

The Little Coffin That Silenced A Hall: Tehran Turns Farewell Into A Global Stage

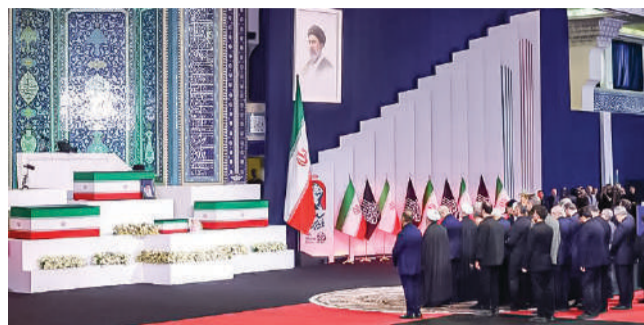
Special Correspondent

Tehran: The giant prayer hall of Imam Khomeini Mosalla fell into an almost reverential silence each time another foreign delegation approached the rows of coffins draped in the Iranian tricolour.

At the centre lay the coffin of Iran's late Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Hosseini Khamenei. Beside it rested

those of members of his family, martyred alongside him in the February 28 attack. Among them was one that drew the longest, quietest gaze from visiting dignitaries—a tiny coffin carrying the remains of the leader's 14 month old granddaughter Zahra.

It was before these coffins that presidents bowed, prime ministers stood motionless, generals saluted, clerics



whispered prayers and diplomats paused for long moments of reflection.

One after another, delegations from across the world filed past in a carefully choreographed procession that transformed mourning into one of the largest diplomatic gatherings Iran has hosted in recent years.

For Tehran, the ceremony was far more than a funeral.

It was a carefully crafted display of resilience, international outreach and political messaging.

From early morning, the cavernous Mosalla became a meeting point for nearly a hundred countries. University professors walked alongside tribal leaders, parliamentarians alongside religious leaders and resistance figures, all converging under one roof.

Many had travelled thousands of kilometres.

Others represented governments that, until recently, had little visible warmth in their relations with Tehran.

Perhaps the most striking image was not merely the diversity of those present but who had chosen to come.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived accompanied by | [More on P10](#)

J&K Braces For Fresh Spell Of Rain

Heavy Showers May Trigger Localised Flash Floods, Landslides

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is set to witness a fresh spell of rain and thundershowers over the coming days, with the Meteorological Department warning that heavy rainfall at a few places could trigger localised flash floods and landslides.

According to the Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers are likely at many places across Jammu and Kashmir from July 4 to 5, mainly during the late afternoon, evening and late night or early morning hours.

Heavy rainfall or brief intense showers accompanied by thunderstorms are also expected at a few places during the period. From July 6 to 9, the weather

MeT Advises People To Stay Away From Streams, Vulnerable Areas

is expected to remain generally hot and humid. However, many places may continue to receive brief spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers, with the possibility of isolated intense showers.

The MeT department advised people to stay away from nallas, streams and landslide or mudslide-prone areas, warning that heavy rainfall over vulnerable locations could lead to localised flash floods and landslides.

During the past 24 hours, Udhampur recorded the highest rainfall at 85 mm, followed by Kathua ARG at 41.5 mm and Rajpura ARG at 27 mm. Light to moderate rainfall was also recorded at several other stations across the Union Territory.

Despite the rain forecast, temperatures remained above normal in most | [More on P10](#)

Faith, Fervour Mark Amarnath Yatra Start; 12,168 Pay Obeisance

8,687 Pilgrims Leave Jammu In Two Batches, Multi-layer Security In Place

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra commenced on Friday with thousands of devotees setting out from the twin base camps of Baltal and Nunwan-Pahalgam for the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, where more than 12,000 pilgrims offered prayers on the opening day of the 57-day pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage began early in the morning simultaneously via the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km



Baltal route in Ganderbal district, even as intermittent rain lashed parts of the region.

Amid chants of "Bam Bam Bhole" and "Har Har Mahadev", | [More on P10](#)

Yatra Slots Fixed, Pilgrims Told Not to Arrive Early

The administration in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday said no pilgrim would be permitted to undertake the Amarnath Yatra to the holy cave shrine before the registered date, and

appealed people to wait for their turn and travel only on the date assigned to them. In an advisory, it said that as directed by the Supreme Court, the maximum number of pilgrims | [More on P10](#)

PM Lists 5 Pledges for Safe, Responsible Yatra

Urges devotees to spend 10% of pilgrimage expenditure on local products

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged devotees undertaking the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra to take five pledges aimed at ensuring a clean, safe and responsible pilgrimage while contributing to local livelihoods, environmental conservation and nation-building.

In a special message to pilgrims, pamphlets of which were distributed by the Jammu and Kashmir administration at the Nunwan and Baltal base camps, Modi called upon devotees to | [More on P10](#)

Punjab Scraps Levy, Mutton Crisis Ends

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Kashmir's mutton crisis stands resolved after the Punjab government revoked the levy imposed on vehicles transporting livestock through the state, after the intervention of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

All Kashmir Wholesale and Retail Mutton Dealers Association president Khazir Mohammad Regoo announced on Friday that the dispute over the alleged "illegal" levy imposed on Kashmiri meat traders has been resolved.

Kashmir had been facing an acute shortage of mutton ever since the Punjab government imposed a 4 per cent tax on vehicles carrying livestock through the state.

"The matter has been resolved after the Punjab authorities revoked the levy," Regoo said.

He said the association had formed a coordination committee | [More on P10](#)

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Mirwaiz Calls for Responsible Conduct by Media, Social Media Users

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Friday called for responsible conduct by media and social media users, urging them to uphold restraint and moral accountability in public conduct.

Addressing the Friday congregation at the historic Jamia Masjid here, the Mirwaiz urged individuals, society, and especially the media to uphold responsibility, restraint, and moral accountability in public conduct.

As per PTI, he said every individual carries a responsibility for which they will be answerable.

This applies to parents, teachers, traders, leaders, public figures and also the media which plays a major role in shaping public opinion, Farooq said.

The media is an important pillar of society and social media today has assumed great significance, he said.

"When used with wisdom and responsibility, it informs and strengthens society. However, when used only to gain followers, viewership or TRP without considering its impact, it can cause serious harm," the Mirwaiz added.

Referring to a recent viral

video in which a minor child was asked about heat and school holidays, he expressed concern over such content.

Farooq said society must ask whether minor children should be exposed to social media in this manner and used for public reactions without understanding the consequences.

He said children are the future and the questions asked of them and the content they are exposed to shape their thinking, and added that children cannot be treated as tools for entertainment, publicity or social media engagement.

Stressing that responsible media and social media require sensitivity and accountability, the cleric said those who hold cameras and microphones must remember that they carry a responsibility before society and before God.

He appealed to media persons, content creators and social media users to act with care, restraint and responsibility. The Mirwaiz also urged people to share content with wisdom and discretion, and said public discourse, even in disagreement, should reflect maturity, respect and moral responsibility, so that children have a good example before them.

Environment Committee Visits Achan Site, Assesses Waste Management in Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant move towards strengthening environmental governance and promoting sustainable municipal solid waste management, the Committee on Environment of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Friday visited the Achan Waste Management Site at Eidgah to review the functioning of the city's primary waste processing facility, besides on-site field inspection of the Anchar, Hokersar and Khushal Sar lakes and their associated wetlands.

The high-level delegation led by the Chairman of the Committee on Environment, M.Y. Tariq and was accompanied by Legislators Mubarak Gul, Javid Riyaz (Bedar), Dr. Sajjad Shafi, Dalip Singh, Salman Sagar, Showkat Husain Ganie besides Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department Mandeep Kaur, Secretary JKLA Manoj Kumar Pandit, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation Faz Lul Haseeb, Chairman J&K Pollution Control Committee; Vice Chairman, J&K Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA); Chief Engineer, Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED); Joint Commissioners of SMC; and other senior officers.

During the visit, the Committee carried out a comprehensive inspection of the Achan Waste Management Site and reviewed the existing solid waste management framework, ongoing waste processing operations, legacy waste remediation measures, leachate treatment systems, environmental safeguards, and the overall operational efficiency of the facility and also assessed the status of solid waste management, illegal encroachments, degradation of water bodies and the impact of pollution on public health.

The Committee also assessed the initiatives being undertaken to strengthen scientific waste processing, improve environmental



compliance, enhance sanitation standards, and ensure sustainable disposal practices in accordance with prescribed environmental norms.

Briefing the Committee, Commissioner SMC, highlighted the Corporation's sustained efforts to modernize and strengthen municipal solid waste management across Srinagar. He informed the Committee about various initiatives aimed at improving door-to-door waste collection, enhancing segregation at source, expanding scientific processing and disposal capacities, upgrading waste management infrastructure, and ensuring environmentally sustainable sanitation services for the city.

The Committee stressed on adopting modern technologies, innovative waste processing solutions, and global best practices to transform the Achan Waste Management Site into a state-of-the-art, environmentally compliant, and sustainable waste management facility.

It also emphasized that the Corporation remains committed to safeguarding public health, protecting the environment, and maintaining high standards of urban cleanliness through efficient and scientific waste management systems.

Appreciating the initiatives undertaken by the Srinagar Mu-

nicipal Corporation, the Committee underscored the need for sustained inter-departmental coordination, continuous monitoring, infrastructure augmentation, scientific management of legacy waste, and adoption of advanced waste processing technologies to further strengthen environmental protection and solid waste management across the city.

Expressing anguish over rampant illegal landfilling, unauthorized construction and indiscriminate dumping of waste in and around the wetlands, the Chairman observed that these ecological sensitive water bodies are facing serious threats due to encroachment and unplanned urban expansion.

The Committee directed the concerned departments to initiate immediate action, prepare a comprehensive time-bound action plan for the protection and restoration of these lakes and wetlands, and keep the Committee informed through periodic Action Taken Reports.

The visit reflects the Committee's commitment to advancing environmental conservation, promoting scientific municipal solid waste management, enhancing urban sanitation, and building a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable Srinagar through collaborative and forward-looking environmental initiatives.

Land Grabbers Threaten KU Officials after VC's Visit, FIR Already Registered



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Tension gripped the Mirza Bagh Residential Campus of the University of Kashmir at Sadrabal on Friday after the University's Chief Proctor, Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmad, was allegedly threatened and an attempt was made to manhandle him by suspected land grabbers shortly after Vice Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan visited the campus to review the alleged encroachment of University land.

Chief Proctor Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmad said the encroachment took place during the 8th, 9th and 10th days of Muharram when over a kanal of the University's land was occupied by some persons. The Mirza Bagh Residential Campus, spread over more than 300 kanals, houses nearly 200 residential quarters occupied by teaching and non-teaching employees of the University.

University authorities had approached Police Station Nigeen on June 30, alleging criminal trespass and damage to the fencing erected around the University's property. Acting on the complaint, a police team visited the site the same day, assessed the situation and registered an FIR against the alleged encroachers.

As per KNT, on Friday, Vice Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan, accompanied by senior University officers, visited the campus to take stock of the situation. During the visit, the Vice Chancellor directed the concerned officials to

initiate the demarcation of the University's land to safeguard the public property from further encroachment.

However, according to University officials, the situation took a serious turn soon after the Vice Chancellor and the accompanying security personnel left the campus. A group of locals entered the University premises, threatened and abused the Chief Proctor and other officials, and attempted to manhandle Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmad while objecting to the University's action against the alleged encroachment.

Speaking to KNT, Chief Proctor Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmad confirmed the incident, alleging that the persons who had allegedly grabbed more than one kanal of Kashmir University land threatened him with consequences and attempted to manhandle him when he resisted the encroachment.

"They threatened me and tried to manhandle me after I objected to the illegal occupation of University land. An FIR has already been registered, and we are pursuing the matter through legal channels," Prof. Ahmad told KNT.

University officials described the encroached land as public property belonging to the University and urged the administration to ensure its protection by taking strict legal action against those involved.

Police have already registered a case in connection with the alleged trespass and damage to University property, while further investigation is underway. [KNT]

Foul Smell from Achan Dumping Site Sickens Patients, Staff at SKIMS

Medical Superintendent wrote repeated letters to SMC but no action taken, reveals RTI

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The persistent foul smell emanating from the Achan dumping site has once again become a major source of concern for patients, attendants and healthcare workers at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, with the problem intensifying during the ongoing summer season.

Patients and attendants, speaking to KNO, expressed frustration over the continued neglect of the issue, saying the smell becomes unbearable during the afternoon and evening hours.

"My father has been admitted here for over a week. During the daytime, especially when the temperature rises, the smell becomes so strong that it makes us nauseous. A hospital should provide a healing atmosphere, but this foul odour only adds to our stress," said an attendant from north Kashmir.

Another attendant from south Kashmir said, "We are already going through emotional and financial hardship while caring for our patient. The unbearable smell makes it difficult to even sit outside the wards for a few minutes. Authorities must resolve this issue without further delay."

A patient undergoing treatment at SKIMS said the persistent stench often causes discomfort and loss of appetite. "The

smell is overwhelming at times. It affects our peace of mind and makes recovery even more difficult," he said.

Hospital staff also voiced concern, saying they have been facing the problem for years. "The foul smell is more intense during the summer months. Doctors, nurses, support staff and even those living in the residential quarters have to endure it almost every day. It is not only unpleasant but also affects the overall working environment," a staff member said on condition of anonymity.

Medical Superintendent, SKIMS, Prof. Farooq Ahmad Jan, has written to the Commissioner of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), urging immediate intervention to address the issue, stating that the foul odour continues to cause immense inconvenience and poses a potential health risk to critically ill patients admitted to the premier tertiary care hospital.

According to the letter accessed by KNO through an RTI by activist M M Shuja, SKIMS had earlier raised the issue with the SMC. However, despite repeated representations, the problem has persisted. In another communication issued this year, the Medical Superintendent reminded the civic body that the unbearable stench continues to affect patients, attendants and

hospital staff, particularly during the summer months when rising temperatures intensify the smell from the dumping site.

The hospital administration said numerous complaints have been received from attendants who spend days and nights with their loved ones undergoing treatment. The unpleasant odour, it noted, not only causes discomfort but also creates an unhealthy environment for patients battling serious illnesses. Staff members residing in the nearby residential quarters are also facing the same problem on a daily basis.

"We have repeatedly requested the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to take urgent and effective remedial measures to mitigate the foul smell from the Achan dumping site but no action has been taken as of now," an official said.

The issue is directly impacting patient welfare, attendants and hospital staff. Early intervention is essential in the larger public interest.

The SKIMS administration has urged the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to take concrete and lasting measures to control the odour and improve waste management practices at the Achan dumping site, stressing that safeguarding the health and dignity of patients should remain a top priority.

Crime Branch Files Chargesheet against Srinagar Man

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Kashmir, of the Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir has filed a chargesheet against a Srinagar resident for allegedly duping several job seekers of lakhs of rupees by promising overseas employment and providing forged documents, officials said on Friday.

The chargesheet in FIR No. 67/2021, registered under Sections 420, 468 and 471 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), has been filed before the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, against Fayaz Ahmad Zarger, son of Mohammad Shafi Zarger, a resident of Qutub Din Pora, Aali Kadal, Srinagar.

According to the Crime Branch, the case originated from a written

complaint alleging that the accused, operating under the name M/s HR Choice International Education Consultancy at Karanagar, Srinagar, lured the complainant with assurances of securing employment in Bahrain.

Investigation revealed that the accused had allegedly adopted a similar modus operandi with several other victims, collecting

lakhs of rupees from them while providing forged job offer letters, visas, air tickets and other fabricated travel-related documents. To make the scheme appear genuine, the victims were reportedly made to undergo online interviews, medical examinations and sign agreements.

Despite completing the formalities and paying the demanded

amounts, none of the victims were provided employment abroad, nor was their money refunded, the investigation found.

As per KNT, the Crime Branch said the allegations were substantiated during the investigation and, after completing all legal formalities, the chargesheet was presented before the competent court for judicial determination.

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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


HIJRI CALENDAR
18 Muharram
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	3:40
ZUHR	12:35
ASR	5:35
Magrib	7:50
ISHA	9:30

This Day In History

- 1927 - Sukarno and friends form the pro-Indonesian independence party, the PNI (Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia) in Batavia, Dutch East Indies
- 1942 - 1st American bombing mission over enemy-occupied Europe (WW II)
- 1942 - US air offensive against Nazi Germany begins
- 1946 - President Manuel Roxas was inaugurated as the 5th President of the Philippines and the first president of the Third Republic at the Independence Grandstand in Manila
- 1950 - Harry Truman signs public law 600 (Puerto Ricans write own constitution)
- 1950 - The first broadcast by Radio Free Europe.
- 1968 - Radio astronomy satellite Explorer 38 launched
- 1982 - 4th Space Shuttle Mission-Columbia 4 lands at Edwards AFB
- 1987 - Discovery moves to Launch Pad 39B for STS-26 mission
- 1987 - Imran Khan takes 300th Test Cricket wicket, only Pakistani to do so
- 1988 - US Navy shoots down Iranian civilian jetliner over Gulf, kills 290
- 1989 - Unmanned Russian Mig-23 crashes in Bellegem-Kooigem, Belgium (1 dies)

From KO Archives

3 Kashmiri Women Among 1,000 Nominated For Nobel Prize

SRINAGAR - Three prominent Kashmiri women are among 91 nominated from India for this year's Nobel Peace Prize. They figure in the list of 1000 women from all over the world for the coveted nomination. According to reports, the three Kashmiris who had made it to the list are Parveena Ahanger, Nighat Shafi Pandit and Dilafroz Qazi. They have made a mark in various fields of social service and empowerment of women and children.

Parveena Ahanger, 48 is an extraordinary woman who has been living with the trauma of the custodial disappearance of her son. Over the past over a decade, she has become a rallying force for similarly circumstanced women and eventually formed an organization by the name of Association of Parents of Displaced Persons to fight the pernicious human rights abuses. In her relentless crusade against injustice, she braves physical danger to her own life and remains undeterred by the perils that go with it.

Ahanger has been instrumental in building up social pressure against the government

which was initially clueless as to the exact number of those disappearing from custody. As a result of untiring efforts of APDP, the authorities finally acknowledged more than 3000 custodial disappearances and held out an assurance to call a halt to these. Having risen above her personal trauma, Ahanger is now a prominent human rights activist in Kashmir.

Born in 1951, Nighat Shafi Pandit is the chairperson of a leading non-governmental organization, Human Effort for Love and Peace (HELP) Foundation, established in 1997 with the primary objective of organizing a social response to the growing destitution with particular emphasis on the education and healthcare of orphans, it prefers to call special children and rehabilitation of widows and other indigent members of the society irrespective of their creed, colour, community or region.

Wife of a senior IAS officer and the chairman of Public Service Commission, Muhammad Shaft Pandit, she preferred to step out of the comfortable home to move about extensively in the rural communities in both Kashmir and Jammu regions with a view to making a difference in the lives of its targeted segments. Nighat Shafi is more, focused on the education of orphans and rehabilitation of widows and leaves no occasion to share their pain and distress. She is actively involved in the promotion of peace and harmony in the insurgency-hit region.

Dilafroz Qazi is yet another Kashmiri woman who is engaged in promotion of literacy among rural folks. Born in 1972, she runs an engineering college known as SSM College of engineering near the highway town of Pattan. She is also running several primary schools.

(Kashmir Observer, 04 July, 2005)

Indian Delegation Pays Tributes to Iran Leader in Tehran

Press Trust Of India

Tehran, Jul 3: A high-level Indian delegation on Friday paid tributes to Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in US-Israeli strikes in February, in Tehran.

The delegation, comprising Bihar Governor Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain and Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita paid their respects to the Ira-

conflict," Hasnain said in a social media post.

In a separate post, Margherita said he and the Bihar governor "represented India at the funeral ceremony" and "conveyed our respects on behalf of the Government and the people of India".

Separately, Congress leader Salman Khurshid, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious leaders from India also paid homage to the late



nian leader in Tehran.

"Represented India at the funeral ceremony of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran today, along with MoS External Affairs @PmargheritaBJP. Also extended deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the recent

Iranian leader.

In a social media post, Mufti said it was "an honour" to be in Tehran to express her deepest condolences and solidarity over the death of Khamenei, whom she described as "a revered leader who dared to stand against the tide and fought for the oppressed".

Pak PM Sharif, Army Chief Munir Pay Tributes to Khamenei



Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad, Jul 3 (PTI) A high-level delegation from Pakistan led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tributes to Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in US-Israeli strikes in February, in Tehran.

Sharif, Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, Deputy PM & Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other senior officials attended the funeral of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Sharif recalled the contributions of the late supreme leader for Islam and "paid rich tribute" to Ayatollah Khamenei, who guided the Iranian nation for decades, with remarkable wisdom and sagacity, his office said in a statement.

He expressed full solidarity with the new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, President

Masoud Pezeshkian and the people of Iran in this moment of "national grief," it added.

After attending the ceremony, PM Sharif, who had arrived in Tehran earlier today, left for Istanbul for his official visit to Turkey.

Munir also left for Pakistan after the ceremony, PTV reported.

Parliamentary delegation led by Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani and Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Parliamentarians and Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah also attended the funeral along with the Prime Minister.

The public funeral ceremonies would be held in Tehran and Qom on July 5, 6, and 7. The burial will take place in the city of Mashhad on July 9.

Pakistan played a mediator role in the ceasefire and subsequent talks between the US and Iran. The two sides signed an MoU on June 18 and later agreed to find a lasting solution to all issues in 60 days.



Wangchuk's Fast Enters Day 6; CJP Seeks Solidarity

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Activist Sonam Wangchuk completed the sixth day of his hunger strike at the Jantar Mantar here on Friday, with the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) saying he appears "far weaker and more exhausted" as it appealed to people across the country to observe a daylong fast in solidarity with its protest against alleged irregularities in the country's examination system.

Sharing Wangchuk's latest health update on X, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said his blood pressure was recorded at 110/75 mm Hg, pulse rate at 72 beats per minute and blood sugar level at 61 mg/dL.

"It is Day 6 of Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike, and today he looks far weaker and more exhausted than he did just a few days ago. Today, for the first time, I could see the pain on his face as his health continues to deteriorate. He told us he is

fine and that there is nothing to worry about, but the reality is different. His condition is worsening with every passing hour," Dipke said.

In another post, Dipke said Wangchuk is risking his life "to seek justice for the students" and asked when the government would "wake up".

He also appealed to supporters across the country to observe a daylong fast in their homes and upload videos on social media in solidarity with Wangchuk and the protesters at the Jantar Mantar.

"Today is day six of Sonam Wangchuk's fast and our team is fasting with him in solidarity. We appeal to everyone to observe a one-day fast from their homes in support of this movement and share a video on social media," Dipke said.

Six students associated with the Left-affiliated All India Students' Association (AISA) also continued their indefinite hunger strike from a separate stage at the protest site.

The protest entered its 14th day after receiving support over the last week from several political leaders and civil-society members, including CPI(M) general secretary M A Baby, senior CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat, CPI general secretary D Raja, CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhat-tacharya, social activist Yogendra Yadav, Supreme Court lawyer Prashant Bhushan, CPI leader Annie Raja, transparency activist Anjali Bhardwaj, RTI activist Nikhil Dey and TMC MP Sagarika Ghose.

The CJP protest began on June 20 over alleged irregularities in the examination system, including the NEET. The protesters are sticking to their demand that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan must resign.

Dipke has said the agitation would also raise other accountability-related issues, including electoral matters such as the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.

US Asked Allies to Warn Iran of Israeli Plot: Report

Trans Asia News

DUBAI: The US asked countries in the Middle East to warn Iran that Israel could target two of Tehran's senior negotiators during sensitive ceasefire talks earlier this year, according to a report in The New York Times.

Washington feared Tel Aviv might attempt to assassinate Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, derailing negotiations over an interim peace deal that began in April and potentially reigniting the conflict.

The concerns became significant enough that the US asked regional intermediaries to privately warn Tehran about the potential threat, according to the report in the Times on Thursday.

The warning underscored an emerging divergence between Washington and Israel over the objectives of the Iran



war. While the US prioritized securing a negotiated settlement with Iran, Israel remained focused on weakening Tehran's leadership and pursuing broader strategic goals, including regime change and curbing Iran's regional influence.

During the early stages of the conflict, Israel had targeted senior Iranian officials, including Ali Larijani, Iran's senior national security official, and former Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, both of whom had been involved in contacts with Washington.

Araghchi and Ghalibaf could have been considered

legitimate military targets during the initial phase of the conflict, but once negotiations began in earnest in April, Washington concluded that any attempt to assassinate the two men would jeopardize the diplomatic track, US officials told the publication.

Iran responded by tightening security around its negotiating team. Before a planned meeting in Islamabad with US Vice President JD Vance, Iranian officials sought assurances through Pakistani and Qatari intermediaries that Israel would not target their delegation.

Belgian Diamond Group Gifted Trump Lavish Ring

SAM McNEIL

Brussels, Jul 3 (AP) Dozens of diamonds spell out two giant letter "T" next to the Stars and Stripes and "1776" and "2026". Dozens more frame the numbers 45 and 47 in the shape of Superman's logo. A diamond-winged eagle carries a ruby shield and clutches an olive branch of emeralds, below a radiant "250" and atop the phrase "250 YEARS USA" etched in 18-karat gold.

All told, 321 diamonds, 56 sapphires, 13 emeralds and six rubies encrust the watch-sized gold ring presented this week to Bill White, the US ambas-

mond Centre or AWDC, gifted the ring on behalf of the centuries-old diamond community in the Belgian port city, a central node in the worldwide trade of the precious stones that found itself struggling last year under the weight of Trump's sweeping trade war.

"May this ring serve as a lasting reminder that true partnership like the finest natural diamonds are formed under pressure, endure the test of time, and shine brightest when built on trust," Morsel said. The ring's interior is engraved with the phrase "Crafted in Antwerp for Donald John Trump."



sador to Belgium, to give to President Donald Trump.

"A very special thank you to my friends from Antwerp for the magnificent Freedom 250 ring," Trump said in a pre-recorded video message during an event marking America's 250th birthday in Brussels.

Isidore Morsel, president of the Antwerp World Dia-

mond Centre, said the ring's value pales beside gifts like the USD 400 million plane donated by Qatar that Trump ordered converted into a new Air Force One. But it's a glitzy window into the role that ostentatious — and almost always gilded — gifts are playing by those seeking to curry favour with the US president.

Congress Urges PM to Break Silence on Ram Temple Theft

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Jul 3: The Congress on Friday demanded the dissolution of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust over the donation "theft" at the Ram temple, a Supreme Court-monitored probe, and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi break his "silence" on the issue.

The opposition party also demanded a public accounting of the nearly Rs 1,400 crore collected in donations for the construction of the temple before the formation of the trust.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Mr. Prime Minister, when there has been a betrayal of Lord Ram and public's trust has been breached, what hesitation or arrogance is there in accepting it?"

"There is massive anger and outrage across the country against the theft of the donations that took place under the leadership of people from the RSS ecosystem chosen by your government," Ramesh said in a post on X.

"What you have done was a grave sin indeed, but your silence on this extremely important matter now is a bigger

sin," he said.

Congress leader Ragini Nayak questioned why the Special Investigation Team (SIT) report was not being made public.

"Who exactly are they trying to protect in the end? Narendra Modi took full credit for the Ram temple, but today he remains silent on the theft of offerings... when he took the credit, he must also take responsibility. This is a betrayal of the people's trust," Nayak said at a press conference here.

Reiterating the party's demands, Nayak said the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust should be dissolved immediately, its operations and financial transactions investigated under the supervision of the Supreme Court, and Modi should "break his silence" on the alleged theft of donations.

"A public accounting of the approximately Rs 1,400 crore in donations collected in the name of Ram temple construction before the formation of the trust should be disclosed," the Congress spokesperson said.

Nayak alleged that in major cases, small people get arrested, while the "big fish" are let off the hook.

NEWS MAKERS

Kochi, Jul 3 (PTI) The Kerala motor vehicles department has imposed a fine on a private bus operator, officials said on Friday.

The bus had drawn attention after its owner announced free travel for men in response to the state's free bus travel scheme for women in KSRTC buses.

The fine was imposed on the operator of the "Little Flower" bus, which operates on the Aluva-Manjaly route, for allegedly cancelling a scheduled trip in violation of its permit conditions.

The bus had gone viral after its owner announced free travel for male passengers in response to the state government's Priyadarshini scheme, under which women are allowed to travel free in ordinary Kerala State Road Transport Corporation buses.



Kerala Bus Offering Free Rides to Men Fined

According to motor vehicles department officials, regular passengers complained that the bus had cancelled its afternoon service.

An inquiry by the depart-

ment found that the bus had failed to operate its scheduled trip between 2 pm and 3 pm.

Officials said cancelling a scheduled service amounted to a violation of the permit condi-

The bus had drawn attention after its owner announced free travel for men in response to the state's free bus travel scheme for women in KSRTC buses.

tions, following which a fine of Rs 7,500 was imposed on the operator.

The bus owner reportedly told officials that the afternoon trip was cancelled due to poor passenger patronage and to avoid financial losses, despite the free-travel offer for men.

Private bus operators have raised objections to the Priyadarshini scheme, citing financial losses they suffer as more women passengers now prefer KSRTC buses.

Woman Kills Husband, Buries Body Under Bathroom Floor

Agra, Jul 3 (PTI) Agra Police on Friday arrested a woman for allegedly killing her husband and burying his body beneath the bathroom floor, officials said, adding that the accused also filed a missing persons complaint for the victim.

The body of Surendra Sharma (45), who was missing for around 45 days, was recovered after police dug up the bathroom floor at the couple's house in Renuka Dham Colony under Sikandra police station limits.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Amisha said Sharma was allegedly murdered by his wife, Ruby Sharma, who buried the body beneath the bathroom floor before covering it with concrete to conceal the crime.

The officer said the breakthrough came after police questioned Ruby Sharma following a complaint regarding her husband's disappearance. During the investigation, police uncovered the alleged murder and recovered the body.

Ruby Sharma has been arrested and is being interrogated to ascertain the motive behind the killing, the police said.

A neighbour, Gaurav Dixit, said the couple frequently quarrelled and that Surendra Sharma, a native of Bharatpur, had been living with his family in Renuka Dham Colony for about nine years.

He said residents had repeatedly asked Ruby Sharma about her husband's whereabouts after he went missing, but she allegedly kept evading their questions.

The body of Surendra Sharma (45), who was missing for around 45 days, was recovered after police dug up the bathroom floor at the couple's house in Renuka Dham Colony under Sikandra police station limits.

AMARNATH YATRA 2026

Admin Handovers Pamphlets Carrying PM's Message to Pilgrims

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration gave out pamphlets carrying a message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to pilgrims of the Amarnath Yatra that began on Friday.

The prime minister, in his message, urged the devotees to pledge to maintain cleanliness, ensure safety, support local livelihoods, promote environmental conservation and strengthen nation-building.

The 57-day yatra began earlier on Friday from both Nunwan and Baltal base camps.

The prime minister extended his heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all devotees undertaking the yatra, describing the pilgrimage as an eternal symbol of India's rich spiritual heritage, cultural unity and the spirit of selfless service, an official spokesperson said.

Modi noted that the Amarnath Yatra has over the years emerged as a living expression of India's unity in diversity, bringing together devotees from different regions, languages and traditions with a shared resolve to worship Lord Mahadev.



As per PTI, the PM said the yatra reflects the enduring strength of Sanatan culture and reinforces the nation's spiritual and cultural bonds.

He commended the efforts of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board and the Jammu and

Kashmir government for the efficient management of the annual pilgrimage.

Modi also acknowledged the invaluable contribution of the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces, Jammu & Kashmir Police, disaster response agen-

cies, healthcare professionals, administrative officials, sanitation workers and thousands of personnel who ensure the safety, security and smooth conduct of the yatra.

The PM expressed special appreciation for the hospitality

extended by the people of J-K and the spirit of voluntary service demonstrated by locals and numerous organisations that establish community kitchens (langars) and service camps for pilgrims along the yatra routes, the spokesperson said.

Modi described this tradition of selfless service as a true reflection of India's civilisational values and the timeless ideal of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah".

Calling upon devotees to make the pilgrimage a model of responsible citizenship and national service, the PM urged every pilgrim to undertake the five pledges during this year's pilgrimage.

The pledges include maintaining cleanliness, ensuring safety, supporting local livelihoods, promoting environmental conservation and strengthening nation-building.

Expressing confidence that the yatra would serve as a grand celebration of faith, national unity and selfless service, the PM prayed for the blessings of Baba Amarnath upon all devotees.

Modi wished every pilgrim a safe, peaceful and spiritually enriching journey.

80-Year-Old Allegedly Stripped, Robbed by Unknown Men

ANANTNAG: An 80-year-old man from Akingam village in south Kashmir's Anantnag district was allegedly robbed by a group of unidentified men after accepting a lift from them, prompting Islamic scholar Maqbool Akrani to seek immediate police action against those responsible.

Addressing a congregation during Friday prayers, Akrani alleged that the octogenarian had travelled to Anantnag town last week to offer Friday prayers. While returning home from the Janglat Mandi area, he was reportedly offered a lift by a group of unknown men, who assured him that they would drop him at Akingam.

However, instead of taking him to his destination, the men allegedly drove him to a secluded place where they stripped him of his clothes, snatched his cash and other belongings, and abandoned him before fleeing from the spot.

As per KNT, describing the incident as shocking and deeply disturbing, Akrani appealed to the police and the district administration to identify the accused and bring them to justice at the earliest.

He also urged the public, particularly elderly citizens, to exercise caution and avoid accepting lifts from unknown persons. (Observer News Service)

Amarnath Yatra Pilgrim from Punjab Found Dead at Sonamarg Hotel

GANDERBAL: A 40-year-old pilgrim from Punjab undertaking the annual Amarnath Yatra was found dead at a hotel in Sonamarg on Friday, officials said.

The deceased has been identified as Narinder Kumar, son of Parminder Kumar, a resident of Barnala district in Punjab.

Officials said the pilgrim was found unconscious inside the hotel where he was staying. He was immediately shifted to the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Sonamarg, where doctors declared him dead after completing medico-legal formalities.

Police have initiated inquest proceedings under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to ascertain the exact cause of death.

As per KNT, officials said further investigation is underway. (Observer News Service)

Former DDC Chairperson Safina Baig to Join NC on July 8

SRINAGAR: Former chairperson of district development council Safina Baig is joining National Conference on July 08.

Sources told KNO that Safina Baig will join the party on 8th of this month in presence of NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

Safina's induction in NC is expected to strengthen the party in Baramulla district as well as in other Pahari-majority areas of Jammu & Kashmir.

Wife of former deputy CM Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Safina Baig has played a key role in development of Baramulla district during her tenure as DDC head. (Observer News Service)

Six CRPF Personnel Injured as Convoy Vehicle Overturns

SRINAGAR: Six Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were injured after a convoy vehicle skidded off the road and overturned near Gagangir in Ganderbal district on Friday, officials said.

The accident occurred when a vehicle, part of the down convoy returning from Baltal, reportedly lost control near a tunnel at Gagangir and overturned.

The injured personnel have been identified as Head Constable Ajit Kumar of 79 Battalion, Head Constable (Driver) Rajesh Kumar of 35 Battalion, Constable Balran Moharana of 35 Battalion, Constable Kiren Dev of 79 Battalion, Assistant Sub-Inspector Rathod Kalash of 35 Battalion and Head Constable Lalit Mohan of 35 Battalion.

As per KNT, rescue teams and fellow CRPF personnel rushed to the spot and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital for treatment. (Observer News Service)

Youth Killed After Motorcycle Skids Off Road in Chadoora

BUDGAM: A youth was killed after the motorcycle he was riding skidded off the road and crashed into an electric pole in the Chadoora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on Friday, officials said.

Officials said the accident occurred when the rider lost control of the motorcycle, causing it to skid off the road before ramming into an electric pole. The impact left the rider critically injured.

The injured youth was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

The identity of the deceased was not immediately known. Police have taken cognizance of the incident and initiated proceedings to ascertain the circumstances leading to the accident. As per KNT, further details are awaited. (Observer News Service)

Cong MLA Alleges Assault by NC MLA's Brother, Aides

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Congress MLA from Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat, alleged that a National Conference MLA's brother and supporters attempted to assault him during an official meeting on Friday.

Jalal Akbar Lone, brother of Sonawari MLA Hilal Akbar Lone, and his aides disrupted the meeting held to review development works and use of funds in Bandipora, resorted to hooliganism, vandalised the hall and threatened officials, Bhat said.

The Bandipora MLA said that during the meeting, some participants objected to the discussions and walked out. They later returned with Jalal Lone and others.

"Jalal Akbar Lone and his supporters stormed into the meeting hall, vandalised the premises and attempted to intimidate officials," Bhat told reporters, adding, "They damaged doors and window panes of the hall and created panic."

Police are aware of the issue, he said, calling for urgent action.

"This is not the first time he has done so. This has been happening," Bhat said.

As per PTI, describing the incident as unfortunate, the Congress MLA urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to intervene, warning that such incidents could impact the NC-Congress alliance.

"If Omar Abdullah does not intervene and stop his own people from indulging in hooliganism and maligning alliance partners, it will have an impact on the alliance. Congress is a national party; we will not tolerate this," he said.

Asserting that such "hooliganism and humiliation" would have long-term consequences on Jammu and Kashmir's politics, Bhat said that "these goondas are to be shown the door".

"The situation is very sensitive today. The chief minister should be well aware of his difficulties. Elements like these add to his troubles. If the alliance continues to be a victim of this hooliganism and humiliation, it will have long-term consequences on the state's politics," Bhat said.

Sakeena Itoo Inaugurates Maternity & Child Care Block at SDH Tangmarg

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo held extensive tour of Tangmarg area of Gulmarg Constituency and inaugurated various projects of public importance, including Maternity & Child Care Block and Operation Theatre at Sub-District Hospital Tangmarg, Auditorium at Higher Secondary School Tarhama and New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) at Lalpora.

Member Legislative Assembly Gulmarg, Peerzada Farooq Ahmad Shah; HoDs of various departments, senior officers of district administration Baramulla and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Maternity & Child Care Block and Operation Theatre at SDH Tangmarg, the Minister said that the Government is committed to ensuring that quality healthcare reaches every citizen, particularly women, children and people living in remote areas.

Sakeena Itoo added that the newly inaugurated facilities will significantly im-

prove maternal and neonatal healthcare, enhance emergency medical services and reduce referrals to tertiary hospitals, ensuring timely treatment closer to home.

The Minister further said that the Government is continuously investing in modern healthcare infrastructure, advanced medical equipment and better facilities across the Union Territory. She emphasized that development is being carried out with a people-centric approach, adding that strengthening healthcare and education remains among the Government's top priorities. She assured the people that every genuine public concern would continue to receive focused attention.

Later, Sakeena Itoo inaugurated the newly constructed Auditorium at Higher Secondary School Tarhama and said that quality education is the foundation of a progressive society. She noted that modern educational infrastructure provides students with opportunities to develop academically as well as culturally and creatively. She expressed hope that the new auditorium would become a vibrant centre for learning, innovation and extracurricular activities.

Work on District Hospital Budgam Stalled Since Jan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Construction work on the under-construction District Hospital Budgam and the Centre-funded Critical Care Hospital at Rishipora in central Kashmir's Budgam district has remained suspended since January this year, reportedly due to a shortage of funds, raising concerns over delays in strengthening healthcare infrastructure in the district.

Official sources said the superstructure of the new District Hospital has already been completed. However, the remaining civil, mechanical and electrical works are yet to be executed, preventing the hospital from being made operational.

According to officials, an additional ₹30-40 crore is required to complete the project. A supplementary Detailed Project Report (DPR) has al-

ready been submitted to the government and is presently awaiting approval from the Finance Department.

As per KNT, the delay has prompted calls for early release of funds to ensure the timely completion of the much-awaited healthcare facility. An appeal has also been made to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the Finance portfolio, Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo and Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Finance, Shailender Kumar, to expedite the approval process.

Separately, the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) has been urged to extend financial assistance of ₹10-20 crore under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative for procurement of MRI and CT Scan machines for the hospital, similar to the support pro-

vided to health institutions in Kargil and Anantnag.

Meanwhile, health officials have welcomed the Union Government's decision to provide advanced diagnostic equipment to Jammu and Kashmir under the Prime Minister's special package. The package includes 275 AI-enabled portable handheld X-ray machines, nine 1.5 Tesla MRI units and four digital mammography systems, which are expected to improve access to modern diagnostic services, strengthen breast cancer screening and support artificial intelligence-based tuberculosis screening across selected government health institutions in the Union Territory.

However, locals have stressed that the benefits of such initiatives would be fully realised only after the completion and operationalization of the District Hospital Budgam.

Northern Army Commander Reviews Ops Preparedness along LoC

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Northern army commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Friday visited the forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in the J&K's Krishna Ghati and Poonch sectors to review operational preparedness and security measures.

During the visit, the Army Commander assessed the security situation and interacted with troops deployed along the forward areas.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Commander Northern Command, visited the forward areas of the Krishna Ghati and Poonch Sectors to review operational preparedness and security measures," Northern Command said on X.

As per PTI, the Army Commander



commended them for their alertness, untiring efforts to maintain operational readiness and resolve to safeguard the nation's frontiers under challenging conditions.

He urged all ranks to remain

mission-focused and continue upholding the highest standards of operational excellence in the service of the nation, reaffirming the Army's commitment to maintaining a high level of vigilance along the border.

Boating Facility Inaugurated at Tawi River Front to welcome Amarnath Yatra Pilgrims

Observer News Service

JAMMU: As the annual Amarnath Yatra 2026 gathers momentum with thousands of pilgrims arriving in Jammu every day, Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) inaugurated the much-awaited boating facility at the Tawi River Front, adding a new recreational attraction for devotees, tourists and local residents.

The boating service was formally inaugurated by Chief Executive Officer Jammu Smart City Limited and Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Dr Devansh Yadav in presence of senior officers of JSCL, officials from the district administration, representatives of various departments and members of the public.

The launch marks another milestone in the transformation of the Tawi River Front into a vibrant urban destination under the Smart Cities Mission, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience the scenic beauty of the Tawi River.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Devansh Yadav said Jammu serves as the gateway to the holy Amarnath Cave Shrine and welcomes lakhs of pilgrims every year. He said the introduction of the boating facility is aimed at enriching the overall experience of pilgrims visiting the city by providing them with a safe, enjoyable and memorable recreational activity during their stay.

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNANG, J&K

(CAMP OFFICE: MAIN CAMPUS DIALGAM)

Phone No: 01932-227624 | e-mail principal-gmca@jk.gov.in

E- TENDER NOTICE NO: 15 GMCA OF 2026

DATED: 29 .06.2026

Online Bids through e-tender Portal (www.jktenders.gov.in) are invited from eligible bidders for supply of Instruments and other items as per the schedule of requirements given in Annexure "A" to this tender required in the Department of Physiology Govt. Medical College, Anantnag as per the schedule of events given hereunder:-

S.T.No	Particulars	Date and time	
1.	Date & Time of floating of bid	03.07.2026	03: 00 PM
2.	Date & time of online bid submission.(Any query to clear can be done through e-mail id on principal gmca@jk.gov.in from 03.07.2026 to 04.07.2026	Start Date & Time 03.07.2026 03: 00 PM	End Date & Time 25 .07.2026 03:00PM
3.	Date & time of online Technical bid of opening	26.07.2026	2:00 PM
4.	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 10,000/= (Rupees ten Thousand Only)	
5.	Cost of tender document	Rs. 500/= (Rupees five hundred only)	

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including Schedule of Requirement and terms and Conditions are available on the website: www.gmcnanantnag.ac.in and www.jktenders.gov.in.

Any query to clear can be done through email id on principal-gmca@jk.gov.in

NO:- GMCA/Pur/17 /2064-67

Dated: 29.06.2026

DIPK-2819-26

DT: 03/07/2026

Sd/-

Prof.(Dr.) Junaid S Wani

Principal

Govt. Medical College, Anantnag

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The Startup Illusion

Behind the certificates and hashtags, founders are running out of money faster than the government can process their paperwork.



KO VIEW

Pollution Is Sin

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has done something governments, activists and environmental campaigns rarely achieve. He has declared that dumping untreated sewage, solid waste and hazardous material into rivers is a sin under Islamic law.

That ruling reaches beyond Iraq, and speaks directly to Kashmir, where environmental decline has become a public habit disguised as someone else's fault.

Kashmir still sells itself as paradise. Tourists photograph mesmerizing meadows, while residents speak with pride about a landscape unlike any other.

Daily conduct, however, tells a different story. Plastic bottles choke streams, household waste finds its way into rivers, wetlands shrink beneath encroachments, construction debris scars mountain slopes, and medical waste and untreated sewage continue to pollute water bodies that once sustained entire communities.

Civic campaigns have documented the damage for years, and awareness has grown, but public behaviour has barely changed.

Sistani's decree introduces a language that many Kashmiris understand instinctively.

His fatwa states that polluting rivers violates Islamic law because it harms society. He also declares that violating environmental regulations is impermissible and calls on authorities to provide safe systems for waste disposal.

That combination links personal conduct with public responsibility. Faith and governance move in the same direction instead of working in isolation.

Kashmir's mosques now hold an opportunity that should not pass unused. Friday sermons often condemn corruption, addiction and domestic violence. Environmental destruction also belongs in that discourse.

Worshippers hear repeated calls to protect neighbours, safeguard public health and avoid causing harm. Polluting a river violates all three principles.

Religious scholars possess influence that government advertisements and municipal notices rarely command. A sermon delivered with conviction can change behaviour more effectively than another awareness campaign.

Many people blame tourists for the garbage scattered through famous destinations. Visitors certainly contribute to the mess, but local habits determine the condition of neighbourhood streams, village springs and urban drains long after holiday crowds return home.

Community conduct sets the standard that visitors either respect or ignore.

Bhutan shows what is possible. Its Sustainable Development Fee and strict environmental rules make it clear that both tourists and locals have a duty to keep the country clean.

Kashmir can learn from that example by combining stronger rules with a public mindset that sees protecting nature as everyone's responsibility.

The valley has invested heavily in cleaning lakes, restoring wetlands and promoting tourism. Those efforts lose force when household garbage still enters rivers and public spaces become dumping grounds.

Environmental laws work best when people believe in them.

Sistani's fatwa cannot clean a single river on its own. Clerics, civil society and public institutions can transform its message into action.

Kashmir has heard enough speeches celebrating nature. Sermons that define pollution as a moral failure could finally change the conduct that keeps poisoning the valley's greatest inheritance.



Uzma Qadir Mir

“Kashmir turns out graduates, not engineers and data scientists in the numbers growth-stage companies need, and those who do build those skills tend to leave for cities that pay more and promise more.”

A senior official stood before a room of young founders in Srinagar last year and said something nobody expected to hear at an entrepreneurship event: Kashmir remains twenty years behind in building a genuine startup culture.

The audience had just absorbed an hour of upbeat statistics about growth and innovation. The silence that followed said more than the applause that came before it.

That silence is worth sitting with, because Kashmir's startup story is really two stories stitched together.

One is authentic and hard-won, the other is manufactured for social media, built on certificates and handshake photos rather than revenue.

Telling them apart is not an academic exercise. It's the difference between giving Kashmiri youth a real path out of massive youth unemployment and selling them a mirage.

Start with what's genuine.

DPIIT-recognized startups in Jammu and Kashmir climbed from 237 in 2020 to more than 1,446 by early 2026, a jump near 500 percent. The J&K Startup Policy 2024-27 sets a target of 2,000 startups and a 250 crore venture fund by 2027.

More than a dozen incubators now operate out of IIM Jammu, IIT Jammu, IUST Awantipora and the University of Kashmir. Curve Electric, an e-bike sharing startup from the valley, pitched on Shark Tank India's fourth season and won national attention.

Given decades of discord, brain drain and dependence on government jobs, this counts as a real shift in how young Kashmiris think about work.

But registration is not revenue, and a television appearance is not profit.

Somewhere among those 1,000-plus registered startups sits a harder question: how many actually pay employees, sell products and survive past year two?

On this, the evidence is unflinching.

A February 2026 report submitted to the J&K government by the Kashmir Angel Network, built on interviews with 19 local founders, laid out the trouble plainly.

Most had cleared the idea stage and found product-market fit. Half were fully bootstrapped. Mid-stage companies de-

scribed a funding gap so severe the report gave it a name: the "Valley of Death," the space between a working product and the capital needed to grow it.

Startups collapse inside that gap, with no headline to mark the loss.

The report identified three walls that founders keep hitting. Capital comes first.

Venture networks common to Bangalore and Delhi rarely extend to Srinagar, and banks built on collateral lending have little use for early-stage companies with no assets to pledge.

Alternative Investment Funds have put 50 crore into J&K startups, while the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme has approved 2.05 crore. Both numbers sound respectable until you compare them to a single funding round for a mid-stage tech company in Bangalore.

Founders here lean on savings, family loans and whatever cash their earliest customers hand over. That is not an ecosystem. Individual grit standing in for institutions that haven't shown up.

Regulation is the second wall.

Seventy-five percent of founders point to the absence of single-window clearance as a defining obstacle, and only 37 percent say they fully understand the government schemes meant to help them.

Approval can take six to twelve months, a delay founders call an existential threat, because a startup burning cash cannot sit still for nine months waiting on a signature.

Talent is the third.

Kashmir turns out graduates, not engineers and data scientists in the numbers growth-stage companies need, and those who do build those skills tend to leave for cities that pay more and promise more.

Call it a rational exit rather than a failure of ambition.

The clearest illustration of the whole problem has nothing to do with software. Kashmir grows over 70 percent of India's apples, and still no large processing plant turns that fruit into juice inside the valley.

Farmers sell raw apples to outside buyers, who process them elsewhere, brand them without a mention of Shopian or Sopore, and sell the finished product back to Kashmiris at a markup.

Raw material leaves, and value re-

turns as someone else's brand.

That is the startup economy in miniature: abundant talent and resources, controlled processing and distribution sitting somewhere else.

Curve Electric breaks that mold, so does FastBeetle, a Kashmiri logistics startup delivering parcels nationwide.

Both are real businesses solving specific problems, and both remain exceptions in a scene where founders more often stall at the idea stage or compete in crowded fields like edtech, where Kashmir holds no particular edge.

Meanwhile, the hackathon circuit keeps humming: pitch days, panels, certificates, and photos with officials.

Some of that energy is genuine, as young Kashmiris want to build things. But an event that produces ten registered companies gets called a success even when nine never earn a rupee.

Columnist Irshad Mushtaq has argued that survival, repeat revenue, jobs and exports should count for more than registration totals. He's correct, and Kashmir's ecosystem has not owned up to the gap between those two measures out loud.

Fixing this starts with incubators that do more than hand out desks and certificates, connecting founders to real markets, seasoned mentors and investors willing to write checks.

It continues with a dedicated growth-stage fund, something like the 50 crore proposal from the Kashmir Angel Network, reviewed by people who have actually built companies.

It also demands enforceable timelines for approvals, because nine months of waiting eliminates exactly the first-generation founders this policy claims to serve.

The hunger is real, but what remains unbuilt is the machinery to turn that hunger into companies that outlast their launch party.

Twenty years behind, the official said. The room fell silent, then went back to work.

That, at least, is something worth watching.

The author is pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at a Delhi-based university. She can be reached at muzmaqadir@gmail.com.

Kashmir's Rotten Opportunity

Two collapsed harvests and a tourism crash have exposed a region betting its future on raw fruit instead of the industry that could turn it into wealth.



Malik Daniyal

Kashmir grows some of the finest apples, walnuts, and saffron on the planet, and it sends most of that bounty out the door raw.

That single fact explains why a valley with extraordinary natural gifts still counts on schemes to survive when the weather turns bad or tourists stop coming.

Last year, both happened at once.

Apple production dropped for a second straight year, down roughly 30 percent because of erratic weather. Tourist arrivals collapsed by more than 52 percent in the first half of 2025, in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack.

Kashmir economy stands on two legs, agriculture and tourism, and both buckled

simultaneously.

An economy built that way has no floor beneath it, and pretending otherwise is how crises repeat themselves.

Nearly 70 percent of Jammu and Kashmir's population depends on agriculture. Manufacturing contributes just 18.3 percent of gross state value added, and even the services sector leans heavily on government spending rather than private business.

Economists have a name for this: a failure to make the structural shift that pulls labour and capital out of low-productivity farming and into higher-value manufacturing.

Kashmir never made that shift. It stayed put, selling what it grows instead of what it could build from what it grows.

Consider the waste this produces.

Of the 21.4 lakh metric tonnes of apples harvested in 2023, only 9 to 10 lakh tonnes graded A. Roughly half of those went straight to mandis, where growers absorbed all the price risk themselves.

The C-grade fruit, which could become juice concentrate, cider vinegar, or dried snacks, mostly rotted for lack of processing infrastructure.

Only 39 percent of the valley's 2,247 regis-

tered food processing units actually operate.

India processes just 4.5 percent of its fruit nationally, and Kashmir, with thinner infrastructure than the rest of the country, processes even less.

Meanwhile, the world wants exactly what Kashmir grows.

The global food processing market hit \$354.5 billion in 2024 and keeps growing past 8 percent annually. Kashmiri saffron, GI-tagged and prized by pharmaceutical and cosmetic manufacturers, brought in Rs 486.43 crore in export value in 2024-25.

That number shows what happens when a Kashmiri product gets branded, certified, and sold on its merits.

Apples and walnuts, both grown here in world-leading volumes, still wait for the same treatment.

Three obstacles explain the gap between what Kashmir grows and what it sells.

Cold chain infrastructure barely exists, so fruit must move within weeks of harvest or lose value fast, flooding markets and crushing prices.

Small growers, most farming two to five kanals, can't get affordable credit or yield-based insurance, so a bad season becomes a

debt trap rather than a recoverable setback.

And aging orchards threaten productivity losses of up to 77 percent without rejuvenation, while the high-density plantation systems that would fix this cost about Rs 1.9 lakh per kanal, out of reach for most smallholders acting alone.

None of these problems calls for another investor summit or another glossy roadmap. They call for building things.

Cold storage clusters near Sopore, Shopian, and Pulwama would let farmers hold fruit instead of dumping it at distress prices.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's newly announced weather-based crop insurance scheme could change how growers think about risk entirely, provided it covers quality loss and pays claims fast rather than repeating the delays of earlier programs.

The PMFME scheme, backed by a Rs 10,000 crore national outlay, already exists to fund small processing units for juice, walnuts, and saffron, but Kashmir has barely tapped it.

An agro-industrial park near Sopore, home to Asia's second-largest fruit market, could pool cold storage, grading, and packaging facilities and cut costs enough to draw

private investment that no individual grower could attract alone.

Kashmir isn't short on resources or opportunity. Central schemes sit underused. NITI Aayog has already mapped the strategy. What's missing is the political will to build boring, unglamorous infrastructure instead of waiting for tourism to recover or the next apple season to save the year.

Nearly 46 percent of Kashmir's educated youth remain unemployed, a number that won't move on its own.

The valley's fruit rots in orchards while global buyers pay premiums for exactly what grows there.

Kashmir doesn't need more raw harvests. It needs the processing plants, storage networks, and financing structures that turn abundance into income.

The inputs sit in the orchard already. The only open question is whether the policy machinery finally decides to process them.

The author is an economics graduate from University of Delhi and regularly writes on Kashmir economy and policy issues. He can be reached at mdaniyal.054@gmail.com.

The Conservationist Next Door

From wetlands to forests, a Kashmiri ecologist is building a new generation of environmental leaders.



Aashiq Hussain Andrabi

On a warm morning in Srinagar, a small group of women huddle near the edge of a wetland, notebooks in hand, listening to birdsong and watching ripples on the water.

They're part of a nature education program started by Dr. Mehreen Khalil, a Kashmiri conservationist who believes that saving the environment begins with empowering people, especially women.

After earning her PhD in Ecological Sciences from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Dr. Mehreen returned home to work where conservation is often seen as someone else's job.

She founded the Wildlife Research and Conservation Foundation (WRCF) in 2018 to change that.

Through the foundation, she brings together local communities, students, and policymakers to bridge the gap between science and everyday life.

Her journey began deep in the Himalayas, where she spent years studying langurs.

But what started as curiosity about a rare primate soon became a lifelong mission to reconnect people with the natural world. "I realized that conservation doesn't start in labs or offices," she says. "It starts in the hearts and hands of people who live closest to nature."

Today, WRCF runs training programs that teach women ecological literacy and leadership, turning kitchen waste into compost, classrooms into nature labs, and curiosity into community change.

Dr. Mehreen also collaborates with scientists across India, consults for various conservation projects, and advocates for women in STEM fields.

In this interview, she talks about Kashmir's vanishing wetlands, melting glaciers, and how empowering women could transform the region's environmental future.

You started your journey as a primatologist, studying Himalayan langurs. Let's begin there. What was so special about them?

Oh, the Himalayan langurs are incredible. They live in some of the harshest, steepest terrains of the Himalayas and still manage to thrive.

I was fascinated by how little we knew about them. Locals often called them Wan-mohniv, meaning yeti, or sometimes apes and gorillas.

That showed me the huge gap in awareness about wildlife right at our doorstep.

So you were looking at animals, but it sounds like you ended up discovering people.

Exactly. Studying langurs up close opened my eyes to the fragile balance between wildlife, people, and the environment.

You realize very quickly that saving a species is essentially about the forests, rivers, and communities tied to it. That realization slowly shifted my work from studying primates to working with people who share their space.

Was there a single moment when you thought, "Ah, conservation is really about people"?

Actually, there were a few.

The first was when I hired a local Gujjar man as my field assistant. He knew the forest inside out. He could read the terrain, predict animal movement, and even tell which areas were sacred.

I learned more from him than from any manual.

And that changed your approach?

Completely.

Then there was a moment I'll never forget: a tribal woman caring for two baby langurs separated from their troop.



She looked after them like her own children.

Watching her, I realized that empathy for wildlife already existed in these communities.

Conservation was something to build with them.

You work across science and activism. That's not an easy mix. How do you balance both?

For me, they go hand in hand. Science gives you facts, activism gives those facts meaning.

My research on langurs revealed how fast their habitats were shrinking. But instead of just publishing data, I sat with local villagers to talk about how they used the forest and how we could protect it.

The insights they shared made my research better, and the science gave their concerns more weight.

So, it's less about balancing and more about connecting? Exactly. Science tells you what is happening. Activism tells you what to do about it.

Let's talk about the big picture. How do you see Kashmir's environment changing, with all the cloudbursts, drying wetlands, and melting glaciers? What worries you the most?

The speed of it. Jammu and Kashmir has lost nearly 57% of its wetlands in just ten years, from about 391,500 hectares in 2011 to 164,110 hectares in 2021.

And glaciers are melting too. Between 1980 and 2018, glacier area dropped by about 29%, and the Kolahoi Glacier alone has lost 20-25% of its mass.

That's huge.

It is. And it's not just about numbers. When wetlands disappear, the region's water security, farming, and livelihoods collapse. Every ecosystem here is tied to the other.

That's what makes Kashmir's ecology so vulnerable, and so globally important.

You've said Kashmir's conservation story is a global one. How so?

Because everything here is connected. The birds that spend winters in Kashmir travel across continents. Our glaciers feed rivers that support millions of people. Our forests help shape the region's climate.

When we protect nature in Kashmir, the impact reaches

far beyond these mountains.

So Kashmir becomes a testing ground for global solutions?

Exactly. What works here can inspire other mountain and wetland regions facing similar crises.

Your foundation is launching a training program on nature education for women. Why women?

Because women are already caretakers of nature here. They collect water, farm, manage households, and make choices that directly affect natural resources.

But they rarely get a seat at the table when decisions are made about conservation.

And this program changes that?

That's the idea. By training young women in ecological literacy and leadership, we're helping them turn everyday experience into environmental expertise.

When women learn, they don't keep it to themselves. They share it with families, children, and communities. The ripple effect is incredible.

Let's say a woman joins your program. How does it actually change her daily life?

It can be as simple as turning waste into opportunity. Traditionally, cow dung or organic waste is thrown away to keep homes clean. Through training, women learn to make compost or organic manure, which improves soil and earns income.

When they understand wetlands or sustainable farming, they can lead community meetings or school programs. That's how small actions become leadership.

Sounds powerful. But what are the biggest hurdles women face in joining such work?

Mobility, mainly. Families are often uncomfortable with young women traveling to forests or remote sites, places seen as male spaces.

There's also a lack of role models. Would you believe there isn't a single female wildlife or forest guard working in the field in Kashmir?

Not one?



I SEE FLOURISHING WETLANDS, LIVING RIVERS, AND FORESTS ALIVE WITH BIRDS. I see schools where nature education is as important as math or science. And at the center of it all are women, leading conservation committees, shaping policies, and mentoring others.

Not one. That's why we're building safe learning spaces and connecting women with mentors. Once they have support and confidence, they can step into leadership naturally.

A lot of organizations stop at awareness campaigns: posters, events, hashtags. What's different about your model?

We move beyond awareness to action. Our focus is on field-based learning. Participants lead nature walks, conduct surveys, and design their own outreach projects.

By the end, they don't just "know" about conservation, they can do it.

What do they actually learn?

They explore Kashmir's ecosystems, including wetlands, forests, and mountains, while learning about the species that depend on them.

They practice nature journaling, environmental storytelling, and community engagement.

They also gain leadership and communication skills. And we connect them with women conservationists who mentor them long after the program ends.

Do you see this work influencing schools or even policy someday?

Absolutely. When trained young women go back to their schools and colleges, they introduce new ideas and lesson plans.

Over time, that shapes how environmental topics are taught.

And when local officials see women leading conservation efforts, it challenges stereotypes and encourages more inclusive policies, like including women in wetland management or environmental committees.

Your foundation connects to global sustainability goals too, doesn't it?

Yes. Everything we do ties into the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 on Quality Education, SDG 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 13 on Climate Action, and SDG 15 on Life on Land.

We also connect our participants to international youth movements. Some have contributed wetland data to global databases, others have spoken at youth climate events.

It shows them that what they're doing in Kashmir is part of a much larger effort.

Do you imagine a day when Kashmiri women become global voices for the planet, like Greta Thunberg or Vandana Shiva?

I do. Kashmiri women already carry powerful stories of resilience. They've lived through shrinking resources and climate uncertainty. They don't need inspiration, they just need platforms.

I'd love to see a young woman from Kashmir stand on a global stage and say, "Here's what sustainability looks like where I come from."

You began with langurs and now run a conservation foundation. What keeps you going?

The people. Every time I see a young woman confidently lead a nature walk or teach her community about wetlands, it reminds me why this matters.

At the end, conservation is about unlocking human potential.

Let's end with a dream. Picture Kashmir in 2040. What does it look like?

I see flourishing wetlands, living rivers, and forests alive with birds.

I see schools where nature education is as important as math or science.

And at the center of it all are women, leading conservation committees, shaping policies, and mentoring others.

Women as the keepers of Kashmir's future.

Exactly. If we start today, by 2040 we'll have a generation of women who see conservation as a way of life, one that keeps both people and the planet thriving.

— The author is a senior scribe from Pulwama.



WE MOVE BEYOND AWARENESS TO ACTION. Our focus is on field-based learning. Participants lead nature walks, conduct surveys, and design their own outreach projects. By the end, they don't just "know" about conservation, they can do it.

Study: Human-Induced Moisture Losses Impact River Basin Water Availability

Press Trust Of India

Moisture losses from river basins due to human activities like extensive irrigation and groundwater pumping is essential for assessing water availability - not accounting for them can result in more than 50 per cent overestimation in India's river basins, a study reveals.

Evapotranspiration, or the process by which water evaporates and is used up by plants, is important for water availability.

Researchers Vimal Mishra and Anuj Prakash Kushwaha from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Gandhinagar said that in India, human activities such as irrigation and groundwater pumping significantly increase evapotranspiration, but most models overlook the effects.

Human-induced evapotranspiration changes water availability by intensifying losses due to evapotranspiration, reducing

groundwater storage and altering surface water dynamics, they said.

The study, published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres, estimated human-induced evapotranspiration across 12 river basins, including the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Indus, during 2003-2020.

Observations from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) satellites and results from five hydrological models were analysed.

"Quantifying human-induced evapotranspiration (H-ET) is essential for evaluating water availability in regions with extensive irrigation and groundwater pumping," the authors wrote.

Human-induced evapotranspiration was found to be more prominent during the dry season, contributing 30-50 per cent of total evapotranspiration in irrigation-intensive basins.

Overall, the highest human-induced evapotranspiration occurred during the summer in



Brahmani (seasonal river in Odisha), Pennar (Andhra Pradesh), Krishna, Mahanadi and Narmada, among others, the authors found.

Evapotranspiration due to

human activities was also found to remain consistently high across most river basins studied, revealing the persistent human-induced pressure on water resources throughout the year.

Further, "Non-accounting for H-ET leads to considerable (more than 50 per cent) overestimation in total available water in the Indus, Mahi, and Pennar river basins, while 30-40 per cent overestimation (was calculated) in the Brahmani, Ganga, Godavari, Krishna, Tapi, Narmada, and Mahanadi basins," the team said.

Annual water availability was found to be the most substantially reduced in basins with a high irrigation intensity - having more than 50 per cent of agricultural land under irrigation - such as Krishna (64.7 per cent), Mahi (63.6 per cent), Godavari (57.6 per cent), and Pennar (74.6 per cent), due to intensive groundwater and surface water based irrigation.

The authors said the results highlighted the need to integrate irrigation intensity, groundwater dynamics, and human interventions into hydrological models to improve estimates of available water.

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AI Platform Developed To Support Doctors, Frontline Workers With Verified Health Intelligence



Press Trust Of India

A platform aimed at providing verified, evidence-based healthcare intelligence by combining artificial intelligence with clinical expertise has been developed by a Chennai-based epidemiologist to strengthen preventive healthcare across India.

Developed by Dr Viduthalai Virumbi Balagurusamy, founder director of the Honeybee Population Healthcare Foundation (HPHF), the Healthcare Intelligence and Verification Engine (HIVE) is designed to go beyond conventional AI chatbots by verifying recommendations through patient records, clinical reasoning, medical literature, public health data and current clinical guidelines.

Unlike AI tools that primarily generate responses using information available online, HIVE integrates multiple sources of evidence and the treating doctor's clinical judgement to deliver healthcare intelligence that is transparent, explainable and tailored to individual patients.

The platform comes at a time when millions of people are increasingly relying on AI for health-related information even as concerns continue over misinformation, delayed diagnosis, inappropriate self-medication and unreliable healthcare advice.

The developers say HIVE seeks to bridge this gap by ensuring healthcare decisions are grounded in evidence rather than assumptions.

"Healthcare is not just about information. It is about trust, context and verification. HIVE has been built to ensure that healthcare decisions are supported by reliable evidence, clinical reasoning and patient-specific realities rather than generic responses," said Dr Viduthalai Virumbi Balagurusamy.

Apart from assisting doctors in clinical decision-making, HIVE has been envisioned as a platform that can support frontline healthcare workers and public health programmes, particularly in underserved communities where access to specialist healthcare remains limited.

According to the foundation, the long-term objective is to build a preventive healthcare ecosystem that facilitates early disease detection, improves treatment compliance, expands access to healthcare services and empowers communities to take



Healthcare is not just about information. It is about trust, context and verification. HIVE has been built to ensure that healthcare decisions are supported by reliable evidence, clinical reasoning and patient-specific realities rather than generic responses

informed health decisions before illnesses become critical.

The platform also has the potential to address several key public health priorities in India, including maternal health, anaemia, mental health, non-communicable diseases, perimenopause, menopause and preventive screening, by equipping community health workers with verified decision-support systems that can help identify health risks early and enable timely intervention.

According to Balagurusamy, the future of healthcare lies in augmenting rather than replacing clinicians.

"Artificial intelligence should not replace human judgement. It should strengthen it. Our goal is to create a system where technology, clinicians and public health workers work together to improve health outcomes for millions of people," he says.

The Honeybee Population Healthcare Foundation is currently offering HIVE free of cost to individuals and at subsidised rates for doctors, clinics and hospitals, saying wider access to verified healthcare intelligence is essential for improving healthcare equity, particularly in resource-constrained settings.



भारतीय खेल प्राधिकरण
SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
खेल विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS
(युवा कार्यक्रम और खेल मंत्रालय के तहत एक स्वायत्त निकाय)
(An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports)
(मानव संसाधन प्रभाग -II)
(Human Resources Division -II)



Head Office, J N Stadium Complex,
Gate. No. 10, Lodhi Road, CGO Complex,
New Delhi-110003

File No. 01-04001(03)/7/2026-66

Date: 10-06-2026

SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE) ON DEPUTATION BASIS

The Sports Authority of India (SAI), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, invites applications for one post of Executive Director (Finance) in Pay Matrix Level-13A on deputation basis for a period of 3 years. Eligible officers may submit applications in the prescribed format, along with required documents, to the O/o Director (Human Resources Division-II), SAI, J.N. Stadium Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003. Last date for receipt of applications is 10-07-2026 (5:00 PM). Detailed advertisement, eligibility criteria, proforma and instructions will be available on the SAI website (www.sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in).

cbc47103/11/0016/2627

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FISHERIES DISTRICT KUPWARA ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

In pursuance to Director Fisheries J&K Govt. Order No 368-Fisheries of 2026 dated 01-07-2026 endorsed vide No DOF-PLG/22/2026-05(E-7910253) dated 01-07-2026, applications are invited from the interested persons who intend to establish / procure following components in Private Sector under Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana" "PMMSY" (2026-27) with the below detailed funding pattern.

S.No	Activity	Unit Cost	Pattern of Funding (Category)		Pattern of Funding (ST Category)	
			Central Share General	Beneficiary Share	Central Share General	Beneficiary Share
01	Live Fish Vending Centre (03 No's)	20.00	--	--	12.00 (60%)	8.00 (40%)
02	Backyard Ornamental Fish Rearing Unit (02 No's)	3.00	1.20 (40%)	1.80 (60%)	--	--
03	Construction of Fish Kiosks including Kiosks of Aquarium / Ornamental Fish (02 No's)	10.00	-	-	6.00 (60%)	4.00 (40%)
04	Three-Wheeler with Ice Box including e-rikshaws for fish vending (03 No's)	3.00	--	--	1.80 (60%)	1.20 (40%)

The applications be submitted in the Office of Assistant Director Fisheries District Kupwara by or before 12-07-2026. No application shall be entertained after the last date. The terms and conditions laid down as under shall be strictly followed while submitting the application.

Terms & Conditions

- The applicant will submit Detailed Project Report (DPR) / Self Contained Proposal (SCP) with justification, capital Cost, recurring cost involved, source of funds for meeting the beneficiary contribution including bank consent for providing loan to meet the beneficiary share, undertaking of beneficiary to the effect that no other government assistance is availed for the proposed projects.
- Documentary evidence of availability of requisite property of adequate size for live fish vending centre and fish kiosk free from all encumbrances, along with necessary clearance/permission from concerned authority.
- The authenticity of the premises for establishment of units shall be purely guided by the guidelines established under PMMSY, which can be downloaded from website <http://www.pmmsy.dof.gov.in>
- The applicants must be in possession of valid Driving license, who intends to apply for three-wheeler with ice box

Sd/-
Assistant Director Fisheries,
District Kupwara

No:- ADF/Kup/2026/1432-34

Dated: - 03-07-2026.

DIPK-2809/26 dated: 03-07-2026

J&K Bank MD & CEO Chairs Customer Meet At Leh

Customers Hail Bank As Lifeline Of Their Businesses



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Reinforcing its commitment to customer-centric banking and direct stakeholder engagement, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee Friday chaired a Customer Meet in Leh, where a cross-section of customers from across the district participated and shared valuable feedback and operational requirements.

The meet was attended by Zonal Head (Ladakh) Tsewang Dorjai, DGM & Board Secretary Mohammad Shafi Mir, DGM & Special Secretary to MD Tanveer Hussain, Cluster Head Tsewang Dorjay and other senior officers of the Bank.

Appreciating the initiative, the participants expressed gratitude to the MD & CEO for personally visiting Leh and making it a point to hear their grievances and feedback first hand. The customers described J&K Bank as the lifeline of trade and business in Ladakh and acknowledged the Bank's consistent support in strengthening the region's commercial ecosystem.

They congratulated the Bank's leadership on the historic milestone of crossing Rs 3 trillion in total business and expressed confidence that the institution would continue to play a pivotal role in the economic development of the region.

Keeping in view the unique terrain and geographical challenges of Ladakh, the customers also urged the Bank to con-

sider enhancing the delegation of powers to its administrative hierarchy in the region to facilitate faster decision-making and improved customer service.

Addressing the gathering, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee thanked the participants for their candid feedback and assured them that the Bank would carefully examine every genuine concern and suggestion. He said, "I am delighted to be among you today and hear your grievances, suggestions and feedback because nothing matters more to us than the voice of our customers. I firmly believe we can improve our services only by understanding our customers' experiences and challenges first hand."

Referring to the Bank's recently achieved milestone, he added, "It is because of your trust, confidence and unwavering support that J&K Bank has crossed the historic Rs 3 trillion business mark. This achievement belongs to our customers who have stood by the Bank through every phase of its journey."

Assuring the customers of the Bank's continued commitment towards the region, the MD & CEO said, "I assure you that all your genuine expectations and aspirations will receive due consideration. Given Ladakh's unique geography and the exceptionally strong relationship its people share with the Bank, we will examine the possibility of extending region-specific measures wherever feasible."

Middle Class Growth Engine Of India: FM Sitharaman

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday described the middle class as the growth engine of India and said nearly 500 cities are poised to emerge as the country's next centres of economic activity.

Participating in a panel discussion on 'How to promote the rise of a new middle class' at the Rencontres Economiques d'Aix-en-Provence, a major economic forum of France, Sitharaman said 31 per cent of India's population is middle class as of today.

Since India opened its economy, the middle class is growing at an annual rate of 6.3 per cent, she noted.

"We think 93 per cent of all spending in India will be because of the middle class or the slightly affluent consumers...and again, this middle class is not concentrated in our metropolitan cities...India's model has resulted in the development in such a way that the middle class is present not just in big cities but they are on the contrary in these tier two, tier three cities," the finance minister said.

The distribution of wealth is therefore automatically seen spreading to cities beyond the metropolitan, she added.

"So, we see the middle class not just as a beneficiary of growth, but actually as the engines of growth. It is their consumption, which is happening, which is making the economy grow," she said.

Quoting an OECD study, Sitharaman said India will surpass



China in absolute terms in its middle-class population size between 2030 and 2035 on the back of several measures taken by the government.

Stressing that India remains the fastest-growing large economy after Covid-19, primarily because of consumption triggered by the middle class, she said, "Nearly 500 cities poised to emerge as the new centres of economic activity."

To grow the size of the middle class, Sitharaman said, the government has taken several initiatives, including financial inclusion, recent GST rate rationalisation, providing collateral-free loans, and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Talking about the middle class benefiting from AI, Sitharaman said people are continuously upgrading their technical skills to stay ahead.

For those who fear AI may displace jobs, there is extensive government support through

AI-focused skilling programmes being conducted across the country, she said, adding that AI skilling camps are being organised in partnership with the private sector at the district level.

As a result, the middle class is increasingly able to take advantage of emerging opportunities in India's evolving economy.

One indicator of this transformation is that nearly 40 per cent of India's exports come from micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and these enterprises are rapidly adopting AI-driven business models and are looking for skilled professionals who can provide AI-based solutions, she said.

Highlighting that India has emerged as the leading destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs) and data centres, Sitharaman said companies continue to expand their presence in the country because India has a large pool of skilled talent capable of supporting AI-led growth and digital transformation.

Targeting 16-17% Growth In Goods Exports, 11% In Services In FY27: Goyal

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- India is targeting an ambitious 16-17 per cent growth in merchandise exports to about USD 530 billion in the current fiscal year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

Speaking at the Board of Trade meeting here, Goyal said the target for the services sector is 11 per cent growth to about USD 470 billion in 2026-27.

"We want to grow to USD 1 trillion export this year. And to reach USD 1 trillion, our goods export will have to increase from (USD) 442 (billion) to about (USD) 530 billion, USD 90 billion increase," Goyal said.

In 2025-26, the country's total exports were USD 863 billion (USD 442 billion in goods and USD 421 billion in services).

During the April-June quarter, the country registered a 15 per cent growth in merchandise shipments and 11 per cent in services exports, Goyal said.

"So we are getting there (to achieve the target). We are on track. But when you fly a kite, you have to hold it tight. So we have to achieve this with everyone's collective effort," the minister said.

He added that though it's an "ambitious" target, "we have to achieve this".

The Board of Trade is a plat-



form where the Centre, states, exporters and industry representatives discuss ways to boost the country's trade.

The minister suggested that the industry focus on manufacturing high-quality goods and tap into export opportunities by leveraging free trade agreements (FTAs) finalised by India.

He said the industry should not depend only on the vast domestic market.

Industry should get out of the "cosy comfort" and reach out to the world market, he said, adding that the commerce ministry's export promotion mission will help set up branding overseas, warehouses, and participate in global exhibitions.

The FTA with the UK will be operational from July 15 and it is a big market, he said.

"UK imports even more than what India imports. UK imports twice India's exports. Their import is almost USD 900 billion. The UK offers that much," Goyal said.

Under the trade pact, 99 per cent of Indian goods will get zero-duty access.

"And if freight is expensive, it's expensive for the whole world. It's not just expensive for India," he said, adding that the industry should not complain.

He added that India is exporting defence goods to 100 countries.

"A historic Rs 38,400-crore export of defence material last year... we have exported more defence goods than we have imported. We have a surplus in defence exports," he said.

He suggested seven action points for board members to focus on to boost trade and manufacturing.

"First, please make exports a higher priority item of your agenda. Whether state governments, export promotion councils or industry associations, let's make export the high priority agenda of our world," he said.

The other suggestions include participation of states in the Centre's Rs 33,660-crore BHAVYA (Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna) scheme; utilising services of the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) in case of dumping of goods; and increased participation in global exhibitions.

Goyal said the ministry will provide funds to set up testing facilities.

Ethanol Blending Backed By Global Practice, Says Govt

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- The government on Friday issued a detailed rebuttal to what it described as misinformation circulating on social media about the country's E20 ethanol blending programme, rejecting claims ranging from excessive water consumption and engine damage to insurance invalidation and environmental harm.

In a 10-point clarification, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the programme, under which petrol contains up to 20 per cent ethanol, is supported by scientific studies, international experience and regulatory safeguards.

Rejecting claims that producing one litre of ethanol consumes 10,000 litres of water, the ministry said only surplus rice, cleared after meeting national food security requirements, is diverted for ethanol production.

It added that ethanol distilleries consume about 3-5 litres of processed water per litre of ethanol and increasingly operate Zero Liquid Discharge systems to recycle water.

The ministry also said maize, which now accounts for more than 40 per cent of ethanol supplied under the programme, requires significantly lower irrigation than paddy and is being promoted through higher minimum support prices.

The government also dismissed assertions that E20 is an untested fuel, noting that



ethanol-blended fuels have been used internationally for decades. It cited countries, including the United States, Brazil, Canada, Thailand, Japan and several European nations, as having adopted ethanol blending at varying levels.

Addressing concerns over vehicle performance, the ministry said Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI)-led trials covering about 40,000 kilometres in passenger cars and 20,000 kilometres in two-wheelers found no significant adverse impact on drivability or fuel efficiency, with only "marginal" changes in mileage.

It added that vehicles calibrated for E20 could benefit from ethanol's higher octane rating.

On allegations that E20 damages engines or corrodes components, the ministry cited studies conducted by ARAI in collaboration with Indian Oil Corporation, the Indian Institute of Petroleum and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers.

The studies found no issues relating to drivability or compatibility of metal and plastic components, although certain rubber parts in older vehicles may require earlier replacement.

India's Services Sector Growth Hits 17-Month Low In June: PMI

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- India's services sector growth fell to a 17-month low in June as challenging market conditions and reduced client interest for some services reportedly stymied total sales and output, a monthly survey said on Friday.

Several firms indicated that challenging market conditions and reduced client interest for their services dampened sales at their units, resulting in stagnant hiring activity and lower business confidence.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell to 57.4 in June, from 59.8 in May, registering the weakest upturn in 17 months.

The HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index -- based on a single question asking how the level of business activity compares with the situation the month before -- was comfortably above both the neutral mark of 50.0 and its long-run average.

Behind the softer increase in services output was the slowest expansion in new order intakes in over two-and-a-half years.

"India's services PMI remained in expansionary territory but eased to 57.4 in June, the lowest reading in 17 months. The loss of momentum points to more challeng-



ing market conditions and weaker demand, particularly at home," Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

One area of strength seen in June was exports, with firms seeing the strongest rise for three months. According to them, demand from clients in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Qatar, Singapore, the UAE and the US improved.

"... External demand held up well as overseas sales stayed robust and growth reached a three-month high," Bhandari said.

On the prices front, the rate of inflation was slight, below its long-run average and the weakest since November 2025.

"Price pressures also continued to cool, with both input cost and output charge inflation moderating as geopolitical disruptions in the Middle East began to subside," Bhandari said.

On the job front, service providers generally found that payroll numbers were sufficient for current requirements and hiring was broadly paused.

Gold Rises Rs 3,300/10 Gm To Return To Rs 1.5 Lakh Levels

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices reclaimed the Rs 1.5 lakh per 10 grams mark in the national capital on Friday, gaining Rs 3,300 in the second straight session, as a strong global trend and a weaker US dollar boosted bullion demand.



The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity increased Rs 3,300, or 2.2 per cent, to Rs 1,50,800 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Thursday's closing level of Rs 1,47,500 per 10 grams.

Silver also advanced for the fourth consecutive session, rising Rs 5,000, or 2.08 per cent, to Rs 2,45,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had closed at Rs 2,40,000 per kg in the previous session.

"Gold prices extended their gains on Friday, tracking strength in international markets. The prices were driven by a weaker US dollar and diminished prospects for aggressive interest rate increases," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst -- Commodity and

Currency, LKP Securities -- said, "The rebound comes after more than a month of sustained selling following the May 13 import duty hike, with improving sentiment supported by a softer US dollar."

The pullback in dollar index has encouraged fresh buying in bullion, while domestic prices have also benefited from currency movements, he added.

In the international markets, spot gold gained USD 57.58, or 1.4 per cent, to USD 4,181.50 per ounce and silver rose 2.44 per cent to USD 62.45 per ounce.

"Spot gold extended gains to edge close to USD 4,200 per ounce on Friday, building on Thursday's rally as the dollar held below 101," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

Fire-Boltt Enters Smartphone Market With New Boltt Brand

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- After building one of India's largest connected consumer ecosystems with more than 4 crore users, Fire-Boltt recently announced its entry into the smartphone category with the launch of boltt, a new Made-in-India smartphone brand that will be available on Flipkart and other channels of distribution.

The move marks a significant milestone in Fire-Boltt's evolution from a wearables leader into a broader consumer technology company. Drawing on years of consumer insights and category expertise, the brand is now bringing its consumer-first approach into smartphones, a category that sits at the center of everyday digital experiences. Manufactured in India and designed for Indian consumers, boltt re-



flects Fire-Boltt's commitment to local manufacturing while combining its deep understanding of the market with Flipkart's extensive reach to bring its smartphone portfolio to consumers across the country.

The upcoming boltt smartphone portfolio will span both 4G and 5G affordable devices across the Evo and Ace series, built around the principles of reliability, innovation, and accessibility. Designed for the realities of modern India, the portfolio is intended to address the evolving expectations

of users through thoughtful design, dependable performance, and features that deliver everyday value.

Speaking on the announcement, Arnav Kishore, Founder & CEO, boltt, said, "Over the years, millions of consumers have welcomed Fire-Boltt into their daily lives, helping us build one of India's largest connected consumer ecosystems. boltt is the next chapter in that journey. Smartphones sit at the heart of how people connect, create, learn, and aspire today, and we believe there is a significant opportunity for a homegrown brand that truly understands Indian consumers. With boltt, we are bringing together our consumer insights, technology expertise, and commitment to India to create smartphone experiences that are designed for the country and built for its future."

Meta Team Meets IT Ministry Officials On Username Feature Notice

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- A team from Meta met officials in the IT Ministry following a notice summoning them over the contentious issue of the 'username' feature on WhatsApp in India, sources said on Friday.

Given that the timeline for furnishing a detailed explanation on the 'usernames' feature is three days, Meta will submit its final reply as per the schedule, they added.

"Meta team met Meity officials today following the notice summoning them on the issue of rollout of the 'usernames' feature on WhatsApp in India. Ministry officials sensitised them about the government's concern relating to the feature," according to sources. On Wednesday, the Centre issued a notice to Meta questioning the planned username feature on WhatsApp, citing concerns that it could materially increase online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks.

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

The Centre had also asked Meta to explain why action shouldn't be initiated under the IT Act and rules over WhatsApp's new feature that may increase cybercrimes.

Stock Markets Take Winning Run To 3rd Day

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher on Friday, extending their winning momentum to the third day running, amid a rally in IT stocks and a softer-than-expected US jobs data tempering expectations of near-term monetary tightening by the Federal Reserve.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 261.79 points, or 0.34 per cent, to settle at 77,763.91. During the day, it jumped 655.4 points, or 0.84 per cent, to 78,157.52.

The 50-share NSE Nifty went up 95.15 points, or 0.39 per cent, to end at 24,270.85.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech surged 5.79 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra which climbed 1.81 per cent. Bharti Airtel, Sun

Pharma, Bajaj Finserv, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel Bajaj Finance, Tata Consultancy Services, and ICICI Bank were also among the winners.

Axis Bank, State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Larsen & Toubro were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi rebounded nearly 6 per cent. Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index also ended in positive territory.

The BSE MidCap Select index declined 0.46 per cent and SmallCap Select index dipped 0.33 per cent.

Sectorally, realty surged 2.22 per cent, focused IT jumped 1.74 per cent, IT (1.55 per cent), healthcare (1.31 per cent), commodities (0.90 per cent), metal (0.89 per cent) and telecom-

munication (0.77 per cent). Power declined 2.39 per cent, capital goods (2.26 per cent), industrials (1.45 per cent), utilities (0.58 per cent), auto (0.42 per cent) and consumer durables (0.32 per cent).

A total of 2,257 stocks advanced, while 1,986 declined and 198 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"Domestic markets closed the session higher, despite intermittent volatility and profit-booking, aided by supportive global cues and growing expectations of a more accommodative global rate environment following softer US labour market data.

"Sentiment was further lifted by positive outcomes from the India-Japan Summit and continued recovery in the IT sector," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Building, Fire Safety Violations

HC Directs JMC To Survey Hotels, Commercial Establishments

M Ahmad

Jammu: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has directed the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) to conduct a comprehensive survey of hotels, commercial establishments, coaching institutes and other public buildings across Jammu to identify violations relating to sanctioned building plans, parking facilities, fire safety clearances and other mandatory statutory permissions.

Hearing a petition pending since 2002, a bench of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal observed that the issues raised extend beyond the dispute between the parties and concern the uniform enforcement of municipal laws, public safety and planned urban development.

The matter came before the court after the respondent, S Singh and others, alleged arbitrary and selective enforcement by the municipal authorities, claiming that one hotel was singled out for action while numerous other establishments with similar alleged violations escaped scrutiny.

They relied on

information obtained under the Right to Information Act, claiming that numerous establishments were functioning without approved building plans and parking facilities despite apparent violations.

The court noted that although JMC had issued notices to the establishments in May 2024, it failed to place on record the action taken thereafter.

The court observed that merely issuing notices did not amount to compliance with the Court's earlier directions and criticized the corporation for filing only a generalized response instead of a detailed, establishment-wise report.

The Court directed the Commissioner, JMC, to file a comprehensive affidavit within two weeks detailing the total number of hotels, commercial establishments, coaching institutes and similarly situated buildings functioning within the jurisdiction of the Jammu Municipal Corporation.

The affidavit must also disclose number of such establishments which have been granted building permission and occupancy,

completion certificate in accordance with law, the court said.

The affidavit, the court said, shall also provide details regarding the number of establishments found to have raised construction in deviation from, or without, any sanctioned building plan, specifying the nature and extent of such deviations.

The affidavit is also required to provide details regarding the number of establishments which do not possess the mandatory parking facilities as required under the applicable Building Bye-laws, the Master Plan and other statutory regulations.

Besides, the affidavit must also disclose the number of establishments functioning without the requisite Fire Safety Clearance, No Objection Certificate from the competent Fire and Emergency Services Department or whose fire safety installations are deficient.

The commissioner has also been asked to delineate whether periodic inspections are undertaken by the Jammu Municipal Corporation and other competent authorities

to ensure compliance with municipal laws, building regulations and fire safety norms, and the mechanism adopted for carrying out such inspections. Lastly, the affidavit is required to provide details regarding the action already taken against the defaulting establishments, including issuance of notices, sealing, demolition, prosecution, cancellation of permissions or any other coercive measures contemplated under law.

The Court further directed the Commissioner to co-ordinate with the Director of Fire and Emergency Services, the Vice Chairman of the Jammu Development Authority, the Inspector General of Police (Traffic) and other concerned departments for effective enforcement of building regulations, parking norms and fire safety standards.

The matter has been listed for further hearing on July 30. The Court warned that if its directions are not complied with within the stipulated period, the Commissioner, JMC, shall remain personally present before the Court along with the relevant records.

HC Mandates Full Disclosure in Bail Pleas

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Friday amended its procedural rules to make comprehensive disclosures regarding pending criminal cases, antecedents and other relevant details mandatory in all bail applications filed before the High Court as well as subordinate criminal courts across Jammu and Kashmir.

The amendments, notified by the Registrar General with the prior approval of the Lieutenant Governor, are aimed at enhancing transparency and enabling courts to adjudicate bail pleas on the basis of complete and accurate information.

Under the new provisions, every bail applicant will be required to furnish detailed particulars relating to the case, custody, progress of trial, criminal antecedents, previous bail applications and any coercive processes initiated against them.

For bail petitions filed before the High Court, a new Rule 176-B has been inserted in Chapter XV (Procedure in Criminal Cases) of the Jammu & Kashmir High Court Rules, 1999. A corresponding Rule 10 has also been inserted in Chapter XVI (Bail and Recognizance) of the Rules and Orders for the Guidance of Courts Subordinate to the High Court of Judicature, Svt. 1988 (Criminal), extending the disclosure requirements to Sessions Courts and Magistrates.

As per the amended rules, every bail application must disclose the FIR number and date, the police

station, district and State, the offences invoked and the maximum punishment prescribed. Applicants must also specify the date of arrest, the total period of custody undergone and the current stage of the proceedings, including whether the case is under investigation, at the charge-sheet, cognizance, framing of charges or trial stage.

The rules further mandate disclosure of the total number of witnesses cited in the charge sheet and the number of prosecution witnesses examined so far.

Applicants are also required to disclose their criminal antecedents, including details of previous FIRs, the police stations concerned, the offences involved and the status of those cases, whether pending, ending in acquittal or resulting in conviction.

Additionally, every bail plea must contain particulars of all previous bail applications, including the court where they were filed, case numbers and their outcome. The applicant must also disclose whether any non-bailable warrant has been issued against them or whether they have ever been declared a proclaimed offender.

The High Court said the amendments have been made in exercise of the powers conferred under Article 225 of the Constitution of India and other enabling provisions. The new rules are intended to streamline bail proceedings by ensuring that courts are placed in possession of complete, candid and relevant information before deciding bail applications.

NEET-UG Retest Results By July 20: NTA

Agencies

New Delhi: The academic year for MBBS students will not be delayed, as the results of the re-examination of National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG), conducted following paper leak, will be announced by July 20, a senior official at the National Testing Agency (NTA) confirmed.

At present, the agency is resolving the issues submitted by the students.

On June 25, NTA had released the provisional answer key, and candidates were given time till June 28 to challenge it. A fee of Rs200 is charged per question, which is refunded if the student's challenge is found to be correct.

Around 10,000 challenges were received from aspirants, the official said.

The official stated that the agency is working on a war footing to release the results soon; however, the exact date could not be confirmed. The official, however, assured that the academic year for MBBS students will not be delayed.

NEET-UG re-examination was held on June 21 after the cancellation of the May 3 examination over the alleged paper leak, with over 20 lakh students taking the retest.

Despite NEET being conducted again, the academic year will not be delayed, the official assured.

Following the results, the counselling schedule is released both for the central and state quota seats, which stand at 15 per cent and 85 per cent respectively.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

The Little Coffin

Army Chief General Asim Munir.

Turkmenistan's national leader Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Iraqi President Nizar Amedi, Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani all paid tribute.

Russia sent former President and Security Council Chairman Dmitry Medvedev.

China was represented by Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress He Wei.

Turkey dispatched Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz.

Perhaps the most telling image was that of Saudi Arabia—once Iran's fiercest regional rival and a major target of Iranian missile strikes during the war—sending a high-profile delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed El Khoreiji, illustrating the remarkable shifts underway in Middle Eastern diplomacy.

Equally noteworthy was the presence of Afghanistan's Taliban-led administration, whose senior leaders joined the procession despite the many disputes that continue to divide Kabul and Tehran.

The rawest emotions came from leaders of the Yemeni, Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi resistance groups. As they approached the coffin, many instinctively raised clenched fists in a final salute before breaking into tears or standing in silent contemplation, reflecting the profound bond they shared with the late leader.

For Iranian organisers, these images carried obvious symbolic value.

Officials repeatedly described the gathering as evidence that efforts to isolate the Islamic Republic had failed.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei noted that delegations, parliamentarians and public figures from around 100 countries were expected during the multi-day ceremonies, although Tehran had deliberately not invited governments that had publicly supported the US and Israeli war against Iran.

Inside the Mosalla, however, politics often gave way to quiet emotion.

Many delegates lingered before the coffins, offering silent prayers before moving aside for the next visitor.

Among ordinary participants, grief transcended nationality.

A professor from India described the assassination as "a transformative sacrifice", saying the late leader's ideas would outlive borders.

An Afghan official remarked simply: "He lived with strength and was martyred with strength."

Iranian officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Judiciary Chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Eje'i and Expediency Council Chairman Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larjani, stood alongside families of those killed, representatives of recognised religious minorities and relatives of members of the resistance front.

The procession of international dignitaries continued uninterrupted for hours.

Parliament speakers from Iraq, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, ministers from Africa, Latin America and Central Asia, officials from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the D-8 group all took their turn.

For many observers, the funeral reflected not only mourning but the changing diplomatic landscape of West Asia.

Countries that until recently stood on opposite sides of regional rivalries now found themselves standing shoulder to shoulder before the same coffin.

Iranian officials made little effort to conceal the political significance they attached to the

moment.

They portrayed the turnout as proof that, despite war, sanctions and sustained international pressure, Tehran remained capable of convening an unusually broad spectrum of political, religious and ideological actors.

Whether that interpretation is shared internationally remains open to debate, but few disputed the scale of the gathering.

With organisers expecting between 15 and 20 million mourners over the coming days, the ceremonies are set to continue through Tehran before moving to Qom, then across the border into Iraq for commemorations in Najaf and Karbala, before concluding with burial in Mashhad on July 9.

As Friday's ceremony drew to a close, the stream of foreign delegations showed no sign of slowing.

The little coffin remained where it had been all day—perhaps the most poignant reminder that beyond the geopolitical symbolism and diplomatic choreography lay a family's loss, and the human tragedy at the heart of one of the most consequential events in Iran's recent history.

J&K Braces For

parts of the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 31.7 degrees Celsius, 2.1 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 19.3 degrees Celsius, two degrees above the seasonal average.

Qazigund recorded a maximum temperature of 30.6 degrees Celsius, Pahalgal 25.1 degrees Celsius, Kupwara 30.7 degrees Celsius, Kokernag 29.9 degrees Celsius and Gulmarg 20.2 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 37.3 degrees Celsius, while Banihal recorded 31.7 degrees Celsius, Katra 33.7 degrees Celsius, Batote 28.2 degrees Celsius and Bhaderwah 29.6 degrees Celsius.

The MeT department said humidity levels remained high across the region, adding to the prevailing hot and humid weather conditions, particularly in the Jammu division.

Faith, Fervour Mark

batches of pilgrims, including men, women, elderly devotees and sadhus, began their onward journey to the holy cave, which houses the naturally formed ice Shivaling.

Officials said around 12,168 pilgrims paid obeisance at the shrine on the first day of the Yatra. The devotees included about 9,350 men, 2,250 women, more than 200 children, 70 sadhus, nine transgender pilgrims and over 260 security personnel.

At the Baltal base camp, the first batch of pilgrims was ceremonially flagged off by Rahul Yadav, Managing Director of J&K Power Development Corporation and Nodal Officer for the Baltal Axis, along with Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Jatin Kishore, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Armed) Kashmir Maqsood-ul-Zaman and Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal Sudhanshu Dhama.

The officers extended their best wishes to the pilgrims and prayed for a safe, peaceful and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage.

Meanwhile, the second batch of 3,865 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu for the twin base camps in Kashmir under tight security.

Officials said the pilgrims departed in a convoy of 201 vehicles escorted by security personnel and Central Armed Police Forces. Of the total, 1,735 pilgrims in 115 vehicles were headed for the Baltal base camp, while 2,130 pilgrims in 86 vehicles were proceeding towards the traditional Nunwan-Pahalgal base camp.

The atmosphere at the Jammu base camp

was filled with devotion as pilgrims chanted religious slogans before embarking on their journey.

On Thursday, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the first batch of 4,822 pilgrims from Bhagwati Nagar. The pilgrims reached the Kashmir Valley later in the day and were welcomed by the administration and local residents.

With Friday's departure, a total of 8,687 pilgrims have left the Jammu base camp for Kashmir since Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his greetings to the devotees and described the Amarnath Yatra as an enduring symbol of India's spiritual heritage, cultural unity and selfless service.

In a special message distributed among pilgrims at the Baltal and Nunwan base camps, the Prime Minister urged devotees to undertake five pledges during the pilgrimage. He appealed to them to maintain cleanliness along the Yatra route, strictly follow safety guidelines issued by the administration, support local livelihoods by purchasing locally made products under the "Vocal for Local" initiative, promote the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign by gifting a garland in Raksha Bandhan, and uphold the spirit of "Nation First" through sincere service to the country.

He also appreciated the efforts of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, the Jammu and Kashmir administration, the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police, healthcare workers, disaster response agencies, sanitation staff, volunteers and local residents for ensuring the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration also issued an advisory asking pilgrims to travel strictly according to their registered dates, saying no devotee would be permitted to undertake the pilgrimage before the allotted date.

The administration said the daily number of pilgrims has been fixed in accordance with Supreme Court directions to ensure safety and smooth conduct of the Yatra. It urged devotees to complete advance registration before arriving in Jammu and Kashmir, noting that Tatkal registration slots are extremely limited.

Pilgrims arriving without registration or ahead of their scheduled travel dates were requested to wait for their turn. The administration assured that every registered pilgrim would get an opportunity to undertake the pilgrimage according to the prescribed capacity and schedule.

Authorities have put in place elaborate security arrangements for the pilgrimage. Thousands of personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Reserve Police Force and other paramilitary forces have been deployed along the twin routes, base camps and transit points. Multi-layered security has been activated along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, while aerial surveillance is being carried out to monitor the pilgrimage routes.

The 57-day pilgrimage will conclude on August 28 on the occasion of Shraavan Purnima and Raksha Bandhan.

Yatra Slots Fixed,

permitted daily on the pilgrimage route has been fixed.

"Compliance with this daily ceiling limit is mandatory for the safety of pilgrims and for the smooth conduct of the Yatra," it said.

For pilgrims' convenience, advance registration was made available well before the start of the Yatra through bank branches across the country and online channels. Most pilgrims have already taken advantage of this facility and completed their registrations in advance, it said.

Therefore, Tatkal (on-spot) registration slots are extremely limited.

All pilgrims are requested to reach Jammu and Kashmir only after completing their advance registration, it added.

The advisory said it is not possible to accommodate thousands of pilgrims arriving in Jammu and Kashmir without registration, under the Tatkal facility.

"Such pilgrims are requested to wait for their turn and travel only on the date assigned by the administration," it said.

The advisory stated that it has been observed that many registered pilgrims are arriving in Jammu and Kashmir before their registered travel date.

"No pilgrim will be permitted to travel before their registered date. Please travel only on your registered date. Pilgrims who have arrived in Jammu and Kashmir without registration are again requested to wait for their turn," it added.

Assuring that every pilgrim will get an opportunity to undertake the Yatra, it stressed that this would be possible only according to the prescribed procedure and available capacity.

"You are requested to maintain order and cooperate with the administration to ensure everyone's safety," the advisory read.

The 57-day pilgrimage will begin on July 3 and conclude on August 28. Devotees can take either the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgal route in Anantnag or the shorter 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district. (PTI)

PM Lists 5 Pledges

maintain cleanliness, follow safety guidelines, support local livelihoods, promote environmental conservation and uphold the spirit of "Nation First".

The Prime Minister specifically urged pilgrims to spend at least 10 per cent of their pilgrimage expenditure on locally made products under the "Vocal for Local" initiative to strengthen the livelihoods of local families and youth in Jammu and Kashmir.

He asked devotees to adhere to cleanliness norms and actively contribute towards keeping the pilgrimage routes litter-free.

On safety, Modi urged pilgrims to strictly follow directions issued by the administration, comply with traffic regulations and safety advisories and remain vigilant during adverse weather conditions. He also asked them to take precautions against slippery terrain and cold weather.

As part of the environmental conservation pledge, the Prime Minister called upon devotees to gift a sapling to their brother or sister on the concluding day of the Yatra, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan, and support the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign.

He also urged pilgrims to uphold the "Nation First" spirit by performing their duties sincerely throughout the year and contributing towards the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Describing participation in the annual pilgrimage as a matter of great fortune and a deeply spiritual experience, Modi said the Amarnath Yatra was an enduring symbol of India's rich spiritual heritage, cultural unity and spirit of selfless service.

The pilgrimage, he said, has emerged over the years as a living expression of India's unity in diversity, bringing together devotees from different regions, languages and traditions with a shared resolve to worship Lord Mahadev.

Modi appreciated the efforts of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board and the Jammu and Kashmir administration in managing the annual pilgrimage. He also acknowledged the contribution of the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police, disaster response agencies, healthcare

professionals, administrative officials and sanitation workers in ensuring the safety and smooth conduct of the Yatra.

The Prime Minister also praised the hospitality extended by the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the voluntary service provided by local residents and organisations running community kitchens and service camps along the pilgrimage routes.

He described the tradition of selfless service as a reflection of India's civilisational values and the ideal of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah".

Expressing confidence that the 2026 Amarnath Yatra would serve as a celebration of faith, national unity and selfless service, Modi wished the pilgrims a safe, peaceful and spiritually enriching journey.

Pilgrims welcomed the Prime Minister's message, describing it as a thoughtful gesture that strengthened their spiritual resolve and enthusiasm for the pilgrimage.

Punjab Scraps Levy,

that camped in Punjab and took up the issue with the government there.

"Members of the coordination committee were in Punjab for the last 10 days. They met several people in the Punjab government. Thank God, the government there understood that it was an illegal tax and revoked it," he said, expressing gratitude to political leaders, people, and media for their support.

Kashmiri traders had raised the issue with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as well as other political leaders in the Valley.

Abdullah on Monday said he has taken up the concerns of mutton dealers with his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann, and sought his intervention.

Abdullah had informed Mann that livestock-laden vehicles bound for Jammu and Kashmir were allegedly being stopped by certain contractor groups operating in connection with cattle fairs, and subjected to unauthorised fee collection, despite carrying all valid permits and requisite documentation.

"I have taken up this issue with the Punjab government, seeking immediate intervention to ensure unhindered movement of livestock transport vehicles through Punjab," Abdullah had said.

"They are just using the highway. There is no justification for unauthorised levies being imposed on mutton dealers from Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

The chief minister also posted on social media a letter he had written to Mann last week.

In the letter, he told Mann that such disruptions not only caused avoidable delays, but also financial losses and hardship to transporters, adversely affecting animal welfare.

The chief minister said the matter was being examined by the Kashmir Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs through an internal committee.

"The findings indicate that transporters are reportedly being compelled to make substantial payments per vehicle during transit without any apparent legal sanction. The committee has further observed that livestock movement is exempt from GST and that the continued imposition of such charges is placing an additional burden on the livestock trade, with consequential impact on meat prices and consumers in Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Abdullah reminded Mann that Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir share longstanding bonds of friendship, cooperation and economic interdependence.

"Any such practices, if found to be occurring, are inconsistent with the spirit of cooperation that has traditionally characterised relations between us and have understandably caused concern among the trading community," the letter read.

Ramos, Ronaldo Score as Portugal Rallies to Beat Croatia 2-1

Agencies

TORONTO- At 41, Cristiano Ronaldo will get another match in a Portugal uniform, thanks to a penalty he scored, a stoppage time header by Goncalo Ramos, and a VAR ruling the Croatia team still doesn't understand.

Ramos headed in the winner as Portugal beat Croatia 2-1 in a wild finish that also included a Croatian goal disallowed for offside just before the final whistle in a World Cup round of 32 match on Thursday night. The game featured a match-up of 40-somethings — Ronaldo, in his sixth World Cup, and Croatia's Luka Modrić, making his fifth bid for a tournament title.

Ronaldo tied things up in the 68th minute on a penalty kick that gave the megastar his first knockout stage goal at the World Cup before being subbed out in the 81st minute.

"I never felt any of that

(fear)," he said. "Yes, nervous. But as always, you have to be very positive for things to go well."

Still, it was Ramos who gave Portugal the victory and a berth in the round of 16.

"I love that type of moment, I love that type of games," he said. "I want to play every game like that."

Portugal moves on to face Spain on Monday.

"First half we dominated the game. In second half after the goal we get a little bit panic, but this is football," Ronaldo said. "After the penalty, I think it was a little bit better for us. We created a few chances and I think at the end of the day we deserved to win the match."

In a postgame interview with Fox, Ronaldo proudly turned around to show that he was wearing a Diogo Jota jersey and his No. 21, one year after his teammate died in a car crash.



"We knew this before the game. It was a so special moment. We speak today to our group, the coincidence of life. It's unbelievable."

Things got weird after Ramos scored. With Portugal and its fans still enthralled with his goal, Croatia thought it had tied things up 2-2 in the very

last moments. But after a 2 1/2-minute delay, Mario Pasalic was called offside as VAR ruled no goal. Croatia fans threw bottles on the field and whistled in

protest.

Croatia midfielder Petar Susic said, "the referee said he didn't see (anyone) touch the ball, he said that he had a sensor in that ball," that caused the offside ruling. "For me, it's a regular goal."

Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said it was, indeed, the chip in the ball that triggered the decision.

"I need to tell them (Croatia fans) the message is very clear: The balls now have a chip, and it's very clear that's why the VAR intervened," he said. "It's not a subjective opinion."

Croatia opened the scoring in the 53rd minute when Ivan Perisic scored off a cross from Josip Sanisic.

Ronaldo, booed loudly by Croatia fans every time he touched the ball, got his chance from the spot after Nikola Vlasic was called for a holding foul inside the box. Portugal's megastar hitched his step and

converted down the middle as the goalkeeper went to his right.

Modrić led Croatia to second- and third-place finishes in 2018 and 2022, and the match carried the weight of the two aging stars each trying to realize the dream of winning the World Cup. Modrić is 40.

The men, who were teammates at Real Madrid, shared a few smiles and an embrace ahead of the coin toss before the match. The two met on the pitch after the match, hugged and exchanged a few words.

"I played with Luka so many years," Ronaldo said. "We're nearly the same age. I think he's a legend of football. He's still a legend of football."

Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić said this was "probably" Modrić's last World Cup, but added, "only God knows what will happen in the next four years. We'll see. We'll talk about it in Croatia." (AP)

Switzerland Beats Algeria 2-0 to Reach World Cup Last 16



Agencies

VANCOUVER- Breel Embolo and Dan Ndoye both scored and Switzerland advanced to the round of 16 at the World Cup with a 2-0 victory over Algeria.

Switzerland will play the winner of Friday's match between Colombia and Ghana in Kansas City, Missouri. The round-of-16 game is set for next Tuesday in Vancouver.

Switzerland has not won a knockout-round match since

1938 in France, but in 1954 the team won a playoff game to reach the quarterfinals.

Although the Swiss reached the round of 16 at the past three World Cups, there was a smaller field of 32 teams in each of those tournaments, and they could get no further.

Algeria was eliminated after returning to the World Cup for the first time since 2014, when it advanced to the knockout round but fell to eventual champion Germany. (AP)

Novak Djokovic Earns 105th Match Win At Wimbledon To Equal Roger Federer Record

Agencies

LONDON: Novak Djokovic saw Arthur Rinderknech falling toward the Centre Court net after a volley and said to himself "please stay down."

The Frenchman did — and 39-year-old Djokovic dove to hit a backhand volley winner on match point for a 7-5, 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (4) record-equaling victory in the third round at Wimbledon on Friday.

Djokovic's 105th match win at the All England Club ties Roger Federer on the men's list for most singles match victories. Martina Navratilova won 120 singles matches at Wimbledon.

By next weekend, Djokovic would love to equal Federer's men's record of eight singles titles, but this one will have to suffice for Friday.

"Today, I was quite stressed out, more tension than usual," Djokovic said in his on-court interview. "I knew it was going to be a very challenging match for me."

The 24-time Grand Slam champion overcame a blip — dropping the third set in 18 minutes — and held his nerve in the fourth-set



tiebreaker by hitting back-to-back aces before Rinderknech's forehand went wide to set up match point.

"I saw him slip and kind of fall down. And I was just like please stay down' for that last shot," Djokovic, who had repeatedly punched his left thigh after losing the third set, said of the final play.

Joining Federer on 105 singles match wins is "a huge honor and privilege," Djokovic added. "I propose a matchup for me and Roger for 106."

Djokovic will face Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin in the fourth round.

Also Thursday, defending champion Jannik Sinner beat Jenson Brooksby 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 on No. 1 Court to advance to the fourth round.

Fonseca loses to Safiullin Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin wiped away tears after beating Brazilian rising star João Fonseca 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 to reach the fourth round.

Safiullin, ranked No. 132, dealt with a knee injury last year but this week has eliminated two seeded opponents at the All England Club. He surprised 12th-seeded Andrey Rublev in the first round. Fonseca was seeded No. 24.

The 28-year-old Safiullin, a Wimbledon quarterfinalist in 2023, became emotional when he described his journey back.

"After the U.S. Open, I had to stop — for treating my injury," he said in an on-court interview. "That time was super tough. Even let's say half a year ago I didn't know if I will be able to be back."

Safiullin then paused and used his shirt to wipe away tears as fans applauded on No. 2 Court.

"I'm super happy to be back here," he added. (AP)

Ahead Of 2nd T20I, Samson'S Inconsistency, Tilak'S Approach Under Radar

Press Trust of India

MANCHESTER: With Vaibhav Sooryavanshi breathing down his neck, Sanju Samson will be under pressure to turn the frequent busts in his performance graph into consistent booms as India take on England in the second T20 International here on Saturday.

The first game was abandoned after India posted a healthy 189 for 7 at the Chester-Le-Street in Durham, riding on half-centuries from Abhishek Sharma and skipper Shreyas Iyer.

However, the focus of attention during the next few games would be Sanju Samson and whether he can weather the Sooryavanshi storm that is building up on the sidelines.

In an alternate universe, three back-to-back match-winning knocks in India's T20 World Cup triumph would have given Kerala's most 'globally followed' sporting

icon a cushion for a year.

But with Indian cricket discovering the generational talent of Sooryavanshi, Samson's margin for error has become minimal and the T20 World Cup halo alone can't save him.

With Abhishek Sharma smashing his way to 49 and 59 in two of the last three games, the pressure is entirely on Samson to get some runs under his belt.

In the opening game that was washed out, Samson looked miserable scoring a single run off seven balls and not for once did it seem that he is trying to take the high-risk high-reward route.

The technical flaws in Samson's game don't inspire a lot of confidence when he plays on seaming tracks. Ireland's unheralded Jai Moon-dra, who actually hails from Rajasthan's Tonk, had exposed his frailties during successive games with deliveries that moved off the surface.




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