



A JOURNEY OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED AMARNATH CAVE



Do's for the Yatris

- It is mandatory for every yatri to get registered and to carry valid RFID card before starting the journey from Baltal/ Chandanwari.
- Yatris are required to collect their RFID card from designated locations in Jammu/Srinagar before embarking on the Yatra.
- Carry your aadhar details for collecting your RFID card.
- Wear the RFID card around your neck at all times during Yatra for safety & security.
- Do carry sufficient woolen clothing, umbrella, wind cheater, raincoat and waterproof shoes. Weather remains unpredictable and temperature may abruptly fall to below 5 degree Celsius.
- Walk slowly and steadily – don't rush on steep paths.
- Take regular breaks to avoid fatigue.

Don'ts for the Yatris

- No yatri shall be allowed to embark on the Yatra without mandatory registration and valid RFID card.
- Don't ignore the symptoms of high altitude illness.
- Don't drink alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or smoke.
- Don't stop at places with warning signs.
- Don't take shortcuts on the route—it's risky.
- Don't pollute or disturb the Yatra environment.
- Don't separate from your group – always stay with your companions.

May your journey be happy and auspicious!

**Department of Information & Public Relations
Government of Jammu & Kashmir**



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PUBLIC NOTICE

I, MEHRAJ U DIN BEIG, S/o BASHIR AHMAD BEIG, R/o Kralweth, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby notify the general public that my name and my father's name have been incorrectly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 6295 9594 1895 as MEHRAJ UD DIN BEIGH S/o BASHIR AHMAD BEIGH instead of my correct particulars MEHRAJ U DIN BEIG S/o BASHIR AHMAD BEIG.
 The correction is being sought in the Aadhaar records to bring them in conformity with my Domicile Certificate and other official records.
 If any person has any objection to the above correction, the same may be conveyed to the concerned authority within the prescribed period. If no objection is received, the correction shall be deemed valid for all legal and official purposes.
 Sd/-
 MEHRAJ U DIN BEIG
 R/o Kralweth, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT) FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, MEHRAJ U DIN BEIG, S/o BASHIR AHMAD BEIG, R/o Kralweth, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby inform the general public that my name and my father's name have been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 6295 9594 1895 as MEHRAJ UD DIN BEIGH S/o BASHIR AHMAD BEIGH instead of the correct particulars MEHRAJ U DIN BEIG S/o BASHIR AHMAD BEIG.
 I have applied for correction of the said entries in my Aadhaar Card to make them consistent with my Domicile Certificate and other official records.
 If any person has any objection to the above correction, the same may be submitted to the concerned authority within the prescribed period. If no objection is received, the correction shall be deemed valid for all legal and official purposes.
 Sd/-
 MEHRAJ U DIN BEIG
 R/o Kralweth, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT) FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, GH MOHD BHAT, S/o SH AHAD BHAT, R/o Hayatpora, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby notify the general public that my name and my father's name have been incorrectly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 3647 9677 3105 as GH MOHMAD BHAT S/o AB AHAD BHAT.
 The correct particulars are:
 Correct Name: GH MOHD BHAT
 Father's Name: SH AHAD BHAT
 The correction is being sought in the Aadhaar records to bring them in conformity with my service records and other genuine documents.
 If any person has any objection to this correction, the same may be conveyed to the concerned authority within the stipulated period. If no objection is received, the correction shall be treated as valid for all legal and official purposes.
 GH MOHD BHAT
 R/o Hayatpora, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, J&K (UT) fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Jammu & Kashmir bank main branch Budgam passbook bearing A/C No 007804100002228 the name is entered as ASIYA AKHTER D/O MANZOOR AH. LONE while my actual name is ASIYA KHTER D/O MANZOOR AHMAD LONE. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Branch Manager Jammu & Kashmir Bank Budgam with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
 ASIYA KHTER D/O MANZOOR AHMAD LONE
 R/o HUROO BUDGAM. mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Manzoor Ahmad Parry F/o Sana Jan R/o Wailoo Kralpora Tehsil Kunzer District Baramulla hereby announce that the name of my daughter is incorrectly recorded in her Aadhar Card as Sanaha Jan under Aadhar no. 5543-2480-3196. Now she want to correct the same in her Aadhar Card. The correct Name is Sana Jan any person having an objection to these corrections may contact the Aadhar authorities within 7 days. fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to obtain my 4th class pass Discharge certificate from the school. If anybody is having any objection in this regard he/she may contact office of the Headmaster Girls Middle School Soura Srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice. After (7) seven days no objection shall be entertained.
 Muzamil Akhtar
 D/O Kh Abdul Gani Wani
 R/O Soura
 Contact No. 9906817385 Media Line Advt

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Sakina Shah to (new name) Sakeena. In future i will be known as (new name) Sakeena.
 If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact passport office srinagar, within & 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted. Media line advt

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No 5747 9309 4735 Now I want to change my name from Mohammad Sahil Mir (Old Name) to Sahil Muzaffar Mir (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.
 Name:- SAHIL MUZAFFAR MIR
 S/O:- MOHAMMAD MUZAFFAR MIR inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No 4543 8788 4556 Now I want to change my name from HASANOOOR MALIK (Old Name) to DANISH ALI MALIK (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.
 Name:- DANISH ALI MALIK
 S/O:- GHULAM AHMAD MALIK
 R/O:- ODRU, BUDGAM Jammu And Kashmir- 191111 inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No 6696 6459 3487 Now I want to change my name from Shagufta Bano (Old Name) to Shubeena Banoo (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.
 Name:- Shubeena Banoo
 D/O:- Gh Hassan Thoker inf
 R/O:- Arampora Ichkotee, BUDGAM Jammu And Kashmir- 191111

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that my name in my Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No :- 9564 7898 8403 has been wrongly mentioned as Suhail Hameed instead of Suhail Hamid Rather. Now I am applying for its Correction as per J&K BOSE and School record bearing Reg No:- 232800000360044. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.
 Suhail Hamid Rather fko
 S/O, Abdul Hamid Rather
 R/O :- Nahama Tehsil :- Qaziabad Kralgund Distt : Kupwara .Post Office:- Langate Pin Code:- 193302. J&kashmir

اطلاع عام

برخاص و عام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ مجھے اپنے بچے ایگرہ سٹریٹ نزد گورنمنٹ پرائمری سکول میں 0206010024127 کے نام پر پیدائش شدہ ولد عبدالرشید شہزاد کے نام پر پیدائش کا رجسٹریشن کیا گیا ہے۔ اب یہ مکان میں نئے خریدار ہے۔ اس لئے اب اس کو میرے نام یعنی HAKIMA BANOO کے نام پر رجسٹریشن کیا گیا ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر تیار کر کے مجھے یا اس کے والدین کو مطلع کرے گا۔ اس کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
 حکیمہ بانو زہرا صدیق علی
 ساکن دندوسہ پورہ پانچواں نمبر فون نمبر 6005936260 MBC-

**Government of Jammu & Kashmir
 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
 (R&B) DIVISION, BEMINA SRINAGAR**

FRSH NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
 NIT No. 22/EE/R&B/BM/CS/3034-42 of 2026-27
 Dated: 01.07.2026

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

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of Completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1	Macadamization of roads at Qamarwari and Barthana	38.85114	1100/-	77,702/-	20 days	C&T 5054	AAV/BEE
2	Macadamization of roads at Bemina	38.83659	1100/-	77,673/-	20 days	C&T 5054	AAV/BEE
3	Macadamization of roads at Parimpura	38.85114	1100/-	77,702/-	20 days	C&T 5054	AAV/BEE
4	Macadamization of Balance Portion of Bemina Roads including allied roads	19.43957	800/-	38,879/-	10 days	C&T 5054	BEE/CEE
5	Macadamization of Balance portion of Qammerwari and Barthana Roads including allied roads	38.84224	1100/-	77,684/-	20 days	C&T 5054	AAV/BEE
6	Macadamization of inner roads of village Kakerpora and Village Tilwan Checkpora incl. allied roads	38.85114	1100/-	77,702/-	20 days	C&T 5054	AAV/BEE
7	Improvement / Upgradation of Hanfiya masjid road at Ranbirgha incl. allied roads by way of Macadamization	38.84386	1100/-	77,688/-	20 days	C&T 5054	AAV/BEE

Position of AAA:- Accorded
 Technical Sanction:- Accorded
 Project Authority:- PW(R&B) Deptt Kashmir

1. The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.iktenders.gov.in on the dates listed below: -

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	01.07.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	02.07.2026 from 11.00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	02.07.2026 from 11.00 AM
4	Bid Submission End Date	13.07.2026 upto 4.00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	14.07.2026 at 12.00 PM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina, Srinagar.

2. Bids must be accompanied by a **Treasury Challan (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059** in the name of **Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina, Srinagar** (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

3. **At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the**

Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina, Srinagar. The successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the total cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

4. The date and time of bid opening shall be notified on the Web Site www.iktenders.gov.in and automatically communicated to bidders via an e-mail message sent to their e-mail address. **Responsive bidders' bids** will be opened online on the same Web Site in the Office of the **Executive Engineer R&B Division Bemina, Srinagar** (tender receiving authority).
 Bids for the work shall be **valid for 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids**

Abnormally Low Bid Price:

As per the Circular instructions of Finance Deptt. Vide No. FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated: 08.08.2025, which is reproduced as :-

- A) Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee/security percentage shall be Incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.
- B) Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be Incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.
- C) The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security. Additional performance Security shall be taken only after approval of next Higher authority.

The bidder declared as L1 has to Provide additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG as per the break up given above at the time of allotment.

The additional performance security shall be released only after Virtual completion of work

DIPK-2764/26
 DATED: 02-07-2026

Sd/-
 Executive Engineer
 R&B Division Bemina,
 Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have passed/appeared in SSE/HSE-VISE-II(Class10 under Roll No.242100000040006 Session OCT-NOV Year 2025 through the J&K Board of School Education. The error has been committed against my MOTHER'S NAME. as SHABEENA BASHIR instead of SHUGUFTA BASHIR



Now I have applied for correction in The J&K Board of School Education Magam. If any person has any objection in this regard may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary JKBOSE MAGAM within seven days from the date of the publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection will be entertained
 This is published for the information of the general public.
 The correction particulars are recorded as under:
 Name: FAIZAN BASHIR GANAIE.
 Father's Name: BASHIR AHMAD GANAIE.
 Mother's Name: SHUGUFTA BASHIR.
 Date of Birth: 25-07-2011.
 Residence: ICHAMA. bmg
 Mobile No. 9797910403/9541660362.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my passport bearing no: R4514950 while travelling from Srinagar to Shopian. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the Passport Office Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Uzma Yaqoob
 D/o Mohammad Yaqoob Tantray
 R/O Kaprin Shopian fko

**OFFICE OF THE
 NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN**

Sub... Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
PUBLIC NOTICE
 The registrar birth BDO Lalpora has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Naseema Bano D/o Abdul Jabbar Reshie R/o Kanloo tehsil pattan district baramulla with verified date of birth 01/05/1970. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
 Sd
 fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

**OFFICE OF THE NAIB
 TEHSILDAR SARIWARPORA**

Sub...issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Death..
 The registrar birth BDO Wailoo has submitted a case file pertaining to death of Bakthi Begum w/o late Mohd Yousuf Shah R/o Shouchpalpora Tehsil Pattan district baramulla with verified date of Death 07/04/2026. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he/she may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
 Sd
 fko Naib Tehsildar Sariwarpora

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohd Mahboob Alam Sheikh Gojar, S/o Mohd Ismaeel Sheikh Gojar, R/o Devpora, District Shopian, J&K (UT), hereby notify the general public that my name and my father's name have been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar records as Mohammad Mehboob Alam Sheikh Gojar and Mohammad Ismail Sheikh Gojar, respectively.
 My correct name and my father's correct name, as recorded in my Domicile Certificate and other genuine documents, are Mohd Mahboob Alam Sheikh Gojar and Mohd Ismaeel Sheikh Gojar, respectively.
 I have applied before the concerned authority for correction of my name and my father's name in the Aadhaar records from "Mohammad Mehboob Alam Sheikh Gojar" to "Mohd Mahboob Alam Sheikh Gojar" and from "Mohammad Ismail Sheikh Gojar" to "Mohd Ismaeel Sheikh Gojar".
 If any person has any objection to the above correction, the same may be conveyed to the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Otherwise, the requested correction shall be deemed to have no objection.
 Sd/-
 Mohd Mahboob Alam Sheikh Gojar
 R/o Devpora, Shopian, J&K (UT) fko

CLOUDBURST AFTERMATH

Roads Blocked, Villages Cut Off

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The aftermath of heavy rainfall and cloudbursts continued to disrupt normal life across the Chenab region on Thursday, with fresh landslides forcing the closure of the strategic Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road and flash floods leaving several villages in Doda's Bhalesa region cut off from the rest of the district.

Officials said continuous rain loosened hill slopes at multiple locations along the Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road, triggering landslides that blocked the highway and rendered it unsafe for vehicular movement. Traffic on the route, which connects the Chenab Valley with south Kashmir, was suspended until the debris is cleared and the road is declared fit for travel.

Authorities advised commuters, tourists and transporters to postpone travel on the road and follow official advisories regarding its reopening. Road restoration agencies are expected to begin clearance operations once weather conditions improve and the affected stretches are assessed for safety.

The disruption comes amid a series of weather-related incidents reported across Jammu and Kashmir over the past two days, with cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides damaging roads, public infrastructure and disrupting connectivity in several districts.

In neighbouring Doda district, the [More on P10](#)

Amarnath Yatra Begins As LG Sinha Flags Off First Batch

4,822 Pilgrims Reach Kashmir, Receive Warm Welcome Amid Tight Security

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The annual Amarnath Yatra commenced on Thursday with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagging off the first batch of 4,822 pilgrims from the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu amid elaborate security arrangements.

Earlier in the day, Sinha paid obeisance at the historic Ram Mandir in Jammu's Purani Mandi and prayed for the happiness, well-being and prosperity of the people. He also interacted with sadhus and sadhvis staying at the temple before embarking on the pilgrimage and extended his best wishes for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey. More than 400 seers have gathered at the temple, which traditionally serves as a halt for saints undertaking the annual pilgrimage.



THOUSANDS OF TENTS DOT the Baital base camp as preparations are completed for the annual Amarnath Yatra in Ganderbal on Thursday. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Before flagging off the convoy, the Lieutenant Governor performed a special puja at the Bhagwati Nagar base

camp. Addressing the pilgrims, he described the Amarnath Yatra as "a sacred path where devotion meets

spiritual awakening" and wished all devotees a safe, comfortable and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage.

In a post on X after the ceremony, Sinha said every step on the sacred route reflected unwavering faith and devotion to Lord Shiva and prayed that the pilgrimage brought immense joy and divine peace to all.

The first batch left Jammu in a convoy of escorted vehicles under a multi-tier security cover and later entered the Kashmir Valley through the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund in south Kashmir.

The pilgrims were welcomed by senior civil administration, police and CRPF officers, including Deputy Inspector General of Police, South Kashmir Range, Javid Iqbal Matoo, with garlands, flower bouquets and flower petals before proceeding towards the Baital and Pahalgam base camps.

The pilgrims will begin the onward [More on P10](#)

Ensure Thorough Yet Pilgrim-Friendly Security Checks: DGP

Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Thursday directed the officers to ensure thorough yet pilgrim-friendly security checks and maintain seamless movement of Amarnath Yatis. DGP Prabhat visited the Nunwan Base Camp at Pahalgam to review the arrangements made for the

smooth, safe, and hassle-free conduct of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra. He stressed the need for close coordination among all security agencies and civil administration to ensure a secure, peaceful, and hassle-free pilgrimage. The DGP appreciated the dedication and commitment of the police personnel and other

security forces deployed on Yatra duty. He urged them to remain alert, responsive, and compassionate while performing their responsibilities, ensuring that every pilgrim feels safe and well-assisted throughout the pilgrimage. The DGP conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Base Camp [More on P10](#)

HC Clears Way For J&K Child Rights Commission Appointments

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has cleared the way for the declaration of results and appointments to the Jammu and Kashmir Commission for Protection of Child Rights after dismissing as infructuous a petition that had led to an interim stay on the selection process.

A Division Bench comprising the Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani observed that the selection process for the posts of Chairperson and Members of the Commission had already been completed, but the results could not be declared because of interim directions issued on November 7 last year, in a separate writ petition.

The court noted that the petitioner in the related writ petition had earlier been permitted to participate in the interview pursuant to interim directions. Since the petitioner did not pursue the matter further, the petition was dismissed as infructuous, thereby vacating the



interim order.

Following the dismissal, the Bench held that there was no impediment to declaring the selection results and making appointments. However, it clarified that the appointments would remain subject to the outcome of another pending writ petition, WP(C) No. 2926/2025, in terms of the court's earlier directions.

The court also directed that the sealed-cover result produced before it be returned to the government counsel to enable completion of the selection process. It ordered the parties to complete pleadings in the pending petitions and listed the matter for further [More on P10](#)

Schools Must Become Laboratories Of Life-Building: LG

Stresses NEP's Goal of Developing Creative and Self-Reliant Citizens

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday called for transforming schools into "laboratories of life-building", saying the true purpose of education lies not in examination results but in its ability to change lives and prepare students to face the challenges of the modern world.

Addressing a one-day Capacity Building Programme jointly organised by the Bharti Airtel Foundation, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), J&K, and the School Education Department, the Lieutenant Governor said empowering teachers was the key to building confident students and a resilient society.

"When teachers are empowered, students gain confidence. When schools are strengthened, society becomes more resilient and when education moves in the right direction, Jammu and Kashmir and the nation advance toward a



brighter, safer and more prosperous future," he said.

The event also marked the launch of instructional resources jointly developed by the three institutions to strengthen teachers' professional capacities and improve the quality of school education across the Union Territory.

Emphasising holistic learning, Sinha said education should go beyond academic achievement and focus on developing character, confidence

and life skills.

"The greatest power of education does not lie in exam results but in its ability to change lives. A dedicated teacher shapes destiny. I want schools in Jammu and Kashmir to focus on this aspect and become laboratories of life-building," he said.

Linking the programme with the broader "Drug-Free Jammu and Kashmir" campaign, the Lieutenant Governor said schools have [More on P10](#)

SC Warns Against AI-Generated Fake Legal Precedents

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Red flagging the use of "non-existent, fake, and hallucinated" judgements generated by artificial intelligence (AI), the Supreme Court on Thursday set aside a verdict of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), saying that courts must adopt zero tolerance against citing or using AI-generated precedents.

The bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe said, "The production of fake, non-existent, and hallucinated material and its utilisation as precedents in law, is like the release of methyl isocyanate in the province of law and justice: invisible, insidious, and catastrophic by the time anyone notices. It not only contaminates but takes away the very lifeblood of judicial determination."

It set aside an NCLT judgement on Essel Infraprojects insolvency after finding that the tribunal had relied on non-existent, fake and hallucinated

judgement precedents generated through AI tools.

"It is necessary for Courts to adopt a zero-tolerance mode for producing, citing or using AI-generated precedents without verification. It is a misconduct on the part of an advocate to cite such judgments without verification," the verdict said.

The bench said it was equally a "serious lapse" if a judge relies on such a fake or hallucinated AI-generated material as precedents in support of the determination.

"We have no hesitation in declaring that such a decision is no decision in the eyes of the law, irrespective of whether such material had a direct or indirect bearing on the decision-making. Such decisions are to be set aside even if an iota of fake or hallucinated material enters the decision-making process, as it would violate the sanctity of adjudication," it said.

The bench said it is absolutely necessary to maintain integrity in decision-making.

"And we [More on P10](#)

New NH-44 Tunnels End The Khooni Nallah Nightmare For Kashmir

Built beneath a landslide-prone corridor in Ramban, the Digdol-Panthyal Twin Tube Tunnels replace hours of uncertainty with a five-minute drive on Kashmir's highway lifeline.

Er Navaid Runyal

Srinagar: Dawn once brought uncertainty to drivers approaching Panthyal on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

Truckers slowed beneath towering cliffs, watching rain-soaked slopes for falling rocks, while pilgrims, tourists and local families waited for hours as landslides and shooting stones blocked the road.

A journey expected to take minutes often consumed an entire day.

But now, vehicles pass beneath those same cliffs in about five minutes through the newly opened Digdol-Panthyal Twin Tube Tunnels,

which bypass one of NH-44's most hazardous stretches.

Built at a cost of 866.37 crore by Ceigall India Private Limited and Patel Engineering for the National Highways Authority of India, the tunnels bypass Khooni Nallah, a narrow corridor that became synonymous with landslides, rockfalls and repeated highway closures.

The southbound tube extends 3.08 kilometres, while the northbound tube measures 2.6 kilometres with an additional 619-metre section.

Both tunnels span 10 metres in width and include ventilation, drainage, LED lighting, emergency exits, communication systems, CCTV



surveillance and traffic management equipment designed for continuous operation.

Few roads matter more

to Jammu and Kashmir than NH-44.

The highway forms the valley's primary road link with

the rest of India, carrying fruit, fuel, medicines, construction materials and consumer goods while serving millions of tourists each year.

Ramban has long been its most difficult stretch. Steep slopes, fractured rock and intense rainfall regularly triggered landslides that halted traffic for hours, sometimes days.

Those disruptions delayed apple shipments during harvest, interrupted essential supplies and left ambulances, school buses and passenger vehicles waiting alongside stranded trucks.

The twin tunnels shift traffic away from exposed slopes that long disrupted movement

through Ramban.

Freight now moves with greater certainty, emergency services gain quicker access during severe weather and residents complete journeys that once depended on the highway's condition.

"Building the tunnels meant working through one of the world's youngest mountain ranges, where rock conditions can change within metres," said a geotechnical instrumentation engineer who worked on the project. "Continuous monitoring helped engineers track ground movement and adjust support systems in real time as excavation progressed."

That approach, now central

to Himalayan tunnelling, allowed construction teams to respond to changing ground conditions while maintaining stability.

Scientific studies explain why tunnelling here is so difficult.

A 2024 study published in Geotechnical and Geological Engineering found that fractured rock in Himalayan tunnels creates about a 20 percent risk of wedge failure while placing the greatest stress near the tunnel crown.

The researchers said those conditions make continuous monitoring and flexible support systems essential during excavation.

"These new [More on P10](#)

Board Exams May Count 50% in NEET, JEE Admissions

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Board exams may have 50 per cent weightage in crucial admissions presently based on scores of entrance exams like NEET and JEE, according to sources.

The possibility is being contemplated with an idea of reducing the high-stakes nature of any exam, be it entrance tests for medical and engineering admissions or board exams.

The move comes after a series of anomalies in the examination system, including evaluation errors and paper leaks, have kick-started a debate on the credibility of the system.

"The changes being contemplated are 50 per cent weightage for board marks in admission/merit, closer alignment of entrance tests with school syllabi to reduce dependence on coaching centres, multiple attempts and a gradual shift towards adaptive on-demand computer-based tests," a source said.

At present, medical and engineering admissions are based on entrance test scores and candidates are required to score a qualifying percentage in board exams to be eligible

The changes being contemplated are 50 per cent weightage for board marks in admission/merit, closer alignment of entrance tests with school syllabi to reduce dependence on coaching centres, multiple attempts and a gradual shift towards adaptive on-demand computer-based tests

for the entrance exams.

The reforms are being considered by the Ministry of Education's nine-member committee set up last year to examine students' dependence on coaching, the spread of "dummy schools" and fairness in high-stakes entrance tests.

The panel's final report is likely to be submitted to the government in the coming weeks. The committee has also recommended closer alignment of entrance tests with school syllabi.

UN Urges Pakistan to Undo Taxila Reconstructions



Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad, Jul 2 (PTI) The UN has asked Pakistan to reverse the "reconstructions" that "undermined the integrity" of two historical sites in Taxila, a UNESCO World Heritage site, or these would be placed on the agency's "danger list", a media report said on Thursday.

UNESCO, the cultural arm of the UN, in a recent meeting told senior government officials that it would not hesitate to "delist" the historical sites at Mohra Moradu and Sirkap, just like it had "delisted" a World Heritage Site in Germany, due to the recent "unnecessary interventions", the Dawn newspaper reported, quoting sources.

The UN agency warned that it would "delist" Taxila from its World Heritage List if the actions were not reversed.

Taxila, located in the Rawalpindi district of Pakistan's Punjab province, is a vast serial site that includes a Mesolithic cave and the archaeological remains of four early settlement sites, Buddhist monasteries, and a

mosque and madrasa.

The ruins of the four settlement sites at Taxila reveal the pattern of urban evolution on the Indian subcontinent through more than five centuries, according to the UNESCO website.

In March, a visitor shared information and pictures with Pakistan's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO in Paris, highlighting reconstruction works by the Punjab archaeology department.

The visitor observed interventions that could "affect the authenticity and integrity of the property, specifically original walls being replaced with new construction or their height being raised", the report said.

Subsequently, UNESCO cautioned that "unnecessary interventions" compromised the authenticity and integrity of these sites and could put them at risk of being placed on the "danger list".

Photos showed that fresh masonry works had replaced some ancient walls, and reconstruction was carried out to increase the height of the walls, the report said.



Khamenei's Funeral Becomes Global Diplomatic Event

Trans Asia News

Tehran — Nearly 50 official delegations, including heads of state, prime ministers, parliamentary leaders and senior ministers from across Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, are expected to attend the funeral ceremonies of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian officials said on Thursday.

The week-long funeral ceremonies, beginning Friday, are expected to witness one of the largest gatherings of foreign dignitaries hosted by the Islamic Republic, with representatives from around 100 countries expected to participate in various capacities.

Vahid Jalalzadeh, Secretary of the International Committee for the funeral ceremonies, said preparations were complete to receive nearly 50 official delegations for the farewell, funeral and burial ceremonies.

Speaking ahead of the ceremonies, Jalalzadeh said supporters of the Islamic Republic from across the world had contacted Iranian diplomatic missions following the announcement of the funeral

schedule to express their desire to participate.

He said participants would include ordinary citizens travelling independently, prominent personalities such as academics, clerics, journalists and members of resistance movements, as well as official government delegations.

According to Jalalzadeh, senior leaders from most of Iran's neighbouring countries are expected to attend, including the National Leader and Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, the presidents of Tajikistan, Iraq and Georgia, and the President of Iraq's Kurdistan Region.

He said the prime ministers of Pakistan, Armenia and Afghanistan would also participate. The head of Afghanistan's Kabul administration is expected to arrive with a delegation that includes the country's foreign minister.

Jalalzadeh said Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev, Pakistan's Army Chief and the Vice Chairman of China's National People's Congress are also expected to attend.

Parliamentary speakers from Iraq, Pakistan's Sen-

ate and National Assembly, Oman, Qatar, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and Egypt are also scheduled to participate, he said.

Foreign ministers from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Ghana, Nicaragua and the Republic of the Congo, Turkey's First Vice President and several cabinet ministers and special envoys from different countries are also expected to attend.

He added that Serbia, Tunisia, Lebanon, Namibia, Malaysia, Cuba, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India, The Gambia and Thailand would send representatives at different levels.

The Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and the head of the ECO Cultural Institute are also expected to participate.

Jalalzadeh said the presence of such a large number of international delegations would demonstrate Iran's international standing and create what he described as "a lasting historical image" of solidarity with the Iranian people.

Pak Alleges India Making Efforts to Control Rivers

Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad, Jul 2 (PTI) Pakistan on Thursday rejected the alleged Indian effort to control rivers by treating water as a "strategic asset," especially in the case of the Indus basin.

Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi's comments during his weekly press briefing were in response to a question about India's decision to put the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) in "abeyance."

India took a series of punitive measures against Pakistan a day after last year's Pahalgam terror attack on April 22. One of the major steps was putting in "abeyance" the 1960 vintage IWT, which has governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries since then.

Andrabi said that Pakistan rejected "India's attempt



to invoke baseless allegations of terrorism as a pretext for placing the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance and obstructing the lawful flow of the Pakistani share."

"Let this be very clear: the real issue is not terrorism. The real issue is the growing disposition within the Indian leadership to treat a shared international river system

as a strategic asset that can be controlled, withheld or diverted at will," he alleged.

Andrabi said that water is not a tool of coercion or political pressure and any attempt to deny Pakistan its legitimate share of water under the IWT constituted a clear violation of the international legal obligations undertaken by India.

Starmer Issues Apology for UK's Historic Forced Adoptions

Aditi Khanna

London, Jul 2 (PTI) Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday issued an apology on behalf of the British state for thousands of forced adoptions of children born to unwed mothers between the 1950s and 70s.

The government also announced a 4-million-pound support package for better access to adoption records.

In a House of Commons statement, the outgoing leader serving as caretaker PM until his successor is elected paid tribute to the "remarkable women" who were "coerced, bullied or misled" into feeling they had no choice but to have their children taken from them.

An estimated 1.85,000 babies are believed to have been forcibly taken away by institutions, including religious organisations, from vulnerable young women who fell pregnant.

"What happened to them – and to tens of thousands of mothers, children and families – should never have happened. It is a stain on our history," said Starmer.

"These were not isolated or accidental acts. They were practices embedded within systems across local authorities, across voluntary and faith-based institutions, and in health and social care services, including parts of what is now the NHS [National Health Service]."

"I hope this statement and this apology perhaps gives some of them the confidence to speak about what happened to



them because it will help in a small way.

"But I say this: the shame is not yours, the shame is never yours, the shame is ours. And I say that on behalf of the whole country, I say it to every single person impacted, we are deeply and profoundly sorry," he said.

Starmer noted that it was a "systemic failure" which meant that many from ethnic minority backgrounds "experienced racism" and some were adopted across borders or cultures and therefore "lost connections to their heritage, racial and personal identity."

"To each and every one of those affected, we say a deep and heartfelt sorry," he stated.

During the PM's speech, some of the impacted mothers and adopted children were watching and clapping from the public gallery of the Commons.

The Department for Education has been directed to set up support groups for such mothers and adopted kids, now adults, and a 4-million-pound support package over three years is expected to offer better access to adoption records and family reunion services.

Centre Brings Three Rules Under VB-G RAM G Act

Aditi Khanna

New Delhi: The Centre has notified three sets of rules under the VB-G RAM G Act, laying down the framework for the transition from MGNREGS, payment of wages and unemployment allowance, and expenditure beyond the Centre's normative allocation, government sources said.

The rules, notified by the Ministry of Rural Development through separate Gazette notifications dated July 1, came into force from the date of their publication. The draft rules were issued in May and the government had invited feedback on them.

The Transitional Provisions Rules provide for an orderly migration from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to the new employment guarantee framework – Viksit Bharat – Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025.

They require state governments to verify all liabilities under MGNREGS existing up to June 30, settle admissible dues and submit audited utilisation certificates within 180 days, extendable by another 90 days by the Centre for recorded reasons.

The Centre will continue fund support for liabilities ex-

isting up to June 30, while allowing interim allocations to states until the final rules governing normative allocation are framed.

The rules also provide that the ongoing MGNREGS works will continue under the new Act, while e-KYC-verified MGNREGS job cards will remain valid until states issue



new Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards. Existing employment records, physical and digital records and assets created under MGNREGS will also be transferred and preserved during the transition.

A second notification prescribes the manner of payment of wages and unemployment allowance under the VB-G RAM G Act.

It mandates that all wage and unemployment allowance payments be made only through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into beneficiaries' bank or post office accounts, prohibits cash payments except under extraordinary circumstances permitted by the Centre.

J&K's First Vulvar Cancer Brachytherapy at AIIMS Jammu

Samba/Jammu, Jun 27 (PTI) AIIMS Jammu has achieved a major milestone in cancer care by successfully performing Jammu and Kashmir's first-ever interstitial brachytherapy procedure on a 26-year-old woman diagnosed with Stage II vulvar cancer, the institute said.

Vulvar cancer is a rare gynaecological malignancy, accounting for only four per cent of all gynaecological cancers, and is particularly uncommon in young patients.

The case was extensively reviewed by a multidisciplinary tumour board comprising experts

from the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Radiation Oncology, Surgical Oncology, Radio-diagnosis, and Pathology to formulate an individualized treatment strategy. The AIIMS Jammu said in a statement.

It said the interstitial brachytherapy procedure was successfully performed by the Department of Radiation Oncology under the leadership of Prof (Dr) D N Sharma, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu.

This highly specialized technique allows precise delivery of radiation directly into the tumour, maximizing treatment effectiveness while mini-

mizing exposure to surrounding healthy tissues, the institute said.

It said a significant advantage of this approach is that it enabled the patient to avoid a mutilating surgical procedure, which is particularly important in young women.

This organ-preserving treatment offers the potential for excellent disease control while maintaining the patient's quality of life.

Prof Sharma highlighted that this landmark procedure marks a significant step towards introducing advanced, organ-preserving cancer treatment modalities in the region.

Burnham Wants Grooming Gang Leader Deported to Pakistan

Aditi Khanna

London, Jul 2 (PTI) Andy Burnham, widely expected to succeed Keir Starmer as Britain's new prime minister later this month, is leading calls for the deportation of a grooming gang ringleader to Pakistan after he was released from prison on Thursday.

Burnham, the MP for Makerfield likely to be elected unopposed later this month after Starmer's recent resignation, said he will "review all options" to remove Shabir Ahmed – convicted in 2012 of multiple charges of rape and sexual offences against young girls.

The scandal, which rocked Rochdale in Greater Manchester, falls within Burnham's patch as the region's former mayor and has hit the headlines again after it emerged that Ahmed is protected under a 1970s law that blocks



his deportation.

"Like everyone, I want this vile criminal out of the country. Victims must come first," said Burnham.

"I will ask the Home and Foreign Secretaries to review all possible options – and they should consider nothing is off the table," he said.

Ahmed, a 73-year-old dual national, was stripped of his British citizenship when he was sentenced to 22 years imprisonment by a UK court.

11-Year-Old Driving Pickup Kills Nine Thai Monks

Bangkok, Jul 2 (AP) An 11-year-old boy crashed a pickup truck into a group of monks on a pilgrimage walk in northeastern Thailand on Thursday, killing nine, officials said.

A total of 35 monks from Mukdahan province, about 600 km northeast of the capital Bangkok, were on the pilgrimage. Five monks were killed at the site, while four others died at a hospital. Thirteen were hospitalised with three in critical condition, according to the provincial administration.

The group started the 260-km walk to Ubon Ratchathani province about 30 minutes before the crash.

Security camera footage shared by a local rescue group, Ruam Jai Mukdahan Rescue Association, shows the monks walking in a single line on the side of a road before the truck crashes into them.

The boy is in custody and will be questioned when state child protection officers arrive, police said.

The cause of the accident is under investigation, but police said the monks described seeing the vehicle swerving before it slid off the road and crashed into the group.

Water Crisis Deepens in Several Srinagar Localities

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Residents of several localities in Srinagar on Thursday complained of an acute water shortage, alleging that there was no potable water supply for several hours, leaving them grappling with hardship.

The affected areas include Qamarabad, Qamarwari, Karfali Mohalla, Chotta Bazar, Karan Nagar, Habba Kadal and parts of Nowhatta.

Farooq Wani, a resident of Qamarwari, told KNO that the absence of water supply had severely affected daily life. "There has been no water supply in our area, and people are facing immense difficulties. We appeal to the authorities to restore regular supply without further delay," he said.

Ashiq Hussain, another resident of Qamarwari, said the water crisis had forced residents to endure immense hardship. "Recently, there was a death in our locality, and we had to bring water from outside to perform the last rites and bathe the deceased because there was no water supply in the area," he said, adding it is unfortunate that despite repeated pleas, we continue to suffer due to the department's failure to ensure a regular drinking water supply.

ure to ensure a regular drinking water supply.

Sahil Shafi, a resident of Habba Kadal, said they have repeatedly brought the issue to the notice of the concerned authorities but claimed that no concrete measures had been taken.

"We pay for basic services, but every now and then, we are left without drinking water. The department should identify the cause of these recurring disruptions and ensure that people do not suffer repeatedly," he said.

Another resident, Nazir Khan from Karan Nagar, said many households had exhausted their stored water, forcing them to depend on private sources. "People are struggling even for drinking water. Routine household work has come to a standstill due to the prolonged disruption. The authorities must act immediately and restore the supply," he said.

The residents urged the Jal Shakti Department to ensure an uninterrupted drinking water supply and take lasting measures to prevent such disruptions in the future. They said access to safe drinking water is a basic necessity and called on the authorities to respond promptly to their grievances.

DIPR's Cultural Unit Kashmir organises NMJKA Awareness Programmes

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) organised awareness programmes under the Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA) at Government High School (Brane and Government High School Dalgate on Thursday.

The programmes witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who took part in speech competitions highlighting the devastating effects of drug abuse

on individuals, families, and society. The speakers stressed the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and staying away from substance abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, Cultural Officer, Abdul Raqib Bhat and AECO, Syed Shakeel Shan emphasised the crucial role of parents in preventing drug abuse. They urged parents to maintain close supervision over their children, keep a vigilant watch on their activities, and remain particularly alert in vulnerable areas to protect them from the menace of drugs.

Dy CM Inspects Under-Construction Seerbagh-Sempora Bridge in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary inspected the under-construction Seerbagh-Sempora Bridge in Srinagar and directed the executing agency to expedite the remaining works to ensure the project is completed and dedicated to the public at the earliest.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the progress and quality of the ongoing construction works. He was

accompanied by Chief Engineer, PWD Central Kashmir, Narinder Kumar; Superintending Engineer, Iram Lone; and other senior officers of the department.

Emphasising the need for timely completion, the Deputy Chief Minister instructed the officers to maintain the highest standards of quality while adhering to the stipulated timeline.

He noted that the bridge has entered its final phase and stressed on speedy work completion on the project.



DC, SSP Extend Warm Welcome to First Batch of Amarnath Yatra Pilgrims

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar District Administration on Thursday welcomed the first batch of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims at Bypass, Pantha Chowk, as the annual pilgrimage commenced amid a spirit of devotion and enthusiasm.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, along with Senior Superintendent of Police, Sundeeep Chakravarty, received the pilgrims on their arrival and conveyed best wishes for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey. The Officers also reviewed the arrangements put in place to ensure the comfort and convenience of the yatrins.

Senior Officers of the District

Administration, Srinagar, SMC and the Police Department were present at the venue to facilitate the arrival of the pilgrims and oversee the smooth management of the facilities.

Speaking at the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra holds immense religious significance and that the Administration has made extensive preparations to ensure the pilgrimage is conducted in a safe, seamless and well-coordinated manner.

The DC added that comprehensive arrangements, including security, accommodation, sanitation, healthcare and other essential services have been put in place so that pilgrims can undertake the sacred journey with confidence and peace

of mind.

The DC and the SSP accompanied by local residents, extended a heartfelt welcome to the yatrins and prayed for the safe, smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

The pilgrims acknowledged the warm reception and hospitality extended to them and the arrangements made by administration.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, IAS Probationeer, Thomas Alfred, SP Headquarter, Umar Shah, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, SDO Panthachowk, Zuhair Ahmad, Tehsildar Panthachowk, Muzamil Zaman, Assistant Commissioner Food Safety, Yamin ul Nabi and other Officers and Official were present on the occasion.

Heatstroke, Dehydration, Food-Borne Infections Risk High in Hot weather: GMC Sgr

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As Kashmir continues to witness rising summer temperatures, health experts have issued a comprehensive public health advisory urging people to take precautions against heat-related illnesses and food-borne infections, which become increasingly common during hot weather.

The advisory, issued for public health awareness by Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan, Professor in the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College Srinagar, highlights that increasing temperatures can significantly raise the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and infections caused by contaminated food and water.

Health experts warned that prolonged exposure to high tempera-

tures can lead to several heat-related conditions. Heat exhaustion is characterised by heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, and nausea, while dehydration presents with excessive thirst, dry mouth, dark-coloured urine, and reduced urine output.

The advisory, accessed by KNO, warns that heat stroke is the most dangerous heat-related illness, with symptoms including a body temperature exceeding 40 degrees Celsius, confusion, loss of consciousness, rapid pulse, and collapse, requiring immediate hospital care. People are also advised to protect themselves against sunburn and heat rash.

Doctors have urged the public to seek medical help immediately in cases of persistent vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, high fever, severe abdominal pain, prolonged diarrhoea lasting more than 48 hours, or signs of severe dehydration such as diz-

ziness, confusion, and very dark urine. "Early medical care can save lives. Delaying treatment may lead to serious complications," the advisory states.

The advisory warns that hot weather creates ideal conditions for bacteria to multiply rapidly in food left at room temperature, increasing the risk of food poisoning, acute gastroenteritis, typhoid fever, cholera, hepatitis A and E, and dysentery. People have been advised to avoid uncovered street food, cut fruits sold in the open, chutneys and sauces kept without refrigeration, cooked rice, meat, chicken, kebabs, and biryani left outside for several hours. Milk products, cream pastries, improperly stored ice cream, unpasteurised milk, and fresh juices prepared with contaminated water have also been identified as high-risk items.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 941993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 245222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
17 Muharram
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 39
ZUHR	12:35
ASR	5: 35
Magrib	7: 50
ISHA	9: 30

This Day In History

- 324- Battle of Adrianople: Roman Emperor Constantine I defeats his co-emperor Licinius, who flees to Byzantium
- 1187- Battle of Horns of Hattin: Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, destroys Jerusalem's crusader army.
- 1250- Louis IX of France is captured by Baibars' Mamluk army at the Battle of Fariskur while he is in Egypt conducting the Seventh Crusade; he later has to ransom himself.
- 1428 -Treaty of Delft between Jacoba of Bavaria & Philip the Good of Burgundy
- 1608 -Samuel de Champlain founds city of Quebec
- 1630 - Emperor Ferdinand II opens German Parliament

From KO Archives

Cabinet Okays Shahtoosh Trade Ban

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR: The cabinet today approved in principle the proposal to ban Shahtoosh trade in view of the ban on it at national and international level and in pursuance of government policy on wildlife protection .

However, it was decided, be-fore the ban comes into force, the state /government would re-quest the Centre to provide one-time exception for sale of Shahtoosh stocks available with the traders in the state.

Announcing the decisions, the chief secretary said the trad-ers would be asked to declare their stocks and hand-over these to a nominated authority for all India auction to get competitive rates. The traders would indi-cate the reserve price for their produce and any return over and above that would go to a fund to be created for wildlife protection. The traders will get reserve price.

Jaitley said that at the same time private owners of Shahtoosh shawls in the state may also be permitted on the basis of one-time exception to declare their stocks as there has been no ban in Jammu and Kashmir. This they will have to do before the ban comes into force.

The cabinet asked the indus-try minister to invite Shahtoosh traders for discussion regarding modalities on implementing this policy.

(Kashmir Observer, July 3, 2000)

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Khurshid Ahmad Bhat, S/o Habibullah Bhat, R/o Hardusoor, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby notify the general public that due to an inadvertent clerical/typographical error, the name of my daughter has been recorded in the school records of Mohammadia High School, Kunzer, Baramulla as "Sadaf Khurshid" instead of her correct name "Sadaf Khurshid".

The correct name of my daughter is Sadaf Khurshid, as reflected in her other genuine official records. The correction is being sought in the school records to bring them in conformity with her official documents.

If any person has any objection to the above correction, the same may be conveyed to the concerned authority within the prescribed period. If no objection is received, the correction shall be treated as valid for all legal and official purposes.

Khurshid Ahmad Bhat S/o Habibullah Bhat
R/o Hardusoor, Tehsil Kunzer,
District Baramulla, J&K (UT)

FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, MOHD AYOUB KOHLI, S/o SHAMS DIN KHOLI, R/o Buderkote, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), hereby inform the general public that my name, my father's name and my date of birth have been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 8327 8177 0427 as MOHAMMAD AYOUB KOLI, S/o SHAMAS DI KOLI, with Date of Birth 12/12/1968.

My correct particulars are:
Name: MOHD AYOUB KOHLI
Father's Name: SHAMS DIN KHOLI
Date of Birth: 08/02/1976 (as per Domicile Certificate)

I have applied for correction of the above particulars in my Aadhaar records to bring them in conformity with my Domicile Certificate and other official records.

If any person has any objection to the above correction, the same may be submitted to the concerned authority within the prescribed period. If no objection is received, the correction shall be deemed valid for all legal and official purposes.

Sd/-
MOHD AYOUB KOHLI
R/o Buderkote, Tehsil Tangmarg,
District Baramulla, J&K (UT)

FKO

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Public Works (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA
Email: Email: rb-awantipora@jk.gov.in

NO: T-1/EEA /2609-13 Dated: 02/07/2026

EXTENSION NOTICE

Subject: -

- Macadamization of Road from SDH Tral to Pinglish
- Macadamization of Dhankard Road i/c IR Chewa Ullar and School link Mandoora.
- Macadamization of MTI Link Road i/c Sikh Basti Road Bajwani and Shairabad Dhankard Road.
- Macadamization of Link Roads from Batagund Road to Medical shop of Nazir Ahmad Sheikh including Peer Mohalla Kuchmullah Tral
- Macadamization of Lurrow Jageer to Seer.
- Macadamization of Gulshanpora Gurduwara Link i/c IR Batagund & IR Khulbagh.
- Macadamization of Gamraz Arigam Road.
- Macadamization of Road from Jamia Masjid to Panchayat Ghar at Lalpora Kahlil.
- Macadamization of Panner Kathwar Gujjar Basti Road.
- Macadamization of Internal roads Pampore Town.
- Macadamization of Yangwani Laribal Road incl. Yangwani Army Camp.
- Macadamization of IR Aripal and IR Satoora i/c Masjid Link Satoora.

Reference: -

- This office e-NIT No.20/EEA/R&B of 2026-27/1551-61 Dated: 02-06-2026.
- This office e-NIT No.21/EEA/R&B of 2026-27/1563-73 Dated: 02-06-2026

The critical dates for the above noted Works are hereby extended as under:

1	Bid Submission End Date	08-07-2026 up to 4. 00 P.M
2	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	09-07-2026 up to 12.00 P.M

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned NIT.

Sd/- Technical officer
DIPK-2787/26 DATED: 02-07-2026

sd/-
Executive Engineer R&B Division Awantipora

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved

Syed Hassan Hamdani
S/O Late Syed Ali Hamdani

DATE OF DEMISE:
1st July 2026 (Wednesday)
15th Muharram 1448 A.H.

RESIDENCE:
Hassanabad, Rainawari
Formerly resided at
Surteng, Rainawari

A kind-hearted, pious and respected soul has returned to the mercy of Allah (SWT). He will always be remembered for his gentleness, humility and devotion to family and faith. May Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannah.

FATEH KHAWANI
will be held on
Friday, 3rd July 2026
at
MASJID E ABU TALIB, HASSANABAD

Bereaved
Syed Sujat Hamdani, Syed Muzaffar Hamdani
and other family members

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
Distribution & Advertising: Firdous Ahmad
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
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The Kashmiri Boy Who Offended Summer

Apparently, saying it was too hot outside was less forgivable than everything adults have been saying to each other for years.



Haziqah Showkat



KO VIEW

Fix the Bucket

Kashmir has become obsessed with attracting money. Investment summits, tourism campaigns and infrastructure projects dominate public discourse. That goal matters, but a stronger economy starts with a simple question: how much of that money actually remains in the valley? That question rarely receives the attention it merits. Tourism contributes almost 7 percent to Jammu and Kashmir's economy and supports the livelihoods of nearly five lakh people. Government spending continues to fuel construction and services, while horticulture remains a major source of income. Those numbers sound encouraging, but they also hide a deeper weakness: much of the income generated in Kashmir leaves through imports of consumer goods, processed food, furniture, electronics, building materials and countless products that could, at least in part, come from local factories and workshops. Economic growth depends as much on circulation as creation. Money spent on a locally made product pays a worker, supports a supplier, reaches another business and continues moving through the local economy. Money spent on an imported product completes that journey somewhere else. Kashmir keeps searching for new streams of income while paying too little attention to this drain. Tourism illustrates the problem with unusual clarity. Visitors fill hotels, restaurants and taxis, creating visible prosperity during peak seasons. Hotels often purchase furniture manufactured outside the valley, restaurants rely on packaged goods produced elsewhere, and shops sell products sourced from distant factories. Tourist spending therefore produces far less local value than it could. The headline numbers remain impressive, but the multiplier effect remains weak. The same story runs through horticulture. Kashmir grows some of the finest apples in the country, although much of the crop leaves as raw produce instead of branded juice, dried fruit, cider or premium packaged food. Walnut, saffron and cherry growers face similar limits. Value addition happens somewhere else, and the larger share of profit follows it. Official data points toward an obvious solution. Micro, small and medium enterprises contribute around 6 percent of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, account for nearly 60 percent of industrial investment and generate about 90 percent of industrial employment. Strengthening this sector would produce far greater returns than another cycle of ribbon-cutting ceremonies and investment announcements. That means building food-processing units close to orchards, expanding furniture manufacturing, helping crafts reach premium markets, improving credit for small firms and making government procurement favour quality local products whenever possible. Consumers also hold part of the answer. Buying locally produced goods keeps wealth circulating through neighbourhood businesses instead of exporting purchasing power. Kashmir possesses skilled workers, internationally recognised crafts, fertile land and one of India's strongest tourism brands. Those assets already exist, economic policy should now focus on converting them into a stronger production base. A leaking bucket never fills, regardless of how often someone pours water into it. Kashmir will find lasting prosperity only after it seals the holes.

Picture the 'crime scene': a boy walks out of his school gate under a sun that could fry an egg on the pavement, sweat soaking through his uniform, and a reporter blocks his path with a microphone. The boy is tired, thirsty, and cornered on a public street by a grown man with a camera crew. He answers the question he is asked, plainly, the way children do before anyone teaches them to speak in careful little circles. He says the heat is unbearable and the people running the schools have done nothing about it except watching from "AC" chambers. That's the whole offense, and many Kashmiris responded as though he had confessed to treason on live television. Businessmen who run private schools got the outrage rolling first, condemning the boy "on behalf of the public" as though anyone had appointed them to that job. There's an old line worth borrowing here: a fish rots from the head, and this particular fish had a lot of company rotting alongside it. Senior journalists, decades of by-lines between them, used their own platforms to lecture a child about tone. Self-described educators, people paid to understand young minds, went so far as to endorse corporal punishment as the proper reply to a boy naming his own discomfort. A society that reaches for a stick the moment a child tells the truth has confused discipline with revenge, and it isn't a subtle confusion. Layer on top of that Kashmir's unofficial ethics committee: retired officials, self-appointed civil society voices, and social media elders who specialize in finding fault from a safe distance. These are the people who never stood on that sidewalk, never felt the pavement heat through their shoes, and still found the confidence to demand punishments severe enough to silence a child faster than any heat-wave could manage on its own. Call it the armchair effect: strong opinions, zero fieldwork, delivered with the swagger of a man who has never once been asked a hard question by a stranger with a microphone. Compare that with how the clip landed outside the valley. Commentators elsewhere took it for exactly what it was: a kid, ambushed on his way home from school, saying something true about a system failing him. They praised his nerve, and pointed out, correctly, that a seven-year-old naming a governance failure looks a lot more like civic health than civic decay. The gap between the two reactions tells its own joke: the farther you get from Srinagar, the more sense people make, and the closer you get, the louder the moral panic gets. Inside Kashmir, the loudest defense of the boy came mostly from women and younger voices online, and that split says plenty on its own. Mothers who recognized their own children in his frustration wrote in his defense. Young commentators, closer to his age and his patience for nonsense than any editorial board, pointed out that naming heat and neglect is not a crime against decorum. The old Kashmiri proverb about a king's word and a fool's word both tumbling out of small mouths applies here with almost embarrassing precision: only one gets forgiven, and it usually isn't the honest one. Consider, too, who never gets this treatment. Legislators inside the assembly curse each other on the record in language that would get a schoolboy suspended, and nobody stages a press conference in response. Akbar Lone's exchange with Iftikhar Ansari gets cited online again and again as exactly the sort of adult behaviour that draws zero institutional outrage. A seven-year-old complains about the heat, and suddenly the region discovers a passion for classroom manners it has never once shown its own lawmakers. If hypocrisy were a school subject, Kashmir would be handing out gold medals this week. None of this means children need no guidance. They do, and the best of it happens privately, from parents and teachers who know the difference between correction and humiliation. What Kashmir delivered instead was theater: senior journalists performing outrage, self-styled educators enforcing discipline, and moralists staging ethics, all directed at a boy whose only real offense was noticing what the adults preferred to ignore. Teach a child that honesty earns him a lecture and a possible beating, and you don't raise a more polite generation. You raise a silenced one, and a silenced generation stops asking why the heat, the schools, and the people running them never seem to improve. The boy will likely forget this by autumn. The rest of Kashmir might spend a little longer wondering why an entire ecosystem of respectable adults needed one sweating child on a sidewalk to expose exactly how thin its tolerance for honesty runs.

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The old Kashmiri proverb about a king's word and a fool's word both tumbling out of small mouths applies here with almost embarrassing precision: only one gets forgiven, and it usually isn't the honest one.”

The author is a practicing advocate engaged with the corporate ecosystem. She can be reached at haziqahshowkat@gmail.com.

Beyond the Viral Boy

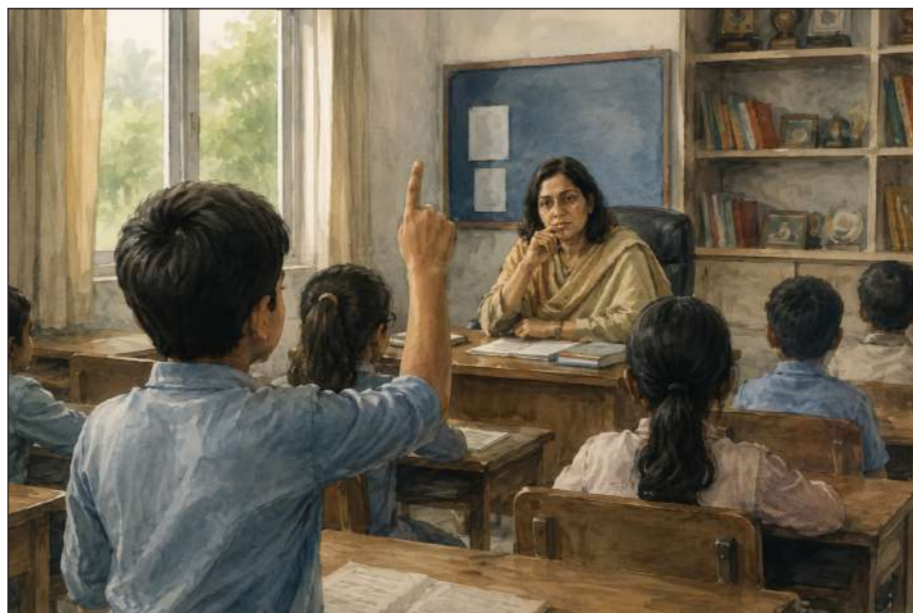
Public outrage over a schoolboy's comments during Kashmir's heat wave missed the deeper story: an education system that prizes marks far more than character.



Farooq Ahmad Khan

The schoolboy who questioned Jammu and Kashmir's education minister during the recent heat wave became the latest target of public judgment. His complaint came after days of sweltering classrooms and growing demands for summer vacations. Speaking into a reporter's microphone, he wondered whether the minister even had school-going children and accused her of sitting comfortably in an air-conditioned room. Social media exploded within hours. Admirers praised his courage, while critics rushed to blame his parents. Almost nobody stopped enough to examine the institution that influences children almost as much as their families do. That instinct says plenty about Kashmir's public discourse. Adults found it easier to police a child's tone than to examine the system that helped produce it. Parents became convenient defendants, while teachers, schools and society escaped scrutiny.

A single viral clip turned into a courtroom where the child stood trial while the education system walked free. Children in primary school absorb ideas from far more than their homes. Teachers, classmates, textbooks, television, social media and daily public conduct all leave an imprint. Adults constantly tell children what success looks like. Examination scores receive applause, and admission into prestigious colleges becomes family triumph. Competitive careers become the ultimate destination, while character receives generous speeches and very little classroom time. That imbalance has consequences. Generations have grown up believing mathematics, science, languages and technology determine success. Those subjects remain essential. Modern economies depend on them, and students need strong academic preparation. Education, however, reaches much further than producing engineers, doctors, lawyers or civil servants. Schools also build future neighbours, parents, voters and public officials. Academic excellence without courtesy, empathy and self-restraint creates capable professionals who struggle with public life. Many schools still treat moral education as a decorative subject rather than a central mission. Students prepare tirelessly for examinations while lessons on honesty, gratitude, patience, compassion and civic responsibility occupy far less attention.



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Kashmir's debate over summer vacations reached far beyond school calendars. Heat pushed children into exhausting classrooms, public frustration built naturally, and one child expressed that frustration with unusual candour. Adults then transformed his words into a morality play about manners.”

Children quickly understand what adults value because institutions reward it. Report cards influence futures, while character rarely receives the same sustained investment.

Religious traditions have long reached similar conclusions through different languages. Islam speaks of tagwa and parhaizgaari. Hinduism teaches dharma and self-discipline. Sikhism values truthful living, humility and selfless service. Christianity emphasises love, forgiveness and purity of heart. Judaism stresses righteousness, justice and honouring obligations. Those traditions differ in theology while sharing a common conviction: knowledge alone cannot produce a healthy society. Kashmir's debate over summer vacations therefore reached far beyond school calendars. Heat pushed children into exhausting classrooms, public frustration built naturally, and one child expressed that frustration with unusual candour. Adults then transformed his words into a morality play about manners. That reaction overlooked a larger question: what habits have schools, families and public institutions cultivated through years of rewarding academic performance far more enthusiastically than ethical conduct? Answering that question demands more than adding another textbook chapter on values.

The author is an advocate practising before the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and can be reached at feroqahmadkhan@gmail.com.

Why We Keep Doubting Depression

Too many people in the valley treat depression like a claim that needs evidence, leaving those who speak up to defend their pain instead of finding support.



Palveen Kour

Depression faces two battles in Kashmir.

One unfolds inside the mind, the other begins the moment someone decides to speak.

That second battle often comes with suspicion, gossip, amateur diagnosis, and endless questions that push people back into silence.

"What happened? Did you have a breakup?" "Were you cheated on?" "You have a good job, a loving family, and enough money. What reason do you have to be depressed?"

Those questions expose a belief that has settled deep into public thinking.

Depression, many people assume, needs one dramatic event before anyone accepts it as real.

Pain, in this view, comes with a neat explanation. Anything less sounds unbelievable.

Medical science tells a different story.

Depression grows through a complex mix of biological, psychological, and social influences.

One event may contribute, several influences might combine, or the illness possibly emerge without any obvious trigger.

Someone may build a successful career, enjoy financial security, share life with supportive parents, or live in a happy marriage and still wake up under the weight of depression.

Mental illness never checks a bank account before entering someone's life.

Public discussion keeps chasing

explanations that fit popular imagination. Someone shares their diagnosis, and attention shifts straight to romance, family conflict, financial trouble, or hidden scandal.

Friends become investigators, neighbours become commentators, and illness fades into the background while speculation takes centre stage.

That response turns a medical condition into entertainment, leaving the person who reached out wondering whether speaking had become a mistake.

Picture the courage it takes to admit depression after months of internal struggle. Then picture the response: "Did someone reject you?" "Did your partner leave?" "You must be hiding something."

Compassion disappears before the discussion even begins. Curiosity wins, judgment follows close behind, and anyone watching learns the same lesson: keep your mouth shut.

Money creates another powerful myth.

Success, many people believe, protects the mind from depression. Someone owns a beautiful house, drives an expensive car, earns a high salary, or posts smiling photographs online. Public opinion quickly reaches a verdict: "You have everything people dream of, what more do you want?"

Those remarks confuse comfort with emotional health.

Money buys treatment, medication, and access to specialists, but none of those purchases guarantee peace of mind.

Wealth cannot silence racing thoughts. It cannot fill emotional emptiness, and restore the ability to enjoy ordinary life.

Many of the world's wealthiest people have spoken openly about living with depression. Their experiences show one simple truth: mental illness reaches people through age, profession, religion, gender, education, and income without asking permission.

Another common response pushes people deeper into guilt:



ONE SENTENCE OFTEN ACHIEVES MORE THAN AN HOUR OF ADVICE: "I AM HERE FOR YOU." Those four words create space where honesty becomes possible. Sitting beside someone during a painful afternoon sometimes accomplishes far more than searching endlessly for perfect answers. Human presence carries its own power.

"Be thankful for what you have."

Gratitude enriches life, though it never functions as a cure for depression. Comparing suffering rarely helps anyone.

A broken leg continues to hurt even when another patient has two broken legs. Emotional pain follows the same logic.

Someone else's hardship never erases your own.

That constant comparison creates shame. People begin believing

they lack permission to struggle because someone else appears worse off. Instead of asking for help, they minimise their symptoms, convince themselves they should cope alone, and postpone treatment.

Depression grows stronger while pride and fear keep the door firmly closed.

In this whole process, silence becomes the biggest casualty. People continue attending college, showing up at work, raising children,

meeting deadlines, and smiling through family gatherings while fighting private battles that nobody sees.

Months pass, sometimes years. Friends praise their strength without recognising exhaustion hiding behind normal expressions. Families celebrate achievements while missing warning signs that have existed for a long time.

Popular advice rarely improves the situation.

Someone finally admits they are struggling, and responses come instantly: "Stay strong", "Think positively", "Move on."

Those phrases sound comforting to the speaker, but they often feel dismissive to the listener.

Depression rarely disappears because someone repeated a motivational slogan.

Listening serves people far better than lectures. Most people speaking about depression do not expect instant solutions. They seek someone willing to hear difficult emotions without interruption, criticism, or suspicion.

They seek a dialogue free from labels like drama, weakness, attention-seeking, or ingratitude.

Tears need acceptance more than analysis, while silence needs companionship more than clever words.

One sentence often achieves more than an hour of advice: "I am here for you." Those four words create space where honesty becomes possible.

Sitting beside someone during a painful afternoon sometimes accomplishes far more than searching endlessly for perfect answers.

Human presence has its own power.

Kashmir speaks often about compassion, community, and shared responsibility. But those values ring hollow when depression still faces interrogation before empathy.

Someone living with diabetes rarely has to explain high blood sugar. A patient recovering from a fracture rarely answers questions about why a bone broke.

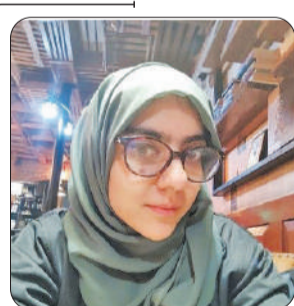
Depression alone still stands trial before anyone offers understanding.

That, in itself, is depressing.

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The Reader's Curse

A lifelong reader reflects on the strange moments when novels spill into everyday life.



Hirra Sultan

It was one of those rare winter days when everything looks perfect. The sun was high, the sky was brilliantly blue, and snow from the day before still blanketed the earth in blinding white.

After being stuck indoors, I was finally stepping out, hoping to soak up the warmth of the sun and the cold of the snow at once. I was unusually cheerful.

I wasn't the only one. Near the Dal Lake, people had poured out like spring after a long frost. Tourists posed for photos, kids threw snowballs, and couples sipped kehwa. Even the famously lazy locals had made an exception for the weather.

The mountains in the distance looked dipped in white. The evergreens had been gently dusted, and black clouds hovered above them, threatening more snow.

I was there to meet a friend for a driving lesson. Learning to drive had been on my list for a while, mostly

because I've always liked wandering, and driving felt like freedom. I imagined myself behind the wheel, taking off into the unknown, chasing roads without maps.

After a few warm-up rounds—clutch here, brake there—I finally hit a stretch of empty road. It felt like mine. I gently pressed the accelerator, aiming just to glide forward. But instead, I was suddenly somewhere else.

It was morning again. I was in a car, next to Kemal Bey. We were driving out of Fatih, headed toward Europe. I was dizzy from too much wine, the weight of betrayal, and a string of broken dreams. Then I rammaged the car into a tree. No hesitation. Just pain.

The vision startled me so much I had to pull over. I took deep breaths, trying to remember where I really was. Who I really was. I told my instructor I wasn't feeling well and would continue later. Then I walked away, shaken.

Once alone, I wondered if I was losing it. Was I slipping into someone else's story? Did Fusun, did Kemal Bey—characters I hadn't thought of in years—just hijack my thoughts? Was fiction bleeding into my reality?

I've been a bookworm all my life. Before I could even borrow books from the school library, I would spend recess buried in them. When the librarian finally let me take books home, I felt like I'd won a lottery. Even the new librarians who quizzed me couldn't quite figure out how or why I read so much. My father once said novels weren't good for me. I'd shrugged it off.

Now I wasn't so sure.



The snow started again. Light, soft, and steady. I thought of Snow, of K wandering Kars. And then, sitting by the lake, I felt like Ella—calm on the outside, chaos rippling within.

Was I still me? Sometimes I'm Salaar's lover. Sometimes I'm waiting for Santiago. Or hoping for a magic mirror to reach Wonderland. I see Pip, Mitch, Anna,

Anne Frank, Havisham. I see them all. I feel their pain, their joy, their longings. These stories aren't just things I've read. They've stayed. They've shaped me.

The world always shrunk for me, and books became my only real escape. But somewhere along the way, they stopped being escapes. They became parts of me.

On my way back, coffee in hand, I

wondered if this was madness or magic. Maybe it's both. Maybe being a bibliophile means you don't just read stories. You live them. Carry them. And sometimes, you lose yourself in them.

— The author is a Srinagar-based techie. She can be reached at prhrr@gmail.com.

Once alone, I wondered if I was losing it. Was I slipping into someone else's story? Did Fusun, did Kemal Bey—characters I hadn't thought of in years—just hijack my thoughts? Was fiction bleeding into my reality?

Airlines Shun Rs 10,000-Crore ATF Subsidy As Fuel Prices Fall



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Rs 10,000-crore jet fuel price stabilisation programme has failed to take off, with no airline signing up for the scheme as a decline in international oil prices eroded its appeal, sources said.

The Union Cabinet last month approved a one-time Rs 10,000-crore scheme to compensate state-owned fuel retailers for selling aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to airlines at capped prices for up to three years, aiming to shield carriers from surging fuel costs triggered by the West Asia crisis.

The scheme was voluntary, and airlines were to sign agreements with oil marketing companies to avail of the capped price of about Rs 115 per litre. However, no airline has signed up for the scheme so far, sources said.

This could possibly be because international oil prices started to fall around mid-June, making the capped price unattractive.

On July 1, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices in fact dropped to Rs 110 per litre from Rs 115 rate that was an-

nounced on June 9.

Under the voluntary scheme, participating airlines were to pay a fixed free-on-board (FOB) benchmark price of Rs 86.32 per litre, plus airport charges, oil company margins and applicable taxes, resulting in an effective selling price of Rs 115 per litre in Delhi, Rs 114.5 in Mumbai and Rs 139 in Chennai. Airlines that do not opt for the scheme are to pay market-linked prices.

Sources said market-linked ATF prices were around Rs 142 per litre when the scheme was announced on June 3. However, prices have since softened following an interim peace deal between the US and Iran, easing concerns over potential supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil shipping route.

The scheme was announced to give airlines clarity on fuel prices. Those opting into the price stabilisation scheme were to continue to receive ATF at Rs 115 per litre for up to three years, insulated from global benchmark fluctuations. While non-participating carriers will benefit from price declines, they also face higher costs when international rates rise.

Air India Cuts Fuel Surcharges For North America, Europe Flights



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Air India has cut fuel surcharges for flights to North America, Australia, Europe, and the UK as oil prices eased in recent weeks, according to sources.

The airline announced fuel surcharges on April 7 amid a surge in oil and jet fuel prices due to the West Asia conflict. The higher costs and airspace curbs had pushed up operational expenses for the airline.

Fuel surcharge for North America and Australia flights have been cut to USD 200 from USD 280 per ticket and that for Europe and the UK services have been reduced to USD 125 from USD 205, the sources said on Thursday. The revised fuel surcharges are effective from July 1, the sources said.

There was no comment from Air India.

Fuel surcharges for other international flights and domestic services of the airline remain unchanged. Fuel surcharges for North America,

Australia, Europe, and the UK flights had come into force from April 10.

On April 7, the Air India Group announced fuel surcharges ranging from USD 24 to USD 280 for international flights except certain routes, and Rs 299 to Rs 899 for domestic flights.

The group comprises Air India and Air India Express. Following the government's decision to cap domestic Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price hike at 25 per cent, Air India group has adopted this calibrated approach, transitioning from a flat domestic surcharge to a distance-based grid, it had said in a statement on April 7.

Citing latest International Air Transport Association (IATA) data, the airline had said the global average jet fuel price rose to USD 195.19 per barrel for the week ending March 27, up from USD 99.40 at the end of February, recording a surge of close to 100 per cent.

ATF accounts for almost 40-45 per cent of an airline's total cost.

Labour Min Makes EPF Contributions Beyond Rs 1,800 Voluntary

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Labour & Employment Ministry has made all contributions in the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) above the monthly wage ceiling of Rs 15,000, which is beyond Rs 1,800, voluntary under the new Employees' Provident Funds Scheme 2026 notified on Monday.

Earlier, under the old scheme, the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme 1952, the wage ceiling, which is Rs 15,000 per month at present, was relevant at the time of joining a firm for providing the employee with mandatory social security cover.

All employees whose basic wages were up to Rs 15,000 were mandatorily covered under the scheme and others had the option to join the social security schemes run by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), voluntarily.

Once covered under the scheme, employees used to contribute on their actual basic wages and employers used to match that contribution, which were even higher than the wage ceiling notified by the government from time to time.

The present wage ceiling of Rs 15,000 was notified in 2014.

The new Employees' Provident Funds Scheme 2026 provides that "the contribution payable in respect of a member shall be subject to the wage ceiling limit, no-



tified by the Central Government from time to time.

"... Subject to the provisions contained in sub-paragraph (4) of paragraph 9, where the monthly wage of such a member exceeds the wage ceiling, the employer's and employee's contributions shall be limited to the contribution payable on the 'wage ceiling'," it also says.

Provided further that an employer may make such contribution for wages beyond the wage ceiling to the Pension Fund in respect of such cases, which have been permitted for contribution on higher wages under the Employee's Pension Scheme, 1995, it also says.

However, it states that the employer's contribution under this Scheme shall be at the rate of 12 per cent of the wages payable to the employee to whom this Scheme applies, and the employ-

ee's contribution shall be equal to the employer's contribution in respect of such employee.

After the amendment to the Employees' Pension Scheme in 2014, the contribution of 8.33 per cent of basic wage to the Employees' Pension Scheme by employers was restricted to the wage ceiling of Rs 15,000 only (i.e. Rs 1,250 per month).

The excess amount contributed by the employers used to go to the EPF accounts of the employees as the contributions were made on actual wages, which were higher than the wage ceiling.

This overhaul of the clause in the new scheme will allow employees as well as employers to opt for contribution as a wage ceiling or on a higher actual basic wage that they are getting.

The labour ministry has not commented on the issue so far.

Railways Move Over 419 Tonne Freight In Q1 FY 2026-27

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Indian Railways transported 419.08 million tonnes of freight in the first quarter (April-June) of the 2026-27 fiscal, registering a growth of 1.46 per cent compared to the corresponding period during the previous financial year, the railway ministry said on Thursday.

In the first quarter of FY 2025-26, the railways carried 413.05 million tonnes of freight.

"The quarter (Q1 FY 2026-27) also witnessed encouraging growth across several key commodity segments, with Iron Ore loading increasing by 7.44 per cent, Clinker by 6.54 per cent, and Balance & Other Goods by 12.16 per cent over the corresponding period of the previous year," a Ministry of Railways press note said.

Highlighting strong performance by the railways during June, officials said this built upon the sustained growth recorded during the first quarter of FY 2026-27.

"Indian Railways loaded 142.21 million tonnes of freight during June 2026, compared to 136.71 million tonnes in the corresponding month last year, registering a growth of 4 per cent," the ministry stated.

"Freight earnings also recorded healthy growth, generating an additional revenue of about Rs 430 crore, an increase of 3 per cent over June 2025," it added.



Several major commodities that registered encouraging growth during the month of June were fertiliser, with loading increasing by 19.1 per cent; Balance & Other Goods, by 17.3 per cent; Iron Ore, by 9.4 per cent; Domestic Coal, by 4.9 per cent; Total Coal, by 3.6 per cent; and Clinker, by 7.2 per cent.

It reflects sustained demand from core sectors of the economy, officials said.

"To meet the increased requirement of thermal power stations during the extended summer season, Indian Railways stepped up domestic coal transportation, supplying 7 per cent more coal to power plants during June 2026 compared with the corresponding month last year, thereby supporting uninterrupted power generation across the country," the press note said.

It claimed steady growth in passenger mobility as well, stat-

ing that Indian Railways carried 63.81 crore passengers in June 2026, compared to 62.37 crore passengers during the corresponding month last year.

However, the ministry's press note did not provide quarterly data on passenger movement. It emphasised that the Non-Suburban segment, covering short and long-distance travel, recorded a growth of 3.9 per cent, with passenger numbers increasing from 28.90 crore in June 2025 to 30.04 crore in June 2026.

The Suburban segment also registered positive growth of 0.9 per cent, increasing from 33.46 crore to 33.77 crore passengers," it stated.

On expansion of passenger services, the ministry said the number of Vande Bharat trains has increased to 164, including the recently-introduced Vande Bharat Sleeper service between Howrah in West Bengal and Kamakhya in Assam.

Puri Hints At Fuel Price Cut When Crude Oil Stabilises

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- International crude oil prices may have fallen to a four-month low, but retail petrol and diesel prices in India are unlikely to be cut anytime soon as state-run refiners are still processing costlier crude purchased during the peak of the West Asia crisis, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said.

Petrol and diesel prices were raised by about Rs 7.50 per litre each in the second half of May - more than two months after the outbreak of the West Asia conflict and by less than the increase in global fuel costs - resulting in state-owned fuel retailers absorbing a significant portion of the higher crude prices.

The delayed and partial pass-through left Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) with substantial losses on the sale of petrol and diesel, even as international oil prices have since retreated.

Puri said state-owned fuel retailers incurred cumulative losses of Rs 74,781 crore on the sale of petrol, diesel and subsidised cooking gas (LPG). The figure includes losses from selling petrol and diesel below cost for four months following the outbreak of the West Asia conflict on February 28, as well as unrecovered LPG subsidies for the same period and earlier months.

International oil prices have retreated over the past two to three weeks after the United



States and Iran signed an interim peace deal, easing concerns over the Strait of Hormuz - a critical energy shipping route used to transport oil and gas from Gulf producers. Crude oil prices have fallen from USD 119 per barrel at the peak of the conflict to around USD 70 now.

Puri, however, said refiners, who turn crude oil into fuels like petrol and diesel, are currently processing crude bought two or two and a half months back. That crude was bought at high prices.

"That crude would have been obtained two months back (when) prices were high, cost of insurance was high, cost of freight was high," he said. "Crude priced at current lower rates will arrive (at refineries) later."

A fuel price cut can be looked at if oil prices remain at low levels for a sustained period, he said. "If it (oil prices) remains like this (at current rates), it (cutting retail prices) is a legitimate thing," he said.

On Nayara Energy, India's largest private fuel retailer, cutting petrol prices by Rs 5 per litre and diesel by Rs 3 per litre while state-owned firms have not followed suit, Puri said the company was effectively rolling back the increases it had implemented in March.

Govt Fast-Tracks Disinvestment Process To Shore Up Revenues

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The government has pushed the pedal on its disinvestment and asset monetisation plan in the current fiscal, raising about 31 per cent of its full-year budgeted target in the first quarter itself.

Recording the fastest pace of disinvestment ever in the first quarter of any fiscal, the period between mid-May and June this year saw one offer for sale from the government every week for disinvestment of public sector enterprises.

Faced with the stress of increased expenditure on subsidy due to a higher import bill, the government is making all-round efforts to garner revenues, especially from the non-tax side.

Over the past six weeks, offer for sale (OFS) of six public sector enterprises hit the capital markets wherein the government garnered a cumulative Rs 18,561 crore. The six entities are Central Bank of India, Coal India, NHPC, NLC India, GIC and IRFC.

Separately, Rs 6,367 crore has come from asset monetisation under the Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT).

As against the full year target of Rs 80,000 crore envisaged in the FY27 Budget, the government has so far raised Rs 24,928 crore from disinvestment and asset monetisation.

It has already firmed up a



pipeline of public sector companies to be divested in the current fiscal and hopes to exceed the Rs 80,000 crore budgeted disinvestment target.

The big ticket disinvestment in the current fiscal could be of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). The government currently holds 96.5 per cent in the insurance behemoth and has to lower it to 90 per cent by May next year. The government had in May 2022, raised Rs 20,500 crore by selling a 3.5 per cent stake in LIC.

The strategic sale in IDBI Bank is also on the table. Despite a failed attempt earlier this year to sell its stake in the bank, the government is working to fast-track the sale process and invite fresh bids.

FISCAL PRESSURE

The government's move to boost miscellaneous capital receipts or disinvestment and asset monetisation in the current fiscal comes in the backdrop of a likelihood of the expenditure exceeding the budget estimates in the wake of higher energy and fertiliser import prices due to the West Asia crisis.

Stock Markets Rally For 2nd Day; Sensex Jumps 579

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended nearly one per cent higher on Thursday amid softening crude oil prices, following positive developments on the geopolitical front and buying in blue-chip IT stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 579.48 points, or 0.75 per cent, to end at 77,502.12. During the day, it surged 656.29 points, or 0.85 per cent, to 77,578.93.

The 50-share NSE Nifty rallied 169.85 points, or 0.71 per cent, to settle at 24,175.70.

From the Sensex pack, Infosys jumped 5.64 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra (4.32 per cent), Tata Consultancy Services (4.28 per cent) and HCL Tech (4.12 per cent). Bajaj Finserv, Adani Ports, Titan and ICICI Bank were also among the major gainers.

Larsen & Toubro, Maruti Suzuki India, Axis Bank and Reliance Industries were among the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil bench-

mark, dropped 1.45 per cent to USD 70.53 per barrel.

India and Japan on Thursday unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives, including an economic partnership framework and defence pact to co-develop military hardware, following summit talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi.

The major outcomes from the meeting included a declaration on economic security, a joint statement for cooperation in the field of artificial intelligence and a document to bolster engagement in the energy supply chain.

"Indian equities extended their winning streak despite pressure in global markets, where technology stocks dragged overseas indices lower. Easing energy prices and fresh India-Japan agreements in strategic areas such as AI, defence technology and energy security helped sustain domestic market optimism," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Gold Rebounds Rs 3,000 To Rs 1.47 Lakh/10g

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices rebounded by Rs 3,000 to Rs 1.47 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday as firm trends in the international markets and a weak US dollar revived demand for the precious metal.

Halting a two-day slide, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed Rs 3,000 to Rs 1,47,500 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 1,44,500 per 10 grams, according to local traders.

Silver continued its upward trajectory for the third consecutive session, rising Rs 5,000 to Rs 2,40,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal settled at Rs 2,35,000 per kg in the preceding session.

Traders said gold recovered after two sessions of losses following a rally in the overseas markets, while silver continued to gain on sustained industrial and investment demand.

"Gold prices edged higher on Thursday after US Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh struck a less hawkish tone than markets had anticipated, easing

concerns over an imminent interest rate hike," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. Globally, spot gold gained USD 38.75, or 1 per cent, to USD 4,070.04 per ounce, and silver rose 1.3 per cent to USD 59.89 per ounce.

"Spot gold traded nearly 1 per cent higher to trade at USD 4,072 per ounce as the US dollar index has eased slightly," Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

Singh attributed the softer dollar to the strength of the Japanese Yen following reports of the Bank of Japan's intervention. "A weak dollar makes gold cheaper for buyers holding other currencies, boosting global demand and supporting prices," he added.

Adding to market sentiment, President Donald Trump hailed progress between US-Iran talks in Doha, Qatar.

"Investors are awaiting the US non-farm payrolls report, which is expected to provide fresh guidance on the strength of the labour market and the Fed's next policy move," Manav Modi, Commodities Analyst at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Rupee Falls 19 Paise To Close At 95.35 Against US Dollar

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day on a negative note, lower by 19 paise at 95.35 against the US dollar on Thursday, as the support from easing crude oil prices was negated by robust dollar demand from importers and corporate hedgers.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee opened higher on an overnight decline in the US dollar following less hawkish comments from Fed Chair Kevin Warsh and a fall in crude oil prices. However, the rupee lost its initial gains on FIH outflows and dollar demand from hedgers.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.95 against the American currency and traded in a range of 94.90-95.42 during the session. The rupee finally closed at 95.35, registering a decline of 19 paise from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 60 paise to close at 95.16 against the US dollar.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on uncertainty over

the US and Iran deal despite positive comments from US President Donald Trump. However, any softening of the US dollar on less hawkish comments from the Fed may support the rupee at lower levels.

"Declining crude oil prices may also support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from weekly employment claims and the non-farm payrolls report from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 95.00 to 95.60," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.00, lower by 0.38 per cent. Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 1.43 per cent at USD 70.55 per barrel in futures trade.

While a decline in global crude oil prices and RBI interventions propped up the local unit, the rupee is likely to stay under pressure amid continued geopolitical uncertainty and significant foreign fund outflows.

CM Omar Reviews Shopian's Progress, Dedicates ₹76 Cr Development Package

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chaired a comprehensive review meeting of District Shopian to assess the progress of developmental works, implementation of key government schemes and the overall delivery of public services, while reiterating his government's commitment to ensuring balanced and equitable development across the district.

During his visit, the Chief Minister dedicated development projects worth over ₹76 crore to the people of Shopian, laid the foundation of major infrastructure works and interacted with farmers, fruit growers and public delegations to take stock of their concerns.

The review meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education Sakina Itoo, Minister for Agriculture Production Department Javid Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Members of Legislative Assembly Shabir Ahmad Kullay (Shopian) and Showkat Hussain Ganai (Zainapora).

Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Heads of Departments, district officers and other senior officials also attended the meeting.

The meeting focused on accelerating infrastructure development, strengthening essential public services and ensuring the timely completion of ongoing developmental projects so that their benefits reach the people without delay.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian gave a detailed presentation highlighting the district profile, progress achieved under



No One Should Object to India-Pak Dialogue Aimed at Improving Ties: CM Omar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said no one should object to dialogue between India and Pakistan aimed at improving bilateral relations.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function here, Abdullah said the conflict between the two countries was not new and has persisted for the last three to four decades.

"This conflict is 30 to 40 years old, and last year, it intensified after the Pahalgam attack. Now, the PM is being requested, through a letter, that the relations between the two countries should be improved. No one should have any objection to that," Abdullah said.

A letter coordinated by OP Shah, chairman of the Centre for Peace

and Progress, and signed by 61 Indians and 55 Pakistanis, has urged the two countries to engage in bilateral talks.

Questioning those criticising the initiative, Abdullah said senior leaders of the RSS had also advocated improving ties between India and Pakistan.

"Recently, a senior RSS leader said that India and Pakistan should talk to each other and become friends. When the RSS says this, no one objects, but when the leaders in J-K say the same thing, it becomes an issue.

"We are only saying what (former prime minister Atal Bihari) Vajpayee used to say that friends can be changed, but we cannot change neighbours. We want relations between neighbours to improve," Abdullah said.

More than 100 prominent citizens, including former Jammu and Kashmir chief ministers Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, from India and Pakistan, have urged Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif to revive bilateral dialogue and restore normal ties.

Among the signatories are former RAW chief A S Dulat, Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha, former diplomat Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, former Union minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, besides several retired diplomats and civil society members.

As per PTI, the letter urged both governments to take "meaningful and sustained steps towards restoring peace, normalcy, dialogue and cooperation in South Asia".

centrally sponsored schemes, physical and financial status of various departments, and the implementation of major developmental projects currently underway.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister commended the Deputy Commissioner and his entire team for their efforts in implementing developmental programmes in the district.

Describing Shopian as a geographically small but strategically significant district with unique developmental challenges, Omar Abdullah observed that its identity is intrinsically

linked to its world-renowned apple industry, scenic beauty and the historic Mughal Road. He said the government is committed to further strengthening these assets through focused investments and sustained developmental interventions.

The Chief Minister acknowledged the prevailing financial constraints facing Jammu and Kashmir but asserted that these would not become an obstacle to the district's progress.

"There will be no injustice with Shopian or with any Assembly constituency of the district despite our financial limitations," he said, assuring the elected representatives that every issue and demand raised during the meeting had been carefully noted and would be addressed in a time-bound manner.

He directed officers to immediately rectify shortcomings wherever identified and expedite action on the developmental demands projected by the legislators.

Emphasising effective implementation of projects sanctioned under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), the Chief Minister asked the Deputy Commissioner to personally monitor these works to ensure timely execution.

He observed that the scheme carries strict timelines and requires close supervision to maintain the pace of implementation.

Expressing satisfaction over the overall developmental progress reflected during the review, the Chief Minister appreciated the constructive feedback provided by the legislators and assured them that all genuine public grievances would be addressed to the fullest extent possible.

Kishtwar Issues Weather Advisory till July 5

KISHTWAR: The Kishtwar district administration on Thursday issued a weather advisory of heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, flash floods and landslides till Sunday in the region, urging people, particularly those living near riverbanks, to remain cautious and avoid vulnerable areas.

According to the advisory issued by the Office of the Kishtwar Deputy Commissioner, the area is likely to witness generally cloudy weather accompanied by spells of light to moderate rain and thunderstorms at many places, with a few areas experiencing heavy rainfall, brief intense showers and gusty winds. The administration warned that prevailing weather conditions could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides in vulnerable locations.

Residents, especially those living near water bodies, streams and nullahs, have been advised to stay away from such areas and take all necessary precautions until weather conditions improve, the advisory said. The district administration has directed all line departments, including Revenue, Public Works Department, Mechanical Engineering, Power, Jal Shakti, Health and Medical Education, Irrigation and Flood Control, NHIDCL and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), to remain on high alert.

According to the advisory, the field staff have been instructed to stay active and be prepared to provide immediate assistance wherever required. All tehsildars have also been directed to report any loss of life or damage to property.

As per PTI, the administration said the District Control Room at the Deputy Commissioner's Office is functioning round-the-clock to respond to emergencies and provide necessary assistance. Emergency helpline numbers have also been issued for the public to seek help. (Observer News Service)

Ladakh Police Deploys Sniffer Dogs to Check Drug Smuggling

KARGIL: In a bid to strengthen its anti-narcotics drive, Ladakh Police has deployed trained K-9 sniffer dogs at police post Minamarg in Drass to prevent the supply and trafficking of narcotic substances into the Union territory.

The deployment, undertaken by district police Drass, is aimed at enhancing surveillance and tightening checks along the strategic route leading into Ladakh, officials said.

According to police, the highly trained sniffer dogs are capable of detecting narcotic substances concealed in vehicles, luggage and on individuals, thereby improving the effectiveness of screening and enforcement operations.

Police said the initiative forms part of its sustained efforts to curb drug trafficking and safeguard the region from the menace of narcotics. District Police Drass reiterated its commitment to maintaining a drug-free society and said it would continue adopting advanced measures to combat the illegal trade in narcotic substances.

As per PTI, the police also appealed to the public and commuters to cooperate during checking and screening operations, stating that public support is crucial for effective enforcement and ensuring the safety and security of the region. (Observer News Service)

Boy Drowns in Deep Water Pit in Kargil

KARGIL: A boy drowned in a deep water pit near Iqbal Bridge in the Kargil district of Ladakh union territory on Thursday, officials said. The incident occurred when the boy accidentally slipped into the deep water pit near the bridge, they said. Local residents immediately alerted the authorities, following which a rescue operation was launched.

Personnel from the Kargil police, the Union Territory Disaster Response Force (UTDRF), and volunteers of the Basji Imam Youth Organisation rushed to the spot and carried out a coordinated search operation, they said. After strenuous efforts, the rescue teams recovered the boy's body from the water pit. He was shifted to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the officials said.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and initiated proceedings to ascertain the circumstances leading to the drowning. The identity of the deceased was not immediately disclosed. (Observer News Service)

Minister Sharma Welcomes SANJY-2026 Pilgrims at Baltal

Observer News Service

BALTAL: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Science & Technology, and Transport, Satish Sharma, today warmly received the pilgrims of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2026) at the Baltal Base Camp and extended his heartfelt greetings to the devotees embarking on the revered annual pilgrimage.

Interacting with the pilgrims, the Minister enquired about their travel experience and wished them a safe, peaceful and spiritually enriching journey to the holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji. He expressed hope that the pilgrimage would bring peace, prosperity and well-being to the devotees and the entire nation.

During his visit, Satish Sharma undertook a comprehensive review of the arrangements put in place for the smooth conduct of the Yatra. He inspected facilities related to transportation, accommodation, healthcare, sanitation, drinking water, food supplies, security and emergency response, while taking stock of the preparedness of the concerned departments.

The Minister appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Civil Administration, Security Forces, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, Health Department, Transport Department and other line departments for working in close coordination to ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of the pilgrims. He said that the successful conduct of the Yatra reflects the collective commitment and tireless efforts of all stakeholders.

Speaking on the occasion, Satish Sharma said that the Jammu & Kashmir Government is fully committed to ensuring that every pilgrim is provided with safe, efficient and hassle-free services throughout the Yatra. He emphasized that the government has mobilized all necessary resources to facilitate a smooth pilgrimage experience.

The Minister urged all departments and field functionaries to maintain the highest level of alertness, coordination and responsiveness so that any issue arising during the pilgrimage is addressed promptly. He stressed that uninterrupted coordination among all agencies is essential for the successful and peaceful conduct of SANJY-2026.

Bandipora welcomes Amarnath Yatis with warmth

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: The first batch of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026 pilgrims received a warm, traditional welcome at the Shadipora Transit Camp on Thursday, as Deputy Inspector General of Police, North Kashmir Range, Dr. Vinod Kumar; Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib; and Senior Superintendent of Police, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar, greeted the yatis with flowers and good wishes for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey.

The officers interacted with pilgrims, enquired about their well-being, and reaffirmed the District Administration's commitment

to a comfortable, hassle-free pilgrimage.

Ahead of the reception, the DC and the SSP carried out a detailed inspection of camp arrangements, reviewing accommodation, sanitation, drinking water, healthcare, electricity, traffic management, and security deployment. Expressing satisfaction with the preparations made by the District Administration, Police, and line departments, they directed all stakeholders to maintain close coordination, respond promptly to requirements, and ensure uninterrupted services through the Yatra period, upholding the highest standards of hospitality and security.

J&K to Receive 275 AI-Enabled Handheld X-Ray Machines, 9 MRI Units

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Government of India has allocated 275 AI-enabled Portable Handheld X-Ray Machines, 9 MRI (1.5 Tesla) Units and 4 Digital Mammography Units to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir under the Prime Minister's Fund, providing a significant boost to the diagnostic healthcare infrastructure in the UT.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, and the Govern-

ment of Jammu & Kashmir for implementation of the project. The equipment will be installed in identified Government health institutions across the Union Territory to strengthen diagnostic services, improve early disease detection, enhance breast cancer screening and support AI-enabled tuberculosis screening.

The procurement, installation and commissioning of the equipment will be undertaken by the Government of India through its designated agencies, with supplies expected to commence in the coming months. The Health &

Medical Education Department will ensure timely site readiness, deployment of requisite manpower and expeditious operationalization of the equipment so that these advanced diagnostic facilities become available to the people of Jammu & Kashmir at the earliest.

The allocation is the outcome of sustained efforts by the Health & Medical Education Department and reflects the continuous focus on strengthening healthcare infrastructure and expanding access to advanced diagnostic facilities across Jammu & Kashmir.

JKAACL Hosts Inspiring 'Meet the Eminent Writer' Programme



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organized an enriching literary interaction under its flagship "Meet the Eminent Writer" series, featuring eminent Kashmiri writer and literary personality G.R. Hasrat Gadda at the Conference Hall of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothi Bagh, Srinagar.

The programme brought together an impressive gathering of eminent writers, scholars, academicians, students, literary enthusiasts and members of civil society, reflecting the growing interest in literary and cultural pursuits across Jammu and Kashmir.

The event commenced with a formal welcome, followed by an introduction to the life and literary achievements of G.R. Hasrat Gadda, whose contributions to Kashmiri literature have earned him widespread recognition for their depth, humanism and artistic excellence. His literary journey, spanning several decades, was highlighted as an inspiration for aspiring writers and readers alike.

In his address, G.R. Hasrat Gadda shared his experiences as a writer, reflecting on the changing landscape of literature, the enduring relevance of the Kashmiri language, and the pivotal role of writers in preserving the cultural ethos of society. He stressed the need to encourage reading habits among the younger generation and urged budding writers to remain rooted in their language, culture and values while embracing contemporary literary trends.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that I Mohammad Ramzan Bandy S/O Abdul Aziz Bandy R/O Lal Bandy Mohalla Handwara Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir have applied for upgradation of my class BEE contractor card issued vide No. SE (R&B) SB-B-2982 of 2019-20 to Class AAY. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemia Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter. AB

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that I Aijaz Ahmad Gujri S/O Mohammad Ramzan Gujri Prop. of M/S Rehzan Constructions R/O Khandabawan Nawakadal Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir have applied for upgradation of my class CEE contractor card issued vide No. SB (R&B) SB/3445/CEE of 2018-19 to Class BEE. If any person has any objection in this regard, they may submit their objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Bemia Kashmir or Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter. AB

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA
Email: Email: rb-awantipora@jk.gov.in

NO: T-1/EEA/2657-61 | Dated: 02/07/2026

CORRIGENDUM

- Subject: -
1. Construction of Synthetic Volley Ball Court at HSS Dadsara.
 2. Construction of Synthetic Volley Ball Court at GHSS Panzgam.
 3. Construction of Synthetic Volley Ball Court at Allochibagh (Civil Part).
- Reference: -
1. This office e-NIT No. 27/EEA/R&B/of 2026-27/1809-19 Dated 10-06-2026.

Please read item No. 6 of advertised BOQ's as under:-

Please read item No. 6 as	Instead of
Providing and fixing of artificial UV resistant polyethylene synthetic (FIFA approved) Grass with rigid monofilament yarn, 40mm pile height and 1250 gm/sqm pile weight with total carpet weight not less than 2500 gm/sqm and infill in the ratio of 2:1 with silica sand (size of sand 0.2mm-1.00mm) 15mm (minimum) height and Rubber 8mm (minimum) height infill weight not less than 2.25 kg/sft. The stitch rate per meter should be minimum of 285, all line marking shall be white, unless in the drawings. Line marking shall be stitched "tufted" material (painted lines are not acceptable) the carpet should be laid as per the manufacturers manual including all applicable taxes, levies, octroi, transportation loading/unloading complete (European/American made) @ Rs 3315/sqm	Providing and fixing of artificial UV Resistant polyethylene synthetic (FIFA approved) Grass with ridged monofilament yarn, 35 mm pile height and 1250 gm / sqm pile weight with total carpet weight not less than 2500 gm / sqm and infill in the ratio of 2:1 with sand (size of sand 0.2mm - 1.00 mm) 15 mm (minimum) height and rubber 8 mm (minimum) height infull weight not less than 2.25 kg / sft. the stitch rate per mtr should be minimum of 285 all line marking shall be white , unless in the drawings line marking shall be stitched " tufted " material (painted line or not accepted) the carpet should be laid as per manufacturers manual inc. all applicable taxes lavies, octroi , transportation loading unloading complete job (European /American made) @ Rs 3438.10/sqm
Estimated/Advertised Cost = Rs 14.78 Lacs.	Estimated/Advertised Cost = Rs 15.22 Lacs.
Class of Contractor = BEE, CEE, DEE.	Class of Contractor = BEE, CEE.

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned NIT

Sd/-
Technical officer
DIPK-2790-26
DT: 02/07/2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

Iran Invites J&K Leaders to Khamenei Funeral

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Several political and religious leaders from Jammu and Kashmir, including PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and host of religious leaders have been invited by Iran to attend the funeral ceremonies of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei.

Other invitees from Jammu and Kashmir include senior Shia clerics Aga Syed Mohammad Hadi, Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari and President of Anjuman-e-Sharie Shian, Aga Syed Hassan Al-Mosavi Al-Safavi and Shai Association President Imran Raza Ansari.

Mehbooba Mufti is expected to travel to Tehran to pay her respects and offer condolences, while the office of MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi confirmed that it had received a formal invitation.

Meanwhile, Masroor Abbas Ansari said he would be unable to attend the ceremonies as he has been denied a passport. In a post on X, Ansari said he has been without a passport for the past nine years despite repeated

efforts to obtain one. He said receiving the invitation was an honour but being unable to attend because of the denial of a passport was a lifelong sorrow.

Unconfirmed reports said Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Grand Mufti Nasir al Islam are also figure in the list of invitees.

It bears mention that Iran has announced it will offer a special 10-day visa for free to people, including Indian nationals, desiring of attending the funeral of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Under the arrangement, Indian travellers will not receive visa-free entry, but Iran is expected to waive the normal visa fee for eligible applicants.

The applicants will have to apply online for the visa and get it before they plan their trip. The applicant will be given a special entry in the Iran eVisa system for the funeral at the usual rate for an Iranian visa application to make it exempt.

It should be clear that the Iranians are handling these applications using the e-visa system with Iran, where the user has to select the special entry visa type, and he/she travels for the purpose of attending funerals.

Aga Syed Hassan Stopped from Travelling to Tehran

The Jammu and Kashmir Anjuman-e-Sharie Shian has alleged that its president, Aga Syed Hassan Al-Mosavi Al-Safavi, was stopped from travelling to Tehran to attend the funeral ceremonies of Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei despite holding valid travel documents and an official invitation. In a media invitation issued on Thursday, the organisation said it would hold a press conference at 10:30 am on Friday at Darul Mustafa, Shariyat Abad, Budgam, to present its version of the incident and respond to media queries. According to the organisation, Aga Hassan was stopped at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, before boarding his flight to Iran. However, it did not specify the reasons cited by the authorities for preventing his travel. The organisation said it would elaborate on the incident during Friday's briefing.

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has upheld a trial court's decision directing the Union Government to compensate landowners in Sopore whose property remained inaccessible due to the occupation of security forces, while clarifying that rent is payable only for the formally requisitioned portion and compensation for the remaining land rendered unusable.

Dismissing an appeal filed by the Union of India and others, a bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar modified the trial court's decree to distinguish between rent and compensation.

The dispute pertained to 23 kanals and 14 marlas of land with two structures at Jalalabad, Sopore. According to the pleadings, the property was initially occupied by the Border Security Force (BSF) in 1995, later handed over to the CRPF, and subsequently taken over by the Army's 22 Rashtriya Rifles in March 2011.

accessible ministers to MLAs.

The possibility of one minister being dropped from Jammu and replaced by someone from the region cannot be ruled out. However, that remains an even chance.

There is also a likelihood that two to three new faces from the Kashmir Valley could find a place in the cabinet. It will be interesting to watch whether Omar Abdullah keeps one berth vacant for the Congress in the government or fills it with a nominee from the NC.

All indications suggest that one new face each could be inducted from Central Kashmir and South Kashmir, where the party would not find it difficult to make its choices. There could also be one new face from North Kashmir, though the chances are not very high. Six MLAs from the region are reportedly eyeing induction in the council of ministers. (KNO)

Ensure Thorough Yet

and took stock of the facilities and arrangements made for the yatris. He reviewed the security arrangements, access control measures, deployment of police personnel, traffic regulation, emergency response preparedness, and other logistical arrangements to ensure the safety, security, and convenience of the pilgrims.

The DGP also interacted with police personnel deployed at the Base Camp and appreciated their dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment towards ensuring the successful conduct of the Yatra. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest standards of vigilance while adopting a pilgrim-friendly approach in the discharge of their duties.

Later, DGP Prabhat chaired a security review meeting at the Nunwan Base Camp, attended by senior police officers. The meeting focused on the prevailing security scenario, operational preparedness, deployment strategy, area domination, intelligence coordination, contingency planning, and measures to strengthen the overall security grid along the Yatra route.

The DGP directed the officers to maintain round-the-clock alertness, ensure effective supervision at all levels, and uphold close coordination among field formations for prompt response to any contingency.

He stressed that every possible measure should be taken to provide a safe, secure, and seamless pilgrimage experience for the yatris. (KNO)

Roads Blocked,

devastating aftermath of twin cloudbursts continued to unfold across the Khal Jugasar belt of Bhalasa, where torrents of water, mud and boulders triggered massive flash floods, washing away roads and isolating several remote villages.

The Thathri-Kilhotran road remained the worst-hit stretch, with huge quantities of debris burying the roadway, bringing traffic to a complete halt and leaving commuters stranded on both sides for several hours. With no alternative route available, concerns mounted over the movement of ambulances and other emergency services in case of medical emergencies.

Several link roads connecting remote villages were either washed away or severely damaged, cutting off large parts of the Bhalasa region from the rest of Doda district and complicating relief and restoration efforts.

Significant damage was also reported from the Bhatiyas area, where floodwaters entered a government food storage depot, destroying food grain stocks. Local residents estimated that stocks equivalent to two to three truckloads were damaged after remaining submerged under floodwater and debris.

Residents alleged that despite informing the local administration immediately after the disaster, road clearance operations did not begin for several hours, prolonging the hardship of stranded travellers and local inhabitants.

In the absence of immediate official assistance, local youth, transporters and volunteers stepped in to help stranded passengers, regulate traffic and assist people trapped by the blocked road until restoration work eventually commenced.

HC Upholds Compensation For Army-Restricted Sopore Land



The landowners alleged that while rent had been paid during the BSF and CRPF occupation, payments either stopped or were not made according to revised rates after the Army took possession. They also contended that the Army's security arrangements, including concertina fencing and restricted access, rendered the entire property unusable.

The Union of India contended that only 6 kanals and 6 marlas belonging to the petitioners had been requisitioned and that rent had been paid in accordance with the rates fixed by the District Rent Assessment Committee. It further stated that the remaining land was never occupied.

After examining the pleadings, the High Court held that although only 6 kanals and 6 marlas had been formally requisitioned, the Army's security restrictions effectively deprived the landowners of access to the remaining 17 kanals and 8 marlas.

"The plaintiffs may not strictly be entitled to rent for the non-requisitioned area but they would certainly be entitled to compensation for loss of use and enjoyment of that portion of the area," the Court observed.

It ruled that the Army cannot avoid liability once it is established that its security arrangements completely excluded the owners from accessing the remaining land.

While affirming the trial court's findings, the Bench clarified that rent shall be paid for the requisitioned 6 kanals and 6 marlas at rates fixed by the Rent Assessment Committee from time to time, whereas compensation for the remaining 17 kanals and 8 marlas shall be paid at the

same rates.

With this, the High Court dismissed the Union Government's appeal and modified the trial court's decree to the limited extent of distinguishing rent for requisitioned land from compensation for the land rendered unusable due to security restrictions.

"Accordingly, while dismissing the appeal filed by the appellants (Union of India and others), it is clarified that for the requisitioned portion of the suit land measuring 06 kanals and 06 marlas, the appellants/defendants shall pay rent to the plaintiffs at the rates specified by the Rent Assessment Committee from time to time," the court said, adding, "For balance portion of the suit land measuring 17 kanals and 08 marlas, they shall pay compensation for its use and occupation to the plaintiffs at the same rates. The judgment/decree passed by the learned trial court shall stand modified to the aforesaid extent."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Amarnath Yatra Begins

trek to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine on Friday through the twin routes. The 57-day pilgrimage will continue until August 28, with devotees travelling either through the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district or the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

Pilgrims expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made by the administration and security agencies. First-time yatris appreciated the facilities provided at the base camp, while returning pilgrims said the arrangements had improved over the years, particularly for elderly and specially abled devotees.

Officials said elaborate arrangements have been put in place by the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, the Jammu and Kashmir administration, police, Army, CRPF and other security agencies to ensure the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

The convoy is being escorted under heavy security, while traffic restrictions, area domination measures and daily sector-wise advisories have been enforced along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway for the duration of the yatra.

More than 3.9 lakh devotees have registered for this year's pilgrimage, while on-the-spot registration is also continuing in Jammu. The annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra commenced on Thursday with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagging off the first batch of 4,822 pilgrims from the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu amid elaborate security arrangements.

LG Pays Obeisance At Jammu Ram Temple Earlier in the day, Sinha paid obeisance at the historic Ram Mandir in Jammu's Purani Mandi and prayed for the happiness, well-being and prosperity of the people. He also interacted with sadhus and sadhvis staying at the temple before embarking on the pilgrimage and extended his best wishes for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey. More than 400 seers have gathered at the temple, which traditionally serves as a halt for saints undertaking the annual pilgrimage.

Before flagging off the convoy, the Lieutenant Governor performed a special puja at the Bhagwati Nagar base camp. Addressing the pilgrims, he described the Amarnath Yatra as "a sacred path where devotion meets spiritual awakening" and wished all devotees a safe, comfortable and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage.

In a post on X after the ceremony, Sinha said every step on the sacred route reflected unwavering faith and devotion to Lord Shiva and prayed that the pilgrimage brought immense joy and divine peace to all.

The first batch left Jammu in a convoy of escorted vehicles under a multi-tier security cover and later entered the Kashmir Valley through the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund in south Kashmir.

The pilgrims were welcomed by senior civil administration, police and CRPF officers, including Deputy Inspector General of Police, South Kashmir Range, Javid Iqbal Matoo, with garlands, flower bouquets and flower petals before proceeding towards the Baltal and Pahalgam base camps.

The pilgrims will begin the onward trek to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine on Friday through the twin routes. The 57-day pilgrimage will continue until August 28, with devotees travelling either through the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district or the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

Pilgrims expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made by the administration and security agencies. First-time yatris appreciated the facilities provided at the base camp, while returning pilgrims said the arrangements had improved over the years, particularly for elderly and specially abled devotees.

Tech-Driven Security Shields Amarnath Yatra This year's Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is being conducted under one of the most technology-driven security arrangements in recent years, with authorities deploying advanced surveillance systems, artificial intelligence, drones and digital monitoring tools to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

Officials said nearly 670 additional

companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been deployed across Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen the security grid along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, the twin pilgrimage routes, base camps and other vulnerable locations.

As part of the enhanced security architecture, aerial surveillance through drones has been intensified at key transit points, highways, base camps and other sensitive locations. Authorities are also using AI-assisted monitoring systems for crowd management, movement analysis and real-time response coordination.

Pilgrims are being tracked through Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, enabling authorities to monitor their movement in real time and facilitate quicker emergency response during adverse weather conditions or medical emergencies.

To improve communication and provide essential services to pilgrims, the Jammu and Kashmir Police has launched the PEHCHAAN mobile application, offering real-time information, emergency assistance and other services aimed at ensuring a digitally connected and hassle-free pilgrimage.

Authorities have also deployed 30 Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) along the Baltal and Nunwan-Pahalgam routes. Equipped with specialised mountaineering gear, medical supplies and communication equipment, the teams have been stationed at vulnerable locations to respond swiftly to accidents, weather-related incidents and health emergencies.

Meanwhile, helicopter services have been suspended for this year's pilgrimage as part of enhanced security measures. All pilgrims will travel by road to the Baltal and Nunwan base camps before undertaking the trek to the holy cave shrine.

Officials said the multi-layered security plan has been put in place through close coordination among the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Army, Central Armed Police Forces, intelligence agencies and the civil administration to ensure the peaceful and incident-free conduct of the 57-day pilgrimage.

Cabinet Reshuffle

With Jammu and Kashmir having a total of 95 MLAs, the permissible number of ministers under the Act works out to 9.5. Since the figure includes a fraction, the rule is that if the fraction is 0.5 or below, it is rounded down to the nearest whole number. Therefore, 9.5 becomes 9. On the other hand, if the fraction is 0.6 or above, it is rounded up to the next whole number, making it 10.

So, J&K cannot have more than nine ministers. With six ministers currently in place, three slots remain vacant in the council of ministers.

Indications & possibilities The cabinet expansion is taking place after ruling National Conference's brainstorming session at Dachigam on June 03. The Chief Minister himself said that he feels it necessary to move forward with cabinet expansion and reshuffle after Dachigam meeting. What transpired at Dachigam is now widely known. The main highlight of the meeting was that Deputy CM Surinder Kumar Choudhary faced a torrent of criticism from NC legislators over fund allocation as well as his behaviour with legislators.

Two other ministers-Javid Rana and Satish Sharma-also faced criticism during the session. The biggest possibility is that Surinder Kumar Choudhary may lose the key portfolio of the Roads & Buildings Department currently held by him. However, chances of him being dropped from the council of ministers or divested of the position of Deputy CM are slim, given that he is the seniormost Hindu MLA from Jammu region within the party.

The likelihood of a rejig in the portfolios of almost all ministers, including the Chief Minister, is very high. It is widely expected that Sakina Masood Ittoo and Javid Dar may be divested of less significant portfolios, considering their conduct over the past 20 months. Sakina Ittoo is regarded as one of the most effective ministers in the government and has played a key role in countering opposition parties.

Known for his quiet and diligent style of working, Javid is considered one of the most

The latest disaster has also revived public concern over inadequate drainage infrastructure in the region. Residents said repeated demands for proper drainage channels and flood protection measures had gone unaddressed, making the area increasingly vulnerable during every spell of heavy rainfall.

Meanwhile, relentless rain in the upper catchment of the Chenab River caused the water level to rise to nearly one metre above the danger mark, prompting the district administration to issue a high alert. People living along the riverbanks were advised to stay away from the river and avoid unnecessary movement in vulnerable areas.

Officials said restoration teams have been deployed to clear debris and reopen blocked roads, while the administration continues to monitor the weather as fresh spells of rain could trigger additional landslides and flash floods.

Despite widespread damage to roads and public infrastructure and major disruption to normal life, no loss of life had been reported in either district till the filing of this report.

HC Clears Way

consideration on August 29.

Schools Must

an increasingly important role in addressing challenges such as substance abuse, mental stress, peer pressure, digital risks and changing lifestyles.

He said teachers should be equipped with modern tools and training to help students build emotional resilience, self-awareness, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

"Education today cannot be restricted to measurable academic achievement alone. Life-skills education has become essential as children face increasing social pressures and growing dangers of substance abuse. Schools must prepare students to face these challenges with confidence," he said.

Highlighting the National Education Policy (NEP), Sinha said it aims to develop creative, responsible, innovative, compassionate and self-reliant citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

He also commended the School Education Department for launching online classes for students of Classes XI and XII across ten districts, describing the initiative as a significant step towards educational equity by enabling students in remote areas to access quality education.

The Lieutenant Governor said the success of educational reforms would ultimately be measured by the confidence of students and their contribution to building a self-reliant Jammu and Kashmir.

He stressed that education should equip young people not only with academic knowledge but also with the ability to overcome hardships, rebuild communities and promote social harmony.

On the occasion, Sinha felicitated meritorious students and winners of the Tobacco-Free Educational Institution (TOFEI) initiative and released several books on life skills.

The programme was attended by Bharti Airtel Foundation Co-Chairman Rakesh Bharti Mittal, Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Nareish Kumar, Bharti Airtel Foundation CEO Nuriya Ansari, Director School Education Jammu Dr Naseem Javid Chowdhary, senior officials, teachers, students and heads of educational institutions.

SC Warns Against

reiterate and declare zero tolerance for the Bar as well as the Bench to cite, refer to, or rely on such material. It is also clarified that our judgment shall have no bearing on the rightful use of AI, but on the presentation or reliance on fake or hallucinated material as if it were a court precedent," it said.

The bench said mere declaration of prohibitory action is not sufficient and there must be a consequential action following accountability.

"So far as the responsibility of the bar is concerned, we direct the Bar Council of India (BCI), being the apex statutory body, to constitute a committee and deliberate on this issue of members of the bar submitting such fake and hallucinated material before the Court as if they are precedents of law," it said.

The verdict said the apex bar body must take up this issue with utmost seriousness, deliberate earnestly, and prescribe a guiding principle to prevent such occurrences, along with the disciplinary action that will follow a violation of the norms.

The matter arose from an insolvency dispute involving Pooja Ramesh Singh and Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd and Essel Infraprojects Ltd.

The appellant challenged an NCLT Mumbai order that had admitted a Section 7 insolvency application.

The top court found that several "precedents" cited by the NCLT to justify its decision simply did not exist.

These included fabricated case names and paragraphs wrongly attributed to genuine citations. For instance, the judgement cited ICICI Bank Ltd vs Urban Infrastructure Real Estate Ltd (2019) 16 SCC 528 and Sarbjit Singh vs Union Bank of India (2022) 7 SCC 464, both of which were found to be entirely non-existent citations.

While respondent Jammu and Kashmir Bank filed an affidavit clarifying that their counsel had not cited these cases and that the NCLT had obtained them through its "own research," the apex court held that the source of the error did not mitigate the damage to the rule of law.

"More than the inevitable consequence of setting aside such judgments, what is significant for our decision-making is our resolve to adopt AI technology in aid of adjudication, while at the same time asserting and declaring total and absolute control over adjudication, with a human in the loop at every stage," the bench observed.

New NH-44 Tunnels

tunnels were built using the New Austrian Tunneling Method, which lets engineers adapt to changing ground conditions," the engineer quoted above said. "Work advanced in stages, with engineers monitoring stability throughout construction."

Residents who have watched the highway for decades describe the change through daily experience rather than engineering terms.

Ratan Kumar, who lives in Digidol, remembers rainfall bringing long waits and uncertainty. "Earlier, when rocks used to fall and during heavy rains, many people would be forced to wait for days on either side. Now, we can reach from Digidol to the Ramsoo-Magarkote side in just five minutes," he said.

Naresh Sharma, another resident, remembers daily traffic jams and frequent accidents that turned routine trips into long delays. "Children often spent hours travelling to and from school," he said. "Now, we can reach Ramban within no time."

The Digidol-Panthal tunnel represents one link in a broader effort to make travel through the Himalayas more reliable.

The 9.28-kilometre Chenani-Nashri Tunnel, opened in 2017, shortened the Jammu-Srinagar journey by about 30 kilometres and reduced travel time by nearly two hours.

The 8.5-kilometre Banihal-Qazigund Tunnel shifted another vulnerable stretch beneath the Pir Panjal range. The 2-Morh Tunnel has already provided year-round access to Sonamarg, while the 14.15-kilometre Zojila Tunnel, which achieved breakthrough in June, is scheduled to open in 2028 as Asia's longest bi-directional road tunnel. Work also continues on the 4.38-kilometre Marog-Digidol Tunnel and a 6.02-kilometre viaduct near Banihal, gradually removing bottlenecks along the corridor.

Together, these projects are strengthening Kashmir's surface communication, and supporting commerce, tourism and emergency access.

Meanwhile, drivers now pass beneath Panthal in minutes, leaving behind a stretch once defined by landslides and long delays.

That brief journey highlights years of engineering beneath the Himalayas and marks a lasting shift on the valley's lifeline.

Soccer Fans Are Into This Year's World Cup, But The US Still Isn't A Soccer Nation, New Poll Finds

AP

WASHINGTON: This World Cup has given U.S. soccer fans plenty to cheer about — even if a new survey shows most Americans are still on the sidelines.

New polling from Ipsos Sports, provided exclusively to The Associated Press, shows that the World Cup has excited soccer fans and piqued many Americans' interest, even as the sport faces an uphill climb to reach mainstream popularity in the United States.

Despite that challenge, many U.S. adults were excited about the United States making it to the knockout round of the World Cup. Most soccer fans in the U.S. have been pleased by the U.S. men's national team performance, and the overwhelming majority are excited for the rest of the World Cup. The poll was conducted June

26-28, after the United States advanced from the group stage but before they won against Bosnia-Herzegovina in the knockout round.

Soccer fans are excited by the USMNT's performance. About 6 in 10 soccer fans were "extremely" or "very" excited about the U.S. advancing to the knockout round, much higher than the 25% of Americans overall who said the same.

The United States has historically lost once they reached the knockout rounds. Before Wednesday, they had lost a knockout game in 2002.

Though this poll was conducted before the United States' victory against Bosnia-Herzegovina, fans were already giving the U.S. men's team credit for having a strong showing in the group stage. Most soccer fans, 55%, said the U.S. team's performance was going "ex-



tremely well" or "very well." One-quarter, roughly, believed it was going "somewhat well."

Similarly, about half of soccer fans say the United States' role in co-hosting the World Cup is going at least "very" well.

There's less enthusiasm for FIFA's role in managing the World Cup. Only about one-third of soccer fans in the U.S. say that's going "extremely" or "very" well. During the tournament, FIFA has faced criticism for enforcing mandated hydration breaks that some say ruin the momentum of games, as well as cooperating with travel restrictions and visa refusals against Iran.

The poll found Americans and soccer fans alike are about evenly split on whether they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of FIFA. About 2 in 10 U.S. adults have a positive view of FIFA, while 25% have a

negative one. Most Americans

— 55% — don't have an opinion. Will this be the moment Americans turn to soccer? Probably not. It's not easy to get Americans to care about soccer, even with the World Cup in their backyard.

Only about 2 in 10 Americans consider themselves fans of international or U.S. soccer, far behind the share who root for professional football, basketball or baseball. And roughly one-third of U.S. adults say they have heard or read "a lot" about the World Cup, though most have heard at least "a little."

Roughly 2 in 10 U.S. adults — 17% — say they are "extremely" or "very" excited about the rest of the World Cup. That's up a smidge from Ipsos polling in May, but points to the challenge that comes with trying to turn America into a soccer nation.

Thakur, Jain Takes Two Apiece As SL 'A' Score 288 For 5 On Day 1

Press Trust of India

GALLE: Pacer Yash Thakur and off-spinner Saransh Jain took two wickets apiece but Sri Lanka A rode on skipper Sahan Arachchige's unbeaten 83 to reach 288 for 5 in 85 overs on the opening day of the second unofficial 'Test' against India 'A' here on Thursday.

While Arachchige's 148-ball innings had nine fours and a six, he enjoyed a 99-run stand for the fifth wicket with keeper Anjala Bandara (42), who was bowled by off-break bowler Jain.

Apart from Thakur (2/32 in 14 overs) and Jain (2/77 in 24 overs), lanky speedster Gurnoor Brar (1/49 in 15 overs) also got a wicket while Zeeshan Ansari, playing his first red ball game after a gap of six years, gave away 64 in his 16 wicketless overs.

On a slow Galle track, picking up wickets wasn't an easy proposition as Sri



Lanka A openers Pawantha Weerasinghe (39) and Sohan di Livera (28) added 53 for the opening stand.

It was Thakur who got left-handed Di Livera to edge one to Devdutt Padikkal in the slip cordon.

Weerasinghe, the other southpaw, had done all the hardwork to see off the morning session before Brar struck minutes before lunch. He got Weerasinghe to edge one to India A skip-

per and keeper Dhruv Jurel behind the stumps.

It was Nuwanidu Fernando (44) and Ashen Bandara (34), who also looked set as they added 57 for the third wicket before Jain had the former caught by Padikkal.

Ashen was dismissed when he edged one to Jurel off Thakur, who came in as second change, bowling well with the semi-new and subsequently the old ball.

Auqib Nabi (0/50 in 15

overs) for the second match in a row didn't look potent with the new ball and was easily negotiated by the Lanka A openers.

Brar was way more quicker and was able to bowl the effort deliveries, although he didn't get anything more than a solitary success.

The biggest disappointment was Ansari, a surprise pick by the national selection committee based on his net bowling. Ansari's lack of preparedness was singularly evident as he bowled a lot of long hops and half trackers which hardly troubled the batters with his leg break. He was also taken to the cleaners on a few occasions.

Brief Scores:
Sri Lanka A 1st Innings: 288/5 (Sahan Arachchige 83 batting, Nuwanidu Fernando 44, Anjala Bandara 42, Yash Thakur 2/32, Saransh Jain 2/77, Gurnoor Brar 1/49).

World Cup Can Help Us At Asian Games: Sjoerd Marijne

Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: Indian women's hockey team coach Sjoerd Marijne on Thursday conceded that the 20-day gap between the World Cup and the Asian Games is tough, but expressed confidence in his team's ability to tide over physical barriers.

The FIH Women's World Cup will be held between August 14 and 30 at Wavre, Belgium before the team travels to Japan for the Asian Games, beginning on September 19.

"Like it was in 2018 (Jakarta Games where India brought home a silver), the (FIH) World Cup can help us at this Asian Games," said Marijne, who led India to a historic fourth-place finish at Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

"We have to focus on good strength and conditioning. But it is important for us to play a lot of matches. It will help the girls understand tac-



tics better and also adjust to opponents' tactics," said the Dutchman while speaking in a panel discussion organised by Sports Writers' Association of Bangalore (SWAB) as part of the World Sports Journalists Day celebration.

MM Somaya, former India captain and gold medalist at the 1980 Moscow

Olympics, said the World Cup which precedes the continental championship will offer the ideal lead-up.

"We are ranked eighth in the world among men and ninth among women. So it is important to win as many matches as we can.

"The Cup format has also changed and it has

three stages, which means we have to focus on every match," said Somaya while speaking on the subject — 'Indian Hockey: Big year, bigger aspirations.' A gold medal in this Asian Games will ensure a berth at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, and Somaya urged the teams to go full steam in the event.



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After WhatsApp, Govt Notices, Telegram & Signal

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 2: After sending a notice to Meta-owned WhatsApp, the IT Ministry has now shot off notices to Telegram and Signal, raising questions on their existing username feature and asking how the platforms are addressing concerns related to fraud and impersonation risks, according to a source.

The source said that in the notice to Telegram, the government has asked the platform why it should be allowed to have the username feature.

The feature allows users to create unique usernames that can be used for connecting on the platform without sharing phone numbers.

On Wednesday, the Centre issued a notice to Meta over the username feature announced for WhatsApp, citing concerns that it could materially increase online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks.

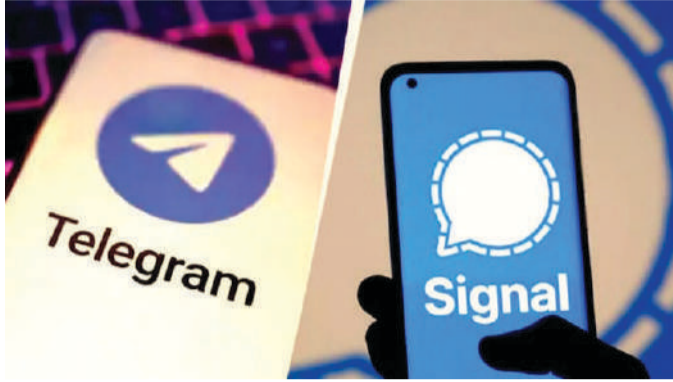
It had also directed WhatsApp to pause the feature until consultations on the issue are completed "to the satisfaction of the Government".

The government has now widened its scrutiny to other messaging platforms as well.

The source told PTI that the IT ministry has also written to Telegram and Signal - which already have the username feature - and asked how concerns around fraud and impersonation are being addressed by them. "Government has asked Telegram why the feature should be there," the source said.

Telegram and Signal could not be reached for their comments.

The government source added that the two cases are similar, but



not identical. Telegram already has the feature in place, while WhatsApp has only announced it. The user bases also differ significantly, with India being WhatsApp's largest market and the platform having over 500 million users in the country, far exceeding Telegram's reach.

In its notice to WhatsApp, the government had expressed concern that the proposed username feature may "materially increase" cases of online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks by enabling bad actors to solicit and message victims.

Meta was asked to explain why action shouldn't be initiated under the IT Act and rules over WhatsApp's new feature that may increase cybercrimes. The Centre also reminded Meta that WhatsApp, as a significant social media intermediary, was bound by due diligence obligations under the IT Act and rules.

WhatsApp, in a statement, had defended the feature, citing built-in safeguards to prevent scams and

impersonations and protect users.

That was followed by a detailed set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) posted on social media that outlined details of the feature, the safeguards built in, and its plans to address concerns around impersonation, scams and unwanted contact as users begin reserving usernames.

Over the past months, Telegram has come under the regulatory lens in India with rising concerns related to fraud, impersonation and circulation of sensitive content. The Indian government had imposed a week-long ban on Telegram and its associated web services until June 22, citing the platform's failure to curb the circulation of leaked and fake National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) examination papers, misleading content and other fraudulent activities linked to the country's medical entrance examination process.

The instant messaging platform, however, returned to service in India after the government ban expired.

Explainer: Why WhatsApp's Username Feature Sparked Row

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 2: WhatsApp has announced plans to roll out a username feature later this year, allowing those on its platform to communicate without sharing their phone numbers. The Meta-owned messaging platform maintains that the feature is aimed at enhancing privacy, particularly in group chats and interactions with new contacts. The company has already opened early reservations for usernames.

Why is WhatsApp introducing a username feature?

The username feature is intended to let users connect without revealing their phone numbers, offering an extra layer of privacy and protection. According to WhatsApp, the feature is optional and aims to make interactions with new contacts and participation in group chats more secure by reducing the need to share personal contact details.

The company says the feature will be introduced gradually later this year with multiple safeguards built into the system.

Why are experts and users concerned?

The proposed feature has triggered worry among cybersecurity experts, startup founders and some users who

fear it could lead to impersonation, spoofing and financial fraud through lookalike usernames. Some public figures, including MobiKwik CEO Bipin Preet Singh and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, have said that close variations of their names appear to have already been reserved, fuelling concerns about possible wider misuse once the feature becomes mainstream. Industry watchers have cautioned that shifting trust from a visible phone number to a platform-managed identity could dilute accountability.

Government missive to WhatsApp:

On Wednesday, the Centre issued a notice to Meta, saying the new WhatsApp feature could "materially increase" online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams and impersonation attacks by enabling bad actors to contact victims using misleading usernames. It has asked Meta to explain why action should not be initiated under the IT Act and related rules, sought detailed documents within three days, and directed the company to pause the feature until all consultations are completed "to the satisfaction of the Government".

What WhatsApp says:

While the clock is ticking on

that three-day timeline given by the Government - and it would be interesting to see how WhatsApp defends its latest move before authorities - a spokesperson for the platform, in a statement on Wednesday, maintained that the feature is not yet live and will be rolled out gradually later this year with multiple safeguards. WhatsApp asserts that usernames are optional, cannot be searched by strangers and that users can enable an additional "username key", requiring both elements to be in place before someone can initiate contact.

In a set of FAQs released on Thursday, WhatsApp reiterated it has reserved usernames of public figures, celebrities, government entities and Meta-verified accounts, along with lookalike derivatives, so they can only be claimed by legitimate owners. It has also dismissed as "false" claims that popular or well-known usernames are being reserved by others. Users who link their Instagram or Facebook accounts can opt for matching usernames to establish ownership before unlinking them later if they so choose, it says.

WhatsApp says it will display contextual warnings for first-time messages, such as whether the sender is a new account, shares mutual groups or is messaging from another country. It also plans to limit outreach by new accounts, block repeated attempts to guess username

keys, and monitor 'reports and blocks' to detect impersonation and scam patterns.

What happens next?

The government is awaiting Meta's response to its notice before deciding its next course of action. But it has already made it clear that unless the response is found to be satisfactory, unless they can "assure and convince, WhatsApp won't be allowed to proceed with the rollout.

While WhatsApp maintains that the username feature strengthens privacy without compromising safety, experts feel that success on the ground will depend on how effectively the platform detects impersonation, verifies identities and protects ordinary users and small businesses - not just high-profile accounts - from abuse.

The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) has, however, expressed concern over the Centre's missive, saying the notice to WhatsApp has no clear basis in law.

"It is an attempt by the executive to decide what a company may build and ship, which no statute permits," the digital rights advocacy group said.

In a social media post, the IFF further wrote: "MeitY does not name any provision that lets it approve a product feature before release or order one withdrawn, because there is none, and the provisions it does cite do not supply that power."

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