

Youth Must Not Repeat Mistakes Of Past: LG

Greets People On 80th Independence Day,



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday called upon the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to learn from the painful experiences of Partition and ensure that the mistakes of the past are never repeated, saying the wounds of the 1947 division continue to linger as a generational pain in India's collective consciousness.

Sinha made the remarks while addressing a Partition Horrors Remembrance Day event at Tagore Hall in Srinagar, where he paid tribute to those who suffered and lost their lives during the Partition.

"Decades after the partition, their sacrifice reminds us that the wound remains unhealed, lingering as a generational pain in India's collective soul," Sinha said.

He said the day was not merely about recalling the past but about giving voice to millions whose voices were lost amid the upheaval.

"On Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, we are not merely recalling the past but we are giving voice to those millions whose voices were taken away from them," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said remembering | [More on P11](#)

J&K All Set For I-Day Amid Tight Security

» CM Omar to preside over main function in Srinagar; Surinder Choudhary to lead in Jammu

» Security strengthened along LoC, IB, highways and key installations



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is all set to celebrate the

80th Independence Day on Saturday, with elaborate arrangements in place across the Union Territory and

heightened security measures being implemented to ensure peaceful and incident-free celebrations. | [More on P11](#)

51 JKP Personnel To Get Gallantry & Service Medals

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: As many as 51 Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel have been selected for gallantry and meritorious service medals on the occasion of Independence Day 2026, according to the official honours list.

The awardees include 38 recipients of the Medal for Gallantry (GM) and 13 recipients of the Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM). Besides, one J&K

Home Guard and Civil Defence personnel has also been selected for the MSM.

Among the 38 gallantry medal recipients are senior police officers, including Deputy Inspector General Shiv Kumar, IPS; SSP Shobhit D Saksena, IPS; SP Nasir Ahmad; SP Mushtaq Ahmad; DIG Pande Rajiv Omprakash, IPS; and SP Divya D, IPS.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Sarfaraz Bashir has been | [More on P11](#)

HC Orders J&K to Enforce Women's Quota

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has issued a set of directions to the concerned authorities to ensure effective implementation of reserved seating for women in public transport and to put in place a mechanism for addressing complaints by women commuters.

The directions were passed by a Division Bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani in a Public Interest Litigation filed by advocate Monisa Manzoor Mir.

Taking note of the nature of the controversy, the Bench said the directions were necessary to ensure the "safety and comfort of the women commuters in the public transport."

The Court directed the Transport Commissioner to ensure strict implementation of Circular No. 3 TC/2025, under which seats 1 to 12 in large buses and 1 to 9 in mini-buses have been earmarked for women.

The Court specifically directed that the reserved seats in every public transport vehicle be clearly identified and marked in bold letters with the words "Reserved for Ladies", so that women commuters can easily identify the seats and enforcement authorities can ensure compliance.

The High Court also called upon the J&K Legal Services Authority to conduct awareness programmes, particularly for drivers and helpers of public transport vehicles, to sensitise them about their role in ensuring that women are provided their earmarked seats.

The Legal Services Authority has further been asked to create awareness about Circular No. 3/TC/2025 through | [More on P11](#)

Govt Taking Steps To Curb Paper Leaks: Murmu In I-Day Address

Says India remains the world's fastest-growing major economy despite global instability

'Operation Sindoor demonstrated precision counter-terror capability'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said the government is undertaking comprehensive reforms in public examinations to completely curb paper leaks and unfair means, while asserting that India continues to move ahead as the world's fastest-growing major economy



despite global instability. Addressing the nation on the eve | [More on P11](#)

Approves 78 Gallantry Awards

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday approved 78 gallantry awards, including 13 posthumous, to defence forces and central armed police forces personnel on the eve | [More on P11](#)

Partition Victims' Courage Must Inspire Us': PM

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday remembered the victims of the 1947 Partition, paying tribute to those who lost their lives, were displaced and endured immense suffering during the division of the country.

Marking Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, observed on August 14 since 2021, Modi said Partition had torn apart



several lives, uprooted families and separated loved ones.

"Today we mark #Partition HorrorsRemembranceDay. We recall the courage of all those who were | [More on P11](#)

HAPPY

INDEPENDENCE DAY

GREETINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF

JAMMU & KASHMIR

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DIPK No: 4606/26

Dated: 14.08.2026



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Study Reveals Why Some Smokers Escape Lung Cancer

Press Trust Of India

A study has found the first direct evidence of how one's genetic makeup can influence DNA damage through exposures such as cigarette smoke or sunlight and alter how many mutations accumulate. Findings published in the journal Nature could explain aspects including why most smokers do not develop lung cancer, while some non-smokers develop lung cancer. Researchers, including those at the University of Cambridge, said the reason why is almost certainly related to our inherited genetic makeup, but finding direct evidence has proved challenging in patient cohort studies. Even though many studies have suggested that inherited genetic differences affect cancer risk, proving this link has been difficult because individuals within -- and between -- human populations vary in lifestyle, environment, and exposure history, they said. Senior author Duncan Odom, who led the research while at the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Cambridge Institute at the University of Cambridge, said, "Cancer does not arise entirely by chance. Although tumours often reach the same biological endpoint, the path to that endpoint is determined by an individual's genetic back-



ground." "We've been able to show for the first time the extent to which genetic background influences both the mutation processes and the pathways leading to tumour development," Odom said. The researchers said the findings have implications for cancer screening and precision medicine, adding that prevention and screening strategies may need to account more carefully for inherited genetics and

population diversity. The researchers bred four strains of mice with a varying susceptibility to liver cancer, spanning a level of genetic diversity comparable to that seen in human populations. The mice were then exposed to a single dose of the liver carcinogen diethylnitrosamine (DEN). DEN is found in tobacco smoke and certain processed foods and is known to cause DNA damage in liver cells,

leading to mutations that can initiate tumour growth, the researchers said. Because every mouse received the same dose at the same age - 15 days of age - under controlled conditions, the team eliminated the environmental variation that confounds studies in humans. They then sequenced genomes of almost 600 tumours and analysed gene activity that developed, along with examining the untreated mice to compare spontaneous tumour formation across strains. Using the data, the researchers reconstructed how each tumour evolved from its original cancer-causing mutation. Across all mouse strains, cancers nearly always acquired a cancer-driving mutation that activated the same cancer-promoting signalling system, called the MAPK pathway -- a multi-step cascade of molecular signals that controls important life processes, including cell growth, and plays a key role in numerous types of cancer. However, depending on the genetics of a mouse, the acquired mutation altered the activity of other signalling pathways associated with cancer, and also caused a striking tendency for a duplication of the whole-genome -- where an organism gets an extra set of all its chromosomes and extra gene copies are free to mutate and take on new jobs.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Qamar Ud Din Shah S/o Gh Nabi Shah, R/o Manasbal, hereby notify that my name is wrongly recorded in Aadhaar as Syed Qamar Ud Din, whereas my correct name is Qamar Ud Din Shah. My date of birth is also wrongly recorded as 04/03/1960, whereas the correct DOB is 27/03/1956 as per my Service Record Book. I have applied for correction of my name and date of birth in Aadhaar and for issuance of the necessary Gazette notification. Any person having objection may approach the concerned authority within the prescribed period. Qamar Ud Din Shah S/o Gh Nabi Shah R/o Manasbal fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Suhail Ahmad Khan, S/o Gh. Mohd. Khan, R/o Shir Pora Bangil, Tehsil Pattan, Post Office Pattan, District Baramulla, do hereby inform the general public that my name has inadvertently been recorded as "Suhil Ahmad Khan" in Aadhaar Card No. 2700-5520-8614, which is incorrect. My correct and actual name is "Suhail Ahmad Khan." I have applied for correction of my name and request the concerned authorities/public to take note of the same. Any person having any objection may contact the concerned authority within the prescribed period. Suhail Ahmad Khan S/o Gh. Mohd. Khan R/o Shir Pora Bangil, Tehsil Pattan, Post Office Pattan, District Baramulla FKO

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR TILGAM

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS

Subject: - Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer, Pattan) has submitted a case file pertaining to the birth of Kulsuma Rasheed D/o Abdul Rasheed Band and Faisal Rasheed S/o Abdul Rasheed Band, having verified dates of birth as 11-04-2016 and 10-09-2014, respectively, both residents of Tilgam, Tehsil Pattan, District Baramulla, and the births having occurred at Home.

In this connection, if anybody having objections to the issuance of the said registration orders may contact this office within seven (05) days, after which no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st class Naib Tehsildar Tilgam

FKO

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Tilgam

Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: - Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death.

Public Notice

The registrar Births and Deaths BDO Pattan has submitted case file pertaining to birth of Nazir Ahmad Ganai S/O Mohd Sultan Ganai R/o Tilgam Tehsil Pattan having verified the date of birth as 05-03-1977 and the event has been shown to be occurred at Home.

In this connection if anybody having any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall submit his/hr claim to this office within seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained fko Naib Tehsildar

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Tilgam

Executive Magistrate 1st Class

Subject: - Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death.

Public Notice

The registrar Births and Deaths BDO Khaipora has submitted case file pertaining to birth of Tajamul Ahad S/o Abdul Ahad Mir R/o Dardpora Tehsil Pattan having verified the date of birth as 31-10-2009 and the event has been shown to be occurred at Home.

In this connection if anybody having any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall submit his/hr claim to this office within seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained fko Naib Tehsildar

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of the general public that the name of the father and Date of Birth of my daughter have been wrongly recorded in the school records of Al Noor Model School, Dhoiwan, Kunzar.

The correct particulars are:

- Student Name: Shamsu Nisa
- Father's Correct Name: Javeed Ahmad Ganaie
- Incorrect Father's Name in School Record: Javid Ahmad Ganaie
- Correct Date of Birth: 15-09-2017
- Incorrect Date of Birth in School Record: 06-10-2017

Now, I have applied before the concerned school authorities for correction of the above entries in the school records. If anybody has any objection to this correction, he/she may file the same before the concerned authorities within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Javeed Ahmad Ganaie S/o Abdul Ahad Ganaie R/o Peth Kanihama, Tehsil Magam, District Budgam, J&K. bmg-r

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the name "Arfan Javid Shah" mentioned in the Driving Licence records is incorrect.

The correct name is: "Arfan Javid"

Driving license No.: Jk01 20260000317

I am applying for correction in the official records. If anyone has any objection to the same, they may contact RTO office Srinagar, within 7 days of publication of this notice. After that, no objection will be entertained.

Arfan Javid S/o Javid Ahmad Shah

media line advert

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR, NEAR J&K BANK (ZALDAGAR)

Telefax No. 0194-2952696 e.mail Id: to-exenmidsrinagar@jk.gov.in

Sub: e-NIT No. 19 of 2026-27, dated: 15.07.2026 for below mentioned work: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of different pumping unit for Lift Irrigation Scheme in different areas of District Srinagar.

Ref: JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No.: 2026_IFC_316196_1

CANCELLATION NOTICE

Due to technical disqualification of all three bidders, the above referred e-NIT is hereby cancelled.

No. MIDS/Ts/2444-51
DIPK-4609/26 Date: 14.08.2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Srinagar

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE, SRINAGAR

Near Petrol Pump Baghi Ali Mardan Khan, Srinagar - 190011

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/s Shaziyaad Textile Industrial Estate, Zakura, Srinaga stands registered with District Industries Centre, Srinagar under No. 01/003/09181/PMT/MSME dated. 30.11.2017 for the activity of "Weaving of silk on power looms" as proprietorship concern of Mr. Sheikh Shahzad S/o Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh R/o 19-Chinar Avenue Naseem Bagh Srinagar.

Now the promoter of the unit has approached this office for change of constitution by way of induction of partners (family members) namely 1.Mr. Sheikh Yasir S/o Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh R/o 562/1, 3rd Floor, Gali No.-18, Zakir Nagar Jamia Nagar Okhla South Delhi and 2. Mr. Sheikh Uzaib S/o Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh R/o Habak Naseem Bagh Hazratbal, Srinagar.

Any person having any objection with regard to the above proposed change shall report to the Office of General Manager, District Industries Centre, Srinagar within a period of 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

DIPK-4557/26
dated: 14-08-2026

General Manager
District Industries Centre
Srinagar

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Health Services Kashmir Bemina Srinagar

Visit us at: www.dhskashmir.org Email: dhsk-pa@jk.gov.in

Subject: 3rd Tentative Seniority List of Supervisory pharmacists, Division Cadre Kashmir NOTIFICATION

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that the 3rd Tentative Seniority List of Supervisory pharmacists (Divisional Cadre Kashmir) working under the administrative control of the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir has been prepared on the basis of the service records available in this Directorate and the information furnished by the subordinate offices.

Whereas, representation received in response to the 2nd Tentative Seniority List of Supervisory pharmacists, circulated vide this office Circular No. Est-II/NG/E7913978/3087-121 dated 24-07-2027, has been examined, and the requisite correction, wherever found justified, has been incorporated in the present list.

Accordingly, the 3rd Tentative Seniority List of Supervisory pharmacists (Divisional Cadre Kashmir) is hereby circulated for the information of all concerned and for inviting objections, if any. All Supervisory pharmacists are advised to carefully verify the particulars recorded against their names.

In case of any discrepancy, the concerned official may submit a representation, duly supported by documentary evidence, through the proper channel to this Directorate within seven (07) days from the date of issuance of this notification.

In case no representation/objection is received within the stipulated period of seven (07) days, the 3rd Tentative Seniority List of Supervisory Pharmacists shall be treated as final and no further claim/objection in this regard shall be entertained thereafter.

The 3rd Tentative Seniority List shall also be uploaded on the official website of the Directorate, www.dhsk.gov.in, and published in two leading newspapers of the Kashmir Valley for wider circulation.

Sd/-
Director Health Services
Kashmir

No: Est-II/NG/ E7913978/3690-3724
DIPK-4582/26
Dated: 14 / 08/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) GHULAM MOHI UD DI JOO to (New name) GH MOHI UD DIN JOO . In future i will be known as (new Name) GH MOHI UD DIN JOO.

If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Bashir Ahmad Reshi, S/o Abdul Subhan Reshi, R/o Sonlipora, hereby inform that my son Sahil Bashir, studying in Class 8th at Government Middle School Gonpora, has his name wrongly recorded in the school admission record as Sahil Basheer S/o Basheer Ahmad Reshi.

His correct name, as per the Birth Certificate, is Sahil Bashir S/o Bashir Ahmad Reshi.

I request the concerned school authorities to correct the record accordingly. I take full responsibility for the said correction and shall be responsible for any claim or dispute arising therefrom.

Bashir Ahmad Reshi
S/o Abdul Subhan Reshi
R/o Sonlipora

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Army No. 12964988A, Rank Havildar Sajad Ahmad Ahanger, S/o Abdul Salam Ahanger, R/o Wahipora, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, J&K (UT), presently posted with 161 Inf Bn TA (H&H) JAKLI, intend to correct the name of my son in my Army Service Records.

The name of my son has been wrongly recorded as "Ibrahim Sajad" (Incorrect), whereas his correct name is "Mohammad Ibrahim Sajad" (Correct).

Any person having any objection to the above-mentioned correction may convey the same to the concerned authority within one week from the date of publication of this notice.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as FATIMA BEGUM in my Adhaar card bearing Adhaar No..5547 3596 7314 while my correct name is KHATI BEGUM W/O GH HASSAN DAR which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office of concerned Adhaar Authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name...KHATI BEGUM
W/O ...GH HASSAN DAR
R/O. KHISIPORA KREERI

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that I, Ms WANI construction prop mubeen akther w/o Hilal ahmad wani R/o Gulab bugh Reim Baramulla, J&K, have applied for upgradation of my class B contractor card issued vide No. SE(R&B) SB-B-2517 OF 2018-19 to Class A.firm If any person has any objection in this regard, he may submit his objections (if any) in writing to the office of Chief Engineer CID wing JKSPDC Kashmir, Bemina Srinagar or Engineer-in-Chief (Secretary Technical PWD (R&B) Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within 4 (four) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

ab

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death

Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Ghulam Nabi Dar S/O Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Dar R/O Dokalbal Wadoora , Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of Son Namely Irfan Nabi who was Born on 10/04/2010and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

fko

Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate
Bomai

CM Omar Felicitates Young Winners for Promoting J&K's Floral Heritage

CM distributes prizes to winners of Insta Reel, photography, painting competitions held during Tulip Show, Badamwari Spring Festival

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday felicitated 12 winners of various competitions organised during the Tulip Show and Badamwari Spring Festival, recognising their creativity, artistic talent and innovative use of digital media in promoting J&K's iconic spring gardens and floral heritage.

The winners, who included a large number of students, particularly from Government Schools, were presented cash prizes and certificates of participation by the Chief Minister at a felicitation ceremony held here.

The awards covered three categories—painting, Instagram reels and photo-



tography—with winners securing the first, second and third positions in each category. In the painting competitions, Farhan Ali Bhat, Soleha Tanveer and Roja Fayaz secured the first, second and third positions respectively in the Tulip Festival 2026 competition, while Ahmreen Bashir, Mir Maryam Zaffar and Hanzala Shafiq bagged the top three positions in the Badamwari Almond Festival 2026

painting competition.

In the Instagram Reel Competition organised in connection with the Tulip Show 2026, Salman Ahmad Wani, Shazeeb Iqbal and Ayush Anand secured the first, second and third positions respectively. In the photography competition, Umair Wani, Saba Reshi and Sharafat Khan emerged winners, securing the first, second and third positions respectively.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the objective of these competitions was not only to encourage artistic and creative talent among students and young people but also to garner greater public attention to J&K's major floral attractions through contemporary platforms.

The Chief Minister highlighted the main floral events in the annual floriculture calendar while appreciating that Badamwari, Tulip Garden and newly added Chrysanthemum festival witnessed great public participation and that these events get further visibility and attention through competitions in painting, photography and social media content creation.

KU's Special Cell Concludes Deafhood Workshop

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Special Cell under the aegis of the Department of Students' Welfare (DSW), University of Kashmir (KU), concluded a 10-day workshop on Deafhood themed 'HEAR A MILLION' at the Main Campus. The workshop was organised from August 4 to 14, in collaboration with the Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS) and EnAble India.

The workshop was aimed at empowering students with hearing disabilities by providing them a platform to showcase their talents, creativity, leadership and resilience. It brought together specially-abled students, University volunteers, faculty members, disability experts, sign language interpreters and representatives of civil society organisations to promote awareness about deaf culture, Indian sign language, accessibility and the rights of persons with disabilities.

Speaking at the valedic-



tory session, Vice-Chancellor, KU Prof. Nilofer Khan, said that creating an inclusive educational environment is a collective responsibility and that every student must be provided equal opportunities to learn, participate and realise their potential.

"An inclusive university is one where every student feels heard, valued and empowered. Such events are important in creating greater awareness about deaf culture and accessibility," she said.

Dean DSW KU, Prof.

Seema Singh, said that the workshop reflected the University's commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive campus environment.

Vice-President, Voluntary Medicare Society, Prof. Masooda Yasin, said that empowering persons with disabilities requires moving beyond awareness towards meaningful participation and equal opportunities.

The programme featured interactive sessions, motivational talks, recreational activities, talent exhibitions and skill-development

workshops designed to foster confidence, self-expression and meaningful participation among students with hearing disabilities. The sessions also focused on deaf culture, Indian sign language, accessibility, disability rights, communication and leadership skills.

The workshop provided an opportunity for around 50 participants, including specially-abled students, University volunteers, faculty members and invited experts from EnAble India and VMS, to engage in learning, interaction and collaborative activities.

The programme was co-ordinated and conducted by Shaheel Mohammad, Coordinator, Special Cell, DSW, KU.

The workshop concluded with a reaffirmation of the University's commitment to fostering an accessible, inclusive and supportive campus environment where students with disabilities can participate fully in academic, cultural and social life.

Tributes Paid to Late Anwar Ashai At His Fateha Function



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of people from political, religious, social, academic, professional and business circles attended the congregational Fateha and condolence meeting for noted engineer and social activist Er. Mohammad Anwar Ashai, who passed away on August 11.

The congregational prayers were held at his ancestral graveyard at Ashai Kocha, Fateh Kadal, and were led by prominent Islamic scholar Moulana Showkat Hussain Keng.

A condolence meeting was later held at Ashai's residence in Raj Bagh, where speakers paid tribute to his contribution to Kashmir's civil society and his deep knowledge of the region's history and institutions.

Moulana Showkat Hussain Keng highlighted the distinguished legacy of the Ashai family, while Moulana Syed-ur-Rehman Shams, speaking on behalf of Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, termed Anwar Ashai's demise a loss to Kashmiri society.

Other speakers, including Bashir Ahmad Wani, Sofi Ghulam Rasool, Ajaz Ahmad Kakroo and Moulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, recalled his spiritual journey, social engagement, historical knowledge and efforts to promote unity and discourage sectarian discord.

Mir Syed Mehmood-ul-Hassan Andrabi read out a citation honouring the deceased and presented it to his son, Dr Zubair Ashai, who was also honoured with dastarbandi.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Dr Zubair Ashai thanked all those who participated in the funeral, Fateha and condolence meeting, and those who extended support and condolences to the family.

The proceedings were conducted by Syed Shakeel Qalander.

JKLCMA Vice Chairman Reviews Dredging Works in Gilsar



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Vice Chairman, J&K Lake Conservation & Management Authority (JKLCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah on Friday conducted a comprehensive field inspection of Gilsar to review the ongoing conservation, restoration and navigational channel cleaning works.

He was accompanied by Collector, Executive Engineer, Lake Division Ist /2nd /Mechanical, AEEs and other field staff of the Authority.

During the inspection, the Vice Chairman reviewed the progress of dredging and cleaning of navigational channels in both water bodies. He was informed that dredging of two major channels from Saidapora Bridge towards Firdousa Abad and Sazgaripora have been completed. Work on opening and cleaning the remaining interior channels is currently underway.

The Vice Chairman also inspected the Watermaster recently deployed in the area and reviewed its utility for cleaning, opening

and maintaining navigational channels.

The concerned officers briefed the Vice Chairman on the progress achieved so far, the challenges encountered during execution and the measures being taken to ensure timely completion of the remaining works.

The Vice Chairman directed the concerned officers and field staff to ensure that all ongoing works are executed efficiently and within the stipulated timelines. He stressed the importance of regular field monitoring, optimum utilization of available machinery and close coordination among the field teams to restore navigational connectivity and improve water circulation in Khushalsar and Gilsar.

He further emphasized that all conservation and restoration interventions must be carried out with due care to safeguard the ecological health of the water bodies while ensuring improved navigation, water flow and overall functionality of the interconnected water bodies.



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India

Heartfelt greetings to all fellow citizens on the

8th Independence Day



“

I extend my best wishes to all of you on this great festival of Independence. There's only one mantra for 140 crore Indians - Viksit Bharat. To build a Viksit Bharat, we will neither stop nor bow down, and we will build a Viksit Bharat in 2047.

— Narendra Modi

”

Live telecast of the Independence Day celebrations from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Doordarshan Network from 6:30 AM onwards.

CBC 22201/13/0019/2627

Indians, Pakistanis See Each Other as Greatest Threat: Pew

Sagar Kulkarni

Washington, Aug 14 (PTI) A large section of Indians and Pakistanis view each other as their greatest threat, reflecting the deep-entrenched distrust between the two neighbours, a new survey has found.

According to American think tank Pew Research, 54 per cent of surveyed adults in India described Pakistan as their greatest geopolitical threat, followed by China at 21 per cent.

Similarly, 43 per cent of Pakistanis saw India as their greatest threat while 24 per cent each held the same views about Israel and China.

Pakistanis clearly point to China (75 per cent) as their most important ally and, to a lesser degree, to Saudi Arabia (12 per cent).

About a third of Indians say Russia is their top ally (36 per cent), while 16 per cent name the US. Roughly a third of Indians did not answer the question.

Despite the camaraderie between US President Donald Trump and Pakistan's army chief



Asim Munir, only 15 per cent of Pakistanis hold a favourable opinion about the US. An overwhelming 90 per cent had a favourable view about China.

Pew Research found that only 12 per cent of Pakistanis had confidence in Trump to do the right thing in world affairs, while 83 per cent held similar views about China's President Xi Jinping.

Indians held much more positive views of Russia (58 per cent

favourable) and President Vladimir Putin (51 per cent confidence) than Pakistanis do - 39 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

Just 23 per cent of Indians view China positively, while 25 per cent trust Xi Jinping's global leadership.

Forty-five per cent of surveyed Indians viewed the US favourably, while 39 per cent expressed more confidence in Trump.

The survey among adults in

four South Asian nations - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka threw up varying results.

An overwhelming majority of Sri Lankans (79 per cent) express a positive view of India, compared with 42 per cent of Bangladeshis and 7 per cent of Pakistanis.

Sixty-three per cent of Sri Lankans name India as their most important ally, while Bangladeshis and Pakistanis most often name India as their greatest threat.

In the US, 45 per cent of Americans view India favourably, while 50 per cent view it unfavourably.

As many as 50 per cent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents have a favourable view of India, compared with 42 per cent of Republicans and Republican leaners.

Over 54 per cent of Americans surveyed say that India's global influence in recent years has stayed about the same, while 30 per cent say it is getting stronger. Another 13 per cent say India's influence has been getting weaker.

‘What Have I Done?’: Jinnah’s Horror at Partition

Mohit Saini

New Delhi, Aug 14 (PTI) As Partition tore through the subcontinent in 1947, millions were forced to flee across a newly drawn border amid communal violence, killings and looting, and it was against this backdrop that Pakistan founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah, after seeing streams of people fleeing across a divided Punjab, reportedly struck his forehead and asked in despair: "What have I done?"

The episode is recounted by journalist and author Kuldip Nayar in his autobiography "Beyond the Lines".

Nayar writes that when Jinnah was in Lahore, Pakistan's rehabilitation minister Iftekhar-ud-din, and the Pakistan Times editor Mazhar Ali Khan, flew him in a Dakota aircraft over the divided Punjab.

"When he saw streams of people pouring into Pakistan or fleeing it, he struck his hand on the forehead and said despairingly: 'What have I done?'" Nayar wrote.

The author says both Iftekhar and Mazhar vowed not to repeat the remark. However, Mazhar later took his wife Ta-

hira into confidence and told her what Jinnah had said. She, in turn, communicated Jinnah's comment to Nayar long after her husband's demise.

The reported remark came as the scale of the human tragedy



accompanying Partition became increasingly visible. Nayar wrote that Jinnah initially did not believe reports that thousands of people were migrating from both sides of the border.

Both the Congress and the Muslim League had rejected the proposal for an exchange of population and had insisted that Muslims and non-Muslims remain in their homes.

However, escalating violence led to a massive movement of people across the newly carved borders.

Nayar's own account provides a grim picture of the devastation he witnessed while approaching Wagah as he left his ancestral home in Sialkot for Delhi at the time of Partition.

"I saw corpses lying on both sides of the road and empty suitcases and bags which bore testimony to the looting that had taken place either before or after the killing," he writes.

He also recalls the atmosphere of fear as he approached the border: "There was nervousness as we neared Wagah."

The two accounts - Jinnah seeing streams of displaced people from the air and Nayar witnessing bodies and abandoned belongings along the road - capture the scale of the upheaval that accompanied Partition.

August 14 is observed in India as the Partition Horrors Remembrance Day to remember the suffering, displacement and loss of lives endured during Partition and the communal violence that accompanied the division of the subcontinent.

SC to Hear Plea on CBSE OSM Exam Regulations

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said it would hear on August 21 a plea seeking directions to the Centre and the CBSE to frame regulations for conducting exams through the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system.

The CBSE's OSM evaluation system is a digital grading method where teachers assess scanned copies of physical answer sheets on a computer instead of checking physical paper scripts.

The plea came up for hearing before a bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joydalya Bagchi and V Mohana.

The counsel appearing for the petitioner told the bench that some students have passed their Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) exams and subsequently appeared for entrance examinations for other courses.

He said these students have not secured the minimum marks needed for admission due to their CBSE scores and some of the courses have already commenced.

"Find out how can you protect their interest," the bench told the counsel appearing for the CBSE.

The bench posted the matter for August 21 after it was informed that Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was earlier asked by the apex court to assist it in the matter, was not available today.

On July 15, expressing concern over students' "frustration" with the CBSE's digital marking system, the top court had sought Mehta's assistance in the matter.

Show Respect: MEA on Political Jibe at Meloni



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, : India on Friday emphasised that it shares a strong relationship with Italy and underscored the importance of maintaining mutual respect in public discourse, a day after a Congress leader triggered a controversy with his political jibe at Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said this at his bi-weekly media briefing while responding to a question on Rahul Gandhi's criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's handling of foreign policy and subsequent remarks by Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit.

"We have strong ties with Italy. Our ties with Italy in recent years have expanded and strengthened. It is important that as part of diplomatic practice that we strengthen our ties keeping in mind being respectful of each other," Jaiswal said.

In an address at an event on Thursday evening, Gandhi scoffed at Modi's handling of foreign policy which he claimed was all about hugging leaders.

Iran War Grind Pushes USS Lincoln Crew to Brink

Trans Asia News

Washington: A sailor went overboard from the USS Abraham Lincoln earlier this month amid mounting concerns over deteriorating living conditions, exhaustion and mental health among thousands of personnel aboard the US aircraft carrier during its prolonged deployment for the Iran war.

The sailor, assigned to the carrier's air wing, was rescued within an hour after going overboard in rough seas on August 3, according to US officials cited by CNN. The sailor was reportedly wearing a life vest, suffered no injuries and was medically evaluated before being transferred off the ship for further care.

One official described the incident as a mental health episode.

The episode has added to growing alarm over conditions aboard the Lincoln, where more than 5,000 sailors and Marines have spent over 250 days on deployment and more than 200 consecutive days without a port call — a modern-day record, according to Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal.

Reports from sailors and family members have painted an increasingly troubling picture of life aboard the carrier, including claims of exhaustion, declining morale, shortages of basic supplies, plumbing problems, water contamination and deteriorating mental health.

'People Are Going to Start Losing Their Minds'

The concerns intensified after reports emerged of multiple alleged attempts by crew members to jump overboard during the extended deployment.

Stars and Stripes and Navy Times, citing sailors and family members, reported incidents involving crew members threatening or attempting to go overboard.

At a town hall meeting in San Diego attended by around 200 family members of Lincoln personnel, relatives confronted senior Navy officials over the conditions aboard the carrier and uncertainty surrounding when the ship would return home.

One spouse reportedly told officials



that her husband had sent her a message saying he hoped he would not wake up the following day.

Another family member described sailors as being pushed to breaking point.

Democratic Congressman Mike Levin said families had reported "moldy showers, broken toilets, no hot water for weeks" and severely restricted meals.

According to Levin, one family member said the ship's own doctor had warned that the crew needed to reach port soon or "people are going to start losing their minds."

200 Days Without Setting Foot Ashore

The Abraham Lincoln left its home port of San Diego in November last year for what was expected to be a seven-month deployment. But the carrier was subsequently redirected to West Asia to support US military operations during the war with Iran.

The deployment has now stretched beyond 250 days.

Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has written to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and the acting Navy secretary, demanding answers over the conditions aboard the ship.

He cited "widespread reports" of shortages of essential supplies, water contamination, plumbing failures, deck safety

concerns and deteriorating mental health.

He also raised concerns over disruptions to the mail system, with care packages reportedly remaining undelivered for months.

"If the Administration intends to maintain a prolonged military campaign or an elevated carrier presence in the region," Blumenthal warned, "it must explain how it intends to ensure today's operational requirements do not create tomorrow's readiness crisis."

Navy Pushes Back

The US Navy has rejected suggestions that there has been an increase in suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts aboard the carrier.

In a statement to CNN, the Navy said it had "not observed an increase in suicidal ideations or attempts aboard the ship" and maintained that medical, mental health and religious professionals were available to assist service members.

A US official also said the Navy's internal tracking indicated that reports of suicidal ideation aboard the ship had declined in recent months and that the service did not believe there was a direct correlation between the length of deployment and thoughts of self-harm.

But families and lawmakers remain unconvinced.

UK Sets 24-Week Asylum Appeal Target to Speed Deportations

Aditi Khanna

London, Aug 14 (PTI) Immigrants with no right to be in Britain will be deported faster as a new 24-week target on asylum appeal decisions is enforced, the UK Home Office said on Friday.

Starting this week, the First-tier Tribunal will be expected to hear new asylum and immigration appeals from non-detained foreign national offenders (FNOs) and individuals in receipt of asylum support and accommodation within 24 weeks.

This is intended to speed up the removal of those whose asylum appeal is unsuccessful, cutting costs by freeing up space in British taxpayer-funded accommodation and generating savings of an estimated 6.9 billion pounds.

"For too long, asylum and immigration appeals have been plagued by delays, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill while cases drag on for months and sometimes years," said Anna Turley,

UK Minister for Border Security and Asylum.

"This new 24-week target will see cases resolved faster, reduce reliance on taxpayer-funded accommodation and speed up the removal of those with no right to be in the UK," she said.

According to the latest Home Office estimates from the past year, Indians have the lowest grant rate of just 1 per cent in the UK's asylum ranking, which is led by nationals of Sudan (93 per cent) and Eritrea (87 per cent).

The new 24-week target will apply to asylum appeal cases submitted to the First-tier Tribunal from August 12. Currently, the average wait time for a case to be decided by a judge is 67 weeks.

As official estimates indicate over 150,000 appeals are still waiting to be heard, the Home Office admitted that wider reform is needed to ensure the system can deal with cases more quickly and "prevent it from becoming a barrier to removal".

Bees Attack BJP's Tiranga Yatra, Several Injured

Dewas (MP), Aug 14 (PTI) A swarm of bees attacked the BJP's Tiranga Yatra in Dewas district on Friday, injuring around 40 workers with one person seriously hurt after being stung around 200 times, a party leader said.

A DJ vehicle accompanying the procession passing through Vijayaganj Mandi area hit a beehive in a tree, said Atul Sharma, BJP rural mandal president who was among the injured.

More than 500 BJP workers were taking part in the Yatra on motorcycles, he said.

"Hundreds of bees instantly flew out after the beehive was

struck, and attacked the workers. Around 40 to 50 workers were stung," he said.

"Several workers hid in a soybean field. They were later brought out of the field," Sharma added. Injured workers were treated at different hospitals, Sharma said.

Dr Kamal Kishore of Mahatma Gandhi District Hospital said six injured people were brought to the hospital.

"One person was seriously injured after being stung by around 200 bees. All the patients are currently in stable condition after treatment," he said.

Centre Notifies 40 Questions for Census 2027, Including Caste

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Aug 14 (PTI) The Centre on Friday notified 40 questions, including for the first time queries on caste, to be asked of respondents during the population enumeration phase of the Census, set to begin from September 1 in snow-bound areas, a government order said.

The order from Registrar General of India Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan notifies questions such as whether the person belongs to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe and their caste.

The population enumeration in Ladakh and snow-bound non-synchronous areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, will take place from September 1 to 30, according to a gazette notification issued earlier this month.

"For the conduct of the above Census, there shall be an option for self-enumeration from August 17 to 31 just before the start of house-to-house population enumeration," it said.

In the rest of the country, the popu-

lation enumeration (PE) will begin next year. This will be the first time when caste details will be collected as part of the Census.

The questionnaire is unlikely to carry a list of castes, and the responses will be recorded as shared by respondents, sources said.

The decision to include caste enumeration was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on April 30 last year.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 8 of the Census Act, 1948 (Act 37 of 1948), the Central Government hereby instructs and directs that the census officers may, within the limits of the local area for which they have been respectively appointed, ask all such questions of all persons residing within such limits, subject to the items enumerated below, for collecting information through the Household Schedule in connection with the Census of India 2027," a notification from Registrar General of India said.



The respondents will be asked for personal details, such as marital status, age at marriage, spouse name, nationality, religion, Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST), caste, particulars of parents, disability, mother tongue, and other languages known, literacy, and digital literacy status, among others.

The biggest headcount of the world will be a totally digital enterprise.

Respondents will also be asked for attendance in an educational institution, highest educational level, stream, discipline, if they worked at any time during the last year, category of economic activity, occupation, nature of industry, trade or service, class of worker and if engaged in non-economic activity (for marginal, semi-marginal and non-worker).

Whether they are available for

work (for marginal, semi-marginal and non-worker) and if they travel to their place of work will also be part of the questionnaire.

The enumerators will also ask for the birthplace of respondents, place of last residence, reason for migration, duration of stay in this village/town since last migration, and permanent residential address, it said.

Currently married, widowed, divorced and separated women will be asked for the number of children surviving at present, the number of children in the current marriage, and the number of children born alive in the last one year.

The respondents will also be asked about the place of Covid-19 vaccination, total number of bank accounts, mobile number, Aadhaar Number, Voter ID number, Passport number, and whether they possess a driving licence, it said.

The first phase - house listing and housing census (HLO) - is on till September 30.

Field visits for the housing listing and housing census began on April 16 in several states and union territories.

South Kashmir Hit By Hailstorm, Heavy Rain

Orchardists Report Massive Losses

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A severe spell of hailstorm accompanied by heavy rain and gusty winds damaged apple orchards and other standing crops across parts of South Kashmir on Friday, with growers in Shopian and Kulgam districts reporting extensive losses, while flash floods following intense rainfall hit Pahalgam.

In Shopian, affected areas included Feeripora, Mandujan, Pud-soo, Batagund, Kaprin, Rakhpora and adjoining villages. Similar damage was reported from Nihama, Samnoo, Rambhama, Chogalpora, Bathipora, Adijan, Gopalpora and Ladgoo in Kulgam.

The hailstones were reportedly around 2-3 cm or larger in some areas, damaging apples, branches and foliage and causing extensive fruit drop. Standing crops were also affected.

Local growers claimed that damage in some of the worst-hit areas was more than 90 per cent, although a detailed official assessment is awaited.

The weather event struck at a crucial stage of the apple season, when growers were preparing for harvest after months of expenditure on pruning, fertilisers, pesticides and labour.

"It was nothing less than a doomsday for us. We have lost almost everything on which our families depend," a grower from one of the affected villages said.

Another orchardist said growers were already struggling with losses from the previous year.

"Last year, we suffered because of the highway closure and the difficulties in transporting our pro-



duce. This year, before we could recover from those losses, nature has struck us again," he said.

Growers said the impact was particularly severe in areas where horticulture is the primary source of household income, with the sector supporting orchard owners as well as labourers, traders, transporters and other workers associated with the fruit industry.

"For most families here, the apple orchard is not just a crop. It is our livelihood, our children's education and the source through which we meet our daily expenses," another grower said.

Several orchardists said apples that had reached the harvesting stage were damaged, while strong winds shook trees and caused further fruit drop.

The growers have urged the administration to immediately constitute assessment teams and conduct village-wise and orchard-wise surveys to determine the actual extent of damage.

They demanded that the Horticulture, Revenue and Agriculture departments jointly assess the

losses and ensure that compensation is provided without delay.

Growers also called for stronger crop protection and insurance mechanisms, citing repeated losses from erratic weather, hailstorms and heavy rainfall.

Fruit Growers' Union Seeks Immediate Relief

The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-cum-Dealers Union expressed concern over the damage caused by the hailstorm in Shopian and Kulgam.

The Union said the affected growers were facing severe distress after witnessing the destruction of their standing fruit crops, which it described as their primary source of livelihood.

It also flagged the absence of an effective crop insurance scheme for fruit growers in Jammu and Kashmir, saying growers were being forced to bear the entire burden of losses caused by natural calamities.

The Union urged the government to immediately dispatch assessment teams to the affected

areas, conduct a comprehensive assessment and provide adequate compensation and financial assistance to the growers.

It also renewed its demand for the introduction and effective implementation of Crop Insurance and the Market Intervention Scheme, saying both were essential to protect growers against natural calamities, crop losses and market-related difficulties.

Flash Floods Hit Pahalgam

Meanwhile, flash floods were reported from Pahalgam following an intense spell of rain.

Nallah Awoora overflowed, washing away a makeshift road constructed in the Awoora area. The same route had earlier been washed away during a cloudburst.

The India Meteorological Department's Srinagar centre had earlier issued a warning for several areas, forecasting heavy rain and brief intense showers over Anantnag, Pahalgam, Tral, Pulwama, Kulgam, Banihal-Ramban and Shopian.

The warning, issued at 2:46 pm, remained valid until 5:46 pm and cautioned that intense showers could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides, particularly in Pahalgam, Shopian, Kulgam, Anantnag and Ramban.

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar said rainfall was recorded over many parts of Rajouri, Shopian, Kulgam, eastern parts of Srinagar, Anantnag, Banihal-Ramban, Kishtwar and adjoining areas.

It forecast that rain and thundershowers could continue over many places, with brief intense heavy showers likely over Ganderbal, eastern Srinagar, the Haz-

ratbal-Zakura axis, Shopian, Kulgam, Anantnag, Tral, hilly areas of Ganderbal, Ramban, Udhampur, Reasi, Doda and Kishtwar during the following three to five hours.

The weather office warned that intense showers could trigger localised flash floods, mudslides and landslides in hilly areas, besides shooting stones and landslides at vulnerable locations.

In the preceding 24 hours, Kathua recorded 62.4 mm of rainfall, Bhaderwah 62.2 mm and Reasi ARG 34.5 mm, according to the Meteorological Centre.

More Rain Forecast

The weather office said light to moderate rain and thundershowers were expected at many places in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday during the late night and early morning hours, followed by another brief spell towards the afternoon.

From August 16 to 19, several spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers are likely at many places, with heavy rain or brief intense heavy showers possible in some districts during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The Meteorological Centre has warned of heavy rain and brief intense showers in some districts of the Jammu division during this period, along with brief intense showers in one or two districts of the Kashmir division.

Such intense showers could trigger flash floods, landslides, mudslides and waterlogging in low-lying areas.

From August 20 to 22, light rain and thundershowers are expected at scattered places across Jammu and Kashmir. (with KNO inputs)

Khonmoh Turns Out for Tricolour Rally Ahead of Aug. 15

The procession brought students, community representatives and government officials together under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign.

Syed Sammar Mehdi

Mohammad Muqsit Wani walked at the head of the procession on Friday, the National Flag rising above the crowd as students, residents and government officials moved through Khonmoh ahead of Independence Day.

Wani, a Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service officer and Block Development Officer of Khonmoh, led the Tiranga rally with Farooq Khan, an inspector at Police Post Khonmoh.

Officials from several government departments followed as the procession brought together people who rarely appear in the same public gathering: students, social workers, former panchayati raj representatives, government employees and local residents.

The purpose was straightforward. The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign seeks to bring the National Flag into homes and workplaces and turn Independence Day participation into a community activity. Wani's presence gave the campaign a local face.

As the administrative officer responsible for the block,



he helped bring government departments and residents into the same procession, with young people forming a visible part of the gathering.

Students marched with the flag, joining adults who carried it through the locality. Social workers and former PRI members also took part, giving the rally a broader community presence than a routine government programme.

The procession carried a message that organisers repeatedly returned to: the Tricolour represents India's unity, diversity and aspirations. The appeal was directed especially toward residents preparing

to mark Independence Day on Aug. 15.

Wani and other organisers encouraged people to display the flag at their homes and workplaces, presenting the campaign as a public expression of patriotism rather than a ceremony confined to government offices.

The rally brought young people into the I-Day preparations, with students marching alongside government officials and community representatives. Farooq Khan joined Wani in leading the procession, while officials from several departments took part.

Threats to Kashmiri Pandits Cannot Be Ignored: CM

KO Web Desk

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said threats to Kashmiri Pandit workers in the Valley cannot be ignored and called upon security agencies to ensure full protection for members of the minority community working in the region.

Abdullah said those responsible for security arrangements in Jammu and Kashmir should take the reported threats seriously and act against those behind them.

"We have been hearing time and again that militancy has ended (in J-K), that now no one (terrorist) is left. But then this threat (comes), so where is this threat from? And those who are responsible for security arrangements, they should not take these threats lightly," Abdullah told reporters in Srinagar.

The Chief Minister referred to targeted killings of members of the minority community in recent years and recalled the concerns among Kashmiri Pandit employees following such incidents.

"One or two years ago, targeted killings happened, particularly against the minority community. How many names should I take of those who were targeted?" he said.

Abdullah said the security situation had previously prompted several Kashmiri Pandit employees to consider leaving the Valley.

"Even many employees were preparing to flee from here. They were kept in their camps after being almost arrested. Gates were locked," he said.

No Work-From-Home Order for PM Package Employees: Div Com

SRINAGAR: Amid reports that employees appointed under the Prime Minister's Package had been asked to work from home ahead of Independence Day, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir Anshul Garg on Friday clarified that no such order has been issued. He urged people to rely on official government and administration channels for authentic information.

Responding to a query about reports that PM package employees had been verbally directed to work from home amid security concerns, Garg, as reported by KNO said, "No such orders have been issued in any way."

He said the administration and security agencies have put in place necessary arrangements for the safety of employees, residents and the general public ahead of the Independence Day celebrations in Srinagar. "We should rely on the authentic information channels that are provided by the government and the administration," Garg said.

The Div Com also extended Independence Day greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and invited residents of Srinagar and across Kashmir to attend the main Independence Day function at Bakshi Stadium on Saturday. (KNO)

2014 Bribery Case: Ex-REW Executive Engineer, Orderly Get 4-Yr Jail

M Ahmad

SRINAGAR: The Special Judge Anti-Corruption here on Friday sentenced a former Executive Engineer of Rural Engineering Wing (REW) Ganderbal, and an orderly of the department to four years' simple imprisonment each in a 2014 bribery and criminal conspiracy case.

The court presided over by Tasleem Arief convicted Gulam Nabi Dar, the then Executive Engineer, and Mohd Shameem Parrah, then an orderly in the REW Ganderbal office, under provisions of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act and Section 120-B of the State Ranbir Penal Code.

According to the prosecution case, a complainant had approached the Vigilance Organisation Kashmir (now Anti-Corruption Bureau) alleging that Dar had demanded a bribe of Rs 10,000 for passing his bill related to the construction of an "Apna Panchayat Ghar" at Sarfaraw-A in Ganderbal. A trap was subsequently laid, during which Rs 3,000 in treated currency notes were recovered from Parrah, who allegedly received the money at the instance of Dar.

The court found that the prosecution evidence established the demand and acceptance of illegal gratification and held both accused guilty of criminal misconduct, acceptance of illegal gratification and criminal conspiracy.

While convicting the accused, the court stressed the wider threat posed by corruption, observing, in the words of the Supreme Court, that corruption "poses a grave danger" to constitutional governance and threatens the foundation of democracy and the rule of law. The court noted that corruption undermines values including justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, and stressed that anti-corruption laws must be interpreted in a manner that strengthens the fight against corruption.



Central Reserve Police Force Personnel hold national flags on a boat during a Tiranga rally on Dal Lake ahead of Independence Day celebrations, in Srinagar. KO PHOTO ABID BHAT.

16 Month-Old Child Dies at Children Hospital

Family alleges negligence, delay in investigations, seeks probe

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A 16-month-old child from Bandipora died at Government Children Hospital Bemina here on Friday, with the family alleging that negligence and delays to conduct important diagnostic tests led to the deterioration of the patient's condition and his death.

Family members of the deceased told KNO the child was brought to the hospital around two days before his death after developing a throat-related health problem. They alleged that after an initial examination, the child was administered an in-

jection and prescribed medicines, with the family being told that his condition would improve within a few days.

However, the family claimed that instead of improving, the child's condition continued to deteriorate. They said that when they brought him back to the hospital the following day, similar treatment was provided and they were again advised to take the child back.

The family alleged that the child's condition worsened considerably outside the hospital, with his complexion turning pale, following which he was brought back and

admitted for treatment. The relatives further alleged that after admission, the child was initially given what they described as routine treatment similar to that being administered to other patients, despite his deteriorating condition.

They said that on Friday morning, doctors subsequently advised several investigations, including Echocardiography (ECHO), ECG, Troponin-T and ultrasound (USG). All attempts to contact Medical Superintendent of the hospital Dr Abdul Rasheed Para went in vain as he did not respond to the repeated calls and text messages. (KNO)



Government of Jammu and Kashmir

PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DEPARTMENT

CIVIL SECRETARIAT, JAMMU/SRINAGAR

Subject: Acceptance of B.Tech Degree and inclusion of name in the seniority list of Degree Holder category of Junior Engineers (Civil) –Notice thereof.

NOTICE INVITING OBJECTIONS

WHEREAS, the Chief Engineer, PW(R&B) Department Kashmir vide his letter No.CE/RBK/ADM/5165-66 dated 31.03.2023, has recommended the case of the below-named diploma holder Junior Engineer (Civil), for acceptance of his Degree and inclusion of his name in the seniority list of Degree Holder Junior Engineers(Civil) with the following details:-

Name with design.	Date of confirmation/ appointment	Date of enrollment	Mode of degree	Name of university	Date of passing degree
Aasif Ahmad Najar (JE)	30.11.2022	01.08.2017	Regular	University of Kashmir	28.07.2022

AND WHEREAS, the case was examined in the department, and the Degree/ marks certificates were forwarded to the concerned University vide letter dated 27.02.2025 for verification and the University vide letter No. 21971 dated 27.07.2025 has authenticated the genuineness of the same;

AND WHEREAS, the above-named Junior Engineer has also produced undertakings in the form of an affidavit, affirming therein that if his information proves fake at any point of time he shall be held responsible for all consequences thereof;

NOW THEREFORE, before considering the case for acceptance of the Degree acquired by the above-named Junior Engineer and also inclusion of his name at the appropriate place in the seniority list of Degree holders Junior Engineers (Civil), objections are hereby invited from the members of the cadre who are likely to be affected. The objections, if any, shall reach this department through the Chief Engineer, PW(R&B) Department South Kashmir or by Post (addressed to the Financial Commissioner/ACS, PW(R&B) Department, Room No. 518, 5th Floor, Civil Secretariat, Srinagar or via e-mail to compwd@rediffmail.com or through CRU, Civil Secretariat, Srinagar within a period of 21 days from the date of issuance/ publication of the notice. No claim whatsoever, shall be entertained after expiry of the stipulated time period.

No.PWD-HRM1/85/2023-05(C.No.7218028)
Dated: 14.08.2026

DIPK-4607-26
DT: 14/08/2026

(Hamid Hameed)
Under Secretary to the Government

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Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 8899256463
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email: editor@kashmirobserver.net

KO VIEW

Kashmir’s 1.5 Problem

Jammu and Kashmir has reached a strange demographic milestone. Its fertility rate has fallen to 1.5 children per woman, well below the 2.1 needed to replace the existing population.

A figure buried in a parliamentary report now points towards a future that could be visible in Kashmir’s homes, schools, hospitals and workplaces way before anyone is ready for it.

For years, fewer children were exactly what public policy sought. Better maternal healthcare, near-universal institutional deliveries, wider access to family planning and rising female literacy helped families choose smaller households.

The achievement is real. Women gained greater control over reproduction, while healthcare reached deeper into villages and remote areas. Then demography turns the page.

A child missing from a census today becomes a worker missing from the economy twenty years later. A smaller cohort eventually means fewer hands in hospitals, fewer employees in businesses, fewer taxpayers supporting public services and fewer young relatives available to care for older parents.

Population decline happens slowly. It shows up in fewer children, older people and smaller families.

Kashmir’s fertility decline has also emerged from a changing social landscape. Marriages are taking place later, some young people choose bachelorhood, and divorce has risen. Economic pressure, stress and infertility add further barriers to parenthood. Housing costs, uncertain employment and the growing expense of raising children can make a second or third child feel like a decision reserved for another time.

Another time can become no time.

That is where the demographic question becomes larger than family planning. A society can respect private choices while still preparing for their collective consequences. Kashmir needs policies that make family life more practical, especially for young couples.

Better employment, affordable housing, accessible fertility treatment and dependable maternal healthcare can remove some of the pressures that push parenthood further into the future.

Remote Kashmir needs particular attention. Reliable antenatal and prenatal care, stronger hospitals and accessible reproductive services can give families greater confidence around childbirth. Voluntary financial support for larger families and measures encouraging timely marriage can also enter the policy debate without turning private decisions into state commands.

The politics around this subject also demand caution. Fertility can easily become a proxy for communal anxiety, cultural fear or demographic competition. Such thinking obscures the real story. Kashmir’s population is changing because Kashmir itself is changing.

The deeper question is what kind of society those changes will produce.

A younger Kashmir once filled its schools, colleges and labour markets with growing cohorts. A much older Kashmir could eventually ask who will staff its hospitals, run its businesses, pay into public systems and care for its ageing parents.

That question lies inside the seemingly modest figure of 1.5.

Kashmir spent decades learning how to have fewer children. It now has to learn how to build a future in which fewer children do not become fewer futures.

Think Like an Ecosystem

Nature ignores the boundaries drawn around protected areas. Kashmir’s conservation strategy must begin doing the same.



Mauzam Bakshi



Kashmir’s mountains, lakes and forests look like separate postcards, but they actually function as one living system.

Wetlands hold back floodwater, forests stabilize slopes that would otherwise collapse under heavy rain, alpine lakes feed the rivers and springs that supply the valley below, and grasslands and river corridors give wildlife the room to move and keep the whole system in balance.

Break one piece and the damage spreads through the rest.

That system is now under strain from several directions at once. Climate change is altering rainfall and snowmelt. Habitat fragmentation is cutting wildlife off from the corridors it needs. Pollution, encroachment, unplanned construction and heavy tourism traffic are wearing down the links between one habitat and the next.

Many of Kashmir’s wetlands, forests and wildlife habitats already have legal protection, but the protection stops at the boundary line. Managers guard individual sites while the connections between them go unmanaged.

Conservation science has moved past this approach, and Kashmir has not caught up.

Elsewhere, governments have already made the shift. Conservation no longer implies fencing off isolated plots of land. It means protecting whole ecological landscapes as connected networks.

The European Union built the clearest example of this model.

Natura 2000 links thousands of forests, wetlands, rivers, grasslands and coastal habitats into a single co-ordinated system, the largest of its kind in the world.

Farming, grazing, fishing and tourism continue inside these landscapes, managed so biodiversity holds up alongside economic activity.

North America runs a similar experiment through the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, which maintains ecological connections over more than 3,000 kilometres of mountains and forests.

Australia has built its own version, the National Reserve System, connecting protected land on a continental scale.

These programs share one working principle: nature survives through connection.

Kashmir demonstrates that principle better than almost anywhere else in the Himalaya.

Its Ramsar wetlands, Wular, Hokersar, Haigam and Shallabugh, lie along the Central Asian Flyway and host thousands of migratory birds all winter. Its high-altitude lakes, Gangbal, Vishansar, Kishansar, Gadsar, Tarsar, Marsar, Kounsarnag and Sheshnag among them, form the headwaters of Kashmir’s rivers and regulate the flow of water downstream.

Forests, mountain streams, alpine meadows, springs and river corridors tie these wetlands and lakes together.

Through those connections move wildlife, ground-water, pollen and nutrients, and the system that results sustains agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and human settlements throughout the valley.

“
Kashmir will probably never join Europe’s Natura 2000 program, but it can still adopt the thinking behind it. A well-planned ecological network would strengthen biodiversity, improve the valley’s ability to withstand climate change, and support water security and long-term development throughout the region.

Weaken one link and the damage does not stay put. A degraded wetland means fewer migratory birds, while a polluted alpine lake means worse water quality downstream.

Fragmented forests cut wildlife populations off from one another and leave the system less able to recover from shocks. The consequences travel far and wide.

This is the case for building a Kashmir Ecological Network: a scientifically designed, legally backed framework linking wetlands, alpine lakes, springs, forests, grasslands, wildlife habitats and river corridors into one conservation landscape.

Such a network would force better planning. Infrastructure, tourism and economic activity could continue, but only alongside ecological review, scientific assessment and long-term planning.

Local communities would take an active role through habitat restoration, responsible tourism, traditional knowledge and direct participation, rather than watching conservation happen around them.

And the gains would go well beyond protect-

ing wildlife.

Healthy wetlands cut flood risk, improve water quality and recharge groundwater. Forests hold soil in place, stabilize mountain slopes and store carbon. Alpine ecosystems regulate stream flow and strengthen the valley’s ability to withstand a changing climate.

Protecting these systems is an investment in water and food security, disaster preparedness and the economic future of the region.

India already has the legal groundwork in place. The Ramsar Convention, the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972, the Biological Diversity Act of 2002, the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the country’s commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework all point toward the same conclusion.

A Kashmir Ecological Network would build on these commitments and give the Indian Himalaya a working model of landscape-scale conservation.

Environmental problems keep growing more complex, and conservation strategies have to keep pace. Protecting isolated pockets of nature stopped being enough some time ago.

The task now is to protect the relationships that bind rivers to wetlands, forests to alpine lakes, mountains to the plains below, and people to the land they depend on.

Kashmir will probably never join Europe’s Natura 2000 program, but it can still adopt the thinking behind it.

A well-planned ecological network would strengthen biodiversity, improve the valley’s ability to withstand climate change, and support water security and long-term development throughout the region.

The real question is whether Kashmir, facing accelerating climate change and ecological decline, can afford to keep managing its lakes, forests and wetlands as if they had nothing to do with one another.

The valley is one living system. Its future depends on how well its parts stay connected.

The author is a businessman by profession but a nature lover and environmentalist by heart. He can be reached at mauzambakshi@gmail.com.

The Long Wait for Jobs

A joblessness crisis worse than the rest of India’s meets a political climate that punishes public complaint.



Sahil Parray

This summer in Delhi, a movement born from an insult became a force strong enough to pull two Union ministers to a negotiating table.

The Cockroach Janta Party took its name from a Chief Justice’s remark comparing unemployed youth to cockroaches, turned that line into a slogan, and marched ten thousand strong on Parliament over leaked papers in NEET and CBSE.

Police responded with tear gas and batons. Protesters got hurt, and they also got heard.

Activist Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike stayed on front pages for weeks. In Bihar, and now in Jharkhand, aspirants have followed the same road over BPSC irregularities and delayed results, taking their anger onto the street and into the political calendar.

The country watched them do it, whatever came of it.

Kashmir’s young people live with a heavier load of the same grievances and none of that visibility. Start with the government’s own numbers.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey put ur-

ban youth unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir at 32 percent for the 15-to-29 age group, the highest of any state or union territory in the country and close to double the national figure.

Months later, when the J&K government answered a question in the Legislative Assembly on the same subject, it put the overall unemployment figure at 6.7 percent, still nearly twice the national average of 3.5 percent, an admission delivered in a written reply rather than a press conference.

Now consider what happens to the young people who try to escape that number through a government exam, the one channel supposed to run on merit alone.

The Sub-Inspector recruitment of 2022 collapsed under a CBI investigation alleging that candidates paid twenty to thirty lakh rupees apiece to secure a seat, in a scheme that reportedly reached JKSSB’s own board and the outside agency hired to run the test.

The Finance Accounts Assistant exam was cancelled after an oddly concentrated set of selections from a handful of districts, and the CBI raided thirty-seven locations across Jammu in the case that followed.

The Junior Engineer recruitment fell apart after video surfaced of candidates solving questions outside an exam center before the paper was supposed to be sealed.

When JKPSC 10+2 Lecturer aspirants said their English paper read as if a machine had written it, forty pages to answer in two hours, with wording that confused subject experts, the commission reviewed the complaints and

dismissed them all without releasing scores that could have settled the matter honestly.

At SKUAST Kashmir, candidates who scored poorly on earlier JKSSB exams somehow topped the merit list for engineering posts, and the university never published scorecards to explain how. A federal CAG audit later confirmed a longer history of irregular appointments and favouritism there.

Even the judicial service exam, assumed immune to manipulation, now faces scrutiny after aspirants flagged a lopsided regional split on the final list.

Line these cases up and coincidence stops being a plausible explanation.

An exam gets announced, and aspirants spend a year or several, plus money families can barely spare, preparing.

Then, irregularities surface, sometimes on video, sometimes in a CBI chargesheet, sometimes in an audit report tabled in Parliament.

A committee forms, its report stays sealed, and nobody gets named.

The exam eventually reopens silently, or it doesn’t, and the same aspirants start again, older and poorer, having watched people who paid or knew someone walk through a door closed to them.

That is where the comparison with Delhi and Bihar turns unbearable.

When Delhi’s students marched, they marched, and the story stayed on the injustice. But when Kashmir’s aspirants gather outside an exam center over a leak, coverage shifts to permissions and to which political

party takes the blame for a scandal that pre-dates all of them.

Years of shutdowns, restricted assembly, and consequences that skip due process have taught a generation that silence is the safer response to injustice.

Beyond apathy, it’s a survival instinct built by experience rather than by temperament.

The government has not stayed entirely silent about its own record. It points to job fairs, to Mission YUVA’s baseline survey of potential entrepreneurs, to schemes like Mumkin and Tejaswini pushing self-employment.

Nearly a million self-employment opportunities have reportedly opened since 2021 through these programs, and that is a real achievement worth acknowledging.

But a subsidized loan for a roadside stall cannot substitute for a salaried government post that was budgeted, advertised, and then sold to someone else.

Entrepreneurship as policy can be a genuine path forward, or it can be a convenient way to avoid fixing recruitment.

With a scandal list this long, it looks like the second one.

But behind the list lies a person instead of a data point. Irshad Ahmad Butt, a postgraduate from Shopian, has gone twelve years without work. What he asked for publicly was basic acknowledgment, some support, even a modest stipend, enough to keep applying without going broke.

That’s not a radical demand. It is the mini-

mum owed to citizens told repeatedly to wait one more cycle, one more inquiry, one more year.

So here is the ask, without slogans. Publish all inquiry reports the government commissions into these exams, on a fixed timeline, naming wrongdoing rather than sealing it in a court file or letting the news cycle bury it.

Record interviews on video, as Jammu’s own political leaders have already demanded for JKPSC selections, so a merit list can be checked against something besides trust.

Build an independent recruitment ombudsman with real power to reopen a compromised exam within weeks.

Extend to Kashmir’s job aspirants the same basic room to gather and object that aspirants in Patna, Ranchi, and Delhi already use, because a peaceful protest outside an exam center is citizenship rather than sedition.

Kashmir’s youth are not asking anyone to win their hearts with a slogan or a survey. They want what all other aspirants in this country now treat as a baseline: an exam that survives its own scrutiny, and a government that answers instead of stalls.

Give them that, and the loyalty officials keep chasing will already be there.

The author is a student activist from Jammu and Kashmir and heads the Open Merit Students Association. He writes on education policy, reservation, youth unemployment, and institutional fairness in J&K.

Why Kashmir Must Rediscover Physics

Physicist and educator Dr. Qudsia Gani speaks about gender stereotypes, the decline of physics education, the failures of opportunity and the need to reconnect students with the possibilities of science.



Ashiq Hussain Andrabi

Dr. Qudsia Gani is a prominent physicist whose passion for revitalizing physics education in Kashmir is both inspiring and transformative.

Born and raised in the valley, Dr. Gani has made it her mission to address the decline in physics enrollment at colleges, advocating for the subject's profound applications in both industry and artificial intelligence.

As an assistant professor in the Department of Higher Education, Govt. of J&K, Dr. Gani is actively involved in diverse research projects and mentoring exams.

Her journey, culminating in a specialization in Nuclear and Particle Physics from the University of Kashmir, has positioned her as a prominent advocate for the cause of physics education.

From challenging the persistent gender stereotypes in Physics to navigating its current state in Kashmir, Dr. Gani provides insights into her experiences, challenges, and aspirations in an engaging conversation.

Breaking stereotypes is a journey many admire, especially in the dynamic landscape of Kashmir. Against this backdrop, could you start by sharing the factors that influenced your decision to choose Physics as a field of study, especially in the face of the persistent stereotype in our society that women can't excel in this domain?

I will not attribute anything to gender or to circumstances, nor did I know of any iconoclasts early on in my childhood to get inspired from. I have always made use of my raw intelligence to move ahead in life. Each one of us should respond to the inherent calling and be brutally honest with oneself. This is essentially what I did.

To my understanding, women are not born with the fear or phobia of mathematical sciences. Probably they are infused with it.

In the Indian context, one should look up to Shakuntala Devi, the mathematical wizard who made it to Guinness book of world records and is well known as a human computer.

It was only after I grew up, that I knew I had broken some stereotypes and set some examples. Like, I am the first woman to secure distinction in Physics in the University, then I was the first to crack the elite national level competitions like CSIR-NET/JRF and GATE. I was also the first ever woman to top the JKPSC selection list of assistant professors in Physics. My teachers and the appointing authorities who are all men, by the way, have always considered me well-deserved for all my accomplishments, irrespective of my gender.

The best way to break stereotypes is to be unaware of them and not pay heed to them.

But what sparked your decision to become a teacher, and how did this calling unfold in your life?

I had aspired to be an engineer and had obtained an 88 percentile in a state level exam to pursue software engineering. However, my father was supporting a family of six members, one of them with serious medical condition for which he was exhausting all his resources.

For not being able to afford the expenses of a professional degree, I took recourse to academics which usually unfolds into teaching. I chose Physics since I found it the most exciting intellectual pursuit which gives a broader perception about many different fields. I had a natural bend towards this subject among all the stuff that I was reading in school.

I express it with all humility that my teachers would often call me the next "Madam Curie" whenever I would solve a tedious numerical problem in the class. My Mathematics teachers would secretly tell my father, "Your daughter is not just good but she is exceptional in Mathematics". Such compliments have always humbled me. The constant appreciations and encouragements of my teachers finally pushed me where I am today. I am enjoying doing Physics.

Reflecting on your teaching experience, what do you find most rewarding about being a Physics teacher?

Physics teaching is considered to be one of the most challenging and fulfilling careers you could consider. Physics teachers are the most sought after even in countries like USA and UK. Therefore, you automatically carry an aura of prestige and decorum.

You've an out-of-box identity and relevance at your workplace. Your presence is deeply noted and your absence is deeply felt. Your colleagues as well as the students hold



PHYSICISTS HOLD A KEY TO THE GLORY OF NATIONS. Recall Chandrayan, for instance, and many more such upcoming missions. One can render a great deal of service to mankind in general and to the nation in particular by holding to the principles of Physics. It can also win you an international recognition. The names like Newton and Einstein are synonymous to intelligence. Glory comes default with it.

you very high. Nonetheless one should stay humble amidst all glory and glamour.

But how would you describe the current state and future potential of physics education and research in Kashmir?

Well, it is pathetic! By now, there is a pool of PhD holders in the discipline of Physics, not to speak of other disciplines. The governments don't have to offer much to them. As a result, some of them are switching to other fields. It is no surprise that we have seen a significant fall in the number of students opting for university education, especially in Kashmir. I would not like to point out any major drawback with the curriculum or with the teachers in place. It is only in terms of a limited output after a long term of hard-work that has demotivated them.

To have a job and a decent livelihood are after all, the most real and the most rational concerns of any educated person. Unless there is a policy renewal in terms of providing jobs and other opportunities, especially in the sector of science and technology, the future of Physics shall tend to remain bleak in our part of the world.

But then, we now have a new education policy, NEP, in place which comes with a myriad of changes aimed at internationalization, diversity and inclusion. What does it mean to you as a teacher?

The respondents to this policy fall in two categories, the supporters and the critics. The critique is that the policy lays more emphasis on a general rather than a specialized framework of different courses. But all sorts of progress of a nation in different fields would need more specialists than generalists especially in the current era.

Previously, all general aspects of education were to be followed and finished in school only. While coming to college, a student had to mend to specialize. The policy also aims at acquiring and upgrading various skills for the students to be self-reliant but it cannot be without realizing that the schools and the colleges do not have the necessary facility in terms of infrastructure and equipment to impart such trainings. Let the vocational training and industry training be taken up separately and not be messed up with educational institutions. That is why we have already seen some states doing away with the new education policy.

Do you anticipate that the new policy will in any way influence or change the perception about the subject of physics among students in Kashmir?

Well, it is too early to provide a definitive assessment of the new policy. While on one hand, it does not lay much emphasis on specialization, but on the other hand there is also optimism regarding the policy's potential to broaden the students' choices, encourage

diversity and enhance the overall quality of education. Let at least one batch of students, graduate under the new scheme to see where they are able to land. If the choices really diversify or deluge, remains to be seen.

But beyond your role as a teacher, your contributions as a writer are noteworthy. Can you share your specific writing interests and shed light on the areas that you typically cover in your articles?

Thanks for your appreciation. Yes, I have been contributing to science pages of the leading national and regional newspapers and journals, from quite some years now. I have specific interest in Cosmology, Particle Physics and Astrophysics. Thankfully, I have received an immense response from my readers which keeps me going.

As a writer covering scientific topics, how do you navigate the balance between making complex scientific concepts accessible to the public and maintaining accuracy?

Well, I don't take my readers through the abstract assumptions or the mathematical formalism needed to evaluate a hardcore physics idea, because I understand that I am reaching out to a mixed audience. I just bring to them the interpretations and meanings of different ideas, mostly of astrophysics.

I can confidently say, I have been able to evoke lot of interest in all segments of people from professionals to businessmen to employees to literary to commoners, besides the students of all age groups.

What are some of the recent developments or discoveries in physics that excite you the most?

There are many, but I am driven by two of them. One is the discovery of gravitational waves remotely proposed by Einstein and recently discovered by the famous LIGO experiment. This idea also lends credence to the theory of multiverse or parallel universes. This is going to be a hot topic in the physics fraternity for many decades from now.

The second is the idea of neutrinos; the minute undetectable particles which are actually jam packing the Universe. In fact, I hold my PhD in the same topic. There is a high likelihood that everything in the world in a few decades from now may prove to be neutrinos only.

OK, but what are some of the common misconceptions or myths about physics that you encounter in your work or in the public domain?

Physics is supposed to be hard but it can be broken down to simpler ideas. One can always find it interesting and appreciate the beauty of its contents. It is said that Physicists are socially awkward persons who don't mix up with others so easily nor do they fall in love, or be good life partners. A physicist may not necessarily be

a nerd. He/she may also be jolly and loving.

In a beautiful chain of words, Stephen Hawking writes in a subtle way that he pursued PhD to get a job and he wanted a job to marry Jane. Sometimes, Physicists make an influence in the society, far more than that of leaders or statesmen. Some time back I had written about the politico-effectiveness of Einstein, for example. Similarly, Isaac Newton is rated as the second most influential person in the entire human history, by some analysts. We are also sometimes labeled as atheists but how many people know that Newton was a theologian of equal footing as he was a physicist.

Alright, so what resources or support do you believe teachers need more of to improve education in Kashmir?

There are already many strategies in place that can work well in support of educators but I am sure that bulk of educational institutions in Kashmir are not having or availing them. Teachers need access to high-quality instructional resources by way of separate libraries for them, as well as the online support systems like smart classrooms and sophisticated science and language labs. Some schools and colleges are working on it using what is called LMS or learning management system. Teachers can also benefit from professional development programs conducted by various institutions of higher learning.

However, facilities and provisions don't mean much unless the students have the desire to learn and let there be some degree of cooperation from their parents as well. Our youngsters are looking for short cuts to success which for their kind information don't exist. Rest, we can always make up for the deficiencies in resources. It is not a big deal.

What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a teacher and what actually makes a great teacher in your opinion.

For anyone aspiring to become a teacher, especially in the higher education, I have one important piece of suggestion in the context of Kashmir. While our students keep piling up their degrees one after the other, they don't pay the necessary attention to crack various competitions and fellowship exams which could really give them a boost. Nor do they acquire the desired skills which could have made them worth the job market. In addition to a PhD degree, a student should necessarily go for various national eligibility exams without which the recruiting agencies do not honour their degrees and it is clearly laid down in their selection criteria. There are also many students who think it easy to compromise the quality to acquire their degrees in a short time. Later they realize that they have cut a sorry figure as they are unable to defend their work on certain platforms.

A person aspiring to become a teacher should be an efficient communicator who is able to raise and maintain a two-way interaction in the classroom with a productive outcome. Besides, he/she should constantly up-

date in terms of content and teaching skills. A good teacher is able to deliver an intricate idea in simplest terms. According to Einstein, if you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.

Is Artificial Intelligence a direct application of Physics? Do you treat it as a boon or bane?

Yes, indeed, AI is drawn from some fundamental principles of physics. It is used to model and simulate complex systems to help machines to learn, adapt, and make intelligent decisions. However, machines don't have self-awareness and emotions. They are very unlikely to match the human conscience or take over us. Nonetheless, AI is transforming every walk of life and we have to keep pace with the current trends or we shall cease to have a meaningful existence in future.

Calling AI a boon or bane is much like the essay we would be asked to write in school, whether science is a boon or bane. Going gracefully ahead with AI in future, will depend on our intent and our values and virtues. Moreover, the development of AI is heavily regulated, and is subject to strict ethical and legal guidelines. Its operation is quite transparent and accountable, to the best of my knowledge. Rest is rumor and hearsay

OK, so how can the education system and teachers better support both students interested in physics and those not interested, igniting passion for physics and making it more engaging and relevant?

This is an important question that you have asked. Physics can be popularized in many ways. Learning by doing projects and labs, holding of science fairs and workshops can be of great help. Though, these practices are already in vogue, but not to the requisite level. The physics teachers can volunteer for some mentorship examinations for students at all levels of education. The students with any grades or score in Physics are eligible to write these exams. These are held by various physical societies such as Indian Physical Society (IPS), Indian Physics Association (IPA) and Indian Association of Physics Teachers (IAPT). Luckily, I am a life member in all the three.

I have been conducting Olympiads for school students since 2019 by registering an exam center at JK Institute of Mathematical Sciences. I have also been conducting two more popular exams for college students. These are National Standard Examination (NSE) and National Graduate Physics examination (NGPE). The advantage of cracking such examinations at an early age is that the students get enrolled in various institutions of higher learning for integrated courses with handsome fellowships. Quite early on in their life, they get monetary support to achieve their higher education in well reputed institutions which is indeed a huge motivation.

Similarly, the schools and colleges should frequently invite noted Physicists (teachers and scientists) across the country for popular talks and interactions with their students to get them inspired. Seminars and conferences should be regularly organised to impress upon the importance of science in nation building. The popular science movies must be played at various events to highlight the importance of the subject in almost all walks of life.

What message or encouragement would you like to convey to the students specifically about the subject of physics, highlighting its relevance, potential, or any insights you've gained through your own experience with the subject?

There is a general consensus that Physics is the most fundamental and exact of all the sciences. Its laws are basic to deep understanding of other sciences such as astronomy, materials science, chemistry, photonics, life sciences, earth sciences, medicine, engineering and environmental science. It lends credence to the equations of Mathematics by giving them a meaning.

To me, Physics is not just about metrics and measurements nor is it only about mechanical entities like machines and gadgetry. It has rather encroached into almost all domains of human conscience including origin and evolution of universe, the concepts of life and death or even into religion and philosophy. It grills you for everything else. Physicists are the only professionals who have secured prestigious prizes in other fields of knowledge as well. Physics has given me a great personal and professional satisfaction. It is exciting if pursued with consistency and a living spirit.

Physicists hold a key to the glory of nations. Recall Chandrayan, for instance, and many more such upcoming missions. One can render a great deal of service to mankind in general and to the nation in particular by holding to the principles of Physics. It can also win you an international recognition. The names like Newton and Einstein are synonymous to intelligence. Glory comes default with it.

— The author is a senior scribe from Pulwama, and can be reached at cj.saha.18@gmail.com.

'Neck, Back Pain Related To Gene Activity Setting Off Breakdown Of Spinal Discs'

Press Trust Of India

New research in zebrafish suggests neck and back pain could be a result of changes in gene activity triggering a breakdown of the spine's natural shock absorbers -- the spinal discs.

Findings published in the journal Communications Biology show that the changes in gene activity can lead to a build-up of minerals in the spine -- similar to unwanted bone forming in the wrong place -- causing it to harden.

Researchers from the universities of Edinburgh and Bristol in the UK said the findings point to potential future drug targets to treat back pain and suggest zebrafish could be a valuable tool for testing them.

One of the main underlying causes is a gradual breakdown of spinal discs -- they cushion bones of the spine -- known as intervertebral disc degeneration (IVDD).

The researchers said no drugs are available currently to stop or reverse IVDD, despite the condition being common and costly, adding that surgery remains the only long-term option.

"For decades, surgery has been the only real answer for disc disease. By understanding the biology that drives the spine to harden, our zebrafish studies point to several ways of slowing it down, including a drug already used safely in patients," lead researcher Erika Kague, from the

University of Edinburgh's Institute of Genetics and Cancer, said.

"There's more work to do, but for a condition that's affected people for generations without a treatment in sight, this is super exciting," Kague said.

The researchers bred zebrafish lacking a copy of the gene connected to a protein called collagen IX -- which helps hold the disc's structural fibres together. Previous studies have linked the gene to an early-onset of disc problems.

As the fish aged, their spines developed problems strikingly similar to human disc disease -- bones of the spine fused together and the tissue between vertebrae became abnormally hardened with mineral deposits.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No 3514 9285 7392. Now I want to change my name from ABDUL MAJEED GANIE (Old Name) to AB MAJEED GANAIE (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- AB MAJEED GANAIE
S/O:- AB RAHMAN GANAIE
R/O:- KARGAM PALACHITHI, BUDGAM, Jammu And Kashmir- 191111

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. 9617 4548 1048. Now I want to change my name from BINTU ASHRAF (Old Name) to BINTUL HUDA (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- BINTUL HUDA
D/O :- MOHAMMAD ASHRAF WANGNOO
R/O: NAGRADKHAH DISTRICT BUDGAM, Jammu And Kashmir- 191111

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that I, Mohd Yousuf Bhat, son of Ghulam Ahmad Bhat, resident of Narkara, Budgam, Jammu & Kashmir, hold an expired Indian Passport No. L8615902 issued on 09/05/2014 at [Place of Issue, Srinagar].

I am applying for the reissue of my passport with the following corrected details:

Name: Mohd Yousuf Bhat (previously recorded as Mohammad Yousf Butt)

Father's Name: Ghulam Ahmad Bhat (previously recorded as Gulam Ahmed Butt)

Date of Birth: 30/10/1970 (previously recorded as 01/02/1970)

Address: Narkara, Budgam

If anyone has any objection to the aforementioned corrections, please notify the Regional Passport Office, Srinagar, within 14 days of the publication of this notice.

Mohd Yousuf Bhat

S/O Ghulam Ahmad Bhat

R/O Narkara, Budgam 191111

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public and all concerned that the services of Esteemed Group, represented by Mr. Sohail Nawaz, have been terminated by Shuhul Homes, Rajbagh, Srinagar, due to non-performance under the agreement dated 1 May 2026. Accordingly, any outstanding amount taken or incurred by Mr. Sohail Nawaz is solely his responsibility and has no connection with or liability of Shuhul Homes. Mr. Sohail Nawaz and Esteemed Group are no longer authorised to represent or transact on behalf of Shuhul Homes.

bko

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

Sr.DEN-III/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date-04.09.2026 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in

Tender Type		Tendering Section		Bidding System	
Open		Works		Single Packet System	
Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date		Bid Closing Date/Time	
13.08.2026		21.08.2026		04.09.2026/15:00 Hrs.	
S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender			
1.	103-2026-27-SrDEN-III-FZR	Misc. track works in connection with the yard and drainage improvement of various yards in JUC-ASR section (excluding ASR & JUC) under SSE/P.way/BEAS & SSE/P.way/JUC in the section of ADEN-II/ASR & ADEN/JUC.			
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	
	2,53,07,689.96	5,06,200.00	60 Days	10 Months	
	Similar nature of work:- "CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of track, screening, distressing of track, pre & post works for track maintenance machine like tamping machines/ballast screening/regulating machines & TTR by T28."				
2.	104-2026-27-ADEN-II-ASR	Misc. track works in connection with the yard and drainage improvement of various yards in ASR-KEMK & BEAS-TTO section under SSE/P.way/PAX & SSE/P.way/BEAS in the section of ADEN-II/ASR.			
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	
	1,39,80,652.39	2,79,600.00	60 Days	10 Months	
	Similar nature of work:- "CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of track, screening, distressing of track, pre & post works for track maintenance machine like tamping machines/ballast screening/regulating machines & TTR by T28."				

Note: 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. No.: 103-2026-27-SrDEN-III-FZR & 104-2026-27-ADEN-II-ASR. Date: 13.08.2026 2809/2026

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEN-IV/JAT acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 04.09.2026 upto 15:00 hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in

Tender Type		Tendering Section		Bidding System	
Open		Works		Single Packet System	
Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date		Bid Closing Date/Time	
12.08.2026		21.08.2026		04.09.2026 15:00	
S. No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender			
1	32-2026-27-MCTM-DRM-JAT	Civil work for Upgradation and Provision of RDSO-based VSS (Video Surveillance System) at SVDK Station under Jammu Division.			
Advertised Value (Rs.)		Earnest Money (Rs.)		Validity of Offer	
64,37,566.22		1,28,800.00		60 Days	
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Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. No.: 770-W/01/WA/JAT/2026-27 Date: 14.08.2026 2821/2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited
Impaired Asset Recovery Centre
Moulana Azad Road Srinagar
iarb.chq@jkbmail.com

POSSESSION NOTICE

Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas I, Aamir Bin Masood as the Authorized Officer of The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of he said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 08.08.2022 thereby calling upon the Borrowers/Mortgagors namely1)M/s Imaad Sales Corporation ,Sanat Nagar , Bye Pass Srinagar through Proprietor Mrs. Asmat Aijaz Banday W/o Mr. Aijaz Ahmad Banday R/o Sherwani Colony Khawa Bagh Barzulla Presently Housing Colony, Sanat Nagar Srinagar 2.Mr. Aijaz Ahmad Banday S/o Habibullah Banday R/o Sherwani Colony Khawa Bagh Barzulla Presently Housing Colony, Sanat Nagar Srinagar (Mortgagor/ Guarantor) to repay an amount of Rs.8,16,04,017.96 (Rupees Eight Crores Sixteen Lacs Four Thousand Seventeen and Ninety Six Paise) total outstanding as on 31.7.2022 in the accounts of the Borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized officer of the J & K Bank Ltd. has taken possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on this the 12thday of August2026 .

The said borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount aggregating to Rs.10,44,79,379.80 (Rupees Ten Crores Forty Four Lacs Seventy Nine Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Nine and Eighty Paise Only) as on 31.07.2026together with future interest thereon from 01.08.2026 and other charges incurred or to be incurred.

The borrower/s attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Property:-

1. Mortgage of land measuring 12 Kanals falling under Khasra No. 408 min, Khata No.152 and Khewat No.59 situated in Mouza Khoshal Pora Tehsil and District Baramulla standing in the name of Mr. Aijaz Ahmad BandayS/o Habibullah Banday R/o Sherwani Colony Khawa Bagh Barzulla Presently Housing Colony, Sanat Nagar Srinagar.

2. Registered mortgage of land measuring 07 Kanals & 05 Marlasfalling under Khasra No. 4696 min (03 Kanals 06 Marlas) and Khasra no. 4701 min (03 Kanal 19marlas) of Khata No. 716 and Khewat No.131 situated at Delina Baramulla standing in the name of Mrs. Asmat Aijaz Banday W/o Mr. Aijaz Ahmad Banday R/o Sherwani Colony Khawa Bagh Barzulla Presently Housing Colony, Sanat Nagar Srinagar

Dated:12.08.2026

Place: Srinagar

Aamir Bin Masood
(Authorized Officer)

You are Cordially Invited

to an

EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE & CAREER COUNSELLING EVENT

DATE

23rd August 2026

(Sunday)

TIME

10:00 AM

Venue

GRAND RAYAN

Hyderpora, Opp Jamkash Vehicleads, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

From

THE CONSULTANT EDUCATIONAL ADVISORS

359/4637 Sathu Bala Barbar Shah, Srinagar 190001.
Mob No. 9906566501
Email : theconsultantjtk@gmail.com

METRO INTER TRADE SERVICES PVT LTD

1st Floor Green Globe Tower, Hyderpora Bypass, Srinagar.
Mob No: 9541149348, 9796963999
Email: metrointertrade@gmail.com

Your presence and participation will be highly appreciated.

METRO INTRO TRADE SERVICES PVT. LTD.

MITS

URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR

MAURITIUS

OCCUPATION PERMIT

METRO INTER TRADE SERVICES PVT. LTD.

CV SELECTION

ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED BY COMPANY

MEDICAL/INSURANCE PROVIDED BY COMPANY

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY COMPANY

S. NO.	TRADE	SALARY (USD DOLLAR)	NOS	WORKING DAYS	WORKING HOURS
1	AUTOCAD/ REVIT DRAFTSMAN	1,000-1,500 (USD DOLLAR)	08	6 DAY'S	8 HOURS

BENEFITS

ACCOMMODATION: Provided by Company.
MEDICAL/INSURANCE: Provided by Company.
TRANSPORTATION: Provided by Company.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

DUTY HOURS: 8 HOURS
ONE WEEK OFF.
EXPERIENCE: MINIMUM 3 - 5 YEAR

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

PROVIDE CONTACT NUMBER
Please send CV's, Experience Certificates, passport copy and Photographs.
If you require further clarification please contact immediately to our office.

CONTACT US

9541149348
9796963999

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING SKILLED PROFESSIONALS TO OUR TEAM!

FROM SRINAGAR TO A GLOBAL STAGE

Kashmir-Born Gatoes Joins Qashier in Restaurant Tech Deal



KO Web Desk

SRINAGAR: In a moment being hailed as a defining milestone for Jammu & Kashmir's startup ecosystem, hometown restaurant technology platform Gatoes has been acquired by Qashier, a global leader in point-of-sale and restaurant management solutions. The deal marks one of the most significant startup exits to emerge from the region and underscores the growing global relevance of tech ventures built outside India's traditional startup hubs.

Founded by Jibran Gulzar, a Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia honoree, Gatoes set out to solve a problem familiar to restaurant owners everywhere: how to grow online orders without being squeezed by steep marketplace commissions. In a market long dominated by discount-driven aggregators, Gatoes took a different route — building a SaaS-style infrastructure model that gave restaurants more control over pricing, margins, and their relationship with customers. **Built for Restaurants, Not Just on Top of Them**

Rather than positioning itself as another delivery marketplace, Gatoes built a full-stack merchant enablement platform — combining order management, digital customer reach, and marketing tools into one system tailored to independent restaurants. The philosophy was simple: help restaurants own their digital growth instead of renting

it from an aggregator.

That approach resonated. At its peak, Gatoes had:

- Onboarded 3,000+ restaurant partners
- Built a customer base of over 2.2 million users
- Facilitated millions of digital orders
- Created employment for 400+ people across Kashmir, spanning delivery, operations, and merchant support roles

The traction wasn't slow to arrive either. Within its first seven months — as a fully bootstrapped venture — Gatoes had already crossed \$1 million in total order value and onboarded over 1,450 merchants, quickly making it one of the most talked-about startups to come out of Jammu & Kashmir. Along the way, the company drew backing from private and angel investors, including individuals behind billion-dollar companies — an early signal of confidence in both the model and the market opportunity.

Winning Without Playing the Discount Game

Competing against giants like Swiggy and Zomato is not for the faint-hearted, and Gatoes made a deliberate choice early on: it would not chase customers through subsidy wars. Instead, it doubled down on restaurant economics — helping merchants protect margins and build direct customer relationships, even in one of India's most fiercely contested consumer internet categories.

Gold Falls For Second Day To Rs 1.56 Lakh/10g As Profit-Taking Weighs

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices fell for the second straight session on Friday, declining Rs 800 to Rs 1,56,200 per 10 grams in the national capital as profit-taking and weak global cues weighed on bullion. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,57,000 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Silver, however, remained unchanged at Rs 2,40,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes), according to local traders.

"Gold pulled back on Friday amid weaker global cues, with spot yellow metal edging lower despite softer-than-expected US producer-price data," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

The decline was largely driven by profit-taking after the recent rally, while investors remained cautious about adding fresh positions at elevated levels, he added.

In the international markets, spot gold was trading marginally lower to USD 4,351.01 per ounce while silver went rose 0.33 per cent to USD 64.68 per ounce.

"Gold extended its decline to



test support around USD 4,300 on profit booking and tentative selling as oil prices recover," said Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

He noted that crude oil has bounced back on Friday as the US prepares more economic measures against Iran to get the Strait of Hormuz open.

Gandhi said gold's upside also remained constrained by geopolitical uncertainty, with diplomatic efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz remaining deadlocked.

"Any disruption to regional oil supplies could revive inflation concerns and complicate the Federal Reserve's policy outlook, potentially limiting gains in assets such as gold despite the recent improvement in US inflation data," he added.

SC Slams FSSAI Over Delay In Packaged Food Warning Labels

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Supreme Court on Thursday slammed the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) over a delay in introducing warning labels on packaged foods and asked if the government "does not want its people to be healthy".

The top court was hearing a PIL of public charitable trust 3S and Our Health Society seeking directions to the Centre, states and Union territories to implement mandatory front-of-package warning labels (FOPL) on packaged foods.

A bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran said FOPL labels are necessary to create awareness, especially among growing children who are becoming addicted to junk food.

"Are you taking the court for a toss?" Justice Pardiwala questioned Additional Solicitor General Brijender Chahar.

The top court noted that there



was no progress on its order regarding the issue of labelling.

"We are doing this in public interest. Keep it in mind. We are not doing it for ourselves. Why are you not abiding by our order? We know the pressure on you. Will you do it on your own or should we pass an order?" Justice Pardiwala observed.

The plea referred to India's growing burden of non-communicable diseases and claimed FOPL would highlight the presence of

high levels of sugar, salt and saturated fats -- key contributors to serious health issues such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers.

It highlighted the alarming surge in lifestyle diseases across the country and said non-communicable diseases were now responsible for over 6 million deaths annually in the country, with diabetes emerging as a silent epidemic affecting nearly one in four Indians.

Deceased JK Bank Customer's Family Gets ₹2.55 Cr Insurance Claim

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR, AUG 14: In a major relief to a bereaved family, J&K Bank has facilitated the settlement of life insurance claims worth ₹2.55 crore for the legal heirs of a deceased High Net Worth Individual (HNI) customer of its Residency Road branch in Srinagar.

The settlement, covering multiple insurance policies, was completed swiftly, providing financial support to the family at a difficult time and underscoring the importance of adequate life insurance protection, a J&K Bank spokesman told Kashmir Observer.

At a function held to mark the settlement, J&K Bank's Zonal Head Srinagar Sheikh Mohammad Muzaffar, along with PNB MetLife Associate Director and Relationship Head Irfan Ali Zargar, handed over a symbolic claim-settlement cheque to Residency Road Branch Head Tajamul Qadri.



Project Head Sheikh Yasir Arafat, Regional Manager Sajid Ali Khan and Zonal Insurance Coordinator Tahseena were also present.

Muzaffar said the settlement demonstrated the importance of insurance in helping families maintain financial stability following the loss of a breadwinner.

"While no financial compensation can make up for the loss of a loved one, adequate insurance protection can help a family retain financial stability and face the future

with greater confidence," he said.

PNB MetLife's Irfan Ali Zargar said the settlement reflected the trust customers place in the institution and its insurance partner.

"Insurance is not just about financial protection; it is about keeping promises to our customers and their families," Zargar said.

The settlement also highlights the partnership between J&K Bank and PNB MetLife in providing insurance solutions and financial protection to customers.

Current Account Deficit Widens To USD 6.2 Bn In Jun: RBI Data

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- India's current account deficit widened to USD 6.2 billion in June from a surplus of USD 1.2 billion in the year-ago month, according to preliminary data released by the Reserve Bank of India on Friday.

The current account deficit was primarily driven by a widening merchandise trade deficit, which rose to USD 30.2 billion in June 2026 from USD 19.2 billion a year earlier.

Merchandise exports increased to USD 41.2 billion in June from USD 35.3 billion in the year-ago month, while imports rose at a faster pace to USD 71.4 billion from USD 54.5 billion.

The data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also showed that the surplus in services increased to USD 17.9 billion in June 2026 from



USD 16.2 billion a year earlier.

Services exports rose to USD 36.4 billion from USD 32.1 billion, while imports increased to USD 18.5 billion from USD 15.9 billion.

Net transfers also rose to USD 11.9 billion in June from USD 10.9 billion, while net income deficit narrowed to USD 5.8 billion from USD 6.8 billion.

On the capital account front, net inflows stood at USD 9.1 billion in June 2026, compared with an outflow of USD 1.6 billion in

the year-ago month. Net foreign direct investment stood at USD 1.3 billion in June, while foreign portfolio investment recorded a net inflow of USD 2.5 billion.

The overall balance was positive at USD 2.9 billion in June 2026, against a deficit of USD 0.4 billion in June 2025.

During the April-June quarter, the merchandise trade deficit widened to USD 85.7 billion from USD 68.9 billion, while the services surplus increased to USD 52.2 billion from USD 47.9 billion.

Net transfers rose to USD 41.4 billion during April-June 2026 from USD 30.9 billion in the year-ago period.

The overall balance during the quarter was negative at USD 8.1 billion compared with a positive USD 4.5 billion in April-June 2025, the RBI data showed.

WPI Inflation Eases To 9.78% In July As Prices Cool

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Wholesale price inflation softened month-on-month for the first time in nine months to 9.78 per cent in July on easing in fuel and food prices.

Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation was 9.87 per cent in June.

This is the first time since October 2025 that WPI inflation has fallen month-on-month. The softening in July numbers is mainly on account of lower inflation in fuel & power even as inflation in primary articles and manufactured products accelerated.

"Across groups, mineral oils (containing petroleum products), food articles, manufacture of basic metals, non-food articles, manufacture of food products, and manufacture of chemicals and chemical products have been major drivers of WPI inflation in July 2026," the commerce and industry ministry said while releasing the monthly Wholesale Price Index (WPI) data on Friday.

Wholesale inflation in fuel and power dropped to 20.05 per cent in July, as against 27.41 per cent in June.

Inflation in food articles too eased marginally to 5.44 per cent in July from 5.49 per cent in June.

However, manufactured products saw an uptick in inflation at 8.29 per cent in July,



as against 7.48 per cent in June.

As per the data, the output Producer Price Index (PPI) - which the government has said will eventually replace the WPI in about 5 years -- remained unchanged at 9.6 per cent YoY in July vis-a-vis June.

Output PPI saw lower inflation in manufacturing and mining, but higher agriculture and electricity PPI nullified those gains.

In a research note, Barclays said the direction of the WPI has reversed and WPI inflation should soften in coming months as global prices seem to have peaked.

"In our view, WPI inflation has peaked and gradual and modest disinflation from hereon should continue, in line with relatively lower global commodity prices in general and crude oil price in particular (since June)," Barclays said.

The war in West Asia war which began on February 28 and the resultant blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, through which the majority of crude oil is imported into India, has kept WPI elevated with pressure on global crude and fertiliser costs.

Agoda: European Interest in India Surges for Summer 2026



KO Web Desk

NEW DELHI- Digital travel platform Agoda has unveiled its ranking of European travel interest to Asia, based on accommodation search data from April to June 2026 for travel during July and August. India emerged as the fastest-growing destination, recording a 14 percent year-on-year increase in searches compared to the same period last year.

The United Kingdom was the largest European market driving travel interest to India, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Italy, based on accommodation search volumes.

While these markets saw the highest overall travel interest, several emerging European markets recorded notable year-on-year growth in accommodation searches compared to 2025. Slovakia led with a 148 percent increase, followed by Croatia at 128 percent and Ireland at 88 percent.

For Europeans, July and August mark the height of summer and a peak travel period, when schools break and holiday plans come to life. In 2026, Thailand retains its

crown as the most-searched Asian destination among European travelers for the second consecutive year, Indonesia shifts to second place, and Japan takes third.

Across the top 20 destinations, India saw the most notable year-on-year growth in European searches at 14percent , followed by South Korea at 13 percent and Vietnam at 12 percent . These three markets stand out as the region's fastest rising European summer travel interest, pointing to a growing appetite for diverse itineraries beyond Asia's traditional hotspots.

Among destinations within India, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Goa emerged as the most-searched cities among European travelers for summer 2026. As India's primary international gateways, New Delhi and Mumbai serve as key metropolitan hubs that connect travelers to destinations across the country while also offering rich cultural, culinary, and urban experiences. Complementing these gateway cities, Goa continues to attract European visitors with its beaches, vibrant hospitality scene, and laid-back coastal charm.

Concessional Swap Facility Attracts USD 56.85 Bn Forex Inflows: RBI

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The Reserve Bank on Friday said its concessional swap facility, introduced to encourage foreign currency inflows, has attracted USD 56.84 billion till August 13.

Based on the encouraging response to the swap facility for FCNR (B) deposits and the resultant forex inflows, the RBI said the facility will be available only for deposits mobilised till August 31.

Earlier, the cut-off date for Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) or FCNR (B) deposits was September 30. Under the FCNR (B) scheme, banks offer attractive interest rates to mobilise foreign currency deposits.

"The Swaps under this facility, i.e. FCNR (B) deposits, may be availed with the RBI till September 11, 2026," it said in a statement.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also said the Scheme for ECBs and OFCBs will continue to be open till December 31, 2026, as hitherto.

Of the total inflows, FCNR (B) deposits accounted for USD 52.3 billion, while Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) contributed USD

2,805 billion and External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) amounted to USD 1.741 billion.

The concessional swap facility was operationalised on June 8, 2026.

The measures were announced as part of the RBI's efforts to strengthen India's external sector position and support foreign exchange liquidity amid global market uncertainties.

In recent months, the rupee has witnessed significant depreciation against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, India's forex reserves jumped USD 14.136 billion to USD 707.002 billion during the week ended August 7, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall kitty had jumped by USD 10.512 billion to USD 692.866 billion in the previous reporting week ended July 31.

The reserves had expanded to an all-time high of USD 728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year before the onset of the West Asia conflict that led to several weeks of drops as the rupee came under pressure and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales.

Stock Markets End Lower Amid Geopolitical Uncertainty

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday as elevated oil prices and the prolonged US-Iran impasse weighed on investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 70.71 points, or 0.09 per cent, to settle at 78,009.25. During the day, it declined 395.59 points, or 0.50 per cent, to 77,684.37.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 29.85 points, or 0.12 per cent, to end at 24,366.

From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, InterGlobe Aviation, NTPC, Power Grid, State Bank of India and HCL Tech were among the major laggards. Bharati Airtel, Adani Ports, ICICI Bank and Titan were among the winners.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.17 per cent to USD 87.15 per barrel.

"Indian equity markets ended largely unchanged on Friday, struggling to build on supportive global cues as persistent uncertainty surrounding the US-Iran standoff and the Strait of Hormuz kept investors cautious heading into the weekend. De-

spite a softer US inflation reading and record closes on Wall Street, elevated crude oil prices and the absence of any diplomatic breakthrough continued to cap risk appetite," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Geopolitical tensions remained the dominant market driver, he added.

"Indian equity markets ended lower on Friday as renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East pushed crude oil prices higher, overshadowing the positive global cues from Wall Street's record close. A notable positive for the domestic market was the Nifty-50's ability to defend the 24,325 support zone for the second consecutive session," Hariselman Radhakrishnan, Founder & CEO of HST Wealth, a Research Analyst firm, said.

The BSE SmallCap Select index declined 0.65 per cent and the MidCap Select index dipped 0.13 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Housing Finance declined 1.40 per cent, MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt 0.58 per cent, MidSmall Private Banks 0.46 per cent, Oil & Gas 0.45 per cent, Enrgy 0.44 per cent and Services 0.39 per cent.

BSNL Announces New Digital Services On 80th I-Day

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has announced a series of customer-centric initiatives and special offerings, including expansion of its indigenous 4G network and additional validity for prepaid subscribers, on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has ordered over 602 additional 4G Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, in addition to 2,247 sites already planned for deployment -- 1,843 in J&K and 404 in Ladakh.

Addressing a press conference here, Chief General Manager Telecom, J&K Circle, Kush Kumar said, "BSNL remained committed to providing reliable, secure and affordable telecom services, particularly in geographically challenging areas, while advancing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and digital India".

"BSNL has ordered over 602 additional 4G Base Transceiver Stations (BTS) for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, in addition to 2,247 sites planned earlier. Of these, 1,757 4G BTS in J&K and 343 in Ladakh have already been

commissioned, further expanding coverage across urban, rural and remote areas," the manager said.

The network has also been optimised to improve coverage, data speeds, call quality and overall customer experience, using an indigenous technology platform that is 5G-upgradable.

As part of the Independence Day offerings, BSNL announced its Re 1 Freedom 2.0 offer for new customers, providing 1 GB data per day, 100 SMS per day and unlimited voice calls with a validity of 24 days, he said.

"The company also introduced the fibre freedom plan at a special launch price of Rs 1,111 per month, offering speeds of up to 200 Mbps, 5,000 GB monthly data and access to more than 25 premium OTT platforms."

BSNL also unveiled its revamped BSNL Selfcare New mobile application for Android and iOS users, he said, adding that "the app enables prepaid recharges, bill payments, complaint registration and tracking, DND management, payment history, fibre booking, AI chatbot support, voice search, multiple-account management and access to entertainment services".

Infantino Gets Backing From Six Arab Federations Amid FIFA Revolt

AP
DOHA: The heads of six Arab soccer federations expressed their "full support" and "confidence" in Gianni Infantino on Thursday as the embattled FIFA president fights to keep his job after his failed World Cup private investment plan.
The backing came from 2030 World Cup co-host Morocco, Qatar, Egypt, Mauritania, Lebanon and Sudan, with four of the signatories being FIFA council members.
"We, the undersigned leaders of our respective football associations, express our full support for Mr. Gianni Infantino, President of FIFA, and reaffirm our confidence in his leadership and continued commitment to the development of football worldwide," the statement read.
"We deeply appreciate Mr. Infantino's sustained efforts to advance football globally, expand opportunities across all regions and strengthen the game's role

in bringing people and communities together."
The statement said the signatories "look forward to continuing our close cooperation with him towards a stronger and more prosperous future for world football, expanding opportunities and further enhancing Arab football's contribution to the global game."
Infantino is facing a revolt after his plan to sell stakes in the World Cup to private equity investors. He withdrew the \$20 billion proposal after a furious backlash by global soccer officials, including European body UEFA, which has warned of a boycott of all FIFA games and events.
UEFA teamed up with CONCACAF — the confederation for North, Central America and the Caribbean — and the Asian Football Confederation — and issued an open letter Monday saying Infantino's plan was a "fundamental breach of trust" and described it as "deception."



And on Thursday, the Football Association of Ireland said in a statement it has withdrawn its support for Infantino to be re-elected as FIFA president in March, saying "recent events have raised significant concerns regarding governance, transparency and the lack of meaningful consultation."
The soccer federations in England and Wales did the same last week, while Northern Ireland said it was backing UEFA's stance.
New Zealand Football issued a statement Friday local time saying it had withdrawn its support for the candidature of Infantino and was seeking an independent review of steps taken to develop

the FIFA Forward Enterprise scheme.
New Zealand Football broke ranks with its Oceania confederation, saying it "formed the view that decisions and actions within FIFA have contributed to a breakdown in trust and increased division within international football, and that an independent review is required to restore confidence and trust."
Without commenting on Infantino's position, the OFC said it welcomed FIFA's decision to withdraw the FFE proposal and its commitment to review the issues surrounding the project.
"OFC recognizes the progress achieved over the last decade in advancing football development in Oceania under FIFA's leadership and encourages FIFA to use the review as an opportunity to identify and implement any changes that may be necessary," the statement said.
Schism in Asian bloc over Infantino supportBy expressing support for Infantino, Qatar and Lebanon aligned against the Asian Football Confederation. Infantino's official Instagram account previously has posted letters of support from several member federations, including Morocco, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.
The four FIFA council members among the signatories were Qatar Football Association president Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Egyptian Football Association president Hany Abo Rida, Moroccan Football Federation president Fouzi Lekjaa and Mauritanian Football Federation president Ahmed Yahya.
The other two were Lebanese Football Association president Hashem Haidar and Moatasem Gafar, president of the Sudan Football Association.
Infantino has been FIFA president since 2016 and seemed sure to be re-elected unopposed next year in Morocco.
FIFA has set a Nov. 18 deadline for challengers to come forward.

Akhtar: I Could Have Taken 400 Test Wickets Under Imran

Press Trust of India
KARACHI: Pakistan's express fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has said he could have reached 400 Test wickets had he played under the dynamic leadership of Imran Khan.
One of the most feared pacers of his generation, Shoaib, who took 178 wickets in 46 Tests, retired from international cricket during the 2011 World Cup in India amid reported differences with then captain Shahid Afridi.
Appearing on a Geo TV show, Shoaib said pointed out that he had taken more than 400 wickets in first-class cricket before suggesting that playing under his dream captain Imran Khan could have made a significant difference.
"If I had played earlier under the fiery leadership of Imran Khan I would have



also produced some memorable performances, particularly during Pakistan's 1999 tour of India and later at the 1999 World Cup in England, where Pakistan finished runners-up to Australia in the final at Lord's.
Shoaib also spoke about the physical damage he suffered because of his career which lasted from 1997-2011. The former pacer also reflected on the punishing routine he followed to keep himself fit and recover from injuries.
"I had to wake up three hours before everyone else. I had to cycle first, then go to the gym. My knees would get jammed and lock up."
"I would have fluid drained from them, apply medication, and ice them," said the 51-year-old who also took 247 wickets in 163 ODIs and 21 wickets in 15 T20Is.
handing the young pacer his debut, believing the timing was not right.
The relationship between the two fast bowlers remained complicated over the years, with moments of both admiration and friction.
Their bowling partnership

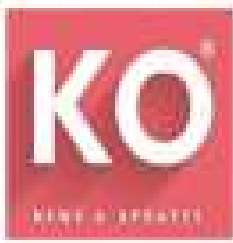
Tanzid's Maiden Century Puts Bangladesh in Command Against Australia

AP
DARWIN (AUSTRALIA): Tanzid Hasan posted his maiden century in just his second Test to help guide Bangladesh to 351-6 at stumps Friday and into commanding position over top-ranked Australia after two days of the series opener.
Tanzid raised his hundred with a single off Nathan Lyon from 188 deliveries but after a patient and resilient innings, he added just more run before he lofted a ball from the veteran Australian spinner to Mitchell Starc at long-off soon after.
He shared two big, important partnerships to set No. 9-ranked Bangladesh on course for a big first-inning lead, combining with Mominul Haque (49) in a 102-run second-wicket stand and 93 with skipper



Najmul Hossain Shanto for the third.
Shanto went on to score 84 from 126 deliveries before he was one of the three wickets to fall in a four-over period soon after the Australians took the second new ball.
Bangladesh resumed Friday at 96-1, 102 behind on the first innings after dismissing Australia for 198, and finished Day 2 with a 153-run lead and four wickets in hand.

In their first test on Australian soil since 2003, the Bangladesh players were just as disciplined with the bat as they were with the ball on the opening day.
Mehidy Hassan Miraz (32) and Hasan Mahmud (13) shared a 43-run unbroken partnership for the seventh wicket to get Bangladesh to stumps in the kind of position that few expected ahead of the series.
The reunion of Australia's so-called Big Four — pacemen Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Starc and veteran off-spinner Lyon has so far been blunted by the visiting batters in the warm, tropical conditions of far north Australia.
The two-test "Top End" series starts a heavy 12-month schedule for the Australians that will feature 20 test matches, including tours to South Africa, India and England.



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CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K All Set For

An official said that the civil administration and security agencies had completed preparations for the August 15 celebrations, with functions scheduled at district, sub-divisional and block levels across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will pre-side over the main Independence Day function at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar, while Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary will lead the main celebration at Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu.

The administration has made arrangements for ceremonial functions, including parades, cultural programmes and other activities, officials said. Full dress rehearsals have also been conducted at various venues ahead of the celebrations.

Security has been strengthened across Jammu and Kashmir, particularly around major venues, sensitive installations, highways, entry and exit points and vulnerable areas along the Line of Control and International Border.

The security grid has been reinforced along stretches of the LoC, including the Gurez, Uri, Karnah and Tangdhar sectors of North Kashmir and the Sunderbani area of Jammu, the official said.

Additional surveillance and area domination measures have also been put in place along the International Border in the Jammu region, with security personnel maintaining round-the-clock patrolling and monitoring of sensitive locations.

Another official said troops deployed along the LoC had intensified patrolling and surveillance while maintaining close coordination to detect and respond to any suspicious movement or possible infiltration attempt.

"Security forces have also deployed modern surveillance equipment, including drones and quadcopters equipped with high-resolution cameras and night-vision capabilities, in difficult and vulnerable areas," the official said.

He said smart fencing and electronic surveillance systems had been strengthened at vulnerable points to supplement physical barriers and improve detection capabilities along the borders.

"Rapid response teams and specialised units have been kept ready for quick deployment to sensitive locations, while bulletproof and all-terrain vehicles are being used to facilitate movement in mountainous and difficult terrain," he added.

The official said security forces had also conducted operational exercises to sharpen their response to possible infiltration attempts and attacks on forward positions.

Recently, troops in the Sunderbani sector conducted drills simulating infiltration and attacks on fortified positions to test co-ordination, firepower and rapid-response capabilities.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police have also intensified checking and surveillance in sensitive and border areas while strengthening security at key entry and exit points, officials said.

"Security agencies are maintaining close coordination and sharing intelligence inputs to prevent any attempt to disrupt the Independence Day celebrations or exploit increased movement during the occasion," the official added.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has appealed to people across the Union Territory to participate in the Independence Day celebrations in large numbers and attend functions being organised at district and other levels.

Officials said public participation would add to the spirit of the national celebration and make the programmes across Jammu and Kashmir more inclusive.

The administration urged people to join the celebrations peacefully and observe Independence Day with enthusiasm and patriotic spirit.

With security arrangements and civil preparations completed, authorities said all necessary measures had been put in place for the smooth conduct of August 15 functions across Jammu and Kashmir.

51 JKP Personnel

awarded the second bar to the Medal for Gallantry, while Head Constable Rayeesh Ahmad Reshi and Selection Grade Constable Ishfaq Ahmed Khan have been awarded the first bar to the GM.

The other personnel selected for the Medal for Gallantry include Waseem Mohi-Ud-Din Lone, Manzoor Ahmad, Mudasir Ahmad, Ashak Hussain P, Kishore Kumar, Javid Iqbal Jan, Mohinder Singh, Sheeraz Ahmad, Surinder Paul, Ishfaq Ahmad Reshi, Tanveer Hussain Lone, Mudasir Ahmad Shah, Kalu Din, Adit Kumar Nad, Mohd Usman, Shabir Ahmad Malik, Manzoor Ahmad Ganie, Khurshid Ahmed Wani, Mushtaq Ahmad Shah, Ab Rashid Mir, Mohamad Shafi Bandy, Abdul Rashid, Zahoor Ahmad, Zahoor Ahmad, Dheeraj Kumar, Shakir Hassan, Vikram Nag, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan and Tariq Ahmad.

The 13 J&K Police personnel selected for the Medal for Meritorious Service are SP Sandeep Kumar, SP Amit Gupta, DSP Rajesh Sharma, DSP Muzaffar Ahmad Shah, DSP Kuljeet Singh, DSP Sharat Chander Singh, Inspector Shamim Ahmed, Inspector Vikram Singh, ASI Bodh Raj, Inspector Mumin Ahmad Rather, ASI Mushtaq Ahmed, Sub-Inspector Manzoor Ahmad Gada and Constable Ashraf Gull.

Separately, one J&K Home Guard and Civil Defence personnel has also been selected for the Medal for Meritorious Service.

The honours recognise personnel for acts of gallantry and distinguished and meritorious service in the police and other uniformed services on the occasion of Independence Day.

Govt Taking Steps

of the 80th Independence Day, Murmu said students are the "architects of India's future" and stressed the need for collective efforts to safeguard their present and future.

"Public examinations become gateways to opportunities for our students. The government is undertaking comprehensive steps to reform these examinations," she said.

She said the objective of the reforms was to completely curb the use of unfair means in public examinations and make the examination system "more transparent, more secure, and more trustworthy" for the youth.

The President's remarks come amid concerns over irregularities and paper leaks in competitive examinations, with student and youth groups in recent times demanding systemic reforms, faster investigations and stringent action against those responsible.

Murmu said public examinations play a crucial role in determining opportunities for students and called for joint efforts by the government and society to protect the interests of young people.

Highlighting the growing role of youth in the country's development, she said 65 per cent of India's population is below the age of 35 and described young people as the country's "most valuable asset".

She said many young Indians were embracing self-employment and a culture of job creation, contributing to the growth of the country's startup ecosystem.

"Many of our youth are embracing the culture of job creation as they pursue the path of self-employment," she said.

The President also highlighted the growing recognition of Indian youth globally, saying major global enterprises were impressed by their talent and dedication and were entrusting them with leadership roles.

She stressed that the physical and mental well-being of young people was equally important for the country's future and highlighted sports as an important avenue for youth development and nation-building.

Under the Khelo India programme, she said, a sports ecosystem was being developed from the grassroots to the national level, with increased government investment helping Indian sportspersons achieve significant gains in international competitions.

Turning to national security, Murmu lauded the "unmatched valour" of the Indian Armed Forces and said Operation Sindoor demonstrated the country's capability to conduct precision counter-terror operations.

Referring to Kargil Vijay Diwas and Operation Sindoor, she said India had once again remembered the courage and sacrifice of its armed forces.

"On the 26th of July, we observed Kargil Vijay Diwas. Earlier, on the 7th of May, we commemorated the completion of one year since the launch of Operation Sindoor. We remembered the unmatched valour of our Armed Forces. That historic operation against terrorism demonstrated the capability of the Indian Armed Forces to act with precision," she said.

She said the operation sent a clear warning to terrorists and those supporting them. "It sent a clear and firm message to terrorists and those who support them, that no matter where they hide, they will have to face the consequences of their actions," Murmu said.

The President also described the decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty as a "decisive step" in the national interest, particularly for farmers.

On internal security, she termed the eradication of Naxalism a major achievement after decades of struggle.

"For decades, Naxalism posed a serious challenge to the nation. Making India Naxal free is a major achievement. Today, enthusiasm prevails in the areas once affected by Naxalism," she said.

She pointed to development initiatives and greater local participation in areas once affected by Naxalism, including the Bastar Olympics and Bastar Pandum festival.

India's Economy Remains Resilient
Highlighting India's economic performance, Murmu said the country continues to move ahead as the world's fastest-growing major economy despite warfare and instability in several parts of the world.

"Even in such trying circumstances, our economy is moving ahead as the fastest growing major economy in the world," she said.

According to economic projections, she added, India's growth rate is expected to be more than twice the average global growth rate.

Murmu said the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan had further strengthened the foundations of India's economic progress and national security.

She also highlighted welfare achievements, saying more than 25 crore people had been lifted out of poverty.

Nearly 59 crore account holders, she said, had joined the banking system under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, including more than 32 crore women. She also said food security had been ensured for more than 80 crore people through free rations.

India Accounts For Over Half Of Global Real-Time Digital Transactions

The President highlighted India's technological transformation, saying the country had developed the world's largest and most advanced digital infrastructure.

She said India now accounts for more than half of the world's real-time digital transactions, with digital payments becoming increasingly common among street vendors and in small rural shops.

Technology, she said, had also enabled the government to deliver welfare benefits directly to citizens in a transparent manner.

Murmu also highlighted the expansion of highways, waterways, railways and airways, saying the rapid development of infrastructure was creating new business opportunities, generating employment and boosting investor confidence.

Women's Empowerment A Key Focus
Women's empowerment also featured prominently in the President's address.

She said the initial target of creating three crore Lakhpati Didis had been achieved and that the government was now working towards creating three crore more.

"Our girls are performing exceptionally well in education and diverse sectors, from the Drone Didi enhancing agricultural productivity to the Fighter Combat Leader in the Air Force," she said.

Murmu also highlighted India's performance at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, where women won eight of India's 13 gold medals.

She referred to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam enacted in 2023, which provides for reservation of 33 per cent of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies, saying the measure would make Indian democracy more inclusive.

India Ahead Of Several 2030 SDG Targets

On sustainable development, Murmu said India was playing a leading role globally in protecting the environment and had achieved several Sustainable Development Goals targeted for 2030 ahead of schedule.

She said renewable energy development had gained unprecedented momentum in recent years.

The President also invoked a Santali poem by Pandit Raghunath Murmu and urged citizens to remain committed to protecting nature and human values. She linked individual responsibility with initiatives such as Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam and Lifestyle for Environment.

India's Digital And Physical Infrastructure Expands

Murmu said India's digital transformation had provided a model for the world, with the country accounting for more than half of global real-time digital transactions.

She said the expansion of physical infrastructure across highways, waterways, railways and airways was opening new avenues for investment, employment and economic activity.

The President also highlighted India's growing startup ecosystem and the contribution of young innovators to the country's technological progress.

India's Growing Global Role

On foreign policy, Murmu said peace, dialogue, cooperation and the principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam remained the foundation of India's international relations.

"We believe in a rules-based international order. Our endeavour is to ensure that the global community receives appropriate representation in the United Nations and other multilateral organisations," she said.

She also highlighted India's growing stature among the Global South.

On India's civilisational heritage, the President noted that Sarnath, the site associated with Lord Buddha's first sermon, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List this year.

She also recalled the listing of 12 Maratha military forts the previous year.

Free Healthcare For Senior Citizens

Murmu also spoke about the growing number of senior citizens in India, noting that the country has both the world's largest young population and a rising elderly population.

She said around six crore senior citizens aged 70 and above could now avail themselves of free healthcare services of up to Rs 5 lakh per year under government initiatives.

She called upon society to remain sensitive towards senior citizens and uphold their dignity.

India's March Towards Viksit Bharat

The President said India was moving steadily towards the goal of building a Viksit Bharat by 2047, driven by economic resilience, digital infrastructure and empowered youth and women.

She stressed that, guided by the spirit of Antyodaya, the core resolve should be to ensure that the benefits of development reach every individual.

Murmu also paid homage to freedom fighters and national leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, B R Ambedkar and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, recalling Patel's role in integrating more than 550 princely states.

She solemnly remembered those who lost their lives or were displaced during Partition, observed on August 14 as Vibhajan Vibheeshika Smriti Divas.

Quoting Telugu writer Gurajada Apparao, the President said, "A nation is not just its land, a nation is all its people," and urged citizens to contribute wholeheartedly towards transforming independent India into a fully developed nation by 2047.

Approves 78 Gallantry

of the 80th Independence Day. The awards included nine Kirti Chakras, 19 Shaurya Chakras, five Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry) and 36 Sena Medals (Gallantry).

Kirti Chakra is India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award after Ashoka Chakra. Shaurya Chakra is the third-highest peacetime gallantry award.

The Kirti Chakra awardees are Lt Col Manoj Francis of 21 Para (Special Forces) and Major Jitendra Rathee of 2 Para (Special Forces). Seven other Kirti Chakras were conferred posthumously.

The armed forces personnel granted the prestigious awards posthumously included Havildar Gajendra Singh of 2 Para (Special Forces); Head Constables Jagbir Singh and Bashir Ahmad; Constables Jaswant Singh, Balvinder Singh and Tariq Hussain; and

Inspector Sunil Kumar.

The Shaurya Chakra awardees are Major Paramveer from 36 Rashtriya Rifles, Major Tarun Vasudevan from 57 Rashtriya Rifles, Major Keshav Kumar from 12 Dogra Regiment, Major Gaurav Singh Brijwal from 21 Grenadiers, Major Vipeen Kumar from 11 Rashtriya Rifles, Naib Subedar Shankar Ram from 3 Assam Rifles and Naib Subedar Dabbal Singh Bisht from 21 Para (Special Forces).

Other recipients of the award are Havildar Jagattar Singh from 4 Para (Special Forces), Lance Naik Narender Sindhu from 9 Rashtriya Rifles (posthumous), Lance Naik Kapil Dev from 11 Rashtriya Rifles, Sepoy Jaswinder Singh from 7 Sikh Light Infantry, Lieutenant Commander Shivam Kumar from the Indian Navy, and Squadron Leader Sudhir Kumar of the Indian Air Force.

The remaining Shaurya Chakra awardees are: Deputy Superintendent Dheeraj Singh Katoch, Inspector Ajay Singh Chib, Deputy Superintendent Sukhvir Singh, Assistant Sub-Inspector Niyaz Ahmad, Deputy Commandant Anjani Kumar, and Constable Deepak Sah.

Partition Victims'

impacted by Partition. It was a moment in history that tore apart several lives — families were uprooted, loved ones were lost and immense suffering was endured," Modi said in a post on X.

The Prime Minister said that despite the turmoil, those affected by Partition rebuilt their lives from nothing, overcame adversity and contributed to the country's progress.

"Their lives remind everyone of the strength of the human spirit," he said.

Modi called upon citizens to draw lessons from the painful chapter of history and strengthen harmony and brotherhood in the country.

"May this day deepen our resolve to preserve harmony and brotherhood in our nation and collectively work towards building a 'Viksit Bharat,'" he said.

He also urged people to further strengthen the national spirit of goodwill and unity. India will celebrate its 80th Independence Day on Saturday.

PM Hails President's Address

In a separate post, Modi said President Droupadi Murmu's address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day had inspired the country to work with renewed determination towards building a Viksit Bharat.

The Prime Minister said the President's thoughts reflected the strength of the nation and the aspirations of its people.

"Her message inspires us all to work with renewed determination for a Viksit Bharat," Modi said.

He described Murmu's address as motivating and thoughtful.

In her address, the President underlined that students were the "architects of India's future" and said the government was undertaking comprehensive measures to reform public examinations and completely curb paper leaks and unfair means.

She said the reforms were aimed at making the examination system more transparent, secure and trustworthy for young people.

Murmu also stressed the need for collective efforts by the government and society to safeguard the present and future of students, drawing a parallel with the unity required to protect national security.

The President also highlighted India's economic resilience, saying the country remained the world's fastest-growing major economy despite global instability.

She highlighted the role of youth, women, digital infrastructure and entrepreneurship in India's development and reiterated the goal of building a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Modi's remarks came a day before India's 80th Independence Day celebrations, with the Prime Minister scheduled to address the nation from the Red Fort on Saturday.

HC Orders J&K

other modes, including print and electronic media, so that both commuters and transport operators are aware of the provisions.

In another direction, the Court asked the Department of Transport and the Traffic Police to work together and establish an effective mechanism through which aggrieved women can lodge complaints regarding denial of reserved seats or other related difficulties, along with a mechanism for their redressal.

The Court directed that its order be conveyed to the authorities concerned for immediate compliance and ordered them to submit a compliance report on the next date of hearing on October 6.

The PIL raises concerns regarding the implementation of measures intended to provide women with safer and more accessible public transport facilities in Jammu and Kashmir. The petitioner has sought effective enforcement of the government directions relating to reserved seating and mechanisms for protecting women commuters.

The petition also brings into focus the need for coordination among various departments responsible for regulating public transport and maintaining traffic discipline. The Court's direction requiring the Transport Department and Traffic Police to jointly formulate a complaint and redressal mechanism is aimed at addressing this aspect.

Youth Must Not

the victims of Partition was a duty towards humanity and stressed the need to preserve their memories with truthfulness, honesty and sensitivity.

He urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to treat the occasion as an opportunity for introspection and to reaffirm

their commitment to peace, harmony and national unity.

Addressing the youth, Sinha said they had a responsibility to ensure that the divisions and bitterness of the past did not shape the future.

"The youth of Jammu Kashmir must ensure that the mistakes of the past are never repeated in the future. Where walls were once raised, you must build bridges of trust and construct a Viksit Bharat that is inclusive," he said.

Sinha also recalled the displacement of families and communities from Pakistan-occupied Jammu Kashmir and Chhamb during Partition. He paid tribute to those who, he said, faced decades of discrimination within the Union Territory due to Article 370, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had granted them equal rights.

The LG also remembered the families who made sacrifices during the tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir months after Partition.

"Within a few months of partition, enemies of the nation carried out terror attack under the cover of tribal invasions. Indian army and people fought bravely," he said, paying tribute to the families whose "patience, hard work, and unbroken patriotism", he said, remained an integral part of the collective memory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sinha said Partition should not be viewed merely as a historical event, but as a living memory for millions of families who experienced displacement, loss and suffering.

He urged people, particularly the younger generation, to reject enmity and communal bitterness and work towards building bridges of trust.

The Lieutenant Governor also underlined India's diversity, saying the country's strength lay in its varied languages, cultures, traditions and beliefs.

"Through partition, enemies of the nation tried to destroy this spirit of unity in diversity, but India has continuously moved forward with pride and confidence," he said.

Sinha called for efforts to ensure that future generations remain aware of the pain of Partition while strengthening peace and harmony.

"We must take a pledge to acquaint future generations with the pain of partition, to strengthen peace and harmony, and to ensure that such a tragedy is never repeated," he said.

He also said building a self-reliant Jammu and Kashmir was a shared responsibility, while national unity remained central to the country's strength, security and collective progress.

During the programme, the Lieutenant Governor visited a photo exhibition on Partition Horrors Remembrance Day. A two-minute silence was also observed in memory of those who lost their lives during Partition.

The event featured a theatrical performance by artists depicting the trauma, hardship and displacement experienced by millions during the Partition.

Sinha extended his greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of the 80th Independence Day, paying tribute to freedom fighters and martyrs and calling for collective efforts to safeguard peace, unity and prosperity in the Union Territory.

In his message, Sinha paid homage to the leaders, freedom fighters and martyrs of India's freedom struggle and expressed gratitude to the Armed Forces, paramilitary forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police and other agencies for protecting the country's sovereignty and integrity.

"We honour the supreme sacrifice of the brave hearts who laid down their lives in the line of duty," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also felicitated the farmers, workers, business community, scientists, teachers, innovators, craftsmen, civil society groups, women and youth of Jammu and Kashmir, acknowledging their contribution to the development and stature of the Union Territory.

Sinha said the diversity of Jammu and Kashmir must be cherished while national unity and integrity should be protected.

"Let us cherish the diversity behind our strength while fiercely protecting our national unity and integrity at any cost. This is the core message of Independence Day," he said.

Highlighting the Union Territory's development trajectory, the LG said Jammu and Kashmir had firmly embarked on a path of rapid socio-economic growth and witnessed significant progress in recent years.

He said the Union Territory had received a "powerful developmental boost", with several major projects nearing completion and work on key infrastructure initiatives progressing rapidly.

"These initiatives are ensuring that the benefits of development reach every corner of the region. I am confident that we will scale new heights of prosperity in the near future," Sinha said.

He called upon citizens to renew their commitment to working together towards building a strong, self-reliant and developed Jammu and Kashmir.

"I urge all citizens of the Union Territory to join hands in safeguarding peace and prosperity," he said.

Sinha expressed confidence that Jammu and Kashmir would soon emerge as one of the leading developed regions in the country and make a significant contribution to the vision of a developed India.

"The day is fast approaching when our beloved Jammu Kashmir will emerge as one of the leading developed regions in the country, significantly contributing to the vision of a developed India," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor concluded his message by extending his warm wishes to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on Independence Day.



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