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GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Office of the Custodian Evacuee Property Department Kashmir, Srinagar

Tel: (0194) 2472839

email: custodiankashmir@gmail.com

Auction Notice

It is notified for the information of general public that the Evacuee Property Department Kashmir intends to put the following Evacuee property plots carved out on the Evacuee land of Capt. Nasrullah situated at Batapora Srinagar to re-auction for determination of premium to be charged from the lessee whom the plot is leased out through e-auction portal (<https://jkustodian.procure247.com>). Intending participants at large are requested to go through the terms and conditions and participate in the e-auction. The e-auction will be conducted from 01-02-2025 to 15-02-2025 upto 04:00 PM.

S. No.	No. of plot	Area of plot	Usage	Registration Fee. (Non Refundable)	Minimum Reserve Bid
1.	4	14.5 Marla (3962 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
2.	6	23.6 Marla (6433 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
3.	7	21.8 Marla (5939 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
4.	15	9.8 Marla (2670.7 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
5.	16	12.7 Marla (3469.1 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
6.	18	12.8 Marla (3489.3 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
7.	25	10 Marla (2730 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
8.	27	14 Marla (3816 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
9.	28	12.4 Marla (3398 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
10.	30	17.7 Marla (4827.9 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
11.	31	12.9 Marla (3537.1 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal
12.	32	9.3 Marla (2543.2 Sqft)	Residential	Rs. 1000/-	Rs. 70.00 Lacs per Kanal

Terms and Conditions of e-auction/Lease are as under:-

- To the best knowledge, information and registration, the intending participants who shall have attained the age of 18 years and above shall visit e-auction portal <https://jkustodian.procure247.com>
- The auction of plots shall be purely on lease basis and the period of lease shall initially be for a period of 40 years renewable for further period not exceeding 99 years in the light of Rule 13-C of J&K Evacuees' (Administration of Property) Rules, SVT 2008.
- The highest bidder shall have to pay monthly nominal rent at Rs. 400/- Per Kanal per month for residential purposes in addition to the bid amount.
- The bid to be submitted by the aspirants shall be above the minimum bid fixed notified on the above mentioned portal.
- EMD (Earnest Money Deposit) of Rs.90,000/- per plot shall be payable through e-payment mode of online payments in the official account of Custodian Evacuee Property Department Kashmir bearing No. CD 036701020000078 J&K Bank Branch Tankipora Srinagar.
- The successful bidders shall have to pay 25% of bid amount on the next working day after opening of bid, and balance 75% of bid after confirmation of the highest bid and issuance of lease order thereof by the Custodian General J&K (Chairman Auction Committee). In the event of failure to pay 25% of amount or balance amount within stipulated period as stated above, the amount paid earlier will be forfeited and the plot shall be put to e-auction again and the defaulting bidder shall forfeit all the claims to the plot. All payments shall have to be made through cheque, Bank draft or online payment and no cash payment will be entertained.
- The highest bidder shall have no right to mortgage the Evacuee plot to any financial institution / bank for obtaining loan etc.
- The highest bidder shall not sublet the leased out plot to anybody and in case of sublet, the lease shall be liable for termination.
- The lessee shall besides the rent specified above during the currency of lease shall have to pay all taxes, rates, duties and other charges which are payable or may become payable in respect of the plot.
- The lessee shall not carry or permit to be carried on the leased out plot or any part thereof any offensive, noisy or dangerous trade or business occupation or commit or permit to be committed on the plot anything which may amount to public nuisance or private nuisance.
- The lessee during the period of lease shall have to pay all charges on account of electricity and water consumed by him/ her on the premises as registered on the matter or otherwise irrespective of the fact whether such matter stands in the name of the lessor.
- The intending bidder should make direct enquiries as regards to the plot and should satisfy himself about the title, extent, size of the plot before submitting the bid. No claims of whatsoever nature regarding the plots put to e-auction will be entertained after submission of bid.
- The intending aspirant can inspect the property by prior appointment or any working day before the date of e-auction at his/ her own expenses and for further details, please feel free to contact on the Mobile No's (0194)2472839, 6005867895, 7006878281.
- All the bids made by bidder after registration on the said e-auction portal shall deemed to have been made by him/her and the bids once made shall not be cancelled/withdrawn.
- The bidders may participate in e-auction for bidding from their places of choice and internet connectivity shall have to be ensured by the bidders themselves. The Evacuee Property Department shall not be held responsible for internet connectivity, network problem, system crash down, power failure, wrong entries, erroneous typing etc.
- All bidders who submit the bids shall be deemed to have read and understood the terms and conditions of e-auction and shall be bound by them.
- Any person who is already in possession of Evacuee property of the same kind in UT of Jammu and Kashmir shall not be eligible for lease of the plot in question.
- In case any bidder offers highest bid for more than one plot and in that case he shall be allowed to retain only one plot of his choice and rest of the plot will be offered to second highest bidders on the highest offered price and in case the second highest bidder is not ready to retain the plot on such rates the plot will be put to e-auction again.
- In case amount if any chargeable on account of tax or duty from the plots in question, shall exclude the charging of premium and in that event the lessee (highest bidder) shall be bound to deposit tax amount in addition to the premium charged.
- Any other information along with a copy of site plan can be had from the office of undersigned during working hours.
- The size and dimension of plots may vary at the time of handing over of possession to the highest bidder (Lessee). In case the size of plot increases at the time of handing over of possession of such plot, the lessee shall have to pay extra premium at the same rate which he has offered for the plot.
- The department reserves the right to summarily disqualify any highest bidder in case his background credentials are reported adverse by the competent authority.
- The Custodian General J&K Government being chairman of the auction committee shall have the absolute right and discretion to accept or reject any bid or adjourn, postpone, cancel the auction, modify the terms and conditions without any prior notice and assigning any reason thereof.

DIPK-11297/24
dated: 27-01-2025

Custodian,
Evacuee Property Kashmir
Srinagar.

Govt. Of Jammu And Kashmir

**Department Of Rural Development And Panchayati Raj
OFFICE, OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER SHERPATHRI
(Block SANITATION OFFICER SHERPATHRI)**

Subject: Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Solid Waste Management in Block Sherpathri.

On behalf of the Block Sanitation Officer (BSO) Sherpathri, Expressions of interest (EOI) from the eligible and interested agencies are hereby invited for the execution of a Solid Waste Management Plan in Block Sherpathri, District Ganderbal in two (2) Clusters of CD Blocks.

BACKGROUND:

The Solid Waste Management program aims to implement effective and scientific waste management practices in Sherpathri, in line with the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin). The program will cover the Block Sherpathri comprising 09 Gram Panchayats divided in the following 2 clusters of CD Block:
The cluster-wise details of households of 09 Gram Panchayats of Block Sherpathri are as under:-

CLUSTER I	Harran, Tullbagh, Hatbura, Shallabugh-A.
CLUSTER II	Sehpora, Gogjigund, Rabitar, Shallabugh-B, Kurag.

Note:- Full bid will be uploaded on Office X handle of BDO Office Sherpathri (@bdosherpathri) due to limited space available on newspaper and also will be available on Office notice boards

SCOPE OF WORK:

The contracting agency/individual will be responsible for the following processes:
Solid Waste Collection:

- Sanitation and door-to-door collection of both biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste from all households of one of the Five designated clusters covering all households, shops, factories, industrial establishments, etc. at least thrice a week.
- A Panchayat-Halqa-wise schedule of waste collection shall further be notified in consultation with the Panchayat Secretaries concerned.
- The intending agency/individual shall collect all types of waste viz., door-to-door waste, waste from already installed dustbins, and legacy waste so that the objective of ODF plus is obtained.
- The agency/individual shall ensure segregation of waste preferably at the household level and mandatorily at the already constructed segregation shed sites.
- Effective and scientific management and disposal of collected waste in an environmentally sustainable manner. A weekly review/report shall be submitted by Panchayat Secretaries concerned to ascertain the effectiveness of weekly disposal.

Revenue Collection:

a. Percentage of the Fee/User charges so collected has to be deposited in the bank account of the concerned Gram Panchayat on a monthly basis. This will be a part of Financial bid.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- The contracting agency must meet the following criteria:
a. The agency can be a sole proprietor, registered contractor, registered partnership firm, limited liability partnership, public limited company, private limited company, society or NGO, etc.
- Previous experience in managing public utilities as a PPP/outsourcing and knowledge of waste management, including running decentralized solid waste management processes, will be advantageous.
- Additional experience in community mobilization and IEC activities will be preferred.
- The agency must deposit a Cash Deposit Receipt (CDR) of Rs. 15000 (fifteen thousand rupees) pledged to the Block Development Officer, Sherpathri.

CONTRACTING PROCESS:

- Interested agencies/individual must submit their EOI in sealed envelopes addressed to the Block Development Officer Sherpathri, by 10-02-2025 up to 2 PM.
- The envelopes will be opened on the next day 11-02-2025 at 3 PM in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives.
- The EOI will be followed by Technical Evaluation and Financial Evaluation.

6- SUBMISSION OF EOI AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Interested agencies/individuals must submit their sealed envelopes containing the EOI to the following address: Office of the Block Development Officer Sherpathri, Near Pirpora chowk Pyt building Tulbagh
Email: sherpathribdo@gmail.com
For any inquiries or clarifications regarding the EOI, interested agencies may / contact Block Development Officer, Sherpathri at the above-mentioned address or via email.

No: BDO/Spt/2461-67
DIPK-11260/24 Date: 27-01-2025

Block Development Officer,
Sherpathri.

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub. Application of Khurshid Ahmad Sheikh s/o Mohd Ramzan Sheikh R/o Para mohalla Pattan for obtaining legal hair certificate of his mother.

Public Notice

It is inform to general public that applicants mother's legal hair certificate is under process in this office in this matter report was sought from Patwari concerned which reveals that applicant's mother namely Zoono Begum W/o Mohd Ramzan Sheikh died on 02/01/2025 and left following legal heirs.

Name	Age	Relationship with the Deceased	Marital Status
KHURSHIED AHMAD SHEIKH	41	SON	MARRIED
MOHAMMAD ASHRAF SHEIKH	68	SON	MARRIED
TASLEEMA	40	DAUGHTER	MARRIED
POSHA BANO	55	DAUGHTER	MARRIED
AASHA BEGUM	51	DAUGHTER	MARRIED

Report further reveals that one son namely Mohd Maqbool Sheikh of deceased Zoono Begum died before one year and legal heirs of Mohd Maqbool Sheikh are as under 1 Tashooq Ahmad 2 Ishaq Ahmad 3 Sakeena 4 Rifat In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained

fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan.

Sub. Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth.

Public Notice

The registrar birth BDO pattan submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Ab Rashid Sheikh s/o Mohd Sulthan Sheikh R/o Burn Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 17/05/1986 occurred at home.in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office Of The Naib Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject Application of Faisal Fayaz S/o Fayaz Ahmad Hajam R/o Dolipora Tehsil Kreeri for issuance of OBC (Other Backward Classes) in favor of Self

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the Subject cited above the applicant has submitted the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC In this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in village Dolipora and belongs to the Hajam Community having annual income of Rs 104000 (One Lack Four Thousand Rupees) The details of the family of the applicant are as follows:

S No	Name of the family Member	Relation with the Family Head	Age	Occupation	Annual Income
01	Fayaz Ahmad Hajam	Father	45	Barber	104000
2	Afrozha Begum	Mother	43	H/W	
03	Nusrat Fayaz	Sister	20	h/w	
4	Faisal Fayaz	Self	18	Student	
5	Shabnum Fayaz	Sister	14	--	
6	Mudiya Fayaz	Sister	12	--	

Therefore, through this Public Notice Objections are being sought from general public, if any person has any objection, he/she can submit their objections in the office of the undersigned within 07 days (Sevsn days) positively from the date the notice has been published No objection shall be entertained after the stipulated time period.

fko Naib Tehsildar

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S Wild wings tour and travel Situated at Bhat Complex Court road magam opposite Girls Higher secondary school Magam

Public Notice

Whereas I, Mr. Hilal Lateef Shah R/o Chukar Kunzer 193404 KASHMIR intend to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name & style of M/S Wild wings tour and travel Situated at Bhat Complex Court road magam opposite Girls Higher secondary school Magam under tourist trade act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit state subject / Domicile certificate , Qualification Certificate, pan card \ Experience Certificate(Minimum 5years), Police character certificate, Bank statement (minimum balance 10000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by sub Registrar, printing material (Letter head / Visiting card) Photograph of the unit (indoor and outdoor) and Two passport size photographs to the department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist I Prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency. / Adventure Tour Operator Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12) before my case is processed for my registration by the Competent Authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial institutions/Bank/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration(email id: ddtreg23@gmail.com) within a period of 7days from the publication of this notice in a leading newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

bmrg

**OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE
MOHAMMAD FAYAZ MAGREY**

OFFICE District Court Complex, Budgam. Pin: 191111.

Cell No 9797792309

In the case of:

- Ritu Balia W/o Ravi Kumar R/o Narwal plain Satwari Jammu
- Nazir Ahmad Sheikh S/o Gh Qadir Sheikh R/o Gokhama Tehsil Kunzer District Baramulla.

Caveators..

V/s

Public At Large.

fko

Mohammad Fayaz Magrey
Advocate & Associates

Non Caveator..

IN THE MATTER OF: - Caveat Petition in terms of Section 148-A of C.P.C.

1. That the Caveator has reasons to believe/apprehension that non-Caveator (s) may file a suit/application/petition or any other type of proceedings before the Hon'ble High Court, District Courts, Revenue Courts or any other forum on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story, may succeed in obtaining some relief/order at their back/ex-parte against the caveators and in such eventuality, the caveators will be put to an irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators are given opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble Court before passing any order or direction.

fko Mohammad Fayaz Magrey
Advocate & Associates

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan.

Sub. Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The registrar birth EO Pattan submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Momin ishaq D/o Ishaq Ahmad pandith R/o Palhallan Tehsil Pattan with verified date of birth 16/08/2022 occurred at SDH pattan.in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 03 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION URI
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

eNIT No.90 of 2024-25/8746-54/R&B Uri e-tendering DATED: 25-01-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/DOC (In Rupees)	E/Money	Time for completion of work	Time & Date of opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	M.H of Account
1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
01	Elementary Boundary Wall at BMS Uranboba.	7.20	300/-	14400/-	40 days	01.02.2025	CEE DEE	Samagra Siksha (PAB 2021-22)

Project Authority: State Project Director RAMSA

Position of AAA/TS: Accorded/Sanctioned

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, 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:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25.01.2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	25.01.2025 from (04:00PM) to 01.02.2025 (02:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	25.01.2025 from (04:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	01.02.2025 (02:00PM)
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	01.02.2025 (03:00PM) in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan debited under M.H-0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Uri, (tender receiving authority).
3. At the time of tendering, all the 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 Uri (The date of Earnest money should be between Date of Start of bid and bid submission End date). The successful (1st lowest) bidder will have to provide Performance security @ 5% of Allotted cost in shape of CDR/FDR at the time of contract award. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of performance security of 5% of the total allotted cost which will be released after successful completion of the DLP.

3 (a) Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debaring of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.
3. (c) The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited If:
(i) Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.

(ii) Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent.
(iii) Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
(iv) If at any stage of work, the Bidder back up from the contract, again the Performance security/EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

4. 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 Uri (tender receiving authority).

5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids
6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

6.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

6.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act 2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

6.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
6.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

6.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.
20. In case of CRF and any other specified project, the relevant guidelines / standard bidding document shall be followed.

No.: 2024-25/8746-54
DIPK-11281/24 Dated: 27-01-2025

fko

Executive Engineer,
R&B Division, Uri.

Er. Fayaz Kumar



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Merit-Based Jobs

Over 27,000 youth secured Government jobs on merit within days of the formation of the Government.

MSP for all 24 Crops

Farmers receive payment directly into their bank accounts within 48 hours of procurement.

Domestic Gas Cylinders for just ₹500

13+ lakh families benefited across the State till date.

Free Dialysis

Free dialysis service started in all district hospitals and medical colleges, benefiting over 20,000 patients.

1.85 lakh Lakhpati Didis

Over 1.85 lakh women from self-help groups became Lakhpati Didis, with a target of 5 lakh Lakhpati Didis. 5,000 women in the State will be made Drone Didis. Free drones worth up to ₹8 lakh with training.

Free Treatment for 70+ Elderly

Citizens aged 70 and above are provided free treatment worth up to ₹5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat and Chirayu Schemes.

Reservation for Backward Class-B

Backward Class-B has been granted reservation in Panchayati Raj and Urban Local Bodies. Deprived Scheduled Castes have been given their due rights.

New Metro Route from Rithala to Kundli

Prime Minister laid foundation of the new metro route, which will make travel from Haryana to Delhi easier.

New Indoor Gyms

250 new indoor gyms have been opened in Haryana's villages with plans to have a gym in every village.

Job Security for Contractual Employees

Job security provided to the state's contractual employees and various categories of teachers.

Ownership Rights for Tenant Farmers

Tenant farmers on Shamlat land on lease for over 20 years granted ownership rights.

100 Square Yards Plots for the Poor

Allocation of up to 100 square yards residential plots under the Mukhyamantri Gramin Awas Yojana initiated. Beneficiaries will receive financial assistance for house construction under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural) scheme.

TB-free Haryana

100-day TB eradication campaign launched.



Uttarakhand Becomes First To Implement Uniform Civil Code

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: BJP-ruled Uttarakhand on Monday became the first state in independent India to implement the Uniform Civil Code, which promotes equal laws for every citizen across all religions and standardises personal laws on marriage, divorce and property.

With the implementation of the UCC which applies to all people of Uttarakhand except those belonging to the Scheduled Tribe community, the BJP has fulfilled a major commitment made to people of the state ahead of the 2022 assembly polls which saw the party storming to power for a second consecutive term.

Chief Minister Pushkar Dhama announced UCC's implementation at a programme at his official residence here, saying THAT with this the constitutional and civil rights of people across all religions have become uniform.

"With the implementation of UCC, the BJP has fulfilled all its major ideological commitments, including abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, ille-

galisation of triple talaq, the CAA and building of a Ram temple in Ayodhya," the chief minister said.

He unveiled the notification on UCC, released its rules and regulations and launched a portal designed for the mandatory online registration of marriages, divorce and live-in relationships, in the presence of his ministerial colleagues and members of the UCC drafting committee.

The chief minister was the first to register his marriage on the UCC portal. Chief Secretary Radha Raturi handed over the certificate of his marriage registration to him. Chief Minister Dhama also gave certificates to the first five people who registered on the UCC portal.

"The UCC creating equal laws for every citizen across all religions comes fully into effect at this moment. The credit for it goes entirely to the people of the state," Dhama said at the function.

Dhama said he had gone into the 2022 assembly polls on the promise of a UCC and the people gave the BJP a huge mandate for a second time in a row to form the government and fulfil its promise.

US Police Inspect Gurdwaras for Illegal Immigrants



Press Trust Of India

Washington: Law enforcement officials from the US Department of Homeland Security have started visiting gurdwaras in New York and New Jersey to check for the presence of illegal immigrants, drawing a sharp reaction from some Sikh organisations which see such actions as a threat to the sanctity of their faith.

Some of the gurdwaras in New York and New Jersey are believed to be used as a hub by Sikh separatists along with illegal and undocumented immigrants.

Within hours of Donald Trump being sworn in as the 47th President of the United States, acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary Benjamin Huffman in a directive rescinded the Biden administration's guidelines for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enforcement actions that thwart law enforcement in or near so-called "sensitive" areas.

These "sensitive" areas included places of worship like gurdwaras

and churches. "This action empowers the brave men and women in CBP and ICE to enforce our immigration laws and catch criminal aliens—including murderers and rapists—who have illegally come into our country," a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security said.

"Criminals will no longer be able to hide in America's schools and churches to avoid arrest. The Trump administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement, and instead trusts them to use common sense," the spokesperson said.

In a statement, the Sikh American Legal Defence and Education Fund (SALDF) expressed grave concern over the directive rescinding the guidelines that designated "sensitive areas", such as houses of worship, where immigration enforcement actions were previously restricted.

"This troubling shift in policy comes in tandem with community reports of DHS agents visiting gurdwaras in the New York and New Jersey areas just days after the directive was issued," SALDF said.



Tens of thousands of Palestinians had waited for two days at roadblocks to return to their homes

Trump Pauses All US Foreign Aid, Orders Review

Press Trust Of India

Washington: The United States has announced the suspension of all foreign aid and ordered the review of American financial assistance to other countries, to ensure they are efficient and consistent with its foreign policy under the America First agenda.

The move comes after President Donald Trump signed an executive order in this regard. State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce Sunday said, "President Trump stated clearly that the United States is no longer going to blindly dole out money with no return for the American people. Reviewing and realigning foreign assistance on behalf of hardworking taxpayers is not just the right thing to do, it is a moral imperative." She

said Secretary of State Marco Rubio has paused all US foreign assistance funded by or through the State Department and US Agency for International Development (USAID) for review.

"He is initiating a review of all foreign assistance programmes to ensure they are efficient and consistent with US foreign policy under the America First agenda," Bruce said. She added that the secretary is proud to protect America's investment with a deliberate and judicious review of how to spend foreign assistance dollars overseas.

"The mandate from the American people was clear - we must refocus on American national interests. The Department and USAID take their role as stewards of taxpayer dollars very seriously," State Department spokesper-

son said. The implementation of Trump's Executive Order in this regard and the secretary's direction furthers that mission, she added.

Bruce reminded reporters that Rubio has said, "Every dollar we spend, every programme we fund and every policy we pursue must be justified with the answer to three simple questions: Does it make America safer? Does it make America stronger? Does it make America more prosperous?"

In 2023, USAID distributed nearly USD45 billion in foreign aid to 158 countries. This included USD400 million to Bangladesh, USD231 million to Pakistan, USD1 billion to Afghanistan, USD175 million to India, USD118 million to Nepal, and USD123 million to Sri Lanka.

Trump's Plan To 'Clean Gaza' Stokes Fear Of Another Nakba

Agencies

GAZA: US President Donald Trump's suggestion that Jordan and Egypt should take more Palestinians from Gaza is raising concerns that they are being driven out of the coastal strip, with Arab states worried about the destabilising impact of any such exodus.

Both Hamas and Palestinian political leaders have reacted with fury and defiance to a plan floated by US President Donald Trump to "clean out" Gaza, which has been met with approval from the Israeli side.

Calling Gaza a "demolition site", Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that he had spoken to Jordan's King Abdullah II about moving Palestinians out of the territory.

"You're talking about probably a million and half people, and we just clean out that whole thing," Trump said of Gaza, whose population is about 2.4 million.

Tens of thousands waiting

"I'd rather get involved with some of the Arab nations and build housing at a different location where they can maybe live in peace for a change"

to re-enter besieged enclave as Israel closes entry gates

"I'd rather get involved with some of the Arab nations and build housing at a different location where they can maybe live in peace for a change," Trump said, adding that moving Gaza's inhabitants could be "temporarily or could be long term".

"I'd like Egypt to take people. And I'd like Jordan to take people", he said, adding that he would also talk to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Sunday.

For Palestinians, any at-

tempt to move them from Gaza would evoke dark historical memories of 'Nakba' — the mass persecution and displacement of Palestinians from their land for the creation of Israel.

Egypt had previously warned against any "forced displacement" of Palestinians into the Sinai desert, which Sisi said could jeopardise the peace treaty Egypt signed with Israel in 1979.

Jordan is already home to 2.3m registered Palestinian refugees. Jordan's rejection of any displacement of Palestinians is "firm and unwavering," Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Sunday.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas condemned "any projects" to relocate the people of Gaza outside the territory. Also, Bassem Naim, a member of Hamas's political bureau, said Palestinians would "foil such projects" as they have done to similar plans "for displacement and alternative homelands over the decades".

Trump Might Defy Policy To Reach Nuclear Deal With Iran: Report

Agencies

Washington: President Donald Trump has signaled an unexpected shift in the conventional US policy regarding Iran, revealing that the only issue his administration would face with the Islamic Republic is its development of a nuclear weapon.

Speaking on Fox News' Hannity show on January 23, Trump did not address Iran's regional policies, its defiance of the Israeli occupation, or the possibility of enforcing a regime change. Rather, his only focus was preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

In this regard, a Responsible Statecraft report, written by Eldar Mamedov, recalled previous statements by Iranian officials, confirming that the nation does not seek nuclear weapons, adding that this could facilitate a political agreement between Washington and Tehran.

Tehran has also gestured its willingness to re-engage with the West, particularly following the election of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his government coming to power. However, despite the mutual political willingness, the path to a deal remains highly complex and is vastly different from 2015, when the JCPOA curtailed Iran's nucle-

ar program.

Is a nuclear deal possible?

Following Trump's 2018 withdrawal from the JCPOA, his imposition of sanctions, and the EU's failure to abide by the terms of the deal, Iran significantly advanced its program, including enriching uranium to 60%—a step away from weapon-grade levels (90%)—and deploying advanced centrifuges. Nuclear expert Kelsey Davenport notes that Iran could now produce enough material for five to six nuclear bombs in just two weeks, according to Mamedov.

The situation is further complicated by the limited access the IAEA has had to Iran since 2021, heightening concerns about unmonitored nuclear material potentially being moved to covert sites, as well as shifts in Iran's nuclear rhetoric that suggest a potential rethinking of its doctrine.

While Tehran officially maintains it is not pursuing nuclear weapons, regional challenges could incentivize Iran to consider a nuclear deterrent, Mamedov explained.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's threats of a direct attack, possibly with US support and cover, could possibly motivate Iran to contemplate threshold weaponization as a defensive measure.

2 Israeli Reservists Detained On Suspicion Of 'Spying For Iran'



Agencies

Jerusalem: The Israeli regime's so-called internal security service, Shin Bet, and police say they have arrested two reservist troops on suspicion of espionage for Iran.

An Israeli police spokesman said in a statement on Monday that the primary suspect, Yuri Eliasov, served in the Israeli army's Iron Dome anti-air missile unit and passed along classified material obtained during his military service to Iranians.

Contact between Eliasov and the Iranian agent started in September 2024, the Israeli daily newspaper Haaretz claimed.

Months later, Eliasov purportedly recruited his friend, Georgi Andreyev, and put him in contact with the same Iranian handler.

Andreyev supposedly served in the Israeli military's Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv. The pair allegedly spray-painted graffiti and hung pro-Iranian banners in Tel Aviv.

Police accuse the two 21-year-old suspects, both from the northern side of the

occupied territories, of security offenses — transferring classified information and aiding Iran during wartime.

Prosecutors are expected to bring an indictment against them within the coming days.

The pair is also accused of sending photos and videos from Caesarea, where the Israeli prime minister has a private residence.

Back on October 14 last year, Shin Bet and the Israeli police said they had arrested two settlers east of Tel Aviv on charges of espionage for Iran.

They claimed in a joint statement that 30-year-old Vladislav Viktorson, a resident of Ramat Gan, his 18-year-old partner Anna Bernstein and another unnamed Ramat Gan resident.

The trio purportedly carried out various acts of sabotage and vandalism, including spraying provocative graffiti and putting up posters, setting fire to cars near Tel Aviv's Yarkon Park, and acts of arson in local forests, at the behest of an individual identified as "Mari Hossi", who gave them instructions in Hebrew.

NEWS MAKERS

Indian actor Mamta Kulkarni, known for her roles in Karan Arjun, Sabse Bada Khiladi and Baazi, left the entertainment industry behind to become a Hindu monk, and renamed herself Mai Mamta Nand Giri, Indian media reported on Saturday.

In a statement, the Uttar Pradesh government said in the ongoing pilgrimage Maha Kumbh, Mamta first undertook the sanyas ritual in the Kinnar Akhara — a Hindu religious order established in 2018 by the trans community of India, Indian Express reported.

According to the publication, Mamta then received her new name, performed the pind daan, a ceremony honouring deceased ancestors, and then the Kinnar Akhara consecrated her as mahamandaleswar, a title used by some Hindu monks of the Dashanami order of swamis, amid Vedic chanting.

Speaking to the media, Mamta said she had to give an examination to receive the title of mahamandaleswar.



Karan Arjun Star Mamta Kulkarni Becomes A Hindu Monk

"I was asked what I did in 23 years. When I cleared all the examinations, I got the upaadihi of mahamandaleswar," she said.

According to the Indian Express, she felt very nice that such planetary positions had formed after 14 years, adding that no Maha Kumbh could be as pious as this one.

"Several people are angry, my fans are also angry, they feel that I will return to Bollywood. But it is all right. Whatever the Gods wish. No one can supersede the will of Mahakaal and Mahakaali," Mamta said.

Prior to her spiritual journey, Mamta worked alongside some of the biggest Bollywood actors includ-

ing Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Aamir Khan and Akshay Kumar.

Mamta quit acting in 2002. In a recent interview with IANS, she said that she left India for spiritual reasons, was inclined towards spirituality in 1996 and then met Guru Gagan Giri Maharaj.

"After his arrival, my interest in spirituality increased following which my penance started. However, I believe that Bollywood gave me a name and also fame. After this, I quit Bollywood too," Mamta said.

"From 2000 to 2012, I kept doing penance. I was in Dubai for many years, where I lived in a two-bedroom flat and remained celibate for 12 years," she added.

In 2016, Mamta was named by the Thane police as one of the accused involved in supplying ephedrine for the illegal manufacturing of methamphetamine to a drug racket. She and her partner, Vicky Goswami, were suspected to be in Kenya where the logistics of the drug supply were allegedly discussed, the Indian Express reported.

Maha Kumbh: Amit Shah Takes Dip In Sangam

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday took a dip in the Triveni Sangam here amid the ongoing Maha Kumbh.

Flanked by some top seers, Shah took the dip around 1 pm.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also took a dip separately amid loud chants of mantras.

The home minister earlier held an interaction with Junapithadheeshwar Mahamandaleswar Acharya Avdheshanand Giri Ji Maharaj and some other top seers onboard a cottage on a floating jetty.

Shah's visit was marked by unprecedented security cover in the Mela area and in Prayagraj.

While the Mela area was made strictly a no-vehicle zone, Prayagraj city had several route diversions in place, impacting locals and visiting pilgrims.

Earlier in the day, the home minister said in a post on X that "Mahakumbh" is a unique symbol of the continuous flow of Sanatan culture. The Kumbh showcases the life philosophy of Sanatan Dharma, which is rooted in harmony.

"I am eager to take a dip at Sangam and receive the blessings from saints at this great



festival of unity and integrity in the holy city of Prayagraj," he added.

According to the state government, over 53.29 lakh people had taken the holy bath at the Maha Kumbh on Monday by 10 am.

The Mela area was hosting over 10 lakh 'Kalpvasis' and so far more than 13.21 crore people have taken the dip since the mega religious congregation started on January 13, it said.

The Maha Kumbh will continue until February 26.

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BOOK APPOINTMENT

J&K Govt Hikes DA Of Employees To 53%

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Monday announced a hike in the Dearness Allowance (DA) for all government employees working under the 7th Pay Commission. This decision follows the Council of Ministers' approval on January 20.

According to an order issued by the Finance Department, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer, the Dearness Allowance will be revised to 53% of the basic pay, effective from July 1, 2024, up from the previous rate of 50%.

The revised DA will be applicable to employees working in regular pay levels under the 7th Pay Commission. The government also announced that employees will receive arrears for the additional DA installments from July to December 2024 in their February 2025 salary. From January 2025 onwards, the increased DA will be included in the monthly salary.

Furthermore, the government clarified that any fraction of 50 paise or more in the DA calculation will be rounded up to the next higher rupee, while any fraction below 50 paise will be disregarded.

Waqf Amendment Bill Cleared By JPC

NDA's 14 Proposals Accepted, 44 Of Opposition Rejected



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: A Joint Parliamentary Committee on Monday cleared the Waqf Amendment Bill - which seeks to make 44 changes to the way Muslim charitable properties are managed in the country - with 14 alterations to the draft tabled in the House in August last year. Overall 66 had been proposed - 23 by MPs from the ruling BJP and 44 from opposition members - to the

committee led by BJP MP Jagadambika Pal.

However, changes proposed by the opposition were rejected after committee members voted on party lines; the JPC has 16 MPs from the BJP or allied parties and only 10 from the opposition.

Voting to confirm acceptance of the 14 changes will take place January 29, and the final report will be submitted by January 31, sources said. The committee | [More on P11](#)

1) Nomination of Non-Muslim Members

Allows the nomination of non-Muslim members to Waqf boards

2) Inclusion of Women

Mandates the inclusion of at least two women representatives on Waqf boards

3) Central Waqf Council Composition

Requires the Central Waqf Council to include:

- A Union Minister
- Three Members of Parliament (MPs)
- Four former judges
- Four individuals of 'national repute'

4) Loss of Land Claim Rights

Revokes the Waqf Council's authority to claim land

5) Donation Restrictions

Prohibits donations from Muslims who have been practicing their faith for less than 5 years

Non-Muslim Members, Restriction On Donations Key Changes

A joint parliamentary committee has voted in favour of 14 alterations to the draft version of the Waqf Amendment Bill, which had been tabled in the Lok Sabha in August last year and seeks to make 44 contentious changes to the way Muslim charitable properties are managed in the country.

The 14 alterations include distinguishing between the mandatory two non-Muslim members - as specified in the original draft of the bill - and nominated ex-officio members (Muslim or non-Muslim).

This means waqf councils, whether at state or pan-India levels, will have at least two, and possibly more (if the nominated ex-officio members are also not Muslim) members not

from the Islamic faith.

Another key change is directing an officer nominated to the concerned state to determine if a property is 'waqf'. In the original draft this decision was left to the District Collector.

A third change is establishing that the law will not apply retrospectively, so long as the property in question is already registered. To this point, Congress leader and JPC member Imran Masood raised a red flag, noting an estimated 90 per cent of waqf properties are not, in fact, registered.

These changes, and the 11 others, were proposed by members from the ruling BJP, including Lok Sabha MPs Nishikant Dubey, Tejasvi Surya and Aparajita Srangi.

Among the | [More on P11](#)

22 JKAS Officers Transferred

Munir-ul-Islam is Secretary Info

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday ordered the transfer and posting of 22 JKAS officers in the interests of administration.

According to an order issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), a Munir-ul-Islam, Chief JKAS, has been transferred and appointed as Secretary in the Information Department.

Ajaz Abdullah Saraf, JKAS, Additional Transport Commissioner, J&K, has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer/Secretary of the J&K Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board.

Firdous Ahmad Giri, JKAS, Additional Director SKIMS, Srinagar, has been transferred and posted as Mission Director RUSA, J&K. Qazi Sarwar, JKAS, Additional Commissioner in the office of the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, has been appointed as Director, Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir.

Bashir Ahmad Wani, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Kulgam, has been appointed as Additional Registrar | [More on P11](#)

Opposition Calls It 'Farcical Exercise'

Opposition members of the joint committee of Parliament examining the Waqf bill on Monday claimed the Bill's "draconian" character and bid to interfere in the religious

affairs of Muslims would remain despite examination by the panel. The opposition members, whose proposed amendments to the Bill during the committee's | [More on P11](#)

'One Nation, One Election' Debate Critical For India's Democratic Process: PM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the ongoing debate on the "One Nation, One Election" proposal is critical for India's democratic process and urged youngsters to actively engage in and promote the discussions.

Addressing a National Cadet Corps (NCC) rally here, Modi urged youngsters, including NCC cadets and National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers, to actively engage in and promote the debate, which he said is directly linked to their future.

The prime minister observed that polls have often led to an overwhelming cycle of continuous electioneering in India.

"After independence, elections at the state and central levels were held together for a long time. But over time, this pattern broke down, causing significant challenges for the country," he said. Modi highlighted that the



current situation, where elections take place frequently, disrupts governance and development.

"Today, there is an important debate about 'One Nation, One Election'. Holding the Lok Sabha and state elections simultaneously could alleviate disruptions and enable a more focused governance approach," he said.

The prime minister urged youngsters to take part in the discussion, stressing its relevance for the | [More on P11](#)

Me'raj-e-Aalam: Nightlong Prayers Held Across Kashmir

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Thousands of devotees on Monday thronged shrines and mosques across Kashmir Valley to offer special prayers on the occasion of Me'raj-e-Aalam.

Late-night prayers were held at prominent Masjids and shrines while even smaller places of worship hosted ceremonies to mark the occasion.

According to reports, the biggest congregation on Me'raj-e-Aalam, (the night of ascent) when the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) ascended to the heavens, was held at the Hazratbal shrine where thousands of devotees gathered to participate in the night-long prayers



at the shrine, seeking blessings and spiritual solace.

The shrine echoed with the recitation of Quranic verses and prayers as worshippers, cutting across age groups,

expressed their devotion.

The holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) will be displayed after pre-dawn prayers on Tuesday, allowing devotees to offer their respects. | [More on P11](#)

LG, CM Greet People

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has extended his greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Me'raj. In a message, the Lieutenant Governor has said: "On the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Me'raj,

I convey my greetings and best wishes to all. May almighty accept all our prayers on this pious night and continue to guide us on the path of compassion, love and harmony. I pray for good health, happiness and | [More on P11](#)

J&K CEO Gets Best Electoral Practices Award

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Election Officer P K Pole was honoured by President Droupadi Murmu in the national-level programme organised on National Voters' Day at Manekshaw Center in New Delhi.

The President presented the Best Electoral Practices Awards to state and district officials who demonstrated exemplary performance in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections, on the occasion.

She also received the first copy of the book "India Votes 2024: A Saga of Democracy" from the Chief Election Commissioner, Rajiv Kumar.

'81% Coverage Achieved' CM Pushes For Final Lap In Jal Jeevan Mission

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday said that 81% of households across Jammu and Kashmir have been connected with tap water supply under the Jal Jeevan Mission and efforts being made to achieve the remaining targets.

CM chaired a review meeting of the Jal Shakti Department here at the Civil Secretariat.

The meeting discussed the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Jammu and Kashmir.



CM emphasized the need for effective implementation and robust monitoring mechanisms to achieve the mission's objectives.

During the meeting, ACS Jal Shakti presented a comprehensive overview of the mission's

progress, goals, and challenges.

It was informed that mission aims to provide 55 litres per capita per day (lpcd) of safe and clean drinking water, adhering to BIS 10500 standards. The adoption of alternative | [More on P11](#)

Reviews Preparations For 5th Winter Games

Omar Abdullah chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparations for the 5th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) scheduled to be held from February 22 to 25, 2025

at the renowned ski resort Gulmarg. The meeting focused on ensuring the successful conduct of the event and strengthening Jammu & Kashmir's position as a premier | [More on P11](#)

Light Snowfall Likely From Jan 29-Feb 05

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The weatherman on Monday said that the series of Western Disturbances are affecting Jammu and Kashmir from January 29 onwards and light snowfall is expected at isolated places or scattered places till February 05.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather is expected to remain dry till January 29 afternoon.

However, he said that a series of WDs are affecting J&K till February 5 and under its influence, there is a forecast of light snowfall at isolated places. "Fresh spell of light rain and snow is expected at



Organophosphorus Poisoning Suspected In Rajouri Deaths

Agencies

Srinagar: The situation in the Badhaal area of Rajouri appears to be stabilizing, with no new cases reported in the last five days. However, authorities are still working to confirm the cause behind the 17 mysterious deaths that occurred in the village over the past two months.

Officials said that three siblings who were undergoing treatment at GMC Jammu and SMGS Srinagar have recovered and were discharged. These

individuals have been shifted back to Rajouri, where they will remain under observation along with their families and close contacts.

Another patient, Aijaz Ahmad, who is being treated at PGI Chandigarh, is also showing signs of recovery, while other patients admitted to GMC Rajouri have also recovered.

Top health officials suspect that organophosphorus poisoning might be behind the deaths, as patients responded positively | [More on P11](#)

India, China To Resume Direct Flights

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India and China on Monday announced a series of measures to "rebuild" ties including resuming Kailash Mansarovar Yatra in the summer this year and agreeing in principle to restore direct flights, in a significant move aimed at normalising their relations after completing the disengagement of troops in eastern Ladakh.

The decisions were announced after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri held wide-ranging talks with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong in Beijing.

The two sides also agreed to hold an early meeting of the India-China expert level mechanism to discuss resumption of provision of hydrological data and other cooperation pertaining to | [More on P11](#)

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Opinion Editor: Tooba Towfiq
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
Business & Sales Head: Namisha Raj
Distribution & Advertising: Firdos Ali
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
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KO VIEW

Echoes of Dialogue

Is there any engagement taking place between the centre and Hurriyat as reported by Deccan Chronicle? It is quite possible that there is. With either side staying short of denying the news, it is safe to assume that there might be some contact. And if so, one can't but welcome the development, and hope it leads to some concrete outcome. Hurriyat-centre dialogue has had a chequered past. Although the two have interacted frequently in the past, nothing was ever achieved. This is because the expectation of both the parties from the talks have been a polar opposite of each other. Centre wants Hurriyat to join the national mainstream and play a role as a mainstream political party, but Hurriyat has long harboured a secessionist goal.

After the abrogation of Article 370, which granted J&K a special position under the constitution, the complexion of things on the ground has drastically altered in the union territory. New Delhi will no longer engage with either Pakistan or any local entity in J&K over what was earlier regarded as a Kashmir issue. It has also by and large successfully overcome the political and armed separatist campaign within the union territory. This has transformed the situation, and, in a sense, rendering not just India-Pakistan dialogue redundant but the Centre-Hurriyat engagement too. More so, the latter. Only discussion that appears to have been left to do between the two is if and when Hurriyat joins the mainstream.

However, it is also not that Hurriyat is completely extinct. The organization's underlying idea, if not the organization itself, could still be a challenge for the centre to deal with. And it could be for this reason that the centre will certainly seek to engage with it. If this is sought to be done, it is a worthwhile cause. For decades, Kashmir has been mired in violence, political unrest, and a sense of alienation among its people, so a reported dialogue between the Centre and Hurriyat offers hope that the cycle of confrontation and mistrust can finally be broken.

The timing of this alleged dialogue is also crucial. The political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir has changed beyond recognition over the past five years with the last year's assembly election creating an opportunity for a fresh start. By engaging with the Hurriyat, the Centre can address the sense of disenchantment among sections of the Kashmiri population and work towards rebuilding trust.



Did You Know?

Investment Strategies: Balancing Risk and Reward

Irshad Mushtaq

When considering where to allocate your money, understanding your investment options is essential. Different assets come with varying levels of risk and return, and knowing how to balance these can significantly impact your long-term financial health.

Below are some popular investment vehicles, their characteristics, and what you should consider before diving in.

Equities (Stocks)

Characteristics:

- High potential returns (average CAGR can be around 15-20%)
- Prone to volatility and market fluctuations

Considerations:

- Requires a longer time horizon to weather market ups and downs
- Understanding fundamental analysis or consulting financial advisors can enhance stock-picking skills

Real Estate

Characteristics:

- Considered a stable investment with decent long-term returns (typically 6-12% CAGR)
- Provides potential rental income and capital appreciation

Considerations:

- Less liquid than stocks; selling a property can take time
- Costs include property taxes, maintenance, and transaction fees

Mutual Funds

Characteristics:

- Pool money from multiple investors to buy diversified assets
- Can offer returns similar to equities, varying by fund type (large-cap, small-cap, etc.)

Considerations:

- Management fees can impact returns but it's relatively small, and withdrawals are possible anytime
- Research fund performance and manager track record before investing

Precious Metals (Gold/Silver)

Characteristics:

- Seen as a hedge against inflation and market downturns
- Historical returns can vary, typically around 4-11% CAGR

Considerations:

- Generally does not produce income; mainly a store of value
- Buy and sell spreads can affect profitability

Fixed Income (Bonds/Fixed Deposits)

Characteristics:

- Generally safer, with predictable returns (around 6-8% CAGR)
- Fixed income provides regular interest payments

Considerations:

- Lower returns compared to equities or real estate
- Interest rate fluctuations can impact bond prices negatively

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Ending Modern-Day Untouchability

Need Of Addressing Employer Bias Against Non-NLU Students

Ummar Jamal

India's legal education landscape has transformed substantially over the past few decades, primarily with the establishment of National Law Universities (NLUs). Regarded as the gold standard, NLUs are elite institutions that admit students based on the highly competitive Common Law Admission Test (CLAT). Only a fraction of applicants secure admission, creating an aura of exclusivity around NLU graduates. Yet, this perception often leads to biases against students from other law schools, categorizing them as less competent despite their potential. The reality is far more complex, as many talented students outside of NLUs face socio-economic barriers or narrowly miss the CLAT cut-off, while still possessing the skills to excel in the legal profession.

In February 2023, Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud addressed the convocation at NALSAR University, urging NLU students to respect their peers from other law schools. He emphasized the need for humility, cautioning against a sense of superiority based solely on institutional affiliation. Justice Chandrachud also acknowledged the challenges NLUs face in making legal education accessible to diverse socio-economic backgrounds, a gap that reinforces inequity in the legal field.

In July 2024, the Supreme Court again highlighted these challenges in *Gaurav Kumar v. Union of India*, where CJI Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala acknowledged the barriers non-NLU graduates face. The judgment underscored that students from marginalized communities or those lacking an NLU degree often encounter discrimination in elite law firms, senior lawyer chambers, and other prestigious roles, all of which are critical for establishing a career in law. The judgment reaffirmed the need to dismantle institutional biases and called for a more inclusive approach to legal hiring.

The "Modern-Day Untouchability" in Law

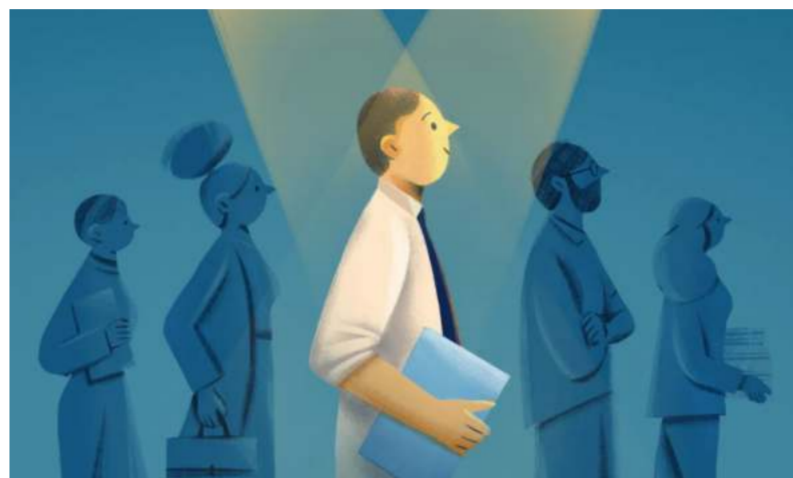
In India's legal job market, non-NLU students are often sidelined, treated almost as "untouchables" by many recruiters who gravitate towards the NLU brand. Despite having comparable skills, determination, and legal acumen, these students find doors closed to prestigious law firms, judicial clerkships, and corporate roles simply because they don't hold an NLU tag. This bias, deeply rooted in institutional elitism, overlooks individual talent and reinforces an unfair hierarchy.

NLUs account for approximately 3,000 seats annually across India, while the country's broader network of law schools produces over 80,000 graduates each year, with non-NLU students making up the overwhelming majority. Yet, the "NLU-only" mindset fosters an elitism that permeates legal hiring, often translating into biased recruitment practices favoring pedigree over talent. For example, in 2014 graduates from a single National Law School held 26% of partnership positions in India's top six corporate law firms, despite abundant talent from other law schools.

Non-NLU students often face institutional discrimination, facing rejection from top firms and judges' chambers solely due to their alma mater. This pervasive "brand bias" not only reduces diversity within the profession but also limits the range of perspectives that can enrich legal practice.

Access to NLUs is heavily reliant on the CLAT, an entrance examination that has been criticized for creating structural barriers. In 2024, around 60,295 students competed for just 3,243 seats, giving NLUs an acceptance rate around 5%. Students from economically marginalized backgrounds are disproportionately disadvantaged, as they often lack the resources to access specialized coaching that many affluent students rely on to prepare for CLAT. Consequently, highly capable students are sidelined—not due to a lack of ability, but due to systemic inequities that hinder access.

The average NLU tuition fee exceeds 10-15 lakh for a five-year program, a staggering amount for most Indian families, especially when considering that the annual per capita income in India is around 1.5 lakh. In comparison, non-NLU institutions offer significantly



A more equitable legal landscape requires collective action from students, educational institutions, employers, and the government. Breaking free from the "modern-day untouchability" of institutional elitism means moving toward a future where all law students, regardless of their alma mater, have equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to India's legal ecosystem

lower fees, allowing students from diverse financial backgrounds to pursue a legal education. However, many employers equate higher fees and exclusivity with competence, an assumption that overlooks the immense talent in non-NLU schools.

The Disparity in Employment Opportunities

In the competitive field of law, where networks and mentorship play crucial roles, NLU graduates often have an advantage, enjoying campus recruitment from prestigious firms and clerking opportunities that set them up for successful careers.

In 2024, a social media post ignited with discussions after KIA India, a major motor vehicle manufacturer, posted a job opening for a Legal Specialist, initially specifying a preference for applicants from National Law Universities (NLUs) only. The announcement sparked criticism online, with commenters expressing disappointment over the bias against candidates from non-NLUs and the broader preference many employers show for law graduates with an NLU background.

A few years ago, a Delhi University graduate filed a petition in the Patna High Court challenging a recruitment post by Bihar Mining Corporation Limited, which restricted eligibility for law officer positions to graduates from Chanakya National Law University (CNLU), Patna. In response, the court issued a notice to the State in March 2022.

Similarly, in June 2022, the Kerala High Court invalidated a notification by the National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) that limited applications for an Assistant Law Officer role to candidates who had passed the CLAT 2021 postgraduate exam. Declaring the restriction discriminatory, Justice VG Arun remarked, "There is no logical basis for the assumption that professionalism and competence is the fiefdom of only those passing from elite institutions."

These are not the only case where the preference in job applicants was given to students from National Law Universities. This has become a routine in Indian job market. This disparity is largely due to the longstanding bias in the legal community that considers NLU graduates inherently superior, while overlooking the competence, dedication, and unique insights of non-NLU graduates.

This bias extends beyond recruitment, affecting career growth, salary potential, and professional respect. Many law firms and corporate legal departments often reserve entry-level positions and internships for NLU graduates, creating a cycle where non-NLU students face fewer opportunities, which impacts their professional trajectories. Moreover, top-tier firms rarely visit non-NLU campuses for recruitment, further restricting access for those graduates. Such discrimination perpetuates an elitist view that limits the potential for innovation and diversity within India's legal profession.

Breaking the Stereotype

In India, non-NLU students have repeatedly demonstrated that talent, dedication, and success in the legal profession are not exclusive to NLU graduates. Though NLUs often carry a prestigious reputation, many students from non-NLUs have excelled and sometimes even

The government can also intervene by increasing funding to NLUs, allowing these institutions to lower fees without compromising quality, thereby opening doors to talented students from diverse backgrounds.

Data from the National Law Universities Consortium (NLUC), which includes 22 NLUs across India, reveals that in 2020, only 14% of admitted students came from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

Many students don't attend NLUs not because they're incompetent but because they can't afford the exorbitant costs of education. The high fees, often reaching several lakhs, make it impossible for talented students from less privileged backgrounds to access these institutions. Its economic barriers, not a lack of ability, that hold them back, leaving many bright minds out of the NLU system simply due to financial constraints.

The Role of Employers: Embracing Diversity in Legal Hiring

The responsibility to dismantle these biases also lies with employers, who must make hiring practices more inclusive. Rather than focusing solely on institutional affiliation, employers should prioritize competency, critical thinking, and real-world skills. Research supports that diversity in educational backgrounds brings fresh perspectives to law firms, enabling them to better address complex legal issues and represent varied client interests effectively.

Law firms and legal departments can further contribute to an inclusive hiring process by participating in recruitment drives at non-NLU campuses. Offering internship programs specifically for non-NLU students can provide them with essential training and networking opportunities. Such initiatives can help level the playing field and ensure that the legal profession does not miss out on exceptional talent.

Achieving equality in legal education and employment requires structural changes. Collaborative programs between NLUs and non-NLUs, including shared courses, faculty exchanges, and academic partnerships, can help standardize legal education across institutions. Such collaborations would raise the overall quality of legal training, benefiting the profession at large and reducing institutional bias.

Furthermore, standardized accreditation measures can help bridge the perceived gap in quality between NLUs and non-NLUs. By setting clear standards for legal education across all law schools, students from different institutions can receive comparable training, ensuring that the quality of graduates is uniformly high, regardless of the institution.

Tailpiece

The deep-rooted bias against non-NLU graduates has far-reaching implications, not only limiting individual career prospects but also hindering the growth of India's legal profession. By excluding talented individuals based on institutional pedigree, the legal sector risks becoming insular and homogenous, missing out on diverse perspectives that are essential for a dynamic profession.

A more equitable legal landscape requires collective action from students, educational institutions, employers, and the government. Breaking free from the "modern-day untouchability" of institutional elitism means moving toward a future where all law students, regardless of their alma mater, have equal opportunities to contribute meaningfully to India's legal ecosystem. The legal profession, founded on principles of justice and fairness, must rise to the occasion by dismantling institutional biases, embracing diversity, and championing inclusivity.

Through sustained efforts, it is possible to create a legal community that values hard work, commitment, and skill over the brand name of an institution—ensuring that every aspiring lawyer has the chance to fulfil their potential and impact society positively.

The author is a national president of J&K Students Association and final year law student of a non-NLU institution. He tweets at ummar_jamal and can be reached at umarjama1968@gmail.com

Procrastination, An Enemy of Results

Beating procrastination requires self-regulation, self-control, and strong determination

Tauseef Hassan

Imagine this:

"Have you finished the assignment that needs to be submitted by Monday?" asked Mudasir's mother, who is a 10th-grade student. Actually, his mother had noticed him scrolling through his phone on Sunday. He hesitated for a moment but had the courage to reply, "Not yet, I will do it after dinner. I have more than enough time to complete it." As he sat down with his books after dinner, Mudasir got distracted by a series on YouTube, which cost him two hours of precious study time. His mother again noticed him wasting time and asked, "What is wrong with you? Why aren't you working on your homework assignment?"

"Relax, Ammi Ji, I will definitely finish it before bedtime," Mudasir said confidently. He was exhausted by the time bedtime arrived and postponed his decision to do the assignment until the next morning. The next morning, he could hardly make preparations to get ready for school with the assignment still undone, regretting and saying to himself, "Dude, why did you procrastinate and not start working on the assignment earlier?"

This is not the case with Mudasir only; we all procrastinate from time to time. We put off decisions, skip reading books, tell ourselves to wait until tomorrow, or don't complete tasks because we don't feel like it.

PROCRASTINATION HAS A PRICE

Everybody wrestles with procrastination in one way or another. It is like trying to pull ourselves out of a deep hole once we get caught in it. Pondering the costs of procrastination is a difficult task, as it makes us feel worse when we are already



down, grappling with its worst effects. A study published in the American Psychological Society journal discusses the cost of procrastination. It is linked to depression, low self-esteem, irrational beliefs, anxiety, stress, robbing of precious time, and more. Stress, for example, is a result of delaying a task until it becomes unbearable. The task you have been putting off doesn't disappear; instead, it appears more frightening as the deadline approaches. This type of stress is not just uncomfortable; it affects our judgment, makes us exhausted, and even makes us fear starting. Consequently, our results are prone to imperfection and flaws. As a result of procrastination, we suffer more mentally than the task itself. Low self-esteem is born each time we delay a task.

This is because when we put off a task until later, we are telling ourselves, "We can't do this task right now." Over time, this feeling becomes internalized, and we start to believe that we are incapable of performing tasks promptly and efficiently. What happens is the shame of unfinished tasks sneaks into negative self-talk, damaging our self-esteem and making it even harder to break out of this cycle once we get caught in it.

The study presents enough evidence that procrastinators enjoy themselves, go out, and have a great time, experiencing no stress at all rather than working on assigned tasks—until the rising pressure of imminent deadlines forces them to get to work. From this perspective, procrastination may occur due to a lack of

self-regulation, and the motivation required to work depends on externally imposed forces.

BEATING PROCRASTINATION

Self-regulation, willpower, and strong determination are all essential when it comes to beating the cycle of procrastination. Everyone may agree with this, but there is one more thing worth discussing here: the comfort zone. We all fear, for some unknown reason, stepping outside of our comfort zones. It takes courage to make bold moves and finish tasks within the stipulated time frame. Remember, procrastination has nothing to do with the task at hand—whether it is big or small; it always waits until later. In fact, the word "later" is what feeds it. When we start working on a task, we are excited

and focused, but then, after some time, we think: "Let's have a look at the latest score in a cricket match." Then, we think: "Let's watch one episode of a series on YouTube," and then another one. And so forth. Initially, we might have thought of just one thing, but it opens up a whole bunch of distractions that drag us further and further from where we started. Then, when we realize this thought derailment, we say to ourselves: "This is the last time we are wasting our time!"

RULES TO GET OUR WORK DONE

What we really need is a system for getting work done. It is not always courage that works; what matters most is a system of organized people working collectively and efficiently. This kills procrastination. To get things done on time, research has proven effective methods such as self-imposed deadlines, working/studying in intervals, exercising for 30 minutes a day, maintaining a healthy diet, eliminating distractions, and most importantly, having internal motivation. The methods outlined above combine the right tactics that are productive in creating an efficient system. But there is no system that can help us beat procrastination if we do not have an inner drive. Researchers even compare procrastination to alcohol or drug abuse. Breaking its cycle today and not tomorrow is recognizing its true costs. It is the right time to start.

"Beware of procrastination, for it is the highest-ranking soldier of Iblis." – **Allama Ibn Jawzi (ra)**
"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." – **Abraham Lincoln**

The author works in the School Education Department



WHAT WE REALLY NEED IS A SYSTEM FOR GETTING WORK DONE. IT IS NOT ALWAYS COURAGE THAT WORKS; WHAT MATTERS MOST IS A SYSTEM OF ORGANIZED PEOPLE WORKING COLLECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY. This kills procrastination. To get things done on time, research has proven effective methods such as self-imposed deadlines, working/studying in intervals, exercising for 30 minutes a day, maintaining a healthy diet, eliminating distractions, and most importantly, having internal motivation

How Artificial Intelligence Can be Weaponized for Harassment

Tactical Tech

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools — especially those that generate images, videos, and audio — have been marketed as "creativity apps" for individuals and "efficiency tools" for businesses, but there are few ways to control how they're actually used and the harms that these artificially created visuals can cause.

It may come as no surprise that AI tools are making the problem of online harassment even worse, such as through the creation and sharing of non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII) — these are intimate photos or videos, including nudity or sexually suggestive or explicit images exposing someone's real or AI-generated body, shared without their permission.

NCII affects many people — not just the celebrities you might hear about in the media — and it's not easy to deal with. Even platforms and law enforcement are struggling to keep up.

THE PROBLEM IS BIGGER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

The technology is advancing so quickly that now it only takes one image of someone (and it could even be a totally wholesome picture) to be able to create sexually explicit content using one of many AI-powered tools.

While certain AI tools supercharge the problem of harassment, making it easy to create NCII of anyone, other AI tools are being used to tackle it. However, AI-powered tools that are trained to detect AI images are not perfect, and much of the work to identify and take them down still falls on the people working as content moderators.

One of the most resonant cases in 2024 involved sexual-



The technology is advancing so quickly that now it only takes one image of someone (and it could even be a totally wholesome picture) to be able to create sexually explicit content using one of many AI-powered tools. While certain AI tools supercharge the problem of harassment, making it easy to create NCII of anyone, other AI tools are being used to tackle it

ly explicit AI-generated deepfake images of Taylor Swift. These images first appeared on 4chan and, within minutes, spread like wildfire across various social media sites. One of the images was seen over 47 million times before it was re-

moved. It's possible that these images are still being shared online since there is no real way to completely wipe them off the internet.

But this is not an isolated case. According to a 2021 study, 41 percent of over 10,000 survey respondents in the US said that they had personally experienced a form of online harassment. Of the respondents under 35 years old, 33 percent of women and 11 percent of men said they had specifically experienced sexual harassment online.

On a similar note, a 2023 analysis of over 95,000 deepfake videos found that up to 98 percent of them were deepfake pornography, and, of those, 99 percent of the individuals targeted were women. Other vulnerable groups, such as minors and LGBTQ+ people, are also disproportionately victims of online sexual harassment.

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THIS KIND OF HARASSMENT?

There are some guardrails in place by online platforms to support you in locking down your information from unwanted eyes. While these tips won't build you an impenetrable fortress, they can make it harder for bullies or those trying to do harm to get to you.

Every platform is different and has settings and options accessible to users. As an example, here are a few things you can do to tighten controls on your Instagram and TikTok:

- Set your profile to "private." On platforms like Instagram and TikTok, you can set your profile to private so that only people who you approve as followers can see what you share in most cases. However, they can still see comments you make

- on other people's posts and can even still send you messages. Learn to set your profile to private on Instagram and TikTok.
- Remove followers or block people. If someone is giving you a hard time or making you feel uneasy, you can remove them as a follower or block them altogether. But if you know the person in real life, you'll need a different strategy. Learn how to block people on Instagram and TikTok.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Looking at how many people are getting targeted by online harassment, it seems logical to assume there are a lot of harassers, too. But the fact is, it only takes one bad actor to do widespread harm. Would you consider someone who shares NCII a harasser, even if they didn't originally generate

the images? In the example of Taylor Swift, it took only a few people to create the NCII of her, but it wouldn't have gone viral without many people sharing it.

So, how can you be an ally to someone who is being targeted and harassed? No matter which social media platform you use, it likely will have a "report" function. On apps like Instagram, you can report specific posts or entire profiles or accounts if you spot anything that looks like abuse or harassment. Reporting on Instagram is a great option to flag problematic people or things you see or hear. Instagram won't share the identity of the person reporting with the person being reported.

When you "report" on Instagram, the platform may remove the post or may warn, deactivate, or ban the profile or account, depending on what happened and whether it goes against their Community Guidelines. Worth noting is that Meta's Community Guidelines are not always helpful, and post takedowns and account bans have caused recent controversies.

If you personally know the person who is being targeted, gently reach out to them if you feel comfortable doing so. It might be that they had no idea this was happening and could react with strong distress, anger, or sadness. If you feel prepared to support them, you can offer them resources (like those linked at the end of this guide) and help them monitor and document the harassment.

Even though you most likely will not want to look at the harassment again, it might be helpful to document it before it's taken down. Consider taking a video capture or screenshot of the post or comment that includes the account name of the other person and the date. Save the documentation some-

where safe and out of sight on your phone or computer. For example, on some phones you can set up a password-protected "secure folder."

Documentation, when done well, can be useful in case the person being targeted decides to bring the issue to law enforcement and needs some sort of evidence.

It's important that the person being targeted decides what they want to do. Do they want to contact law enforcement, get a lawyer, or reach out to their school, university, or workplace? Or would they rather keep it confidential as much as they can? Especially in a situation of NCII, so much choice is being taken away from them, so make sure to support them in getting back in control.

KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

If you or someone you know is targeted with NCII, know that there are dedicated organizations out there who are ready to help. You don't have to deal with it alone. Here are just a few supporting English-speakers:

- Chayn (worldwide): Chayn provides resources and support to survivors of gender-based violence.
- StopNCII (worldwide): StopNCII has a bank of resources as well as a tool that can help you get non-consensual intimate images taken down.
- Take Back the Tech (worldwide): Take Back the Tech offers explainers and resources like Hey Friend, with tips on how you can support your friends when they are targets of harassment.

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Chinese AI startup DeepSeek overtakes ChatGPT on Apple App Store

Agencies

Beijing- Chinese startup DeepSeek's artificial intelligence (AI) Assistant on Monday overtook rival ChatGPT to become the top-rated free application available on Apple's App Store in the United States.

Powered by the DeepSeek-V3 model, which its creators say "tops the leaderboard among open-source models and rivals the most advanced closed-source models globally", the artificial intelligence application has surged in popularity among US users since it was released on January 10, according to app data research firm Sensor Tower.

The milestone highlights how DeepSeek has left a deep impression on Silicon Valley, upending widely held views about US primacy in AI and the effectiveness of Washington's export controls targeting China's advanced chip and AI capabilities.

AI models from ChatGPT to DeepSeek require advanced chips to power their training. The Biden administration has since 2021 widened the scope of bans designed to stop these

chips from being exported to China and used to train Chinese firms' AI models.

However, DeepSeek researchers wrote in a paper last month that the DeepSeek-V3 used Nvidia's H800 chips for training, spending less than \$6 million.

Although this detail has since been disputed, the claim that the chips used were less powerful than the most advanced Nvidia products Washington has sought to keep out of China, as well as the relatively cheap training costs, has prompted US tech executives to question the effectiveness of tech export controls.

Little is known about the company behind DeepSeek, a small Hangzhou-based startup founded in 2023, when search engine giant Baidu released the first Chinese AI large-language model.

Since then, dozens of Chinese tech companies large and small have released their own AI models, but DeepSeek is the first to be praised by the US tech industry as matching or even surpassing the performance of cutting-edge US models.

Saudi Authorizes Foreign Property Investments In Holy Cities

Agencies

Riyadh- In an attempt to attract foreign investments, Saudi Arabia has decided to open investments in publicly traded companies owning properties in the holy cities of Mecca and Madinah.

Starting January 27, foreign investors will be allowed to buy shares and convertible debt instruments in companies listed on the Saudi Stock Exchange that own public or private real estate within city limits, as announced by the Capital Market Authority (CMA). However, strategic foreign investors are exempt from this rule, and foreign ownership is capped at 49% of a company's listed shares, according to the CMA.

"The Capital Market Authority aims to stimulate investment, enhance the attractiveness and efficiency of the capital market, and strengthen its regional and

international competitiveness while supporting the local economy," the CMA said.

Following the announcement, shares of some real estate companies surged. Jabal Omar Development Co. rose by as much as 10% at market opening in Saudi Arabia. Other related companies include Dar Al Arkan Real Estate Development Co., Taiba Investments Co., Emaar Economic City, and Makkah Construction & Development Co.

This move aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 diversification plan, which aims to enhance the country's attractiveness as an investment hub. The kingdom has implemented significant reforms to investment laws, relaxed foreign ownership regulations in the stock market, and is working on major expansion projects in Mecca and Madinah to accommodate 30 million foreign pilgrims annually by 2030.



DPIIT, JKEDI Sign MoU To Strengthen Startup Ecosystem In J&K

Observer News Service

Baribrahmana- In a landmark move to bolster the startup ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering collaboration, mentorship, and support for startups in the region.

The signing took place at "Jammu Kashmir Konnect," a special startup-focused program organized at JKEDI's Baribrahmana campus, where startups, incubators, and key-way stakeholders gathered to discuss innovation and growth opportunities.

Director DPIIT Dr. Sumeet K Jarangal and Director JKEDI Rajinder Kumar Sharma formally signed the MoU, marking a significant step toward strengthening startup support systems in

J&K. While incubators and startups from the Jammu division attended the event physically, those from the Kashmir division participated virtually.

During the program, Director DPIIT and Director JKEDI held one-on-one interactions with all incubators, discussing their challenges, needs, and future plans. The session provided a unique platform for incubators to share insights, suggest improvements, and seek policy-level support for enhancing the startup ecosystem.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Sumeet K Jarangal emphasized the need for DPIIT-recognized incubators to avail Funds of Funds and Seed Fund. He stressed that while financial resources are available, structured mentorship and handholding remain the most crucial factors for startup success. He also assured that more interactive sessions will be conducted in the future,

encouraging startups to shift their mindset toward becoming job providers rather than job seekers. Furthermore, he highlighted India's ambition to become a global leader in advanced technology sectors, reducing dependence on countries like Israel and the U.S.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajinder Kumar Sharma reiterated JKEDI's commitment as the nodal agency for Startup JK, stating that the institute is actively collaborating with various organizations to strengthen the startup ecosystem in the region. He assured that more such workshops will be conducted in partnership with DPIIT and incubators to ensure continuous knowledge sharing and engagement. He also lauded the achievements of a startup from Udhampur that has attained unicorn status, underscoring the immense potential of J&K's emerging startup ecosystem.

Beekeepers Felicitated At Concluding Ceremony Of 7-Day Training Program

Observer News Service

Jammu- Directorate of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Jammu Monday felicitated 50 aspiring Beekeepers drawn from Jammu and Samba Districts.

They were felicitated at the concluding ceremony of the seven-day training program on Scientific

Beekeeping organized for them at Baba Jitto Kisan Kendra by the Apiculture Development Scheme, Directorate of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Jammu, under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM).

Director Agriculture Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen, presided over the ceremony and felicitated the bee-

keepers, presenting them with Tool Kits, literature, bee flora saplings, and certificates of participation.

Earlier, the participants visited the Apiculture Demonstration cum Training Centre in Chimney Chak, Jammu, where they received practical, hands-on training in bee hive operations and colony management.

Govt May Consider Giving Agri Subsidies Via DBT: Chouhan

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- The government is trying to bring policy-level changes for simplifying agriculture, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday said and indicated that providing subsidies on fertiliser, seed and farming equipment through direct benefit transfer could be considered in the future.

In an interaction with farmers, who were invited to witness the Republic Day parade as special guests, at his residence here on Monday, the Agriculture and Rural Development Minister said the government spends up to Rs 2,00,000 crore on fertiliser subsidies.

"The fertiliser subsidy that the government gives costs to the tune of Rs 2,00,000 crore. A sack of urea costs Rs 265 to the farmers, but it costs Rs 2,400. The subsidy goes to the company. The fertilizer is also used for other purposes... If there is a reliable system, farmers can be given the subsidy directly in their accounts," Chouhan said.

"The PM Kisan Samman

Nidhi's cost comes to around Rs 60,000 crore, if the fertilizer subsidy is given through DBT, the bank balance will increase further," he said.

Similarly, he said, the government will explore if direct benefit transfer can be applied for other subsidies related to agriculture as well, like for drip irrigation, poly-house or tractors.

The minister also said that the government is considering bearing the transportation cost for agricultural produce so as to enable farmers to sell their products across the country.

"We are making efforts to simplify agriculture for farmers. Soybean rates went down, so we imposed a 20 per cent duty on import of (soybean) oil... We removed the restriction from export of Basmati rice..." he said.

"Agricultural produce is cheap, but it becomes expensive by the time it reaches cities. We are contemplating how to reduce this difference for the consumer, like if the Centre and states can share the transport expense," he said.

Investors Lose Rs 9.28 Lakh Crore As Stock Markets Fall For 2nd Day

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Stock investors took a severe hit on Monday as key indices slumped to more than seven-month lows due to widespread selling amid increased uncertainty over US trade policy, wiping out Rs 9.28 lakh crore of market wealth.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies tanked Rs 9,20,654.51 crore to Rs 4,10,31,199.48 or USD 4.75 trillion. The market breadth was negative as 3,588 shares declined, 532 advanced and 114 stocks remain unchanged.

The 30-share BSE barometer plunged by 824.29 points or 1.08 per cent to close at 75,366.17, a level not seen since June 2024. During the day, the barometer plummeted 922.87 points or 1.2 per cent to a low of 75,267.59.

"Dalal Street continues to

bleed, extending its losses from Friday last week, as the wind of slowing corporate earnings swayed away hopes of earnings revival and bolstered pessimism about tepid earnings.

"Volatility geared up during the day, driven by a mix of factors such as heightened anticipation around the fiscal budget, concerns about slowing corporate earnings, and uncertainties surrounding the upcoming Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting," Ameya Ranadive Chartered Market Technician, CFTe, Sr Technical Analyst, StoxBox, said.

Geopolitical tensions and continued selling by foreign institutional investors (FII) further hit the sentiment. Mid and small-cap continue to face the brunt of heightened volatility as richer valuations trigger sell-off across the segment, Ranadive said.

Public Notice: My name in the class 10th Board certificate of my son Afaan Arif is incorrectly entered as Sajad Hussian Arif in place of Sajad Hussain Arif. I am applying for correction of the same...

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

Public Notice: This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing number 725514608161 of my daughter the name is wrongly entered as YATOO ATHAR YOUSUF D/o MOHAMMAD YOUSUF YATOO while her actual name is ATAHAR JAN D/O MOHAMMAD YOUSUF YATOO.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE The Deputy Chief Engineer/BR/Workshop, Northern Railway, Jalandhar Cantt. for and on behalf of President of India invites Open-tender under Signle Packet System for the under noted work-

Public Notice: This is for the information of the general public that I have sold my Alto car (LX) bearing registration no. JK01L 9924 (Chassis No MA3EYD 81501218898), Engine No (F8dn1244488) with month and year of manufacturing 08/2008 to Syed Zain-ul-Aabideen Andrabi (Aadhar No: 9664-4570-9421) S/O Syed Nazir Ahmed Andrabi R/O 1085, Housing Colony, Ompora, Budgam, J&K, 191111 on 20/01/2024.

Public Notice: This information is for the general public that in school record mother's name of my daughter has been mentioned wrongly as Rukiya Firdous instead of Rukaya thus it needs to be corrected objection if any must be reached into the office of Hilltop Educational Institute Darend Ganderbal within 5days from the publication date.

Public Notice: Whereas, I, Mr. Faizan Fida Sofi, S/o Fida Rehman Sofi, R/o Saura, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, intend to apply to the Prescribed Authority of the Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir, for the registration of my proposed unit under the name and style "Letourista", situated at Habbak Naseem Bagh, Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE Our Institute Namely Harmukh Khadi Gramudyog Sansthan Srinagar (J&K) Wanted To Registration From Directorate Of Industries And Commerce Kashmir. In This Connection If Any Person Has Any Objection To Inform The Concern Department As Well As Our Institute Within 7 Days. After That No Objection Will Be Entertained.

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کٹرہ درخواست منجانب محمد شعیبان بنوارہ لغلام محمد بنوارہ کٹرہ ہا پاکین برادرسول OBC تہذیب و ثقافت ڈیپارٹمنٹ شہنشاہ برادری گاہی بر خاص و عام معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سالانہ دفتر ذمہ داری زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ تقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے لئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سالانہ سالانہ موقع کٹرہ ہا پاکین میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ سالانہ تقوالات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے کہ یہ سالانہ سالانہ 100000 روپے تک ہے سالانہ کٹرہ ہا پاکین افراد پر مشتمل ہے محمد شعیبان بنوارہ 56 سال مزدوری/تربھان عظیمہ بیگم 53 سال گھر بیگم عاقبہ احمد بنوارہ 27 سال زیر تعلیم عمر شعیبان بنوارہ 26 سال -- -- بہہ شعیبان 25 سال -- -- کٹرہ شعیبان

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class) Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER For and on behalf of the University of Kashmir, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage (%) basis from approved and eligible Civil Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/UT/ Central Governments for the following works

CBC Organizes Outreach Programme On Drug Addiction



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Central Bureau of Communication, Field Srinagar, under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, organised a Mini Integrated Communication and Outreach Programme at the Gujjar Bakerwal PG Hostel in Padshahi Bagh, Srinagar. The event focused on Mission LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment), Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, drug addiction, and various Central Government schemes.

The programme aimed to inform and educate the audience about welfare schemes of the Central Government, while raising awareness about environmental conservation, drug addiction, cultural unity, and new criminal laws.

The speakers emphasized the importance of individual responsibility in creating a sustainable and drug-free society. Resource persons from the Education and other departments discussed initiatives such as Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, which promotes cultural exchanges among students from different states, and the recently introduced Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, highlighting its focus on welfare over punitive measures.

Field Publicity Officer of CBC Srinagar, Naseer Ahmad Rather, underscored the significance of such outreach initiatives, saying such programmes are organised to enhance public awareness about government policies and programmes. He said that such programmes will be organised across Jammu and Kashmir in the coming months.

Warden Gujjar Bakerwal Boys PG Hostel Abdul Rashid and Warden Boys Hostel Gogji Bagh Nayek Mohammad while addressing the students thanked CBC for organising such outreach programme, saying such programmes prove very beneficial for the students who come from far flung areas in spreading awareness about the government welfare initiatives.

An open quiz, painting, and drawing competition was also held on the programme's themes, with participants being awarded certificates and mementos. Students also took out a rally, carrying placards and banners promoting the messages of environmental conservation and the eradication of drug addiction.

The cultural troupes empanelled with CBC Srinagar presented musical performances and skits on government initiatives.

No Need For Confrontation With Centre On Statehood: Salman

Agencies

SRINAGAR: National Conference leader and MLA Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar, stated on Monday that his party does not expect any conflict with the central government over the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

Talking to reporters, Salman said, "National Conference remains confident that the Government of India, particularly the Prime Minister and Home Minister, understand the importance of fulfilling the mandates necessary for restoring Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and special status. But yes, restoration of statehood is not a matter of orders but a process," he said.

Salman highlighted that these issues, including the resolution of special rights, were discussed in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, underlining the commitment to resolving them peacefully and effectively.

"We do not foresee any confrontation with the center. We



are sure that the mandates given to us by the people will lead to the restoration of statehood. Our issues are primarily local, and we are confident that the central government will take them seriously in due course," Sagar stated.

Addressing concerns raised by opposition parties, Sagar dismissed the notion of unnecessary conflicts and stressed that the focus remains on constructive development and addressing local issues.

He reaffirmed that the National Conference continues to push for statehood without resorting to confrontation, trusting that the central government will fulfill its promises in the near future. (KINS)

Amid Health Crisis, 60% Of Posts Vacant At GMC Rajouri

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid the ongoing health crisis in the Badhal area of Rajouri district, the Government Medical College (GMC) Rajouri is grappling with a severe staff shortage, with around 60% of sanctioned posts currently vacant.

Official sources revealed that nearly 62 percent of the sanctioned positions at GMC Rajouri remain unfilled, which affects the institution's functioning.

"Out of 23 sanctioned posts for professors, only one professor is currently available," an official said, adding that the hospital is also facing acute shortages of doctors and paramedics, leaving key departments understaffed and overburdened.

The hospital lacks critical diagnostic and treatment facilities, including an MRI machine and a Cath Lab, forcing patients from Rajouri and neighbouring Poonch district to travel to Jammu for advanced medical care.

Residents of Rajouri and Poonch have expressed concern over the inadequate healthcare facilities and have urged the government to address the shortages in staff and infrastructure at GMC Rajouri.

MLA Budhal, Javed Iqbal Choudhary said the hospital is in a dire state. "The hospital is

severely short-staffed and is functioning without many essential diagnostic facilities," he said.

Principal GMC Rajouri has formally requested the Health and Medical Education Department to establish an MRI facility at the hospital.

In a letter to the Health Secretary, the Principal stated: "In continuation of Office No. GMC/R/2022-23/9754-59 dated 21.11.2022 and in reference to the request submitted by the In-charge Head of the Department, Radio Diagnosis & Imaging, GMC Rajouri, it is forwarded with a request to kindly direct the concerned authorities for the establishment of an MRI facility at the Associated Hospital of GMC Rajouri."

In light of the mysterious illness that claimed 17 lives in Badhal village, authorities recently deployed 10 paediatricians and anesthesiologists to GMC Rajouri. All leaves for doctors and paramedics have been cancelled under a medical alert issued by the administration.

The residents of Rajouri have appealed to the government to prioritise the hospital's needs. They said the absence of proper medical facilities in this frontier district is causing undue suffering. Local treatment options should be improved to minimise patient reliance on distant healthcare facilities, they added—(KNO)

Become Voice Of Patriotism, Unity: J&K LG To Poets, Literary Personalities



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday called upon poets and literary personalities to become the voice of patriotism and unity and make their valuable contribution in building a vibrant, progressive and united society.

"Poetry as art form has a social responsibility. It can be

a powerful medium for creating awareness about socio-economic issues, inspiring the spirit of patriotism and portraying the values of harmony and brotherhood," he said.

Sinha was speaking after inaugurating the 'Rashtriya Kavi Sammelan' in Hindi, Dogri and Urdu, at the Abhinav Theatre here.

The three-day literary event is being organized by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and

Languages as part of the 76th Republic Day celebrations.

The Lt Governor said Jammu Kashmir is witnessing a historic transformation and "it is our collective responsibility to reaffirm our commitment to inclusive development and work with dedication".

Several renowned poets and young talent enthralled the audience through their captivating poetry recitation.

CS Reviews Progress On Ongoing Road Projects

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, chaired a meeting of the Public Works Department (PWD) attended by the Engineers of the executing agencies to review progress on major ongoing road projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

While taking stock of overall progress on accomplishing these vital road connectivity links across the UT, the Chief Secretary emphasised on enhancing the capacity of the engineers to enable them in meeting deadlines efficiently. He directed the senior functionaries to monitor the works themselves for timely completion. He maintained that these road projects are highly significant and need to be completed expeditiously while observing all quality parameters and supervision by the senior officers from the concerned agencies.

He emphasised early completion of survey and formulation of DPRs under PMGSY IV so that all of the unconnected habitations are provided all weather road links under this programme without any fail. He advised the Secretary to regularly monitor this process and complete the requisite Comprehensive New Connectivity Priority List (CNCL) in respect of each village so that due priority is given to them for early execution and completion.

In a presentation, Secretary PWD, Bhupinder Kumar, apprised the meeting of the achievements made under PMGSY I, II and III. He informed



that under PMGSY-I a road length of 17578 Km was constructed including 210 Long Span Bridges (LSBs) and 7 LSBs stands completed under phase II while 1248 km road including a LSB was constructed under phase III of this programme.

The meeting discussed the action plan for completion of remaining works of earlier phases of PMGSY. It also took note of the rolling out of PMGSY IV and its scope of implementation in the UT. The list of unconnected habitations and their survey over the 'Gram Sadak Survey app' and the status of preparation of CNCL for each proposed habitation at block/district level was debated threadbare in the meeting.

It was revealed that J&K being in special category along with NE states would be given assistance to the extent of 90% by the central government under PMGSY. It also has a relaxation in terms of population criteria as the habitations here need to have a population of 250 only instead of 500 for other States/UTs with legislatures.

The meeting was apprised that out of the 1386 uncon-

nected villages in J&K, Gram Sadak Survey in favour of 1249 villages had been finalised and those of 102 is under scrutiny to take them up under PMGSY phase IV for execution.

About Central Road Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), it was divulged that out of 121 ongoing projects sanctioned at a cost of Rs2366 crore an expenditure of Rs 1180 crore had been incurred till date and 21 projects stands completed against the target of 41 projects for the year 2024-25.

With respect to NABARD RIDF, it was given out that 1098 projects were sanctioned under RIDFs XXIV to XXIX to be completed at a cost of Rs4761 crore. Out of these, an expenditure of Rs 1246 crore had been recorded and 195 projects completed till date. It was added that under RIDF-XXX the UT has submitted 140 projects for approval costing around Rs949 crore.

Other issues that came up for discussion in the meeting included merger of JKPC staff in PWD and utilisation of funds still lying with the Corporation for finishing of incomplete projects left out by it.

Police Arrests 7 Drug Peddlers; Contraband Substances Recovered

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police have arrested 7 drug peddlers in Kulgam, Baramulla, Anantnag & Awantipora and recovered contraband substances from their possession. Besides, police detained a notorious drug peddler under PIT-NDPS Act in Kupwara.

In Kulgam, a police team of Police Station Mattan conducted a raid at the residence of Javid Ahmad Padder, son of Gh Ahmad Padder, resident of Pet Nambal Mattan. During the search, 5 kilograms of charas powder was recovered from the said house.

In Awantipora, a police team from Police Station Pampore under the supervision of SHO Police Station Pampore, at a checkpoint established at Galander Crossing intercepted a scooter bearing registration number JK13E-7562 ridden by 3 persons. They have been identified as Owais Gull son of Gh Mohd Bhat resident of Drangbal Pampore, Tariq Ah Sheikh son of Gh Qadir resident of Tulbagh Pampore and Mushtaq Ah Mir son of Ab Khaliq Mir resident of Nambal Pampore. During the

search, 8.160 Kgs of grinded poppy straw-like substance was recovered from their possession. Vehicle used in the commission of the said crime has also been seized.

All the accused have been arrested and cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and further investigation have been initiated.

Meanwhile, Police in Kupwara detained a notorious drug peddler namely Mohd Shafi Sheikh son of Gh. Hassan Sheikh resident of Sheikhpora, Trehgam, under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (PIT-NDPS), 1988. The accused was involved in multiple cases of drug trafficking, including FIR No. 12/2021 under Section 8/20 NDPS Act and FIR No. 23/2023 under section 8/20 NDPS Act of Police Station Trehgam.

The detention warrant was issued by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir and accordingly the accused has been taken into custody and lodged in District Jail Udhampur. The detention is aimed at preventing his further involvement in illicit drug trafficking and ensuring a safer society.

DC Srinagar Greet People On Meraj Un Nabi (PBUH)

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat has felicitated people on the auspicious occasion of Meraj Un Nabi (PBUH).

Dr. Bilal in his message, stated that the holy night in which Almighty Allah gives us an opportunity to seek His mercy and blessings.

On this occasion, Dr. Bilal prayed for the betterment of the people and hoped that the holy night would bring Allah's blessings. He also prayed that the auspicious occasion would strengthen the bonds of communal harmony and brotherhood and be a harbinger of peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile, District Ad-



ministration on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat have made all necessary arrangements on the eve of religious occasion to facilitate the devotees at Hazratbal and other prominent shrines of the District.

A special Control Room has also been established for proper coordination among the line Departments to ensure smooth observance of the religious obligations.

Special Bus Service Introduced For Devotees

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a bid to facilitate thousands of devotees heading to the revered Hazratbal Shrine for Shabe-Meraj, the Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (RTC), in collaboration with Smart City Srinagar, introduced a special bus service on Monday evening.

An RTC official sharing details about the bus service said that the service commenced around 7 PM from Batmaloo Srinagar to Hazratbal, ensuring seamless transportation for worshippers attending the night-long

prayers. "If the footfall increases, we are prepared to deploy additional buses," the official said. He said that approximately 100 to 120 buses, each with a seating capacity of 32 to 35, have been readied for the occasion.

The official further said that 10 to 15 buses will stay overnight at Hazratbal to facilitate devotees returning home after the pre-dawn (Fajr) prayers. "More buses will ply on the route tomorrow, and all arrangements have been made to ensure smooth travel for the faithful," he said—(KNO)

Dozens Fall Ill After Consuming 'Contaminated Water'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: More than two dozen villagers have fallen ill after reportedly consuming 'contaminated water' in Gutli-gum village of Verinag in South Kashmir's Anantnag district, while the authorities have begun monitoring the situation.

Locals said that people have fallen ill due to the unhygienic conditions of the water reservoir, which is the main source of drinking water in the area.

They claimed that contaminated water has led to the outbreak of an unknown disease, which has affected more than two dozen people.

The villagers, visibly distressed by the situation, gathered in large numbers to protest the authorities' inaction regarding the worsening public health crisis. While protesting they demanded that they be provided with safe, clean, and hygienic drinking water.



"We have been living with this problem for years, but it has never been this severe. The water is clearly contaminated, and we are suffering as a result. We need clean water, and we need it now," said one of the protesting villagers, Mohammad Yousuf.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid when contacted, told Kashmiri Dot Com that the administration is closely monitoring the situation.

"We have collected samples from the area and sent them for testing. The results are expected soon. We are closely monitoring the situation, and there is no need for people to panic," he added. (KDC)

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT. GROUND
WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR
BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN, NOWSHARA SRINAGAR.
E-mail:-phegwd@yahoo.com,
Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

EXTENSION NOTICE 1ST

Subject: 1. Construction of Tube Well Har Lamin Achabal District Anantnag.
2. Construction of Tube Well for Govt. middle School Awanpora, khoveripora District Anantnag.

Due to "No/Poor Response" for the work advertised vide e-NIT No.54/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25 issued vide this office endorsement No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Corrs./10597-608, Dated: 15-01-2025. Bearing Tender ID No. 2025_PHE_270379_1 & 2. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 27-01-2025 Up-to 11:00 PM are extended as per the details given below: -

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	06-02-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	07-02-2025 11.00 AM

NOTE:
All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endst: nos.
No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Corrs./11181-92 Sd/-
Dated: 27-01-2025 Executive Engineer
DIPK-11304-24 Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
DT: 27/01/2025 Ground Water Division Srinagar.

ICC Awards: Jasprit Bumrah Named Test Cricketer Of The Year

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was chosen for the men's Test Cricketer of the Year, while big-hitting batter Smriti Mandhana bagged the women's honour in the ODI format as Indian cricketers dominated the ICC individual awards that were rolled out on Monday.

ICC announced three more awardees from its annual list this afternoon, continuing a process that started on Friday. The final two honours -- the men's and women's Cricketer of the Year -- will be revealed on Tuesday and Bumrah is in contention to bag a double after having been named in the Test Team of the Year.

Bumrah was a standout performer in the last 12 months in which he dominated all opposition teams, grabbing 71 wickets from a mere 13 matches at a brilliant average of 14.92.

Bumrah bowled a phenom-



enally special because that shifted the momentum in our favour," Bumrah was quoted as saying in an ICC release.

The 31-year-old's brightest moments came during India's tour to Australia, where his astonishing 32 wickets across five Tests earned him the Player of the Series award, despite India going 1-3 down in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

During the series Down Under, Bumrah crossed the 200 Test wickets milestone, becoming the 12th Indian bowler to achieve the feat.

Bumrah also set a unique record while achieving the feat, becoming the only bowler in Test history with a minimum of 200 dismissals to have an average less than 20 (19.4).

He is the first male Indian cricketer to bag an individual ICC honour since 2018, when Virat Kohli claimed the Test player of the year as well as the cricketer of the year.

bowler to take 70 or more wickets in a calendar year after Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble and R Ashwin.

"I am really happy to win the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year award. This format is always close to my heart. The last

year was really special, to be having a lot of learning and wins.

"I am happy to play a lot of cricket this year, and a lot of wickets have been special. But the wicket of Ollie Pope (England) at Visakhapatnam was re-

Short TAKES

CM Reviews Preparations For 5th Khelo India Winter Games

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparations for the 5th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, scheduled to be held from February 22 to 25, 2025 at Gulmarg.

The meeting focused on ensuring the successful conduct of the event and strengthening Jammu & Kashmir's position as a premier destination for winter sports.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Commissioner Secretary General Administration Department (GAD)/Information, Commissioner Secretary Youth Services & Sports (YS&S), Secretary PW(R&B), Secretary Health & Medical Education, senior police officers, heads of departments, Director Information, and other concerned officials.

The venues for the events include Kongdoori and Gulmarg Club.

Virat Kohli In Ranji Trophy: Beefed Up Private Security

Virat Kohli is expected to train with the Delhi Ranji Trophy squad from Tuesday ahead of his first domestic red-ball match since 2012, as the Delhi & Districts Cricket Association prepares to ensure that all arrangements are in place for the maestro's highly-anticipated homecoming.

Kohli was on Monday officially named in the Delhi squad, led by Ayush Badoni, for their final group match against Railways at the Arun Jaitley Stadium starting January 30. This will be Kohli's first Ranji match since he played against Uttar Pradesh at Ghaziabad's Mohan Nagar in 2012.

At that time, Kohli was a rising star in Indian cricket, and now, he is a legend in his own right, a former India captain, and the owner of 80 international centuries.

DDCA secretary Ashok Sharma told PTI, "we will definitely increase security so that Virat can train without any disturbance." "We have also informed the Delhi Police about the match."

ICC To Open CT Ticket Sales Despite Pakistan's Struggles

The ICC said on Monday that the ticket sales for the Pakistan leg of next month's Champions Trophy will begin from Tuesday despite the stadium renovation work in the host nation is yet to be completed.

The venues at Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi are still getting readied as a January 30 deadline looms for the handover of the stadiums to the ICC.

This edition of the Champions Trophy is scheduled to be held across Pakistan and Dubai from February 19. India will be playing their games in Dubai and the ticket information regarding those matches will be made available in the coming days.

The PCB asserted that the presence of ICC delegation, including broadcast, hospitality and event operations officials in the country, was an affirmation that the event is on schedule in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the ICC has fixed the minimum price for the standard ticket for the Champions Trophy at PKR 1000 (approximately Rs 310) and the premium seating tickets will start from PKR 1500 (approximately Rs 465).

Azmatullah Omarzai Named ICC Men's ODI Cricketer Of The Year

Afghanistan all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai, known for his dynamic pace bowling and powerful batting, was on Monday named the ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year 2024.

The 24-year-old built on an impressive 2023 to become one of the world's leading One-Day International performers last year.

Omarzai also enjoyed a strong year in T20Is and franchise cricket, but it was in ODIs where he proved most influential.

He finished the year as his national team's second-highest run scorer behind Rahmanullah Gurbaz and second-highest wicket-taker behind AM Ghazanfar, with Afghanistan winning four of their five ODI series in 2024. He scored 417 runs while taking 17 wickets in 14 matches last year.

His consistent performances powered Afghanistan to four consecutive series wins over Ireland, South Africa, Bangladesh, and Zimbabwe.

Real Kashmir Continue To Excel On Home Front In Srinagar

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC maintained their undefeated home record in the I-League 2024-25 with a fluent 2-0 victory over Goa's Dempo Sports Club at the TRC Football Turf here on Sunday.

Both the goals came in the second half through Lalramsanga (52') and Abdou Karim Samb (58') as the Snow Leopards sealed their fourth home victory of the season.

This win helped Real Kashmir move to the fifth position in the league standings with 16 points from 10 matches.

Meanwhile, Dempo SC continued to struggle as



they remained mired in eighth place with 11 points from 10 matches.

The match also highlighted the strategic prowess of two former India internationals turned coaches, with Ishaq Ahmed's pragmatic Real Kashmir outplaying Samir Naik's Dempo SC.

Real Kashmir struggled to break down the Dempo

defence in the first half despite several attempts.

The dynamic of the match, though, shifted dramatically after the interval. Real Kashmir increased their intensity and broke the deadlock in the 52nd minute.

Real Kashmir then doubled their lead in the 58th minute through a well-executed play on the right flank.

Real Kashmir U-17s To Participate In AIFF's Elite Youth League

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC's Under-17 team is set to participate in the prestigious AIFF's Elite Youth League, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad.

The U-17 squad is the only team from J&K to have qualified for this national-level tournament. A contingent comprising 20 players, along with the coaching and technical staff, has already flown to Hyderabad to participate in the league. The team is scheduled to play its first match on January 28.

Over the past several weeks, the players have undergone rigorous train-

ing to prepare for the competition. The squad features talented young players from various parts of the Kashmir Valley, reflecting the club's commitment to nurturing grassroots talent.

Real Kashmir owner Arshad Shauw said, "We have been scouting grassroots talent across Jammu and Kashmir and providing them with a platform to compete at the national level. This initiative aims to promote football and empower young players in the region."

The RKFC management extended its gratitude to Lava Mobiles and Crax for sponsoring the U-17 team, enabling their participation in the league.



Kashmir United Lift 45th All India MKM Hind-Zinc Tourney



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Kashmir United FC defeated Hindustan Zinc FC to clinch the 45th All India MKM Hind-Zinc Football Tournament in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on Sunday.

Mehran Rasool set the tone for the match in the 27th minute, delivering a perfectly timed pass to Bares Nisaar, who calmly struck the opener. Nisaar wasn't done yet—just 11 minutes later, in the 38th minute, he doubled the lead with another clinical finish, putting Kashmir United FC in a commanding position.

On the defensive front, Hashim and

Mohsin were rock-solid, demonstrating exceptional composure and tactical awareness to shut down Hindustan Zinc FC's attacking efforts. However, the standout performance of the night came from goalkeeper Umair Hussain. With a series of stunning saves, Hussain kept Hindustan Zinc FC at bay, frustrating their attackers and silencing the 25,000-strong crowd.

The J&K Football Association congratulated the team and said, "It marks a significant milestone for the footballing community of J&K, showcasing the region's growing prominence on the national stage."

Khelo India Winter Games 2025: Ladakh Finish On Top

Press Trust of India

LEH: Hosts Ladakh topped the Khelo India Winter Games after securing two gold medals on the final day, swelling their tally to four, as the first phase of the tournament concluded here on Monday.

Thirteen gold medals were at stake in the first phase. The second and final phase will be held in J&K's Gulmarg from Feb 22 to 25.

In men's ice hockey final, Indian Army squeezed past ITBP 2-1 to retain the crown.

Ladakh's mixed relay quartet, comprising Stanzin Jampal, Skarma Tsulim, Mohammed Saquaf Raza and Padma Angmo, clocked



3:02.19 secs to strike gold. Maharashtra (3:03.78 secs) and Telangana (3:04.85 secs) won silver and bronze, respectively.

Ladakh girls, meanwhile, romped past fancied ITBP 4-0 to finish on top. Himachal Pradesh won the bronze.

Table toppers Ladakh (7 medals, including four gold) were followed by Tamil Nadu (five medals including three gold). Maharashtra finished with the maximum number of medals (10) but only two golds meant they finished third.

Teams In Danger Heading Into Pivotal Week In Champions League

Agencies

MANCHESTER: The Champions League's new look league phase reaches its conclusion on Wednesday with big names like Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain in danger of early elimination.

Holder Real Madrid is fighting to avoid a playoff and so is six-time winner Bayern Munich.

With so much jeopardy going into the final round of games before the knockout stages, UEFA's revamp of European club soccer's elite competition looks to have delivered.

The group stage was scrapped and replaced by a 36-team league phase. The revamp saw each team play one-off games against eight different opponents based on a seeded draw.

The top eight teams automatically advance to the round of 16. Teams placed ninth to 24th go into a playoff and those below are eliminated.

How will the final round of games work?

Traditionally the group stage finale was split over two days, but all 36 teams will play at the same time on Wednesday. Kickoff is 9 p.m. CET (2000 GMT).

Only leader Liverpool and second-



place Barcelona are guaranteed a place in the last 16. Record 15-time winner Real Madrid is one of 16 teams are vying to be one of the other six teams to automatically qualify for the round of 16 and avoid a playoff.

What are the big stories to look out for?

Manchester City, the winner in 2023 and four-time defending Premier League champion, needs to win against Brugge just to secure a place in the playoffs. Anything less and it

will be eliminated. PSG beat City last week to move into the playoff spots, but a loss to Stuttgart could still see it go out.

Madrid eased concerns about a potential early exit with a 5-1 win against Salzburg last week. The defending champion may yet have to settle for a playoff and the possibility of an uncomfortable draw, given so many big teams are currently positioned in places 9-24.

Those include Bayern, Juventus,

PSG and last year's beaten finalist Borussia Dortmund. City will be hoping to join that list as well.

Who tops the league?

Liverpool is in first place with a 100% winning record from its first seven games and has already booked its place in the round of 16 along with second-place Barcelona.

Liverpool needs a point against PSV Eindhoven to win the league phase. Barcelona is three points behind and could yet take top spot with a win against Atalanta if Liverpool loses.

Is there an advantage to coming first?

That remains to be seen. In a season that has already been congested by the addition of two extra league phase games, there is an obvious advantage to avoiding the playoffs and two more matches.

But the number of big teams currently in the playoff spots means there is the chance of drawing one of the favorites in the round of 16.

If the standings remained the same after Wednesday's games, Liverpool would face the prospect of Madrid, Bayern, Juventus or Celtic in the last 16. Hardly a reward for finishing top.

Man United Coach Would Rather Have GK Coach On Bench Than Rashford



Agencies

MANCHESTER: Ruben Amorim says he would rather have Manchester United's goalkeeper coach in his squad than Marcus Rashford after appearing to question the 27-year-old's commitment to the club.

Out-of-favor Rashford has not played for his hometown club since Dec. 12 and seems firmly out in the cold under the United manager after again not making the squad for the 1-0 win at Fulham in the Premier League.

Amorim went as far as saying that 63-year-old goalkeeper coach Jorge Vital is more likely to gain minutes than the England forward. "It's always the same reason

(why Rashford is not playing)," Amorim said Sunday on the eve of his 40th birthday. "The reason is the training, what I think a footballer should do in training, in life and every day. If things don't change, I will not change. "It's the same situation for every player. If you do the maximum and the right things then we can use every player."

"Today on the bench we missed a bit of pace to change the game but I prefer it like this, I will put (in) Vital before I put (in) a player who doesn't give the maximum every day, so I will not change in that department."

Rashford, who campaigned against child poverty during the COVID pandemic, posted "Congratulations on the win lads" on social media.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 5

Waqf Amendment

had originally been asked to file the report by November 29 but that deadline was extended to February 13, the final day of the Budget Session.

44 amendments were discussed. In detailed discussions (spread) over six months, we sought amendments from all members. This was our final meeting... 14 were accepted by the committee on the basis of a majority (vote). Opposition also suggested amendments... each was put to a vote. There were 10 votes supporting theirs (suggested amendments) and 16 votes opposing it..." Pal said.

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Last week opposition MPs wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to voice their concerns, saying Pal was trying to "steamroll" the Waqf Amendment Bill through, with one eye on the Feb 5 Delhi election.

The appeal came after 10 opposition MPs were suspended; they, and their colleagues, complained that they were not being given time to study the suggested changes.

The suspended MPs included the Trinamool Congress' Kalyan Banerjee and All India Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimen boss Asaduddin Owaisi, both of whom are fierce critics of the Waqf Amendment Bill.

In October, for example, Banerjee had a 'Hulk' moment, smashing a glass bottle on the table and throwing it at Pal. He later explained his actions, saying another BJP MP, ex-Calcutta High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay flung verbal abuses at his family and provoked that strong reaction.

The Waqf Amendment Bill proposes numerous changes to the way Waqf boards are administered, including nominating non-Muslim and (at least two) women members.

Also, the central Waqf Council must (if the amendments are passed) include a union minister and three MPs, as also two ex-judges, four people of 'national repute', and senior government officials, none of whom need be from the Islamic faith.

Further, under the new rules the Waqf Council can't claim land.

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Also, the central Waqf Council must (if the amendments are passed) include a union minister and three MPs, as also two ex-judges, four people of 'national repute', and senior government officials, none of whom need be from the Islamic faith.

Further, under the new rules the Waqf Council can't claim land.

Owaisi and the DMK's Kanimozhi, meanwhile, have argued it violates multiple sections of the Constitution, including Article 15 (the right to practice a religion of one's choice) and Article 30 (the right to minority communities to establish and administer their educational institutions).

Non-Muslim Members,

other 11 is a change - put forward by Mr Surya - specifying that anybody wishing to donate land must "show or demonstrate that she/he is practicing Islam for at least five years" and also acknowledge "...there is no contrivance involved in the dedication of such property".

Overall, MPs from the ruling party and those allied to it made 23 proposals to alter the Waqf (Amendment) Bill. MPs from the opposition made 44 proposals, none of which were accepted.

But the opposition's proposals were rejected by a 10:16 vote after committee members voted on party lines; the JPC has 16 MPs from the BJP or allied parties and only 10 from the opposition.

Voting to confirm acceptance of the 14 changes will take place January 29, and the final report will be submitted by January 31, sources said.

The 1995 Wakf Act was passed to regulate 'auqaf' (assets donated and notified as Waqf) by a 'wakif' (the person who dedicates the property). The legislation was last amended in 2013.

22 JKAS Officers

Cooperatives, Kashmir. Altaf Ahmad Khan, JKAS, Additional Registrar Cooperatives, Kashmir, has been transferred and appointed as Additional District Development Commissioner, Kulgam.

Akram Ullah Tak, JKAS, Director Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir, has been posted as Additional Commissioner in the office of the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir.

Pran Singh, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Doda, has been appointed as Special Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department. Zahoor Ahmad Mir, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department, has been posted as Additional Director SKIMS, Srinagar. Sanjay Gupta, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Enforcement (Samba), has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Mining Department.

Arun Kishore Kotwal, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Mining Department, has been posted as Additional Transport Commissioner, J&K. Bal Krishan, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Bhandarwah, has been transferred and posted as Additional Registrar Cooperatives, Jammu.

Masarat Hashim, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Pahalgam, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Labour Commissioner (Central), J&K. Shah Nawaz Shah, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Kokernag, holding additional charge of Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Verinag, has been posted as Deputy Commissioner.

Waseem Raja, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Enforcement (Central) Kashmir, has been posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment. Ajeet Singh, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Bani-Basohli, has been posted as Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Enforcement (Samba).

Mridhu Salathia, JKAS, Additional Mission Director, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission, Jammu, has been posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department. She will also hold the additional charge of Mission

Director, National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), in addition to her own duties, until further orders. Ideel Saleem, JKAS, Deputy Labour Commissioner (Central), J&K, has been posted as Additional Secretary in the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Kashmir.

Mir Nasrool Hilal Jeri, JKAS, Joint Registrar, Cooperative (Audit), Srinagar, has been posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department. Manpreet Kour, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner, State Taxes Department, Jammu, has been posted as Additional Mission Director, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission, Jammu.

Bureeda Majid, JKAS, Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD) Budgam, has been transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Ganderbal. Hilal Ahmad Mir, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD) Budgam.

Debate Critical

country's future. "I appeal to the NCC cadets, volunteers and all youngsters across the country - wherever you are, take this debate forward. It is directly linked to your future," he said, while emphasising that participating in the debate is essential for shaping India's future political landscape.

Comparing India's election frequency with that of other countries, Modi pointed out that even in the United States, the electoral cycle is structured to ensure a clear separation of governance periods.

"In countries like the US, elections are held every four years and the dates for forming a new government are fixed," he noted.

The prime minister further emphasised the need for more young people to join politics with innovative ideas.

"I had said from the Red Fort that one lakh youngsters should join politics," he said.

Reflecting on the significance of youngsters in global development, the prime minister said, "The future of the world cannot be imagined without India's youngsters. That is why I call you a force for global good."

He also mentioned that India has witnessed a significant rise in the number of NCC cadets.

"In 2014, the number of NCC cadets in the country was around 14 lakh. Today, it is around 20 lakh and more than eight lakh of them are girl cadets," Modi noted.

The prime minister lauded the achievements of India's youngsters.

"India's youngsters are not just for India's development, they are a force for global good. The world is recognising this," he said, further stressing that India's youth power is indispensable in sectors across the globe.

On youth empowerment, the prime minister mentioned his government's efforts to ease out challenges.

"Earlier, youngsters used to struggle to get bank loans. When I became the prime minister, I said I would give a guarantee for loans to youngsters. We launched the Mudra Yojana, which provides loans without a bank guarantee. Earlier, loans of up to Rs 10 lakh were given without a guarantee but in our third term, we have increased this limit to Rs 20 lakh," he said.

Modi also mentioned the expansion of the NCC's presence, particularly in border and coastal areas.

"The NCC has reached more than 170 border talukas and over 100 coastal talukas," he said, further highlighting the significance of this expansion for national security.

Modi urged youngsters to be a driving force for India's growth, saying, "No sector can progress without India's youngsters and talent. The world cannot imagine its future without the contribution of India's youngsters."

Me'raj-e-Aalam

The Hazratbal Shrine, known for housing the holy relic of the Prophet (SAW), becomes the focal point of prayers and gatherings on this auspicious occasion.

Meanwhile, the officials from the Waqf Board said all arrangements have been made for devotees, with washrooms and other facilities set up. "We have made elaborate arrangements for tonight and are expecting a good rush of people. As the weather is good, the crowd is expected to increase tomorrow. The display of the holy relic tonight and tomorrow is also expected to attract a large crowd," said an official.

Similar congregational prayers were held in many other shrines in the valley include Khanqah-e-Mualla, Ziyarat Syed Saib Sonwar, Ziyarat Malkhoom Sahib, Jinab Sahib Saura, Aasar-i-Sharief Shahri Kailshpora and Aasar-i-Sharief Lal Bazar.

Notably, Muslims every year celebrate on 27th of Rajab (Hijri calendar), the Isra and Me'raj, the two parts of a Night Journey that prophet took during a single night around the year 621. Within Islam it signifies a physical journey.

During Me'raj, the command for five daily prayers (Nimaz) was also given to the Prophet of Islam.

LG, CM Greet

prosperity for all."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended his heartiest greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Me'raj, marking the miraculous night journey and ascension of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the heavens.

In his message of felicitation, the Chief Minister highlighted the profound significance of this sacred event, stating that it reaffirms the truthfulness, greatness and devotion of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to Almighty Allah.

"Shab-e-Me'raj is a testament to the unparalleled honesty, integrity and spiritual eminence of the beloved Prophet (SAW)," he said.

On this auspicious occasion, the Chief Minister prayed for peace, prosperity and communal harmony across Jammu and Kashmir.

He urged people to follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to build a society rooted in compassion, tolerance and unity.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, has extended heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of Shab-e-Me'raj.

While elaborating the philosophy behind the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the event symbolises a connection between God and his creation. He said that we should follow the path of righteousness, compassion and mutual tolerance, which are cornerstones of every faith.

The Deputy Chief Minister prayed for the well

being of mankind and hoped that the occasion would usher peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Organophosphorus Poisoning

to atropine injections—a standard antidote for organophosphate poisoning.

A senior doctor explained, "Atropine was initially administered to two patients for heart rate management, and they showed significant improvement. This led us to consider organophosphorus poisoning as a likely cause."

However, the doctor cautioned against premature conclusions, as official reports from top laboratories are still awaited.

Organophosphorus poisoning is caused by exposure to organophosphates, a class of chemicals commonly used in pesticides, herbicides, and nerve agents. Exposure can occur via ingestion, inhalation, or skin contact.

Common symptoms include excessive saliva and tears, vomiting and diarrhoea, small pupils, sweating, muscle tremors and confusion.

The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) report from Chandigarh, which could provide critical insights, is expected within 2-3 days.

Dr Shuja Qadri, an epidemiologist and Head of Community Medicine at GMC Rajouri, stated that active and passive surveillance of cases has ruled out communicable diseases, bacteria, viruses, and zoonotic causes. "Our investigation has narrowed down to food-related toxins, either ingested accidentally or deliberately," he said.

Samples have been sent to toxicology labs for screening against 200 potential toxins. Dr. Qadri expressed optimism that the investigation will identify the toxin within a week, enabling authorities to prevent further deaths.

Over the last two months, 17 people, including 14 children, succumbed to the mysterious illness, with several others requiring hospitalisation.

Authorities are maintaining strict surveillance in the affected village, and all efforts are focused on identifying the cause to ensure no further loss of life.

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakina Itoo expressed confidence in the investigating team. She assured that all possible efforts are being made to identify the cause behind the mysterious deaths in Rajouri.

"The team is working diligently to gather more information and laboratory results, which will provide critical insights into the situation," she said.

With the situation seeming to normalise, the minister appealed to the public to remain vigilant and cooperate fully with the authorities. "The government is committed to taking every necessary step to ensure the safety and well-being of the people, particularly those living in the affected areas," Itoo added.

CM Pushes For

and effective designs, coupled with detailed technical scrutiny of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), has led to significant cost savings amounting to Rs 522 crore, underscoring the department's commitment to efficiency and innovation.

The Chief Minister reviewed various challenges faced during the mission's implementation, including low tender responses, delays in the supply of Galvanized Iron (GI) pipes in Jammu and Ductile Iron (DI) pipes in Kashmir, and incidence of dry bore wells in multiple districts. Electro-mechanical issues were also highlighted as significant concerns impacting the timely execution of projects.

The proposed project size under the Jal Jeevan Mission covers 3,253 schemes aimed at ensuring sustainable water supply system.

The meeting was informed that establishment of District Project Management Units (DPMUs) and continuous technical review by consultants are being carried out to ensure the quality and success of the mission.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of robust third-party monitoring mechanisms to enhance transparency and accountability.

He directed that complaints from specific areas be addressed promptly by engaging these monitoring agencies for swift resolutions. Furthermore, he called for addressing concerns related to the improper laying of water supply pipes above ground and ensuring the sustainability of water resources in affected regions.

The meeting also focused on water quality monitoring and surveillance, with the Chief Minister emphasizing the need to strengthen Pani Samities at the Panchayat level.

He encouraged regular interaction with concerned Ministers and MLAs to define their roles and responsibilities in enhancing the effectiveness of these committees.

In addition, the meeting discussed the operation and maintenance of rural water supply and extension of the Nal Jal Mitra Programme, e-billing systems and other operational aspects. The Chief Minister highlighted the urgency of addressing manpower shortages within the department to improve service delivery and achieve mission objectives.

The Chief Minister expressed satisfaction with the progress made under the Jal Jeevan Mission while reiterating the importance of sustaining momentum and overcoming challenges.

He assured full government support in realizing the mission's vision of providing clean and reliable drinking water to every household in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs Javed Ahmad Rana, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Jal Shakti Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Finance, Commissioner Secretary H&UDD, Commissioner Secretary Forest, Ecology & Environment, Mission Director JJM and other senior officers from concerned departments.

Reviews Preparations

destination for winter sports. The meeting was attended by Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Commissioner Secretary General Administration Department (GAD)/Information, Commissioner Secretary Youth Services & Sports (YS&S), Secretary PW(R&B), Secretary Health & Medical Education, senior police officers, heads of departments, Director Information, and other concerned officials.

Commissioner Secretary YS&S, Sarmad Hafeez gave a detailed presentation, highlighting the success of the 4th edition of Khelo India Winter Games, which significantly boosted the tourism of Gulmarg and Kashmir as global winter tourism destinations.

This year, the 5th edition has once again been allotted to Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, he informed.

The meeting was informed that the event is split into two phases: one held in Ladakh from January 23 to 27, and the second in Gulmarg from February 22 to 25.

Over 1,000 athletes from 35 states, Union Territories and sports boards are expected to participate in competitions such as alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, ski mountaineering, snowboarding and a demonstration sport—snowshoe racing.

The venues for the events include Kongdoori and Gulmarg Club.

The meeting reviewed the organizational framework, including technical and logistics arrangements, with the event being funded by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India.

Committees for coordination, registration, and logistics have already been constituted, with registrations underway.

The meeting was informed that the mascot for the 5th edition, a snow leopard, and the event's logo have been finalized.

Publicity efforts, including hoardings and mascot displays at major cities and airports such as Delhi, Srinagar, Jammu and Amritsar, are in full swing.

In terms of media and publicity, the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) has been actively involved in pre-event, event, and post-event coverage.

The games will be televised live on DD Sports and streamed on other online platforms, with extensive coverage planned through AIR and Prasar Bharati.

A community engagement slogan, "Aes Che Praraan" (We Are Waiting), has been adopted to involve local communities in the games.

Teams and officials are expected to arrive in Srinagar on February 21, where a help desk at the airport will assist with logistics arrangements. The event will also feature cultural evenings, a grand opening ceremony and comprehensive arrangements for transportation, traffic management, health services, water supply, sanitation and food for participants and officials.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah unveiled the Khelo India Winter Games 2025 mascot, the snow leopard, symbolizing the region's rich biodiversity and commitment to conservation.

During the meeting, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasized the importance of ensuring seamless coordination and preparedness for any unforeseen situations including accidents Chief Secretary asked the department to have some prominent sports celebrities at the event to enhance the event's visibility and appeal.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister also released a commemorative souvenir and launched a multimedia campaign—including print, electronic, and social media initiatives—for the Khelo India Winter Games 2025.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence in the preparations and reiterated the government's commitment to making the 5th edition of Khelo India Winter Games a grand success.

He commended the efforts of all stakeholders involved and emphasized the importance of showcasing Jammu & Kashmir's potential as a hub for winter sports and tourism.

Light Snowfall

details, the MeT Director said that the minimum temperature is expected to rise from January 29 by some degrees while the maximum temperature would dip by some degrees and would settle around normal.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir is presently witnessing the prolonged dry spell with the first three weeks of this month recording the deficit rainfall of 81 percent from January 01 to January 22.

India, China

trans-border rivers, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The foreign secretary also met Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Liu Jianchao.

Misri and Sun reviewed the state of India-China bilateral relations comprehensively and agreed to take certain people-centric steps to "stabilise and rebuild ties", the MEA said in a statement.

"In this context, the two sides decided to resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra in the summer of 2025; the relevant mechanism will discuss the modalities for doing so as per existing agreements," it said.

The MEA said it was also agreed to hold an early meeting of the India-China expert level mechanism to discuss resumption of provision of hydrological data and other cooperation pertaining to trans-border rivers.

"They agreed in principle to resume direct air services between the two countries; the relevant technical authorities on the two sides will meet and negotiate an updated framework for this purpose at an early date," it said.

The two sides agreed to take appropriate measures to further promote and facilitate people-to-people exchanges, including media and think-tank interactions, it added.

It also referred to the talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazan in October last year.

As agreed between Modi and Xi at their meeting in Kazan, Foreign Secretary Misri and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun reviewed the state of India-China bilateral relations "comprehensively" and agreed to take certain people-centric steps to "stabilise and rebuild ties", the MEA said.

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra as well as direct flights between the two countries were suspended in 2020.

"The two sides recognise that 2025, being the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China, should be utilised to redouble public diplomacy efforts to create better awareness about each other and restore mutual trust and confidence among the public," the MEA said.

It said the two sides also took stock of the extant mechanisms for "functional exchanges".

"It was agreed to resume these dialogues step by step and to utilize them to address each other's priority areas of interest and concern," the MEA said.

"Specific concerns in the economic and trade areas were discussed with a view to resolving these issues and promoting long-term policy transparency and predictability," it added.

Misri began his two-day trip to Beijing on Sunday primarily to hold talks with Sun.

Last month, NSA Ajit Doval visited Beijing and held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi under the framework of Special Representative (SR) dialogue on the boundary dispute.

The decision to revive the SR mechanism and other such dialogue formats was taken at the meeting between Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi in Kazan on October 23.

In the nearly 50-minute meeting, Modi had underscored the importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquillity in border areas.

The Modi-Xi meeting came two days after India and China signed a pact for a disengagement pact for Depsang and Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

In the SR dialogue, India pressed for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the overall boundary dispute between the two countries.

Doval and Wang also focused on "positive" direction for cross-border cooperation including resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, river data sharing and border trade.

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

Following completion of the disengagement process in Demchok and Depsang, Indian and Chinese militaries also resumed patrolling activities in the two areas after a gap of almost four-and-a-half years.

Opposition Calls It

meeting on Monday were rejected, also accused panel chair Jagdamba Pal of being "undemocratic" in the committee's functioning and alleged he had enabled the Union government to add a saffron colour to this secular nation by using its majority in Parliament.

"It was a farcical exercise. We were not heard. Pal has acted in a dictatorial manner," PTI quoted TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee as saying.

The opposition MPs slammed the meeting's proceedings, accusing the JPC chairperson of "subverting" the democratic processes.

"It was a farcical exercise. We were not heard. Pal has acted in a dictatorial manner," PTI quoted TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee as saying.

DMK MP A Raja alleged that the committee's proceedings were reduced to a "mockery" and that the "report is already ready by this time."

"The DMK, myself, will move the Supreme Court to strike down the new law after it receives Parliament's nod," he said.

Pal, however, rebutted the charges, and said the panel considered all the amendments in a democratic way. The view of the majority prevailed.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla constituted the committee on August 9.

"As the committee has arrived to its closure part of the deliberation, we, the members of the opposition, registered our protest then and there -- both in the nature of conducting the proceedings by the chairman as well as the gross and serious deviations from the rules and procedures... We have already brought on such ignominious incidents to the speaker and the public," the opposition members said in the statement.

The committee's opposition members who signed the joint statement are A Raja, Kalyan Banerjee, Gaurav Gogoi, Asaduddin Owaisi, Naseer Hussain, Mohibullah, Imran Masood, M M Abdulla, Mod Javed, Arvind Sawant and Md Nadimul Haque.

"Today, in spite of our protest, that clause-by-clause considerations could not be held without those documents or depositions, as promised by the chairman, which will be a grave departure from the established rules. Ignoring our claims, the chairman himself called the names of the mover of the amendments (given by us) and he himself moved the amendments on our behalf and conducted the head counts on his own desire," they said.

"He (Pal) announced the rejection of our amendments, thereby our sincere efforts to protect the constitutional assurances given to the minorities are being defeated," they added.

The chairman's awkward and solo act for all stakeholders of Monday's sitting made him out as a painter to enable the Union government give a saffron colour to the secular nation by using its brute majority in the Parliament, they alleged.

"We, the members of the opposition, appeal to the people of India who stand for the constitutional values to come forward to preserve the labour and conviction put by our forefathers Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar, Vallabhbhai Patel and others in the national building process with secular credentials and to protect the rights of minorities ensuring the social harmony of this sub-continent," they also said.

In addition, the opposition members said they highlighted a few "wilful and wanton disregards" by the chairman in sharing the details of deliberations.

During the proceedings, 95 per cent of the stakeholders deposed against the Bill and the remaining 5 per cent appeared before the committee under the communal entity or umbrella, according to the joint statement.

They also claimed that minutes of the sittings held in Delhi and other places were not supplied to the members and members were stopped from placing their views on the amendments.

"No discussion on clause by clause was permitted by the chairman, which is the essential element in the process," they claimed.

They also said that after the joint committee's tour of Patna, Kolkata and Lucknow to hear the views of stakeholders of the respective states and, having heard them, the chairman directed those stakeholders to submit their views within 15 days.

"These documents are yet to reach the committee for perusal of the members. Meanwhile, another sitting of the committee was convened on (January) 24 and 25 with the agenda for clause-by-clause consideration. Suddenly, on the midnight of (January) 23, for reasons best known to the chairman, the agenda was changed as stakeholders for Jammu and Kashmir for their views and 25th sitting was cancelled without assigning any reason," according to the statement.

"This issue was raised by us in the meeting held on (January) 24 for which we were suspended undemocratically," the opposition members added.

"Knowing fully well, out of our earlier experiences that the subsequent meeting might be called in short notice by the chairman", the opposition members said they had orally demanded on January 24 and subsequently in writing that depositions or documents of the stakeholders who appeared before the committee on tour had to be placed before the panel for perusal "so that we can ascertain our participation effectively and legally".






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