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Widespread Rains Likely Across J&K: MeT

Thunderstorms, Gusty Winds Forecast on July 7, 8 & 11

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Meteorological Department on Sunday forecast an increase in rainfall activity across Jammu and Kashmir over the next few days, warning of heavy rain, thunderstorms, gusty winds and possible flash floods in vulnerable areas of the Jammu division.

According to a weather bulletin issued by the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, isolated light rain and thunderstorms are expected over the Kashmir division during the next 24 hours, while fairly widespread light to moderate rain and thunderstorms are likely in the Jammu division.

Rainfall activity is expected to increase during the subsequent two days, with widespread precipitation likely at several places across the Union Territory.

The MeT | More on P6

Ensure No Amarnath Yatri Faces Inconvenience: LG Sinha

Reviews Yatra Management at Nunwan Base Camp | Orders Action Against Fake Registrations

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday directed officials to adopt a pilgrim-centric approach and ensure that no devotee faces inconvenience during the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

Sinha issued the directions during a visit to the Nunwan Base Camp, where he reviewed the management of the annual pilgrimage and chaired a meeting with senior administrative and security officials.

The meeting discussed the movement of pilgrims, security arrangements, accommodation facilities, registration progress and other logistical



requirements for the smooth conduct of the Yatra.

The Lieutenant Governor asked officials to prioritise the safety, security and convenience of pilgrims and ensure that devotees are made aware

of the requirement for valid registration on designated dates to minimise waiting times.

"Maintain close coordination, remain available on the ground and ensure prompt grievance | More on P6

'Unregistered Pilgrims Must Wait For Their Turn'

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday urged unregistered pilgrims undertaking the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra to remain patient and wait for their turn, saying the daily pilgrim caps at Chandanwari and Baltal were fixed and could not be increased.

"We are seeing a large influx of unregistered pilgrims. I strongly urge those without prior registration to remain patient and wait for their turn," Sinha told reporters during a visit to Chandanwari.

He said adherence to the

prescribed protocols was essential for the safety of pilgrims and the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

"Daily pilgrim caps at both Chandanwari and Baltal are strictly fixed and cannot be increased. Adhering to these established protocols is vital for everyone's safety and a hassle-free pilgrimage," the LG said.

Sinha said the Amarnath Yatra had witnessed a "massive surge" in pilgrim numbers this year, prompting the administration, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board and other | More on P6

Govt Eases Emergency Gas Curbs

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The government has withdrawn most provisions of an emergency natural gas supply order imposed during the West Asia conflict after liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments through the Strait of Hormuz resumed following a ceasefire.

In a notification issued on Saturday, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas amended the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026, removing key provisions that had allowed the government to prioritise and redirect domestic natural gas and imported LNG to essential consumers.

The emergency order was issued on March 9 under the Essential Commodities Act after the West Asia conflict disrupted LNG shipments through the Strait of Hormuz. Several suppliers had invoked force majeure and cargoes were diverted to priority consumers.

The ministry said the situation had since improved following a ceasefire, ongoing negotiations and | More on P6

Ayatollah Khamenei Funeral Becomes Stage for Defiance

Neelufar Raminfar

Tehran- Hundreds of thousands of mourners poured into Tehran's Grand Mosalla on Saturday as Iran began an elaborate multi-day funeral for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, whose assassination in a US-Israeli strike in February has profoundly reshaped the country's political and strategic landscape.

Beating their chests in grief and waving Iranian flags, mourners filed past the glass-covered coffins of Khamenei and four members of his family who were killed in the same attack, chanting "Down with America", "Death to Israel" and repeated calls for revenge.

The funeral—the largest state ceremony in Iran since the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989—is unfolding at a time when Tehran is negotiating a permanent end to the war with



Washington while simultaneously using its control over the Strait of Hormuz as its strongest bargaining chip.

The ceremonies are also expected to consolidate the authority of Iran's new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who succeeded his father after the February 28 attack.

A Nation in Mourning

Long before sunrise, thousands had gathered outside the sprawling Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla.

Many had travelled overnight from distant provinces. Others had spent the night outside the complex to secure a place inside the prayer hall.

Inside, the atmosphere alternated between | More on P6

Meta Gets Notice Over Child Abuse Ads On Instagram

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The government has issued a stern notice to Meta on Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) in paid advertisements on Instagram, sources said on Sunday.

The government issued the notice on Saturday evening, they added.

"MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) has ordered Instagram to disable all ads and content promoting and facilitating access to CSEAM," the sources said.

The development came a day after IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw directed MeitY officials to summon Meta over Instagram ads allegedly promoting child sexual abuse material.

The ministry has demanded an explanation and information on action taken in its notice to Meta over child sexual abuse material advertisement allegations, government sources said.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has also demanded a detailed explanation within 7 days.

The Menlo Park, California-headquartered technology giant Meta owns | More on P6

Police Raid Publishers Over 'Separatist' Books In Schools

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The counter-intelligence wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police has raided premises linked to publishing houses after registering a case over two books allegedly glorifying separatist figures that were procured for government school libraries under the Samagra Shiksha programme.

The case has been registered under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), officials said.

During the searches, police seized physical documents and digital evidence. No arrests have been made so far.



The FIR pertains to Personalities and Legends of Jammu and Kashmir, authored by Hilal Ahmad and Santosh Meena and published by Jammu-based Oberoi Book Service, and Great Personalities of Jammu | More on P6

Police Warn Against Sharing Old Baderwah Video

The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday cautioned the public in Doda district against circulation of an old video related to a 2022 incident in Baderwah, saying it is being shared on social media with misleading and distorted narratives that could disturb communal harmony. According to the police, the video pertains to an incident that occurred on June 9, 2022, for which a case was | More on P6

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Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name : uGSOT Scholarship Program 2026

Description: The uGSOT Scholarship Program 2026 by upGrad School of Technology (uGSOT) aims to support Class 12 passed science students across India who wish to pursue B.E/B.Tech in Computer Science in specialisations like GenAI & ML, Quantum Computing, and Full Stack Development.

Eligibility: Open to PAN India students planning to pursue B.E/B.Tech in Computer Science in any of the following specialisations:

- GenAI & ML
- Quantum Computing
- Full Stack Development

Applicants must have passed Class 12 in the Science stream with PCM/PCMB. Students must have passed Class 12 in the academic year 2025 or 2026. Applicants must have scored at least 50% marks in Class 12.

Prizes & Rewards: Discount on the uGNET fee based on 12th scores

Scholarships opportunity upon admission. Students qualifying the uGNET exam and securing their admission seat will become eligible for Merit-Based Scholarship, Girls in Tech Scholarship, Need-Based Scholarship, Ronnie Screwvala Scholarship for Tech Innovators and Defence Scholarship offered by upGrad School of Technology covering up to 100% of the tuition fee based on their overall profile score.

Note: The final scholarship amount may depend on the student's performance, admission confirmation, seat availability, and the scholarship terms defined by the program.

Last Date to Apply: 10-07-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/UGST1
 QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ugsot-scholarship-program-20261782798685.png>

Scholarship Name: Bharti Airtel Scholarship 2026-27

Description: Bharti Airtel Scholarship 2026-27 an initiative by the Bharti Airtel Foundation aims to support deserving students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, with a focus on girl students, to become future technology leaders.

Eligibility: Confirmed admission in the first year (academic year 2026-27) of the undergraduate/5-year integrated courses



in fields of Electronics and Communication, Telecom, Information Technology, Computer Sciences, Data Sciences, Aerospace and Emerging Technologies (AI, IoT, AR/VR, Machine Learning, Robotics) at the top 50 NIRF-ranked Engineering universities/institutes.

Must be a citizen and resident of India. Both parents/guardian's annual income from all sources must not exceed INR 8 lakhs.

Prizes & Rewards: 100% annual course fee coverage for the entire course duration, as per the institute/university fee structure. Hostel and mess charges covered.

Laptop provided to all Bharti Scholars in the first year.

Last Date to Apply: 31-07-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/BHRSP3
 QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/bharti-aitel-scholarship-2026-271782798788.png>

Scholarship Name: Muskaan Scholarship Program 2.0 (2026-27)

Description: The Muskaan Scholarship Program 2.0 (2026-27), an initiative by Valvoline Cummins Private Ltd. (VCPL), supports students in Classes 9 to 12 from southern, eastern, and northeastern India. The program aims to help children of commercial drivers, mechanics, and EWS category students continue their education.

Eligibility: Students studying in Classes 9 to 12 from Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur,

Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tripura, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana are eligible to apply.

Open to children of commercial drivers, including LMV/HMV drivers, children of mechanics, and students belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category. Applicants must have secured 60% and above in their previous class.

The total annual Family income from all sources must not exceed INR 8 lakh. Children of employees of Valvoline Cummins Private Ltd. (VCPL) and Buddy4Study are not eligible.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will receive scholarship benefits as mentioned below.

Scholarship of up to INR 12,000 (based on actual expenses)

Mentorship support (Session on Road Safety)

Last Date to Apply: 20-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MKSP3
 QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/muskaan-scholarship-program-2-0-2026-271780373884.png>

Scholarship Name : Education Future International Scholarship 2026

Description: The Education Future International Scholarship 2026 is being offered by the Education Future organisation to meritorious Indian students, who are pursuing their studies overseas.

Eligibility: Application is open to Indian nationals possessing a valid passport, who

are pursuing an undergraduate/postgraduate course overseas in a recognised university/college outside India. Applicants must have secured a minimum of 60% marks in Class 10 and 12, and be able to demonstrate their lack of means for education funding.

Prizes & Rewards: A scholarship ranging between 2 to 10 lakh.

Last Date to Apply: 30-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/EFIS1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/education-future-international-scholarship-20261782807435.png>

Scholarship Name : Masters' Union: Scholarship Aptitude Test 2026

Description: Masters' Union: Scholarship Aptitude Test 2026 is specifically designed for high-merit, high-potential candidates pursuing careers in Tech & Business Management, Psychology & Marketing, Finance & Economics, Design, Sustainability, Data Science & Artificial Intelligence by providing financial assistance and direct admission opportunities, along with tuition fee scholarships.

Eligibility: Applicants must be currently enrolled in Class 12 (any recognised education boards) or have completed it in 2025.

Must be aiming to pursue a full-time undergraduate programme in Business Management, Technology, Leadership, Data Science & AI, Design, Sustainability, Finance & Economics, Marketing or related fields.

Assessment Requirement: All applicants must appear for the Masters' Union Scholarship Aptitude Test (MUSAT) or qualify for an approved alternate test.

Alternate Eligibility for Data Science & Artificial Intelligence programme:

JEE percentile above 90%

MUSAT score above 35/45

SAT score above 1500/1600

Note: check Masters' Union official website to ensure accuracy on eligibility

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarships offering 10% to 80% tuition fee waivers

Last Date to Apply: 10-07-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MUS-CASP1

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/masters-union-scholarship-aptitude-test-20261773114910.png>

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my character certificate issued by Govt Boys Higher Secondary Kunzer Bearing roll no 321018068. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Usmaan Mir

R/o Kunzer

Contact no: 778098965

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohd Safdar Sofi, Son of Ghulam Hassan Sofi, residing at Chak Saderbal, Hazratbal, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir - 190006, hereby state that my name has been inadvertently recorded as "Mohd Sabder Sofi" in my Aadhaar Card.

My correct and actual name is "Mohd Safdar Sofi." I intend to get my name corrected in my Aadhaar records from "Mohd Sabder Sofi" to "Mohd Safdar Sofi."

I hereby declare that "Mohd Sabder Sofi" and "Mohd Safdar Sofi" refer to one and the same person, i.e., myself. I request all concerned authorities to take note of this correction and update their records accordingly.

Place: Srinagar

(Mohd Safdar Sofi)

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohammad Assadullah Parray, S/o Mohammad Jamal Parray, R/o Chukar, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, on behalf of the legal heirs of late Nazir Ahmad Parray, hereby notify that Nazir Ahmad Parray expired on 21-08-2002 due to a bullet wound by unknown gunmen. His date of birth, as per school records, is 25-04-1981.

The earlier death certificate issued by Police Station Pattan could not be authenticated due to damaged records of the year 2002. Therefore, we have applied for issuance of a fresh death certificate from BDO Wailien.

If any person has any objection, they may file the same before the competent authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/-

Mohammad Assadullah Parray

R/o Chukar, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla

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Srinagar Police Extends Assistance to Pilgrims During Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police continues to extend dedicated assistance and support to Pilgrims undertaking the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026, ensuring their safe, secure, and smooth passage through the district.

Comprehensive security, traffic, and facilitation arrangements have been put in place in close coordination with all stakeholder agencies. Police personnel deployed along the Yatra route are providing round-the-clock assistance by regulating traffic, facilitating medical aid, guiding pilgrims, assisting senior citizens, women and children, and responding promptly to any emergency. Special emphasis has been laid on maintaining law and order, ensuring the seamless movement of Yatra convoys, and providing timely assistance to pilgrims at every stage of their journey. To further strengthen public facilitation, Srinagar Police has established Assistance Booths, Help Desks, and Emergency Response Teams at strategic locations to provide immediate support and address the needs of Pilgrims.

Robust communication mechanisms have also been put in place to disseminate timely traffic advisories, weather updates, emergency information, and other important announcements. Pilgrims are advised to rely only on official information issued by the Administration and Police and to avoid unverified messages circulating on social media.

Police remains committed to serving the pilgrims with professionalism, compassion, and dedication throughout the Yatra. All pilgrims are requested to cooperate with security personnel, adhere to the prescribed advisories, and make full use of the assistance facilities made available for their convenience. Police reiterates its unwavering commitment to ensuring that Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 is conducted in a peaceful, secure, and hassle-free manner, enabling every pilgrim to undertake the sacred Pilgrimage safely.

Srinagar Police accord warm farewell to six retiring Police Personnel

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police organised a dignified farewell ceremony at the District Police Lines (DPL), Srinagar, to honour six Police personnel on their superannuation, recognising their long, dedicated, and exemplary service to the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

The retiring personnel included SI Abdul Aziz Wagay, SI Reyaz Ahmad Rather, SI Mohammed Saleem Pala, ASI Kulwant Singh, ASI Bashir Ahmad Batloo, and SgCt Riyaz Ahmad Khan. During their distinguished careers, they served the department with sincerity, professionalism, discipline, and unwavering commitment, making significant contributions towards maintaining public safety, law and order, and ensuring peace in the region.

On the occasion, Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar, Dr. G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarty, IPS, paid rich tributes to the retiring officers/officials and expressed deep appreciation for their invaluable contributions to the police force. He commended their integrity, dedication, and years of selfless service, stating that their commitment and experience would continue to inspire younger generations of police personnel. SSP Srinagar extended his heartfelt wishes to the retirees and their families, praying for their good health, happiness, and a fulfilling post-retirement life. He also assured them that they would always remain valued members of the Srinagar Police family.



KU Team Heads to Delhi for National Youth Parliament Award

This is one of the highest achievements our students can attain beyond academics." carrying with them the pride and aspirations of the University." VC KU

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir organized a flag-off ceremony for its National Youth Parliament Team, which is proceeding to New Delhi to receive the prestigious National Championship Award in the 17th National Youth Parliament Competition (2025-26) at Parliament House, the highest democratic institution of the country. The University contingent, comprising 50 students, is led by Dr. Shahid Ali Khan, Cultural Officer and Coordinator, National Youth Parliament, who has mentored and guided the championship-winning team throughout the competition.

In her message, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Nilofer Khan said "The triumph of our students in the National Youth Parliament Competition is a celebration of knowledge, leadership and democratic values. Their recognition at the Parliament of India, the temple of our democracy, is not merely an award but a powerful affirmation that the youth of Kashmir possess the vision, intellect and confidence to contribute to the nation's future. This historic achievement will inspire generations of students to dream big-

ger, think deeper and lead with integrity. On behalf of the entire University fraternity, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and wish the team continued success as proud ambassadors of the University of Kashmir."

Registrar, Prof. Naseer Iqbal said "This remarkable accomplishment reflects the culture of excellence, discipline and perseverance that defines the University of Kashmir. Our students have demonstrated that with dedication and commitment, no goal is beyond reach. Being honoured at the Parliament of India is a rare distinction and a proud milestone in the University's journey. I congratulate every member of the team and appreciate the tireless efforts of the mentor whose guidance transformed talent into national excellence. May this achievement ignite greater aspirations among our youth to serve society and strengthen the democratic fabric of our nation."

The flag-off ceremony was conducted by Prof. Majid Zaman, Controller of Examinations, in the presence of Prof. Pervez Ahmad, Dean, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Prof. Seema Singh, Dean Students' Welfare.

Prof. Imtiyaz Ahmed, Chief Proctor, Faculty members, university officials, students, and parents of the winning students gathered to extend their best wishes to the team for this momentous national recognition.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Majid Zaman congratulated the students on their remarkable achievement and said: "This accomplishment is a matter of immense pride for the University of Kashmir and the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Being honoured at Parliament House reflects the dedication, discipline and intellectual excellence of our students. I wish the team every success and hope they continue to inspire future generations."

Prof. Seema Singh, Dean Students' Welfare, described the occasion as a historic milestone for the University. She said: "Our students have demonstrated exceptional talent, confidence, and democratic values through their outstanding performance. Their national recognition is a testament to the University's commitment to nurturing leadership, responsible citizenship, and holistic development. We are immensely proud of their achievement."

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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
20 Muharram
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 41
ZUHR	12:35
ASR	5: 35
Magrib	7: 49
ISHA	9: 29

This Day In History

- 1044- The Battle of Ménéf takes place.
- 1189 - Richard the Lionheart is crowned King of England.
- 1253 - Mindaugas is crowned King of Lithuania.
- 1348 - Papal bull of Pope Clement VI issued during the Black Death stating Jews not to blame and urging their protection
- 1415 - Jan Hus is burned at the stake.
- 1483 - England's King Richard III crowned
- 1484 - Portuguese sea captain Diogo Cão finds the mouth of the Congo River.
- 1491 - Opening ceremony of Daitokuiji's Shinju at subtemple
- 1495 - Battle of Fornovo, near Parma: French King Charles VIII beats Holy League
- 1560 - England and Scotland sign Treaty of Edinburgh
- 1573 - Pacificatie of Boulogne: new peace treaty with huguenots
- 1573 - Córdoba, Argentina, is founded by Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera.
- 1621- Dutch governor general John Pieterszoon Coen takes Banda islands, 15,000 die
- 1630- Swedish troops under Gustaf II Adolf land at Peenemunde
- 1673- French troops conquer Maastricht as part of the Franco- Dutch War
- 1770- Battle at Cesme: Russian fleet beats Turkish
- 1776-American Declaration of Independence announced on front page of "PA Evening Gazette"
- 1782- British-French sea battle at Negapatam (off India)
- 1801- Battle at Algeciras: French fleet beats British
- 1848- Mexican-American War ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- 1885- Louis Pasteur successfully tests an anti-rabies vaccine
- 1892- Dadabhai Naoroji elected as first Indian Member of Parliament in Britain.
- 1898- US Senate agrees to annex Hawaii
- 1904- Two Russian cruisers move into the Red Sea and begin to stop ships of Britain, Germany, and other nations they believe friendly to Japan
- 1923-The Central Executive Committee accepts the Treaty of Union, signed in Moscow in December 1922, and the Russian Empire becomes the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- 1924 -1st photo sent experimentally across Atlantic by radio, US-England
- 1928- Worlds largest record hailstone 1.5 lbs (7 inches in diameter) at the time falls in Potter, Nebraska
- 1947- The AK-47 goes into production in the Soviet Union.
- 1959-Saar becomes part of German Federal Republic
- 1961- Portuguese ship explodes near Mozambique, kills 300
- 1975- Comoros declare independence from France (most of them)
- 1976- Soyuz 21 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 5 space station
- 1977 France performs nuclear test at Muruora Island
- 1978- Israeli jet fighters swooped over mostly Muslim West Beirut
- 1987- 1st of 3 massacres by Sikh extremists takes place in India
- 1986- Premier Nakasone's Liberal Democratic Party wins Japan's election
- 1987 - Pakistan cricket all-rounder Imran Khan reaches 300th Test wicket milestone, during 3rd Test vs England at Leeds
- 1987 - USSR performs nuclear test
- 1997 - Australian cricket batsman Steve Waugh completes twin centuries (108 & 116) in 268 run 3rd Test win v England at Old Trafford
- 2002 - Wimbledon Women's Tennis: Serena Williams beats older sister Venus 7-6, 6-3 for her first Wimbledon singles title
- 2006- The Nathula Pass between India and China, sealed during the Sino-Indian War, re-opens for trade after 44 years
- 2009- Jadranka Kosor becomes the first female prime minister of Croatia
- 2017- France announces it will ban petrol and diesel cars by 2040
- 2018- Paraguay has eliminated malaria in announcement by the World Health organization

Five Booked for Allegedly Defrauding J&K Bank through Fake Revenue Records

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Kashmir, of the Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir has filed a chargesheet against five persons for allegedly securing bank loans worth 60 lakh from J&K Bank by using forged revenue records and fabricated title documents.

The chargesheet in FIR No. 05/2019, registered under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471 and 120-B of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), was filed before the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, against Sheikh Samiullah of Arampora Nawakadal, Abdul Ahad Bhat of Mufti Bagh Harwan, Ghulam Nabi Baqal of Saderabal Hazratbal, Mushtaq Ahmad Sofi of HMT Zainakote and Sartaj Ahmad Hakeem of Nai Sadak Habba Kadal.

According to the Crime Branch, the investigation was initiated following a complaint from J&K Bank alleging that the accused had fraudulently obtained a term loan of 30

lakh from the bank's Zainakote Branch and a cash credit facility of another 30 lakh from its Residency Road Branch in 2007 by mortgaging properties on the basis of forged ownership and revenue documents.

The agency said that after the borrowers defaulted on repayment, verification conducted by the Revenue Department established that the mortgage deeds, title documents and revenue extracts submitted to the bank were forged.

During the investigation, the Economic Offences Wing allegedly established that the accused, led by Sheikh Samiullah, entered into a criminal conspiracy to deceive the bank by furnishing fabricated documents to obtain the loans and subsequently misappropriated the borrowed amount.

As per KNT, following completion of the investigation and other legal formalities, the Crime Branch presented the chargesheet before the competent court for judicial determination.

Tourist from Punjab Dies in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 52-year-old tourist from Punjab was brought dead to SMHS Hospital in Srinagar on Sunday, officials said.

The deceased has been identified as Satnam Singh, son of Piyara Singh, a resident of Amritsar, Punjab.

Officials said Satnam Singh, who was temporarily staying at

his friend's rented accommodation in Alochi Bagh area of Srinagar's uptown was shifted to SMHS Hospital after he was found unconscious. However, doctors at the hospital declared him brought dead.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident and initiated legal proceedings to ascertain the cause of death.

As per KNT, further investigation is underway.

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Can Israel Stand Alone?

Netanyahu talks about self-reliance while every major system that keeps his military running still answers to Washington.



M A Hossain

Benjamin Netanyahu recently said Israel should eventually stop relying on American military aid.

The statement projected confidence and a desire for greater self-reliance.

Most countries want to secure themselves without depending on others, especially when it comes to national security.

But ambition and reality are often different. In Israel's case, the gap between the two remains wide.

Modern Israel, as a military and diplomatic power, depends on the United States to an extent that makes true independence almost inconceivable.

This amounts to a strategic fact rather than a moral judgment, one that shows up clearly in dollars, hardware, and diplomatic votes.

Israel has spent decades cultivating an image of self-reliance built around a small nation surrounded by hostile neighbours, defending itself through ingenuity and grit. Portions of that story hold up well.

Israel runs one of the world's most sophisticated intelligence services, maintains a serious defense industry, and fields a military that performs at a high level.

Military capability and strategic independence remain separate things, however, and once American support gets removed from the equation, the architecture underneath starts looking remarkably thin.

The financial numbers establish the baseline.

Since the 1970s, the United States has handed Israel more than \$150 billion in assistance, placing it among the largest recipients of American foreign aid in modern history.

Washington currently supplies roughly \$3.8 billion annually in military assistance, a figure that excludes the supplemental packages that surged after the Hamas attacks of October 2023.

Financial support forms only the visible layer of a much deeper relationship.

Israel's most advanced weapons systems remain wired directly into American technology. The F-35 fighter jets that anchor Israeli air superiority depend heavily on U.S. maintenance, spare parts, and software support.

Analysts estimate that losing access to those

parts could push Israel's fleet toward operational constraints within a matter of weeks.

Wars are won by keeping armies supplied, and this is where Israel's dependence becomes clear.

Israel can defend itself for a period using its own resources, drawing on substantial stockpiles, a capable domestic arms industry, and a nuclear deterrent that most analysts assume exists. It can launch strikes, intercept missiles, and protect its territory on its own terms for a while.

Sustaining simultaneous campaigns in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and potentially Iran without American backing presents a much harder test, and the honest answer to whether Israel could manage that alone points toward serious doubt.

Recent events already supplied the answer.

Following the October 2023 attacks, the United States reportedly shipped tens of thousands of tons of military equipment and munitions to Israel. American naval deployments in the eastern Mediterranean helped deter wider regional escalation, while U.S. intelligence cooperation remained essential throughout the conflict.

Israel's military performance unfolded under an American umbrella that extended well beyond hardware into the diplomatic sphere.

Diplomatic protection runs just as deep as the military relationship.

Washington has repeatedly used its UN veto power to shield Israel from resolutions that could have triggered sanctions or broader international isolation. Decades of American diplomacy have constructed a political environment where Israel faces considerably fewer consequences for military action than most countries would encounter.

Picture a Middle East where that diplomatic shield disappears entirely.

International investigations would intensify quickly, economic pressure would build, arms restrictions would become genuinely plausible, and European governments, already uneasy about Israel's conduct in Gaza, would likely harden their positions considerably.

Israel would continue to exist under such conditions, though it would function as a significantly more constrained state.

The late Israeli strategist Charles Freilich argued that the United States functions as a core component of Israel's deterrence system rather than serving merely as an ally.

Adversaries calculate Israeli capability alongside the possibility of American intervention when weighing their options.

Iran factors in Israel plus America when making strategic decisions, and Hezbollah weighs the risk that a regional war could ultimately draw American forces into the conflict.

Removing the American variable would shift the strategic math throughout the entire region.



“**The central question was never whether Israel can exist without the United States, since it clearly can. The real question concerns whether Israel can remain the type of regional power the world has known for half a century once American support stops standing behind it.**”

That dependence carries consequences beyond deterrence alone.

It has encouraged ambition, since knowing that Washington will likely provide emergency resupply and diplomatic cover creates a sense of strategic insulation.

Critics argue that this insulation has enabled policies that Israel might otherwise have considered too risky to pursue.

Some American analysts now suggest that Israel's capacity for prolonged military campaigns rests partly on the assumption that Washington will absorb much of the political and strategic cost involved.

History gives several examples of allies growing overconfident because they believed a stronger patron would always back them.

South Vietnam's government believed its Ameri-

can support would last indefinitely. Afghanistan's government made a similar bet decades later.

European colonial powers after World War II miscalculated on comparable grounds, expecting Washington's backing to remain unconditional.

Israel differs from these cases in important respects, though the underlying principle still applies broadly, since nations accustomed to external guarantees tend to overestimate their own freedom of action considerably.

This principle may explain Netanyahu's recent rhetoric better than any concrete policy plan does.

His call for greater military independence likely functions as an acknowledgment that national security tied to another nation's political moods creates real vulnerability.

American politics continues to shift, and those changes matter here.

Younger Americans show rising skepticism toward unconditional support for Israel, polling reveals widening partisan divisions, and calls to restrict arms transfers have moved from the political fringe into mainstream debate.

The assumption of permanent American backing looks considerably less certain than it once did, and Israeli leaders appear increasingly aware of that shift.

Israel remains a country of fewer than ten million people situated in one of the world's most volatile regions.

It lacks the economic scale, industrial depth, and strategic geography that define genuine superpowers.

Its extraordinary military capabilities were built through partnership with the United States rather than through independent development.

Israel could survive without America.

It could defend itself in the short term using its own resources, but fighting prolonged wars on multiple fronts, maintaining regional military dominance, and enjoying near total diplomatic protection without American support represents a far taller order, one that the evidence suggests Israel could rarely manage on its own.

The central question was never whether Israel can exist without the United States, since it clearly can.

The real question concerns whether Israel can remain the type of regional power the world has known for half a century once American support stops standing behind it.

History suggests that empires and dominant states typically discover their genuine limitations precisely when the patron sustaining them begins to hesitate.

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Kashmir's Lost Recipe for Longevity

Simple food, meaningful work, deep relationships, and peace once sustained long lives. Can they still?



Kabra Altaf

In the hills above Shopian, there was a man known only as "Mujah Baba." No one knew his real name or age. He kept bees, and drank a glass of raw milk every morning. His skin was leather, but his grip was strong enough to break open walnuts.

Some said he was 100. Others said older. He never said anything. Just smiled and went on collecting honey like time owed him nothing.

I think of him often these days, especially when I read about scientists promising to extend life with stem cells, gene editing, precision pills. They say we could soon live to 120, maybe more. But I wonder: what for?

In Kashmir, we've already seen people stretch the limits of age. They did it without doctors. Without diagnostics. They did it quietly, by living the kind of life that's disappearing fast.

It wasn't built on supplements or gym memberships. It was built on hard work, silence, and a kind of patience you don't learn from books.

There was rhythm to their days. They rose before the sun, worked in fields, walked to springs for water, and returned home with stories carried on their shoulders like firewood.

Meals were simple but complete. Roti and rice, curd, homegrown vegetables, fruits like bananas, apples, mulberries; eggs fresh from backyard hens; chicken or meat when available. All of it was cooked with what came

from their own land. Nothing was artificial, nothing came with a barcode.

They didn't snack. They didn't scroll. They chewed slowly and rarely ate alone.

Longevity wasn't something they spoke of. It just happened. Because they didn't fight time. They moved with it. Now, things are changing.

As a coach, I see it firsthand. Young athletes, full of potential, struggling with the basics. Some can't sleep without pills. Others complain of constant body aches, slow recovery, or fatigue that doesn't match their age. They train hard, but something's missing.

It reminds me of when I first left Kashmir to join the national judo camps. I was still young, unsure, but naturally strong. The coaches and other athletes noticed. "This girl is built different," they'd say. And it wasn't just about my body.

Yes, I had never touched a supplement. I didn't even know what creatine or protein powders were. I ate whatever was cooked at home: bananas, eggs, chicken, vegetables, rice, whatever our land gave us.

But it wasn't just my diet. What truly made me strong was the mental strength to not give up. I didn't even know how to use a gym, but I could lift another person on my shoulders and keep going. That came from willpower, not whey powder.

Today, I see a rise in giving up. Small pains lead to big doubts. Minor setbacks feel like defeat. The body doesn't break first, the mindset does.

I hear of heart attacks in men barely thirty. I see women with back pain in their twenties. Boys addicted to painkillers they never needed in the first place.

We've traded silence for screens, movement for machines, and meaning for pace. And science, in all its brilliance, is offering us more years, onto a life we no longer recognize.

Let's be clear, science has its place. I'm not saying it's useless. From diagnostics to disease prevention, medical advances are saving lives. But longer life and meaningful



life are two very different things.

So yes, I believe in the story of Mujah Baba. But tell me honestly, how many of you would want to run a marathon at 90, outrunning someone half your age? Or blow out 100 candles on your birthday cake without tipping them over?

Because this is what science promises—but what do we really want?

The truth is, longer life doesn't come from the future. It comes from memory.

I remember my friend's great-grandmother oiling her hair with walnut oil, sitting under a pear tree, humming half-remembered lullabies. She was nearly blind, but she knew the steps of her courtyard better than my friend knew the city bus routes.

She lived to 96. No check-ups. No panic. Just grace, and a steady grip on this world.

She had everything we're trying to buy back now: gut health, mindfulness, sleep hygiene, community.

But these aren't trends. They were once normal.

So what happens when medicine starts giving us longer lives, but our bodies are wired for burnout, and our

minds are already ageing from overstimulation?

What good is a second century if your soul feels worn out at 40?

A miracle drug won't fix broken families. Gene therapy can't cure loneliness. Artificial intelligence can't teach your child how to sit with silence or grieve with dignity. These aren't medical problems. These are cultural absences.

And so, while the world rushes to hack death, I think Kashmir must remember how it once lived.

Eat what your soil grows. Kaand. Nadru. Turnips in winter, mulberries in summer. Let food be memory, not industry.

Move with purpose. Don't exercise to punish yourself. Walk to the spring. Hoe a row of earth. Carry a bucket, lift your child, knead dough. Sweat should mean something.

Speak. Especially to those older than you. Let their stories remind you how long life can be, and still how full. Stay outside. Watch how the light shifts on a snow-covered branch. Notice how the body slows in winter and speeds up in spring. There's a language in nature that recalibrates the body better than any app.

And most of all, make peace a daily practice. We can't control war, but we can be soft with each other. We can learn to sleep without anger. We can sit with the ones we love and just be still.

Because maybe the real question isn't how long we can live, but how much life we can fit into the years we already have.

Mujah Baba didn't worry about the future. He lived by the sun, trusted the bees, and died peacefully, one winter, in his sleep. They say the honey he left behind never spoiled.

I believe them. And I also believe we still have time to sweeten our own lives, too—if we remember how.

The author is an eight-time national judo medalist and an SAI-accredited coach based in Srinagar, Kashmir.

What Kashmir Owes Its Daughters

Fourteen centuries of scripture settled the question of a daughter's worth. The numbers coming out of Jammu and Kashmir suggest the lesson never fully landed.



Mudasir Ali

Before the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]'s mission reached Arabia, a father could bury his infant daughter alive and face no social cost for it.

Mothers absorbed shame simply for producing a girl. Women held no inheritance, legal standing, or claim on their own survival.

Historians describe a society where this practice was seen as normal.

Islam put an end to it, giving daughters inheritance rights, legal recognition, and the respect they had long been denied.

That correction is one of the sharper moral interventions in religious history, and Kashmir, a place that holds its Islamic identity close, inherited it directly.

The numbers coming out of Jammu and Kashmir today complicate the comfort of that inheritance.

Government data presented in the Lok Sabha shows registered crimes against women in the region climbing from 3,405 cases in 2020 to 3,937 in 2021, then settling at 3,716 in 2022, a total that includes rising incidents of rape, kidnapping, and domestic violence.

Arrests jumped sharply over the same window, reaching 6,309 in 2022, up from 4,548 the year before, which tells its own story: police caught more suspects because there was more to catch.

Convictions moved too, climbing from 19 in 2020 to 52 in 2021 and 68 in 2022. The numbers technically showed progress, though a conviction count still measured in the dozens against thousands of filed cases is not the record of a system operating at capacity.

Set those figures beside the language Kashmiri households use about their daughters, and the contrast becomes the real subject here.

Fathers describe daughters as the strong presence in a home, the bond that holds a marriage together, the force behind a family's daily functioning.

Daughters serve guests, manage households, care for elders, and absorb half the responsibility of family life well before they reach adulthood.

None of this affection is manufactured. It runs deep, and produces real anguish whenever a daughter is harmed.

But anguish has never been the scarce resource. What's largely missing is enforcement.

Look at what separates a society that reveres daughters in principle from one that protects them in practice, and the list is concrete rather than sentimental.

Sons should be taught from a young age that a woman's body belongs to her alone. Families should treat this lesson with the same seriousness as religious teaching.

Police and courts must act firmly against harassment and assault in every case, whether it makes headlines or not.



THE MEN WHO BURIED DAUGHTERS IN PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA ACTED ON A BELIEF THAT A GIRL'S LIFE CARRIED NO INDEPENDENT VALUE. A man who assaults a girl in Kashmir today may recite entirely different words about her worth and still act on a version of that same belief underneath, that her body becomes negotiable the moment he decides it should be.

Communities need functioning channels for girls to report danger while there is still time to

intervene, instead of systems built to respond only once harm is already done.

None of this sits outside Islamic teaching. The theology settled this

question fourteen hundred years ago, but the infrastructure to match it still has ground to cover.

Here is the sharpest version of the claim: a culture capable of producing beautiful language about daughters while its conviction numbers stay in double digits has memorized a lesson without finishing the work of living it.

The men who buried daughters in pre-Islamic Arabia acted on a belief that a girl's life carried no independent value.

A man who assaults a girl in Kashmir today may recite entirely different words about her worth and still act on a version of that same belief underneath, that her body becomes negotiable the moment he decides it should be.

Reciting the correction changes nothing on its own, only enforcement does.

That is the test Budgam now sets before this valley.

An innocent girl was raped and murdered there, and the response came with real speed: police worked the case quickly, and the public reaction was immediate and unified in its horror.

That response has to become the baseline rather than the exception reserved for cases that break through.

Every family that calls a daughter its greatest blessing must prove it through action.

Raise sons to respect and protect women, ensure police and courts deliver justice in every case, and judge the valley by how well it punishes offenders, not by how deeply it mourns victims.

—The columnist can be reached at ahangermudasir91@gmail.com.

Sacred Stewardship

Caring for rivers, forests, wildlife, and water is woven into Islamic tradition. Kashmir has every reason to revive that ethic.



Aqib Ul Ahad Wani

Islam doesn't separate faith from the physical world. It links prayer to purity, charity to feeding animals, and good character to how we treat public spaces. Removing a thorn from a road is called charity in Islam. Can we imagine what littering says about us?

Kashmir is changing, and not always for the better.

Walk along the banks of the Jhelum and you'll spot plastic bottles bobbing in the water. Drive through what used to be thick forest, and you'll find stumps and dust.

In villages and towns, garbage piles up faster than it's cleared. Some streams that once ran clear now carry more sewage than snowmelt.

It's not just a local problem. Climate change, pollution, and deforestation are hitting hard everywhere. But here in Kashmir, where nature has always been a part of daily life—where mountains, rivers, and orchards define our land—this crisis feels personal.

And yet, in the middle of this mess, there's a wisdom that many of us grew up with but rarely connect to the environment anymore: our faith.

Islam has always had something to say about how we treat the Earth. But somewhere along the way, we stopped listening.

Take a closer look at the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and you'll see a clear message: nature isn't ours to abuse. It's a trust, a gift from God, and we're its caretakers.

In Islam, humans are not kings of



creation. We are Khalifah, stewards. That means we're supposed to protect what's been placed in our care. That includes forests in Kupwara, the lakes in Ganderbal, the orchards in Shopian, and the wetlands in Pampore.

There's a verse in the Qur'an that says: "Do not commit abuse on the Earth, spreading corruption." (2:60)

That's not just about war or injustice. It's also about pollution. It's about cutting down trees recklessly. It's about pouring chemical waste into rivers. It's about turning meadows into dumping grounds.

And it's about waste. We see it every day. Plastic wrappers along mountain trails, leftover food rotting outside markets, water flowing endlessly from public taps. But the Prophet (PBUH) once said: "Do not waste water, even if you are beside a flowing river." That's not poetry. It's principle. Even at abundance, we're called to be mindful.

Think about how often Islam ties faith to cleanliness. Ritual washing before prayer uses water, but carefully. You're meant to use just enough, never too much. In fact, the Prophet

used less than a litre of water for his ablution.

And it's not just water. Islam encourages planting trees and protecting animals. The Prophet said that planting a tree—even if the Day of Judgment is about to begin—counts as a good deed. That says something about hope. About responsibility. About the long view.

In Kashmir, we're already seeing what happens when that long view disappears.

Our glaciers are melting faster. Our springs are drying. Once, every village

had its own nallah. Now, many rely on tanker water. The Dal Lake has shrunk. The Wular is choked with weeds and plastic. Wildlife like the hangul deer are nearing extinction. We've already lost snow leopards from many areas.

This isn't just climate change from somewhere else. It's also what we're doing right here.

But it doesn't have to stay this way. The Prophet established Hima—protected zones where grazing and hunting were limited so nature could recover. Early Muslims respected these areas. It's a model we could bring back in our own hills and forests.

Imagine if every mosque in Kashmir used its Friday sermon to talk about waste, water use, and tree planting. Imagine if our religious schools included environmental care as part of their curriculum. It wouldn't be a new idea. It would be a return.

Because these teachings have always been here. We just stopped connecting the dots.

Islam doesn't separate faith from the physical world. It links prayer to purity, charity to feeding animals, and good character to how we treat public spaces. Removing a thorn from a road is called charity in Islam. Can we imagine what littering says about us?

In a place as beautiful, and as fragile, as Kashmir, these lessons are not just spiritual. They're practical. They're urgent.

Maybe it's time we stopped looking only to governments and NGOs to fix our environment. Perhaps we need to look inward, too, to our homes, our habits, our values, and to the words we've read and repeated since childhood, but rarely applied to the Earth under our feet.

—The author is an environmentalist and currently works as a Legal Aid Defence Counsel at the District Legal Services Authority in Ganderbal.

Ladakh LG Clears Initiatives to Strengthen Pashmina Sector

Press Trust Of India

Leh: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved two initiatives to boost Ladakh's Pashmina sector, benefiting herders through a 25 per cent top-up incentive and an Rs 8 crore revolving fund to cooperatives, an official said on Sunday.

Saxena cleared the two landmark initiatives in the first meeting of the newly constituted Ladakh Pashmina Development Board (LPDB) to strengthen the region's globally renowned Pashmina industry and improve the livelihoods of Changpa pastoral communities, an official spokesperson said.

He said the twin initiatives seek to promote sustainable livestock development, increase the population of Pashmina goats, strengthen the cooperative procurement system, improve the quality and quantity of Ladakh Pashmina,

ensure financial benefits to nomadic herders and eliminate distress sales.

This would, in turn, also encourage younger generations to continue the traditional practice of Changthangi Pashmina goat rearing by making it a profitable and more respectable enterprise, the spokesperson said.

Ladakh is globally recognised for producing the world's finest quality Pashmina from the indigenous Changthangi goat, reared by the Changpa nomadic pastoral communities. However, rising costs of livestock rearing, harsh climatic conditions and fluctuating market returns have adversely affected livestock productivity and the incomes of pastoral families in recent years.

Recognising these challenges, discussed during the first board meeting, the LG approved the Livestock Development Incentive Programme, under

which eligible Changpa herders will receive the 25 per cent top-up incentive, to be paid over and above the procurement price paid by the government, the official said.

He said this incentive will be transferred directly to the beneficiary's Aadhar-linked bank account through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.

"This is the first-of-its-kind initiative, designed to make Pashmina goat rearing more profitable and sustainable. The policy has been carefully structured wherein 60 per cent of this top-up incentive received by the herder will be utilised for livestock improvement and scientific breeding.

"The other 20 per cent will be utilised for infrastructure development, such as improved combing equipment and facilities to enhance Pashmina production, while the remaining 20 per cent could be used for the personal and household needs

of the herder, thereby improving their financial sustainability," the spokesperson said.

He said it was also decided in the Board meeting that the population of Pashmina goats in Ladakh be increased from nearly two lakh at present to at least four lakh in three years' time.

A target has been set to increase the raw Pashmina production from 200 grams per goat at present to at least 350 grams per goat, using scientific techniques and advanced tools for combing.

To add to the Livestock Development Incentive Programme, the LG has also approved the Policy for Creation and Management of Rs 8 crore Revolving Fund for the All Changthangi Pashmina Growers Cooperative Marketing Society Ltd (ACPGCMS), the apex cooperative responsible for procurement of raw Pashmina directly from nomadic herders, the official said.

J&K Bank Appoints Rakesh Magotra As Chief Compliance Officer

Observer News Service

Srinagar: J&K Bank has appointed General Manager Rakesh Magotra as its Chief Compliance Officer (CCO) and Group Compliance Officer (GCO) for a period of three years. The appointment was approved by the Bank's Board of Directors and informed to the stock exchanges through a regulatory filing on Saturday.

A seasoned banking professional with over decades of experience, Rakesh Magotra succeeds Peer Masood Ahmad as the Bank's Chief Compliance Officer. His appointment underscores the Bank's continued commitment to further strengthening its compliance framework, governance standards and regulatory oversight.

Prior to assuming the new role, Rakesh Magotra served as General Manager & Head of the Retail Banking Division, where he led the Bank's Retail Assets, Agriculture, MSME, Government Sponsored Schemes and Liability Management



portfolios. Since joining the Bank as a Probationary Officer in 1996, he has held several key leadership assignments including Zonal Head, Advisor to the Chairman, Head of Financial Inclusion and Head of Supervision & Control.

An alumnus of the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Jaipur and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Amritsar, where he was awarded the Director's Medal, Rakesh

Magotra is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Economics at IIM Jammu.

Having been proactive in several transformative initiatives across retail banking, financial inclusion, MSME financing, Start Up finance and institutional partnerships, he brings a unique combination of business acumen and governance perspective that will further strengthen the Bank's compliance culture and institutional resilience.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Ensure No Amarnath

redressal of pilgrims," Sinha told officials. During the visit, the LG also interacted with pilgrims and assured them that the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board and departments involved in Yatra management were working to ensure a safe, smooth and hassle-free spiritual journey.

Sinha directed officers to extend all possible assistance in cases where members of the same family arrive together but one of them is unable to obtain registration while the others possess valid permits. Such families, he said, should be facilitated to undertake the pilgrimage together in accordance with prescribed procedures.

Expressing serious concern over reports of travel agents facilitating fake registrations, the LG directed police and other concerned authorities to identify those involved and initiate strict legal action against them.

'Unregistered Pilgrims

stakeholders to step up arrangements. "Having closely monitored the holy Yatra over the past four years, I have noted a massive surge in pilgrim numbers this year. In response, the administration, the Shrine Board and all key stakeholders have implemented significantly better arrangements than in previous years," he said.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor reviewed the ground situation and pilgrim facilities at Chandanwari and interacted with officials, pilgrims, volunteers, langar sevadars and other service providers.

He directed Yatra management teams to examine feedback from pilgrims and remain available round-the-clock to provide support.

"Through a seamless whole-of-government approach, we are leaving no stone unturned to provide excellent food and lodging to the devotees of Lord Shiva. I want every Yatri to have a blissful darshan and a profoundly enriching spiritual experience," Sinha said.

The LG also inspected the Base Hospital at Chandanwari to assess healthcare arrangements for pilgrims. He visited wards, laboratories and emergency units and interacted with patients to enquire about their well-being and the quality of care.

Officials informed him that adequate stocks of medicines and essential medical equipment were available, while specialist doctors, nursing staff and paramedics had been deployed for prompt treatment.

The hospital is providing healthcare services to pilgrims, service providers and support staff, with its outpatient department recording an average of 2,500 patient visits daily, officials said.

Sinha appreciated the doctors, paramedics and healthcare workers for providing medical services to pilgrims. He said the 100-bed hospital at Chandanwari had been operational for the past two years, while officials and staff across departments were working to ensure a seamless pilgrimage.

Govt Eases

the resumption of maritime traffic through the strategic waterway.

The gas supply restrictions were among three emergency measures introduced after energy supplies from the Gulf were threatened by the disruption of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz following US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 and Tehran's retaliatory attacks.

The government has already withdrawn the other two measures, which directed refiners to maximise LPG production by diverting feedstock from petrochemicals and restricted diesel sales to bulk consumers.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer and consumer, imports about 88 per cent of its crude oil requirements and nearly half of its natural gas needs.

Around 40 to 45 per cent of India's crude oil imports and nearly 65 per cent of its LNG supplies come from West Asia, leaving the country vulnerable to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for Gulf energy exports.

While India diversified crude oil purchases during the crisis, natural gas imports remained particularly exposed as most LNG cargoes from Qatar pass through the Strait.

The disruption prompted the government

to invoke emergency powers to safeguard domestic supplies and prioritise gas for essential sectors.

Under the March order, supplies to piped natural gas households, compressed natural gas for transport, LPG production and pipeline operations were to be maintained at 100 per cent of their average consumption over the previous six months.

Fertiliser plants were assured 70 per cent of their average gas requirement, while industrial consumers connected to the national gas grid and city gas distribution networks were guaranteed 80 per cent, subject to operational availability.

To meet these priorities, the government had authorised curtailment of gas supplies to petrochemical plants and power stations and directed oil refiners to reduce gas consumption to about 65 per cent of their average use wherever operationally feasible.

State-run GAIL, in coordination with the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, was tasked with pooling and redistributing gas supplies and overseeing revised allocation schedules.

The emergency provisions also overrode existing gas sale agreements and other commercial contracts.

The government said these measures were no longer required after LNG shipments resumed through the Strait of Hormuz.

"The ongoing conflict in the Middle East that had resulted in the disruption of liquefied natural gas shipments through the Strait of Hormuz has been subject to a ceasefire, and negotiations are ongoing, as part of which, sea traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has been permitted to be resumed," the notification said.

Following the improvement in supplies, the government has omitted provisions of the March 9 order that prioritised the allocation of all available gas.

Widespread Rains

department said isolated heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 40 to 50 kmph, with gusts reaching up to 60 kmph, is likely over the Jammu division from July 6 to 8.

It also warned of possible landslides, mudslides, shooting stones and flash floods at vulnerable locations during the period.

In the Kashmir division, isolated thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds reaching 40 to 50 kmph are expected on July 7, 8 and 11.

Meanwhile, maximum temperatures remained two to four degrees Celsius above normal at most places in Kashmir during the past 24 hours, while several areas of the Jammu division recorded temperatures up to three degrees above normal.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 34 degrees Celsius, the highest in Kashmir, while Kathua was the hottest place in the Jammu division at 38.2 degrees Celsius.

Night temperatures also remained above normal at several places. Gulmarg recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Kashmir at 13.2 degrees Celsius, while Baderwah recorded 18.7 degrees Celsius in the Jammu division.

Kathua received 11.2 mm of rainfall during the period.

For July 6, the weather office forecast mainly clear to partly cloudy skies in Srinagar, with the maximum temperature likely to hover around 33 degrees Celsius. Jammu is expected to remain partly cloudy with chances of light rain and thunderstorms.

Authorities have advised people, particularly those living in landslide and flood-prone areas, to remain alert and follow weather advisories.

Ayatollah Khamenei

silence and thunderous slogans. The flag-draped coffin of Ayatollah Khamenei rested above those of his slain family members—including his daughter, daughter-in-law and granddaughter.

His black turban, symbolising descent from Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), was placed atop the coffin.

The funeral prayers were offered in three stages.

The first prayer was dedicated solely to the late Supreme Leader.

The second covered Seyyedeh Boshra Khamenei, Mesbah al-Hoda and Zahra Haddad Adel.

The final prayer was offered for Zahra, Khamenei's 14-month-old granddaughter whose tiny coffin drew emotional scenes throughout the ceremony.

Many mourners openly wept as they passed before the coffins.

"Our word is one! Revenge! Revenge!" crowds repeatedly chanted.

"He Was Our Everything"

Many mourners described Khamenei's death as a deeply personal loss.

"Imam Khamenei was our heart, our father, our everything," said Masoumeh Mohammadi.

"I still can't believe they martyred him. We will not rest until we avenge his death."

Ali Kazemi, who travelled over 500 kilometres from Tabriz, said the funeral was about demonstrating unity.

"We attended the funeral to show that we are all committed to defending our country and religion," he said.

Twenty-seven-year-old Hananeh Mousavi struggled to hold back tears.

"I am here to say goodbye to my beloved leader Ali Khamenei," she said.

"I never expected to see such a day. I wish I had died before this tragedy."

For 42-year-old nurse Ziba Naderi, the focus had already shifted to Iran's new leadership.

"I heard the call for revenge, but our leader should say what we need to do," she said.

"And we must listen to him." Historic Funeral

The outdoor stage at the Grand Mosalla closely resembled the Husseiniyah inside Ayatollah Khamenei's Bayt-e-Rehbari compound where he had delivered sermons for decades.

A familiar wooden chair, microphone and small table recreated the setting from which he had addressed the nation countless times.

Above the stage hung the portrait of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Unlike Khomeini's funeral in 1989, which descended into chaos as millions overwhelmed security arrangements, authorities this time appeared far better prepared.

Security checkpoints, metal detectors and body searches controlled entry into the complex.

Police carrying assault rifles guarded surrounding streets while volunteers sprayed water on mourners enduring Tehran's summer heat.

Food and beverages were distributed free of charge.

Despite the tight security, vast crowds spilled into surrounding roads and parks as the city virtually shut down for the funeral.

Top Leadership Reappears

The ceremony also marked the first major public appearance of several senior Iranian officials since the war.

President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Judiciary leaders attended alongside senior military commanders.

Among those present were Revolutionary Guards commander Gen. Ahmad Vahidi—seen publicly for the first time since the war—and Quds Force commander Esmail Qaani.

Khamenei's sons Masoud, Meysam and Mostafa also appeared publicly after months away from public view.

The funeral prayers were led by 97-year-old Grand Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani.

Calls for Revenge Dominate Ceremony

While the funeral remained deeply religious in tone, political messaging was never far away.

Poet Mohammad Rasouli, who emceed the ceremony, repeatedly led chants of "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!"

Addressing the mourners, he asked: "Why is the most bastard man in the world still alive?"

The remark, referring to US President Donald Trump, drew loud cheers.

He continued: "The world is no longer a good place for Trump."

Large banners reading "#KillTrump" were displayed inside the Mosalla while posters around the venue also targeted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Some mourners openly echoed those sentiments. "I came here to shout and seek revenge," said grocery worker Gholamreza Sabooni. "They killed our imam, we should kill their

leader, Trump."

Mohammad Reza Sharifi said Iran's diplomatic posture must reflect the sacrifices made during the war.

"Our foreign policy should not be shaped in a way that allows our martyred leader's blood to be dishonoured and other countries can afford to do such things without any serious response from our government and diplomatic system," he said.

Meta Gets Notice

popular social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

The latest action from the ministry comes amid a BBC report that alleged Meta's recommendation algorithm had been promoting videos containing child sexual abuse material, exposing serious gaps in the safeguards.

The BBC investigation had also allegedly found advertisements of this nature appearing on Facebook and Instagram, despite Meta's advertising policies explicitly prohibiting nudity and sexually explicit content.

Instagram is alleged to have shown paid advertisements with terms like 'rape video' and 'child video', which directed users to Telegram channels where such content was reportedly on sale.

According to a person privy to the development, the government is expected to seek answers on how such advertisements were even approved, what corrective measures Meta has taken since the allegations surfaced, and what safeguards it plans to put in place to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Even as an intermediary, Meta can't hide behind the 'third-party content' argument or defence if allegations involve paid ads promoting child sexual abuse material, sources said.

"If the allegations are found to be true, they will be held accountable for the advertisements, for which the platform receives revenue," one of the sources said.

While MeitY will review the technical and regulatory aspects of the matter, any agency, authority, or individual may file a complaint against the advertiser or platform if they believe offences under the law have been committed, sources pointed out.

The Indian government has maintained a zero-tolerance approach towards CSAM, requiring online platforms to promptly detect, remove and report such content while strengthening safeguards to protect children in the digital ecosystem.

The government has, from time to time, also blocked websites containing child sexual abuse material (CSAM), based on lists from Interpol received through the Central Bureau of Investigation, India's national nodal agency for Interpol.

Authorities have repeatedly warned technology companies that any failure to crack down on CSAM and other harmful content could invite regulatory scrutiny and legal action.

Meta has come under regulatory glare for the second time this week.

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".

Sources said that WhatsApp will defer the rollout of the username feature.

Meanwhile, a team from Meta met officials in the IT Ministry following the notice summoning them over the contentious feature on WhatsApp.

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.

The Centre had 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.

The government also reminded Meta that WhatsApp, as a significant social media intermediary, is bound by due diligence obligations under the IT Act and rules.

Police Raid Publishers

and Kashmir, authored by Dr Sushant Giri and published by Delhi-based Anurag Prakashan.

Officials said 123 copies of one of the books were supplied to schools in Jammu, Ramban and Udhampur districts, while 128 copies of the other were distributed in Jammu and Baramulla districts.

The police action comes a day after the Jammu and Kashmir administration banned the two books, blacklisted their authors and publishers and ordered a high-level inquiry into their procurement.

Eight officials of the School Education Department, including a principal, were suspended, while a contractual employee was removed from service over the controversy.

The School Education Department said the books had been withdrawn from school libraries after they were found to contain "highly inappropriate content".

In an order issued on Saturday, the department directed that the authors and publishers be banned and blacklisted in the Union Territory. It also ordered the withdrawal of any other printed material authored or published by them.

The books were procured under the centrally sponsored Samagra Shiksha programme.

The department said it had procured 463 books from 364 publishers under the scheme this year and only two titles were found to contain objectionable material. Around 250 copies of the two books had been supplied to schools in Jammu, Ramban, Udhampur and Baramulla districts.

The government said officials involved in approving the books had shown "serious negligence", "dereliction of duty" and a "lack of proper due diligence".

It said the publications contained material relating to separatism that had the potential to create a law-and-order situation.

The controversy erupted after the BJP alleged that the books glorified separatist leaders and contained objectionable references.

Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma alleged that one of the books praised Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, referred to Jammu and Kashmir as "India-occupied Kashmir" and projected several separatist leaders in a favourable light.

The opposition also termed the procurement a serious lapse and sought accountability from those involved in the selection and approval process.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has said he has neither seen nor read the books.

The latest action comes amid a broader crackdown on publications in Jammu and Kashmir. Last year, the administration ordered the forfeiture of 25 books, citing concerns over radicalisation and the alleged glorification of terrorism.

The banned titles included works by Arundhati Roy, Sumantra Bose, A.G. Noorani, Anuradha Bhasin, David Devadas and Hafsa Kanjwal.

Police Warn

registered at Baderwah police station.

"It has come to the notice of Doda police that an old video relating to an incident that occurred in Baderwah in June, 2022 is being circulated on various social media platforms with misleading and distorted narratives, causing unnecessary concern and apprehension among members of the public," a police spokesman said.

Clarifying that the video pertains to a 2022 incident, which was thoroughly investigated, the spokesman said the re-circulation of the content at this stage, without context and accompanied by misleading claims, is capable of creating misunderstanding and disturbing public tranquillity.

"Citizens are urged to verify facts from official sources before sharing any information and to act responsibly in the larger interest of maintaining communal harmony, public peace and social cohesion," the spokesman said.

The police warned that any person found deliberately circulating misleading content, spreading misinformation, promoting hatred, inciting communal disharmony, or attempting to create panic and disturb public order through social media or any other medium shall be dealt with strictly under the relevant provisions of law.

"Doda police remains committed to maintaining peace, public order and communal harmony, and urges citizens to rely only on authentic information disseminated through official and authorized channels," the spokesman said. PTI

DC Doda Reviews Preparations for Annual Kailash Yatra 2026

Directs timely completion of arrangements

Observer News Service

BHADERWAH: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Krishan Lal, chaired a review meeting at Dak Bungalow Bhaderwah, to assess the preparedness for the forthcoming Annual Kailash Yatra 2026 and review the arrangements being made to ensure the safe, smooth and successful conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The meeting witnessed a comprehensive review of the preparedness being made for the Annual Kailash Yatra, with detailed discussions on security, traffic management, transportation, healthcare, sanitation, drinking water, power supply, communication facilities, road repairs, availability of tents, temporary shelters, washrooms, firewood and other essential infrastructure along the Yatra route.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to complete the required arrangements well before the commencement of the Yatra. Health authorities were instructed to deploy two dedi-



cated medical teams equipped with oxygen support, along with a mobile medical unit from the Kellar side, to provide prompt medical assistance to pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage.

To ensure the safety and security of devotees, adequate deployment of security personnel was planned at key locations including Kailash Kund and Hayan.

The meeting also recommended the installation of solar lights at strategic points to improve visibility and enhance safety during night hours, particularly in remote and high-altitude stretches

of the Yatra route.

Emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts, the DC Doda called upon all stakeholder departments to work in close synergy to provide hassle-free facilities to pilgrims. He also appealed to the local population to extend wholehearted cooperation and warm hospitality to the visiting devotees, thereby upholding the district's tradition of communal harmony and hospitality.

Special emphasis was laid on maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability along the entire Yatra route. The DC

Doda directed the concerned departments to ensure proper sanitation, effective waste management and preservation of the ecological balance during the pilgrimage.

Expressing confidence in the collective efforts of the administration and local community, the DC Doda said that with meticulous planning, effective coordination and dedicated public support, the Annual Kailash Yatra 2026 would be conducted in a peaceful, safe and spiritually enriching manner.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, CEO Bhaderwah Development Authority, Additional Superintendent of Police Bhaderwah, Assistant Commissioner Development Doda, Divisional Forest Officer Bhaderwah, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Doda, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Doda, Tehsildars of Bhaderwah and Bhalla, Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Bhaderwah, EO Municipal Committee Bhaderwah, Assistant Engineer

JPDC, Block Development Officer Bhalla, Assistant Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department, representatives of BRO and other concerned officers.

Prominent religious and community leaders also attended the meeting, including the President of Sanatan Dharma Sabha, President of Kailash Sewa Sang Trust, President of Kailash Langer Ganthak Ramtund, President of Chobia Langer Hanyan Rish Dal and representatives of Ashapati Kailash Sewa Samiti, Vasuki Sewa Sang Chobia, Kailash Dal Development Committee and the J&K Dharmarth Trust, who assured full cooperation for the successful conduct of the Yatra.

DC Doda directed all concerned departments to complete all pending works within the stipulated timeframe and maintain close inter-departmental coordination. He stressed the need for round-the-clock preparedness, robust emergency response mechanisms and continuous monitoring of arrangements to ensure the safety, convenience and well-being of every pilgrim.

J&K Police Arrests 2 Gamblers in Sopore

SOPORE: In a continued drive against social evils and illegal activities, J&K Police in Sopore have arrested two gamblers and seized cash along with playing cards from their possession.

Acting on credible information, J&K Police conducted a raid at Botingoo in the jurisdiction of Police Post Warpora and apprehended two persons involved in illegal card gambling, while some others managed to flee from the spot. The arrested persons have been identified as Tahir Ahmad Mir, son of Mohammad Maqbool Mir, and Ferooz Ahmad Malla, son of Ghulam Mohammad Malla, both residents of Malpora, Warpora, Sopore. During the raid, stake money amounting to 5,050 along with playing cards was recovered and seized on the spot.

Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 168/2026 under Section 13 of the Gambling Act has been registered at Police Station Sopore, and further investigation is underway. Efforts are on to identify and apprehend the other persons who fled from the spot.

Person found indulging in criminal activities shall be dealt as per the law. General public is requested to share information regarding the crimes in their neighbourhood with the local police units. (Observer News Service)

J&K Police Attaches Properties of Drug Trafficker

SRINAGAR: Continuing its sustained campaign against narcotics and drug trafficking, J&K Police in Baramulla attached immovable properties belonging to a notorious drug peddler, Mushtaq Ahmed Dar son of Mohd. Yousuf Dar resident of Yadipora, Palhallan, Pattan, under the provisions of Section 68-F(1) of the NDPS Act.

The attached properties comprise a single-storey residential house at Yadipora, Palhallan and four shops in a double-storey commercial building at Hyderabad, Pattan, with a combined assessed value of over 29 lakh. The accused is involved in multiple cases under the NDPS Act and has also been detained under the PIT NDPS Act. The attachment followed a detailed enquiry conducted under Chapter V-A of the NDPS Act, during which valuation certificates, revenue records and income-related documents established reasonable grounds to believe that the attached properties had been acquired from the proceeds of illicit narcotic trafficking. The cases against the accused have already been challaned before the competent court of law.

This action reflects the unwavering commitment of Police to dismantle the financial network of drug traffickers by identifying and attaching assets acquired through illicit narcotic trafficking. Such stringent action is aimed at ensuring that crime does not pay and serves as a strong deterrent against those involved in the drug trade. Police reiterates its zero-tolerance policy against drugs and appeals to the public to continue supporting the fight against drug abuse and trafficking by sharing any information related to narcotics. The identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential. (Observer News Service)

Police Intensifies Cannabis Destruction Drive in B'la

SRINAGAR: Continuing its sustained campaign against the menace of narcotics under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, J&K Police conducted a comprehensive wild cannabis (Bumg) destruction drive at multiple locations across the district Baramulla.

The drive was carried out at Koker Mohalla, Goshugh up to the roadside near Goshugh Petrol Pump, in coordination with the local residents of Goshugh, reflecting strong community participation in the fight against drug abuse. Simultaneously, another destruction drive was conducted at Jahama and Singhpora falling under the jurisdiction of Police Post Delina. During the operation, police teams identified and destroyed a substantial quantity of naturally grown wild cannabis plants. The exercise was undertaken as a preventive measure to eliminate the availability of narcotic raw material and to discourage its misuse for illegal purposes.

Police remains committed to eradicating the drug menace through sustained enforcement, public participation, and awareness initiatives. The general public is urged to actively support the Police by sharing information regarding illegal cultivation, trafficking, or abuse of narcotic substances so that strict legal action can be taken against offenders.

Man Injured in Batmaloo LPG Cylinder Fire Succumbs

SRINAGAR: A man who sustained critical burn injuries in an LPG cylinder fire at his residence in SD Colony, Batmaloo, Srinagar, succumbed to his injuries at Hospital on Sunday, officials said.

An official told KNO that the deceased was among the three family members who suffered burn injuries after an LPG cylinder caught fire inside their house on Saturday. He was shifted to Hospital for treatment, where he succumbed to his injuries on Sunday afternoon.

The deceased has been identified as Ghulam Rasool Karcho, son of late Abdul Aziz Karcho, a resident of SD Colony, Batmaloo. Meanwhile, the condition of the other two injured persons is stated to be stable and they are undergoing treatment. Police have already taken cognizance of the incident. (Observer News Service)

Body of 13-Year-Old Recovered from Jhelum

SRINAGAR: The body of the 13-year-old boy who drowned in the River Jhelum near the Lasjan area of Srinagar on yesterday was recovered on Sunday afternoon, officials said.

An official told KNO that teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), assisted by police, resumed the search operation at first light and recovered the body from the river this afternoon. The deceased was identified as Lukman Javed Malik (13), son of Javed Ahmad Malik, a resident of Lasjan, Srinagar.

The boy had drowned on Saturday while bathing in the river after accidentally slipping into deep waters. After completion of the necessary formalities, the body was handed over to the family for the last rites. Police have taken cognizance of the incident and initiated further proceedings. (Observer News Service)

Fire Breaks Out in Srinagar's Lal Bazar

SRINAGAR: A fire broke out in the Lal Bazar area of Srinagar on Sunday afternoon, involving two to three residential houses, officials said.

An official told KNO that the blaze broke out in Lal Bazar area, where two to three residential houses were involved.

He said that on receiving information, personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) and the concerned police station rushed to the spot to carry out firefighting and rescue operations. (Observer News Service)

Director Horticulture Jammu Reviews Horticulture Development



Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: Director Horticulture Jammu, Gul Syed accompanied by Chief Horticulture Officer Kishtwar Sajid Mustafa, Assistant Director Sunil Gupta and other officers and officials of the Horticulture Department, undertook a two-day visit to Marwah Zone in District Kishtwar.

During the visit, the Director conducted a Mega Awareness Camp at GFPP Nowpachi, Marwah, bringing various horticulture services and information directly to the doorstep of orchardists. He interacted with growers and highlighted the benefits of various government initiatives, including the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), Revised Modified High-Density Plantation Scheme and post-harvest management and value addition of fruit crops.

The Director also inspected the

departmental nursery, inaugurated the newly constructed Horticulture Development Officer (HDO) Office at Marwah, and visited several Ultra High-Density (UHD) apple orchards and walnut orchards in the area to assess their progress and provide technical guidance to growers.

During his two-day stay, Gul Syed patiently listened to the grievances and suggestions of the orchardist community. Several issues were resolved on the spot, while the remaining genuine demands were assured of priority consideration and timely resolution.

The orchardists expressed their gratitude to the Director for his visit, stating that it was the first-ever visit by a Director Horticulture Jammu to Marwah Zone. They appreciated the department's proactive approach and expressed confidence that the visit would significantly strengthen horticulture development in the remote region.

Army Conducts Mock Drill Amid Heightened Vigil In J-K's Poonch

Press Trust of India

MENDHAR/JAMMU: Amid intensified security vigil in the border areas, Army troops on Sunday conducted a mock drill in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district to enhance operational preparedness and familiarise civilians with safety procedures during contingencies, officials said.

The exercise simulated a terrorist attack and tested evacuation procedures, safety protocols, and coordination among security agencies, the civil administration, and local residents to ensure a swift, coordinated and effective emergency response, the officials said.

They said the mock drill was conducted simultaneously by Rashtriya Rifles personnel and troops from other Army units at multiple locations along the Line of Control (LoC), including the Mendhar sector, as well as in the hinterland to assess operational readiness and coordination.

Residents said such drills were vital in keeping people alert and aware of the measures to be taken during emergencies.

"First of all, I thank the Indian Army for conducting the mock drill. Such exercises are important because everyone needs to remain alert. Our Army has always taken such initiatives so that people know

how to protect themselves in any situation," former Block Development Council (BDC) member Mankote Amanullah Choudhary said.

He said the people of the border areas had always stood by the nation and would continue to do so whenever required.

"Sacrifices have been made in the past, and if the need arises again, people will continue to make sacrifices. We thank the Indian Army for providing us with such training through these mock drills. It is our duty to fully support the Army," Choudhary said.

Another resident, Mohd Farooq, said the exercise not only enhanced awareness about emergency preparedness but also instilled confidence among people living in vulnerable border areas, where maintaining a high level of readiness remains essential.

Meanwhile, the Army has intensified security measures in Surankote and Mendhar towns of Poonch by increasing deployment and setting up checkpoints following intelligence inputs indicating that terrorists may attempt to infiltrate or carry out terror-related activities in the region.

Security personnel are maintaining strict vigilance at important locations to ensure public safety and prevent any untoward incidents, the officials said.

Meeting Held at MP Khatana's Residence Ahead of BJP National President's Jammu Visit

Observer News Service

BATHINDI: A massive preparatory meeting was convened today at the residential office of Sr BJP Leader and Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha (Nominated) Er. Gulam Ali Khatana, to review arrangements and mobilise party workers for the forthcoming visit of the BJP National President to Jammu.

The meeting witnessed enthusiastic participation from former Chairmen, Ex-Sarpanches, Panchayat representatives, BJP office bearers and senior party leaders representing Akhnoor, Marh, Nagrota, Bamyal, Shiba, R.S. Pura, Nikki Tawi, Chatha, Chawadi, Bathindi, Dogian, Batra, Sidhra, Bajalta, Gujjar Nagar, Kathua, Sunjwan, Barmin, Vidhata Nagar, Bakshi Nagar, Rehari, Bantalab, Satwari, Gandhi Nagar, Malik Market, Channi, Bhalwal and several other areas of Jammu.

The participants expressed immense happiness and enthusiasm over the proposed visit of the BJP National President and unanimously resolved to accord him a grand and historic welcome. They assured wholehearted participation in all scheduled pro-

grammes and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the BJP at the grassroots level.

Addressing the gathering, MP Er. Gulam Ali Khatana said that the previous NC-Congress governments deprived the people of Jammu & Kashmir of several transformative Central Government welfare schemes, including Constitutional safeguards, the Forest Rights Act (FRA), and numerous other flagship initiatives. He alleged that instead of ensuring development and employment, the previous regimes misled the youth, pushed the region towards instability, and deprived thousands of families of opportunities and a secure future.

He further stated that during the last one and a half years, the people have been subjected to unfulfilled promises, misgovernance and administrative failures. He expressed concern that many citizens continue to struggle for basic necessities, while backward classes, Scheduled Tribes and other deserving sections have been denied their legitimate rights and benefits. He asserted that the people of Jammu & Kashmir have now recognised the difference between politics of promises and

politics of performance, and are firmly standing with the vision of development, transparency and inclusive governance under the leadership of the BJP.

The meeting concluded with a unanimous pledge by all participants to ensure the grand success of the BJP National President's visit and to further strengthen the party's outreach across every village, ward and constituency of Jammu.

Among those present were ST State General Secretary Ali Mohammad Chachi, Chairman Rajaz Ali Putoo, Chairman Naseem Ali, Ex-Sarpanch Ch. Noor Alam, Ch. Mohammad Alam, Bashir Ahmed, Advocate Mohammad Riyaz Khana, ST District President Jammu Ch. Abdul Mehmood, Youth President Mohammad Rafiq Vicky, Lambardar Ch. Ghulam Rasool, A.H. Malik, Sh. Ravinder Jamwal, Kapoor, Ms. Gulshan, Mrs. Sani, Ch. Mukhtar Ali, Ch. Yaqoob, Shaukat Ali, Bashir Ahmed Khatana, Ch. Noor Hussain, Sh. Sushil Ji, and several other senior BJP leaders, former Chairmen, Ex-Sarpanches, Panchayat representatives and prominent citizens from across the Jammu region.

Incomplete Hospital Building in Kupwara's Villgam Hits Healthcare Services

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Residents of the Ramhal area in north Kashmir's Kupwara district have sought the immediate completion of the new building of the Sub-District Hospital at Villgam, alleging that construction has remained stalled for over a year, affecting healthcare services in the area.

The hospital building was taken up to address the growing patient load and shortage of space in the existing facility. However, residents said the project has seen little progress despite the passage of more than a year.

According to local residents, work on the first floor remains incomplete, while construction of the second floor has stalled

after the walls were erected. They alleged that the roof and concrete slab have not been laid, leaving the structure unusable.

Some residents also alleged that poor-quality construction material had been used in the project and demanded an inquiry into the execution of the work.

"The existing hospital does not have enough space to accommodate the increasing number of patients. The delay has made it difficult for elderly patients, women and emergency cases to receive proper treatment," a resident said.

Another resident urged the administration to complete the project without further delay, saying the hospital caters to thousands of people from Ramhal and adjoining areas.

As per KNS, Block Medical

Officer concerned said the construction agency had been repeatedly asked, both verbally and in writing, to expedite the work but no significant progress had been made.

The contractor handling the first floor said interior works, including plastering and finishing, could not be completed until the second floor was finished as rainwater could damage the interiors.

Repeated attempts to contact officials of the construction agency, HLL, for their response did not elicit any reply.

Residents appealed to the Jammu and Kashmir administration, the Health Department and the district authorities to intervene and ensure early completion of the hospital building to improve healthcare services in the area.

Mughal Road Sees Unprecedented Tourist Rush

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The historic Mughal Road, the picturesque highway linking Shopian in south Kashmir with Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu division, is witnessing an unprecedented influx of tourists and commuters this summer. The growing popularity of the scenic route has, however, brought into sharp focus the glaring absence of basic infrastructure and public facilities, prompting locals, transporters and tourism stakeholders to demand immediate government intervention.

The 84-kilometre road, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, alpine meadows and historic significance, has emerged as one of Jammu and Kashmir's most sought-after tourist destinations. Every day, hundreds of vehicles carrying local tourists, families and adventure enthusiasts pass through iconic spots such as Peer Ki Gali, Dubjan and Aliabad Sarai.

However, while the number of visitors continues to increase, commuters say the infrastructure has failed to keep pace with the growing traffic.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that tourist arrivals on the Mughal Road have witnessed a significant rise over the past few months, particularly during weekends and holidays, as visitors from both Kashmir and the Pir Panjal region flock to the high-altitude destinations to escape the summer heat.

Despite being declared a National Highway nearly three years ago, travellers say the route continues to lack even the most basic facilities required for a safe and comfortable journey.

Activists Ask Jains to Ditch Peacock Feathers

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A row has erupted over former Union minister Maneka Gandhi's appeal to the Jain community to stop using 'picchis' (sacred broom) made of peacock feathers, claiming that their demand fuels illegal wildlife trade.

Reacting strongly, members of the Jain community called her allegations "completely wrong" and said that they have filed police complaints against her in many parts of the country, noting that killing peacocks or any other living being would be fundamentally contrary to the core principles of Jainism, which is rooted in non-violence (Ahimsa).

However, several animal activists backed Gandhi, stressing that her concerns are valid in view of the widespread "organised illegal trade in peacock feathers".

A picchi is a sacred hand-held broom made of peacock feathers and used by Jain monks, particularly those of the Digambara sect, to gently move insects and avoid harming them.

The Illegal Peacock Feather Trade

Gandhi, a renowned champion of animal rights, urged the Jain community last week to stop using peacock-feather picchis, alleging that the commercial trade in peacock feathers had resulted in the killing of lakhs of peacocks.

"I am not saying that the Jain community killed the peacocks. But they opened the door. And once the door opens... 15-25 lakh peacocks have died," Gandhi had said.

Gandhi appealed to Jain monks to replace peacock-feather picchis with rope or other non-animal alternatives, saying, "The Shwetambar Jains also keep a picchi, but theirs is made of rope. There is less violence in that because it is not made from animals."

"This feather does not



drop on its own... In a month, one feather falls," she claimed.

Backlash From Jain Community

Members of the Jain community claimed that she made public remarks on Jain religious practices without adequate knowledge of the faith.

Responding to the allegations, Sanjay Jain, National President of the Vishwa Jain Sangathan, told PTI on Sunday that it was "completely wrong" to single out the Jain community when peacock feathers are also used in various traditional folk dances and cultural practices across different states.

Jain said the organisation has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue and that members of the Jain community have also lodged police complaints against Gandhi in different parts of the country.

"The organisation has sent letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and several FIRs and police complaints have been registered," he added.

"To say that peacocks are being killed because of the Jain community is completely wrong. Jain monks use peacock-feather picchis, but peacock feathers are also used in traditional dances and other cultural practices in different parts of the country. Associating their use only with the Jain community is a mistake," Jain told PTI.

He maintained that a community founded on the principle of Ahimsa (non-violence) could not support the killing of peacocks for religious use.

58 Engineering Colleges Shut in 2025-26: AICTE

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Over 55 engineering colleges across the country were shut down during the 2025-26 academic year for various reasons, although existing students will be allowed to complete their degrees, according to the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

"A total of 58 engineering and technical colleges were closed progressively during 2025-26. Progressive closure means institute cannot admit the students for the first year during the academic year for which progressive closure is granted. However the existing students will continue," a senior AICTE official told PTI.

The AICTE, the statutory national-level apex advisory body and regulator for technical education in India, oversees programs in engineering, architecture, management,



and pharmacy, ensuring quality assurance, maintenance of standards, and coordinated development.

Among the 58 institutions, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra accounted for the highest number of closures, with 12 each, followed by Madhya Pradesh (8), Telangana (4), and Punjab (4).

Three colleges each in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan were closed during the year, while two each in Gu-

jarat, Karnataka, Pune and Tamil Nadu Haryana, Odisha, Uttarakhand and West Bengal recorded one closure each.

Of the 58 institutions, three were government aided, while the rest were privately financed.

"Over 950 courses being offered in technical and engineering colleges across the country were also closed during the period," the official added.

The AICTE distinguishes between progressive closure, under which institutions are phased out gradually while allowing enrolled students to complete their studies, and complete closure, where courses are shut entirely and affected students are transferred to other institutions.

The AICTE orders closure of institutions due to several reasons including less student intake, inability to maintained required faculty, non compliance of infrastructure and operational norms, among others.

Ladakh LG Clears Initiatives to Strengthen Pashmina Sector

Press Trust of India

LEH: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved two initiatives to boost Ladakh's Pashmina sector, benefiting herders through a 25 per cent top-up incentive and an Rs 8 crore revolving fund to cooperatives, an official said on Sunday.

Saxena cleared the two landmark initiatives in the first meeting of the newly constituted Ladakh Pashmina Development Board (LPDB) to strengthen the region's globally renowned Pashmina industry and improve the livelihoods of Changpa pastoral communities, an official spokesperson said.

He said the twin initiatives seek to promote sustainable livestock development, increase the population of Pashmina goats, strengthen the cooperative procurement system, improve the quality and quantity of Ladakh Pashmina, ensure financial benefits to nomadic herders and eliminate distress sales.

This would, in turn, also encourage younger generations to continue the



traditional practice of Changthangi Pashmina goat rearing by making it a profitable and more respectable enterprise, the spokesperson said.

Ladakh is globally recognised for producing the world's finest quality Pashmina from the indigenous Changthangi goat, reared by the Changpa nomadic pastoral communities. However, rising costs of livestock rearing, harsh climatic conditions and fluctuating market returns have adversely affected livestock productivity and the incomes of pastoral families in recent years.

Recognising these challenges, discussed during the first board meeting, the LG approved the Livestock Devel-

opment Incentive Programme, under which eligible Changpa herders will receive the 25 per cent top-up incentive, to be paid over and above the procurement price paid by the government, the official said. He said this incentive will be transferred directly to the beneficiary's Aadhar-linked bank account through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.

"This is the first-of-its-kind initiative, designed to make Pashmina goat rearing more profitable and sustainable. The policy has been carefully structured wherein 60 per cent of this top-up incentive received by the herder will be utilised for livestock improvement and scientific breeding.

Aamir Khan Weds Gauri in Third Marriage

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Actor Aamir Khan on Sunday married longtime partner Gauri Spratt in an intimate ceremony held at his residence here, which was attended by close family members and friends from the film industry.

Despite heavy rainfall in the city, the wedding preparations continued as planned and close friends from the industry, including "Lagaan" filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker, comedian-actor Vir Das, cricketer Irfan Pathan, businessman Mukesh Ambani and others marked their presence at the wedding.

The ceremony was a simple affair, judging by the photo shared by the actor's team. The photo shows Aamir signing the marriage document with Pratt, surrounded by family. Pratt's son is sitting be-

tween the couple, while Azad is sitting alongside the actor.

This marks Aamir's third marriage. The actor was previously married to film producer Reena Dutta from 1986 to 2002. The former couple has two children-- Junaid and Ira Khan.

In 2005, the actor married filmmaker Kiran Rao. The couple separated in 2021 and continue to co-parent their son, Azad.

Khan had introduced Spratt to the media in 2025 on the eve of his 60th birthday, revealing that they had been in a relationship for over a year at the time.

Spratt, a professional in the beauty and wellness sector from Bengaluru, has a son from a previous marriage.

The ceremony was also attended by politician Raj Thackeray and lyricist Pra-soon Joshi.

Police Warn Against Circulating Old Baderwah Video

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday cautioned the public in Doda district against circulation of an old video related to a 2022 incident in Baderwah, saying it is being shared on social media with misleading and distorted narratives that could disturb communal harmony.

According to the police, the video pertains to an incident that occurred on June 9, 2022, for which a case was registered at Baderwah police station.

"It has come to the notice of Doda police that an old video relating to an incident that occurred in Baderwah in June, 2022 is being circulated on various social media platforms with misleading and distorted narratives, causing unnecessary concern and apprehension among members of the public," a police spokesman said.

Clarifying that the video pertains to a 2022 incident, which was thoroughly investigated, the spokesman said the re-circulation of the content at this stage, without context and accompanied by misleading claims, is capable of creating misunderstanding and disturbing public tranquillity.

"Citizens are urged to verify facts from official sources before sharing any information and to act responsibly in the larger interest of maintaining communal harmony, public peace and social cohesion," the spokesman said.

The police warned that any person found deliberately circulating misleading content, spreading misinformation, promoting hatred, inciting communal disharmony, or attempting to create panic and disturb public order through social media or any other medium shall be dealt with strictly under the relevant provisions of law.

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