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Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K

DIPK-2576/26
Dated: 28.06.2026

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LG: Kashmiriyat Reflects India's Ethos Of Harmony

Says Hinduism Embraces Diversity, Never Imposes It



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said India's ancient civilizational ethos, rooted in Sanatana Dharma, has always promoted mutual respect, coexistence and harmony among diverse faiths, asserting that the country's philosophical traditions offer a path to peace in an increasingly divided world.

Addressing an Interfaith Dialogue organised by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language and the Inter-Faith Harmony Foundation of India in Srinagar, Sinha said Hinduism, or Sanatana Dharma, never sought to impose itself on others but instead embraced diversity and enabled different religions to flourish.

"The world recognizes that Hinduism, Sanatana Dharma,

the world's oldest living religion, never imposed itself. Instead, it embraced diversity and coexistence. Ancient India built a foundation of respect, giving Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism freedom to flourish," he said.

He said the world today is grappling with conflicts, intolerance and divisions based on religion, language and race, but India's ancient philosophy possesses the ability to bridge these differences.

"In a world facing conflicts and intolerance, the core spirit of Sanatana Dharma and Indian philosophy can serve as a guiding light. Today, the world may be divided by religion, language and race, but Indian thought has the unique power to bridge these divides," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Sinha | [More on P6](#)

CIK Conducts Multi-District Raids In UAPA Case

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) on Saturday conducted coordinated raids at multiple locations across the Kashmir Valley as part of an ongoing investigation into a case registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), officials said.

The searches were carried out at five locations across four districts, including Srinagar, Ganderbal, Kupwara and Anantnag, in connection with

FIR No. 7/2023 registered at the CIK Police Station in Srinagar.

According to official sources, simultaneous searches were conducted at the residences of Mubashir Khaliq Malla in Shartgund Payeen, Kupwara; Gulzar Ahmad Rather in Nowgam, Verinag, Anantnag; Syed Qalandar Shah in Chountwailwar, Lar, Ganderbal; and Riyaz Ahmad Beigh in Hokarsar on the outskirts of Srinagar.

The searches were conducted with the | [More on P6](#)



'Detect, Disrupt, Destroy': HM Unveils 3-Yr Anti-Narcotics Roadmap

'100 major networks in crosshairs; NDPS Act overhaul on cards'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday unveiled a three-year national roadmap to dismantle India's narcotics ecosystem, announcing a strategy that combines intelligence-led enforcement, financial investigations, tougher laws and expanded rehabilitation to combat drug trafficking and abuse.

Launching the Roadmap for Narcotics Control (2026-2029) at the 10th apex-level meeting of the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD), Shah said the government would adopt a "detect, disrupt and destroy" strategy to break drug cartels and

eliminate trafficking networks.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we will strike the entire drug trade ecosystem so decisively over the next three years that



A blazing sunset bathes Dal Lake in golden hues as shikaras ferry visitors across the Dal lake in Srinagar. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Iran-US Truce Frays As Hormuz Attacks Escalate

Agencies

Dubai: A fresh wave of military escalation between the United States and Iran rattled the Gulf on Saturday after Bahrain said it had been targeted by Iranian attack drones and an oil tanker carrying Qatari crude was struck by a projectile in the Strait of Hormuz, raising fears over the security of one of the world's most vital energy shipping routes.

The incidents marked the latest setback to an interim ceasefire signed earlier this month, with both Washington and Tehran accusing each other of violating the agreement and threatening further action.

According to Britain's UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), the Panamanian-flagged oil tanker Kiku, which had departed a Qatari oil field two days earlier, was struck by an unidentified projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

The vessel sustained damage to its bridge, but all crew members were reported safe



and there was no environmental pollution.

Following the attack, the Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC), which coordinates security information between naval forces and commercial shipping, raised the regional maritime threat level to "substantial", warning of increased risks to vessels operating in the Gulf.

Saturday's attack was the second on a commercial vessel this week. On Thursday, the Singapore-flagged cargo ship M/V Ever Lovely was also hit while passing through the

Strait of Hormuz.

The US military said its overnight strikes on Iranian missile drone facilities and coastal radar installations were carried out in response to Iran's drone attack on the commercial vessel a day earlier. A US official said the operation lasted about 90 minutes, during which six fighter jets struck four Iranian military sites along the Strait of Hormuz and on Qeshm Island.

Hours after the US operation, Bahrain announced that it had come under attack from Iranian drones. The Gulf kingdom, | [More on P6](#)

RED FORT BLAST CASE NIA Chargesheets 3 More J&K Residents

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The National Investigation (NIA) has chargesheeted three more persons, including an absconding paediatrician identified as a founding member of a terror module, for involvement in the vehicle-borne bomb blast near Delhi's Red Fort last year, officials said on Saturday.

The NIA has named Zameer Ahmad Ahanger, Tufail Ahmad Bhat and absconding Muzafar Ahmad, alias Faraz alias Zafar -- all from Jammu and Kashmir -- as accused in its supplementary chargesheet filed before Patiala House Courts here, they said.

This takes the number of persons chargesheeted in the case to 13, which includes prime accused Dr Umer Un Nabi, driver of the explosive-laden car who died in the blast, officials said.

Muzafar Ahmed, a paediatrician (MBBS, MD), has been identified as elder brother of co-accused | [More on P6](#)

J&K Puts Final Touches To Yatra Preparations

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday entered the final phase of preparations for the annual Amarnath Yatra, with security forces intensifying search operations along the pilgrimage route, senior officers reviewing security arrangements, and the administration appealing for public participation to ensure the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage beginning July 3.

Security forces carried out area domination and search operations across the hilly and forested areas of south Kashmir's Anantnag district, particularly in the upper reaches of Pahalgam and along the traditional yatra route. As part of the operation, security personnel searched dhoks (mud houses) inhabited by members

of the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities.

The intensified security measures come in the wake of last year's terror attack in Pahalgam's Baisaran meadow, in which 25 tourists and a local pony operator were killed.

Officials said Anantnag Police also conducted a simulated rogue drone exercise along the GDC Chowk-Khanabal Sanal crossing stretch to test preparedness against aerial threats. Police teams simultaneously inspected fertiliser shops and chemical laboratories in educational institutions under the jurisdiction of Bijbehara Police Station as a preventive measure.

Security reviews continued across the Union Territory. Special Director General of Police (Coordination) S J M Gillani inspected | [More on P6](#)

Amarnath Yatra Showcases J&K's Spirit Of Unity: LG



Calling the annual Amarnath Yatra an opportunity to showcase Jammu and Kashmir's tradition of compassion, unity and human | [More on P6](#)

Silt-Hit Hydro Output NRPC Pulls Up J&K Over Grid Overdrawal

Agencies

Srinagar: With hydro generation impacted by silt, the Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) has pulled up Jammu & Kashmir for its tendency to over-draw from the grid when its own generation dips.

This caution comes as the committee noted that despite a strict deviation mechanism, these states continue to face challenges in managing low-voltage profiles.

NRPC has said that it has been experienced that states those have major share in hydro like Jammu & Kashmir

and Himachal Pradesh over draw from the grid during such conditions.

As deviation mechanism is also strict, the committee reminded each state to plan in advance for such eventualities.

NRPC urged all hydro generators to regularly update the data on silt monitoring portals so that necessary load generation balancing can be carried out by load despatch centres.

About the maximising availability of ERS in summer 2026, NRPC said that several important transmission lines in the | [More on P6](#)

Diabetes Burden Grows In J&K, Experts Raise Alarm

NFHS-6 shows high blood sugar in 13% of women and 11.3% of men

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Diabetes mellitus is emerging as one of the fastest-growing public health concerns in Jammu and Kashmir, with the latest health data showing a sharp rise in the number of adults living with high blood sugar as experts warn that unhealthy lifestyles, obesity and delayed diagnosis are fuelling the disease.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6, 2023-24) and other studies accessed by the news agency KNO, 13 per cent of women and

Nearly 40% of diabetes cases remain undiagnosed, doctors urge annual screening

11.3 per cent of men aged 15 years and above in Jammu and Kashmir have elevated blood sugar levels or are on medication for diabetes. The figures mark a significant increase from the previous NFHS-5 (2019-21), when 8.7 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men were reported to have high blood sugar.

The data also reveal a pronounced urban-rural divide. Elevated blood sugar was found among 17 per cent of urban women and 14.6 per cent of urban men, compared with 11.9 per cent of rural women and 10.3 per cent of | [More on P6](#)

Bukhari Voices Concern over Decline of Srinagar's Heritage, Traditional Crafts

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Expressing concern over what he described as the gradual neglect of Srinagar's historic and cultural legacy, Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Saturday called for sustained efforts to preserve the city's heritage and revive its fast-disappearing traditional crafts.

Welcoming the establishment of a cultural centre at Maharaj Gunj, Bukhari said the initiative was a welcome step but stressed that preserving Kashmir's heritage requires far more than isolated projects.

He said Srinagar's Sheher-e-Khaas is itself a living museum, reflecting centuries of architectural excellence, Sufi traditions and world-renowned craftsmanship. However, he regretted that despite its historical significance, the old city has not re-

ceived the level of conservation and protection it deserves.

As per KNT, Bukhari maintained that heritage conservation should not become a political issue or a means for political point-scoring. Instead, he said, it must be treated as a shared responsibility aimed at safeguarding Kashmir's cultural identity for future generations.

Highlighting the plight of artisans, he said several traditional crafts that once defined Srinagar's identity are now struggling for survival, forcing generations of skilled craftsmen to abandon their ancestral occupations due to poor economic returns.

Describing the situation as unfortunate, Bukhari said this decline has continued despite Srinagar earning recognition as a World Craft City from the World Crafts Council, an honour that reflects the extraordinary talent of Kashmiri artisans.

DIPR's Cultural Unit organises Awareness Programme

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Cultural Unit of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Kashmir, today organised a comprehensive awareness programme under the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA) at Government Girls High School (GGHS), Naseem Bagh, Srinagar.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers and the school administration. A speech competition was organised wherein students passionately highlighted the alarming consequences of drug abuse and stressed the collective responsibility of society in safeguarding the younger generation through awareness, education and positive engagement.

Adding a powerful cultural dimension to the campaign, artists of the Dilkash Dramatic Club presented a thought-provoking thematic skit depicting

the devastating impact of substance abuse on individuals, families and society. Blending entertainment with a strong social message, the performance effectively reinforced the objectives of the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, inspiring students to stay away from drugs, adopt healthy lifestyles and become active ambassadors of a drug-free society.

The presentation received wide appreciation from the audience for its impactful message and artistic excellence.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal of the School Rehana Masoodi, on behalf of the school administration, expressed sincere gratitude to the Department of Information and Public Relations for organising such a meaningful and informative awareness programme. She appreciated the Department's sustained efforts in sensitising students through educational and cultural initiatives.



File Photo

Stray Dog Attack at Faqir Gujree Sparks Safety Concerns

Two children injured in latest incident; 1.52 lakh stray dogs in J&K urban areas; residents demand permanent solution

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A fresh stray dog attack in the Faqir Gujree area of Dara on the outskirts of Srinagar has once again brought the growing stray dog crisis in Kashmir into sharp focus, with residents accusing the administration of failing to protect citizens despite repeated incidents across the Valley.

Videos circulating on social media purportedly show two young children who were allegedly bitten and scratched by stray dogs during the incident. The latest incident has triggered widespread concern and anger in the locality, where residents say fear has become a part of everyday life, particularly for children, women and the elderly.

"We have reached a point where parents are scared to let their children walk to school alone. Elderly people avoid morning walks, and women hesitate to step out after dusk. Every new attack is followed by silence from the authorities," Nazir Ahmad, a resident, told KNO.

Another resident, Tahir Nazir, said the government cannot continue to treat the issue as routine. "Whenever an attack happens, officials make promises. But the reality on the ground remains unchanged. We need a permanent solution, not temporary assurances," he said.

According to figures placed by the government in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly earlier this year, an estimated 1.52 lakh stray dogs are present across

urban areas of the Union Territory, including over 64,000 in Srinagar. The government also informed the House that around 43,200 stray dogs were sterilised between June 2023 and September 2025.

Locals alleged that overflowing garbage dumps and easy access to food waste continue to fuel the stray dog population in several parts of Srinagar. They also claimed that the pace of the sterilisation programme has been inadequate to address the growing menace.

"We hear about sterilisation centres, but the situation on the ground tells a different story. Unless sterilisation and scientific waste management are carried out on a war footing, these attacks will continue," another resident said.

CIK Conducts Search at Srinagar Residence in UAPA Case

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) on Saturday conducted a search at a residence in Srinagar in connection with an ongoing investigation into FIR No. 07/2023 registered at Police Station CIK Kashmir under Sections 153-A, 505 and 506 IPC and Sections 13, 18,

18-B and 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Official sources said the search was carried out at the residence of Riyaz Ahmad Beigh, a resident of Hokarsar on the outskirts of Srinagar, who originally belongs to Dalal Mohalla, Fateh Kadal. The operation was conducted by a CIK team with the assistance of Police

Station Shalteng.

As per KNT, during the course of the search, investigators seized a Redmi 12 mobile phone, which will be examined as part of the ongoing investigation.

Officials said the search concluded peacefully without any law and order issue. No arrest was reported during the operation.

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

FAJR 3: 37
ZUHR 12:33
ASR 5: 344
Magrib 7: 50
ISHA 9: 31

HIJRI CALENDAR
12 Muharram
1448

This Day In History

- 767 - St Paul I ends his reign as Catholic Pope
- 1098 - Fighters of the First Crusade defeat Kerbogha of Mosul.
- 1119 - Battle of Sarmada - Emir Ilghazi defeats French Crusaders
- 1389- Ottomans defeat Serbian army in the bloody Battle of Kosovo, opening the way for the Ottoman conquest of Southeastern Europe (see Vidovdan).
- 1635 - French colony of Guadeloupe established in Caribbean
- 1651 - Battle of Beresteczko between Poles and Ukrainians starts.
- 1675 - Battle at Fehrbellin: Brandenburg army beats Sweden
- 1762-Russian tsarina Catherine II seizes power, declaring herself Catherine II, the sovereign ruler of Russia
- 1778 - Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey (General Washington beats Clinton)
- 1778 - Mary Ludwig Hayes "Molly Pitcher" aids American patriots
- 1807 - British troops land at Ensenada, Argentina
- 1820 - Tomato is proven to be non-poisonous by Colonel Robert Gibbon eating a tomato on steps of courthouse in Salem, New Jersey
- 1895 - French painter Paul Gauguin leaves France for Tahiti for the second time
- 1902- US buys concession to build Panama canal from French for \$40 million
- 1902- Germany, Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire renew their Triple Alliance for six more years
- 1904-International Anti-Military Cooperation (IAMV) forms in Amsterdam
- 1919- Treaty of Versailles, ending WWI and establishing the League of Nations, is signed in France
- 1936- The Japanese puppet state of Mengjiang is formed in northern China.
- 1941- German & Romanian soldiers kill 11,000 Jews in Kishinev
- 1941- German troops occupy Galicia, Poland
- 1950- North Korean forces capture Seoul, South Korea in opening phase of the Korean War
- 1956-1st atomic reactor built for private research operates Chicago Ill

From KO Archives

Free Trade Area On Both Sides Of LoC Soon

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Prime Minister's working group for strengthening relations across the Line of Control (LoC) has suggested creation of a free trade area between Jammu and Kashmir Pakistan controlled Kashmir.

The ultimate aim (of recommendations) would be to encourage, in stages, the creation of a free trade area comprising Jammu and Kashmir and Pck, modalities of the same being worked out between the two sides, said the group headed by M Rasgotra, which submitted its report to the third roundtable conference on Kashmir in April.

The report said representatives of trade and commerce including the chambers of commerce, have already visited the LoC and reported that there was lot of enthusiasm for opening up of trade and commerce between the two sides.

The group recommended setting up of a joint consultative machinery of officials and representatives of I commerce from both the sides to resolve any difficulties in flow of trade. The list of items for export and import should include, handicrafts, fruits, cement, iron, medicines, sugar, basmati, rice, machinery and equipment, sports goods including raw material like willow, plastic pipes and other items that are manufactured or assembled by small scale industry in Jammu and Kashmir, the report said.

To facilitate the travel of traders across the LoC, the working group recommended that the traders should be given multiple entry and exit permits, which should be valid for a minimum period of one year. The issue of state taxes on the goods traded across the LoC may be determined by the state government after due consideration of all relevant aspects, it added.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 June, 2007)

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION DOORU
Email:- xennrbdooru@gmail.com
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NIT NO 17 OF R&B/DOORU/HD/2026-27/E-Tendering/1054-59 Dated 25-06-2026

For and on behalf of the President of India, e-tenders 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	(Basic cost +GST)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor
1.	Macadamization of Hakura Manzgam Naidpora Road	38.84 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 33.92+ (18% GST Amount 05.92)	1100	77680/-	15 Days	AAJ & BEE Class Only
2.	Macadamization of Kokagund RATHERGUND ROAD	19.40 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 16.44+ (18% GST Amount 2.96)	800	38800/-	10 Days	CEE & BEE Class Only
3.	Macadamization of Kumar Mohalla at Larkipora	13.57 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 11.50+ (18% GST Amount 2.07)	600	27140/-	10 Days	DEE, CEE & BEE Class Only
4.	Macadamization of road Baghwanpora	19.54 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 16.55+ (18% GST Amount 2.99)	800	39080/-	10 Days	CEE & BEE Class Only
5.	Macadamization of Batagund junction including Batagund inner links	23.31 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 17.76+ (18% GST Amount 3.55)	800	46620/-	10 Days	CEE & BEE Class Only
6.	Macadamization of Reshipora Bridge and link to Army Camp Kapran and link to NalBasti Thaman	19.44 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 16.47+ (18% GST Amount 2.96)	800	38880/-	10 Days	CEE & BEE Class Only
7.	Macadamization of ADV Road including Dooru Verinag Town	31.31 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 26.36+ (18% GST Amount 4.75)	1100	62620/-	15Days	AAJ & BEE Class Only
8.	Macadamization & Upgradation of Bus Adda Verinag	17.47 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 14.81+ (18% GST Amount 2.66)	800	34940/-	10 Days	CEE & BEE Class Only

quantities (B.O.Q) seen/downloaded
jktenders.gov.in

S. No.	Particulars	Date
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25-06-2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 26-06-2026 (09:00AM)
		To 09-07-2026 (06:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 26-06-2026 (09:00AM)
		To 09-07-2026 (06:00PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	From 26-06-2026 (09:00AM)
		To 09-07-2026 (06:00PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	10-07-2026 (11:00AM)
		In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Dooru.

Engineer R&B Division (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid CDR/FDR/The be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) Executive Engineer
www.jktenders.gov.in

automatically through Executive Engineer

unsuccessful bidder shall be submission of Treasury

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of the date of opening of

bidder/ tenderer withdraws his tender during the modifications in required performance security within the

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per Information Technology Act 2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

digital Signature. No

accepted in physical form.

copy of all necessary documents physically

Accorded

documents Consisting qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications,

No: 1054-59
DIPK-2588/26 Dated: 27.06.2026

SD
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Dooru

Before Kashmir Shakes Again

A devastating earthquake in Venezuela and tremors that sent Kashmir residents into the open within hours of each other point to a larger truth: geology sets the hazard, while human choices decide the scale of loss.



Dr. Afroz Ahmad Shah

“
Science cannot identify the day when Kashmir’s next major earthquake will come. But science can say with confidence that large Himalayan earthquakes remain inevitable over geological timescales because plate convergence continues beneath the valley without halt.

Days after a devastating earthquake sequence ripped through Venezuela, seismic waves sent people rushing out of homes and offices in Kashmir.

Streets filled with anxious residents waiting for the shaking to stop. The tremors passed without causing major damage, while Venezuela continued counting lives lost after a magnitude 7.2 foreshock gave way to a magnitude 7.5 earthquake only 38 seconds later.

Those events unfolded thousands of kilometres apart, though together they tell a story that Kashmir cannot ignore.

Venezuela’s tremor tragedy did not begin with the earthquake alone. It grew through collapsing buildings, damaged roads, disrupted communication networks and emergency systems pushed beyond capacity.

Scientists have long explained that earthquake sequences, where powerful shocks surface within seconds of one another, place enormous stress on structures already weakened by the first jolt. Human suffering rises sharply when vulnerable buildings stand in the path of that force.

Venezuela’s tragedy, however, is far from an isolated case.

Recent earthquakes in the Philippines told the same story, where powerful tremors struck exactly as earth scientists expected in active tectonic regions.

Collapsing buildings, failing infrastructure and limited preparedness transformed those natural hazards into large-scale human disasters.

Kashmir sits within that same global debate because the valley occupies one of the most seismically active continental collision zones on Earth.

Beneath the Himalaya, the Indian Plate continues moving towards the Eurasian Plate by several centimetres every year. That movement builds stress along major faults, especially the Main Himalayan Thrust, until the rocks rupture suddenly through



earthquakes capable of exceeding magnitude 7.

Plate motion continues every day, even when the ground feels perfectly still.

History leaves little doubt about the consequences.

The 1905 Kangra earthquake, the 1934 Bihar-Nepal earthquake, the 1950 Assam earthquake and the 2005 Muzaffarabad earthquake rank among the most destructive earthquakes to strike the Himalayan region.

The Muzaffarabad disaster alone claimed tens of thousands of lives and exposed the devastating performance of poorly engineered buildings throughout northern Pakistan and parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Two decades have passed since that catastrophe. Geological processes have continued without halt, while public attention has gradually shifted elsewhere.

Construction has accelerated, towns have expanded and the valley now holds far greater exposure than it did in 2005.

Large sections of urban Kashmir now stand on water-saturated sediments that decades of scientific research identify as highly susceptible to amplified seismic shaking.

Buildings founded on these deposits can experience much stronger ground motion than similar structures resting on bedrock.

Development has also moved faster than consistent enforcement of earthquake-resistant construction standards. Many buildings remain non-engineered or comply only partly with modern seismic design, while schools, hospitals, bridges, transport networks and essential utilities still await comprehensive structural assessment and retrofitting.

Earthquake science describes this combination with remarkable clarity: high hazard, growing exposure and continuing structural vulnerability.

Under those conditions, even a moderate earthquake can produce widespread human and economic damage.

Recent earthquakes elsewhere

tell the same story.

Fatalities stem largely from collapsing structures rather than ground shaking alone. Damaged roads delay rescue operations, broken communication systems slow coordination, hospitals struggle as casualties rise, and financial recovery also becomes far more difficult where insurance coverage remains limited and investment in stronger infrastructure falls short.

Kashmir therefore faces three clear priorities.

Better hazard mapping comes first. Scientists understand the Himalayan tectonic system well, although important questions remain about local fault geometry, rupture behaviour and the way different parts of the Kashmir Basin amplify seismic waves.

High-resolution seismic microzonation remains limited for many urban centres. Detailed mapping would give engineers and planners a far clearer understanding of neighbourhood-level earthquake hazards.

Building safety demands equal

attention.

Earthquake engineering has consistently shown that ductile design, proper reinforcement, quality construction materials and rigorous inspection greatly improve structural performance during strong shaking. Building regulations produce results only when implementation receives the same attention as legislation.

Preparing for an earthquake goes well beyond search and rescue. And financial planning is a big part of that effort.

Places with low insurance coverage often depend on government support and families’ savings after a disaster, which slows rebuilding and puts extra pressure on households.

Bringing financial preparedness into disaster planning well before an earthquake can help communities recover much faster.

Science cannot identify the day when Kashmir’s next major earthquake will come.

But science can say with confidence that large Himalayan earthquakes remain inevitable over geological timescales because plate convergence continues beneath the valley without halt.

Latest Kashmir tremors and Venezuela tragedy together brought that reality into sharp focus.

Decisions taken today about seismic microzonation, stronger building standards, safer public infrastructure and financial preparedness will determine whether Kashmir’s next major earthquake becomes another humanitarian catastrophe or a disaster whose human cost stands dramatically reduced before the ground begins to shake.

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The author is a National Geographic Explorer and Senior Assistant Professor of Structural Geology at Universiti Brunel Darussalam, where he leads the Geosciences programme. He can be reached at afroz.shah@gmail.com.

The Politics of Unemployment

Employment figures measure the scale of Kashmir’s job crisis, but they fail to capture what years of waiting do to people, families and public confidence.



Zobiya Bhat

Unemployment in Kashmir has acquired a language of percentages.

Governments cite employment figures, opposition parties quote higher ones, economists publish surveys, and headlines track vacancies, recruitment drives and applications.

Numbers dominate the discourse because they seem objective and measure the scale of the crisis, but they cannot explain what the crisis feels like.

That distinction changes everything. Kashmir’s unemployment problem extends far beyond economics, and reaches into family life, public confidence, education and politics.

Any discussion that begins and ends with statistical tables misses the story unfolding behind those figures.

Parents invest years in their children’s education, believing it will lead to a secure future. Young people study hard, earn degrees and prepare for competitive exams with the same belief. They see a job as the path to financial security, independence and respect.

That expectation now collides with a shrinking pool of opportunities.

Universities continue producing graduates in large numbers while employment gen-

eration moves at a far slower pace.

Degrees increasingly mark the beginning of a prolonged wait instead of the start of a career.

The central crisis, therefore, goes beyond the lack of jobs. It lies in the growing imbalance between what education promises and what the economy delivers.

That imbalance also explains why unemployment has become deeply political.

Employment dominates election campaigns, government announcements and public speeches because it touches almost all families.

Political leaders routinely announce vacancies, recruitment drives and numerical targets.

Those announcements generate headlines, although they seldom address the deeper questions that determine whether employment can grow over time.

Those questions warrant far greater attention. Educational institutions continue producing graduates, although many lack skills that align with changing industries.

Industrial expansion remains limited, private investment grows slowly, and sustainable employment systems receive less political attention than recruitment announcements.

Counting vacancies has become easier than building an economy that creates lasting opportunities. Statistics only narrow that debate further.

They tell us how many young people remain unemployed, but they never explain the emotional cost of spending years preparing for examinations, submitting application after application and watching recruitment processes drag on without certainty.

A percentage cannot describe the disappointment that follows another delayed selection list or another cancelled recruitment process.

Data captures outcomes, while human ex-



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Long-term unemployment leaves scars that surveys cannot measure. Graduates begin doubting themselves despite years of study. Families shoulder growing financial strain, and confidence in public institutions erodes as education fails to lead to opportunity. The cost reaches far beyond a paycheck.

perience tells the real story.

Long-term unemployment leaves scars that surveys cannot measure. Graduates begin doubting themselves despite years of study. Families shoulder growing financial strain, and confidence in public institutions erodes as education fails to lead to opportunity. The cost reaches far beyond a paycheck.

Public attitudes toward employment make the problem even harder to solve.

Government service has become the dominant symbol of professional success for thousands of educated young people. Competition for a limited number of public-sector positions grows fiercer with each recruitment cycle.

Entrepreneurship, innovation, private

enterprise and skill-based industries occupy a much smaller place in public imagination, even though they could expand opportunity far beyond government payrolls.

Kashmir needs more jobs, although it also needs a broader understanding of what successful employment looks like.

That shift cannot happen through speeches alone.

Schools and universities must prepare students for a wider economy. Skill development should connect directly with industries capable of absorbing trained workers. Investment policies should encourage businesses willing to build long-term operations. Political debate should judge success through sustainable employment systems rather than headline-friendly vacancy announcements.

Kashmir’s unemployment debate ultimately asks a larger question than how many people lack work.

It asks whether educated young people can believe that effort still leads somewhere.

Employment provides income, although it also gives purpose, social standing and confidence that tomorrow can improve upon today.

Those qualities never appear in statistical reports, although families experience their absence daily.

Numbers remain essential, but they cannot replace understanding.

Kashmir’s unemployment crisis begins where the statistics end, with young people still waiting for opportunity to match their education.

—
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Kashmir's Azadari Lives Through Art

A Srinagar exhibition built around Karbala shows how art can keep cultural memory alive while restoring human connection at a time when technology dominates public life.



Dr. Khairunnisa Aga

I walked into the Darke Azadari-Mashq e Arbaeen exhibition in Srinagar expecting an art show. I walked out rethinking what mourning can mean.

I expected paintings, calligraphy and poetry inspired by Imam Hussain, but I found something far larger: a community using art to keep memory alive, strengthen moral conviction and protect a cultural inheritance that faces pressure from homogenisation and digital culture.

That experience convinced me that Kashmir risks losing far more than artistic traditions if spaces like this disappear.

The exhibition has reached its thirteenth edition, bringing devotional practice and artistic creation together under one roof.

Darke Azadari expresses profound mourning, while Mashq e Arbaeen points to the practice of commemorating the fortieth day after Karbala.

Azadari goes far beyond grief. It keeps truth alive through memory and gives injustice a permanent witness.

Karbala speaks through spiritual, philosophical and historical traditions, although its ethical message reaches well beyond religious boundaries.

Compassion, empathy, moral conviction, loyalty and solidarity all grow from that shared source, giving artists a lasting language.

That wider language explains why the exhibition refuses to limit itself to Islamic art alone.

Creative traditions inspired by the martyrdom of Imam Hussain

appear through many cultural forms, producing works filled with reverence and affection. History supports that broad vision.

One of the earliest known paintings depicting the massacre at Karbala came from a Syrian Christian artist, showing how the event reached people well beyond one faith.

Poetry, painting, storytelling and many other forms have kept the memory of Karbala alive for centuries, inviting audiences to live according to the values Imam Hussain represented rather than simply admire them from a distance.

Artists have answered that invitation through architecture, literature, calligraphy, film and oral storytelling.

Creative work becomes an act of devotion because it expresses love and loyalty through craft rather than catchphrases.

That explains why this exhibition succeeds as more than a gallery.

Visitors encounter emotional, intellectual and spiritual dialogue at the same time. Art becomes a meeting point where faith and imagination strengthen one another instead of competing for attention.

Kashmir gives that dialogue a distinctive voice.

The valley and neighbouring regions developed rich mourning traditions through poetry, storytelling, passionate oratory and visual art.

Academic attention has rarely matched the richness of those practices, while much of that heritage has remained confined within the Shia community.

Social media and global cultural influences now encourage uniform forms of mourning that gradually replace local expression.

Fresh ideas always enrich public culture, although local traditions also need committed custodians if they are to survive.

Art gives those traditions a living home instead of reducing them to museum pieces.

That cultural inheritance also speaks directly to Kashmir's own experience.

Mourning here holds deep social meaning because generations have



RESEARCHERS STUDYING MUHARRAM COMMEMORATIONS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE ALSO IDENTIFIED THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF KASHMIRI MOURNING PRACTICES. Local calligraphy, storytelling and collective expressions of grief distinguish them from many other traditions. Those characteristics enrich global understanding of Karbala while giving Kashmir a cultural voice that stands on its own. Losing such practices would shrink that contribution considerably.

lived with pain, loss and conflict. Karbala therefore becomes more than distant history.

People recognise elements of their own experience within its moral language. Poetry, painting and calligraphy allow grief to find expression while encouraging compassion and understanding.

Shared language draws communities into conversation, opening paths toward trust through common cultural experience.

My visit made those ideas

tangible.

Informal discussions unfolded beside exhibitions. Poetry recitations drew audiences into collective participation rather than passive observation. Artworks invited careful attention instead of hurried consumption. The screening of Hussain (A) in Kashmir added another dimension. Its filmmaker, Marzia Aga, spoke candidly about storytelling and the experience of building narratives as a young Muslim woman.

Her account strengthened my conviction that culture grows through people willing to document, question and interpret inherited traditions instead of merely repeating them.

Researchers studying Muharram commemorations around the world have also identified the distinctive features of Kashmiri mourning practices. Local calligraphy, storytelling and collective expressions of grief distinguish them from many other traditions.

Those characteristics enrich global understanding of Karbala while giving Kashmir a cultural voice that stands on its own.

Losing such practices would shrink that contribution considerably.

Technology makes this talk even more pressing. Instant communication, social media and artificial intelligence deliver extraordinary convenience, although they also encourage emotional distance.

Healthcare, education and public administration benefit from technological progress, though human judgment, ethics, empathy and creativity remain beyond the reach of algorithms.

Darke Azadari-Mashq e Arbaeen restored those human qualities through dialogue, artistic exchange and shared experience. Students, researchers and members of civil society encountered ideas that demanded participation instead of passive scrolling.

That may prove the exhibition's greatest achievement.

Young people encountered history through art instead of obligation. Emerging and established artists found a platform where dialogue stood beside creative practice. Love for Imam Hussain and reverence for the Prophet Muhammad and his family found expression through contemporary artistic voices while remaining rooted in inherited traditions.

Culture survived because people actively lived it together.

I left convinced that Azadari in Kashmir belongs among the valley's most significant cultural inheritances. Its art forms preserve memory, deepen ethical thought and strengthen bonds between people who share public space.

Darke Azadari-Mashq e Arbaeen demonstrates that mourning can also become an act of creation, conversation and cultural continuity.

Kashmir will hold on to that inheritance through people willing to protect the human imagination from becoming another casualty of technological speed.

—The author is a political science lecturer, and can be reached at khairunnisaaga@gmail.com.

The Other Silence

From mental health to domestic abuse, too many Kashmiri men suffer alone because vulnerability is mistaken for weakness.



Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

Sorrow in Kashmir often travels in silence, but not always the kind you'd expect.

While stories of women's silent suffering have rightly received attention, another kind of silence, one that cloaks men's pain, remains overlooked.

Behind stoic faces and restrained words are men carrying emotional burdens they've been taught never to name. These are not just personal struggles, they are public health concerns, social realities, and cultural blind spots.

From early childhood, Kashmiri boys grow up hearing the phrase: "Kar xhop-pe, Waddan cheukh kor-re hind paet-th"—don't cry like a girl.

This casual dismissal of emotion stays with them, shaping their sense of manhood and gradually teaching them that vulnerability is something to be ashamed of.

Emotional expression becomes unfamiliar, even dangerous. And while girls may find support networks within their families or friendships, boys often drift into emotional isolation.

This is not unique to Kashmir. Across the globe, boys are socialized to equate silence with strength. Whether it's "man up" in the U.S., "men don't cry" in Latin America,

or "be tough" in urban Africa, these phrases may vary by region, but their impact is remarkably similar.

They create generations of men who don't just avoid expressing pain, they often don't know how to.

The consequences of this emotional muting are devastating. According to the World Health Organization, men account for nearly 75% of global suicide deaths. In India, NCRB data for 2022 revealed that nearly 1,20,000 men died by suicide, more than twice the number of women.

The leading causes included family issues and illness, pressures that are often suffered in silence, especially among men who lack emotional support systems.

In Kashmir, where political instability has already taken a toll on mental health, men are particularly vulnerable. A 2021 report by the Kashmir Psychological Society highlighted a 40% rise in suicide rates among young men in the valley over the past decade.

Experts cited untreated depression, substance abuse, and cultural taboos around expressing vulnerability as key contributors.

This silence extends beyond mental health and into domestic spaces. The dominant narrative around domestic violence focuses, rightly, on women, who are overwhelmingly the victims.

But in doing so, we risk ignoring a telling truth: that some men, too, face violence at the hands of their partners or in-laws, and have little or no recourse.

A stark example of this emerged from the life of Atul Subhash, a 34-year-old IT professional from Uttar Pradesh. Facing an acrimonious divorce, Atul accused his wife and her family of abuse. His accusations were public, but his suffering ended in suicide.

His case, far from being isolated, sheds light on a silent minority: men



who are victims of abuse but remain trapped in shame, fear, and disbelief that they'll be taken seriously.

Data on male victims is hard to come by, largely because most men don't report. India's Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) does not recognize male victims, leaving them without legal protection.

Social workers and psychologists in Kashmir say that while male victims do exist, their silence is often more impenetrable than their pain. They fear ridicule, disbelief, or worse: being told they deserve it.

Recently, Kashmiri rights activist Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat helped open up this conversation with a video program on male victims of domestic violence, the first of its kind in the region. The program shared real stories of men facing physical and emotional abuse, offering a rare public space where their pain was acknowledged, not mocked.

But isolated efforts are not enough. The emotional suppression of men has

ripple effects. It damages marriages, where emotional inaccessibility can lead to detachment or conflict. It affects children, who grow up unable to connect with emotionally absent fathers. It corrodes health. Stress-related conditions like hypertension and heart disease are more common in men, partly due to repressed emotions.

And it weakens social fabric, creating individuals who feel disconnected from themselves and those around them.

Religious teachings, ironically, offer a more balanced view. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, openly wept, comforted the grieving, and spoke of love and compassion. Christianity, Buddhism, and other faiths also value empathy and emotional honesty. But religious ideals often get lost beneath cultural constructs of masculinity, which value control over connection, toughness over tenderness.

Globally, there is a slow shift. Scandinavian countries have begun

integrating emotional education into early childhood curricula, teaching boys and girls alike how to name and process feelings.

Campaigns like "Movember" have helped bring men's mental health into the mainstream. In India, organizations like Men Welfare Trust and Save Indian Family Foundation are advocating for greater recognition of male suffering. But the momentum remains limited, especially in traditional societies like Kashmir.

What's needed is a multi-layered approach. Schools must teach boys that expressing emotions is not weakness, but resilience. Parents should create space for emotional conversations with their sons. Not just when they're hurt, but as part of daily life.

Religious and community leaders can challenge toxic masculinity by emphasizing compassion and emotional integrity. And lawmakers must begin to discuss protections for male victims of abuse. Not at the expense of women's rights, but as part of a broader, inclusive understanding of human dignity.

The global gender debate cannot afford to be one-sided. If we are truly committed to justice, empathy, and healing, we must recognize that suffering is not gendered, and neither is the need for care.

In Kashmir and beyond, many men are breaking silently under the weight of expectations they never chose. To listen, to believe, and to include their pain in our conversations is not to deny anyone else's suffering, it is simply to acknowledge a truth long ignored.

Silence may be taught. But it can also be unlearned.

—The author is a teacher and researcher based in Gochar Poru Chadoora, J&K. He can be reached at bhatashraf@gmail.com.

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Iran Braces for 35 Million at Ayatollah Khamenei Funeral

Trans Asia News

Tehran: Iranian authorities have launched extensive security, traffic and logistical preparations for the funeral ceremonies of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, with officials expecting one of the largest public gatherings in the country's history as millions of mourners from Iran and abroad are set to participate.

The multi-city funeral programme, scheduled between July 7 and July 9, will span Tehran, Qom, the Iraqi holy cities of Karbala and Najaf, and Iran's northeastern city of Mashhad, where Ayatollah Khamenei will be laid to rest at the shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

Iranian officials estimate that attendance across the ceremonies could range between 18 million and 35 million people. Authorities have projected that Tehran alone may witness between 15 million and 20 million mourners, while Mashhad is expected to host another eight to 10 million participants.

Officials said the funeral arrangements represent one of



the most extensive security and logistical operations undertaken in recent years. Tehran is expected to receive nearly two million incoming vehicles, prompting authorities to implement elaborate traffic diversion plans, public transport arrangements and emergency response systems.

Police, intelligence agencies, emergency services and municipal authorities have coordinated contingency plans covering crowd management, transportation, medical assistance and potential security threats associated with the large-scale gatherings.

Iranian officials said delegations and visitors from Iraq,

Turkey, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and several other regional countries have expressed their intention to attend the ceremonies.

Following the Tehran events, funeral rites will be held in the holy city of Qom before the cortege proceeds to Iraq, where the cities of Karbala and Najaf are preparing to host commemorative processions on July 8.

Iraqi authorities, working in coordination with the Iranian Embassy and various state institutions, have begun logistical preparations for the ceremonies, which are also expected to attract millions of mourners from across Iraq and neighbouring countries.

SC: Homebuyers Entitled to Delay Compensation Even After Possession

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has said that a homebuyer can seek adjudication of his claim for compensation for the delay in delivery of the flat even after getting its possession.

The apex court set aside a 2016 order of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), which said that the appellant was not a consumer at the time of filing his complaint alleging a deficiency in service on account of the delay in handing over the possession of the flat, since he had already taken its possession without protest.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and V Mohana passed the order on a plea by a homebuyer, who became a member of a co-operative group housing society in Delhi in January 2003 and was allotted a flat, challenging the NCDRC's order.

The top court observed that a claim for compensation for delayed possession necessarily arises from the period prior to the actual delivery of possession.

"The subsequent receipt of possession cannot, by itself,



extinguish the right of the allottee to seek adjudication of a claim for compensation for the alleged delay," the bench said in its June 4 order.

The appellant had instituted a consumer complaint before the district consumer forum, alleging a deficiency in service on account of the delay in handing over possession of the flat.

In July 2009, the district forum referred the parties to arbitration and that order was affirmed by the Delhi State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in February 2013.

The appellant then approached the NCDRC, which dismissed his revision petition in January 2016.

The apex court noted that the consumer complaint filed before the district forum was admitted and notice was issued to the society, which later filed an application seeking reference of the dispute to arbitration.

The appellant argued before the apex court that the consumer complaint could not have been referred to arbitration merely on the basis of an arbitration clause in the agreement between the parties.

Dealing with the appeal, the bench referred to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and said it is a beneficial legislation intended to provide a simple, inexpensive and expeditious remedy to a consumer who

complains of a defect in goods or deficiency in service. It said Section 3 of the Act provides that the remedy under this legislation was in addition to and not in derogation of any other remedy available under the law.

"The existence of another forum or another mode of adjudication, therefore, does not by itself exclude the jurisdiction of the consumer fora," it said.

The bench said the fact that the agreement between the parties contained an arbitration clause could not, by itself, be treated as sufficient to non-suit the appellant before the consumer forum.

It said the NCDRC's order suffered from an "additional infirmity".

"The principal issue before the National Commission was whether the district forum and the state commission were justified in referring the complaint to arbitration. The National Commission, however, dismissed the revision petition on the ground that the appellant was not a consumer at the time of filing of the complaint, since he had already taken possession of the flat without protest," the bench noted.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG: Kashmiriyat Reflects

described India as a "living idea" that teaches humanity to live together as one family and urged the younger generation to carry forward this vision based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.

Referring to what he called "Bhartiyata" or Indianness, the Lieutenant Governor said it represents the country's enduring values of equal respect for all religions, unity in diversity, the pursuit of truth and the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

"Our ancient texts, the Vedas and Upanishads, have always taught harmonious living. Thousands of years ago our sages said that truth is not confined to a single path. Truth is infinite, and there are many routes that lead to it. That is why India has always seen diversity not as division but as a blessing," he said.

Sinha said this outlook is reflected in Jammu and Kashmir, where traditions of harmony and coexistence have flourished for centuries.

"People often use the word 'Kashmiriyat', which actually springs from the philosophy of 'Bhartiyata' and symbolizes the fundamental sentiment India has taught the world since the Vedic age, equal respect for all religions, cultures and traditions," he said.

Speaking about the arrival of Islam in India, the Lieutenant Governor said Sufi saints and Islamic scholars found a culture rooted in love, compassion and spirituality, and were inspired by the ideals of coexistence reflected in Indian scriptures.

He also noted that several repositories of Sanskrit knowledge were translated into Arabic and said India's civilizational tradition has always welcomed people of different faiths without asking them to abandon their beliefs.

"India has never told anyone to abandon their faith. India has always said, bring your faith with you, bring your traditions, and live with us in harmony. That is India's distinctiveness. That is the greatness of the Indian spiritual tradition," he said.

Former Union Minister Dr. Karan Singh, University of Kashmir Vice Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan, President of the Inter-Faith Harmony Foundation of India Dr. Khwaja Iftikhar Ahmed, Director of the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language Dr. Md. Shams Eubal, Founder Director of Dara Shikoh Centre Dr. Jyotsna Singh, Director (Operations) of the Inter Faith Harmony Foundation Dr. Nasreen Shama, Kashmir Writers Association President Fida Firdous, National Coordinator of the Inter Faith Harmony Foundation Navaid-ul-Islam Khan, SSP Srinagar G.V. Sundeeb Chakravathy, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, senior officials, literary personalities and prominent citizens attended the programme.

US Vice President JD Vance defended Washington's military response, saying Iran had failed to respect the ceasefire.

"Iran signed a ceasefire agreement. We have honored it. If they have disagreements about how the MOU is being applied, they can pick up the phone. But violence will be met with violence," Vance wrote on X.

Despite a gradual recovery in shipping traffic after the ceasefire, commercial movements through the Strait of Hormuz remain below pre-conflict levels, with many vessels continuing to sail with their tracking systems switched off because of security concerns.

The latest attacks are expected to renew fears over global energy supplies when financial markets reopen. The Strait of Hormuz carries millions of barrels of crude oil every day, making it one of the world's most strategically important maritime chokepoints, and any prolonged disruption is likely to trigger fresh volatility in international oil prices.

NIA Chargesheets
Dr Adeel Ahmed Rather and a founding member of "AGuH (Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind) Interim" -- an offshoot of the Al-Qaeda, a statement issued by the NIA said.

NIA investigation has found Muzafar to be one of the prime architects -- along with co-accused Umer, Muzammil, Adeel, and Mufti Irfan -- of the conspiracy that led to the deadly vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) blast near the Red Fort on November 10, 2025, killing 11 people.

NIA's probe has revealed that Muzafar had attended the secret Eidgah meeting in Srinagar in June 2022, during which AGuH Interim was established, the statement said, identifying Muzafar as one of the founding members of the terror module.

and accuses the United States of failing to honour commitments under the agreement, particularly those relating to efforts to maintain a ceasefire in Lebanon.

Iranian state television reported that the Revolutionary Guards had fired "warning shots" at vessels using shipping lanes not approved by Tehran, adding that several ships were now seeking Iranian permission before entering the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has insisted that commercial vessels use designated Iranian-controlled transit routes instead of alternative corridors promoted by Western naval forces.

Earlier this week, several merchant ships reportedly turned around after receiving radio warnings instructing them not to sail outside routes approved by Tehran.

Iranian parliamentary national security committee chairman Ebrahim Azizi warned that any ship ignoring Tehran's navigation instructions would face a "decisive response."

The United States, meanwhile, has encouraged commercial vessels to use a southern shipping corridor closer to Oman, while Iran has sought to channel maritime traffic through northern routes under its control and has indicated it may eventually impose transit fees.

Adding to concerns, the JMIC expanded the recommended Omani shipping corridor to allow simultaneous two-way traffic and warned shipping companies of a potential sea mine threat across large sections of the Strait of Hormuz.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) said on Friday that around 80 naval mines could have been laid in the strategic waterway. Under the interim agreement, Iran is responsible for clearing any mines, although officials have not said how much progress has been made.

The latest escalation has also cast fresh uncertainty over efforts to calm tensions in Lebanon.

Although Israel and Lebanon signed a US-brokered framework agreement on Friday aimed at reducing hostilities, fighting continued on Saturday. Lebanese state media reported an Israeli drone strike in Nabatieh, while Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem rejected the agreement as "null and void" and vowed the group would continue its resistance against Israel.

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Muzafar was deeply involved in the manufacture, testing and safekeeping of TATP-based improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at a clandestine facility run by Umer and Muzammil at Al-Falah University, Faridabad, the statement said.

TATP or Triacetone Triperoxide is a homemade explosive.

A Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) has also been issued against Muzafar and efforts are on to track and arrest him, the probe agency said.

As per NIA investigations, Zameer, an over-ground worker (OGW) of AGuH Interim, was actively in touch with handlers, and acted as a courier for arms, ammunition, and cash for the terror module.

Tufail, a former OGW of Pakistan-based proscribed terror organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), served as the module's arms supplier.

He had procured one AK-47, one Krinkov rifle, one pistol, magazines and live ammunition through dead drops orchestrated by a handler, and delivered them to the deceased main accused Dr Umer Un Nabi for Rs 3 lakh, the anti-terror agency said.

NIA, which established the linkages between various accused through multi-disciplinary investigation, including detailed forensic testing, geo-location mapping of conspiracy sites and granular financial-trail analysis, is continuing its probe in the case, the statement said.

J&K Puts Final

the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Base Camp and the Tawi River Front in Jammu, directing officers to ensure effective coordination among all agencies and strict implementation of the multi-layered security plan.

Security was further strengthened across Jammu city with intensified vehicle checking at vulnerable locations, while Senior Superintendent of Police, Awantipora, chaired a high-level meeting of zonal and sector officers, directing them to maintain seamless coordination, strictly follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), adopt proactive policing and provide all necessary assistance to pilgrims.

On the Baltal axis, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Central Kashmir Range, Rajiv Pandey reviewed deployment plans, communication systems, traffic management, access control and coordination mechanisms with senior police and Central Armed Police Force officers.

Kathua Police also conducted a mega security drill to assess operational readiness and strengthen inter-agency coordination before the commencement of the pilgrimage.

Officials said the security architecture this year includes enhanced deployment of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and Central Armed Police Forces, technology-enabled 360-degree surveillance under 'Project Hawk Eye', strengthened intelligence coordination, anti-drone measures and round-the-clock monitoring along both the Pahalgam and Baltal routes.

Meanwhile, sadhus began arriving at the Shri Ram Mandir Amarnath Yatri Base Camp in Purani Mandi, Jammu, marking the start of the influx of pilgrims ahead of the annual pilgrimage.

A day earlier, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat had reviewed security and logistical preparedness and directed all agencies to maintain a robust multi-layered security grid along both Yatra routes, stressing seamless coordination among the Army, CAPFs, intelligence agencies, civil administration and police to ensure a peaceful and incident-free pilgrimage.

The 38-day Amarnath Yatra will commence on July 3 and conclude on August 28. Pilgrims will undertake the pilgrimage through the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district under an extensive security cover.

Amarnath Yatra Showcases

service before the world, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday appealed to people from all sections of society to extend wholehearted support for the smooth and

peaceful conduct of the pilgrimage beginning July 3.

Addressing civil society groups, business leaders and religious heads, Sinha said the Yatra is not merely a religious pilgrimage but a symbol of social harmony, hospitality and selfless service.

"Let us unite across all sectors to make this year's pilgrimage a beacon of faith, unity and devotion. As pilgrims embark on the sacred journey to Baba Barfani's cave, let us transform our devotion into compassionate action, making this Yatra a true testament to human kindness," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said representatives of civil society, religious organisations, trade bodies and social workers are custodians of the Valley's spiritual traditions and their cooperation is vital to ensuring every pilgrim experiences respect, safety and a sense of belonging.

He said people of all faiths in Jammu and Kashmir have, year after year, come together in the service of pilgrims, describing this unity as the region's greatest strength.

"The world witnesses every year that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and people from all faiths unite in the service of pilgrims. This unity is our greatest strength," he said.

Sinha said significant improvements had been made over the past few years in infrastructure, roads, communication facilities, healthcare, sanitation and security, making the annual pilgrimage smoother and safer.

Members of civil society unanimously assured full cooperation for the successful conduct of the Yatra and appreciated the arrangements made by the administration and the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board. The Lieutenant Governor also assured them that their suggestions would be examined for implementation.

Diabetes Burden

rural men.

The Jammu region is witnessing a particularly high burden of diabetes. The ICMR-INDIAB study estimates the overall prevalence at 18.9 per cent, with urban areas recording a prevalence of 26.5 per cent compared with 14.5 per cent in rural areas. Around 10.8 per cent of the population is estimated to have prediabetes, while nearly 40 per cent of diabetes cases remain undiagnosed.

Professor Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan of the Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College Srinagar, said diabetes has evolved into a growing epidemic that requires immediate public attention.

"Diabetes is no longer confined to the elderly. Increasingly, younger adults are developing diabetes because of unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, obesity and stress. Early detection and lifestyle modification can prevent serious complications and improve quality of life," he said.

Health experts attribute the rising burden largely to increasing rates of overweight and obesity. According to NFHS-6, 36.7 per cent of women and 27.1 per cent of men in the 15-49 age group in Jammu and Kashmir are overweight or obese.

Doctors identify physical inactivity, unhealthy eating habits, obesity, family history, advancing age, hypertension, tobacco use, alcohol consumption, stress and poor sleep as major risk factors for diabetes.

Common warning signs include excessive thirst, frequent urination, increased hunger, unexplained weight loss, fatigue, blurred vision, slow-healing wounds, recurrent infections and tingling or numbness in the hands and feet. However, doctors caution that many people remain symptom-free during the early stages, making routine screening crucial.

Health professionals recommend annual diabetes screening for all adults aged 30 years and above, particularly those who are overweight or have additional risk factors. Diagnosis is based on fasting blood glucose, HbA1c and the Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT). Community-level screening is available through Non-Communicable Disease clinics, Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres and the National Programme for

Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases.

Medical experts said most cases of Type-2 diabetes can be delayed or prevented through healthier lifestyles. They advise people to eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses and nuts while reducing refined carbohydrates, sugary drinks and processed foods. At least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity every week, maintaining a healthy body weight, managing stress and ensuring adequate sleep are also recommended.

Doctors said losing just 5 to 10 per cent of body weight can significantly improve blood sugar control among overweight individuals. Left untreated, diabetes can damage blood vessels and lead to complications such as diabetic retinopathy, kidney disease, nerve damage, heart attacks, strokes and peripheral vascular disease.

Urging people not to ignore routine health check-ups, Dr Khan said prediabetes can be reversed if detected early.

"Know your numbers, get screened every year after the age of 30, stay physically active and adopt a healthy lifestyle. Diabetes can be controlled effectively when diagnosed early," he said.

NRPC Pulls Up

Northern Region remain under prolonged outage due to tower collapse in Apr-Jun months during windstorm events reported during the summer season. "The extended non-availability of these transmission lines impacts grid reliability, load transfer capability, and in some cases RE evacuation," it reads.

"Further, more than 30 number of transmission lines are under outage due to tower collapse in northern region," NRPC said. (KNO)

'Detect, Disrupt, Destroy

drug traffickers and a compassionate approach towards victims of addiction, Shah said enforcement agencies must target narcotics supply chains at the entry stage itself while strengthening action against illegal cultivation, clandestine laboratories and synthetic drugs.

A key feature of the roadmap is mandatory financial investigation in major narcotics cases. Shah said agencies would track hawala transactions, cryptocurrency, darknet activity and illicit financial networks to dismantle the economic foundations of drug trafficking. He added that the Enforcement Directorate would intensify money laundering investigations to seize criminal assets and ensure that drug kingpins do not escape prosecution.

The vision document also proposes tighter regulation to prevent diversion of pharmaceutical drugs, enhanced surveillance at borders, airports and ports using artificial intelligence and anti-drone technologies, and greater participation of the chemical and pharmaceutical industries in reporting suspicious transactions.

Besides enforcement, the roadmap seeks to expand de-addiction, counselling and rehabilitation facilities, strengthen the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan and promote drug-free educational institutions through awareness and early intervention.

Shah said the Centre was also reviewing the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act to plug loopholes exploited by narcotics syndicates and invited suggestions from states on strengthening the legal framework.

Highlighting the government's anti-drug campaign, Shah said India had seized 1.18 crore kilograms of synthetic drugs between 2014 and 2026, compared with 26 lakh kilograms between 2004 and 2014. The value of drugs seized also rose from about Rs 40,000 crore to Rs 1.84 lakh crore during the same period.

The Home Minister urged states to ensure real-time information sharing through the Narcotics Control Bureau's digital platforms and called for NCORD meetings to become more result-oriented through regular monitoring and implementation of decisions.

The meeting brought together representatives of 44 central ministries and departments, state governments and law enforcement agencies to review measures aimed at achieving a drug-free India.

J&K's First Interfaith Organ Donation Meet Brings Communities Together

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In a first-of-its-kind initiative in Jammu and Kashmir, an Interfaith Organ Donation Awareness Meet brought together representatives of diverse religious communities, healthcare professionals, social organisations, NGOs and public representatives to spread awareness about organ donation and encourage people to embrace the life-saving cause beyond religious and cultural differences.

According to KNO, the Sarv Dharam Awareness Meet on Organ Donation was organised by the State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) J&K in collaboration with the S.S. Jain Sabha Jammu (Regd.) under the supervision of Dr Elias Sharma, Nodal Officer, SOTTO J&K and Head of the Depart-



ment of Urology, Super Speciality Hospital, Government Medical College Jammu. The programme was held at Namah, Shree Vimal Muni Bhawan, Bahu Plaza, Gandhi Nagar.

The event marked a significant milestone in the Union Territory by creating a common platform where representatives of different faiths collectively advocated organ donation as an act of com-

passion, humanity and selfless service. It highlighted the shared belief across religions that saving a human life is among the noblest forms of service.

Adding a cultural touch to the programme, women members of Shraman Sanskriti Manch presented a soulful song dedicated to organ donation, reinforcing the message of hope and the gift of life.

The programme saw enthusiastic participation from members of the Sikh, Muslim, Christian, Kashmiri Pandit, Aggarwal and Jain communities, along with representatives of the Brahma Kumaris, various NGOs, healthcare professionals, community leaders and social organisations, reflecting a united commitment towards promoting organ donation.

Among the dignitaries present were MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta, MLA Bahu Vikram Randhawa and MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi, who appreciated the efforts of SOTTO J&K and the S.S. Jain Sabha for organising the awareness programme. They commended the initiative for strengthening social harmony while encouraging citizens to come forward for the noble cause of organ donation.

A major highlight of the event

was a detailed presentation by Dr. Poonam Mahajan, Joint Director, SOTTO J&K, on "Organ Donation Through the Lens of Different Religions." She explained that major religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism, and Jainism, promote values such as compassion, charity, selfless service and saving lives. Referring to teachings from various religious scriptures, she emphasised that organ donation is widely regarded as a humanitarian act that transcends religious boundaries.

Representatives from different faiths unanimously endorsed the message that organ donation is a noble act reflecting universal values of kindness, generosity and service to humanity. They urged people to overcome misconceptions and actively support organ donation to help save countless lives.

Kashmir Must Preserve Legacy of Coexistence: Dr Karan Singh

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Former "Sadri-Riyasat" Dr Karan Singh on Saturday invoked Mahatma Gandhi's famous description of Kashmir as a "ray of hope" during the violence of Partition, saying the Valley must continue to uphold its centuries-old tradition of communal harmony, interfaith understanding and cultural pluralism that earned it that distinction.

Addressing an Interfaith Dialogue at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here, Dr Singh, as reported KNO, congratulated the organisers for bringing together discussions on interfaith dialogue, Urdu, Kashmiriyat and communal harmony under one platform, saying each of these themes was significant enough to merit separate deliberations but collectively reflected the essence of Kashmir's civilisational legacy.

He advocated the promotion of Urdu and proposed the establishment of a permanent Interfaith Dialogue Centre in Jammu and Kashmir.

Calling Kashmir the "crown of India", Dr Singh recalled Mahatma Gandhi's remarks during the Partition period. "Gandhiji had said that if there was any ray of light and hope visible to him during those difficult times, it was in Kashmir," he said, attributing that distinction to the Valley's enduring tradition of communal harmony and coexistence.

He urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to preserve that legacy by strengthening mutual trust, safeguarding the region's shared cultural and spiritual heritage and ensuring that future generations continue to uphold the values of unity in diversity.

Tracing the history of the global interfaith movement, Dr Singh recalled the first Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago in 1893, where Swami Vivekananda impressed the world with India's message of universal acceptance and respect for all faiths.

He said the movement was re-



vived in 1993 and has since evolved into a global platform for promoting dialogue among religions. Recalling his own association with the movement, he said he has participated in several international interfaith gatherings over the years.

Explaining the concept of interfaith dialogue, Dr Singh said it was not meant to establish the superiority of one religion over another. "This is not Shastrarth. Every religion has its own philosophy and values. The objective is to understand each other and strengthen harmony," he said.

Quoting the Rig Vedic verse 'Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti', he said truth is one though expressed in different ways, adding that while religions may follow different paths, they ultimately lead to the same Divine.

Drawing an analogy with the different routes leading to the Shankaracharya hill, he said the paths may vary, but the destination remains one. Highlighting India's unique civilisational diversity, Dr Karan Singh said the country is home to nine major religious traditions—Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and the Bahai Faith, making India uniquely positioned to strengthen interfaith understanding.

Reflecting on Kashmir's spiritual journey, Dr Singh said the Valley witnessed the flourishing of Vedic traditions, Buddhism, Kashmir Shaivism and the teachings of philosopher Abhinavagupta before mystic Lal Ded carried spirituality to the masses in the local language.

Chinar Spring Falls into Neglect, Locals Seek Restoration

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Kulam Chinar spring in Shankerpora village of Dooru in Anantnag district has fallen into a dilapidated condition, forcing locals to urge the authorities to restore the site and develop adequate infrastructure for the large number of visitors it attracts.

Maintained by the Verinag Development Authority, the spring is widely known among locals for its mineral-rich water, which many believe helps treat various skin ailments. People from different parts of Kashmir visit the spring to bathe, hoping to benefit from its perceived therapeutic properties.

Locals told KNO that the spring has deteriorated due to unchecked algal growth and the absence of regular cleaning and maintenance.

"People from different districts visit this spring throughout the year, especially on Sundays, believing its water helps cure skin diseases. Unfortunately, the spring is now in a neglected condition and requires immediate attention," Abdul Rashid, a resident, said.

The locals said that although some beautification work has been carried out in the park sur-

rounding the spring, the overall infrastructure remains inadequate to cater to the growing number of visitors.

"Some work has been done in the park, but much more is needed. There are no proper washrooms for people who come here to bathe. Since hundreds of visitors use the spring every week, these basic facilities are essential," another resident said.

They said regular cleanliness drives are needed to remove algal weeds from the spring and preserve its natural beauty, urging the authorities to develop public conveniences and other facilities to make the destination more visitor-friendly.

If the spring is properly maintained and basic infrastructure is created, it can attract more visitors while preserving this natural heritage, the locals said.

An official of the Verinag Development Authority told KNO that the concerns raised by the locals would be looked into.

"We will take up the matter and carry out the necessary works. Whatever is required for the upkeep and development of the destination will be done to the best of our ability," the official said.

Kashmiri Scientist Helps Decode Brain Ageing

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR – A Kashmiri-origin scientist working in the United States has helped identify and name a previously unknown cellular process that could reshape scientists' understanding of how brain cells gradually become vulnerable to neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, offering a potential new avenue for early intervention and treatment.

Dr Nawab John Dar, a post-doctoral researcher at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California, is the lead and co-corresponding author of a peer-reviewed study published in Cell Death Discovery that introduces the term "chronoferroptosis"—a chronic cellular stress pathway in which neurones remain alive but progressively lose their resilience over time, making them increasingly susceptible to age-related degeneration.

The study, published on June 18, identifies prolonged iron accumulation inside neurones as a central driver of this newly described biological process and suggests that preventing or reversing it may help delay or mitigate neurodegenerative diseases.

Dr Dar shares corresponding authorship with senior scientist Dr Pamela Maher, Research Professor at the Salk Institute, a globally recognised neuroscience research centre founded by polio vaccine pioneer Jonas Salk.

Neurodegenerative diseases, particularly Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, affect millions of people worldwide and have long been associated with abnormal iron accumulation in the brain. However, scientists have struggled to explain why neurones often re-



main functional for years despite steadily rising iron levels before eventually succumbing to disease.

The new research proposes that the answer lies not in iron itself but in the duration of exposure.

"It isn't the iron itself that is a problem with age. It is this accumulation of iron over time that is the problem," Dr Dar said.

To investigate the phenomenon, the researchers developed what they describe as the first progressive laboratory model of chronic iron accumulation in human-derived neuronal cells. Unlike earlier experiments that typically exposed cells to iron for only 24 to 48 hours, the team compared acute exposure lasting six to eight hours with sustained exposure over nine days using identical iron concentrations.

Their findings revealed striking differences.

While briefly exposed neurones showed little biochemical disruption and remained capable of handling subsequent stress, chronically exposed neurones underwent widespread metabolic and molecular changes. Protective antioxidant systems weakened, harmful lipid peroxidation increased, and proteins responsible for maintaining iron balance became dysregulated, leaving the cells significantly more vulnerable.

According to Dr Maher, the new findings substantially expand that understanding.

J&K Bank Marks International MSME Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Reinforcing its steadfast commitment to entrepreneurship development and inclusive economic growth, J&K Bank today joined the nationwide observance of International MSME Day by organising a large-scale MSME Awareness Campaign across all its 35 operational Clusters through customer outreach programmes spanning its branch network across the country.

Organised in association with local business groups, trade bodies, Byopar Mandals and other recognised institutions, the campaign engaged directly with local business communities through awareness sessions and structured deliberations with prominent trade organisations, regional business leaders and aspiring entrepreneurs. During these interactions, Bank officials underscored the pivotal role of the MSME sector as a primary engine of innovation, employment generation, economic growth and sustainable development while highlighting the importance of timely institutional finance in fostering enterprise.

The programmes showcased J&K Bank's comprehensive suite of MSME products and customised financial solutions tailored to meet the evolving needs of small businesses. The campaign also highlighted various flagship Government initiatives including Mission YUVA, PHEMEG, PM Vishwakarma, PM SVANidhi, Stand-Up India and other entrepreneurship-oriented schemes, with presentations on



Mission YUVA drawing significant interest from participants. Bank officials also guided prospective entrepreneurs on accessing institutional finance and transforming viable business ideas into successful enterprises.

Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "Today, as we observe MSME Day, we recognize and celebrate the spirit of enterprise and extraordinary contribution of millions of entrepreneurs who form the backbone of our economy and whose enterprise, innovation and resilience drive growth, employment and prosperity across the nation. As the leading financial institution of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh with growing presence in strategic locations across the country, J&K Bank remains deeply committed to empowering entrepreneurs through timely credit, customised financial solutions and continuous handholding at every stage of their growth journey."

Highlighting the Bank's developmental role, he further said, "Our active participation in transformative initiatives such as Mission YUVA, PHEMEG, PM Vishwakarma and other Government-sponsored programs reflect our conviction that entrepreneurship is one of the strongest catalysts for economic progress and livelihood creation. Beyond financing businesses, we are nurturing aspirations, enabling self-employment and contributing to the creation of a vibrant and resilient MSME ecosystem."

Reiterating the Bank's commitment on the occasion, MD & CEO further stated, "As we celebrate MSME Day today, let us reaffirm our collective commitment towards building an entrepreneurial economy. Let us create an environment where every aspiring entrepreneur has access to opportunity, every viable enterprise has access to finance, and every successful business becomes a catalyst for community development."

J&K SIA Executes Court Order in Narco-Terror Case

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency on Saturday executed proclamation proceedings against an absconding accused in a cross-border narco-terror case linked to the smuggling of heroin by a Pakistan-based terror network.

As per PTI, the proclamation was executed at the native residence of the accused, Bilal Shabir Awan, a resident of Dildar in Karnah area of Kupwara district, in compliance with the orders of the competent court, a police spokesperson said.

The case was initially registered at Parimpora police station in Srinagar in January 2025 following the seizure of a substantial quantity of heroin during a naka checking operation at Barthana area.

During the course of the investigation, the case was transferred to State Investigation Agency (SIA) Kashmir, which allegedly uncovered an organised cross-border narco-terror network engaged in trafficking narcotics to finance and facilitate terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson said.

He said provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) were invoked during the investigation.

SIA Kashmir has since filed a charge sheet against seven accused, who are currently facing trial before the competent court, while further investigation into the wider conspiracy is underway, the spokesperson said.

He added the SIA Kashmir remained committed to dismantling narco-terror networks and ensuring that the absconding accused are traced, apprehended, and brought to justice. (Observer News Service)

Railways Dispatch Over 9 Tonnes of Kashmir Plums to Chennai, Kolkata

JAMMU- In a boost to the marketing of Kashmir's seasonal fruit, the Jammu Division of Northern Railway has dispatched over nine tonnes of fresh plums to Chennai and Kolkata through parcel services over the past five days, an official said.

After the successful loading of cherry and litchi, this consignment of plum is the next important step in the series of transporting fresh fruits from Jammu & Kashmir to different parts of the country, a railway spokesperson said.

He said Jammu Division successfully loaded and dispatched 284 packets (three tons) of fresh plum from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station to Chennai on Friday. In addition, approximately 587 packets (6.1 tons) of plum have already been sent from Jammu Tawi to Kolkata between June 22 and 25, he said.

As per PTI, senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu Uchit Singhal said the successful loading of plum from Katra and Jammu Tawi is another milestone for the department.

"After cherry and litchi, the loading of plum proves that our efforts are directly connecting the farmers of Kashmir to major markets. Railways are ensuring quick booking, safe handling, and time-bound delivery," he said.

He said the aim is to ensure that every seasonal fruit of Kashmir reaches every corner of the country. Traders and orchardists should make maximum use of the Railways' parcel service, he said.

The spokesperson said through parcel services, Jammu Division is connecting the orchardists of Kashmir directly with the national market.

"The continuous loading of plum after cherry and litchi demonstrates that Railways is emerging as the most reliable and cost-effective option for transporting fresh and perishable fruits. This is ensuring better prices for farmers and timely delivery of fresh fruits to consumers," he said. (Observer News Service)

200 Private Hospitals, Hotels Get JMC Fire NOC Notices

JAMMU- The Jammu Municipal Corporation has launched a fire safety compliance drive, issuing notices to nearly 200 private hospitals, hotels and other high-footfall establishments over mandatory NOCs, an official said on Saturday.

The action has been initiated under the directions of Commissioner Devansh Yadav, who stressed strict compliance with fire safety norms, stating that public safety cannot be compromised under any circumstances, an official spokesperson said.

As per PTI, he further said the notices were issued to nearly 200 private hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, lodges and other high-footfall commercial establishments within municipal limits.

The establishments were directed to obtain mandatory no-objection certificates (NOCs) from the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

Yadav directed all defaulting establishments to submit copies of valid fire safety NOCs within seven days of receipt of the notices, issued under the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000, read with the applicable Building Bye-Laws and Fire Safety Regulations.

The commissioner further directed the Enforcement Wing to closely monitor compliance and take stringent action against establishments found violating fire safety norms.

The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) has warned that failure to furnish the requisite NOCs within the stipulated period or detection of any establishment operating without fire safety clearance upon verification, will invite strict legal action, including sealing of premises, the spokesperson said.

The corporation made it clear that the owners, proprietors and managements of these establishments bear sole responsibility for adherence to all prescribed fire safety standards and that any untoward incident arising out of negligence or non-compliance shall rest entirely with the concerned management.

The drive has been launched in view of serious concerns regarding statutory compliance and emergency preparedness, according to the spokesperson.

He said the operation of hospitals, hotels, lodges and other commercial establishments without adequate fire prevention measures, functional firefighting equipment and clearly demarcated emergency exits poses significant risks to human life and public property. (Observer News Service)

Explosion Kills One, Injures Four Others in Gulmarg

SRINAGAR: A person was killed and four others injured in an explosion on Saturday in the upper areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Gulmarg, officials said.

"A blast-like sound was reported near Asha Post, Sumli Wali Dhok, in Gulmarg," the officials said.

They said according to the initial reports, a person identified as Zubair Ahmad Bajad, a resident of Galibai village in Chandooosa area of the Baramulla district, died on the spot.

The explosion also left four others injured, they said. A team of forensic experts has been dispatched to the spot to gather samples, they said.

As per PTI, further details are awaited, the officials said. (Observer News Service)




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