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The tourists had come to have a good time here and they were sent back in coffins. A poor labourer had left home to earn but died

-Omar Abdullah, J&K Chief Minister



The terrorists indiscriminately killed innocent people after asking their religion. We strongly condemn this. (But) this is also an intelligence failure

-Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM President



Instead of making hollow claims on the situation being normal in Jammu and Kashmir, the government should now take accountability and take concrete steps that such barbaric incidents do not happen

-Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader



We strongly condemn this heinous act. Let me reaffirm Bangladesh's resolute stand against terrorism

-Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh Chief Adviser

## 90% bookings cancelled: Delhi travel agencies

NEW DELHI, 23 APRIL

Several travel agencies in Delhi said on Wednesday that nearly 90 per cent bookings for Jammu and Kashmir have been cancelled by tourists.

"The moment the news of the terror attack broke, we started receiving calls for cancellations," Dev, owner of Kusha Travels, said.

Since some bookings, especially for flights and hotels, are non-refundable, it is creating a real mess for the tour agencies, Kartik Verma, a travel agent from Good Guide Tours and Travels said, adding that during this time of the year, Kashmir is among the most sought-after destinations for families.

"They are saying they cannot risk taking their loved ones to a place where there is a chance that they might not return," he added.

Another travel agency, AJ Tours and Travels, said they have been instructed to stop taking further bookings for Jammu and Kashmir. —PTI

## SC condemns attack, pays 2-minute tribute

NEW DELHI, 23 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed anguish and strongly condemned the heinous terrorist attack.

Judges and the lawyers in the apex court paid tributes to victims by observing a moment of silence.

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

"This diabolical act of mindless violence has shaken the conscience of all and is



People carry the mortal remains of Adil Hussain Shah, the pony rider who was killed in the terror attack at Pahalgam, during his funeral, in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday

PHOTO: PTI

# RAJNATH VOWS 'STRONG RESPONSE' TO TERRORISTS

### Says India will track down the attackers and conspirators

NEW DELHI, 23 APRIL

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday declared that those behind the "cowardly terrorist attack" in Pahalgam, which killed 26 people—mostly tourists—will receive a "strong response." Calling the massacre "extremely inhuman," Singh said India will track down both the attackers and those who conspired behind the scenes.

This was the first clear signal of India's possible retaliation following the deadly

strike in south Kashmir. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also said that "Bharat will not bend to terror" and assured that the perpetrators "will not be spared."

Before his statement, Singh chaired a high-level security review meeting lasting over two hours, attended by NSA Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh. Singh directed

the armed forces to enhance combat readiness and intensify anti-terror operations. Gen Dwivedi provided a detailed update on deployment and ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Commenting on cross-border terrorism, Singh said, "History is witness to the withering away of nations not due to the action of the adversary, but due to the result of their own misdeeds. I hope people across the border look at lessons of history more closely."

He added that India, with its

long civilization and scale, cannot be intimidated by such acts.

Amit Shah rushed to Srinagar on Tuesday night, met survivors and the victims' families, and assessed the ongoing security measures.

Singh also emphasised self-reliance in defence, highlighting India's progress in domestic manufacturing with examples like Tejas, Dhruv, Prachand, Akash, and BrahMos. He praised the growing role of the private sector in strengthening defence capabilities. —PTI

## DGCA asks airlines to increase Srinagar flights

NEW DELHI, 23 APRIL

Aviation watchdog DGCA on Wednesday asked airlines to increase the number of flights from Srinagar to facilitate the return of tourists.

Besides, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has requested the carriers to consider waiving cancellation and rescheduling fees for Srinagar flight tickets.

"In this regard, the airlines are advised to take swift action to increase the number of flights in response to heightened demand and also to ensure uninterrupted connectivity from Srinagar to various destinations across India, facilitating evacuation of stranded tourists," the DGCA said in an advisory.

According to the advisory, airlines have also been asked to provide all neces-



sary assistance to tourists facing unexpected circumstances and challenges during this difficult time.

Air India and IndiGo are operating additional flights from Srinagar on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the civil aviation ministry has asked airlines to ensure there is no surge in airfares on the Srinagar route. —PTI

## HIGH ALERT IN BIHAR AHEAD OF MODI'S VISIT

PATNA, 23 APRIL

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Bihar on Thursday, a high alert was sounded across the state following the terror attack.

Modi will address Panchayati Raj Institutions and Gram Sabhas

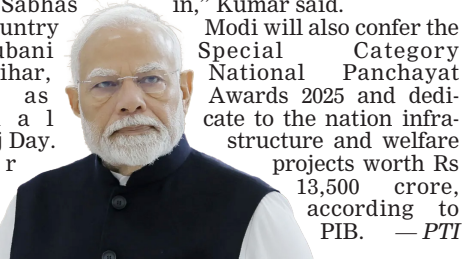
across the country from Madhubani district in Bihar, observed as National Panchayati Raj Day.

Director General of Police, Vinay Kumar, said

that security around vital institutions and tourist attractions in Rajgir, Bodhgaya, Patna has been enhanced.

"The state shares a long, porous boundary with Nepal, which has been often used by infiltrators from other countries to sneak in," Kumar said.

Modi will also confer the Special Category National Panchayat Awards 2025 and dedicate to the nation infrastructure and welfare projects worth Rs 13,500 crore, according to PIB. —PTI



## Jharkhand man held for post on terror attack

BOKARO, 23 APRIL

One person was arrested in Jharkhand's Bokaro district on Wednesday after he allegedly uploaded a controversial social media post regarding the Pahalgam terror attack, a police official said. Md Naushad purportedly praised Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Taiba for the terror strike on X.

"He was arrested from Millat Nagar under the jurisdiction of the Balidih police station," said Naveen Kumar, the officer-in-charge. —PTI

## COURAGEOUS PONYWALLAH

# Omar hails hero who died trying to save tourists



J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah consoles the father of Adil Hussain Shah, a pony ride operator who was killed, in Anantnag district on Wednesday

PHOTO: PTI

PAHALGAM, 23 APRIL

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah offered 'fatiha' to a 30-year-old 'ponywallah' who was among the deceased, and hailed his courage to stand up against the armed assailants.

The 'ponywallah' (pony ride operator), Syed Adil Hussain Shah, was laid to rest at the ancestral graveyard at his Hapatnarg village in Pahalgam with hundreds of mourners bidding him a tearful adieu and saluting his sacrifice.

"I visited Pahalgam today to offer 'fatiha' (prayer after burial) for brave-heart Shah,

who was shot dead while trying to snatch a weapon from one of the terrorists in a courageous attempt to protect the tourists he had ferried on horseback from the parking area to Baisaran meadow. Adil (Shah) was the sole breadwinner, and his extraordinary bravery and sacrifice will forever be remembered," the Chief Minister wrote on X.

He assured the family of the deceased that his government would take care of them. Syed Naushad, younger brother of Shah, said he had gone to Pahalgam for work.

"He used to take tourists on pony rides to Baisaran. A

tourist whose father was killed told me about the heroic act of my brother at SMHS hospital," he said, adding the terrorists hit Shah thrice with bullets in the chest.

Shah's sister Asma said, "In the morning, I told him not to go as if I knew something bad was going to happen. But he did not listen to me and left."

Shah's father, Syed Haider Shah, said he was devastated by his son's killing. "He was young and kind among all the siblings. Many boys from this village go to Pahalgam to find some work but who knew this was going to happen," the grieving father said. —PTI

## VICTIMS OF TERROR



### Navy officer was on honeymoon

Married just a few days ago, 26-year-old Indian Navy officer Lieutenant Vinay Narwal was holidaying with his wife Himanshi Narwal in Pahalgam. She salutes his body in the pic above. From Bhushi village in Karnal, Narwal's family was living in Karnal city. Narwal's neighbour Seema recalled that the entire neighbourhood was celebrating the wedding. "They were planning a honeymoon in Switzerland, but decided to go to Kashmir due to the leave he had... We can't imagine what his family is going through," she said.



### LIC officer asked to recite Kalima before being shot dead

Terrorists who targeted tourists in Pahalgam asked an LIC manager from Indore, who belonged to the Christian community, to recite the 'Kalima' before shooting him dead, his relatives claimed on Wednesday. Sushil Nathaniel, 58, who had gone to Jammu and Kashmir with his wife, daughter and son to celebrate Easter, was among the 26 persons killed in the terror attack on Tuesday.



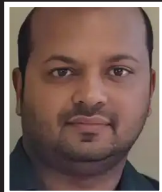
### Slain Odisha tourist had saved money for months for family trip

Prashant Satpathy, 41, of Odisha's Balasore district, who was gunned down by terrorists in front of his wife and nine-year-old son in Baisaran meadow, had saved money for months for their Kashmir trip. Upon hearing the news of her son's death, Satpathy's mother has turned mute, his elder brother Su-shant said. He was an accounts assistant with the Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET) in Balasore. A video sent by Prashant to his elder brother from Baisaran meadow hours before his death showed him playing with snowballs and hurling ice packs at his son Tanuj and wife Priya Darshani Acharya. He was also seen hugging Tanuj, wearing a red jacket. "This was probably the last hug to his son by Prashant," the elder brother said. Prashant was the second of the three sons of their parents. "Prashant was shot in the head while we were alighting from a ropeway in Baisaran... he collapsed on the spot. The army came an hour later," his wife Priya Darshani Acharya told an Odia news channel. Satpathy's father-in-law Radhamohan Acharya said: "My son-in-law was a noble-hearted person. He had never harmed anyone. This is something not acceptable."



### 3 victims from West Bengal

Three tourists from West Bengal, Bitan Adhikari and Samir Guha from Kolkata and Manish Ranjan (pic) from Purulia district, were among those killed in the Pahalgam terrorist attack on Tuesday. Describing it as a "grim hour" for the state, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that her government was making all arrangements to get family members of the victims back home from New Delhi.



### Dubai CA was among victims

Slain Neeraj Udhwani, 33, and his wife Ayushi of two years were holidaying in Pahalgam when tragedy struck. Udhwani was working as a chartered accountant (CA) in Dubai. He visited Jaipur for a wedding function and went to J&K on Monday. Neeraj was scheduled to return to Dubai after the trip. Neeraj's mother Jyoti said, "The terrorist should be hanged."



### Elderly tourist from Kerala was shot in front of daughter

Sixty-five year old Ramachandran's love for travel ended in tragedy on Tuesday when terrorists in Pahalgam gunned him down in front of his daughter who had come down from Dubai to meet her parents. Ramachandran had travelled to Kashmir with his wife, daughter and grandchildren for a family holiday. He was shot dead by terrorists in front of his daughter, family sources said here on Wednesday.



### 3 Gujarat natives killed

Three tourists hailing from Gujarat were among those killed. Shailesh Kalathiya (pic) from Surat, Yatish Parmar and his son Sumit Parmar from Bhavnagar were the victims. Kalathiya, 44, belonging to Chikwad area in Surat city, shifted to Mumbai a few years back after he was transferred there. "He had gone to Pahalgam with his wife and two children, who are safe," Surat disaster management department's revenue officer Sajid Merujay said. Yatish Parmar and his son Sumit Parmar were also among those killed. They were among 19 people from Bhavnagar who went to Kashmir to attend religious preacher Morari Bapu's discourse there.



### IAF Corporal from Arunachal was posted in Srinagar

An Indian Air Force Corporal, hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, was one of the victims. Corporal Tage Hailyang was visiting Pahalgam with his wife. Corporal Hailyang was posted at the Indian Air Force base in Srinagar.



### Close escape for AIR announcer, 3 from Thane dead

Kishori Waghulade, a casual announcer with All India Radio (AIR) in Maharashtra's Jalgaon city visited Pahalgam with her friends. As they stood captivated by the natural beauty of Baisaran meadows, gun-shots rang in the air turning the place into a site of carnage. She said the army acted fast, as they hid tourists in vehicles and ambulances. "I must have done something good in life, that's why I am still alive," she told her husband after surviving the terror attack. Some others weren't so lucky. Hemant Joshi, Sanjay Lele (pic), 44, and Atul Mone, 52 all hailing from Dombivli in Maharashtra's Thane district, died in the attack.



JS Chandramouli (Vishakhapatnam)	Santosh Jaghda (Maharashtra)
Sudeep Neupane (Nepal)	Manju Nath Rao (Karnataka)
Dinesh Agarwal (Chandigarh)	Kastuba Ganbotay (Maharashtra)
Madhusudan Somisetty (Andhra Pradesh)	Bharat Bushan (Bengaluru)
Shubham Dwivedi (UP)	

### M'rashtia family saved by hotel staffers

A five-member family from Buldhana district in Maharashtra was about to step out for local sightseeing, but was stopped by the owner and staff of their hotel from going out amid the terror attack. Nilesh Jain's brother Arun Jain, who is a journalist in Buldhana, said his two sons were accompanying his brother, the latter's wife and their daughter on the Jammu and Kashmir tour.

