

US Opens New Front, Hits Iran's Civilian Lifelines



Trans Asia News

Tehran – The Middle East conflict took a dangerous new turn early Friday as the United States widened its air campaign from military targets to Iran's civilian infrastructure, bombing bridges, power facilities, ports and transport links in what appeared to be an all-out bid to cripple the country's economy and force Tehran to loosen its grip on the Strait of Hormuz. Iran responded with fresh missile barrages on US military bases across the region and warned that "more destructive" retaliation was yet to come.

The latest wave of American attacks, which concluded at dawn Friday, marked the sixth consecutive night of strikes since the collapse of last month's Pakistan-mediated ceasefire, underscoring a dramatic escalation in the conflict.

The US military's Central Command (CENTCOM) said it

struck dozens of military targets, including coastal defence systems, cruise missile launch sites and storage facilities on Greater Tunb Island.

Iranian officials, however, said the overnight bombardment increasingly focused on civilian infrastructure across the southern provinces of Hormozgan, Bushehr, Khuzestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Lorestan.

Iran's Health Ministry said at least 38 people were killed and more than 400 injured in the latest attacks by Friday morning.

The casualties included three women and one child under the age of 18, while 22 women and nine children were among those injured. Forty-seven people remained hospitalised.

The heaviest damage was reported in Hormozgan Province, where US aircraft struck six highway bridges in Khamir County, severing key transport routes linking Bandar Abbas with inland Iran. | [More on P6](#)

Ensure Safety Of Pilgrims Under All Circumstances: LG Sinha

» 'Over 3.5 Lakh Devotees Have Visited the Cave Shrine in 15 Days'

» Says This Yatra Will Be Remembered As A Historic One

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday directed all departments and stakeholder agencies to ensure the safety, security and welfare of pilgrims undertaking the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, while reviewing arrangements at the Nunwan base camp in Pahalgam.

During his visit, Sinha chaired a high-level meeting with senior officials to assess preparations for essential services, including drinking water, electricity, telecom connectivity, accommodation, food, healthcare, emergency response and



security. He also inspected the Yatra Registration Counter and reviewed the registration process.

Directing all departments to operate in mission mode, the

Lieutenant Governor stressed that every effort must be made to ensure the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

"Today marks 15 days since the pilgrimage began, and in

these 15 days more than 3.50 lakh pilgrims have had darshan of Baba Bholenath. By the grace of Lord Shiva, the yatra is proceeding smoothly. There is great enthusiasm among devotees coming from every corner of the country, and local residents and service providers are also actively engaged in making this sacred pilgrimage a success," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor instructed officials to regularly seek feedback from pilgrims and ensure prompt redressal of grievances. He also directed that all services provided during the yatra should strictly follow a 100 per cent prepaid system to | [More on P6](#)

PM, CMs Disqualification Bill JPC Defers Adoption of Report Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Joint Committee of Parliament examining the Bill that seeks to remove Prime Minister, Union Ministers and Chief Ministers detained for 30 straight days on serious charges decided on Friday to put on hold the adoption of its draft report.

The decision came after the members felt that more discussions were needed, panel chief Aparajita | [More on P6](#)

J&K's NEET Stars Shine With Top Ranks, Stories Of Grit

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir has registered one of its strongest performances in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG 2026, with students from across the Union Territory securing top national ranks while several others from modest backgrounds scripted inspiring success stories in one of the country's toughest competitive examinations.

Leading the Union



Territory's performance is Hadiya Nisar from Anantnag, who secured All India Rank (AIR) 99 with an impressive 99.9931 percentile, emerging

as the highest-ranked candidate from Jammu and Kashmir. Another top performer, Zaidan Wani, secured AIR 124 with | [More on P6](#)

Srinagar Records Season's Hottest Day

MeT Forecasts Major Weather Shift From July 19

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar on Friday recorded its hottest day of the season so far as the mercury soared to 35 degrees Celsius, while the Meteorological Department forecast a major shift in weather from July 19, warning of heavy rainfall, flash floods and landslides in parts of Jammu and Kashmir over the coming week.

According to data from the Meteorological Department, the maximum temperature in Srinagar settled at 35.0 degrees Celsius, nearly five degrees above normal and surpassing the previous July high of 34.5 degrees Celsius recorded on July 10.

Official records show Friday's maximum temperature was the third-highest July temperature recorded in Srinagar since 2016, behind 37.4 degrees Celsius on July 6, 2025, and 36.2 degrees Celsius on July 29, 2024.

The minimum temperature in the summer capital was recorded at 22.0 degrees Celsius, around 3.3 degrees above normal, indicating unusually warm night conditions.

Jammu was the hottest place in the Union Territory at 35.8 degrees Celsius, followed by Srinagar and Kupwara, which both recorded 35.0 degrees Celsius. Qazigund recorded a maximum of 33.2 degrees Celsius, Kokernag 32.9 degrees Celsius, Bhabarwah 31.5 degrees Celsius | [More on P6](#)

Hunger Strike Enters Day 20 Will Stay Alive Till July 20: Wangchuk

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Educator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Friday vowed to continue his indefinite hunger strike until July 20, despite doctors warning that his health has entered a critical stage after 20 days without food.

Speaking at Jantar Mantar, where the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has been protesting over alleged examination irregularities, Wangchuk urged supporters to ensure a massive turnout for the outfit's proposed march to Parliament on July 20.

"I am weak from the outside but very strong inside. I am sure all of you are strong from the inside, and outside too. We need this energy for July 20, when we will take out a peaceful march to Parliament. We will go together and present our plea in the temple of democracy," Wangchuk said.

"I will stay alive till July 20 at any cost. If you don't come | [More on P6](#)

Plastic Waste Mounts As Visitors Flock To Kashmir's Hidden Gems



Observer News Service

Srinagar: By the time volunteers wrapped up a massive cleanliness drive in Budgam's Hajian Brenwar Valley on Friday, they had removed nearly 150 quintals of plastic waste and other

garbage from one of Kashmir's emerging tourist destinations.

The staggering volume of litter was more than the outcome of a single day's neglect. It was a stark reminder of a growing challenge confronting many of the Valley's | [More on P6](#)

The Long Road Back From A Saudi Jail

Four months after his detention in Saudi Arabia, Baramulla nurse Amjad Ali Bhat returns home, ending a family's agonising wait while leaving questions unanswered

Dabirah Hassan

Srinagar: For more than four months, every phone call, every passing day, and every knock on the door carried a sliver of hope for the family of 29-year-old Amjad Ali Bhat from north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Their days were marked by uncertainty. With no official word on his whereabouts or the charges against him, the family clung to fragments of information, relying on colleagues, diplomats and distant assurances while fearing the worst.

That agonising wait finally ended when Amjad was released from a jail in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, bringing relief to a family that had spent months searching for answers.

A resident of Gund Ibrahim in Pattan, Amjad had travelled to Saudi Arabia less than a year earlier after his family pooled together years of savings and borrowed money to help him secure

employment abroad. Since June last year, he had been working as a nurse specialist with Saudi Response Plus Medical, a healthcare firm based in Dammam.

His life abroad appeared to be settling into a routine until March 25, when, according to his family, Saudi Civil Defence personnel detained him.

For the next two days, his family knew nothing.

Repeated calls to Amjad's phone went unanswered. With every passing hour, anxiety deepened until one of his colleagues informed them that he had been taken into custody.

"We came to know about his detention through his colleagues, two days after the incident. For two days, we were frantically calling his mobile phone, but it was unreachable. Then we called one of his colleagues, who informed us about his detention," his sister, Shahida Akhter, | [More on P6](#)

INCREASE IN JUDGES' STRENGTH

HC Forms Panel To Oversee Infra Expansion

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Friday constituted a high-level committee to monitor and supervise the augmentation of judicial infrastructure at its Jammu and Srinagar wings following the increase in the sanctioned strength of High Court judges.

According to an order issued by the Registrar General M K Sharma, the committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Justice Shahzad Azeem with the mandate to oversee the expansion of courtrooms, information technology infrastructure, residential accommodation, staff strength, vehicles and other facilities required to support the enhanced judicial capacity.

The committee will monitor and supervise infrastructure augmentation at both wings of the High Court to ensure that adequate facilities are created in | [More on P6](#)

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2

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to Apply for pesticides licence under the name M/S Apple pesticides and FERTILIZERS R/O Hardashoor kunzer if anybody has any objection in this regard they may submit it to the(PPO) plant protection Officer Lalmandi srinagar with in 7 days from the publication of this notice after that no objection shell be entertained

Manzoor Ahmad Rather
S/O Ghulam Ahmad Rather
R/O Hardashoora Kunzer Baramulla

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to Apply for FERTILIZER And seed licence under the name M/S Apple pesticides and FERTILIZERS R/O Hardashoor kunzer if anybody has any objection in this regard they may submit it to the chief agriculture office baramulla with in 7 days from the publication of this notice after that no objection shell be entertained.

Manzoor Ahmad Rather
S/O Ghulam Ahmad Rather
R/O Hardashoora Kunzer Baramulla

fko

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Engagement of Honorary Visiting Specialists at Northern Railway Firozpur Division

S.No.	Name of hospital	HVS	No.of posts
1	Divisional Hospital, Firozpur	Paediatrician	01
		Ophthalmology	01
		Psychiatry	01
		Radiology	01
2	Sub-Divisional Hospital, Amritsar	Physician	01
		Ophthalmologist	01

Detailed terms and conditions governing the engagement is available on Northern Railway website www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
The interested doctors can submit their Bio-Data along with their professional work experience/date of birth/qualification certificates and contact details to Chief Medical Superintendent, Northern Railway, Divisional Hospital, Firozpur-152001 (Punjab) up to 13.00 Hrs on 17.8.26.
No.40-Med/HVS/FZR Dated 14.7.26

Chief Medical Supdt., Firozpur

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PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card of my daughter bearing No 836467706793 the name is entered as HURAIM IRSHAD while her actual name is HURAIN IRSHAD. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

IRSHAD AHMAD NAIKOO
F/O HURAIN IRSHAD
R/o RAWATHPORA BAGHAT BARZULLA SRINAGAR

mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is here by notified that my name & Date of Birth is wrongly mentioned as BUTT KHURSHED AHMAD & Date of Birth is 01/03/1967 in my passport bearing passport No ...N7086181 while my correct name is KHURSHED AHMAD BHAT & correct Date of Birth is 04/09/1970 as per adhaar record which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact with passport office srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....KHURSHED AHMAD BHAT
S/O MOHD ASSADULLA BHAT
R/O HAIL JAGIR
Dist....BARAMULLA

FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) FIZZA MANSOOR to (New name) FIZZA MANSOOR ZAGOO . In future i will be known as (new Name) FIZZA MANSOOR ZAGOO.

If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.
FIZZA MANSOOR ZAGOO D/O MANSOOR AHMAD ZAGOO.

mcb

THE JAMMU & KASHMIR BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION NEW CAMPUS BEMINA SRINAGAR

ATTENTION PLEASE

The Candidates whose photograph is Published in this notice is claiming to have lost his 10 th Class Qualificaiton / DOB/ Diploma Certificate of Secondary School Examination issued by BOSE with the following particulars

Name.:- Manzoor Ahmad Khan

Parentage.:- Sobhan Khan

Mothers Name.:- Poshia Begum

Residence.:- Madian Chogal Handwara .Distt .KUPWARA

10 th Class Roll No:- 533493

Session.:- Bi - Annual 2007

Reg No:- 03NKM50

03293

Certificate Serial No :- 3710129

D O B:- 01.01.1989 Result Qualified Class 10th. Grade Two (2nd)

Now the candidate has applied for issuance of duplicate Qualification/DOB /Diploma Certificate before the same is processed and issued in the candidate anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same before the Deputy Secretary, BOSE or undersigned within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice. Besides, the above referred Qualification /DOB/ Diploma certificate bearing serial no :- 3710129. are be treated as cancelled,
No:-F(Certs-1-DOC)B/KD/26

SD/=

Deputy Secretary
Certificates . KD

fko



PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mumtaza Maqbool, W/o Majid Mansoor Dar, hereby inform the general public that I lost my wallet while travelling from Khore to Kongambara, Tehsil Pattan on 16.07.2026.

The wallet contained:

- Aadhaar Card No. 6551 2601 7498
- PAN Card No. DQPPM4979A
- Election Card No. FVV1003862
- PRAN Card No. 110021579521
- Two ATM/Debit Cards

The documents could not be traced despite all efforts. I am applying for duplicate documents from the concerned authorities. If any person or office has any objection regarding the issuance of duplicate documents, the same may be conveyed to the concerned offices within the prescribed period; otherwise, the duplicates shall be issued.

Mumtaza Maqbool
W/o Majid Mansoor Dar
Contact: 9596448600

fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Sariwarpora

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Death..

PUBLIC NOTICE...

The registrar Death BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to Death of Abdul Gani Najar s/o Abdul Ahad Najar R/o Sariwarpora Tehsil Pattan district baramulla with verified date of Death 03/01/1976 . In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 07 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd

fko

Naib Tehsildar Sariwarpora

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of DEE Class Contractor Card. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Block Development Office Hardu Abura within seven days . After that no objection shall be entertained.

Younis Hameed Malik
S/o Abdul Hameed Malik
R/o Larkhipora Tehsil Kawarhama

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) MAHMOODA AKHTAR to (New name) MEHMOODA AKTHER . In future i will be known as (new Name) MEHMOODA AKTHER.
If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.
MEHMOODA AKTHER
W/o MUKHTAR AHMAD MIR
R/o BANDGAM BUDGAM Cell. 9906532311.

mcb

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ میرے جوں و شمیر یک اکاؤنٹ نمبر

0078041000002105 میں میرا IQRAH MAJEED BHAٹا اندراج ہوا ہے

جبکہ میرے ادھار پر میرا IQRAH MAJEED ہے اب اسکی درستی کرنی مطلوب ہے۔ لہذا

اس بارے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر براؤنچ منیجر جوں و شمیر یک

براؤنچ بڈگام کے دفتر میں پیش کریں ۔ مبعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

IQRAH MAJEED D/O ABDUL MAJEED BHAT
R/O GALWANPORA BUDGAM
MBC -CELL 9469641934

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Directorate of Horticulture Kashmir, Rajbagh Srinagar

dhk-kashmir@jk.gov.in

Subject: - Misbranded Test result of Pesticide Samples

This is to inform to the public in general and farming community in particular that the analysis report of pesticide samples has been received from the Deputy Director Law Enforcement, Lalmandi Srinagar vide no. DDLE/2026-27/531-40 dated 13-07-2026 and DDLE/2026-27/547-56 dated 14-07-2026 dated has been declared MISBRANDED by Quality Control Laboratory, Lalmandi Srinagar. The details are as under:

S. No	Trade name of the product	Active Ingredient	Batch No	Date of Manufacture	Date of Expiry	Manufacture/ Marketed by
1.	SA Cole	Propineb 70% WP	SACCL26005	06-06-2026	05-06-2028	M/S Saraswati Agro Life Science Pvt. Ltd
2.	Difenso	Thiophanate 70%WP	Methyl MS26DF009	06-06-2026	05-06-2028	Mahindra summit Agri Science ltd
3.	Difenso	Thiophanate 70%WP	Methyl MS26DF002	23-01-2026	22-01-2028	Mahindra summit Agri Science ltd

Issued in Public interest by: -

Directorate of Horticulture Kashmir, Rajbagh Srinagar

DIPK-3410/26

DATED: 17-07-2026

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER VERINAG DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE

It is hereby informed that the e-Tender invited for "Outsourcing of Verinag Cafeteria at Verinag on "As Is Where Is Basis" through GeM Portal for a period of 03 years vide EAuction Notice No: 01-VDA of 2026, Dated: 09/07/2026, is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable technical reasons.

A fresh tender notice will be uploaded on the GeM portal soon.

DIPK-NB-1120/26
DATED: 17-07-2026
No. CEO/VDA/2026-27/932-36

(Mohammad Rouf Rahman), JKAS
Chief Executive Officer Verinag
Development Authority

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mufaiz Ahmad Magray, S/o Mohammad Shaban Magray, R/o Kanso, Shopian, hereby inform that my name and date of birth are wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card as Mufiz Ahmad and 26-03-2004. My correct name and date of birth, as per my school records, are Mufaiz Ahmad Magray and 26-03-2005. I have applied for the necessary correction in my Aadhaar Card. Objections, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Aakib Mohi u din Wani, S/o Gulam Mohi u din Wani, R/o Hushangpora, Shopian, hereby notify that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 2957 4104 3028 as Aaqib Muhi ud din Wani instead of my correct name Aakib Mohi u din Wani as per my school records. I have applied for the necessary correction. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Shaheena Akhter, W/o Gulzar Ahmad Allie, R/o Pinjoora, District Shopian, hereby notify that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 5489 7350 0856 as Shaheena Banoo instead of my correct name Shaheena Akhter. My correct name is duly recorded in my Domicile Certificate and other official documents. I have applied for the necessary correction in my Aadhaar Card. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sarwar Hamid, F/o Zaira Jan, R/o Reshnagri, Shopian, hereby notify that the name and date of birth of my daughter have been wrongly recorded in her Aadhaar Card as "Zaahira Jan" and 06-08-2021. Her correct name and date of birth are "Zaira Jan" and 06-09-2021. I have applied for the necessary correction in the Aadhaar records. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Saqib Hussain Paswal, S/o Ghulam Qadir Paswal, R/o Kathohallan, Kellar, Shopian, hereby notify that the name and date of birth of my brother have been wrongly recorded in the Aadhaar records as Sahib Hussain Paswal and 05-05-2015. His correct particulars, as per the school records, are Shoiab Ahmad Paswal, Date of Birth: 25-12-2016, S/o Gulam Qadir Paswal. I have applied for the necessary correction in the Aadhaar records. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Gulam Mohammad Khanday, S/o Ali Mohammad Khanday, R/o Pinoora, Tehsil Shopian, hereby notify that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 4091 4989 6035 as GH MOHD KHANDAY instead of my correct name GULAM MOHAMMAD KHANDAY. I have applied for the necessary correction in my Aadhaar Card. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Aashaq Hussain Bhat, F/o Aleha Aashaq, R/o Losedanow, Shopian, hereby notify that the name and date of birth of my daughter have been wrongly recorded in the Aadhaar records as Kaniza Aamina and 13-07-2017. Her correct name and date of birth, as per the school records, are Aleha Aashaq and 13-07-2016. I have applied for the necessary correction in the Aadhaar records. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Muneer Ahmad Shah, S/o Gulam Ahmad Shah, R/o Sughan, Tehsil Chitragam, District Shopian, hereby notify that my name and date of birth have been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 5891 0598 0442 as Muneeb Ahmad Shah and 12-09-2007. My correct particulars, as per my school records, are Muneer Ahmad Shah, S/o Gulam Ahmad Shah, Date of Birth: 16-02-2007. I have applied for the necessary correction in my Aadhaar Card. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Khurshid Ahmad Mir, F/o Aliza Khurshid, R/o Woyen, District Shopian, hereby notify that the name of my ward has been wrongly recorded in the Aadhaar Card as Kakashaan Khurshid instead of the correct name Mohammad Aliza Khurshid. I have applied for the necessary correction in the concerned records. Any objection, if any, may be raised before the concerned authority.

fko

ازنیات ڈورو

عنوان:- درخواست منجانب افروزہ اکبر جہاں بیوہ مجاز افضل بیگ ساکنہ ڈورو تحصیل ڈاگمر پورہ ہمرادہ جرنلی لیگن ہیر سرفکیبٹ بابت فلیٹی پشن الیس آر آد 43 بیچو گنگی شوہر نوذ مجاز افضل بیگ

اشتہار ہر خاص و عام

محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل/سائلہ نے ایک درخواست بغرض لیگل ہیر سرفکیبٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاہولی ہے اس بارے میں بنواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے اور مطابق بنواری حلقہ و سدر بنواری سائل کا شوہر مورخہ 05-07-2026 کو فوت ہوا ہے بنواری پٹیشن سے سرکاری ملازمت تھا ۔

معتنی کے سداوے ان جائزہ میں ہے

افروزہ اکبر جہاں بیوہ مجاز افضل بیگ 46 سال گھر بڈگام مرزا پاکیزہ مجاز بیگ دختر۔۔ 15 سال زیر تعلیم مرزا فاطمہ مجاز بیگ ۔۔ 12 سال ۔۔ محمد پر مجاز بیگ پسر 09 سال ۔۔ اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی افراد نہیں ہیں ہے سرفکیبٹ زیر بحث اجراء کے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عزیار یا عزیاض ہو تو وہ اندر آئے عزیار عزیاض سے عدالت حد اکوفتری اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عزیار عزیاض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

ناپ تحصیلدار

FKO



CITY

SSB Chief Reviews Security Preparedness

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Sanjay Singhal visited the Yatri Transit Camp at Pantha Chowk in Srinagar to review security arrangements and operational preparedness for the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

The SSB chief was received by Commandant of 40 Battalion SSB Yetan Negi, Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar Dr G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarthy and other senior officers of the police, security forces and civil administration.

During the visit, the Director General inspected the Yatra infrastructure, including the registration centre and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) counters at the transit camp. He reviewed the processing mechanism aimed at ensuring efficient pilgrim registration, movement tracking and security.

He also visited the Joint Police Control Room and the CRPF Command Post, where he assessed the integrated security arrangements, surveillance network and area domina-

tion measures put in place for the annual pilgrimage.

As part of his inspection, the DG visited the community kitchen (langar) and personally checked the quality, hygiene and nutritional standards of the food being served to pilgrims.

Later, he visited the Tactical Headquarters of the 40 Battalion SSB, where he interacted with officers and jawans. Addressing a Sainik Samelan, Singhal commended the personnel for their professionalism, commitment and dedication in ensuring the peaceful conduct of the Yatra.

As per KNT, he also participated in a plantation drive within the SSB campus as part of an environmental initiative before holding an informal interaction with troops to understand their operational requirements and welfare concerns.

The Director General expressed satisfaction over the close coordination among various security agencies and appreciated the high level of alertness maintained by the personnel deployed for the pilgrimage.

Man Injured in Bear Attack, Referred to SMHS Hospital

Observer News Service

Srinagar:: A man was injured after being attacked by a bear in the Tosamaidan area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on Friday, officials and local residents said.

The injured has been identified as Mohd Abdullah, a resident of Shunglipora in Budgam district.

According to locals, Abdullah was in the Tosa-

maidan area when a bear attacked him. Hearing his cries for help, nearby residents rushed to the spot, rescued him and shifted him to the Primary Health Centre (PHC), Khag, for immediate medical treatment.

As per KNT, after administering first aid, doctors referred him to SMHS Hospital, Srinagar, for specialized treatment in view of the injuries he had sustained in the attack.

Srinagar Police Trace Three Missing Minor Girls from Amritsar

Observer News Service

Srinagar:: Srinagar Police have traced and safely recovered three minor girls who had gone missing from the city, locating them in Amritsar, Punjab, within 72 hours of their disappearance during a coordinated operation carried out with the assistance of the Punjab Police.

The recovery was made in connection with FIR No. 63/2026 registered under Section 137(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Police Station Ram Munshi Bagh.

Officials said that following the registration of the case, police launched an intensive investigation and developed crucial leads regarding the whereabouts of the missing girls. A dedicated team was subsequently deputed to Punjab, where, with the active cooperation of the Punjab Police, all three girls were traced and recovered safely from Amritsar.

The recovered girls are being brought back to Srinagar, where the required legal formalities will be completed. Further investigation into the case is underway.

Labourer Dies after Electrocution

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An 18-year-old labourer died after accidentally coming into contact with a high-tension (HT) power line while installing a smart electricity meter in the Khimber-Zakura area of Srinagar on Friday, officials said.

An official told KNO that the labourer sustained an electric shock after coming into contact with an HT line while installing a smart me-

ter. He subsequently fell from the electric pole, suffering multiple injuries.

He was rushed to hospital in an unconscious condition, where doctors declared him brought dead.

The deceased was later identified as Murtaza Khatana (18), son of Abdul Rasheed Khatana, a resident of Garkoot, Uri.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognisance of the incident and initiated further proceedings.



As temperatures soar, youngsters cool off with a refreshing dive into Dal Lake in Srinagar. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Manipur Delegation Visits Srinagar to Study Dal Lake Conservation Model

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A delegation from the Loktak Development Authority (LDA), Manipur, visited the J&K Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) in Srinagar to study Dal Lake's conservation and restoration initiatives, with both sides exchanging technical expertise and best practices for the sustainable management of water bodies.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a spokesperson said the delegation, led by LDA Project Director Heisnam Balkrishna, visited the LCMA on July 16 to study its functioning and initiatives for the conservation and management of Dal Lake, besides exchanging experiences in the management of water bodies.

The spokesperson said the delegation called on LCMA Vice Chairman Khurshid Ahmad Shah, JKAS and held discussions on lake conservation, aquatic weed management, ecological restoration, environmental monitoring and other technical aspects of lake management. During



During a technical session attended by senior officers, engineers and scientists of LCMA, the visiting team was briefed on ongoing restoration works, mechanised weed harvesting, environmental monitoring and other conservation initiatives

agencies facilitate the exchange of technical knowledge, innovative practices and field experience, thereby strengthening conservation efforts across the country.

During a technical session attended by senior officers, engineers and scientists of LCMA, the visiting team was briefed on ongoing restoration works, mechanised weed harvesting, environmental monitoring and other conservation initiatives. The delegation also expressed keen interest in the floating jetties installed by LCMA at various locations on Dal Lake and explored the possibility of introducing similar infrastructure in Loktak Lake, the spokesperson said.

He added that the delegation later visited Dal Lake to inspect weed management operations, restoration works and floating jetties being developed by LCMA. The visit concluded with both organisations reaffirming their commitment to continued technical cooperation and the exchange of best practices for the conservation and sustainable management of Dal Lake and Loktak Lake.

the interaction, the Vice Chairman briefed the delegation on the organisational structure, mandate and functioning of the Authority, while highlighting the scientific and sustainable interventions being implemented for the restoration and long-term conservation of Dal Lake.

He said Shah stressed that such interactions among lake management

Commissioner SMC inspects Integrated Animal Birth Control Centre at Tengpora

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb on Friday conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Integrated Animal Birth Control (ABC) Centre and Cattle Pond at Tengpora to review the functioning of the Corporation's stray animal management facilities and assess ongoing measures aimed at strengthening animal welfare, public health, and urban sanitation.

The Commissioner was accompanied by the Joint Commissioner (Administration), Executive Engineers, DFO SMC and other senior officers of the Corporation.

During the visit, the Commissioner reviewed the implementation of the Animal Birth Control Programme, including the sterilization and anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs in accordance with the Animal Birth Control Rules and the guidelines of the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI). He also inspected the veterinary infrastructure, operation theatres, post-operative recovery units, cattle shelters, feeding arrangements, sanitation facilities, and other essential support infrastructure at the integrated complex.

Interacting with veterinary pro-



fessionals and field personnel, Commissioner emphasized strict adherence to prescribed animal welfare protocols and directed the concerned officers to ensure scientific, humane, and efficient management of stray dogs and cattle while maintaining the highest standards of veterinary care, hygiene, and sanitation.

The Commissioner directed the officers to undertake extensive plantation across the premises to improve the environmental ambience of the facility and stressed the need for intensive sanitation and regular upkeep of all sections. He further instructed that appropriate signage be installed at all functional units to facilitate better identification and operational efficiency. To strengthen animal care services, he also directed the establishment of a modern feed preparation and distribution facility with a robust inventory and stock monitor-

ing system to ensure the timely availability and efficient management of animal feed.

Highlighting the importance of the integrated facility, the Commissioner observed that it is a vital component of the Corporation's strategy for scientific and humane stray animal management, contributing significantly to public health, rabies control, environmental hygiene, and sustainable urban governance. He reaffirmed SMC's commitment to continuously upgrading the facility through modern infrastructure, improved operational systems, and best management practices.

The inspection forms part of Srinagar Municipal Corporation's sustained efforts to modernize civic infrastructure, promote responsible animal welfare practices, and build a cleaner, safer, and healthier urban environment.



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

**HIGHWAY STATUS**



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



HIJRI CALENDAR

03 Safar1448

PRAYERS	
FAJR	3: 51
ZUHR	12:37
ASR	5: 34
Magrib	7: 45
ISHA	9: 22

This Day In History

- 1922 - German-Russian treaty signed in Italy, Soviet Union recognized
- 1925 - Adolf Hitler publishes Mein Kampf (original title was the catchy "Four and a Half Years (of Struggle) Against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice")
- 1929 - NY Yankees become 1st team to wear uniform numbers
- 1932 Belgium, Luxembourg & Netherlands sign Ouchy Convention, a customs treaty
- 1932 - US & Canada sign a treaty to develop St Lawrence Seaway
- 1936 - Spanish Civil War : General Francisco Franco issues manifesto and leds uprising with army in Morocco .
- 1938 - Great Britain recognizes Italian annexation of Abyssinia Agreement Treaty of Interest
- 1939 - Stalin requests British, French & Russian anti-nazi pact
- 1942 - Japanese occupying army on Java installs film censorship 1943 - Swiss scientist Dr. Albert Hofmann discovers the psychedelic effects of LSD
- 1944 - British air raid on German convoy SW of Heligoland
- 1944 - British troops occupy Bourquebus hill range, Normandy
- 1945 - German troops in Groningen surrender
- 1945 - Red Army begins Battle of Berlin
- 1945 - US troops enter Nuremberg, Germany
- 1945 - US troops land on He Shima, Okinawa 1946 - 1st US launch
- 1955 - 1st electric power generated from atomic energy sold commercially
- 1963 - Failed military coup in Syria
- 1963 - The United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid releases its second interim report pressing for international sanctions against South Africa, particularly the supply of arms, ammunition and petroleum

From KO Archives

Australia Frees Kashmiri Detainee After 7 Years

Observer News Service

SYDNEY - A Kashmiri youth, freed yesterday after spending a record of almost seven years in an Australian immigration detention, thanked the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Immigration Minister, Amanda Van stone, for "showing me compassion".

Peter Qasim; was 24 when he arrived on Thursday Island via Papua New Guinea, in September 1998.

He is still in the Adelaide psychiatric hospital to which he was admitted five weeks

ago, but will leave early this week after being granted a visa to live in the community, with full health benefits and employment rights. A Christian couple from Adelaide's southern suburbs, Faye and David, who have visited him in Baxter detention centre near Port Augusta many times, were at his side yesterday, excited to be taking him home.

He calls them Mum and Dad, and thanked them and the Liberal backbenchers who made his plight public, and other "loving, caring supporters" including the Sydney entrepreneur Dick Smith.

"I have been living for almost seven years in a very hard situation," said Qasim, looking relaxed as he read slowly from a prepared statement. "I don't know what my future is now, but I am happy to have the chance to live a normal life. I never wanted to be a burden on Australia." Although his application for asylum was rejected, Qasim can live as an Australian citizen pending deportation. In reality, he has tried unsuccessfully to be deported for the past two years, and it is unlikely this will happen. Although he asserts he is a Kashmiri national, an orphan who fled the country after becoming involved with the separatist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, no government will accept him and he is effectively stateless.

He has also applied for a permanent visa under a section of the Immigration Act that allows the minister to grant visas on humanitarian grounds.

(Kashmir Observer, 18 July, 2005)

J&K FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED

OFFICE OF THE GEENERAL MANAGER

(Sales & Marketing) Kashmir

RAJBAGH SRINAGAR

Subject: Corrigendum to Auction Calander of July 2026.

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that in the Auction Calendar for the Month of July, 2026 issued vide No. 675-97/GM/S&M/K dated 16.07.2026, the year "2027" appearing against the scheduled auction dates shall be read as "2026" wherever it occurs.

DIPK-NB-1130/26
Dated: 17/07/2026
No: 770-27/GM/S&M/K

Sd/-
M. Ayub Dar
General Manager (S&M) K

CONDOLENCE NOTICE

It is informed with profound grief and sorrow to all relatives, friends, and neighbours about the sad demise of Late Ghulam Hassan Khanyari, R/o Shah Faisal Colony, Upper Soura, Srinagar, who departed for his heavenly abode on 17th July 2026, corresponding to 2nd Safar-ul-Muzaffar, 1448 Hijri. Taziyat (condolence gathering) will be observed for three (3) days only. Ladies are kindly requested not to bring any eatables with them. Bereaved Family: Mohammad Iqbal Khangari (Son) Mohammad Yasir Khangari (Son) Abdul Ahad Khangari (Son) Abdul Qayoom Khanyari (Son) Sajjad Ahmad Khan (Son-in-law) Contact No.: 7006077796

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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KO VIEW

Guardians Before Governments

Kashmir's prominent eco-campaigner spent part of this week mourning a loss that cannot be measured in numbers. Standing amid one of the valley's celebrated tourist destinations, he spoke with deep disappointment about what people have allowed to happen to places once known for crystal-clear waters, green meadows and spotless surroundings. His words sounded like an appeal to fellow Kashmiris. Every discarded plastic bottle and food wrapper, he said, steals a little more from the land that has sustained generations. His appeal reached well beyond Warwan and Gurez. Those places tell the story of a much larger problem. Plastic now follows almost every picnic and sightseeing trip. Visitors come for Kashmir's beauty and often leave behind bottles, wrappers and other waste that slowly turns its finest destinations into dumping grounds. Local residents often add to the same problem through everyday habits that have become all too common. Plastic has grown into one of Kashmir's biggest environmental challenges, and tourism now sits at the centre of that story. The valley draws visitors because of its lakes, forests, rivers and mountains. Those landscapes form the backbone of a large local economy. Every pile of litter weakens that promise and slowly changes the image of a place celebrated for its natural beauty. Recent developments show that public attention still has the power to change outcomes. Only days ago, Kashmir Observer highlighted the waste crisis at one of Kashmir's important religious sites. Public discussion soon drew a swift response from the administration, which cleaned the premises. That episode showed how strong public concern can push institutions into action within a short time. Fresh administrative measures have followed elsewhere. Authorities have prohibited plastic and polythene at Drung. The Bandipora administration has issued similar directions for popular tourist spots in its district. Such decisions deserve public support because keeping plastic away from these places always works better than collecting mountains of waste after every holiday rush. Rules, however, reach only as far as enforcement allows. Real change begins when people treat public spaces with the same care they show inside their own homes. Kashmir has often looked towards official agencies whenever environmental problems become visible. Cleaner landscapes, however, grow from a partnership between citizens and institutions. Communities can lead clean-up drives, families can take their waste home, shopkeepers can reduce disposable packaging and visitors can leave every destination exactly as they found it. Administrative action becomes stronger when society moves in the same direction. The eco-campaigner's grief therefore speaks for much more than a handful of tourist destinations. It asks a simple question that every Kashmiri should answer: if people fail to protect the landscapes that feed livelihoods, attract visitors and define the valley's identity, who else will? Government action can strengthen that effort, though the first guardians of Kashmir's natural heritage have always been the people who call it home.

The Day After NEET

With twenty lakh students competing for sixty-three thousand government MBBS seats, the results reveal whether society values every young person or only those who make the cutoff.



Adnan Ur Rehman

Close to twenty lakh students sat the NEET examination this year. Eleven lakh qualified. Government medical colleges hold roughly sixty-three thousand MBBS seats. Private colleges add more, but tuition fees place them beyond the reach of most families. The arithmetic is plain: the vast majority of candidates, including many who poured two or three years into disciplined preparation, will spend the day after results on the other side of the cutoff line. These young people watch the celebration happening down the street as though it belongs to another country. An examination lasts three hours, but its emotional aftermath can extend for months. Students who land below their target rank face a flood of questions from relatives and neighbours about marks and effort. These words wound young minds already grappling with disappointment. The wounds deepen because society celebrates toppers with fireworks and front-page photographs while leaving the rest to sit alone with their scorecards. This imbalance turns a stressful day into a dangerous one.

India Today tracked ninety-three NEET-linked suicides over the past five years. Thirty-two came in 2025 alone. Kota recorded forty of these deaths, making the coaching hub the deadliest cluster in the nation. The Supreme Court has called the trend a disturbing cycle. The National Crime Records Bureau recorded a sixty-five percent increase in student suicides between 2013 and 2023. One research group now reports that student suicides have surpassed farmer suicides in India. These numbers expose the cost of a culture that treats a medical entrance test as the supreme measure of human worth. The day after results is when society shows its true character, and lately that character has looked cruel. Parents occupy the front line. Their words hold more weight than any counseling session. A child who hears that worth extends beyond a scorecard finds the strength to stand up again. Harsh judgment leaves lasting scars, while supportive conversation rebuilds confidence. Parents can ask what their child needs, putting lectures aside. They can point out that one examination, however competitive, gives a partial picture of intelligence, dedication, and future potential. Success at home means celebrating achievement with humility and meeting disappointment with understanding. The tone a parent sets on result day echoes through the following year. Schools and coaching centers must look past the topper photographs they plaster on billboards. Thousands of students need career guidance, emotional support, and clear information about alternative paths. Medicine serves society nobly, but it remains one path among many.



When relatives ask why one cousin scored higher than another, they plant seeds of shame that can grow into much larger problems. Families should replace scorecard conversations with questions about growth, curiosity, and well-being.

Nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, biotechnology, psychology, public health, biomedical sciences, and scientific research all provide meaningful careers. Some of these fields face severe shortages of trained professionals. Institutions that narrow their focus to white-coat triumphs alone betray their students and waste national talent. A coaching center that guides a disappointed student toward a suitable allied health program serves the country better than one that simply celebrates the single candidate who cracked AIIMS. Headlines splash perfect scores and extraordinary ranks, while social media feeds fill with celebration. This one-sided story damages the majority who scored lower. A balanced narrative would highlight perseverance, second chances, and students who found success after early setbacks. Media outlets should ask themselves whether their coverage helps young people cope or pushes them toward despair. Responsible journalism would include helpline numbers, stories of alternative success, and honest discussion about the intense competition. The current coverage acts like a spotlight that illuminates one stage while leaving the rest of the theater in darkness. Society honours children best by recognizing individual gifts. One student masters physics, another paints with precision. One thrives under pressure, while another needs space to grow. These differences enrich the world, when comparison creates pressure and weakens self-esteem. Encouragement builds, and comparison destroys. When relatives ask why one cousin scored high-

er than another, they plant seeds of shame that can grow into much larger problems. Families should replace scorecard conversations with questions about growth, curiosity, and well-being. History supplies ample proof that early setbacks precede great achievement. Doctors, scientists, civil servants, entrepreneurs, and artists have all walked through failure before reaching their goals. A low score on one examination opens space to reassess, improve, and advance with sharper clarity. The setback functions as a pivot, a redirection. Many successful professionals took one entrance, found a different path, and discovered a calling that suited them better. Their stories rarely make headlines, but they form the real backbone of a functioning society. The day after NEET results should unite students rather than divide them into two camps. All of them invested years of effort, sacrifice, and hope. And all of them sat through an examination that filters candidates through a sieve with holes far too small. A compassionate society applauds toppers and stands beside those who need hope most. Let this day be remembered for the kindness, encouragement, and humanity we chose to show. The white coat is honourable, but the outstretched hand saves more lives.

The author is the founder of the Students' Guide Organisation for Educational Advancement, and can be reached at adnanbatccc342@gmail.com.

Kashmir Is Not a Dustbin With a View

Checkpoints, fines, and armed enforcement have become the price of entry to valleys Kashmiris once trusted themselves to protect.



Dr. Rizwan Rumi

Summer sends thousands of us toward the mountains, chasing the same image the tourism brochures sell us: the stillness of Gurez, the green folds of Warwan, the high lakes on the Great Lakes circuit, and the hidden meadows of Daksum. Cameras come out, and captions gush about a love of nature that seems, on the surface, genuine. Then the tents come down, and the truth of the visit stays behind, including plastic bottles, foil scraps, styrofoam plates, half-burnt wrappers, and polythene bags scattered through grass that took years to establish. Within hours of being photographed as paradise, the same meadow becomes a dumping ground. Beyond an aesthetic complaint, this is an ecological one, and the numbers back it up. Recent field data from environmental tracking groups show that alpine lakes are absorbing the worst of an unmanaged tourist surge, with the Great Lakes circuit registering trekker volumes that overwhelm what these high-altitude zones can hold. Cleanliness drives along the Harmukh range have pulled dozens of gunny bags stuffed with plastic out of the ground sur-

rounding Gangabal and Nandkol lakes. These bags were filled by people who called themselves nature lovers days earlier. Altitude makes the damage far worse. Above 11,000 feet, sunlight is thin and winter temperatures fall well below freezing, so the biological processes that would normally break down waste barely function. A wet wipe or a cigarette butt left near a glacier can stay intact for centuries, leaching microplastics and chemical additives into permafrost that has held steady for far longer than human memory. Dense clusters of dark synthetic trash also change how much sunlight the ground absorbs versus reflects, adding thermal stress to glaciers already melting under a warming climate. Litter, in other words, does not sit passively on a mountainside. It works on the mountain. Then there is the water. Snowmelt from these same alpine zones feeds the Kishanganga, the Lidder, and the Sindh, rivers that irrigate fields and fill taps for millions of people downstream. Trash left at 12,000 feet becomes the toxicity found in drinking water at sea level. The connection between a discarded bottle on a ridge and contaminated groundwater in a city home is direct, measurable, and entirely our doing. Here is what makes the crisis so hard to excuse: ignorance is not the problem. Kashmiris are literate, digitally connected, and politically engaged. We know plastic chokes wildlife, degrades topsoil, and threatens the scenic appeal that our tourism economy depends on. We toss wrappers under centuries-old pine trees anyway, and hurl bottles from moving vehicles, comforting ourselves with the fiction that cleanup is somebody else's job. Wild animals do not poison their own water sources. Only people do that, and only when they have decided that



convenience outweighs consequence. Blaming poor government infrastructure is a dodge. No official hiked a plastic bottle into a roadless Gurez meadow and threw it into the wildflowers. We did that ourselves. The absence of trash cans in the wilderness is not the root failure. Our refusal to haul our own waste back out is. And because self-regulation failed, the state has stepped in with force. District authorities have banned single-use plastics throughout key eco-tourism zones, including Gurez. Checkpoints now operate at Tragbal and Pethkoot, where enforce-

ment teams search vehicles for banned plastics, and on-the-spot fines await anyone caught littering. These measures work, and they are necessary. They are also an indictment. A society that needs police checkpoints and monetary penalties to keep its own homeland clean has a civic problem no fine can fully fix. Real change means walking into these valleys with a different mindset entirely. Ditch single-use plastic bottles for reusable steel or copper flasks, paired with gravity filters or purification tablets. Dedicate a waterproof section of your pack solely to trash, and bring back all of it, including wrappers, wet wipes, foil, and tins, for proper disposal in the city. Call out littering when you see it, politely but immediately. Peer pressure changes behaviour faster than any government signpost does. Make it a personal rule to pick up several pieces of somebody else's plastic on any trail you walk. The mountains will outlast us regardless of how we behave. What will not outlast careless tourism is their capacity to sustain the people who depend on them for water, income, and the sense of identity Kashmiris attach to this land. The next generation stands to inherit faded plastic, contaminated soil, and drying streams instead of the paradise we claim to cherish. Tourism without environmental restraint is destruction, only slower. The choice sits with us now, before the mountains stop forgiving it.

The author is a Srinagar-based academic and commentator. He can be reached at rizwanrumi2012@gmail.com.

The Man Making Waves for Kashmir Lakes

A young ecotourism campaigner is betting that Kashmir's lakes can only be saved the way they were lost, through small, stubborn, everyday acts of care.



Syed Sammar Mehdi

The July sun beat down on the ghat as a young man in a white kurta and black waistcoat set out to rally a community around a lake he refused to give up on.

Sameer Baktoo had come to win over boatmen who had heard promises before, and he had chosen the toughest hour of the day to do it.

Around him, the sunbanned water tribe rested in narrow strips of shade, escaping the afternoon heat, their oars lying beside them.

But Baktoo had other plans.

He greeted the men as one of their own, delivering a pep talk on "fixing responsibility", and urging them to care for the lake that had sustained their families for generations.

"The lake can't nap while we do," he said.

The line drew smiles, and one by one, the boatmen rose, reached for their oars and stepped into their boats.

The ghat came alive again, and with it Baktoo's belief that Kashmir's lakes will recover only when the people who depend on them decide they are worth fighting for.

Behind him stood his corps, a small but determined band of volunteers from the Ecotourism Association of Kashmir, the Rotary Club of Kashmir, J&K Eco Watch, and Matrix Events & Productions, all gathered for Friday's sanitization drive on Nigeen.

Gloves went on, sacks were counted, and boats pushed off from the bank toward a lake where encroachment had squeezed the shoreline and polluted drains had clouded the water over the years.

Baktoo heads the Ecotourism Association of Kashmir, and he has trained himself to notice what others sail past.

While natives and visitors look at Nigeen and see a postcard, he sees plastic tangled in the reeds, drains carrying wastewater into the lake, and a water body struggling beneath its beauty.

That contrast has turned him into one of Kashmir's most vocal advocates for community-led conservation, urging residents to treat their lakes as a shared responsibility rather than someone else's problem.

"We alone cannot clean our lakes and water bodies," he told the volunteers as they checked their gloves one last time. "The water quality of our lakes, waterways and connecting water bodies is deteriorating, and all of us need to become more conscious and responsible toward protecting these natural assets."

It was a simple sentence, though it carried the whole afternoon on its back.

The boats eased into the water, oars slicing through a surface that shimmered like hammered silver under the sun.

A local lawmaker who grew up on the shores of the lake joined the flotilla soon after, greeting members of the boatmen community before stepping into his own boat.

"I stand with the people of the water," Tanvir Sadiq said.

Boatmen acknowledged him with nods, while families waved from huts and houseboats, with children racing along the shoreline, trying to keep pace with the boats gliding across the lake.

From far away, Nigeen still looked like the picture on every tourism poster. But up close, the story changed completely.

Plastic bottles bobbed between patches of weed, and the water near the drains ran dark and cloudy, a stubborn stain on an otherwise beautiful canvas.

A boatman, part of the stakeholder delegation, pointed toward one such drain as his boat drifted past it. "The lake still shines," he said. "Inside, it is struggling."

He kept going, unwilling to let the moment pass silently. "We have stayed with symbolic programmes for too long," he said. "The real damage comes through the drains. One enters from the G.D. Goenka side. Another comes from Saderbal. Others bring untreated wastewater into the lake. Cleaning plastic helps, though sewage treatment decides



HIS GOAL SAILS WELL PAST PICKING UP LITTER ALONG ONE SHORELINE. He wants residents, officials, tourism operators, and environmental groups to treat their lakes the way a family treats a shared home, with everybody pitching in rather than waiting for someone else to sweep the floor.

whether these waters recover."

The boat sat in silence for a moment, everyone letting the words settle like sediment. Baktoo had heard this kind of criticism many times while planning the day, and he takes it on the chin rather than brushing it aside.

His answer always paddles back to the same shore.

"We have to move beyond disappointment," he said as the boats pressed toward Pokhribal. "People know the problems. They know who holds responsibility. Community participation has to become part of the answer because this future belongs to everyone."

That word, responsibility, skipped from boat to boat like a stone thrown across still water.

Residents said it, so did volunteers, but an elderly man who has spent his whole life beside Nigeen said it loudest, asking why people wait around for government trucks

before lifting a single scrap of trash themselves.

"Families living here earn their livelihood from this lake," he said. "People can organise themselves and clean these banks regularly with support from authorities. That produces better results."

God helps those who help themselves, the old saying goes, and on this water, it seemed the lake was asking for exactly that type of faith.

As the boats moved through the residential stretches, the mood shifted from environmental talk to everyday grievances.

Residents called out to Sadiq from wooden platforms, raising complaints about broken pipelines and clogged drains. The lawmaker listened patiently and promised that officials would look into the pending issues soon, mentioning that development projects worth several crores had already been approved, with technical teams set to visit

shortly.

He spoke about restoring Kashmir lakes through steady teamwork with community groups and confirmed that more cleanup drives would follow in partnership with the Ecotourism Association.

By the time the boats reached Pokhribal, the talking gave way to working.

Volunteers hopped onto the bank with gloves and sacks, scooping up plastic bottles, food wrappers, and broken household junk until their bags bulged at the seams.

Dr. Touseef Bhatt of the Rotary Club called environmental protection a shared duty and pledged his organization's continued backing.

Environmental lawyer Nadeem Qadri pushed the point further, arguing that stronger enforcement of environmental laws, paired with genuine cooperation between government bodies and local communities, will decide whether Kashmir's

water bodies survive the coming decades.

Houseboat Owners Association president Manzoor Pakhtoon rolled up his sleeves and joined the volunteers himself, a small but telling gesture from a man whose livelihood floats directly on this water.

Before the day wrapped up, Sadiq made one more announcement, promising Constituency Development Funds for a fire service station near Nigeen, a long-standing demand from the houseboat community. He walked the proposed site himself and called emergency infrastructure an important piece of the puzzle for residents living so close to the water.

Steaming cups of kahwa made their rounds once the work was done, and tired volunteers sat on their boats swapping stories about the day.

Baktoo spoke about what comes next, more awareness drives, more community pushes, all aimed at nursing Kashmir's lakes and wetlands back to health.

His goal sails well past picking up litter along one shoreline. He wants residents, officials, tourism operators, and environmental groups to treat their lakes the way a family treats a shared home, with everybody pitching in rather than waiting for someone else to sweep the floor.

"Large environmental recoveries begin with small public actions," he said, watching the last volunteers pack up their gear.

The sun was dipping low by the time the boats circled back to the same ghat where the boatmen had first been coaxed out of their siesta.

One stretch of shoreline looked cleaner than it had that afternoon. The drains, though, kept flowing exactly as before, and the bigger challenge stayed put, waiting patiently for tomorrow.

Baktoo looked out at the water one last time before heading home. He knows a single afternoon cannot save Nigeen Lake, and he makes no pretense otherwise.

He simply believes, the way a boatman believes in his oar, that communities win their lakes back the same slow way they lost them.

— The author is a trainee journalist at Kashmir Observer.

What Hirpora Taught Me About Saving Kashmir

A visit to Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary revealed that Kashmir's environmental future will depend on everyday choices that respect nature's ecological limits.



Dr. Mubashir Jeelani

The road to Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary challenged many assumptions I had long held about Kashmir's forests and forced me to confront a difficult question: why do our landscapes seem healthiest only when human pressure eases?

That question accompanied me throughout a recent visit to Hirpora in Shopian with my college students.

I had gone expecting fresh mountain air, healthy streams and forests rich with life. Memory also played its part because I knew the sanctuary through earlier visits and years of studying environmental science.

Comparison came naturally, and the contrast felt impossible to ignore.

Hirpora still possesses immense beauty, although signs of ecological strain have become increasingly visible.

The COVID-19 lockdowns remain one of the clearest environmental lessons of recent history. Rivers cleared, air pollution fell, wildlife reclaimed spaces usually dominated by people and ecosystems responded with surprising speed. Many people described that period as nature healing itself.

My visit to Hirpora persuaded me that

something deeper had happened.

Reduced human pressure gave natural systems room to recover. That lesson still stands today, years after the lockdowns ended.

Hirpora shows that recovery does not depend on crises. Forests, streams and wildlife respond when human choices become more thoughtful.

Environmental protection grows through restraint, awareness and long-term commitment rather than temporary breaks forced by extraordinary events.

Walking through the sanctuary, I found myself comparing its present condition with both its past and the crowded urban environment where most of us now spend our lives. That comparison produced an uncomfortable conclusion.

Parts of this landscape have shifted from rich natural ecosystems toward increasingly degraded conditions, and the transition continues unless people change course.

My imagination filled many gaps that the landscape itself could no longer fill.

Hirpora once supported thriving populations of markhor, deer, ibex, vultures, monkeys and countless bird species. Those animals remain associated with this landscape, although the richness I expected seemed far less visible during my visit.

Stepping off the bus, I sensed a place still alive but carrying visible signs of prolonged human pressure.

Streams especially caught my attention.

Mountain brooks that should sparkle with remarkable clarity appeared murky in several places. Exhaust fumes drifted through valleys where clean mountain air should dominate. Trees stood along the roadside almost like silent witnesses to gradual ecological decline.



Hirpora once supported thriving populations of markhor, deer, ibex, vultures, monkeys and countless bird species. Those animals remain associated with this landscape, although the richness I expected seemed far less visible during my visit.

None of these observations existed in isolation. Together they formed a picture of an ecosystem absorbing years of cumulative disturbance.

Small details often reveal the biggest environmental truths. Fallen logs once fascinated me during my university years because my teachers explained how they supported insects, fungi and countless microscopic forms of life that sustain entire forest food chains.

During this visit I searched beneath similar logs and found very little activity. Missing insects may seem insignificant to casual visitors. Ecologists understand

that such changes often signal deeper ecological stress.

The mountains themselves also appeared different.

Soil that once felt moist underfoot seemed considerably drier. Snow remained largely absent from the foothills, appearing only around Pir Ki Gali and even there without the permanence earlier generations associated with these elevations.

Rising temperatures continue to alter Himalayan landscapes, and Hirpora appears to be experiencing those shifts alongside the rest of Kashmir.

Human activity remained visible throughout the journey.

Small trucks transported livestock while nomadic communities moved their herds toward Shopian. Mountain slopes displayed fresh scars from landslides. Dense green corridors that I expected beside the highway appeared thinner than memory suggested.

These sights reveal an ecosystem under growing pressure from climate change, expanding infrastructure and tourism.

Hirpora made one truth impossible to ignore: lasting prosperity depends on living within ecological limits.

Responsible tourism provides one practical starting point.

Sensitive landscapes benefit when visitor numbers remain manageable, waste receives proper treatment and wildlife habitats remain free from unnecessary disturbance.

Controlled use of natural resources, stronger environmental education and conservation-centred public policy also strengthen ecological health while supporting local livelihoods.

Evidence from elsewhere supports the same conclusion.

The Aral Sea once ranked among the world's largest inland lakes, supporting biodiversity, moderating climate and sustaining thriving fishing communities. Large-scale diversion of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers for irrigation transformed that ecosystem into one associated with disease, economic hardship and environmental instability. Human decisions altered nature, and nature returned those consequences to human society.

Kashmir offers similar examples much closer to home.

Dal Lake once stood as a flourishing freshwater ecosystem before years of

pollution and uncontrolled development undermined its ecological balance. Restoration efforts continue today because communities and governments recognise that environmental decline eventually affects public health, local economies and daily life.

Dachigam National Park tells another chapter of the same story.

Dense forests, clean streams and healthy populations of Hangul once sustained ecological balance around Srinagar. Human pressure gradually weakened that balance, contributing to growing concerns about water availability and climatic shifts that now influence the wider region.

Fortunately, environmental history also contains encouraging stories.

Community-led plantation drives around Hirpora, catchment treatment programmes in the Dachigam landscape, restoration work within Dal Lake and government social forestry initiatives demonstrate that damaged ecosystems respond positively when people invest sustained effort and scientific planning.

Hirpora finally taught me something simple.

Human choices produced much of the environmental decline visible today. Human choices can also restore these landscapes.

Nature asks for thoughtful companionship rather than complete human absence.

That lesson feels far more powerful than any temporary environmental reset created by a global pandemic because it places responsibility exactly where it belongs, with all of us.

— The author is an environmentalist and Associate Professor in the J&K's Higher Education Department. He can be reached at envfriend@gmail.com.

Bomb Squad, Forensic Teams Probe Amarnath Pilgrim Bus Fire

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A bomb disposal squad and the district forensic mobile unit on Friday collected samples from the passenger bus that caught fire on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway in Ramban district, as police launched a detailed investigation into the cause of the incident, officials said.

The BDS and forensic teams, equipped with technical equipments, reached the site near Karool and carried out a

thorough examination of the gutted vehicle, they said.

The teams screened the wheels, front portion and interior of the fire-damaged bus and collected various samples for forensic analysis to determine the exact cause of the blaze, officials said.

All possible angles are being examined and the investigation is in progress, they said.

The sleeper bus, carrying Amarnath pilgrims from Rajasthan, was travelling from Srinagar to Jammu after the

devotees had offered prayers at the holy cave shrine when it caught fire near Karool in Ramban district on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway on Thursday.

Officials said passengers noticed smoke after one of the bus tyres reportedly burst and quickly got off the vehicle before it was engulfed in flames.

Police, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Army personnel, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Fire and Emergency Services and volunteers of the

Civil Quick Response Team (QRT) rushed to the spot and launched rescue and firefighting operations.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Aiyas Khan had said all 47 occupants, including the driver and conductor, escaped unhurt. The fire completely gutted the bus. While preliminary information suggested the blaze broke out after a tyre burst, the exact cause is yet to be established, pending the outcome of the forensic examination and police investigation.

'3 Idiots' Not Based On Sonam Wangchuk: Aamir Khan

Agencies

New Delhi: Bollywood star Aamir Khan said his character in the film "3 Idiots" was not based on Sonam Wangchuk, calling it a "misconception" and expressed concern over the activist's hunger strike.

Khan attended the Q&A session at the London Indian Film Festival, where he was asked by a reporter to address Wangchuk's protest. The video has been circulating on the internet.

"3 Idiots" was directed by

Rajkumar Hirani and released in 2009. It featured the actor in the role of Phunsukh Wangdu (Rancho). Khan said during the making of the film neither he nor the writers of the film knew about Wangchuk.

"No, that's not true actually. That is a misconception. I didn't know about Mr Sonam at that time when we were doing this film '3 Idiots'... I want to tell you neither Raju nor Abhijat, the writers of the film, nor I. We didn't know about

Mr Sonam. However, what Mr Sonam is doing is good work in any case. He doesn't have to be based on the character of '3 Idiots' for us to respect him and the work that he does," he said.

The news about Wangchuk came to the spotlight on Tuesday, after Omi Vaidya, who also featured in the film, shared the video on his X handle, claiming Khan's character in the film was based on the activist and urged people to draw their attention to his deteriorating health.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

US Opens New

Provincial authorities said seven people were killed and nine others injured in the bridge attacks.

Another strike hit the Allah Akbar Hill residential neighbourhood in Bandar Abbas, killing one person and injuring eight others.

A railway branch station in Bandar Abbas was also struck shortly after midnight, injuring two people and disrupting rail operations.

The attacks appeared designed to isolate Bandar Abbas—Iran's principal commercial port—from the country's central transport network, potentially disrupting both military logistics and civilian supply chains.

The United States also destroyed the maritime control tower at Shahid Kalantari Port in Chabahar, Iran's only deep-water port with direct access to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The control tower collapsed after being struck for the third time, Iranian officials said.

While cargo berths and port infrastructure remained largely intact, authorities acknowledged the attack temporarily disrupted operations before emergency teams began restoring services.

Chabahar has become strategically vital since Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz and Washington reimposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports. It also serves as a key trade gateway for Afghanistan and Central Asia and has been developed with significant Indian investment.

With temperatures nearing 50 degrees Celsius across southern Iran, the country's Energy Ministry appealed to citizens to reduce electricity consumption, acknowledging that American strikes had damaged power facilities and placed additional strain on the national grid.

"These areas are currently experiencing extreme heat and attacks on power infrastructure," the ministry said.

Fresh attacks were also reported in Bushehr, where Governor Mohammad Mozaffari said one person was injured in two separate strikes.

In Khuzestan Province, Iranian officials said areas around Ahvaz again came under attack.

The latest strikes followed an earlier US attack near Shahid Baqaei Cancer Hospital in Ahvaz that forced the emergency evacuation of 211 children undergoing chemotherapy, an incident Tehran condemned as a "cowardly war crime".

Iran said the bombardment rekindled memories of the US attack on an elementary school in Minab during the opening days of the conflict that left 168 children dead.

As explosions rocked southern Iran, air raid sirens sounded across the Gulf.

Qatari authorities urged residents to seek shelter after Iranian missiles targeted Al Udeid Air Base, the largest American military installation in the region.

Explosions echoed over Doha as air defence systems intercepted incoming missiles.

Iran also launched fresh missile and drone attacks against US military facilities in Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria and Oman.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said its latest operations targeted American offensive infrastructure across the region and warned that subsequent phases would be even more severe.

"The enemy should not assume that it can sustain the current dynamics of the battlefield and turn the war into a war of attrition," the IRGC said.

Iranian military spokesman Col. Ebrahim Zolfagari warned that if Washington acted on President Donald Trump's repeated threats to strike Iran's civilian infrastructure, Tehran would retaliate by targeting infrastructure across the region.

"If the recent empty threats by the US president to target the infrastructure of the Islamic Republic are carried out, then everything that, due to Iran's restraint, has so far remained intact throughout the region will be smashed under the iron blows of the powerful armed forces of the Islamic Republic," he said.

"Under no circumstances and in no way will we allow America, as a foreign and extra-regional country, to interfere in the Strait of Hormuz. This is Iran's invincible red line," he added.

Trump, defending the military campaign in a televised address, insisted Washington was making decisive gains.

"We are likewise winning big in Iran, and you will see the fruits of that labor very, very shortly," he said.

The latest escalation comes after the collapse of an interim ceasefire reached last month following weeks of fighting.

Ensure Safety

ensure transparency and prevent overcharging.

Emphasising environmental conservation, Sinha asked officials to intensify cleanliness drives along both pilgrimage routes and at all camps.

"We are dedicated to a waste-free Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra and we must, working together under a whole-of-government approach, fulfill this commitment," he said, while directing all departments to ensure that the environment remains fully protected.

With heavy rainfall forecast over the coming days, Sinha instructed the administration and all stakeholder agencies to strengthen contingency measures and remain fully prepared to safeguard pilgrims under all circumstances. He also ordered that every tent at the base camp be equipped with a fire extinguisher as a mandatory safety measure.

During the visit, the Lieutenant Governor interacted with pilgrims, who expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and appreciated the cleanliness, sanitation, accommodation, security and support provided by officials and personnel engaged in yatra duties.

He said the expansion of infrastructure and pilgrim facilities over the past few years had significantly improved the pilgrimage experience, while emphasising that every devotee should be able to access these facilities without any inconvenience.

Sinha also met shopkeepers, service providers, langar sevadars and volunteers, appreciating their contribution to the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

Speaking to mediapersons, the Lieutenant Governor said the coordinated efforts of the Jammu and Kashmir administration, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, police, Army, security forces and other stakeholders had considerably strengthened arrangements for this year's yatra.

He said the pilgrimage continued to provide a significant boost to Jammu and Kashmir's economy, adding that many devotees were purchasing local handloom and handicraft products following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to support local artisans.

"In the days to come, this pilgrimage will be remembered as a truly memorable and historic one," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by Inspector General of Police (Kashmir) V.K. Birdi, IGP Traffic M. Suleman Choudhary, IGP Security Sujit Kumar Singh, Nodal Officer for Pahalgam Axis Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg, DIG South Kashmir Range Javid Iqbal Matoo, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, SSP Anantnag Amod Nagpure Ashok, DG Rural Sanitation Anoo Malhotra, and senior officers of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, civil administration, police and security forces.

Srinagar Records

, Katra 31.8 degrees Celsius and Banihal 30.8 degrees Celsius.

Among the tourist destinations, Pahalgam recorded a comparatively pleasant 27.4 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg registered 25.6 degrees Celsius.

The Met Department said hot and humid weather is likely to persist on Saturday, although brief thundershowers are expected at scattered places.

From July 19, weather conditions are expected to undergo a significant change, with rain and thundershowers likely at many places across Jammu and Kashmir. Heavy rainfall accompanied by brief but intense showers has been forecast at isolated locations in the Jammu division.

The wet spell is expected to intensify between July 20 and 22, when widespread rain and thundershowers are likely across the Union Territory. The department has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places in the Jammu division, while some districts in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions could witness intense showers and torrential rain.

Rain activity is likely to continue at many places on July 23 before gradually reducing to isolated spells on July 24 and 25.

The weather department has warned of flash floods, landslides and mudslides in vulnerable areas during July 20-22. It also cautioned that heavy rainfall could cause a significant rise in water levels in rivers and streams, leading to waterlogging and minor flooding in low-lying areas.

Farmers have been advised to suspend agricultural operations during the period of heavy rainfall, while residents and government agencies have been urged to remain alert and take necessary precautions in view of the forecast.

J&K's NEET Stars

more than 690 marks, placing himself among only 138 candidates nationwide to cross the 690-mark mark. Zaara Mushtaq Katoo from Harnag in Anantnag district also excelled, securing 610 marks in the examination.

Speaking after the results, Zaara said staying away from distractions, especially social media, played a key role in her preparation.

"My advice to every NEET aspirant is simple. Delete social media applications from your phone and focus completely on your studies. Social media consumes valuable time and

distracts students from their goals. Consistency, discipline and hard work are the real keys to success," she said.

She also encouraged students who could not qualify this year to persevere.

"Failure is never the end. Those who haven't cleared NEET this year should not lose hope. Work harder, remain consistent and determined. With sincere efforts and patience, every goal can be achieved," she said.

Hadiya credited her success to disciplined preparation and the unwavering support of her parents and teachers.

"This achievement belongs not only to me but also to my parents and teachers who stood by me throughout the journey. I remained focused on my studies and believed in consistent hard work rather than shortcuts," she said.

She advised aspirants not to compare themselves with others.

"Every student's journey is different. Stay focused, trust your preparation and never allow temporary setbacks to weaken your confidence," Hadiya said.

Her parents, Nisar Ahmed and Zubia, described the result as one of the proudest moments of their lives and urged parents to support children according to their abilities rather than burdening them with unrealistic expectations.

"Parents should first understand the potential, interests and capabilities of their children before putting any pressure on them. Encouragement is far more important than unnecessary pressure," they said.

Zaidan, who figured among the country's top performers, urged aspirants to remain determined despite setbacks.

"Don't get disheartened because of one result. Continue working hard and keep faith in yourself. If Allah is with you, nothing can stop you. There are countless opportunities in life, and success comes to those who remain determined and never give up," he said.

While the top ranks reflected the growing academic standards in the Union Territory, some of the most inspiring stories emerged from students who overcame financial hardship to realise their dream of becoming doctors.

Among them is Mehran Amin from Batagund village in Verinag, Anantnag, son of a daily-wage labourer, who secured 610 marks and AIR 7,000 despite severe financial constraints.

Speaking to the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Mehran said difficult circumstances should never become a reason to abandon one's goals.

"There are many difficult phases in life and sometimes circumstances are not in your favour. But if you remain patient, stay focused and continue working hard, success will eventually come. Consistency is the key to achieving any goal," he said.

Mehran said his ambition to become a doctor was driven by a desire to serve people who struggle to access quality healthcare.

"Being a doctor is not only about earning a livelihood. It is about helping people, especially those who cannot afford proper healthcare. That is what motivates me," he said.

Another inspiring achiever, Shariq Muzaffar from Manihial village in Shopian, also the son of a daily-wage labourer, secured 601 marks after succeeding in his second attempt.

Recalling his journey, Shariq said he was an average student until Class 10 before deciding to work seriously towards his goal.

"I could not clear NEET in my first attempt, but instead of giving up, I learnt from my mistakes, took a drop year, worked even harder and finally succeeded in my second attempt," he said.

JPC Defers Adoption

Sarang said.

The Joint Committee on the 130th Amendment Bill had made five recommendations in its draft report, which was circulated to members recently.

On Friday, when the committee was voting on each of the recommendations separately, it was decided that more consultations with stakeholders and discussions amongst members were required.

AJIMM leader Asaduddin Owaisi and NCP (Sharad Pawar) MP Supriya Sule had submitted their dissent notes but withdrew them after the panel decided to defer the adoption.

"The joint parliamentary committee unanimously said that we needed more consultations with stakeholders," Sarangi said.

Will Stay Alive

and July 20 is not successful, I will come back as a ghost," he added in a lighter vein, drawing cheers from the gathering.

The BJP's protest at Jantar Mantar entered its 28th day on Friday, while Wangchuk's indefinite hunger strike reached its 20th day.

On Thursday, doctors attending to Wangchuk warned that his prolonged fast had entered a critical stage and that continuing the hunger strike could lead to serious complications, including organ damage.

Despite the medical warning, Wangchuk

refused to end the fast, saying that doing so without any response from the government would send the wrong message. He instead appealed to supporters to focus on making the July 20 march to Parliament a success.

The issue has also reached the Delhi High Court, which has directed authorities to monitor Wangchuk's health on a daily basis and ensure he receives medical assistance if his condition deteriorates.

Meanwhile, the All India Students' Association (AISA), affiliated with the CPI(M/L) Liberation, said the health of its members Neha, Manish and Aameen, who are also on an indefinite hunger strike at a separate stage at the protest site, had reached severe levels.

In a statement, AISA said Aameen was at risk of hypovolemic shock due to dehydration, Neha's random blood sugar level had dropped to a dangerous 49 mg/dL, and Manish had lost more than 10 per cent of his body weight.

"However, students are determined to remain in solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk until the government faces its crimes," the organisation said.

The BJP is demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and 1 crore compensation for the families of students who allegedly died by suicide over alleged examination irregularities.

The organisation has called for a peaceful march to Parliament on July 20, coinciding with the opening day of the Monsoon Session.

The BJP launched its protest on June 20, while Wangchuk joined the agitation on June 28 and has remained on an indefinite hunger strike since.

Plastic Waste Mounts

lesser-known tourist destinations, where a surge in visitor numbers is increasingly colliding with fragile ecosystems and inadequate waste management.

Driven by soaring temperatures across the plains, tourists are venturing beyond Kashmir's traditional hotspots, seeking quieter landscapes in places such as Gurez, Tulail, Keran, Uri, Surinder Valley and Sonamarg. While the influx has opened new economic opportunities for local communities, it has also left behind an unwelcome trail of plastic bottles, food wrappers and other non-biodegradable waste.

In Gurez, where the Kishanganga River winds through alpine meadows and mountain villages, residents say the beauty drawing visitors is slowly being overshadowed by the garbage they leave behind.

"Many tourists leave their garbage at campsites or scenic spots instead of disposing of it properly. Either they should carry it back or hand it over to local hosts for safe disposal," said Mumtaz Ahmad, a homestay owner in Gurez.

Locals say the absence of a structured waste collection and disposal system has only compounded the problem, with litter finding its way into streams, rivers and nearby habitations.

Similar concerns are emerging from Surinder Valley in Bandipora district, another destination that has grown in popularity during the summer season.

"The beauty of this place is attracting more tourists, but many are leaving behind plastic waste. If this continues, it will damage the environment that people come here to enjoy," said local resident Aqib Najar.

Visitors, too, have pointed to the lack of basic facilities, including dustbins and signboards encouraging responsible waste disposal, making it difficult to manage waste even for those willing to do so responsibly.

Environmentalists warn that tourism infrastructure has failed to keep pace with the rapid increase in tourist footfall.

"The administration and the public need to work together. Sustainable waste management and responsible tourism are essential to protect these ecologically sensitive destinations," environmental activist Shakir Ahmad said.

Officials say efforts are underway in coordination with local bodies to develop sustainable waste management systems aimed at preserving the ecological balance of these emerging tourist destinations. However, residents argue that visible improvements on the ground cannot come soon enough.

The challenge was evident at Haijan Brenwar Valley in Budgam, where the Forest Department, in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir ECO Watch, the Tehsil Legal Services Committee Chadoora, the Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Forum and several local organisations, organised a large-scale cleanliness drive on Friday.

Forest officials, volunteers, members of civil society organisations and local residents joined hands to remove heaps of non-biodegradable waste scattered across different parts of the valley.

Range Officer Rameez Raja said the Forest Department would introduce strict anti-polythene measures, including checkpoints, to discourage the use of plastic and promote Haijan Brenwar as a "Zero Waste" tourism destination.

"Haijan Brenwar belongs to all of us, and it is our collective responsibility to keep it clean and protect its natural beauty," Raja said.

He also appealed to horse riders and temporary shopkeepers operating in the area to ensure proper waste disposal and educate visitors about maintaining cleanliness.

Block Forester Jehangir Ahmad stressed that protecting forests from pollution requires collective responsibility and urged all stakeholders to support conservation efforts.

District Nodal Officer of J&K ECO Watch, Syed Farhat, welcomed the Forest Department's initiative and praised officials for taking concrete steps to safeguard the valley's fragile ecosystem.

The Long Road

had said.

The news shattered the family.

"Amjad has not called me since March 25. On March 26, his friend called to tell us what had happened. Our mother collapsed after hearing that her son was in a foreign jail," Shahida had recalled while speaking to the media during the initial weeks of his detention.

What was meant to be a joyful summer soon turned into months of anguish.

Amjad had been expected to return home in June to attend his sister's wedding. Instead, the family postponed the ceremony as they struggled to understand why he had been detained and how they could secure his release.

According to the family, eyewitnesses told them that Saudi Civil Defence officials had surrounded Amjad's accommodation, searched the premises and taken him away. In the days and weeks that followed, they said there was no official communication regarding his whereabouts, legal status or the charges against him.

"We don't know the charges against him. There is no word from Saudi officials. We don't know whether he is dead or alive," Shahida had said at the time.

Throughout the ordeal, the family maintained that Amjad had no criminal record either in India or Saudi Arabia.

Their uncertainty was compounded by the absence of any official explanation.

Following the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a joint US-Israeli operation in February 2026, Amjad had posted a photograph of Ayatollah Khamenei on his Facebook profile with the tribute: "Khamenei is not important, Islam is important."

His family believed the social media post may have led to his detention. However, Saudi authorities never publicly confirmed whether the Facebook post was linked to his arrest, nor did they disclose the reason for his detention or announce any formal charges.

As the weeks stretched into months, the family sought help wherever they could.

They approached the Ministry of External Affairs, wrote to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, sought assistance from the Indian Embassy in Riyadh and appealed to Jammu and Kashmir MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi for intervention.

The Indian Embassy informed the family that it was following up on the matter and would share any developments. But despite those assurances, no further official details emerged for weeks, leaving the family suspended between hope and despair.

Amjad's detention also drew attention because it echoed previous cases involving Kashmiri Shia expatriates in Saudi Arabia.

Among them is Javeed Ahmed Mir, another Kashmiri arrested in Dammam in 2020. According to his family, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison over alleged pro-Iran social media activity and remains incarcerated.

After spending four months in detention, Amjad was eventually released from the Dammam jail. The circumstances surrounding his release have not been made public, and Saudi authorities have not issued any official statement explaining the legal proceedings that led to his freedom.

His return has brought relief to a family whose lives had been consumed by uncertainty.

However, Kashmir Observer made repeated attempts to contact Amjad Ali Bhat and his family following his release. They declined to comment on the matter or share any details regarding his detention, release or return to Kashmir.

Amjad's return has brought an end to his family's agonising wait. But the circumstances surrounding his detention and release remain undisclosed, with neither Saudi authorities nor the family choosing to speak publicly about the episode.

HC Forms Panel

line with the increased number of judges.

Besides Justice Shahzad Azeem, the committee comprises the Registrar General, Registrar Vigilance, Registrar (IT), Registrar Judicial (Jammu/Srinagar), and the Central Project Coordinator (CPC), e-Courts, High Court of J&K and Ladakh.

GDA Warns Against Polythene Use at Drung, Stresses Conservation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) on Friday warned stakeholders at famous tourist destination Drung in Tangmarg against the use of polythene and plastic, stating that strict action will be taken against those violating the ban.

GDA Chief Executive Officer Tariq Hussain, as per KNO said that protecting the natural ecosystem of Drung is essential for sustaining tourism and the livelihoods of people dependent on the destination.

The CEO said the water body at Drung caters to several habitations and any form of pollution can have long term consequences for the environment and local communities.



He stressed the need for a sense of belongingness among residents, business operators

and visitors to ensure cleanliness of the tourist spot. "Drung serves as a source

of livelihood for many. Stakeholders must understand that protecting this place is directly

linked with protecting their own interests," Hussain said.

He warned that the administration will take tough measures against those found using polythene and plastic material despite repeated advisories.

"We urge everyone to stop using such material. Any violation will invite strict action. We have to work together to keep tourist destinations be it Gulmarg, Drung or any other clean and preserve its ecological importance," he added.

It is noteworthy that the GDA on Friday conducted a cleanliness drive at Drung, a popular tourist destination, where officials and stakeholders participated in efforts to improve sanitation and protect the local water body.

Govt Speeds Up PPP Policy to Attract Private Investment

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to deliberate upon the broad contours of the preliminary document of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Policy being formulated by the Planning, Development & Monitoring Department through the Centre for Innovation, Technology and Governance (CITaG), with the objective of creating an enabling ecosystem for attracting private investment and accelerating infrastructure and public service development across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, APD; ACS, Fi-



nance; ACS, PWD; Director, IIM-Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, PD&MD; Commissioner Secretary, H&UD; Commissioner Secretary, Industries; Secretary, Transport; Chief Executive Officer, CITaG; and other senior officers.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of building institutional capacity for successful implementation of the proposed policy. He stressed the

need for systematic capacity building of officers and officials at different levels so that they are adequately equipped to operationalise the policy in an effective and time-bound manner.

Emphasising the need for delivering tangible outcomes on the ground, Dulloo observed that the Government must lead by example in implementing the policy to instil confidence among investors as well as the general public. He directed the Industries Department to take lead in formulation of the policy by suitably refined it and incorporating the suggestions received during the meeting so that a comprehensive and well-structured policy document is finalised within the next month.

Jammu Court Rejects Bail of Accused in Assassination Bid on Dr Farooq

Observer News Service

JAMMU: A Jammu court on Friday rejected the bail plea of Kamal Singh Jamwal, accused in the alleged attempt-to-murder case involving former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference president Farooq Abdullah in March.

Denying the bail to 65-year-old Jamwal, Principal Sessions Judge Jammu R N Watal cited the gravity of the allegations, the larger public interest and the possibility of the offence being repeated.

Abdullah had a miraculous escape when Jamwal allegedly opened fire on him after coming from behind while he was leaving a marriage function at Royal Park Banquet Hall in the Greater



Kailash area of Jammu on March 11. A revolver used in the crime was recovered from the possession of the accused.

On March 14, Jammu and Kashmir police constituted a special investigation team under the supervision of a deputy inspector general of police to probe the case.

"Attack on public figure or Ex-CM Dr Farooq Abdullah is viewed not just as a crime against an individual but as an assault on public order and democratic stability. It carries a profound societal impact,

threatening public order and the rule of law," the judge said in his 20-page order.

As per PTI, the court said the investigators alleged that the accused fired a revolver at Abdullah from close range with the intention of killing him, but the shot missed its target.

Police subsequently registered the case, seized the alleged weapon along with five live and a fired cartridge case, and constituted a SIT to conduct a detailed probe.

Quoting the prosecution, the court said the investigation uncovered evidence suggesting the accused had harboured resentment against Abdullah for nearly two decades over the migration of Kashmiri Hindus and the loss of his family's property in the valley.

J&K Bank Pensioners Federation Charts Roadmap, Inducts New Office Bearers



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The All India J&K Bank Pensioners Welfare Federation on held its Central Committee meeting in Srinagar, during which it inducted new office bearers and Central Committee members following elections in its Jammu unit and the newly constituted Delhi and Rest of India unit.

The meeting, presided over by Federation President Iqbal Singh, welcomed the newly elected representatives from both units and discussed a range of issues concerning J&K Bank pensioners.

Addressing the gathering, the President and General Secretary highlighted the need for collective efforts to safeguard

the interests and welfare of pensioners while discussing the challenges faced by the community.

The Federation also outlined its future course of action, including pursuing pending demands with the concerned authorities, strengthening organisational unity, expanding membership and improving coordination among regional units. Members were urged to remain united and actively participate in the Federation's activities.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks and a reaffirmation of the Federation's commitment to protecting the welfare, dignity and legitimate rights of J&K Bank pensioners across the country.

Four Illegal Properties of Drug Peddlers Demolished in Khansahib

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The District Administration Budgam, in coordination with District Police Budgam, on Friday demolished several illegally constructed properties belonging to alleged drug peddlers in Khansahib sub-division as part of the ongoing anti-drug campaign under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyaan.

Officials told KNO that the demolition drive was carried out in the Parnewa and Arigam villages of Khansahib by teams of the Revenue Department and Jammu and Kashmir Police in the presence of the concerned revenue and police officials.

During the operation, authorities demolished four illegal properties, including four shops, a cowshed and a tile fac-

tory, allegedly constructed on encroached Khaicharai land by persons involved in NDPS-related cases.

The action, officials said, is part of the administration's sustained drive to dismantle illegal assets linked to drug peddling and curb the menace of narcotics in the district.

Officials added that the demolition drive sends a strong message that no leniency will be shown towards those involved in the drug trade, and that action against illegal assets linked to narcotics offences will continue.

The district administration reiterated its commitment to continue sustained action against drug peddlers and all illegal assets connected with narcotics-related activities to ensure a drug-free society.

Man Killed In Bhandarwah Firing; CBI Probe Demanded

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A 30-year-old man was killed and three Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel were injured during a firing incident following an alleged attempt to snatch a service rifle in the Jaie area of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, officials said.

The incident triggered widespread protests in Bhandarwah, with hundreds of people taking to the streets demanding a CBI probe into the killing, while the authorities suspended internet services in parts of the Chenab valley and stepped up security as a precautionary measure.

According to a senior police officer, an SOG team had laid an ambush along the Jaie-Gandoh road, about 35 km from Bhandarwah town, following reports of suspicious movement in the high-altitude area.

At around 11.30 pm on Thursday, the SOG party intercepted a youth who allegedly attacked the personnel and attempted to snatch a service rifle, the officer said.

"During the ensuing scuffle, an SOG personnel opened fire. The youth sustained bullet injuries, while three police personnel were also injured in the incident," the officer said.

The injured were initially taken to the Sub-District Hospital, Bhandarwah, and later shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC), Doda, where the youth suc-

cumbed to his injuries.

The deceased was identified as Aarif Hussain (30), son of Mohammad Iqbal, a resident of Cheeka village in Bhandarwah.

Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Doda, Dr Tanvir Ahmad, said three persons were brought to the hospital around 3 am.

"One patient was brought dead. A medical board conducted the post-mortem and samples have been sent to the forensic laboratory in Jammu. The other two patients have minor injuries to the face, head and back and are stable. One of the patients, aged around 35 years, had a gunshot injury," he said.

The incident sparked protests in Bhandarwah, where hundreds of people after shutting down markets and business establishments, marched through the town, raising slogans demanding justice and alleging that the deceased had been murdered.

The protesters sought a fair, transparent and independent investigation into the incident, with many demanding that the probe be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The victim's pregnant wife, accompanied by their four-year-old child, joined the protesters and appealed for justice. One the kins said that no law allows police to fire at a civilian. "If he had committed any offence, he should have been arrested," he said.

A relative of the deceased alleged that Aarif was murdered

and demanded an immediate CBI inquiry, saying the family would continue its protest until an independent investigation was ordered.

"Our brother was killed last night. He was murdered. We received a call from the hospital this morning informing us that he had died. He was shot dead. He was murdered. We staged a protest here and demanded that the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda and the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Doda should come here and listen to us, but they did not come. Instead, they keep sending subordinate officials, the same people who come every time", he said.

He said that now they are saying they will give him a government job. "What job did he get before his death? Who had given him a job then? And now they are saying they will give him one? We will not end this protest until an immediate CBI inquiry is ordered. For us, the role of the police is over. We want CBI probe to give us justice", he said.

Authorities suspended internet services in Doda, Bhandarwah, Bhalesha and Thatri as a precautionary measure. Additional deployments of the CRPF and police were made in Bhandarwah town, while the Army launched a search operation in the Jaie area.

Officials said one religious preacher was also detained as a precautionary measure, and the situation remained under close watch. Further investigation into the incident is underway.

CBI Arrests PWD Engineer for Accepting Bribe

JAMMU: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday said it has arrested a Jammu and Kashmir Public Works Department (PWD) assistant engineer after allegedly catching him red-handed while accepting a Rs 30,000 bribe to process compensation for a house damaged during a PMGSY road project in Doda.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a spokesperson said the accused assistant engineer was posted with the PWD for the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The spokesperson said the CBI registered the case on July 16, 2026, following a complaint alleging that the complainant's house was damaged during the execution of the PMGSY road project connecting Thathri and Kathawa in Doda district, making the complainant eligible for compensation of around Rs 10 lakh.

He said the accused allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 50,000 for processing and releasing the compensation amount. After negotiations, the accused agreed to accept Rs 30,000 from the complainant. The spokesperson said the CBI laid a trap on July 16 and caught the accused red-handed while demanding and accepting the Rs 30,000 bribe. Investigation into the case is underway. (Observer News Service)

Drug Peddler Arrested in Sopore

SRINAGAR: In continuation of the ongoing anti-drug enforcement drive under the 100-Day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, J&K Police apprehended a drug peddler during patrolling in the jurisdiction of Police Post Bus Stand.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, during patrolling at Neharpura, Sopore, a suspicious individual was intercepted and subjected to personal search. During the search, psychotropic substance was recovered from his possession and seized in accordance with due legal procedure. The accused has been identified as Abid Fayaz Shah, son of Fayaz Ahmad Shah, resident of Neharpura Bagh Ali Street Sopore. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 174/2026 under Section 8/21 of the NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Sopore and further investigation has been taken up to ascertain the source and wider network involved.

Police reiterated that strict action against drug peddlers and traffickers will continue across the district. Every effort is being made to dismantle the narcotics ecosystem and prevent the spread of drugs among the youth. Police remains committed to the objectives of the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan and will continue its sustained efforts to build a safer, healthier and drug-free society. (Observer News Service)

Assembly Secretariat Seeks Deputy CM's Response over Breach of Privilege Notice

SRINAGAR: The Legislative Assembly Secretariat has sought Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary's comments regarding a notice of breach of privilege filed against him by a legislator, who alleged that he was deliberately excluded from official functions during the Deputy CM's visit to his constituency.

As per KNO, acting on the directions of Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather, the Legislative Assembly Secretariat has written to the Deputy CM's office, seeking his response to the notice of breach of privilege filed by R.S. Pathania, who represents the Udhampur East Assembly segment.

"The matter was placed before the Hon'ble Speaker, who has been pleased to direct that comments of the Hon'ble Deputy CM be obtained in the first instance," reads the Assembly communiqué to the Deputy CM's office.

The Deputy CM's office has been directed to submit its response within seven days, so that it may be placed before the Speaker for consideration.

Pathania had last month filed a notice of breach of privilege and contempt of the House against the Deputy CM with the Assembly Secretariat, alleging that he was kept out of the loop during an outreach camp and a series of on-the-spot inspections of projects in his constituency.

He further alleged that the Deputy CM's actions constituted a prima facie breach of the immunities and privileges of a member of the House. (Observer News Service)

SOG Personnel Loses Life In Accident

BUDGAM: A Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel lost his life in a road accident at the Bailey Bridge in Chadoora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on Friday. He was laid to rest amid an outpouring of grief at his ancestral graveyard in Hanjura village.

As per KNO, officials said the accident occurred when an official SOG vehicle carrying personnel while crossing the Bailey hit by an upside-down bridlesteel girder of the Bailey Bridge, leaving both occupants critically injured.

The injured were immediately rushed to Sub-District Hospital Chadoora, where doctors declared one of them dead on arrival, while the other received initial treatment, he said.

The deceased was identified as Tariq Ahmad, a resident of Hanjura, Chadoora. The injured, Riyaz Ahmad, a resident of Sonpah, Budgam, was later referred to a hospital in Srinagar for specialised treatment, where he is undergoing medical care.

Hundreds of mourners attended Tariq Ahmad's funeral, where he was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard amid tears and emotional scenes. Senior police officers, civil officials, colleagues, relatives and local residents participated in the funeral prayers and paid their last respects.

Among those who attended the funeral were Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Budgam Syed Sajad Bukhari, SDPO Charar-e-Sharif Owais Ahmad, DSP Operations Chadoora Ishan Aziz, SHO Chadoora Raja Maseer, besides several other police and civil administration officials. (Observer News Service)

NC to leave for Delhi Despite Pending Nod for Protest: Tanvir Sadiq

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq and MLA Zadibal, on Friday, said the party will leave for New Delhi for its proposed protest seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, even as permission for the demonstration at Jantar Mantar is still awaited.

"We will leave for New Delhi anyway, but we are hopeful that we will get permission, just like others who have been allowed to protest at Jantar Mantar," Sadiq told reporters here in Srinagar, as per KNO.

He said the demand for restoration of statehood was not confined to the National Conference but belonged to every resident of Jammu and Kashmir, irrespective of political or ideological affiliations.

Sadiq said the party had reached out to leaders across the political spectrum, including the BJP and various organisations, urging them to join the campaign. "Our aim is to make this a collective movement because the restoration of statehood is an issue concerning every resident of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Welcoming the Congress party's announcement of district-level protests on July 19 over the statehood issue, Sadiq expressed hope that all political parties would set aside their differences and unite for the larger cause.

"If all political parties stand together for the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the issue of statehood, it will send a strong message," he said.

Sadiq said the party would share further details of its proposed Delhi programme on Saturday. (Observer News Service)

JKPCC Says Statehood Campaign Was Its Initiative

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra on Friday welcomed the National Conference's decision to join the campaign for restoration of statehood, saying the movement was initiated by the Congress nearly two years ago and was always meant to represent the aspirations of all 1.4 crore people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, Karra, as per KNO, said the Congress had from the outset maintained that the "Hamari Riyasat, Hamara Haq" campaign was not a party-specific movement but one belonging to every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir, irrespective of religion, political affiliation or region. He said the party had invited all political parties and sections of society to join the movement, even offering to let others lead it if required.

Welcoming the National Conference's participation, Karra said it would have been better had the party joined earlier, saying the Congress would not question the reasons for its delay. "We welcome this move because the issue of restoration of statehood concerns every resident of Jammu and Kashmir," he said. The JKPCC chief said the Congress had conceived and consistently championed the movement and would continue its campaign until the demand for restoration of statehood is fulfilled. Karra also announced that the Congress has advanced its scheduled programme from July 20 to July 19 following the National Conference's announcement of its Delhi protest on July 20.

He said Congress workers from all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir will assemble at Hari Singh Park in Jammu on July 19, hold a sit-in protest and later march to the Lieutenant Governor's residence to submit a resolution demanding early restoration of statehood. (Observer News Service)



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