

Kashmir Convener



Pahalgam terror attack is direct assault on Indian state, the country is one in fighting: Kharage

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SC Condemns Terrorist Attack In Pahalgam, Judges Lawyers Pay Tribute To Victims

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FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL

Pahalgam Tragedy

The chilling terror attack at Baisaran Meadow, Pahalgam—where 28 innocent lives were snuffed out,—has left India reeling with grief and outrage. Once a sanctuary of laughter and song amid the Himalayan slopes, those hills now bear the stain of innocent blood spilled by the terrorists. Our sorrow for the victims must be matched by a resolute, collective commitment: to safeguard every citizen, to defend the pluralism enshrined in our Constitution, and to defeat the hatred that would rend our social fabric.

This atrocity cannot be viewed in isolation. Recent developments in neighboring Pakistan—election rigging, the jailing and torture of opposition, and incendiary pronouncements by Army Chief General Asim Munir championing a renewed “two-nation” ideology—point to a widening strategy of diversion of domestic pressure by fanning up Kashmir and destabilization. By funneling internal dissent toward the Kashmir Valley, extremist quarters seek to export their domestic troubles. Open rallies by Lashkar-e-Taiba leaders, brazenly threatening India, underline the urgency of recognizing this attack as part of a broader campaign of proxy aggression.

Our response must be two-fold: uncompromising security measures against terror, and an equally vigorous defense of communal harmony to defeat Pak designs. Security forces have already intensified surveillance, and intelligence agencies must relentlessly track and dismantle the networks that spawned this murderous plot. Law enforcement cannot rest until every culprit—local or foreign—faces justice.

Crucially, we must rebut the “two-nation” doctrine with the force of historical truth: Jammu & Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in 1947, rejected partition and chose to remain part of India. Our unity is not a fragile veneer but a living reality, woven through centuries of shared customs, festivals, and values. In the face of those who would divide us, every Indian—irrespective of faith—must reaffirm that our bond is stronger than any ideology of hate.

The media bears a special responsibility amid Pak designs to divide India on further religious lines. In these fraught hours, it must resist sensationalism and the corrosive pull of communal narratives. Instead, it should spotlight stories of intercommunal solidarity. Responsible reporting will serve as a powerful antidote to the despair sown by terrorists.

As we mourn the precious lives lost on those once-serene slopes, let us honor their memory through resolute unity. Let us show that no act of terror, however brutal, can extinguish our shared humanity. May the emerald meadows of Pahalgam ring again with joyous footsteps, and may India's strength—born of its diversity—shine all the more brightly in the face of darkness.

Response to Pahalgam attack

India suspends IWT, closes Attari border

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Security headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to Suspend the Indus Waters Treaty, closure of Attari border post, SAARC Visa Ban for Pakistani Nationals, Diplomatic Expulsions.

The meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security was held at the Prime Minister's residence in New Delhi over the terror attack at Pahalgam in Jammu and



Kashmir. The meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was attended by Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh, External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, NSA Ajit Doval and others. During the meeting, the CCS took stock of the situation.

Briefing the media after the conclusion of Cabinet Committee on Security, CCS, meeting, the Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri informed that CCS was briefed in detail on the Pahalgam terror attack. It has condemned the attack in the strongest terms. He further informed that strong expressions of support and

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J&K Police announce Rs 20 lakh reward for leads in Pahalgam terror attack

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: In a significant move to crack down on the perpetrators of the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, the Jammu and Kashmir Police have announced a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh for any credible information leading to the neutralization of the terrorists involved.

As per an official reward poster issued by Anantnag Police as per news agency JKNS reads, the reward pertains to the cowardly terrorist attack on civilians at Baisaran, Pahalgam, Anantnag district on April 22, 2025.

The attack, which has been registered under FIR No. 25/2025 at Pahalgam Police Station, resulted in the tragic deaths of 27 civilians.

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US ready to aid India's fight on terror: JD Vance



Sajid Raina

NEW DELHI: A day after the deadly terror attack that claimed at least 26 lives including two foreign nationals in Baisaran meadows near Pahalgam, United States Vice President JD Vance has conveyed America's

readiness to provide full assistance to India in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

Vance, who is on a visit to India accompanied by his family, spoke with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed deep condolences over the loss of lives in the attack.

The Vice President “strongly condemned the dastardly terror attack” and reaffirmed Washington's commitment to stand with New Delhi during this difficult time, according to a statement posted by MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on X.

“Vice President Vance also expressed that the United States is ready to provide all assistance in the joint fight against terrorism,” the

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HM Shah winds up Kashmir visit

● Says Pahalgam terror attack perpetrators won't be spared

Jahangeer Ganaie

SRINAGAR: A day after terrorists shot dead 26 civilians, mostly tourists, at Pahalgam in South Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that perpetrators won't be spared.

Shah, who arrived in Srinagar on Tuesday evening, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), chaired a crucial security review meeting last night and before winding up his Kashmir visit, paid tributes to victims at the Police Control Room Srinagar, visited the terror attack site at Baisaran and met the injured at Anantnag hospital.

The Union Home Minister Amit Shah paid his tribute to the victims of the attack by laying a wreath at



the bodies of the victims at Police Control Room in Srinagar.

Shah also met with the families of the victim members. After paying last respects to the terror attack victims the Union Home Minister asserted that the country will not bend to terror and perpetrators

responsible for the carnage at Pahalgam will not be spared.

“With a heavy heart, paid last respects to the deceased of the Pahalgam terror attack. Bharat will not bend to terror. The culprits of this dastardly

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Pahalgam Attack

Perpetrators Will Soon See Loud And Clear Response: Rajnath Singh

KC News Network

NEW DELHI: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of innocent lives in the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir and vowed that the government would respond with firm action and reiterated India's uncompromising stand against terrorism.

Addressing the nation, Singh said, “I want to repeat India's resolve against terrorism. We have a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism... I want to assure the countrymen that the government will take every necessary step. We will not only reach the perpetrators of this act but also the actors behind the scenes... The accused will soon see a loud and clear response, I want to assure the country.”

“We lost many innocent lives in the cowardly



act in Pahalgam. We are deeply distressed. I express my condolences to the families who lost their loved ones...,” Singh said, expressing sorrow over the loss of life.

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Rajnath Singh cancels Ladakh visit

KC NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has cancelled his two-day scheduled visit to

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CM Omar Convenes all-party meet today

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday called an all-party meeting tomorrow in the aftermath of Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians. In a letter, Omar Abdullah has invited all political

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J&K Cabinet advises LG to summon special Assembly session

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Council of Ministers, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, today decided to advise the Lieutenant Governor to summon the special session of Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir on 28th of April 2025 at Jammu at 10:30 am.

Announces ex-gratia relief for victims

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: As a gesture of solidarity and to provide some succour to the grieving families and those injured in the Pahalgam terror attack, the Chief Minister today announced an ex-gratia relief package for victims of Pahalgam terror attack. The Jammu and Kashmir Government will provide Rs 10 lakh each

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Army, Navy chiefs brief Defence Minister

Additional troops inducted to carry out search operations

KC News Network

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was briefed by Army Chief General Upendra Dwiwedi and Navy chief Dinesh Tripathi on the security situation in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir and surrounding areas following

the terror attack in the region, sources mentioned on Wednesday.

According to sources, top officers have rushed to the affected areas, with local security forces on alert, and additional troops are being inducted in the area to carry out the

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Heartbreaking to see exodus of our guests: CM Omar

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said it was heartbreaking to see the exodus of “our guests” from the valley following the gruesome terror attack in Pahalgam yesterday that left 26 people dead and over a

dozen injured.

“It's heartbreaking to see the exodus of our guests from the valley after yesterday's tragic terror attack in Pahalgam, but at the same time we totally understand why people would want to leave,” Omar said in a statement on X.

In response to the situation, the

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation are working to arrange additional flights from Srinagar to facilitate the safe departure of stranded tourists. Meanwhile, the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway (NH-44), which had been

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Local horse rider was killed as he tried to save tourists: CM Omar

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that local horse rider was killed in Pahalgam terror attack as he attempted to save lives of tourists by fighting off terrorists.

Speaking with reporters, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Omar Abdullah said that words fall short to condemn the attack. “We express solidarity with the people who were killed and injured in the attack. We had guests from different parts, who had come to enjoy their holidays,

but unfortunately they have been sent back in the coffins.”

He said that similarly, one local horse rider Adil was earning his livelihood. “As he was out to do his job, he returned home in a coffin,” he said.

The Chief Minister also said that Adil lost his life while showing bravery during the terrorist attack. “Adil tried to save the lives of tourists and also tried to snatch rifle from terrorists that is why he was targeted and killed,” he said.

“We will have to take care of this family. I want to

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NIA team visits Baisaran

Jahangeer Ganaie

SRINAGAR: A team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) led by an Inspector General on Wednesday reached the terror attack site Baisaran, Pahalgam in South Kashmir.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the team besides other officials included top NIA officers, Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General and Senior Superintendent.

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J&K Shuts To Mourn Pahalgam Killings

Rehan Qayoom Mir / Waris Fayaz

SRINAGAR: Kashmir observed a complete shutdown on Wednesday as grief grips the region following Tuesday's deadly terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of 28 civilians, mostly tourists and left several others injured. Anger and anguish spilled onto the streets, especially the city centre Lal Chowk as political parties, civil society groups and trade bodies held protest demonstrations condemning the deadly terror attack.

As reported by the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Lal Chowk, the heart of Srinagar city, reverberated with powerful chants like “Insaan Ka Qatle Aam Band Karo,” symbolising the collective grief and fury felt across the valley.

All shops in the commercial hub Lal Chowk and other districts of the valley remained shut. The usually bustling Jamia Market and commercial pockets of Downtown and uptown Srinagar also remained closed, including bakeries and essential stores.

“I have not seen Lal Chowk this silent in years. It feels like the city itself is grieving,” said Irfan Ahmad, a resident.

A shopkeeper in Lal Chowk said they received formal calls from trade bodies asking them to observe the shutdown. “We are with the victims. Today, business takes a backseat to humanity,” he said.

Despite the widespread mourning,

All markets, schools, transport services and private institutions remained closed in 10 districts of the division as people expressed solidarity with the victims and called for decisive action against terrorism. Only the shops dealing in essential



Srinagar International Airport saw an unusual rush of tourists trying to fly out early. Long queues formed at departure gates as uncertainty loomed over travel plans.

In Jammu division, a complete bandh was observed on Wednesday as political and social organisations from all walks of life supported the shutdown call to protest the deadly terror attack.

commodities were open across the Jammu city. Public transport was also sparse, but private vehicles were plying normally.

From political parties to religious organisations and trade associations, condemnation was unanimous. Various social, political, and trade organisations took to the streets, leading to

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Guj Drug Haul: NIA Opposes Accused Bail Plea, Says Funds Used In Terror Attacks By LeT

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency on Wednesday in the Supreme Court opposed the bail plea of a Delhi-based businessman held in the Rs 21,000 crore Mundra port drug haul case and said the proceeds of sale were used for funding terror activities of Lashkar-e-Taiba.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh reserved its verdict on the bail plea of Harpreet Singh Talwar alias Kabir Talwar, who ran popular clubs in the national capital and was arrested by the agency in August, 2022, in what is termed as biggest drug haul in the country.

"These are front people of the organisation but the blood of innocent people who lost their lives in terror attacks is also on their hands," additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati said.

Bhati, appearing for the NIA, said it was a test case of sending narco consignment (heroin) to India, disguised as legal imports in the form of semi-processed talc stones (a raw material having wide range of applications).

"The said semi-processed talc stones were heroin laden stones, which were imported to India in the name of newly opened proprietor firms and shell companies which showed this heroin laden semi-processed talc stones as a business commodity," the NIA said in an affidavit.

The anti-terror agency said after succeeding in importing heroin laden semi-processed talc stones in India through the legal import channel, the narco trafficker



located in Afghanistan, through the help of Pakistan-based intelligence agency ISI and an Iranian middlemen imported a large consignment of 2988.21 kilogram of heroin, through the same modus operandi which was used to sent the consignment from Afghanistan via Bandar Abbas, Iran and then imported in India concealed as talc powder in the name of importing Company namely M/s Aashi Trading Company.

"The proceeds of this sale for all these consignments, was to be used for funding terror activities of Lashkar-e-Taiba," it alleged.

The agency referred to the offence's seriousness, trans-national ramifications, involvement of Intelligence agencies of countries having interest inimical to the country and the progress in investigation and said the court already dismissed the

bail application of several co-accused in the case.

"Investigations have already revealed that the mastermind of the instant narco-terror is Pakistan's ISI and Pakistan backed banned terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba.

As such considering the totality of the matter in the respectful submission of the petitioner bail ought not be granted in the instant matter so as to prevent miscarriage of justice and obfuscation of the trial of instant international conspiracy of heinous nature," the NIA said.

The present case was pointed out to be "largest intercepted consignment of narco-substance" being brought to India through illicit means.

Bhati called Talwar a habitual offender who was previously booked in several

cases of smuggling, raising apprehensions of witnesses being either influences or killed if he was enlarged on bail.

She referred to the case of a retired custom official, who acted as facilitator at Kolkata port for first consignment dated November 9, 2020 (pertaining to Talwar) but when he wanted to join the investigation, he was found dead (suspected suicide) in a hotel at Jungpura, New Delhi.

Senior advocate A Sundaram, appearing for Talwar, argued there was no evidence to pin the charges of smuggling on his client and all he did was importing talc stones to India from Afghanistan.

He said none of the witnesses named him to be involved in the conspiracy and the high court erred in not granting bail to him.

On September 12, 2021, some containers arrived at Mundra Port from Afghanistan via Iran, filled with bags full of semi-processed talc stones.

Based on intelligence inputs, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence checked the containers on September 13, 2021 and some of the bags were found to contain heroin, eventually leading to the recovery of 2988.21 kilogram of heroin worth of Rs 21,000 crore.

Investigators later found that it was the sixth and last consignment which was intercepted.

Several people including Afghan nationals were arrested in connection with the case.

Pahalgam Attack

Doing Our Best To Minimise Dent On J-K Tourism, Says Union Minister Shekhawat

NEW DELHI: Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Wednesday said some people with nefarious intentions have tried to again "incite separatism and terrorism" in the Valley and asserted that his ministry will do the best to "minimise the dent" on tourism in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the Pahalgam attack.

Interacting with reporters on the sidelines of the 38th meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA) here, he said he and his office are in "continuous touch" with the chief secretary and the tourism secretary of the Union Territory and keeping an eye on the situation.

Terrorists struck at a prime tourist location in Pahalgam in south Kashmir on Tuesday, killing at least 26 people, mostly tourists, and injuring several others. The deceased included two foreigners — from the UAE and Nepal — and two locals.

Before the commencement of the meeting, chaired by the minister, a minute of silence was observed by the attendees.

"The entire country is pained, and also filled with a sense of anger. I convey my sentiments to the families of the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack," Shekhawat said in his opening remarks at the meeting held at the Bharat Mandapam here.

Talking to reporters, he said, "This cowardly incident has hurt our sentiments. But, some people with their nefarious intention, have tried to incite separatism and terrorism in Kashmir again." The Union culture and tourism minister also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi cut short his foreign visit and returned home, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah rushed to Srinagar, putting off other work, and "their stand on this attack, clearly

demonstrates India's and the prime minister's zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism".

And, as they have both said, it will be ensured that each and every person responsible for this attack will get the "harshest punishment," Shekhawat said.

"Earlier, through surgical and air strikes, India has sent a message to the world that anti-India activities, whether emanating from Indian soil or from outside the country, will not be tolerated,"



he said.

Asked if he has approached the Jammu and Kashmir government and tourism department authorities in the wake of the attack, Shekhawat said, "I am in touch with everybody, my office too, my secretary is also in touch with the tourism secretary in Jammu and Kashmir, the chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir".

"We are in continuous touch and keeping an eye on that. And, we will do our best to minimise the dent on tourism in Kashmir because of this incident, and tourism across the country," he said.

Pahalgam terror attack is direct assault on Indian state, the country is one in fighting: Kharge

BENGALURU: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday termed the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed as a direct assault on the Indian state, and said that in this moment the entire nation is one with the government to fight the terrorists.

He urged the government to use all its strength to hunt down the terrorists.

"Very unfortunate incident happened in Pahalgam in Jammu-Kashmir and the terrorists dastardly killed innocent and unsuspecting tourists yesterday around 2:30 pm. This has deeply hurt, shocked and saddened us all. The Congress party unequivocally condemns this cowardly act of terror and those responsible for it in the strongest possible terms," Kharge said.

My remarks on the cowardly #PahalgamTerroristAttack —

1. The dastardly killing of innocent, unsuspecting tourists by terrorists in Pahalgam yesterday



around 2:30 PM has deeply hurt, shocked, and saddened us all. The Congress Party unequivocally condemns this cowardly act of...

— Mallikarjun Kharge (@kharge) April 23, 2025 Addressing reporters here, he said, this attack is a direct assault on the unity and integrity of our nation. "Since the horrific Chittisinghpura massacre in 2000 this is among the most brazen and outrageous attempts by terrorists and separatists. We firmly reiterate that those who murdered unarmed and innocent civilians cannot be human," he

said.

Noting that late last evening he spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was in Kashmir and to J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Congress leaders there, and gathered information, the AICC chief said, "Shah told me that they are going to take action drastically in that area."

The Congress Working Committee will meet at 11 am on April 24 at AICC office in New Delhi to discuss the terror attack, he said.

Stating that this is not a time

for partisan politics, Kharge said, "it is a moment for collective resolve to ensure justice for those who lost their lives and for their grieving families by bringing the perpetrators of this terror attack to justice."

"In this moment we all are one with the government and together we have to fight such incidents, terrorists and whosoever fights against us. We will be one to save the country and for the country's unity and integrity," he said.

The entire nation is in shock and a Pakistani terrorist organisation has claimed the responsibility, Kharge said, "we must give a fitting response and in this matter we are all one and we will fight." "We urge the government to use all its strength to hunt down the terrorist, it has been almost 22 hours now. The government must do everything possible to maintain tourists' confidence in the security arrangement of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

SC Condemns Terrorist Attack In Pahalgam, Judges Lawyers Pay Tribute To Victims

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed anguish and strongly condemned the heinous terrorist attack that targeted tourists at Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir on Tuesday. Judges and the lawyers in the top court paid tributes to victims by observing a moment of silence.

In a full court meeting held on Wednesday morning, the top court unanimously adopted a resolution denouncing the act of terror, the apex court said in a statement.

"This diabolical act of mindless violence has shaken the conscience of all and is a stark reminder of the brutality and inhumanity that terrorism unleashes," it said.

The top court resolution went on, "The Supreme Court of India pays its respectful tribute to the innocent lives snuffed out brutally and prematurely while also expressing its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved



families. May the departed souls rest in peace and may those who were injured recover soon. The nation stands with the victims and their families in this hour of indescribable grief."

The attack on tourists, the statement said, who were merely enjoying the natural beauty of the "Crown Jewel" of India, Kashmir, is undoubtedly an affront to the values of humanity and the sanctity of life and the court strongly condemns the same.

To honour the memory of the victims and express solidarity

Bar Association assembled in the apex court's lawn in solidarity with victims of the terror attack.

SCBA unequivocally condemned the barbaric and cowardly terrorist attacks perpetrated against innocent tourists in the peaceful region of Pahalgam.

"We mourn the tragic loss of lives and express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. Our thoughts and prayers are with those injured, and we wish them speedy recovery. These reprehensible acts of violence are a direct assault on the values of humanity. Targeting unarmed, innocent civilians is an act of unpardonable savagery," a SCBA resolution said.

Even the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association condemned the attack.

"The association stands in unwavering solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, an integral part of our country and the nation as a whole."

SC Refuses To Stay BPSC Mains Exam Scheduled For Apr 25

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to stay the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) mains examination scheduled for April 25 and rejected pleas alleging paper leak during a preliminary test on December 13 last year.

A bench comprising Justices Dipankar Datta

and Manmohan dismissed a batch of petitions seeking the cancellation of the 70th BPSC Combined Competitive Preliminary Exams, citing a lack of conclusive evidence to justify a re-test for all candidates.

Senior advocate Anjana Prakash, appearing for the petitioners, argued that digital evidence, including WhatsApp messages and video clips, demonstrated that question papers were leaked before the exam.

One such video allegedly showed answers being announced via loudspeakers at an examination

centre, she added.

The top court's order came on the pleas filed against the Patna High Court verdict, which had dismissed the petitions, saying there was no definitive evidence of malpractice across multiple exam centres.

That decision allowed the BPSC to proceed with the mains examination.

Earlier on January 7, a bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna refused to examine a plea over the alleged irregularities in the BPSC exam held on December 13, 2024, and the consequent

police action on protesters.

The bench asked the petitioners to move the Patna High Court with the grievances.

Bihar police had allegedly used force to control civil service aspirants who demanded the cancellation of the BPSC examination held on December 13, 2024. The state public service commission ordered a re-examination held on January 4 at 22 centres in Patna for certain candidates. Of the 12,012 candidates eligible for the retest, a total of 8,111 downloaded their admit cards, and 5,943 appeared for the examination.

Sanjay Raut Blames BJP's 'Politics Of Hate' For Pahalgam Terror Attack

MUMBAI: Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday claimed the ruling BJP's "politics of hate" was responsible for the terror attack in Jammu Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 persons were killed.



Talking to reporters, Raut alleged that Amit Shah was a "failed home minister" and demanded his resignation.

Terrorists struck at a prime tourist location in Pahalgam in south Kashmir on Tuesday, killing at least 26 persons, mostly tourists, and injuring several others. The deceased included two foreigners — from the UAE and Nepal — and two locals.

The family members of some of the victims claimed terrorists asked their religion before shooting them down.

Asked about it, Raut said, "If terrorists ask for religion before killing people, then BJP's politics of hate is responsible for it."

The politics of hate will "boomerang" someday, the Rajya Sabha member claimed.

"No one else is (responsible for it). This is a result of the hate that is being spread from West Bengal to Jammu Kashmir," he charged.

They (referring to ruling coalition leaders) are busy 24 hours in forming and toppling governments and putting opposition leaders in jail. How will they protect people? Raut said.

"Amit Shah is a failed home minister in the history of the country. The entire country is seeking his resignation.

He has no right to occupy that post even for a day," he said.

Raut claimed the government will carry out a "surgical strike" and do politics as the Bihar elections are around the corner.

Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, Raut said after demonetisation, the PM said this exercise will end terrorism in the country. But, the instances of terror attacks are increasing and they are "lying" in Parliament (about terror-related incidents), he alleged.

They don't allow information about the incidents to come out in public, Raut claimed.

India to add 100-150 satellites to enhance safety, security in 3 yrs: ISRO Chief

CHENNAI: India would add another 100-150 satellites to cover the entire country over the next three years as part of enhancing border security and coastal surveillance, ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said here on Wednesday.

Currently, India operates about 55 satellites and for a country which has a vast border and



7,500 km of shoreline, it is not sufficient, he said.

Narayanan, also the Secretary, Department of Space, said it was for these reasons Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced reforms in the Space Sector which allows participation of private players in building rockets and satellites.

"We need a lot of satellites to protect our borders. We have 55 satellites working and it is not sufficient to monitor the border and coastal areas. For that we need more satellites. Through Space Sector reforms we can bring in private players to build satellites and we can handhold

them. In three years, we will be adding another 100-150 satellites. With all those satellites we can monitor the country completely," he said at an event here.

He was responding to a query on what are the steps that can be taken by ISRO in the wake of the terrorist attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 people lost their lives.

Narayanan was here at the launch of the "AI powered Robotic Compatible O-ARM with Stealth Navigation System" introduced by city-based health care provider Kauvery Hospital.

Detailing some of the projects undertaken by the space agency, he said ISRO successfully performed the second docking of satellites as part of its SpaDeX missions on Monday.

India was one of the four nations to achieve it, he said. The others are the US, Russia and China. ISRO had launched the PSLV-C60/Space Docking Experiment mission on December 30, 2024. Thereafter, the satellites were successfully docked for the first time on January 16 and successfully undocked on March 13, he said. A second docking was done last week. Further, Narayanan said, scientists were engaged in developing a satellite to study about climate change that would primarily serve the G20 countries. "About 50 per cent of the payload would be built by India and the remaining would be contributed from the G20 Nations," he said without elaborating.

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Candlelight Marches Held Across Bandipora to Condemn Pahalgam Civilian Killings

BANDIPORA: Peaceful demonstrations in the form of candlelight marches were held across Bandipora district on Wednesday evening, condemning the recent civilian killings in Pahalgam.

In Bandipora town, large number of people, including members of civil society, traders' associations, transport unions, and local residents, gathered to express their grief and solidarity.

The march in Bandipora began at Harmukh Chowk and concluded at S.K. Stadium. Participants raised slogans condemning the killings and expressed support for the families of the victims.

Speaking on the occasion, participants emphasized unity in the face of tragedy, saying, "We stand united in mourning this grave loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families, and we unequivocally condemn this senseless act of violence."



Candlelight Vigil Held in Hajin to Protest Tourist Killings

GOWHAR MAQBOOL

Hajin: The Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, led by Imtiyaz Parray, organized a candlelight vigil in Hajin on Wednesday to protest against



the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, which claimed the lives of 28 tourists.

The march began from the main market and concluded at the bus stand, with dozens of locals participating in the peaceful protest. Participants held candles and placards, denouncing the horrific act of violence and expressing solidarity with the victims and their families.

Speaking to reporters during the vigil, Imtiyaz Parray said, "This is not just an attack on

tourists, but an attack on humanity." He added, "No words can describe this barbaric and inhuman act. I strongly condemn this cowardly crime, and those involved must be brought to justice with the harshest punishment."

He further stated, "These terrorists are trying to tarnish the image of Kashmiris, but we will not let that happen. We will stand united against them and give a befitting response."

Journalist Gowhar Maqbool, while talking to reporters, said, "We stand with the survivors, and my heart goes out to all the families who lost their loved ones." Calling it a "barbaric and inhuman act," he said that no words can truly express the pain and horror caused by such incidents.

"No religion permits the killing of unarmed and innocent people. This was a heinous, barbaric, and cowardly act, which must be condemned by all," Gowhar added.

The deadly attack in Pahalgam, where terrorists opened fire on a group of tourists, has sparked widespread outrage across the Valley. Condemnations have poured in from political leaders, civil society members, and ordinary citizens, as the region grapples with the aftermath of yet another tragic event.

Congress Party Bandipora Holds Condolence Meeting for Victims of Pahalgam Attack

BANDIPORA: In a heartfelt gesture of solidarity, the Congress Party Unit Bandipora organized a condolence meeting today at its district office



to pay tribute to the victims of the recent terror attack in Pahalgam. The meeting, attended by party workers and local functionaries, was held to express collective grief and offer prayers for the souls of the innocent civilians who lost their lives in the tragic incident.

The atmosphere at the gathering was solemn,

with participants observing a moment of silence in memory of the departed. Speeches were delivered condemning the heinous act, emphasizing that violence and terrorism have no place in a peaceful and democratic society.

Party members strongly denounced the killing of innocent people and termed the attack an inhuman and cowardly act aimed at disrupting communal harmony and peace in the region. They urged the government and law enforcement agencies to take swift and decisive action against those responsible and ensure that justice is delivered without delay.

During the meeting, the party reaffirmed its firm commitment to stand with the victims' families and support all measures aimed at safeguarding peace and protecting innocent lives. The gathering concluded with a collective call for unity, resilience, and a renewed commitment to upholding the values of justice, compassion and non-violence.

“Mere Eyewash Won’t Stop Terror”: Usman Majid Slams Govt Response to Pahalgam Attack

Bandipora: Former Minister and Ex-MLA Bandipora, Usman Majid, has strongly condemned the cowardly and gruesome terrorist attack that took place in Pahalgam, calling it a brutal assault not only on innocent civilians but also on the fragile peace and stability of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This attack is a grim reminder of the sinister and continuous designs of the Pakistani deep state — including its Army, the ISI, and their terror proxies operating in the region," Majid said in a strongly-worded statement.

He expressed deep concern over what he termed as the "appallingly soft and misdirected response" by the administration in the aftermath of the attack. "Rather than going after the real perpetrators and dismantling the terror ecosystem, the administration has launched arbitrary and indiscriminate crack-

ing reaction of the people of Kashmir, describing it as a turning point. "From men to women, the elderly to the youth — people across Kashmir have spoken with a unified voice. The spontaneous shutdown observed across the Valley was not out of fear, but in solidarity



downs on hundreds of local youths — who had left the path of militancy decades ago and have since reintegrated peacefully into society," he said.

Majid questioned the purpose of these actions, saying, "Who does this benefit? Surely not the victims of terrorism, and certainly not our national security. This kind of response serves only as a desperate attempt to project action while allowing the real threats to continue operating freely. This eyewash must end."

He emphasized that this was not an isolated incident. "The fingerprints of Pakistan are all over this carnage. It is a continuation of the 'bleed India with a thousand cuts' doctrine laid out by former Pakistani dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. Just a few days ago, the current Pakistani Army Chief delivered a speech filled with veiled threats and belligerent undertones — a clear indication of their hostile intentions."

Majid further pointed out the overwhelm-

ing reaction of the people of Kashmir, describing it as a turning point. "From men to women, the elderly to the youth — people across Kashmir have spoken with a unified voice. The spontaneous shutdown observed across the Valley was not out of fear, but in solidarity with the victims and in complete rejection of terrorism. This has been a powerful and unprecedented show of public sentiment. The message is clear: we want peace, we want justice, and we stand united against terror."

Calling for an urgent shift in policy, Majid demanded that the Government of India recalibrate its strategy and adopt a tough, resolute, and uncompromising stance against the external terror networks that have infiltrated the region. "We must stop looking inward and start confronting the cancer that continues to spread from across the border. From Poonch to Rajouri, Jammu to Srinagar, and now Pahalgam — the pattern is unmistakable. The threat is real, and it is being fueled and financed by Pakistan."

He said that arresting innocent civilians will not stop bullets. "If we are serious about peace and justice, the fight must be taken to the masterminds — Pakistan, its Army, and its terror infrastructure."

HSS Mantrigam Celebrates Earth Day with Eco-Awareness Drive

MANTRIGAM: Government Higher Secondary School Mantrigam today organised a day-long series of activities to celebrate Earth Day under the leadership of Principal Masoodul Hassan. The school's Eco Club, overseen by lecturer Iftikhar Rashid, coordinated events that drew enthusiastic participation from students across all grades.

The programme opened during morning assembly with thought-provoking speeches by Vice Principal and Senior Botany Lecturer Mohammad Iqbal Magray and Eco Club in-charge Iftikhar Rashid. In his special Earth Day address, Principal Hassan called on the entire school community to unite in safeguarding the planet, easing environmental distress, and mitigating the economic and social impacts of climate change.

Echoing the UN's Earth Day 2025 theme, students engaged in a variety of eco-friendly activities on campus, from poster-making and slogan competitions to tree-planting and waste-segregation demonstrations. Highlighting the school's commitment to innovation in sustainability, Principal Hassan unveiled the digitisation of the campus flora: QR codes affixed to trees and shrubs link to detailed, student-created profiles of each species.

"This project will allow anyone to learn about our school's plants with a single scan," he explained, noting that the initiative harnesses the latest technology to deepen environmental stewardship.

Staff and students alike praised the day's events. "Celebrating Earth Day together reminds us that every small action counts," said one participant. The school plans to expand its eco-projects throughout the year, continuing to foster awareness and collective responsibility for the environment.



Teachers in Bandipora Wear Black Bands to Condemn Pahalgam Terror Attack

BANDIPORA: In a poignant show of solidarity and condemnation, teachers across Bandipora district on Wednesday attended classes wearing black bands to protest the brutal killing of tourists in Pahalgam. The symbolic gesture was aimed at mourning the loss of innocent lives and denouncing the barbaric act of terror.

UT Spokesperson J&K EJAC and General Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Teachers Forum (JKTF), Mir Bashir, said teachers began their day by observing two minutes of silence during morning assemblies and wore black bands throughout the day. "Teachers also sensitized students about the attack and collectively condemned the inhuman act, paying respects to the departed souls and praying for the bereaved families," he said.

Mir added that the JKTF, in coordination with the Jammu and Kashmir Employees Joint Action Committee (J&K EJAC), has strongly condemned the attack, terming it a "barbaric and unforgivable crime against humanity."

District Spokesperson of JKTF, Anjum Nisar, said nearly all government schools in Bandipora participated in the protest. "A civilized society will never tolerate such inhuman acts. JKTF stands firmly with the bereaved families. Today, we called on all our educators to wear black bands and observe two minutes of silence in solidarity with the victims," he stated.

Calling the attack "a dark day in our history," Mir Bashir said the massacre of peaceful guests who came to experience the beauty of Kashmir has left a deep scar on the collective conscience of the people. "Kashmiri hearts bleed with grief, and Kashmiriyat stands in unwavering solidarity with the families of the martyred," he said.

He further demanded swift and exemplary justice. "Those behind this heinous act must be identified, prosecuted, and given a punishment that sets an example. Justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done."

Mir also welcomed the unified voice of condemnation from all sections of society — including the business community, religious leaders, political representatives, and civil society — many of whom observed shutdowns and staged protests to express their outrage.

"This unified protest by educators underlines the vital role teachers and employees play in upholding humanity and peace," he added. "Through these actions, we reaffirm our collective commitment to non-violence, justice, and communal harmony."



JK Vocational Trainers Welfare Association Condemns Attack on Tourists

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Vocational Trainers Welfare Association (JKVTWA) has issued a strong condemnation of the heinous attack on tourists in Pahalgam, calling it a "cowardly and senseless act" that strikes at the core values of peace, humanity, and Kashmir's age-old tradition of hospitality.

"This barbaric attack on innocent civilians is not only inhuman but an unforgivable crime with no justification in any faith, culture, or society," the Association said in a statement. "Such violence threatens the very soul of our community and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms."

The Association expressed heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families, praying for strength, healing, and a swift recovery for those injured. It also urged authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice without delay and take every measure to prevent such incidents in the future.

Apni Party leader Syed Shafat Qazmi Expresses Grief Over Pahalgam Incident

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) District President Syed Shafat Qazmi has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the recent tragic incident that took place in Pahalgam, resulting in the killing of innocent civilians.



In his statement, Syed Shafat Qazmi conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families affected by the incident and extended solidarity with them during this time of immense pain. He said that such acts serve no purpose and only bring suffering to innocent people and their families.

He further stated that the killing of civilians in any form cannot be justified and must be seen as a serious crime. He urged the administration

and law enforcement agencies to carry out a thorough investigation and ensure that those responsible are identified and punished under the law. According to him, justice must be served without any delay to restore the confidence of the public.

Qazmi called on all sections of society to come forward in support of peace and to work together to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future. He reiterated the importance of upholding the rule of law and ensuring the safety and security of all citizens.

He concluded by saying that JKAP stands with the families of the victims and continues to advocate for peace, justice, and protection of human life in Jammu and Kashmir.

Editorial

From Runways to Resurgence

India's aviation sector is in the midst of a historic transformation, symbolizing not just the rise of an industry but the ascent of a nation. What was once perceived as a luxury has, under visionary reforms, been democratised to become an affordable and accessible mode of travel for millions of Indians. At the heart of this flight is a clear ambition — to build a world-class aviation ecosystem that connects Bharat internally and globally, strengthens economic growth, and reflects the spirit of Viksit Bharat @2047.

In 2024, India achieved the milestone of 5 lakh domestic air passengers in a single day — a feat that illustrates the unprecedented momentum of the sector. Legislative reforms have played a catalytic role in fuelling this growth. The Protection of Interest in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, aligns Indian aviation leasing with global standards, drastically cutting costs for Indian carriers. The replacement of the 1934 Aircraft Act with the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, is not just symbolic of decolonisation but also a substantive leap into modern regulation, ease of doing business, and indigenous innovation. And as India builds for the skies, it is also investing in the people who make it fly. A growing network of Flight Training Organisations, new pilot license targets, and aviation career programmes in schools aim to meet the surging demand for trained professionals — from pilots to ground staff. Notably, India has one of the highest percentages of women pilots in the world, and efforts are underway to extend this gender balance across all aviation roles.

With annual passenger traffic surpassing 350 million and cargo handling growing at over 10%, India is now the world's third-largest aviation market. It is no longer just catching up; it is taking the lead. As we chart the journey to Viksit Bharat, civil aviation will be a cornerstone — not just of connectivity, but of economic integration, regional empowerment, and national pride. The sky, once a limit, has become a launchpad. The real flight, it seems, has only just begun.

The Henna Had Not Even Dried: The Pahalgam Attack and the Death of Humanity

BY DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

On the morning of April 22, 2025, the snow-covered valleys of Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir were brimming with visitors—newlyweds, children, the elderly—all drawn by Kashmir's fabled serenity. But that serenity was shattered by the roar of gunfire. In a place known for snow, blood was spilled instead. Among the tourists was a newly married couple from Rajasthan. Just five days into their marriage, they had come to Kashmir for their honeymoon, dreaming of a beginning framed by snow-clad peaks and tranquil meadows. But fate, manipulated by hatred, had something else in store. Their car was stopped. Their names were asked. And the groom—a Hindu—was shot in the head. He died instantly. His wife stood frozen, mehendi still fresh on her hands, her world reduced to silence and shock.

This was not merely a killing. It was a cold-blooded execution born of religious hatred. A murder not of a man—but of humanity.

A Name, A Death Sentence

This was no random act of terror. It was a targeted hate crime. A grotesque message written in blood: your religion determines your right to live. The terrorists didn't just pull a trigger—they attempted to redefine identity through fear.

Is this what we've reduced humanity to? Is this what the essence of Kashmiriyat now stands for?

The Silence That Screamed

The image of the young widow, stunned and voiceless beside her husband's lifeless body, circulated widely on social media. No tears, no protest—just haunting silence. And in that silence echoed the loudest indictment of a system that failed to protect its citizens. Her expression asked a simple question: "What was our fault?"

That silence is not just hers. It belongs to an entire nation—wounded, ashamed, and heartbroken.

The State's Scripted Responses

As always, the response from authorities followed a familiar script: condemnation, compensation, a promise of investigation. But where is the accountability? How is it that terrorists can stop vehicles, demand names, kill in cold blood, and vanish into the woods—again and again?

Shouldn't additional security measures be in place during the tourist season? Doesn't the administration understand the ripple effects of such attacks—not

just on tourism, but on the national fabric of unity? Human Rights, or Hypocrisy?

for his identity, where are these voices? Is empathy reserved for victims of only certain backgrounds? Does

hypocrisy of those who claim to stand for peace, yet turn away when it is inconvenient.

A National Wound

This attack in Pahalgam is not just a regional tragedy—it is a national wound. An attempt to send a message: You are not welcome here. But Kashmir is not the property of extremists. It is a symbol of India's diversity and unity.

If we continue to respond with hashtags and candle marches alone, the next attack will come—in another town, on another couple, bearing another name.

The Pakistan Factor and Global Silence

Once again, the perpetrators—The Resistance Front—are linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-backed terror outfit. Yet, on the global stage, Pakistan continues to be seen as a victim of terror rather than a perpetrator.

The international community—especially the UN, the US, and Europe—must take a principled stand. The targeted killing of civilians based on religion is not just an Indian problem. It is a threat to global peace and a test of global conscience.

Time for a Decisive Stand

India must act—not just react. This is not a policing issue alone. It requires political will, strategic clarity, and zero tolerance for any form of separatist sympathy. Soft-pedaling religious hatred only allows it to fester.

Tourism in Kashmir is not just about economics. It is about integration. Every traveler who visits, every couple who chooses Kashmir for their honeymoon, builds a bridge of national unity. And we must defend these bridges with resolve.

Beyond Condolences

For the young widow whose world was destroyed in seconds, this is not a news cycle. It is an unending nightmare. Her pain should not be drowned in the din of fleeting outrage.

Let us not forget her. Let us not move on this time.

Because the question she is left with—for how long—is now a question for us all.

For how long will we fail to protect the innocent?

For how long will names decide who lives and who dies?

For how long will candles be our only answer to bullets?

India must choose action over grief, accountability over rhetoric. Because this is no longer just about names—it is a question of our shared humanity.



Each time India acts against terrorism, international voices are quick to raise the banner of human rights. But when a Hindu civilian is gunned down

a Hindu name no longer evoke human sympathy? This selective outrage undermines the very essence of universal human rights. It exposes the

Pope Francis: A Legacy of Reform, Humility, and Compassion



YAMIN MOHAMMAD MUNSHI

Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, entered the world on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His early life offers a window into the humble beginnings of the man who would become the first pope from the Americas, the first Jesuit pope, and the first non-European pope in over a millennium. His background, shaped by immigrant roots, modest upbringing, and a deep connection to both faith and service, laid the foundation for his future as a transformative figure in the Catholic Church.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was the eldest of five children in a working-class family. His father, Mario José Bergoglio, was an Italian immigrant and railway worker, while his mother, Regina María Sívori, was a homemaker of Italian descent born in Argentina. The values instilled in him by his family—hard work, humility, compassion, and religious devotion—had a lasting influence on his character.

As a child, Jorge was known to be thoughtful and deeply spiritual. He attended a local technical secondary school and earned a diploma as a chemical technician. However, he soon felt a calling to religious life and entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1958. His decision marked the beginning of a life dedicated to spiritual service, education, and social justice.

Jorge's formation as a Jesuit was marked by rigorous academic study and pastoral work. He studied philosophy and theology in Buenos Aires and Chile and was ordained a priest in 1969. As a young priest, he quickly stood out for his intelligence, leadership, and dedication to serving the poor. He later taught literature and psychology, demonstrating a commitment not just to religious life, but to the development of young minds.

In 1973, at the age of 36, he became the provincial superior of the Jesuits in Argentina. This role placed him in a position of leadership during a tumultuous time in Argentine history, marked by political unrest and violence. During this period, Bergoglio emphasized humility, simplicity, and a strong pastoral approach to ministry—qualities that would become hallmarks of his papacy

decades later.

He was elected the 266th pope of the Roman Catholic Church on March 13, 2013. As the first pope from the Americas and the first Jesuit pope, his election marked a turning point in the history of the Church.

From the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis distinguished himself with his modesty and personal humility. He chose to live in the simpler Vatican guesthouse rather than the traditional papal apartments and took his name



from Saint Francis of Assisi, a symbol of humility and peace. This gesture set the tone for his approach to leadership—one rooted in service and compassion rather than authority and opulence.

A central theme of Pope Francis's papacy was a deep concern for the poor and marginalized. He spoke out against economic inequality, consumerism, and environmental degradation consistently. His 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si'" called for urgent action to combat climate change and protect the planet, framing environmental issues as moral and spiritual concerns. This encyclical marked a significant moment in the Church's engagement with global environmental policy.

Pope Francis also focused on making the Church more inclusive and merciful. He opened the door to greater discussion on previously controversial issues such as divorce, homosexuality, and the role of women in the Church. His famous quote, "Who am I to judge?" regarding homosexual individuals seeking God, reflected a more compassionate and understanding tone that resonated with many

Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Since the beginning of his papacy, he initiated several significant reforms within the Catholic Church, aiming to make it more transparent, compassionate, and relevant to the modern world. His reforms touched on areas including church governance, financial transparency, pastoral care and interfaith dialogue;

1. Reforming the Curia and Church Governance:

One of Pope Francis' earliest and most ambitious goals was to reform the Roman Curia, the

a commitment to integrity and stewardship in Church affairs.

3. Pastoral Reforms and Inclusivity:

Pope Francis has placed strong emphasis on mercy and pastoral care, especially in reaching out to those marginalized by traditional Church teachings. In his apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia" (2016), he opened the door for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion under certain circumstances, encouraging discernment over rigid rules. His emphasis on a more inclusive

church extends to LGBTQ+ individuals, whom he has welcomed with the phrase, "Who am I to judge?" Though he has not changed doctrine, his tone has fostered a more compassionate and understanding approach.

4. Clerical Abuse and Accountability:

In response to the global sexual abuse crisis, Pope Francis has introduced several measures to hold Church leaders accountable. He convened a global summit on clerical abuse in 2019 and issued the "Vos Estis Lux Mundi" decree, which established procedures for reporting abuse and misconduct by bishops. Though some critics argue more must be done, these steps mark a significant shift towards accountability and justice for survivors.

Pope Francis, since his election in 2013, emerged as a global symbol of peace, humility, and dialogue. As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, he held a position of immense influence not just within Christianity but across the broader religious and political spectrum. One of the most significant aspects of his papacy was his unwavering

commitment to promoting interfaith harmony—a mission rooted in compassion, mutual respect, and the shared values of humanity.

From the very beginning of his papacy, Pope Francis emphasized the importance of building bridges rather than walls. His approach to interfaith dialogue was grounded in the belief that all people, regardless of religious affiliation, are children of God. This message has resonated deeply in a world often marked by religious tension and conflict. He actively engaged with leaders from Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other faiths to foster understanding and cooperation.

A landmark moment in Pope Francis's interfaith efforts came in 2019, when he signed the "Document on Human Fraternity" in Abu Dhabi with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb. This historic declaration called for peace, coexistence, and the rejection of violence in the name of religion. It marked the first time a pope visited the Arabian Peninsula and symbolized a new chapter in Christian-Muslim relations. The document advocates for universal human values such as justice, mercy, and peace, laying a foundation for interreligious cooperation.

Pope Francis also made significant gestures toward the Jewish community, reinforcing the shared spiritual heritage of Christianity and Judaism. He condemned antisemitism in all forms and visited key Jewish sites, including the Western Wall in Jerusalem and concentration camp memorials in Europe, to honor the victims of the Holocaust and promote reconciliation. Beyond high-profile visits and declarations, Pope Francis led by example. His inclusive language, his efforts to reach out to marginalized communities, and his advocacy for the poor and refugees spoke to the universal ethics shared by many faith traditions. He highlighted the importance of promoting peace and the need to refrain from hate or division.

Now gone, Pope Francis is remembered not only as a reformer but as a deeply human leader. He did not change core doctrines of the Church, but he shifted its tone in a profound and lasting way. He made the Catholic Church more accessible, more compassionate, and more connected to the modern world. His legacy lives on in the renewed hope of countless believers, in the dialogues he began, and in the global conscience he helped awaken.

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Pahalgam attack condemned widely across all the schools of Kashmir

SRINAGAR: The heart wrenching attack on tourists at Pahalgam has been widely condemned across all the schools of Kashmir, and in this connection, condolence meetings and special prayers were offered in favour of all the deceased tourists during the morning assemblies. In this regard, a divisional level condolence meet was held in the conference hall of Directorate of School Education Kashmir early in the morning. All officers/officials of the Directorate participated in the meeting wherein Director School Education, Dr



G N Itoo prayed for the deceased souls and also for

the patience of the bereaved families. Director reiterated that every employee of the Department of School Education stands with the bereaved families at this hour of grief and also prayed for speedy recovery of the injured persons. During the condolence meet, two minutes of silence was observed as a mark of respect for deceased souls. Condolence meetings were also held at District and Zonal Levels in all the offices of respective Chief Education Officers and Zonal Education Offices.

Commissioner SMC, senior officials observe Two-Minute silence in solidarity with Pahalgam incident victims



SRINAGAR: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmed, along with senior officials of the Central Office, observed a solemn two-minute silence today at the SMC Headquarters, Karan Nagar, to honour the victims of the tragic incident that occurred in Pahalgam yesterday. This gesture reflects the deep sense of grief shared by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and reaffirms its solidarity with the affected families during this difficult time. The SMC stands united in mourning and in support of those impacted by the tragedy.

District Doda observes 2 minute silence to honour Victims of Pahalgam Massacre

DODA: The District Administration Doda, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, observed a two-minute silence today in solemn remembrance of the victims of the heinous massacre that took place in Pahalgam, Kashmir. The tribute was held at the Mini Conference Hall, DC Office Complex, Doda, where Additional Deputy Commissioner, Anil Kumar Thakur; Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Ashraf Pervez; Chief Planning Officer, Manesh Kumar Manhas; and other district officers and employees participated with heartfelt reverence. The gathering stood in silence to pay homage to the innocent lives lost in the brutal act of violence. The Deputy Commissioner Doda emphasized the importance of standing united against such inhumane acts that aim to disrupt societal peace and fabric. Meanwhile, similar observances were held simultaneously across all government offices in the district. From tehsil offices to block headquarters, officials and staff paused their routine work to participate in this solemn tribute. The coordinated effort across the district displayed a unified message of condolence and resilience. The observance served as a reminder of the value of human life and the need to uphold peace and unity.

Director Agriculture Jammu launches Training Calendar 2025-26

JAMMU: Director Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Jammu S. Arvinder Singh Reen today launched the Training Calendar for 2025-26, here at Kissan Kendra Talab Tillo. In his address, the Director highlighted that the Training Calendar features 28 divisional-level capacity building programmes designed for both farmers and officers, with a strong focus on sustainable agricultural practices and technological advancements. Joint Director Satish Sharma emphasized the Extension wing's commitment to enhancing the capacities of farmers and officers alike, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainability in agriculture. The event witnessed the presence of Satish Sharma, Joint Director Agriculture (Extension), Dr Ashwani Sharma Deputy Director Central, Dr. Manju Thakur, Country Coordinator CAB International, Dr. Aman Jyoti Sharma Agriculture Chemist Jammu, Alok Pandotra Deputy Director Trainings, Darmesh Vaid SMS RL, Rajesh Verma Assistant Entomologist Jammu, Rajeev Katoch, Programme Officer and Extension Wing team who played a key role in formulating the calendar which is thoughtfully scheduled to align with significant national and international observances, enriching the thematic relevance of the training sessions.



Judicial Officers pay tributes to retired Principal District & Sessions Judge Dev Raj Sharma

KATHUA: A condolence meeting was held today at the District Court Complex Kathua by the Judicial Officers to mourn the sad demise of Retired Principal District & Sessions Judge Dev Raj Sharma. The meeting took place in the office chamber of the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kathua. During the solemn gathering, the Judicial Officers expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of Sh. Dev Raj Sharma and extended their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, relatives, and friends. The officers described his demise as an irreparable loss to the Judiciary. Remembering his remarkable service, the Judicial Officers acknowledged his extraordinary legal acumen, humility, and

unwavering commitment towards the judicial system. His contribution to the judiciary and the legal fraternity was termed exceptional and invaluable. The meeting concluded with a two-minute silence as a mark of respect, followed by heartfelt prayers for the departed soul. The officers prayed for strength and comfort to the bereaved family in this hour of grief.

CEO invites public to review Electoral Rolls: SSR Deadline April 24

JAMMU: The Special Summary Revision (SSR) in the Assembly Constituencies of 27 Budgam and 77 Nagrota, which commenced on 8th April, 2025, is going to end on 24th April, 2025. In accordance with the established electoral process, the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have meticulously prepared the lists of claims and objections, which are now available for public scrutiny. These lists, generated in Forms 9, 10, 11, 11A and 11B, detail the applications received for inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition of entries in the electoral rolls. To ensure transparency and facilitate the public participation, these lists have been prominently displayed on the notice boards of the respective ERO offices.

Furthermore, the lists are also accessible online through the object to an electoral roll entry or submit a claim can do so



official website of the Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir, at www.ceo-jk@nic.in. The Chief Electoral Officer has appealed all the electors of Assembly Constituencies of 27 Budgam and 77 Nagrota to go through the displayed lists so as to ensure accuracy and completeness of the electoral rolls. The citizens who wish to by contacting the concerned Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for Assembly Constituency 27 Budgam or 77 Nagrota, as applicable. The Chief Electoral Officer has emphasised the importance of active citizen participation in this process, as it is fundamental towards upholding the integrity of the electoral system.

EPIC-Aadhaar Linking to Be Carried Out Within Constitutional and Legal Framework: ECI

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has reaffirmed that any move to link Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) with Aadhaar will be carried out strictly within the framework of the Constitution and relevant legal provisions. In a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi, the ECI held consultations with the Union Home Secretary, Secretaries of the Legislative Department and MeitY, CEO of UIDAI, and

ECI's own technical experts at Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi. Citing Article 326 of the



Constitution, which restricts voting rights to Indian citizens, the Commission clarified that Aadhaar serves only as a tool for identity

verification, not citizenship validation. Therefore, any linkage between Aadhaar and EPIC will be undertaken in accordance with Article 326, Sections 23(4), 23(5), and 23(6) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and in compliance with the Supreme Court's directions in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 177 of 2023. The ECI also announced that technical-level consultations between the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and ECI experts will commence shortly to operationalise the process.

Libraries Deptt organises series of events to showcase rare literary resources, promote book reading

SRINAGAR: A series of events were organized by the Department of Libraries & Research today across Kashmir division to commemorate the World Book & Copyright Day-2025. As part of the World Book & Copyright Day events, three closed libraries were also made functional today on the initiative of the Principal Secretary Department of Culture. These include Block Libraries of Khanyar (Srinagar) & Khanshab (Budgam) and Border Block Library Villgam (Kupwara). World Book and Copyright Day is celebrated on April 23 every year to promote the love for reading and writing; power of publishing, making reading accessible for all and the importance of protecting intellectual property through copyright laws.

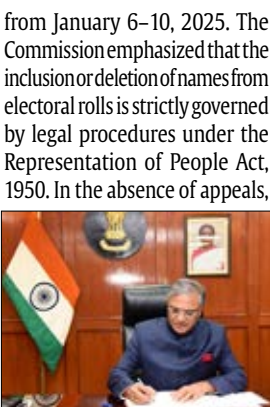
The Day also signifies the potential of books and literature in shaping minds, uniting people, and inspiring social transformation. Proclaimed by UNESCO in 1995, the day commemorates the passing away of literary legends including William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, all of whom passed away on this day. This year's theme for World Book and Copyright Day is - "Role of literature in achieving Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs)", which highlights literature's pivotal role in driving progress towards the SDGs. It emphasises how literature can inspire action and awareness across key global issues such as poverty, hunger, inequality, and more. To mark the day, today's main event was organized at SPS Central Library complex with an Exhibition of Special Literary Collections including Manuscripts, Rare Books and Miniature Paintings. The main attractions of the exhibition, jointly organized by SPS Library Srinagar & the Oriental Research Library (ORL) Srinagar, were the historic manuscripts like Qarabai-Din, Sadh Pand Luqman and Shahnama Firdous. Some of the rare books including Mahabharata & Ramayana, Rajtarangini by Kalhana, Tareekh-e-Rasheed, Gazetteer of India and Kashur - a history of Kashmir were also displayed at the exhibition. Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Director, ORL Srinagar, Mrs Ishrat Majeed said the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar established in 1904, is a repository of around 6000 rare manuscripts in 17 languages encompassing varied fields. The library also has around 500 rare books and miniature paintings. Ishrat said the manuscript collection of ORL is a treasure-trove of religious, philosophical,

historical, literary and scientific writings rich in classical languages like Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Turki, Brij Bhasha and Arabic. These languages have left deep impression on Kashmiri language by conditioning its growth in terms of forms and scope, she said and added that the Sanskrit, language of court and culture in 9th and beginning of 10th century in Kashmir contributes number of religious, aesthetic and poetic articulations and are preserved in ORL. Ishrat said such exhibitions make our young generation aware about, the culture, traditions, heritage and history of Jammu and Kashmir. A large number of people from different walks of life visited the exhibition. Book exhibitions and other activities including literary tours of libraries to discover the magic of books and re-inculcate reading habits among the youth were organised in District and Tehsil Libraries across Kashmir as part of World Book & Copyright Day events. The Department of Libraries, has for the past few years, laid special emphasis on selection of reference books for students preparing for IAS/KAS/NEET/JEE and other competitive examinations to make productive use of the resources earmarked for the purchase of books resulting in huge boost to the footfall of youth in public libraries.

ECI Charts Bold Reforms to Strengthen Electoral Processes Across India

New Delhi: In less than a month since assuming office, the 26th Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Dr. Vivek Joshi, has initiated a series of bold reforms to strengthen the electoral process and deepen democratic participation across the country. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has activated the entire electoral machinery—from the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) down to Booth Level Officers (BLOs)—with a renewed focus on maximizing voter participation and ensuring a seamless voting experience. The ECI reaffirmed that India's nearly 100 crore electors remain the cornerstone of its democratic framework. As part of this transformative push, the Commission is enhancing engagement with political stakeholders. Nearly 5,000 all-party meetings have been organized at the CEO, District Election Officer (DEO), and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) levels across the country. The move has been widely welcomed by political parties, who are now being offered digital training modules and guidance on legal provisions concerning voter list corrections, claims, and objections. In a significant update, the ECI revealed that only 89 first appeals and one second appeal were filed following the Special Summary Revision (SSR) exercise conducted



from January 6–10, 2025. The Commission emphasized that the inclusion or deletion of names from electoral rolls is strictly governed by legal procedures under the Representation of People Act, 1950. In the absence of appeals, the electoral roll prepared by the ERO is deemed final. To further improve the quality of the electoral roll, the ECI is working closely with the UIDAI to eliminate duplicate EPIC numbers—a decades-old issue the Commission aims to resolve within three months. Regular updates to the voter list will be aligned with data from birth and death registration authorities for accuracy. The Commission is also tackling urban apathy and rural accessibility by ensuring that no polling station serves more than 1,200 voters and is located within 2 kilometers of the electors. Even in remote rural areas, all polling stations will be equipped with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF), while high-rise urban clusters will see polling stations established within their premises to boost turnout. In a landmark move for continuous capacity building,

the ECI recently organized a two-day national conference at the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM) on March 4–5. For the first time, DEOs and EROs from all states and UTs participated alongside CEOs. The conference laid down a stakeholder-mapped framework to energize over 1 crore election officials nationwide. Digital training kits in multiple languages, animated videos, and integrated dashboards are being developed to facilitate learning and implementation. BLOs, the frontline workers of the election process, will soon undergo specialized training through newly devised modules aimed at improving their effectiveness. Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has directed that regular all-party meetings continue at all levels to address issues raised by political stakeholders and ensure transparency. This engagement drive will be completed across India by March 31, 2025. Furthermore, political parties have been invited to submit suggestions concerning any aspect of election conduct by April 30, and to meet with the Commission in New Delhi at their convenience. Through these initiatives, the ECI is laying the groundwork for a more inclusive, transparent, and efficient electoral system that upholds the highest standards of democratic governance.

DC Rajouri leads observance of 2 minute silence in Solidarity with Pahalgam incident victims

RAJOURI: In a solemn tribute to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, along with senior officers and officials of the district administration, observed a two-minute silence today at the DC Office Complex. The observance was marked by a sense of collective grief and solidarity as the officers

paid homage to those who lost their lives in the unfortunate incident. The Deputy Commissioner expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. He emphasized the importance of standing united in times of tragedy and reaffirmed the district administration's

commitment to ensuring peace, harmony, and support for those affected. Similarly, ADC Kalakote, ADC Kotranka, ADC Sunderbani, ADC Nowshera, and SDM Thanamandi also led the observance of a two-minute silence in their respective sub-divisions, expressing solidarity with the victims and their families.

Baramulla unites to condemn killing of tourists in Pahalgam

BARAMULLA: In a strong display of unity and collective grief, members of civil society, traders' federation, transport Association, staff members from Government offices, and concerned citizens of Baramulla today gathered together and participated in a protest march condemning the tragic killing of tourists in Pahalgam on Tuesday. The march witnessed massive public participation with people from all walks of life gathered in solidarity, holding placards and banners expressing their anguish and support for the victims and their families. With firm determination, the participants urged the authorities to swiftly identify and bring to

justice those responsible for the heinous act. They demanded for stringent action under the full

stood as a powerful testament to Baramulla's united stand against violence and its unwavering



ambit of the law, ensuring such acts of violence are met with zero tolerance. Participants condemned the attack in the strongest terms, expressing deep sorrow and extending heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families. The march

commitment to peace, justice, and communal harmony. In a similar spirit, solidarity marches were held across various sub-divisions and tehsils of the district, reinforcing the collective voice of empathy and resilience in the face of tragedy.



In Pictures: Kashmir Unites to Protest Against Massacre of Tourists in Pahalgam



Continued From P1...

India suspends

solidarity have been received from many governments around the world which have unequivocally condemned this terror attack.

The Foreign Secretary informed that the CCS reviewed the overall security situation and directed all forces to maintain high vigil. India will be unrelenting in the pursuit of those who have committed acts of terror or conspired to make them possible.

The landmark 1960 agreement between India and Pakistan has been taken in abeyance with immediate effect. India stated it would remain suspended until Pakistan “credibly and irrevocably” renounces support for cross-border terrorism.

The cabinet also decided closure of Attari Integrated Check Post:

Effective immediately, the check post will be closed. Only those with valid endorsements who crossed before May 1, 2025, will be considered exceptions.

SAARC Visa Ban for Pakistani Nationals: Travel under the SAARC Visa Exemption (SVE) scheme has been revoked for all Pakistani citizens. Existing visas are canceled, and those currently in India under this arrangement must leave within 48 hours.

Diplomatic Expulsions: All defence, naval, military, and air advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi have been declared persona non grata and given one week to depart. India will reciprocally withdraw its military attaches from Islamabad, effectively annulling these diplomatic roles.

Downsizing of High Commissions: Both nations’ diplomatic missions will reduce staff strength from 55 to 30 by May 1.

J&K Police announce

The police have assured that the identity of anyone providing information will be kept strictly confidential.

Citizens with any information can contact the authorities through the following, SSP Anantnag: 9596777666 – PCR Anantnag: 9596777669 – Email:

HM Shah

terror attack will not be spared,” Shah, wrote on X. Shah, according to KNO, also visited the Baisaran meadow, the site of the terror attack this morning.

He arrived at the terror site by helicopter, descending onto the meadow now bearing the scars of violence.

The Home Minister was accompanied by the top security officials.

The attack, which unfolded on Tuesday at Baisaran area turned a place once known for its tranquility into a site of mourning. The attack was one of the biggest terror attacks in the region after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Shah also visited a hospital in Anantnag to enquire about the condition of the persons injured in the terror attack.

He arrived at the Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital in the afternoon.

The Home Minister was accompanied by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

“HM Amit Shah and CM Omar Abdullah visited the Associated Hospital of GMC Anantnag to inquire about the condition of the injured tourists following the Pahalgam terror attack,” ruling National Conference posted on its X handle.

The Union Home Minister left for New Delhi in the afternoon

US ready

statement, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, underscoring a renewed push for counter-terror cooperation between the two nations.

Prime Minister Modi thanked Vice President Vance and U.S. President Donald Trump for their messages of support and solidarity.

Earlier, former U.S. President Donald Trump took to Truth Social to express his condolences and support following the Pahalgam terror attack. “Deeply disturbing news out of Kashmir. The United States stands strong with India against Terrorism. We pray for the souls of those lost, and for the recovery of the injured. Prime Minister Modi, and the incredible people of India, have our full support and deepest sympathies. Our hearts are with you all!” Trump posted.

Notably, Tuesday’s attack is the major terror attack targeted against civilians in the Valley since 2019.

Meanwhile, leaders across the world have

strongly condemned the Pahalgam terror attack, expressing solidarity with India and extending support to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government in its efforts to combat terrorism.

Local horse rider

assure people that we stand with them at this difficult situation and we will do for them whatever would be possible,” he said.

The Chief Minister along with hundreds of people attended the funeral of Adil in Pahalgam this afternoon.

NIA team

The team would provide assistance to the local police probing Tuesday’s terrorist attack which left 26 people, mostly tourists, dead.

Pertinently, a group of terrorists on Tuesday afternoon gunned down tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking with their families at the meadow popularly known as ‘Mini Switzerland’ for its serene beauty

Perpetrators Will

Ahead of this, he also chaired a meeting with NSA Ajit Doval, Air Force’s Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, and other officials, discussing the security situation in the region.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited the Government Medical College (GMC) in Anantnag to meet the injured victims of the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed several lives and left others wounded.

The attack, carried out by terrorists at Baisaran meadow in Pahalgam on Tuesday, is one of the deadliest in the Valley since the 2019 Pulwama strike.

Earlier in the day, HM Amit Shah visited the affected area of Baisaran meadow where the attack took place. The Union Minister first took an aerial stock of the region as he arrived at the site by helicopter, descending onto the meadow now bearing the scars of violence.

Before heading to Pahalgam, the Union Home Minister paid tribute to the victims with a “heavy heart” during a poignant ceremony and met with the families of the victims outside the Police Control Room in Srinagar.

Taking to X, Amit Shah expressed the centre’s firm resolve to combat terrorism, stating that “Bharat will not bend to terror.”

“With a heavy heart, paid last respects to the deceased of the Pahalgam terror attack. Bharat will not bend to terror. The culprits of this dastardly terror attack will not be spared,” Shah stated.

The Pahalgam attack is the latest in a series of violent incidents in the region.

Rajnath Singh

Ladakh in view of the situation arising out of the terror attack in Kashmir’s Pahalgam.

Singh was to visit Ladakh on April 25 and 26.

The defence minister cancelled his upcoming visit to Ladkah, sources said.

Twenty-six civilians were killed by terrorists in Pahalgam on Tuesday in an attack that triggered widespread outrage within India and abroad.

CM Omar Convenes

parties, Members of Parliament from Jammu and Kashmir and Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly for the meeting.

The meeting will be held tomorrow at 3:00 pm at the SKICC in Srinagar.

Army, Navy chiefs

search and destroy operations to nab the terrorists responsible for the attack.

“More troops have been inducted in the areas near the attack site to carry out search and destroy operations,” the source said.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Defence Minister expressed “deep anguish” over the attack, calling it a cowardly and reprehensible attack on innocent civilians.

“Deeply anguished by the news of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam (Jammu & Kashmir), This dastardly attack on innocent civilians is an act of cowardice and highly reprehensible. My thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families,” Minister Singh said in a post on X.

One naval officer, Lieutenant Vinay Narwal, was killed in the terror attack. Earlier today, the Indian Navy, while condemning the attack, also extended condolences to the families of the victims.

“Adm Dinesh K Tripathi, CNS, and all Personnel of the Indian Navy are shocked and deeply saddened by the tragic loss of Lt Vinay Narwal, who fell to

the dastardly terror attack in Pahalgam. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family during this moment of unimaginable grief. The Indian Navy also stands in solemn solidarity with all others who lost their lives in this heinous act of violence,” read a post by the Navy.

This attack is considered one of the most significant and brutal terror incidents since the revocation of Article 370 in 2019 in the region.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army, along with Jammu and Kashmir Police, has launched an extensive search operation in the Baisaran area of Pahalgam to apprehend those responsible for the violence.

Announces

to the families of those who lost their lives in the attack. Further, Rs 2 lakh will be given to those who sustained serious injuries, and Rs 1 lakh to those with minor injuries.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed profound shock and anguish over the heinous terrorist attack that took place in Pahalgam yesterday, terming it a barbaric and senseless act of brutality against innocent civilians.

In a strong condemnation issued today, the Chief Minister said, “This despicable act of terror has no place in our society. We mourn the precious lives lost and extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved families. Our hearts go out to them in this dark hour.”

As a mark of solidarity and support, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has announced an ex-gratia relief of 10 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased, 2 lakh for those seriously injured, and 1 lakh for those who sustained minor injuries.

The Chief Minister assured that all necessary arrangements have been made for the dignified transportation of the mortal remains to the victims’ native places. Additionally, the injured are being provided with the best possible medical treatment.

“Our hearts go out to the bereaved families. We share your grief and stand by you in this dark hour,” he said.

Reiterating the Government’s firm resolve to combat terrorism, the Chief Minister asserted, “Terror will never break our resolve. We will not rest until those behind this barbarity are brought to justice.”

Heartbreaking to see

blocked due to recent landslides and flash floods, has been partially reopened for one-way traffic. The administration has been directed to prioritize tourist vehicles for outbound travel from Srinagar.

“I’ve directed the administration to facilitate traffic between Srinagar and Jammu, allowing tourist vehicles to leave,” Omar added. “This will have to be done in a controlled and organised way because the road is still unstable in places and we are also working hard to clear all the stranded vehicles.”

Authorities have emphasized that unrestricted vehicle movement is not possible at this stage due to ongoing restoration work and the fragile condition of the highway.

J&K Shuts

the deployment of additional police and paramilitary forces in sensitive areas to ensure peace and order.

Protests and candle light march continued from dawn to dusk. Normal life came to a standstill following a complete shutdown in Jammu and Kashmir. Security has been beefed up across the region, especially at vital tourist spots. The effect of the shutdown was also witnessed in the other district headquarters of the Jammu division.

In Srinagar, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) led a protest march from Nawa-e-Subha, the party’s headquarters, to Lal Chowk. The rally was headed by Nasir Aslam Wani, Adviser to the Chief Minister. Senior party leaders, workers and supporters marched while holding placards, demanding justice and calling for a high-level probe into the killings.

The presence of Omar Abdullah’s sons—Zamir Abdullah and Zahir Abdullah drew more attention as they walked with the protestors in a show of solidarity.

“This is not a political protest. This is a public expression of pain and anger. The people of Kashmir are united in grief and strongly condemn the attack. We will not allow this violence to define us,” NC spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said while speaking to the media.

The People’s Democratic Party (PDP) held a protest at Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower), Lal Chowk, with party president and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti leading the demonstration. Carrying black flags and banners, PDP workers raised slogans against terrorism and expressed sorrow over the loss of innocent lives.

Speaking to reporters, Mufti strongly condemned the attack, saying, “The killing of innocent tourists is a direct attack on the values of Kashmiriyat. It has brought shame to the region. We are heartbroken and extend our deepest apologies to the people of the country.”

She urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah to act swiftly and ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice. “We expect immediate and strict action. The government must deliver justice,” she added.

MLA Handwara and People’s Conference (PC) president Sajad Lone strongly condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam, characterising it as a “dastardly and cowardly” act aimed at destabilising Kashmir’s tourism industry and economy.

“For decades, we have been identified as great hosts. We have a history of hospitality. And some cowardly terrorists want to destroy it all,” Lone said, emphasising Kashmir’s long-standing tradition of welcoming visitors.

As a show of solidarity against the recent innocent killings, the PC chief led a candlelight vigil at Polo View, Srinagar. He was joined by the party’s senior General Secretary Molvi Imran Reza Ansari.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) issued a statement condemning the incident and demanding heightened security across all tourist zones. The party said that such acts were aimed at destabilising peace efforts and must be crushed with full force.

The Awami National Conference (ANC), led by senior Vice President Muzzafar Shah, held a protest against the killings.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir unit of Janata Dal (United) also held the vigil, stressing unity against terrorism and support for the people of Kashmir. The joint call for peace and justice comes amid widespread outrage and grief over the tragic incident.

The shock and condemnation were not limited to political circles alone. Civil society and trade groups across the valley came forward in a unified protest against the attack.

he Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kashmir (CCIK) called the attack “an assault on Kashmir’s image and economy”, stressing that such incidents deeply affect tourism and business prospects in the region.

The students and scholars of the University of Kashmir held a peaceful protest on campus to condemn the inhuman and barbaric attack.

The representatives of the Tour and Taxi Operators of Association, Hotelier Associations, Radio Taxi Association of J&K, and the Auto Rickshaw Association staged symbolic protests at various locations in Srinagar.

“This attack is not just about the loss of lives; it is about the loss of trust,” said a member of Tour and Taxi Operators Association. “Tourism is the backbone of our economy. We appeal to the authorities to act decisively.”

The Shikara wallas and houseboat owners led a protest rally in Srinagar against the killings. They demanded that the administration take stringent steps to ensure the safety of visitors and prevent such tragedies in future.

The hotelier community echoed similar sentiments, urging the government to restore a sense of security in the region. “We cannot allow a single incident to destroy the hard-earned confidence that tourists have begun to show in Kashmir again,” said one of the hotel owners participating in the protest.

In north Kashmir’s Sopore, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), SA Raina led a solidarity rally alongside civil administration officers and local stakeholders. “The incident in Pahalgam is deeply unfortunate. Every human life is sacred and must be protected,” Raina said.

Sopore saw multiple peaceful demonstrations throughout the day, with residents calling for peace, unity and an end to bloodshed. “We want peace and progress, not more graves,” said one protester.

In Baramulla district, members of the Kashmiri Pandit community held a separate protest, demanding justice and accountability. Shouting slogans like “We Want Justice” and “Ensure Our Safety”, they urged authorities to take concrete steps to prevent such tragedies in the future. The Bar Association Baramulla also condemned the attack, suspending court work as a mark of respect and solidarity with the victims.

In towns like Tangmarg and Handwara, many called upon the central and J&K governments to enhance the security grid, fix intelligence lapses and rebuild public trust. “This is not just a terror attack – it’s the murder of Kashmiriyat,” said a protester in Tangmarg, adding that “killing our guests is unforgivable. We want the killers to be brought to justice and the peace of our land restored”.

Security has been tightened across key areas, especially in tourist-heavy zones, with checkpoints and surveillance intensified.

On Tuesday evening, multiple organisations including religious leaders, trade bodies and political parties called for a complete shutdown on Wednesday to mourn the victims and protest the massacre.

Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq, through the Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to observe a peaceful shutdown. In a post on X, the Mirwaiz quoted the Quran: “Whoever kills an innocent soul... it is as if he had slain mankind entirely.” “This is another dark day in Kashmir’s blood-soaked history,” he wrote, adding, “Islam is a religion of peace and such brutality is unacceptable.”

The Grand Mufti of J&K, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam, also backed the bandh, calling for solidarity with the victims’ families.

Noted lawyers from Kashmir, and Chamber and Bar Association Jammu also called for a complete bandh in protest.

Prominent Bollywood personalities have strongly condemned the recent attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, which has sent shockwaves across the country.

Producer Imtiyaz Bhat, singer Satya Thakur, choreographer Shabina Khan, and director Shamim Sayid expressed deep sorrow and outrage, urging for peace and unity in the region.

In a joint statement, they said, “Violence has no place in our society. We stand in solidarity with the victims and their families. Kashmir deserves peace, not pain.”

They further added, “Kashmir has always welcomed people from outside—be it tourists or the film industry. It is heartbreaking to see such incidents in a land known for its warmth, beauty, and hospitality.”

Offer all possible aid to tourists, including waiving cancellation fees: Govt to hotels, others

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday asked tourist service providers, travel agents, tour operators, hoteliers and online travel aggregators to provide all possible assistance to tourists, including waiving cancellation fees, in the aftermath of the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir’s Pahalgam.

The tourism ministry said this in a communication issued to various stakeholders of the tourism and hospitality sector, as also to the Jammu and Kashmir’s department of tourism.

Thousands of tourists began leaving Kashmir on Wednesday, a day after 26 people were killed by terrorists at Baisaran meadow near Pahalgam

in Anantnag district.

Local travel agents in Jammu and Kashmir said most of the tourists were leaving the valley due to fear.

“This is in the aftermath of the recent incident in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. It is requested that all the tourist service providers, travel agents, tour operators, Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs), tourist transport providers, hoteliers and all other accommodation units may provide all possible assistance to the tourists including waiving off cancellation fees. Your support is greatly appreciated,” reads the communication signed by Union Tourism Secretary V Vidyavathi.

The Pahalgam terror attack is set to deal a blow to tourism in Jammu and Kashmir with travel agencies in several parts of the country reporting widespread cancellations of scheduled trips to the Union territory even as the Centre said it will do the best to “minimise” the impact on hospitality sector there.

“We know tourists have by and large been safe in Kashmir but with such an incident happening here, one cannot expect them to stay back. The cancellations are massive, close to 80 per cent,” Aijaz Ali, a travel operator from Srinagar, said.

He said there were cancellations of packages even for next one month.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said it was “heartbreaking” to see the exodus of tourists.

Interacting with reporters on the sidelines of an event in Delhi, Union Tourism Minister Jagendra Singh Shekhawat on Wednesday said some people with nefarious intentions have tried to again “incite separatism and terrorism” in the Valley and asserted that his ministry will do the best to “minimise the dent” on tourism in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of the Pahalgam attack.

Over 50 Tourists From Goa Stuck In J&K After Pahalgam Terror Attack: Officials

PANAJI: More than 50 persons from Goa who were on a vacation to Jammu and Kashmir were stranded at hotels in Srinagar after the horrific terror attack in Pahalgam and efforts were on to bring them back, officials said on Wednesday.

Terrorists struck at a prime tourist location in Pahalgam in south Kashmir on Tuesday, killing at least 26 persons, mostly tourists, and injuring several others, according to officials.

The terrorists opened fire at tourists who were milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking at the Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam, touted as ‘Mini Switzerland’ for its serene beauty.

After the incident, all visitors were transported from Pahalgam and other places to hotels in Srinagar, a Goa government official said.

More than 50 persons from Goa were currently in Jammu and Kashmir, the official said, adding that “all are safe”.

Efforts were on to bring them back, the official said.

Tour operators from Goa were also working out plans to bring all tourists back from Jammu and Kashmir.

One of the tour operators said a few of the tourists were scheduled to visit Baisaran point after food where the attack happened.

“A group of Goans was in Pahalgam market when the incident happened, while another group was in Sonamarg. All were called back to a hotel in Srinagar where they are currently safe,” said Ahraz Mulla, co-founder of tour company Goa Adventure Club in Panaji.

Mulla said their firm had planned a trip for a group of 34 persons to Pahalgam and 12 to Jammu.

“Those in Jammu are stranded due to a landslide. They also cannot fly out from there as flights are running full capacity,” he said.

A group that went to Pahalgam reached there on April 17 and was supposed to return on April 24. “Efforts are on to get them back immediately,” Mulla said.

Daxal Naik, owner of Travel Bug Tours and Travels near Panaji, said a group of 26 persons whose visit to Jammu and Kashmir was facilitated by his company, was still stranded there.

“All of them have reached hotels in Srinagar. We are trying to bring them back as soon as possible,” he said.

Naik said a group of tourists from Goa was having lunch at Pahalgam market when the attack happened.

“The tourists were scheduled to visit Baisaran point after having food where the attack happened,” he added.

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DIPR observes two minute silence in solidarity with Pahalgam victims



JAMMU: All the Officers and officials of the Directorate of Information & Public Relations, led by Director Information, Nitish Rajora, observed a

two-minute silence at the DIPR Complex, Jammu, in the memory of victims of the #Pahalgam terror attack.

Future Plan Is To Play For India But Current Focus Is To Win IPL With DC: Porel

Like any other cricketer from the country, young Delhi Capitals opener Abishek Porel aspires to represent India in the future but said his current focus is to help his side win its maiden Indian Premier League trophy this year.

Chasing 160, the 22-year-old made 51 off 36 balls to help DC win by eight wickets against Lucknow Super Giants here on Tuesday.

"Obviously, I am enjoying every innings, trying to develop in every innings. The future plan is to play for India, play for the country for a long period," Porel said at the post-match press conference.

"But current focus is the IPL trophy, how can I help the team in winning the trophy, how can I contribute for DC. This matters a lot right now.

"I know my game and the support staff also knows that. The support staff always tells me to play freely and not to take any tension."

Asked to bat, LSG made a quick start with Aiden Markram (52) and Mitchell Marsh (45) sharing 87 runs for the opening stand in 10 overs.

But DC bowlers made a brilliant comeback with Mukesh Kumar (4/33) leading from the front to restrict LSG to 159 for 6, a target which Porel feels was gettable.

"The wicket was very good, so 160 score was a bit less, so we had that in mind that we need to chase these runs. Good toss to win. There was not much difference but the skipper took a good decision," Porel said.

"They (LSG) got runs initially but we knew we can restrict them in middle overs. We had good spinners so we backed ourselves and made

a comeback with some good bowling in the second half."

their innings after a bright start. "I think leaving pitch, you can see that we

mentum and we should have taken advantage of that," he said.



Obviously, I am enjoying every innings, trying to develop in every innings. The future plan is to play for India, play for the country for a long period," Porel said at the post-match press conference.

LSG assistant coach Vijay Dahiya said the hosts lost the momentum in the second half of

scored over 80 runs in nine overs. From there we lost the momentum a bit. We had the mo-

"Let's give credit where its due. I think Delhi Capitals' bowlers assessed the conditions better.

"I think leaving pitch, you can see that we scored over 80 runs in nine overs. From there we lost the momentum a bit. We had the momentum and we should have taken advantage of that," he said.

Rahul has left last season's baggage, it will help him do well for DC, feels Pujara

NEW DELHI: Cheteshwar Pujara feels KL Rahul has moved on from a disappointing last season at Lucknow Super Giants and the change in mindset was not only helping him flourish at his new IPL franchise but will also make him a strong asset for the Indian team.

Rahul hit his third fifty of the season to take his mew team Delhi Capitals to a commanding eight-wicket win against his



former franchise LSG in Lucknow on Tuesday.

"Just move on, don't carry any baggage from the past. And that's a good thing. KL is a mature player. Last couple of years, he's been batting well across formats," Pujara said on ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut.

"He doesn't want to think about the past and wants to enjoy his batting and be in his zone, rather than think about what went wrong when he was playing for the LSG team.

"It's good to move on, which will also help him play well for DC and even for the Indian team. Because, lately, he is someone the India team also relies on, the way he's batting."

Under Rahul's captaincy LSG had reached the play-offs in 2022 and 2023 seasons. However, the Lucknow outfit finished seventh last season.

Rahul's relationship with LSG owner Sanjiv Goenka also deteriorated last year. In a video that went viral on social media, Goenka was seen publicly reprimanding the former Lucknow captain after a defeat.

A few months later, the 33-year-old was released by the franchise ahead of the mega auctions.

At DC, the wicketkeeper batter, one of the most consistent players in the IPL, has emerged as the leading run scorer this season, scoring 323 runs in seven innings.

"Even as a person, he looks a lot more mature now, he understands his game very well. We have seen a different KL Rahul this season. When he started (against LSG), he didn't look that (fluid), but still he picked it up," Pujara said.

Realised That Captaincy Sometimes Is About Instincts: Pandya

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya said captaincy is sometimes about instincts and innovation rather than just adhering to stereotype roles, following his team's seven-wicket win against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL here on Wednesday.

The all-rounder came up with yet another bold decision as he asked Deepak Chahar to bowl all his four overs in a single spell. Chahar returned excellent figures of 4-0-12-2 as he, along with New Zealand quick Trent Boult, reduced the Sunrisers to 13 for 4, from where the home side couldn't recover and lost the contest in just 15.4 overs.

This was MI's fourth consecutive victory and pushed the five-time IPL champions to third spot on the table with 10 points. Former MI skipper Rohit Sharma too played his part, smashing his second successive half-century this season.

"Realised that captaincy sometimes is about instincts. Want to see and react and not always pre-plan. In a situation like this where he (Chahar) bowled wonderfully in the powerplay, then why hold his fourth over back?" said Pandya as Chahar went for the SRH jugular and made the biggest impact in the game.

"Good to have a win. Glad the boys are taking the momentum in the right way. I've felt, once everyone starts clicking

in this team there will be domination. Deepak, Boult set it up; Rohit, SKY (Suryakumar) finished it. Overall, a wonderful win," added the captain.

He, however, cautioned the team to not become complacent, saying a few more boxes still need to be ticked.

"Just need to get better in all departments. So far, very satisfied," he added.

Player of the Match Boult, whose 4/26 took the wind out of SRH's sails, also praised Chahar, saying the Indian quick did a great job.

"To keep a quality side down in their home conditions was the most satisfying. Deepak did a great job. I'd love to bowl four in a row and swing it around but it doesn't always happen. You have to be ready to bowl in whatever stage you're asked," said the New Zealander.

SRH skipper Pat Cummins conceded that his team's plans were not falling in place. SRH are currently in ninth place with just four points.

"After (losing) a couple of wickets, you have to find a way to steady the ship. Couldn't do that. The difference between the first game where we got 280-plus and the next, where we folded, was big," Cummins said.

"That's T20, you don't know what happens. Hasn't worked out so far. We have a few away games now. It's about assessing

each wicket quickly. Some days it might be all-out attack and there'll be graft on others."





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