

Kashmir Convener



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Bloodbath In Baisaran

26 Killed, several injured

KC News Network

PAHALGAM: Terrorists opened fire at a famed meadow near Kashmir's Pahalgam town on Tuesday afternoon, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in what is the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

The 26 dead included two foreigners and two locals, a high ranking official said without getting into details. The toll is still being ascertained, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said while describing the terror attack as "much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years". The attack, which comes as US Vice President J D Vance is visiting India and



just as the tourist and trekking season is picking up momentum, took place around 3 pm, officials said. Baisaran, about six kilometres from the resort

town of Pahalgam, is an expansive meadow ringed by dense pine forests and mountains and a favourite with visitors from across the country and the world.

Armed terrorists came into the grassland, dubbed 'mini Switzerland', and started firing at tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking, officials and eyewitnesses said. At least 20 people were injured in the strike in the volatile Kashmir Valley where tourists have so far mostly been spared. As news of the terror attack targeting tourists in Kashmir spread, The Resistance Front (TRF), shadow group of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group, claimed responsibility. Officials said it was possible the terror group could have crossed over from Kishtwar in Jammu and reached Baisaran through Kokernag in south Kashmir.

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Locals organize candle light march across Kashmir to express sympathy

Call for end to terrorism; say 'we stand united against violence'

Jahangeer Ganaie

PAHALGAM: In a heartening show of resilience and unity, the people from multiple areas across Jammu and Kashmir organized candle light protests to express their sympathy with the tourists, who were attacked by the terrorists in Pahalgam area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO),



locals from Pahalgam organized a peaceful candlelight march to express their solidarity with the victims and send a message of peace to the world.

Scores of locals, including youth, shopkeepers, ponywalas, and hotel owners, gathered in the town square with candles and placards reading "We Stand for Peace" and "Tourists Are Our Guests." The march moved through the main market, ending near the Lidder River, where participants held a moment of silence for those affected.

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HM Shah Arrives In Srinagar CM Omar briefs him at airport

KC News Network



SRINAGAR: Hours after the deadly terror attack, which left 28 civilians, mostly tourists, dead at Pahalgam in South Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in Srinagar on Tuesday to review the security situation.

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Security beefed up across J&K, high alert in Delhi after Pahalgam attack

Massive combing ops continue at attack site

NIA set to take charge of investigation tomorrow

Sajid Raina

SRINAGAR: Security has been heightened across Jammu and Kashmir, while Delhi has been

placed on high alert following a deadly terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam's Baisaran meadow that left dozens of people dead on Tuesday.

The attack occurred around 2:30 Pm when a group of terrorists, wearing combat uniforms, opened fire on tourists

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Those Behind Heinous Act Will Not Be Spared: PM Modi



KC NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Condemning the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that those behind the

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Terrorist Attack On Tourists In Pahalgam Painful: President Murmu

KC News Network

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday termed terrorist attack on tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam as shocking and painful, and said that their dastardly inhuman act of targeting innocent citizens was unpardonable.

She also offered heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their dear ones and prayed for the quick recovery of the injured. Multiple tourists were feared killed and at least 20 injured when terrorists opened fire in a picturesque

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Perpetrators Of Terror Attack Will Have To Pay Very Heavy Price: LG Sinha

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said security forces have launched operations to neutralise terrorists who carried out the Pahalgam attack, and the perpetrators will have to pay a very heavy price for their heinous act.

"Anti-terror ops launched to neutralise terrorists. Entire nation is angry and blood of our forces is boiling. I want to assure



the nation that perpetrators of Pahalgam attack will have to pay a very heavy price for their heinous act.

My heartfelt condolences to bereaved families," Sinha said on X.

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CCI Jammu Calls For Jammu Bandh today

Yogesh

JAMMU: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Jammu, led by President Arun Gupta, has announced a complete Jammu Bandh on Wednesday, (April 23, 2025) to protest the horrific terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Anantnag district.

The attack, which occurred at Baisaran meadow, claimed dozens of lives, mostly tourists from various states, and left several others injured, marking it as one of the deadliest attacks on civilians in recent years.



Mehbooba Mufti Extends support

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: PDP President Mehbooba extended support to the band call of Chamber & Bar Association Jammu.

"The Chamber & Bar Association Jammu has called for a complete shutdown tomorrow in protest against the horrific militant attack on tourists. I appeal all Kashmiris to unite in solidarity to support this bandh as a

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Cm Omar, Mehbooba, Others Condemn Pahalgam Terror Attack



KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, and several other political parties and leaders on Tuesday expressed shock over terrorist attack on tourists in south

Kashmir's Pahalgam. The leaders condemned the attack in strongest words and expressed sympathies to the families of the victims.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah termed the attack "an abomination", saying the perpetrators of the attack are animals and inhuman.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter) he said: "I'm shocked beyond belief. This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman & worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough. I send my sympathies to the families of the deceased".

Abdullah said he has spoken to his college and health minister Sakina Itoo who has moved to the hospital to oversee arrangements for the injured.

"I've spoken to my colleague @sakinaitoo & she has moved to the hospital to oversee arrangements for the injured. I'll be flying back to Srinagar immediately", he said on X. Former chief

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"We Stand Together": Locals, tourists in Kashmir reassure safety after Pahalgam attack

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Despite a terror attack that struck the scenic tourist destination of Pahalgam on Tuesday, locals and visitors



have come forward to reassure the world that Kashmir remains a place of warmth and security.

The attack, which occurred around 3 PM near the Baisaran Valley—often called 'mini Switzerland' for its lush meadows—left over

20 people feared dead and several injured.

Terrorists reportedly opened fire on tourists before security forces swiftly intervened. Videos circulating online showed emergency responders rushing to aid the wounded.

Meanwhile, amid the chaos, a strong message of solidarity emerged from both Kashmiris and tourists. "We Are Safe Here": Tourists Praise Local Support

A tourist from Haryana, who had planned to visit Betaab Valley, expressed gratitude to locals for their immediate assistance. "The people here have been incredibly kind. They're helping us in every way possible. We feel safe and sound," she told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). An injured tourist from Gujarat recounted the harrowing

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Statehood our promise, will be restored to J&K: BJP MP Anurag Thakur

Rehan Qayoom Mir

SRINAGAR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Member of Parliament (MP), Anurag Thakur on Tuesday said the restoration of statehood is the government's promise, which will be fulfilled.

He further said the simultaneous polls in the country under 'One Nation, One Election' will lead to the growth of the country's GDP by 1.5 per cent.

"Statehood is our promise and it will be restored to Jammu and Kashmir," Thakur, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said while addressing the reporters here.

Asserting that there is no place for terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir,



Thakur, said the fight against Naxalism and terrorism is going on across the country. "Many naxalists have surrendered while there has been a relief in J&K as the security forces have taken stringent measures against terrorism," he

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Can't Allow High Courts To Exercise Power Under Article 142: Supreme Court

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would examine whether the recent judgement on a plea of Tamil Nadu, fixing timelines for the grant of assent to bills, covered the issues raised by the Kerala government in its pleas.

A bench comprising Justices P S Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi agreed to hear on May 6 the pleas of the Kerala government against Governor over the delay in approving bills passed by the state assembly.

"We will look into that judgement and see whether issues raised here are covered," the bench said when Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Governor's office, said the recent judgement delivered by a bench headed by Justice J B Pardiwala did not cover the issues raised by the Kerala government.

A bench comprising Justices Pardiwala and R Mahadevan on April 8 delivered a significant verdict on the plea of Tamil Nadu and set aside the reservation of the 10 bills for President's consideration in the second round holding it as illegal, erroneous in law.

The bench, for the first time, also prescribed that President should decide on the bills reserved for her consideration by Governor within a period of three months from the date on which such reference is received.

Kerala seeks similar directions in its case.

On Tuesday, senior advocate KK Venugopal, appearing for Kerala, said the pleas of the state were covered by



the recent judgement.

"What is the timeline for making a reference to the President by the Governor and this issue is dealt with by that judgement and there are no other questions," he said.

He urged the bench to allow the pleas of the Kerala government in terms of the Tamil Nadu judgement.

Mehta, however, insisted on making submissions saying the case of Kerala was not covered by the Tamil Nadu judgement.

"The (Tamil Nadu) judgment does not cover certain issues in this case on facts which are essentially different," the bench said and fixed the pleas for hearing on May 6.

The bench asked Venugopal to mention the third and subsequent plea of the state government, challenging the withholding of assent by President, before the CJI so that it can also be referred to it.

Venugopal said the Chief Justice of India directed listing of the petition on May 13.

The bench said a mention had to be made before the

CJI for tagging the other petition with the present one.

In 2023, the top court expressed displeasure over the then Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan "sitting" for two years on bills passed by the state legislature.

Khan is currently Governor of Bihar.

The top court, on July 26, last year, agreed to consider the plea of opposition-ruled Kerala alleging the denial of assent to bills passed by the legislative assembly.

The Kerala government alleged that Khan referred certain bills to President Droupadi Murmu and those were yet to be cleared.

Taking note of the pleas, the top court issued notices to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the secretaries of the Kerala Governor.

Venugopal said, "This is the most unfortunate situation." The state said its plea related to the acts of Governor in reserving seven bills, which he was required to deal with himself, to President.

Not one of the seven bills had anything to do with Centre-state relations, it argued.

The bills were pending with Governor for as long as two years and his action "subverted" the functioning of the state legislature, rendering its very existence "ineffective and otiose", the state added.

"The bills include public interest bills that are for the public good, and even these have been rendered ineffective by the Governor not dealing with each one of them 'as soon as possible', as required by the proviso to Article 200," the plea said.

The state government said on February 23 and 29, the home ministry informed it that President had withheld assent to four of the seven bills – University Laws (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2021; Kerala Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022; University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022; and University Laws (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill, 2022.

The Constitution is silent on how much time President can take in granting assent to a bill passed by a state legislature and referred to the Rashtrapati Bhavan for presidential consideration or for denying consent.

Article 361 of the Constitution says President, or Governor of a state, shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office or for any act done or purporting to be done by him in the exercise and performance of those powers and duties.

The article provides for the process for a bill passed by the assembly of a state to be presented to Governor for assent who may either assent or withhold assent or reserve the bill for consideration by the President.

"When a bill has been passed by the legislative assembly of a state or, in the case of a state having a legislative council, has been passed by both Houses of the legislature of the state, it shall be presented to the governor and the governor shall declare either that he assents to the bill or that he withholds assent therefrom or that he reserves the bill for the consideration of the president," Article 200 says.

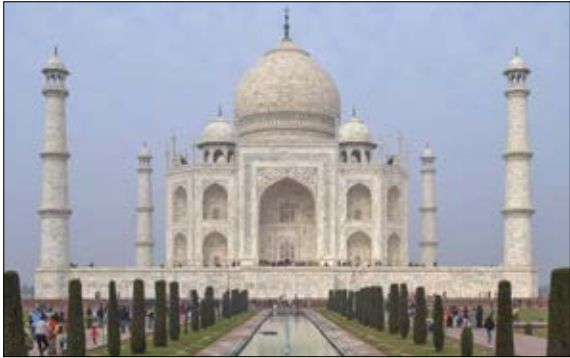
19% Rise In Footfall At Indian Heritage Sites From 2019 To 2024, Ticket Revenue Drops By 2.83%: Data

NEW DELHI: India's centrally protected ticketed monuments experienced an over 19 per cent surge in footfall in 2023-24 compared to the pre-pandemic levels but this did not translate into higher revenue from ticket sales, which dropped by 2.83 per cent, official data shows.

An analysis of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) data, presented in the Rajya Sabha, covering 143 monuments shows a complex recovery picture for these key heritage sites, contextualised by broader national trends reported in the Ministry of Tourism's 'India Tourism Data Compendium 2024'.

The total footfall across these listed monuments increased by 19.35 per cent from approximately 4.60 crore in 2019-20 to 5.49 crore in 2023-24, the data showed.

However, despite the surge in the number of visitors, the combined revenue from ticket sales at these monuments saw a decline of 2.83 per cent during the



five-year period, dropping from Rs 312.54 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 303.70 crore in 2023-24.

This suggests a shift in the visitor composition at these sites. A direct comparison of visitor data for centrally protected ticketed monuments between 2019-20 and 2023-24 reveals divergent trends.

While domestic tourist visits surged by 21.75 per cent, from 4.36 crore in 2019-20 to 5.31 crore in 2023-24, foreign tourist visits decreased by 16.03 per cent, from 27.56 lakh in 2019-20 to 23.15 lakh in 2023-24, according to the data.

The increase in the domestic visitor segment, coupled with a decline in the number of higher-paying foreign visitors compared to the pre-pandemic levels, appears to be the primary factor behind the stagnant overall monument revenue despite higher total footfall.

This trend mirrors the national picture, where Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2023 (95.2 lakh) recovered to only about 87 per cent of the 2019 levels.

The resulting lower average revenue per visitor at the

monuments, likely stemming from this altered visitor mix and the ASI's differential pricing structure, aligns with the broader national context where Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism overall stood at USD 28.08 billion in 2023, lower than the 2019 peak of USD 30.72 billion.

The broader tourism sector remains a significant economic contributor nationally, with its total (direct + indirect) share estimated to be 5 per cent of the GDP and supporting 7.62 crore jobs in 2022-23,

according to the Tourism Satellite Account data.

Performance varied dramatically across individual monuments. While sites like Rajarani Temple (301 per cent), Ashokan Rock Edict (251 per cent) and Konark Sun Temple (53.5 per cent) saw massive revenue growth (2023-24 vs 2019-20), others like Tirumalai Nayak's Palace (98.2 per cent), Moovarkoil (90.1 per cent) and Agra Fort (47.2 per cent) saw sharp declines.

Shakti Dubey Tops Civil Services Exam; Harshita Goyal, Dongre Archit Parag Get 2nd, 3rd Ranks: UPSC

NEW DELHI: Shakti Dubey has topped the civil services examination 2024, results of which were declared on Tuesday by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Dubey has done her graduation (Bachelor of Science) in Biochemistry from the University of Allahabad.

She qualified for the examination with political science and international relations as her optional subject, a statement issued by the commission said.

Harshita Goyal, a B.Com graduate from MS University of Baroda, secured the second rank with political science and international relations as her optional subject. Dongre Archit Parag, who has a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) in electrical and electronics engineering from VIT, Vellore, stood third in the rank with philosophy as his optional subject. The civil services examination is conducted annually in three stages – preliminary,



main and interview – by the UPSC to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others. The civil services (preliminary) examination, 2024, was conducted on June 16 last year. A total of 9,92,599 candidates applied for this examination, out of which 5,83,213 candidates actually appeared in the examination.

A total of 14,627 candidates qualified for appearance in the written (main) examination, which was held in September 2024. Out of these, 2,845 candidates qualified for the

personality test or interview.

Of these, 1,009 candidates (725 men and 284 women) have been recommended by the commission for appointment to various Services.

Among the finally qualified candidates, the top five comprise three women and two men.

Shah Margi Chirag, who has a Bachelor of Engineering degree in computer engineering from Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad, secured the fourth rank with sociology as her optional subject.

Aakash Garg, who has a Bachelor of Technology degree

in computer science and has done engineering from the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi, got the fifth rank with sociology as his optional subject.

The top 25 candidates comprise 11 women and 14 men. Their educational qualifications range from graduation in engineering, humanities, science, commerce,

medical science, and architecture from premier institutions of the country, such as IIT, NIT, VIT, JNU, University of Delhi, and University of Allahabad, the UPSC said.

The top 25 successful candidates have opted for a wide range of optional subjects in the written (main) examination, including anthropology, commerce and accountancy, geography, mathematics, philosophy, physics, political science and international relations, public administration, sociology, and literature of the Tamil language.

'Highly condemnable' Mayawati flags atrocities against Dalits on Ambedkar Jayanti



LUCKNOW: Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Tuesday expressed concern over the alleged incidents of atrocities against Dalits and desecration of statues of their icons, warning that if strict action is not taken against the offenders, the affected communities will never forgive the authorities.

In a post on X, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo said, "During the birth anniversary celebrations of Bharat Ratna and Constitution-

maker Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, incidents of desecration of his statues and attacks by feudal elements on rallies and programmes in several states were extremely shameful. These events exposed the double standards of the governments."

Referring specifically to the violence in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district, Mayawati termed the killing of a Dalit youth reportedly during an Ambedkar Jayanti procession and the injuries sustained by several others "highly condemnable".

Alleging that the lack of strict action against the culprits raises questions about the role of the state government, Mayawati said, "The government's complicity in the matter cannot be ruled out."

She also urged both the Centre and all state governments to take these incidents with utmost seriousness. "If strict measures are not taken to stop the atrocities against Dalits and to prevent the disrespect of their great saints, gurus and icons, these communities will never forgive the authorities," she warned.

India Now Ranks High In Startup Ecosystem, Global Innovation Index: Union Minister Jitendra Singh



HYDERABAD: Contrary to the popular perception about Indians doing well when they go abroad, the country now ranks high in startup ecosystem, global innovation index, patent filing by resident Indians and others, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday. Speaking at a two-day StartUp Conclave jointly organised by CSIR institutes here, he said the country is now in a position where the world has started accepting its talent. From being one of the 'Fragile Five' (emerging economies that were too dependent on foreign investment to finance

growth ambitions in 2013), India is now among the top five economies, he said.

"Our startup (startup ecosystem) is now ranked three. Global innovation index has gone up from 81 to 39. Our patent filing is ranked six. I was just going through the figures. Out of 64,480 patents filed in the recent years, more than 55 per cent are resident Indians," said Singh, Union MoS (Independent Charge) Science and Technology. Citing the examples of nobel laureate Har Gobind Khorana and others, he said there was a common cynicism earlier that the scientists and others achieved greatness after going abroad. The young men and women who have filed patents did not leave India even for a day which shows that the country has got the talent, resources and ecosystem, he said. The Centre has already done much more than what the previous governments did to promote science and technology, he said.

In 2014, the budget of CSIR or DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) was only Rs 5,615 crore, but it was Rs 13,416 crore in the budget presented five months ago, he said.

Uphold Principles Critical For National Resurgence: Bhagwat To Sangh Workers

ALIGARH: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat concluded his five-day visit to Aligarh with a call to Sangh workers to uphold and propagate principles critical for social harmony and national resurgence.

In his interaction with RSS functionaries from the Brij region of central Uttar Pradesh on the last day of his visit



on Monday, Bhagwat stressed the urgent need to revive and reconstruct traditional Indian family values, which he described as the "bedrock of Indian society." He said familial practices rooted in ancient Indian traditions, such as regular shared mealtimes, were pivotal in shaping the moral fabric of society. A second key principle highlighted by Bhagwat was the promotion of 'Samrasta' – a spirit of social harmony. He urged RSS pracharaks to actively work towards eliminating caste-based discrimination, calling it a divisive force that weakens the social fabric. Bhagwat also praised Dr B R Ambedkar for his role in laying the foundation of a socially cohesive and equitable India.

"The nation is indebted to Ambedkar for infusing a spirit of reform and justice in modern India," he said.

On economic matters, the RSS chief underscored the importance of reviving the spirit of 'Swadeshi', urging people to patronise domestically manufactured products rooted in indigenous traditions and skills. He said the Swadeshi ethos not only strengthens the economy but also preserves cultural heritage. Bhagwat called for greater attention to environmental conservation. He highlighted the need to protect India's natural heritage, including its wildlife and traditional systems of water management like village ponds and lakes, which he said were under threat due to modern lifestyles. Bhagwat stressed the fostering of 'Civic Responsibility' and emphasised that every citizen has a duty to contribute to nation-building in their everyday conduct.

Every word spoken by constitutional functionary guided by national interest: Dhankhar

NEW DELHI: Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday asserted that every word spoken by a constitutional authority is guided by supreme national interest, as he hit out at his critics for questioning his remarks on a recent Supreme Court order.

Dhankhar also said that efforts of forces working against the country to tarnish and run down institutions should be neutralised, "be it that of the presidency".

Asserting that Parliament is supreme, Dhankhar said, "There is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament. Parliament is supreme... Let me tell you, it is as supreme as every individual in the country."

A top court bench recently prescribed a three-month timeline for the president of India to decide on Bills reserved by governors for her nod.



Reacting to the directive, Dhankhar had said that the judiciary cannot play the role of a "super Parliament" and get into the domain of the executive.

Addressing a Delhi University event, he said every word spoken by a constitutional functionary is guided

by the supreme sublime interest of the nation. "I find it conceivably intriguing that some have recently reflected that constitutional offices can be ceremonial or ornamental. Nothing can be far distanced from a wrong understanding of the role of everyone in this country – constitutional

functionary or a citizen," he said.

Stating that everyone of them has a role, he said, "The soul of democracy resides and pulsates in every citizen. Democracy will blossom. Its values will get heightened. When citizen is alert, citizen contributes and what a citizen contributes, there is no substitute for that."

Dhankhar also said that there is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament.

"Part of 'We the People' is an atom in democracy and that atom has atomic power. That atomic power is reflected during elections and that is why we are a democratic nation," Dhankhar, who is also the Rajya Sabha chairperson, underlined. Voicing concern over the recent Supreme Court ruling prescribing a timeline for the president to decide on Bills, Dhankhar on Friday said India had not bargained for a democracy where judges will legislate

and perform executive functions and act as a "super Parliament".

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court had, for the first time, prescribed that the President should decide on the Bills reserved for her consideration by governors within three months from the date such reference is received. "There is a directive to the president by a recent judgement... We never bargained for democracy for this day. President being called upon to decide in a time-bound manner, and if not, becomes law," Dhankhar said. The vice-president was criticised for questioning the judiciary, with critics terming his remarks "unconstitutional". In an apparent response to Dhankhar's "super Parliament" remark, a top court bench on Monday said that "as it is, we are alleged of encroaching upon the parliamentary and executive functions".

‘Public Safety our Top Priority’: DC Bandipora Inspects Low-Lying Areas After Heavy Rainfall

BANDIPORA: The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Tuesday conducted an extensive visit to various low-lying areas of Hajin and sumbal including main town Hajin, Banyari, Madwan, Bakshibal, Paribal, Wangipora sumbal and adjoining areas. The visit was aimed at assessing the post-rainfall situation and reviewing the ongoing repair works on the Jhelum embankments.

During the field visit, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with local residents and took stock of the situation and the preventive measures being undertaken by the concerned departments.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner M.A.Qadri said that Our primary objective is to ensure the safety and well-being of the people living in low-lying areas.

He said, recent rainfall highlighted certain vulnerable spots along the Jhelum embankments, and administration is committed to addressing these issues on priority.



M.A.Qadri said that the Department of Irrigation and Flood Control has already initiated repair works, and all necessary steps are being taken to strengthen the embankments to prevent any potential threat to nearby habitations besides genuine concerns raised by locals are being taken seriously and will be taken up in coordination with relevant departments.

The Deputy Commissioner also issued instructions to the concerned departments to identify and remove all encroachments on irrigation and flood control land. He emphasized that such encroachments

hinder the free flow of water and pose a significant risk during heavy rainfall.

Interacting with the media, the Deputy Commissioner said that the purpose of the visit was to conduct an on-ground assessment of the post-rainfall conditions and to ensure that all precautionary and restoration measures are being implemented effectively.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner also inspected the irrigation canal at Wangipora, which has been affected due to the ongoing construction of Ring Road Phase II. He instructed the executing agency to speed up the pace of work and ensure the complete restoration of the canal before the onset of the irrigation season to avoid impact on agricultural activities in the area.

Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool Lone, Tehsildar Hajin, Abdul Wasee Deva, Executive Engineer I&FC Mutayib Bashir along with engineers from the concerned departments, accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the visit.

DC Bandipora Inspects Yatra Facilities at Shadipora; Stresses Timely Completion

BANDIPORA : In view of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2025, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri today visited Shadipora Transit Camp to take a first-hand



assessment of the infrastructure, facilities, and services being developed for the convenience of the Yatris.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the pace and quality of ongoing works and finalizing arrangements at the transit camp for pilgrims heading towards the holy cave via Baltal route.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the timely completion of all necessary arrangements to ensure a smooth and safe experience for the pilgrims and directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and maintain high standards of facilities at the transit camp.

M.A.Qadri directed the departments to work in synergy to ensure that the infrastructure and services are in place well ahead of the Yatra commencement.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool Lone, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mutayib Bashir, Executive Engineer R&B Mushtaq Ahmad, and other senior officers from concerned departments.

Jitendra Srivastava assumes charge as CMD, REC Limited

GURGAON: Shri Jitendra Srivastava, IAS, has assumed charge as Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of REC Limited on 22nd April 2025.

On 18th April 2025, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) appointed Shri Srivastava, who is an IAS from Bihar Cadre (2000 Batch), as the CMD of REC. This appointment has been made in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary to the Government of India, under the Ministry of



Power.

Shri Srivastava is a seasoned civil servant with over two decades of distinguished service. Over the years, he has held several key administrative and leadership roles across the Government of India and the Government of Bihar.

Shri Srivastava has served as Joint Secretary in the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti from January 2023 onwards. Earlier, he served as Secretary to Govt. of Bihar in Home Department and Public Health Engineering Department (PHED).

His postings have included important assignments in sectors such as finance, power sector, education, public health, and infrastructure. His deep understanding of grassroots governance, combined with his experience at the central level, makes him well-equipped to steer REC's strategic objectives and support India's growing power and energy needs.

He holds a B.A. (Hons) in Economics from Delhi University's Hansraj College and MBA (Finance) from Cochin University of Science and Technology.

Two-Day Health and Wellness Training Program Concludes at DIET Bandipora

BANDIPORA: District Institute of Education and Trainings (DIET) Bandipora organised a two-day Health and Wellness Training Program for teachers of Zone Bandipore. The programme concluded on Tuesday.

An official spokesperson said the programme was organised at the DIET Complex Bandipore under the guidance of Principal DIET Bandipore Abdul Rasheed Mir, who also holds the additional charge of CEO Bandipore.

In his valedictory address, Mir emphasized the significance of cultivating a healthy and positive school environment. He stressed the importance of stress-free surroundings to enhance both teaching efficiency and student learning outcomes.

He also called for the sensitization of educators toward the overall well-being of students. He extended his heartfelt gratitude to all resource persons, participants, and the organizing team from the DIET faculty, especially acknowledging the efforts of Program Coordinator Sr Academic Officer Mr. Tanveer Ahmad Jan.

Sr. Academic Officer Shabir Ahmad also addressed the participants and highlighted the crucial role of teachers in nurturing students' mental health and moral values. He encouraged educators to guide students toward becoming responsible and emotionally balanced individuals.

The two day featured four insightful technical sessions. The first technical ses-

sion was conducted by the Resource Person, Ishtiyag Ahmad Mir who engaged the participants in a thoughtful and in-



teractive session on promoting a healthy lifestyle.

His session was enriched with practical activities aimed at encouraging teachers to adopt and advocate for wellness in their personal and professional lives.

The second session was led by Dr. Sabeha Malik, who presented a comprehensive talk on Reproductive Health and HIV Prevention. Her session was marked by a rich blend of experience, knowledge, and sensitivity, leaving a meaningful impact on the attendees.

The third conducted by Dr. Asif Iqbal, who delivered a comprehensive and thought-provoking session on Prevention

and Management of Substance Abuse. His presentation received wide appreciation for its depth, clarity, and well-researched content.

The fourth session was led by Mr. Firdous Iqbal, who spoke on Gender Equality. Drawing from his extensive experience, he engaged the audience in meaningful discussions, underlining the need for inclusive education and equal opportunities for all genders.

Officials said this training is part of a multi-phase initiative designed to equip teachers with essential knowledge and skills to foster physical, mental, and emotional well-being in schools. The program will continue in the coming weeks, covering teachers from all zones of the district.

Usman Majid Condemns Brutal Terror Attack in Pahalgam

BANDIPORA: Former Minister and Ex-MLA Bandipora, Usman Majid, has strongly condemned the horrific terrorist attack on innocent tourists in Biasern, Pahalgam, calling it a gut-wrenching, cowardly and barbaric act that shakes the very conscience of humanity.

In a deeply emotional statement, Majid expressed his anguish over the brutal assault that reportedly left multiple casualties. "This is absolutely heart-breaking and gut-wrenching news. Innocent tourists who came to experience the beauty of our land have been made victims of senseless violence," Majid said.

Calling the attack "pure evil," he emphasized that such acts of terror have no justification or place in any civilized society. "This heinous and cowardly act is beyond condemnable. It is not just an attack on individuals, but an attack on the values of peace, humanity, and hospitality that Kashmir stands for."

Usman Majid extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved families and offered his heartfelt prayers for the swift recovery of the injured. "Today, we mourn with the families who have lost their loved ones in this tragic incident. Our hearts bleed for them."

He further stated, "Enough is enough. The time has come for decisive,

harsh, and uncompromising action to eliminate the threat of terrorism from our soil. We cannot and must not allow such acts to repeat. This is the height of cruelty and utter nonsense, a shameful attempt to derail peace and harmony."

Usman Majid urged the people of Jammu and Kashmir to unite in one voice against terrorism. "We must all come together to defeat this madness. Our silence helps the perpetrators. Our unity will defeat them."

He concluded with a call for both immediate security review and a long-term strategy to safeguard civilians and tourists. "Today we mourn, but tomorrow, we must act with resolve, with purpose, and with unwavering commitment to justice and peace."



DLSA Budgam organizes review/ introductory meeting of LADCs

BUDGAM: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam today conducted a review and introductory meeting of all Legal Aid Defence Counsels in the office chamber of the Secretary, DLSA Budgam.

The meeting was convened by the Secretary, DLSA Budgam, Nusrat Ali Hakak, to assess the performance of Pervious Legal Aid Defence Counsel and ensure that the newly selected LADCs shall meet the standards of Service delivery.

The meeting was attended by LADCs including Lateef Ahmad Khan (Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel); Javaid Ahmad Mir, Abdul Rouf Parray and Nazeer Ahmad Wagay (Deputy Legal Aid Defence Counsel); Shaista Ganai, Fozia Shafi and Zahoor Ahmad Malik Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels. They shared their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improving the delivery of legal aid.

Discussions focused on ensuring quality legal representation, expediting pending cases, and enhancing coordination among counsels to strengthen access to justice. Secretary, DLSA Budgam emphasized the importance of efficient and accessible legal aid services and reiterated the commitment of DLSA to providing free and effective legal assistance to those in need.

The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to further streamline legal aid mechanisms and enhance the efficiency of legal services in the district.

PMAY (U) 2.0 : Bandipora Admin Conducts Training for Survey Teams

Bandipora : The District Administration Bandipora on Tuesday conducted a training programme for Master trainers, Enumerators and Supervisors who have been assigned the task of carrying out the survey for houseless urban households under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) 2.0 in the Conference Hall of the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

During the programme, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Husson Shawl urged the participants to carry out this survey with sincerity and dedication and stressed that only the deserving and eligible beneficiaries get selected under the scheme. "Reject ineligible applications, and follow all rules and guidelines carefully," he added.

ADC commended the officials for their commitment and acknowledged the critical role that Supervisors and Enumerators play in ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation process besides instructed the field teams to maintain strict checks and balances, adhere to the timeline, and work collaboratively to ensure the scheme's benefits reach those in need.

On the occasion, the ADC encouraged the participants to carry out their duties with sincerity, dedication, and a strong sense of public service, contributing meaningfully to the socio-economic upliftment of the urban poor through the successful implementation of the scheme.



Among others, the event was attended by Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Bandipora, Ajaz Ahmad, Executive Officer Municipal Committee Sumbal and Hajin besides other concerned.

SANKALP HEW, Mission Shakti Organise Sports Event at HSS Aloosa

BANDIPORA : SANKALP – Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW), Mission Shakti, Department of Social Welfare Bandipora in collaboration with the Department of Youth Services and Sports, today organized a sports competition for female students at Higher Secondary school (HSS) Aloosa.

The event held under the banner of "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao", aimed to empower and uplift young girls by promoting physical fitness, teamwork, and gender equality through sports.

On the occasion , series of athletic events were conducted, with the Tug of War competition emerging as the highlight of the day where Students showcased strength, coordination, and enthusiasm.

The winning and runner-up teams were felicitated with trophies, free uniforms and to acknowledge the efforts, the Physical Education teacher was also felicitated for his commitment to training and mentoring the participants.

On the occasion, all participating students and match officials were provided with free sports uniforms, ensuring encouragement for continued involvement in physical activities.

In a progressive step towards promoting menstrual health awareness, sanitary napkins were also distributed among the female students.

Addressing the participants, Principal Shabeer Ahmad Para and District Mission Coordinator, SANKALP HEW Mission Shakti, emphasized the importance of sports in building self-confidence, leadership, and resilience among young women. They encouraged students to take pride in their abilities and pursue excellence across all spheres of life.

TAAK Condemns Attack on Tourists at Baisaran

Srinagar: Travel Agents Association of Kashmir (TAAK) has condemned the attack on tourists at Baisaran.

While expressing deep anguish , TAAK has to investigate the attack and bring culprits to book.

TAAK has extended heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this tragic incident and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured tourists.

TAAK has also appealed to the authorities to provide the best possible medical treatment to all those affected.



DLSA Kulgam, Social Welfare Office organize Awareness programme on Legal Rights for Disabled Persons

KULGAM, APRIL 22: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kulgam in collaboration with the District Social Welfare Office, Kulgam, organized an awareness programme on Legal Rights for Disabled Persons at the Mini Secretariat Kulgam, today.

The programme was attended by staff members of DLSA Kulgam, staff members of the District Social Welfare Office, LADCs, and PLVs.

Resource persons Muzaffar Ahmad (Tehsil Social Welfare Officer, Kulgam), Labeeba Alamgir (Assistant LADC) and Sheikh Saqib Ansari (Assistant LADC) spoke on the topic and addressed the audience on the comprehensive rights available to persons with disabilities, fostering a better understanding and advocacy for their needs.

The engagement aimed to enhance awareness and empower stakeholders in ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities are upheld.

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.

Private Schoolteacher and His Hidden Hunger

PRIYANKA SAURABH

There was a time when couplets like “Guru Govind dono khade, kake lagoon paay” were on the tongues of children. Today, the situation is such that if the teacher picks up a mobile, it is said, “If you have so much free time, why don't you take care of the children?” Times have changed; now the word ‘teacher’ has become a symbol of tolerance, not purity. And the most cruel form of this tolerance is seen in the world of private school teachers.

A palace of appearances, a swamp of despair inside. If you look from outside, a private school looks no less than a five-star hotel—AC classrooms, high-tech boards, English-speaking children, and bus attendants wearing white gloves. But if you look inside, there is a master sahib sitting there who can neither drink tea on time nor have lunch. If there is a complaint about a child not doing his homework, the master's class is held. If a child fails the exam, the management asks, “Why did you not teach him properly?”

Salary: What's on paper, not in pocket

The salary system in private schools is so confidential that even secret agencies would feel ashamed. 25,000 is written on the appointment letter, but only 8,000 is transferred to the bank. The rest is either given in cash or never given. And the funny thing is—if a teacher is asked for salary details, his answer is, “Tell me, do you want the job or not?”

‘Double exploitation’ of women teachers

At home she is a daughter-in-law, mother, and wife. At school she is madam, teacher, and sister. Women teachers have to live with dual responsibilities. Take care of the house from 5 am, then go to school and take care of 40 children there. On top of that, if the husband is also in the private sector, then the household budget has to be mortgaged even before the monthly salary.

Vacation? That's a dream!

The government calendar says, 15th August is a holiday, 26th January is a holiday, but the private school says, “Come, hoist the flag, give a speech, then mark attendance and go.” Attendance is compulsory even on holidays. If you fall ill, HR will say, “There is no holiday, a deduction will be made.” Even when the teacher's throat is hoarse, it is said, “You have to take the class; there is no one else.”

Work overload and emotional abuse

Today, a teacher does not just teach; he is the class teacher, examination controller, parent communication officer, WhatsApp group admin, sports day organizer, and editor of the weekly selfie video.

But when it comes to salary, it is said, “You teach only two periods.”

Master's tears and principal's press conference

If the child tops, the principal holds a press conference—“The environment of our school is

“What can one do about teachers? They say anything.” It has now become a habit to cover up the humiliation of the whole year with the respect of one day.

Where is the law? Education policy is only on paper.

Private teachers' unions should be formed in every district that speaks in one voice. Parents also need to understand that a teacher is not just a salaried employee but the creator of their child's future.

A little respect, a little authority—that's it.



like this.” And if the child fails, the teacher is held accountable—“You did not teach properly.” The school wins, the teacher loses. The principal's photo is on the banner, the teacher's hard work is done.

Parents' Expectations: Teacher or Magician?

Nowadays parents want teachers to make their child an IAS in 3 months, and if this does not happen, they say, “What difference would it have made if we had put him in a government school!” Even the child's mistake is now the teacher's responsibility. The teacher gets the most scolding in the parents' meeting.

Teacher's Day: Respect for a day, humiliation for a whole year

On 5th September, we receive flowers from children wishing us “Happy Teachers Day.” Children sing a song—“Sir, you are great”—and “the very next day the same child says, for not doing homework,

The new education policy 2020 says that the position of the teacher should be strengthened. But the ground reality is that there is no regulation, no monitoring. The district education officer only inspects government schools; private schools are given a free “hand”—“make your own rules, run yourself.”

Student and teacher: A one-sided relationship

Today, students talk about their rights—not getting beaten, getting less homework, and getting good results. But who talks about the rights of teachers? Can anyone file an RTI to find out how much salary a teacher is getting? No. Because talking about teacher rights is still considered “unbearable.”

Solution: We need movement, not silence.

Now the time has come for teachers to break their silence. The government should form a regulatory body that decides the salaries, working hours, holidays, and workload of private schools.

If the country wants to move ahead, then first of all we have to take care of that hand that creates the future with chalk on the blackboard. We have to listen to that voice that teaches the child to start the day by saying “Good morning” every day. The smile of the country is hidden in the smile of the teacher, but no one knows how much pain is behind that smile.

In the end, that's it.

“If the child fails, the teacher is responsible. If the child tops, the school is to be blamed.” This balance has to be broken. If private schools are to be made temples of education, then first the teacher should be worshipped in them—at least his exploitation should stop.

Author is a Research Scholar in Political Science

The Environmental Toll Of Overtourism In Doodhpathri



MUKHTAR DAR

Around 2013, Doodhpathri, a bowl-shaped valley in the Pir Panjal Range of the Himalayas, located in the Budgam district, was introduced to the tourism map. Over the years, this alpine valley, with its pine, fir, and deodar forests, lush meadows, snow-covered mountains, and wildflowers such as daisies, forget-me-nots, and buttercups, has captured the attention of tourists. The local management aims to attract even more visitors.

Well, Instagram has made it easier—it all starts with a simple hashtag or a viral reel. A scenic location is identified, influencers capture a breathtaking shot, and that's it. A hidden treasure quickly transforms into a must-visit destination, thanks to the power of social media. But when the tide of visitors swells into a tsunami, overtourism takes hold.

Now, this ecologically sensitive area is struggling with an influx of tourists. Beneath the picturesque selfies and the thrill of discovering Doodhpathri, a quiet calamity is unfolding.

Overtourism:

Overtourism is a global phenomenon that disrupts the delicate balance between tourism expansion and the long-term preservation of a location's natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources. While tourism plays a crucial role in fostering social development, cultural exchange, and economic growth, it also poses a risk of depleting these very resources—especially in fragile locations like Doodhpathri.

In recent years, the concept of overtourism has gained significant attention in the tourism industry, media, and academic research. Overtourism occurs when visitor demand exceeds a destination's capacity, leading to congestion, environmental degradation, and a negative impact on the surrounding area.

The concept of overtourism emerged from the harmful effects of unchecked tourism expansion, including societal instability and ecological damage. While tourism offers significant economic benefits, an excessive influx of visitors in popular destinations often leads to irreversible environmental degradation—a phenomenon known as

“tourism kills tourism.”

Despite growing research on the issue, practical challenges persist, particularly in regions like the Kashmir Valley, where managing overtourism remains difficult due to unique sociopolitical and environmental factors.

Overtourism in Doodhpathri:

Doodhpathri, a popular tourist destination in the Kashmir Valley, is renowned for its tranquility and natural beauty. While tourism authorities celebrate this surge as a major achievement, en-



vironmentalists are deeply concerned that the numbers exceed the area's carrying capacity. They argue that excessive tourist traffic is damaging the region's delicate ecosystem. Critics contend that Doodhpathri's ecological sensitivity is being overlooked in favor of promoting it as a mass tourism destination. As one critic puts it, “This is not development; this is degradation.” They urge the government to implement eco-friendly tourism policies that balance tourist needs with environmental preservation.

Experts urge the government to adopt eco-friendly tourism strategies that balance visitor needs with environmental preservation.

In 2013, approximately 125,000 tourists visited Doodhpathri. Over the past decade, the number of visitors has increased significantly.

According to authorities, between January and October 2023, Doodhpathri received 2.628 million visitors. However, in 2024, the number saw a slight decline, with a total of 1.86 million tourists visiting the area. This included 681,255 local visitors, 1,482 international tourists, and 1,182,843 domestic travelers.

Although tourism authorities praise this surge as a significant achievement, environmentalists are deeply concerned that the numbers exceed the area's carrying capacity. They argue that the region's fragile ecosystem is being harmed by

excessive visitor traffic.

Carrying Capacity and Doodhpathri:

The World Tourism Organization defines tourism carrying capacity as “the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without destroying the physical, economic, and sociocultural environment and causing an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction.”

To assess the tourism carrying capacity of Doodhpathri, a study titled “Carrying Capacity—A Brief Case Study of Doodhpathri

Tourist Spot in Jammu & Kashmir's Budgam District” was conducted in 2022. The study aimed to determine the maximum number of tourists the site can accommodate without negatively affecting its ecological, social, and cultural context.

Using a quantitative approach based on the Cifuentes (1992) framework, the study calculated two key measures:

First, the maximum number of people that can physically occupy a given area is known as physical carrying capacity (PCC). The analysis considers the total Doodhpathri tourist area (335 hectares) and the average tourist density (3.15 people per hectare).

Since tourists typically spend about eight hours at the site, three different groups of visitors can use the same location in a single day. The study concludes that Doodhpathri could potentially accommodate 4,437 visitors per day. However, this number does not account for practical limitations such as extreme weather, transportation challenges, accommodation shortages, and waste management issues.

The study applies certain limiting parameters to adjust the PCC for a more accurate estimate. The capacity is reduced by 24.65% due to harsh winters, which render much of the destination inaccessible for over three months.

Transportation is another major concern, with 42% of travelers reporting that it is inadequate. Accommodation is also an issue, as only 14% of tourists are satisfied with the available lodging options. Additionally, 18% of respondents cited inadequate waste management as a problem.

Taking all these factors into account, the study determines that the Effective Real Carrying Capacity (ERCC) is 1,367 visitors per day—the

maximum number that can be accommodated without negatively impacting the ecosystem or the overall tourist experience.

Notably, in 2024, a total of 1.86 million people visited Doodhpathri, meaning that, on average, more than 5,000 visitors arrived daily. However, according to its carrying capacity, the site can sustainably accommodate only 1,367 tourists per day without harming its ecology. This indicates that 266% more tourists visited Doodhpathri than its carrying capacity, which could have severe repercussions.

Impacts of Unsustainable Tourism in the Area:

Due to the massive influx of tourists, Doodhpathri is under significant environmental stress. The rapid growth of tourism has surpassed its natural carrying capacity, placing considerable strain on its resources. Tourism has caused major environmental issues, such as deforestation, air pollution, water scarcity, and excessive solid waste generation. The area is more dependent on rivers and streams due to a reduced number of ground-water sources. While tourism has boosted the local economy, it has also disrupted social order and weakened the natural balance of Doodhpathri. The region's ecological stability is at risk, and the long-term viability of the tourism sector is also threatened by environmental degradation.

Pertinently, Doodhpathri is located near the Shin Mahnew and Tatakuti Glaciers, which feed the Shaliganga and Shukhnag Rivers, both tributaries of the Jhelum River. These rivers are lifelines for Budgam and parts of Srinagar, as they provide drinking water and irrigation to the area. Allowing unchecked tourist access to the region puts these crucial glaciers at risk. Over the past decade, the water levels in these rivers have decreased at an alarming rate. The increased influx of tourism is one of the contributing factors. Research also indicates that the water quality of these rivers has deteriorated due to the surge in tourism.

Recommendations:

Tosamaidan is an eco-sensitive area, and it is paramount to keep it clean and free of waste. Heaps of plastic waste can be found in its forests. The government should designate it as a plastic-free zone, and those who violate the rules should be dealt with according to the law. Tourists should be encouraged to explore the local cuisine, which would help locals earn a livelihood. Secondly, proper waste management systems for both liquid and solid waste should be implemented. Eco-friendly housing, efficient waste management systems,

and conservation education initiatives for both residents and visitors are essential for promoting sustainable tourism.

Allowing tourism in a place should align with its carrying capacity to prevent overcrowding and environmental degradation. According to available studies and data, Doodhpathri has already exceeded its carrying capacity and is severely harming its ecosystems and natural resources. Overuse is leading to pollution, habitat loss, and the depletion of essential resources like water, which are vital for both local livelihoods and tourism. Controlling visitor numbers and investing in sustainable infrastructure are crucial for striking a balance between tourism and environmental preservation. This will help the administration manage tourism responsibly while benefiting the economy.

Doodhpathri is a relatively under-researched region. There is no comprehensive research that estimates the impact of unsustainable tourism on its upper glaciers, surrounding rivers, and wildlife and plant life. It is paramount to conduct proper research to understand the ecological consequences of the region's expanding tourism. A comprehensive study would help guide sustainable tourism practices and provide a clearer picture of the environmental impacts. This information could encourage local officials to adopt ecologically friendly policies that safeguard the area's vulnerable ecosystems. Responsible tourism would help conserve Doodhpathri's biodiversity and natural resources for future generations.

Conclusion:

For the past half-decade, millions of tourists have visited Doodhpathri each year due to its natural abundance. The region's economy has benefited greatly from tourism. However, greater opportunity also brings greater responsibility. The surroundings of Doodhpathri are delicate and sensitive, and natural resources are strained to meet the demands of so many tourists. In addition to long-term environmental harm, this stress frequently results in the contamination of the resources the ecosystem depends on. Therefore, extra care must be taken to manage tourist flow. The biodiversity and natural resources of these areas may be at risk if proper regulations are not in place.

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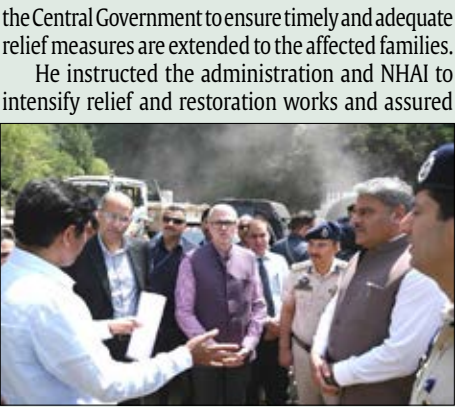
CM Omar Abdullah revisits Ramban, Commands relief ops for second straight day

RAMBAN: In a significant outreach to the people affected by the recent cloudburst in Ramban district, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today visited the affected areas for the second consecutive day to personally assess the situation and oversee ongoing relief and restoration efforts.

The Chief Minister conducted an aerial survey of the damage caused at Dharmkund and along National Highway-44, accompanied by colleagues and concerned officers. He later visited various severely impacted locations, including Seri, Boli Bazar, Main Bazar Ramban, and the area surrounding Government Higher Secondary School Ramban.

During his visit, the Chief Minister interacted with affected families and assured them of all possible support. He emphasized that the immediate restoration of NH-44 is the topmost priority and directed the district administration Ramban to expedite the damage assessment process, covering death cases, structural losses, property damage, agricultural losses and livestock casualties.

The Chief Minister assured that relief compensation will be provided by the J&K Government to all those affected by the cloudburst. He further stated that the J&K Government is committed to supporting the victims during this difficult time and will seek assistance from



the Central Government to ensure timely and adequate relief measures are extended to the affected families. He instructed the administration and NHAI to intensify relief and restoration works and assured adequate financial assistance for the same. He further directed for clearing of link roads and removal of debris from residential areas, restoration of power supply and deployment of water tankers to ensure drinking water in affected localities. He also called for the enhancement of community kitchens (langars) to support displaced families and the submission of fund requisition to the Finance Department for immediate financial support from the government.

The Chief Minister also appreciated the prompt response and real-time action by the district

administration and Police, which helped save many precious lives.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, DDC Chairperson Dr. Shamshad Shan, MLA Banihal Sajad Shaheen, MLA Ramban Arjun Singh Raju, Deputy Commissioner Ramban Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, SSP Ramban Kulbir Singh and other senior officers.

Later, a review meeting was also held at Ramban, where Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took stock of the ongoing rescue, relief, and restoration efforts being carried out by the district administration and stakeholder departments. Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani suggested measures for the timely restoration of essential services and urged early insurance claims processing to avoid delays in compensation.

The Chief Minister also directed authorities to strictly regulate construction near water channels and nallahs to prevent obstruction to natural water flow. The DDC Chairperson, MLAs, and other officials highlighted various pressing issues that require immediate attention.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary briefed the Chief Minister about the tragic incident and measures undertaken so far for rescue, relief and restoration across the district.

Chief Electoral Officer appeals eligible citizens for registration as voter in Nagrota, Budgam ACs

JAMMU: The Chief Electoral Officer Jammu & Kashmir has appealed the eligible citizens of the Assembly Constituency 77 Nagrota and 27 Budgam, to



participate in the ongoing Special Summary Revision (SSR) of the electoral rolls.

The SSR, which commenced on April 8, 2025, will conclude on April 24, 2025. With only two days remaining, till now in assembly constituency 27 Budgam and 77 Nagrota only 1069 Form 6 and 1575 Form 6 have been received respectively.

It is crucial that all citizens who have attained the age of 18 years as on 1st April 2025 and are not yet registered as voter are once again requested to get registration as voter before 24th April, 2025.

Registering as a voter is a fundamental right and civic duty, enabling participation in the democratic process. Ensuring an accurate and up-to-date electoral roll is essential for fair and transparent elections.

All citizens who have attained the age of 18 years as on 1st April 2025 and are residents of Assembly Constituency 77 Nagrota or 27 Budgam and are not yet registered as voters, are strongly urged to register using the given methods. The eligible candidates can contact their

respective Booth Level Officers (BLOs), contact their respective Assistant Registration Officers/ Tehsildar (AROs), Contact their respective Electoral Registration Officer/SDM/ACR (ERO) and can also apply online through the Voter Helpline App/ www.eci.gov.in./ Call 1950.

The citizen must provide required documents including proof of age and residence. They can use Form 6 for addition as new voter, Form 7 for deletion and Form 8 for shifting of residence, correction in existing entries, issuance of replacement EPIC or request for marking as Person with Disabilities.

The EROs emphasized the urgency of this matter and requested all eligible citizens to utilize this final opportunity to ensure their inclusion in the electoral rolls.

Artisans, weavers advised to avail benefit of educational scholarship for their kin

SRINAGAR: Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, has called upon all registered artisans and weavers to take advantage of the Educational Assistance Scheme for their kin, which has been introduced by Jammu & Kashmir Government in 2022.

This initiative is aimed at supporting educational aspirations of children from families of registered artisans and weavers across the region.

The scheme offers financial assistance to students from Class 1 up to Post Graduation in technical and professional courses and is open to families with an annual income up to Rs 90,000.

Explaining the key features, a spokesperson of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department said, that the level of financial support is determined by the student's course or class and all assistance shall be transferred directly to beneficiaries in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode, to ensure transparency and timely disbursement. "Applications can be submitted through the Department's district offices," he added.

Laying stress upon its broader impact, the spokesman stated apart from financial aid, the

scheme is an investment in the future of artisan families.

"Education is the bridge that connects our rich heritage with a promising future," he said, adding that empowering the younger generation through education shall foster a self-reliant and resilient artisan community capable of preserving traditional crafts while embracing modern knowledge and opportunities.

He further urged all eligible families to make use of this valuable opportunity and advised them to approach the respective District Handicrafts and Handloom Offices or access the official departmental website, for detailed information and application guidelines.



Education for all is our prime motto: Dy CM



JAMMU: Education for all is one of our prime agendas and the government will take comprehensive measures to enhance educational standards while addressing the concerns of the teacher fraternity.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, stated this while addressing a one day convention on "How To Raise Standard Of Education" organised by the Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC) here today.

Joint Director School Education, Shuba Mehta, Chairman JKTJAC, Saleem Sagar, President JKTJAC, Vinod Sharma, General Secretary, Najam Jafri besides teachers were present during the convention.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister lauded the role of teachers in building the society. He hailed the efforts of JKTJAC in highlighting the demands and grievances of teacher fraternity.

He asserted that standard of education can be raised through various strategies, including building educational partnerships, providing individualized learning, embracing technology and increasing global awareness.

The Dy CM stressed on exploring new strategies for teachers to adapt their instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners in the classroom.

He suggested for revising curriculum to include global issues, cultural diversity and critical thinking skills to prepare the students for a globalized world.

Choudhary also advocated professional development for teachers through workshops, training programs and collaborations. He emphasized the importance of teacher mentorship and coaching to support new and experienced educators in their professional growth.

The Dy CM said that focus should be on improving teachers' training, reducing rote learning and creating more inclusive learning environment.

He also emphasized the need for creating opportunities for students to connect classroom learning with practical, real-world applications through internships, mentorships and project-based learning.

Earlier, the President JKTJAC highlighted the genuine issues of the teaching fraternity while seeking speedy redress for the same.

These included revival of ReT scheme, transfer policy for regularised ReT teachers, exemption of teachers from all sorts of non teaching assignments, revival of Old Pension Scheme, clearance of GP Fund bills and Gratuity of the employees and timely DPC of staff.

The Dy CM assured the Association that the government would look into all their issues for redress in a phased manner.

ECI Rejects Allegations of Irregularities in Maharashtra Assembly Polls, Calls Claims Baseless

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday issued a detailed point-wise rebuttal dismissing recent allegations of irregularities in the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections, particularly concerning a sudden surge in votes during the last two hours of polling. The Commission termed these claims as "unsubstantiated" and "an affront to the rule of law."

In a press note released today, the ECI clarified that during the polling held from 7 am to 6 pm, a total of 6.40 crore electors exercised their franchise across the state. With an average polling rate of 58 lakh votes per hour, nearly 1.16 crore voters could have potentially voted in the final two hours. The Commission stated that the actual number of votes polled during this period stood at approximately 65 lakh—much below the expected trend.

"Therefore, the figure does not indicate any abnormal voting pattern," the ECI emphasized.

Refuting allegations raised by the Indian National Congress (INC), the Commission pointed out that voting was conducted in the presence of officially

appointed polling agents from all political parties, including the INC. No formal objections were raised by any candidates or their agents during the statutory scrutiny process before the Returning Officers and Election Observers, the note stated.

The ECI also defended the integrity of the electoral rolls, stating that they were prepared in accordance with the Representation of People Act, 1950, and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. The rolls were shared with all political parties, including the INC, well in advance. "Only 89 appeals were filed before the first appellate authority and just one before the second, clearly indicating no widespread discontent with the rolls," it added.

Moreover, during the roll revision process, over one lakh Booth Level Agents, including 27,099 from the Congress party, were appointed to ensure transparency. The Commission said this further invalidates any claims of irregularities in the voter list.



"It appears that all these facts are being deliberately ignored to cast aspersions on the electoral process," the ECI said, referencing a previous reply it sent to the INC on December 24, 2024, now publicly available on its website.

Concluding the note, the Commission asserted that Indian elections are globally recognized for their scale and accuracy, and condemned any attempt to malign the electoral machinery as disrespectful and demotivating for the lakhs of government employees and party-appointed representatives involved in the process.

"After any unfavourable verdict by the voters, trying to defame the Election Commission by saying it is compromised is completely absurd," the Commission noted.

Sakeena Itoo inaugurates Dialysis Centre at SDH Tangmarg

TANGMARG (BARAMULLA): Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today visited Tangmarg area of Gulmarg Constituency, wherein she inaugurated Dialysis Centre at Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Tangmarg and laid foundation stone for 20-bedded pre-fabricated ward and a new Primary Health Centre (PHC) block.

MLA, Gulmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah; Director Tourism Kashmir, Director School Education Kashmir, Director Health Services Kashmir, Director Coordination New GMCs, Director Colleges, Director Social Welfare Kashmir, MD J&K Cable Car Corporation, district and sectoral officers of various departments accompanied the Minister during the visit.

While visiting SDH Tangmarg, Sakeena Itoo inaugurated a state-of-the-art Dialysis Centre.

Interacting with the doctors and other medical staff on the occasion, the Minister highlighted that this facility will provide critical support to patients suffering from renal ailments by ensuring access to life-saving dialysis treatment within their area.

While interacting with some locals on the occasion, Sakeena Itoo highlighted the commitment of Omar Abdullah led government towards improving healthcare delivery in rural and semi-urban areas.

"Access to quality healthcare is basic right

of public. Our Government will ensure that the people of Tangmarg and surrounding areas receive timely and effective medical care", she stated.



During her interaction, the Minister elaborated healthcare and education as top priorities of the government. She stated that these sectors form the backbone of a strong society and Government is making concerted efforts to improve infrastructure and service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

She also mentioned that sustained investments are being made to upgrade hospitals, enhance educational institutions and ensure equitable access to quality services in both rural and urban areas.

The Minister further said that establishment of Dialysis Center at SDH Tangmarg aligns with the government's commitment of decentralizing specialized healthcare facilities in peripheral areas.

During her visit, Sakeena Itoo also laid foundation stone for two key healthcare

projects; 20-bedded pre-fabricated ward and new Primary Health Centre (PHC) block.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that this 20 bedded ward after completion will certainly expand inpatient capacity and improve service delivery at the hospital. She added that it will considerably enhance patient care facilities and decongest the existing hospital infrastructure, which was long-standing demand of the local population.

Reiterating the Government's commitment of improving health care infrastructure in peripheral areas, Sakeena said with the establishment of upgraded infrastructure, dependency of locals of these areas will significantly reduce on tertiary care hospitals for specialized treatments.

Later, the Minister visited Baderkoot, Ringawari and Gogaldara areas of Tangmarg where a local tourism festival was organized. She appreciated the local initiative in showcasing the region's beauty and reaffirmed that all rural tourism hotspot areas of J&K will be developed into viable tourist destinations. She laid emphasis on promoting tourism not only as a recreational avenue but also as a source of livelihood for the local population.

Meanwhile, Sakeena Itoo also held a brief review of all ongoing developmental works. She instructed the concerned departments to expedite the pace of works for timely completion of these works.

Srinagar Admin holds Awareness programme under 'Drug Free J&K' campaign at GHS Lawaypora



SRINAGAR: As part of the ongoing Drug Free J&K campaign, an awareness programme was organized at Government High School (GHS) Lawaypora with the aim of combating drug abuse and promoting a healthy, addiction-free lifestyle.

The programme, held on the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, focused on sensitizing the local population especially the youth about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

The event saw active participation from officials representing the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Education Department, Health Department, Excise Department, Social Welfare Department, and other concerned departments. School staff and students also took part in the programme.

Speakers at the event highlighted the importance of collective community responsibility in addressing the growing challenge of substance abuse.

They urged the youth to channelise their energy into constructive and developmental pursuits.

Interactive sessions were conducted to ensure meaningful engagement and to effectively communicate the campaign's message.

At the end of the event, participants took a pledge to support the Drug Free J&K campaign and commit to protecting future generations from the dangers of drug addiction.

DLSA Budgam organizes review/ introductory meeting of LADCs

BUDGAM: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam today conducted a review and introductory meeting of all Legal Aid Defence Counsels in the office chamber of the Secretary, DLSA Budgam.

The meeting was convened by the Secretary, DLSA Budgam, Nusrat Ali Hakak, to assess the performance of Pervious Legal Aid Defence Counsel and ensure that the newly selected LADCs shall meet the standards of Service delivery. The meeting was attended

by LADCs including Lateef Ahmad Khan (Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel); Javaid Ahmad Mir, Abdul Rouf Parry and Nazeer Ahmad Wagay (Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel); Shaista Ganai, Fozia Shafi and Zahoor Ahmad Malik Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsels. They shared their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improving the delivery of legal aid.

Discussions focused on ensuring quality legal representation, expediting pending

cases, and enhancing coordination among counsels to strengthen access to justice.

Secretary, DLSA Budgam emphasized the importance of efficient and accessible legal aid services and reiterated the commitment of DLSA to providing free and effective legal assistance to those in need.

The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to further streamline legal aid mechanisms and enhance the efficiency of legal services in the district.

Several Health, Yoga camps held under AYUSH initiative at Shopian

SHOPIAN: In line with the directions of Director AYUSH J&K, Dr. Nuzhat Bashir Shah, a series of health and wellness activities were organized across Shopian to promote preventive healthcare and holistic well-being.

Free Anemia screening cum medicine distribution camp was held at AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre Sedow.

Similarly another camp held at Government Middle School Sedow, featured free hemoglobin testing, distribution of necessary medicines, and health counseling.

The initiatives benefitted students and members of the local community by raising awareness about anemia and ensuring early detection and management.

Also, Morning Yoga Session organized by the AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre Reshniagar at Government Higher Secondary School Ramnagri witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and teaching staff. It aimed to encourage the integration of yoga into daily routines for improved physical and mental health.

Indian Army Leads From The Front: Operational Prowess, Indigenization Define 2024



S.SAHMAD

ADMM-Plus: Raksha Mantri addressed the 11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) at Vientiane, Lao PDR on November 21, 2024. He reiterated India's stand for rule-based international order for peace & prosperity in Indo-Pacific, and pitched for Buddhist doctrines of peaceful co-existence for global peace. On the sidelines, Raksha Mantri met the Defence Minister of China Admiral Dong Jun and highlighted the fact that amicable relations between India and China, would have positive implications for global peace and prosperity. He also



met US Secretary of Defense Mr Lloyd J Austin, with both sides recognising remarkable progress made under US-India Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap. Raksha Mantri also met his Malaysian, Lao PDR, South Korean, Australian, New Zealand Philippines counterparts.

- India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue: Raksha Mantri and External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar hosted Japanese Minister of Defense Mr Kihara Minoru and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms Yoko Kamikawa for the 3rd India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi on August 20, 2024. On the sidelines of the 2+2 dialogue, a bilateral meeting was held between Raksha Mantri and his Japanese counterpart. They reviewed the existing defence cooperation activities and discussed ways to enhance further cooperation.

- India-Singapore Defence Dialogue: Raksha Mantri and Minister of Defence of Singapore co-chaired the sixth India-Singapore Defence Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi on October 22, 2024. Both Ministers acknowledged the deep and long-standing bilateral defence relations based on shared outlook on regional peace, stability and security.

- India-Netherlands: Raksha Mantri held a bilateral meeting with the Netherlands Defence Minister Ms Kajsa Ollongren in New Delhi on February 23, 2024. Both Ministers discussed the possibilities for expanding their bilateral defence cooperation, particularly in maritime and industrial domains. They noted the increased interaction between the two Navies and expressed keenness to work together to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.

OROP 10th Anniversary

November 07, 2024 marked the tenth anniversary of One Rank One Pension (OROP). OROP was implemented as a significant step towards addressing long-standing demand and reaffirming the nation's gratitude to the heroes. It is a tribute to veterans and ex-service personnel who dedicated their lives in protecting the nation. Over the decade lakhs of pensioners and their families have benefitted from the landmark initiative. OROP also represents the government's commitment to the well-being of the armed forces.

Appointments

- Shri Rajnath Singh assumed charge as the Raksha Mantri for the second consecutive term in June 2024. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, our aim will be to further strengthen the security apparatus of the country, with focus on achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing, Armed Forces modernisation and the welfare of the soldiers, both serving and retired, will continue to be our main focus," he said upon his joining.
- Shri Sanjay Seth assumed charge of the office of Minister of State, Ministry of Defence in June 2024. He said he would strive towards fulfilment of several initiatives of the Ministry of Defence aimed at strengthening the nation's security.
- General Upendra Dwivedi, Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Air Chief Marshal AP Singh took over as the Chief of the Air Staff, Chief of the Naval Staff and Chief of the Air Staff respectively this year.
- Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh assumed the office of Defence Secretary and Shri Sanjeev Kumar took over as Secretary (Defence Production).
- DG Paramesh Sivamani took over as the 26th Director General of Indian Coast Guard.

Part-11 INDIAN ARMY Operations

Operational Preparedness: The Indian Army (IA) maintained a high state of operational preparedness to ensure stability & dominance along all the frontiers including Line of Actual Control (LAC) & Line of Control (LC). Relentless counter terrorist operations were also carried out while constantly reviewing emerging & future threats to National security. Infrastructure development in border areas being one of the key imperatives of operational preparedness was given impetus in consonance with the 'Viksit Bharat Vision' of the Government.

Situation at LAC: Overall situation along the LAC is stable but sensitive. Post prolonged negotiations at Diplomatic and Military levels, on 21 October 2024, broad consensus has been achieved to restore ground situation based on principles of Equal and Mutual Security. Consensus achieved includes disengagement and relocation of troops from the friction areas of Depsang and Demchok followed by joint verification. Currently, blocking posi-

tions have been removed by both sides and joint verification has been completed. Patrolling activity has commenced to traditional patrolling areas in Depsang and Demchok.

- LC & Counter Terrorist Operations: Situation along the LC remains peaceful post the Director General Military Operations (DGsMO) Understandings of February 2021. However, Indian Army is monitoring the situation closely and remains prepared to respond to any escalation along the LC. Since the abrogation of Article 370, the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) continues to witness steadfast improvement despite intermittent spikes in violence.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Development: Development of essential infrastructure from operational perspective is being carried out in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Adoption of latest construction techniques is being ensured for timely completion and enhanced quality infrastructure. Concerted efforts are being made by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) & other construction agencies for construction of road infrastructure in border areas. The perspective plan of BRO has been finalised till year 2028, wherein, 470 roads of approximately 27,000 kms will be constructed. The perspective plan of other agencies roads is being synchronised with the plans of BRO.

Operational Works: The construction efforts are focused on development of defence related infrastructure including force preservation assets, operational logistics infrastructure, billeting of troops, establishment of forward connectivity, anti-infiltration system and development of aviation related infrastructure.

Connectivity in Sikkim was severely affected due to Glacial Lake Outburst Flood in October 2023. Further, flash floods in May 2024 also severely affected roads and borders in Sikkim. Actions are at hand with various stakeholders for restoration and construction of new infrastructure for redundancy.

Indian Army is undertaking infrastructure development in the Creek Sector. Infrastructure being constructed includes berthing facility, docking infrastructure and marine equipment repair & maintenance. Further, additional billeting and allied infrastructure is being constructed for housing troops during heightened security situations.

In sync with Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PM GS NMP), details of dual use infrastructure like border roads, Hospitals, important railway lines etc have been uploaded on GS NMP portal. The data layers will enhance visibility to all stakeholders for integrated planning and dual use of infrastructure.

Tri-Services Synergy

Operational Synergy and Jointness: Exemplary conduct of Tri-Service Exercises, participation & pragmatic discussions during Front Level Operational Discussions are a testimony of enhanced Inter-Service integration. Formations along the International Border (IB) continued their training to maintain highest standard of operational readiness in conjunction with other services.

Exercise JAL PRAHAR-I, a joint amphibious training exercise with Indian Navy was conducted at Visakhapatnam in September 2024. This was followed by Operation Sea Test (OST) of INS JALASHWA, which was conducted at Kakinada in October 2024.

An integrated Tri-Service live demo and static display was conducted on 12 March 2024, wherein Indian Army was the lead service. The exercise was conducted in Pokhran Field Firing Ranges with the aim to validate joint all-arms, Air-Land Battle, in a Tri-Service setting, with indigenous equipment. Around

250 types of equipment in the wide range of tech domains such as aircraft, helicopters, ISR platforms, unmanned & counter-unmanned aerial systems, Artificial Intelligence/ autonomous systems/robotics, armament, ammunition, communication/5G/ quantum, mobility, survivability, alternate power solutions, habitat, operational logistics, cyber, space applications and training equipment were showcased.

Modernisation and Aatmanirbharta

- Force modernisation through capability development is progressing at a steady pace. Cognisance is being taken of the hi-tech warfighting equipment being developed and used across the world especially in active war zones. Acquisition procedures are being reviewed and renewed to boost 'Aatmanirbharta'. Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 is likely to undergo a complete revamp in 2025 and efforts are being made to make it amenable to service requirements. More than five hundred schemes have been planned for acquiring potent fighting capability in next 15 years. The broad categories of acquisition schemes include Force Application, Battlefield Awareness, Command & Control, Sustenance & Support, and Protection. Defence Procurement Board (DPB) has approved the Annual Acquisition Plan 2024-26 in May 2024. Based on prioritisation of schemes in AAP 2024-26, a total of 25 schemes costing approximately 40,695 crores have been identified and targeted to be concluded in FY 2024-25. To address any capability void and induct niche technology, a special provision was accorded in the form of EP-IV by DAC on 22 August 2023. A total of 73 Capability Development schemes were contracted in the domains of Drone/Counter-Drone, Weapon systems, Mobility & Protection, Survivability etc.

- Out of 158 Capital Acquisition contracts worth Rs 70,028 crore concluded in last four Financial Years (2021-22 to 2024-25), 144 contracts worth Rs 68,121 crore (97.3%) have been signed with Indian vendors under Normal/Emergency Procurement acquisition process. This year, 16 contracts have been concluded. Out of these, 14 are with Indian Industry, enhancing the force capability in important domains of small arms, long range vectors, communication and remotely piloted aerial systems.

- 96% of total Acceptance of Necessity accorded in Financial Years 2022-24 have been granted to indigenous defence industry. During this year, 23 AoNs have been accorded (worth Rs 1.22 lakh crore). Out of these, 21 are with Indian Industry worth Rs 1.19 lakh crore (98%).

- Indian Army's ammunition procurement under 'Manufacture of Ammunition for Indian Army by Indian Industry' for long term requirement of 10 years is in progress to establish at least one indigenous source for all types of ammunition. Through concerted and proactive efforts and in close coordination with other agencies, 154 out of 175 (nearly 88%) ammunition variants have been indigenised so far.

Initiatives Taken to Promote Technology Infusion

- Army Design Bureau (ADB) acts as a facilitator for technological R&D efforts and procurement of indigenously developed weapons and equipment. 'Make Projects' are being spearheaded by the Indian Army to compliment the vision of Government of India and to create a robust defence ecosystem. Out of 52 Make Projects, 35 Projects have reached prototype development stage and beyond. Number of projects under Army Technology Board (ATB) have risen from 17 to 62 in one year.

- Technology Development Fund (TDF) has been launched by the Government for giving impetus to R&D projects beyond the proof-of-concept stage. At present five projects (approximately Rs 50 crore) are being progressed through TDF.

- The Innovation in Defence Excellence (iDEX) platform was created to harness the innovation potential of startups and innovators in the country. Presently, 85 challenges of Indian Army (approximately Rs 500 crore) as part of iDEX, are being progressed.

- In the fifth PIL promulgated in October 2023, out of 97 items, 37 are Indian Army items. Anticipated cumulative positive impact from PILs is 5 lakh crore over a period of next 5-10 years.

- 10 Intellectual Property Rights were filed by IA during this year, out of which three have been granted. The remaining IPRs are under progress. Details are as under:

- Portable Multi Target Detonation Device, developed by Major Rajprasad RS (Engineers) has already entered production and is being inducted in the Indian Army.

- Hexacopter Tactical Remotely Piloted Aircraft is developed by Major Rengarajan (EME).

- Full Body Armour Suit, developed by Lieutenant Colonel Anoop Mishra (Engineers) overcomes the limitations of existing Bullet Proof Jackets and provides troops with higher level of protection.

- MoU with Department of Science and Technology (DST) was signed in March 2024 for the utilisation of their expertise and access to Tech Evaluation & Tech Consultancy from the domain experts of the DST for evaluation of proposals received from the defence ecosystem.

- MoU with Centre for Development of Advance Computing (CDAC) was inked in May 2024. It will enable IA to utilise the expertise of CDAC to foster focused Research & Development and innovations towards finding solutions to address Indian Army challenges.

- The following innovations developed by Service personnel have been inducted:

- Transfer of Technology (ToT) of two innovations developed by service personnel namely 'Xploder' - IED disposal and room intervention UGV and 'Agniastra' - Multi Target Portable Detonation Device has been undertaken with two private industries. Both the innovations have extensive utilisation in conventional and sub-conventional operations.

- Another innovation by service personnel named 'Vidyut Rakshak' - Internet of Things Enabled Integrated Generator Moni-

toring Protection and Control System', has already been inducted in Northern Command.

- The ADB has mapped over 1,700 industries, contacted 200+ top academic institutions and 50 top R&D institutes/organisations in the country. The outreach initiatives include Forward Area Tours, facilitating Internal Development Trials, Capability Demonstration (No Cost No Commitment) by providing access to Field Firing Ranges and Equipment and establishment of Regional Technology Nodes.

Project AKASHTHEER: First batch of Control Centre for the Air Defence Control & Reporting Systems, Project Akashteer was flagged off from Bharat Electronic Limited, Ghaziabad in April 2024. This is significant development for automation of

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India-Netherlands: Raksha Mantri held a bilateral meeting with the Netherlands Defence Minister Ms Kajsa Ollongren in New Delhi on February 23, 2024. Both Ministers discussed the possibilities for expanding their bilateral defence cooperation, particularly in maritime and industrial domains. They noted the increased interaction between the two Navies and expressed keenness to work together to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.

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Air Defence Operations.

Digitisation and Automation

- The declaration of Indian Army's Theme of 2024 & 2025 as 'Years of Technology Absorption' has focused the thrust towards force modernisation by infusion of technology. It involves various initiatives in the fields of Automation, Digitisation, Development of Joint Applications for Tri-Services, Data management and Infusion of Artificial Intelligence (AI). 59 applications/websites have been developed. The software/applications aim to enhance situation awareness, generate comprehensive operational & intelligence picture, facilitate HR management and create quality MIS for multiple domains. Collaboration with industry, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), academia, ministries, domain experts and start-up ecosystem is being done while integrating efforts with India's AI Mission, National Quantum Mission and IT Mission. A compendium of 100 applications showcasing Digitisation Initiatives undertaken by Indian Army was released by Raksha Mantri during Chanakya Defence Dialogue in October 2024.

- Indian Army has prepared an AI roadmap which outlines the effort and timelines for implementation by various stakeholders to achieve tactical, operational and strategic goals. Indian Army has signed an agreement with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for joint technology incubation. An AI Incubation Centre for Indian Army will be established at BEL, R&D centre as part of the agreement.

Military Diplomacy

- In line with India's rising global stature in recent years, there has been a considerable increase in diplomatic activity undertaken by the Indian Army. Presently, Indian Army is engaged with 118 countries through various defence cooperation activities.

- As part of Phase-1 of reorganisation of defence wings, the number of Defence Wings have been increased from 45 to 52. Four additional new defence wings were established at Poland and Algeria in June 2024 and at Ethiopia & Mozambique in October 2024. For Phase-2 of reorganisation, raising of four additional Defence Wings is in process.

- There are total 39 Joint Exercises in which IA participates. In addition, new bilateral exercises are being planned with Egypt, UAE, KSA and Cambodia. Yoga and Nari Shakti is being given emphasis during the conduct of these Exercises.

Continued From P1...

Bloodbath In Baisaran

Union Home Minister Amit Shah briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a visit to Saudi Arabia, and left for Srinagar soon after to hold an urgent security review meeting with all agencies.

“I strongly condemn the terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. I pray that the injured recover at the earliest. All possible assistance is being provided to those affected,” the prime minister said on X.

“Those behind this heinous act will be brought to justice... they will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger,” he added.

Eyewitnesses painted a chilling picture of gunfire breaking the calm of a regular Tuesday afternoon with scores of people enjoying their day out. Cries for help were heard as lifeless bodies lay motionless in pools of blood.

Some put the number of attackers at five.

“My husband was shot in the head while seven others were also injured in the attack,” a woman survivor told.

HM Shah

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the Home Minister was received by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, his advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat and others at the airport.

Sources said that the Chief Minister briefed the Union Home Minister about the Pahalgam attack at the airport itself.

Shah drove straight to the Raj Bhavan where he will chair a high level security meet.

The security review meeting, sources said, will be attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Secretary, Atal Duloo, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, Director IB, ADGP CID, IGP CRPF, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Srinagar based Chinara corps and other top officials.

The Union Home Minister will visit the terror attack site at Baisaran in Pahalgam on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Suchendra Kumar also arrived in Srinagar to review security situation, defence sources told KNO

They said the Army Commander will be briefed by local formation commanders on the present security situation in Kashmir. He was in New Delhi for a security conference.

Pertinently, earlier in the day terrorists opened fire at Baisaran famed meadow near Pahalgam town this afternoon.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the terror attack as “much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years”

Security beefed

in the upper reaches of Baisaran, a popular trekking and picnic spot in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Most of the slain are said to be non-locals, who had come to the Valley as part of a larger travel group.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the security forces have launched a large-scale search and cordon operation in the area to trace the attackers.

“Checkpoints have been increased on highways and entry routes across the Valley, and surveillance has been intensified in major urban centres as well as in rural belts close to forests and highlands,” he added.

More senior police and paramilitary officials have been sent to Pahalgam to oversee security arrangements, the official added.

A senior government officer from Delhi said that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is expected to take over the case, with a team scheduled to arrive in the region on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the security has been intensified across Udhampur district. At Jakhani Chowk, one of the key entry points, security forces have set up additional checkpoints and are conducting strict checking of vehicles.

The deployment of personnel has been increased in the area to ensure enhanced vigilance and prevent any untoward incident. The official said the measures are part of a broader security review being implemented across Jammu and Kashmir.

Another senior security official said that security measures have been increased across the Kashmir Valley, from the northern to the southern regions, with heightened vigilance, including drone surveillance and additional deployment of forces.

Meanwhile, government sources said a high alert has been issued in Delhi and other major cities across the country. Security agencies have been instructed to stay vigilant, increase patrolling, and

monitor crowded public places, transport hubs, and tourist spots as a precautionary measure following the Pahalgam attack, they said

Locals organize

A local hotel owner said, “Tourism is our lifeline. Everything we have – our businesses, our livelihoods – depends on it. Without tourism, we can't do anything. That's why we are here, to show that Pahalgam stands united against violence and in favor of peace and hospitality.”

He said that terrorism of any kind has no space and all must work so that Kashmir continues to be famous for good things not bad.

Another local youth said, “We want to reassure all tourists that they are safe here. We condemn this attack in the strongest words and want the world to know that the people of Pahalgam welcome everyone with open arms.”

From Pahalgam to Srinagar, Sopore, Baramulla, Handwara, and Kupwara, people took to the streets carrying candles and placards, expressing anguish over the attack and reaffirming Kashmir's age-old tradition of hospitality.

Protesters chanted slogans like “Stop Innocent Killings,” “Tourists Hamar Jaan Hai,” and “Stop Terrorism,” demanding that those responsible for the massacre be brought to justice.

In Handwara, residents sent out a strong message of resilience and unity. “People of Kashmir are with the tourists. Don't fear—these acts will be answered. Our neighbouring country must stop its tactics to disrupt peace here,” one resident said, indirectly blaming cross-border elements for the attack.

The protesters not only expressed grief but also stood in defiance of terror, urging the rest of India and the world not to judge Kashmir by the actions of a few. Many said that the attack was meant to malign the region's image and disturb the growing sense of peace.

The reports of candle light protests were also received from Srinagar's Makkah Market, where the protesters condemned the attack.

The candle light protests were also held in Kupwara, Baramulla. Bajrang Dal workers also held a protest in Jammu.

Pertinently, dozens of tourists have reportedly been killed while many others wounded in a terror attack in Pahalgam area this afternoon, leaving the entire nation in shock and grief

heinous act will be brought to justice.

In a post on X, the prime minister said, “They (terrorists) will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger.”

Modi also conveyed his condolences to those who lost their loved ones in the attack.

Terrorist Attack

meadow near Kashmir's Pahalgam town, breaking the calm of a regular Tuesday afternoon with scores of people enjoying their day out.

The death toll could be more than 20, estimated a high ranking official without getting into details.

“The terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam of Jammu and Kashmir is shocking and painful. It is a dastardly and inhuman act which must be condemned unequivocally. “Attacking innocent citizens, in this case tourists, is utterly appalling and unpardonable. My heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their dear ones and my prayers for the quick recovery of the injured,” Murmu said in a post on X.

Those Behind

heinous act will be brought to justice.

In a post on X, the prime minister said, “They (terrorists) will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger.”

Modi also conveyed his condolences to those who lost their loved ones in the attack.

Perpetrators Of Terror

Officials said security forces have fanned out in Baisaran area to hunt down the assailants.

Baisaran, about six kilometres from the resort town of Pahalgam, is an expansive meadow ringed by dense pine forests and mountains and a favourite with tourists and trekkers.

CCI Jammu

Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal, who staged protest marches across Jammu on Tuesday evening to condemn the attack.

The VHP and Bajrang Dal have extended their full support to the CCI's bandh initiative, urging citizens to join in solidarity to demand justice for the victims and stringent action against the perpetrators of this heinous act.

In a statement, CCI President Arun Gupta described the attack as “a barbaric assault on humanity and an attack on the spirit of Jammu & Kashmir tourism.” He called for unity among the people of Jammu to send a strong message against terrorism.

“This bandh is a collective stand against those who seek to disrupt peace and harmony in our

With 24-Hour Claim Settlement Following Cloudburst in Jammu & Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Shriram General Insurance (SGI), one of India's leading non-life insurers, recently set an industry benchmark by settling two motor insurance claims within 24 hours in the Ramban district of Jammu & Kashmir.

In the aftermath of the recent cloudburst and landslide in Ramban one TATA 1616, a Goods Carrying Commercial Vehicle (GCCV), and one TATA Magic, a Passenger Carrying Commercial Vehicle (PCCV) were engulfed in a massive landslide triggered due to a heavy cloudburst.

SGI claims team swung into action promptly on receipt of the claim intimation, activated its emergency response protocols and settled both claims were processed and efficiently within 24 hours ensuring immediate financial and emotional relief to the owners of both vehicles.

Mr. Anil Aggarwal, MD and CEO, Shriram General Insurance said, “Any calamity, manmade or natural, affects people in the worst possible manner. It is at times like these that they need support and empathy. As an insurance company, we understand these feelings extremely well and ensure that all our systems and processes are aligned to help and support our customers in their time of need. We are committed to driving a robust claims management framework focused on ensuring our policyholders can lead a peaceful, protected and insured life.”

SGI continues to provide swift, innovative support to policyholders with reduced TATs which highlights their dedication to excellence and reinforces its reputation as a dependable, compassionate and empathetic insurer.

region. We urge the government to identify and punish the culprits swiftly and ensure the safety of all citizens and visitors,” Gupta said. He further appealed to all traders, businesses, and citizens to observe a complete shutdown to honor the victims and press for immediate action.

The VHP and Bajrang Dal, during their protests, raised slogans in support of the Indian Army and demanded decisive measures to eliminate terrorism in the region.

VHP leaders emphasized that such attacks are an attempt to destabilize the region's economy and tourism, a vital lifeline for Jammu & Kashmir.

Bajrang Dal activists echoed similar sentiments, pledging their support to the bandh and calling for heightened security to prevent future incidents.

The bandh has also been supported by other groups, including the Jammu & Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Shiv Sena (UBT), Dogra Front, Kashtriya Bajrang Dal, and various market associations.

Meanwhile, the authorities have beefed up security across Jammu to maintain law and order, with additional police and paramilitary forces deployed in sensitive areas.

The CCI Jammu, VHP, and Bajrang Dal urged all residents, traders, and organizations to participate in the bandh to express solidarity with the victims' families and to demand a terror-free Jammu & Kashmir.

The bandh will see the closure of all shops, businesses, and commercial establishments across Jammu, with public transport likely to be affected.

Mehbooba Mufti

mark of respect for the innocent lives lost in the brutal assault in Pahalgam. This isn't just an attack on a select few—it is an attack on all of us,” she wrote on X.

We stand together in grief and outrage & strongly support this shutdown to condemn the massacre of innocents, she added.

Statehood our promise,

said, adding that the BJP has a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism.

On ‘One Nation, One Election’, Thakur said it is in the interest of the country. “While the JPC formed in this regard has been discussing the issue, I believe that the simultaneous elections will save money, increase the voting percentage and also save time for employees, who are being deputed on election duties,” he said, adding that if the bill is passed, India's GDP can see an economic growth of 1.5 percent.

The BJP MP further said there was no pressure on the Supreme Court (SC) on the Waqf Amendment Act, saying the court has already validated the government's decisions on Triple Talaq, Article 370 and other issues.

He accused the Congress and opposition leaders of misleading the people on the issues. “In J&K, development has taken place, we are witnessing a tourism boom here. Similarly, Triple Talaq has brought relief to the Muslim women,” he added

"We Stand Together"

moments of the attack but emphasized the quick response. “I had just entered the park when gunfire erupted. My arm was hit, but the locals and security forces acted fast. I'm stable now,” he said.

Nasir Hussain, a Srinagar resident, strongly condemned the violence. “Such cowardly acts will not break our spirit. We urge tourists not to panic—our homes are open to them. We will protect them as our own,” he said.

Farhaan, another local, echoed the sentiment. “Tourists should not be scared. Kashmiris stand with them. We will ensure their safety and make them feel at home.”

With the Srinagar-Jammu national highway temporarily closed, locals have stepped up to provide shelter, food, and reassurance to stranded visitors.

“The army is here, but so are the locals—helping, guiding, and keeping us calm. There's no reason to fear,” said a group of tourists

Cm Omar,

minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti also denounced the attack.

“I strongly condemn the cowardly attack on tourists in Pahalgam, which tragically killed five and injured several as being reported for now. Such violence is unacceptable and must be denounced”.

“Historically, Kashmir has welcomed tourists warmly, making this rare incident deeply concerning. A thorough investigation is needed to bring the perpetrators to justice and examine potential security lapses. Ensuring visitor safety is paramount, and steps must be taken to prevent future attacks,” she

said and added, “Our thoughts are with the victims and their families”.

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) also strongly denounced the cowardly militant attack on tourists in Pahalgam, terming the incident as the most unfortunate and shameful act.

“The rank and file of the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee led by President Tariq Hameed Karra strongly denounced the militant attack on tourists in Basiran area of Pahalgam in Anantnag District in which several tourists were injured leaving reportedly one dead. It was very shocking and anguishing to learn about the mindless and dastardly militant attack on innocent tourists, such incidents are highly deplorable and have no place in a civilized society, JKPCC said in a statement said.

“Adding that the incident has put a big question mark on the tall claims of Centre Govt with regard to the security situation in J&K, JKPCC strongly urged that the perpetrators of this heinous crime must be identified & given exemplary punishment,” JKPCC said.

The party expressed solidarity with the family of the deceased person and prayed for speedy recovery of the injured.

MLA Handwara and Peoples Conference President Sajad Lone has strongly condemned the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, characterizing it as a “dastardly and cowardly” act aimed at destabilizing 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 stated, emphasizing Kashmir's long-standing tradition of welcoming visitors.

In his statement, he noted the cruelty of the timing, saying, “After years of struggle, our tourism industry was finally stirring back to life. People had begun to dream again – to rebuild. And here come these ugly villains to crush hope.”

Lone pointed to the economic motivations behind such attacks, asserting, “Make no mistake. These terror attacks are aimed at yet again disempowering us economically.”

He further portrayed those responsible for the violence as enemies of the Kashmiri people themselves.

“Those who do this are the worst enemies of Kashmiris. They defile our history of hospitality, smearing our glorious past. And they are a curse on our present. They are enemies of our children, of our young generation,” he declared.

Calling for unity against terrorism, Lone urged, “We have to unitedly send a message that there is no tolerance for terror. Let us live our lives in peace and economic dignity.”

He concluded with a passionate plea directed at those perpetrating violence: “Please get out of our lives. These tourists are our revered guests.”

Former MLA Pahalgam and General Secretary Apni Party Rafi Ahmad Mir has strongly condemned the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, calling it a heinous act that goes against the spirit of peace and harmony that the region stands for.

Mir, who is currently stationed in Pahalgam, expressed deep anguish over the incident and extended his heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families. He emphasized that such acts of violence have no place in society and must be condemned

by one and all.

“The people of Pahalgam have always upheld the values of peace and brotherhood. This attack is not only an act of terror but an attempt to disrupt the harmony of the region,” Mir said.

He further stated that the people of Pahalgam and the local trade fraternity do not stand for such violence and unequivocally reject any attempts to destabilize the area. “Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families during this difficult time,” he added.

Mir hoped that those responsible for the attack, are held accountable. “It is important that justice is delivered swiftly. The perpetrators must face the law,” he said.

Restoring traffic on Jammu-Srinagar NH within 24 hours our priority: CM Omar

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah Tuesday said that the government will try hard to open the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway within 24 hours.

Speaking to the reporters, Omar said, “Our first priority was to protect the innocent lives stuck in the landslides and we evacuated them swiftly.”

“Now our priority would be to reconnect the National Highway because until we reconnect and reconstruct the road, it is not possible for us to send the material to Ramban,” he said.

Omar further said, “Officials have assured

me that they will restore single traffic towards the highway.”

He said, “For the three consecutive days, the administration visited the Ramban. On the first day, the deputy Chief minister and the concerned MLA visited Ramban on the spot on the very first day.”

“On the second day, I reached the spot to ensure that no life was harmed because of the massive landslides,” he said.

The CM further said, “I believe that any work that can

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Nasha Mukht Bharat

Students sketch their vision of a drug-free Bharat during a Painting Caption Organised by JK Teachers Forum in government schools of remote Bandipora villages.

