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Doda Gripped By Terror Attacks

2 Soldiers Injured In Latest Encounter, 2nd in Two Days



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Two army personnel were injured in a gunfight with terrorists in a remote forest village in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district on Thursday, officials said, as security forces continued their search in the region for the ultras who killed four soldiers three days ago.

The gunfight, lasting more than an hour, took place at Jaddan Bata village in the Kastigarh area around 2 am when the terrorists opened fire on a temporary camp established in a government school for the ongoing search operation, they said.

One of the critically injured army personnel was evacuated to the Udhampur-based command hospital by

an advanced light helicopter (ALH) despite challenging weather conditions, a defence spokesperson said. "Swift action by ALH from Air Force Station, Udhampur, saved a critically injured soldier's life in Doda (J-K). Despite challenging weather, the evacuation was successful, ensuring timely medical care at Command Hospital, Udhampur. Kudos to the team for their dedication and bravery," PRO Defence, Jammu, posted on X.

In a separate incident, security forces guarding a forward post opened fire after observing suspicious movement near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Sunderbani sector of Rajouri district late Wednesday night.

The area was | More on P6

'Building A Future-Ready Workforce' LG Calls For Skill-Centric Education To Shape Industry's Destiny

Stresses Industry-Academia Collaboration

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The speed and scale of change in 4th Industrial Revolution calls for strengthening the Industry-Academia collaborations. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said, while speaking on the rapid transformation taking place in the industry sector. He made these remarks on Thursday during the inauguration of Kashmir College of Engineering and Technology, at Ranbirgarh, Srinagar.

The LG, in his address,



emphasised on fostering innovation culture in Engineering Colleges and realigning the curriculum to fulfill the evolving industry requirements. "Skills and not the degree will shape the destiny of our industries. The future

workforce must have critical skills such as cognitive skills, logical reasoning, technical skills etc to build future-proof careers," the LG said. On the occasion, the LG highlighted reforms in the education sector under the guidance

of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, to promote startups, innovation and entrepreneurship in Jammu Kashmir. He also made some valuable suggestions to explore the vast opportunities in the engineering and | More on P6

Calls On People To Help 'Preserve & Protect' Ancient Shrines

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha called upon the people from all sections of the society to work together with the administration to preserve and protect the ancient shrines and places of religious importance. Sinha paid obeisance at Mata Sidh Lakshmi Asthapan, Lokbhawan, Anantnag, on the auspicious

occasion of 'Har Bah'. He prayed for the well-being of all and peace and prosperity of J&K. The LG also joined the devotees in the Maha Yagya, organised by the Terathraj Sidh Lakshmi Peeth Trust, on Ashadh Shukla Paksha Dwadashi. Speaking on the occasion, he reiterated the commitment of the government to improve facilities for the pilgrims of | More on P6

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Probe Ordered After Family Alleges Negligence Death

High-Risk Patient Died Of Cardiac Arrest, Says Paras Hospital



Majid Nabi

Srinagar: A patient undergoing treatment at the Paras Hospital Dalgate lost his life as a result of the alleged 'medical negligence', family claimed on Thursday.

Despite paying a substantial

amount for his treatment, the patient—identified as Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mohammad Rajab Sheikh, a resident of Buchwara Dalgate—died from medical negligence, according to his family.

The death of the 40-year-old patient sparked | More on P6

Paras Hospital Reacts

Paras hospital issued the following statement to Kashmir Observer

"We regret to inform you that Mr. Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh aged 46 years, who was brought to Paras Hospital, Srinagar on July 16 from another hospital in a critical condition passed away today due to cardiac arrest.

After clinical evaluations, the patient was taken for the bypass surgery. His family was counselled about the critical nature of the procedure and the high-risk associated with the | More on P6

NC Steps Up Campaign Ahead of J&K Polls

Omar To Camp In Jammu From July 21

Agencies

Srinagar: As the possibility of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir looms, political activity in the region is intensifying. Following the BJP and Congress, the National Conference (NC) is ramping up its efforts, commencing a series of public meetings in the Jammu division. The first of these meetings will take place on July 21, marking NC Vice President Omar Abdullah's first visit to Jammu since the Lok Sabha elections.

Omar will address a public meeting at Ramliila Maidan in Gudha Salathia, part of the Vijaypur assembly constituency in Samba district. The Jammu provincial unit of the NC has been preparing diligently for this significant

event.

NC's provincial president, Ratan Lal Gupta, highlighted that the party's performance in the Lok Sabha elections was particularly strong in the seven assembly constituencies of the Jammu division that fall under the Anantnag-Rajouri seat. Gupta noted that NC candidates won with substantial margins in these areas, fueling the party's optimism for the upcoming assembly elections.

"The party is rapidly expanding its activities in the Jammu division, becoming the voice of the people," Gupta said. He also criticized the current government's policies, attributing recent terrorist attacks in the Jammu division to these missteps.

In preparation for the visit, Aijaz Jan, | More on P6

'Re-exam Requires Concrete Proof of Process Compromise'

SC Directs NTA To Declare Centre-wise Results Of NEET-UG

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to declare by 12 noon of July 20 the centre and city-wise results of NEET-UG 2024 while masking the identities of aspirants.

As it strove to address the allegations of malpractices in the conduct of the examination, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said any order for conducting it afresh has to be on concrete conclusion that the sanctity of the entire process was affected.

The top court will resume hearing the arguments on July 22 on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe into the allegations of large-scale



malpractices in the prestigious test held on May 5.

During the day-long hearing, the bench asked the counsel for the aspirants to establish their claim about extensive irregularities in holding the examination, including leak of question paper, warranting cancellation and a re-test.

The court said it prima facie appeared that the question paper leak was limited to Patna and Hazaribagh, and nothing of this sort can be said to have happened in Godhra in Gujarat.

In Patna and Hazaribagh, the question papers allegedly got leaked, while in Godhra there were claims | More on P6

No Tents In Gulmarg Without Permission: GDA

Agencies

Srinagar: In a bid to preserve the fragile ecosystem at the renowned ski-resort, the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) has issued a new directive, requiring prior permission for the installation of temporary tents within its jurisdiction.

A circular released by the GDA reads that it has been observed that visitors have been setting up tents on green meadows for overnight stays without obtaining proper authorization from the competent authority. "This unregulated activity has led to several issues, including littering, unauthorized parking on green slopes, lighting fires on the greens, and even law and order disturbances."

It further reads that given the eco-sensitive nature of Gulmarg and its status as a world-famous tourist spot, the GDA has found | More on P6

No FASTag? NHA Doubles Toll For Vehicles Without Windshield Sticker

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: To deter National Highway users from deliberately not fixing FASTag on the windshield of the vehicle, NHA has issued guidelines to collect double user fee from such users entering the toll lane with non-affixed FASTag on the front windshield from the inside, an official release said on Thursday.

NHA said deliberate non-affixation of FASTag on the windscreen leads to unnecessary delays at the toll plazas causing inconvenience to fellow National Highway users.

"Detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) has been issued to all User

Fee Collection Agencies and Concessionaires to charge double user fee in case of non-affixation of FASTag on the front windshield," it said.

According to the statement, the information will also be prominently displayed at all User Fee plazas, informing highway users about the penalties for non-compliance of entering a toll lane without a fixed FASTag on front windshield.

In addition, the statement said CCTV footage with Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) at the fee plaza shall be recorded of the non-affixed FASTag cases. This will help in maintaining proper record regarding the | More on P6

India Gears Up To Host 46th Session Of WHC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India is gearing up to host the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee scheduled to be held in the country for the first time from July 21-31, with sources saying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi may inaugurate the key event.

Ahead of the session, the government recently launched a public art project with works themed on India's cultural legacy and the country's UNESCO heritage sites among others.

In sync with the proposed 46th World Heritage Committee meeting, some of the artwork and sculptures will draw inspiration from world heritage sites such as Bimbetka and the natural world heritage sites in India and accord them a special place in the proposed artworks, officials said.

The 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) is scheduled to be | More on P6



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Commissioner SMC Suspends Asst. Secretary

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmad has suspended an Assistant Secretary rank officer pending an inquiry.

"Pending enquiry into his conduct, Mr. Hilal Ahmad Shah I/C Assistant Secretary Council/Assistant Secretary Personnel, is hereby suspended and attached to the office of Joint Commissioner Works, with immediate effect," reads an order issued by Dr. Owais Ahmad, Commissioner SMC.

"Mr. Abdul Rashid Thakur, I/C Stores Officer, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, shall hold the additional charge of I/C Assistant Secretary Personnel, in addition to his own duties, till further orders," the order further reads.

Meanwhile, insiders told KDC that the order was issued after Hilal Ahmad Shah had provided the keys to the offices of the Mayor and Deputy

Mayor to the Joint Commissioner Administration and Secretary SMC.

According to sources, both officers had shifted their offices to the above two rooms, which are specifically designated for the Mayor and his Deputy.

Earlier, reacting to the issue, Former Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu had posted on 'X' (formerly known as Twitter), which reads, "Amazed to learn that the Office of the Mayor of Srinagar has been occupied and is being misused by a KAS officer in SMC. While the Deputy Mayor's Office has been occupied by another officer. I strongly condemn this denigration of these erstwhile elected institutions. Shameful!"

Acting on the misconduct, the SMC has suspended the Incharge Assistant Secretary, while sources say that both officers have now shifted back to their designated rooms, leaving the offices of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.



Enjoying pleasant weather, tourists snapping selfie's from Mughal Garden against the stunning Dal Lake in backdrop. KO photo, Abid Bhat

DLSA Reviews 41 Cases Of Under Trial Prisoners In UTRC Meeting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of J&K Legal Services Authority, successfully convened the inaugural 2nd quarterly meeting of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) in the office chamber of the Principal District & Session Judge (Chairman DLSA) Srinagar.

The meeting, chaired by Jawad Ahmed, Principal District & Session Judge (Chairman DLSA) Srinagar, witnessed active participation from key stakeholders, including senior officials from the judiciary, police, administration, and medical fraternity.

The committee reviewed the cases of 41 under trial prisoners, engaging in thorough discussions and deliberations to ensure fair and expedited trials.

Each case was meticulously examined, and after thoughtful consideration, the committee formulated suitable recommendations

The meeting, chaired by Jawad Ahmed, Principal District & Session Judge (Chairman DLSA) Srinagar, witnessed active participation from key stakeholders, including senior officials from the judiciary, police, administration, and medical fraternity.

tailored to the specific circumstances of each individual. The meeting aimed to streamline the criminal justice system and uphold the principles of equity and justice.

Chairman of the meeting, emphasized the paramount importance of UTRC gatherings in ensuring fair and expedited trials for under trial prisoners. He underscored the need for regular initiatives such as these to strengthen the criminal justice system and protect the rights of under trial prisoners.

The meeting was attended by Ashish Mishra, S.S.P Srinagar; Syed Ahmad Kataria, ADC Srinagar; Sheikh Zulfikar Azad, SSP, Central Jail Srinagar; Jahangir Ahmad Bakshi, Secretary DLSA Srinagar; Meena Gowhar, Public Prosecuting Officer, Srinagar; Dr. Sheikh Athar Senior Medical Officer, Central Jail Srinagar; Saad Ganie, Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel and Zulfi Tasneem, Deputy Legal Aid Counsel.

DLSA Srinagar is committed to ensuring that the rights of under trial prisoners are protected, and that they receive fair and speedy trials. The UTRC meetings are a crucial step towards achieving this goal.

KPs Celebrate Lord Gopi Nath's Birthday In Srinagar

Agencies

Srinagar: The birth anniversary of Lord Gopi Nath, a mystic saint from the early 20th century was celebrated with religious fervor and enthusiasm at the Ganpatyar Gopi Nath Ashram in Habba Kadal here.

The event saw a large gathering of members from the Kashmiri Pandit community, who participated in the celebrations to honor the revered saint.

The ashram was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and the atmosphere was filled with devotional hymns and prayers. The devotees expressed their reverence and gratitude towards Lord Gopi Nath, saying his teachings and legacy continue to inspire the community.

Sharing his thoughts with news agency-KNO, one of the attendees, Vinod Kaul, said "Bhagwan Gopinath's teachings

have always been a guiding light for us. His message of love, compassion, and unity is more relevant today than ever. It is heartening to see so many members of our community come together to celebrate his birthday."

Another devotee, Shanti, said, "Events like these help us stay connected to our roots and keep our traditions alive. It is a reminder of our rich cultural heritage and the values that Bhagwan Gopi Nath stood for."

Adding to the significance of the event, the Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Arun Kumar Mehta, paid a visit to the ashram. He interacted with the community members and offered his respects to Bhagwan Gopi Nath. Mehta praised the efforts of the Kashmiri Pandit community in preserving their cultural and religious heritage despite the challenges they have faced over the years.

Com Secy HUDD Reviews Dev. Works In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Mandeep Kaur, accompanied by Commissioner SMC/CEO, SSCL, Dr Owais Ahmed, undertook a thorough inspection of ongoing developmental works in Srinagar.

Senior officers from various line departments accompanied the Commissioner Secretary during the visit.

The Commissioner SMC/CEO, SSCL provided a detailed briefing to the Commissioner Secretary on various projects as the review commenced from Karan Nagar.

Mandeep Kaur inspected the development work on underground ducting for communication and electricity cables, development of roads including pavements at Karan Nagar.

Moving forward, the inspection encompassed Shireen Bagh, focusing on the development of walkways and footpaths along the bund.

At Habba Kadal, Mandeep Kaur further directed the officers for construction of public convenience at old Habba Kadal Bridge. She also asked for expediting the repair work and facade improvement of Iskcon Temple besides illumination of old Habba Kadal Bridge.

Blood Donation Camp Held At Imambara Baghwanpora

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A blood donation camp was organized on Thursday at Imambara Baghwanpora, Lal Bazar.

The event was organized by Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) in collaboration with Imambara Abul Fazil Abbas (a.s).

A total of 132 points of blood were collected from donors. Special arrangements were made to facilitate female blood donors, ensuring their comfort and privacy.

The administration of Imambara expressed their gratitude to the SKIMS staff for their dedication and hard work.

Office Of The Chief Executive Officer, Information Technology And Communication Division Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL)

PDD COMPLEX BEMINA, SRINAGAR

E-mail: ceo.rapdrp.a@gmail.com Tel No: 0194-2490821 Fax No: 0194-2490829

CORRIGENDUM

The Item No. (L) in respect of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for e-NIT No: CEO/IT&C/03 of 2024 Dated: 28-06-2024 issued by this office for "Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC)/Technical support of 2x40KVA and 2x200KVA Emerson Make Un-interrupted power supply systems installed at KPDCL Data Center Bemina, Srinagar Kashmir for a period of one year" may be read as EMD amounting for Rs 13,595/- instead of Rs 40,785/-

No: CEO-IT&C/745-47

DIPK-NB-909/24 Dated: 18-07-2024

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
IT and Communication Division,
KPDCL

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES, J&K Tourist Reception Centre, Srinagar/Nowabad Canal Road, Jammu (Email-jkfdjmu@gmail.com, Phone No. 0194-2500106, 0191-2951670)

E-tender Notice NO. 01 of 2024 Dated: 16 -07-2024

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor J&K Union Territory, e-tenders affixed with revenue stamp worth Rs. 5/- are invited from Registered Govt. Suppliers/dealers for Supply of Trash Fish on rate contract basis (Required at various Trout Fish Farms having Trout Hatchery (Seed Production Units) across the Union Territory J&K for consumption as supplementary feed for trout brood stocks for better gonadal development and viable seed production for the year 2024-25.

S.No	Name of the Item with specification
1	Trash Fish. (fresh water) 30-80 mm size

The tender document containing detailed specification/size, terms & conditions and other details can be obtained/downloaded against tender document fee of Rs.2000/- only in shape of DD pledged to Accounts officer Fisheries Department from the official government website www.jktenders.gov.in. from

1	Download date start	18.07.2024
2	Bid Submission date start	19.07.2024
3	Bid submission date ends	25.07.2024
4	Submission of original Earnest Money Deposit along with Tender document	26.07.2024
	Fee in shape of Demand Draft.	
5	Bid opening Date	27.07.2024

The bid document of the tender accompanied by the Bid Security Declaration pledged to Accounts Officer Member Secretary UT Level Purchase Committee be uploaded on the website www.jktenders.gov.in along with all relevant papers. The tenders shall be opened on 27-07-2024 at 11:00 AM or any other date convenient to tender opening authority in presence of tenderers who may like to be present. The other specification/terms and conditions are mentioned in detailed tender document.

Member Secretary (UTLPC)
Department of Fisheries

No: -DOF-ACTT/

DIPK-3141/24 Dated: 18-07-2024.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPOR: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar-Leh - (Open)

**HIJRI
CALENDAR**
12 Muharram
1446

PRAYERS

FAJR 3:53
ZUHR 12:37
ASR 5:34
Magrib 7:44
ISHA 9:20

This Day In History

- 1850 - Airship Elizabeth leaves in storm for Fire Island, crashes (42 die)
- 1860 - 1st railroad reaches Kansas
- 1863 - Battle of Buffington's Island (St George Creek), Ohio
- 1864 - Third Battle of Winchester, VA (Stephenson's Depot)
- 1870 - France declares war on Prussia; Franco-Prussian war begins
- 1912 - A meteorite of estimated 190kg mass explodes over Holbrook in Navajo County, Arizona, causing approximately 16,000 pieces of debris to rain down on the town
- 1918 - World War I: German armies retreat across Marne River in France
- 1963 - NASA civilian Test pilot Joe Walker in X-15 reaches 105 km
- 1967 - US launches Explorer 35 for lunar orbit (800/7400 km)
- 1969 - Apollo 11 goes into Moon orbit
- 1974 - Soviet spacecraft Soyuz 14 lands back on earth
- 1975 - Apollo & Soyuz linked in orbit for 2 days, separate
- 1979 - 2 supertankers collide off Tobago-260,000 tons of oil spill
- 1989 - United Airlines DC-10 crashes at Sioux City Iowa, kills 112
- 1994 - Bomb explosion in Alas Airlines at Colon Panama, 21 killed
- 2001 - Michael Brunet discovers the skull of Sahelanthropus tchadensis in the Djurab Desert, Chad. One of the oldest known species in the human family tree, 6-7 million years ago years old.
- 2015 - World Health Organization puts world's Ebola death toll at 11,284
- 2017 - US scientists calculate total amount plastic ever produced - 8.3 million tonnes, equal to weight

From KO Archives

Baramulla Boat Tragedy Minister Greeted With Stones In Village

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Local MLA and minister for tourism, Muhammad Dilawar Mir, was attacked with stones when he arrived in Ladura, Baramulla, on Friday to visit the families of Wednesday's boat tragedy victims.

After taking a recess in a supporter's house, the minister finally managed to reach the victim's home, offer fateha and pay condolence to the bereaved family.

Mir, who represents the Rafiabab assembly segment, was visiting the area to pay condolence to the families who had lost their loved ones on Thursday, when locals retrieved the body of another victim, Firdous Ahmad Dar, from the Jhelum. Dar was one of the six people killed when a boat capsized in the river on Wednesday.

Reports said that the minister reached Ladura chowk just as a large number of people were in the streets after taking Dar's body to his family.

The already emotionally-charged crowd raised slogans against Mir and the government, and a group of youth attacked the minister's car with stones. Unable to come out his vehicle, Mir took a U-turn and made for the home of a supporter.

The minister and his entourage escaped unhurt in the attack. The locals said that the army and the police, assisted by residents, had resumed the search for missing victims on Friday morning, but gave up only after two hours, leaving the difficult task to villagers.

They alleged that the administration was using dilatory tactics in recovering bodies from the Jhelum, which had added to the anguish of the victims' families. The locals contested reports that the police or the army had recovered three bodies yesterday, saying that the victims were found solely due to the tireless efforts of the local villagers.

(Kashmir Observer, 19 July, 2007)

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Friday | 19-07-2024

Uncertainty About Polls

Although Assembly elections are due to take place later this year, the surge in militant attacks in Jammu and Kashmir is reportedly forcing some reassessment of the situation. This despite the fact that the Election Commission of India's (ECI) has expressed its commitment to adhere to the Supreme Court's September 30 deadline for holding the polls. But the central government will have to take a final call on whether to go ahead with the exercise or not.

The spate of attacks, particularly in Jammu division, has intensified concerns. In the last three months, 11 soldiers and 10 civilians have been killed in various attacks. As the region grapples with the heightened threat, the Union government and security agencies are working to ensure a secure environment. However, the looming question remains: will Jammu and Kashmir be able to conduct its assembly elections as mandated by the Supreme Court, or will the security situation necessitate a delay? The coming weeks will be critical in determining the path forward for the Union Territory's democratic process.

On the surface, however, the union territory seems to be on track to hold the polls later this year. This was indicated by the PM also in his speech during his recent Yoga Day visit to Srinagar. Since then, the union home minister Amit Shah and the BJP president J P Nadda have held their separate Kashmir meetings, apparently to rally their party for the upcoming polls. While Shah's meeting was held in New Delhi, Nadda flew to Jammu to meet the senior J&K BJP leaders. The main focus of these meetings is said to be the review of the party's election strategy, expand its base, and address areas where the BJP's vote share declined during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

However, the delay in announcement of the polls by the Election Commission is sowing doubts in the minds of people that the union government may be interested in yet again deferring the exercise. And this time on specious grounds of the surge in violence. However, regional politicians have expressed hope that Assembly elections will after all be held by the Supreme Court's September deadline. They have rightly argued that J&K has witnessed all elections since 1989 under the shadow of gun, with much worse violence.

On the face of it, the preparations for elections are on course. But until the elections are not announced there is every reason for the people to doubt the prospect of the exercise being held. Here's hoping that the government ends the uncertainty about this in the near future and the ECI announces the polls.

Towards growth with jobs

The first Budget of NDA 3.0 should focus on job-creating growth, with incentivised labour-intensive sectors, trade policy steps, and linking MSMEs with global supply chains



Nagesh Kumar

Having laid a path for capex-led robust economic growth in the post-Covid era, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) 3.0's first Budget should now turn attention to fostering job-creating growth by harnessing the potential of labour-intensive sectors. This would not only need their incentivisation but also trade policy measures and linking micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with global supply chains.

Assessments made by different organisations corroborate the dynamism of the Indian economy, stimulated largely by the huge expansion of infrastructure spending by the government. This has made India the world's fastest-growing large economy. The macro-fundamentals also remain sound, with bulging forex reserves and a modest current account surplus in the last quarter of FY24. What continues to remain a concern for policymakers, however, is the declining employment elasticity of India's economic growth, or economic growth generating fewer decent jobs. The inability of growth to create an adequate number of decent jobs, in turn, is responsible for pervasive informality and persisting poverty. The widening inequalities of income are also an outcome of the inability of growth to trickle down through decent job opportunities.

The compulsions of job creation have led the government to focus on the manufacturing sector, including ease of doing business, efficient logistics (Gati Shakti), and the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, among others. However, the focus of PLI has been on 14 strategic sectors. While they tend to be capital- and technology-intensive and are important for strategic reasons, they may create jobs mainly for skilled workers.

Going forward, it is also critical to put a massive thrust on labour-intensive consumer goods sectors such as textiles and clothing, leather goods, food processing, furniture, kitchenware, gems and jewellery. These are the sectors generally dominated by MSMEs and other informal sector enter-

prises. Their expansion would help to spread the effects of economic growth through creation of direct and indirect jobs and this, in turn, would foster MSMEs.

Despite India's natural advantage in labour-intensive sectors arising from its abundant labour, Indian-made goods are increasingly giving way to imported goods. A visit to any of the shopping malls or departmental stores would show how their shelves are now dominated by goods not Made in India — whether it be garments, including simple shirts and trousers, or artificial flowers, glassware, crockery, plastic ware, furniture, decorative items, among other household goods, often sold under Indian brand names. These are products of rather simple technology, which have been made by Indian MSMEs and larger firms for decades. What has happened to them?

In an effort to become the "factory of the world", China has built huge capacities for production of all kinds of manufactured goods, especially labour-intensive consumer goods. However, the rising protectionist backlash against Chinese goods, coupled with the slowdown of the global economy, has affected the ability of China to export them to advanced economies. Hence, they find a convenient option to dump their goods in India's fast-growing markets, with the expanding middle class becoming an easy target. The threat of dumping to destroy the local industry, especially the MSMEs and millions of jobs, is real. The government needs to act not only to protect these industries but also to foster them to create more jobs, taking advantage of growing demand.

Some of the policy actions would include simply limiting imports of labour-intensive consumer goods through tariffs and non-tariff barriers. The multilateral trade rules provide for trade remedies for import surges and injury to domestic players. India has been acting on the complaints of domestic players for injury and taking anti-dumping action. However, the relatively unorganised structure of MSMEs that

are the affected parties in the case of consumer goods do not have an effective organisation to plead with the government for recourse to trade remedies.

Governments around the world are becoming aware of the threat of dumping and are taking action. The US, generally a champion of free trade, followed by the European Union, have recently imposed 100% tariffs on imports of electric vehicles, among other goods from China to protect their domestic firms from possible dumping by the dominant producer.

As organised retail is the conduit for the imported consumer goods, these chains could be imposed certain performance requirements in the form of export of MSME-made products for every dollar of imports of consumer goods. This would also help in linking MSMEs with the global supply chains of organised retail players.

The government may also consider extending the PLI scheme to labour-intensive sectors to foster more production and jobs. The innovation focus of the industry is critical for overall growth and competitiveness. The neglect of R&D by the Indian industry has been a key concern and needs to be addressed. Besides accelerating the implementation of the ₹1-trillion corpus for long-term zero-coupon loans for R&D by industry, announced in the Interim Budget, the government could consider restoring weighted tax deductions of the past and provide for utility models or petty patents to encourage incremental innovations by MSMEs.

The first Union Budget of the NDA 3.0 government should herald a new focus on job-creating economic growth that will foster inclusive, balanced, and sustainable prosperity for all.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Financial Express



A visit to any of the shopping malls or departmental stores would show how their shelves are now dominated by goods not Made in India — whether it be garments, including simple shirts and trousers, or artificial flowers, glassware, crockery, plastic ware, furniture, decorative items, among other household goods, often sold under Indian brand names



Did you know?

Penny Shares are Risky for First-time Investors

Irshad Mushtaq

Investing in penny shares (low value shares) can be a risky venture for first-time investors. It's important to do your own research and consider other options like blue-chip stocks, ETFs or mutual funds through SIP.

Low-priced value shares may be attractive at first, with high returns due to low prices like Rs. 2, 5, 10, and 20, and getting a huge quantity for a small amount. However, there are several reasons why investing in penny stocks may not be the best option for beginners or putting all amounts. One key reason for penny shares is that the company's business may not be strong or its valuation may be low. It is important for investors to do their research and analysis before investing in any stock, especially penny stocks.

Furthermore, penny stocks may be more susceptible to manipulation by stock market operators due to low volume. They may promote these stocks through social media or other channels, making it difficult for investors to make attractive, but informed decisions and protect their investments is very important. Instead of focusing on penny stocks, first-time investors may want to consider investing in ETFs (exchange traded funds) and portfolios of blue-chip companies as well-established companies and focus on mutual funds through SIP, reducing risk and providing more stability to the investment portfolio.

However Diversifying your portfolio across different sectors and industries is also important to minimize risk and maximize returns. Remember over diversification does not make any sense, it leads to compromise on less returns, consult trusted services for portfolio creation. conclusion, while penny stocks may look good, it is important for first-time investors to exercise caution and choose their investments wisely. Investing in quality shares from strong companies, such as blue-chip stocks, and utilizing SIPs in mutual funds can be safer and more reliable ways to build wealth over time. By taking the time to research and evaluate potential investments carefully, investors can avoid the pitfalls of penny stocks and make more informed decisions about where to put their hard-earned money, as money is working for you in investment so putting money wisely is more important.

Learn from the insights of writer and investor, founder of MI Securities and Business Partner at Sharekhan! Reach out to him at Irshad@bp.sharekhan.com for valuable knowledge on financial matters.



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Not Counting the Greatest Blessing

We take the support, stability, and the mere presence of loving family for granted. Even though the idea that it can be snuffed out at a moment's notice is, I suppose, always present, but the realisation and the appreciation of one's blessings hardly materialises. At least, perhaps, not until man comes face to face with the tragedies himself or of someone quite familiar. The cold hard stare of the circum-

stances of some individuals spoken with a warmth and maturity unexpected of their tender ages may make one to look at their own troubles as mere trifles, be inspired by their resilience to suffer one's own difficulties with greater dignity, and yet sometimes it leave a sense of embarrassment over the inability to overcome one's own problems some of which might appear comical in comparison. How fickle is a human? How eas-

ily can he be beguiled? How quickly he makes a mountain out of a mole hill? He loses and wastes everything: precious relations, the faith of a loved one, a kind friend; all that is worthy of preservation in the name of fear, indignity, dishonour, and other perceived things and amazingly spawn these very same emotions in their reactions. Yet, there are people, who despite the burdens of life, complex

situations unmanageable even in imagination, do not fail to share a word of care, of kindness: a scarce commodity.

Today, I met an old schoolmate of mine who has undergone grievous losses in a short period of time. This weighed heavily on my heart and compelled me to write this. Hope you will forgive me to rant.

Ahsan Ul Haq Shah

