

11 Years Of Inaction Key Jhelum Flood Projects Yet To Take Off



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Despite repeated flood threats looming over the Kashmir Valley, two of the most crucial components of the ₹1,623 crore Comprehensive Flood Management Plan for River Jhelum remain stalled, caught in financial and technical deadlock.

The ambitious project, cleared by the Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in March 2022, was designed to strengthen

Kashmir's flood resilience under Phase-II (Part A) of the Jhelum and tributaries management plan. It was recommended for inclusion under the Flood Management Project (FMP) component of the Flood Management Project & Border Areas Programme (FMPBAP) for 2021-26, with 90% central assistance and 10% Union Territory funding.

The J&K Administrative Council gave its formal nod to the project in July 2022. However, two high-value works—resectioning | [More on P10](#)

HC Summons J&K Officials Over Flood Threat

The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Monday took a serious note of concerns raised over flood preparedness in Kashmir and directed top bureaucrats to appear in person before the Bench. The intervention came during the hearing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the Environmental Policy Group (EPG). The Division Bench, headed | [More on P10](#)

NOTHING SUBSTANTIAL WAS DONE in the last 11 years to prevent floods in Kashmir. We are now carefully reviewing the project and its altered cost structure

Schools Reopen In Kashmir As Weather Eases

40 Still Submerged In Floodwaters

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Schools reopened in Kashmir on Monday after being closed last week due to heavy rainfall and floods in some areas of the valley, officials said here.

However, 40 schools in parts of south and central Kashmir remained closed as they were still inundated in flood waters, the officials said.

The schools in Kashmir were closed as a precautionary measure last Wednesday as the water level in River Jhelum and other water bodies rose sharply due to rainfall, posing a flood



threat in the valley.

However, improvement in weather conditions over the weekend eased the flood fears but some areas in south Kashmir and central Kashmir were affected due to overflowing of Jhelum at | [More on P10](#)

Schools In Affected Areas to Stay Shut Until Safe: Itoo

Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Monday said that nearly 40 schools in flood-affected areas continue to remain closed and will be reopened only after conditions stabilize, ensuring that | [More on P10](#)

Kashmir Apples Rot As NH Closure Cripples Transportation

Rs 400 Cr Loss Looms, Fruit Growers Suspend Auction

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir's fruit industry is reeling under massive losses as the continued closure of the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway has disrupted transportation of produce during the peak harvest season.

President of Sopore Fruit Mandi, Fayaz Ahmad Malik, said on Monday that traders and fruit growers have already suffered losses worth over Rs 200 crore in just over a week of the highway's closure.

"Over 250 trucks are presently stuck at Sopore



Mandi. Besides, trucks laden with fruits are stranded in other mandis and along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway," Malik said.

The Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, the Valley's only all-weather surface link with the rest of the country, has faced

repeated closures due to landslides and inclement weather, often disrupting supplies. Malik said the present situation is particularly devastating for the horticulture sector, the backbone of Kashmir's economy.

"Traders and fruit growers have already suffered losses of Rs 200 crore, and the figure is only rising. If the highway doesn't reopen, it may touch Rs 400 crore," he said.

This is the peak season, and any delay in transportation reduces the fruit's market value," he added.

Authorities have been allowing a | [More on P10](#)

Restoration Work Enters Final Phase

The restoration of a 250-meter-long stretch of the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, which had been blocked for a week, has entered its final phase, officials said on Monday. This restoration aims to reopen the

only all-weather road connecting Kashmir to the rest of the country. The highway has been closed since August 26 due to multiple blockades following torrential rain, flash floods, and landslides. However, it was | [More on P10](#)

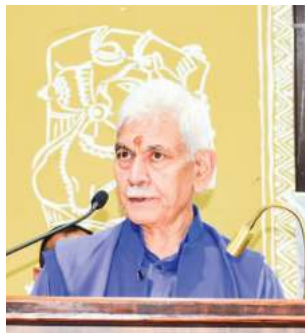
LG Calls For Sustainability- Driven Education At JU

Pushes for Climate Research, Student Volunteerism

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As Jammu and Kashmir battles flood fury, J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday called upon the University of Jammu to integrate innovation and sustainability into its academic framework, urging students and faculty to lead the way in addressing climate challenges and driving development that does not compromise the environment.

Delivering the keynote address at the varsity's Foundation Day ceremony, the Lieutenant Governor said universities must adopt a multi-dimensional approach to prepare youth for future challenges. "Our youth must drive development that meets societal needs without



compromising ecosystems and optimize the use of resources through modern innovation. We need to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to make the earth better for the future generations," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor urged the faculty members to guide and lead youth in

their responsibility to balance nature with development. It is our shared responsibility to protect Mother Earth and promote the culture of environmental awareness at all levels of society, he added.

Extending his heartfelt congratulation to the Vice Chancellor, faculty members, non-teaching staff and students on University's foundation day celebration, the Lieutenant Governor urged to set new and challenging goals and pursue them with a renewed sense of zeal and enthusiasm.

"Today's occasion is also an opportunity for self-analysis, self-exploration, and self-inspection. I am proud of the exceptional accomplishments of our universities in the recently released | [More on P10](#)

AIIMS Awantipora To Be Operational By 2026 End: CM

Says Delays, Cost Escalation Linked to Poor Site Selection



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) coming up at Awantipora in Pulwama district is likely to be fully

functional by the end of 2026.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to the under-construction campus, Omar said that after initial delays, the pace of work has picked up and the institute is expected to start OPD services and MBBS classes | [More on P10](#)

Rain, Thunder Likely Till September 12: MeT

J&K Records 41% Excess Rainfall Amid Flood Threats

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Meteorological Department (MeT) has predicted more spells of rain and thunderstorms across Jammu and Kashmir till September 12.

Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said that generally cloudy weather is expected today with one or two spells of light rain and thunder at many places, with brief

moderate showers possible in isolated districts of Jammu division.

He said that from tomorrow, hot and humid conditions will prevail, accompanied by brief spells of rain and thunder at a few places, continuing till the evening of September 12.

Dr Ahmad also warned of a fresh spell of light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places during the early morning and morning hours on September 13.

Residents are advised to remain cautious and stay updated with | [More on P10](#)



'Terror Glorification, Misinformation & Threats To Officials' AAP MLA Mehraj Malik Detained Under PSA

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir AAP chief and MLA Mehraj Malik was on Monday detained under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in Doda district, officials said.

"Spreading misinformation, glorifying terrorists, and using abusive language against women" are among the charges that form part of a dossier on firebrand MLA, officials said.

Malik was taken into custody



in his Doda constituency on Monday under the stringent law, which permits detention without charge or trial for up

to two years in certain cases.

The dossier, compiled by Doda Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, details a series of allegations against the legislator, PTI reported.

According to the dossier, Malik is considered an "imminent threat" to the peaceful existence of the community. It also claims he has a "regular habit of issuing threats and carrying out physical assault of people, including government officials".

Singh said | [More on P10](#)

J&K Parties Condemn Detention

Cutting across party lines, ruling National Conference, opposition PDP and People's Conference on Monday condemned

the detention of AAP MLA from Doda, Mehraj Malik, under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA), saying it was an "assault on | [More on P10](#)



National Conference (NC) leaders on Monday paid tributes to party founder Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah on his 43rd death anniversary. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Sankarshan Thakur: The Journalist Who Saw Kashmir Beyond the Headlines

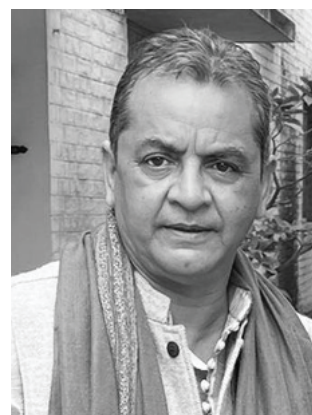
A master storyteller and mentor, Thakur carried the valley in thought and spirit, translating everyday lives, struggles, and dignity into narratives that resonated across India.

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Sankarshan Thakur wandered through the towns and villages of Kashmir with a single purpose: to listen.

He did not arrive as a judge or a distant observer. He arrived with patience, empathy, and the belief that the stories of ordinary Kashmiris grappling with grief and gloominess needed to be heard.

On the morning of September 8, 2025, in a Gurugram hospital, Thakur died after a



months-long battle with lung cancer. He was sixty-three. His departure left a void in Indian journalism and in the hearts of those whose lives he chronicled with care and depth.

As editor of The Telegraph, Thakur earned a reputation for sharp political analysis and clear, human-centered reporting. His coverage of Kashmir, a region often defined by conflict, stood apart for its sensitivity and honesty. He avoided the sensational and instead sought the voices that too often went

unheard.

Born in Patna in 1962, to a father who was both a journalist and a politician, Thakur had an early taste for inquiry. His academic journey took him from St. Xavier's in Patna to Hindu College at Delhi University, where he earned a degree in political science in 1983. By the next year, he had begun writing for Sunday Magazine, and from there his career stretched across the fault lines of Indian politics and society.

In 1999, he | [More on P10](#)



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Doctors Voice Concern Over Rising PCOS Cases, Stress On Need For Early Diagnosis

Press Trust Of india

As September marks PCOS Awareness Month, experts have voiced concern over its growing prevalence and impact on women's health, especially as stigma and lack of awareness delay diagnosis. Globally, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) affects 6-26 per cent of women, and in India, nearly 1 in 5 young women. Despite being among the most common hormonal disorders, it often goes undiagnosed. Alarming, nearly 70 per cent of cases remain unidentified, experts said. PCOS is a hormonal disorder causing irregular periods, weight gain, acne, excess hair growth and infertility.

Often marked by fluid-filled sacs on the ovaries, it extends beyond reproductive issues, increasing risks of insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even endometrial cancer. Dr Yashica Gudesar, Director and unit head, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, at the Max Super Speciality Hospital in Dwarka, said that PCOS is one of the most widespread endocrine disorders among women of reproductive age. "In India, stigma and lack of awareness delay diagnosis," she said. With early screening and timely lifestyle interventions, many severe complications can be prevented, Dr Gudesar underlined. PCOS has strong links to low-grade inflammation along with genetic, environmental and

lifestyle factors, she said. While family history raises susceptibility, poor diet, inactivity, stress and obesity can trigger or worsen symptoms. "Treatment is always tailored to the individual -- since not all women with PCOS need medical therapy. In many cases, lifestyle modification alone can be transformative, while medications are used only when specific symptoms, such as infertility, irregular cycles, or excess hair growth, need to be addressed," Dr Gudesar stated. Dr Swapnil Agrahari, a gynaecologist at Silverstreak Multispeciality Hospital, said, "PCOS needs a multi-pronged approach -- medical care alongside lifestyle changes like exercise, diet, and stress management. It should be seen

not just as a reproductive disorder but as a chronic condition with wide-ranging health impacts." Experts emphasise that beyond physical health, PCOS also exerts a toll on mental health, leading to anxiety, depression and social stress. The stigma surrounding women's reproductive health in India further delays conversations and diagnosis. Dr Astha Dayal, Director, Obstetrics and Gynaecology department at CK Birla Hospital in Gurgaon, said, "As a gynaecologist practising in Gurugram, I see PCOS rising sharply among young women, especially in metros due to stress, poor diet, and sedentary lifestyles. "Early awareness and lifestyle changes -- not just medication -- are key to preventing long-

term complications and protecting women's health." As India already battles the burden of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and hypertension, the growing prevalence of PCOS poses a serious public health challenge. Doctors and health advocates are calling for greater awareness campaigns, nationwide screening programmes and integrated treatment approaches that address physical, emotional, and lifestyle dimensions of the disorder. Experts urged the women to seek timely medical advice, break the stigma around reproductive health, and adopt preventive measures early. Only through awareness, early diagnosis, and holistic care can India effectively address the growing PCOS burden, they said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My ward's dob has been wrongly written in her adhaar card as 08-03-2011 while her correct DOB is 17-03-2011. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Mushtaq Ahmad Hajam
F/o Rumisa Mushtaq
R/o Vehil Chatwattan Tehsil & Distt Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My ward's name and DOB has been wrongly written in her adhaar card as Iqra Jan , DOB 14-04-2002 While her correct name is Iqra Altaf, Correct DOB is 10-12-2003 . Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Mohammad Altaf F/o Iqra Altaf
R/o Wangam Sudershanpora Tehsil and Distt Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Fathers name MOHD SADIQ KHAN S/O GHULAM HASSAN KHAN R/O KREERI .Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 02102040010480 wants to be registered on my name RAJA SHAHEEN KHAN S/O MOHD SADIQ KHAN R/O KREERI .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name..RAJA SHAHEEN KHAN
S/O ... MOHD SADIQ KHAN
R/O ...KREERI fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Nargis Ishtiyag while my correct name is Nargis Bashir. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Nargis Bashir
W/o Ishtiyag Ahmad Badroo
R/o Amargrah Tehsil Sopore fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My ward's name has been wrongly written in her adhaar card as Seerat Jan While her correct name is Seerat Mohi Ud Din . Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Rather
F/o Seerat Mohi Ud Din
R/o Guwila Tehsil Pattan fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub..Application of Nazir Ahmad Wani s/o Ghulam Hassan Wani R/o Malpora Burn Pattan for issuance of legal hair certificate..

PUBLIC NOTICE

IT is inform to general public that applicants brother's legal hair certificate is under process in this office in this matter report Was sought from Patwari concerned which reveals that Ab Majeed Wani s/o Ghulam Hassan Wani R/o Malpora Burn died on 04/02/2002 and left following legal hairs.

Name	Age	Relationship with the Deceased	Marital Status
NAZIR AHMAD WANI	44	BROTHER	MARRIED
MISRA BEGUM	55	SISTER	MARRIED
SHAHZADA BEGUM	50	SISTER	MARRIED

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
fko Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR TANGMARG (EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS)

Notice for the general public

It is hereby notified that the applicant, MOHAMMAD Maqbool lone S/o Abdul Ahad Lone in favour of ROUF BIN MAQBOOL R/O ...Harnow Kawcheck had applied for the issuance Birth/ Death certificate of his/her son namely Kemp Bin Maqsood. The applicant intends to register the DOB/DOD of his/her son as per the hospital/School/other record which is DOB 31/10/2007

If anybody is having any objection/claim regarding the same, he/she may approach the office of undersigned within a period of seven days from the date of publication this notice or else any such claims/objection shall not be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class
Fko Tangmarg

From Office of the Advocate Ishfaq Rasool and Associates

In the case of
1. Mohammad Sultan Dar
2. Ali Mohammad Dar
Both Sons of Mohammad Subhan Dar
Both Residents of Check Jamal Mir Palhallan Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla

V/s
Public at large
(Caveator)

In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap- peal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seed in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irrepa- rable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.
fko Sd/advocate

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Peer Qawam Din While my correct name is Quam ud Din . Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre Jammu / Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Quam ud Din S/o Late Peer Gh Mohd
R/O Mamoosa Tehsil Pattan fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Manzoor Ahmad Shiekh while my correct name is Mansoor Ahmad Shiekh . Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar center Jammu / Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mansoor Ahmad Shiekh S/o Gh Mohiud-din Shiekh
R/o Mehmoodpora Tehsil Kunzer fko

Annexure-II

Ayush Admissions Central Counseling Committee (AACCC)
For
National Commission for Indian System of
Medicine (NCISM)
&
National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH)
Government of India



AACCC-PG COUNSELING 2025-26

NOTICE

For All India Quota (AIQ) Seats under PG (MD/MS) Courses: Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani & Homoeopathy (ASU&H) for A.Y. 2025-26.

- All the eligible candidates who qualified for AIAPGET 2025 and aspiring for admission in PG respectively, are hereby informed that the AACCC-PG Counseling 2025-2026 for allotment at AIQ-PG seats of ASU&H-PG courses will commence from 10th September, 2025 as per schedule uploaded on AACCC website (<https://aaccc.gov.in>)
- AACCC, NCISM shall conduct counseling for admission in AIQ seats of ASU&H-PG courses under Government/Government Aided College/Institute, National Institutes, Central Universities and Deemed Universities (established under Central Act).
- The counseling for admission to AIQ seats of PG courses in Private Institutes of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani & Homoeopathy shall be conducted by the respective counseling authority of the State/UT Government.
- For participation in AACCC-PG Counseling 2025-26, the candidates are required to register themselves at the official website of AACCC (<https://aaccc.gov.in>)
- Kindly note that 'Non-Refundable registration fees' and 'Refundable Security Deposit' have to be paid by the candidates at the time of registration as per their category and selection of counseling on the portal
- For allotment of AIQ-PG seats under ASU&H stream under Government/Government aided Institutes/Colleges, National Institutes, Central Universities, Deemed Universities; AACCC, will conduct four rounds of counseling through online mode: i.e. **Round 1, Round 2, Round 3 and Stray Vacancy Round (Phase I & Phase II allotment)**

Round	Conditions*
I	Free exit
II	Exit with forfeiture till 03 days before commencement of R-3. If withdrawn beyond this period till R-3 result, shall become ineligible for AACCC- PG Counseling.
III	After the R-3 result publication, one must join the allotted/upgraded seat or else security deposit shall be forfeited & will become ineligible for further AACCC/State/UT-PG Ayush Counseling.
Stray Vacancy Round (SVR)	Phase-I: - Fresh registration and choice filling available during SVR-I. After the SVR-I result publication, one must join the allotted seat or else security deposit shall be forfeited & will become ineligible for further AACCC/State/UT-PG Ayush Counseling. Phase-II: - No registration and choice filling in SVR-II. Choices locked by candidates in SVR-I shall be exercised as per merit and preference for phase II allotment on non-reported seats of SVR-I. After the SVR-II result publication, one must join the allotted seat or else security deposit shall be forfeited & will become ineligible for further AACCC/State/UT-PG Ayush Counseling.
	Non-registered eligible candidates willing to participate in SVR MUST register themselves during SVR-I.

*This is only a basic outline of the modified counseling scheme for A.Y. 2025-26. For more details, candidates must refer the AACCC PG- Information Bulletin, Counseling Scheme & FAQ's and relevant notices uploaded on AACCC website regularly.

CBC:17222/12/0002/2526



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No. 166/PA/Misc/CBI,ACB-Srinagar

dated.08-09-2025.

MESSAGE

DO NOT PAY BRIBE TO ANYONE, IF ANY GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, EMPLOYEES OF GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES OR OTHER INDIVIDUALS PERFORMING PUBLIC DUTIES DEMANDS BRIBE FROM YOU OR IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THE CORRUPTION OR IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF CORRUPTION, PLEASE MAKE A COMPLAINT TO DIG, ANTI-CORRUPTION BRANCH, CBI SRINAGAR LOCATED NEAR MLA HOSTEL SRINAGAR ON PHONE NO'S (LAND LINE) 0194-2455514 AND (MOBILE NO.) 9419900977. YOU CAN ALSO SENT YOUR COMPLAINT ON EMAIL ID-HOBACSGR@CBI.GOV.IN. IDENTITY OF THE INFORMER WILL BE KEPT SECRET AND NOT DISCLOSED. SAY NO TO CORRUPTION. BE A LEADER TO ERADICATE THE MENANCE OF CORRUPTION. ISSUED IN PUBLIC INTEREST.

Sd/- (Raman Kumar Meena) IPS DIG
& Head of the branch,
CBI ACB Srinagar

DIT/KM/8/25
dated: 08-09-2025

Locals Decry Unwanted Activities At Habba Kadal Bridge

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Habba Kadal Bridge in Srinagar, rebuilt under the much-hyped Smart City project, is now facing a storm of criticism from locals and pedestrians, who allege the structure has turned into “both a safety and a security concern.”

Earlier the administration had announced plans to redesign the bridge into a pedestrian-only zone with gazebos, seating and heritage-style architecture, similar to the Zero Bridge model. But, the locals argue that instead of beautification, authorities should first

Another local said authorities must take the matter as seriously and look into this before any possible accident.

Moreover, residents also alleged that the bridge has become a “toxic space” during late evening and night hours. “Youth gather here late in the evenings. Instead of being a family-friendly public space, it has become a spot for unwanted activities,” said another resident.

Spending crores to boost commerce and connectivity in Downtown Srinagar, the bridge has instead sparked controversy and skepticism.

Community members say re-



address what they call “serious ground problems.”

Locals from Habba Kadal Srinagar said that there are cracks in the bridge's wooden flooring.

“The bridge is beautiful, but I don't feel safe walking here. It looks weak and any accident could happen. The administration must treat this as a serious safety issue,” said Muntazir, a commuter.

peated failures in construction quality have raised questions over the city's infrastructure planning. “They need to fix the cracks, ensure safety, and address ‘unwanted activities’ concerns before talking about redesigning or beautifying. Otherwise, it feels like money is being wasted while our livelihoods suffer,” said another resident—(with KNO inputs)

DLSA Observes ‘International Legal Literacy Day’



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A comprehensive legal awareness programme was today organized by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, to observe International Legal Literacy Day, at Government S.P. Higher Secondary School, Srinagar.

The initiative was aimed at sensitizing students about their legal rights and the importance of understanding the law, thereby promoting awareness and empowering the youth with crucial legal knowledge.

The programme was conducted under the chairmanship of Tasleem Arief, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and held under the supervision of Sajad Ur Rehman, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Srinagar.

During the session, Zeenat Nazir, Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel (LADC), delivered an insightful presentation on important legal issues such as Child Custody and Guardianship, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and Drug Abuse.

She elaborated on the legal framework that governs child custody and guardianship disputes, the provisions and procedures under the POCSO Act aimed at safeguarding children against sexual offences, and the laws relating to the prevention of drug abuse and its social consequences.

Her session provided the students with a detailed understanding of their rights and the legal measures in place to protect vulnerable individuals. Additionally, Sehar Nazir, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel, addressed the audience on the broader topic of International Legal Literacy Day. She highlighted the significance of knowing one's legal rights and responsibilities as an informed citizen and emphasized the role of law in promoting justice, equality, and social welfare.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students, who actively engaged with the resource persons. Their curiosity and thoughtful questions created a dynamic atmosphere, allowing for productive discussions.

NIT Mourns Demise Of Assistant Professor

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar has expressed grief over the untimely demise of Dr. Sagadevan R, Assistant Professor in Department of Civil Engineering, who passed away in Srinagar on Saturday. His sudden demise has left the entire campus community in deep shock and mourning.

On Monday, his mortal remains were flown to his hometown in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, where the last rites will be performed on Tuesday. Faculty members from NIT Srinagar accompanied the body to ensure a dignified and respectful farewell.

NIT Srinagar expressed its heartfelt gratitude to Jammu

and Kashmir Government and SKIMS Soura for extending the best possible medical treatment to Dr. Sagadevan during his illness and for assisting in the completion of medical and legal formalities after his passing.

The Institute also extended its gratitude to Director SKIMS Soura, SP Hazratbal, Police Control Room (Embalming Section), Indigo Cargo, the Airport Authority of India, and other concerned authorities for their timely support in ensuring the dignified transportation of Dr. Sagadevan's mortal remains to Tamil Nadu.

Their cooperation ensured that all arrangements were carried out smoothly and with full respect.



RAINS LASHED SRINAGAR on Monday, as people were seen rushing for cover under shopfronts and umbrellas.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Water Crisis Deepens In City, Residents Slam ‘Empty Promises’

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Srinagar city is currently grappling with an unprecedented water crisis, as residents across multiple localities continue to face severe shortages despite repeated assurances from authorities.

From Batamaloo and Khanyar to Lal Bazaar, Nawa Kadal, Bemina, and parts of the outskirts, including Bagh-e-Methab, people are enduring long waits for water tankers or resorting to unsafe, muddy water sources.

On September 5, 2025, officials said the disruption was due to recent flood-like conditions in the valley, which caused increased cloudiness in water sources and affected supply from several treatment plants.

The district administration of Srinagar had also announced a dedicated helpline to assist residents and assured that water supply would be restored that very day. However, days have passed, and little has changed.

Ambreena Anjum, Superintending Engineer (SE), Srinagar Ganderbal, had previously claimed that water supply in the affected areas would resume that night. Yet, the problem persists,

with taps remaining dry long after.

When contacted on September 5, the PHE exchange helpline officials reiterated that supply would be restored “by late evening”, a promise residents now see as routine and unfulfilled. “We have multiple complaints. Requests for tanker services are pending, and it's impossible to send tankers everywhere,” said an official when asked about the ongoing water shortage in one of the affected areas.

The crisis has already led to

suffer. Even when tankers arrive, they cannot serve hundreds of households with a single round,” said a woman from Lal Bazaar. In several uptown areas, including Bemina and Hyderpora, residents report that muddy, foul-smelling water has been flowing from taps for weeks. “This is untreated water, unfit even for washing clothes, let alone drinking. We are being pushed towards diseases,” said Mohammad Ashraf of Bemina.

Despite repeated assurances, residents remain unconvinced.

WE HAVE MULTIPLE COMPLAINTS. Requests for tanker services are pending, and it's impossible to send tankers everywhere,”

protests. Last month, residents of Batamaloo blocked the main road, accusing authorities of ignoring their suffering. “We have been without water for weeks. Our children go to school without bathing, and our kitchens are dry. How long should we wait?” questioned Ghulam Rasool, a local.

Residents also allege favouritism in tanker distribution. “Tankers are sent selectively, often to VIP zones, while common people

“Every time, they promise water by evening, but the evening passes, and the taps stay dry. Authorities are testing our patience,” said Nazir Ahmad of Nowhatta.

When contacted, PHE Chief Engineer Er Rakesh Gupta said he would personally speak with the exchange officials and officers, promising to take steps once he fully understands the situation—(KNO)

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

I did wash my hand ... but.... did I clean it enough? ?Wash it again? is it clean now?

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING BUT UNSEEN PAIN distress myths and stigma associated with OCD

KASHMER / Kashmir American Society of Healthcare.
Medical Education & Research
In collaboration with
HPVT / Help Poor Voluntary Trust!
is initiating a **free 8 weeks Group therapy** for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of J&K.

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

There is no need for referral , simply call us for registration.

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- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

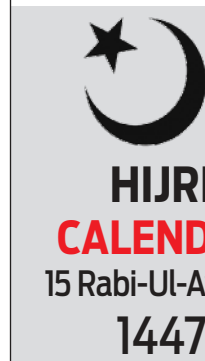
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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 - (Closed)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar-Leh- (Open)



HIJRI CALENDAR
15 Rabi-ul-Awwal
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	4:47
ZUHR	12: 31
ASR	4:58
Magrib	6:53
ISHA	8:15

This Day In History

- 1000 - Battle of Svolder, Baltic Sea. King Olaf on board the Long Serpent defeated in one of the greatest naval battles of the Viking Age.
- 1493 - Battle of Krbava field, a decisive defeat of Croats in Croatian struggle against the Ottoman Empire invasion.
- 1513 - Battle of Flodden Fields; English defeat James IV of Scotland
- 1591 - Battle at Flores Azores: Spanish beat English
- 1753 - 1st steam engine arrives in US colonies
- 1830 - Charles Durant, 1st US aeronaut, flies a balloon from Castle Garden, NYC to Perth Amboy, NJ
- 1881 - Egyptian military coup under colonel Arab “El Wahid”
- 1908 - Russia takes part of Poland boxing title
- 1911 - 1st European airport (Hendon to Windsor, England)
- 1912 - J Verdrines becomes 1st to fly over 100 mph (107 mph/172 kph)
- 1913 - Association for Study of Negro Life & History organizes in Chicago
- 1914 - 121 Belgian offensive from Antwerp
- 1914 - Boston Brave George Davis no-hits Philadelphia Phillies, 7-0
- 1914 - First fully mechanized unit in the British Army created - the Canadian Automobile Machine Gun Brigade (WWI)
- 1914 - Meeting held at Gaelic League headquarters between Irish Republican Brotherhood and other extreme republicans; initial decision made to stage an uprising while Britain is at war
- 1915 - Association for study of Negro Life & History forms by Carter G Woodson
- 1918 - Dutch government of Ruijs de Beerenbrouck forms
- 1919 - Boston's police force forms strike
- 1921 - Guatemala, Honduras, and San Salvador agree to Central American Union
- 1922 - St Louis Brown “Baby Doll” Jacobson hits 3 triples beating Tigers 16-0
- 1922 - Turkish troops conquer Smyrna/murder Greek citizens
- 1942- 1st bombing on continental US soil at Mount Emily, Oregon during WWII by Japanese planes
- 1943 - US, British & French troops land in Salerno (operation Avalanche)
- 1944 - Bulgaria liberated from Nazi control (National Day)
- 1945 - Japanese in South Korea, Taiwan, China, Indochina surrender to Allies
- 1954- Earthquake strikes Orleansville Algeria: 1,400 killed
- 1965- Tibet is made an autonomous region of China
- 1967 - 1st successful Test flight of a Saturn V
- 1967 - Uganda declares independence from Great Britain
- 1969 - Allegheny 853 collides with Piper Cherokee above Indiana, kills 82

From KO Archives

DD Kashir Runs Into Rough Weather

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI- The much-hyped Kashir channel of the Doordarshan has run into rough weather. The union ministry of home affairs (MHA) is understood to have declined to foot the bill for running the channel. Even as the channel has allegedly become a money spinner for some Mandi House officials and a handpicked coterie of Kashmiri migrants. According to reliable sources, the MHA had ‘promised’ to provide the financial support required to run the channel which was launched, for the third time in June this year, with a big fanfare. Two plane loads brought several Bollywood celebrities besides the union minister of information and broadcasting, Arun Jaitley, with hundreds of ministry officials in tow to grace’ the occasion. The gala function held at the city's Grand Palace hotel is believed to have cost the exchequer a fabulous Rs two to three crore. Sources said no new Kashmiri programmes were likely to be produced for the channel. Proposals submitted by Kashmir producers, mostly Kashmiri pandits, were being returned due to non-availability of funds. Sources said 148 proposals, were approved by the Mandi House last month. However, some ‘stale’ programmes provided gratis by Star, Zee TV Sahara and some other private channels may be telecast from the Kashir channel.

(Kashmir Observer, September 09, 2000)

Cables Cut In Red Sea, Internet In Asia Disrupted

Associated Press

Dubai : Houthis have been targeting ships in Red Sea over the Israel-Hamas war. Photo: iStock

Undersea cable cuts in the Red Sea disrupted Internet access in parts of Asia and the West Asia, experts said on Sunday, though it wasn't immediately clear what caused the incident.

There has been concern about the cables being targeted in a Red Sea campaign by Yemen's Houthi rebels, which the rebels describe as an effort to pressure Israel to end its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. But the Houthis have denied attacking the lines in the past. Connectivity degraded in Pak, India

NetBlocks, which monitors Internet access, said "a series of subsea cable outages in the Red Sea has degraded Internet connectivity in multiple countries," which it said included India and Pakistan. One of the cables is run by Tata Communications, part of the Indian conglomerate.

Undersea cables are one of the backbones of the Internet, along with satellite connections and land-based cables. Typically, Internet service providers have multiple access points and reroute traffic if one fails, though it can slow down access for users.

Microsoft announced via a status website that the Mideast "may experience increased latency due to under-sea fibre cuts in the Red Sea." The Redmond, Washington-based firm did not immediately elaborate, though it said Internet traffic not moving through the Middle East "is not impacted."

NetBlocks, which monitors Internet access, said "a series of subsea cable outages in the Red Sea has degraded Internet connectivity in multiple countries," which it said

included India and Pakistan. It blamed "failures affecting the SMW4 and IMEWE cable systems near Jeddah, Saudi Arabia." The South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe 4 cable is run by Tata Communications, part of the Indian conglomerate. The India-Middle East-Western Europe cable is run by another consortium overseen by Alcatel Submarine Networks. Neither firm responded to requests for comment.

Pakistan Telecommunications Co Ltd, a telecommunications giant in that country, noted, in a statement on Saturday, that the cuts had taken place.

Saudi Arabia did not acknowledge the disruption and authorities there did not respond to a request for comment.

In the United Arab Emirates, home to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Internet users on the country's state-owned Du and Etisalat networks complained of slower Internet speeds. The government did not acknowledge the disruption.

Subsea cables can be cut by anchors dropped from ships, but can also be targeted in attacks. It can take weeks for repairs to be made as a ship and crew must locate themselves over the damaged cable.

The lines' cut comes as Yemen's Houthi rebels remain locked in a series of attacks targeting Israel over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Israel has responded with airstrikes, including one that killed top leaders within the rebel movement.

In early 2024, Yemen's internationally recognised government in exile alleged that the Houthis planned to attack undersea cables in the Red Sea. Several were cut, but the Houthis denied being responsible.

On Sunday morning, the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel acknowledged that the cuts had taken place, citing NetBlocks.

Iran's Supreme Leader Sends Condolences to India Over Flood Tragedy

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatullah Sayyed Ali Khamenei has expressed deep sorrow and solidarity with the people and government of India following the recent devastating floods in Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Delhi.

In a message, his representative in India, Dr. Abdul Majeed Hakim Elahi, conveyed condolences on behalf of the Supreme Leader to the bereaved families, the injured, and the wider Indian nation, a statement from his office said. He affirmed that the Iranian people and government stand by India in this time of crisis and are ready to extend all possible assistance to the flood-affected regions.

Dr. Elahi further said

that the Supreme Leader and Iranian officials are closely following the developments with concern and compassion, sharing in the



grief of the Indian people. Offering prayers, he sought mercy for the deceased, a speedy recovery for the injured, and patience for the survivors, a statement from his office said.



19 Killed In Nepal In Protests Over Social Media Ban, Army Deployed

Press Trust Of India

Kathmandu: At least 19 people were killed and more than 300 others injured on Monday after police used force during protests by youths that rocked the Nepalese capital and other parts of the country over the government's ban on social media sites, officials said.

Thousands of youths, including school students, under the banner of Gen Z, converged in front of Parliament in the heart of Kathmandu and shouted anti-government slogans demanding immediate revocation of the ban. The protests spread to Pokhara, Butwal, Bhairahawa, Bharatpur, Itahari and Damak.

Nepal Police spokesperson Binod Ghimire said 17 people were killed in clashes in various parts of Kathmandu during the rally, and two protesters died in Sunsari district of eastern Nepal in police firing.

Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak, who represents the Nepali Congress party in the coalition government led by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, has resigned on moral grounds, the Nepali Congress sources said.

The Nepali Army was deployed in the capital after the situation intensified during the protest. The army personnel have taken control of the roads surrounding the parliament complex in New Baneshwor.

The demonstration turned violent when some protesters entered the Parliament complex, prompting police to use water cannons, tear gas, and live rounds to disperse crowds, eyewitnesses said.

Citing hospital officials, The Kathmandu Post newspaper reported that eight people died at the National Trauma Centre, three at Everest Hospital, three at Civil Hospital, two at Kathmandu Medical College, and one at Tribhuvan Teaching Hospital.

Citing the Ministry of Health, the paper said that hospitals across the country are treating at least 347 injured protesters - Civil Hospital 100, Trauma Centre 59, Everest 102, KMC 37, Bir Hospital six, Patan Hospital four, Tribhuvan Teaching 18, Norvic three, BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences two, Gandaki Medical College one, Birat Medical College four, and Damak Hospital seven.

Air India Aborts Delhi Landing, Lands Safely Late

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: An Air India flight from Mumbai aborted landing at the Delhi airport on Monday evening and went around before making a safe landing in the second attempt, according to sources.

The flight AI 2910, which was operated with an A320-neo aircraft, had an unstabilised approach due to which the landing had to be aborted initially, one of the sources said.

"The aircraft touched down, but took off and started flying again. The pilot announced that some landing parameters were not achieved, so the aircraft was doing a go-around. After the go-around,



the aircraft landed back safely in Delhi," a passenger, who was on board the flight, told PTI.

In a statement, Air India said the flight AI 2910 discontinued with landing and performed a routine go-around at Delhi airport as

per standard protocols.

"The aircraft landed safely in its second attempt, and all passengers and crew have disembarked," the airline said.

The number of passengers on board the flight could not be immediately ascertained.

Shooting Attack At Jerusalem Bus Stop Kills 6

Trans Asia News

JERUSALEM: Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a bus stop in east Jerusalem on Monday, killing six people and wounding others, according to Israel's foreign minister, in one of the deadliest attacks on Israel since the start of the Gaza war.

"Palestinian terrorists murdered six Israelis," Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said, adding that one of the dead was a recent immigrant from Spain.

Israeli emergency service Magen David Adom (MDA) had earlier reported 15 people wounded in the late morning attack at the Ramot Junction in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, with seven in serious condition. Police said the two gunmen were also killed.

Four of the dead were ultra-Orthodox Israeli men, according to local media.

Spain's foreign ministry condemned the attack, affirming its "commitment to peace in the Middle East."

At the scene of the attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "Let it be clear: these murders strengthen our determination to fight terrorism."

"We are now engaged in pursuit and are cordoning off the villages from which the murderers came. We will apprehend whoever aided and dispatched them, and we will take even stronger steps."

Israeli army chief Eyal Zamir later said in a statement that he "ordered a full closure

of the area from which the terrorists came."

"We will continue with a determined and ongoing operational and intelligence effort, we will pursue terror cells everywhere, and we will thwart terrorist infrastructure and its organizers," he added.

The Israeli military had earlier said troops were "encircling several areas on the outskirts of Ramallah" in the Israeli-occupied West Bank in response to the attack.

French President Emmanuel Macron "strongly condemned the terrorist attack," as did the United Arab Emirates, while German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful described it as "cowardly."

Hamas, which has been at war with Israel in the Gaza Strip for nearly two years, praised the attack, saying it was carried out by two Palestinian militants.

"We affirm that this operation is a natural response to the crimes of the occupation and the genocide it is waging against our people," Hamas said in a statement.

Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich blamed the attack on the Palestinian Authority, which he claimed "raises and educates its children to murder Jews."

"The Palestinian Authority must disappear from the map, and the villages from which the attackers came should be reduced to the status of Rafah and Beit Hanoun," he wrote on X, referring to cities in Gaza that have been devastated by Israeli air strikes.

UK's new Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood sets out harder line on migration

Press Trust Of India

London: Britain's newly-appointed Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood on Monday set out a harder line on immigration as she warned of visa suspensions for countries that refused to "play ball" and take back illegal migrants.

In one of her major engagements since taking charge at the Home Office last week, the South Asian-origin minister hosted ministerial counterparts from the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada at a meeting of the Intelligence-sharing group named 'Five Eyes' in London.

It followed a weekend when over 1,000 migrants arrived illegally on UK shores via small boats, marking among the highest numbers making the dangerous journey across the English Channel.

"For countries that do not play ball, we have been talking about taking much more coordinated action between the Five Eyes countries," said Mahmood.

"And for us that means the possibility of cutting visas in the future, just to say we do expect countries to play ball,

play by the rules and if one of your citizens has no right to be in our country, you have to take them back," she said.

The minister, who was promoted to her new role from the Ministry of Justice in a Cabinet reshuffle by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer last Friday, said she sees her top priority in the new job as securing the country's borders.

"I'm very clear that there has to be a strong approach to maintaining our border, and that does mean saying to countries who do not take their citizens back that we're not simply going to allow our laws to remain unenforced. That they do have to play ball, they have to come to the table and if cutting visas is one of the ways to do that, then I will do whatever it takes," said the minister.

Mahmood was speaking to reporters as she began talks with Kristi Noem, US Homeland Security Secretary, who is on a visit to the UK.

In her role with the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency, Noem has been overseeing President Donald Trump's efforts to ramp up deportations.

81-yr-old Man Kills Ailing Wife, Attempts Suicide In Palghar

Press Trust Of India

Palghar: An octogenarian man allegedly killed his 74-year-old wife by stabbing her with a knife and then slit his wrist in a bid to commit suicide in Maharashtra's Palghar district, police said on Monday.

The man, aged 81, and his wife had been ailing for a long time and this might have prompted him to take the extreme step, an official from the police control room said without elaborating on their health issues.

The incident took place on Saturday evening at the couple's home in Vasai area.

The man allegedly stabbed to death his wife with a kitchen knife and then slit his wrist with it, the official said.

The couple's son, who had gone out, found the door locked from inside on return. He broke open the door and found his mother lying in a pool of blood and his father in an injured

“The couple's son, who had gone out, found the door locked from inside on return. He broke open the door and found his mother lying in a pool of blood and his father in an injured condition.

condition.

The woman was found dead and the man was rushed to a hospital where he is battling for life, the official said.

The body was sent to a government hospital for postmortem and a case registered against the man under section 103(1) (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the police said.

Man Who Stole Rs 1 Crore Gold 'Kalash' From Delhi Event Arrested

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Police here have apprehended a man from Hapur in Uttar Pradesh and recovered the gold 'kalash' that was stolen during a religious ceremony held near the Red Fort here, police said on Monday.

Made of 760 grams of gold and embedded with 150 grams of diamonds, rubies and emeralds, the 'kalash' worth around Rs 1 crore was stolen from a Jain religious event at the August 15 Park on September 3.

The case is being probed jointly by a team of north district and the Crime Branch. A team was dispatched to Hapur based on leads and the accused, Bhushan Verma, was intercepted and taken into custody, police said.

"The stolen kalash was also recovered at his instance," a senior officer said, add-



ing that the accused is being brought to Delhi for questioning.

Verma's background, his accomplices and the motive behind the theft are being looked into, police said.

The complaint in the case was filed by Sudhir Jain, a businessman and a resident of Civil Lines.



The event from where the 'kalash' was stolen began on August 28 and will conclude on September 9. Jain told police that he brought the 'kalash' with him every day for the rituals.

According to police, the accused stole the vessel when people were busy welcoming Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

JK Legislative Assembly Secretariat Denies Endorsing PSA Against MLA Mehraj Malik

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In an official communication, the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Secretariat informed that "It has been highlighted/reported in some media reports, social media Platforms, X (formerly Twitter) that the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly Secretariat has endorsed the slapping of provisions of Public Safety Act 1978 on Shri Mehraj Malik, Hon'ble MLA (52-Doda Assembly Constituency) which is factually Incorrect and baseless as the Secretariat has no role in it."

It further reads that, "However, this Secretariat was under an obligation in terms of Rule

260 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to inform all the Hon'ble Members of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly about the aforesaid Arrest/detention of the Hon'ble Member."

The Assembly Secretariat clarified that, Rule 260 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly reads as "As soon as may be, the Speaker Shall, after he has received a communication referred to in Rule 258 or Rule 259 read it out in the House, if in Session or if the House is not in Session direct, that it may be Published in the Bulletin for the information of the Members."

Newly Established SMVDIME Gets 50 MBBS Seats



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The newly established Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME) has been sanctioned 50 MBBS seats, with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister J P Nadda.

A new medical college owned by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) commenced its operations last year in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, with the medical college set to start imparting education for the first batch of MBBS students in the academic session 2025-26.

"Grateful to Honourable PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji and Honourable Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Shri J P Nadda Ji for sanctioning 50 MBBS seats for the newly established Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence (SMVDIME)," the LG said on X.

The LG added that this decision not only fulfils the resolve of the SMVDSB to provide world-class medical education in J&K but also meets the objective of improving healthcare access and increasing highly skilled medical professionals in underserved areas.

The shrine board, in its 71st meeting held on August 19,

2023, had granted in-principle approval for the establishment of a 50-seat medical college at Kakryal, with a long-term plan for upgradation to a 100-seat medical college subsequently.

"Our aim is to help more MBBS aspirants study in the UT, and we have made significant strides in this area by increasing MBBS seats in the past few years. These achievements will ensure greater access to specialised care and build a stronger healthcare system," Sinha said.

"The session is set to begin as counselling is going on," Executive Director SMVDIME Dr Yaspaul Sharma told PTI.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence – Medical College started its operations in the administrative block of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University at Kakryal in November last year.

The SMVDIME Medical College is expected to be completed with all facilities soon.

The medical college is affiliated with SMVD University, with the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana superspeciality hospital serving as its teaching hospital. MBBS students will receive hands-on training in approximately 26 specialities available at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality hospital in Kakryal, officials said.

Delegations Meet Javed Rana, Raise Public Issues

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Several delegations from different parts of the Valley called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, here, at the Civil Secretariat.

The visiting delegations apprised the Minister of various pressing issues concerning their respective areas, including irregular water supply, challenges in forest conservation and matters related to tribal welfare, particularly the implementation and settlement under the Forest Rights Act.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to all the delegations and took note of their concerns.

Emphasizing the Government's commitment to responsive and transparent governance, he issued immediate directions to the concerned departments for necessary action. He further assured the delegations that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner, with special focus on resolving matters under the Forest Rights Act to uphold the rights and welfare of tribal communities.

The Minister reiterated Omar Abdullah Government's resolve to work in close coordination with local communities to ensure inclusive development, environmental conservation, and equitable access to essential services across the regions.

Flood Relief Train Begins Operation In Jammu Division

Agencies

JAMMU: A special flood relief train started operations in the Jammu division on Monday, running between Katra and Sangaldan for five days to assist people affected by recent rains and floods, officials said.

An official said that the train has been pressed into service to carry both passengers and essential relief material to flood-hit areas.

"On its first run, over 1,500

passengers availed the facility, while nearly 1,200 tonnes of food supplies, including wheat and rice, are scheduled to be distributed at various stations along the route," he said.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (DCM) Jammu Division, Uchit Singhal, said that the first consignment of 4 tonnes will be delivered on September 9. "The service will continue for five days, ensuring both connectivity and timely relief support," he said—(KNO)

CS Seeks Central Assistance For Restoration Of Flood-Hit Infrastructure



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday held a detailed meeting with the Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) that arrived in the Union Territory to assess the damages caused by the recent floods. The deluge affected several districts, damaging homes, infrastructure, standing crops and horticultural produce.

While no casualties were reported in the Kashmir Valley, the mountainous districts were deeply affected by flash floods, leading to the loss of human lives and extensive damage to public assets. The agriculture and horticulture sectors have also suffered heavy losses, with vast stretches of paddy fields and apple orchards bearing the brunt.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary made a strong pitch for immediate central assistance to restore vital infrastructure such as power

supply lines, water supply schemes, schools, roads, bridges and other public utilities. He underscored the need of a comprehensive safety audit of critical public infrastructure, particularly schools, health-care facilities, bridges and roads, to ensure their resilience for their utility for continuous public use.

The Chief Secretary also sought special relief for farmers whose crops or agricultural lands were damaged due to the floods. He proposed that the Central Government bear the farmers' share of premium too under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) so that the affected growers can avail insurance cover for their crop losses.

Highlighting the issue of connectivity, he pressed for immediate directives to central road agencies to undertake swift restoration of damaged roads and support new connectivity projects in flood-hit

districts that remain cut off.

The Chief Secretary later took note of the restoration measures taken in the Jammu division. He took detailed appraisal first from Divisional Commissioner Jammu and then enquired from each Deputy Commissioner about the status of essential amenities there along with relief and rehabilitation measures initiated to bring respite to the locals in terms of connectivity, power, water and other public infrastructure.

The IMCT has already visited several worst-affected areas of Jammu region, which has borne the maximum brunt of the recent floods and landslides. Over the past month, inclement weather has left J&K reeling, with around 150 people losing their lives and key roads, including the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, frequently blocked, thereby affecting the movement of traffic on these roads here.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR IMMEDIATE CENTRAL ASSISTANCE to restore vital infrastructure such as power supply lines, water supply schemes, schools, roads, bridges and other public utilities."

Dy. CM Reviews Status Of Restoration Work Of NH's



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Monday chaired a meeting and held a detailed review of restoration of road infrastructure including National Highways and critical roads of Jammu & Kashmir damaged due to recent floods.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary PW(R&B), Chief Engineers of all wings of PWD, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers, RO NHAI, Chief Engineer BEACON, Chief Engineer SAMPARK Project Direct NHIDCL and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, Principal Secretary PWD gave a power presentation about the overall road infrastructure maintained by various agencies. It was informed that out of a total road length of 42000 Kms, around 12000Kms have suffered damages due to recent floods/flash floods.

The Deputy Chief Minister was apprised that the department has put in place men and machinery on war footing for temporary restoration of the road connectivity.

The RO NHAI informed that NH44 has suffered major dam-

ages in Udhampur- Ramban stretch which will be restored by today evening while on the Dhar- Udhampur stretch, the traffic will be through for one way movement by tomorrow. The RO also apprised that out of total 105 Bridges at NH44, 03 bridges were damaged which have been restored.

Taking serious note of the damage caused to Seri-Kath Bridge at Kathua, the Deputy Chief Minister asked NHAI authorities the reason for Seri-Kath bridge collapse in the recent floods despite having been constructed only a few years back. He directed the NHAI to conduct the design/structural audit of all bridges constructed by the agency.

The Deputy CM directed the department to coordinate with the other agencies for immediate restoration of the damaged infrastructure as early as possible.

The Chief Engineer SAMPARK Jammu apprised the Chair that Rajouri- Thannamandi Road Surankote Road, Reasi- Arnas- Mahore, Rajouri- Kandi- Budhal, Pouni- Sair Rajouri, Beeri-Pethan and Jhulas and Akhnoor Poonch have been restored where as the work at the Budhal- Mahore- Gul Road is blocked and will be

restored within a week's time

The status of Kishtwar- Chastoi, Doda- Kishtwar, and Kishtwar- Sinton Roads were also reviewed and the concerned Engineers of PWD and Project Director NHIDCL informed that the temporary restoration of the maximum roads has been done and work on the remaining roads is going on war footing.

The Principal Secretary PW (R&B) also informed that all measures have been taken to ensure that all vital critical and strategic links are restored for traffic.

The Deputy CM, during the meeting, also took detailed assessment of restoration works in the Kashmir Valley especially in South Kashmir.

The Chief Engineer Central/ South Kashmir informed that the damaged roads have been temporarily restored for vehicular movement, however at Vailloo, five roads and three culverts have suffered major damages.

In this regard, the Deputy CM directed CE and SE concerned to visit the spots and take necessary remedial measures for restoration of the roads and submit a report to the Administrative department on the same.

Highway Closure Sparks Mutton Shortage In Kashmir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway remained closed for another consecutive day, the Kashmir Valley is on the verge of facing an acute mutton shortage, with dealers warning of complete stock exhaustion from Tuesday-Wednesday onwards.

Dealers said the crisis has already forced the likely postponement of multiple events, including several weddings and other key functions.

"This is an extremely alarming situation, and if the government does not take it seriously, we might face an acute shortage of mutton across Kashmir," Mehraj-Ud-Din Ganai, General Secretary of the Mutton Dealers Association, said.

He added that if supplies do not reach within the next 24-48 hours via the Mughal Road, there will be zero availability of mutton across the valley.

Despite government assurances of routing essentials

through the Mughal Road, trucks are repeatedly halted at Lakanpur, Nowshera, Surankote and Poonch for several days, resulting in heavy financial losses.

"The stoppages and continuous halts are killing our livestock and crippling our trade," Ganai said, adding that over the past week, mutton dealers have faced losses exceeding Rs 15 crore.

"We appeal to the administration to intervene immediately and ensure hassle-free passage of vehicles through the Mughal Road," he added.

Notably, mutton is a key component of Kashmir's food culture, with weddings and other functions heavily dependent on its availability. Moreover, the Srinagar-Jammu Highway—the valley's only all-weather road link with the rest of the country, has been hit by multiple landslides and damage in Udhampur and other areas following heavy rains over the past two weeks, while restoration work is underway—(KNO)

HIGHWAY CLOSURE

Vegetable Prices Soar, Kashmir Markets Turn Costly



Agencies

SRINAGAR: In Kashmir's bustling marketplaces, once affordable and easily available vegetables have now become a luxury as prices soar sharply. The recent memories of rotten mutton and their lingering impact continue to cast a shadow over the region, and now even vegetables, which were once staples, are out of reach for many Kashmiris.

The public's fondness for mutton has turned into frustration, and people are now approaching vegetable markets with a sense of despair.

Locals said that outrage over rising prices has transformed into open anger, with the cost of essential items increasing dramatically. For instance, live chicken, once affordable at Rs 120-130 per kilogram, is now selling for over Rs 200 per kilogram.

"Even chicken, which used to be a fallback option, is now beyond the reach of the poor," said Shahzada, a resident of Bemina. She added that vegetable prices have also surged, with items like onions, tomatoes, potatoes,

and beans being sold at double or more their previous rates, making simple meals feel like a luxury.

"They've turned vegetables into status symbols," joked a shopper in Batamaloo, though the humour was tinged with irony.

Another resident said that it is not just the high prices, but that they have "weaponised" kitchens, leaving common people struggling.

Dealers said the sharp price hikes were due to disrupted supply chains and increased transportation costs, worsened by recent highway blockages. However, locals also accuse the Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department of being a "mute spectator", saying the department has become ineffective, merely issuing orders and polishing the government's image while people are left to cope with soaring prices on their own.

"This department only issues orders and tries to project an image of efficiency. On the ground, they are silent while our kitchens burn," said Bilal Ahmad, a resident of Srinagar—(KNO)

NC Recalls Sheikh Abdullah's Legacy On 43rd Death Anniversary

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Conference on Monday remembered its founder Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, describing him as a leader of "iron will" whose legacy continues to shape the political and social aspirations of Jammu and Kashmir.

Party president Dr Farooq Abdullah, vice president and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and other senior leaders visited the mausoleum of Sheikh Abdullah at Naseem Bagh, Hazratbal, where they offered prayers and floral tributes. Similar functions were held at party offices in Jammu, Ladakh and district headquarters.

Advisor to CM, Nasir Aslam

Wani, said Sheikh Abdullah's struggle defined the identity of the people of J&K. "He sacrificed everything for dignity and justice. Remembering him is not about politics but about honouring the foundation of public service he laid," Wani said.

The party statement hailed the former leader for transforming J&K "from a feudal society into a progressive and democratic one," and for setting up the state's first inclusive cabinet with leaders from different communities.

"Sheikh Sahib's life was not a quest for power, but a mission to empower the common people. His vision of unity and equality still guides us," the NC said.

Secondary Level Students Skipping Regular Classes: DSEK

Agencies

SRINAGAR: School Education Department (SED) Monday said that students of 11th and 12th standard in Kashmir division were skipping regular classes and the trend was spreading to lower classes.

The department said that the irregularity was impacting the objective of student development as envisioned by NEP 2020. Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) G N Itoo or-

dered strict vigilance regarding regular attendance of students in all high and higher secondary schools.

DSEK in a circular issued in this regard said that the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) envisions education not merely as academic instruction but as a holistic journey nurturing students' intellectual curiosity, emotional intelligence, creative expression, ethical awareness and social skills.

"To realize this vision, es-

pecially through experiential learning and collaborative projects, regular class attendance is not only essential but the backbone to achieve competency-based learning, critical hands-on activities, teacher interactions and peer engagement, which NEP 2020 aims to cultivate among students" reads the circular.

DSEK said, "It has been observed that a number of students of classes 11th and 12th are skipping regular classes and

the trend is spreading to class 9th and 10th. This is a matter of serious concern as it will impact to achieve the objectives of student development as envisioned by NEP 2020."

The directorate also said that regular school attendance is mandatory and the school curriculum is designed to provide comprehensive learning and missing classes can create significant gaps in a student's effective learning.

"To ensure that the goals of

NEP 2020 with regard to holistic development of students are achieved, it is enjoined upon all stakeholders to ensure strict enforcement of student attendance in all government and private recognised schools through VSK attendance Chatbot, Aadhaar based attendance," DSEK said.

Itoo further said that principals must ensure that practical classes in science subjects are conducted regularly as these are crucial for hands-on learning.

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KO VIEW

Embattled
Apple Industry

Road repairs along the Jammu-Srinagar highway have halted thousands of trucks carrying apple produce to the markets in other parts of the country. This has worried apple farmers who fear the further delay will rot the produce. This, in turn, would not only cause massive losses to the farmers but also inflict a crushing blow to the Valley’s economy as a whole. According to an estimate, there are 800 trucks stranded on the highway. Incidentally, this year has witnessed a bumper crop of apples. But the delay in reaching markets in New Delhi and the other parts can turn it all to dust.

The people in the Valley at large have become concerned about the already beleaguered sector. The Kashmir Valley produces two-thirds of the country’s apples and earns around Rs 10,000 crore from the industry. This makes the sector a backbone of Kashmir’s economy. Already, the growing costs of pesticides and transportation have reduced considerably the returns from exports. And if the sector suffers major losses because of the ongoing rains, flooding and the consequent road closure, it would not only affect the apple farmers but also the economy as a whole. Currently, five lakh families (around 25 lakh people) in the state are practicing horticulture. Apple occupies around 40 percent of the total area under fruit and accounts for 90 percent of the total production of fruits in the state. The existing state of affairs is thus grim news for the region.

It is incumbent on the government to intervene and ensure that Jammu-Srinagar highway is made motorable and trucks are given a smooth passage. In fact, the government needs to do more to ensure that the apples get a fair price as lakhs of families depend on the trade for their livelihood. In past, the government’s efforts to salvage the apple season through Market Intervention Scheme haven’t succeeded. National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED was accused by the apple farmers of paying less money per kilogram of apple. So, they prefer selling outside to earn higher profit. And to that end, a hassle-free transportation is critical and government needs to step in to ensure everything is done to save the apple trade.

What the Valley’s apple growers need most right now is not sympathy but swift, practical solutions. Clearing the highway, ensuring efficient logistics, and building trust in support schemes are steps that cannot wait. Each day lost on the road is a day closer to ruin for farmers. The season of plenty should not be allowed to turn into a season of despair.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

ETFs Made Simple
Low-cost investing for
Kashmiri savers.

Irshad Mushtaq

When I first heard of ETFs, Exchange Traded Funds, it sounded complicated, distant from the daily life of a Kashmiri investor. Banks and stock markets seemed far away from Srinagar’s alleys and apple orchards. But today, as investing shifts from active stock-picking to passive strategies, ETFs offer a simple, powerful way to grow wealth.

An ETF works like a basket of investments—stocks, bonds, gold, or even silver—all bundled into one. You buy or sell it just like a stock on the exchange, through your Demat account. Imagine buying a small share of India’s top companies in one go, or investing in global markets without worrying about individual stocks.

Why does it matter to Kashmiris? Because diversification and cost-efficiency matter when financial literacy remains low, and investment choices are limited. Unlike mutual funds, ETFs publish their holdings every day. Their lower fees mean more of your money stays invested. And they are highly liquid. You can sell them anytime market hours are open.

Gold ETFs have gained some attention in Kashmir, especially as gold holds cultural significance and a sense of security for many families. But broader awareness around index ETFs or global ETFs remains sparse.

Regulated by SEBI in India, ETFs are safe and transparent. With the world leaning toward passive investing, Kashmiri investors can’t afford to step behind. The shift is underway. In the coming years, as more investors from the valley step into stock markets, ETFs could well become their first, smartest choice.

Embracing them today could build financial independence tomorrow.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The Academic
Dalits of Kashmir

Denied job security, fair pay, and recognition, they represent a growing class of exploited professionals. Their struggle reflects a structural injustice that must end.

Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

Education and healthcare are supposed to be pathways to stability and hope in Jammu and Kashmir. Colleges and hospitals stand as symbols of progress in a region long marred by messy situation. But the reality is far grimmer.

Behind these institutions are thousands of teachers, doctors, and researchers working under temporary, insecure contracts. Their dedication keeps the system running, while their precarity defines it.

The Supreme Court of India recently reminded the nation that teachers are the “intellectual backbone of the country,” and that paying them a pittance amounts to dishonoring that role.

It emphasized that contractual appointees cannot remain second-class citizens.

This judicial clarity echoes a deeper truth: India’s academic and healthcare systems depend on exploited, unprotected workers, whose suffering is the foundation of the very progress the country claims to pursue.

Dalits in India have historically been pushed to the margins, denied rights, opportunities, and dignity. Today’s academic and healthcare contractual workforce forms a parallel category.

I call them “Academic Dalits.”

They are highly qualified individuals, often PhD holders, teaching full courses, mentoring students, and treating patients. Their presence is indispensable, but their status remains unstable.

The contrast is striking. India boasts about world-class institutions, global rankings, and technology-driven solutions. Politicians speak of “knowledge economy” and “health for all.” Yet across Jammu and Kashmir, the story is of unpaid or delayed salaries, semester-to-semester appointments, and ever-changing designations.

For over 25 years, these workers have seen their titles shift repeatedly. At times called “Academic Arrangements,” sometimes “Guest Faculty,” now perhaps “Academic Labourers.”

Every new college director introduces a new term and new criteria designed to limit hiring and spending.

Take the example of a young scholar in Kashmir with a freshly earned PhD. She teaches full undergraduate courses, helps research students, and supports departmental administration. Her salary may come to 25,000 a month, for 8 or 9 months in a year, often delayed by months.

She stands in the classroom, is part of the department, yet never part of decision-making meetings. Her contract will likely expire in a semester, leaving her future in limbo. Thousands like her face the same fate.

The University Grants Commission’s removal of the 10 percent cap on contractual



hiring transformed a temporary fix into permanent policy. Now, one-third to half of India’s academic workforce works without job security. In higher education alone, about five lakh faculty members remain contractual, excluded from pensions, research grants, and career progression.

In hospitals, the pattern repeats. Contractual doctors and nurses treat patients in emergency rooms, conduct surgeries, and deliver babies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they were called “frontline warriors.” Still, most lacked even basic insurance or job security.

After the waves receded, many returned to contractual precarity, a system that continues to rely on their labour without recognizing it.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the problem compounds. Each new Director of colleges enforces different rules. Official criteria are ignored. Established norms are rewritten arbitrarily. Salaries meant for 12 months now cover 8 or 9. Recruitment becomes ad hoc. A sanctioned post remains “vacant” indefinitely. The state imposes instability on its most critical institutions, while professionals bear the cost.

These practices are not failures of administration. They represent a calculated strategy. Contractual hiring allows the government to cut costs and avoid long-term responsibilities. The threat of non-renewal keeps workers silent. Corruption and inefficiency go unchallenged.

Academic Dalits are present in classrooms and hospitals but excluded from academic research, faculty governance, and institutional benefits.

The human cost is immense. Families remain unsettled, careers stagnate, and research ideas wither without grants or support. Entire departments rely on these workers, yet offer no stability.

The best talent leaves for opportunities abroad or outside the system. What remains is a hollow shell of education and healthcare, sustained by overworked and underappreciated individuals.

The state’s choice is telling in a place like Kashmir that needs stability more than ever. Instead of building lasting institutions, it relies on temporary solutions.

The term “Academic Dalits” is deliberate. It draws a parallel between historical oppression and current exploitation. Both systems institutionalize exclusion. Both treat survival as the privilege of those who serve without recognition.

Reforms must start now. Every sanctioned academic and healthcare post must be filled promptly through transparent recruitment. Temporary roles should not outnumber permanent ones. Equal pay and benefits for equal work must be non-negotiable. No one should remain contractual in essential services beyond three years. Pathways to regularisation must be clear.

Until then, contractual faculty must receive research grants, travel allowances, and academic privileges.

India’s Constitution banned untouchability more than seven decades ago. The government now sanctions a new caste, based on employment contracts.

If India dreams of global universities and universal healthcare, it must stop building them on unstable contracts. The future of Jammu and Kashmir depends on acknowledging those who teach, heal, and build every day. Their dignity is not an option. It is a foundation.

The author is a teacher and researcher based in Gouhar Pora Chadoora, Jammu and Kashmir.

Letter to Editor

Kashmir and the Loneliness of Modern Cities

Arshad lives in a cramped apartment in Srinagar’s uptown area. Every day, he takes the same local bus toward Lal Chowk, passing hundreds of faces he doesn’t recognize. He doesn’t greet his neighbours in the building. He doesn’t speak to the man in the next seat. His phone keeps buzzing, but none of it fills the emptiness of the commute.

Cities are where India’s future is unfolding. They offer opportunities unimaginable a generation ago: world-class hospitals, prestigious universities, sprawling IT parks, and cultural institutions. In Delhi, Bengaluru, and other metropolitan hubs, dreams take shape. For Kashmiris, these urban centers have become essential lifelines, especially as situation and seclusion have deepened rural disadvantage.

The economic benefits are undeniable. Urbanization has powered India’s rise as the world’s fifth-largest economy. Its metros are home to nearly 50 percent of India’s GDP, and millions migrate every year in search of jobs, education, or health care. The India Habitat Centre in Delhi and the Academy of Fine Arts in Kolkata are spaces where ideas flow, cultures meet, and civil society grows stronger.

Yet something is unraveling in this success story.

A survey by LocalCircles in 2023 revealed that 39 percent of urban Indians report feeling lonely. In Kashmir, the problem stands out. Years of conflict have already eroded social trust. The influx of modern urban life has only accelerated this trend. High-rise gated colonies isolate residents. Neighbours remain strangers, living side by side but worlds apart.

In villages, where community ties are woven into daily life, people know each other’s families. They share festivals, help in emergencies, and solve disputes through collective discussion. In urban Srinagar, however, few know who lives next door. Families retreat into individual silos. The small shops and open courtyards of the past have been replaced by private malls and security-guard-

ed entrances.

Technology compounds the isolation. Smartphones were supposed to connect us, but in practice, they isolate us further. While riding the metro in Delhi or the city bus in Srinagar, it is rare to see a conversation between strangers. Most people stare at screens, avoiding eye contact, swallowed by the illusion of connection.

George Simmel’s century-old insight holds true: modern cities have become symbols of “loneliness in the crowd.” Each new apartment block, each new office tower, seems to add another layer of social distance.

Infrastructure conflicts reveal the widening divide. Parking disputes in Delhi regularly escalate into physical violence. Srinagar, with its narrow roads and haphazard construction, faces even graver issues. Water shortages spark bitter neighbourhood fights. Electricity outages lead to hours of silence, punctuated by anger and helplessness. Road accidents rise every year, and vehicle pollution clouds the air, contributing to insecurity.

Resident Welfare Committees (RWCs) are meant to foster local governance and civic responsibility. Instead, most function as administrative bodies focused solely on sanitation and security. Cultural activities, festivals, or public dialogues rarely happen. In Srinagar, where people have lived through collective trauma, RWCs could have emerged as platforms for reconciliation and community rebuilding. The absence of such spaces deepens the rift.

Affordable housing is another missing piece. Cities have become a story of stark inequality. High-income gated communities stand tall next to sprawling slums. This physical segregation fuels social distrust. In Kashmir, where political alienation and economic disparity have already divided communities, class-based divisions in urban areas threaten to deepen fault lines.

The solution demands a rethink of urban planning. It is time to design cities that prioritize people

over property. Parks, pedestrian zones, community centers, and public squares must become the heart of urban life. Festivals, cultural fairs, and public dialogues should be actively supported by local governments. RWCs must evolve beyond paperwork to become platforms of social engagement, organizing events that bring together diverse groups.

In Srinagar, where social capital has been battered by decades of disturbances, there is an urgent need to rebuild community trust. Public spaces can no longer be treated as leftover areas. They should be designed as safe, open places where dialogue happens organically, spaces where an elderly Kashmiri man can share stories with a young IT professional, where a shopkeeper and an office worker can discuss common concerns.

Affordable housing policies must aim to mix incomes, preventing the concentration of wealth or poverty into ghettos. Cities like Bengaluru have experimented with inclusive housing models. India must mainstream such practices nationwide.

Urbanization is inevitable. India’s population is expected to add 416 million urban dwellers by 2050, according to UN projections. Kashmir’s share in this transformation is significant, as its cities absorb young people fleeing rural stagnation and situation.

If urbanization remains a one-sided race toward economic growth, India risks creating isolated communities. Cities will be crowded but lonely, prosperous but divided, fast-paced but emotionally bankrupt.

True progress will arrive only when urban life fosters trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Cities must reflect the spirit of collective well-being that once defined Indian society.

Without restoring the dignity of human connection, the towers we build will rise on hollow ground.

Sincerely,

Priyanka Saurabh,
Research Scholar

Srinagar's Creative Confluence

In a unique cultural exchange, international artists join Kashmiri creators for immersive workshops along the banks of the Jhelum, celebrating art, heritage, and collaboration in the World Craft City.

Ilyas Rizvi

I watched the Jhelum rise, its silver waters spilling across the Bund Rajbagh. Rain ran into streets, gardens, and the floating houseboats. Wind rattled the shutters, and the smell of wet earth filled every alley.

Days earlier, Sono Kuwayama and Bob Holman had arrived from New York, to be soaked from the rain soon. Phones were useless in a city where signals had vanished. They stepped into the hotel lobby like travelers entering a fragile, unfamiliar world, carrying ideas ready to take shape against the city's restless back-drop.

For a moment, the river, the storm, and the city felt less like obstacles and more like a stage. Everything seemed set for three days of art, conversation, and unexpected connections.

Sono moves between painting, sculpture, and video as if each medium were a language of memory. Bob carries words like instruments, his poetry a bridge between voice and silence. They travel together, creating work that is performative, experimental, alive.

I had been waiting for this visit for months, eager to place their vision against the backdrop of Srinagar's craft, its centuries-old streets, and its living traditions through EdRAAK, the initiative I started a decade ago to revive arts, crafts, and heritage in Kashmir.

The first day began with a walk along the Bund. Jhelum's waters lapped at the streets, houseboats bobbed like gentle boats in a restless sea. The city's sounds - the slap of water, the call of a distant boatman, the hum of a generator - formed a strange orchestra.

Sono and Bob took it all in, alert and silent, absorbing the rhythm. We moved to British-era showrooms, where wood carvings and papier-mâché lay in layers of dust and reverence. At Mahatta Studio, the century-old photography gallery, Sono traced her fingers across old cameras. Bob recited a few lines, letting them float above the river.

It felt like time bent around us, the past and



present folding into a single frame.

We drifted into the lanes of Fateh Kadal, Zaina Kadal, Khanqah e Moula, and Pather Masjid. Here, architecture told stories in three voices: Buddhist simplicity, Hindu detail, Islamic flourish. Painted flowers clung to weathered walls. Carved balconies leaned over narrow streets.

I watched the artists' eyes catch every pattern and carved curve, as if the city itself were a live canvas. Tea came later at Down Town Café. Chai poured onto a dastarkhan, simple yet ceremonial, and conversation moved from art to memory to grief and joy. Every sip tasted like the city itself: layered, warm, and alive.

The second day belonged to the youth. In Bagh e Shagufa, by Nigeen Lake, mostly wom-

en from varied backgrounds arrived with notebooks, cameras, brushes. Bob's "Out of Box" exercises and Sono's interactive sessions were sparks thrown into dry tinder.

We used a "Set of Cards" to ask questions beyond routine: What would you say if no one judged? What would you paint if the world paused? Phones were left aside. Kashmiri words shaped the conversations.

Fatima Qadri read her poetry aloud, her voice threading through the autumn wind. Irfan Hussain and Safah Bilal Wadera displayed drawings that trembled between reality and imagination. Marzia Aga, a teenager, premiered Hussain in Kashmir, her camera capturing mourning architecture with the soft echo of oral traditions in the background.

Rakeeba Hussain's essay, The Power of Permission, spoke of young women steering social currents. Aabroo Hussain's Pains and Pills drew tears and laughter, mapping grief from humans to animals. Grace Paljor told stories that tethered imagination to tradition.

By afternoon, we walked the lakeway together, and the space seemed suspended in light: art, conversation, laughter, memory, all flowing along the river.

On the final day, elders gathered. At Bukhari Hall, Amar Singh College, we launched Hari Krishna Koul's Complete Short Stories. Later, Abi Guzar, a narrow street turned performance space, held musicians, poets, and artists.

Sono was the only woman among them, observing silently, while Bob performed a poem



In the current of Jhelum, in brushes, poems, and cameras, in the hands of youth and elders alike, art had flowed, persistent and alive. Srinagar had become a living studio, its heritage, streets, and rivers part of the work itself.

on Srinagar, composed during our stay. Musician Kifayat Hussain's ghazal wove through the words, grounding poetry in sound.

Participants spoke freely. Safah called the workshops a lifeline. Fatima said they brought hope. Aabroo pointed at mountains, Chinar trees, lakes, skies - nature as a palette, a source of inspiration. Nadiya spoke of calm that art brings, of the slow work of healing. Maria Mir described a space where science and art intersect, where creativity stretched beyond the expected.

By the time Sono and Bob left, I realized these workshops were a reminder that sincerity builds serenity.

In the current of Jhelum, in brushes, poems, and cameras, in the hands of youth and elders alike, art had flowed, persistent and alive.

Srinagar had become a living studio, its heritage, streets, and rivers part of the work itself.

— Ilyas Rizvi is a Srinagar-based crafts and heritage consultant and founder of EdRAAK, a decade-long initiative dedicated to reviving arts, crafts, and cultural heritage in Kashmir.

Beyond the Flowers

Beyond the greetings and stage shows, teachers today live under scrutiny, stripped of dignity, and treated as disposable.

Nowshreen Mushtaq

Teacher's Day is over. The flowers are drying, the handmade cards are tucked away, the speeches and greetings have faded. Everything is back to normal.

And normal, for a teacher today, means humiliation, blame, and being treated as if their presence hardly matters.

One day of celebration cannot hide the reality that teachers are no longer respected in the way they once were.

Look around at what is happening nowadays. Teachers are monitored more than trusted. Instead of being allowed to teach freely, they are tied up with endless paperwork, online reports, and administrative orders. Their energy is drained in filling forms, updating apps, and attending meetings that add little to a child's growth.

The classroom has become less of a place for imagination and more of a stage where teachers must constantly prove themselves under the sharp gaze of management and parents.

Parents, too, no longer see teachers as partners in shaping their child but as service providers. The moment a child falters, the teacher is blamed. If a student misbehaves, the teacher is questioned. If marks are low, the teacher is humiliated.

Even basic discipline, which was once a teacher's tool to guide, is now seen as cruelty. Students have absorbed this attitude. They know their teachers have no real authority, so the respect in their eyes is slowly fading. A teacher raising their voice is branded harsh, a teacher showing strictness is called insensitive, and a teacher expecting sincerity is considered unreasonable.

Teachers are now nothing more than puppets. They bow to administration, parents, and even to the moods of students. Their eyes are lowered, because they are no longer allowed to stand tall. They live in fear of complaints, transfers, and the constant threat of being labeled incompetent.

The noble profession that once commanded respect is now treated like a thankless service where teachers are replaceable and disposable.



Teachers deserve more than one day. They deserve daily respect, trust, and recognition. They deserve the freedom to teach without fear. They deserve to be seen not as puppets but as human beings who give their lives to shaping others.

What hurts most is that the core of teaching is slipping away. Teachers hardly have time to connect with children, to inspire curiosity, or to nurture creativity. They are drowned in formalities, deadlines, and instructions that leave little space for genuine learning.

Instead of building relationships with students, teachers are reduced to managing classrooms as if they were machines delivering output.

In such an environment, how can one day of greetings mean anything? Can a single rose, a few claps, and a rehearsed speech undo the months of disrespect and years of neglect?

If society continues to break the dignity of teachers, it is silently destroying its own future. For no nation can grow when its teachers are made to feel small.

Teachers deserve more than one day. They deserve daily respect, trust, and recognition. They deserve the freedom to teach without fear. They deserve to be seen not as puppets but as human beings who give their lives to shaping others.

Until that happens, Teacher's Day will remain a show, a performance staged for a few hours, before the curtain falls and teachers go back to being unseen and unheard.

The author is a writer with a keen eye on social changes and the challenges of our times.

Lanterns of Memory in Kashmir

Through fury, floods, and flickering screens, books in Kashmir continue to endure as vessels of memory and imagination.

Ishfaq Manzoor &
Fatima Irshad

Books are never only paper. They are fire for the weary, light for the lost, and company for the lonely.

A book becomes a presence in the valley, where winters press against glass and days lengthen into silence.

A father wrapped in a pheran leans closer to its glow. A grandmother recites from a worn manuscript. A student carries a novel in secret, as though carrying hope.

From clay and palm leaves to the fragile pages that line old libraries in Srinagar, books carry forward the breath of civilizations. Equations scribbled by scientists, meditations of philosophers, laments of poets, and courage of reformers are preserved in ink.

Unlike the fleeting pulse of a screen, a book holds its ground. It does not vanish when the current fails. It waits, steady, like a lantern that refuses to go out.

To read is to enter a secret intimacy. You bend over a page, and the world dissolves. A voice rises, not loud, not insistent, but steady. It asks nothing, it gives everything. A book allows hesitation. You may linger on a line, return to it years later, find yourself changed in its reflection.

In a school library in Srinagar, students slip fingers across spines of novels and histories, choosing companions for weeks to come. Such rooms are sanctuaries, where words breathe in unison, where a young mind can find its mirror.

Technology has carried books into new skies. A boy now downloads his lessons at midnight, while a girl walks to class with an audiobook murmuring in her ear. Knowledge



now leaps boundaries that once confined it. Yet the printed page holds its own tenderness: the scent of paper, the weight of a hardcover, and the thrill of scribbling a thought in the margin.

Both forms exist, in companionship, proof of the book's endless adaptability.

Still, the rhythm of reading falters. Children scroll reels into the night, attention scattered like leaves in wind. A recent survey showed fewer than one in three Kashmiri students read beyond their textbooks. This loss is not small.

Schools that guard libraries protect futures. Communities that gather at book fairs renew a covenant with learning.

To place a book in a young hand is to plant a seed against the erosion of thought.

Books heal as much as they instruct. A lonely student finds solace in a novel at dusk. A restless heart softens in the rhythm of Lal Ded's verse. The story of a life can return courage to those who falter. They remind us that across borders and centuries, joy and grief, hope and longing belong to us all.

Books are the invisible bridges across human experi-

ence, stitching together what time and place have tried to tear apart.

Kashmir has seen fires consume libraries, floods swallow shelves, strife shutters bookstores. Yet the written word has endured.

On Residency Road, booksellers still dust off volumes in the morning light. In homes, trunks still hold novels, Qurans, poetry collections, waiting for younger hands. Their survival is a testament to the human need for story.

Borges once imagined paradise as a library. Perhaps in Kashmir, where memory is fragile and endurance precious, paradise is as simple as a child reading by a dim lamp, snow falling outside, the page turning softly.

To open a book is to listen to voices that refuse silence. To read is to enter a conversation older than we are, larger than our own lives.

Books are companions of the soul. They walk beside us, steady and unyielding, through loss and through joy.

— Ishfaq Manzoor is a library futurist, while Fatima Irshad is a student at Mallinson Girls School Srinagar.

'Home-Cooked Meal Prices Inch Up Month-On-Month In Aug'

Press Trust Of India

MumbaiPrice of a home-cooked meal inched up month-on-month in August, majorly due to a spike in tomato

prices, a report said on Monday.

The average cost of a vegetarian meal increased 4 per cent to Rs 29.10 in August as compared to Rs 28.10 in July, while the same for non-vegetarian

thali was up 2 per cent at Rs 54.60 per plate, as per the report by Crisil.

The tomato prices surged 26 per cent on-month in August due to a 35 per cent drop in arrivals, it said in

the monthly roti rice rate report.

Prices of potato and onion remained stable on-month as stored stocks were released in the market, it said.

Compared with August 2024, the

price of a vegetarian meal decreased 7 per cent from Rs 31.20 in the year-ago period, and the same for non-vegetarian meal was down 8 per cent from Rs 59.30.



For Some, Covid-19 Vaccine Means Jumping Through Hoops Or Hitting The Road

Associated Press

Michelle Newmark has tried — and failed — a couple times to get an updated Covid-19 vaccine.

First, she was told she needed a prescription. Then she learned that her local CVS drugstore won't have shots for a couple more weeks. The Reston, Virginia, resident was considering a drive to Maryland to get vaccinated before a friend told her of a closer CVS that was booking appointments.

What was once a simple process has become “a whole different beast this year”, Newmark said.

“It's very frustrating that I can't get a vaccine that I feel should be widely available like it always has been in the past,” she said.

The debut of updated Covid-19 vaccines has gotten off to a clunky start in many states. Limits on who can get the shots and prescription requirements are confusing customers and leaving some people worried about whether they will get protection from the virus this fall.

Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr. has insisted that everyone who wants a shot still can get one after consulting with a doctor, but he also told a Senate committee hearing on Thursday that this access “depends

on the states”.

The situation is changing daily and varies by state. And it may take time for vaccine-seekers to understand how the system works now for them.

“We anticipate it will get to be a little bit more of a smooth road in the coming weeks,” Brigid Groves, a vice president with the American Pharmacists Association, said.

In the meantime, challenges are cropping up, and some patients are hitting the road to get vaccinated.

Lee Yarosh made plans to drive about 30 miles from Ossining, New York, to a Fairfield, Connecticut, drugstore to get vaccinated because the 71-year-old retiree couldn't schedule a vaccine closer to home.

On Friday, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed an executive order allowing pharmacists to administer the vaccine to patients as young as 3. But Yarosh is keeping his Monday appointment in Connecticut because he needs the vaccination ahead of a trip to Europe.

Chris Stone said he tried about five times to book a Covid-19 shot appointment online at his usual drugstore, but he was only allowed to schedule a flu vaccination.

The 69-year-old Richmond, Virginia, resident said he expects to get the shot from his

doctor during a checkup next month. But he doesn't want to wait that long.

“If they fiddle around too long ... it's going to be really hard to get the coverage you want during the winter season,” Stone said.

Most Americans get their Covid-19 vaccines at drugstores, and many seek shots in the late summer or early fall to get protection against any winter surges in cases.

Pharmacists in most states can administer updated vaccinations without a prescription thanks to approval of the shots from the Food and Drug Administration last week.

But several states are requiring prescriptions — which are normally not needed for vaccines — as they wait for a recommendation on the shots from a committee that advises the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That committee won't meet until later this month.

Some states, including Pennsylvania and New Mexico, were waiting for that recommendation before allowing pharmacists to give the vaccines. But they have since changed rules to let pharmacists start vaccinating sooner.

Before that, Pennsylvania drugstore owner Marc Ost said his store fielded more than 50 calls from customers asking about the Covid-19 shots.

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Ref No: GHSSK/025/

Dated: 08-09-2025

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UNRAVEL KASHMIR

IIM Jammu Signs Tripartite MoU With JKTPO, I&C Directorates J&K To Launch MSME Health Clinic



Observer News Service

JAMMU- The Indian Institute of Management, the Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) and the Directorates of Industries and Commerce Government of Jammu & Kashmir signed a landmark Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Monday at the Board Room, Jagti Campus to establish the Jammu & Kashmir MSME Health Clinic (JKMHC) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) program.

The formal signing ceremony included detailed presentations on the scope, funding structure and implementation of the roadmap of the initiative.

The MoU signing ceremony was graced by Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu; Sudershan Kumar, Managing Director, JKTPO; Arun Kumar Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce, Jammu, Government of J&K and Khalid Majeed, Director, Industries and Commerce, Kashmir, Government of J&K

From the Directorate of Industries and Commerce and JKTPO, the ceremony was attended by Imran Mehmood, FA-/CAO, JKTPO; Naser Ali, Joint Director, M&P, Directorate of Industries and Commerce, Jammu; Sourabh Sharma, General Manager, JKTPO and Vishal Ray, Faculty, JKTPO. Also present were senior faculty members of IIM Jammu, including Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean, Faculty and Research; Prof. San-

jeev Pathak, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy; Prof. Shyam Narayan Lal, Chairperson, Media and Publication Division; Prof. Rajesh Sikka, Co-Chairperson, Executive Education & Consultancy; Prof. Pranab Ranjan Das, Chairperson, SBDU; Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Parida, Associate Professor; Dr. Mahesh Gadekar, Associate Professor and Cmdr. Keshavan Baskaran, Chief Administrative Officer, IIM Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, Director, IIM Jammu Prof. B. S. Sahay remarked that hosting the PMU at IIM Jammu will enable a strong knowledge-driven and research-based framework to address real-world challenges faced by MSMEs. He underscored that this collaboration aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, as articulated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji and reflects IIM Jammu's commitment to nation-building through capacity development, innovation, and entrepreneurship support. He also proposed active involvement of IIM Jammu's students in live projects with industries across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, providing them with valuable hands-on exposure and opportunities to contribute innovative solutions towards the progress and development of the region. This initiative, integrated into the course curriculum and evaluation process, will not only prepare students to become industry-ready professionals but also empower faculty to drive impactful research, consultancy, and knowledge creation in the MSME sector.

Midterm Review Meeting Of UT-Level Apex Committee On HADP Commences At SKUAST-K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The UT-level Apex Committee for the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) convened Monday for a three-day midterm review (2023-2025) meeting at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir here.

The meeting aims to evaluate the progress of the Rs 5012 crore program and strategies for the remaining period.

The meeting was presided over by Chairman, Apex Committee, Dr Mangla Rai, renowned agriculture scientist and former DG ICAR.

Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Shailendra Kumar and other committee members including Dr PK Joshi, Secretary NAAS; Dr HS Gupta, former Director IARI; Vice Chancellor

SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai; Vice Chancellor SKUAST-J, Dr BN Tripathi and Dr. JP Sharma, former VC SKUAST-J.

The meeting is also being attended by key stakeholders, including directors from various line departments, directors and deans from SKUAST-K, Principal Investigators (PIs) of the 29 HADP projects, and other senior officials from SKUAST-K. In his remarks, Chairman Dr. Mangla Rai presented several suggestions to further enhance the program's implementation and impact.

ACS, Shailendra Kumar, during the meeting talked about the various initiatives taken by the APD. He said HADP is reaching out to people and uplifting farmers.

Vice Chancellor SKUAST-K Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, while welcoming the apex committee members, gave an overview of the HADP and the meeting's objectives.

Full Benefits Of GST Rate Cuts Must Be Passed On To Consumers: Goyal

Press Trust Of India

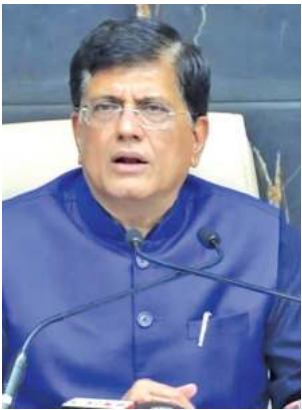
NEW DELHI: Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday asked the industry to pass on the full benefit of GST rate cuts to consumers, thereby increasing the demand of domestic products and strengthening the foundation of India's economy.

"The GST rate cuts, along with simplification, will boost domestic demand, small and large enterprises will get access to more opportunities, new avenues for employment will be generated, earnings will rise, which will lead to higher spending," Goyal said, adding that this will create a virtuous cycle of growth to take the country ahead.

No power in the world will be able to stop India's emergence as a global superpower, the commerce and industry minister said at an EEPIC India event here.

Goyal stated the importance of equitable economic benefits, and highlighted that advantages of goods and services (GST) rate cuts must be fully passed on to consumers, ensuring that growth reaches every citizen and strengthens the foundation of India's economy.

The minister said when India works together as a united family, supporting each other across sectors, inclusive growth will naturally follow. He expressed confidence that the country can become a global role model



for sustainable and inclusive development.

The minister expressed confidence that India's economy, which currently has a size of about USD 4 trillion, will become the third largest globally in the next 2-2.5 years and by 2047, it will become an economy of at least USD 30 trillion.

The minister said with GST rate cuts and simplification, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a boost to domestic demand. He noted that new opportunities for employees and increases in income will follow. He further said when infrastructure spending and consumer demand grow on strong base of the economic system, no power in the world can stop India from becoming a world power.

Goyal said under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi, India has transformed from a fragile five economies to one of the top five economies. He

noted that India has been the fastest-growing economy for the last four years. In the last quarter, the country achieved 7.8 per cent GDP growth, which he described as a world record.

"Therefore, we must all accept the call to action of Atmanirbhar Bharat which is in front of us," he said.

"No matter how much instability arises in the global situation... India's confidence is so strong today we do not get scared or bow to any challenge," asserted the minister.

He added that the country has the strength to overcome any crisis, emphasising that businesses should focus on Swadeshi products, as this will not only help India's growth but also strengthen the country's financial security.

He said the country's 1.4 billion people, businesses and trade should focus on Made in India products. Businesses that are import dependent can look into products that can be procured and made in India, he suggested.

Goyal highlighted that India's strength relies on trade and the MSME sector, which form the backbone of the country's businesses.

Referring to EEPIC's journey, he pointed out that in 1955, exports were at USD 10 million, while today they stand at USD 116 billion. With time, he said, the engineering sector will grow further with bigger goals and greater strength.

The minister said he has full

Agri Min Approves ICAR-CPRI's Four Potato Varieties For Nationwide Cultivation, Processing

Press Trust Of India

SHIMLA- The Union Agriculture Ministry has approved four new potato varieties for agricultural use as quality seed across India based on the Central Seed Committee's recommendations to enhance the country's potato productivity.

These four new potato varieties -- Kufri Ratan, Kufri Chipbharat-1, Kufri Chipbharat-2, and Kufri Tejas -- developed by ICAR's Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI) have been approved for seed production and multiplication across the country, an official statement said.

Kufri Ratan, a medium maturing (90 days), high-yielding (37-39 t/ha) red skin table potato variety, is suitable for North Indian plains and plateau regions like Haryana, Punjab, the plains of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. It produces attractive, dark red, ovoid tubers with shallow medium eyes and yellow flesh and has excellent storability.

Kufri Tejas is a heat-tolerant, medium maturing (90 days) and high-yielding (37-40t/ha) variety for table potatoes. It has been notified and recommended for Indian plains, such as Haryana, Punjab, UP, Uttarakhand, for the



early season and for Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, for the main season.

The variety produces white cream, ovoid tubers, shallow eyes, white flesh, and has very good storability under ambient storage conditions.

Kufri Chipbharat-1 is a medium maturing (100 days), high-yielding (35-38t/ha) chip processing variety.

It is recommended for Indian plains such as Haryana, Punjab, UP, Uttarakhand, MP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu in the main season. The variety produces white cream, round tubers, shallow eyes, white flesh, high dry matter (21 per cent), and has very good storability under ambient storage conditions. It has an acceptable chip colour and low re-

ducing sugars.

The fourth variety, named Kufri Chipbharat-2, is an early maturing (90 days), high-yielding (35-37t/ha) chip processing potato variety. It has been notified and recommended for Indian plains such as Haryana, Punjab, UP, Uttarakhand, MP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu in the main season.

The variety produces white cream, ovoid tubers, shallow-medium eyes, cream flesh, high dry matter (21 per cent), and has very good storability under ambient storage conditions.

The variety has wide adaptability, acceptable chip colour and reducing sugars and will be available through licensing to potato seed producers and processors.

Global Trade Challenges Need To Be Turned Into Opportunities: President

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said India should leverage its exceptional capabilities to turn the challenges of global trade into new opportunities.

Addressing the platinum jubilee of the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), she pointed out that India's engineering export destinations have changed significantly over the last seven decades.

EEPC should continue this process of change and keep working to make India's economy stronger with the spirit of 'Nation First', said the President.

She said "the challenges of global trade need to be turned into opportunities by utilising the exceptional capabilities available in our country".

She observed that high-quality engineering services and products at low cost are a great strength of India. The President observed that in the last 10 years, India's engineering exports have increased from USD 70 billion to more than USD 115 billion.

Murmu said this growth in exports seems even more impressive when "we consider that there have been many challenges in the field of international trade during the last decade."

The President said EEPC act-



ed as a bridge between the international market and Indian producers. She urged EEPC to continuously expand India's role in the global value chain.

Murmu said that due to the changes taking place in the world trade order and international economic order, EEPC's role has become more important.

Being an important stakeholder in the economic sector, EEPC should act with greater determination, she stressed.

"Global Capability Centres of the world's biggest companies are in India. Stakeholders like EEPC should move forward with the idea of making India a Global Innovation Centre by providing proper incentives and an ecosystem," Murmu said, adding innovation economies are the most competitive and prosperous in the world.

She urged all stakeholders of EEPC to pledge to make India a leading innovation economy by providing an enabling ecosystem to the talent and energy available in the country.

CBIC To Engage With Insurers To Work Out Transition Mechanism For ITC On Exempt Policies: FM

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI-The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) will be engaging with the insurance industry to work out a transition mechanism for the accumulated input tax credit (ITC) of those policies which have been exempted from tax with effect from September 22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said.

The GST Council, comprising the Centre and states, in its meeting last week, decided to exempt GST on premiums paid on individual life and health insurance policies with effect from September 22.

Currently, 18 per cent GST is levied on premium payments for such policies.

In a FAQ issued after the Council meeting, the CBIC had said that businesses whose outward supply has been exempted after the GST rate rationalisation will have to reverse their ITC, which is accumulated in their ledger.

Private sector health and life insurance companies have expressed concern that the reversal of the ITC would impact their finances. When asked whether the government is working on a transition mechanism in such cases, Sitharaman said, "Yes, the board will be talking to the interested stakeholders and see how their transitional arrangement can be made."

Asked if it would come in before September 22, the Minister said it would also depend on industry engagement with the board. "Ideally, it should be done before September 22," she said.



The GST Council has approved a two-tier GST structure with rates of 5 per cent and 18 per cent for most goods and services and a special rate of 40 per cent for tobacco and related products as well as ultra-luxury items.

The new rates will be effective September 22, barring tobacco and associated products, will continue to be taxed at 28 per cent plus a compensation cess till December 31.

As part of the rationalisation, GST has been exempted on individual life insurance, including term, ULIP, and endowment plans and reinsurance services. Currently, premium payment on such policies attracts 18 per cent tax. Currently, GST is levied in the slabs of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent.

The government has collected Rs 16,398 crore from goods and services tax (GST) levied on healthcare and life insurance in FY24.

Of this, Rs 8,135 crore came from life insurance and Rs 8,263 crore from health insurance. Additionally, Rs 2,045 crore was also raised as GST from re-insurance on life and health insurance last fiscal, including Rs 561 crore from reinsurance on life and Rs 1,484 crore on health care.

India, Israel Ink Bilateral Investment Agreement

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India and Israel on Monday inked a bilateral investment agreement with an aim to promote and protect investments in each other's countries, the finance ministry said.

The pact includes provisions to safeguard investments against expropriation, ensure transparency, and enable smooth transfers and compensation for losses.

At the same time, it carefully balances investor protection with the state's regulatory rights, preserving sufficient policy space for sovereign governance.

"The agreement is expected to boost investments, provide greater certainty and protection for investors, facilitating the growth of trade and mutual investments by ensuring a minimum standard of treatment, and an independent dispute resolution mechanism through arbitration," it said.

It added that the agreement is expected to pave the way for increased bilateral investments between the two countries, which presently stands at a total of USD 800 million, thereby benefiting businesses and economies in both countries.

In this regard, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned that both sides should have more business interaction to explore opportunities of investments, to gain benefit from the pact.

The pact was inked by Sitharaman and Finance Minister of State of Israel Bezael Smotrich here.

Stock Markets End Higher In-Line With Firm Global Trends Amid Hopes Of US Fed Rate Cut

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed with gains on Monday, tracking a firm trend in global markets amid hopes of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve later this month.

The 30-share BSE Sensex edged higher by 76.54 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 80,787.30 despite profit-taking by investors in the last hour of the session.

The barometer opened higher and later jumped 460.62 points or 0.57 per cent to a high of 81,171.38 as auto, oil and private bank shares advanced. However, selling in IT and FMCG shares trimmed gains at the fag-end.

The 50-share NSE Nifty ended marginally higher by 32.15 points or 0.13 per cent at 24,773.15.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Motors rose the most by 3.97 per cent. Mahindra & Mahindra jumped by 3.96 per cent. Maruti, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance and UltraTech Cement were also among the gainers.

However, Trent declined 3.81 per cent. Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, L&T, TCS, Power Grid and Sun Pharma were also among the laggards.

"The domestic market failed to sustain its early gains as a late-session sell-off reflected the prevailing 'buy-on-dips, sell-on-rallies' strategy, highlighting investor caution. Auto and ancillary stocks continued to rally on expectations of demand recovery following GST rate cuts, while IT remained weak amid global uncertainties.

Gold Falls Rs 200 To Rs 1,07,670/10 G In Delhi Markets

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices on Monday retreated from record levels to trade at Rs 1,07,670 per 10 grams, down by Rs 200, in the national capital due to fresh selling by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity also fell by Rs 200 to Rs 1,06,800 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). On Saturday, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity surged Rs 900 each to hit record highs of Rs 1,07,870 per 10 grams and Rs 1,07,000 per 10 grams, respectively, in the national capital.

Silver also came under selling pressure, tumbling by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,26,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal scaled a lifetime high of Rs 1,27,000 per kg on Saturday.

Meanwhile, in the futures market, gold and silver rebounded sharply from early losses and hit fresh peaks.

On MCX, the precious metal futures for October delivery climbed Rs 447 or 0.41 per cent to a record high of Rs 1,08,175 per 10 grams. Similarly, December futures also advanced to breach Rs 1.09 lakh per 10-gram level, by jumping Rs 370, or 0.34 per cent.

"Gold remains in the bull's control; the price opened slightly lower in the early trade on Monday. However, it recovered from earlier losses and traded higher, supported by safe-haven demand, rate cut expectations, and a steady US dollar," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

Automobile Dealers Seek Govt Intervention In Compensation Cess Recovery

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Automotive dealer's body FADA has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman seeking help regarding the levy and treatment of cess balances.

In a letter to the minister, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) noted that while GST 2.0 subsumes the earlier compensation cess regime for automobiles, the dealers today hold significant, validly-availed cess balances in their electronic credit ledgers.

Once no further cess liability arises, these balances cannot be utilised against CGST/SGST/IGST under the current law, FADA President C S Vigneshwar said.

Without a transitional pathway, credits risk lapsing, creating an unintended, permanent loss and a sharp working-capital shock for compliant MSME dealerships, he added. With the 56th GST Council decision, the levy of compensation cess on motor vehicles has been subsumed into GST rates, and hence no fresh cess liability will arise on outward supplies, he said.

Vigneshwar sought that the balance lying in the compensation cess credit ledger as on September 21 be transferred to the IGST/ CGST credit ledger. Besides, such a balance may then be utilised for discharge of regular GST liability, he added.

"Our members are extremely anxious on this matter as we enter the festive season. We hence request you (Sitharaman) to mark this issue with high importance and also urge you with a positive response," he said.

PM Urges NDA MPs to Host ‘Swadeshi Mela’

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday asked the ruling NDA MPs to organise ‘Swadeshi Mela’ to promote indigenous products and make it a mass movement, stressing that self-reliance is the way to power India’s rise when its increasing strength is bound to face some challenges.

Addressing the MPs a day before the Vice Presidential election, Modi kept the focus on the need for promoting made-in-India products and taking to the masses the wide impact of the GST rate cuts by holding meetings with



people and traders in their constituencies, especially during the festival season between Navratri and Diwali, sources said.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju later said that Modi was not referring to any country, while emphasising the need for self-reliance.

“The Prime Minister said that some challenges will come up when India is emerging as a strong nation and it needs to be ‘aatmanirbhar’ (self-reliant) to continue on the path to become a developed nation,” he said.

Amid a strain in ties with the US following President Donald Trump’s decision to impose a high 50 per cent tariff on India, Modi has turned up his “swadeshi” pitch even though he has been emphasising on it for a long time.

He asked the MPs to hold fairs to promote made-in-India products in their constituencies, urging them to take a leadership role for this. People should feel as proud for owning made-in-India products as they used to at one point of time about Japanese items, he added.

“Swadeshi” should be a part of every programme they attend, he said.

Modi said the GST rate cuts have triggered a “lehar” (wave) among people, but MPs needs to build on it by holding “swadeshi mela” and “vyapari sammelan” (meetings with traders).

The PM, a source said, gave an example by noting that even if a storm

is blowing, one needs to pump air in their vehicle’s tyres. In the same way, one has to work on the ground to take the message forward despite a favourable atmosphere.

Turning to the vice presidential election, he asked MPs to ensure that they vote correctly, noting that it does not send out a good message when parliamentarians make a mistake in polling.

A mock polling session was held to ensure that MPs know the correct way of casting their ballot in an election held on single transferable vote.

NDA vice presidential candidate CP

Radhakrishnan, whose win is all but certain as numbers favour him, was present in the meeting, with Modi also greeting nonagenarian JD(S) leader and former prime minister HD Devegowda, who attended the programme along with other BJP allies.

NDA sources said their alliance has 427 MPs, while the opposition has 315 MPs. There are 39 MPs who are unaligned to the two main blocks. Among them, the YSR Congress has announced its support to Radhakrishnan and AIMIM’s sole member Asaduddin Owaisi has pledged his vote to the opposition’s B Sudershan Reddy.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Key Jhelum

of the Flood Spill Channel (FSC) and widening of the Outfall Channel (OFC)—together estimated at ₹1,280 crore, have seen no progress.

Conflicting Studies, Mounting Costs
The delay stems from conflicting assessments by two agencies: Pune-based Central Water & Power Research Station (CWPRS) and multinational consultancy EPTISA. Both carried out hydrological studies but arrived at differing conclusions on the effectiveness of resectioning and widening interventions.

Given the divergence, the matter was referred to the Central Water Commission (CWC), which appointed its Member (River Management) as the nodal officer. After holding 11 rounds of meetings with stakeholders, the CWC submitted its recommendations to the J&K government on December 23, 2024.

Officials said the revised plan carries an additional financial implication of nearly 300 crore. “We need to secure approval for additional funding before work on these components can begin,” a senior official from the Irrigation and Flood Control Department said.

The official also cautioned that excavation up to two meters deep in the Flood Spill Channel could leave nearly 20 bridges vulnerable, exposing their foundations. “Strengthening them will require extra resources, further escalating the project cost,” he added.

Minister Reacts
When contacted, Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Javed Rana, confirmed that the project was under examination.

“Nothing substantial was done in the last 11 years to prevent floods in Kashmir. We are now carefully reviewing the project and its altered cost structure,” he said.

A Race Against Time
The Jhelum River, which devastated Srinagar and adjoining districts during the September 2014 floods, remains a looming threat. Experts warn that delays in strengthening flood management infrastructure could prove disastrous for lives and property in the Valley.

While smaller works under the project have progressed, the fate of its two most critical components—considered essential to enhancing Jhelum’s discharge capacity—remains uncertain, pending financial clearance and technical consensus. –With inputs from KNO

HC Summons

by the Chief Justice, examined a six-page report submitted by EPG convenor Faiz Ahmed Bakshi through Amicus Curiae Advocate Nadeem Qadri.

The report highlighted the risks posed by inadequate preparedness, encroachment on wetlands, and the absence of long-term planning.

Following the submission, the Court directed the Commissioner Secretaries of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department and the Housing and Urban Development Department, along with the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, to be present at a special hearing scheduled for September 9 (Tuesday).

The Bench also instructed the government to file a detailed Action Taken Report (ATR).

The EPG report called for a halt to all land allotments, sales, or transfers within 500 metres of wetlands, arguing that unchecked encroachment was reducing the Valley’s natural flood absorption capacity.

It specifically mentioned projects such as Rakh Arth, Transworld University, and IIM Srinagar, urging that they be stopped immediately. The report further recommended that no government buildings or facilities be constructed without confirming the land is not a waterbody.

The report said that the carrying capacity of the Jhelum River and its flood channels has not been increased despite repeated court directions since 2014. Dredging operations undertaken in the years after the floods were described as incomplete and inconsistent.

The group urged that dredging be guided by satellite surveys and sediment studies, with continuous monitoring to ensure effectiveness.

It also flagged the decline of wetlands such as Hokersar, Haigam, Shallabugh, and Mirgund, as well as the encroachment on Narakara Nambal.

These wetlands once acted as natural buffers during high rainfall but are now unable to perform that role, the report said.

In addition, the EPG highlighted the vulnerability of Srinagar’s drainage system and the weak condition of embankments along the Jhelum, which remain unrepaired or fragile since the 2014 breaches. It suggested the creation of small storage structures in every basin and sub-basin, which could help moderate floodwaters while also supporting hybrid power generation.

Marking the 11th anniversary of the 2014 floods, the EPG reiterated its commitment to pursue the matter in court. The Group also announced plans to hold a seminar of experts and submit further recommendations to the government.

Kashmir Apples

limited number of small trucks through the alternative Mughal Road, but Malik said the arrangement is insufficient. ‘Apples and other fruits are exported in bulk through big trucks

which can ply only on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway. With hundreds of loaded trucks stuck, fruits are deteriorating, forcing traders to sell at throwaway prices,” he explained.

Growers and traders have appealed to the administration to ensure early restoration of the highway to prevent further damage to the sector. “The horticulture industry sustains lakhs of families in Kashmir. If such disruptions continue unchecked, the entire chain—from growers to traders—will be pushed into crisis,” Malik cautioned.

“The market is completely closed. For 15 days, the National Highway has been closed,” Bashir Ahmad Basheer, Chairman of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers and Dealers Union (KVFGDU) said. “This is the beginning of the whole season and the loss has increased considerably. Fruit growers can’t tolerate it.”

Bashir said growers had pinned their hopes on the recently expanded railway operations to ease the crisis but said that too has failed to make a difference. “The train service was expected to provide relief, but it is not operating as required. So that hope too is fading now,” Bashir said.

The Valley’s apple harvest, which begins in late August and continues through October, contributes nearly 8 percent to Jammu and Kashmir’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Prolonged disruptions, stakeholders fear, could have long-term implications on both livelihoods and the region’s economy.

In view of the ongoing transport crisis, the Kashmir Fruit Growers and Dealers Association Sopore has announced the suspension of all fruit auctions at the Fruit Mandi Sopore on 9th and 10th September 2025. In a statement, the Association said the decision was taken after consultations with growers, dealers, and commission agents, keeping in mind the disruptions caused by the current condition of the National Highway.

The Association appealed to fruit growers across north Kashmir not to harvest or pack their produce until movement of vehicles on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway normalizes. “Transport bottlenecks and unpredictable road closures have made it extremely difficult to ensure smooth supply of fruit consignments to outside markets. In such a scenario, any harvesting or dispatch of fruit consignments may result in huge losses to the growers,” the statement read.

The Association added that while the suspension of auctions was a difficult decision, it was necessary to safeguard the interests of growers, and assured that auctions would resume immediately once highway movement stabilizes.

The Sopore Fruit Mandi, one of Asia’s largest wholesale fruit markets, plays a vital role in the Valley’s horticultural economy. Growers and traders have appealed to the administration to ensure early restoration of the highway to prevent further damage.

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Restoration Work

reopened for traffic for a few hours on August 30. In total, the highway has been closed for 13 days.

“The highway is still closed for vehicular movement from Jakheni (Udhampur) towards Srinagar and vice versa due to road blockages between Jakheni and Bali Nallah. No vehicular movement shall be allowed from Nagrota (Jammu) towards Reasi, Chenani, Patnitop, Doda, Ramban, Banihal, Srinagar, and vice versa,” a traffic police advisory said.

Additionally, commuters travelling to Katra and Udhampur towns are advised to carry photo ID cards to verify their identities, facilitating smoother movement.

The closure of highways and other inter-regional roads to Kashmir has resulted in over 4,000 vehicles becoming stranded across various locations, including Kathua, Samba, Jammu, Udhampur, Ramban, the Kashmir Valley, and Punjab. Many inter-district roads, including the Katra-Reasi road, remain closed.

The army and locals are providing stranded highway travellers, mostly truckers, with rations and food daily in various districts.

2 Terrorists

and dedication will forever inspire us”.

Earlier, based on an intelligence input from Jammu and Kashmir police, a joint search operation was launched by the Army, CRPF and police in Guddar forest of Kulgam.

Vigilant troops observed suspicious activity and were met with gunfire when they challenged the terrorists.

Initial reports indicate one of the neutralised terrorists was a local, while the second is believed to be a foreign militant with the code name ‘Rehman Bhai’.

Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat visited the encounter site in Guddar, where he praised the joint operation led by the Army.

AIIMS Awantipora

by April next year, with the IPD (In-Patient Department) becoming fully operational by November–December 2026.

“The director and CPWD officials supervising the work have assured me about these timelines,” he said.

Addressing the reasons for the delay, Omar said the hospital’s location was chosen without proper feasibility checks and political considerations influenced the site selection. Soon after finalizing the project, security concerns raised by the Army delayed it by nearly a year, requiring revisions to the Detailed Project Report (DPR) and leading to cost escalation. “The project lost valuable time in the initial stage due to these complications,” he added.

Despite the early setbacks, Omar said work over the past year has gained momentum, and he expressed hope that the project would be completed within revised timelines.

Regarding the arrest of Doda MLA Mehraj Malik, Omar refrained from commenting, saying he would first seek full details.

LG Calls For

NIRF-2025 Rankings. While on one hand these rankings should be seen as a revolution, a transformation in the higher education landscape of Jammu Kashmir, on the other, we should critically evaluate our rankings and go back to the drawing board to set new goals,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He observed that the process of change in the campus should continue uninterrupted so that the students remain determined, eager to learn and do something new and have the passion to face the future challenges.

“Real world experience bridges the gap between theory and application. Classroom must be transformed into a thinking room, a room full of curiosity and creativity. Experience-based, interdisciplinary, life-skills & project-based education should be our focus to prepare youth for the unpredictable world,” the Lieutenant Governor further said.

The Lieutenant Governor exhorted the University to start short-term professional programs to deal with climate challenges and research on floods and landslides.

“Today the whole world is affected by natural disasters. There was massive destruction of infrastructure and loss of lives in Jammu Kashmir. The Government of India is fully committed to ensure that normal life resumes once again and the affected people are rehabilitated properly.

Once the road connectivity is completely restored, the university administration must send groups of students to serve in different areas and prepare a team of volunteers who will assist and help the district administration in relief and rehabilitation of families affected due to recent natural calamities in the UT,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor felicitated the Alumni of the University of Jammu and called upon them to make their valuable contribution to the progress of the University.

NSS and NCC Volunteers, retired teaching and non-teaching staff of the Jammu University were also felicitated on the occasion.

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (Northern Region Transmission System – II) handed over PA System and Streetlights to University of Jammu under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The event was attended by Justice Tashi Rabstan, former Chief Justice of J&K and Ladakh High Court; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Tarun Bajaj, Executive Director, PowerGrid; Dr. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean of Research Studies; Prof. J.P. Singh, Dean of Academic Affairs; Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, along with faculty, alumni, and students.

AAP MLA Mehraj

multiple FIRs have been registered against him for unlawful acts, including forcibly locking government offices and verbally and physically attacking public servants on several occasions.

“The subject’s provocative speeches and ‘Facebook Lives’ have been continuously misused by him to spread misinformation and provoke the public to cause public order issues.

“Every lawful action by administration aimed at creating law based society, whether conducted in district Doda or in Jammu, gives the subject an ‘opportunity’ to spread lies and provoke public especially youth to cause large scale breach of peace,” the deputy commissioner said, citing registration of various FIRs against him in Doda and Jammu.

The dossier specifically accuses Malik of inciting the public to “act as Lashkars like Burhan Wani” to have their demands met. Burhan Wani was a poster boy of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist group.

Malik, who defeated BJP candidate Gajay Singh Rana by 4,538 votes in last year’s Assembly elections, had initially supported Omar Abdullah during government formation.

J&K Parties

democracy”.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said Malik is “not a threat to public safety” and using a

“discredited law to detain him is wrong”.

“There is no justification for detaining Mehraj Malik under PSA. He’s not a threat to ‘public safety’ and using this discredited law to detain him is wrong. If the unelected government can use its powers against an elected representative like this then how does anyone expect the people of J&K to continue to have faith in democracy,” he said on X.

“Strongly condemn the use of PSA against MLA Doda @MehrajMalikAAP. Detaining elected representatives under draconian laws sets a dangerous precedent in J&K post-2019, stifling democracy and silencing dissent. Free speech and political voices must be protected, not suppressed,” National Conference spokesman and Hazratbal MLA Salman Ali Sagar said in a post on X.

Slamming the action, AAP said those raising their voice for people’s rights were being treated as a threat.

“Is demanding a hospital for the people of your area such a grave crime that an elected MLA has to be thrown in jail for it? Mehraj Malik is the lion of the Aam Aadmi Party,” AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal said in a post on X in Hindi.

“He will always remain the voice of the people, fighting for their rights. Jail, threats and conspiracies... none of these can ever scare any soldier of AAP,” the Aam Aadmi Party national convenor said.

Opposition PDP also condemned the detention of the MLA from Doda.

“Strongly condemn the use of PSA against MLA Mehraj Malik. Such draconian laws are weaponised to silence political voices & crush dissent. Such authoritarian measures are no way to resolve differences in a democracy,” PDP MLA from Pulwama Waheed Para said in a post on X.

People’s Conference leader Sajad Gani Lone in a statement strongly denounced the slapping of the PSA on Malik, describing it as “yet another assault on the democratic fabric” of Jammu and Kashmir.

“We strongly condemn the use of PSA against MLA Mehraj Malik. This is a soulless democracy,” Lone said, stressing that such actions reduce the democratic process to a mere facade.

Lone said the people’s mandate continues to remain “powerless” despite the conduct of elections.

“The will of the people of J&K continues to be subservient. What is the purpose of holding elections if an elected representative is denied the right to express his sentiments?” he asked.

Lone alleged that such measures only deepen the “crisis of credibility facing the democratic institutions” in the region. “It is a very sad day for an already endangered democracy,” he added.

CPI(M) leader and Kulgam MLA M Y Tarigami called for the revocation of PSA. “Slapping PSA on an elected member of the Legislative Assembly sets a very wrong precedent. Such a harsh and unjustified measure must be immediately revoked,” Tarigami said in a statement.

Rain, Thunder

weather alert

Meanwhile, amid frequent flood threats Jammu and Kashmir has received an excess rainfall of 41 per cent from June to September this year.

According to the Meteorological department (MeT) data, five stations in Jammu region have recorded the large excess rainfall from June 01, 2025 to September 03, 2025. The stations include Udhampur, Samba, Rajouri, Ramban and Doda. (Areas where rainfall exceeds 60% above the normal are categorized as experiencing ‘Large Excess Rainfall’.)

The large excess rainfall came at a time when the region experienced back-to-back years of deficit rainfall.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir experienced its driest year in five decades in 2024, witnessing a significant deficit of 29%. In 2023, J&K recorded 7% deficit, in 2022 16% deficit, 2021 saw 28% deficit and 2020 experienced 20% deficit.

The data reveals that Srinagar & Jammu, summer and winter capitals of Jammu and Kashmir, are among the five stations where excess rainfall has been recorded during the period. The other three stations include Anantnag, Pulwama and Reasi. (Areas where rainfall exceeds 20% to 59% above the normal are categorized as experiencing ‘Excess Rainfall’.)

Seven stations including Budgam, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Baramulla, Kulgam, Kathua and Poonch recorded a normal precipitation in this season, the data reveals. However, it shows that the two stations including Kishtwar, Kupwara and Shopian have recorded a deficit rainfall of 33 per cent, 20 per cent and 57 per cent respectively.

Schools Reopen

some places and a breach in the embankment at Shalina in Budgam district.

Schools In Affected

children’s health and learning are not compromised.

Speaking to reporters, Sakina Itoo explained that the closure was necessary as floods had

impacted the cleanliness of the schools and in several cases, families displaced by the deluge had been sheltered in these institutions. “These schools were shut down because of floods which impacted their cleanliness. Many affected families had also been sheltered in these institutions. That is why around 40 schools are still closed,” she said.

The minister clarified that reopening will be done only once it is deemed safe. “We are trying to restore normal functioning as quickly as possible, but we have to be sure that students’ health and education are not put at risk,” she added.

She further emphasized that the closure applies only to flood-affected areas, while schools across other regions are functioning normally

Sankarshan Thakur

covered the Kargil conflict. He witnessed flashpoints from India’s political heartlands and hinterlands. Yet Kashmir remained close to his heart.

He stayed in local homes, sat with families affected by strife, and listened without judgment. His reportage moved beyond politics to reflect the lived reality of people under strain.

Neem Akhter, a longtime friend and political commentator, remembered Thakur as a rare voice in reporting Kashmir. Akhter recalled Thakur’s visits during his detention and the kindness he extended to his family. “His understanding of the region went deeper than most,” he said.

Thakur’s work did not stop at the news pages. In essays such as In Kashmir: It’s Been a Month, he documented the despair that followed the 2019 lockdown and internet shutdown. In The Passing of Kashmiriyat, he traced the slow erosion of traditional values and trust, a shift many found hard to articulate but impossible to ignore.

Colleagues remember him for a sharp intellect and generous spirit. Amitabh Mattoo, a political scientist and academic, said, “We often disagreed, sometimes fiercely, but I never missed reading him. His writing had a rare brilliance, humility, and honesty—qualities that made even his sharpest critics pause and reflect.”

Indian journalism, Mattoo added, has lost one of its most courageous voices, “and those of us who knew him have lost a generous and spirited friend”.

Iftikhar Gilani, a senior Kashmiri journalist with decades of experience, called Thakur’s legacy one of integrity and commitment. “His work on Kashmir stood out for its depth, sensitivity, and honesty,” Gilani said. “He brought to light voices often overlooked. His legacy will continue to inspire journalists and readers alike.”

Thakur shaped young journalists with care and precision. He could tear down a story idea with merciless logic and rebuild it with generosity and insight.

A colleague recalled how in 2019 he praised a folktale book, saying, “For its sheer thought and effort, this is a stellar act. In an age of haste, the author chose to pause and delve into the past to uncover treasures for our future.”

His affection for life extended beyond the newsroom. Thakur loved meals shared with friends, where laughter and insight flowed in equal measure. He traveled widely, yet carried Kashmir in his thoughts, chronicling its people’s pain, dignity, and hopes with deep empathy.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described him as one of the “rare journalists” who traveled extensively in Jammu and Kashmir, “and actually listened. He didn’t judge.”

Former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti remembered Thakur as a gifted writer, rare for his deep understanding of Kashmir’s complex nuances. “Deeply perceptive and always with his ear to the ground, he was one of the few journalists who never sacrificed the truth,” she said.

Thakur’s reporting brought political realities into view by showing the human lives behind them. His books, including Subaltern Saheb: The Making of Laloo Yadav, Single Man: The Life and Times of Nitish Kumar, The Unmaking of Bihar, and The Brothers Bihari, remain benchmarks of political insight woven with narrative elegance.

He earned the Prem Bhatia Award for excellence in political journalism in 2001 and the Appan Menon Fellowship in 2003 for a book project on Kashmir.

Thakur’s sharp wit often cut through political posturing. When former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik made contradictory statements, Thakur wrote, “Going by the sheer speed of his volte-face, Malik might as well join the endless parade of television pundits, reciting lines faster than anyone can grasp.”

He understood that beneath official words lay a human cost, too easily overlooked.

Following his departure, Thakur is being remembered for humanizing Kashmir, chronicling its people’s pain and dignity, and connecting their lives to India’s national consciousness.

“For Indian journalism, Sankarshan Thakur was a moral compass,” said a senior Kashmiri scribe. “For Kashmir, he was a witness, a chronicler, and above all, a friend.”

Historic 4th Ascent Of Thajiwas Peak: Glacier II Route Climbed After 80 Years

Observer News Service

SONAMARG: A team of Kashmiri mountaineers — Faik Aijaz Pattoo, Yasir Khan, Muzzakir Khan and Zaid Jan — has successfully summited Thajiwas Peak via the Glacier II route, marking only the fourth recorded ascent of the mountain and the second successful climb through this challenging line after an 80-year gap. Until this year, the Glacier II route had not been repeated since 1945.

On Sunday, the team set out from Sonamarg at 3:30 a.m., traversing steep grassy slopes and scrambling over rock slabs to reach the snout of Glacier II by 8:15 a.m. From the snout, the party donned crampons and ice gear and roped up.



Glacier II was riddled with deep, wide crevasses and steep ice walls, some rising to 20 feet.

The climbers scaled hard ice faces, jumped narrow gaps and threaded what felt like a maze

of towering ice barriers — relying on precise belays, rope techniques and close teamwork at every step. Rain began late morning and was followed by snow as they progressed, further complicating route-finding and movement.

By 1:30 p.m., the team reached the base of the gully leading to the back of the Great Couloir. They cached heavy packs and ascended a steep, loose-rock gully as weather deteriorated. At 3:20 p.m. they topped out at the Great Couloir and, despite heavy snowfall and poor visibility, reached the summit at 3:50 p.m.

After a brief five-minute summit stop they began a cautious descent, downclimbing loose rock back to their gear cache, roping up, and negotiating the

glacier on rappel where necessary. A narrow gully between the glacier and a rock band allowed them to build a V-thread anchor for a safe rappel.

The team reached the glacier snout by 6:30 p.m. and returned to Sonamarg after a further three-hour trek, completing a 19-hour round trip with an elevation gain of approximately 2,930 m.

Beyond the technical feat, this ascent is a symbolic revival of Kashmir's mountaineering heritage. It was not only a demonstration of skill and endurance but also a historic attempt to reopen the Glacier II route after 80 years, inspiring a new generation of climbers and reaffirming the valley's untapped potential in high-altitude mountaineering.

Budgam Hosts Girls' Provincial Level Wushu Championship



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports' Inter-District Provincial Level Wushu Championship for Under-17 and Under-19 Girls commenced on Monday at the sports grounds of Narbal Sunderabad in Budgam.

The championship was inaugurated by the Chief Education Officer of Budgam, who was welcomed by senior officials from the YSS Department. In an inspiring address to the participants, the Chief Education Officer motivated the young athletes to engage wholeheartedly in sporting activities. Appreciation was also extended to the organisers, officials and the Sports Department for their meticulous planning and ef-

forts in ensuring the smooth conduct of the event.

The opening day of the championship was marked by competitive bouts. A remarkable number of participants from various districts displayed exceptional skill, determination and sportsmanship. The intense matches captivated the audience, with each contestant demonstrating resilience and a fierce will to win, thereby setting a powerful example for their peers.

Reflecting the growing enthusiasm for sports among students, this championship provides a crucial platform for aspiring athletes to showcase their talent and compete at a higher level. The competitions are scheduled to continue at the same venue until September 9.

Syed Yasir Hits Hole-In-One At Royal Springs Golf Course

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a remarkable display of skill and precision, Syed Yasir, a prominent and avid golfer in the golfing circles of Jammu and Kashmir, achieved a sensational hole-in-one on the 165-yard Par 3, 16th hole at the prestigious Royal Springs Golf Course (RSGC) during an early morning round.

Yasir, playing alongside fellow golfers Javed, Umar and Numan, struck the perfect shot that landed directly in the cup — a feat celebrated by golfers worldwide as one of the rarest and

most exciting accomplishments in the sport. This marks Yasir's second career hole-in-one, underscoring his exceptional talent and consistency on the course.

The Secretary of RSGC, along with all members of the club, extended their warmest congratulations to Yasir on this extraordinary achievement, which has further solidified his reputation in the region's golfing community.

This memorable moment adds another highlight to the rich history of Royal Springs Golf Course, one of India's most scenic and challenging courses.



Asmita Khelo India City League Ends At Rugby Field Polo Ground



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Asmita Khelo India City League concluded on Monday at the Synthetic Rugby Field, Polo Ground, here. The event witnessed 22 teams from across J&K compete.

The opening and closing ceremonies were led by Abhinav Sharma, Deputy Director, Sports Authority of India, who presided as the Chief Guest. The Guests of Honour included Zulfiqar Ahmad, SAI Coach, SAI Centre Srinagar, Mohd Shafi, Secretary General J&K Rugby, Irfan Aziz Botta, Chief Coach J&K Rugby, and Aadil Manzoor, internationally acclaimed athlete.

COMPETITION RESULTS:

Under-15 Girls: Baram-

ulla stormed to Gold, while Kupwara fought valiantly to secure Silver.

Under-18 Girls: Srinagar outshined the rest to clinch Gold, as Bandipora earned Silver after a close contest.

Senior Women: Srinagar stamped their dominance with a commanding Gold, while Pulwama battled their way to Silver.

"Today's matches prove that the future of women's sports in Jammu & Kashmir is bright and unstoppable," Sharma said.

A delighted player from the Srinagar Senior Women's team shared:

"Winning here means the world to us. It's not just a medal it's a message that girls from J&K can dream, compete, and win at the highest levels."

Mohammed Siraj Nominated For ICC's POTM Award



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India pacer Mohammed Siraj was on Monday nominated for ICC's Player of the Month Award for August for his heroics in the fifth and final Test of the England tour, along with New Zealand's Matt Henry and West Indies' Jayden Seales.

In a series marked by injuries to several players from both teams, Siraj stood tall and featured in all five Tests to play a decisive role with 23 wickets, the highest by any bowler in the rubber.

In the series starting in late June and culminating in early August, Siraj bowled 185.3 overs across the five Tests to help a young and inexperienced Indian team to force a 2-2 draw, without any drop in his intensity.

"Mohammed Siraj played just one match in August, but his brilliance in that outing was enough to earn him a nomination. The India right-armer was instrumental in the final Test of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy series against England at The Oval, where he claimed nine wickets at an average of 21.11," the ICC said on its website.

"With Jasprit Bumrah absent, Siraj led the attack with great determination, bowling more than 46 overs across two innings, after having featured in the

previous four Tests in the series as well."

"He took four wickets in the first innings and followed it up with a stellar five-wicket haul in the second. His decisive spell in the final innings bowled India to victory and proved crucial in securing a 2-2 series draw. For his stellar effort, Siraj was named Player of the Match in the south London contest," the governing body added.

New Zealand's Henry was nominated for his stellar show in the Kiwis' Test series victory in Zimbabwe, in which the right-arm pacer claimed 16 wickets.

Henry took 6/39 and 3/51 in the first Test and 5/40 and 2/16 in the second to help his side record a 2-0 win.

Seales, meanwhile, was rewarded for playing a "pivotal role" in West Indies' first ODI series win over Pakistan in 34 years. Seales took 10 wickets in three matches including 6/18 in the final ODI in which Pakistan were shot out for a mere 92, chasing 295.

"He had a quiet start in the opening ODI, managing only one wicket while conceding 59 as Pakistan cruised to victory. However, Seales bounced back brilliantly in the second match, striking with three wickets in seven overs, including the prized scalps of Babar Azam and Saim Ayub," the ICC said.

From Desk Jobs To Asia Cup, Oman Cricket's Inspiring Story

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: From long days at office desks to late evenings on cement pitches, Oman's cricketers have fought a battle few noticed beyond their own dressing room.

That constant hustle now takes them to the Asia Cup, where captain Jatinder Singh and all-rounder Sufyan Mehmood carry not just their team's hopes but also the story of a nation determined to carve its place in world cricket.

"When we started, our primary job was to get a job; cricket was secondary for us," Jatinder told PTI Videos.

"Most boys worked in offices and then managed cricket on the side. But will say now that it's a dream come true to represent Oman in the Asia Cup. Our camp is really excited and looking forward to the tournament", he added.

Jatinder spoke more his early struggles of playing cricket in Oman.

"Initially, we never had turf grounds. We started on cement wickets, then moved to Astro Turfs in 2008, and only in 2011 got a proper turf ground. There were times I thought, why am I putting in so much without results? But the hunger and passion kept us going," said the skipper.

That harsh reality meant many talented players walked away. But those who stayed on like Jatinder and Sufyan, carried the torch.

Jatinder, 36, has scored 1,704 runs in 36 ODIs with four centuries and a best of 118*, alongside 1,120 T20I runs at a strike rate above 115. Sufyan, 34, has featured in eight ODIs, scoring 107 runs with a top score of



72 and taking six wickets at 24.50.

For Sufyan, the resistance came from home.

"When I joined the national team, my parents told me Oman cricket had no future and I should focus on studies and work.

But the self-belief was always there. The hunger to play kept me going. When we made it to the 2016 World Cup, I felt all our hard work had paid off," he said.

In 2015, Oman gained T20I status by defeating Namibia in the World T20 Qualifier, paving the way for their maiden global appearance the following year. In the 2016 World T20, they stunned Ireland in their opening match before rain spoiled their game against the Netherlands and a defeat to Bangladesh ended their run. That World Cup debut proved to be the turning point.

"After our 2016 T20 World Cup campaign the journey truly started.

Discipline, professionalism, coaching, everything changed. Players started enjoying the game more. Fast forward to 2025, now the team is hungrier than ever," Jatinder said.

Now the challenge is bigger than ever, with Oman drawn alongside India, Pakistan and UAE in group A.

"We want to play fearless cricket. At least we will know where we stand because we hardly get chances against top teams. It is a golden opportunity," Jatinder explained.

For Oman, the highlight of the Asia Cup will be standing across from world champions India. A chance to measure themselves against the very best.

When asked which Indian stars he looks up to, Jatinder was quick to name a few in "Shubman Gill, Surya paaji (Suryakumar Yadav), Abhishek paaji (Abhishek Sharma), — Arshdeep (Singh), Tilak Varma."

For Sufyan, the admira-

tion was for none other than star all rounder Hardik Pandya.

"The way he handles both batting and bowling. But honestly, I'd like to learn from most of the Indian team — how they prepare, how they handle pressure. Every moment with them will be a learning."

Beyond the tournament, Oman cricket is focused on building a sustainable future. With deputy head coach Sulakshan Kulkarni spearheading structured programs in schools, efforts are underway to introduce cricket to a wider pool of young Omanis despite football's dominance.

"Cricket takes time, effort and equipment to popularise, but the work is underway," Jatinder said.

"The academy coaches are visiting schools, teaching the basics, and nurturing talent from a young age. The goal is to create a pipeline of skilled players who can carry Oman cricket forward for years to come."

Hussaini Sports Club Hosts One-Day Mountain Hiking Event



Hussaini Sports Club, in collaboration with Hussaini Welfare Organisation, conducted a one-day mountain hiking event to the historic Hari Parbat Fort to promote physical fitness and environmental awareness among youth.

As per a statement issued on Saturday, the event was flagged off from Hassanabad Chowk by Haji Er Muneer Ahmad Nagoo, President of the Hussaini Welfare Organisation, in the presence of his office bearers and Vilayat Hussain, Vice President of JKHS. The primary objective of the event was to raise awareness among the younger generation about the importance of physical fitness and to familiarise them with the rich flora and fauna of the region.

Presenting the vote of thanks, Ahsan Ali Beigh, General Secretary of Hussaini Sports Club, announced that several such activities are planned for the upcoming weekends. (Observer News Service)

Baramulla U-14 Girls Win Provincial Volleyball C'ship

The Under-14 Girls Volleyball team from Baramulla has clinched the title at the Inter-District Provincial Level Volleyball Championship.

The thrilling final against Kulgam was held at Shopian, where Baramulla displayed exceptional skill, teamwork and determination to emerge as champions.

Youth Services and Sports district Baramulla extended its congratulations to the entire team for their outstanding performance, sportsmanship, and hard work throughout the competition. (Observer News Service)

CM Omar Reviews Preparations For Kashmir Marathon 2025

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday chaired a meeting to review preparations for the upcoming Kashmir Marathon 2025, a sporting event aimed at promoting sports, fitness, tourism and Kashmir's vibrant culture.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the CM, Nasir Aslam Wani; Additional Chief Secretary to the CM, Dheeraj Gupta; Additional Chief Secretary Tourism; Principal Secretary Finance; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Secretary IT, Information and GAD; and other senior officials. Director Tourism, Kashmir made a detailed presentation on the preparations and proposed plan of activities for the marathon.

The CM suggested introducing 10 km and 5 km runs for local participants in addition to the full and half marathons. Taking into account the Delhi Marathon and Diwali festivities, Omar Abdullah instructed that the Kashmir Marathon 2025 be scheduled on November 2 (Sunday) instead of October 19.

The second edition will feature Full Marathon (42.19 km), Half Marathon (21.09 km) and a 10 km Run, covering Polo View, Rajbagh, Lal Chowk, TRC, Nishat Garden and SKICC. (Observer News Service)

Under-17 Girls Badminton Competition Concludes In Handwara

The Under-17 Girls Badminton competition concluded on Monday at Indoor Stadium Handwara with 13 zones across the district participating in the Inter-Zonal District Level Badminton (Singles and Doubles) event.

In the finals, Zone Villgam outshined all participating zones.

In the singles category, Saba Altaf of Light House Public School, Zone Villgam, defeated Zone Langate with a score of 2-0.

In the Doubles category, Insha and Sofiya from the same school and zone clinched victory over Zone Rajwar, also with a 2-0 scoreline.

Asia Cup 2025 Begins Today With Afghanistan-Hong Kong Clash

The 2025 edition of the Asia Cup, in T20I format, will start from Tuesday with the campaign opener between a rising Afghanistan side and Hong Kong at Abu Dhabi.

Team India is scheduled to start their campaign the next day against hosts UAE in Dubai.

Sri Lanka, who last won the T20I edition of the Asia Cup back in 2022 under the captaincy of Dasun Shanaka, will be putting up their title up for defence against Team India, the current T20 World Cup champions who are captained by Suryakumar Yadav, Salman Agha-led Pakistan, who have reinvented their T20I batting with the injection of fresh, new and hard-hitting blood and dark horse contenders Afghanistan captained by Rashid Khan, who reached the semifinals of T20 WC last year. Bangladesh, captained by Litton Das, is not a team to be underestimated either.

Other non-Test playing sides, UAE, Oman and Hong Kong, would be aiming to spring up a few surprises and cause a few upsets, which would add further to the theatre, the cinema, which T20 cricket brings thanks to its short, high-pace and unpredictable nature.

India is a part of Group A, alongside arch-rivals Pakistan, who they will play on October 14, Oman and the UAE. Pool B consists of Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Bangladesh.

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