

...30 Year **Wait Ends**

PM Inaugurates Chenab Railway Bridge, Flags Off Katra-Sgr Vande Bharat Express

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday inaugurated the iconic Chenab Bridge, Anji rail bridge and Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project and flagged off Vande Bharat Trains, connecting Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

"The development of Jammu and Kashmir will not stop," Modi said while addressing a rally in Katra after the inaugurations.

He also inaugurated several other infrastructure projects,



worth over Rs 46,000 crore, in the Union Ter-

ritory of J&K. The Prime Minis-

ter also mentioned the April 22 terror •P-06

June 6 Will Go Down in History: LG

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha

on Friday termed the inauguration of the Chenab and Anji rail bridges by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "historic moment" in the region's development journey. •P-06

CM hails Railway Link as historic milestone

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KATRA: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

Friday hailed the rail-link of Kashmir with the rest of the country as a "historic accomplishment," stating that the development will boost tourism, trade and bring •P-06

LG, CM Greet people On Eid-Ul-Adha

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, has greeted the people on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha, which will be celebrated today.

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "Eid Mubarak! Heartiest greetings and



good wishes to the people on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

Eid embodies the spirit of sacrifice and forgiveness. Let us reiterate our resolve

to strengthen the foundations of unity, harmony and brotherhood in the society and work with love and compassion to ensure the well-being of all.

May this festival spread peace and bring prosperity to all".

Similarly, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended warm •P-06

असली स्वाद का मज़ा !



Eid Al - Adha Mubarak !



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DIPK NB:719/25 Dated:06/06/2025

Greener tomorrow begins today: J&K schools unite to 'Beat Plastic Pollution'

7955 schools, 439072 students across Valley participate in the event

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a profound celebration of environmental responsibility, School Education Department (SED), Jammu and Kashmir, observed World Environment Day 2025 with resounding enthusiasm and heartfelt commitment across all districts of the Union Territory.

The theme for this year, "Beat Plastic Pollution," became a rallying call for students, teachers and communities to rise in defense of the Earth.

The main event was held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Ganderbal, where Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK), Dr. G.N. Itoo led the proceedings as chief guest. He was joined by Additional Secretary, SED, G.N. Bhat, who attended as guest of honour.

In his inspiring address, Dr. Itoo emphasized that the real change begins at home. "When families, schools, and communities commit to giving up plastic,



only then we can truly protect our planet for future generations."

Dr. Itoo announced that all the schools would be declared plastic-free zones. He also called for rejuvenation of eco-clubs, expanding their work beyond school boundaries to encompass nearby water bodies and tourist areas,

making environmental care an integral part of student's daily experience.

The event was also attended by Chief Education Officer Ganderbal, Oneel Kumar Bhat, Deputy CEO Ganderbal, Rumysa Sangeen and several other officials from the Education Department.

Beyond these flagship

events, World Environment Day 2025 was celebrated across all schools in the entire Kashmir division through a diverse array of activities.

These included solemn pledges, engaging quizzes, extensive tree plantation drives, crucial cleanliness campaigns, informative awareness rallies, insightful seminars and talks, stimulating debates, invigorating nature walks and marathons, and creative painting and slogan writing competitions, all aimed at fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the environment among the student community.

In total, 7955 schools celebrated the day with a total participation of 439072 students, teachers/ HoFs and community members.

The widespread participation and diverse initiatives underscore the School Education department's commitment to nurturing environmentally conscious citizens and promoting sustainable practices across Jammu and Kashmir.

NASHA MukT BHARAT ABHIYAN

Mini Marathon, Kho-Kho mark twin sporting triumphs in Tangmarg

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: In a vibrant display of youth energy and community commitment against drug abuse, Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Zones Tangmarg and Kunzer Friday jointly organized two impactful events — a Mini Marathon for sub-division Tangmarg and a Girls Kho-Kho competition at playfield Kunzer, under the banner of the Nasha MukT Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA).

Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Farooq Ahmad Shah flagged-off the Mini Marathon from Hospital Crossing, Tangmarg, and later presided over the Kho-Kho competition.

The marathon concluded at Higher Secondary School (HSS) Chandilora, with 310 boys participating enthusiastically, carrying forward the message of a drug-free and disciplined lifestyle.

Mini Marathon was attended by SDM Gulmarg, DYSSO Baramulla, and other officers and officials



from various departments. Top performers were felicitated with appreciation certificates by the MLA during the award ceremony, who praised the youth for their proactive participation.

Later in the day, focus shifted to YSS Zone Kunzer, where a Girls Kho-Kho competition was held at playfield Kunzer under the same campaign. The event

witnessed participation from over 300 girls, with teams demonstrating skill, agility, and sportsmanship.

The Kho-Kho event was presided over by MLA Farooq Ahmad Shah. In a special gesture, local cricket national-level player Mir Khushboo from Mamoosa Kunzer and other national level athletes from the previous

year were felicitated with appreciation certificates, celebrating their achievements and encouraging their peers.

Speaking on both occasions, MLA stated, "We are witnessing the power of youth and sports as a weapon against drug addiction. Events like these bring purpose, discipline, and hope to our younger generation. I deeply appreciate the efforts of the Youth Services and Sports for mobilizing such positive energies across Baramulla district under the Nasha MukT Bharat Abhiyan."

These back-to-back events highlight the unwavering commitment of the Youth Services and Sports, Baramulla, in fostering awareness, fitness, and community resilience through inclusive sporting events.

The Nasha MukT Bharat Abhiyan continues across all zones of Baramulla, aiming to eliminate the menace of drug abuse by empowering youth through education and sports.

Rana extends Eid-ul-Adha greetings

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, has extended his warmest greetings to the people of Jammu & Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

In his message, the Minister said, "May the blessed festival bring peace, prosperity and joy to us all. On this occasion, let us come together to celebrate the

true spirit of sacrifice and compassion that defines Eid-ul-Adha."

The Minister prayed for well-being and happiness of all citizens and expressed hope that the festival will foster a deep sense of social harmony and brotherhood among the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Rana urged everyone to embody the true message of Eid-ul-Adha by helping the needy and underprivileged, spreading love, kindness and generosity.



Satish Sharma extends Eid-ul-Adha greetings to J&K people

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, has extended heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha.

The Minister said that Eid-ul-Adha is a celebration of deep spiritual significance, symbolizing unwavering faith, sac-

rificance and the spirit of giving. He noted that the festival serves as a powerful reminder of the values of compassion, solidarity and collective responsibility.

He urged the people to mark the occasion by extending kindness to the needy, fostering unity among communities and promoting peace and harmony in society. "Let this Eid strengthen our resolve to build a more inclusive, progressive, and vibrant Jammu and Kashmir," he added.



DC Srinagar visits Hazratbal, oversees arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Ahead of Eid-ul-Adha, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Friday visited Hazratbal Shrine to take stock of arrangements made by various Departments with regard to celebration of the festivities of Eid-ul-Adha.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by senior Officers of District Administration, Police, other Departments and Administrator Waqf Board.

Reviewing the arrangements on spot, the DC directed the concerned Officers to ensure all facilities for the devotees expected to offer Eid prayers at the Shrine especially on account of water supply, electricity, health-care, cleanliness and illumination in and around the shrine, besides proper transportation, parking

facility, deployment of fire tenders and establishing emergency control rooms.

The DC also took stock of the arrangements being made by the Waqf Administration at the Shrine for the people on Eid-ul-Adha.

The DC enjoined upon the Traffic Police Department to make fool-proof traffic plan for devotees and also directed SMC officials to ensure proper sanitation in and around the Shrine premises and repair all street lights before Eid-ul-Adha.

The DC further stressed the Officers to maintain close coordination to ensure smooth conduct of the Eid-ul-Adha, the religious festival at Hazratbal Shrine.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner has directed the all concerned authorities to ensure such arrangements at all other places across the City particularly at prominent Masjids and Shrines.

DC Poonch chairs District Health Society meeting



GMK NEWS NETWORK

POONCH: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal, Friday chaired a meeting of the District Health Society to review the performance of healthcare institutions and discuss strategies for strengthening health infrastructure and service delivery.

The meeting took stock of the sanctioned strength, staff availability, and existing vacancies at the District Hospital and associated health facilities.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized strict adherence to the dress code and duty rosters by all medical staff, calling for greater accountability and professionalism. He stressed the need for effective implementation of healthcare interventions

aimed at reducing infant mortality and maternal deaths—highlighting these as critical focus areas.

The DC proposed setting up dialysis units in Mendhar and Surankote to decongest the District Hospital and ensure timely, life-saving treatment in remote areas. "This step will reduce the number of referrals to the District Hospital and facilities outside the district," he noted.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chief Medical Officer, Medical Superintendent, District Education Planning Officer, Block Medical Officers, Executive Engineers from PDD and PWD, Assistant Director CAPD and other senior officials and health staff.

Fisheries deptt organises awareness workshop on PMFME scheme at Shangus

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: To inform and empower local entrepreneurs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and small-scale food processors about the wide-ranging benefits of the PMFME scheme, Department of Fisheries Anantnag Friday organized an awareness workshop under the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme here.

Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shangus Anantnag East, Riyaz Khan, graded the occasion as chief guest. In his address, he emphasized the government's commitment to promoting entrepreneurship in the fisheries and allied sectors. "With focused initiatives in areas such as fish processing, bakery production, pickle making, and fruit and vegetable processing, we aim to create sustainable employment avenues for the youth and rural communities," he stated.

The workshop witnessed an encouraging response, with over 100



participants registering on the spot. Many expressed keen interest in setting up or upgrading their micro food processing units under the scheme.

PMFME offers a 35% credit-linked capital subsidy (up to Rs.10 lakh) for individual enterprises, and up to Rs.3 crore for common infrastructure projects by SHGs, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and cooperatives. The scheme also provides cru-

cial support in the form of Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation, bank loan facilitation, branding, packaging and marketing assistance.

Deputy Director Fisheries Anantnag, Shabir Ahmad Shabir highlighted the department's ongoing efforts and schemes operational in the district. He provided insights into annual fish production statistics, number of private fish farms supported by the department, and the upcoming schedule for similar awareness and capacity-building programs.

Horticulture Development Officer Shangus, Peerzada Farhat on the occasion spoke about the schemes including High Density Apple Cultivation etc.

Likewise representatives from the line departments spoke about their schemes during the programme

The workshop concluded with an interactive session, where participants engaged with departmental officials and experts on scheme guidelines, eligibility criteria, and business development strategies.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION GANDERBAL

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

EE/R&B/Divn/Gbl/e-tender NIT No.16of 2025-26 issued under endorsement No.1848-53 Dated: 05-06-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT J&K, e-tenders are invited on **Percentage Rate basis** from Eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Government, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following work.

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money. (In Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor
1.	Annual Stage Contract for Maintenance of Roads and Bridges for Sub-Division Safapora.	07.00	Rs.300/-	Rs.14,000/-	F. Y 2025-26	All Classes
2.	Annual Stage Contract for Maintenance of Roads and Bridges for Sub-Division Lar.	08.00	Rs.300/-	Rs.16,000/-	F. Y 2025-26	All Classes
3.	Annual Stage Contract for Maintenance of Roads and Bridges for Sub-Division Ganderbal.	11.00	Rs.600/-	Rs.22,000/-	F. Y 2025-26	All Classes

Position of AA: Accorded
Major Head: MH-3054

- The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below-

Date of Issue of Tender Notice	05-06-2025
Period of downloading of bidding documents	06-06-2025 at 02:00 PM
Bid submission Start Date	09-06-2025 at 12:00 PM
Bid Submission End Date	18-06-2025 at 04:00 PM
Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	19-06-2025 at 11:00AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal.

- The successful bidder must begin the work as soon as the tenders are opened.
- The work has to be started on multiple fronts.
- If there is negligence or if the Engineer reports that the work's completion will be impacted, action will be taken by disqualifying the contractor and engage another agency at the contractor's own risk and cost.
- Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.
- At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal.
- The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of Allotted Cost as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal within 03 days before Fixation of contract and shall be released after completion of Stage Contract and the 2% EMD shall be released in favour of successful bidder only after the receipt of 5% Performance Security. (Chief Executive PW(R&B) Department Central Kashmir's Circular No.-: CE-CK/WS/6458-79 of 2024-25 Dated: 19-08-2024.)

Unbalanced Bid:-

S.No	Percentage of unbalanced bid viz advertised cost On account of low rates	Additional Performance Security to be deposited on Quoted Bid by L1
01.	Upto and including 15% below	Nil
02.	>15% upto and including 20% below	5%
03.	>20% upto and including 25% below	10%
04.	>25% upto and including 30% below	15%
05.	>30% Below	20%

In case bid of the bidder is unbalanced. The lowest bidder (L-1) has to provide additional performance security, immediately after issuance of LOA. The successful bidder shall submit the additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 03 days after the issuance of LOA and in case of the delay in submission of additional performance security, the tender shall be re-advertised without any notice at the cost, risk and responsibility of the L-1 or penalty shall be imposed as per the rules. The additional performance security shall be released only after successful completion of work.

- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal (tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Ganderbal

DIPK-2294-25
DT: 06/06/2025

Pak enemy of peace, development and humanity: PM Modi

YOGESH

KATRA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched a scathing attack on Pakistan and accused it of being an enemy of peace, development, and humanity.

Addressing a public rally in Katra after dedicating the Kashmir rail project to the nation, PM Modi, while referring to April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, said, "Pakistan tried to target Kashmir's economy and trigger communal clashes in India, but failed in the face of people's unity and resolve."

"Tourism connects people, but our neighbouring country has always tried to disconnect humanity. Pakistan attacked the soul of Kashmir and humanity on April 22 by targeting innocent civilians. They wanted to incite communal violence, destroy livelihoods, and derail the region's peace," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister blamed Pakistan for trying to damage the social fabric of the Valley and for directly targeting the growing tourism economy that has become a lifeline for thousands of Kashmiris. "A poor worker Adil, who resisted the terrorists, was also shot dead. He was there to earn his living,"



he added.

"Pakistan didn't just attack the innocent people—it attacked Kashmiriyat, Insaniyat, and gareeb ki roti (the poor man's bread). But the people of Jammu and Kashmir have risen. They have sent a loud and clear message to Pakistan: we reject terror, and we stand united," PM Modi said.

He lauded the courage of the people of J&K, especially the youth, for choosing progress over fear. "Once terrorism had burned our schools and hospitals. Even holding elections was a challenge. People had stopped dreaming. But today, youth in Jammu and Kashmir are not just dreaming—they are turning those dreams into reality."

churches in border areas like Poonch. The nation stands with the 2,000 families affected by Pakistan's shelling. The Government will provide Rs 2 lakh for houses completely damaged and Rs 1 lakh for those partially damaged. This compensation is in addition to the aid that has been provided to them."

Underscoring his government's commitment to border communities, PM Modi said, "We consider border residents as our first-line citizens. The bunkers we built have saved many lives. Two men and two women battalions have been formed, and more infrastructure is coming up in these areas."

Calling upon the youth of J&K and the rest of India, he said, "Operation Sindoor has shown the power of India's armed forces and the success of 'Make in India'. I urge the youth to become innovators in the defence sector. Help India become one of the top defence exporters in the world. This will not only protect the nation but create employment for lakhs."

PM Modi reaffirmed his promise: "No power in the world can stop the development of Jammu and Kashmir. I will not let vikas (development) slow down—not today, not tomorrow. If anyone tries to disrupt J&K progress will have to face Modi first."—(KNO)

Rana participates in regional Power Ministers' conference

Pushes for strengthening of transmission infra, cyber security

GMK NEWS NETWORK

CHANDIGARH: Jammu & Kashmir Cabinet Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana Friday participated in the Regional Power Ministers' Conference, 2025, of Northern States/UTs held here in Chandigarh.

The conference provided a platform for deliberation on critical power sector issues affecting the region including resource adequacy, transmission capacity and cyber security.

During the conference, Javed Rana sought firm and assured power supply to Jammu and Kashmir from the Government of India during winters at reasonable prices. He highlighted the challenges facing the state due to its geographical location and the seasonal variation in power demand. He also stressed the importance of strengthening the transmission infrastructure in Jammu & Kashmir.

Javed Rana urged for



upgradation of Kishenpur-Moga transmission line and completion of the 400 KVA Grid Station at Siot to ensure reliable power supply to the region.

Furthermore, Rana emphasized the need for promoting sustainable energy in Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted the potential for small hydro projects in the UT and the importance of green corridor connectiv-

ity with Ladakh for solar energy evacuation.

The Minister underlined the imperative of ensuring cyber security in the power sector, recognizing the critical importance of protecting the UT's power infrastructure from potential threats.

Javed Rana assured that the Jammu and Kashmir government, led by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, is committed towards collaborating with all

stakeholders to ensure a reliable, sustainable and secure power supply to the people of the region.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity for the JK Minister to engage with his counterparts from other northern states and UTs, as well as officials from the Ministry of Power, to discuss crucial issues and explore solutions to the challenges facing the power sector in J&K.

Train to Kashmir

USBRL project will make J&K's progress unstoppable: HM Shah

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday congratulated the people of Jammu and Kashmir on inauguration of Udhampur-Baramulla-Srinagar Rail Link project, saying the move will serve new artery of growth and make progress of the region unstoppable.

He also said that two Vande Bharat trains flagged off will boost religious tourism to Vaishno Devi, while health and road projects worth rupees 24,000 crore will improve the living standards of people of the region to new heights.

Taking to micro-blogging site X (formerly

Twitter), Home Minister Amit Shah said: "Congratulations to our sisters and brothers in J&K on the inauguration of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project by PM Shri @narendramodi Ji today. It will serve as a new artery of growth, making the progress of the region unstoppable".

"The two Vande Bharat trains flagged off today will instill more power in the region's syncretic culture by boosting religious tourism to Vaishno Devi, while the new health and road projects worth ₹2400 crore will further elevate living standards to a new height," Home Minister Amit Shah added.



Dream of rail link to Kashmir made possible due to PM's determination: Vaishnaw

AGENCIES

KATRA: Railway Minister Ashwani Vaishnaw on Friday said the dream of connecting Kashmir to the rest of the country through a railway link has become a reality due to the determination and sharp focus of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

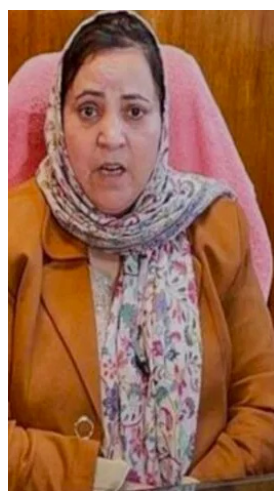
"The nation had nurtured the dream of the Jammu-Srinagar-Baramulla railway line for decades. There were many difficulties, like tall mountains and deep valleys. But we do not have to fight nature... through a network of bridges and tunnels, this railway line has become a reality. "It has become possible due to the strong will,



determined endeavour and laser sharp focus of the PM," Vaishnaw said at the inauguration of the Vande Bharat train to Kashmir by Modi in this pilgrim town.

Vaishnaw said it was a historic day as "another jewel has been added to Maa Bharti's crown", referring to the rail line. (PTI)

Sakeena Itoo greets people on auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha



compassion, humility, and unity. She added that Eid is a day that commemorates the unparalleled obedience and submission of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) to the will of Almighty Allah, a lesson that inspires us to lead lives of sincerity, selflessness and service to humanity.

"As we gather in prayer and offer our Qurbani (sacrifice), let us also remember the values this festival upholds — caring for the underprivileged, sharing our blessings, and strengthening the bonds of community and kinship. It is a time to embrace those in need with empathy and ensure that no one is left behind in our collective celebration", Sakeena said.

The Minister also called upon all to celebrate this Eid with a renewed sense of responsibility towards each other and with prayers for peace, prosperity, and harmony in our region and across the world. She also prayed for everyone contributing towards building a more inclusive, enlightened and resilient Jammu & Kashmir.

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has extended her heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

In her greetings, Minister Sakeena said that Eid ul-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice, is not only a celebration of faith and devotion but also a time to reaffirm our commitment to

Vande Bharat Train accorded warm welcome at Sangaldan Station



GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN: The inaugural Vande Bharat train to Kashmir was Friday warmly received at Sangaldan Railway Station—one of the key stop points on the prestigious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL).

The District Administration Ramban led by Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary and DIG DKR Range Shridhar Patil welcomed the train amidst patriotic celebrations.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi flagged off the train

from Katra to Srinagar, formally inaugurating long-awaited rail connectivity to Kashmir.

SSP Kulbir Singh and SDM Gool Intiaz Ahmed and several other officers were present for the historic occasion.

The USBRL project, often described as an engineering marvel, finally bridges the geographical divide, connecting the Kashmir Valley to the national railway network.

The arrival of the Vande Bharat at Sangaldan marks a transformative moment for the region's development and accessibility.

Mehbooba hails train to Kashmir, collective work on project over the years



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday welcomed the train to Kashmir, terming the project a culmination of what so many governments worked on and capped by the government of Narendra Modi.

"We welcome the train. The work had been on for the past 40 years, ever since Indira Gandhi started the Jammu-Udhampur railway link in 1983. All governments have worked on this project, and Modi has completed it. It was very difficult, but he has done it, and people are happy with it," Mufti said.

Reacting to the prime minister's address in

Katra, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said she was happy that Modi acknowledged the people's categorical denunciation of terrorism in the aftermath of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

"I am also happy that Modi has acknowledged the stand taken by the people of Kashmir against terrorism after the Pahalgam attack. He appreciated Adil Shah, who laid down his life while saving a tourist. This is who Kashmiris are," she said.

Nevertheless, Mufti questioned the Centre's rationale behind large-scale detentions of youths in Kashmir since the Pahalgam attack.

Rana hails inauguration of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, hailed the historic inauguration of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link describing it as a major breakthrough in effecting development of every section in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister complemented the Railways and the Government of India, as well as the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, for bringing this engineering marvel to life.

Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister of India and Union Railways Minister, he recalled the efforts of successive governments over the years that have gone into making this project a reality.

"This train service is a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of our governments towards improving the connectivity and

infrastructure of Jammu and Kashmir," Minister Rana said.

"It will not only enhance the mobility of people but also boost economic activity, promote tourism and provide new opportunities for growth and development in various regions and sub-regions of J&K."

The Minister expressed his optimism that this development will have a positive impact on the lives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in terms of economic development and social connectivity.

Rana who hails from the remote Pir Panjal Region of J&K, also hoped that other ongoing and planned infrastructure projects in Jammu & Kashmir will also be expeditiously completed and opened for the public soon.

These include the Jammu-Poonch National Highway, Loran to Tangmarg Road, Tunnel on Mughal Road, Budhal to Shopian Road, among others.

Good Morning **Kashmir**

EDITORIAL

Eid Ul Azha - Faith & Sacrifice

Eid ul Azha, also known as the Festival of Sacrifice, is being celebrated today with profound religious zeal and spiritual devotion across the Muslim world. This sacred occasion commemorates the unwavering faith and obedience of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S), who was willing to sacrifice his beloved son in submission to God's command. It is a story that continues to inspire millions, reminding humanity of the deeper values of faith, humility, and selflessness.

At its heart, Eid ul Azha is not merely a ritual of animal sacrifice; it is a symbolic act that urges believers to give up their ego, pride, and personal desires for the greater good. The festival teaches us that true devotion lies in surrendering to the will of the Almighty and in extending kindness to others, particularly those less fortunate.

This is also a time of togetherness—of families coming together in prayer, communities sharing meals, and people reaching out to the needy. The act of distributing meat from the sacrifice reflects the core Islamic values of charity, empathy, and social equity. It serves as a reminder that the blessings we enjoy are not ours alone to keep, but to share with those who struggle silently.

As we celebrate Eid today, it is crucial to reflect on the deeper meaning behind the festivities. In a world grappling with conflict, poverty, and division, the principles of Eid ul offer a much-needed message of peace and solidarity.

...A New Dawn Of **Eid-Ul-Azha**

PM's Historic Visit And The Rise Of A Progressive Jammu & Kashmir

MOHD AMIN MIR

As the crescent moon heralds the arrival of Eid-ul-Azha, the valleys of Jammu and Kashmir reverberate with not only the sounds of celebration but also with a profound sense of transformation, hope, and renewed unity. This Eid is unlike any in the recent past. It is being observed under the watchful gaze of history and progress, especially following the epochal visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji to Jammu & Kashmir. A land long marginalized and distant in physical and political connectivity is now on the threshold of an entirely new era—and it has taken 127 years to reach this pivotal moment.

The Prime Minister's visit was not merely ceremonial. It was the culmination of an unwavering commitment to integrating Jammu & Kashmir with the mainstream of national progress, not just politically and socially, but also physically—with steel tracks finally tying the region to the rest of the Indian heartland. For the first time in 127 years, the long-dreamt-of railway connection between Kashmir and the rest of India is now a reality.

This development is not only symbolic; it is transformative. Trains carry more than people—they carry ideas, opportunities, hopes, and investments. And behind this development is a vision—the vision of Narendra Modi Ji, a Prime Minister who has gone beyond words to etch his legacy into the very soil of Kashmir.

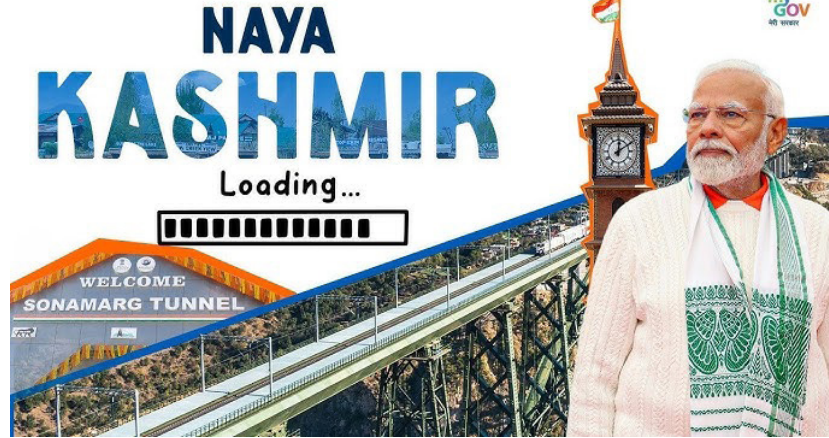
Connecting Kashmir: A Dream Realized After 127 Years

For generations, Kashmir has waited for a train that could unite it with India—not just in geography but in spirit. It was the dream of many governments, but it remained a dream until Narendra Modi Ji's leadership prioritized it with determined political will, infrastructural ambition, and administrative resolve. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (USBRL) is now a living testament to the resilience of Kashmiris and the steadfastness of a central government finally aligned with their aspirations.

On his visit, Prime Minister Modi flagged off the first electric train service that will run across the world's highest railway bridge—the Chenab Bridge—a structural marvel that has already become a symbol of engineering excellence and national pride. Built over the tempestuous waters of the Chenab River at a height of 359 meters, the bridge is taller than the Eiffel Tower and stands as a metaphor for Kashmir's rise under Modi's leadership.

Modi Ji's Progressive Vision: From Isolation to Integration

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's governance model is rooted in the principle of inclusive growth—Sabka



Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his treatment of Jammu & Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370. His leadership has pivoted from merely administering the region to empowering it.

Under his watch, Jammu & Kashmir has seen:

- Unprecedented infrastructure development: From AIIMS to IITs, new roads, tunnels like the Z-Morh and Zojila, and world-class railway lines.
- Social welfare schemes: Seamless implementation of PM Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, and Ayushman Bharat have ensured that even the most remote villagers now have access to housing, water, and healthcare.
- Youth and skill development: Initiatives like Mission Youth and Skill India have given wings to the aspirations of young Kashmiris.
- Tourism revival: With better connectivity and security, Kashmir is witnessing a revival in tourism that has generated both employment and cultural reawakening.
- Panchayati Raj empowerment: Democratically elected local bodies have been given real power, restoring faith in grassroots governance. These are not isolated achievements.

They are components of a larger, cohesive vision—a vision that sees Jammu & Kashmir not as a problem to be solved but as a promise to be fulfilled.

The Human Touch: Eid-ul-Azha and Modi Ji's Message of Unity

As people gathered in mosques and Eidgahs to offer their Eid-ul-Azha prayers, there was a profound sense of acknowledgment of the Prime Minister's humane approach toward the people of the region. The symbolism of his visit during a sacred festival is not lost on the people. In a region where politics has often overshadowed emotion, Narendra Modi Ji has brought an emotional connect—of respect, of commitment, and of reassurance.

His Eid message emphasized not just

peace but progress with dignity, echoing the sentiments of millions of Kashmiris who seek development without the loss of identity. His outreach to the people—from apple farmers in Sopore to artisans in Anantnag—reflects a bottom-up approach that treats people not as beneficiaries but as stakeholders.

A Prime Minister of the People: More Than Just Politics

When history is written, Narendra Modi Ji will not be remembered merely as the Prime Minister who repealed Article 370. He will be remembered as the leader who restored Jammu & Kashmir—not by force, but through faith and development. His deep-rooted connection with the people of Kashmir transcends politics. His frequent visits, constant engagement with local administration, and bold policy decisions reflect a sincerity rarely seen in Delhi's corridors of power.

Compared to his predecessors, Modi Ji has brought tangible results. For decades, promises were made in flowery speeches; Modi has made deliveries in brick and mortar. Whether it's the digital revolution in J&K's schools or the silent but impactful upliftment of BPL families, every sector now feels the pulse of progress.

Even his critics, once vocal, now find themselves acknowledging the undeniable changes sweeping across the Union Territory.

The Poor at the Centre: Modi Ji's Welfare Legacy

One of the most significant aspects of Narendra Modi Ji's governance—nationally and in J&K—has been his tireless focus on the welfare of the poor. In Kashmir, this translates to:

- Free ration under PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojana
 - Universal Health Coverage under Ayushman Bharat
 - Ujjwala Yojana LPG connections to remote villages
 - Scholarships and fellowships to tribal and backward students
 - Direct Benefit Transfers without middlemen or corruption
- The poor, who were once merely sta-

tistics in policy documents, now feel seen, heard, and supported. On this Eid, many poor families will celebrate with dignity, thanks to the government's uninterrupted welfare pipeline.

This is what makes Narendra Modi Ji truly stand apart—his governance does not discriminate, and his compassion does not waver.

Jammu & Kashmir Today: Not Just Peace, But Purpose

Perhaps the most remarkable change under Modi Ji has been the shift in Kashmir's national perception—from a conflict zone to a contributor to India's growth story. Jammu & Kashmir is now being seen as:

- A hub for eco-tourism and winter sports.
- A center for handicraft exports and GI-tagged products like saffron and Pashmina.
- A launchpad for startups and women-led SHGs (Self Help Groups). A model for e-governance and digital public infrastructure.

This Eid, when families gather in mountain villages and bustling towns, there's a palpable sense that they are no longer isolated—they are part of something bigger, something promising.

Kudoos to the People's Prime Minister

Narendra Modi Ji has achieved what many thought impossible. He has built bridges—not just of steel, like the Chenab Bridge, but of trust, development, and dignity. He has made Jammu & Kashmir more progressive than ever before, overtaking the legacy of every previous Prime Minister when it comes to real, on-ground change.

On this Eid-ul-Azha, the people of Jammu & Kashmir salute him not just as a Prime Minister, but as a visionary leader, a compassionate statesman, and a friend of the poor.

His legacy here is cemented not just in words, but in lives improved, roads constructed, children educated, and futures reimagined.

As the sound of takbir fills the air and children play with new clothes and sweets, it's worth reflecting on the journey of Jammu & Kashmir. From decades of isolation and broken promises, it now marches forward—not in fear, but in faith.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's historic visit on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha is more than a milestone. It is a message—that Jammu & Kashmir matters, that it belongs, and that its future is bright.

History will remember this as the Eid when Kashmir was no longer on the periphery of the Indian dream—but at its very heart.

Kashmiris, with gratitude and pride, say: Kudoos to Narendra Modi Ji. Eid Mubarak.

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Eid Ul Adha In Kashmir: Celebrations And Practices

Eid Ul Adha In Kashmir Is Not Just A Festival It Is A Heartfelt Tradition Where Faith Meets Compassion, And Valleys Echo With Prayers, Brotherhood And The Fragrance Of Sacrifice

MUKHTAR AHMAD QURESHI

Eid Ul Adha or Bakr Eid and the Festival of Sacrifice is one of the biggest Islamic festivals celebrated by Muslims all over the world. Eid Ul Adha is celebrated with deep religious fervor, cultural diversity and high social cohesion in Kashmir. Given the very long history of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.)'s unflinching belief in Allah, Eid Ul Adha in Kashmir is a blend of cultural, social and religious importance. It is an amalgamation of tradition, family, religion and festivities in a subdued yet potent combination that infuses everything all across the hills and valleys of this lovely land.

The Spiritual Essence

Eid Ul Adha is to remember the greatest act of obedience by Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) when Allah commanded him to sacrifice his son Ismail (A.S.) as a show of obedience. As a reward for obedience, Allah provided him with a ram in place that he should kill. On this basis, Qurbani (sacrifice) began, which is celebrated by Muslims today all across the globe.

In Kashmir, the day opens with recitation of Takbeerat and morning congregation prayers in Eidgahs, open spaces, mosques or shrines like Hazratbal, Khankah-e-Moula and Dargah Sharif. The devotees gather in thousands, wearing clean or freshly washed clothes, heads bent in supplication and hearts brimming over



with thankfulness. The sermon read during prayer usually addresses sacrifice, mercy and concord among mankind.

Pre Eid Preparations

Preparations for Eid Ul Adha in Kashmir begin days ahead for the festival. Bazaars of towns and cities like Srinagar, Baramulla, Sopore, Anantnag and Kupwara come to life and are filled with activity. Livestock bazaars are full of people who are hurrying to purchase sheep and goats for Qurbani. There is attention to choose the sacrificial animal with caution, that it is healthy and is according to religious tradition.

Tailors, baker shops and shops are booming into busi-

ness. Women make traditional foodstuffs, clean houses and adorn rooms with enthusiasm. Kids look forward to new clothes and Eidi (pocket money or gift from the elders).

Sacrifice and Distribution

Qurbani sacrifice is the crux of Eid Ul Adha. In Kashmir, the sacrifice is done in a state of faith and social consciousness. The community sacrifices immediately upon returning from Eid prayers, typically in the courtyard or designated area.

It reserves one third for the family, one third for friends and relatives and a third for the needy and poor. This action enhances the spirit of brotherhood and makes sure that the celebration of Eid reaches all strata of society,

particularly the poor.

It is a sight Kashmiri to see little boys helping break up the meat, transporting in tidy sized portions swathed under plastic or clothing of tradition. Even the spirit of sacrifice is translated into compassion and good will.

Traditional Dishes and Culinary Delights

The Eid in Kashmir would be incomplete without the ceremonial banquet. Locally found foods with spices and taste add to the very center of it. Rista (meatballs in red gravy), Gushtaba (meatballs in yogurt gravy), Rogan Josh, Yakhni, Kabab, Harissa (in cold Eids) and Tabaq Maaz along with aromatic rice or naan, are offered. Wazwan, the legacy of the cuisine of Kashmir, will find a place in family banquets that never end.

Kashmiri Kahwa or Noon Chai (pink salt tea) is served at family reunions. The fragrance of spices such as cardamom, cinnamon and saffron pervades homes and the hospitality of Kashmiri people is evident in their warm and generous serving.

Family gatherings are the core of festivities. Family members gather at each other's houses, exchange Eid Mubarak, sweets and warm praying. Grandparents pray for the kids and give Eidi in return for love.

Community cohesion is very prominent, particularly in rural settings. Sacrifices are likewise typically managed by community committees and mosques, particularly for poor families

that cannot even make animal sacrifices. NGOs and other youth organizations also give out food and clothing to the poor.

Social media has added a new dimension to the celebrations of Eid in the past few years. People post pictures in clothes that are traditional to their area, exchange Eid wishes and wish near and dear ones at distant locations.

Eid Ul Adha In Changing Times

Where traditional values persisted, Eid Ul Adha celebrations in Kashmir have witnessed the process of gradual transformation through urbanization, nature sensitivity and global awareness. People have become more aware regarding cleanliness and hygiene during the sacrificial time and more people have shifted to group or organized Qurbani through local welfare agencies.

Eid Ul Adha in Kashmir is not just a religious duty but an emotional and cultural one. It tells tales of devotion, acts of philanthropy and festivities that reverberate in the valleys for days. From the dawn devotional reflection to the break fast meal at night, from the children's laughter in new clothes to the old people's reverberant prayers Eid Ul Adha in Kashmir is a lovely performance of faith, custom and belonging.

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Eid Ul-Adha: Epitome Of Devotion And Sacrifice

ER ISHFAQ KHALIQ

Eid ul-Adha commemorates the unwavering faith and submission of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and his son Isma'il (Ishmael) to God's command. This act symbolizes the epitome of devotion, where personal desires are set aside in obedience to divine will. The festival serves as a reminder for Muslims to embody this level of commitment in their own lives, striving to align their actions with the principles of Islam. Broadly understating with a deep sense of knowledge Eid ul-Adha, also known as the Festival of Sacrifice, is deeply rooted in the Islamic understanding of faith, devotion, and moral responsibility. At its core, it commemorates the profound story of Prophet Ibrahim and his willingness to sacrifice his son, Isma'il in obedience to a divine command.

This event represents absolute submission to God's will, even when it defies human logic or personal desire. The essence of the festival lies in the concept of sacrifice—Qurbani. Muslims who are able to do so offer an animal as a symbolic act of devotion, remembering Ibrahim's readiness to give up what he loved most. However, the sacrifice is not about the physical act alone. It reflects a deeper spiritual truth: the willingness to let go of one's ego, desires, and worldly attachments for the sake of righteousness. The act becomes meaningful when it leads to inner purification and a closer connection to God. Eid ul-Adha also emphasizes generosity, social responsibility, and community.

The meat from the sacrificed animal is divided into portions to be shared with family, friends, and especially those in need. This ensures that the joy of the festival reaches beyond the individual and family to touch the wider community. It is a reminder that worship is not complete without care for others, especially the poor and marginalized. The festival occurs during the Hajj pilgrimage, a time when millions of Muslims from around the world gather in Mecca, all dressed in simple white garments, symbolizing equality, humility, and the stripping away of worldly status.

This connection to Hajj reinforces the themes of unity, mortality, and the ultimate return to God. Eid ul-Adha teaches that true piety is not in ritual alone but in sincerity, selflessness, and ethical living. It calls believers to reflect on their relationship with God, their responsibilities to others, and the kind of person they strive to be. Through remembrance, charity, and humility, the festival becomes not just



a celebration, but a reaffirmation of faith and a renewal of purpose.

Eid ul-Adha, emphasizing its spiritual, moral, and societal dimensions. "Eid-ul-Adha," delves into the essence of this festival, highlighting its significance beyond the ritualistic practices.

Furthermore, Various scholars emphasized that the act of sacrifice during Eid ul-Adha is not merely a ritualistic slaughter of an animal but a representation of the believer's readiness to relinquish personal interests for the greater good. They underscore the importance of understanding the underlying message of selflessness, piety, and social responsibility that the festival conveys.

In the broader discourse, scholars articulate that Islamic festivals like Eid ul-Adha are designed to reinforce communal bonds and collective consciousness among Muslims. They are occasions that transcend mere celebration, serving as platforms for spiritual reflection, moral rejuvenation, and societal cohesion.

THE MUST DO THINGS TO BE DONE ON EID AL ADHA

During Eid al-Adha, certain acts are considered obligatory (wajib) or highly emphasized (sunnah mu'akkadah) depending on your Islamic school of thought and personal circumstances. Here's a summary of the key obligations and important practices:

Eid Prayer (Salat al-Eid)

Obligatory for: Adult Muslim men (according to hanafi school; Sunnah Mu'akkadah in other schools). It is performed in congregation, usually in an open space called Eid Gah or in a large mosque. The prayer consists of two rak'ahs with extra takbirat

(saying "Allahu Akbar").

Sacrifice (Qurbani / Udhiyah)

Obligatory (wajib) according to the hanafi school for every adult Muslim who is sane and resident (not traveling). And possesses wealth above the Nisab (like the one for Zakat) on Eid day. According to other schools (Shafii, Maliki, hanbali), it is a highly recommended Sunnah, not obligatory. The sacrifice must be: A healthy animal (goat, sheep, cow, or camel). Done after the Eid prayer and within the days of 10th-12th Dhul-Hijjah (3 days of Tashriq). The meat is distributed: one-third for the family, one-third for relatives/friends, and one-third for the poor.

Observing the Takbir

Saying Takbirat al-Tashriq (Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illa Allah, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, wa Lillahil-hamd) after every fardh prayer starting from Fajr on 9th Dhul-Hijjah (Day of Arafah) to Asr on 13th Dhul-Hijjah. Obligatory (wajib) according to hanafis for men, Sunnah in other schools and for women.

Avoiding Hair and Nail Cutting Before Sacrifice

For those intending to offer a sacrifice, it is mustahabb (recommended) to avoid cutting their hair and nails from the start of Dhul-Hijjah until after the sacrifice is done. This is based on a hadith of the Prophet

General Sunnahs and Etiquettes

While not "obligatory," these acts are strongly encouraged Ghusl (ritual bath) before going to Eid prayer. Wearing clean and best clothes, ideally new or the best you own. Eating after the Eid prayer (unlike Eid al-Fitr where you eat before). Taking different routes to and from the Eid prayer ground.

Greeting others with "Taqabbalall hu minn wa minkum" (May Allah accept from us and you).

The must do things for the animal to be sacrificed

When performing Qurbani (Udhiyah) on Eid al-Adha, there are several essential actions and etiquettes that must be observed to ensure the sacrifice is valid and spiritually meaningful.

The process begins with a sincere intention. One must make a clear niyyah that the sacrifice is being done solely for the sake of Allah, following the tradition of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). The sacrifice can also be made on behalf of oneself, one's family, or deceased loved ones. It is important that the person offering the sacrifice owns the animal, or has proper permission. The animal cannot be stolen, borrowed, or taken without consent.

The sacrifice must be done only after the Eid prayer on the 10th, 11th, or 12th of Dhul-Hijjah. Performing the slaughter before the Eid prayer invalidates the Qurbani, except in specific cases like rural areas where no Eid congregation is held.

The animal selected for sacrifice must meet certain criteria. It can be a goat, sheep, cow, buffalo, or camel. A sheep or goat is sufficient for one person, while a cow or camel may be shared by up to seven people. The animal must be of the minimum required age: one year for a sheep or goat, two years for a cow, and five years for a camel. It must be in good health, without defects such as blindness, lameness, or severe emaciation. Minor imperfections are overlooked, but any major defect disqualifies the animal for Qurbani.

During the actual slaughter, it is

obligatory to mention the name of Allah. Saying "Bismillahi Allahu Akbar" before slaughtering is required. It is also recommended to say a prayer like, "Allahumma hadha minka wa laka. Taqabbal minni," which means, "O Allah, this is from You and for You. Accept it from me." The slaughter must be carried out with a sharp knife and in accordance with Islamic law. The windpipe, food pipe, and two blood vessels in the throat should be severed swiftly, ensuring the animal is alive and conscious at the time of the cut. The animal should be treated gently, not harmed unnecessarily, and should be laid facing the Qiblah.

It is Sunnah for the person offering the sacrifice to perform it personally or at least be present. One should avoid letting other animals witness the slaughter, and the knife should not be sharpened in front of the animal. These steps uphold the dignity and respect due to the creature being sacrificed.

After the sacrifice, the meat should ideally be divided into three parts: one-third for the family, one-third for friends and relatives, and one-third for the poor and needy. While it's permissible to keep all the meat or give all of it away, the recommended practice is to share generously, especially with those in need. The meat, skin, or any part of the animal should not be sold. Payment to the butcher should not be in the form of meat; instead, they should be compensated with money or another gift. However, one may gift meat or skin to others freely. Hygiene is also part of the Islamic ethic. Cleanliness must be maintained during and after the sacrifice, with proper disposal of waste and respect for public spaces. Local regulations should be followed, especially in urban areas.

Lastly, while not obligatory, it is highly recommended to avoid cutting one's nails or hair from the beginning of Dhul-Hijjah until the sacrifice is completed, if you intend to offer Qurbani. This act reflects a symbolic connection with those performing Hajj.

The Qurbani is not merely about slaughtering an animal, but a reminder of complete submission to Allah, a test of sincerity, and a moment to express compassion and care for others through sharing and charity. It reflects the legacy of Prophet Ibrahim and encourages a deeper connection with faith, community, it uplifts the spirit of sacrifice. For others before anything though all odds and hurdles.

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Eid Al-Adha: A Joyous Occasion

VINOD CHANDRASHEKHAR DIXIT

Eid-ul-Adha festival is deeply ingrained in the J & K region's cultural heritage, with families and communities coming together to celebrate. It is a significant festival in Jammu and Kashmir as it reflects the region's rich cultural and religious heritage. It is an occasion for people to reunite with loved ones and exchange gifts.

Eid al-Adha holds significant cultural and religious importance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The region has a majority Muslim population, making Eid al-Adha a vital part of their spiritual and cultural identity. This festival has been celebrated in the region for centuries, with unique customs and traditions that are passed down through generations. Why? Because Eid al-Adha brings people together, fostering a sense of community and social cohesion among the residents of Jammu and Kashmir. The festival is a time for spiritual reflection, prayer, and devotion, allowing people to reconnect with their faith and values.

Eid Al-Adha, also known as the Greater Eid, is an important Muslim festival which lasts for four days. It's worth mentioning that there are two Eids in the Hijri (Islamic) calendar and they shouldn't be confused. The first one is Eid Al-Fitr, which is celebrated at the end of Ramadan. Eid Al-Adha is the second one and it's known as the greater of the two Eids.

Eid al-Adha, the "Feast of Sacrifice," is a major Islamic festival celebrated worldwide, particularly in Muslim communities. It commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Ishmael (Ibrahim's son) as a test of his faith. During Eid al-Adha, Muslims perform a communal prayer, visit with family and friends, and some families



sacrifice an animal (sheep, goat, etc.) to share with family, friends, and the poor. The sacrifice is a reminder of Ibrahim's obedience and a way to show gratitude to Allah. The story of Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son as commanded by Allah exemplifies the importance of complete submission and obedience to God's will. The act of sacrifice on Eid-ul-Adha serves as a reminder for Muslims to prioritize their faith and trust in Allah above all else.

Although Eid-ul-Adha has no direct relation to the Hajj Pilgrimage, it is but a day after the completion of Hajj and therefore has significance in time. Eid Al-Adha marks the high

point in Hajj. The Hajj is a pilgrimage (a spiritual journey) to Makkah (Mecca). It's also the Fifth Pillar of Islam, so all Muslims who are healthy and financially stable must make this trip at least once in their lives. At the same time that people celebrate Eid Al-Adha by sacrificing animals, the pilgrims at Hajj are also commemorating Prophet Ibrahim's sacrifice.

Muslim worshippers typically perform a communal prayer, or al t, at dawn on the first day of the festival, attend Mosque, donate to charities and visit with family and friends, also exchanging gifts. The act of sacrifice is also seen as a means of seeking forgiveness and spiritual purification.

By sacrificing an animal, Muslims acknowledge their own shortcomings and sins, seeking Allah's forgiveness and striving for a renewed sense of purity and righteousness.

The importance of the Eid al-Adha sacrifice also lies in promoting unity and solidarity among Muslims and is evident in its role in combating poverty. The distribution of the sacrificial meat to the poor and needy helps strengthen social bonds and enhances the sense of equality and justice.

The traditions associated with Eid-ul-Adha hold deep meaning and significance, emphasising the values of faith, selflessness and gratitude. Through the act of sacrifice, Muslims

seek to strengthen their relationship with Allah, demonstrate their devotion and foster a spirit of compassion and empathy towards all members of their community.

The importance of the Eid al-Adha sacrifice is evident as it is a means for Muslims to draw closer to God. Many people in Jammu and Kashmir use this opportunity to donate to the needy, reflecting the festival's emphasis on compassion and generosity. May the spirit of Eid al-Adha bring peace, prosperity, and harmony to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

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Empowering Youth The Most Powerful Thing A Nation Can Do: PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that several of his government initiatives are rooted in the firm belief that empowering youth is the most powerful thing a nation can do, citing several programmes in the 11 years

of his tenure.

He said on X "India's youth have made a mark globally. Our Yuva Shakti is associated with dynamism, innovation and determination. Our youth have driven India's growth with unmatched energy and conviction."

In the last 11 years, he said, India has witnessed remark-



able instances of youngsters who have done the "unthinkable" across various sectors, including startUps, science, sports, community service, culture and more.

He said, "The last 11 years have also seen a decisive shift in policy and programmes aimed at youth empowerment. Government

initiatives like StartUp India, Skill India, Digital India and the National Education Policy 2020 are rooted in the firm belief that empowering youth is the most powerful thing a nation can do."

The prime minister said he is confident that the youth will keep strengthening the efforts to build a 'Viksit

Bharat'.

Modi had taken the oath as prime minister for the first time in May 26, 2014 and has since led the ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance to power for two more times.

He was sworn in for a third term in June 9 last year. (PTI)

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan Social Welfare Office Budgam Organises Week-Long Sports Activities

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: In a significant effort aimed to combat the menace of drug abuse and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle among youth, Social Welfare Office Budgam successfully organised a week-long series of sports and wellness activities under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

The programme commenced with great enthusiasm through a Marathon/Run against Drugs, where scores of students, youth, and civil society members participated to spread the message of saying 'No to Drugs and Yes to Life,' witnessing encouraging participation.

On the second day, momentum continued with a variety of sports tournaments including volleyball, cricket, kabaddi, and several traditional and recreational games. These activities were aimed at channelising the energy of youth towards positive, healthy engagements while raising awareness about the harmful effects of

substance abuse.

The third day was dedicated to Yoga and Meditation sessions, conducted in collaboration with the Youth Services & Sports Office and School Education department. Participants, especially school and college students actively took part in practicing various asanas and breathing exercises, reinforcing the importance of mental well-being in the fight against addiction.

The week-long campaign culminated with a vibrant Cycle Marathon and Paidal March against Drugs, which saw impressive participation from across the district. The concluding event sent out a strong and united message against drug abuse, underlining the community's commitment to building a healthier, drug-free society.

This programme under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan marked yet another step forward in the district's ongoing fight against substance abuse, promoting health, fitness, and social responsibility among the youth.

GMC's Urology Deptt Achieves Historic Quadruple Milestone

Solidifies Its Position As A Premier Urology Center In North India

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a testament to the department's commitment to excellence in academics, research, and patient care Department of Urology at Superspeciality Hospital, GMC Srinagar, has achieved a historic quadruple milestone, solidifying its position as a premier urology center in North India.

The department's academic triumph is marked by the graduation of its inaugural batch of MCh Urology specialists. Under the guidance of Prof. Syed Sajjad Nazir, the program has set new standards in surgical training, establishing the department as a center of excellence in urology education.

The team's national glory is evident in their double honors at Urolithicon 2023, Kolkata, showcasing their academic and clinical expertise. This achievement brings national recognition to J&K and highlights the department's capabilities.

The department's surgical excellence is demonstrated by



Prof. Nazir's live demonstration of Retrograde Intrarenal Surgery (RIRS) at AIIMS Bathinda, where they secured 3rd prize at NZUSICON's 360° Urolithiasis conference. This achievement showcases the department's innovative approach to urology.

The clinical revolution achieved by the department is the successful revival of live related kidney transplants, with the first case performed under Ayushman Bharat coverage. This milestone makes advanced care accessible to all, further solidifying the department's position as a leader in urology.

The leadership team, headed by Prof. Iffat Hassan, Principal & Dean, include M Ashraf Hakak, Administra-

tor, GMC Srinagar; Prof. Syed Sajjad Nazir, HoD Urology & Renal Transplantation and Dr. Rubina Shaheeb, Medical Superintendent. The active support of the deptt of anaesthesiology & critical care made the successful surgical interventions possible smoothly.

These achievements establish the department as a leading urology training center, a hub for innovative surgeries, a destination for kidney transplantation, and a champion of accessible healthcare under Ayushman Bharat. The Urology Department at GMC Srinagar has set a new standard in healthcare, and their accomplishments are a testament to their dedication and expertise.

Series Of Activities Organized Under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan Across Anantnag

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: To strengthen the fight against substance abuse among youth, Youth Services & Sports (YSS) Anantnag, in collaboration with the Education department Anantnag, organized a series of activities Friday across various educational institutions in Anantnag district under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

Programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, and community members. Activities included awareness rallies, interactive sessions, essay writing and debate competitions, and pledge-taking ceremonies held at Shaheed Humayun Muzaamil GDC Boys Anantnag and GDC Mattan.

Aim of the campaign was to educate young people about the harmful effects of drug abuse on health and society, and to encourage them to become agents of change in their families and communities.

Special awareness sessions were conducted by experts, teachers and students, with real life stories and case studies shared to highlight the dangers of addiction.

District administration stressed the importance of community involvement and urged schools and colleges to continue awareness efforts and set up early intervention systems.

More awareness programmes are scheduled on selected focus days to ensure ongoing public outreach and engagement under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

PM Inaugurates

attack in south Kashmir's Pahalgam, which left 25 tourists as well as a local man dead and has brought the tourism industry in Kashmir to a halt.

"It was an attack by Pakistan on humanity and Kashmiriyat, to break the backbone of those in Kashmir who are dependent on tourism," Modi said.

"Our neighbouring country opposes peace, tourism and even the livelihood of the poor. What happened at Pahalgam on April 22 is a clear example of it," he said.

Moments after inaugurating the Chenab Bridge, the Prime Minister was seen waving the Tiranga and walking across it with a broad smile. Accompanying him were Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, as he cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Reiterating that India will not bow to terrorism, the PM said the people of J&K, especially the youth, have made up their mind to give a fitting reply to terrorism. He said he appreciated the people for spontaneously coming out on the roads and holding demonstrations against the terror attack.

Chenab bridge is the part of the 272 km long USBRL project, constructed worth around Rs 43,780 crore and includes 36 tunnels (spanning 119 km) and 943 bridges. The project establishes all-weather, seamless rail connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of the country.

Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various road projects. He laid the foundation stone of road widening project from Rafiabad to Kupwara on National Highway-701 and the construction of Shopian bypass road on NH-444 worth over Rs 1,952 crore. He also inaugurated two flyover projects at Sangrama Junction on National Highway-1 in Srinagar and at Bemina Junction on National Highway-44. These projects will ease traffic congestion and enhance traffic flow for the commuters.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence in Katra worth over Rs 350 crore. It will be the first medical college in Reasi district contributing substantially to the healthcare infrastructure in the region.

June 6 Will Go

momentous day! June 6, 2025, will go down in history. Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji inaugurated the Chenab Bridge, the world's highest railway arch bridge, and the Anji Bridge, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge—making the dream of connecting Kashmir to Kanyakumari a reality," Sinha said in a post on X.

The bridges are part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), a flagship railway infrastructure project aimed at providing year-round, all-weather connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India.

During his day-long visit to the Union Territory, Prime Minister Modi also laid the foundation stone for development projects worth over 46,000 crore,

underscoring the government's commitment to regional infrastructure and connectivity.

Highlighting the pace of development in Jammu and Kashmir under the current leadership, the Lieutenant Governor noted, "In the last three years alone, projects worth Rs 1,16,000 crore have been completed, which is unprecedented. The bridges, highways, tunnels, and rail links are not just infrastructure, but the symbols of a new, developing Jammu and Kashmir."

He emphasized that these infrastructure developments have laid the foundation for new pillars of progress and drawn a "new line of destiny" for the people of the region.

Referring to the tragic Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, lost their lives, LG Sinha said, "Our response through Operation Siondoor was swift and strong. It sent a befitting message that terrorism will not be tolerated on the soil of J&K."

The Lieutenant Governor concluded by expressing his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi, saying, "PM Modi has not only developed Jammu and Kashmir but has also instilled new hope, pride, and opportunity in the hearts of its people."

The event witnessed participation from local dignitaries, pilgrims, and citizens who hailed the infrastructure push and renewed connectivity as a transformational phase in Jammu and Kashmir's development journey.

CM hails Railway

comfort in the daily lives of people of Jammu & Kashmir.

The Chief Minister was addressing a large gathering at Katra during the inauguration of the Chenab and Anji Bridges and at the flagging off ceremony of the Vande Bharat Train to Kashmir by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This marks Kashmir's first all-weather railway connectivity with the rest of India.

Also present on the occasion were Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union MoS PMO Dr. Jitendra Singh and other dignitaries.

"The benefits to Jammu & Kashmir will be substantial. Tourism will receive a major boost, and the daily lives of our residents will improve," the Chief Minister said.

He highlighted the difficulties faced by people during inclement weather when highway closures lead to exorbitant airfares.

"With this railway line operational, that hardship will be alleviated to a great extent, offering affordable and reliable transportation," he noted.

Speaking about the economic benefits, the Chief Minister emphasized the importance of better market access for the region's horticultural produce.

"Our apples, cherries, and other fruit will now find faster and more easy access to markets across the country and even globally. This will provide a significant economic benefit to our growers and traders," he said.

Lauding Prime Minister Modi's leadership, the Chief Minister said that the

successful completion of this critical infrastructure project stands as a testament to the Centre's commitment to the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Under PM Modi's stewardship, yet another critical infrastructure project in Jammu & Kashmir has been completed. We are also witnessing rapid progress on other vital initiatives — the Jammu Ring Road, the Srinagar Ring Road, the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, the four-laning of the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, and the expansion of both the Jammu and Srinagar airports and the railway network," he said.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that with the Prime Minister's continued support, Jammu and Kashmir will soon regain its status as a full-fledged state.

"Today marks yet another momentous occasion. With your leadership and support, we look forward to Jammu & Kashmir regaining its status as a full-fledged state," he said.

Reflecting on his personal tryst with key milestones in J&K's rail history, Omar Abdullah recalled his presence at the inauguration of the Anantnag Railway Station, the Banihal Railway Tunnel, and his government's final event at the same venue with PM Modi in 2014.

"You may call it fate, or perhaps destiny, but I have always had the good fortune of being present at key milestones in Jammu and Kashmir's railway journey," he said.

He also recalled that the dream of connecting Kashmir via railway dates back to colonial times.

"Even during British rule, plans were envisioned — such as the proposed Uri and Jhelum railway lines — but they remained unfulfilled. What the British could not achieve, you have made a reality. You have connected Kashmir with the rest of India and, through it, to the wider world. This is a historic accomplishment," he said.

Paying tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he credited him for being the first to recognize the rail-network to Kashmir as a project of national importance.

"This progress owes much to the vision of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, who declared this railway line a project of national importance. Since then, the project has seen consistent progress and budgetary prioritization," he said.

Reaffirming his government's commitment to development, the Chief Minister reiterated his resolve to fulfill the vision of a prosperous region.

"Our government remains committed to the vision of 'Viksit Jammu Kashmir, Viksit Bharat' — a developed Jammu & Kashmir, a developed India — and we are determined to realize this goal for the people of our region."

Concluding his remarks, the Chief Minister extended his gratitude to the Prime Minister on behalf of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

"On this historic day, on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, I extend my heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to you, Hon'ble Prime Minister. Thank you for your unwavering support and for helping turn decades-old dreams into reality."

LG, CM Greet

greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, wishing them peace, well-being and prosperity.

In his message on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha, the Chief Minister said the holy occasion imbues in us the spirit of making honesty, truthfulness and selflessness a way of life.

He added that the festival commemorates the timeless example of absolute faith and unwavering obedience set by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his devoted son Prophet Ismail (AS).

"Eid-ul-Azha is not only a celebration of faith but also a reminder of the profound sacrifice and complete submission to the will of Almighty. The unwavering trust shown by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and the willing obedience of Prophet Ismail (AS) teach us the essence of selflessness, devotion and steadfastness in the face of trials," Omar Abdullah said.

He expressed hope that this auspicious occasion will further strengthen the bonds of communal harmony, mutual brotherhood, amity and tranquility across the region.

The Chief Minister also prayed for sustained peace, harmony and progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

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PM Modi speaks with Canadian counterpart, confirms participation in G7 Summit

IAN S

OTTAWA/NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday spoke with Canada's new PM Mark Carney, discussing various global issues while also accepting the latter's invitation to attend the G7 Summit in Kananaskis later this month.

"Glad to receive a call from Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada. Congratulated him on his recent election victory and thanked him for the invitation to the G7 Summit in Kananaskis later this month. As vibrant democracies bound by deep people-to-people ties, India and Canada will work together with renewed vigour, guided by mutual respect and shared interests. Look forward to our meeting at the Summit," PM Modi posted on X after the phone call.

As the G7 President this year, Canada will host the G7 Leaders' Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta from June 15 to 17.

The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal grouping of seven of the world's most advanced economies, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as the



European Union.

PM Modi had also attended the 50th G7 Summit hosted by Italy in Apulia last year where India was invited as an Outreach Country.

The visit was the Prime Minister's first overseas trip after assuming office in his third consecutive term.

It was India's 11th participation in G7 Summit and Prime Minister Modi's fifth consecutive participation at the G7 Summit where he engaged with other world leaders on issues of importance to India, as also to the Global South.

The visit to Kananaskis will come at a time when Canada's new Prime Minister Mark Carney is pushing for deepening economic cooperation with India.

Even during his campaign, the Canadian Prime Minister said rebuilding

ties with India was a priority for his government, describing it as an "incredibly important relationship".

He had said Canadians have deep personal, economic and strategic ties with India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had congratulated Carney on being elected as the Canadian Prime Minister after his predecessor Justin Trudeau stepped down from the role.

In his message, PM Modi had stressed strong people-to-people ties between the two countries while saying he was looking forward to "unlocking greater opportunities".

Last week, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar spoke with Anita Anand after her appointment as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"Thank you Minister @DrSJaishankar for the productive discussion today on strengthening Canada-India ties, deepening our economic cooperation, and advancing shared priorities. I look forward to continuing our work together," Anand wrote on X.

With Carney, it looks like India wants to turn a new leaf in bilateral ties that had nosedived under Trudeau amid unsubstantiated allegations against New Delhi related to the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023.

Relations between India and Canada took a big hit in 2023 after Trudeau publicly accused India of being involved in the killing of Nijjar on Canadian soil, allegations that India described as "absurd" and "politically motivated".

Tensions escalated as Canada expelled six Indian diplomats, followed by a tit-for-tat move by India last year.

Both countries expelled top envoys, froze trade talks and suspended official visits. India has accused Canada of tolerating extremism on its soil and failing to take action to curb attacks against its diplomats.

India's global engagement needs rethink, says Congress

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Supriya Shrinete, in a press briefing on Friday, expressed concern over what she described as a decline in India's diplomatic engagement and visibility on the global stage. She specifically referred to India's absence from major forums like the G7, despite being among the world's largest economies.

Shrinete cited then-US President Barack Obama's 2010 remarks in praise of then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and questioned why countries like Canada now appear hesitant to extend invitations to India for the G7. She interpreted this as a sign of waning diplomatic influence.

She also referred to public statements made by US President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly claimed to have brokered a ceasefire between India and Pakistan. The Congress spokesperson further said that similar assertions are now being echoed by Russia. She urged the Indian government to respond clearly to these claims, either by refuting them or explaining the context if they are accurate.

"The nation deserves clarity," she said, stressing the importance of transparency in foreign affairs. Shrinete also voiced apprehensions over what she viewed as a preference for image-building over substantive diplomacy. She warned against focusing too heavily on symbolic gestures or visual narratives. She, in this context, suggested that a more strategic and consistent foreign policy is needed to safeguard national interests.

She expressed concern over "the evolving global perception" of Pakistan. Institutions like the IMF, the ADB, and the World Bank, she noted, have extended significant financial support to Pakistan, while the country has also assumed roles in global bodies such as the UN's Counter-Terrorism Committee. In her view, this is at odds with India's long-standing position on terrorism and reflects a missed opportunity for stronger international advocacy.

Commenting on recent international outreach by Indian parliamentary delegations, Shrinete questioned the effectiveness of such efforts. She pointed out that many of these visits resulted in meetings with lower-level officials or Indian diaspora groups, rather than influential foreign leaders or decision-makers. "We need to assess what tangible outcomes these visits have achieved," she remarked.



Turning to domestic matters with international implications, Shrinete referred to the tragic terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, which claimed the lives of 26 individuals. She questioned the timing of the Prime Minister's visit to Jammu and Kashmir, suggesting that it came more as part of a ceremonial event than a response to the tragedy. She expressed disappointment that "national security concerns in sensitive regions are not always met with prompt or visible engagement".

Shrinete also commented on alleged shifts in India's traditional alliances, pointing to what she called Russia's recent cooperation with Pakistan. She warned that regional dynamics are changing, with China and Pakistan strengthening ties—a

development, she said, that has long been cautioned against by opposition leaders.

When asked about Congress MPs, including Shashi Tharoor, who participated in foreign delegations and later described the visits as positive, Shrinete acknowledged the complexities of international diplomacy. She explained that while representatives may exercise restraint abroad, there remains a responsibility to ask hard questions back home. She cited Kuwait's recent decision to lift a 19-year visa ban on Pakistan shortly after an Indian delegation's visit, suggesting this raised legitimate questions about diplomatic impact.

A key concern she highlighted was the apparent reluctance to hold comprehensive discussions in Parliament on foreign policy matters, while simultaneously prioritising engagement with Indian communities abroad. "There seems to be a disconnect between domestic accountability and international outreach," she said.

The Congress spokesperson stressed the need for a more grounded and outcome-driven foreign policy approach. In her view, the current trajectory risks sidelining India's voice in global conversations, despite its growing economic stature.

EAM Jaishankar meets delegations led by Supriya Sule and Shrikant Shinde

IAN S

NEW DELHI: The high-level Indian multi-party delegation led by Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-SP) Supriya Sule on Friday met External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar after concluding a successful visit to Qatar, South Africa, Ethiopia and Egypt, conveying India's resolute stance against terrorism.

"Nice to meet the All Party Delegation headed by Supriya Sule, which visited Qatar, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Egypt," the EAM posted on X.

Sule, while speaking with media after the meeting, highlighted that the delegation briefed the EAM about the diplomatic outreach on Operation Sindoor.

"EAM S Jaishankar wanted to hear our experience and the feedback we got from each country. We discussed it in great detail," she said.

In response to a criticism received from the opposition that the delegation met only Members of Parliament (MPs) and not any decision-makers, she said, "Each delegation met different dignitaries across various countries including Speakers and



Vice Presidents. Additionally, MPs are also decision makers and part of policy making in any democracy".

"In a strong democracy, everyone has the right to speak, and many people have different views. Many Congress leaders were there in various delegations, including mine, which had two Congress leaders," she added while responding to a question.

The delegation also included BJP leaders Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Anurag Thakur, and V. Muralidharan, Congress leaders Manish Tewari and Anand Sharma, Telugu Desam Party's Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, Aam Aadmi Party leader Vikramjeet Singh Sawhney, and former diplomat Syed Akbaruddin.

"We shared the gist of the discussions from our visits to four countries as

part of the Supriya Sule-led delegation. Overall, it was a highly productive and meaningful dialogue, where those countries strongly condemned terrorist attacks in India. We also spoke about the need for a global effort against terrorism and the successes achieved in our efforts," former Minister V. Muralidharan told IANS.

During their visit to the four countries, the delegation engaged with the government, parliament, media, think tanks, and the Indian diaspora, highlighting the significance of Operation Sindoor and the continued fight against Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism.

EAM Jaishankar also met the all party delegation led by Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Eknath Shinde that visited the UAE, Liberia, Congo and Sierra Leone.

HC shields Karnataka cricket body office bearers from coercive action, refuses relief to RCB marketing head

IAN S

BENGALURU: The Karnataka High Court on Friday provided relief from coercive action to the office-bearers of the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), who were facing the prospect of arrest in connection with the stampede near Chinnaswamy Stadium during a felicitation programme for the RCB, in which 11 persons were killed.

Meanwhile, taking up the petition filed by Malavika Naik, questioning the arrest of her husband Nikhil Sosale, the Marketing Head of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), the high court adjourned the matter to June 9 without providing any relief from the arrest.

The single-judge bench of Justice S.R. Krishna Kumar, hearing a petition seeking the quashing of FIRs against the office bearers of the KSCA, passed an interim order, directing the police not to initiate any forceful action against the KCSE's President, Raghuram Bhat, Secretary A. Shankar, and Treasurer E.S. Jayaram.



However, the court opined that the investigation into the case could be continued and asked the KSCA office-bearers to cooperate and not to leave the court's jurisdiction.

Advocate General K. Shashi Kiran Shetty, representing the state, submitted that only necessary arrests are being made following the lodging of FIRs.

The senior counsels representing the KSCA office bearers demanded that the FIRs against their clients be quashed. They submitted that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah himself had given directions to arrest the RCB franchise representatives and KSCA office bearers, and also argued that the due legal procedure was not followed

while making arrests. They further submitted that new FIRs were being lodged against KSCA office bearers and that they needed protection. They highlighted that Sosale was taken into custody at 4.30 a.m. by the police, which, they claimed, was against the law. They also pointed out that the complainant in the case, the Police Inspector of Cubbon Park, had been suspended.

The bench questioned how the arrests in the case could be against the law, stating that an FIR is lodged first, and then arrests are made, which is lawful. It also questioned the Advocate General about the investigation into the stampede case being conducted by three agencies simul-

aneously: a magisterial probe, a judicial probe by a retired High Court Judge, and an investigation by the CID. The Advocate General agreed that three agencies were probing the incident.

The bench noted that making arrests without evidence would not be correct. The KSCA had filed a writ petition with the High Court on Friday, challenging the state government's decision to file an FIR against the association's office bearers for the stampede and claiming that the government is trying to shift the blame onto them to escape public outrage.

In its writ, the KSCA submitted that the filing of an FIR against them and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's issuance of arrest orders at a press conference are against the law.

It argued that the state government organised the felicitation event at Vidhana Soudha and called for fans to participate. Furthermore, the KSCA claimed that crowd management is not its responsibility.

It alleged that by suspending police officers, the government has acknowledged its mistakes and is now making allegations to safeguard its own image and that of its ministers.

India and Germany discuss joint role in ensuring global peace and security

IAN S

BERLIN: The all-party Parliamentary delegation from India led by BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday held a productive interaction with Omid Nouripour, Vice-President of Bundestag, the German Parliament, deeply appreciating Germany's strong and unequivocal support for India's principled stand against terrorism.

The delegates conveyed India's firm response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and briefed about Operation Sindoor, reiterating the country's zero tolerance for terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Later, the delegation also met Bundestag's Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee Armin Laschet and other members and former min-

isters, including Ralph Brinkhaus and Hubertus Heil. The delegation conveyed India's unwavering stand for zero tolerance for terrorism and outlined its resolve to not give in to nuclear blackmail.

The leaders noted growing momentum in strategic partnership between India-Germany and joint role in ensuring global peace and security.

Following the conclusion of a productive and impactful visit to Belgium, the delegation had arrived in Germany late Thursday for the final leg of their engagements in Western Europe.

The delegation is a part of the Indian government's ongoing diplomatic outreach under Operation Sindoor and its "unwavering adherence" to a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism.

India's forex kitty enough to fund over 11 months of imports: RBI chief

IAN S

NEW DELHI: India's foreign exchange reserves stood at \$691.5 billion, as of May 30, and are sufficient to fund more than 11 months of goods imports and about 96 per cent of external debt outstanding, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Friday.

For the week ended May 30, the reserves dropped by \$1.2 billion to break an 8-week rising trend. India's foreign exchange reserves had recorded a robust increase of \$6.99 billion to \$692.72 billion in the preceding week ended May 23.

Changes in foreign currency assets, expressed in dollar terms, include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of other currencies held in the reserves.

External commercial borrowings (ECBs) and non-resident deposits have seen higher net inflows compared to the previous year.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor said: "Overall, India's external



sector remains resilient as key external sector vulnerability indicators continue to improve. We remain confident of meeting our external financing requirements."

The latest RBI data showed that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of foreign exchange reserves, stood at \$586.167 billion. The RBI releases forex data every Friday.

According to RBI data, India's forex reserves are still quite close to its all-time high of \$704.89 billion, reached in September 2024. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion.

Central banks worldwide are increasingly accumulating gold as a safe-haven asset in their foreign exchange reserves amid uncertainty created by geopolitical tensions. The gold reserves currently amount to \$83.582 billion. The share of gold maintained by the RBI in its foreign exchange reserves has almost doubled since 2021.

Elon Musk-run Starlink latest player to get DoT satcom licence in India

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Elon Musk-run affordable satellite internet service Starlink has finally received a satcom licence in India to offer its commercial services, possibly later this year or early next year.

According to reliable sources, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued the Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (GMPCS) permit to the US company.

The trial spectrum is also set to be issued to Starlink in coming days, as the company has fulfilled all security compliance requirements outlined in its letter of intent (LoI).

Starlink is now the third satcom company to get a GMPCS permit after Eutelsat's OneWeb and Jio-SES to provide services in the



country. Starlink now needs approval from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), and has already submitted necessary documents, before the spectrum is allocated to the satellite-based internet service.

The initial DoT approval was granted after Starlink agreed to comply with the new national security guidelines for satcom operators. The Department had

announced 29 additional requirements, including mandatory interception and monitoring mechanisms, use of local data centres, location tracking for mobile user terminals, localisation mandates, among others, for existing and potential satcom licensees.

In April, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held a meeting with top executives of Starlink to discuss the company's investment plans for the country.

Boland: 'I just want to make their decision as hard as possible'

Scott Boland says he is pain free for the first time in 18 months and is aiming to cause Australia's selectors headaches as he vies for a spot in the World Test Championship final next week, ahead of Josh Hazlewood.

Boland, 36, is fighting for a spot in the WTC final XI despite being Player of the Match in the last Test he played in Sydney against India in January. He was not selected in Sri Lanka when Australia fielded just one quick and three spinners in each of the two Tests and has not played any cricket since Victoria's second-last Sheffield Shield fixture of Australia's domestic season in early March after battling ongoing knee soreness.

Boland had a huge impact (21 wickets at an average of 13) in Border-Gavaskar series in the three Tests he played in place of the injured Hazlewood. He was also Australia's best quick in the 2023 WTC final when he was selected ahead of Hazlewood. But he knows he is no guarantee to play at Lord's against South Africa as Hazlewood is fully fit again having bowled superbly

throughout the IPL (22 wickets at an average of 18) to help Royal Challengers Bengaluru claim a maiden title.

Boland said the three months off have been vital to help him get his knee right after playing through soreness over the previous year-and-a-half and he is hoping to make the selectors job as difficult as possible.

"I'm really happy with how my body's feeling at the moment," Boland said. "Pain free for probably the first time in about 18 months. So it's feeling really good."

"My goal for probably the last two months was just get myself and my body in the position where I can put my hand up and be ready to go if it goes my way. I probably felt like at the back end of the Shield season, my knee was sort of, not wearing away, but wasn't going how I wanted to go. And I didn't feel like I was bowling how I wanted. But now I feel like I'm in a really good spot that I can bowl how I want to bowl. It's pulling up really well, so that's all I can do, and I just want to make their decision as hard as possible."



The decision between Boland and Hazlewood is one of a few that Australia's selectors are mulling over, alongside whether to pick a specialist allrounder, where to bat Cameron Green on return from injury as a batter-only and who will open alongside Usman Khawaja given Travis Head will move back to No. 5 after opening in Australia's last two Tests in Sri Lanka. The decision between

Boland and Hazlewood sits independent of the batting order. However, Boland's chances would increase if the selectors elect not to play an allrounder in Beau Webster given concerns over Hazlewood's durability after breaking down in each of his last two Tests.

"I felt like I had a couple of really strong games," Boland said. "But Josh is obviously a world-class bowler. He's one of

weeks after the domestic season finished and worked exclusively on strengthening his knee in the gym.

"I was able to get it to a spot where it's really strong, and then it's just gotten better and better since I've started running and bowling, which was seven weeks ago," he said.

The only concern for Boland is that he is not as match-hardened compared to Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc. The latter three have all been playing in the IPL and although they have only been bowling four overs per game, bowling at high intensity in games regularly over a two-month stretch has value for the experienced quicks.

Australia opted not play a long-form practice match leading into the WTC final and have instead chosen to do seven days of nets and centre-wicket practice in Beckenham, south of London, as they did before the 2023 WTC final. Boland said his lack of match practice is not a concern.

"I think we're really comfortable with the way that we do it now," Boland said. "I don't think we've played a practice game since I've been

in the team. We haven't had a scheduled tour game. So I think you can get as much out of training if you have the right conditions. And I think the set-up we've got at Beckenham is perfect. There's a really nice centre-wicket, beautiful run ups, all that kind of stuff. So it's as close you can get to a game without playing a game."

"For me personally, I like that the best. You can just get what you need to get done. And then all the other guys have been playing IPL, the other three bowlers, so they're ready to go. They're match hardened. And I think the intensity of the IPL helps when you go from format to format. They've already been at 100%. The only step up for them is just bowling a few more overs which they're definitely used to."

One factor not in Boland's favour is that he has never played at Lord's. He was not selected for the Lord's Test during the 2023 Ashes series. Hazlewood has 13 wickets at 26.15 in three Tests at the ground including five crucial scalps across two innings to help Australia win the 2023 Lord's Test against England.

MLC hopeful of Afghanistan players' participation after Trump's travel ban



Major League Cricket (MLC) officials hope that Afghanistan players including Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad will be able to fulfil their contracts for the 2025 season after US president Donald Trump signed a travel ban which will come into effect next week.

Trump's proclamation will "fully restrict and limit the entry" into the United States of nationals of 12 countries: Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. He said the ban is designed to "protect the national security and national interest of the United States and its people".

There are seven Afghanistan players under contract for MLC 2025: Rashid, Azmatullah Omarzai and Naveen-ul-Haq (all MI New York); Gulbadin Naib, Fazalhaq Farooqi and Waqar Salamkheil (all Seattle Orcas) and Noor (Texas Super Kings).

The ban, which is effective from 12.01am Eastern Time on Monday, June 9 includes an exemption for

"any athlete or member of an athletic team... traveling for the World Cup, Olympics, or other major sporting event as determined by the Secretary of State".

The order also states: "This proclamation shall apply only to foreign nationals of the designation countries who: (i) are outside the United States on the applicable effective date of this proclamation; and (ii) do not have a valid visa on the applicable effective date of this proclamation."

ESPNcricinfo understands that some relevant players have already reached the United States after receiving visas, while others are yet to apply or travel. A league official told ESPNcricinfo they were hopeful that MLC will be classified as a 'major sporting event' by Marco Rubio, the Secretary of State, which would ease any concerns about the participation of Afghan players.

An official at one affected franchise told ESPNcricinfo that they would explore all options, including the possibility of flying affected players into the United States

before the ban kicks in. The official added that they will lean on MLC and other relevant authorities for guidance.

An MLC spokesperson said: "We're continuing to monitor the situation and are working with the relevant authorities to minimize travel disruptions for overseas players ahead of the start of Major League Cricket next week. We continue to attract some of the best players from around the world to come over to the US to showcase their talent, along with the best cricketers from the USA, and we are set to have the most exciting tournament to date this summer."

The order specifically mentions the Olympics, which will take place in Los Angeles in 2028, as an event for which athletes will be granted exemptions. Afghanistan should, therefore, be eligible to compete in the men's T20 cricket event at the Games if they qualify.

MLC's 2025 season starts on June 12, with a rematch of last year's final between Washington Freedom and San Francisco at the Oakland Coliseum.

Football: Uzbekistan, Jordan book debut World Cup spots for 2026 edition

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BEIJING (CHINA): Three more Asian teams have punched their tickets to the 2026 FIFA World Cup following the latest round of qualifiers, with Uzbekistan and Jordan set to make their tournament debuts and South Korea extending its streak to 11 consecutive appearances. China, by contrast, was eliminated with one match remaining. Uzbekistan secured its place with a goalless draw against the United Arab Emirates in Group A. The result was enough for the Central Asian side, who featured Manchester City defender Abdulkodir Khusanov and Roma forward Eldor Shomurodov, to become the fifth team to reach the tournament through the qualifying pathway, joining Japan, New Zealand, Iran and Argentina.

Qatar, the 2022 World Cup host, edged 10-man Iran 1-0 in the same group. Both Qatar and the UAE will advance to the playoffs, where two more World Cup spots will be contested, reports Xinhua.

In Group B, Jordan



made history by qualifying for its first-ever World Cup following a 3-0 win over Oman. South Korea, already a regular presence on the world stage, sealed a 2-0 away victory against Iraq to maintain its perfect run since 1986. Iraq will join the playoffs, while the final playoff place from the group will be decided between Oman and Palestine, who face each other in the final round.

China's slim hopes were dashed in Group C after a 1-0 defeat to Indonesia in Jakarta. Ole Romeny converted a penalty just before halftime to secure the win and send Indonesia to the playoff round, while China was left to reflect on another failed campaign.

Bahrain also exited contention following a 2-0 loss to Saudi Arabia. In another match, Australia claimed a 1-0 victory over Japan in

Perth, positioning itself strongly to secure a direct berth from the group. The Socceroos lead Saudi Arabia by three points and have a +8 goal difference advantage heading into the final round.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States from June 11 to July 19, with 48 teams in the fray, playing in 48 venues.

VPTL 2025: Batters need to take more responsibility, says NECO Master Blaster skipper Jitesh Sharma after first loss

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NAGPUR: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Jitesh Sharma, who is captaining NECO Master Blaster in Vidarbha Pro T20 League, feels that the batting unit needs to step up their game following the loss in the first match.

Bharat Rangers clinched a tense 23-run win over NECO

Master Blaster in the Vidarbha Pro T20 League match on Friday. Leading the side, Jitesh Sharma too wasn't able to make a mark, but the batter is confident of doing well in the coming games.

"This is a learning phase for us in the Vidarbha League. It's our first year, and naturally, there will be mistakes—but what's important is that we learn and improve. The IPL is

a different league altogether and can't be compared directly, but we can definitely raise our standards and skill levels here," said Jitesh Sharma after the match.

"Yes, there were mistakes today, especially with the bat, but we want to focus on the positives. We bowled really well, but the batting unit needs to take more responsibility. As a player and captain,

I just want to see the youngsters enjoying the game and growing through the experience," he added.

NECO Master Blaster will lock horns with Nagpur Titans on Saturday before meeting Nagpur Heron on Sunday. "Our plan for the next match is simple—focus on playing better cricket and aim for a win," said Jitesh Sharma.

'Our careers are over' - Oman players denied T20 World Cup prize money

This time last year Kashyap Prajapati was living the dream, playing against the likes of Australia and England at the men's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean. The top-order batter didn't do much of note and Oman went winless, but the tournament was a rare foray into high-profile cricket for Oman. It was Prajapati's second T20 World Cup, having played in the 2021 edition - which Oman had co-hosted - and Oman's third time overall.

A year on, Prajapati is in the US, looking to secure a future for himself, having been forced out of Oman after an acrimonious - and still unresolved - pay dispute with Oman Cricket over

prize money from that event. Prajapati is not alone. Almost the entire Oman squad from that tournament is no longer part of the set-up, and quite a few are no longer in the country, a consequence of Oman Cricket's refusal to pay the players the US\$ 225,000 prize money the ICC had set aside for teams finishing between 13th and 20th at the event.

The total prize money of US\$ 11.25 million for that tournament was widely trumpeted by the ICC as a record-breaking amount at the time, with the winners India receiving US\$ 2.45 million. Yet, according to the World Cricketers' Association (WCA), multiple

participating boards from that tournament have yet to pay the full prize money to their players. Oman's is the most flagrant breach, with the deepest consequences, with none of the US\$ 225,000 passed on to the 15-man squad.

"Our lives have been upended over this issue; we've lost our spot in the team, our contracts have been torn up, and we have been forced to leave the country," Prajapati told ESPNcricinfo. "It's just so confusing and we don't understand why the ICC isn't able to ensure we get paid the prize money we have earned, and why there isn't a safe space for us to raise concerns?"

Under the ICC's terms of participation for events, to which each member signs up, all prize money must be paid to the squad, via the member boards, within 21 days of the end of the event. The ICC has confirmed that the prize money was paid to Oman Cricket, but that money has not been paid on to the players.

Prajapati says Oman's players wouldn't have been aware of what they were due had it not been for the media attention around the record-breaking amounts on offer (he claims they never received prize money from the 2021 edition either, because they didn't know about it).

According to Prajapati and two other members of that squad, the players raised the issue of the prize money on several occasions after the T20 World Cup with team management and the board, to no avail. The first time was at a tri-series in Canada in September, already three months after the end of the T20 World Cup. Twelve of the 15-man World Cup squad, including Prajapati, were part of this squad, there to play against the hosts and Nepal.

It was here that Oman's players discussed the issue with players from the other two teams, who had also been at the T20 World Cup. Nepali

and Canadian players told Prajapati and his team-mates they had received their shares but only after overcoming some resistance. WCA claims players from other Associate nations who played in that tournament have been paid between 20%-70% of the prize money they are due but not the full amount by their boards. Oman's players brought up the issue with team management but were told to concentrate on playing and that the issue was being looked at.

The issue was brought up again by the players, this time ahead of the T20 Emerging teams Asia Cup, which included 'A' sides from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and

Bangladesh among eight teams. The tournament was played in Oman last October. This time, according to Prajapati, the team resolved to take unified action, including the threat of refusing to play, if they weren't given assurances about the prize money and when they would receive it. This is when matters escalated.

When they brought it up with a board official during practice before the tournament, he asked the squad members individually if they wanted to play. When they said no unless they received the prize money due to them, it was made clear that this could result in their expulsion from the side.