepers receive alerts on their phones and act quickly instead of discovering dead colonies weeks later. Early intervention cuts winter losses sharply and keeps colonies productive through Kashmir's harsh seasons.

Image recognition software takes the fight against pests further.

During brief hive openings, high-resolution photos feed into machine learning systems that count Varroa mites with remarkable accuracy.

The technology spots microscopic infestations that tired eyes might miss and reduces the need for lengthy, invasive exams. Bees experience less disruption to their carefully balanced internal environment. Treatments reach the problem faster, and colonies recover with minimal setback.

AI also sharpens honey production.

Models combine weather data, flowering schedules, and nectar flow predictions to tell keepers exactly when and where to move hives. Strategic placement maximizes collection while trimming fuel costs



AI simply removes guesswork, handles routine monitoring, and supplies predictive power in a world of rapid environmental change. It frees keepers to focus on the art of beekeeping while technology manages the science.

for transport.

In lean periods, the same systems recommend tailored supplemental feeding that maintains colony strength and prepares bees for the next abundant season.

Commercial operators gain efficiency, while small farmers in remote Kashmiri villages gain reliable guidance that once came only from decades of experience.

Acoustic monitoring opens an even more intimate window.

Bees communicate constantly through vibrations and specific frequencies. AI algorithms learn to decode these signals, distinguishing the constant hum of a thriving colony from the frantic tones of distress.

Keepers monitor behaviour remotely, day and night, without lifting a lid. The approach preserves the natural state of the hive while giving humans unprecedented insight into the colony's collective mood.

Looking ahead, robotics promise to lighten the physical burden.

Prototypes already handle frame movement and honey extraction. Autonomous drones could patrol larger apiaries, delivering fresh data from distant sites to a single dashboard.

These advances remain experimental, but they point toward scalable, sustainable management that could transform how Kashmir's beekeepers operate across rugged terrain.

Challenges remain, as smart sensors and supporting software carry upfront costs that strain small family operations. Technical skills vary, and reliable internet or electricity can prove patchy in higher reaches. Data quality depends on hardware durability in extreme mountain weather.

Governments and research bodies in agricultural regions like India must step up with targeted funding, training programs, and pilot projects that blend local knowledge with digital tools.

Kashmir, with its rich beekeeping heritage and immediate need for rural income, stands as an ideal testing ground. Initiatives that make these technologies accessible will strengthen both livelihoods and biodiversity.

The goal is not to sideline human expertise. Seasoned keepers bring intuition and long-term observation that no algorithm can duplicate.

AI simply removes guesswork, handles routine monitoring, and supplies predictive power in a world of rapid environmental change. It frees keepers to focus on the art of beekeeping while technology manages the science.

This fusion of old wisdom and new capability creates a sweet revolution.

In Kashmir's orchards and across global farmlands, healthy bees sustain harvests, support wildlife, and secure the future of food.

By equipping beekeepers with these powerful allies, societies invest in the pollinators that keep our plates full and our landscapes alive.

The buzzing of strong colonies need not fade. With clear-eyed adoption of precision tools, it can grow louder and more resilient for the generations who will inherit these hills.

The author is an Agricultural Analyst writing on farming, climate and culture. He can be reached at waseembhatpn@yahoo.com.

Kashmir's Missing Diagnosis

A global renaming of a widely misunderstood disorder exposes decades of diagnostic error, and places Kashmiri women at the center of a health crisis long pushed to the margins of public concern.



Iffat Aurooj

A medical consensus published on May 12, 2026 in The Lancet replaced Polycystic Ovary Syndrome with a new term: Polycystic Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome.

Fourteen years of research, more than 50 professional bodies, and thousands of patient voices led to this change.

Nearly 170 million women live with this condition worldwide. The revision moves far beyond terminology. It corrects a long-standing scientific error that reduced a complex endocrine and metabolic disorder to a misleading label centered on ovarian cysts.

Language in medicine directs power, and medical naming decides which departments take responsibility, which budgets receive attention, and which patients gain serious clinical response.

PCOS placed focus on cysts that do not exist in the clinical sense. Ultrasound images show immature follicles rather than cysts.

That misunderstanding led to widespread confusion in diagnosis.

Many patients received incorrect labels or waited years for confirmation. Research indicates diagnostic delays affected nearly 70 per-

cent of cases.

That delay created a gap between illness and care that persisted for decades.

The new name holds specific meaning. Polycystic signals disruption across hormonal systems that extend beyond the ovaries.

Insulin signaling, adrenal activity, thyroid function, and hypothalamic regulation interact within the disorder.

Metabolic changes place insulin resistance, diabetes risk, cholesterol imbalance, and blood pressure fluctuations at the core of clinical concern.

Ovaries retain their role, as their dysfunction remains central to the condition.

Global surveys show strong support for name change, with 86 percent of patients and 71 percent of clinicians backing a revised term that better captures the full biological complexity.

Medical naming also exposes questions of authority.

Indian scientific institutions have raised concerns about limited inclusion of data from South Asia during the renaming process. India reports nearly 44 million women affected, while China and India together account for nearly 75 million cases.

criticism points toward uneven participation in global medical standard-setting. Decisions taken in international forums often guide health frameworks in regions where lived experience differs sharply from clinical modeling.

Kashmir presents a more concentrated picture of this condition.

Prevalence estimates range between 29 and 35 percent among women of reproductive age. That places nearly one in three women within a

high-risk category for infertility and metabolic complications.

Such figures sit far above national averages and indicate a concentrated public health burden.

Conflict conditions deepen this burden, as health systems in Kashmir function within a wider environment dominated by political



tension, institutional strain, and uneven service delivery.

Women's health concerns often remain outside dominant public discussion. Attention gravitates toward security, governance, and political dispute. Hormonal and metabolic disorders, which progress without dramatic outward signs, receive limited visibility within such a setting.

Clinical silence grows where institutional focus stays elsewhere.

Social expectations intensify medical ne-

glect. Women in the region frequently face pressure tied to reproduction soon after marriage.

Irregular cycles, weight change, acne, and mood variation often receive informal interpretation rather than clinical evaluation.

These symptoms belong to PMOS but frequently receive dismissal or moral judgment. Limited awareness leads to delayed diagnosis and fragmented treatment.

Social consequences extend far beyond clinics. Infertility linked with PMOS often triggers stigma within families and communities. Women report rejection, verbal abuse, and marital breakdown. Terms used in everyday language turn medical conditions into social labels.

A 30-year-old woman from Kupwara, Asmat, lived with PCOS, tuberculosis, and depression at the same time. Family support weakened over time. Her husband later expressed intent to remarry due to absence of children. Her experience sits within a wider pattern where reproductive expectations define social acceptance.

Psychiatric dimensions intensify the condition's impact.

Dr. Yasir Rather from GMC Srinagar has documented growing mental health cases linked to infertility. Depression, anxiety, low self-worth, and guilt appear frequently among patients.

Local studies confirm strong associations between PMOS symptoms and psychological distress. Sleep disruption and stress increase alongside hormonal imbalance. Clinical systems rarely integrate reproductive endocrinology with mental health services, which leads to fragmented care pathways.

Global health data indicates that nearly

70 percent of women with PMOS remain undiagnosed. Local conditions in Kashmir suggest an even higher undiagnosed population due to limited screening, restricted awareness, and restricted access to specialized care.

Public discussion on women's health remains limited despite rising cases. Silence around infertility, combined with social pressure to conceive early, intensifies emotional strain.

A major shift in medical terminology now sits alongside a deeper policy question. Recognition of PMOS as a systemic endocrine and metabolic disorder opens space for restructured health planning. Kashmir stands at the center of that challenge.

High prevalence, combined with institutional gaps, creates a setting where delayed diagnosis and social stigma reinforce each other.

Health policy that treats PMOS as a minor reproductive issue fails to capture its full impact on women's bodies, mental health, and social standing.

A medical name change has already altered scientific understanding. Practical change within Kashmir depends on whether health systems, policymakers, and community institutions align clinical knowledge with lived experience.

Women affected by PMOS live within a gap between diagnosis and recognition. Closing that gap now sits at the center of public health responsibility in the region.

The author is an undergraduate student of Political Science at Janki Dev Memorial College, University of Delhi. She can be reached at aurooj.iffat@gmail.com.

From Patiala to Kashmir

What began as a demanding train journey from Patiala turned into an adventure filled with unexpected generosity, missed comforts, and stunning mountain vistas.



Rizqiyah Yusrinawati

When I first told people I was traveling from Patiala to Kashmir by train, most reactions were the same: "That's a long journey."

They were right. My trip began before sunset in Patiala, Punjab. At 7 p.m., I boarded an Intercity train to Ambala, the first leg of a journey that would take me hundreds of kilometers north.

From Ambala, I would catch the Shalimar Express to Jammu, arriving around six o'clock the next morning.

Then, after a quick transfer, I would board the Vande Bharat train to Srinagar.

It apparently sounded simple, but in reality, it was an adventure.

As an international student from Indonesia, navigating multiple train stations with heavy luggage was not always easy.

At times, I had to carry my bags across platforms. When the distance was too far, I relied on porters to help move my luggage.

There were moments when I wondered whether I had packed too much.

Technology was not always on my side either. At one point, I lost mobile signal and found myself depending on the kindness of strangers for internet access.

A fellow passenger shared a hotspot, allowing me to send messages and check important information about my journey.

One thing that surprised me during the trip was how willing people were to help.

Fellow passengers assisted me with my luggage, offered directions, and checked whether I was heading to the correct platform.

Travelling alone can sometimes feel intimidating, especially in unfamiliar places, but these small acts of kindness made the journey easier.

The longest stretch of the trip was aboard the Shalimar Express from Ambala to Jammu. During the journey, the train's air conditioning briefly stopped working.

For a moment, passengers grew concerned, but railway staff responded quickly. Within a short time, technicians arrived and fixed the issue, allowing the journey to continue comfortably through the night.

Outside the train window, there was little to see. Darkness covered the landscape, and eventually I fell asleep.

When I woke up the next morning in Jammu, I still had one final train to catch.

It was 6.13 a.m. when I reached the winter capital of Jammu and



AS TRAVELLERS, WE OFTEN FOCUS ON REACHING A PLACE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. But this trip reminded me that sometimes the most memorable part of travelling is not the arrival, but the landscapes, challenges, and unexpected kindness encountered along the way.

Kashmir, and my next train would be on 6.20 a.m. It was much more hectic. Imagine I have to move from the platform one to seven, without escalator within few minutes.

That was when the journey truly became unforgettable.

At around 6:30 a.m., I boarded the Vande Bharat train to Srinagar. As the train moved forward, the scenery outside transformed dramatically.

Mountains emerged in the distance, rivers cut through the landscape, and tunnels carried us through the hills before revealing breathtaking views on the other side.

For someone who grew up in Indonesia, the sight was astonishing. I found myself looking out the window almost continuously,

afraid of missing something. Every few minutes seemed to reveal another postcard worthy scene.

The mountains appeared larger, greener, and more dramatic than anything I had imagined while planning the trip.

Perhaps the reason it felt so special was because I had not seen any of it the night before. The darkness between Punjab and Jammu had hidden the landscape completely.

Then, suddenly, the morning journey to Srinagar unveiled everything at once.

The exhaustion of carrying luggage, changing trains, searching for signals, and navigating unfamiliar stations faded into the background.

All that remained was the view.

By the time the train arrived in Srinagar shortly before 11 a.m., I understood why so many people speak of Kashmir with admiration.

The destination was beautiful, but so was the journey that led me there.

As travellers, we often focus on reaching a place as quickly as possible. But this trip reminded me that sometimes the most memorable part of travelling is not the arrival, but the landscapes, challenges, and unexpected kindness encountered along the way.

For one Indonesian student travelling to across northern India, the route from Patiala to Srinagar was an experience that turned distance into discovery.

— The author is a journalism student at Punjab University, currently in the second year of the Mass Communication and Journalism program.

From Anna to Daniella

What connects nineteenth-century Russia to contemporary Kashmir? More than we imagine. Turgenev's masterpiece illuminates a world struggling with loss, individualism, and the erosion of meaning.



Wajahat Qazi

"So... you were convinced of all this and decided not to do anything yourselves?"

"And decided not to do anything serious," Bazarov repeated grimly.

"But to confine yourselves to abuse?"

"And that's called nihilism?"

"And that is called nihilism," Bazarov repeated again, this time with marked insolence. (Fathers and Sons by Ivan Turgenev)

"So, what did you do in Australia?"

"Read."

"Read what?"

"Everything I could."

"What did it give you? Where's the degree and the permanent residency?"

"Knowledge. They did not give me one. No. The whole world is my ken."

"What will mere knowledge give you?"

"A worldview and self-awareness."

"Let's get you married."

"No. I am still discovering myself."

"You insist on all this?"

"Totally and absolutely," said Javaid to his mother.

"I will love and support you forever," says Javaid's mother in resignation.

"Hey, I love you. I can't even tell you how much. Let's marry."

"I can't tell you how flattered I am. But I am not romantic anymore. And men... yikes!" (The emailed response arrives after a while.)

Chagrined and distraught, Javaid says, "But we were one, united in sublime love."

"But you always talked about and thought of Kashmir. I thought that was your first and last love," emails Daniella.

"You are and shall remain a piece of my heart. I wish you a long, happy life."

The emailing stops.

Before elaborating upon these vignettes and putting them into context and perspective, a wee digression may

be called for.

As US President Donald Trump's conservative agenda, fostering family and family values, crafting a new social, political, and economic paradigm, and so on, flounders on the rocks of an ill-conceived war against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the entire world is in a tizzy.

While this is politics, it may have a tangential bearing on the other Russian great novelist, Ivan Turgenev.

This eminence grise, in his opus, Fathers and Sons, vividly illustrated the tensions and contradictions within Russian families in the nineteenth century.

This was a time when Russia was in the crosshairs of competing ideologies and ideas, European nihilism and liberalism, traditional spirituality and faith, and so on.

Turgenev brought these tensions and contradictions to the fore at his eloquent best.

Highlighting the generational divide in nineteenth-century Russia, Turgenev's treatise Fathers and Sons tells the story of a young university graduate, Arkady Kirsanov, returning to his father's estate, Marino. While Nikolai, Arkady's father, welcomes his son and his friend Yevgeny Bazarov to the estate, his brother Pavel is unsettled by the strange ideology of nihilism that both young men espouse.

After growing bored at the Marino estate, Arkady and Bazarov go to visit Arkady's relatives. There, both socialize with the locals and end up meeting Madame Anna Odintsova, financially and socially independent and defined by grace and elan, atypical in a provincial society. Both young men are besotted with her.

While proclaiming his belief in nihilism and his critique of society, social mores, and its conventions, Bazarov expresses his deep love for Anna Odintsova. The woman spurns his advances, telling him in clear-cut terms that she does not approve of the way he demeans and disparages human feelings such as love and that, contrary to nihilism, she is enamoured of the aesthetics and beauty of existence.

Both Arkady and Bazarov then return to the latter's home, where they are treated warmly by Bazarov's parents. Bazarov still stands in awe of nihilism and proclaims it loudly. In the meantime, Arkady gradually weans himself away from his influence. Bazarov's parents' joy knows no bounds



when Arkady tells them that their son has a bright future ahead of him.

But soon after, both friends enter into an argument, almost coming to blows. They then return to Arkady's father's estate, Marino.

On his way home and increasingly distancing himself from Bazarov's ideals, Arkady meets Madame Odintsova again. But he soon realizes that he is actually in love with Odintsova's sister, Katya.

In the meantime, Bazarov has a fleeting romantic encounter with Fenechka, Nikolai's mistress. After entering into a duel with Pavel over this matter, Bazarov leaves Marino and returns home.

At home, Bazarov helps his father with his medical duties. One day, while performing an autopsy, Bazarov accidentally cuts himself and becomes infected. On the verge of death, Bazarov longingly asks for Madame Odintsova and tells her how sublimely beautiful she is. She kisses his forehead and leaves. Soon after, Bazarov dies. Arkady marries Katya, and both are welcomed into their family home.

Turgenev's brilliant book ends on a tragic but poignant note. It depicts Bazarov's mother and father weeping and praying over his grave.

It would appear that Turgenev's novel is as relevant and timely as ever. In fact, it has a searing resonance in today's world, where postmodern values, with their apparent nihilistic undercurrents, often rule the roost.

In the schema of nihilism, an existential philosophy of sorts, nothing is real. There is no inherent value to life and no ultimate meaning.

Morality, in the nihilist view, means nothing. It is merely a construct in which nothing is intrinsically good or bad, and knowledge itself is a chimera, as nothing can truly be known.

This deeply odious and even destructive philosophy is gaining ground across the world, albeit with time lags and in different avatars and forms, through the idiom of postmodernity.

How, the question is, does this relate to the vignettes delineated in the introduction of this essay? And is there redemption from the evils of nihilism?

While there is no obvious connection to the vignettes, as society moves globally from Durkheim's "mechanical" to "organic solidarity," the vignettes correlate in a loose way.

In terms of the former, the organizing principle of traditional, premodern, and agrarian societies is collective

solidarity and social cohesion built around sameness and homogeneity.

With respect to the latter, everything becomes depersonalized and individualized. Social cohesion becomes contingent upon Adam Smith's "division of labour" and the economic interdependence of members of a given society.

Within this vision, law becomes a surrogate for morality and ethics.

This, in different permutations and combinations and with varying intensities, is the contemporary global condition, whether in New York, Barcelona, Berlin, Paris, Kashmir, or New Delhi.

Now, to the vignettes.

The first set comes from Turgenev's Fathers and Sons. It is a dialogue between Bazarov, the novel's nihilist, and his friend's uncle Pavel Kirsanov, a defender of tradition and the values of the older generation.

The second set is again a dialogue, this time between a Kashmiri father and his son Javaid.

Contextually, Javaid is sent by his parents to Australia in the 1990s, a time when Kashmir was in the grip of death, violence, and anarchy. The motivation of Javaid's parents is that he study in Australia, obtain a degree,

and secure a job.

But Javaid returns a changed man. He is no longer animated by worldly gain or possessions. He has become cosmopolitan, defined by a non-utilitarian approach to life. In his own words, Javaid is still discovering himself.

While he has become cosmopolitan, his attachment to Kashmir is unquestionable and intense, so much so that he abandoned the woman he loved, and who loved him, in Australia.

But then, this is me filling in the gaps. Kashmir too has moved on. It is, in an odd and convoluted way, gyrating toward postmodernism.

Javaid looks both backward and forward. He wants to reconnect with the only love of his life, Daniella, but she has moved on. Life has moved on. In a deeply reflective and melancholic moment, Javaid realizes that he has lost both Kashmir and Daniella.

So, while there are loose connections between the vignettes, there is a vigorous one between Turgenev's Fathers and Sons and the global condition today.

Here, the novel's theme becomes relevant for the Global South, an entity that is standing up economically but has yet to develop ideational and philosophical themes that it can truly call its own.

Can we find redemption?

Indeed.

If redemption exists, it lies in family, faith, and God.

Within this worldview, and in the context of Kashmir, as the poignant and pathos-filled ending of Fathers and Sons and the intense dialogue between Javaid and his mother make clear, it is only parents whose bond with their children is unconditional and defined by sublime love.

This is worth cherishing and valuing.

Let us then, in all humility and gratitude, thank God, tashakur, and celebrate what is essentially the cornerstone of society in all its dimensions, ethical, moral, social, and empathetic: the mauj, the mother.

— The author holds a Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen and combines scholarship with real-world engagement. He has worked in academia and media, including as Associate Editor at Kashmir Observer.

Heat, Humidity of India's Monsoon Could Extend Summer Heat Stress as Climate Warms: Study

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Hot and humid conditions prevailing during India's monsoon season could extend the duration of uncompensable heat stress of the summer season under a global warming of 2 degrees Celsius, a study has found.

Findings published in the journal American Geophysical Union (AGU) Advances highlight a "surge of UHS (uncompensable heat stress) during the monsoon season (July-October) as the climate warms".

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar and the US' Stanford and Purdue universities said long-lasting uncompensable heat stress across both the seasons -- summer and monsoon -- could pose critical challenges to public health, labour productivity, and climate resilience in densely populated and vulnerable regions.

Uncompensable heat stress occurs when one's body is unable to cool down through sweating or other mechanisms due to extreme heat and humidity.

A sustained accumulation of heat can endanger human health, including causing heat-related illness, organ failure and death.

The study shows that over the period of 1979-2021,



uncompensable heat stress has become more frequent and is affecting significantly more areas across India -- from less than 0.01 million square kilometres during the 1980s to 0.04 million square kilometres by 2020.

Uncompensable heat stress was found to be more prevalent during the summer months of March-June, affecting eight per cent of India and more strongly associated with yearly heat-related mortality -- only one per cent was found to be impacted

during the monsoon season.

"However, the monsoon season (July-October) UHS, predominantly characterised by hot-humid conditions, is projected to increase rapidly with climate warming and affect nearly equivalent areas of the country as the summer season (60 per cent in summer and 53 per cent in the monsoon season) under 2 degrees Celsius warming relative to the preindustrial period," the authors wrote.

The total population affected by uncompensable heat stress

could be between 0.8 and 1.2 billion, based on the projected population, under different warming levels, the team estimated.

Population and density data for the study period came from the Gridded Population of the World dataset, while heat-related mortality data for the Indian states during 1980-2019 was obtained from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Spatially, the uncompensable heat stress during summer primarily occurs in the Indo-Gangetic plain and coastal regions of India, potentially due to high temperatures and an inland moisture transport by pre-monsoon winds from the Bay of Bengal, among other factors.

In contrast, the researchers found that the monsoon season primarily experiences humid uncompensable heat stress within a narrower air temperature range between 35 degrees Celsius and 38 degrees Celsius.

The monsoon-season uncompensable heat stress has occurred in the Punjab state of northwestern parts of the country, the team said.

The presence of high humidity during the monsoon season combined with moderately high air temperatures, especially during the monsoon breaks, makes favourable conditions for extreme heat stress occurrence, they said.

The Gangetic Plain, northwestern India, and eastern coastal regions were identified as hotspots that experience uncompensable heat stress primarily during the summer season.

"However, northwestern and Gangetic plain regions will face more frequent occurrences of UHS during the monsoon than in summer under the warming climate," the authors said.

SC Issues Notice to CBSE on Class 12 Improvement Exam Result Plea



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea filed by a student from Saudi Arabia seeking directions to the Central Board of Secondary Education to declare his Class 12 improvement examination result.

A bench comprising Justices Manmohan and Vijay Bishnoi issued notice to the CBSE and its regional officer on the plea filed by the student.

"This is about the career of a child, he will miss all his admissions...Whatever it is, burn the midnight oil," the bench remarked orally while directing the counsel for CBSE to seek instruction in the matter.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Pransujigarkumar Patel against the CBSE's failure to declare his result despite an assessment scheme framed for students whose examinations

in several Gulf countries were cancelled.

The plea contended that the non-declaration of his result has jeopardised his higher education prospects and deprived him of admission opportunities.

The petition stated that Patel appeared as a private candidate in the CBSE Class 12 improvement examination, 2026, from Al Jubail in Saudi Arabia in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English and Computer Science.

Patel claimed that his representations sent to the CBSE on May 17, May 21 and May 30 seeking a resolution of the issue went unanswered.

The CBSE cancelled the Class 12 board examinations in seven Middle Eastern countries (Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE) due to escalating tensions amid the Iran-Israel-US conflict.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Zojila Tunnel

the tunnel meet.

According to the company, tunnelling work was carried out simultaneously from the Baltal side in Kashmir and the Minamarg side in Ladakh to accelerate construction and meet project timelines.

Following the breakthrough, work will shift to the next phase, including concrete lining, installation of ventilation systems, electrical infrastructure and other safety features required for tunnel operations. The project will also include a dedicated walkway for maintenance and emergency response.

The tunnel is being executed by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) using the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM), a specialised engineering technique widely used for tunnelling in complex mountain terrain.

Construction began in October 2020 and has continued despite difficult weather conditions and challenging terrain. Officials said the tunnel will not only strengthen strategic connectivity but also boost tourism, trade and economic activity in the region.

MEIL said more than 1,200 personnel have been engaged in the project, with nearly 80 per cent of the workforce drawn from local communities. Despite facing five avalanche incidents during construction, including a major avalanche in January 2023 in which 172 workers were rescued by the Army, the project has recorded 10 million safe man-hours.

Once completed, the Zojila Tunnel is expected to emerge as a critical transport corridor, reducing travel disruptions and ensuring seamless movement between Kashmir and Ladakh throughout the year. (inputs from KNO)

Trump Secures Pause

the first time in a very long time that a major power would put real hard power behind a warning or a deterrent against an attack by Israel on a third country."

Regional analysts described the strike as the beginning of a new deterrence equation.

"This is the first time Iran has struck Israel after Israel struck another country's territory," one analyst said. "Iran has now proven that it will also respond to Israeli strikes on Lebanon."

The exchange came after Israeli airstrikes on Beirut's southern suburbs killed two people and wounded 20 others, according to Lebanese authorities, threatening to unravel recent ceasefire efforts and underscoring the risk of a wider confrontation involving Iran, Israel, Hezbollah and the United States.

Fresh Advisory

in Iran are also advised to exit the country by available means of transport," it said.

On Monday, Israel launched airstrikes targeting central and western Iran in response to missile fire from Tehran.

On April 7, India issued the advisory asking its nationals in Iran to stay wherever they are for the next 48 hours.

The advisory was issued after US President Donald Trump had warned that a "whole civilisation will die tonight" if Iran does not meet his 8 pm Eastern Time deadline to end its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

According to official data, around 9,000 Indians, including students, were in Iran when the conflict began following strikes on Iranian targets by Israel and the US on February 28. Nearly 1,800 Indians have returned to India so far.

Enhanced Services

last year's pilgrimage and ensure a safe and comfortable experience for the devotees.

"We are trying to provide improved facilities and services compared to last year. Comprehensive arrangements will be made to

ensure the safety and convenience of all pilgrims," he said.

Expressing confidence about the conduct of the yatra, Dulloo said the administration is committed to making the pilgrimage a pleasant experience for devotees visiting the cave shrine.

"I would like to assure everyone that complete arrangements will be in place for the pilgrims, and their experience during the Yatra will be a very pleasant one," he added.

The annual Amarnath Yatra attracts thousands of devotees from across the country who undertake the pilgrimage to the Himalayan cave shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva through the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

The administration has already intensified preparations along both routes, with departments coordinating efforts to ensure adequate infrastructure, security and essential services ahead of the pilgrimage. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Monday said the administration is making extensive preparations for the annual Amarnath Yatra, assuring that all arrangements will be in place before the commencement of the pilgrimage next month.

The 57-day pilgrimage to the holy Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir is scheduled to begin on July 3 and conclude on August 28, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan.

Speaking to reporters, Dulloo said the administration is working on multiple fronts, including security, transportation, healthcare, accommodation, electricity and water supply, to ensure a smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage for devotees.

"All necessary administrative and security arrangements are being made and will be fully completed before the start of the pilgrimage. Various aspects such as electricity supply, water supply, accommodation for pilgrims, transportation, security and healthcare arrangements are being worked on," he said.

The Chief Secretary said efforts are underway to provide facilities better than those available during last year's pilgrimage and ensure a safe and comfortable experience for the devotees.

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'Ensure Quality

the quality and authenticity of conservation efforts. He also reviewed the ongoing repair work at the temple and sought details about measures being taken to safeguard heritage structures in the vicinity.

Speaking to reporters, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo said repair work at the temple had already begun and was expected to be completed within a few days.

"Since there was a pressing need for parking in the area, a parking facility is being constructed by Smart City Limited. During the course of the yatra, Dulloo said the administration is committed to making the pilgrimage a pleasant experience for devotees visiting the cave shrine. Repair work has already started and is progressing," he said.

Dulloo said the proposed parking facility is designed to accommodate at least 200 vehicles and would significantly improve infrastructure around the heritage complex.

The Lieutenant Governor was also briefed on the progress of the ramp-based multi-level parking project and other works being undertaken under the Mubarak Mandi conservation master plan.

Officials informed him that restoration and conservation work is currently underway on 11 buildings within the sprawling heritage complex. According to Dulloo, nine to ten of these projects have already achieved around 80 to 90 per cent completion and are expected to be completed by March 2027.

Among the major projects under execution are the conservation of the Darbar Hall, Raja Ram Singh Palace, Raja Amar Singh Palace and the Dogra Art Museum, besides several ancillary restoration works.

During the visit, Sinha also toured the newly opened library-cum-cafeteria developed as part of the heritage revitalisation programme. Officials briefed him about the remaining works planned under the project and future initiatives aimed at enhancing visitor experience.

Dulloo said five additional projects are also being planned, including a laser show, light-and-sound show and other visitor facilities intended to transform the complex into a major cultural and tourism destination.

Located in the heart of Jammu's old city overlooking the Tawi River, Mubarak Mandi served as the royal residence of the Dogra rulers until 1925, when Maharaja Hari Singh shifted to Hari Niwas Palace.

Declared a protected monument in 2005, the heritage complex is being restored under the supervision of the Mubarak Mandi Jammu Heritage Society (MMJHS). A conservation vision document was first prepared by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) in 2008, while a comprehensive master plan received approval in 2019.

The master plan envisages the development of the heritage complex across six thematic zones, including public spaces, knowledge centres, galleries, experiential spaces and a crafts bazaar. An estimated Rs 144.15 crore has been earmarked for various sub-projects under the plan.

Dulloo attributed delays in the project to inadequate funding in earlier years but said the pace of work had increased considerably over the past four to five years with improved financial support.

"Some restoration work was carried out by the Archaeological Survey authorities, while the Mubarak Mandi Heritage Society has also undertaken several projects and delivered good results," he said.

He added that facilities such as a restaurant, café and library have already been developed as part of the restoration programme and assured that further conservation work would be undertaken wherever necessary to preserve the heritage character of the complex.

CM Seeks INDIA

a range of political and public issues and stressed the need for greater coordination among alliance partners in confronting the BJP-led government at the Centre.

Sources said Abdullah also called upon opposition parties to look ahead to the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and underscored the importance of unity within the alliance.

"Let us look ahead to 2029 and let us acknowledge that Congress is the glue that holds

INDIA together," Abdullah is understood to have told the meeting.

The opposition alliance also decided to write to the Chief Justice of India regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and alleged electoral irregularities. It further demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET-CBSE controversy.

Leaders also agreed to hold INDIA bloc meetings every two months, with the next gathering scheduled to take place in Hyderabad in August, while continuing coordination during the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament.

The meeting was attended by leaders of 22 opposition parties, including Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti and representatives of Left parties.

Police Finalise

to a police spokesperson, officers presented detailed briefings on security measures, logistical requirements and district-wise preparedness plans for both the upcoming Muharram observances and the Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2026.

While reviewing Muharram arrangements, Birdi emphasised the importance of adequate security deployment, effective traffic management and close coordination with the civil administration to facilitate the smooth and peaceful conduct of processions and related events across Kashmir.

The IGP also reviewed the overall security framework and directed officers to ensure strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) while maintaining effective coordination among all agencies.

He asked officers to remain prepared for any contingency, including operational challenges, natural disasters and other unforeseen situations, through a synchronised response mechanism.

Birdi further stressed the need for heightened vigilance, enhanced surveillance and continuous monitoring in sensitive areas. He also directed officers to conduct mock drills to assess preparedness and improve operational efficiency wherever necessary.

The meeting also reviewed preparations for the annual Shri Amarnathji Yatra, with discussions focusing on pilgrim safety, deployment strategies and security measures along the pilgrimage routes.

Ujjwala Subsidised

cut further to four.

At a news briefing, Praveen Mal Khanooja, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, said the revised entitlement broadly matches the average annual consumption of Ujjwala beneficiaries.

To encourage the use of cleaner cooking fuel and improve affordability, the government introduced a targeted subsidy of Rs 200 per 14.2-kg LPG cylinder in May 2022, credited directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts after every refill is purchased for up to 12 cylinders annually. In October 2023, the subsidy was increased to Rs 300 per 14.2-kg cylinder, with a proportionate benefit extended to 5-kg cylinders.

The latest reduction in the subsidised quota follows increases in LPG prices. The price of a 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi has risen by a cumulative Rs 89 over two hikes in the past three months, the latest on June 7, taking the retail price to Rs 942. After accounting for the Rs 300 subsidy, PMUY beneficiaries pay Rs 642 for a 14.2-kg cylinder.

He said the revised entitlement broadly reflects the average annual consumption among PMUY households. Beneficiaries effectively

receive support of about Rs 1,000 per cylinder when compared to the government's estimated supply cost of around Rs 1,600 per cylinder. Cooking gas LPG prices were raised on June 7 by Rs 29 per cylinder.

"The increase comes to Re 1 per day," he said, adding that for a family of five, the increase comes to 20 paise per day.

Indian households continue to pay among the lowest prices for cooking gas globally despite a sharp rise in international LPG prices triggered by disruptions in West Asia, he added.

Khanooja said the cost of supplying a domestic LPG cylinder has risen to more than Rs 1,600, following a surge in international prices that followed the outbreak of war in West Asia at the end of February.

India's LPG import costs are linked to the Saudi Contract Price (CP), the global benchmark for the fuel. The benchmark has risen about 46 per cent since February after disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz tightened supplies from the Gulf region.

The government, he said, has provided Rs 52,000 crore in subsidy since 2022.

Despite the price hike, oil companies continue to lose about Rs 700 per 14.2-kg cylinder, he noted.

Besides LPG, the oil companies are also losing on selling petrol and diesel at rates below cost. On petrol, the under-recovery was Rs 6 a litre, and that of diesel was about Rs 30 per litre.

"Cumulatively, the oil companies are losing Rs 600-700 crore," he said, giving reasons for the price hikes.

Apart from LPG, the oil companies have also raised petrol and diesel prices by about Rs 7.50 a litre each in four instalments last month. CNG rates too have been hiked by Rs 6 per kg.

Railway Employee

and two nights and repeatedly subjected her to forcible sexual intercourse.

The case surfaced in July 2012 when the victim approached the authorities with a complaint. Following registration of FIR No. 01/2012 at Police Station Railway Hamray, investigators carried out searches of the accused's residential quarter, prepared site plans, seized material evidence, recorded witness statements and obtained medical and forensic reports. The victim's statement was also recorded under Section 164 CrPC before a magistrate.

The charge sheet was initially committed to the Sessions Court at Baramulla in August 2012. Subsequently, on a transfer petition filed by the complainant, the High Court transferred the case to Srinagar in February 2014.

During arguments on sentence, the prosecution sought life imprisonment, contending that the accused had shown no mercy towards a helpless minor girl and had exploited his official position and accommodation to commit the crime.

The defence, however, pleaded for leniency, citing the convict's family responsibilities, absence of any previous criminal record and the hardship his incarceration would cause to his dependents.

Rejecting the plea for a lighter sentence, the court held that the prosecution had established the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt through clear and cogent evidence.

For the offence under Section 376 RPC, the court sentenced the convict to ten years' rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh. For the offence under Section 363 RPC, he was awarded five years' rigorous imprisonment and fined Rs 50,000. He was also sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment under Section 342 RPC.

The court directed that all substantive sentences would run concurrently and ordered that the period already spent in custody during investigation and trial be set off against the sentence in accordance with law.

Kashmir Records Heavy Tourist Footfall in Early June

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Kashmir witnessed a heavy tourist rush during the first week of June this year with stakeholders exuding hope that Valley could record one of its highest tourist arrivals this year amid improved connectivity and growing footfall at both established and offbeat destinations.

According to official data accessed by KNO, more than six lakh tourists have visited Jammu and Kashmir so far this year.

Officials attributed the increase in tourist arrivals to improved mobility and easier access to the Valley through road, rail and air connectivity.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway via Banihal continued to witness the highest tourist movement, while rail travel registered a significant increase this year.

The recently launched Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express has further strengthened connectivity between the two regions, tourism officials said.

"We are witnessing encouraging tourist arrivals across destinations in Kashmir. The response during the first week of June has



Abid/Bhat/KO

been very good. We are hopeful that Jammu and Kashmir will record one of the highest tourist footfalls this year," a Tourism Department official said.

The official said tourist arrivals have remained steady despite the brief setback caused by the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

Popular tourist destinations including Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg witnessed a large number of visitors during the week. Offbeat destinations such as Gurez, Doodhpathri, Bangus

Valley, Lolab and Yusmarg also reported a significant increase in tourist arrivals.

Rahul Sharma, 32, a tourist from New Delhi, said improved rail connectivity had made travel to Kashmir easier.

"The Vande Bharat service has reduced travel time considerably. The journey was comfortable and convenient," he said.

Priya Mehta, 28, from Mumbai, said she was visiting Kashmir for the first time.

"We visited Gulmarg and Sri-

nagar and are planning to travel to Gurez. The transport facilities have improved and travelling has become easier," she said.

Harpreet Singh, 35, from Punjab, said he chose Kashmir for a family vacation because of the improved connectivity.

"We travelled by train and road. It was a smooth journey and we are also visiting Doodhpathri and other places," he said.

Tourism stakeholders said hotels, guest houses, houseboats and transport operators

witnessed increased business during the first week of June. Advance bookings for the coming weeks also remain strong, they said.

Notably, Kashmir has been witnessing relatively cool and pleasant weather conditions in recent weeks, with daytime temperatures remaining significantly lower than those recorded in many parts of north, west and central India.

While several states, including Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and parts of Uttar Pradesh, have been experiencing heatwave conditions and soaring temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius, the Valley has continued to offer a respite from the intense summer heat.

Tourism stakeholders said the favourable weather has emerged as a major attraction for visitors seeking relief from the scorching conditions elsewhere in the country.

They said many tourists were opting for longer stays in Kashmir, particularly in destinations such as Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Pahalgam, Gurez and Doodhpathri, where temperatures remained comfortable.

Encroachment Allegations Surface in Sonmarg, People Question SDA's Silence

SRINAGAR: Fresh concerns have emerged in the tourist resort of Sonmarg after locals alleged that land earmarked for a road behind the main market is being encroached upon while the Sonmarg Development Authority (SDA) remains a silent spectator.

The allegations have sparked resentment among local residents and public representatives, who claim that portions of land reserved for public infrastructure are gradually being occupied despite restrictions on construction activities in the environmentally sensitive tourist destination.

According to locals, a road had earlier been laid out behind the main Sonmarg market as part of the area's development plan. However, residents now allege that even the land designated for the road is no longer safe from encroachment.

The issue has assumed significance as Sonamarg continues to face increasing developmental pressures amid growing tourist footfall and commercial activity.

Locals claim that while private construction activities remain largely prohibited under existing regulations, encroachments on public land are allegedly taking place unchecked.

Sources familiar with the matter told KNT that several small hotel operators located behind the market have allegedly started extending their activities onto portions of land reserved for the road.

Locals alleged that the developments are occurring in full public view and questioned why the Sonmarg Development Authority has not intervened to safeguard the land.

"The concern is not merely about a road. It is about protecting planned infrastructure and preventing gradual encroachment on public assets in one of Kashmir's most important tourist destinations," said a resident. (Observer News Service)

PDP MLA Joins Protest against Govt's Attempts to Evict Land Tillers

SRINAGAR: PDP MLA from Pulwama on Monday joined local farmers in paddy transplantation as a mark of protest against the Jammu and Kashmir government's attempts to evict the land tillers.

Waheed Ur Rehman Para drove a tractor as he ploughed a paddy field and later joined the farmers in sowing paddy saplings.

"The authorities had destroyed the saplings and threatened the farmers with the Public Safety Act (PSA) if they cultivate the land again. So I joined the farmers in cultivating the land again," Para told PTI.

Although the land in question is state land, he said, claiming that farmers tilled it for more than 100 years.

"I do not understand why the government wants to undertake construction on a fertile piece of land! There is so much barren land available. Why cannot they use those tracts?" the MLA from Pulwama asked.

As per PTI, another PDP leader, Iltija Mufti, who also visited the Padgampora area of Pulwama, questioned the government's intentions behind trying to prevent cultivation of the fertile land. "This is an agricultural land and farmers have been growing rice and mustard for more than 100 years. Why is the revenue department (officials) threatening farmers with PSA if they cultivate the land?" she asked. Iltija said the government should stop evicting people from their land.

"I want to ask this NC government why you are chasing away people from their lands. The revenue department is headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah," she said. She claimed that the authorities had disrupted irrigation water supply to the Padgampora area, which was restored only after the PDP MLA held a protest there. (Observer News Service)

CS Reviews Rehabilitation Measures Taken for Migrant Populations in J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday chaired a meeting to review and address various issues pertaining to PM Package employees serving in the Kashmir Division, with a focus on transit accommodation, career progression, rehabilitation measures and welfare initiatives for displaced communities.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Commissioner Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Commissioner Secretary, Planning; Commissioner Secretary, GAD; Secretary, Revenue; Secretary, Rural Development Department; Secretary, Transport; Relief Commissioner (Migrants); Chief Engineers of R&B Department; representatives of various departments and senior officers of DMRR&R.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took a detailed review of the transit accommodation infrastructure created for PM Package employees across different districts of Kashmir. Stressing the need for optimal utilization of the facilities, he directed that all completed flats be allotted and occupied at the earliest. He instructed the Relief Commissioner (Migrants) to ensure that all completed accommodations are taken over by the eligible employees by the end of July this year without fail.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of flats under construction at various sites. He further examined the status of allied infrastructure and utility services including electricity, drinking water supply, internal road connectivity, boundary walls and Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) to ensure that the colonies are fully functional and habitable.

The meeting also discussed plans for operation and maintenance (O&M) of the transit accommodations as well as migrant colonies in



J&K Govt. Sanctions Over ₹7Cr for Strengthening Infrastructure for Kashmiri Migrants

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir, led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, has sanctioned key infrastructure projects worth ₹7.05 crore under the Capex Budget aimed at strengthening facilities and enhancing welfare measures for Kashmiri migrants residing in Jammu.

The approved projects include the construction of a Multipurpose Community Hall at Migrant Camp Muthi, Jammu, which will also accommodate a library and dedicated shops for Self Help Groups (SHGs). The initiative is intended to strengthen community engagement, promote livelihood opportunities, and enhance social support systems within the migrant camp.

In addition, approval has been accorded for the construction of a new office building for the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants), Jammu. The proposed facility is expected to improve administrative efficiency and further strengthen the delivery of migrant-related welfare schemes and services.

The total technically vetted cost of the sanctioned works stands at ₹7.05 crore, to be executed under the Regular Capex Budget, subject to fulfillment of all codal formalities, financial norms, and prescribed procedures.

Jammu. Deliberations were held on creation of additional accommodation facilities in Jammu, with land identified at Purkhoo for expansion.

Reviewing the service-related issues of PM Package employees, the Chief Secretary took stock of matters concerning promotions, preparation of seniority lists and inter-district transfers within the Kashmir Division. Departments presented cadre-wise details of PM Package employees and informed the meeting about the status of Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) and related service matters.

Several other issues concerning the welfare and rehabilitation of displaced persons were also discussed. These included cases under the Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (RAS) relating to deceased employees, provision of adequate budgetary support for operation and maintenance of migrant colonies by line departments, and development of an integrated online portal for digitization of records of displaced communities including Kashmiri Pandits, West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs) and families displaced from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

The Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti gave the meeting a comprehensive overview of the rehabilitation and resettlement initiatives being undertaken by the Department. He informed that the department has prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for operation and maintenance of migrant colonies across Jammu and Kashmir divisions and that works would be taken up after completion of the requisite formalities.

He further apprised the meeting that the PoJK Bhawan at Suketar has achieved nearly 50 percent physical progress and is targeted for completion by January next year. He also informed that the Community Hall at Jagti has reached around 90 percent completion and is nearing completion.

Div Com Kashmir Reviews Flood Mitigation Preparedness



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In view of the impending monsoon season, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Monday convened a high-level meeting with Deputy Commissioners of the Valley to review flood mitigation measures, disaster preparedness, and the status of emergency response infrastructure across the region.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, senior officers from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Irrigation Department, and the Assistant Commissioner Central.

During the review, the Divisional Commissioner assessed the preparedness of districts with regard to updating the India Disaster Resource Network (IDRN) inventory, formulation of contingency plans, availability of rescue shelters, identification of flood-prone villages and low-lying areas, network shadow zones, and the availability of satellite communication sets with field officers. He also reviewed district-wise data on operational helipads, boats, dewatering pumps, awareness programmes, and mock drills conducted to enhance disaster response capabilities.

Emphasising the need for proactive preparedness, the Divisional Commissioner directed all Deputy Commis-

sioners to replenish critical resources and ensure timely updating of the IDRN portal with details of rescue equipment and other essential resources.

He further underscored the importance of round-the-clock functioning of District Emergency Operation Centres and instructed district administrations to formulate comprehensive contingency plans to facilitate swift rescue operations and effective flood mitigation during emergencies.

To strengthen inter-agency coordination, he directed the district administrations to share the geographical coordinates of all operational helipads with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), SDRF, Police, and the Army.

Special instructions were issued to the district administrations of Ganderbal and Anantnag to undertake Yatra-specific disaster management preparations to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims during the forthcoming pilgrimage season.

The Divisional Commissioner also instructed the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla to facilitate the allotment of land for the establishment of a permanent SDRF deployment at Gulmarg, aimed at enhancing emergency response capacity in the tourist destination.

Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Arrangements Reviewed in Ramban

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, and the Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, visited Ramban district and reviewed the arrangements being put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026. They also assessed the progress of the National Highway-44 four-laning project from Nashri to Banihal.

Among those present were the DIG, DKR Range; the Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan; the SSP, Ramban; the SSP, Traffic NHW; the ADC, Ramban; the Project Director, NHAI; the SDM, Banihal; the SDM, Ramsoo; and officers from the District Administration, Army, CRPF, SDRF, Police and other stakeholder departments.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, briefed the Divisional

Commissioner and the IGP Jammu regarding the comprehensive arrangements being made for the convenience, safety and welfare of pilgrims undertaking the annual holy pilgrimage.

The Divisional Commissioner inspected various facilities at Yatri Niwas, Chanderkote, including accommodation, sanitation, drinking water supply, power availability, medical facilities and security arrangements. He also reviewed arrangements at langar sites at Chanderkote, Yatra Camp Lamber and other designated locations along the yatra route.

While reviewing arrangements at Yatri Niwas, Chanderkote, the Divisional Commissioner directed all stakeholder departments to ensure completion of the remaining works and establishment of all essential facilities before June 20, 2026. He emphasised the installation of adequate toilet units at identified locations, proper sanitation and waste management systems, uninterrupted power

supply, sufficient bedding capacity and efficient management of langar facilities. He further directed the SDRF to remain fully prepared with equipment and manpower to respond promptly to any situation during the yatra period.

The Divisional Commissioner instructed the Fire and Emergency Services Department to ensure all necessary fire safety measures at lodging centres, langar sites and other locations with pilgrim footfall. He directed the department to maintain readiness of fire tenders and emergency response teams.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer, JPDC, to ensure uninterrupted power supply at all lodging centres, camps and langar sites besides arranging an adequate number of generator sets as backup.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Department, to ensure adequate water supply

and creation of sufficient storage facilities at all lodging centres, langar sites and other identified locations to cater to the requirements of pilgrims and service providers.

A threadbare discussion was held on various aspects of the arrangements required for the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage. The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the timing and movement plan of both Pahalgam-bound and Baltal-bound yatra convoys, including designated halts, traffic regulation measures and cut-off timings, and issued necessary directions for their strict implementation.

Reviewing preparations at Yatra Camp Lamber, the Divisional Commissioner directed all concerned departments to expedite the pace of work and ensure completion of all pending arrangements by June 20, 2026.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the road and tunnel construction projects undertaken

by NHAI. He directed the Project Director, NHAI, to expedite and complete the ongoing works on the Digdool-Panthyal tunnel stretch, Magarkote-Ramsoo Viaduct and other key infrastructure projects nearing completion, so as to ensure safe, smooth and comfortable road connectivity for pilgrims and commuters well before the commencement of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026.

The Divisional Commissioner and the IGP Jammu also held a detailed discussion on the security arrangements with officers of the Police, Army, CRPF and other security agencies, emphasising close coordination and robust security measures for the safe and smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Deputy Commissioner and the Senior Superintendent of Police to personally monitor all the arrangements for the successful conduct of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026.

Muharram-ul-Haram, Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela Arrangements Reviewed

ANANTNAG: A meeting to review the arrangements for the ensuing holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram and auspicious Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela-2026 was held on Monday at DC Office Anantnag.

ACR, Tariq Ahmad Malik, SDM Dooru, Parvaiz Rahim, SP, Sunny Gupta, ARTO, Inspector Traffic Police, officials from Health, FCS&CA, F&ES, PHE, PDD and other concerned departments attended the meeting.

On the occasion, threadbare discussions were held regarding the arrangements to be put in place to ensure smooth observance of Muharram and Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela by the respective communities.

Regarding Muharram, ACR stressed upon officers to make timely and proper arrangements of security, water and power supply, sanitation, medical facilities, ration, firewood, among others. He said that proper plans be devised to ensure all religious gatherings and processions are held smoothly and in a seamless proper.

The ACR emphasised maintaining proper hygiene and cleanliness around Imam Baras and procession sites adding that prior visits to the three prominent places in the district be conducted by the concerned officers. He said medical teams along with ambulances shall be deployed along with availability of staff and medicine besides adequate supply of potable water and electricity shall be ensured during this period. (Observer News Service)

From Luring Stars To Hosting The World Cup, Saudi Arabia Has Spent Billions To Disrupt Soccer

AP
NEW YORK: Saudi Arabia pulled off one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history by beating mighty Argentina in Qatar four years ago.

That stunning victory against Lionel Messi and the eventual champion turned out to be just the start of its campaign to disrupt soccer. Perhaps no nation has done more to shake up the world's most popular sport.

Within weeks Cristiano Ronaldo became the first of slew of superstars to swap Europe for the Saudi league with the five-time Ballon d'Or winner declaring: "In Europe my work is done. This is a new challenge."

Karim Benzema was lured away from Real Madrid. Brazilian icon Neymar also made the move to the oil-rich kingdom. While attempts to land Messi and Kylian Mbappe were unsuccessful, Saudi Arabia did secure its biggest win of all: The right to host the 2034 World Cup.

It was all part of the country's attempt to pivot away from its heavy reliance on oil and ex-

plure other revenue-generating sectors. Some critics say it is also an attempt at sportswashing, using sports to rebrand its public image in the face of its human rights record and crackdowns on dissent.

Billions of dollars have been spent to secure world championship boxing, Formula One racing and tennis. The Saudi-backed LIV Golf enticed major winners to defect from the PGA. It recently announced it would be pulling funding from that venture, but its commitment to soccer remains strong. A number of its top teams are owned by the country's sovereign wealth fund.

2026 World Cup expectations

This year's tournament will be a test of how far the Saudi national team has come against the backdrop of such spectacular spending.

"We cannot promise miracles, but we promise you that we will give our all to achieve our goals," newly appointed coach Georgios Donis said.

An influx of top overseas tal-



ent does not necessarily translate to improved performance of homegrown players on the international stage.

There was the disappointingly early elimination from the Asian

Cup in 2024 in the round of 16. Saudi Arabia's most memorable contribution to that tournament — a little over 12 months after the landmark win against Argentina -- was Italian coach

Roberto Mancini walking off during his team's losing penalty shootout against South Korea. Months later, Mancini was out of a job.

In came Frenchman Herve

Renard, who had led the team in Qatar in 2022, and the team promptly secured qualification for this year's tournament. But in April, less than two months before Saudi Arabia kicks off its World Cup campaign, Renard was replaced by Greek coach Donis.

Late arrival for a new coach

Donis has coached several teams in the Saudi league and has also worked with a number of the players who will be going to the World Cup. Among them is striker Feras Al Buraikan, a back-to-back Asian Champions League winner with Al-Ahli.

His appointment at such short notice appears to have been based on his specific knowledge and experience of Saudi soccer, with the Saudi Football Federation saying he was "expected to support a seamless transition".

"The advantage for us is that I have spent many years in Saudi Arabia and I know the culture of the country and the players. Therefore, we want to be very competitive and fight hard," Donis said when announcing his squad last month.

Developing homegrown players

While star signings from overseas have slowed, with big names also departing — including Neymar — the governing body of Saudi soccer has made moves to develop its own players. In May, Matt Crocker was lured away from his role as U.S. Soccer's sporting director to head up talent development in Saudi Arabia.

Youth investment has doubled over the past three years to \$26.7 million, with an expansion of regional training centers all with a view to the 2034 World Cup on home soil.

Before all that is this year's tournament and the chance to shock the world again.

"I believe all the players have the ability and passion required to commit to our plan, which will enable us step-by-step to build a strong and united team," Donis said. "I believe in their abilities, so my priority now is for them to believe in their abilities, to be convinced of the plan, and to know what is required of them."

Sports Minister Mandaviya Felicitates Men And Women Hockey Teams

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya felicitated both the Indian men and women's hockey teams at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) head office here on Monday for their stupendous performance in the recently concluded Under-18 Asia Cup in Japan.

The Indian U-18 men's hockey team, led by captain Ketan Kushwaha, were crowned champions of the U-18 Asia Cup 2026 after defeating hosts Japan 4-1 in the final in Kakamigahara on Friday.

The minister handed a cheque of Rs 61.5 lakh to the men's team.

On the other hand, the



Indian women's hockey team, led by captain Sweety Kujur, secured the bronze medal at the Under-18 Asia Cup after registering a commanding 3-0 victory over Korea in the bronze medal match.

Mandaviya handed the women's team a cheque of Rs

21 lakh as encouragement. Mandaviya shared words of encouragement for both the men's and women's teams, saying: "I would like to congratulate both the teams for the hard work they have put in for bringing laurels for the country. The entire nation is proud of you."

I would like to tell you that this is just the start.

"There is no alternative for hard work. Someone who has scored 13 goals should think of scoring 15 or more goals. Someone who has stopped 10 goals should aim for not letting the opponents even score one."

"Whether you study or play sports, there should be total commitment. Keep performing to the best of your abilities and making your parents and well-wishers happy, that should be your aim."

Mandaviya said that government is fully committed to transforming India into a sports superpower as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Teenager Lamine Yamal Carries The Responsibility Of Leading Spain At The World Cup

AP

MADRID: Despite being only 18 years old, Lamine Yamal will be carrying the responsibility of a seasoned veteran when Spain enters the World Cup seeking its second world title.

The prodigy has been La Roja's top star for the past few years, attracting the spotlight on and off the field.

He's earned accolades helping Spain and Barcelona thrive. He has made headlines by waving a Palestinian flag during a title celebration. He's been criticized after hiring people with dwarfism as entertainers for his lavish 18th birthday party.

And he's prompted nationwide concern by getting injured just weeks before



soccer's showcase event, putting his participation in the tournament in doubt.

Yamal will make it to the World Cup after all — the first for the teenager considered by many the heir apparent to the one-and-only Lionel Messi at Barcelona. Many expect him to break through once and for all at the international soccer scene by

thriving in the tournament in North America.

"The time has finally come," Yamal said in an interview with the Spanish soccer federation after Spain's World Cup squad was announced on May 25.

A budding star limps into his first World Cup

Spanish coach Luis de la

Fuente showed no hesitation adding Yamal to the squad even though it wasn't guaranteed that the forward would be 100% fit early on after injuring his left hamstring with Barcelona in April. Yamal himself said he was scared of missing the World Cup.

De la Fuente last week said Yamal is likely to be ready to play from the start, but he also called for "prudence" about the expectations surrounding the young star.

"He's still 18 years old," the coach told Movistar after announcing the squad. "He's already very mature as a player, and we can't even fathom his full potential right now, but we have to give him the necessary time. Especially now that he is coming off an injury."



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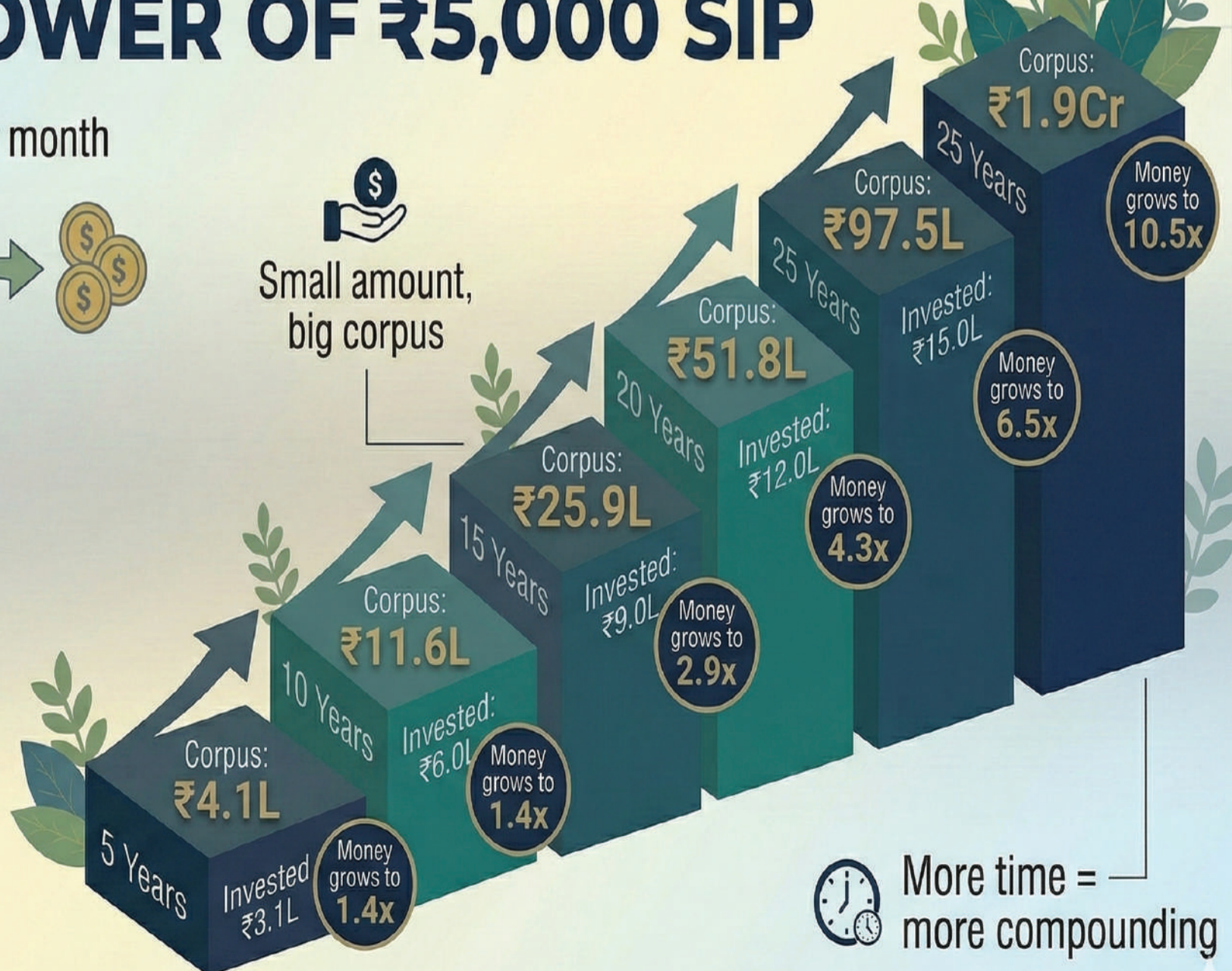
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