



CM Omar Abdullah deutes his Cabinet colleagues across country to ensure safety of J&K residents

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: In light of recent incidents and to reinforce a sense of security among students and businesspersons from Jammu & Kashmir residing in various parts of the country, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today directed the deployment of Cabinet Ministers to key cities across India.

These senior representatives of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir have been tasked with coordinating closely with their counterparts in the respective State Governments. Their mandate is to ensure the safety, dignity and well-being of J&K residents

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



Amit Shah assures full support for safety of J&K residents outside UT: Omar Abdullah

■ HT News Network/UNI

SRINAGAR, APR 25 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said the Union Home Minister has assured full support and concrete measures to ensure the safety of students, traders, and other individuals from Jammu and Kashmir residing outside the Union Territory.

This assurance comes amid rising concerns and reports of alleged harassment of J&K students in various states following the Pahalgam terror attack that left 25 tourist and a local

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Pahalgam Attack: Eyewitness Accounts Key In Absence of CCTV Footage

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 25, : With no CCTV footage available from the site of the recent Pahalgam attack, the probe teams are heavily dependent on eyewitness testimonies and physical evidence collected from the area. Sources said that preliminary leads suggest that the

attackers may have fled toward the higher reaches of the Pir Panjal range soon after carrying out the strike.

Security forces have intensified searches at the houses of active militants and suspected overground workers (OGWs) in districts like Shopian, Pulwama, and Anantnag. A senior police

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Pahalgam terror aftermath: CM Omar Abdullah holds interaction with tourism, business stakeholders in Kashmir

■ HT News Network/UNI

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: In the aftermath of the recent terror attack on civilians at Baisaran, Pahalgam, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday convened a detailed interaction with business stakeholders from Kashmir's tourism, travel, and trade sec

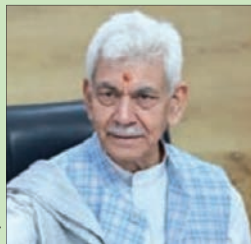
TURN ON.....PAGE 02



LG Manoj Sinha summons Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Session on April 28

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, has summoned the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to convene its session in accordance with Section 18(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019. As per the order issued today by Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, the Legislative Assembly shall meet at Jammu on Monday, the 28th of April, 2025 at 10:30 A.M. "I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in exercise of the powers conferred upon



TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Lieutenant Governor Reviews Security Scenario with Army Chief and Army Commander, Northern Command

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has asked the Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, who called on him here today to take effective steps not only to bring those responsible for the Pahalgam terror attack to justice but also to intensify efforts to crush infrastructure of terrorism and its ecosystem.

During the discussion Lieutenant Governor said the nation has full faith in the bravery and valour of our army, police and CAPFs and they must work in close synergy to identify perpetrators, enablers and OGWs of Pahalgam terrorist killing and pursue the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Hajj 2025: First Flight with 178 Pilgrims to Depart from Srinagar on May 4

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 25: The sacred journey of Hajj 2025 is set to begin from Jammu and Kashmir, with the first flight scheduled to depart from Srinagar International Airport on May 4. This inaugural flight, operated by SpiceJet, will carry 178 pilgrims and marks the commencement of this year's Hajj pilgrimage from the Union Territory. The flight is expected to depart from Srinagar at 10:25 AM and arrive at Fujairah International Airport in Saudi Arabia

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Opposition stands with Govt on terror response: Rahul Gandhi in Srinagar 'Sad to see Kashmiris being targeted, unity must to defeat terrorism'

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 25 Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, who arrived in Kashmir following the deadly Pahalgam attack, strongly condemned the killings and called for national unity in the face of such "nasty actions." During his visit to Srinagar on Friday, Gandhi met one of the injured victims and held discussions with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to understand the situation firsthand.

"It is a tragedy. I came here to get a sense of what's going on and to help



in anyway I can," Gandhi told reporters, adding that his party would fully support any action the govern-

ment takes in response to the attack. "I assured both the Chief Minister and the LG that myself and my party are going to support fully."

The Congress leader emphasized the importance of standing together, especially at a time when attempts are being made to divide society. "This idea of violence is designed to make brother fight brother. We must stand united and defeat terrorism once and for all," he said.

Referring to the communal backlash being reported in some parts of the country, Gandhi as per the news agency Kashmir News Trust said, "It's sad to see that some people are tar

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Pahalgam Attack Fallout: Hundreds of Kashmiri Students Return Home

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 25, : The recent attack in Pahalgam has sent shockwaves throughout the region, leaving a trail of fear and unrest among Kashmiri students living in different parts of India. As tensions rise, numerous reports of harassment, threats, and violent incidents against Kashmiri students have surfaced, particularly in states like Uttarakhand, where right-wing activists have openly called for the expulsion of Kashmiri students.

Kashmiri students, who have

been pursuing their education away from home, are now in the grip of fear, and many have been forced to return to Kashmir due to growing concerns over their safety. Hundreds of students have fled back to their homes, fearing further attacks and harassment in an atmosphere of growing hostility. Many have expressed the emotional toll of the situation, with some describing how their academic aspirations have been overshadowed by the threats to their lives and well-being.

In Uttarakhand, the situation

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Tourists ambassadors of Kashmir, says Deputy CM Meets tourists in Srinagar: 'Pahalgam killings painful

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 25: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, along with Cabinet Minister Javid Dar and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, met with tourists in the Rajbagh area on Friday and condemned the recent terror attack in Pahalgam that resulted in 26 fatalities and several injuries on April



22. According to the news agency— the Deputy CM referred to tourists as "ambassadors of Kashmir", saying they will share their

experiences of Kashmiri hospitality upon returning home.

"Tourists are the ambassadors of Kashmir. They will share how they were treated and supported by the people in Kashmir after the tragic events in Pahalgam. While the killings are painful, J&K is a place filled with peace and love," he said. "We have been tasked by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to meet

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Pak Rangers refuse to handover BSF jawan for third day..

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, APRIL, 25 + Pakistan Rangers refused to hand over a BSF jawan, who inadvertently strayed to the other side, for the third straight day on Friday and remained non-committal on his whereabouts, official sources said. The jawan, Constable Purnam Sahu of the 182nd Border Security Force (BSF), was apprehended by the Rangers from a farming field along the Ferozepur district of Punjab on Wednesday. Sources said that the BSF has made multiple contacts and sought

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Tourists affirm Kashmir as 'Heaven on Earth' despite terror attack

Praise local hospitality, urge others to experience valley's beauty

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 25: A tourist bus filled with visitors travelled peacefully along Srinagar's Boulevard Road, with a group from Maharashtra expressing their admiration for the Kashmir Valley, describing it as a "heaven on earth". Despite their concerns fol-



lowing the recent attack in Pahalgam, the tourists

maintained that they believe Kashmir is the safest place on earth.

The group, primarily comprising individuals from Maharashtra and Mumbai, expressed their sentiments, saying, "Kashmir is the safest place in the world."

Speaking to the news

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Ground Zero: DGP Prabhat leads anti-terror operations, houses of 2 terrorists linked to carnage razed

NIA takes over probe, drones, choppers pressed into service; Forensic experts visit Baisaran, security beefed up across J&K

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 24: In the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, security forces have intensified anti-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the details available with the news agency—Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat is personally supervising multiple ongoing anti-terrorist operations in Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian in South Kashmir.

HOUSES OF 2 TERRORISTS RAZED

"The security forces during search of Asif Sheikh's—terrorist involved in #pahalgamattack— house at Moghama Tral a suspicious box was found. Wires were



protruding out of the box. After confirmation by #IndianArmy RR's Engineers team it was destroyed in-situ resulting in explosion. In the explosion the house was partially damaged. No loss of life was reported, as the area was cleared and neighbouring houses were evacuated," the official said, as per KNO.

He said the house of another terrorist Aadil Thokar of Bijbehara was demolished this morning.

Police said that both are active terrorists and are linked to the Pahalgam attack.

Meanwhile, two policemen were injured in an encounter with terrorists in North Kashmir's Bandipora district on Friday. "Following a tip off security forces launched a cordon and search operation at Kulnar Bazipora in

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Meet Aadil, another hero from Pahalgam who used his ATV bike to rescue tourists after firing

■ HT News Network

:PAHALGAM, APR 25: In a remarkable display of bravery, a youth from Pahalgam named Aadil Ahmad utilised his All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) to rescue tourists and help them reach safety following a recent firing incident in the area. Speaking to the news agency— Aadil recounted how he quickly sprang into action after hearing about the gunfire. He said conventional vehicles could not access the site due to the rough terrain, so he immediately took out his ATV to assist those in distress. As panic erupted in response to the sudden gunshots, tourists were seen



TURN ON.....PAGE 02



CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

CM

who may be facing distress, anxiety, or insecurity in the wake of recent developments.

“With a view to instilling a sense of security among our students and businessmen currently in other states, I have deputed my Cabinet Ministers to various cities across the country. The purpose of these visits is to coordinate efforts with the respective State Governments and ensure the safety and well-being of J&K residents,” Office of Chief Minister, J&K posted on X.

“The J&K Government will stand with its people—anywhere, everywhere,” stated the Chief Minister, reaffirming the administration’s unwavering commitment to the welfare of its citizens beyond the territorial boundaries of Jammu & Kashmir.

HM

dead
“I spoke to the Home Minister.... He has assured me that necessary steps will be taken for the security and safety of students, traders, and others outside Jammu and Kashmir,” Abdullah told reporters on Friday after holding a meeting with business stakeholders in wake of Pahalgam attack.

Abdullah further revealed that the Home Minister already spoke with several Chief Ministers across the country to address the issue and has promised that an advisory will be issued shortly to all states regarding the protection of J&K residents.

Omar Abdullah also stated that he personally reached out to a few of his counterpart Chief Ministers, and that prompt and concrete actions are being taken in areas where such incidents have been reported.

“Wherever such news is emerging, appropriate steps are being taken without delay,” he added.

Chief Minister commended the J&K’s business community for demonstrating solidarity and selflessness during a time of profound grief.

Abdullah noted that not a single participant brought up business losses or demanded compensation.

“At this point in time, we are not counting rupees and paisa,” he said. “It is a credit to all the participants and stakeholders—no one lamented empty rooms, houseboats, or idle taxis.”

Abdullah emphasized that the focus of the meeting was not on financial matters but on extending sympathy and support to the families of the victims.

“Our concern is to express solidarity with the families of those 26 people who were killed in this attack,” he said. “Business comes and goes, but right now, it’s about standing together in this moment of pain.”

Omar Abdullah also lashed out at a section TV channels for ignoring a powerful moment of unity and compassion in Kashmir.

Abdullah highlighted the two-minute silence observed at Srinagar’s historic Jamia Masjid before Friday prayers in memory of the 26 victims of the attack.

“No one is feeling happy,” he said, “but at least we should be satisfied that such a dignified silence was observed in Jama Masjid. It was a moment of collective grief and solidarity.”

He lashed out at what he called “shameless” media channels for failing to cover the tribute.

“This silence was an answer to all those channels spreading poison against Kashmiris,” he said. “But they won’t show this. Because spreading hatred fuels their agenda. Some of their anchors are cowards who don’t support the truth.”

Abdullah also praised the selfless bravery of a local Kashmiri man Syed Adil who died while trying to rescue tourists during the Pahalgam attack.

“It is our duty not just to honor him and his family, but to ensure his memory lives on,” he said

“In the meantime, the Maharashtra tour and travel operators have already taken a decision to adopt his family, to take care of all their education needs from now until they complete their education, and also to help the family in the days and years ahead,” he said.

CCTV FOOTAGE

officer said that the operations are aimed at uncovering any support network or safe houses that may have aided the attackers before or after the assault.

Adding a new dimension to the investigation, the role of Saifullah Kasuri, an associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed is being closely scrutinized. Kasuri had surfaced in a provocative video posted on social media in February, vowing to make Kashmir “the land of the pure” by February 2, 2026, and hinting at a spike in militant activity.

A National Investigation Agency (NIA) team, led by Inspector General Vijay Sakhare, is currently stationed in Srinagar and has formally taken over the probe with logistical and intelligence support from Jammu and Kashmir Police. Sources say the NIA is looking into both local and cross-border links that could have played a role in orchestrating the attack.

Notably, Pahalgam attack left 26 civilians mostly tourists dead while 17 people sustained injuries. [KNT]

BUSSINESS

tors at SKICC, Srinagar.

The meeting commenced with a minute of silence in memory of the victims, expressing solidarity with the families who lost their loved ones in the tragic incident.

The interaction was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretaries of Industries & Commerce and Tourism, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, senior police officials, and other concerned officers.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said, “We collectively condemn the Pahalgam terror incident, mourn the loss of 26 innocent lives, and extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.”

He noted the pain of meeting the victims’ families—many of whom were visiting Kashmir on their honeymoon or family vacation. “As the Tourism Minister myself, I found it extremely difficult to meet their families. I was at a loss for words,” he added.

Highlighting the collective outrage and unity across the Valley in the wake of the attack, Omar Abdullah said this unified response sends a powerful, silent message to those who seek to sow fear and division.

He commended the business community for taking a principled stand, saying, “You’ve clearly said this act was not in our name—neither have we ever supported such violence, nor will we ever in the future.”

The Chief Minister assured that all constructive suggestions offered during the meeting would be seriously considered to help prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Addressing concerns regarding harassment faced by Kashmiri students and traders outside Kashmir, he informed the gathering that he had spoken directly with the Union Home Minister, who assured him of necessary protective measures. An advisory will be issued in this regard, and the Home Minister has also personally reached out to several state Chief Ministers. Omar Abdullah said that he too has spoken to his counterparts in other states to ensure the safety of Kashmiris across India.

He lauded the tourism and business stakeholders for not focusing on financial losses or seeking compensation, saying, “Business will come and go. Right now, our primary concern is to express our grief and stand in solidarity with those affected by this senseless attack.”

He added that discussions on economic impact can take place later, once the immediate pain of the tragedy has been addressed.

Referring to the two-minute silence observed at Jamia Masjid Srinagar earlier today, the Chief Minister called it “a strong and dignified response” to the propaganda peddled by some news channels against Kashmiris.

He paid special tribute to Syed Adil Hussain, a local who lost his life while trying to save tourists during the attack, calling him a “symbol of Kashmiri hospitality.” Omar Abdullah assured that his government would take steps to honour his memory and support his family.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani said, “This incident has shaken us to the core.” He appreciated the people of Kashmir for rising in protest against the attack and sending a clear message across the country and the world that “this act has no place in our society or our religion.”

Earlier, stakeholders from the tourism sector unanimously condemned the attack, calling it a “murder of humanity.” They emphasized that the Valley is in deep mourning and that commercial concerns are secondary at this time.

They proposed several measures, including: formation of a coordination committee comprising administration, security agencies, and tourism stakeholders; protection and welfare of Kashmiri students and businesspersons outside Kashmir.

Besides, they suggested the Establishment of Quick Response Teams (QRTs) at key tourist destinations and countering misinformation and biased media narratives.

The Chairman of Raja & Rani Tour and Travels informed the gathering that the Maharashtra Tour and Travel Operators’ Association has pledged to adopt Syed Adil Hussain’s family.

The association will support the educational needs of his children and provide long-term assistance to his family.

Furthermore, the association has decided that no tour bookings to Kashmir will be cancelled, in a strong show of support and solidarity.

LG

me under section 18(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, do hereby summon the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to meet at Jammu on Monday, the 28th of April, 2025 at 10.30 A.M.,” said the Summon.

“Accordingly, in terms of rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, all the Hon’ble Members are requested to kindly attend the Session of the Legislative Assembly on the appointed date, time and place,” said an order issued by Secretary J&K Legislative Assembly.

METING

entire chain in a sustained manner and neutralise them.

“Every perpetrator and supporter of Pahalgam terror attack, whatever his location or affiliation, must be hunted and they must pay the heavy price for the cowardly and dastardly act against our citizens,” the Lieutenant Governor told the top army officials.

The meeting also reviewed security mechanisms in place, various short-term, long-term measures and integration and coordination among the various security agencies. The meeting was attended by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, GOC-in-C Northern Command Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar, Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Pratik Sharma and GoC 15 Corps Lt Gen Prashant Srivastava.

RAHUL

getting my brothers and sisters from Kashmir elsewhere in the country. That is not the way forward. We all must remain united.”

Although most of the injured victims had been shifted back, Gandhi managed to meet one of them during his hospital visit. “I couldn’t meet everyone who was injured or the families of those who lost their lives, but I want to send my love and affection to all of them. The entire country is standing with you.”

He also noted that people across Jammu and Kashmir have strongly condemned the attack, further adding that the unity shown by the public should be a message to those who try to spread hatred.

Rahul Gandhi revealed that he attended the all-party meeting convened by the government in Delhi yesterday. “The united opposition has condemned this brutal act and extended its complete support to the government in taking decisive action,” he said. [KNT]

HAJI

at 2:55 PM.

After a brief layover, the flight will continue its journey, departing Fujairah at 3:55 PM and landing at Madina International Airport by 6:55 PM on the same day.

Following the first flight, there will be no departures on May 5, 6, and 13. However, regular flights will resume on May 7, with 321 pilgrims scheduled to depart each day for Madina. On May 9 and May 14, two flights will operate, each carrying 642 pilgrims. The final flight will take place on May 15, carrying the last group of 321 pilgrims from Srinagar.

A total of 3,388 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir are expected to embark on the Hajj pilgrimage this year. SpiceJet has been tasked with managing these flights, ensuring that all arrangements are in place for a smooth and safe journey.

The Hajj Committee has confirmed that necessary steps, including health check-ups, documentation, and logistical support, have been taken to provide a seamless experience for the pilgrims.

STUDENTS

has been particularly dire, with right-wing groups issuing direct threats to Kashmiri students. These threats have sparked widespread panic, leading to some students leaving their academic institutions in search of safety. The fear is not just about physical harm, but the psychological toll of living under constant threat of attack.

Educators and academics have also voiced their concerns, with several urging universities across the country to consider postponing exams for Kashmiri students by two to three weeks. With many students facing severe emotional and logistical challenges, they argue that it would be nearly impossible for them to prepare adequately for their exams in such a hostile environment. The disruption to their studies is not just academic but also personal, as they face the trauma of living in fear.

Prominent political leaders have also weighed in on the crisis. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi condemned the attacks, stating that Kashmiri students are “brothers and sisters” who are being unfairly targeted and attacked in various parts of the country. Gandhi emphasized the need for unity and understanding, calling for solidarity with the students affected by the violence.

In response to the growing concerns, Jammu and Kashmir’s Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, has taken proactive steps to ensure the safety of Kashmiri students. Abdullah has deputed a team of ministers to travel to various states to meet with local authorities and ensure the safety and security of students from the region. He has also called for swift action to be taken against those responsible for any acts of harassment or violence against Kashmiri students, urging the government

to intervene and restore normalcy.

BSF

flag meetings with the Rangers to secure the release of its jawan but the response has “not been positive” till now.

The incident comes at a time when relations between the two countries have hit a low in the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attack which claimed 26 lives.

The BSF has also alerted all its formations and asked them to be on “heightened vigil” along the 2,289 kilometers India-Pakistan border that runs from Jammu in the north to Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat in the west in the wake of the Pahalgam attack and related developments.

Sources said the BSF will continue to seek a field commander level meeting with the Rangers for an early release of the jawan. They said, as per established protocol between the two sides, any such case of an armed personnel straying inadvertently is dealt with in a professional and prompt manner. It is expected that the BSF jawan will be with his force very soon, the sources said. Meanwhile, Sahu’s family in Hooghly, West Bengal is praying for his safety and early return.

“He was serving the nation, and now we don’t even know whether he is safe or not. We have heard that he is in Pakistani custody,” the jawan’s father Bholanath Sahu said. The jawan was escorting a group of farmers ahead of the border fence and had stepped a few meters for a break under a tree when he was picked up by the Rangers claiming he breached the IB....

DYCM

the tourists today.”

Chaudhary urged visitors to continue exploring Kashmir, assuring them of their safety under the Omar Abdullah-led government. “Although maintaining law and order is a challenge, the government and the people of Kashmir are committed to ensuring your safety,” he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister acknowledged that while every society has people who create chaos, such incidents shouldn’t define the community as a whole. “At this moment, we need to strengthen our nation and preserve the brotherhood for which J&K is renowned,” he urged.

Advisor Nasir Wani called the killings in Pahalgam “unfortunate”. “We experience the same pain as you do, but we are doubly pained as this tragedy has occurred on our land.” He reaffirmed that the people of J&K are peace-loving and dedicated to promoting harmony.

Meanwhile, the tourists praised the hospitality shown by the local people here, saying that they have been supported and assisted by the people of Kashmir. “We have felt like home here,” they said.

Pertinently, 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed in a major terror attack in Pahalgam on Tuesday, with many others injured—

ADIL

fleeing in every direction, many of them trapped in the hilly landscape with limited means of escape.

Aadil’s quick thinking allowed him to navigate the chaotic scene, ferrying families, especially women and children, safely to secure areas. “He didn’t wait for anyone to tell him what to do. He just saw people in need and took charge,” an eyewitness said.

Reflecting on his actions, Aadil said, “I acted on instinct. These tourists come here to enjoy the beauty of Kashmir. It is our duty as locals to protect them and show them that this land is not for innocent killings but for love and humanity.”

Aadil said he transported people to motorable areas where ambulances could then take them to the hospital.

He said the people of Pahalgam are grieving. “There are families who haven’t eaten anything for two days. This is not just the killing of one person; it is the killing of humanity.”

Aadil described the tragedy as a “murder of Kashmir and humanity”, saying the locals feel the pervasive loss.

Despite the risk and the investment of 8 lakh on his vehicle, Aadil resolved to use it to save lives rather than let it sit idle.

“The government must take action to boost tourism and send a clear message that neither tourists nor locals should be paralysed by fear due to such unacceptable acts,” he said—

TOURIST

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), they acknowledged that while the Pahalgam attack initially raised alarm, their personal experiences in Kashmir have been overwhelmingly positive.

One female tourist said, “Kashmir is truly heaven on Earth”. She added that despite the news of the attack, their experiences had alleviated any fears they had.

“We feel safe here, and the people have been incredibly warm and welcoming. It is the safest place on earth, and we encourage everyone to visit,” she asserted.

Jayesh, a tourist from Mumbai, shared his experience of being in Gulmarg when the attack occurred. Initially worried, he said the situation returned to normal quickly, thanks to the supportive locals. “Their hospitality touched our hearts,” he added.

The group praised their guide and driver, who they credited with ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable tour. “Our driver has been more than just a driver. He is a tour guide who has not only shown us the beauty of Kashmir but also made sure we felt at ease throughout our trip. His knowledge of the valley and his friendly demeanour have made our journey enjoyable and worry-free,” another tourist added.

Staying in the region for a week, the group has plans to visit several other attractions, including Gulmarg and Sonamarg, to further explore Kashmir’s rich culture and stunning landscapes. They urged travellers not to let recent incidents dissuade them from experiencing the region’s charm and hospitality.

Another lady from the group said the Pahalgam attack was tragic. She, however, assured everyone that Kashmir remains a safe and welcoming destination.

“The locals are kind and peaceful, and they are eager to share their beautiful homeland with visitors,” she said.

Despite the challenges, she said Kashmir continues to be a safe haven. “The warmth and hospitality of the people far exceed the narratives portrayed in the media,” she said.

This optimistic viewpoint comes at a time when the tourism sector in Kashmir is gradually recovering from previous setbacks in recent years—

GROUND ZERO

Bandipora district. The search operation turned into an encounter after the hiding terrorists opened fire on the security forces’ positions,” said an official.

He said two policemen were injured in the firing by terrorists.

NIA TAKES OVER PROBE

A National Investigation Agency (NIA) team, led by Inspector General Vijay Sakhare, currently stationed in Srinagar has formally taken over the probe with logistical and intelligence support from Jammu and Kashmir Police, sources told KNO.

They said the probe agency is looking into both local and cross-border links that could have played a role in orchestrating the attack.

Meanwhile, a team of forensic experts visited Baisaran, terror attack site, in Pahalgam to collect the evidence.

DRONES, CHOPPERS PRESSED INTO SERVICE

“Security forces have intensified searches at the houses of active terrorists and suspected OGWs in districts like Shopian, Pulwama, and Anantnag,” said an official, adding, “The operations are aimed at uncovering any support network or safe houses that may have aided the attackers before or after the assault.”

The official said that choppers and drones are being used to look for the terrorists involved in the Pahalgam terror attack.

He said that security has been beefed up across Jammu and Kashmir and a strict vigil is being maintained.

INDIA-PAK ARMIES EXCHANGE FIRE

Pakistan Army soldiers used small arms to fire at an Indian position along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, the officials said, adding that Indian soldiers retaliated and gave a befitting reply. However, no casualties were reported on either side.

The United Nations has urged India and Pakistan “to exercise maximum restraint and to ensure that the situation and the developments we’ve seen do not deteriorate any further.”

Pertinently, a special forces para commando of the Army was killed in an encounter with terrorists in the Dudu-Basantgarh area of Udhampur district on Thursday.

The joint search operation was launched by the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and the CRPF, following specific intelligence inputs regarding the presence of terrorists in the area. “The operation began early Thursday morning in the dense forests of Basantgarh. During the mission, contact was established with a group of 3–4 suspected terrorists, believed to have recently infiltrated across the international border. A heavy exchange of gunfire ensued in which one para commando lost his life and two others sustained injuries,” said an official.

SEARCH OPERATIONS IN JAMMU REGION

Security forces are conducting massive search operations in Udhampur, Kathua, Hiranagar and other areas.

As per KNO, a massive search operation was launched in Jammu Kathua after a woman claimed to have seen four suspicious men.

Personnel of J&K Police’s Special Operations Group reached the spot and launched a combing operation. Searches were on when this report was filed. Meanwhile, searches were conducted in the Chann Rorian area near the Railway Yard in Hiranagar sector in Kathua district on Friday. “The operation was initiated following inputs about suspicious movement in the vicinity of the railway yard. Joint teams of police and security forces cordoned off the area and carried out thorough checks in nearby fields and residential pockets,” said





Jal Shakti Minister reviews Water Supply Schemes in Kashmir

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today held a meeting with Superintending Engineers of the department at Civil Secretariat to review the progress on different Water Supply Schemes (WSSs) being executed in Kashmir division. Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, also participated in the meeting. Javed Rana had a detailed review of the department functioning focusing on implementation of JJM in J&K, completion of different schemes, physical targets achieved besides fund utilisation under various schemes. While addressing the meeting, Rana directed the Superintending Engineers to keenly monitor working of all water supply schemes, ensuring these function unhindered. He directed the concerned officials for fast-tracking completion of pending projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and other ongoing water supply schemes. He also asked them to increase their visibility on ground and take proactive initiatives like a complaint



redressal system to address the problems of the general public. He emphasized upon the officers to focus on effective grievances redressal mechanism so that people do not face any kind of inconvenience on this account. He called upon the officers to regularly monitor the execution of works so as to maintain quality standards. Maintaining that the government is committed to provide quality water to all households, he asked for ensuring that all water quality standards are met at all levels without any compromise. The Minister asked the officers to ensure removal of all bottlenecks and hindrances

in project execution in coordination with other departments for timely completion of works. Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today held a meeting with Superintending Engineers of the department at Civil Secretariat to review the progress on different Water Supply Schemes (WSSs) being executed in Kashmir division. Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, also participated in the meeting. Javed Rana had a detailed review of the department functioning focusing on implementation of JJM in J&K, completion of different schemes, physical targets achieved besides fund utilisation under various schemes. While addressing

the meeting, Rana directed the Superintending Engineers to keenly monitor working of all water supply schemes, ensuring these function unhindered. He directed the concerned officials for fast-tracking completion of pending projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and other ongoing water supply schemes. He also asked them to increase their visibility on ground and take proactive initiatives like a complaint redressal system to address the problems of the general public. He emphasized upon the officers to focus on effective grievances redressal mechanism so that people do not face any kind of inconvenience on this account. He called upon the officers to regularly monitor the execution of works so as to maintain quality standards. Maintaining that the government is committed to provide quality water to all households, he asked for ensuring that all water quality standards are met at all levels without any compromise. The Minister asked the officers to ensure removal of all bottlenecks and hindrances in project execution in coordination with other departments for timely completion of works.

Brazen Violation of SMC Rules in Baghander Humhama Sparks Public Outcry

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 25: The peaceful locality of Baghander Humhama is fast becoming a hub of lawlessness, as illegal construction activities gain momentum right under the nose of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC). Despite the area being officially notified by the Town Planning Division with a strict ban on new constructions, several violations have recently surfaced—raising serious questions about the enforcement of municipal laws. According to local residents, one of the most glaring violations involves the construction of a massive 16-foot-high boundary wall. The wall not only lacks proper permissions but also directly contravenes the SMC's own boundary wall byelaws, which prescribe a maximum height of 2.1 metres. Moreover the ground level is also being raised far more than the prescribed limit of 0.3 mtrs from the nearest street level. The situation worsened when, following a brief and symbolic intervention by the SMC—where a few bricks were removed—the construction resumed with renewed speed and audacity. “It appears the action taken was nothing more than a formality and now the wall is being built like a fortress,” a concerned resident told this reporter on condition of anonymity. Locals allege that the token demolition was staged to give an illusion of enforcement, only to later allow the illegal activity to continue unhindered. Adding insult to injury, the offender has also caused extensive damage to the adjoining roads by using heavy machinery like dumpers for unlawful land fillings.

Mirwaiz leads devotees at Jamia Masjid to express solidarity with Pahalgam victims

Observes one-minute silence, condemns killings, slams media vilification of Kashmiris

HT News Network

Srinagar, : Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Molvi Muhammad Umar Farooq Friday led the devotees at the historic Jamia Masjid to condemn the dastardly terror attack in Pahalgam that left 26 people dead and several others wounded. The gathering during the congregational Friday prayers observed a one-minute silence for the first time to express deep grief and solidarity with the victims of Pahalgam terror attack. Calling the killings “inhuman and heartbreaking”, Mirwaiz said the brutal manner in which people were slain, after being identified in front of their families, was a chilling reminder of the suffering Kashmiris have endured for decades. “This massacre has left every heart in Kashmir wounded. Our people, regardless of background, are united in grief and condemnation,” he said, urging patience and healing for the bereaved and injured. As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Mirwaiz said,



“Repeatedly barring me from fulfilling my religious duties is not only condemnable but deeply painful for me and for the community.” In his address, Mirwaiz condemned the “disturbing and dangerous” media discourse that he said had vilified Kashmiris in the wake of the attack. Such narratives, he said, were fueling communal hatred and had already led to incidents of Kashmiri students being targeted in different parts of the country. “Mainstream media's divisive rhetoric is making Kashmiris vulnerable and insecure outside the region. Hundreds have been forced to return home in panic. This is unjust and unacceptable,” Mirwaiz said, appealing to governments in other states

to ensure the safety of all Kashmiris. He said the Kashmiri people had not only condemned the terror attack outright but also extended humanitarian support to the victims. “Locals risked their own lives to save tourists. Adil Hussain, a pony operator, died a hero while helping others. Many others carried the injured on their backs, provided shelter, food and even emotional comfort to distressed visitors,” he added. Mirwaiz paid tribute to Hussain and urged authorities to allow him to personally visit the bereaved family and those injured in the attack. He reiterated his appeal to authorities to “desist from bans and restrictions on religious leaders” and called for unity and compassion in the face of grief—

SKUAST-K conducts awareness cum seed distribution prog for tribal farmers at Budgam

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 25: The KVK Budgam in collaboration with KVK Pulwama held a Seed Distribution cum Awareness Programme of Tribal Farmers of Budgam under the project ‘Outreach of Technology and Distribution of Farming Tools for ST and Low-Income Farmers funded under the Tribal Sub-Plan. The aim of the programme was to distribute high quality potato and maize seeds among Tribal farmers. About 60 farmers of village Lobran, Khag Block participated in the programme. The programme was inaugurated by Prof Raihana H. Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K who was the chief guest on the occasion. In her address to farmers, she encouraged them to come forward for such develop-



mental initiatives to augment agriculture in their region & to optimize production for sustenance and commercial viability using new technologies. She also stressed on adoption and dissemination of these high yielding varieties of potato and maize. She also briefed the farmers about the role of SKUAST-K in augmenting research in agriculture to facilitate the farming in Tribal Areas of Kashmir. Dr. Javid A. Mughal, Principal

Investigator of the project, shared the key highlights of the project in enhancing livelihood of farmers. Dr. Bilal A. Lone, Prof & Head KVK Budgam, briefed the tribal farmers about the role of KVK Budgam in facilitating such programmes through on farm trials and front-line demonstrations at farmers field. Dr Ambreen Nabi, Scientist KVK, deliberated upon the Packages of Practices of Potato (Kufri Jyoti) to be adopted throughout the Tribal Area.

Altaf Bukhari calls for unity to defeat the enemies of peace

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 25: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has called on people to “preserve their spirit of kindness, empathy, and hospitality, despite the warmongering of certain communal elements.” He said that a large number of “tourists have given terrorists a befitting response by staying in the valley despite the gruesome massacre, which claimed 26 innocent lives in Pahalgam.” The Apni Party president said that “upholding unity, mutual trust, and resilience is the key to overcoming adversity and defeating the enemies of peace.” In his statement issued here, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, “I take immense pride in saying that the people of Kashmir embody extraordinary hospitality and compassion. During the winter, the residents of Gund village in Ganderbal opened their homes and mosques to provide shelter to hundreds of foreign and domestic tourists who were stranded in heavy snowfall. In freezing temperatures, the locals offered free food and tea to these guests.”



He further said, “Several accounts have now surfaced, revealing that during the recent gruesome terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam, locals—despite their own fear and panic—came forward to help the injured at Baisaran Meadow. Our hero, Syed Adil Hussain, gave his life while trying to disarm a terrorist. Local drivers gave many tourists free rides to Srinagar. Auto-rickshaw drivers ferried tourists—who chose to leave the valley after this horrific attack—to the airport free of charge. Locals were seen weeping, heartbroken by the tragedy that unfolded.” Applauding the hospitable nature of the people of Kashmir, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari stressed .

Helpline established at CM's Raabita office for J&K students studying outside following reports of harassment

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: In the aftermath of the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam and alarming reports of assaults, harassment, and threats targeting students from Jammu & Kashmir across various parts of the country, the Government of Jammu & Kashmir has taken swift and decisive action to ensure the safety and welfare of its students studying outside the Union Territory. A dedicated toll-free helpline — 1800-8900-166 — has been set up at the Raabita Office in Srinagar to extend support and assistance to any student facing intimidation or threat. The helpline will operate round-the-clock and is equipped to address grievances, offer assistance, and coordinate with local authorities wherever needed. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed deep concern over the unfolding situation and reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to uphold the rights, dignity of every student from Jammu & Kashmir and ensure a safe environment for them, no matter where they are pursuing their education. “We humbly and earnestly appeal to the governments of all States and Union Territories, in these trying times, to come forward with unwavering commitment to protect the Kashmiri students and citizens who find themselves far from home. These individuals, whether traveling or residing outside Jammu and Kashmir, must be safeguarded against any form of harassment, discrimination, or intimidation,” — pronounced by a resolution passed yesterday at the All Party Meeting chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir urges all educational institutions and state administrations across the nation to ensure the safety of students from J&K and to take firm action against any individuals or groups attempting to disrupt communal harmony. Students and their families have been asked to report any incident or concern via the toll-free helpline. The government assures swift response and necessary support in every genuine case reported. For assistance, those in distress have been asked to call: 1800-8900-166 (Toll-Free).

GCW Srinagar organises workshop on ‘Media and Information Literacy’

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: Government College for Women, M.A Road Srinagar organised a workshop on ‘Media and Information Literacy’ here today. The workshop was organised by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of the college. The workshop was attended by faculty members of the college and was aimed to build their capacity to navigate the evolving media landscape and combat misinformation. Speaking on the occasion, Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Yasmeen Farooq said, “Fake news has emerged as a major problem across the world so it is important that we are well equipped with essential media literacy skills to critically assess media content so that we act as informed and responsible citizens. Without proper media literacy, people fall prey to misinformation and manipulation.” She said there is a need for more such workshops to spread awareness among people regarding the importance of verifying online content. The resource person for the workshop was Dr. Afsana Rashid, Assistant Professor, Media Education Research Centre (MERC), Kashmir University and a certified FactShala trainer. The workshop covered various themes including media bias, misinformation ecosystems, deepfakes, artificial intelligence, and critical thinking.

Kashmiri Students Meet SSP Kapurthala Over Safety Concerns Following Pahalgam Attack

HT News Network

Kapurthala, April 25: Amid rising tensions following the recent terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam, Kashmiri students from Lovely Professional University (LPU) Punjab met with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kapurthala, Gorav Toora, on Thursday to voice their concerns about safety and growing threats against Kashmiri youth in different parts of the country. The students, deeply concerned by reports of harassment and intimidation targeting Kashmiris, said they felt increasingly vulnerable, especially in the aftermath of the attack which has stoked public anger and backlash. They called on local authorities to step in and ensure their protection. Student activist Syed Abdul Mohsin Andrabi a PhD Scholar, who has been actively representing Kashmiri students in the Punjab region while speaking to the SSP, stressed the need for proactive security measures and appealed for a more sensitive handling of the situation. “We are students, not suspects,” Andrabi told SSP Toora. “Our only demand is safety and dignity.”

EDITORIAL

Time for tourism
players to go outside
and motivate people
to visit Kashmir

The Jammu & Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah has been carrying out a series of meetings following the April 22 Baisaran-Pahalgam terror attack that left 25 tourists and a local dead. On Thursday the CM chaired the all party meeting which was attended by representatives of all the leading political parties. Today Omar chaired a meeting attended by representatives of different trade bodies and business organizations of Kashmir. Both the meetings turned out to be successful as the participants condemned the heinous incident vehemently.

Over the past few years there has been an unprecedented arrival of tourists both domestic and international to Kashmir. Since some people and agencies are not happy with the economic progress of Kashmir and Kashmiris, the success of the tourism sector does not go well with such people and agencies. They are on the lookout to create trouble in the valley so that the people don't visit the Paradise on Earth and those who are here leave the same at the earliest.

Ever since the Baisaran-Pahalgam incident has taken place there are reports of mass cancellation of bookings of the people who had made plans to visit Kashmir in the coming weeks and months. It is quite natural that people would be scared as and when some unfortunate incident takes place at any tourist place in any part of the world and Kashmir is no exception to the same. As the images and videos of the killing of tourists flashed across the media channels and mobile phones the people became sceptical about the situation of Kashmir valley.

In the past whenever any such incident took place the department of tourism along with the tourism players visited different places in the country and motivated the people to come and enjoy the beauty and magnificence of Kashmir. These steps bore fruit since people in thousands said goodbye to fear and made it a point to visit the Kashmir valley. In such a manner the tourism department officials and the tourism players turned out to be peace ambassadors for Kashmir and its tourism.

This time around the whole process needs to be repeated and the union territory government should draw a comprehensive plan so that the people living in different parts of the country are motivated to come over here as tourists. This would defeat the designs of the people and agencies that are hell bent to cause economic losses to the people of Kashmir especially to those who are associated with the tourism sector.

Pahalgam Attack: Kashmir Speaks,
Shocked & Stunned

M S SHOSSAIN

Every heart bleeds in Kashmir today, as the bodies of the slain tourists completed their final journey out of the Valley – a Valley once known for the fragrance of its flowers, its hospitality, and the soulful songs of peace and well-being. That same land now mourns, not just the loss of innocent lives, but a brutal assault on its soul.

The recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam has shaken the conscience of every peace-loving citizen of the nation. What unfolded was not merely an act of terror but a barbaric assault on humanity itself – a crime that has no connection, justification, or sanction in the teachings of Islam. A religion that upholds the sanctity of human life, that commands mercy, and that holds hospitality as a virtue cannot be evoked to legitimize such savagery. No divine cause can be advanced by the spilling of innocent blood, especially that of guests who came seeking the warmth of our culture and the serenity of our land.

This incident also reflects a sinister and desperate shift in the strategy of terror organizations. No longer able to strike military or strategic installations due to strong counterinsurgency responses and increasing isolation, these groups have turned their guns towards soft targets. It is not strength that guides these new tactics, but sheer desperation. This shift – from ideology to indiscriminate brutality – is a loud confession of failure. It mirrors their growing irrelevance in a Kashmir that is moving on and turning its back on violence. This desperation was echoed in the recent rhetoric of the Pakistani Army Chief, who once again referred to Kashmir as Pakistan's "jugular vein" – a tired, provocative metaphor that betrays Pakistan's unchanged mindset of bleeding the Valley to maintain its relevance on the global stage.

But the timing of this particular attack offers deeper context. It coincides with the interrogation of Tahawwur Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, presently in NIA custody. With his deportation, the global gaze is once again being cast on Pakistan's deep involvement in nurturing and sheltering terrorists. The ISI's role in the Mumbai attacks, long buried under layers of denial and deceit, is now dangerously close to being officially exposed in an Indian court. In this backdrop, the Pahalgam attack appears not only as a disruption of peace in the Valley but also as a calculated distraction – a smokescreen to dilute international attention from the truth about the ISI's blood-soaked past. But this too



will fail. The world now sees through such smokescreens. Pakistan's image as a terror-sponsoring state is etched in global memory, and it will not be washed away by orchestrated violence or diversionary tactics.

While the psychological and emotional scars of this massacre are deep, the economic consequences are equally alarming. In recent years, Kashmir's tourism sector – a vital artery of the region's economy – had been witnessing a resurgence. Record-breaking footfalls of domestic and international tourists were breathing new life into local livelihoods: hoteliers, shikara owners, guides, artisans, transporters, and small traders alike. The Valley's famed hospitality, warmth, and picturesque beauty had begun to replace the headlines of conflict.

The Pahalgam attack threatens to derail this delicate recovery. Travel advisories are being reissued. Cancellations are surging. Fear is returning – not just to those who might visit, but to those whose lives depend on that very influx. Each attack like this strikes not only at the body of the nation but at the economic heart of the Valley. It disrupts livelihoods, breaks trust, and erodes years of painstaking effort to rebuild Kashmir's image.

Kashmir's hospitality – once legendary, where a guest was treated as divine – now finds itself under threat from forces that do not represent its people. The attackers may have aimed to disrupt peace, but they have

also injured the soul of a place known for its open doors and open hearts. This must not be allowed to become the new normal.

If Pakistan's long game was to destabilize Kashmir through proxy warfare, then it must now confront the fact that it has lost that game. The people of Kashmir have grown wiser, more resilient, and more vocal. In response to the Pahalgam massacre, what emerged was not fear or silence, but overwhelming condemnation from every corner of the Valley. Local traders called for a shutdown to express solidarity with the victims. Religious leaders, civil society members, and ordinary citizens stood up, not just to mourn the dead, but to indirectly tell the terrorists: enough is enough. This is not our war. You are not our warriors. And this is not our way.

Such an outpouring of collective grief and moral clarity is unprecedented. It marks a decisive departure from a past when fear often silenced dissent against the gun. The bandh is not just a gesture – it is a collective referendum against terrorism. The Kashmiri people, through their spontaneous actions, have sent a strong message not just to the militants and their foreign handlers, but also to the Indian nation: we are not the problem; we are the victims, and now we are becoming part of the solution.

Yet this moment of awakening also brings with it a word of caution. While the calm in Kashmir today is promising, it is not absolute. Tourist influx

is at a record high. Businesses are thriving. Schools are open. But the illusion of complete normalcy can be dangerous if it blinds us to the lurking threats. The enemy is not absent; it is only recalibrating. It is vital that we remain alert, adaptive, and aware. We must not be swayed by cosmetic calm or misled by short-term quiet. The attack in Pahalgam proves that while the nature of the threat may evolve, its intent remains unchanged.

In this moment of crisis, the courage and compassion shown by ordinary Kashmiris must be acknowledged and applauded. It was local citizens who rushed to help the victims, who provided first aid, arranged for transportation, and extended emotional support before official responders arrived. Their actions speak of a deeper transformation within society – a shift from silent suffering to active empathy. This is the Kashmir that deserves to be seen, heard, and celebrated.

Unfortunately, even as Kashmiris stood tall in the face of terror, certain voices within the national media and self-styled "experts" wasted no time in peddling outdated stereotypes and painting the entire Valley with a brush of suspicion. Their narrative – vague, recycled, and irresponsible – does nothing to support the national interest. Instead, it plays directly into the hands of Pakistan's propaganda machinery. By demonizing the very people who are now resisting terror with courage, these fringe voices weaken India's moral high ground and damage the very fabric of national unity. It is time to call out and shut down these purveyors of prejudice. Let us not allow them to hijack the narrative. Let us ensure that facts, not fear, drive our discourse.

Pahalgam, whose name means "village of shepherds," now stands as both a site of mourning and a symbol of moral awakening. The attack that aimed to silence Kashmir has, paradoxically, amplified its voice. A voice that is calling not for revenge, but for justice. Not for more guns, but for lasting peace. Not for more slogans, but for real change.

Let the memory of the slain be honored not with mere tears, but with transformative action. Let this tragedy be not just a moment of grief, but a defining milestone in the journey towards reclaiming Kashmir's soul. A journey in which the fragrance of its flowers and the warmth of its people once again become the identity of the Valley – not blood on its earth.

Kashmir is speaking, although shocked and stunned, it is speaking with clarity, with compassion, and with conviction. It is now upon all of us to listen – and to act.

Evils and their redressal are vital for society



SAHIL MANZOOR
sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Today's learners are the bosses of the future. Today's learners may decide the future of the nation and the world. Learners may put their positive impact on society when they have effective skills, great goals, and unconditional love for the nation.

We have no option for the learners living in the present era other than providing chances and motivating them in every aspect of their developmental changes. They are to our teachers, scientists, doctors, and players in every role in every playing field. It is obvious all the great professionals are among them and may decide the fate of our nation and world as well. Who are learners?

Every individual has to accept that every learner is our future and they are our nation builders, so how can we ignore what they are engaged with today? May Almighty not do this; if our present generation is facing issues, we all have to redress them. This is not the issue of a single individual or particular community. Any evil in society is our duty to condemn, and we are the true kins and may provide them counseling and all that they demand for their upliftment.

Learners are in every household. Every parent wishes to see their children develop great personalities and believes in great results for their future.

How can we feed them under safe shelter?

Today, with the arrival of cutting-edge technology, we are celebrating every developmental step our nation is heading towards, and at the same time, we are concerned that our society is dealing with grave concerns like drugs, which are destroying the health, wealth, and dignity of our blooming young people.

What are the evils in our society that need an immediate

eradication?

The drug menace becomes the central attraction of evils in our society, followed by online gambling, and the demand for branded clothes and day-to-day requirements is getting out of reach for the parents.

Drug menace.

There are drugs prescribed by doctors to their parents for the healing purpose. Lucky people ignore them and complete the medicine course after hard efforts, and unfortunately, there are people who consume drugs, which may make their health worse, spoil their money, lose their dignity, and get closer to the grave. Drug management is spoiling the image of our society and making us ashamed among the others. Adolescent school-going students are habitual smokers, alcohol consumers, and dreadful drug consumers. This is quite nasty for the whole society, and I condemn and pray to get rid of such evils from our society. Drug abuse may be eradicated by taking measures like educational institutions having to make their learners aware not only on Drug De-Addiction Day but on all 365 days of Anti-Drug Addiction Day.

Visit the drug de-addiction centers where they experience how the drug menace soils the lives of innocent and healthy individuals, and show them case study videos once a week.

Motivate them towards physical activities like the gym, where they may get habitual to building their physique instead of spoiling it. Show them exercises that may reduce their anxiety and feel them relax. Tell them how they can spend their free time, like spending time with family discussing your life goals, your interests, and your likes and dislikes.

Online gambling
Online gambling is one more threat to our young minds. Online gambling is becoming a trend and is being promoted through different mediums.

One thing that is very unfortunate is that famous and renowned cricketers are promoting such activities. Our nation does not need such types of sources for the employment our country needs educated, patriotic, and loyal citizens. We need people who hate evils, and such acts may lead our country towards the developmental heights, and believe that

the crimes and other offenses may decline, like harassment of female folk, minor rapes, murders, and hundreds of evils may be eradicated if we focus on giving moral knowledge, and criminals should be treated under strict laws. No crime should be taken for granted.

Online gambling should be banned, and celebrities should think before promoting any activity that may harm and be dreadful for the future.

Branded day-to-day demands

There are people in our society who manage to live with very little earning and provide education to their children, and there are people who spend two thousand on their designer underwear. No doubt if we are financially well-off, we can spend as per our earnings, but there are people in our society having zero earnings and unnecessarily troubling their parents to give them huge money for iPhones, branded shoes, clothes, etc. Such acts may spoil their careers as well as drain their financial strength and make them so poor that they take wrong steps and may harm the society and lose their dignity.

What do we need?

We need educated, honest, and patriotic professionals who help the nation to eradicate such evils and friendly professionals who guide their future stars, not demotivating them.

Motivation is power.
Motivation may help our youth in the righteous path and be the ones who may uplift the nation, not the ones who are the reason for destruction.

What do we need?
We need counseling centers so that everyone may get counseling without any fear or shyness.

We need government gym centers in every village with proper guides and equipment or subsidies for home gym equipment.

Bodybuilding enhances the interest in making personality and decreases the urge to take drugs like smoking, etc. We have to motivate our young minds towards their future goals as early as possible.

Be healthy, be happy, be safe, and enjoy your life.

Never follow competition; first understand yourself and follow your passion for the upliftment of the nation and family.

Preserving The Legacy: The Legal And Moral Battle To Save Walnut And Chinar Trees In Jammu & Kashmir

MOHD AMIN MIR
miramin354@gmail.com

Once upon a time, the landscapes of Jammu and Kashmir were defined by the graceful sway of chinar leaves in the breeze and the majestic silhouette of walnut trees standing tall on hillsides and village borders. These trees were more than flora; they were symbols of culture, commerce, and continuity. Today, however, they face an existential threat, not from natural calamities or pests, but from human avarice, administrative confusion, and legal loopholes.

The question at the heart of the crisis is deceptively simple: Who has the authority to permit the cutting of walnut and chinar trees in Jammu & Kashmir? Can a Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) legally prevent a Tehsildar from granting such permission? Or is this power misplaced in a bureaucratic tangle?

This article explores the intricate interplay of law, history, current misuse, and the environmental consequences of inaction, while also offering a roadmap for safeguarding these ecological and cultural treasures.

The Legal Terrain: Section 133 CrPC and Its Applicability

Section 133 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 empowers Executive Magistrates, such as Tehsildars, to issue conditional orders for the removal of public nuisances. These could range from obstructed pathways to dangerously hanging structures, and in some disputed interpretations, even trees.

However, legal scholars and judgments have made it increasingly clear that Section 133 cannot override special statutes where such statutes exist to deal with a specific subject matter – such as environmental conservation and forestry.

In this light, it becomes evident that Section 133 CrPC is not legally tenable as a tool to grant permis-

sion for felling specified trees like walnut and chinar, which are governed under a special law in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Preservation Law: J&K Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969

Enacted with foresight, the Jammu and Kashmir Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969 is the cornerstone legislation that regulates the felling of walnut and chinar trees. The law was framed to prevent indiscriminate cutting and ensure these heritage trees are preserved for posterity.

Key provisions include:

Section 2(d): Defines “specified trees,” which currently include walnut and chinar.

Section 3: Prohibits cutting down, uprooting, or damaging such trees without written permission.

Section 5: Empowers the Deputy Commissioner (DC) as the competent authority to grant or deny such permission, after obtaining a technical opinion from the Divisional Forest Officer.

Hence, the law is unambiguous – only the Deputy Commissioner, after due consultation with the DFO, can permit the felling of walnut and chinar trees.

Role of the Divisional Forest Officer: Advisory, Not Directive

The DFO is a technical expert, not a licensing authority. Their role is to assess whether the tree in question is diseased, hazardous, or impeding essential infrastructure, and then submit a report to the Deputy Commissioner.

In a recent incident from Anantnag, a DFO issued a letter directing a Tehsildar not to entertain applications under Section 133 CrPC for the cutting of walnut trees. While this direction aligns with legal principles, it lacks binding authority. The DFO can advise, but not command a magistrate unless empowered by law or a court.

This subtle legal nuance is frequently misunderstood, resulting in friction and jurisdictional over-



reach.

The Historical Context: Royal Edicts and Cultural Significance

The chinar tree (Platanus orientalis) is perhaps the most iconic symbol of Kashmiri heritage. The Mughal emperor Jahangir was so enchanted by its beauty that he ordered the planting of chinar avenues across Srinagar. Later, Maharaja Hari Singh prohibited their felling in 1922, recognising their symbolic and environmental value.

The walnut tree, prized for its high-quality timber and nutrient-rich nuts, was similarly protected, given its economic value to Kashmiri households. Craftsmen used their wood for carving, furniture, and houseboats – a tradition passed down through generations.

These royal and cultural protections laid the groundwork for the 1969 Act, which formalised the protection.

Post-2019 Developments: Repeals

and Retentions

After the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the state into two Union Territories, many state laws were repealed. However, the Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969, continues to operate in the UT of J&K, reaffirming its continued relevance.

Recent correspondence from the Office of the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag (Ref: DCA/Misc/2023-24/595-7617 dated 11.03.2024) reiterates that no Executive Magistrate is permitted to allow felling under Section 133 CrPC for walnut or chinar trees, reinforcing that the DC is the sole authority under the special law.

Ground Reality: Widespread Violations and Local Complicity

Despite robust legal protections, specified trees are being felled at an alarming rate. Locals, often in connivance with contractors and certain officials, exploit ignorance,

delays in permissions, or lack of coordination between departments.

Illegal felling is disguised as:
Road expansion projects
Hazards to electric lines
Crop interference

There are instances where trees are chopped at night, their stumps buried or burnt, and permissions backdated fraudulently. In rural hamlets, social influence often outweighs legal process.

Moreover, enforcement is weak. FIRs are rarely lodged. Penalties are lenient. And follow-up inspections by forest staff are infrequent.

Is the End Near? A Grim Forecast

If this trajectory continues unchecked, the once-proud walnut and chinar trees may soon be found only in textbooks and paintings. Their saplings are not being replanted with the urgency required. Their ecological role in preventing soil erosion and maintaining microclimates is underestimated.

The question must now be asked with sincerity: Are we writing the obituary of these trees through legal neglect and moral apathy?

The Way Forward: Suggestions for Revival and Reform

To reverse this ecological and cultural decay, the government and civil society must act on multiple fronts:

Legislative Strengthening:

Amend the 1969 Act to include stricter penalties, real-time tracking of permissions, and mandatory replanting clauses.

Establish tree heritage zones where felling is entirely banned, akin to “no-construction” zones.

Digital Permission and Monitoring System:

Introduce an online portal for tree felling applications, linked to GIS maps and DFO reports.

Mandate photographic and video documentation of trees before any decision is taken.

Empower the Forest Department Technically, Not Administratively:

Allow DFOs to recommend cancellation of illegal permissions.

Include forest officers in revenue inspections when land records involve walnut or chinar trees.

Awareness and Community Engagement:

Launch village-level Tree Guardianship Programs, involving schools and panchayats.

Offer incentives for preserving old walnut and chinar trees on private land.

Enforcement Mechanisms:

Create a Tree Protection Task Force within the Forest Department with magisterial powers under the Forest Act.

Fast-track prosecutions for illegal felling under environmental courts or Lok Adalats.

Celebrate Tree Heritage:

Organise annual Walnut and Chinar Festivals, tying together culture, ecology, and commerce.

Document and publish the oldest walnut and chinar trees, tagging them as “State Trees of Historical Significance.”

Conclusion: The Battle Is Legal, But the Cause Is Moral

The issue of who can allow or prevent the cutting of a walnut or chinar tree is not just a legal question – it is a test of our commitment to ecological justice and cultural preservation. While the law clearly empowers the Deputy Commissioner and not the Tehsildar or DFO independently, the current abuse of authority and negligence threaten to turn a living legacy into mere memory.

The Divisional Forest Officer has a duty to advise, not command. The Tehsildar must defer to the special legislation. The Deputy Commissioner must act with integrity. But above all, the citizens must recognise that once a chinar is gone, it cannot be replaced in our lifetime.

Unless we act now – not tomorrow – we may find ourselves staring at valleys without shadows, hill-tops without crowns, and a culture stripped of its most iconic.

Theatrical enmity of politics and real stupidity of the public



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABHI

The stage of politics is never straight. What is visible in front is often only a glimpse of the truth hidden behind the curtain. A scene in which leaders are seen fighting, dying, and quarreling for the public on the stage, and at the end of the same scene, they hug each other behind the curtain and laugh while sipping tea.

Have you ever wondered? That people who call each other 'anti-national' and 'traitor' in TV debates drink coffee together after the break? Or that leaders who call each other's parties 'enemies of the people' also go to each other's houses for dinner as soon as the Parliament session ends?

So who is the real fool? The leader who fights a battle for show, or we, who take that battle to heart and harbor hatred against our own people?

Acting of enmity, truth of friendship

In politics, enmity is an art, and friendship is a necessity. Despite the sharp tone on TV and poisonous arrows on Twitter, one truth remains: the real purpose of all this is to cheat the public emotionally. Votes are obtained in elections on the basis of 'emotion,' not logic. And when the public gets excited in the name of religion, caste, sect, and patriotism, only then are the leaders' moves set.

Be it Kiran Choudhary and Shashi Tharoor or Modi and Mamata, Kejriwal and Rahul—all of them live comfortably in their personal lives by engaging the emotions of their respective sections of the public.

The public: a resource for the leader, an enemy for himself

We are not ashamed to think that we fight with our neighbor for a leader. We break friendships before casting our vote, block each other on WhatsApp, families break up, and there are conflicts in marriages.

Why? Because we feel that 'our leader' is saving the country, and 'your leader' is selling the country.

The limits of this madness are crossed when you see that the leaders whom you considered as arch enemies are getting photographed together at each other's sons and daughters' weddings.

History is witness: The politics of friendship is nothing new.

Not only today, but in the political history of India, there are thousands of such examples where leaders with opposing ideologies have been close friends of each other outside the Parliament.

Pandit Nehru and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee were staunch critics of each other but never crossed the line of personal respect.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Sonia Gandhi used to make sharp comments against each other in Parliament, but cordiality was maintained at a personal level.

Today this decorum has ended, but the relations between leaders are still cordial—just by keeping the public in confusion.

The game of religion and caste: the cheapest weapon of politics

The politics of our country runs on the trigger of religion and caste. Hindu-Muslim, Dalit-Thakur, Brahmin-backward—a new division is raised in

every election.

And us? We pounce on this trap. As soon as a leader says, “Hindus are in danger,” “Muslims have increased,” or “Ram has been insulted, we take out our swords, start tweeting, and forget decorum in debates.

While the leaders know that these issues are only meant to engage the public, the real game is being played elsewhere—private deals, government tenders, transfer postings, and the seat of power.

Media: Factory adding fuel to the fire

The media adds fuel to the fire lit by politicians. Debates on news channels are scripted. Every night there is a fixed agenda, a fixed enemy, and a fixed standard of “nationalism.”

The anchor shouts, “Are you a patriot or a traitor?”

The public gets divided: “I am a Hindu with Modi; you are a Muslim with Rahul.”

And in this debate we transform from humans into machines—machines for spreading hatred.

Social media: Arena of blind followers and liberal politics

Social media has made the common man a 'digital warrior.' Now everyone attacks others on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, carrying the flag of one ideology.

Anyone who is a supporter of BJP attributes every question to the 'Tukde-Tukde Gang.'

Those who are in the opposition consider every government decision an example of 'dictatorship.'

In this fight, logic has died, and only emotional blind devotion remains.

Why silence on the real issues?

Even today, crores of people in the country are deprived of clean water, quality education, employment, and health facilities.

But no leader speaks on these issues because these issues do not

arouse emotions and do not get votes.

The hunger of the poor, the suicide of the farmer, the helplessness of the unemployed, the suicide of the student—politics is silent on all these.

We are also silent because we pay attention to the “trending” issue that our leaders and media serve.

Are we really democratic?

Democracy is not just about voting. It is about thinking, asking questions, and respecting dissent. But today, as soon as someone raises questions against the government or leader, he is labeled a “traitor.”

Criticizing leaders has now become 'anti-national.' Is this democracy? Or an emotional dictatorship?

What to do now? What is the solution?

1. Understand politics as politics; do not make it a symbol of religion or caste.

2. Get out of the agenda of media and leaders, think for yourself, read, and question.

3. Maintain dialogue—Don't let political differences interfere with personal relationships.

4. Opposition is necessary in democracy—give it space, don't abuse it.

5. Don't make yourself a pawn in the show-off battles of politicians.

Finally, a simple question: Are you a real leader or a slave?

Before every election, think about who you are voting for—the leader who makes you fight on the streets, in mosques and temples, or the leader who talks about hospitals, schools, water, and employment?

If you are also living with the same anger, the same hatred that the leaders sowed, then sorry—you are not free. You are a spectator of a show where the leaders are the heroes and you are the joker.

Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist

Books are tools for future construction

VIJAY GARG

In today's digital era, when social media, mobile apps and sources of quick information are spread around us, at such times it has become more essential than ever to rediscover the relevance of books and their importance. The 'World Book and Copyright Day', celebrated on April 23, reminds the importance of books only, but the day also constrain us to think why books should remain inseparable part of our lives. The world of books is such a wonderful world, which not only gives knowledge, but also gives new light to emotions, thoughts and fantasies. This Day, launched by UNESCO in 1995, reflects global commitment towards the preservation of books and their propagation by bringing writers, publishers and readers to a common platform. Indeed, the day marks the death anniversary of the worldfamous literary writer William Shakespeare, Miguel De all-round and Spanish writer Inka Garcilaso De La Vega. The day is associated with the idea that books are part of the world cultural heritage by not being confined to a country or language. Today, when there is a full of sources of information, the culture of reading the book is becoming increasingly eroded. From children to youth and adults, everyone has joined digital devices so much that giving books time is now starting to be a 'old habit'. World Book Day aims to increase the attachment to books in people, give global respect to writers and publishers, spread awareness on sensitive topics like copyright, and make the habit of reading a part of life. It is well-known that reading is not only the medium of knowledge, but it is also helpful to focus, increase the ability to think, develop imagination, and reinforce emotional intelligence. When we turn the pages of a book, our brain enters the imaginations of the author, joins the characters and attempts to understand a narrative deeply. This process develops the brain's capabilities, which cannot be by taking mechanically information only. It has been evident from various neuro-psychological researches in the subject that the memory-strength, cognitive skills and language efficiency of children regularly reading the book is far better than those children who spend most of the time on the screen. The biggest concern regarding the falling graph of book culture in India is that the reading habit of the country's majority youth population is declining rapidly. Studies show that on average an Indian reads only two or three books per year. This number is significantly lower than developed countries. However, institutions like the National Book Trust in India and the Union Ministry of Education regularly organize book fairs.



Jammu AIIMS operationalizes Centre for Advanced Genomics, Precision Medicine for oncology patients

HT News Network

Jammu, Apr 25 (UNI) To mark a new era in affordable, precision-driven cancer care for patients across India, the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Jammu on Friday announced the initiation of laboratory operations at the newly inaugurated state-of-the-art "Centre for Advanced Genomics and Precision Medicine". As per the official communiqué, the Centre was inaugurated by Executive Director and CEO, AIIMS Jammu Prof. (Dr.) Shakti Kumar

Gupta along with Dean Research and Medical Superintendent Lt Gen Dr Sunil Kant, Dean (Academics) Prof Dr Meeta Gupta; Associate Dean (Research) Prof Dr. Shabab L Angurana, Registrar Shailender Slathia; Dr Poonam Sharma, Head, Department of Pathology; and Dr Sudarshan, Vice President - Global Operations at 4baseCare. The Centre, established in collaboration with 4baseCare, is equipped with cutting-edge Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology, read the handout. It further said that the facility enables comprehensive genomic profiling for



cancer patients, allowing clinicians to design highly targeted, individ-

alized treatment plans, adding, "by integrating genomic data with AI-

driven diagnostics, the Centre aims to enhance early disease detection, optimize therapy selection, and minimize ineffective treatments, thereby improving patient outcomes and quality of life." "At AIIMS Jammu, the same high-quality NGS tests will now be available at very affordable prices making precision oncology accessible to a much broader segment of the population. This initiative is a significant step towards democratizing access to world-class cancer diagnostics and treatment in India," it read. Executive Director and CEO, AIIMS Jammu, Prof. (Dr.) Shakti

Kumar Gupta, stated, "For every patient we treat, we are treating a mother, a father, a sister, or a brother. This partnership is our promise to every family who walks through our doors that we will do everything in our power to bring them the care they deserve." With the launch of this Centre, AIIMS Jammu cements its position as a frontrunner in India's medical research landscape, he said and added, "the facility is poised to play a pivotal role in advancing precision oncology, rare disease diagnostics, reproductive medicine, and public health genomics.

DC Ganderbal reviews functioning of Revenue Department

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, APRIL 25: In a bid to strengthen the efficiency and transparency of the Revenue Department, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal.

During the meeting, the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Ganderbal gave a detailed presentation highlighting key aspects and current status of the department's functioning. The discussion covered various critical areas including the progress under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), land acquisition cases for developmental projects, issuance of land passbooks, disposal of grievances on JK SAMADHAN, and pending mutations, including those related to defense land.

The DC underscored the importance of timely and efficient service delivery, calling on all concerned officers to expedite the resolution of pending



cases to bolster public trust and transparency in the system.

Reviewing the status of online grievance redressal and service delivery, the DC directed all Tehsildars to personally monitor the relevant online portals and ensure prompt and high-quality disposal of grievances. He further instructed that there should be zero pendency in online services so that applicants do not face unnecessary delays.

Interacting with the officers, the DC emphasized the need to address public concerns effectively and ensure seamless service delivery across the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Syed Fahim Bihagi; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, SDM Kangani; Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Pathwaris, and other concerned officials.

DC Bandipora reviews Departmental Proposals for Capex Budget 2025-26

HT News Network

Bandipora, April 25: The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Friday chaired a meeting at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora to discuss the formulation of the District Capex Budget Action Plan for the financial year 2025-26.

The meeting discussed threadbare department-wise action plans proposed under the District Capex Budget.

District officers of various departments presented their proposed works, outlining developmental priorities and project requirements.

While addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner M.A. Qadri directed all departments to accord top priority to ongoing works under the Capex plan to ensure their timely completion and continued progress.

He stressed the need for tangible asset creation that can have a lasting developmental impact at the grassroots level.

Deputy Commissioner instructed



the concerned officers to ensure that all proposed works are free from any land disputes thereby facilitating smooth and timely execution.

He emphasized a coordinated approach among departments and called for early submission of the finalized Action Plan to be incorporated in the District Capex Budget 2025-26.

Among others the meeting was attended by District Programme Officer ICDS, Yaar Ali Khan, Divisional Forest Officer Bandipora Was-eem Farooq Mir, Joint Director Planning Mohammad Maqbool Lone, Executive Engineers of R&B, Jal Shakti, PDD, District officers of various Departments and other concerned.

JKEDI starts 6-day Entrepreneurship Development Program at ITI Ganderbal

HT News Network

Ganderbal, April 25: Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) District Centre, Ganderbal on Thursday started a six-day Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) under the Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

The EDP is designed to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge required to establish and manage their business ventures successfully.

It seeks to nurture entrepreneurial talent and encourage innovation, particularly among rural youth.

The inaugural session was attended by the Principal ITI, Mubashir Hafiz Jan, who emphasized the critical role of skill development and entrepreneurship in driving economic progress.

He commended JKEDI's efforts in nurturing entrepreneurial talent and urged participants to fully engage in the program to transform their ideas into sustainable businesses.

District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Ganderbal highlighted that the EDP is tailored to address regional entrepreneurial challenges.

The program included interactive workshops, practical case studies, and expert-led sessions to deliver actionable learning outcomes.

Martial arts inter-School competitions held at Baramulla

HT News Network

Baramulla, April 25: Continuing its mission to nurture young talent and promote physical fitness among school-going children, the Department of Youth Services and Sports Baramulla, successfully conducted a series of inter-school zonal level sports events across multiple zones of the district. In Zone Baramulla, the Under-14 and Under-17 Boys and Girls Wushu and Taekwondo Championships were held at the Kashmir Combative Academy. The event witnessed overwhelming participation from over 24 government and private institutions, with more than 300 students demonstrating exceptional skill, discipline, and sportsmanship across various weight categories. Zone Wagoora organized its zonal level Wushu and Taekwondo competitions for the Under-14 and Under-17 boys at HSS Kreeri, where 53 students from different schools displayed commendable performances in their respective bouts.

DIC Shopian organizes awareness prog under RAMP

HT News Network

Shopian, April, 25: The District Industries Centre (DIC) Shopian, under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative, organized an awareness-cum-outreach programme at ITI, Shopian today.

The event witnessed the participation of senior officers, including General Manager, DIC Shopian, Lead District Manager Shopian, Block Development Officer, Shopian, District Nodal Officer, EDI Shopian, Superintendent, ITI Shopian along with representatives from the Departments of Handicrafts, Banks, and officials from DIC Shopian were also present.

More than 150 beneficiaries from various sectors, including Hand-



icrafts, Handloom, NRLM, EDI trainees, ITI trainees/Passouts and MSME entrepreneurs actively participated in the programme. During the inaugural session, participants were sensitized about the significance of Udyam Registration and its role in empowering businesses and industrial establishments. Emphasis was laid on how collaboration with government initiatives and flagship schemes can help enterprises grow and succeed. A detailed PowerPoint

presentation was delivered, outlining the udyam registration process, associated benefits, and available support systems.

On the occasion, the General Manager DIC Shopian, Lead Bank Manager Shopian, Functional Manager DIC Shopian, District Nodal Officer EDI Shopian and Industrial promotion officer DIC Shopian also addressed the gathering, highlighting the importance of Udyam Registration. They interacted with participants, discussed various entrepreneurship opportunities, and encouraged them to leverage government schemes to scale their ventures. The programme concluded with an interactive session, during which participant's queries were addressed, reinforcing DIC Shopian's.

GDC Anantnag organized solidarity march

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 25: The Government Degree College (GDC), Anantnag, on Thursday organized a solidarity and condolence march to mourn the tragic loss of more than 26 innocent lives in the recent Pahalgam terrorist attack.

The march was led by the Principal Prof. (Dr.) Mushtaq Ahmad Malik in which teaching, non-teaching staff and students, came together to express their grief and condemned the heinous and barbaric act. The college administration expressed their solidarity with the families of the victims. The college staff expressed their deep regret on the loss of innocent lives and expressed solidarity with the deceased families to bear the irreparable loss of their loved ones.

While offering heartfelt sympathies and condolence, the staff members prayed for the peace to the departed souls and patience for their near and dear ones and recovery of the persons injured during the incident. The smooth conduct of march was facilitated by J&K Police Anantnag, of Director Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob Farooq. While offering heartfelt sympathies and condolence, the staff members prayed for the peace to the departed souls and patience for their near and dear ones and recovery of the persons injured during the incident. The smooth conduct of march was facilitated by J&K Police Anantnag, of Director Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob Farooq.

Chinar Yuva Centre Baramulla bags award for Sustainable Innovation at CASCA 2025

HT News Network

Baramulla, April 25: In a moment of pride for the district Baramulla, the Chinar Yuva Centre Baramulla has been honoured with the prestigious award in the "Sustainable Product Innovation" category at the CASCA 2025 (Climate Action and Sustainability Conference and Awards) held at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

Chinar Yuva Centre is a public outreach initiative by Northern Command and Chinar Corps of the Indian Army for Kashmir Valley to help youth to be part of the main stream development.

Presented by the M3M Foundation and organised by the CSRU Universe, CASCA 2025 is one of India's leading platforms celebrating exemplary efforts in sustain-



ability and climate action. The event brought together global leaders, policymakers, environmental experts, and

innovators committed to fostering a greener and more sustainable future. The Chinar Yuva Centre's recognition

stems from its groundbreaking work in youth led innovations in climate science, circular product design and eco-friendly practices that significantly reduce environmental impact.

Speaking on the achievement, the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, congratulated the team and said, "This award is a testament of the youth of Baramulla and their commitment to sustainability. It also reflects our district's growing role in contributing to India's climate action goals." Speaking on the achievement, the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, congratulated the team and said, "This award is a testament of the youth of Baramulla and their commitment to sustainability. It also reflects our district's growing role in contributing to India's climate action goals."





Awareness events organised across District Samba to mark World Malaria Day 2025

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, APRIL 25: District Samba today observed World Malaria Day 2025 as a series of awareness programs and educational activities were held across various health institutions and schools. The deliberation centered on this year's theme "Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvest, Re-imagine, Reignite, which aims to re-energize efforts at all levels, from global policy to community action, to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination. The events were held across all three medical blocks of the district-Ramgarh, Nud and Purmandal -where healthcare professionals conducted awareness sessions, distributed informational pamphlets, and emphasized the importance of eliminating mosquito breeding grounds. Special outreach and education programs were also organised in multiple educational institutions including GMS Jakh, GMS Budhwani, GHS Rahya, GMS Dagdhore. Students were educated about the symptoms, diagnosis, and prevention of malaria. The initiatives aimed to foster community involvement and ensure the younger generation plays a role in spreading awareness about this preventable disease.

Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan Udhampur Admin organises awareness program on drug De-addiction at Sial Sallan

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 25: District Administration Udhampur in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department today organized an awareness program under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan here at Sial Sallan.

The program was held in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, who graced the occasion as the chief guest. The event witnessed the participation of District Social Welfare Officer Kanika Gupta, District Tuberculosis Officer Dr. Anil Saloch, Assistant Drug Controller Sanjeev Gupta.

The awareness program featured a series of impactful activities, including sensitization sessions on the ill-effects of drug abuse conducted by resource persons, counsellor from the District Police Line.

Addressing the gathering, the DC emphasized the urgent need to curb the drug menace, stating, India has the largest youth population in the world. "If our youth fall prey to drug addiction, it will hamper the progress of our nation. It is our collective responsibility to prevent this" she noted. She further added that rehabilitated individuals can play a vital role as ambassadors of change by motivating others to stay away from drugs. The DC advocated for a disrupt and distract policy — disrupting regular drug-using patterns and engaging youth in constructive and positive activities to keep them away from harmful substances.

Rehabilitated individuals who had successfully overcome drug addiction shared their inspirational journeys, offering hope and serving as role models for others struggling with substance abuse.

Inter-School Table Tennis Competition Commences at International Delhi Public School, Gowharpora

■ HT News Network



Srinagar, APRIL 25: Today, the Department of Zonal Physical Education Officer, B.K. Pora, organized an inter-school Table Tennis competition at International Delhi Public School, Gowharpora. The event marked the beginning of matches in the Under-14 and Under-17 boys' categories, with enthusiastic participation from numerous schools across the zone. The occasion was graced by Mr. Abdul Hameed Dar Zonal Physical Education Officer B.K. Pora and Activity Incharge Zone B.K Pora Mr. Irfan Nazir as the Chief Guest. Dr. Khalid Abrar, the Principal of International Delhi Public School, also attended and extended a warm welcome to all participants and officials.

The event showcased not only the sporting spirit and talent of young athletes but also emphasized the importance of physical education in schools. The competitive atmosphere, combined with the spirit of sportsmanship, made for an exciting start to the tournament.

Such events play a vital role in encouraging students to pursue sports and maintain a healthy lifestyle, while also fostering teamwork, discipline, and

Shrine Board Holds Joint Security Review - AI based ICCC at Katra to be operationalised in May

■ HT News Network

Katra, April 25: To assess security and operational preparedness of Shrine area for hassle-free pilgrimage, Chief Executive Officer, Anshul Garg today presided over a joint security review meeting with security agencies and other stakeholders at Central Office, Katra.

The meeting was attended by Addl. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SSP, Reasi; Commandant, CRPF; Jt. Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB; SP, Katra; Sub Divisional Magistrate, Katra; Tehsildar, SMVDSB and officers from Army, intelligence agencies and Shrine Board. The CEO stressed that the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) coming up at Katra must be operationalized by the first week of May to ensure pilgrim safety and facilitate smooth yatra regulation. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the timeline, highlighting that a robust security grid across all key sectors of the shrine relies on the timely activation of the ICCC as this



center will enable real-time monitoring, swift response to emergencies and effective coordination among security agencies through a network of 700 CCTV cameras with features like gesture recognition, face recognition, PTZ and such others as per operational requirements. The CEO urged all concerned quarters to strictly follow the deadline to ensure a safe and secure

yatra. Intelligence sharing and coordination among security agencies also remained key focus areas. The meeting highlighted the need for seamless communication and data exchange to prevent security breaches. Strategies to verify the credentials of Pithoo and Ponywallas to prevent impersonation and ensure their legitimate involvement were also discussed to ensure

a secure pilgrimage experience.

The meeting also explored deployment of additional security personnel, area domination and the use of drones and other advanced technologies to monitor the Shrine and surrounding areas. The latest advancements in security scenarios including AI-powered surveillance systems and data analytics were also discussed. The meeting emphasized the importance of staying ahead of potential security threats by adopting cutting-edge technologies and best practices.

The CEO reiterated the importance of effectively utilizing advanced security equipments crucial for maintaining robust security measures provided to security agencies as per the Hon'ble Chairman's (Lt. Governor, JK-UT) directives to ensure a safe environment for pilgrims. These equipments include X-Ray Baggage Scanners, Door Frame Metal Detectors, Hand-Held Metal Detectors and Under Vehicle Search Mirrors recently procured and installed by the Board in the Shrine area.

JMC Commissioner lays foundation of public toilet complex Says efforts afoot to make Jammu ODF

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 25: In line with its mission to make Jammu an Open Defecation Free (ODF) city, the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) is ramping up efforts to enhance sanitation infrastructure across all wards under JMC jurisdiction.

Addressing public demand and prioritizing hygiene and accessibility, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation Dr. Devansh Yadav today laid the foundation stone for a new public toilet complex at below bridge opposite Hanuman Mandir Ward No. 13.

The upcoming facility will include two bathrooms and eight toilets. It is part of a larger plan to construct 16 such public toilet complexes across Jammu city, with a total project cost of approximately Rs. 1.5 crore.

Strategically located near a bus stand, a Super Speciality hospital, and enroute to Jewel Chowk, the site has been chosen to serve a diverse group of users, including commuters, patients,



pedestrians, and pilgrims.

The facility will be especially beneficial during the upcoming Shri Amarnath Yatra and for devotees visiting the nearby Hanuman Temple. Similar complexes would also be established of sanitation facilities to accommodate the increasing number of worshippers. With this initiative, the JMC reaffirms its commitment to public welfare and sustainable urban development by

ensuring essential sanitation amenities are accessible to all. This marks another significant step forward in Jammu's journey toward becoming a fully ODF city. Among others joint commissioner Health and Sanitation, Abdul Sattar, Joint Commissioner Works, Firdos Ahmed Qazi, Executive Engineer Project, Lokesh Gupta also accompanied the Commissioner JMC

MLA Er. Khurshied Ahmed chairs review meeting at Mahore

■ HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 25: Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) 56- Gulabgarh (ST), Er. Khurshied Ahmed today chaired a review meeting at Dak Bungalow, Mahore, to assess the progress of various ongoing developmental works being executed under different government schemes.

The meeting was held in the presence of Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Shafiqat Majeed Bhat, along with key officials from concerned departments, including Officer Commanding, 110 RCC Budhal, Executive Engineer, PWD Mahore, Executive Engineer, PMGSY Mahore, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Dhamari, Assistant Executive Engineer, JPDCL Mahore, Block Development Officer, Mahore/ Gulabgarh/Chassana.

The session witnessed the active participation of prominent civil society members and



a large number of public representatives, reflecting the deep-rooted public interest in the region's development.

The MLA reviewed the status of road infrastructure, electrification, drinking water supply, and rural development works. He directed officials to speed up the execution of projects and ensure transparency and accountability at every stage.

DC Kishtwar reviews security setup at Pakkal Dul Hydroelectric Project Site

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, APRIL 25: Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan, along with Senior Superintendent of Police, Naresh Singh today conducted an extensive visit to the Pakkal Dul Hydroelectric Project site to assess the on-ground security scenario.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the existing security arrangements and emphasized the importance of maintaining a robust security framework in and around the project



site.

He directed the project authorities to immediately install additional CCTV cameras across all key areas of the project to enhance surveillance and strengthen safety of the project area.

In addition to the security assessment, the Dep-

uty Commissioner also reviewed the ongoing works at the project site, stressing the need for timely execution and adherence to quality standards.

Senior officers and officials of Pakkal Dul HEP were also present during the visit.

JKTPO conducts District-Level RAMP awareness workshop at Samba to boost MSME Ecosystem

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, APRIL 25: A District-Level RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) Awareness Workshop was successfully organized at the Conference Hall, DC Office here today.

The event was conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) in collaboration with the State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) - Grant Thornton Bharat LLP, and the District Industries Centre (DIC) Samba.

Organized under the guidance of Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, J&K, the workshop aimed to enhance awareness about the RAMP scheme's vision, components, and opportunities for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the



district. The workshop commenced with a warm welcome address by Sh. Gurpreet Singh, General Manager, DIC Samba, who expressed his appreciation for the enthusiastic participation of stakeholders from

various departments and institutions. The workshop was graced by the presence of the Deputy Commissioner Samba, Rajesh Sharma, who served as the Chief Guest. In his address, he emphasized the critical

role of entrepreneurship in economic development. He encouraged aspiring entrepreneurs, implementing agencies, and all participants to foster a spirit of innovation and actively support budding entrepreneurs. "By empowering new entrepreneurs, we can not only boost economic growth but also create meaningful employment opportunities across the district," he stated. SPIU Team (Grant Thornton) delivered an in-depth presentation on the RAMP scheme in Jammu & Kashmir. The team provided comprehensive insights into the various interventions under the RAMP initiative, highlighting its significant impact on the region's development. The detailed presentation underscored the scheme's objectives and implementation strategies, demonstrating the commitment to fostering growth and progress in J&K.



DC chairs Single Window Committee meeting to review mining issues in Poonch District

HT News Network

POONCH, APRIL 25: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting of District Level Single Window Committee (DLSWC) here today in the Meeting Hall of the DC Office complex to address critical mining issues in the district. As the chairman of the District Level Single Window Committee (DLSWC), Deputy Commissioner led discussions on the execution of mining leases and related concerns. The meeting featured in-depth discussions on various aspects, including title verification, site plans, and the issuance and clearance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for newly identified mineral blocks. A significant focus was placed on strengthening control and regulatory measures to ensure strict compliance with mining regulations. The DC reviewed the case-wise status of NOCs under the Single Window Clearance system, assessing the clearance pro-



cesses of various stakeholders and the status of joint inspections. He instructed the Officers to visit these sites to ensure that mineral leasing does not create detrimental effects or environment. He emphasized the importance of adhering to the regulations prescribed by the Geology and Mining Department while granting NOCs. The Deputy Commissioner also urged officers to adopt a vigilant and proactive approach in identifying illegal activities related to mineral extraction. He called for strict action against violators and stressed the necessity of implementing appropriate legal and punitive measures. ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik; ACR Mohammad Sayeed; DFO, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, District Soil Conservation Officer, Tehsildars, DMO, Executive Engineers and other concerned attended the meeting. The Deputy Commissioner also urged officers to adopt a vigilant and proactive approach in identifying illegal activities related to mineral extraction.

District NCORD Committee discusses anti-drug measures in Kathua

HT News Network



KATHUA, APRIL 25: Additional Deputy Commissioner Vishavjeet Singh today chaired a meeting of the District Level NCORD Committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to discuss and review measures aimed at curbing drug abuse and the narcotics trade in the district. During the meeting, extensive deliberations were held on issues pertaining to drug addiction, identification of areas of concern, and hotspots of drug abuse. Besides, measures undertaken by law enforcement agencies to combat this menace were thoroughly examined. The ADC emphasized on creating awareness against drug abuse and sharing success stories of drug de-addiction. He also directs to identify the persons indulged in drug peddling so that appropriate and timely action can be taken against them. The Chief Education Officer was tasked with launching an extensive awareness campaign in schools to educate students about the perils of drug abuse. Among others, SDM Hiranagar, ACD Kathua, CMO, CEO, DSWO Kathua, Dy. SP Hqrs Kathua, Officers from BSF and other departments were also present.

GCOE organises lecture on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 25: The Government College of Education Jammu organized a lecture-cum-awareness programme on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for the students under the banner of the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC). The College Principal Dr. Jyoti Parihar was the Chief Guest and addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of IPR awareness in academic and professional fields. Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, SPPND Government College, Samba, Dr. Pooja was the resource person for the programme. Convenor of IIC, Cell Sunanda Rani, formally welcomed the resource person and highlighted the initiatives of the IIC Cell in promoting innovation and entrepreneurial skills among students. The Resource Person delivered an insightful lecture on various aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and its relevance in today's innovation-driven environment. The event witnessed the presence of faculty members including Dr. Shubhra Jamwal, Prof. Priyanka Mahajan, Prof. Chanchal Singh, Prof. Kiran Thapa.

Medical Camp organized at Jaganoo by Narayana Hospital, SBSPMCT

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 25: In a profound display of compassion and commitment to public service Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Narayana super speciality Hospital, in collaboration with Shri Bhupinder Singh Pathania Charitable Trust (J&K) organized a Free Medical Camp at Block Jaganoo. The initiative aimed to provide essential healthcare services to underserved communities, particularly in rural areas where access to medical facilities remains limited. The camp was inaugurated by MLA Ramnagar Dr. Sunil Bhardwaj in presence of Vice Chairperson DDC Udhampur Juhi Pathania, Chairman of the Trust Arjun Singh Pathania and trustees.

RAMP scheme outreach gains momentum in Kathua through JKTPO-led District Level Workshop on RAMP Awareness

HT News Network

KATHUA, APRIL 25: The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), in association with the SPIU- Grant Thornton Bharat LLP and the District Industries Centre (DIC) Kathua, successfully organized a District Level Awareness Workshop today at SICOP Conference hall Kathua under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India. The workshop aimed to sensitize and inform Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the district about the various support mechanisms, reforms, and assistance available under the RAMP program for enhancing the competitiveness, access to finance and capacity building of MSMEs in Jammu and Kashmir. The event was graced by Shri Suryavanshi, Functional Manager, DIC Kathua, who highlighted the importance of this initiative in fostering industrial development in the region and encouraging more MSMEs to avail benefits under the RAMP scheme. Other speakers also addressed the gathering and shared valuable insights regarding MSME credit access and institutional support. The workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 50 MSME stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, industry representatives, implementing agencies, and officials from various departments involved in MSME development. Interactive sessions were conducted to spread awareness on key components of the RAMP scheme.

DC Jammu reviews education facility provided to rehabilitated street children

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 25: Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya today conducted a review of the education being provided to 83 rehabilitated street children currently enrolled at a Government school in the District. During the visit, he engaged with the school staff, discussing the children's progress and identifying additional requirements for their holistic development. The Deputy Commissioner emphasised the importance of giving special attention to children with particular needs, ensuring that no child is left behind in the educational process. He



directed the school administration to focus on catering to the individual needs of these

children, providing them with the necessary support to bridge any learning gaps. Following this review, Deputy Commissioner Vaishya also conducted a surprise inspection of Government Middle School Channi Himmat. During the visit, he assessed the overall functioning of the school, including staff attendance, the school's operations and student performance. The objective was to ensure that the educational standards are consistently upheld across all schools within the district. Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh; SDM Jammu South, Manu Hansa and Chief Education Officer BD Sharma were also present during the visit and inspection.

DC Reasi chairs meeting on Change of Land Use Cases

HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 25: Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik today chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee to review Change of Land Use (CLU) cases in the district. A total of 8 cases were taken up for discussion. After thorough scrutiny in the light of policy regulations, 2 cases were approved, 5 cases were deferred, and 1 case was rejected by the committee. The Deputy Commissioner directed the ACR to ensure proper safety measures are in place before granting CLU approval for petrol pumps. She also instructed the Town Planner and Executive Engineer PWD to assess road conditions and ensure proper clearance. A joint site visit by the Town Planner



and the executing agency was also directed. During the meeting, the DC emphasized the timely issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to applicants after thorough verification of documents. She underscored the importance of strictly adhering to guidelines and policies while considering CLU cases. The meeting was attended by ACD Pardeep Kumar, ACR Nitin Verma, XEN PWD, CEO MC, CAO, AEE and other concerned officers.

Establishment of Solid Waste Management Plant discussed in Poonch

POONCH, APRIL 25: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting today at the DC Office complex to review the establishment of solid waste management plants in the district. The meeting aimed to address the growing concerns regarding waste disposal and explore sustainable solutions for the same. Key discussions included planning and implementing a comprehensive solid waste management system.

Bumper Wheat harvest begins along Zero Line in Hiranagar Sector

HT News Network

KATHUA, APRIL 25: Marking a significant milestone in the district's agricultural landscape, the harvesting of ripened wheat crop commenced today across the fence in Chak Changa village, along the Zero Line of Chandwan Border Outpost in the Hiranagar IB sector. The initiative, carried out under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rakesh Minhas, is a result of the seamless coordination between the Agriculture Department, Border Security Force (BSF), and local farmers. The harvesting process was formally launched by Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Sanjeev Rai Gupta, along with Company Commandant BSF, Insp. Mahesh Kumar. It marked a remarkable achievement for farmers of the border belt, who are celebrating a bumper wheat harvest this season. Expressing their gratitude, the farmers acknowledged the District Administration, Agriculture Department, and BSF for their unwavering support in ensuring security and providing essential logistical assistance. The Agriculture Department has deployed 15 tractors and 2 combine harvesters to facilitate the swift harvesting of wheat crops sown over 350 acres across the fence during the Rabi 2024-25 season. The initiative, which began as a pilot project in Rabi 2021-22, has now expanded significantly, with 90 farmers from villages including Chak Changa, Chak Tanda, Krol Krishna, Karol Maithrain, and Maniyari actively participating in cultivation beyond the fence. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Agriculture Officer Sanjeev Rai Gupta, stated, "Our persistent efforts, coupled with technical assistance and the security support of BSF, have resulted in a successful harvest this year. We are committed to empowering border farmers and ensuring they receive the necessary resources for sustainable agriculture."

World Malaria Day 2025 observed across district Doda

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 25: World Malaria Day 2025 was observed across District Doda by organizing awareness events under this year's theme, "Malaria ends with us: Reinvent, Reimagine, Reignite." The observance was held under the guidance of Director Health Services Jammu Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar, and State Malariologist J&K, Dr. D.J. Raina. The main event was organized by the District Malaria Unit Doda at Government ANMT School Doda, where Chief Medical Officer Dr. Om

Kumar was the chief guest. The event was attended by Vidya Kotwal, Principal of Government ANMT School; Umar Anayat, District Epidemiologist; Mohammad Shafi Attu, and Malaria Staff members including Basharat Ahmed Mir, Liaqat Ali Zargar, Mohammad Akbar Dev and Rajinder Parshad, faculty members Naveeda Anjum and Saima Kousar along with a large number of students. The CMO educated the participants about malaria, its symptoms, transmission methods, and emphasized the importance of early diagnosis, timely treatment, and preventive measures such as using mosquito



nets and maintaining hygiene. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) material on malaria prevention was distributed among the students and other attendees by the Malaria Unit staff. Earlier, the programme began with a welcome address by Incharge Media Desk Health Department Faizan A. Trambo, who also elaborated on the significance of World Malaria Day and the global initiatives aimed at eliminating this preventable disease. Meanwhile, similar awareness programmes were organized across other blocks of the district, including Assar, Gandoh, and Bhaderwah,

under the supervision of respective Block Medical Officers. Health professionals in these areas also conducted educational sessions on malaria awareness, prevention, and control. The day served as a vital platform to reaffirm the Health Department's commitment toward a malaria-free future and to strengthen community participation in the fight against malaria. The CMO educated the participants about malaria, its symptoms, transmission methods, and emphasized the importance of early diagnosis, timely treatment, and preventive measures such as using mosquito nets and maintaining hygiene.



Pahalgam incident a grim reminder that Terrorism is a global menace : Jagdeep Dhankar

AGENCIES

UDHAGAMANDALAM (TAMIL NADU), APR 25 (UNI)

The terror attack on innocent tourists at Pahalgam in J and K was a grim reminder that "Terrorism is a global menace", Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar observed on Friday.

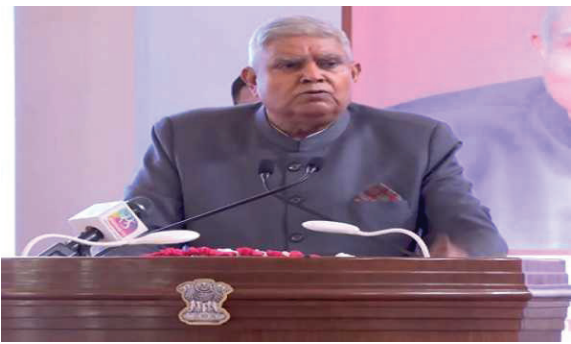
Condemning the Pahalgam terror attack on innocent tourists that claimed 26 lives in strongest terms, Mr Dhankar said this incident in J and K reminds that Terrorism is a global menace.

Speaking as the Chief Guest at the inaugural session of the Conference of Vice-Chancellors of State, Central and Private Universities of Tamil Nadu at the Ooty Raj Bhavan convened by Governor R N Ravi, the Vice-President said that Bharat is the World's most peace-loving Nation and Terrorism is a Global Menace, Needs to be addressed in Unison".

Expressing deep sorrow over the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, Mr Dhankar said "Today I join the Nation in expressing profound grief and outrage at the heinous terrorist attack in Pahalgam that claimed innocent lives."

"It is a grim reminder that terrorism is a global menace to be addressed by humanity in unison. Bharat is the world's most peace-loving nation and our civilisational ethos reflects Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", he said.

He said the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is in his third term, is our greatest assurance that



the nation's rise cannot be handicapped by any situation internal or external.

"But we all have to bear in mind that national interest is supreme. This was echoed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while imparting his final address to the Constituent Assembly. We therefore have to take a resolve to always keep nation first, national interests cannot be intertwined with partisan interest, it has to be uppermost", Mr Dhankar said.

"This cannot be subservient to any interest political, personal or for a group", he said. Touching upon the transformative National Education Policy, the Vice-President said NEP is not a Government Policy; It is a Policy for the Nation.

"After three decades, taking into consideration inputs from the widest spectrum of stakeholders, there was the evolution of the National Education Policy. This policy aligns with our civilization ethos. It encourages multidisciplinary learning." It gives priority to Indian languages. It envisions education as the development of the person, not just employability, he said, adding, the most significant aspect of the NEP is that it allows students

to learn in their mother tongue. "It has got us out of the colonial regime. Even medicine and engineering in local languages, which could not be entertained at one point of time, even in dreams, It is getting shape on the ground", he said. Calling upon institutions to study and adopt the policy in full spirit, he urged, "I beseech you all and the faculty and directors wherever they are to please do a thorough study of National Education Policy to realise its real intent and purpose so that we reap the harvest of it."

"From this platform, I wish to indicate National Education Policy is a government policy. It is a policy for the nation. And therefore I appeal, it is time for us all to adopt it, understand it, execute it, and to reap the fruits", he stressed. Emphasising that the future of Indian higher education lies in moving beyond traditional silos, he said "We are well past the era of standalone institutions. It can't be just IIMs, IITs etc. Standalone era for institutions is already behind us. There is now need of convergence for various verticals to give institutions cutting edge and Multidisciplinary approach

across academic pursuits is the only answer." He told the VCs to share their faculty talent virtually, technologically and otherwise also. That will have two-fold purpose. While giving it, you will be receiving also. The winds of innovation and change must have free passage in educational institutions. Evolve a mechanism. There must be tolerance for varying ideas. Intolerance to a thought defines democracy the wrong way. The nectar of university is that a solo voice that has an opinion different than that of the majority is heard with deference by engaging in dialogue and discourse, not by being judgmental." Highlighting Tamil Nadu's historical role in India's academic evolution, the Vice-President said, "Tamil Nadu is a land of vibrant learning centers, those learning centers must be our North Star now."

Tamil Nadu has been home to such widely acclaimed learning centers like Kanchipuram and Ennayiram. Ennayiram attracted thousands of students from all over Bharat. I see in these conferences emergence of crucibles of ideation that will rekindle the spirit of Kanchipuram and bring back glory of Ennayiram.

"We must take pride that it was in Tamil Nadu, Madras University was established in 1857. Modern education was exemplified in this land", he pointed out. He concluded with a stirring reflection on India's rich linguistic heritage, especially Tamil's historic recognition, saying, "Our

languages, their richness and depth are our pride and legacy. This aspect amplifies the fullness and uniqueness of our culture."

"Go to any country, and you will not find what we have here. Our treasure is unfathomable. Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, Bangla, and other languages are a goldmine of literature and knowledge", he noted.

These have national and global footprints. Educational institutions have to nurture with deep focus this treasure."

He said that "What a pride for Tamil Nadu and the entire country. The Tamil had the distinction of being the first language to be accorded the prestige of being a classical language. This well-deserved recognition was imparted in 2004, which means things started changing in regimes."

"Today, there are 11 languages that are classical languages and Classical languages are those that have rich culture, knowledge, literature, depth. Let me just indicate the 11 languages because

I had the occasion, as Chairman, Rajya Sabha, to declare to the Rajya Sabha that Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali were recently given the status of classical languages, but earlier we had, as I said Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia."

"Go all over the world, we are matchless. We have to realise our power, our potential. We should not be carried away by insignificant aspects", he said.

Centre defends Waqf law, says it regulates secular aspects only

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 25 (UNI)

In a significant development in the ongoing challenge to the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, the Union government has filed its preliminary affidavit before the Supreme Court, strongly defending the constitutional validity of the legislation.

Filed through the Ministry of Minority Affairs, the Centre rejected arguments that the amendments violate fundamental rights under the Constitution, particularly those under Articles 25 and 26.

The affidavit, submitted by Joint Secretary Shersha C. Saidik Mohidin, emphasizes that the amendments are aimed solely at regulating the secular aspects of waqf property management, and do not interfere with religious freedoms or Islamic rituals.

"The Act pertains only to procedural and administrative dimensions such as record-keeping and governance of waqf properties. It avoids interference with any essential religious practices, rituals, or obligations," the affidavit clarifies.

The Centre termed the concerns over the omission of "waqf-by-user" as misleading and unfounded. It clarified that all existing waqf lands already registered as of April 8, 2025, remain fully protected.

The concept of mandatory registration has existed since 1923, under successive waqf legislations, it said. Waqf Registration is not a new requirement; the amendments are only regulatory, and it won't affect religious rights, the government asserted.

"There is a clear and



mandatory legislative regime that ensures registration of all waqfs – a norm continuing for over a century," the government stated.

Dismissing objections over the inclusion of non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards, the Centre said these bodies are secular in nature and do not administer religious practices. Their role is regulatory and advisory, it emphasized.

"The maximum possible number of non-Muslims in the Central Council is four out of 22 members, and three out of 11 in State Boards. Muslims will remain a majority," the affidavit stated.

The Centre also rebutted comparisons with Hindu Religious Endowment Boards, asserting that Waqf properties often overlap with public and even non-Muslim lands, making diverse representation necessary to uphold a constitutional balance.

Justifying provisions allowing government officers to determine whether waqf claims involve encroachments on public land, the Centre cited documented misuse, including claims over collector's offices, government schools, and ASI-protected sites, made without valid documents.

"Waqf boards have, in

many cases, claimed title over public utilities and heritage sites without proper adjudication or evidence," the affidavit said.

Regarding the new provision under Section 2A, which allows Muslim individuals to create secular trusts, the Centre said this merely clarifies existing jurisprudence and empowers individuals to opt for a general trust law framework.

"It does not override judicial decisions but affirms the legal position upheld repeatedly by the Supreme Court," it added.

The government urged the Supreme Court not to pass an interim stay on the Act's provisions, invoking the legal presumption of constitutionality for all laws enacted by Parliament.

The affidavit also included voluminous documentation, such as reports of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, and extensive data on waqf land holdings, arguing that the 2025 amendments were a result of thorough consultation and review.

The next hearing is on May 5.

In an earlier hearing, the Centre had voluntarily agreed to suspend certain contentious provisions, assuring that registered waqf lands, including those claimed by users, would not be impacted.

Pakistan Defence Minister Khwaja Asif admits Islamabad's role in using terror groups for 'US' dirty work'

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, APR 25 (UNI)

In a direct contradiction of its own stance on terrorism, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khwaja Asif has openly admitted Islamabad's role in "doing the US' dirty work for three decades" through its close links with terrorist organisations.

While Pakistan has been denying its culpability in the heinous Pahalgam attack which left 26 tourists dead, Asif's statement has served to only further weaken Islamabad's plea, and undo the country's already very poor reputation in international circles regarding its role in supporting terrorist entities.

In a viral clip on X (formerly Twitter) of his interview on Sky News, the Pakistani Defence Minister is asked by the interviewer: "You do admit that Pakistan has had a long history of backing, and supporting and training, and funding these terrorist organisations?"

To which Asif admits Islamabad's full support for terrorism, saying "We have been doing this dirty work for the United States and the West, including Britain, for about three decades."

Calling the state support to terror groups a mistake, he added "That was a mistake, and we suffered for that... Pakistan's record



would have been unquestionable if we had not entered the fight against the Soviet Union and then the war following 9/11. The chickens have obviously gone home to roost, and there is no one else to blame but Pakistan."

Despite open evidence, Pakistan has denied all

role in supporting terrorism, instead calling itself a "victim" in a show of hypocrisy. The country's officials have termed the Pahalgam terror attack, in which Pakistan's link has been clearly seen, as a "false flag operation" by India, to use the incident as a pretext for attacking

Pakistan.

In response to the terror attack, New Delhi has suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, begun deporting Pakistanis in India, declared Pakistani military advisors to its High Commission in Islamabad, thinned its diplomatic mission, and closed the Attari-Wagah border.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his public remarks after the deadly attack vowed vengeance for the incident, saying that India will track down and bring all perpetrators to justice.

Pak Deputy PM Ishaq Dar postpones Bangladesh visit following Pahalgam terror attack

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD/DHAKA, APR 25 (UNI)

Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's visit to Bangladesh has been postponed in light of the Pakistan-backed terror attack in Pahalgam, which has led to rising tensions with India.

"Owing to unforeseen circumstances, the Hon-

ourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan is unable to undertake the visit to Bangladesh on 27-28 April 2025," said Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement announcing the postponement of Dar's visit to Dhaka which would have been the first such by a Pakistani Foreign Minister since 2012.

The new dates for the visit will be finalised through mutual consultations, it added.

The visit was being highly anticipated in Dhaka with Bangladesh and Pakistan becoming increasingly friendly since the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August last year. The two countries last week conducted their first Foreign Office Consultations in more than 15 years.

US House Foreign Affairs Committee sharply attacks NYT for biased coverage of Pahalgam terror attack

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, APR 25 (UNI)

The US House Foreign Affairs Committee has sharply criticised the New York Times' coverage of the Pahalgam terror attack, accusing the noted publication of downplaying the incident by calling the attackers "militants" instead of terrorists.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee came down on the publication, saying that the attack was a terrorist act "plain and simple", and added that

when it concerns terrorism, the NYT is "removed from reality".

Tagging an NYT article on the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which was headlined by the daily as "At Least 24 Tourists Gunned Down by Militants in Kashmir", the House Foreign Affairs Committee wrote on X, with a red line scoring out the word "Militants", and posted:

"Hey, @nytimes we fixed it for you. This was a TERRORIST ATTACK plain and simple."

Calling out the NYT's highly biased coverage



on terrorism by Islamic extremists, the post added: "Whether it's India or Israel, when it comes to TERRORISM the NYT is removed from reality."

The deadly terror attacks on April 22, in the

Pahalgam region of Kashmir left 26 tourists dead - including a Nepali national.

The NYT downplayed the gravity of the incident by refusing to call the attack a terrorist incident.

The publication instead

used terms like "militant" and "gunmen" in its description of the attackers, and merely called the massacre a "shooting", which was severely criticised by the US government.

US President Donald Trump had also expressed solidarity with India and condemned the terror attack in a post on X, and vowed Washington's "full support" to India in its fight against terrorism. He had also called up PM Modi and spoken with him, to condemn the attack and offer support.

Over 50 people killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza Strip on March 24: Reports

AGENCIES

GAZA, APR 25 (UNI)

The death toll from Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip since Thursday morning has reached 52 people, 39 of whom have been killed in strikes on Gaza City and northern areas of the enclave, Al Jazeera broadcaster reported, citing Palestinian medical sources.

The strikes were also carried out on the cities of Jabalia, Deir al Balah and Khan Yunis, including houses where refugees were accommodated, the report said on Thursday. Certain areas in the north of the enclave were subjected to artillery shelling, the report added.

According to the Gaza



Strip Health Ministry, over 1,900 people have been killed and more than 5,000 have been injured since the resumption of hostilities on March 18.

On March 18, Israel resumed strikes on the Gaza Strip, citing Palestinian

movement Hamas' refusal to accept the US plan to extend the ceasefire, which expired on March 1. Israel also cut off electricity supplies to a desalination plant in the Gaza Strip and closed off entry to trucks carrying humanitarian aid.

Healthy India key towards realising Viksit Bharat goal: HM Shah

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The concept of a Viksit Bharat (developed India) cannot be realised by being unwell and that is why it is very important that every citizen remains healthy, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

HM Shah further stated that all countrymen should take good diet, adequate water, adequate sleep and regular exercise, “the rest Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government will take the responsibility of taking care of your health”.

Speaking at a programme organised by the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) on the occasion of World Liver Day, HM Shah said that everyone should take a pledge to keep their ‘liver’ healthy with awareness, diligence and complete information.

Sharing his experience of a healthy lifestyle, the



Home Minister said that there has been a huge change in his life since May 2020. HM Shah said that young people can achieve a lot in their lives with water, diet, exercise and sleep as per the requirements of the body.

The Union Home Minister said that the Ministry of AYUSH is working to develop a system so that we do not fall ill.

“Today, even big allopathic hospitals are opening AYUSH wings. The mental and physical health of a person was included in the idea of World Yoga Day,” he noted.

PM Modi-led government is bearing the entire cost of treatment, up to Rs 5 lakh, for crores of people of the country. The government is also bearing all expenses up to Rs 5 lakh for the treatment of citizens above 70 years of age.

PM Modi-led government has spent Rs 65,000 crore to build the health infrastructure in the country and has made arrangements to make every Primary Health Center (PHC) and Community Health Center (CHC) a complete unit.

For generic medicines, a network of more than

15,000 Jan Aushadhi Centres has been opened in the country and through these centres, medicines are available up to 80 per cent cheaper.

Under ‘Mission Indradhanush’, arrangements have been made for free vaccination of children from birth to the age of 15 years and 1 crore 32 lakh mothers were also vaccinated.

Under the e-Sanjeevani app, the work of providing more than 30.9 crore digital medical consultations from top health institutions in rural areas across the country has been carried out.

In 2014, there were seven AIIMS in the country and today, the number has reached 23. There were 387 medical colleges in 2014 and today, it stands at 780. There were 51,000 MBBS seats which have increased to 1.18 lakh and 75,000 more seats are going to be added, according to HM Shah.

Scientists use AI to reveal the neural dynamics of human conversation

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

By combining artificial intelligence (AI) with electrical recordings of brain activity, researchers have been able to track the language exchanged during conversations and the corresponding neural activity in different brain regions, according to a new study.

The team from Department of Neurosurgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in the US investigated how our brains process language during real-life conversations.

“Specifically, we wanted to understand which brain regions become active when we’re speaking and listening, and how these patterns relate to the specific words and context of the conversation,” said lead author Jing Cai in a paper published in Nature Communications.

They employed AI to take a closer look at how our brains handle the



back-and-forth of real conversations. The team combined advanced AI, specifically language models like those behind ChatGPT, with neural recordings using electrodes placed within the brain.

This allowed them to simultaneously track the linguistic features of con-

versations and the corresponding neural activity in different brain regions.

“By analysing these synchronised data streams, we could map how specific aspects of language-like the words being spoken and the conversational context were represented in the dynamic patterns of

brain activity during conversation,” said Cai.

They found that both speaking and listening during a conversation engage a widespread network of brain areas in the frontal and temporal lobes.

What’s interesting is that these brain activity patterns are highly specific, changing depending on the exact words being used, the context and order of those words.

“We also observed that some brain regions are active during both speaking and listening, suggesting a partially shared neural basis for these processes. Finally, we identified specific shifts in brain activity that occur when people switch from listening to speaking during a conversation,” said the authors.

The findings offer significant insights into how the brain pulls off the seemingly effortless feat of conversation.

Wearable tech may help people manage everyday stress

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

The virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) technology could simulate stressful situations and help people practice stress-relief strategies, a new study has revealed.

Everyday situations can sometimes feel like big stressors, whether it’s delivering an important work presentation, attending a party full of strangers or confronting a partner. Talking to a friend or a therapist can help. But so can practice.

A new project from Carnegie Mellon University researchers in the US aimed to make that practice easier by using VR/AR technology.

The research team, led by Anna Fang in the School of Computer Science’s Human-Computer Interaction Institute, tested their stress simulation technology on a group of 19 participants, the majority of



whom overwhelmingly supported it.

“For the past 10 to 20 years, virtual reality and augmented reality have taken a really big hold on the health and mental health space,” said Fang, noting the many meditation apps available for

download.

The team built eight prototypes with different design elements for each of the three scenarios, for a total of 24 prototypes. Those prototypes took various forms – virtual reality, mixed or augmented reality, or a text-based

environment without visual cues – and offered different degrees of interaction.

Overall, Fang and her team found that people liked using the technology to gain more awareness about themselves. “They wanted technology that would help them learn self-sufficiency skills that they didn’t feel they had,” she said.

Participants also noted that they preferred being able to decide when the large language model suggested guidance instead of receiving that guidance automatically.

They also wanted to take the headsets to other locations to help them become immersed in and more comfortable with the stressful setting.

In this next version, the team plans to upgrade the avatars to look more realistic and to include more text-to-speech features so the avatars can speak to users more naturally.

Pinworm medication may treat aggressive skin cancer: Researchers

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

A team of US scientists has found that a common pinworm medication may stop and reverse cancer growth in Merkel cell carcinoma, an aggressive form of skin cancer.

The research led by University of Arizona Cancer Center and published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation, found that in laboratory models of Merkel cell carcinoma, pyriminium pamoate inhibited cancer cell growth and reversed the cancer’s neuroendocrine features.

In mouse models of Merkel cell carcinoma, pyriminium pamoate reduced tumour growth.

Merkel cell carcinoma is a rare but fast-growing neuroendocrine cancer that is three to five times more likely than melanoma to be deadly. Response rates to current therapies – surgery, radiation and immunotherapy – are limited, resulting in a need for effective and broadly applicable therapeutics.

“Merkel cell carcinoma is increasing in incidence. Even though it’s a rare cancer type, it mimics a lot of properties that other cancers have,” said senior author Megha Padi, assistant professor at the university.



Pyriminium pamoate, a medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1955 to treat pinworms, has been shown to have antitumour potential in several different cancers, including breast, colorectal, pancreatic and bladder cancers. This is the first time it has been studied in models of

Pyriminium pamoate, a medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1955 to treat pinworms, has been shown to have antitumour potential in several different cancers, including breast, colorectal, pancreatic and bladder cancers. This is the first time it has been studied in models of

Merkel cell carcinoma.

Padi and the research team found that in laboratory models of Merkel cell carcinoma, pyriminium pamoate inhibited cancer cell growth and reversed the cancer’s neuroendocrine features. In mouse models of Merkel cell carcinoma, pyriminium pamoate reduced tumor growth.

“This is a hypothesis, but some people think the reason an antiparasitic agent could be effective against cancers is because tumours are a little bit like parasites in our body,” Padi said. “Parasites and tumours must develop ways to use scarce resources in their host to feed themselves and allow for unlimited multiplication. If the pathways that they have hijacked to feed themselves are the same, then you get lucky, and you have a tumour type that could be amenable to killing by these antiparasitic drugs.”

Kids exposed to paternal depression likely to have behavioural issues later: Study

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

A team of researchers at Rutgers University in the US has found that five-year-olds exposed to paternal depression are more likely to have behavioural issues in grade school.

In a study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Kristine Schmitz, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS), together with other researchers from RWJMS and from Princeton and Rider universities, reported that children exposed to paternal depression when entering kindergarten are far more likely to have teacher-reported behavioural difficulties and poor social skills at age 9.

“We need to consider depression in both parents, not just mothers,” said Schmitz. “Depres-



sion is treatable, and to support the whole family, paediatricians must start talking with dads about it and developing father-focused interventions that meet their needs.”

On average, between 8 per cent and 13 per cent of fathers in the United States will be affected by some form of depression during their child’s early years, and the prevalence increases to 50 per cent when the mother is also experiencing postpartum depression.

Schmitz and colleagues analysed data from the Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study

(FFCWS), a national birth cohort that randomly sampled births in 20 large U.S. cities from 1998 to 2000. The study continues to track changes in participants’ lives.

Two FFCWS data points were key to Schmitz’s assessment: When the children were age 5, their fathers were screened for depressive symptoms in the past year; and when they were 9, the children’s teachers completed a survey that included behavioural assessments.

“Kindergarten entry is an important developmental milestone, and adversities faced at that

time can lead to poorer engagement and behaviours in grade school that may persist or magnify through middle and high school,” the researchers wrote.

By comparing data from 1,422 fathers, the researchers were able to map a clear link between paternal depression and child conduct.

For instance, kids whose fathers reported depressive symptoms, such as feeling sad, blue or depressed when they were age 5 were, by age 9, significantly more likely to exhibit restlessness, defiance and anger as well as present lower levels of cooperation and self-esteem.

Schmitz said several reasons could explain the connection. For one, depression has been found to lead to difficulty parenting and less emotional support for the child. It can also cause conflict or other stress in the home.

New study on brain’s visual regions can help build effective AI systems

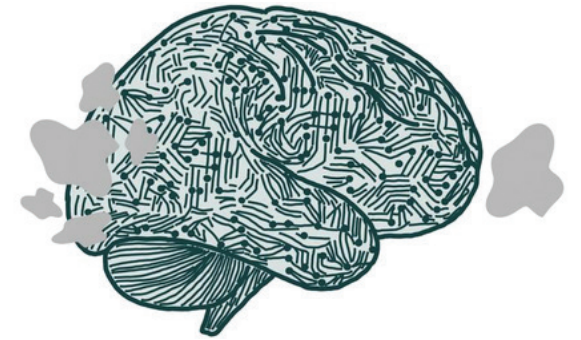
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A Columbia University’s School of Engineering study in the US has shown that the brain’s visual regions play an active role in making sense of information, which could help build more adaptive AI systems.

Crucially, the way it interprets the information depends on what the rest of the brain is working on. Published in the journal Nature Communications, the study led by biomedical engineer and neuroscientist Nuttida Rungratsameetaweemana, provides some of the clearest evidence yet that early sensory systems play a role in decision-making – and that they adapt in real-time.

It also points to new approaches for designing AI systems that can adapt to new or unexpected situations.

The findings challenge



the traditional view that early sensory areas in the brain are simply “looking” or “recording” visual input. In fact, the human brain’s visual system actively reshapes how it represents the exact same object depending on what you’re trying to do.

Even in visual areas that are very close to raw information that enters the eyes, the brain has the flexibility to tune its interpretation and responses based on the current task.

“It gives us a new way to think about flexibility in the brain and opens up ideas for how to poten-

tially build more adaptive AI systems modelled after these neural strategies,” said Nuttida.

Most previous work looked at how people learn categories over time, but this study zooms in on the flexibility piece: How does the brain rapidly switch between different ways of organising the same visual information?

The team used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to observe people’s brain activity while they put shapes in different categories. The twist was that the “rules” for categorising the shapes

kept changing.

This let the researchers determine whether the visual cortex was changing how it represented the shapes depending on how we had defined the categories.

They analysed the data using computational machine learning tools, including multivariate classifiers.

Activity in the visual system – including the primary and secondary visual cortices, which deal with data straight from the eyes – changed with practically every task.

They reorganised their activity depending on which decision rules people were using, which was shown by the brain activation patterns becoming more distinctive when a shape was near the grey area between categories.

Those were the most difficult shapes to tell apart, so it’s exactly when extra processing would be most helpful.



KKR's title defence on brink as PBKS eye upset

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, APR 26 (UNI)

Defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) face a stern test of survival when they host Punjab Kings (PBKS) in a crucial IPL 2025 encounter at Eden Gardens here on Saturday evening.

Having won just three of their eight games, KKR find themselves languishing at seventh on the points table, with their playoff hopes hanging by a thread. In contrast, Punjab are better placed in fifth with five wins, including a morale-boosting 16-run victory over KKR earlier this month.

KKR's struggles this season have been underlined by inconsistent batting and underwhelming performances from senior players. Captain Ajinkya Rahane remains one of the few bright spots, scoring a fluent 50 in their recent 39-run defeat to Gujarat



Titans.

Young Angkrish Raghuvanshi has also impressed with 197 runs at a healthy strike rate, but constant changes in the batting order have unsettled the side.

Sunil Narine and Andre Russell – both central to KKR's past successes – have failed to deliver consistently, while the absence of solid middle-order partnerships has left the team vulnerable on slower tracks.

On the bowling front, the pace duo of Harshit Rana and Vaibhav Arora

have shared 20 wickets between them, but have lacked support in pressure situations. The spin trio of Narine, Moeen Ali and Varun Chakravarty have offered some control, but haven't been able to turn games around.

Punjab, meanwhile, have been patchy but potent. Shreyas Iyer leads their batting charts with 263 runs at a blazing strike rate of 185.21. Openers Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh have shown glimpses of form, while Shashank Singh and Nehal

Wadhwa have added useful lower-order runs. However, questions remain over the lack of consistency and Josh Inglis' minimal impact since replacing Glenn Maxwell.

With the ball, Arshdeep Singh has led the attack effectively, while Yuzvendra Chahal and Harpreet Brar are expected to thrive on the slow Eden wicket. Chahal, with nine wickets so far, will be key in the middle overs.

The Eden Gardens pitch has mostly favoured teams batting first this season, with three of four matches won by the side setting a target. Scores around 180-190 are considered par on a surface that offers turn and grip for spinners under lights.

With the pressure mounting, KKR will need a complete performance to stay in contention, while Punjab will look to tighten their hold on a top-four finish.

Shastri predicts Australia's bowling attack for World Test Championship Final

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, APR 25 (UNI)

The former India coach Ravi Shastri has provided his thoughts on the fast bowlers Australia should select for the ICC World Test Championship Final against South Africa at Lord's.

The reigning World Test Championship winners enter the one-off Test in London with a wealth of riches in their pace bowling department, with skipper Pat Cummins, left-armers Mitchell Starc and consistent duo Josh Hazlewood and Scott Boland likely vying for three fast bowling berths in Australia's XI. The Aussies also have the option of including all-rounder Beau Webster in their XI should they wish to have an extra bowling option.

Shastri discussed Australia's selection dilemma with host Sanjana Ganesan on the most recent episode of The ICC Review and the former India coach believes Hazlewood should get the nod alongside Cummins, Starc and spinner Nathan Lyon should he prove his fitness ahead of the encounter.

"It will be a very tough choice, but if Hazlewood is fit, then he gets the nod ahead of Boland," Shastri told The ICC Review.

Hazlewood was ruled out of three out of the five



Tests during the recent battle for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with India, and subsequently for Australia's tour of Sri Lanka and the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 earlier this year with calf issues.

However, the 34-year-old has since returned to competitive cricket in the Indian Premier League and has looked in decent touch for Royal Challengers Bengaluru with 12 wickets across his first eight matches.

While Shastri is a long-time admirer of Boland, the former India coach believes the conditions at Lord's may be more suited to Hazlewood's line and length.

"If Hazlewood is fit to do that, he will definitely get the nod for two reasons. One, the English conditions, two, Lord's with the slope," he said.

"And the reason I say Lord's slope is Hazlewood

is most likened to Glenn McGrath," Shastri said.

"And you've got to just check Glenn McGrath's record at Lord's, with the slope around and bowling from the Commentary Box end," he said.

One of the all-time greats, McGrath took 26 wickets in three Test matches at Lord's, with a best effort of 8/38 in the second Test of Australia's Tour of England and Scotland in 1997.

"He (McGrath) could be lethal with the ball either seaming back or going away and from either end, to be honest and I think Hazlewood can do something similar with his height," Shastri said, when comparing Hazlewood to former Australia seamer McGrath.

"The pitches aren't as quick as in Australia. So you need that extra bit of height and bounce, which he will get as opposed to Scott Boland, though I'm

a big fan of Scott Boland," he said.

Boland has an impeccable record when playing for Australia and, most notably, the 35-year-old featured in the World Test Championship Final against India in 2023 when he picked up five wickets across the two innings.

He produced a brilliant spell in the second innings with figures of 3/46, which included the key wickets of Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja.

Boland also featured in Australia's home triumph against India in 2024/25 that ensured a second successive World Test Championship final appearance and Shastri suggested the Aussies may consider using an all pace attack against the Proteas.

"Ideally, you want to play all four (seamers) if you get half a chance and if there's a little more grass on the surface," Shastri said.

Indian Women's Hockey Team gear up for five-match series in Australia

AGENCIES

PERTH, APR 25 (UNI)

After a month-long senior national training camp, the Indian Women's Hockey Team is set for a challenging five-match tour of Australia from April 26 to May 4.

The tour begins with two matches against Australia A on April 26 and 27, followed by three matches against the World No. 5 Australian Senior Women's Team on May 1, 3 and 4 at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

The Indian team last competed in the FIH Hockey Pro League (Women) at home, where



they registered two wins and one shootout victory in a mixed campaign. They ended the tournament on a high, clinching a bonus point against World No. 1 Netherlands in a thrilling shootout after a 2-2 draw across regulation time.

Hockey India has named a 26-member squad for the tour, with Salima Tete leading the side as Captain and Navneet Kaur as Vice-Captain. Rising drag-flicker Deepika, who impressed with three goals during the Pro League

matches in February, will be keen to continue her form.

The tour also marks a milestone for veteran goalkeeper Savita, who recently completed 300 international caps and continues to anchor the defence.

The squad includes five new faces – Jyoti Singh, Sujata Kujur, Ajmina Kujur, Pooja Yadav, and Mahima Tete – who could be making their senior team debuts in Australia. The exposure tour presents an opportunity for these young players to gain international experience and adapt to the intensity of top-level hockey.

Barca, Real Madrid renew rivalry in Copa del Rey final

AGENCIES

MADRID, APR 25 (UNI)

FC Barcelona and Real Madrid are set to clash in the Copa del Rey final at the Estadio de la Cartuja in Seville on Saturday night.

Hansi Flick's FC Barcelona side is aiming for a third victory against Real Madrid this season, following a 4-0 triumph at the Santiago Bernabeu in La Liga and a 5-2 victory in the Spanish Supercup final in Saudi Arabia in January.

Barcelona will be without three key players: top scorer Robert Lewandowski, sidelined by a hamstring injury; left-back Alejandro Balde, out due to a muscle problem; and midfielder Marc Casado, who has a long-term knee injury.

Goalkeeper Marc Andre ter Stegen, recovering from a knee injury sustained at the season's start, is back in the squad, but Wojciech Szczesny is expected to continue in goal.

Cell. 9149442151 | 9419007973

AZIZ

AUTO MOBILES

ALL INSURANCE CLAIMS ARE ACCEPTED HERE
ALSO INSURANCE FACILITY ARE AVAILABLE HERE.

BAJAJ ALLIANZ | RELIANCE | HDFC ERGO | DIGIT | ICICI LOMBARD | LIBERTY INSURANCE ETC

SERVICE AVAILABLE: DAINTING PAINTING WASHING MECHANICAL WORK

KREERI

Increasing business profitability
by reducing printing cost

LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS

ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR ALL PRINTING NEEDS

LUBAAB Printing services means I get my job back on time, always accurate and of the highest quality

When you need a Company that can handle a complex workload, save your money and deliver on time..... leave it to

LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS

Also visit us for:
Newspapers & News Magazines

Specialists in:
Non Woven & Paper Bags

Mobile: 9999038812
9419008414
Tel: 0194 2496287
Email: jahangirbukhari@gmail.com
Humhama, Budgam/Srinagar

- Prepress
- Sheet Fed
- Bindery
- Finishing
- Promotions

Our Printing Services

- Flyers
- Posters
- Business Cards
- Envelopes
- Brochures
- Booklets
- Catalogues
- Post Cards
- Presentation folders
- letterheads
- Magazines
- Newsletters
- Raised printing
- Wedding Cards
- Invoices
- Note pad
- Forms
- Labels
- Scratch coupon
- Signs/Banners
- Pen/Caps
- T-Shirts
- Calenders
- Embroidery
- Door Hangers

Chief Patron of LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS Group: SYED SAD UD DIN BUKHARI (SAIDI), Printer Publisher, Owner and Editor - SYED JAHANGIR BUKHARI,

Printed at : LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS, Radio Colony Gund Hassibhat Lawaipora Srinagar -190017, Gen. Manager - SHEIKH MUSHTAQ AHMAD - Cell No - 9697071471,

Editorial Section- 7006846797, Multimedia Section-9419008414, Advertisement Section - 9697071471, RNI NO- JKENG/2011/39231