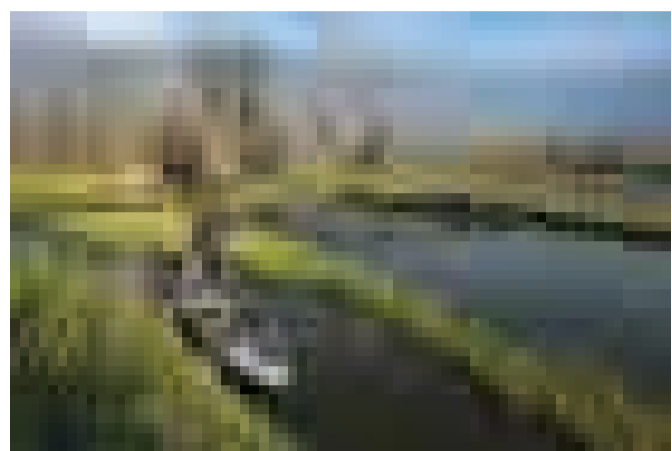


Weather Improves In J&K

More Rain, Snow Till March 12: MeT



File Photo | Abid Bhat

Agencies

Srinagar: After a major wet spell of the season, the weather improved across Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, while the weatherman predicted that light rains and snow would continue in the region till March 12. Nearly 12.2 mm rainfall was recorded in Qazigund till this morning while 11.2mm precipitation was recorded in

Kokernag.

Srinagar recorded a rainfall of 1.4 mm till 8:30 AM. Batote in Jammu division received a rainfall of 28.8 mm in the intervening night of Friday-Saturday till 08:30 am today while 19.0 mm rainfall was recorded in Banihal. The details read that 10.0 mm rainfall was recorded in Bhaderwah during the period while Jammu | [More on P11](#)

Jammu-Srinagar Highway Reopens

The strategic 270-kilometre Jammu-Srinagar national highway has been reopened for light motor vehicles after road restoration work was carried out on Saturday, officials said. The arterial road – the only all-weather road linking Kashmir to the rest of the country – was closed on Thursday evening following heavy snowfall and multiple landslides | [More on P11](#)

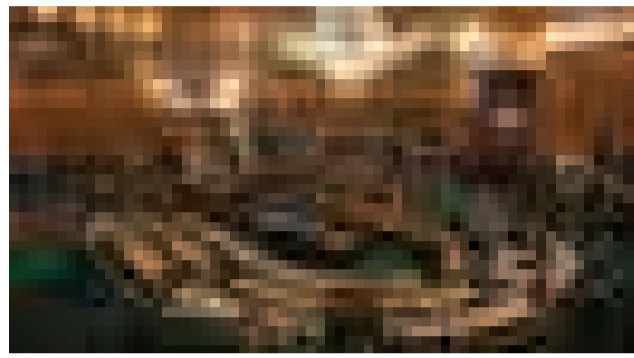
FARMERS SHOULD SUSPEND IRRIGATION & OTHER FARM OPERATIONS TILL MARCH 4. Landslides, rock fall and shooting stones are expected at vulnerable places.”

J&K Assembly Braces For Heated Budget Session

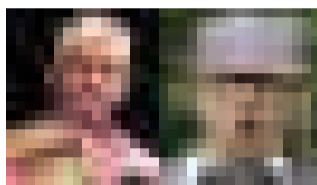
Political Slugfest Over Sajad Lone's Resolution On Article 370

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The stage is set for a stormy budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly starting on March 3 as issues like Article 370, reservation, human rights, and election commitments made by the National Conference in its election manifesto are expected to take center stage. Ahead of the session, all major political parties are holding separate meetings of their legislature parties in the winter capital, Jammu, tomorrow to chalk out their strategies for



the session. The divided opposition, comprising the BJP and Kashmir-based parties, is set to take on the ruling National Conference-led alliance over a gamut of issues. While the 28-member | [More on P11](#)



Omar Meets LG Sinha

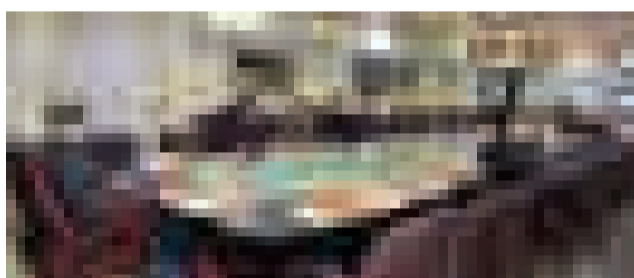
Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday and discussed various issues relating to the forthcoming Budget Session of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. The Budget Session, 2025 of the Assembly will commence on Monday the 3rd March, 2025.

CM Directs Uninterrupted Power Supply During Ramazan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday directed the Power Department to ensure there are no electricity outages during Sehri and Iftar times in the holy month of Ramazan.

The chief minister chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements made for the holy month of Ramazan, which commences on Sunday.



Abdullah emphasised that the people rightfully expect their elected government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any inconvenience | [More on P11](#)

No Shadow Cabinet Needed: CM

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday said his government would fulfil all the promises made to the people and slammed the BJP that has reportedly formed a shadow cabinet, saying there is no such system in India. "There is only one cabinet. There is no shadow cabinet in our country. The BJP has ruled here till now. Now, the people's government will do its work. "There is no need for a shadow. We have promised the people about meeting their expectations, and we stand by our promise," Abdullah told reporters here. The chief minister visited the residence of Ghulam Sibtain Masoodi who | [More on P11](#)

34 JKAS Officers Transferred

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Saturday ordered a significant administrative reshuffle, transferring and reassigning 34 Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) officers across key departments. The orders, issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), according to an official spokesman, aim to streamline governance and fill vacancies ahead of the fiscal year-end. According to the order, Vivek Sharma, JKAS, Special Secretary in the Agriculture Production Department, has been transferred and posted as Director General, Floriculture, Jammu. She shall join at her new place of posting upon the retirement on superannuation of Jatinder Singh, JKAS, on March 31, 2025. Bhawani Rakwal, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Project | [More on P11](#)

J&K Govt Tightens Noose On Illegal Mining

Initiates Stern Action To Curb The Menace

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a decisive move aimed at tackling the menace of illegal mining in the Union Territory, the Jammu and Kashmir government has attached Joint Director, Geology and Mining, Jammu, H L Langeh, with the Administrative Department, ceasing all powers vested in him with immediate effect. | [More on P11](#)

Govt Official Attached

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday attached Joint Director, Geology and Mining, Jammu, H L Langeh, with the administrative department, ceasing all powers vested in him with | [More on P11](#)



رمضان مبارک

Wishing you a blessed Ramadan filled with peace, prosperity, and spiritual growth. May this month bring you and your family joy and fulfillment.



#associatedmedia.org



Ramadan Special



- Daily Iftaar Recipes
- Teachings on Daily Life Issues
- Kalam-e-Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA)
- Quran Quiz
- History in Dates
- Quranic Life Lessons

Follow us on



Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan.
 Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
 Public Notice..

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Barka Imran s/o Mohammad imran Bhat R/o Palhallan Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 05/07/2022 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained .

SD
Naib Tehsildar Pattan

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 748728194362 of my daughter the name is entered as SIMRAN NAZIR while her actual name is BISMAL NAZIR. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

NAZIR AHMAD SOFI
 F/o BISMAL NAZIR
 R/o HARDU BATAPORA BUDGAM CELL. 9682333801

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to correct the mother's name of my daughter Aireen in school records from Sheenum to Sheenum Nazir, studying in Class 7th at Kashmir Valley School Humhama. Anybody having any objection on this, he/she may contact the school within seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after 7 days.

Sheenum Nazir
 Mother of Aireen

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie S/o Ghulam Rasool Ganie R/o Turkawangam Tehsil Chitragam distict Shopian want to correct name and DOB of my ward on adhaar records bearing no: 9271 5845 6145 which has been wrongly entered as Safoora Jan Instead of Safoora Mushtaq and DOB wrongly entered as 20-05-2006 instead of 15-05-2008. Now Correction required if anybody has any objection may contact concern adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar or Concerned Authorites within seven days.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie S/o Ghulam Rasool Ganie R/o Turkawangam Shopian want to correct name and DOB of my ward on Adhaar records bearing no 8494 2846 4331 Which has been wrongly entered as Simat Jan Instead of Simat Mushtaq And DOB wrongly entered as 08-11-2009 instead of 08-04-2012. Now Correction required if anybody has any objection may contact concern adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar or Concerned Authorites within seven days.

fko

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Sub: Application of Perzada Mohd Iqbal S/O : Perzada Mohd Akram R/O: Thindama Tehsil Kreeri For the issuance of Legal Heir certificate.

NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above, in this context, a detailed report was sought from the Patwari Halqa concerned, which reveals that Perzada Mohd Akram F/O Mohd Iqbal, passed away on 26-01-25. Moreover, the Death Certificate issued by the Competent Authority also depicts the same. Furthermore, the report of Patwari Concerned points out that the deceased has left behind the following Legal Heirs, tabulated as below:

NAME OF LEGAL HEIR	RELATION WITH DECEASED	AGE	OCCUPATION	MARITAL STATUS
1 Peerzada Mohd Anwar	Son	53 Yrs	Employee	-
2 Peerzada Mohd Iqbal	Son	50 Yrs	Labourer	-
3 Peerzada Zai Ud Din	Son	49 Yrs	Labourer	-
4 Peerzada Jalil	Son	45 Yrs	Employee	-
5 Dishada Begum	Daughter	55 Yrs	Housewife	-
6 Kousar Jabeen	Daughter	43 Yrs	Housewife	-

The applicant has applied for the issuance of a Legal Heir certificate. As such, the instant matter is published through the newspaper. If anyone has any kind of objection, he/she may approach this office within 7 days (Seven Days) of the publication of this notice.

After passing the stipulated time of 7 days (Seven Days), no objections will be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar Kreeri

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Sub: Application of Hajra Begum , D/O, W/O: Late Habibullah Shah R/O: Kakothal Tehsil Kreeri For the issuance of Legal Heir certificate.

NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above, in this context, a detailed report was sought from the Patwari Halqa concerned, which reveals that Late Habibullah Shah, S/O Sadiq Shah , passed away on 07-02-25. Moreover, the Death Certificate issued by the Competent Authority also depicts the same. Furthermore, the report of Patwari Concerned points out that the deceased has left behind the following Legal Heirs, tabulated as below:

S. NO.	NAME OF LEGAL HEIR	RELATION WITH DECEASED	AGE	OCCUPATION	MARITAL STATUS
1	Hajra	Wife	60 Yrs	Housewife	-
2	Bashir Ah.	Son	58 Yrs	Labourer	-
3	Farooq Ah.	Son	45 Yrs	-	-
4	Nazir Ah	Son	40 Yrs	-	-
5	Mazoor Ah.	Son	30 Yrs	-	-

The applicant has applied for the issuance of a Legal Heir certificate. As such, the instant matter is published through the newspaper. If anyone has any kind of objection, he/she may approach this office within 7 days (Seven Days) of the publication of this notice.

After passing the stipulated time of 7 days (Seven Days), no objections will be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar

SCHOLARSHIPS THIS WEEK

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1
NIT Rourkela Summer Internship Programme 2025

Description: The NIT Rourkela Summer Internship Programme 2025 is available for students pursuing undergraduation and master's degrees at the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela. It encourages students to undertake innovative research and development projects.

Eligibility: Applicants must be pursuing one of the following: B.E./B.Tech (4th semester exam completed), B.Arch/Integrated M.Sc./M.Tech/Dual degree (6th semester exam completed), or M.Sc./MA/MBA (2nd semester exam completed). A good academic record and marks/grade sheets of previous semesters shall be required. Applicants must remain available for internship from May 16 to July 15, 2025.

- Prizes & Rewards: 7,500 per month and other benefits.
- Last Date to Apply: 10-03-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NRSI1

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/nit-20251740398464.png>



Scholarship Name 2
Nehru Fellowship in Politics and Elections 2025

Description: The Nehru Fellowship in Politics and Elections 2025, offered by Inclusive Minds to graduate students, provides hands-on experience in Political Consulting and Campaigns including Policy Research, Political Strategy, and Communications alongside offering world-class education in the UK.

Eligibility: Applicants must be Indian citizens with a strong hunger and desire to excel beyond expectations. They must demonstrate extreme ownership of their work and be adaptable to a dynamic work environment.

- Prizes & Rewards: A stipend of 75,000 per month.
- Last Date to Apply: 30-03-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NFPEI

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/20251740398593.png>

Scholarship Name 3
Vahani Scholarship for 2025-26

Description: The Vahani Scholarship for 2025-26 is offered by the Vahani Group to Class 12 students. This scholarship aims to support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in India to pursue their higher education.

Eligibility: Open to Indian citizens currently studying in Class 12 and appearing for the final board examination next year. Applicants must have secured at least 85% marks in Class 10. The applicant's annual family income must be less than 300,000 from all sources.

- Prizes & Rewards: Full tuition fees, stipend, and other benefits.
- Last Date to Apply: 01-12-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/VAHSI

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/vahani-scholarship-for-2025-261740398307.png>

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: - Application Shoukat Ahmad Bhat S/O : Gh. Mohi-ud-Din Bhat R/O: Hail For the issuance of the Income Dependent certificate.

Sir,
 Regarding the subject cited above, in this connection, a detailed report was sought from the Patwari Halqa concerned, which reveals that the applicant's family consists of 05 members and the annual income of the applicant's family from all sources consists of Rs. 80,000/- (Eighty Thousand Only). Moreover, the family structure of the applicant is as under:

S.no	Name Of Legal Hier	Relation With Dependent	Age	Occupation	Marital Status
1	GH. Mohd Bhat	Father	65 Yrs	Old Age	-
2	Jana Begum	Mother	62 Yrs	Old Age	-
3	Nazir Bhat	Brother	34 Yrs	Labourer	-
4	Rifat Ara	Sister	30 Yrs	H/W	-

It is further submitted that Shoukat Ahmad Bhat, S/O, Gh. Mohi-Ud-Din is a Labourer by profession and is the sole earning hand in the said family. The applicant needs an Income Dependent certificate in favor of Rifat Ara.

The applicant has applied for the issuance of an Income Dependent certificate. As such, the instant matter is published through the newspaper. If anyone has any kind of objection, he/she may approach this office within 7 days (Seven Days) of the publication of this notice. After the stipulated time of 7 days (Seven Days), no objections will be entertained.

fko
Naib Tehsildar Kreeri

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Ghulam Mohammad Mallia Father Of Khushboo Mehmood R/o Maladair Tehsil Chitragam district Shopian want to correct name and DOB of my war on Adhaar card bearing no: 383916889894 which has been wrongly entered as Kushboo Jan instead of Khushboo Mehmood and DOB wrongly entered as 03-05-2005 instead of 12-03-2008. Now Correction required if anybody has any objection may contact concern adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar or Concerned Authorites within seven days.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card bearing no: 4051 6340 8891 as Salim Ahmad Naiko S/o Ab Hai Naikoo while my correct name is Salim Hai S/o Abdul Hai Naik and DOB has been wrongly written as 03-04-2007 instead of 04-05-2007. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Salim Hai
 S/o Abdul Hai Naik
 R/o Gada Pora Shopian

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change my name in my aadhar card bearing no 6906 9290 4294 and in my other documents as well. From ASIFA JAN (old name) to ASIFA FAYAZ (new name). If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Asifa Fayaz
 R/O Pampore Pulwama

jvd

Ph. No. 0194-2311325 Fax No.2310007 E-mail ddkashmir@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR KASHMIR HORTICULTURE (P&M)
RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
 e-Nit AUC Notice 03 OF 2025-26 Dated:28-02-2025

Outsourcing of Gate Entry Contract with respect to F & V Market Zazna Ganderbal

For and on behalf of MAC Fruit and Vegetable Market Zazna Ganderbal, bids accompanied with CDR worth Rupees: 10,000/- (Rupees: Ten Thousand only) pledged to Member Secretary MAC Fruit and Vegetable Market Zazna Ganderbal as earnest money and Demand Draft for an amount of Rs.500/- pledged to Member Secretary MAC Fruit and Vegetable Market Zazna Ganderbal as tender processing fee are invited from public at large/NGO's having valid GST registration, for execution of Gate Entry Contract at F&V Market Zazna Ganderbal for the year 2025-26 commencing, from 01-04-2025 to 31-03-2026.

The tender documents can be downloaded from <http://jketenders.gov.in>

The Tenders/bids shall be opened online in the Office of the Deputy Director Kashmir/Chairperson MAC on bid opening date.

Name of work	Minimum Reserve Bid	Earnest Money in the shape of CDR/FDR	Cost of Tender Document	Period of Contract
Collection of Gate Entry fee of Fruit & Vegetable Market Zazna Ganderbal for the year (w.e.f 01-04-2025 to 2400 hrs of 31-03-2026	1,10,000/-plus GST/ TDS/and other taxes as applicable in J&K UT	(10% Minimum bid amount) in favour of Market Administrative Committee Fruit & Vegetable Market Zazna Ganderbal Rs. 10,000/-	Rs. 500/- (non-Refundable) in favour of Member Secretary Market Administrative Committee Zazna Ganderbal in the shape of DD	12 Months w.e.f 01-04-2025 to 31-03-2026

Critical Dates Table.

1	Publishing Date	01-03-2025
2	Document Download/Sale Date	01-03-2025
3	Bid Submission start Date	01-03-2025
4	Bid Submission Closing Date	12-03-2025 (Up to 4:00 PM)
5	Bid Submission Opening Date	13-03-2025 (At 11:00 AM) at Deputy Director (K) office Rajbagh Srinagar

The Gate Entry Fee for each type of vehicle (loaded/unloaded)/entering/leaving Fruitand Vegetable Market Zazna Ganderbal shall beas under:

S. No.	Type of Vehicle	Entry Fee Per Trip for 2025-26
1	Troller (14/18/20 Tyres)	220/-
	Troller (10/12 Tyres)	165/-
2	Truck/Bus	90/-
3	Matador/Tractor/Jonga/Mobile	30/-
4	Auto/Raida	10/-

The committee will comprise of the following members: -

- Deputy Director Horticulture (P&M) Kashmir : Chairman
- Accounts Officer Horticulture (P&M) J&K : Member
- Member-Secretary MAC /Area Marketing Officer Zazna Ganderbal : Member
- Assistant Grading and Marketing Officer Zazna Ganderbal or Grading and Marketing Inspector : Member

The Successful Tenderer shall have to enter into an agreement with the Member Secretary MAC&VMarketF&VMarketZaznaGanderbal. The other terms & conditions are as under: -

- The minimum reserve offer is Rs. 1.10 Lacs (Rupees One Lac Ten Thousand Only).
- The Offer should be Superscribed as Gate Entry Fee for F&V Market Zazna.
- The successful tenderer shall have to execute an agreement with Administrative Committee ZaznaGanderbal within seven days from the date of issue of letter of authority and also has to deposit the full bid amount before execution of agreement.
- The successful tenderer shall not raise any structure in the Mandi / Market premises during the contract period.
- The allottee shall maintain record of all the vehicle entering the mandi on daily basis (including approximate weight) and submit a copy to the office on daily basis.
- The allottee shall utilize the existing structure on gate for collection of gate entry fee.
- The allottee shall be bound by the labour laws being in force.
- The allottee shall be liable to pay tax of any kind chargeable under the law, whichever is applicable.
- The specimen of the receipts (in triplicate) to be used by the successful tenderer shall be provided by the Administrative Committee ZaznaGanderbal.
- In case of any dispute between the parties, matter shall be referred to the Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing (J&K) for arbitration and the decision of the competent authority (/Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing J & K) shall be final and binding upon both the parties.
- The Administrative Committee shall not be responsible in case of nil or less arrivals in the market due to strike / curfew or other reasons whatsoever.
- The Member Secretary Administrative Committee Zazna Ganderbal reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Deputy Director (K),
Horticulture (P&M),
Srinagar

No: - 142-III/MAC/DDK/HPM/ 2025/5289-5293
 DIPK-12532/24
 Dated: - 01-03-2025



“Ayurveda goes beyond treatment and talks about wellness and promotes wellness.”

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi



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5
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crore
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This initiative reinforces India's commitment to personalized and preventive healthcare through Ayurveda.

We extend our gratitude to all participants, volunteers, and practitioners for their contribution to this historic achievement.



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'Miracle' Saved Zelensky from Trump Slap: Russia

Press Trust Of India

Moscow: Russia has said it was a "miracle" that US President Donald Trump restrained himself from hitting Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during their verbal clash in the Oval Office, as it mocked the Ukrainian leader after the unprecedented showdown.

During an intense Oval Office meeting on Friday, Trump shouted at Zelenskyy, accusing him of "risking millions of lives" and warning that his actions might lead to World War III.

In response, Zelenskyy abruptly departed the White House without signing a crucial minerals agreement with the US, which Trump had insisted upon and implied was a prerequisite for continued support to Ukraine.

Reacting to their spat, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote on Telegram on Friday that Zelenskyy's biggest lie of all his lies was his assertion in the White House that the Kyiv regime in 2022 was alone, without support.

"How Trump and (Vice President JD) Vance held back from hitting that scumbag is a miracle of restraint," she said. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev also reacted to the incident, calling Zelenskyy an "insolent pig" who had received "a proper slap down in the Oval Office."

Zelenskyy abruptly departed the White House without signing a crucial minerals agreement with the US, which Trump had insisted upon and implied was a prerequisite for continued support to Ukraine

"For the first time, Trump told the cocaine clown the truth to his face: the Kyiv regime is gambling with World War III...That's a good thing, but not enough - we must stop military aid to the Nazi machine," Medvedev, who is now deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said.

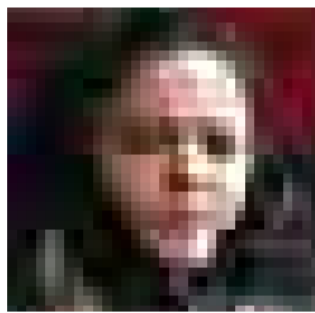
During his meeting with Trump, Zelenskyy referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Crimea in 2014. Vance hit back at Zelenskyy by saying, "I think it's disrespectful for you to come to the Oval Office to try to litigate this in front of the American media. ... you should be thanking the president for trying to bring you into this conference." After departing the Oval Office, Zelenskyy said in a post on X, "Thank you America, thank you for your support, thank you for this visit. Thank you @POTUS, Congress, and the American people. Ukraine needs just and lasting peace, and we are working exactly for that."

Police Allowed to Withdraw Case Against Shehla Rashid for Anti-Army Tweets

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A court here has allowed Delhi police to withdraw a 2019 case of sedition against former JNUSU vice president Shehla Rashid Shora for her tweets on the Army, police sources said. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Anuj Kumar Singh passed the order on February 27 on an application moved by the prosecution, which claimed that Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has withdrawn his sanctions to prosecute Shora.

The case was filed for offences including sedition, promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, language, race, place of birth etc., and inciting riots. The charges carried a maximum punishment of life imprisonment according to the application, the LG order came on the recommendation of a Screening Committee. The FIR against Shora was registered in 2019 at the Special Cell police station in New Delhi, on the basis of a complaint by a person named Alakh Alok Srivastava. Shora, a former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) leader, was accused of promoting enmity between differ-



The case was filed for offences including sedition, promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, language, race, place of birth etc., and inciting riots

ent groups and indulging in acts prejudicial to harmony through her tweets, they said. The proposal for the prosecution sanction was moved by the Delhi Police and supported by Home Department of the Delhi government, the L-G office said. Shora's tweets dated August 18, 2019 allegedly accused the Army of entering houses and "torturing" locals in Kashmir. The allegations were rejected by the Army as baseless.



"Weak Men Make War" How World Reacted To Fiery Trump-Zelensky Exchange

Agencies

Paris : European leaders threw their support behind Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky after a raised-voice spat on Friday with Donald Trump sent shockwaves across the world, casting doubts over efforts to end the Russia-Ukraine war. The US president openly berated Zelensky for not being "thankful", and later accused the Ukrainian leader of "not being ready for peace" and having "disrespected" the United States in the "cherished Oval Office".

Here are some of the political reactions from around the world.

EU: 'New leader'

European Union chiefs Ursula von der Leyen and Antonio Costa assured Zelensky that he was "never alone". "Be strong, be brave, be fearless," wrote the European commission and council presidents in a joint statement on social media, telling Zelensky: "We will continue working with you for a just and lasting peace." The bloc's top diplomat Kaja Kallas questioned the United States leadership of the transatlantic alliance between Europeans and Washington. "Today, it became clear that the free world needs a new leader. It's up to us, Europeans, to take this challenge," she wrote on social media.

France: Russia the 'aggressor'

French President Emmanuel Macron said that Russia was the "aggressor" in the Ukraine war. "There is an aggressor which is Russia. There is an aggressed people which is Ukraine," Macron told journalists, adding: "We were all right to help Ukraine and sanction Russia three years ago and to continue to do so." He later went further to say that "if anyone is playing at World War III, it's Vladimir Putin", referring to Trump's accusations against Zelensky.

Germany: Don't 'confuse'

Germany's likely next chancellor Friedrich Merz assured his support to Zelensky in a posting on X. "We must never confuse the ag-

gressor and the victim in this terrible war," Merz said. The outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz also voiced support for Ukraine, as did Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who added that Kyiv's "quest for peace & security is ours".

Hungary: Trump stood for 'peace'

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, one of the closest partners of both Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, thanked Trump for standing "bravely for peace". "Strong men make peace, weak men make war," Orban wrote in a post on X.

Italy: Summit needed

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni called for the United States, Europe and their allies to gather over the Ukraine war "without delay". "A summit without delay is needed... to talk frankly about how we intend to tackle today's major challenges, starting with Ukraine, which together we have defended in recent years," she said.

Netherlands: Support 'undiminished'

"Dutch support for Ukraine remains undiminished. Especially now," Prime Minister Dick Schoof said on X, adding "we want lasting peace and an end to the war of aggression that Russia has started."

Poland: 'Not alone'

Staunch Kyiv ally Poland moved to reassure Ukrainians after the dispute. "Dear Ukrainian friends, you are not alone," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on X in a post addressed to Zelensky.

Spain: 'Stands with' Ukraine

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said his country would stand by war-torn Ukraine after the row. "Ukraine, Spain stands with you," Sanchez, a staunch backer of Ukraine since Russia's 2022 invasion who pledged one billion euros of aid in a visit to Kyiv this week, wrote on X.

Russia: 'Cocaine clown' Zelensky

"For the first time, Trump told the

truth to the cocaine clown's face," said former president Dmitry Medvedev, now deputy chairman of Russia's security council, referring to Zelensky. Kirill Dmitriev, one of Moscow's negotiators in the first high-level talks between Russian and US officials since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine, branded the spat between the two leaders as "historic".

UK: 'Unwavering support'

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer stood with most European leaders to echo his support for Ukraine ahead of hosting Zelensky this weekend. Starmer "is doing all he can to find a path forward to a lasting peace based on sovereignty and security for Ukraine", a Downing Street spokeswoman said, adding he spoke to both leaders in the aftermath of the White House meeting.

Ukraine: 'Not possible'

Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmygal said Zelensky was "right" as "peace without guarantees is not possible". "Cease-fire without guarantees is the way to Russian occupation of the entire European continent," Shmygal wrote on X. Army chief Oleksandr Syrsky, who rarely makes political statements, also spoke out affirming the armed forces stood behind Zelensky, while calling for unity.

US Democrats: Trump 'doing Putin's work'

Senate Democrats accused Trump and his Vice President JD Vance of siding with Putin. "Trump and Vance are doing Putin's dirty work," Democratic Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer posted on social media.

Other Ukrainian allies

Other Ukrainian allies rallied around the country, with Canada saying Kyiv was not only fighting for its freedom but also "ours". Denmark described its "pride" in supporting Ukraine while Sweden referred to Ukrainians as "friends".

Trump Way Sparks Debate Whether Goal is to Destroy EU

Steven Erlanger
New York Times

During his first term in office, President Donald Trump described the EU "as a foe", established "to hurt the US on trade". He repeated the charge at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, but in more vulgar terms: "The EU was formed in order to screw the US. That's the purpose of it, and they've done a good job of it." Then he said he was preparing to hit Europe with 25 per cent tariffs on cars and other goods.

After Trump's embrace of Russia and his warnings that Europe had better fend for itself, the President's latest attack added to the increasing view of European leaders and analysts that he and his team of loyalists consider America's traditional allies in Europe as adversaries not just on trade, but on nearly everything. Some officials and analysts see the Trump administration as merely indifferent to Europe; others see open hostility. But there is a common view that the fundamental relationship has changed and that America is a less reliable and predictable ally. Trump has rebuffed Nato and aligned himself with the long-standing, principal threat to the alliance: Russia. Vice-President J.D. Vance has attacked European democracy while calling for the door to be opened to far-right parties. Elon Musk, the billionaire Trump aide, has heaped contempt on European leaders and openly endorsed an extremist party in Germany.

Equally shocking to European leaders, the US this week refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine at the UN. It instead broke from its allies and voted with Russia, Belarus and North Korea, all authoritarian governments.

European leaders are scrambling to assess and mitigate the damage. The Prime Minister of Britain, Keir Starmer, arrives at the White House on Thursday — the second such visit this week, after President Emmanuel Macron of France — still hoping to persuade Trump not to abandon Ukraine and to remain engaged in Europe. But Trump describes himself as a disrupter, and Macron got little for his attempt at seduction. Friedrich Merz, 69, the conservative politician likely to be Germany's next chancellor, has doubts about the trans-Atlantic relationship he and his country have been committed to for decades.

On Sunday evening, after his party won the most votes in the German election, Merz said that after listening to Trump, "it is clear that the Americans, at least this part of the Americans, this administration, are largely indifferent to the fate of Europe".

He wondered whether the American nuclear umbrella over Nato would remain — and even whether the alliance itself would continue to exist.

"My absolute priority will be to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible so that, step by step, we can really achieve independence from the USA," he said.

Punjab Sets 3-month Deadline to Wipe-out Drugs

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday convened a meeting with senior officials and set a deadline of three months to make the state drug-free.

To give a renewed push to the state's anti-drug campaign, Mann said the government will set up special courts that will ensure speedy trial in drug cases and conviction of those found guilty. The meeting was held a day after a five-member sub-committee of Cabinet ministers was formed to monitor the ongoing drive against drug menace in the state.

The sub-committee - headed by Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema and comprising state ministers Aman Arora, Balbir Singh, Laljit Singh Bhullar and Tarunpreet Singh Sond - has been tasked with overseeing the measures taken by the police and the health department to tackle the menace of drugs and implement de-addiction programmes.

Friday's meeting was attended by deputy commissioners and senior superintendents and commissioners of police from across the state. Chief Secretary KAP Sinha, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav and the members of the sub-committee were also present. According to an official statement, Mann said that preventive measures should be taken in schools and colleges so that the youth do not fall prey to the



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

scourge of drugs. The education department will take necessary steps to introduce courses detailing the downside of drug addiction, Mann said. The chief minister also said the supply lines should be snapped and drug-sellers should be put behind bars.

The state government will ensure that the drug-peddlers and their families do not get any subsidy, or free power and water, so that it acts as a deterrent, Mann said.

Exhorting that the war against drugs should be transformed into a mass campaign, Mann asked the officials to plan bigger actions. The chief minister also said that properties of those convicted in drug cases should be seized with immediate effect.

Citing the example of a drug smuggler whose illegal property in Ludhiana district was razed on Thursday, Mann announced the construction of a library on the 'Shamlat' land (common land) in the village where the property stood.

NEWS MAKERS

Donald Trump poised to designate English as official US language with new order

President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order designating English as the official language of the United States, according to the White House.

The order will allow government agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to choose whether to continue to offer documents and services in language other than English, according to a fact sheet about the impending order.

Trump had been expected to sign the order Friday. But by Friday night, the White House had not announced the order had been signed and did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The executive order will rescind a mandate from former President Bill Clinton that required the government and organisations that received federal funding to provide language assistance to non-English speakers.

Designating English as the national

language "promotes unity, establishes efficiency in government operations, and creates a pathway for civic engagement," according to the White House.

More than 30 states have already passed laws designating English as their official language, according to US English, a group that advocates for making English the official language in the United States. For decades, lawmakers in Congress have introduced legislation to designate English as the official language of the US, but those efforts have not succeeded.

Within hours of Trump's inauguration last month, the new administration took down the Spanish language version of the official White House website.

Hispanic advocacy groups and others expressed confusion and frustration at the change. The White House said at the time it was committed to bringing the Spanish language version of the website back online. As of Friday, it was still not restored.

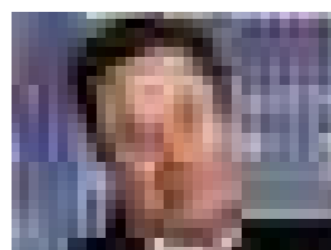
Elon Musk welcomes 14th child, Seldon Lycurgus, his fourth baby with Shivon Zilis

Washington: Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk has welcomed his 14th child, this time with partner Shivon Zilis, as they celebrate the arrival of their fourth child together.

Zilis took to her X account to announce the birth of their fourth child, 'Seldon Lycurgus'. However, she did not reveal when the baby was born.

In her post, she wrote, "Discussed with Elon, and in light of beautiful Arcadia's birthday, we felt it was better to also just share directly about our wonderful and incredible son, Seldon Lycurgus. Built like a juggernaut, with a solid heart of gold. Love him so much."

Musk responded to her post



with a simple red heart emoji. The two also share twins, Strider and Azure, 3, and daughter Arcadia, 1.

According to People, the announcement comes just days after writer Ashley St. Clair alleged that she and Musk had a son together "five months ago". She also shared that she had kept it private to protect her child's safety but felt compelled

to speak out after reports surfaced in the media.

"Five months ago, I welcomed a new baby into the world. Elon Musk is the father. I have not previously disclosed this to protect our child's privacy and safety, but in recent days it has become clear that tabloid media intends to do so, regardless of the harm it will cause," she wrote on X.

Meanwhile, Musk is now the father of 14 kids. According to People, he first became a dad in 2002 with his ex-wife, Justine Wilson. Their first son, Nevada Alexander, passed away at just 10 weeks old. The couple later had twins, Vivian and Griffin, now 20, and triplets, Kai, Saxon, and Damian, now 19.

Namibia bids farewell to founding father Sam Nujoma

WINDHOEK: Thousands of Namibians and dignitaries gathered Saturday to mourn the country's independence leader, Sam Nujoma, as nearly a month of homage climaxed with a state funeral.

Nujoma, the guerrilla leader who won independence for the desert nation from apartheid South Africa, died on February 9, aged 95.

His casket - draped in the blue, white, red and green Namibian flag - was pulled in a gun carriage to its final resting place at the Heroes' Acre, a mountainous memorial for the country's liberation war dead outside the capital Windhoek. Several African leaders including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Angola's Joao Lourenco, Emmerson Mnangagwa from Zimbabwe and foreign officials counting Cuba's parliamentary speaker Esteban Lazo Hernandez attended the burial, which was broadcast live on state television.

Ahead Of Ramazan, City Markets Wear Festive Look

Agencies

Srinagar: As Kashmir gears up for the first fast of the holy month of Ramazan, the markets across the Srinagar city wore a festive look on Saturday, with people thronging shops to buy essentials, including dates, fruits, and bakery items.

With a huge rush, the markets in Srinagar and other towns were abuzz with shoppers making last-minute purchases. Vendors and shopkeepers reported an increase in sales, with many setting up special stalls to cater to the rising demand.

"People are buying fruits, dates, and beverages. We are witnessing better sales than usual," said Bilal Ahmad, a fruit vendor in Srinagar.

Similarly, bakeries and sweet shops saw a surge in cus-

tomers, with many placing orders for traditional delicacies.

"Ramadan is a time when people love to buy special bakery items. We have been preparing extra stock to meet the demand," said a bakery shop owner in Srinagar city.

Meanwhile, grocery stores were also packed with customers purchasing essentials like rice, pulses, and cooking oil in preparation for Sehri and Iftar meals.

Moreover, with the spirit of Ramaan setting in, the festive atmosphere in Kashmir's markets reflects the deep cultural and religious importance of the month for the people of Kashmir.

It is worth mentioning, Ramadan is the ninth holy Islamic month for Muslims across the world that involves fasting, prayer, and charity. It is a time of spiritual rejuvenation and community gathering—(KNO)



Skill Development Centre Inaugurated In City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Youth Empowerment Organisation, in collaboration with the Power Sector Skill Council inaugurated the Skill Development Centre, Srinagar, under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Power



Grid Corporation of India (POWERGRID).

This initiative is aimed at providing comprehensive skill-based training to aspiring youth in the power sector, with a particular focus on training Junior Smart Energy Meter Technicians. This program aligns with the national vision of skill development and employment generation,

ensuring that participants receive industry-relevant training to enhance their career prospects.

The event witnessed the esteemed presence of several dignitaries, who emphasized the importance of skill development in today's evolving power sector. Among the notable attendees were Jasbir Singh Executive Director, CSR, Power Grid Corporation of India, Dr. V. K. Singh -CEO, Power Sector Skill Council, A. H. Khan-Senior General Manager, POWERGRID, Syed Shamim Sahab - Senior Deputy General Manager, POWERGRID

These officials highlighted the critical role of skill-based training in fostering youth empowerment and improving employment opportunities. They stressed the importance of collaboration between government bodies, corporate entities, and training organizations in creating a skilled workforce ready for the challenges of the power sector.

In 3 Years, Srinagar Gardens Generate Over Rs. 1.5 Cr Revenue

Agencies

Srinagar: The gardens and parks under the jurisdiction of the Floriculture Officer in District Srinagar have collectively generated over Rs. 1.5 crore in revenue from 2022 to 2025, according to recent data.

The revenue was sourced from departmental collections and outsourced ticketing systems across locations like Children's Park, Iqbal Park, Badamwari, and Eidgah Park.

As per the official documents at Children's Park, the revenue generated departmentally stood at Rs. 93,864 for the year 2022-23, with the entry ticketing system outsourced at a bid amount of Rs. 13,94,675. However, in 2023-24, no departmental revenue was recorded, as the ticketing system remained outsourced at a higher bid amount of Rs. 22,98,000. For 2024-25, the department generated Rs. 8,94,646, with the outsourcing bid rising significantly to Rs. 33,02,399. Tourist footfall at Children's Park saw a notable increase, with 78,994 visitors in

“The revenue was sourced from departmental collections and outsourced ticketing systems across locations like Children's Park, Iqbal Park, Badamwari, and Eidgah Park.

2022-23, 78,044 in 2023-24, and a sharp rise to 1,72,498 in 2024-25. Iqbal Park, on the other hand, showed consistent growth in departmental revenue, increasing from Rs. 12,32,220 in 2022-23 to Rs. 14,43,162 in 2023-24 and further to Rs. 19,19,130 by February 2025. Despite this, tourist footfall at Iqbal Park declined significantly, from

2,01,786 in 2022-23 to 62,077 in 2023-24, before slightly recovering to 67,333 in 2024-25.

Badamwari Park experienced a mixed trend in revenue generation. In 2022-23, the entry ticketing system was outsourced at Rs. 28,27,300, with no departmental revenue recorded. The following year, departmental revenue was Rs. 34,960, with outsourcing bid amounts rising to Rs. 52,47,017. By 2024-25, departmental revenue surged to Rs. 25,90,250. Tourist footfall at Badamwari Park, however, declined sharply from 3,16,456 in 2022-23 to 1,89,226 in 2023-24 and further to 79,944 in 2024-25.

Eidgah Park recorded modest departmental revenues of Rs. 57,308 in 2022-23 and Rs. 56,445 in 2023-24. In 2024-25, the entry ticketing system was outsourced at Rs. 3,70,111, with no departmental revenue reported. Tourist footfall at Eidgah Park remained relatively low but showed gradual growth, increasing from 3,191 in 2022-23 to 3,832 in 2023-24 and further to 8,740 in 2024-25—(KNO)

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR

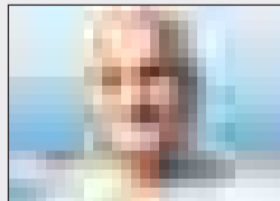
01 Ramazan
1446

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5: 37
ZUHR	12:43
ASR	4: 45
Magrib	6:31
ISHA	7: 49

This Day In History

- 986- Louis V becomes King of the Franks.
- 1657- Great Fire of Meireki destroys 60-70% of the Japanese capital city of Edo, killing an estimated 100,000 people
- 1776 - American troops begin shelling the British in Boston
- 1796 - Napoléon Bonaparte is appointed Commander-in-Chief of the French Army in Italy
- 1807 - William Cavendish-Bentinck, Duke of Portland becomes British Prime Minister for the second time after the fall of William Grenville's Whig government
- 1815 - Signing of Kandyan treaty by British invaders and Sri Lankan King
- 1819 Territory of Arkansas organized
- 1819 - US passed its 1st immigration law
- 1855 - Aleksandr Romanov becomes tsar of Russia
- 1858 - Frederick Cook of New Orleans, patents a cotton-bale metallic tie
- 1865 - British newspaper "Morning Chronicle" begins publishing
- 1968 - USSR launches space probe Zond 4; fails to leave Earth orbit
- 1972 - NASA launches its Pioneer 10 space probe to Jupiter
- 1978 - Soyuz 28 carries 2 cosmonauts (1 Czechoslovakian) to Salyut 6
- 1983 - Compact Disc recordings developed by Phillips & Sony introduced.
- 1984 - Iran offensive against Iraq fails
- 1989 - 12 European nations agree to ban chlorofluorocarbon production by 2000.
- 1991 NC State Chris Corchiani becomes 1st NCAAer to get 1,000 assists
- 1991 - UN votes in favor of US resolutions for cease fire with Iraq
- 1995 - Space shuttle STS-67 (Endeavour 8), launches
- 1997 - Saudi Arab billionaire Prince al-Waleed bin Talal acquires 5% of Apple
- 1997 - Soyuz TM-24 returns to Earth (Russia)
- 1998 - Data sent from the Galileo spacecraft indicates that Jupiter's moon Europa has a liquid ocean under a thick crust of ice.
- 2002 - U.S. invasion of Afghanistan: US conventional forces first deployed as part of Operation Anaconda
- 2004 - War in Iraq: Al Qaeda carries out the Ashoura Massacre in Iraq, killing 170 and wounding over 500
- 2004 - Rosetta space probe is launched by the European Space Agency to study comet
- 2011 - One of cricket's great upsets; Kevin O'Brien scores fastest century in World Cup history off 50 balls (ends 113 off 63) to help Ireland beat England by 3 wickets in Bangalore
- 2014 - President Vladimir Putin receives unanimous approval from Russia's parliament to send troops to the Ukraine
- 2016 - Longest non-stop scheduled commercial flight by distance, Emirates A380 flies 14,200km (8,824 miles) Dubai to Auckland in 17 hours, 15 minutes
- 2016 - Oldest known land fossil (Tortotubus - 440 million years old) from Gotland, Sweden, revealed by British scientists
- 2016 - US astronauts Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko return to earth after nearly a year (340 days), setting an ISS record
- 2017 - US Attorney General Jeff Sessions recuses himself from the investigation into Trump campaign contacts with Russia after revelations he met Russian ambassador
- 2018 - Gunmen attack the French embassy and army HQ in suspected terrorist incident in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, killing 8 and injuring 80
- 2019 - 37-year-old Swiss 20-time Grand Slam tennis champion Roger Federer beats Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-4 to win his 100th ATP Tour title at the Dubai Championships
- 2019 - FESPACO, Africa's largest film festival in its 50th year awards the Golden Stallion of Yennenga to "The Mercy of the Jungle" by Joel Karekezi, in Burkina Faso

SAD DEMISE



With profound grief we regret to inform you of the sad demise of our dearest Sheikh Hafeez Akhtar (Former DIG) who left for his heavenly abode on the 28th of February, 2025.

May his soul rest in peace.

He is survived by his two sons, Dr. Shiblee Hafeez and, Sarmad Hafeez, IAS His Fateh-Khawani will be observed on Monday, 03/03/2025 at 10.45am at the graveyard next to Zero Bridge, Rajbagh, followed by condolence at their residence at Rajbagh.

Remembered lovingly by family and friends

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CONDOLENCE

The management & the staff of the Cancer Society of Kashmir place on record their sense of deep heartfelt grief & sorrow over the sad demise of Retd. (D.I.G.) Mr. A.S. Lone Vice Chairman-I of Cancer Society of Kashmir. It is really an irreparable & unbearable loss which we have to share equally. It is unfortunate that death has laid its icy hands on him.

Anyway man is a tool in the hands of destiny. Mysteries are the ways of Almighty Allah. We have to bear them & face them with utter patience because as per Holy Quran "Inna Allah-a-MaSabreen" we should bear & reconcile to our fate.

The members & Staff of the Cancer Society of Kashmir pray that may Almighty Allah shower patience over the bereaved family and rest the departed soul in Jannat-ul-Firdous.

SCERT's Misadventures

Critics argue that the focus on orchestrating grand spectacles overshadowed the Toycathon initiative's core purpose, raising questions about its overall impact

Farooq Shah

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India must follow a Chinese example if it wants to stay competitive in the toy industry. The Chinese curriculum does not burden students with responsibilities like toy making, as it focuses primarily on academics, skill development, and innovation suited to their age and learning stage

Organized by Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, under the 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan,' launched an inter-ministerial initiative in 2021 named Toycathon to challenge India's innovative minds to conceptualize novel toys and games based on Bharatiya civilization, history, culture, mythology, and ethos.

While the impact in other states and union territories remains unclear, Jammu and Kashmir's SCERT, despite initial excitement, took on the responsibility and, over the course of three years, struggled to effectively implement the initiative.

Lacking a concrete plan, those at the helm held repeated meetings with staff who were ill-equipped for the task. The responsibility was then handed down from SCERT to the District Institutes of Education (DIET) and ultimately passed on to the schools.

Schoolchildren were tasked with using outdated materials and prehistoric themes, while receiving minimal innovative or practical guidance from mentors already overwhelmed with other schemes, syllabus completion, and various other curricular and non-curricular responsibilities.

Over two years, tens of thousands of students from both provinces of J&K UT participated in Toycathon, with SCERT's Director, Prof. Parikshat Singh Manhas, proudly claiming that J&K was the first UT to organize the initiative on such a massive scale. Manhas also hosted Toycathon grand finals in both provinces, attended by several bureaucrats, including Principal Secretary Alok Kumar and Advisor to the Lt. Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar.

He also authored a chapter on Toycathon 2023 in The Art of Implementation—How Modi Ki Guarantee is Delivered, which was launched on April 15, 2024, in New Delhi, where he shared the stage with Modi and Lieutenant Governor of UT, Manoj Sinha.

Manhas maintains an X-account (formerly twitter) where he boasts of Toycathon activities as major achievements, tagging the prime minister every time he writes a post.

Despite the claims of success, many within SCERT view the Toycathon activities as a misallocation of resources, both human and financial. "The glittering events, which



Innovation so timeless, even the billboard refuses to leave—Toycathon 2024, proudly overstaying its welcome in 2025!

came at a significant cost to the state exchequer, are as exercises in self-promotion rather than meaningful contributions to academics or innovation," a high-ranking SCERT official, who wished not to be named, said.

Critics argue that the focus on orchestrating grand spectacles overshadowed the initiative's core purpose, raising questions about its overall impact.

The big question in an era of cutting-edge technology is whether it's truly feasible to launch initiatives that draw students' interest in such fields. If the answer is no, it may be wiser to either revamp these initiatives or discontinue them altogether.

Toycathon was touted as a unique opportunity for students, teachers, startups, and toy professionals in India to submit innovative ideas and win prizes worth Rs. 50 lakhs, with efforts to commercialize exceptional creations supported by industry and investors. On June 24, 2021, Modi engaged with Toycathon participants through a video conference.

According to a 2021 Indian Express report, Modi stated that India

accounted for just \$1.5 billion in the \$100 billion global toy market. The Toycathon initiative was expected to revitalize the industry and position India as a significant exporter.

Before the Toycathon's launch, India reduced Chinese toy imports by 80% starting in 2020, leveraging high tariffs and strict quality checks. Customs duty was increased from 20% to 70% between FY20 and FY24, slashing Chinese toy imports from \$235 million to \$41 million.

Despite these efforts, India's toy exports dropped from \$177 million in 2021-22 to \$152 million in 2023-24, according to an August 2024 government report, dimming hopes of achieving the \$4.4 billion target by 2032.

The decline in exports was attributed to intense competition from countries like China, which dominates the global market with cost-effective and scalable production, and emerging players like Vietnam.

This 14% decline in toy exports not only raises questions about the initiative's execution but also dims hopes of India becoming a global player in the toy market.

India must follow a Chinese example if it wants to stay competitive in the toy industry. The Chinese curriculum does not burden students with responsibilities like toy making, as it focuses primarily on academics, skill development, and innovation suited to their age and learning stage.

The country's dominance in the toy industry is driven by well-established industrial ecosystems, skilled labour, and partnerships with global manufacturers—none of which involve shifting such responsibilities onto school students.

In a place where students are denied even the fundamental necessity of fresh textbooks, the idea that they can drive innovation in a billion-dollar global market is not just ironic—it is a glaring indictment of a system that prioritizes spectacle over substance.

*Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author is an academic*

Greater internationalisation holds a transformative potential for advancing women empowerment. According to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), enterprises engaged in international trade employ more women. According to the report, in developing economies, women constitute 33% of the workforce in exporting firms, compared to just 24% in non-exporting ones. Likewise, female employees account for 33% of total employees in importing firms, as compared to 28% in non-importing companies. Women see similar advantages in businesses that are part of global value chains or have foreign investors, which on average employ 11-12% more women compared to other firms.

According to Exim Bank's analysis, in India too, several export-intensive sectors have a higher proportion of female employment compared to the all-India level. Such sectors include segments where India's exports have traditionally been competitive, including apparel, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and leather products. In fact, in textiles and apparel, there is a higher employment intensity for females compared to males—the proportion of females working in these two sectors relative to the total female workforce across all sectors is higher than the proportion of their male counterparts.

There is a need for skilling women and improving their employment in high-value, technology-intensive export sectors such as electronics and machinery as well. According to Exim Bank's analysis, a higher proportion of female employees in India are engaged in low-technology and resource-intensive sectors that leave them disproportionately exposed to fluctuations in global demand and commodity price shocks. Tailored skill development programmes for the female workforce focused on high-tech industries would be essential to impart resilience to their employment in export-intensive sectors. Further, government support could also be provided through additional payroll incentives by state governments for employing women in technology-intensive export sectors.

A recent IMF analysis also highlights that sectors which employ women more, such as food and beverages, and textiles and apparel typically

Trade Needs A Gendered Perspective

Jahanwi Singh | Neha Raman

face higher tariffs on inputs. In India too, goods produced largely by women face, on an average, 6 percentage-points higher tariffs in export markets than those produced largely by men. There is a need for mainstreaming gender considerations in India's trade agreements. Further, India could seek tariff relaxation in such sectors. Exim Bank's analysis suggests that a 1% reduction in tariffs faced by India's exports in sectors that are relatively more important for the female workforce could lead to a 0.36% increase in labour supply in the country and a 0.14% increase

There is also a need to build export capacities of the nearly 1.24 crore women-owned enterprises (MSMEs) in India, accounting for about one-fifth of all MSMEs in the country. While all MSMEs face challenges related to access to finance, technology upgrade, digital transformation, etc., these challenges are more acute for women-led enterprises due to systemic gender inequalities in accessing crucial resources.

A key issue for female entrepreneurs is access to finance. According to estimates by the

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A recent IMF analysis also highlights that sectors which employ women more, such as food and beverages, and textiles and apparel typically face higher tariffs on inputs. In India too, goods produced largely by women face, on an average, 6 percentage-points higher tariffs in export markets than those produced largely by men

in GDP. The overall welfare gains from such a tariff reduction are estimated to be nearly 3.6%. Thus, considering a gendered perspective while negotiating trade agreements would help enhance female workforce participation and welfare gains from trade.

International Finance Corporation, nearly \$1.5 trillion of credit demanded by MSMEs owned by women in emerging markets remain unmet by financial institutions. In India's case, data from the Global Findex Database suggests that while 77.5% women aged 15 years and above hold bank

accounts, only 10.5% have borrowed from formal sources, as compared to 15% men in this age bracket. This is low when compared to several Asian countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, China, and Sri Lanka.

Low borrowing rates among Indian women could partly be on account of the limited ability to offer collateral. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-21, only 31.7% women aged 15-49 years in India own land, either alone or jointly, compared to 42.3% of men in this age group. Home ownership also stood at 42.3% for women, compared to 60.1% for men. This gap in property ownership makes it difficult for women to access formal credit, in turn limiting the growth potential of their businesses. Lack of formalisation of women-owned businesses and weak financials are other key reasons for the low borrowing rates. To address the financing challenges for women-owned businesses, banks and financial institutions are increasingly developing women-centric financing programmes. Many of these initiatives prioritise capacity building for female entrepreneurs to enhance their bankability.

Besides financing gaps, the digital divide between men and women further exacerbates the challenges for female entrepreneurs. According to NFHS data, only 33% women in India use the internet, compared to 51% men. Further, data from the Global Findex Database suggests that only 28% women aged 15 years and above in India made or received digital payments in 2021, which is much lower than men (41.4%). Equitable access to digital tools can significantly enhance e-commerce opportunities for women-owned businesses.

By improving access to finance, enhancing digital literacy, and supporting a shift into tech-intensive sectors, India can unlock the vast export potential of its female entrepreneurs and workforce.

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



RAMZAN IS NOT JUST A MONTH OF RELIGIOUS DEVOTION BUT ALSO A STRUCTURED, scientifically supported system of natural detoxification. The fasting discipline aligns perfectly with the body's innate cleansing mechanisms, allowing physical, mental, and emotional purification

RAMZAN

A Sacred Path to Physical and Spiritual Detoxification

Arshid Qalmi

Ramzan, the holy month of fasting, is a time of spiritual renewal, self-discipline, and devotion. While its primary significance lies in strengthening faith and moral character, fasting during Ramzan also offers profound health benefits, particularly in detoxifying the body. Detoxification is the process of eliminating accumulated toxins, allowing the body to function optimally. In an era where processed foods, environmental pollution, and stress overload our systems, fasting emerges as a natural remedy that enables the body to cleanse itself at multiple levels.

One of the most remarkable aspects of fasting in Ramzan is the process of autophagy, a natural cellular mechanism in which the body breaks down and recycles damaged cells. This self-cleaning process, for which scientist Yoshinori Ohsumi received the Nobel Prize in 2016, is triggered by fasting and plays a critical role in eliminating toxins, dead cells, and harmful waste products from the body. It not only enhances immunity but also contributes to anti-aging, cognitive function, and overall well-being.

When fasting extends beyond 12 to 16 hours, as it does during Ramzan, the body shifts from using glucose as its primary fuel to breaking down fat stores. This process not only aids in weight regulation but also releases fat-soluble toxins, which are then metabolized and eliminated by the liver, making fasting an effective detoxifier at a biochemical level.

The liver, the primary detoxifying organ of the body, works tirelessly to neutralize toxins from food, pollutants, and metabolic by-products. However, continuous eating overburdens it, reducing its efficiency. During fasting, the liver gets a break from its regular digestive functions, allowing it to focus on detoxification and cellular repair. It optimizes fat metabolism, reduces inflammation, and enhances overall liver function. Similarly, the kidneys, responsible for filtering waste from the blood, benefit from the fasting period. Consuming water-rich foods during Iftar and Suhoor supports kidney function by flushing out toxins more effectively, reducing the risk of kidney stone formation, and enhancing overall hydration.

The digestive system also undergoes a cleansing process during fasting. Regular

eating habits often lead to an overworked digestive tract, which struggles to process artificial additives, preservatives, and excessive sugar. Ramzan provides the gut with much-needed rest, reducing bloating, inflammation, and gut-related disorders. It allows the beneficial gut bacteria to flourish, improving digestion and nutrient absorption. Furthermore, the natural regulation of stomach acid during fasting prevents acid reflux and supports a balanced gut environment, which is essential for overall health.

Beyond physical detoxification, fasting in Ramzan is also a time for mental and emotional cleansing. Modern lifestyles expose individuals to chronic stress, negative emotions, and mental exhaustion. Fasting has been scientifically linked to increased production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein essential for cognitive function, memory, and mental clarity. It reduces oxidative stress in the brain, lowers the risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and enhances emotional resilience. The discipline of fasting naturally regulates the release of key hormones such as cortisol, the stress hormone, and serotonin, the happiness hor-

mone, stabilizing mood and reducing emotional fluctuations. The spiritual aspects of Ramzan, including prayer, meditation, and self-reflection, provide a deep sense of inner peace, facilitating emotional detoxification.

Blood purification is another critical aspect of detoxification during fasting. High consumption of refined sugar, unhealthy fats, and artificial chemicals leads to toxin accumulation in the bloodstream, increasing inflammation and oxidative stress. Fasting stabilizes blood sugar levels, promotes healthy cholesterol balance, and improves circulation. It reduces harmful cholesterol (LDL) and increases beneficial cholesterol (HDL), preventing arterial plaque buildup and promoting cardiovascular health. These changes significantly lower the risk of lifestyle-related diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and obesity.

To maximize the detoxifying benefits of fasting during Ramzan, mindful eating habits play a crucial role. Avoiding processed and fried foods, consuming fiber-rich whole foods, staying hydrated, and including healthy fats from sources like nuts, olive oil, and fish enhance the body's ability to cleanse itself effectively. Engaging

in light physical activity, ensuring adequate sleep, and practicing stress management techniques further contribute to holistic detoxification. Moderation and balance in food choices, along with self-awareness of mental and emotional states, create an ideal environment for complete renewal.

Ramzan is not just a month of religious devotion but also a structured, scientifically supported system of natural detoxification. The fasting discipline aligns perfectly with the body's innate cleansing mechanisms, allowing physical, mental, and emotional purification. By consciously following the wisdom of this practice, one can emerge from Ramzan not only spiritually enriched but also physically rejuvenated, with a body that has undergone a powerful detoxification process. As the Quran beautifully states, "And that you fast is better for you, if you only knew." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:184). Indeed, science and faith converge in recognizing fasting as one of the most profound methods of healing, renewal, and holistic well-being.

The author can be reached for feedback at aqalmi303@gmail.com

The Mountains Are High And The Emperor Is Far Away

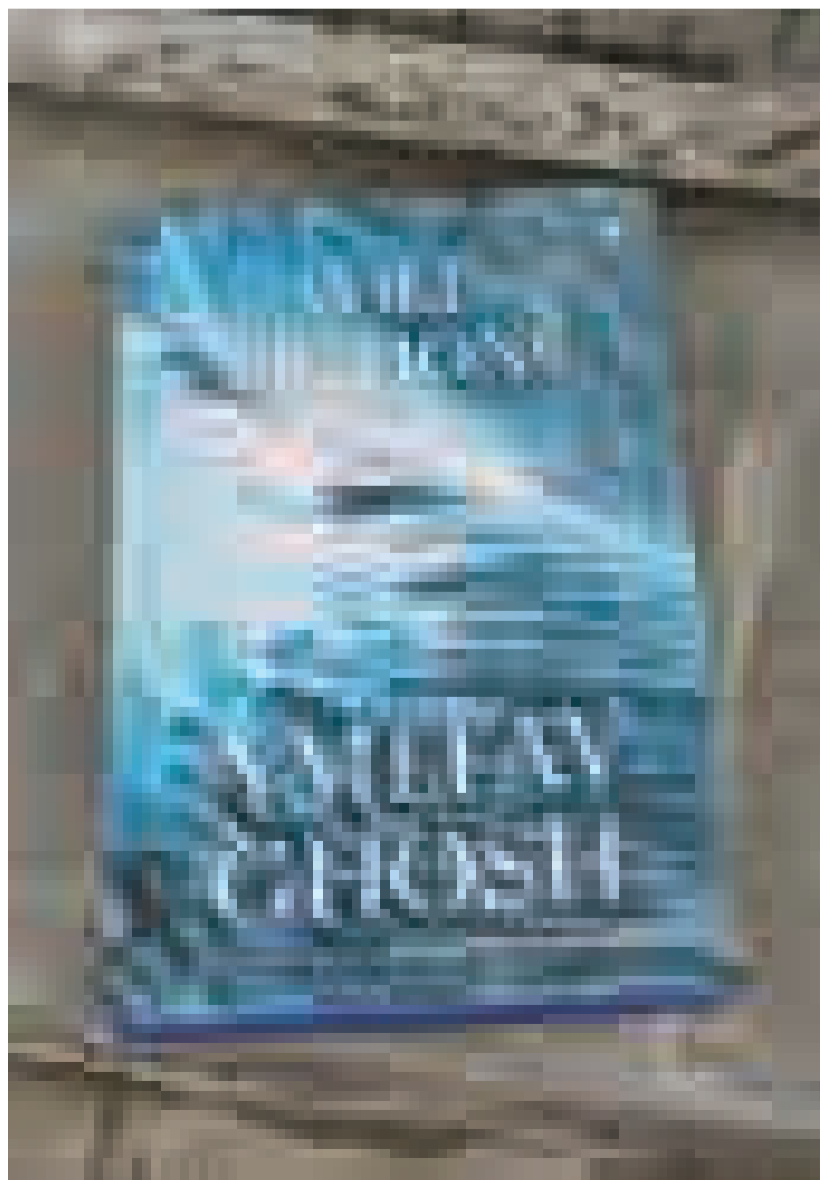
Amitav Ghosh

This is, to me, one of the most appealing aspects of Xizhou: here history is not yet an inert object of consumption; it will not tamely submit itself to plans and projects. The village's past is rich and deep and has the resources to push back.

I asked Brian about the difficulties that he himself had had to face: Were licences difficult to get? Did palms have to be greased?

Brian's answer startled me. 'No,' he said. 'I would say this part of it was easier than in the States. I used to run a gallery in Wisconsin and it took years to get licences there. The building codes and other regulations made it impossible for the small guy to succeed. It's like politics in the US - you have to be rich to get ahead. It was different here; I found China so open, so willing to help. I could sit down with the fire brigade and discuss things directly. I don't want to sound naive—I know that it may be because I'm a foreigner. But there is a tremendous collective pride: people don't want China to lose face.' For Brian, the Linden Centre is both a dream and an enormous risk: he has sunk all the money he could raise into it. 'We are just ordinary people in the States,' he said of himself and his wife. 'We don't have anything to fall back on if this fails. That's scary to me as a father and a husband.'

For the moment, the problems that Brian has to face are those of success rather than failure. The centre has had a great deal of coverage in the Chinese media and is flooded with visitors. Sometimes Brian and his staff are hard put to cope. The Lin-



MY SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD SON, NAYAN, WAS TRAVELLING WITH ME AND HE LOVED THE Linden Centre. Where else in the world can a teenager go for walks in the clouds and bicycle down to a lake where fishermen use cormorants to catch fish?

den Centre was not conceived 234 as a conventional hotel and it does not offer multi-starred comforts. Hot water is available only for a few hours each day; mosquitoes are a problem; the kitchen provides excellent food but it shuts down at eight; there are no TVs in the rooms and since Xizhou, like any other farming village, turns in soon after sunset, guests must look inward, for entertainment.

But none of this detracts from the centre's appeal. Many of the guests are Chinese: prominent artists, affluent young couples and highly placed officials and executives. Some have the courtly manner and meditative bearing of classical scholars; they divide their time between practising Tai Chi and quietly contemplating the surrounding rice fields. They appear to be deeply grateful to Brian for providing an antidote to the frantic pace of China's cities.

But it isn't only to those seeking seclusion that Xizhou appeals. My seventeen-year-old son, Nayan, was travelling with me and he loved the Linden Centre. Where else in the world can a teenager go for walks in the clouds and bicycle down to a lake where fishermen use cormorants

to catch fish? Where else can he eat spicy pork ribs and tiny whole fresh-water crabs, and, with his saved-up pocket money, buy figurines that date back to the time of Genghis Khan?

Western Yunnan is traversed by four of Asia's mightiest rivers: the Salween, the Irrawaddy, the Mekong and the Yangtze. In places, the last three run almost parallel to each other, like troughs in a sheet of corrugated iron, except that their gorges are thousands of metres deep.

The road that runs past Xizhou leads to the steep valley carved by the Yangtze; at times it descends right to the bank of the river, which is in its infancy here but is already a broad torrent, flowing at the pace of a rushing mountain stream. Presently the road comes to one of nature's miracles: the magnificent Tiger Leaping Gorge.

Here the Yangtze, racing to keep pace with the fast-rising mountains, has sliced an almost vertical channel through the upwelling rock.

Excerpted from *Wild Fictions: Essays by Amitav Ghosh*, published by Harper Collins India

Srinagarties Demand Better Amenities During Holy Month

Agencies

SRINAGAR: With Ramadan beginning today, residents across Srinagar are expressing growing concerns about the essential services. The Srinagarties are urging the administration to address issues regarding electricity supply particularly at Sehri and Iftar time, tap water, cleanliness, and market regulation. These demands are especially critical as families prepare to observe fast, a time when the valley's needs for basic amenities become more demanding.

One of the most significant concerns is the erratic power supply in the region. "Fasting is a time when families come together to break their fasts. But every year, we face long power cuts, particularly in the Sehri and Iftar time. It's not just uncomfortable, it's unsafe, especially when we need electricity to cook and heat our homes after a long day of fasting," says Javid Rahid Bhat, a resident of the old city in Srinagar said.

However, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bihuri on Thursday said that uninterrupted power supply will be provided in the valley during the holy month of Ramadan.

The Divisional Commissioner said this in reply to a question by media persons on the sidelines of a function here.

Another issue that has raised alarm among people is the state of cleanliness in the city. Ramadan is a time when people often congregate for prayers and community events, the lack of a consistent waste management system has become a significant concern. "The streets are often filled with garbage, especially after the markets close. With Ramadan nearing, the government must ensure that cleanliness drives are conducted regularly and that the streets are free from waste," says Anjum Khan, a resident of Rajbagh. "We want to welcome Ramadan with clean streets and public spaces, not piles of garbage."

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference General Secretary and MLA Khanyar Ali Muhammad Sagar Friday asked the administration to make necessary arrangements in preparation for the holy month of Ramadan. He emphasised the need for a detailed action plan from concerned departments to ensure the availability of essential commodities, electricity, water, sanitation, cleanliness, and transport facilities during Ramadan. Sagar

specifically called for scheduled power supply, especially during Sehri and Iftar times. He also urged the Public Health Engineering Department to proactively ensure an adequate supply of drinking water during these crucial times.

Market regulation is also high on the list of demands. As Kashmiris gear up for Ramadan, the prices of essential goods such as dates, fruits, and vegetables often soar, leaving many families struggling to afford basic necessities. "Every year, prices of food items go up during Ramadan, and this year is no different. The authorities must step in and ensure that markets are properly checked for inflated prices and substandard goods," says Nisar Ahmed, a shopkeeper in Srinagar. "This is a time for reflection and community bonding, not for exploitation."

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements made for the holy month of Ramadan, which commences tomorrow. The Chief Minister emphasized that people rightfully expect their elected government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any inconvenience during this sacred month.

"As the holy month of Ramadan begins tomorrow, the people rightfully expect the government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any difficulties during this sacred month" the Chief Minister said.

He stressed that key departments under pressure must deliver service—particularly the power supply— which must be prioritized. "People want, and we must strive, to ensure that there are no power outages during Sehri and Iftar time. Any necessary shutdowns should be well-planned and curtailment could be made during the day time as per a proper schedule. The maintenance works, wherever required, are also taken up during the day time," CM instructed.

On water supply, CM said that the recent spell of snow and rainfall had helped improve the situation but stressed the need for supply of adequate potable water to households.

"By the grace of Allah, the recent rainfall over the past few days has been beneficial in this regard," he said.

The Chief Minister also directed officials to focus on cleanliness, particularly around mosques, shrines, traffic management, and making security arrangements. (ANB)

People Demand Price Regulation Ahead Of Ramadan



— Faisal Khan/KO

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As the holy month of Ramadan commences today, the residents across Kashmir have urged the elected government to regulate prices of meat, vegetables, dates, and other essential items, citing concerns over arbitrary rates charged by butchers.

Consumers fear that without strict monitoring, the prices of mutton, dates, fruits, vegetables, and poultry may soar, which would make it difficult for many families to afford essential items for Iftar and Sehri.

"Every year, the prices of essentials like meat and vegetables shoot up, and there is no proper check on it in the month of Ramadan. The government must ensure that shopkeepers adhere to the fixed rates," said Irfan Ahmad, a resident of Srinagar.

Locals and consumers also said that nobody is monitoring mutton prices, which are currently fixed at Rs 700 per kg. They said however, many butchers charge more,

taking advantage of the increased demand.

"Last year, we had to buy mutton at multiple prices—some places at one rate and some places at another. This time, the government must act in advance to prevent such exploitation," said Ghulam Nabi, a shopper from Baramulla.

Meanwhile, butchers stated that the price remains at Rs 700 per kg and that they will try to maintain it during Ramadan. "We are selling mutton at a fixed rate as of now, and we have not received any complaints about increased prices from anywhere," said Mehraj ud Din, General Secretary of the Mutton Dealers Association Kashmir.

Officials within the Department of Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) admitted they are helpless in controlling prices. "We too are consumers and are witnessing the soaring prices in the market, but we are helpless," an official said.

In June 2023, the Jammu and Kashmir government revoked the "J&K Mutton (Li-

censing and Control) Order, 1973," which had regulated mutton prices in the region for the past five decades.

At that time, the move came after the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India, clarified that the legal basis for such regulation was no longer valid.

Since this decision, district administrations and enforcement agencies have lost control and can no longer issue or enforce price notifications for mutton.

Meanwhile, sources within the FCS&CA department said that while the notification was issued across India, states like Delhi, which is both a national capital and a Union Territory, continue to regulate prices on a weekly basis.

"The Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs Department in Kashmir also wants to act on high prices, but the government is not showing any interest. Instead, it is allowing people to be exploited while acting like mute spectators," they said—(KNO)

"EVERY YEAR, THE PRICES OF ESSENTIALS LIKE MEAT AND VEGETABLES SHOOT UP, and there is no proper check on it in the month of Ramadan. The government must ensure that shopkeepers adhere to the fixed rates,"

Police Uncover Drug Frame-Up, Arrest Four In Conspiracy Case

Observer News Srinagar

SRINAGAR: Police said that it dismantled a well-orchestrated criminal conspiracy involving the planting of narcotics, leading to the arrest of four individuals under the NDPS Act.

According to an emailed statement to Associated News Bureau, the operation, which unfolded over the past week, began with a tip-off on 24/02/2025, and has exposed a calculated plot driven by greed and revenge.

The case originated when advocate Yusha Yousuf Mir, a resident of Bakshipora Noorbagh, Srinagar, contacted Police Station Shaheed Gunj with information about a suspicious vehicle bearing registration number JK01AX-8467.

According to the complainant, the vehicle was being parked daily near OASIS School in Karan Nagar, raising suspicion.

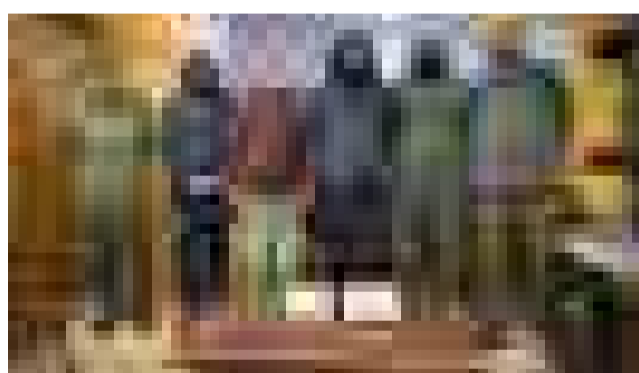
Acting swiftly, Srinagar Police along with concerned Magistrate, raided the location to find the vehicle parked as reported.

Further it reads, the owner, identified as Manzoor Ahmad Bhat son of the late Ghulam Mohd Bhat from Astan Mohalla, Natipora, Srinagar, was contacted through the phone number displayed on the vehicle, and he was directed to present himself at the scene.

In the presence of the magistrate, a preliminary search of the vehicle led to the recovery of 452 grams of the charas-like substance.

Consequently, case vide FIR No. 05/2025 under NDPS Act was registered in PS Shaheed Gung. The vehicle was seized and the owner was arrested.

However, what initially appeared to be a straightforward drug trafficking case soon unravelled into a deeper conspiracy.



"The case originated when advocate Yusha Yousuf Mir, a resident of Bakshipora Noorbagh, Srinagar, contacted Police Station Shaheed Gunj with information about a suspicious vehicle bearing registration number JK01AX-8467."

Further investigation revealed that Manzoor Ahmad had been deliberately targeted by a group of five individuals motivated by a financial dispute. The investigation established that some days prior to the incident, Mohd Shafi Badyari, a resident of Tauheed Colony, Natipora, had borrowed the vehicle from him under false pretence. Mohd Shafi along with accomplices Toufeeq Ali from Safakadal and Arshid Ahmad Wani from Pamposh Colony, Natipora, transported the vehicle to Natipora, where they planted the contraband substance in the vehicle.

Mohd Shafi then returned the vehicle to Manzoor Ahmad at Karan Nagar, setting the stage for the trap.

Following this, Mohd Shafi

allegedly tipped off the complainant, who in turn informed the Police, initiating the chain of events that led to Manzoor Ahmad's arrest.

Further investigation uncovered that the conspiracy had been in motion for months, orchestrated by Mohd Shafi, along with his accomplices. The motive stemmed from a land deal in Hyderpora, where Manzoor Ahmad had entrusted the group with money to purchase property. Instead of fulfilling the transaction, the conspirators sought to eliminate him by framing him in a drug case, thereby securing his funds for themselves.

The contraband substance used in the plot was procured months earlier through one Zahoar Ahmad Mir and stored at Rouf Ahmad Mir's shop in Rambagh, Srinagar.

On 26/02/2025, four of the accused persons namely Mohd Shafi Badyari, Arshid Ahmad Wani, Toufeeq Ali and Rouf Ahmad Mir were apprehended.

The disclosure of the accused persons led to additional recoveries of contraband, thereby, further solidifying the case. Efforts to locate and arrest Zahoar Ahmad Mir remain ongoing while the other accused persons have been arrested in the instant case. Pertinently, relevant sections of BNS have also been invoked in the case.

'BJP Will Play A Role Of 'Good' Opposition In Assembly'

Agencies

JAMMU: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will play a role of "good opposition" in the budget session of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly slated to commence on March 3.

Dr Singh while talking to the reporters, here said, "We will play a good role of opposition in the assembly. For the first time we have come with such a big majority and our vote share is better, decisions will be taken in the interest of the people following our national-

ist ideology and our MLAs are capable of presenting their issues with full preparation."

Dr Singh said that numerous employment options have been created in the past 10 years but its benefits are not reaching Jammu and Kashmir completely as there is "no double engine system" here like Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat; "Our MLAs will also highlight this fact," he added.

The J&K government will be held accountable for the work that is the responsibility of the UT government and which is not being implemented despite the support of the central government, Dr Singh said—(KNO)



DC Srinagar Greets People On Ramadan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat has greeted the people at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

The DC extended his best wishes to the people on the sacred month of Ramadan. He prayed that may this holy month of prayers, blessings and forgiveness bring peace, prosperity and good health to all.

The holy Islamic month of

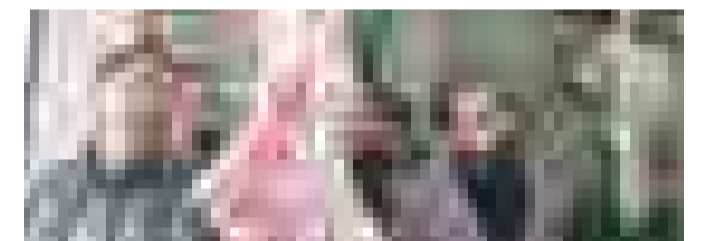
Ramazan 2025 (1446 Hijri) shall begin from March 02, 2025(Sunday).

Meanwhile, on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, District Administration Srinagar has made all necessary arrangements and preparations for Ramzaan ul Mubarak in the District.

Also a Joint Control Room had been established at DC Office Srinagar to ensure smooth and hassle free availability of basic facilities to the general public.



Food Safety Team Conducts Intensified Market Checking



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, the Food Safety team has intensified its market checking efforts across the City in wake of the holy month of Ramadan.

The team conducted a thorough inspection of Parimpora Fruit Mandi to ensure the quality of fruits and vegetables available in the market.

During the inspection, the team lifted samples of fruits for analytical purposes. The Food Safety team also directed all Food Business Operators (FBOs) to take necessary measures to protect every food item, including dates, from environmental hazards such as dust, dirt, and other contaminants.

The team warned that anyone found violating any provisions of

the Food Safety and Standards Act will be dealt with strictly under the law. The Food Safety Department will continue its inspections and sampling efforts across Srinagar city to ensure that all food products sold in the market are safe for consumption.

This intensified market checking drive is part of the Food Safety department's efforts to ensure that citizens have access to safe and healthy food, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan when the demand for food products increases.

The Food Safety team's efforts are aimed at preventing the sale of adulterated or contaminated food products, which can pose serious health risks to consumers. By taking proactive measures, the department hopes to safeguard public health and prevent food borne illnesses.

Nowgam Youth's Death: Father Blames Police Lapses, Demands Probe

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: Mohd Yaseen Shah, a resident of Nowgam, Srinagar, has requested the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar to initiate a thorough investigation into the death of his son, Umar Yaseen Shah. Umar, who was reported missing on December 22, 2024, was tragically found dead on December 30, 2024, in a deep gorge at Digidool, Ramban.

In a detailed complaint, he has alleged gross negligence by the police in handling his son's disappearance and subsequent death.

According to the complaint, Umar Yaseen Shah went missing on December 22, 2024, and a missing report was filed at the Nowgam Police Station on December 24. However, no immediate action was taken to trace him. Shockingly, on December 30, 2024, his lifeless body was discovered in a deep gorge in the Digidool area of Ramban, along with his vehicle, a Mahindra Thar (JK01AN9990).

Mohd Yaseen Shah has accused the Station House Officer (SHO) of Nowgam, Mr. Masrat, and his team of failing to initiate an investigation, trace the victim's last known location, or coordinate with highway police stations between Srinagar and Jammu. "Even stolen phones are retrieved within minutes, yet my son's phone was not traced despite submitting his number to the police," the written complaint states, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer.

The grieving father has questioned why no efforts were made to circulate information about Umar's disappearance, why no search teams were deployed, and why the family was left to con-



"Even stolen phones are retrieved within minutes, yet my son's phone was not traced despite submitting his number to the police,"

duct searches on their own. He further criticized the Nowgam police for their absence during the critical search period, stating that officials only visited the family home during the funeral when VIPs were in attendance.

Expressing deep anguish, Mohd Yaseen Shah has warned that if his concerns remain unaddressed, he will be compelled to approach the High Court for justice.

He has urged the SSP Srinagar to launch an immediate and thorough investigation to determine the circumstances of his son's death and hold accountable those responsible for delays in the case. "We seek justice and demand answers," he emphasized, calling for swift action to uncover the truth behind his son's tragic demise.

Kashmir Observer tried to contact SSP Srinagar Imtiyaz Husain but he was unavailable for comment.

CONDOLENCE

"To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die"
Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn.

It is with profound sorrow and heartfelt sympathy that Imamia School, Zadibal, extends its deepest condolences to Mirwaize-Kashmir, Dr. Molvi Mohammad Umar Farooq, and his esteemed family on the sad demise of his beloved father-in-law, Jenab Dr. Ghulam Sibtain Masoodi Sahib, who passed away on the night of Wednesday, February 26, 2025, after a prolonged illness.

We pray to Allah (SWT) to forgive his sins, shower his infinite mercy upon the departed soul, and grant him the highest abode in Jannah, while bestowing patience, strength, and solace upon Mirwaiz Sahib, his family, and all those mourning this profound loss.

Imamia School, Zadibal, stands in solidarity with the bereaved family.

S/d
Chairman, IHSZ
0194-2422234

India To Remain Fastest Growing Major Eco With 6.5% Growth In FY26: IMF

Press Trust Of India

NEW YORK—Multilateral financing agency International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that India will retain its position as the fastest-growing major economy by clocking a GDP growth of 6.5 per cent in 2025-26, on the back of robust private investment and macro-economic stability.

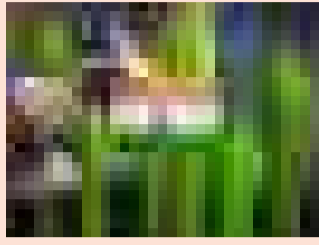
India's strong economic performance, the IMF said, provides an opportunity for the country to advance critical and challenging structural reforms to realise the ambition of becoming an advanced economy by 2047.

"Real GDP is expected to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 and 2025-26, supported by robust growth in private consumption on the back of sustained macroeconomic and financial stability.

According to the second advance estimate released by the Indian government, the country's economy is expected to clock a growth rate of 6.5 per cent during 2024-25. "Headline inflation is expected to converge to target as food price shocks wane," the IMF said after Article IV consultations with India.

The IMF statement also underlined the need for deeper implementation of structural reforms to boost private investment and employment, and push growth.

"...comprehensive structural reforms are crucial to create high-quality jobs, invigorate



investment, and unleash higher potential growth. Efforts should focus on implementing labour market reforms, strengthening human capital, and supporting greater participation of women in the labour force," it added.

Boosting private investment and FDI, the IMF statement said, was vital and would require stable policy frameworks, greater ease of doing business, governance reforms, and increased trade integration. These would include both tariff and non-tariff reduction measures.

It further said that despite recent moderation, India's economic growth has remained robust, with GDP growth of 6 per cent y-o-y in the

first half of 2024-25. Inflation has broadly declined within the tolerance band of the Reserve Bank (of 2 to 6 per cent), though food price fluctuations have created some volatility, the statement said.

The financial sector, it added, has remained resilient, with non-performing loans at multi-year lows. Fiscal consolidation has continued, and the current account deficit has remained well contained, supported by strong growth in service exports.

"Real GDP is expected to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 and 2025-26, supported by robust growth in private consumption on the back of sustained macroeconomic and financial stability."

Sitharaman Asks Civil Accounts Officers To Make Govt's Annual Accounts More User-Friendly

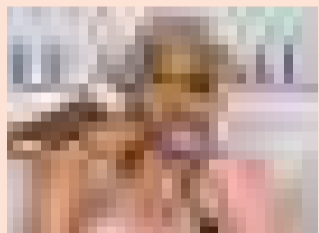
Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI—Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday asked civil accounts services officials to work towards making the government's annual accounts more approachable and user-friendly.

Addressing the 49th Civil Accounts Day event here, Sitharaman lauded the Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) officers, led by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) for the "silent technological revolution" in which states are finding a lot more ease of operation and ease of getting their government business done by adopting the public financial management system (PFMS).

"I would also like you to examine, in consultation with the CAG, whether it would be possible to make the annual accounts more approachable and user-friendly and allow citizens to analyse easily and generate customisable and simpler reports," Sitharaman said.

She said that since a lot of digital integration has already taken place with the states, more research can be carried out based on the data set available with the CGA. "If you're able to make the report a lot more user-friendly, that itself can generate a lot of interest in the work that you do,"



the Minister said. Sitharaman also asked both the Expenditure Department and the CGA to ensure that the SNA Spash is smoothly rolled out for all schemes in the upcoming financial year. "CGA should handhold states in seamless onboarding and transition from whichever (platform) they have to the SNA Spash and convince them about the benefits of this reform and quick adaptation," she said.

PFMS, which is developed and implemented by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) under the Department of Expenditure, provides an IT platform and ensures end-to-end digital payments, collection of receipts, accounting. It ensures effective cash management in the Central Government system through 'just in time' transfer of funds and complete tracking of realisation of funds from its release to its credit into the bank account of intended beneficiaries.

GST Collections Rise 9% To Rs 1.84 Lakh Cr; Indicate Economic Revival, Say Experts

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Gross GST collections rose by 9.1 per cent to about Rs 1.84 lakh crore in February, boosted by domestic consumption and indicating potential economic revival.

As per the official data released on Saturday, on a gross basis, mop up from Central GST stood at Rs 35,204 crore, State GST at Rs 43,704 crore, Integrated GST at Rs 90,870 crore and compensation cess of Rs 13,868 crore.

GST revenues from domestic transactions jumped 10.2 per cent to Rs 1.42 lakh crore while that from imports grew 5.4 per cent to Rs 41,702 crore during February.

Total refunds issued during February were Rs 20,889 crore, a 17.3 per cent increase over the year-ago period. Net GST collections during February 2025 grew 8.1 per cent to about Rs 1.63 lakh crore.

Gross and net GST revenues in February 2024 were Rs 1.68 lakh crore and Rs 1.50 lakh crore, respectively.

The gross GST collections in February 2025, at Rs 1.84 lakh crore are, however, lower than Rs 1.96 lakh crore collected in January 2025.

EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said the robust GST collection figures indicate that the Indian economy is



withstanding global economic challenges.

"The consistent rise in domestic GST revenue compared to import-related collections points to the effective implementation of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat policies.

"Furthermore, the government's increased disbursement of domestic and export refunds, including those related to inverted duty structures, demonstrates its commitment to easing working capital pressures on businesses," Agarwal said.

KPMG, Indirect Tax Head & Partner, Abhishek Jain said, "GST collections growth of 10.2 per cent on domestic supplies and overall growth of 9.1 per cent indicates a potential revival of economy for Q4. If the Maha Kumbh effect comes into play, next month's revenue growth could be even better".

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said while GST

collections in large manufacturing and consuming states like Haryana, UP, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, MP, Karnataka have shown handsome increases in the range of 10-20 per cent, a detailed evaluation on the reasons for the low growth in the range of 1-4 per cent in Telangana, Gujarat, Assam, AP and Odisha could provide reasons on the factors responsible for growth in GST collections".

Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP Partner Vivek Jalan said this year's GST collection is almost on target and that is one of the reasons for revised estimates pegging fiscal deficit for FY24-25 lower at 4.8 per cent, below the budgeted 4.9 per cent.

So far this fiscal (April-February), gross GST collections have grown 9.4 per cent to about Rs 20.13 lakh crore, while net GST collections rose 8.6 per cent to over Rs 17.79 lakh crore.

GST COLLECTIONS GROWTH OF 10.2 PER CENT ON DOMESTIC SUPPLIES AND OVERALL GROWTH OF 9.1 PER CENT INDICATES A POTENTIAL REVIVAL OF ECONOMY FOR Q4. IF THE MAHA KUMBH EFFECT COMES INTO PLAY, NEXT MONTH'S REVENUE GROWTH COULD BE EVEN BETTER"

India, EU Discuss Efforts To Accelerate FTA Talks

Press Trust Of India

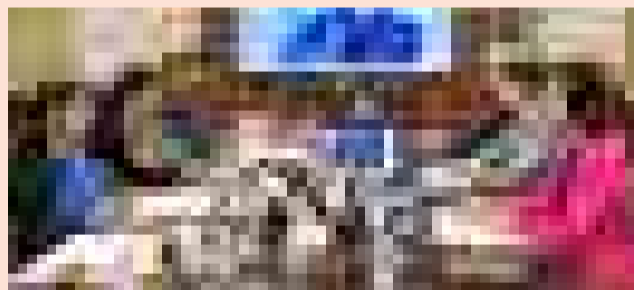
NEW DELHI—With India and the EU setting the year-end deadline to conclude a free trade agreement, teams from both sides held discussions on Saturday to accelerate efforts towards a balanced and mutually beneficial pact.

The meeting was held between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and EU Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maros Sefcovic in Mumbai along with officials from both sides.

"Our discussions focused on accelerating efforts towards a balanced and mutually beneficial free trade agreement. Looking forward to deepening economic ties and fostering a prosperous India-EU partnership," Goyal said in a post on X.

On February 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen agreed to seal a much-awaited free trade deal by this year amid rising concerns over US President Donald Trump's policy on tariffs.

The two sides are scheduled to hold the tenth round of negotiations for the FTA from



uncertain global economic situation, India is the fastest-growing major economy. It is projected to grow at 6.4 per cent in 2024-25.

In June 2022, India and the 27-nation EU bloc resumed the negotiations after a gap of over eight years. It stalled in 2013 due to differences over the level of opening up of the markets.

Besides demanding significant duty cuts in automobiles, the EU wants tax reduction in wines, spirits and a strong intellectual property regime.

Indian goods' exports to the EU, such as ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, steel, petroleum products, and electrical machinery, will become more competitive if the pact is concluded successfully.

"Our discussions focused on accelerating efforts towards a balanced and mutually beneficial free trade agreement. Looking forward to deepening economic ties and fostering a prosperous India-EU partnership,"

March 10-14 in Brussels. Further strengthening of economic ties between the two is crucial in light of the threat from US President Donald Trump to impose higher tariffs. In the current

PM Modi Calls For Speedy Implementation Of Agri Budget, Keeping Focus On Action

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI—Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday called for expeditious implementation of the budgetary proposals for agriculture and rural development, urging stakeholders to focus on "action" instead of deliberating on a new budget.

Addressing a post-budget webinar on 'Agriculture and rural prosperity', the Prime Minister emphasised that the budget reflects the government's new expansion of the vision for a "Viksit Bharat" with a consistent policy approach in its third term.

"It is important to implement this year's budget in a speedy manner. The budget has been formed and our entire focus should be on the action," Modi said, adding that the stakeholders should identify "obstacles and shortcomings" in budget implementation.

Modi said before the budget, inputs and suggestions from all stakeholders helped in framing it. "Now this budget needs to be implemented more effectively on the ground, and for a better outcome, the (stakeholders') role is even more crucial.

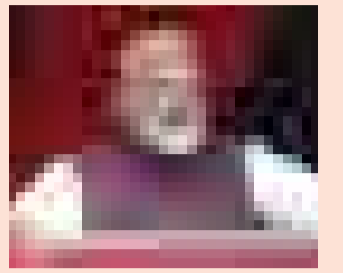
Agriculture is considered as the first engine of growth and the government is moving ahead with the twin target of achieving agricultural growth and rural prosperity, he said.

Modi said the government is committed towards the goal of "Viksit Bharat" and the effort is to ensure no farmer is left behind and to advance every farmer.

"We need to fully explore the country's agricultural potential and achieve more targets."

The Prime Minister highlighted record achievements in the agriculture sector, noting that foodgrain production has increased from 265 million tonnes a decade ago to over 330 million tonnes currently. Similarly, horticulture production has grown to exceed 350 million tonnes.

Modi specifically mentioned the PM Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana, describing it as "a very important scheme" for him. The initiative will focus on 100 districts with low crop yields,



following the successful model of aspirational districts.

"We have announced the setting up of a Makhana Board in Bihar. I urge all stakeholders to explore and promote diverse nutritional foods across the country and in the global market," he said.

The Prime Minister highlighted ICAR's contributions, stating that between 2014 and 2024, more than 2,900 new varieties of foodgrains, pulses, and sugarcane and other crops were developed using modern tools and cutting-edge technology in the breeding programme.

"You have to ensure these new varieties are available at affordable rates to farmers. We also need to ensure farmers' produce is not affected by weather aberrations," Modi said.

He mentioned that a central mission on high-yielding seeds has been announced in the budget. "I especially urge the private sector to become part of the seed chain to ensure high-yielding seeds reach small farmers."

On pulses production, the Prime Minister acknowledged improvements but pointed out that India still imports 20 per cent of its domestic consumption needs.

While the country has achieved self-sufficiency in chickpeas (chana) and moong dal, Modi stressed increasing production of tur, urad and masoor through high-yielding varieties and hybrid seeds.

The Prime Minister noted that approximately Rs 3.75 lakh crore has been transferred directly to 11 crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme since its launch six years ago.

The annual financial assistance of Rs 6,000 is strengthening the rural economy.

RBI Says 98.18% Of Rs 2000 Notes Returned

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI—The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on Saturday that 98.18 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes have been returned to the banking system, and only Rs 6,471 crore worth such notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the withdrawal of Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, declined to Rs 6,471 crore at the close of business on February 28, 2025, RBI said.

"Thus, 98.18 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said in a statement.

The facility for deposit and/or exchange of the Rs 2000



banknotes was available at all bank branches till October 7, 2023. However, this facility is still available at the 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank.

Since October 9, 2023, RBI issue offices are also accepting Rs 2000 banknotes from individuals and entities for deposit into their bank accounts.

Further, members of the public can also send Rs 2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country to any of the RBI issue offices for credit to their bank accounts.

The Rs 2000 banknotes continue to be legal tender.

T K Pandey Assumes Charge As Sebi Chairman

Press Trust Of India

Tuhin Kanta Pandey assumed charge as the 11th chairman of capital markets regulator Sebi on Saturday.

Pandey, a career bureaucrat who was serving as the Finance Secretary till now, was appointed chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) by the government on Thursday.

He replaces Madhabi Puri Buch, whose three-year tenure ended on Friday. Buch, who is reportedly unwell, was not present when Pandey arrived.

Dressed in a dark blue blazer and a striped shirt, Pandey arrived at the Sebi headquarters in the Bandra Kurla Complex business district on Saturday afternoon.

All four Sebi whole-time members, Ashwani Bhatia, Amarjeet Singh, Ananth Narayan and Kamlesh Varshney, welcomed Pandey at the Sebi headquarters.

Pandey has been appointed Sebi chairman for three years.

Pakistan's Tax Shortfall Widens To Pkr 606 Billion This Fiscal Year: Report

Press Trust Of India

Pakistan's tax shortfall widened to PKR 606 billion (INR 189.45 billion) in the first eight months of this fiscal year, piling up pressure on authorities for violating commitments made with the International Monetary Fund, a media report said.

The fund provided a USD 7 billion loan but imposed strict conditions, including on tax collection.

The Express Tribune reported that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) sustained a colossal shortfall of PKR 606 billion against the July-February target of PKR 7.95 trillion because it provisionally pooled PKR 7.342 trillion during this fiscal year's July-February period.

The report said it showed impressive growth of around 28 per cent, but it was not enough to hit the IMF-dictated target of PKR 7.95 trillion. This resulted in a shortfall of PKR 606 billion against the target, putting the authorities under pressure.

The government again missed the monthly target of PKR 983 billion in February by a margin of PKR 138 billion, collecting only PKR 845 billion in the month. This is the seventh consecutive month of missed targets.

The FBR collected PKR 1.65 trillion more than last year, a significant achievement in an economy growing at less than 1 per cent in the first quarter.

However, the government's taxation measures and assumptions in setting the annual target of nearly PKR 13 trillion have put authorities under pressure.

The IMF compelled the country to impose new taxes, primarily burdening the salaried class and levying taxes on nearly all consumable goods, including medical tests, stationery, vegetables, and children's milk.

Mahindra Sales Rise 15% At 83,702 Units In February

Press Trust Of India

Mahindra & Mahindra on Saturday said its total sales increased 15 per cent year-on-year to 83,702 units in February.

The automaker had sold 72,923 units in February last year.

In the utility vehicles segment, the company said it sold 50,420 vehicles in the domestic market, a growth of 19 per cent as compared with 42,401 units in February last year.

Exports increased to 3,061 units last month, an increase of 99 per cent over 1,539 units in February 2024. "This strong performance is a result of a continued positive momentum for our SUV portfolio," Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Automotive Division President Veejay Nakra said in a statement.

The company said its total tractor sales last month stood at 25,527 units, as against 21,672 units for the same period last year.

Exports for February stood at 1,647 units. "After a good Kharif crop, Rabi crop outlook is also looking positive due to favourable weather conditions," M&M Farm Equipment Sector President Hemant Sikka said.

Increase in agri credit limit, continued government support to increase farmer incomes and a bumper Rabi harvest will help boost tractor demand going forward, he added.

'India Can Leverage US Tariff Threat For Mutual Reductions'

Press Trust Of India

The Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, Arvind Panagariya, on Saturday said that the looming threat of reciprocal tariffs from the US could be turned into a positive if India can leverage it to secure mutual tariff reductions.

He, however, cautioned that if it results in a tariff war, where the US imposes tariffs on India and New Delhi retaliates with its own tariffs, it would have an "unfortunate" outcome.

"We have a very good opportunity to do a win-win bargain. So we can really turn it into a win-win situation. Now that the reciprocal tariff threat is coming, it is doubly beneficial that we also, in the process, hold the United States to reciprocal tariff reductions as well, and get access for our goods that we export to them," Panagariya said.

Panagariya was replying to a query on how he foresees the impact of US tariff volatility on India over the next 3-4 years.

US President Donald Trump on multiple times said that America will impose reciprocal tariffs against India. He has also alleged that India is a 'tariff king' and 'tariff abuser'.

The US has already announced a 25 per cent tariff on steel and aluminium. It will come into force from March 12. India also exports these goods to the US.

CT: India Look To Give Fringe Players A Run Against New Zealand

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: A seemingly invincible India will be eager to sharpen their game against spin and give a run to second-line players ahead of the semifinal when they take on New Zealand in their last group match of the Champions Trophy here on Sunday.

A win in their last league match will help India top the Group A. But that position of pride is of little value because they are set to face either Australia or most likely South Africa in the last four, and both of them have handy spin units at their disposal.

Indian batters have not been really comfortable against spin despite two victories thus far in the event, and New Zealand, who are also qualified for the semifinals, could offer them a tough challenge.

The star Indian batters were



focusing more on playing out Bangladesh spinners Mehidy Hasan Miraz (0/37) and Rishad Hossain (2/38) without taking risks, and they followed the same approach against Pakistan leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed (1/28).

But they will come up against

more wily customers in Mitchell Santner and Michael Bracewell on Sunday, and it could be their harshest test against spin yet in this event.

Both the Kiwi spinners are in fine fettle here, and could be even more effective on the worn out surface at Dubai.

Indian batters have been clever enough to milk spinners for singles and twos, while reserving the big shots against pacers when the ball came much more quickly and predictably at them.

But they will face 20 overs from Santner and Bracewell

while a few more of Glenn Phillips' part-time off-spin.

While India would want to sustain the momentum, they will think of giving skipper Rohit Sharma and Mohammed Shami some more time to hit the peak ahead of the semifinals.

But with no tournament riders hanging on this match, the management will be tempted to give Rohit a break. If that is the case, Rishabh Pant may get his first match here.

There will also be discussion on resting Mohammed Shami because he had struggled with his calf during the match against Pakistan, and the think tank might just give him an extended recovery break ahead of the semis on March 4.

Hence, Arshdeep Singh could come in for Shami, and the in-form Chakravarthy might replace Kuldeep as he is also coming off an injury lay-off.

Match starts at 2.30 pm IST.

South Africa Hammer England By 7 Wickets, Qualify For CT Semis

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Rassie van der Dussen and Heinrich Klaasen smashed commanding fifties after a superb show by the bowlers, led by Marco Jansen, as South Africa secured their place in the Champions Trophy semifinals after hammering a struggling England by seven wickets in the last Group B match here on Saturday.

South Africa first dismissed England for just 179

with the new ball, while Wiaan Mulder (3/25) and Keshav Maharaj (2/35) applied pressure throughout the middle overs, ensuring that South Africa's knockout berth was secured even before the run chase began.

South Africa completed the chase with ease, reaching 181/3 in 29.1 overs, thanks to impressive fifties from Klaasen (64) and van der Dussen (72 not out). Klassen and van der Dussen added 127 runs

Ryan Rickelton (27) played a quick-fire knock, smashing five boundaries to keep the scoreboard ticking.

In his final game as England's ODI captain, Jos Buttler won the toss and chose to bat, but the decision backfired as Jansen wreaked havoc early, reducing England to 37 for 3 by the seventh over.

Harry Brook (19) and Joe Root (37) attempted a recovery with a 62-run stand, but just when the partnership



before comfortably chasing down the target with 20.5 overs to spare.

England, already eliminated from the semifinal race, needed a victory by at least 207 runs to give Afghanistan a chance of qualifying for the last-four stage based on net run-rate.

However, South Africa quickly quashed any hopes, bundling out their opponents for the lowest total of this edition in just 38.2 overs.

Marco Jansen (3/39) shone

for the third wicket.

With this victory, South Africa joined Australia in the semifinals from Group B. The Proteas topped the group with five points from three matches ahead of Australia (4 points).

The semifinal line-up will be confirmed after the final Group A match between India and New Zealand on Sunday.

Chasing 180 for a win, South Africa lost opener Tristan Stubbs (0) early, with Jofra Archer cleaning him up.

seemed to gain momentum, South Africa struck twice in quick succession.

England's woes continued as Liam Livingstone (9) and Jamie Overton (11) quickly fell, leaving the side in disarray at 129-7 in the 26th over.

Buttler (21) and Jofra Archer (25) added some respectability to the total with a partnership of 42, but Archer was dismissed by Mulder, and the England skipper was then removed by Lungi Ngidi with a slow ball.

Australia, SA Face Tough Travel Plans Ahead Of CT Semis



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: The Australian and South African cricket teams will fly into Dubai ahead of the Champions Trophy semifinals, even though it remains uncertain whether their match will be held in Dubai or Pakistan, according to a BBC report.

Dubai is set to host the first semifinal on Tuesday, with Lahore hosting the second on Wednesday.

The final venue decision hinges on the outcome of the last Group A match between India and New Zealand on Sunday, which will determine if Australia or South Africa will face Rohit Sharma and Co in Dubai.

Due to security concerns in Pakistan, India are playing all their matches in Dubai.

As a result, both Australia and South Africa must travel to Dubai and await the result of Sunday's game before knowing which team will return to Lahore for the second semifinal.

"Group B concludes with South Africa's match against England on Saturday but neither the Proteas or Australia will know the venue for their semifinal until after the conclusion of India's match against New Zealand on Sunday," wrote BBC on Saturday.

"Were they (Australia and South Africa) to wait until Monday and only travel when the fixtures were confirmed, that would rule out the possibility of training in Dubai -- where India will have played all three group matches," it added.

Some cricketers, including South African top-order batter Rassie van der Dussen and former Australia skipper Pat Cummins, have said India are in an advantageous position as they have played all their games at one venue while other teams have had to travel to different venues in Pakistan.

The report further added that a situation might arise where Australia might take a three-hour flight from Lahore to Dubai on Saturday, and then fly back on Monday if they do not meet India in the semifinal.

"Similarly, South Africa will fly to Dubai in the early hours of Sunday (after their last group match against England) and could return to Pakistan 24 hours later if they do not have to face India,"

The team finishing second in Group A will meet the winners of Group B and vice-versa.

India will play their knockout game in Dubai on Tuesday whether they finish first or second in Group A.

“Similarly, South Africa will fly to Dubai in the early hours of Sunday (after their last group match against England) and could return to Pakistan 24 hours later if they do not have to face India,”

Short TAKES

Real Kashmir Take On Inter Kashi In I-League Today

Real Kashmir FC will look to put their 4-0 drubbing at the hands of Rajasthan United FC in the rearview when they square off against Inter Kashi FC on Sunday in a 2024-25 I-League match at Kalyani Stadium in West Bengal. The game will kick off at 7:00 PM and will be broadcast on Sony Sports 2 and SSEN app and website.

Sunday's matchup will be a crucial one for the third-placed Snow Leopards (16 games, 26 points), as Inter Kashi (16 games, 31 points) is second in the I-League table, five points above them. A win would keep Real Kashmir in the top three and ensure they continue their title charge with league leader Churchill Brothers FC (17 games, 32 points) looking to pull away from their challengers.

Real Kashmir have won three, drawn once and lost once in their last five games, while Inter Kashi also boast the same record in their previous five but are unbeaten in the last three matchups. (Observer News Service)

Downtown Heroes Football Club Extends Heartfelt Condolences

Downtown Heroes Football Club on Saturday said it is deeply saddened by the death of the father of Department of Youth Services & Sports Secretary Sarmad Hafeez (IAS).

"The entire Downtown Heroes FC family is grief-stricken and stands in solidarity with Mr. Hafeez and his loved ones during this difficult time," the club said in a statement.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of Mr. Hafeez's father," said Mushtaq Bashir, founder for Downtown Heroes FC. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Hafeez and his family. May the departed soul rest in eternal peace, and may the Almighty grant strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss."

Downtown Heroes FC requests all fans, well-wishers, and members of the football community to join them in extending heartfelt condolences to Mr. Hafeez and his family.

Ranji Final: Nair's Ton Puts Vidarbha In Strong Position v Kerala

Karun Nair continued with his red-hot form of the season by smashing his fourth century of the ongoing Ranji Trophy as Vidarbha tightened their grip over Kerala in the final here on Saturday.

Chasing their third Ranji title, Vidarbha reached 189/3 at tea on the penultimate day, extending their overall lead to 226.

Nair remained unbeaten on 100 (187 balls), forging a crucial 182-run third-wicket stand with Danish Malewar, who displayed grit with a 73 off 161 balls (5x4).

The duo rescued Vidarbha after they were reduced to 7/2 in the third over of the morning.

Earlier in the day, Vidarbha's second innings began on a shaky note, losing both openers inside 2.2 overs. First-time finalists Kerala were bowled out for 342 on day three, conceding a 37-run first-innings lead.

Brief scores:
Vidarbha: 379 and 189/3 in 61 overs (Karun Nair 100 batting, Danish Malewar 73; MD Nidheesh 1/37, Jalaj Saxena 1/63, Akshay Chandran 1/7).
Kerala: 342.

Crystal Palace FA Cup Victory Overshadowed By Mateta Injury

Premier League Crystal Palace beat second-tier Millwall 3-1 to reach the FA Cup quarter-finals on Saturday but the win was marred by an injury to inform forward Jean-Philippe Mateta.

The 27-year-old Frenchman was struck on the head by Millwall goalkeeper Liam Roberts in the seventh minute at Selhurst Park and needed oxygen on the pitch before being taken to hospital, suffering from concussion.

Palace chairman Steve Parish described Roberts' challenge as the most reckless he had ever seen.

Roberts was shown a red card, following a VAR review, after coming off his line to clear a long ball and catching the on-rushing Mateta in the head with his raised studs.

An own goal by defender Japhet Tanganga in the 33rd minute and a close-range effort by Daniel Munoz put Palace in command but 10-man Millwall hit back before halftime through Wes Harding and pushed Palace hard in the second period.

Dravid Hopes Artificial Intelligence Can Predict Injuries To Cricketers In Future

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Former India captain and coach Rahul Dravid on Saturday hoped Artificial Intelligence would be able to predict injuries to players in future but also warned against over-use and dependency on technology in cricket.

Dravid said predicting injuries to players is something that has not been done so far despite the advancement of technology.

"On the sporting field, one of the things that you are really hopeful about what AI might be able to do, is (to predict) injuries," Dravid said at a panel discussion during AMFI Mutual Fund Summit here on Saturday.

"You just look at the level of injuries that we have and no one really has a perfect answer as to why people pick up stress fractures and there is no one size fits all; I am just using a stress fracture for the back as an example for fast bowlers.

"You have seen over the last years so much of data, so much of sports medicine, science and

stuff going into it but no one being able to really predict that, that's sad, that's (about) people's careers, lives. So if AI can get us there and we will be able to predict injuries," he added.

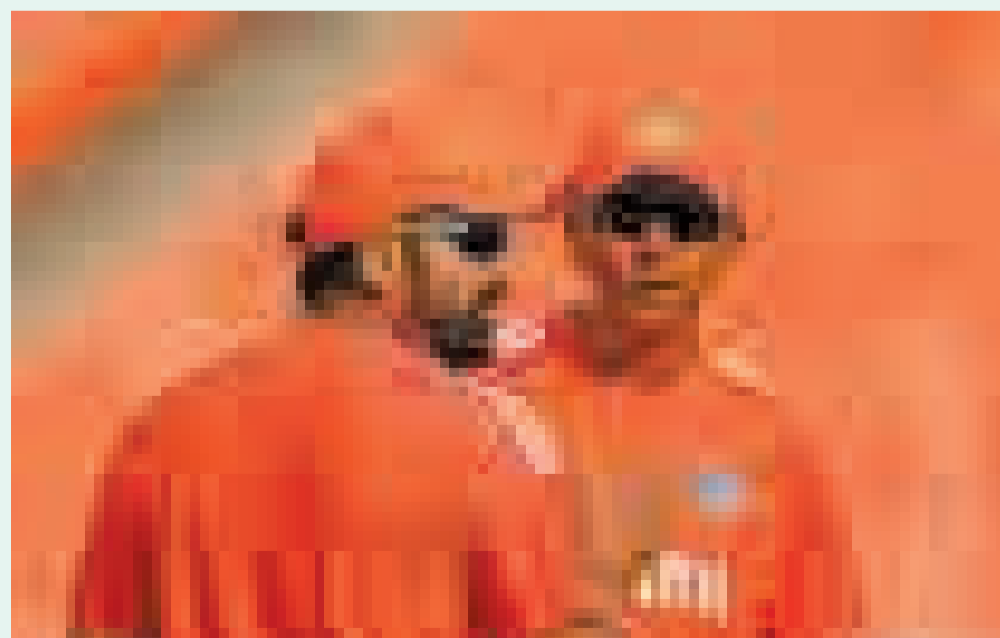
Dravid said finding the right balance in use of technology and human judgement is paramount.

"I'm not saying that you can adopt it completely, but certainly it's a great tool and it's something that is being used more and more in sport in terms of strategy, in terms of tactics, player development, player enhancement," he said.

"In this day and age, you've got to be able to use all of this data and technology for your benefit.

"(But) you can't become a slave of it, but certainly there are huge advantages to using artificial intelligence. You've got to find that balance between recognising that the data is important," the batting stalwart said.

Dravid said while technology has helped in matters of "fairer selection" between



players, it cannot help picking teams for variety of conditions that teams come across while playing at multiple venues.

"You are already seeing data being used a lot in selection and becoming a lot better in terms

of fairer selection, but at the moment we have not reached the point where we can just use data and stats to pick sides for variety of conditions," he said.

"They are getting there, we are getting better and better at

using the data as selectors.

"When we pick an IPL teams we are using the data and analytics a lot more than we did when we first started out in the IPL. We are already there but I don't think we can completely

rely on it," he added.

Citing the example of premier Indian bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who missed the ongoing Champions Trophy due to a back-related problem with the similar issue also keeping him away from action when Dravid was India's head coach, the former captain said too much reliance on technology won't help either.

"Can we clone five Bumrahs or something? I mean, I'm just saying that, but that wouldn't be fun either, right? I mean, what would be the fun in that, right? Where's the uniqueness then?" he quipped.

"I think maybe leave sport alone for a bit and we don't want to get AI too involved in sport. There's got to be that human element to it. There's got to be a level of uniqueness to sport. So, that would be my wish really that we'd never get to a point where we are... It becomes easy," he said.

"Bumrah is unique because it's so hard to do what Bumrah does," said Dravid while agreeing that the ace bowler missing the eight-team competition

was a tough for India.

Dravid revealed that the Indian team management studied data from past two years in the year leading to 2024 T20 World Cup but it was the coaching staff which decided what to be shared with players and what not.

"Our job is really to collect the data, and I would say that, of the data that we've collected in the (2024) T20 World Cup, we did a lot of data in the year and a half, two years leading into that World Cup.

"I would say the players probably saw one hundredth of what we actually saw as coaches. I eventually distilled it down and said this is relevant. There's no point showing somebody data if you actually can't... So you can show data to some player, and say, 'hey, this is what's wrong with you, this is what you need to improve'."

"But if you have only three days (between matches) and you're not going to be able to improve that in three days, what's the point of showing that to a particular player?"

Nadda Asks J&K BJP MLAs To Prioritise Development

Press Trust Of India

Katra: BJP president J P Nadda on Saturday asked party legislators to prioritise development of their constituencies and maintain deep connections with the citizens as he joined the concluding session of the two-day MLA training workshop here, a party spokesman said.

Ahead of the maiden Budget Session post abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories in August 2019, the BJP held the "Vidhyak Prashikshan Shivir" at a hotel in Katra to ensure effective participation of the party legislators in

the Assembly proceedings.

The second day of the workshop witnessed deliberations on leadership, governance, and public outreach, the spokesperson added.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh also attended the workshop and said that while following "our nationalist ideology, the issues concerning the welfare of the people will be raised (during the upcoming Budget Session). And our legislators are also capable of presenting their arguments with full preparation."

Nadda, accompanied by Singh, national general secretary, incharge J-K, Tarun Chugh and J-K BJP president Sat Sharma also paid obeisance at

the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine atop Trikuta hills before visiting the two-day workshop at Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting the shrine.

Addressing the MLAs, Nadda highlighted the importance of "karyakarta nirman" and urged the legislators to rise above the "allure of political posts".

Drawing from his own experience as an MLA and leader of opposition, the Union health minister said "posts are transient, but the trust of the people is enduring."

He advised legislators to proactively engage with communities through platforms like 'Krishi Vigyan Kendras', 'Asha workers' meetings, and

parent-teacher interactions in government schools.

Nadda also emphasised the need for MLAs to be "good listeners" to effectively resolve public grievances and regularly visit Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities to ensure inclusive development, the spokesman said.

"The BJP will play a great role of the main opposition party (in the J-K assembly). This is for the first time that we have come with such a huge mandate (by winning 29 Assembly seats) and our vote share is even better than the ruling party (NC)," Singh told reporters on the sidelines of the workshop.

Art 370, Announcing Truce In 1947 'Big Nehruvian Blunders': Dr Jitendra Singh Says PM Modi Led Govt Committed To Reclaim PoJK

Agencies

New Delhi: Terming insertion of the Article 370 in the Indian Constitution as one of the biggest "Nehruvian blunders", Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday said that Jawhar Lal Nehru's ceasefire decision prevented the reclaiming of Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Speaking at the PoJK Resolution Day event organized by the Jammu and Kashmir People's Forum and the Mirpur

PoJK Sacrifice Committee at the Indian Society of International Law Auditorium here, the Union Minister said, "When the Indian Army was on the verge of reclaiming the territory of Mirpur, now part of PoJK, in 1947 Nehru (the then Prime Minister of India) announced unilateral ceasefire."

Dr Singh stated that the truce was declared without consulting the cabinet, as Nehru, in his attempt to be a "messiah of peace," halted military operations when the Army needed just two more

days to complete its mission.

Dr Singh said, "Insertion of Article 370 (which provided special status to J&K) into the Constitution kept J&K on edge till August 5, 2019, when PM Modi led government scrapped it. This temporary Article was one of the biggest Nehruvian blunders."

He went on to criticize Nehru's decision to take Kashmir to the United Nations, calling it another "historical blunder." "Taking the matter to the United Nations prevented India from reclaiming its territory."

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

More Rain, Snow

and Katra received the rainfall of 7.6 mm and 7.0 mm respectively till today morning.

Meanwhile, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that generally cloudy weather is expected on Sunday with the possibility of light rain and snow at isolated places late night today as well.

He added that on March 3, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places, adding that few higher reaches of North & Central Kashmir may receive moderate to heavy snowfall.

From March 4 to 9, he said generally dry weather is expected during the period, adding that a fresh spell of rain and snow is expected between March 10 and 12.

Moreover, the MeT has issued an advisory, advising the tourists, travellers and transporters to follow administration and traffic advisory.

"Farmers should suspend irrigation & other farm operations till March 4. Landslides, rock fall and shooting stones are expected at vulnerable places," the advisory reads.

"Avoid sloppy slopes & avalanche prone areas & follow DGRE's avalanche warning and bulletin," it adds.

Pertinently, J&K witnessed moderate rain and snowfall for the past four days, especially from February 26 to February 28, which led to the increase in the water level in all the water bodies including river Jhelum. (KNO)

Jammu-Srinagar Highway

in Ramban district. Heavy rains had triggered shooting stones, mudslides and landslides at a dozen places, including Kishtwari Pather, Moum Passi, Hingni, Panthiyal, Mehar and Dalwas, while snowfall between Qazigund and Ramsu left the road slippery.

A side of the road near Mehar has caved in, while a major landslide has blocked one tube of the Kunfer-Peerah tunnel.

The road repair was hampered by continuous rains on Friday, officials said.

They said restoration of the 66-km Banihal-Nashri stretch was intensified on Saturday morning after the weather conditions improved.

"Light motor vehicles carrying passengers are allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar, and from the Valley towards Jammu," a traffic department spokesperson said after the road was reopened.

He cautioned the commuters to follow lane discipline and avoid overtaking, which causes congestion.

"The passengers are advised to take the highway only during day-time and avoid unnecessary halting between Ramban and Banihal since there are apprehensions of landslides and shooting stones. The heavy motor vehicles shall be allowed later, after a thorough assessment of the condition of the road," the spokesperson said.

Ramban deputy commissioner Baseer-ul-Haq Chaudhary said there are at least 16 locations along the 66-km road stretch that were rendered vulnerable by the rains.

"The road has been cleared in almost all the places, except in Mehar, where the width has shrunk after the sinking of the side portion. This spot is a challenge. The concerned agency will address this in the next two weeks," he told reporters in Banihal.

Chaudhary, along with Ramban Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kuldeep Singh and SSP (national highway) Rohit Raskotra, reviewed the vulnerable locations.

Chaudhary said the landslide at Peerah will not hamper the traffic, which has been diverted through the other tube.

"All the stranded vehicles have been cleared," he said, advising commuters to follow the traffic advisories before taking the highway.

J&K Assembly

BJP plans to corner the government on commitments made by the National Conference in its election manifesto, ranging from free electricity to free ration, the Kashmir-based parties, including the PDP and Peoples Conference, will question the government on issues like Article 370 and the alcohol ban.

Both the PC and PDP have already set the tone for a stormy session by bringing resolutions and bills on Article 370 and alcohol. The BJP has indicated that it would oppose any move to raise issues like Article 370 in the House. Sunil Sharma, leader of the opposition in the J&K Assembly, told the Speaker during an all-party meeting held in Jammu on February 27 that they wouldn't permit any unconstitutional and anti-national resolution, question, or bill in the House.

The National Conference on Saturday said that the Speaker would take a final call on business of the House and they (BJP) are just making such statements for scoring brownie points.

To a question that BJP has urged the Speaker that he shouldn't permit any unconstitutional, anti-national and undemocratic activity in the House in the wake of Article 370 resolution

submitted by PC president Sajad Gani Lone, the NC today said that the Speaker has to decide on the Business of the House.

"The Speaker would decide on whether any bill is unconstitutional and anti-national and qualifies to be introduced in the House. The Speaker is in the House. A team of legal experts looks into bills to be tabled. The Parliamentary Affairs Ministry ensures that no anti-national or unconstitutional bill is tabled in the House," NC leader and MLA Hazratbal Salman Sagr told reporters here.

He said that BJP is just making these statements to score brownie points.

PC president Sajad Gani Lone has submitted a resolution in the Assembly seeking condemnation of abrogation of Article 370 and Art. 35A. Lone has also sought restoration of the pre-August 5, 2019 constitutional position. On the other hand, the BJP is demanding that no such resolution should be brought in the House, saying that they wouldn't permit any unconstitutional and anti-national activity in the House

As earlier reported, the National Conference and Congress are holding separate legislature party meetings in Jammu tomorrow to devise their strategy for the session. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will chair the NC meeting at his official residence on Wazarat Road, while Tariq Hamid Karra will preside over the Congress meeting at party headquarters in Jammu. The BJP is also expected to hold its legislature party meeting in Jammu on March 2 or 3.

Several private member bills are also expected to spark debate. A proposed liquor ban has gained momentum, with PDP's Mir Mohammad Fayaz, AIP's Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad, and NC's Ahsan Pardesi advocating for a complete prohibition on alcohol in the Union Territory. PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra has introduced a bill seeking ownership rights for residents living on state land for over two decades, along with another bill aimed at regularization of daily wagers and temporary workers. Meanwhile, NC's Dr. B.A. Veeri has put forward a reservation reform bill, proposing a 40% cap for reserved categories and 60% for open merit, a move backed by student groups. Additionally, Veeri has also introduced legislation to protect Karewa lands from unchecked soil extraction and mining, citing their ecological and archaeological significance. With these key proposals on the table, the session is expected to witness intense discussions and political maneuvering.

According to officials, extensive arrangements have been made to ensure the smooth conduct of the session.

Security measures have been heightened around the legislative complex, and essential infrastructure upgrades are being completed to accommodate the participants.

This marks the first budget presentation under the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference government since it assumed power on October 16, 2024, bringing an end to six years of central rule.

The speaker said he had convened a meeting of the members on February 27 ahead of the start of the budget session to discuss important issues for smooth running of the House.

"People have high hopes with their legislators. They should give preference to the issues of the public and also perform their duty responsibly," Abdul Rahim Rather said. (inputs from KNO)

No Shadow Cabinet

passed away earlier this week, to offer his condolences.

Masoodi was the brother of National Conference MLA Hasnain Masoodi and father-in-law of Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq.

Speaking about his meeting to review the preparedness for the holy month of Ramadan, Abdullah said it is the government's responsibility to provide all facilities to the people.

"We reviewed every department and directed all to ensure every facility, be it power supply at the time of Sehri and Iftar, water supply, ration supply, sanitation and traffic. It is hoped that the government will take all these steps," he said.

The chief minister also called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here and discussed various issues relating to the forthcoming Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, a spokesperson said.

The Budget session will commence on Monday.

34 JKAS Officers

Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. Khalid Jahangir, JKAS, Managing Director, J&K Trade Promotion Organization, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Industries and Commerce Department. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute, J&K, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Shahbaz Ahmad Mirza, JKAS, awaiting orders

of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Managing Director, J&K Housing Board.

Rubina Kausar, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Labour and Employment Department, has been transferred and posted as Director, Libraries, J&K, against an available vacancy.

Sudershan Kumar, JKAS, Secretary, J&K Board of School Education, has been transferred and posted as Managing Director, J&K Trade Promotion Organization.

Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Vice-Chairman, Lakes, Conservation and Management Authority, J&K.

Naseem Javaid Chowdhary, JKAS, Managing Director, J&K Horticulture Produce, Marketing and Processing Corporation, has been transferred and posted as Director, School Education, Jammu.

Mohammad Younis Malik, JKAS, Vice-Chairman, Lakes, Conservation and Management Authority, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government Power Development Department.

Vikas Sharma, JKAS, Director, Horticulture, Planning and Marketing, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Housing and Urban Development Department. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Mission Director, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Mohammad Nazir Sheikh, JKAS, under orders of repatriation to J&K from the Union Territory of Ladakh, has been posted as Director, Handicrafts and Handloom, Jammu.

Ashok Kumar Sharma, JKAS, Director, School Education, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Labour and Employment Department.

Rajinder Kumar Sharma, JKAS, Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti Department.

Puneet Sharma, JKAS, Director, Geology and Mining, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government Revenue Department. He will also look after the work of DILRMP, NAKSHA, SVAMITVA, and AGRISTACK.

Suraj Parkash Rukwal, JKAS, Director, Handicrafts and Handloom, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Director, Geology and Mining, J&K.

Mohammad Farooq Dar, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Skill Development Department, has been transferred and posted as Managing Director, J&K Horticulture Produce, Marketing and Processing Corporation.

Abdul Sattar, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department.

Ashish Kumar Gupta, JKAS, Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, has been transferred and posted as Special Secretary to the Government Skill Development Department.

Rakesh Magotra, JKAS, Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Member, J&K Services Selection Board.

Ghulam Hassan Sheikh, JKAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, J&K Board of School Education.

Rifat Aftab Qureshi, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes (Stamps), Kashmir, has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Srinagar. Jammu and Kashmir travel guide

Ghulam Jeelani Zargar, JKAS, Joint Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, has been transferred and posted as Director, Horticulture, Planning and Marketing, J&K.

Shokat Mehmood, JKAS, Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Kathua, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Technology Department.

Vishal Sharma, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Hospitality and Protocol Department.

Mohammad Anwar Banday, JKAS, Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Reasi, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, School Education Department.

Sunaina Sharma, JKAS, Joint Director, Tourism, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Principal, Revenue Training Institute, Jammu.

Syed Shabir Ahmad, JKAS, General Manager, DIC, Pulwama, has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Education (Central), Kashmir, against an available vacancy. Jammu and Kashmir travel guide

Mohammad Syed Khan, JKAS, Member, J&K Services Selection Board, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department.

Hakeem Tanveer Ahmad, JKAS, Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Kupwara, has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Education (North), Kashmir, against an available vacancy.

Pankaj Bhagotra, JKAS, Regional Transport Officer, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Reasi.

Vivek Phonsa, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Public Works (R&B) Department, has been transferred and posted as Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Kathua.

Surinder Paul Sharma, JKAS, Joint Registrar, Cooperatives (Special), Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Regional Transport Officer, Kathua (Hqr: Lakhanpur), against an available vacancy.

Ajaz Qesar Malik, JKAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Information Technology Department, has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Tourism, Jammu.

Jasmeet Singh, JKAS, Principal, Revenue Training Institute, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Regional Transport Officer, Jammu.

Further transfers and postings were made in a separate order issued by GAD.

Zeba Suleman, Junior Scale JKAS, presently posted as Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Samba, has been transferred and posted as Under Secretary to the Government, Social Welfare Department.

Rahul Gupta, Junior Scale JKAS, presently posted as DSWO, Ramban, has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, for further posting.

Supinder Kour, Junior Scale JKAS, presently posted as Under Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department, has been transferred and posted as Under Secretary in the J&K Public Service Commission.

Nowshad Anjum Mir, Junior Scale JKAS, presently posted as Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Kupwara, has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the Social Welfare Department, for further posting.

Irfan ul Ashaq, Junior Scale JKAS, presently posted as CDPO, Narvaw, Baramulla, has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, for further posting.

Sahir Majeed, Junior Scale JKAS, presently posted as DSWO, Bandipora, has been transferred and posted as Under Secretary in the J&K Public Service Commission.

Nazir Ahmad Rather, Under Secretary in the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat References Monitoring Cell, General Administration Department, has been transferred and posted as Under Secretary to the Government, Hospitality and Protocol Department.

CM Directs Uninterrupted

during this sacred month.

"As the holy month of Ramadan begins tomorrow, the people rightfully expect the government to take all necessary measures to ensure they do not face any difficulties during this sacred month," he said.

He stressed that key departments under pressure must deliver service particularly the power supply which must be prioritised.

"People want, and we must strive, to ensure that there are no power outages during Sehri and Iftar time. Any necessary shutdowns should be well-planned and curtailment could be made during the daytime as per a proper schedule.

The maintenance works, wherever required, be also taken up during the day time," the CM instructed.

He directed officials to immediately address system issues or faulty distribution transformers (DTs) to avoid disruptions.

On water supply, Abdullah said the recent spell of snow and rainfall had helped improve the situation, but stressed the need for supply of adequate potable water to households.

"By the grace of Allah, the recent rainfall over the past few days has been beneficial in this regard," he added.

The chief minister also directed officials to focus on cleanliness, particularly around mosques and shrines, traffic management, and making security arrangements.

He said both the inspectors general of police in Jammu and Kashmir have addressed the security concerns. To enhance public service delivery, the chief minister directed all Deputy Commissioners to set up fully staffed and operational district control rooms to promptly address grievances.

"Our collective effort should be to ensure a smooth and hassle-free Ramadan for the people. It is our responsibility to put all necessary arrangements in place," he said.

The meeting was conducted both in person and through virtual mode.

Earlier, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Bidhuri, presented a detailed report on the arrangements in place for the holy month.

The meeting was informed about the electricity demand during peak hours, particularly at Sehri and Iftar, water supply, sanitation around religious and significant public places, ration distribution for March, traffic deployment plans, police security arrangements, food safety and joint market inspections.

J&K Govt

The order, issued by the Mining Department under Government Order No. 13-JK(MNG) of 2025, comes in the wake of directives received from the office of the Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, reinforcing the administration's commitment towards ensuring transparency and accountability in the mining sector.

The government has taken this step in response to rising concerns over unauthorized mining activities that have been causing severe environmental degradation and revenue loss to the state exchequer. In light of this, the Director of Geology and Mining, J&K, has been directed to submit a comprehensive report addressing complaints related to illegal mining and the issuance of disposal permits, allowing authorities to initiate further scrutiny and take necessary corrective measures. The officials have been instructed to ensure strict compliance with mining regulations to prevent any further unlawful extraction of mineral resources.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, while addressing the matter, underscored the government's firm stance against illegal mining, stating that the administration would not tolerate any misconduct or negligence in the execution of duties. He affirmed that illegal mining not only endangers the environment but also deprives the government of rightful revenue, impacting developmental initiatives.

Stressing the need for stringent enforcement mechanisms, the Deputy Chief Minister assured that those found complicit in unauthorized mining activities, irrespective of their position, would face strict legal consequences. He also urged the public to actively participate in reporting any illegal mining operations, emphasizing that community vigilance plays a crucial role in safeguarding the region's natural resources.

Illegal mining has been a longstanding issue in Jammu and Kashmir, with unregulated extraction causing extensive damage to riverbeds, groundwater levels and local ecosystems. The government has reiterated its commitment to sustainable and legal mining practices, ensuring that all mineral extraction activities are conducted within the ambit of law and environmental norms. Efforts are being intensified to introduce advanced monitoring technologies, including satellite surveillance and digital tracking to curb unlawful mining operations.

The action against the Joint Director of Geology and Mining serves as a strong message that the government will not hesitate to take stringent action against any official found to be negligent or complicit in illegal activities.

The government has urged all stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies and local communities to work in unison to eliminate illegal mining. With a clear emphasis on accountability and legal enforcement, this move signals a renewed effort to protect Jammu and Kashmir's natural wealth while fostering responsible economic growth. The citizens are encouraged to report any instances of illegal mining through designated helplines and online grievance portals, reinforcing the administration's objective of public participation in governance and environmental conservation.

Govt Official

immediate effect, an official spokesman said. The attachment of the officer comes in the wake of directives received from the office of Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, the spokesman said.

He said the government has taken this step in response to rising concerns over unauthorised mining activities that have been causing severe environmental degradation and revenue loss to the state exchequer.

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The officials have been instructed to ensure strict compliance with mining regulations to prevent any further unlawful extraction of mineral resources, the spokesman said. Deputy Chief Minister Choudhary said the action serves as a strong message that the government will not hesitate to take stringent action against any official found to be negligent or complicit in illegal activities.








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