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भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF BHARAT

PM Modi Turns 75

World Leaders Send Wishes

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 75 on Wednesday with a host of prominent personalities, including world leaders, lauding his leadership, while the ruling BJP organised welfare initiatives under the fortnight-long "Sewa Pakhwada" to mark the birthday of its preeminent leader.

PM Modi said he was overwhelmed by the countless wishes and messages of affection from across the nation and overseas and resolved to continue working with even greater energy and devotion to realise the [More on P10](#)

'Long, Healthy Life': LG, CM's Wish For Modi

Observer News Service

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the UT's BJP leaders on Wednesday joined thousands of well-wishers to greet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 75th birthday. LG Manoj Sinha said on X, [More on P10](#)

Apple Growers' Woes

Transport Dept To Monitor Freight Charges

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a move aimed at easing the financial burden on apple growers, the Jammu and Kashmir Transport Department has constituted special enforcement teams to monitor and regulate freight charges in the Valley.

According to a communiqué addressed to Regional Transport Officers (RTOs) and Assistant Regional Transport Officers (ARTOs), these teams have been tasked with preventing the practice of charging exorbitant and unjustified fares from fruit growers and traders. Frequent and surprise visits to major fruit mandis will be conducted to ensure that growers and sellers are not overcharged or harassed.

The enforcement teams are required to submit daily compliance [More on P10](#)

Highway Opens After 3 Weeks

Fruit-Laden Trucks Roll Out, Growers Breathe Easy

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Srinagar-Jammu national highway was thrown open for heavy vehicles on Wednesday after three weeks, clearing the way for hundreds of fruit-laden trucks to proceed towards their destinations across the country.

Fruit-laden trucks from Kashmir were stranded for days due to the closure of the crucial

highway following heavy rains and flash floods.

The 270 km-long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH44) was reopened last week, but only for light motor vehicles.

"Our aim is to clear the maximum number of stranded vehicles which are loaded with fruits," Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic-rural) Ravindra Singh told reporters.

He said all [More on P10](#)

CM Seeks Centre's Package For Rain-Hit J&K

Sanctions Rs 38 Lakh Immediate Aid To Kalaban Landslide Victims

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday visited the land subsidence-hit Kalaban area in Poonch district and assured full support [More on P10](#)

Pak Brought To Its Knees; World Saw Terrorist Crying: PM

Launches 'Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar' Campaign, Free Screening for Women

Hails Operation Sindoor, Says Nuclear Threats Won't Scare India

KO Web Desk

Dhar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hailed the Indian armed forces for "bringing Pakistan to its knees in the blink of an eye" during the recently concluded Operation Sindoor, asserting that the country no longer fears nuclear threats and will strike at terror camps "inside enemy territory."

Speaking after laying the foundation stone of the Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Park in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district,



Modi said the world had just witnessed a Pakistani terrorist weeping and recounting the Indian assault. "Just yesterday, the country and the world saw a Pakistani

terrorist crying and explaining how our soldiers entered their hideout and attacked them," Modi said, apparently referring to a viral video of a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander admitting that the family of JeM chief Masood Azhar was "torn into pieces" in Indian strikes on Bahawalpur. "This is the New India," Modi declared. "We do not fear any nuclear threats. We enter the enemy's house and strike. Terrorists from Pakistan desecrated the vermilion of our sisters and daughters. We carried out Operation Sindoor and demolished their terror launch

pads."

Operation Sindoor, carried out months ago, saw Indian forces target multiple terror establishments in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in a series of precision strikes.

Modi's combative speech comes amid a renewed focus on cross-border terrorism and India's muscular response to it. His remarks are likely to resonate in poll-bound states, where national security remains a key electoral plank.

The Prime Minister also invoked Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel while recalling September 17, 1948 — the [More on P10](#)

Prof Ghani Passes Away

KO Web Desk

Sopore: Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, the academic-turned-separatist leader who for decades remained a prominent voice in Kashmir's turbulent political journey, passed away on Wednesday evening at his residence in Botingoo, Sopore. He was 90 and had been ailing for some time.

Family members confirmed his passing, adding that details of his funeral prayers will be announced later.

Born in 1935 in Botingoo, a village near Sopore in north Kashmir, Bhat grew up in a household that valued education. He studied at Srinagar's historic SP College before moving on to postgraduate studies in Persian and later acquiring a law degree from Aligarh Muslim University. Returning to his home state, he began teaching Persian at the Government Degree College in Poonch, a career he cherished and pursued for over two decades before politics pulled him into a [More on P10](#)



Trump's Call To Modi Signals Reset In India-US Ties

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi and greeted him ahead of his 75th birthday, sparking hopes of a reset in the bilateral ties that came under severe strain after

Washington doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent. In a social media post, Modi said that like Trump, he is also "fully" committed to taking the India-US comprehensive and global partnership to "new

heights". PM Modi also conveyed to President Trump that India supports his initiatives towards a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine conflict. Trump said Modi is [More on P10](#)

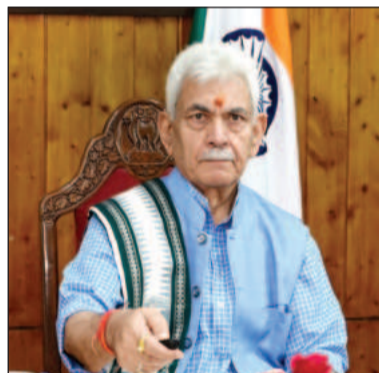
Terror Financiers More Dangerous Than Attackers: LG

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Asserting that Jammu and Kashmir was still suffering due to terrorism, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that during the past 11-years of PM Modi's rule terrorists and their sponsors have been pushed to the wall.

Addressing a gathering after distributing fruits to the patients at JLN Hospital here as part of 'Sewa Pakhwada' to celebrate the 75th Birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, LG Sinha said, "Prior to PM Modi taking reins of the country terrorism had pushed the country on the back-foot, but under the leadership of the Prime Minister, India has regained confidence and is on the path of rapid growth. Naxalism is on its last legs and the terrorism has been crushed in every part of the country."

"Terrorism has to end in J&K for peace, progress, and prosperity. There are different types of terrorists — some carry



guns while others provide financial assistance. Those who fund terrorism are even more dangerous than those who pull the trigger," LG Sinha said.

He emphasized that lasting peace is essential to make J&K Viksit (developed). Highlighting India's transformation over the past decade, the LG said that the country's economic growth story has been remarkable. "Till the 1990s our [More on P10](#)

Lauds Army For Ramban-Gool Bailey Bridge

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday virtually inaugurated a Bailey Bridge on the Ramban-Gool road, restoring a vital link for nearly 1.5 lakh residents of Ramban, Sangaldan, Gool and adjoining areas. Dedicating the bridge to the people, the LG expressed gratitude to the Army engineers for their tireless efforts under challenging [More on P10](#)

HC Seeks Govt Response On Rotten Meat PIL

Calls For Strict Food Safety Oversight In J&K

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Wednesday directed Commissioner Secretaries of Housing and Urban Development Department and Sales Tax besides others to file their response to a Public Interest Litigation on sale of rotten, unhygienic meat, fish and poultry products in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hearing the PIL, a Division Bench of Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal asked the Commissioner Secretaries and all other official respondents to file their response within ten days.

On the last date of hearing, the court was informed that meat and poultry is transported into J&K from different parts of the country in unhygienic conditions without cold-chain facilities and requisite certification by authorized veterinary officers. The apparent inaction and indifference on part of the concerned [More on P10](#)



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OFFICE OF THE ZONAL EDUCATION OFFICER, ANANTNAG

No:- ZEO/A/Sms/1562-71/25
lbadullah.najar99@jk.gov.in
Dated:- 15-09-2025

Subject:- Engagement/ Hiring of Helpers/AAYAs under ECCE for the year 2025-26
Ref:- Chief Education Officer Anantnag's communication No: CEO/A/Sms/AAYAs/25/28492-674/25 dated: 09.07.2025.

RE-ADVERTISEMENT NOTIFICATION

Whereas, after the issuance of Chief Education Officer, Anantnag's aforementioned orders, this office floated an advertisement notice for engagement of AAYAs in 30 schools of this zone wherein the post of AAYAs were sanctioned in the aforesaid reference vide this office No:- ZEO/A/Sms/950-66/25 Dated:- 15.07.2025 which was published in two reputed dailies daily "AFTAB" and daily "SRINAGAR OBSERVER" on 18.07.2025 through Information Department under No:- DIPK/3827/25 and the cut of date was on 25.07.2025.

Whereas, the unit of selection in respect of Rural area was taken as "Village" and in Urban Areas it was taken as "Ward". The interested eligible qualified female applicants deposited their application forms and other allied papers in the school's till cut of date and after the cut off date all files were received by this office.

Whereas, in order to proceed further in the matter, this office constituted a committee for verification/ scrutiny of the documents deposited by the applicants for their engagement as AAYAs in different schools vide this Office No: ZEO/A/Sms/1064-69/25 Dated:- 31.07.2025. The committee met in this office and after verification of the documents, the committee came to the conclusion that out of 29 schools, the tentative engagement of AAYAs in 22 schools have been notified for inviting of objections, if any, from the general public till 21.09.2025. While as the engagement of rest 08 schools was not made due to the reasons indicated against each.

Now, the applications on a prescribed form are invited from the eligible qualified females having a minimum qualification as 8th pass hailing from the below mentioned areas for their engagement/ hiring as Helpers/AAYAs under ECCE for the financial year 2025-26. The candidates shall have to enclose the following credentials/papers in original in support of their application before depositing the same in this office. The candidates shall have to qualify the following norms on the cut of date. The Last date for submission of the applications is fixed after the 10 days of Publication of this Notice in two reputed local dailies.

For Villages	The village means "Revenue Village" as clarified vide G.O No:- 289-Edu of 2009 Dated:- 08.04.2009.
For Ward	The Ward has already been defined in G.O No:- 1628-Edu of 2003 Dated:- 24.10.2003.
Qualification	The candidate should have a minimum qualification of class-8th pass on cut of date. The engagement of the candidate will remain provisional till the genuineness of their documents is verified by the Engaging/Hiring Authority.
Eligibility	Only Female Candidates can apply. The Helper deployed must be a domicile of Village in case of Rural and Ward in case of Urban area where approved school is located.
Nature of Engagement/ deployment	The Engagement/ deployment of a Helper/AAYA shall be purely terminus and shall start from the dates they are engaged/ hired & shall conclude with the end of academic session. It may be extendable subject to the performance & approval of funds from the Ministry of Education Government of India. In a particular Component Affidavit from 1st Class Magistrate shall be taken from the candidate at the time of joining for not claiming for permanent absorption at any stage.
Age	Between 18-45 years on the 1st of January of the deployment year.
Physical Fitness certificate	To be issued not below the rank of a Block Medical Officer.
Preferences should be given to	1. Widow 2. Divorced 3. Orphan
Honorarium	Rs 5000/- (Five thousand only) per month which may vary as per approval in the subsequent year in PAB of Samagra Shiksha.
Finalisation of Selection	In case of Tie up of the selection of candidates for Helper, the preference shall be given to the Elder candidate (i.e. Candidate with more age shall be considered).
Appeal	If anybody feels aggrieved with the selection of Helper/AAYA, an appeal should be preferred to the concerned Zonal Education officer with in the period of 15 days from the selection.
Job Chart of Helper/ AAYA	1. Escorting the children at their arrival, departure, between activities. 2. Maintaining the Hygiene of Children- Toileting/Hand washing/ Cleanliness of Children etc. 3. Helping the teacher in preparing class for activities. 4. Assisting the children in taking food under the supervision of teacher, under PM POSHAN (MDM). 5. Any other assignment given by HOI for proper care of children.

Zonal Education Officer
Anantnag

Name of the approved schools where helpers/ AAYAs have to be engaged during the Year 2025-26

Name of the school approved for engagement of Helpers/ AAYAs	Unit of selection	Name of the school approved for engagement of Helpers/ AAYAs
MS Lalipora	Revenue Village Level	School skipped from the previous advertisement due to the double entry of MS Khahpora Muniwar.
BMS Nazuk Mohalla	Zonal Level	The post at ward level stands already advertised, but no candidate applied for the post of AAYA till cut off date. (Files to be deposited in ZEO Office).
BMS Qazi Mohalla	Zonal Level	The post at ward level stands already advertised, but no candidate applied for the post of AAYA till cutoff date. (Files to be deposited in ZEO Office).
PS Prakashpora	Panchayat Halqa	The post at ward level stands already advertised, but no candidate applied for the post of AAYA till cutoff date.
MS Sangeempora	Revenue Village Level	The earlier advertisement was made on ward level due to oversight when the school falls under the jurisdiction of Rural Area.
BMS Muniwar	Revenue Village Level	These three schools have been advertised and the candidates hailing from the revenue village applied in all three schools. As per the opinion of the committee, all the schools are falling in the same revenue village so it needs to have a single merit list. The post is again re-advertised for consideration of Merit and eligibility on the basis of revenue village for 03 posts of AAYAs in a single merit list in Revenue Village. The files of applied candidates shall remain intact, while as, new files, if any, shall be deposited in the school falling in the center i.e BMS Muniwar. A
MS Khahpora Muniwar		
PS Bonpora Muniwar		

Zonal Education Officer
Anantnag

APPLICATION PROFORMA FOR ENGAGEMENT OF HELPERS/AAYAS UNDER ECCE FOR THE YEAR 2025-26 ZONE ANANTNAG

- Name of the School where Helper/AAYA is sanctioned and applied for _____
- Full Name of Applicant (in Capital letters) : _____
- Father's/Husbands' Name (in capital letters): _____
- Mother's Name (in capital letters): _____
- Permanent Address:
 - Village/Ward: _____ (Attach valid proof).
 - Panchayat Halqa/Municipality Ward: _____ (Attach valid proof).
 - Tehsil: _____ District: _____
 - Contact No: _____
- Date Of Birth: Day _____ Month _____ Year _____ (Attach valid proof)
- Qualification: _____ (Attach valid proof)
- Do you belong to any of the following category;
 - Widow: Yes/No _____ (If Yes, attach valid proof issued by concerned Tehsildar)
 - Divorced: Yes/No _____ (If Yes, attach valid proof issued by competent authority)
 - Orphan: Yes/No _____ (If Yes, attach valid proof issued by concerned Tehsildar)



Signature Of Applicant

Declaration
I hereby declare that the particulars furnished are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing has been concealed therein. I understand that, if at any stage it is found that the information furnished is false or incorrect or I do not satisfy/fulfill the eligibility criteria, my candidature is liable to be cancelled besides disciplinary action as per rules. I have read the contents of the notification and agree to abide by the Rules, regulations and procedure prescribed for hiring of Helpers/AAYAs. I shall accept the selection to be made by the selection committee which will be binding on me.

I also hereby declare that I have never been arrested/prosecuted or involved in any criminal case.
Date: _____ Signature of Applicant

DIPK-6305/25 dated: 17-09-2025

Free trade, AI make China-ASEAN economic cooperation closer, more fruitful

Press Trust Of India

NANNING, China, Sept. 17, 2025 /Xinhua-AsiaNet/ -- Amid global uncertainties and the rise of protectionism, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are forging ahead to deepen their integration.

This commitment is epitomized by the full conclusion of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 upgrade negotiations, which was announced in May and is an achievement that promises to bolster economic ties.

With its negotiations lasting more than two years, the upgraded pact extends to new areas such as digital economy, green development and supply chain connectivity.

Boosted by this landmark upgrade and an AI boom, the 22nd China-ASEAN Expo, which is held by Guangxi International Expo Affairs Bureau and scheduled to open on September 17 in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is expected to showcase new cooperation momentum and potential. The annual event has this year drawn more than 3,200 exhibitors from 60 countries -- as global firms flock to tap into two of the world's most open and dynamic markets.

Notably, the five-day expo features a 10,000-square-meter AI pavilion, a pavilion of new quality productive forces, and an exhibition area for the blue economy. In addition, green and low-carbon technologies and new energy vehicles are also among the highlights of this edition of the expo. These fields have significant growth prospects in terms of China-ASEAN economic and trade cooperation. Advanced manufacturing and digital infrastructure are poised to fuel this growth.

In the field of digital infrastructure, Chi-



na's investments have accelerated in both scale and scope. These include investments in the 5G sector -- which is a key enabler of AI, with a number of Chinese tech giants participating in related digital projects.

Guangxi, as China's southern gateway to ASEAN, is at the forefront of this integration. Its proximity to ASEAN has made it a vanguard of cross-border cooperation programs.

AI, which is set to transform investment landscapes, has emerged as the linchpin for future collaboration, as ASEAN countries embrace digital transformation, underscoring their strong desire for deepening cooperation with China in the regard. China and ASEAN countries are seeing robust momentum in AI cooperation. In April 2025, Guangxi Beitou IT Innovation Technology Investment Group Co., Ltd. partnered with MY E.G. Services Berhad, Malaysia's leading digital services company, to develop an AI innovation and cooperation center -- focusing

on areas such as blockchain applications and robotics.

Meanwhile, the China-ASEAN Artificial Intelligence Collaborative Innovation Center in Nanning, the capital of Guangxi, has signed contracts with 16 enterprises from ASEAN countries, which will help boost industrial upgrading.

China has remained ASEAN's largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years, while ASEAN has been China's largest trading partner for five straight years.

As global trade continues to be affected by volatility, China-ASEAN cooperation stands out as a model of stability. By enhancing trade frameworks and embracing AI, China-ASEAN economic and trade cooperation is set to become even more dynamic and deliver even greater win-win outcomes.

Source: Guangxi International Expo Affairs Bureau (Disclaimer: The above press release comes to you under an arrangement with Asianet and PTI takes no editorial responsibility for the same.). PTI PWR

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 965086585331 the name is entered as IYMAN GULZAR D/O GULZAR AHMED MALIK and Date of Birth 21-06-2011 while actual name is AYMUN GULZAR D/O GULZAR AHMAD MALIK and Date of Birth 04-07-2011. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
AYMUN GULZAR D/O GULZAR AHMAD MALIK
R/O DREVGAM BUDGAM
CELL. 6005884649

MCB

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Fazil Yousuf Shah S/O Mohammad Yousuf Shah R/O Guree Shahpora Veeri Bijbehara Anantnag hereby declare that my correct name is Fazil Yousuf Shah S/O Mohammad Yousuf Shah. In some documents, my name has been wrongly recorded as Fazil Yousuf Faqeer S/O Mohammad Yousuf Faqeer. I have applied for correction of my name in official records to read as Fazil Yousuf Shah S/O Mohammad Yousuf Shah. Any person having objection, if any, to the proposed correction may kindly inform the within 07 days of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection will be entertained and my name shall be taken as Fazil Yousuf Shah S/O Mohammad Yousuf Shah for all purposes.

JNA7780878931

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the registration of my Tour and Travel unit under name and style Al Mustafa Tour And Travels Haji and Umrah. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Mudasir Hassan Gojri
S/O Gh Hassan Gojri
R/O Model Town Sopore

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohd Mahroof Khan S/O Allah Ditta Khan, Prop. Of M/S Mohd Mahroof Khan, am holder of BEE class contractor card bearing registration number SE/HYD/B/BEE/43/2020-21, dated 19-08-2020 valid upto 31-03-2026, issued by Superintendent Engineer Hydraulic Circle Jammu, hereby intend to upgrade the said contractor card to A class and also want to change name of firm from M/S Mohd Mahroof Khan" to M/S Alla Ditta Khan Construction works". If anyone has any objection regarding the same, they may submit their objections in writing to the chief Engineer, Civil Investigation Wing JKP, Bemina with 7 days from the date of this notice. No objection will be entertained after the 7 days.

Mohd Mahroof Khan
S/O Allah Ditta Khan
Cell No: 9055021766

bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rajinder Kumar, D/o: Domader Singh, resident of Rankipora, Beerwah, was a student of Class 10th at HSS Kandoora in the academic year 1981-82. My original School Leaving Certificate was lost during the 2014 floods. I am now applying for a duplicate copy. If anyone has any objections or claims, please inform the Principal, HSS Kandoora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After this period, no claims shall be entertained.

Rajinder Kumar
D/o: Domader Singh
R/o: Rankipora, Beerwah

bmg

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for the information and seeking of objections from the general public that I am applying for the birth certificate of my son Manzer Reza Bhat S/O Mehboob Ul Hassan Bhat R/O Odina at Block Office Ganastan. The birth of Manzer Reza Bhat has occurred at home at Odina. Therefore if anyone has any objection regarding the same he/she may submit his/her objection at BDO Office Ganastan within 7 days.

Sd/-
fko BDO Ganastan

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is information of general public that I have applied for the EWS Certificate namely Sooman Sajad S/O Sajad Ahmad Lone R/O Malaknag Anantnag. If anybody having any objection in this regard He/ She may file his /her objection in the Office of the Naib Tehsildar Office Anantnag, within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Sooman Sajad S/O Sajad Ahmad Lone
R/O Malaknag Anantnag

fko

JNA7780878931

Forces Occupy Grounds, Youth Lose Spaces: Mufti

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday expressed concern over public playgrounds being "taken over" by security forces and said such moves run the risk of depriving youngsters of open spaces essential for constructive activities.

The PDP president also sought intervention of the divisional commissioner, Kashmir in the matter.

"There is a growing concern over public spaces, especially those used by youth for sports and recreation being taken over by security forces or police. While the Chattabal Tabela ground issue was amicably re-

solved with the Army intervention, new cases have emerged.

"The MET (Muslim Educational Trust) custodian land at Bhagat Barzulla used by local youth is reportedly being claimed by police for a martyrs' memorial. Similarly, the Zoo Ground at Sheeri Baramulla is reportedly being taken over by the CRPF," Mehbooba said in a post on X.

"Such moves risk depriving youth of the few remaining open spaces essential for healthy and constructive activities," she added.

The PDP president urged the divisional commissioner, Kashmir to intervene and ensure that these grounds remain accessible for public and youth use.



PM Modi's 75th Birthday Celebrated At Lal Chowk

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The All India Modi Mitr Mandal on Wednesday marked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 75th birthday with celebrations at the historic Lal Chowk in Srinagar.

At the city's iconic Ghanta Ghar, a life-size cutout of the Prime Minister was garlanded, while supporters distributed sweets and chanted slogans. The event also drew attention with traditional dance performances and patriotic songs by

local artists, attracting crowds to the bustling city centre.

As part of the ongoing "Sewa Parv" initiative, which runs from September 17 to October 2 across Jammu and Kashmir, the gathering featured a blood donation camp and distribution of food among the underprivileged.

Members of the Modi Mitr Mandal described the celebrations as a gesture of gratitude towards a leader they believe has guided India's development and inspired the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. (with KNO inputs).

SEWA PARAV CELEBRATION

Humhama Ward-33 Launches Cleanliness Drive



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Humhama Ward-33 on Wednesday organised a special cleanliness drive as part of the Sewa Parav Celebration, a nationwide citizen-centric initiative being observed from September 17 to October 2. The campaign aims to raise mass awareness about the significance of cleanliness and hygiene in both public and private spaces.

The programme was spearheaded by Ward Officer Reyaz Ahmad Bhat, with officers, officials, and sanitation staff of Ward-33 actively participating. The team cleaned Airport Road, adjoining areas, and other public-facing locations. The initiative sought not only to improve the physical environment but also to promote the spirit of collective responsibility within the community.

Local residents and community members welcomed the drive, noting that such efforts

encourage civic responsibility, volunteerism, and pride in maintaining clean surroundings. They also lauded the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) for leading by example and strengthening public partnership through direct involvement.

Speaking on the occasion, Ward Officer Bhat emphasized that cleanliness is fundamental to healthy living and community development. He urged for sustained cooperation between the SMC and citizens to achieve the long-term goals of a safe, clean, and progressive society.

Sanitary Inspector Shabbir Ahmed also participated in the drive under the Sewa Parav initiative. The SMC assured that more such community outreach activities will be organized in the future, with a focus on building stronger civic engagement and promoting a cleaner, greener, and healthier environment for all.

Noor Jahan Bridge Fails To Bring Respite As Traffic Chaos Deepens

Agencies

SRINAGAR: What was meant to be Srinagar's traffic saviour has become its biggest bottleneck. With an estimated Rs 9.5 crore budget, the incomplete Noor Jahan bridge at Qamarwari Srinagar, sanctioned in 2009 to decongest the old Cement Kadal crossing, remains unfinished after 15 years, forcing thousands of vehicles to squeeze through the same narrow route daily.

Every rush hour paints the same picture: gridlocked lanes, honking cars, stranded ambulances and school buses caught in the snarl.

"If this bridge was open, half this mess wouldn't exist," said Riyaz Ahmad, a downtown resident, who spends nearly 20 minutes crossing Qamarwari each morning.

The 130-metre bridge was supposed to be operational by 2014, but after missing more than six deadlines under three different governments, it has become

a symbol of stalled development. Officials blame land acquisition disputes and contractor lapses alleging mismanagement and lack of political will.

Superintending Engineer R&B Showkat Ahmad Kumar said the contractor has been penalised and deadlines extended multiple times. "We are now targeting completion within two months," he said.

He said they had also been facing issues due to the unavailability of materials, which have now arrived.

Responding to queries about the absence of workers at the bridge site during the day, the SE said, the work is being carried out at night and the project is expected to be completed within the next two months.

The residents, however, remain skeptical. "They have been saying 'two months' for years," said Ali Mohammad. "We have lost faith. It is not just a bridge stuck in limbo — it's our lives that are stuck," he said—(KNO)

Teen Girl Killed, 5 Injured As Eco Vehicle Rams Pedestrians In Rainawari

Firdous Ali

SRINAGAR: Grief swept through Rainawari on Wednesday after a tragic road accident in Jogi Lanker locality claimed the life of a 14-year-old schoolgirl and left five others injured, two of them critically.

The deceased was identified as Madiha Farooq Bhat, daughter of Farooq Ahmad Bhat of Gurpora, Rainawari. She succumbed to her injuries at JLN Hospital shortly after being hit by an Eco van (DL-CAS 1744) that reportedly lost control and rammed into pedestrians.

Madiha's body was brought home in the evening, where heart-rending scenes unfolded as neighbours, relatives, and classmates gathered in mourning. "She was so full of life... her schoolbag still lies at home. None of us can't believe she is gone," said a sobbing neighbour.

Police officials said all five injured persons were elderly, including four women. They were identified as:

Halima (55), wife of Gh Mohd Saudagar, resident of Nowgam

Amina (57), wife of Farooq Ahmad Sofi, resident of Noor Bagh

Neelofar (47), wife of Fayaz Ahmad Baba, resident of Nehru Park

Gulshana (45), wife of Gh Mohd



SHE WAS SO FULL OF LIFE, her schoolbag still lies at home. None of us can't believe she is gone,"

Mir, resident of Rainawari

Bashir Ahmad Gagroo (65), son of Ab Rehman, resident of Illahi Bagh Soura

Hospital sources said Gulshana, who suffered a spinal injury, was referred to SKIMS Soura, while Neelofar with a head injury was shifted to SMHS Hospital. Two others were moved to the Bone and Joint Hospital for specialised treatment.

Driver in Custody, Probe Ordered

Police confirmed that the Eco van, driven by a resident of Kal-

wal Mohalla, Rainawari, lost control while negotiating a narrow lane. The driver has been taken into custody, and a case has been registered under FIR No. 31/2025.

"The circumstances that led to the mishap are being investigated, and necessary legal action will follow," a police officer said.

The densely populated Jogi Lanker locality remains gripped by shock, with residents demanding stricter traffic enforcement in Srinagar's congested lanes to prevent such tragedies in the future.

CM Omar Inaugurates New Transport Bhawan At Bemina

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Wednesday inaugurated the newly constructed Transport Bhawan here, marking a major step towards bringing all transport-related services under one roof, an official spokesman said.

He said the Transport Bhawan in the Bemina locality of the city would also strengthen the office infrastructure of the Transport Department.

The Bhawan will serve as a central hub for transport administration and services, housing the offices of the J-K Transport Commissioner, joint transport commissioner, Kashmir Regional Transport Office (RTO), ARTOS and other allied sections, he said.

Bringing these offices under one roof is expected to enhance efficiency, coordination and public service delivery, the spokesman added.

On the occasion, the chief minister also launched PVC Registration Certificates -- a modern initiative designed to provide



durable, tamper-resistant and convenient registration cards to vehicle owners.

Replacing the traditional paper-based format, the new PVC cards will not only improve service quality but also help reduce misuse, the spokesman said.

During the launch of PVC Registration Certificates, Kashmir RTO Qazi Irfan Rasool described the launch as an important step towards modernisation and the convenience of vehicle owners.

Rasool informed that the new cards are durable, tamper-proof, pocket-sized and equipped with

QR codes, ensuring instant verification and reducing complaints with time-bound issuance.

After inaugurating the facility, the chief minister toured the building and inspected its various sections.

He interacted with officers and staff, reviewing the facilities created for both employees and the general public.

Expressing satisfaction, Abdullah said that the new Bhawan would significantly streamline the functioning of the Transport Department and ensure better service delivery to citizens.

ACB Arrests JE, SO Electric Division For Accepting Bribe

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday said to have trapped and arrested JE & SO of Electric Division Pantha Chowk, Srinagar red-handed while accepting bribe of Rs. 50,000 for realignment of HT Line.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, the spokesman said that Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau received a written complaint from a complainant alleging therein that demand of bribe of Rs 50,000 by public servants namely Junior Engineer (JE) Shaik Sultan Bhat and Section Officer (SO) Mohammad Ayoub Dar posted at Power Development Department, Electric Division Pantha Chowk for realignment electric pole installed

in his property land situated at Sempora Pantha Chowk etc.

"Consequent upon the information and in order to verify the allegations leveled against the public servants, the matter was discreetly verified through a designated officer of ACB Srinagar," the statement reads.

On the basis of contents of the complaint, findings and recommendations of verifying officer under Sections 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, read with Section 61(2) of the BNS are prima facie established against the accused public servants namely Junior Engineer Shaik Sultan Bhat S/O Gh. Nabi Bhat, R/O Sanat Nagar, Srinagar, and Sectional Officer Mohammad Ayoub Dar, S/O Gh. Nabi Dar, R/O Sail, Tehsil Awantipora, District Pulwama, the statement added.

Accordingly, the spokesman said that a case under FIR number 18/2025 under Sections 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, read with Section 61(2) of the BNS at Police Station ACB Srinagar today and investigation was taken up.

"During the course of investigation, a trap team was constituted and deputed to Pantha Chowk for laying a trap and to arrest these public servants involved in the commission of crime. The team laid a successful trap and both public servants were apprehended red-handed while demanding and accepting the bribe of Rs 50,000 from the complainant. The bribe money of Rs 50,000 was recovered on the spot from their possession," the spokesman said, adding that further investigation into the case is going on.

NIT Launches Swachhata Hi Seva 2025 Campaign

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar officially launched the Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) 2025 campaign on Wednesday as part of the nationwide cleanliness initiative inspired by Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB).

The inauguration, held near the Main Building fountain, was attended by In-Charge Director, Prof. Roohi Naaz, Registrar Prof.

Atikur Rahman, Dean of Students Welfare Prof. Mohammad Abid Bazaz, Dean of Alumni and International Affairs Professor M.A. Shah, and Nodal Officer of SHS 2025 Dr. Ashok Kumar.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from students, faculty, staff, as well as NSS and NCC cadets, and EBSB volunteers.

A key highlight of the event was the Swachhata Pledge, in which participants committed to dedicating 100 hours per year, or

two hours per week, to voluntary cleanliness activities.

They also vowed to actively promote cleanliness in their personal spaces, encourage at least 100 others to join the initiative, and refrain from littering while discouraging others from doing so.

Speaking at the event, In-charge Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Roohi Naaz, said cleanliness is not just a responsibility but a reflection of our commitment to nation-building.

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

FAJR	4:52
ZUHR	12:36
ASR	4:51
Magrib	6:40
ISHA	8:00

HIJRI CALENDAR
24 Rabi-ul-Awwal
1447

This Day In History

- 96 - Nerva is proclaimed Roman Emperor after Domitian is assassinated.
- 324 - Chrysopolis Emperor Constantine beats Emperor Licinius
- 1454 - In the Battle of Chojnice, the Polish army is defeated by the Teutonic army during the Thirteen Years' War.
- 1502 - Christopher Columbus lands at Costa Rica on his 4th & last voyage
- 1739 - Turkey & Austria sign peace treaty-Austria cedes Belgrade to Turks
- 1759 - Battle of Quebec ends, French surrender to British who capture Quebec City.
- 1864 - Battle of Martinsburg, Virginia
- 1914 - Battle of Aisne ends with Germans beating French during WW I
- 1914 - South African troops land in German South West Africa
- 1918 - Battle of Megiddo (Palestine) starts
- 1922 - Hungary is admitted to the League of Nations
- 1927 - Columbia Broadcasting System goes on air with 18 stations and WOR as the New York City affiliate
- 1934 - USSR is admitted to the League of Nations
- 1940 - Italian troops conquer Sidi Barrani
- 1942 - Canadian Broadcasting Corporation authorized for radio service
- 1943 - German occupiers liquidate the ghetto of Lida, Belarus, transporting the last remaining Jews to their murder at the Nazi extermination camp Sobibor
- 1944 - WWII: British submarine Tradewind torpedoes Junyo Maru: 5,600 killed, including 1,377 allied POWs and 4,200 Javanese slave laborers
- 1944 - WWII: Eindhoven, Netherlands, is freed by American and British troops (Liberation Day)
- 1944 - WWII: US 266th division defeats German troops at Brest Bretagne in Brittany, France, after a seven-week siege; 37,000 prisoners taken, ports rendered useless
- 1947 - Central Intelligence Agency officially comes into existence after being established by President Truman in July
- 1947 - US Air Force is created as a separate military service with the passing of the National Security Act
- 1947 US Department of Defense first day of operation
- 1948 - Communist Madiun Uprising in Dutch Indies (Musu/Sjarifudin)
- 1961 - Transair Sweden DC-6 passenger aircraft, chartered by the United Nations for transit to cease-fire negotiations during the Congo Crisis, crashes near Ndola, Northern Rhodesia (present-day Zambia), killing 16, including UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, and 15 others; official inquiries never determine the cause
- 1961 - USSR performs a nuclear test at Novaya Zemlya, USSR
- 1962 - Rwanda, Burundi, Jamaica, and Trinidad are admitted to the United Nations as the 105th through 108th member countries
- 1962 - USSR performs a nuclear test at Novaya Zemlya, USSR
- 1973 - The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic are admitted to the UN
- 1977 - Voyager 1 takes the first space photograph of Earth and Moon together
- 1978 "WKRP in Cincinnati," an ensemble TV sitcom created by Hugh Wilson and set in a struggling radio station, debuts on CBS
- 1980 - Soyuz 38 carries two cosmonauts, including one Cuban, to the Salyut 6 space station
- 1983 - Lebanese and Syrian armies battle
- 1985 - Computer scientists accidentally stumble upon the largest prime number ever discovered, the number 2^216091 - 1, containing 65,050 digits
- 1987 - US and USSR sign accord to remove mid-range missiles
- 1987 - USSR performs a nuclear test at the Semipalatinsk Test Site in northeast Kazakhstan
- 1988 - Burma suspends its constitution
- 1988 - Coup in Haiti: General Prosper Avril takes control, and Henri Namphy flees
- 1994 - Sweden's Social Democratic Party wins the parliamentary election
- 1995 - Space shuttle STS-69 (Endeavour 9) lands
- 1998 - Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is formed
- 2007 - Pervez Musharraf announces that he will step down as army chief and restore civilian rule to Pakistan, but only after he is re-elected as president

SC Tells Pollution Boards to Draft Anti-Pollution Plans

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and state pollution control boards to come up with measures to prevent air pollution within three weeks, ahead of the onset of winter when pollution levels spike.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Ga-

months for filling up promotional posts in state pollution control boards, CAQM and CPCB.

CAQM is a statutory body formed by the Centre and its main goal is to manage and improve air quality in the National Capital Region and its adjoining areas, which include parts of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The bench was hearing a suo motu plea relating to fill-



vai and Justice K Vinod Chandran also pulled up states over vacancies in their pollution control boards and asked states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan to fill them in three months.

The bench also passed similar directions to CAQM and CPCB.

It, however, granted six

ing up of vacancies in these authorities. It will hear the matter next on October 8.

The court came down heavily on states for failing to fill long-pending vacancies in their pollution control boards, observing that inadequate manpower during peak pollution seasons aggravates the environmental crisis.

SC: Devotees Don't Offer Money To Temples For Setting Up Marriage Halls

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the money offered by devotees was not meant for the construction of marriage halls as it refused to stay an order which said temple funds couldn't be treated as public or government funds.

The order of the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court had quashed the government orders allowing the construction of marriage halls with funds belonging to five temples at different locations in Tamil Nadu.

In its August 19 order, the high court held the government's decision to construct marriage halls for rental purposes by giving them for wedding functions wasn't within the definition of "religious purposes".

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing the pleas challenging the high court decision and said, "Devotees do not offer their money to the temple for the purpose of setting up these marriage halls. It may be for the improvement of temple."

The bench went on to ask, "If there is a marriage party going on in a temple premises and all kinds of vulgar songs are played, is that the purpose of a temple land?"

The top court instead suggested such money to be

Devotees do not offer their money to the temple for the purpose of setting up these marriage halls. It may be for the improvement of temple

utilised for charitable purposes such as education and towards medical institutions.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi and other lawyers were representing the petitioners.

The bench noted the issue was whether the decision taken by the government was right or wrong.

The apex court, however, agreed to hear the challenge and posted it for November 19.

"We will hear this matter. We are not granting any stay order to the petitioners," the bench said.

The high court decision came on a plea challenging the government orders allowing the construction of marriage halls with temple funds.



Israel Expands Gaza Ops, Tells Residents To Flee

Associated Press

Jerusalem: After a night of heavy airstrikes, the Israeli military announced Tuesday (September 16, 2025) that its expanded operation in Gaza City "to destroy Hamas' military infrastructure" has begun and warned residents to move south.

Israel ramps up strikes on Gaza City, hospital says at least 32 killed

The announcement by Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee followed Defence Minister Israel Katz's statement that "Gaza is burning" and further escalated the Israel-Hamas war as any potential ceasefire feels even further out of reach despite weeks of diplomacy.

Rubio promises 'unwavering support' for Israel in Gaza goals

Also on Tuesday (September 16), U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio left Israel and arrived in the energy-rich nation of Qatar, where he planned to meet with its ruling emir as the nation is still incensed over Israel's strike last week that killed five Hamas members and a local security official.

While Arab and Muslim nations denounced the strike

at a summit on Monday (September 15), they stopped short of any major action targeting Israel, highlighting the challenge of diplomatically pressuring any change in Israel's conduct in the grinding Israel-Hamas war. Egypt, however, has begun to escalate its language against Israel, referring to it widely on Tuesday as the "enemy" for the first time in years.

Mr. Rubio, speaking to journalists in Israel before his departure, suggested the offensive on Gaza City had begun.

"We think we have a very short window of time in which a deal can happen," Rubio said. "We don't have months anymore, and we probably have days and maybe a few weeks so it's a key moment — an important moment." "Our preference, our No. 1 choice, is that this ends through a negotiated settlement," he added, while acknowledging the dangers an intensified military campaign posed to Gaza.

"The only thing worse than a war is a protracted one that goes on forever and ever," Mr. Rubio said. "At some point, this has to end. At some point, Hamas has to be defanged, and we hope it can happen through negotiation. But I think time, unfortunately, is running out."

Intensity of strikes in Gaza City grows. After weeks of threatening an expansion of the Israeli military operation in Gaza City, Mr. Katz signalled it had begun.

"Gaza is burning," he said early on Tuesday morning. "The (Israeli military) is striking with an iron fist at the terrorist infrastructure and soldiers are fighting heroically to create the conditions for the release of the hostages and the defeat of Hamas. We will not relent and we will not go back — until the completion of the mission." The United Nations estimated on Monday that over 220,000 Palestinians have fled northern Gaza over the past month, after the Israeli military warned that all residents should leave Gaza City ahead of the operation. An estimated 1 million Palestinians were living in the region around Gaza City before the evacuation warnings.

At least 20 Palestinians killed in Gaza City Palestinian residents reported heavy strikes across Gaza City on Tuesday morning.

The city's Shifa Hospital said it received the bodies of 20 people killed in a strike that hit multiple houses in a western neighbourhood, with another 90 wounded arriving at the facility in recent hours.

Iran Says Saudi Bears Major Duty on Muslim Unity vs Israel

Associated Press

Doha— Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian says major Muslim nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, carry a "very heavy responsibility" in the current situation, stating that unity among Islamic countries would prevent Israeli aggression.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the sidelines of the emergency summit of the heads of Islamic countries and the Arab League in Doha, Qatar, on Monday.

The event is being held to discuss a formal response to Israel's September 9 strikes at-

tempting to assassinate the leaders of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in Doha.

The Iranian president underscored that if Islamic countries are "united," the Israeli regime will "not dare to attack or invade any Muslim country," adding that Saudi Arabia can play "an important role in the path of unity of Islamic countries."

Bin Salman, for his part, expressed happiness that relations between major Islamic countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are expanding. Islamic countries, he emphasized, must become "more empowered in the long term" so that they can "more effectively defend their independence and dignity" in the

Islamic world and "prevent the aggression and excesses of the Zionist regime."

He underscored the gravity of regional circumstances and the situation in Palestine, adding, "Our region is in a special situation, and strengthening cooperation and unity between us, you, and other Islamic countries is not a choice, but a definite necessity."

"Unity of Islamic states most effective way to confront Israel"

In his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Pezeshkian asserted that strengthening "unity and cohesion among Islamic countries" is the most effective way to confront the repetition and continuation of Israel's crimes.

'Bot Army' Flooding Social Media With Pro-Israeli Propaganda: Report

Trans Asia News

Tel Aviv: An American "public relations" firm closely allied with the Democratic Party is in contract with the Israeli regime to flood social media platforms with pro-Tel Aviv propaganda, using a "bot army," a report says.

The two sides' contract, now in the fifth month of its conclusion, is worth a whopping \$600,000. Sludge, an investigative journalism outlet, reported on Monday, citing a Foreign Agents Registration Act filing.

The report identified the company as Washington-based SKDKnickerbocker LLC that subcontracts through French "PR firm" Havas under its parent Stagwell Global, a similar US-based company.

The "bot-based program" targets the most popular social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

The program is tasked with "flooding the zone" with content promoting the Israeli foreign ministry's pro-regime messaging.

"Automated tools will increase the visibility of targeted posts, while SKDK also coaches Israeli 'civil society spokespeople,' tests social media influencers, and arranges outreach to 'journalists' at outlets like BBC, CNN, Fox, and the Associated Press," the report added.

History repeats itself

The campaign, Sludge wrote, "mirrors influence tac-

Automated tools will increase the visibility of targeted posts, while SKDK also coaches Israeli 'civil society spokespeople,' tests social media influencers, and arranges outreach to 'journalists' at outlets like BBC, CNN, Fox, and the Associated Press

tics previously documented in pro-Israel campaigns."

Earlier this month, a report revealed a subversive Israeli intelligence foray aimed at recruiting Iranians, which used an American comedian as its cover and the exiled son of Iran's former US-backed monarch as a central pawn.

Grayzone, an independent news website, carried the report on September 8, saying the campaign sought to bait Iranian nuclear scientists and security officials among their other compatriots by enticing them to turn on their own country's Islamic establishment.

The bid primarily used ads placed by Atlanta-based comedian and influencer Desi Banks, who enjoys a nine-million-plus Instagram following.

Sludge also cited a May 2024 Al Jazeera investigation showing how AI-powered "superbots" were targeting pro-Palestinian accounts, replying rapidly with pro-Israeli messages, and using large language models to appear human.

Appalled By 'Decimation' Of JNU In Last 10 Years: Romila

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Historian Romila Thapar has said Jawaharlal Nehru University and other centres of social sciences have suffered in the last 10 years, and those who were involved in their establishment are appalled by the "decimation".

Thapar, who was speaking at the third Kapila Vatsyayan Memorial Lecture at the India International Centre here on Tuesday, said maintaining academic standards at JNU in the last decade has been "extremely problematic".

"Some of us who were involved in establishing JNU in the 1970s have been appalled by the decimation that it has undergone in the last 10 years. This is not confined to JNU alone, as other strong centres of the social sciences have also suffered," Thapar said.

She said they had succeeded in establishing a university that was highly respected at home and in the world outside.

"But in the last decade, maintaining academic standards has been made extremely, to put it politely, problematic. This was done in various ways, through appointing some substandard

faculty, non-professionals dictating the curriculum and syllabi, attempts to rescind the earlier appointed professor emeritus, curtailing freedom to research and teach what academics regard as meaningful," the historian said.

Citing the January 2020 incident at the university, in



Romila Thapar

which an armed mob stormed the campus, resulting in injuries to students and faculty, the 93-year-old said the situation "went beyond academic mechanism".

While mentioning the arrest of Umar Khalid without naming him, Thapar said, "political control over education silences intellectual creativity".

"There have been arrests of students for criticising authority, and some of those arrested are still in jail without a trial, despite being there for the last six years.

NEWS MAKERS

Armed Gang Ties Staff, Robs ₹20 Crore from Karnataka SBI

Press Trust Of India

Vijayapura: Three masked men armed with country-made pistols and knives allegedly robbed a nationalised bank in this district, making off with over Rs 20 crore in cash and gold ornaments, after tying up the staff, police said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred at around 6.30 pm on Tuesday at the State Bank of India branch in Chadchan town of Vijayapura district, they said.

Cash and gold ornaments worth over Rs 21 crore have been stolen by the robbers as per the estimate of the bank authorities.

According to police, three masked men



came to the bank under the pretext of opening a current account and threat-

ened the manager, cashier and other employees with pistols and knives. The gang tied up the hands and feet of the staff. They escaped with more than Rs 1 crore in cash and gold ornaments weighing approximately 20 kg, worth approximately Rs 20 crore, the FIR said. Based on the complaint of the bank manager, a case was registered, police said, adding that teams have been formed to nab the suspects.

Citing preliminary investigation, Vijayapura Superintendent of Police Laxman Nimbargi told PTI that the suspects used a Suzuki EVA vehicle with a fake number plate.

After committing the offence, they moved towards Pandharpur in Maharashtra.

"Further investigation is under way and all efforts are being taken to nab the suspects," he added.

King Charles III greets Trump in Windsor

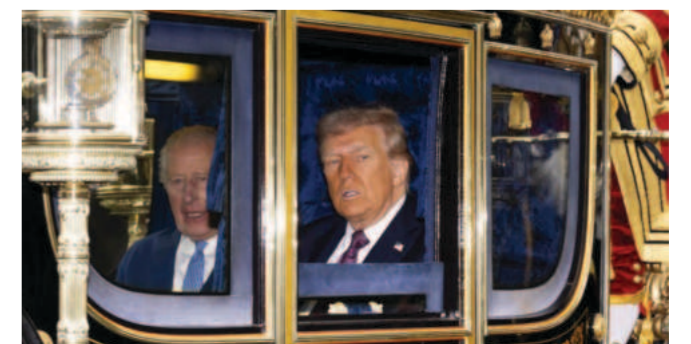
Associated Press

US President Donald Trump arrived at Windsor Castle on Wednesday, kicking off a two-day state visit to Britain as the guest of King Charles III.

The president's Marine One helicopter landed in the private Walled Garden at the Windsor estate.

Prince William and his wife Catherine were on hand to meet the president and first lady Melania Trump, walking them over to be greeted by the king and Queen Camilla.

Carriages have been pol-



ished, hundreds of troops have been drilled to perfection, the family silver is being laid out, and diamonds are being dusted off for a day of royal pageantry on the president's unprecedented second state visit to Britain.

It's a spectacle with a purpose: to bolster ties with a world leader known for a love of bling at a time when his America First policies are putting pressure on trade and security arrangements globally.

Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat's Demise Widely Condolled



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The demise of academic-turned-separatist leader Abdul Gani Bhat has been widely mourned across Jammu and Kashmir, with political, social, and religious leaders expressing profound grief and recalling his immense contributions to the political and intellectual discourse of the Valley.

Former Chief Minister and PDP President Mehbooba Mufti remembered Professor Abdul Gani Bhat as a "voice of moderation amidst the tumultuous history of Kashmir." She described him as an esteemed scholar, teacher, and political leader with a pragmatic approach. "Despite differing political views, he remained a close and respected friend of Mufti Saheb, and together, peace and reconciliation were the core of their political campaigns. May his soul rest in peace, and may his legacy continue to inspire," she said.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq described his death as a "huge personal loss." In his condolence message, he said, "I lost an affectionate elder, a dear friend and colleague, Prof. Abdul Gani

Bhat Sahib, who passed away some time ago. May Allah grant him the highest place in Jannah. Kashmir has been bereft of a sincere and visionary leader."

Prominent Shia cleric Mas-roor Abbas Ansari expressed deep sorrow, terming the loss "irreplaceable." "He was a prominent personality, intellectual, and respected leader. May Allah grant him maghfirah and strength to his family in this hour of grief," he said.

Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone, recalling his association with Professor Abdul Gani Bhat, said, "Fondly remembered as Professor Sahib, he was a literary figure too apart from politics. He was a colleague of my late father, and I have had long conversations with him. May Allah grant him Jannat."

CPI(M) leader M. Y. Tarigami described him as an eminent figure in Jammu and Kashmir's political landscape. "I have known him for long. He will be remembered for his humility, intellect, and lifelong struggle for the welfare of people. His loss leaves a void that will be deeply felt," Tarigami said.

Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) chief and former minister Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen said the demise of Professor Abdul Gani Bhat has left Kashmir "poorer in intellect and political maturity." "He was a towering personality whose contributions to political discourse, public life, and academia will always be remembered. His passing has created a void that can never be filled," Yaseen said.

Awareness Session On Forest Conservation At Held GDC Tral



Observer News Service

PULWAMA: The Zamin Foundation, in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department and the Government Degree College (GDC), Tral, today organized a significant awareness session on Conservation of Forests in J&K. The event aimed to educate and engage students on the critical importance of preserving the regions rich forest ecosystems.

The session was inaugurated by Dr. Rafiq Ahmed Wani, Head of the Department of Physics at GDC Tral, who welcomed the guest speakers, faculty members, and students. He emphasized the colleges commitment to environmental education and its role in fostering a generation of ecologically conscious citizens.

Mr. Salim Wani, Program Manager at Zamin Foundation, opened the proceedings by outlining the foundations ongoing environmental initiatives and

its mission to promote sustainable community development and ecological balance in the region.

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Arook Ahmed Shah, Range Officer from the Tral Forest Range. He provided an insightful presentation on the pressing issues surrounding forest conservation, the role of the Forest Department in protection and management, and the active participation required from local communities to safeguard this vital natural heritage.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks presented by Mr. Mohammad Rafiq Wani, Head of the Department of Botany. He expressed his gratitude to all the partners Zamin Foundation, the J&K Forest Department, and the college administration for their collaborative effort in making the session a success, and to the students for their attentive participation.

AYUSH Holds Camps Under Swastha Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: To commemorate the launch of Swastha Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan, AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre, Kenihama, under the guidance of District AYUSH Officer, Budgam Dr. Firdous Malik organized series of health camps here.

The initiative is aimed to promote health and wellbeing of women, thereby strengthening families and communities as a whole.

A special outreach camp was held in local High school where female students actively participated, besides another camp was held at AYUSH Health & Wellness Centre, Kenihama which witnessed enthusiastic participation of women from the local community.

During the camps, free health check-ups for anaemia, hypertension, diabetes, thyroid disorders and other lifestyle-related conditions, along with awareness sessions on nutrition, menstrual hygiene, maternal and child health were held. Yoga, meditation and stress management demonstrations were also conducted to



encourage holistic wellbeing, besides one-on-one counselling sessions were held on reproductive health, mental wellbeing and lifestyle modifications.

During these camps, free medicines were also distributed among the participants.

Speaking on the initiative, Dr. Nusrat Bashir, Medical Officer, AHWC Kenihama, emphasised that women's health is the cornerstone of a healthy society. She highlighted the importance of regular health check-ups and preventive care for overall well being of an individual. Dr. Nusrat further said that the program is part of a nationwide campaign that seeks to empower women through improved health outcomes, thereby contributing to stronger and healthier families.

75th Birthday Celebration Of PM Modi

LG Visits JLNM Hospital, Distributes Fruits To Patients



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday visited JLNM Hospital Rainawari and distributed fruits to the patients as part of 'Sewa Pakhwada' to celebrate the 75th Birthday of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Speaking to the media-persons on the sidelines of his visit, the Lieutenant Governor extended his heartfelt birthday wishes to Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Selfless service fosters community bond and a sense of shared purpose. From 17th September to 2nd October, various Sewa Parv campaigns are being dedicated to women empowerment and health."

"Prime Minister spent his

6 SELFLESS SERVICE FOSTERS COMMUNITY BOND AND A SENSE OF SHARED PURPOSE. From 17th September to 2nd October, various Sewa Parv campaigns are being dedicated to women empowerment and health."

life dedicated to nation's service. Under his leadership, the past 11 years are seen as a milestone in India's transformation and it has emerged as the world's fourth-largest economy," He said.

"Prime Minister has ensured that benefits of economic growth reach the poor and marginalised section of society. 25 Crore people have been lifted out of poverty. India's prestige in the world

has greatly increased under his visionary leadership. We pray for his long and healthy life," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; SSP Srinagar, Dr GV Sundeep Chakravathy; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Shri Akshay Labroo and other senior officials.

LoP Sunil Sharma Meets LG At Raj Bhawan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Leader of Opposition in the J&K Legislative Assembly, Shri Sunil Sharma, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan Srinagar and held an extensive discussion on several critical issues affecting the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of recent natural calamities.

During the meeting, Shri Sharma highlighted the issue of road connectivity across the Union Territory, particularly in areas cut off due to landslides and floods. He stressed that many villages and towns remain disconnected, which is severely hampering public movement, delivery of essentials, and access to healthcare.

The power supply and water supply crisis was also raised in detail. Shri Sharma pointed out that many flood-hit and hilly regions are facing acute electricity cuts and irregular drinking water facilities, creating immense hardships for common people. He urged the administration to ensure res-



toration on a war footing.

On the matter of flood relief, Shri Sharma emphasized that the current allocation for damaged houses is grossly inadequate. He requested that the financial support for affected families be increased substantially, so that people whose homes have been destroyed or partially damaged can rebuild their lives with dignity.

The postponement of competitive examinations, including the JKPSC Lecturer recruitment and Munsiff examinations, was also discussed at length. Shri Sharma conveyed the concerns of aspirants who are unable to prepare or even reach examination centres due to poor connectivity, floods, and in-

ternet issues. He appealed to the administration to ensure fairness by rescheduling these exams.

The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha gave a patient hearing to all the issues raised and assured Shri Sunil Sharma that these matters will be taken up on priority for timely resolution.

Shri Sunil Sharma expressed gratitude to the Hon'ble LG for his understanding and prompt assurance. He said, "As Leader of Opposition, it is my duty to be the voice of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. I will continue to raise their concerns with full sincerity and commitment, ensuring that every citizen's voice is heard and addressed."

Northern Railway Central Hospital Participates In "Swastha Naari, Sashakt Parivar"

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Northern Railway Central Hospital today announced its participation in the "Swastha Naari, Sashakt Parivar" (Healthy Women, Empowered Family) campaign, a nationwide initiative launched to promote the health and well-being of women and their families. The campaign, which focuses on comprehensive screenings and health services, was inaugurated with the presence of key dignitaries.

The launch event at Northern Railway Central Hospital was attended by Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Railways; Shri Satish Kumar, Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board; and Shri Ashok Kumar Verma, General Manager of Northern Railway. Their presence underscored the commitment of Indian Railways to the national health movement.

The "Swastha Naari, Sashakt Parivar" campaign, initiated by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the Min-



istry of Women & Child Development, aims to provide widespread health services at the community level. The program is designed to conduct screenings for various health issues, including anaemia, hypertension, and diabetes, to ensure early detection and treatment.

"The health of our women is the foundation of a strong family and a strong nation," said Ms. Rushma Tandon CMD Northern Railway Central Hospital. "By participating in this

national campaign, we are committed to providing accessible and high-quality healthcare services to railway employees, their families, and the wider community. This initiative aligns with our mission to contribute to a healthier and more productive society."

The Northern Railway Central Hospital will host various health camps and awareness programs as part of the initiative, focusing on preventive care, nutritional counseling, and early disease detection.

Non-political Delegation To Hold Talks With Centre: Leh Body

Press Trust Of India

LEH: In an effort to revive stalled dialogue, Leh Apex Body (LAB) has decided to remove leaders of political parties from its delegation which will negotiate with the Centre on its two crucial demands - statehood and extension of the sixth schedule of the Constitution for Ladakh.

LAB co-chairman Chering Dorje said veteran leader Thupstan Chhewang, who had resigned from the body after the last round of talks in May, has agreed to return to the grouping as its head to lead the talks with the government.

Chhewang, a former two-time MP from Ladakh, had distanced himself from LAB and submitted resignation citing "partisan, individual agendas and competing interests".

The LAB also requested the government to resume dialogue. Leaders in the body indicated that climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who is on an ongoing 35-day-long hunger strike since September 10, may not be part of it.

It was generally perceived that some political leaders had exercised undue influence over LAB, which hampered fruitful negotiations and resolution of issues, apparently for political gains. The tendency had increased as the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh elections were approaching next month.

Many within LAB, especially youth leaders, had expressed concerns regarding "politicisation" of the body, which led to intense internal conflicts in recent times.

Accepting LAB's decision, the local Congress unit also announced that it will remain away from talks, if people of Ladakh desire so.

Wangchuk, who was included in the high powered committee after the resignation of the Chhewang and Congress's Nawang Rigzin Jora on July 6, went on a hunger strike along with a group of locals, including some retired soldiers, on September 10. However, the hunger strike has so far failed to evoke any response from the government.

Previously, over 1,000 kanals of land allocated to Wangchuk's institution HIAL was cancelled by the UT administration due to various irregularities including failure to complete the lease agreement, non-payment of dues and non-establishment of any recognised university, for which the land was allocated.

Wangchuk is also under CBI scanner for suspicious foreign transactions. However, he dismissed all the charges and accused the government of "witch hunt" in view of his association with LAB.

His hunger strike has evoked mixed response in Ladakh, with many veteran leaders suggesting preference to talks with the government over confrontational agitation.

Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA), a powerful body within LAB, passed an unanimous resolution on September 13, calling for separation of political parties from the grouping and persuading Thupstan Chhewang "at all costs, respecting his conditions and sentiments" to return.

LAB along with Kargil Democratic Alliance is engaged in dialogue with the Ministry of Home Affairs over its demands for which they have been agitating for the last four years.

The two powerful bodies are hopeful of a positive response from the government to their request for resumption of dialogue.

IUST Hosts Workshop On Earthquake Risk Mitigation & Management

Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) organized a one-day training and capacity-building workshop on Earthquake Risk Mitigation and Management. The program was jointly conducted by the Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR), Department of Civil Engineering, and Department of Architecture, IUST, in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR), Government of J&K.

The workshop featured an expert session by Er. Wajahat Dedmari, President of DW En-

gineering Inc., California, USA, who shared insights on earthquake-resistant design and strategies for risk reduction. The event was attended by the Dean, School of Engineering and Technology (SoET), along with faculty and students from Civil Engineering and Architecture. Participants engaged in interactive discussions on preparedness, resilient infrastructure, and community safety measures, with a focus on building a disaster-resilient future for the region. The workshop was a part of the series of the workshops that the university is organizing in the area of disaster risk reduction.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. DSTE/JAT acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders on https://www.ireps.gov.in against Tender Notice No. 433_Sig_JAT_14_25_26 Closing Date/Time 08.10.2025 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like Net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.	
NIT HEADER	
Contract Type	Works
Name of Work	Interlocking of 7 nos. L-xing gates having TUV more than 20000 i.e B2-2 & C-9 on PTK-JAT Section and C-46A, C-51, C-97, C-134 & C-142 on PTK-BPRS Section over Jammu division
Tender Closing Date Time	08.10.2025 15:00
Date Time of Uploading Tender	16.09.2025 17:41
Advertised Value (Rs.)	11431977.29
Bidding Start Date as per IREPS	24.09.2025
Earnest Money (Rs.)	207200.00
Period of Completion	6 Months
Tender Notice No: 433_Sig_JAT_14_25_26 Date:-17.09.2025 Closing Date/Time : 08.10.2025 15:00 2865/2025	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY Notice Inviting Tender	
Sr.DEE/TR/JAT acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the works as under. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date 09.10.2025 at 15:00 Hrs. only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall not be considered.	
Tender No. : 755-TRD-JAT-2025-26	
Name of work : TRD work in c/w construction of platform no. 4 & 5 between line no. 5 and 6 at Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan Railway Station over Jammu division.	
App. Cost (Rs.) : 2,92,47,008.05	
Cost of Tender form (Rs.) : NIL	
Date & time for submission of tender : Up to 09.10.2025, 15:00 Hrs.	
Earnest Money # (Rs.) : 2,96,200/-	
Completion Period : Six (06) Months	
Opening of tender : 09.10.2025 after 15:00 Hrs.	
Website Particulars : www.ireps.gov.in	
Note : # Tenderer(s) may please note that offers received without Bid Security either in cash through e-payment gateway or as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents (as per Annexure-21) valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period, will be considered as incomplete & invalid offer and for which contractor shall have no claim on Railway.	
No. : 755-TRD-JAT-2025-26 Dated: 16.09.2025 2853/2025	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

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KO VIEW

New Cancer Vaccine

The announcement of Russia's new mRNA-based cancer vaccine, Enteromix, has stirred global hope. Claimed to show 100% efficacy and safety in early clinical trials, it comes as the world continues its long battle against one of humanity's deadliest diseases. The vaccine is designed to train the immune system to recognize and destroy cancer cells, sparing healthy tissue. If all goes well in the bigger trials, it could usher in a new era in oncology where malignancy is combated by the body's natural defences.

This breakthrough comes in the wake of the development of a drug in 2022 when twelve rectal cancer patients treated with dostarlimab were found to be completely tumor-free after six months of therapy. That trial, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, was hailed as "a miracle," though experts stressed that far more evidence was needed before speaking of a comprehensive cure. Taken together, these two developments suggest that the science of cancer treatment may finally be turning a corner.

For Kashmir, such breakthroughs could not be more urgent. The region is in the throes of a cancer crisis that has quietly worsened over the last decade. In 2011, a little over 3,000 new cases were reported. By 2021, Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) alone recorded more than 5,000 fresh cases. The figures from recent years tell a grim story. SKIMS alone has documented over 44,000 cancer cases between 2013 and 2023, while Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) Hospital has reported more than 6,000 cases between 2017 and 2023. The trend is not confined to Srinagar. This excludes data from hospitals in Anantnag and Jammu, which also shows a substantial surge.

Experts have blamed lifestyle choices, environmental factors, and poor dietary habits for this surge. Besides, food adulteration and contamination have also been linked to the rise, with chemicals and dyes finding their way into daily consumption. The recent rotten meat scandal has lent credence to this explanation. Yet despite the mounting numbers, there has been little by way of credible, publicly accessible research from the region's major health institutions on the precise causes. Such knowledge is crucial if people are to take meaningful precautions and if authorities are to design effective interventions.

Enteromix and drugs like dostarlimab may eventually transform the way cancer is treated worldwide. But until they are tested widely and made accessible, Kashmir cannot afford to wait. The rising number of cancer cases should alarm the government and persuade it to invest heavily in research, healthcare infrastructure, and above all, prevention. Hope must be matched by action.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

The Fiscal Tightrope

As Kashmir grapples with a persistent budget deficit, untapped sectors and strategic reforms offer a path to sustainable growth.

Irshad Mushtaq

Despite generous central assistance, Jammu and Kashmir faces a growing budget deficit that threatens its long-term stability. Half of the government's revenue flows directly into salaries and pensions, leaving little room for meaningful development.

Agriculture and horticulture remain the backbone of the economy, contributing around 11,000 crores. These sectors reflect local traditions and livelihood but lack the capacity to spur large-scale growth or generate significant tax revenue. Industrial development remains minimal, limiting the region's ability to raise its own revenue or attract substantial investment.

The Union Territory's reliance on central grants underscores an urgent need for self-sufficiency. In 2024-25, J&K contributed merely 8,673 crore in GST compared to the 1.18 lac crore it received through the union budget. Maharashtra, by contrast, boasts a GSDP nearly 20 times larger and generated 3.60 lac crore in GST. This stark gap reveals a missed opportunity.

Yet, hope lies in sectors ripe for revival. Tourism, handicrafts, handlooms, and traditional industries hold significant untapped potential. With targeted investment, skill development programmes, and an improved business environment, these sectors could become engines of growth.

The union budget allocates funds for roads, education, healthcare, and social welfare. The challenge lies in using these resources effectively, prioritising transparency, accountability, and strategy over short-term fixes.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Kashmir's Copper Crisis

A centuries-old copper industry stands at a tipping point in Kashmir. The rise of cheap fakes, lack of innovation, and broken trust put artisans' livelihoods, and a vital cultural tradition, on the line.



Sahil Manzoor Bhatti



The artisans are caught in a crossfire. Young Kashmiris see little reason to spend years learning a craft that no longer pays. With rising unemployment, they drift toward uncertain jobs or migration. Meanwhile, cheap imitations thrive, bought by customers seeking affordability, not authenticity.

In Srinagar's old city, the sound of hammers on copper once marked Kashmir's tradition. Artisans shaped flower pots, samovar trophies, trays, and cookware by hand, using skills passed down for generations.

Introduced in the 14th century by Shah Hamdaan (RA), the copper industry supported thousands of families and became a symbol of the region's cultural identity.

Now, those hammer strikes are slowly fading into silence.

Today, mass-produced copperware floods the market. Machine-made imitations, cheap and shoddy, are sold at prices far below what an artisan can afford to charge.

Even worse, adulterated copper items slip into the supply chain, undermining consumer confidence. Many buyers, tourists and locals alike, hesitate before purchasing what used to be Kashmir's proud signature souvenirs.

Behind this decline lies a broader failure. The region's economy struggles under layers of poor governance, corruption, and environmental neglect. Recent scandals, including rotten meat exposed in hotel kitchens and fake medicines circulating in pharmacies, have deepened mistrust in local markets.

Every sector suffers, whether it's horticulture, tourism, handicrafts, or agriculture. The copper industry bears the same scars.

Government efforts to modernize the region have produced unintended harm.

Battery-powered rickshaws and smart buses were meant to improve mobility. Instead, they create traffic jams on roads designed for cycles and pedestrians. Free public buses have crippled auto-rickshaw drivers who once relied on daily fares. Urban planning remains haphazard. Illegal encroachments shrink flood canals, making Srinagar more vulnerable every monsoon.

In seismic zone 5, where every building should be earthquake-resistant, safety standards remain ignored.

The artisans are caught in this crossfire. Young Kashmiris see little reason to spend years learning a craft that no longer pays. With rising unemployment, they drift toward uncertain jobs or migration. Meanwhile, cheap imitations thrive, bought by customers seeking affordability, not authenticity.

Saving this heritage demands bold, coherent action.

First, the government must recognize copper artisans as national treasures. Financial aid, low-interest loans, and skill-enhancement workshops should be made easily available. These measures would help artisans invest in tools, innovate designs, and scale up without sacrificing tradition.

Second, the government should introduce an authenticity certification program. Scannable QR codes or official holographic seals embedded in copperware can assure customers they are buying genu-

ine, Kashmiri-made products. This simple step could rebuild trust, attract tourists, and boost exports.

Third, product innovation can help connect the past with present needs. Instead of limiting copperwork to traditional plates and samovars, artisans could create modern décor: stylish wall clocks, elegant light fixtures, unique trophies. The samovar trophies handed out at local cricket tournaments are a smart example, blending tradition with modern pride.

Finally, tourism should embrace copperware as part of Kashmir's living heritage. Souvenir shops and local exhibitions must highlight authentic pieces, making them part of every traveller's memory.

A visitor leaving with a genuine copper keepsake leaves with a piece of Kashmir itself.

The copper industry has always been a cultural lifeline, a symbol of Kashmiri artistry, and history. Without proper care and innovation, it may vanish, leaving behind empty workshops and lost livelihoods.

The time for action is now. Future generations deserve more than mass-produced fakes. They deserve the beauty of real Kashmiri copper, crafted by human hands, grounded in centuries of tradition.

The author can be reached at
sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com. Views expressed are personal.

Letter to Editor

Kashmir's Apple Industry Is Dying on the Road

Every autumn in Kashmir, orchards blush red and green as apple harvests reach their peak. For generations, these apples have been the lifeblood of the valley, supporting nearly seven lakh families. Farmers rise before dawn, tend trees through harsh winters and monsoon rains, and, come harvest time, carry their hopes in wooden crates. Yet today, those hopes rot on the side of the road.

The Srinagar-Jammu highway, the only major land artery linking Kashmir to the rest of India, becomes a battleground each harvest season. Blocked by landslides, trucks laden with apples face delays that stretch into days. By the time fruit reaches Delhi or Mumbai, freshness fades, market prices collapse, and farmers are forced to sell at ruinously low rates. A crate that should have fetched thousands is sometimes offloaded for a fraction of its worth.

Kashmir produces around 20 lakh metric tonnes of apples annually, accounting for 70

percent of India's supply. This industry is not merely an agricultural activity. It forms the economic backbone of the valley.

From orchard workers to cold storage operators, from truck drivers to market commission agents, livelihoods are tightly woven around this fruit. When the highway blocks, entire communities feel the tremors.

Cold storage facilities could change everything. With enough storage capacity, farmers could hold their fruit until transport clears or market prices improve. Cold storage is hope, but without government support, it remains an unattainable dream for small growers.

High upfront costs, lack of subsidies, and insufficient loans keep this solution out of reach for many.

Every season, the same pattern plays out: farmers face mounting debt, youth abandon dreams of innovation for survival, and the valley's economy bleeds.

Walk through an apple orchard in Septem-

ber, and the atmosphere carries an unspoken anxiety. Farmers glance at their crates with fear. "Will my apples reach the market in time?" has become the question that overshadows every smile.

Solutions are simple and achievable: uninterrupted passage for perishable goods during harvest, government-backed cold storage infrastructure, railway alternatives, and transparent compensation for losses.

These are the very tools that could rescue the industry and the people who depend on it.

Kashmir's apple industry stands at a crossroads. Without decisive action, the valley risks losing its economy, and future. The orchards will continue to bloom every spring, but their pride may wither if the highways remain blocked.

Sincerely

Ishfaq Khaliq
ishfaqalnoortech@gmail.com

Kashmir Scores Big

From village fields to international competitions, young Kashmiris are embracing athletics, redefining ambition, and rewriting the valley's story.

Mehak Farooq

Kashmir is witnessing a transformation that few imagined a decade ago. Fields that once lay empty are now crowded with young people chasing footballs, paddling kayaks, and sprinting on track lanes.

Sports, long sidelined in the valley, are emerging as a defining force in the lives of its youth.

Official figures show the scale of this shift. In just five years, youth participation in sports has surged from around 2.5 lakh to nearly 40 lakh.

The growth stretches from remote village grounds to Srinagar's refurbished stadiums, with nearly 100 Khelo India Centres across Jammu and Kashmir providing structured training.

For many young Kashmiris, athletics has moved from a pastime to a path toward national and international recognition.

Opportunities now abound where few existed before. Football academies, winter games in Gulmarg, and local coaching programs offer structured avenues for skill development, while encouraging discipline and teamwork.

Simultaneously, government investment



under Khelo India's "Sports for Peace and Development" vertical has funded stadiums, sports complexes, and equipment, making professional-level training accessible.

Srinagar has become the valley's showcase.

The Legends League Cricket in October 2024 brought top national players to the city, drawing thousands of fans and signaling that Kashmir is ready to host big-ticket events.

Dal Lake, long known for its scenic beauty, now hosts the Khelo India Water Sports Festival, attracting hundreds of athletes from 28 states and union territories.

Local athletes are capturing attention on the national stage.

Gowhar Ahmed, who overcame a disability to compete in para canoeing, and Bilquis Mir, an international canoeist and the first Indian woman to serve on the Olympic jury in Paris 2024, exemplify the potential of Kashmiri talent.

Their stories reflect determination, perseverance, and a new era of visibility for the

valley's athletes.

South Kashmir is experiencing its own sports revival.

Pulwama recently hosted its first day-night cricket match, drawing thousands of residents to the stands. Shopian's Batpora Stadium now hosts sports festivals that attract entire communities, while Bijbehara's Premier League has become a popular event blending athletic competition with social initiatives, including campaigns promoting healthy lifestyles.



Kashmir's sporting rise is essentially about the choices young people make. From village fields to national arenas, they are building an identity rooted in talent, determination, and shared pride.

Plans for professional sports complexes in Pulwama and Shopian further promise long-term opportunities for training and competition.

Women's participation has also surged. The Baramulla Women's Premier League, where the Baramulla Stars lifted the trophy, showcases female athletes taking lead roles and challenging traditional expectations.

Transparent selection policies and sports-related job opportunities have encouraged many young women to pursue athletics seriously.

The change is visible in how youth spend their time.

Sports calendars, rather than any other markers, now guide daily life. Competitions, training sessions, and festivals provide platforms for recognition, achievement, and pride.

Kashmir's sporting rise is essentially about the choices young people make.

From village fields to national arenas, they are building an identity rooted in talent, determination, and shared pride.

— Mehak Farooq, hailing from Kashmir and based in New Delhi, is a journalist specializing in defence and strategic affairs.



Sports calendars, rather than any other markers, now guide daily life. Competitions, training sessions, and festivals provide platforms for recognition, achievement, and pride.

The Meal That Told the Truth

I went to eat with my friends, expecting a simple meal. What I found instead revealed a truth so unsettling that it still haunts me.

Nusrat Hassan

That day began like any other. The sky over Srinagar hung heavy with an air of exhaustion. My friends and I were on our way to campus, passing through the crowded streets, each of us carrying the fatigue of early classes and relentless deadlines.

We decided to stop for a meal near the varsity gate, where small restaurants cater to students and workers.

The eatery looked ordinary, the place you pass by without a second thought, except today it became the stage for something much bigger.

We ordered chicken. Nothing special, just an attempt to restore our energy.

When the food arrived, we ate without hesitation. But within two bites, everything changed.

The chicken was wrong, slimy and heavy. It tasted as if it had already died twice before reaching my mouth.

A sour, rotten smell wafted up. My throat burned, my stomach recoiled. My friends' faces mirrored mine: a mixture of shock, fear, and disbelief.

For a moment, none of us spoke. We kept chewing, hoping the taste was a fluke, that our senses deceived us. But they didn't. The truth was unmistakable.

We were eating rotten chicken. I remember the look in my friends' eyes, that frozen, silent realisation. We were trapped between hunger and illness, powerless to do more than swallow the bitter truth.

Hospitals in Kashmir are filling up with patients suffering from



borne illnesses. The overcrowded wards tell the real story of neglect, unchecked greed, and failed accountability.

I thought about confronting the restaurant owner. I imagined standing there, asking why the food was rotten, demanding an explanation.

But what authority do students hold in Kashmir? Who listens to young voices in a place where power flows through money, influence, and silence?

So I chose to write, because silence isn't an option. I had seen too much, experienced too deeply to let it pass.

We often blame society. We speak of corruption as if it's an abstract force, something that exists elsewhere. Politicians are corrupt. Systems are broken. The narrative is convenient. It distances us from responsibility.

But the rot begins here, in the small decisions made every day.

When a shopkeeper ignores hygiene standards, when an inspector

turns a blind eye, when a customer accepts food without questioning its quality, the trade continues. It is silent, invisible, yet deadly.

Kashmir is a land of contradictions. Beneath its breathtaking landscapes, lies a slow decay. I don't pretend to have solutions. I don't claim this story will change the world. I only know that if we don't speak, if we don't expose these silent betrayals, they will grow.

I still feel the weight of that rotten chicken in my mouth, the taste of greed mixed with apathy. It is a question that lingers: how many more go hungry, unknowingly poisoned, while we look away?

This isn't just a story of a meal gone wrong. It is a chronicle of negligence, of responsibility evaded, and of voices too small to be heard.

But perhaps, if enough small voices rise, they can shake the foundation, because every plate matters, every bite counts.

— The author is a graduate student at GDC Ganderbal.

The Magical World of Tea

Exploring the timeless charm, rituals, and flavors of the world's most beloved beverage

Lily Swann

A cup of tea can never be big enough, nor a book long enough, to satisfy a true devotee. C.S. Lewis once mused.

And as Henry James reminded us, few hours in life are as blissful as those devoted to the ritual of afternoon tea.

Sincerely thinking, it is not truly an addiction, for one has been known to go hours without drinking this magical beverage.

Yet, it is the nectar, the ambrosia, that has trickled from the heavens for admirers and followers like me.

It's the panacea for all ills, and the celebratory fluid in moments of sheer thrills.

"Yaar cha pila" is an oft-heard statement as you walk along the corridors of life. "Arre bhai, ek chai ki pyaali mil jaati toh mazaa aa jaata."

This fun factor never ceases to add zing to 'khushi' and a balm to 'ghami'.

The cooling effect on hot days and hot heads alike, because "garmiyan mein garam chai thhandak pahunchaati hai."

Whether it's the 'kadak' chai of the truckers on the G.T. Road, shouting to the tea shop server, "punj sau meel waali cha peya oye chhotu," or the exotic blends favored by Earl Grey enthusiasts. Whether it's the 'Chai Latte' of the Starbucks crowd, amusingly called chai tea, or the comforting 'masala chai' in Indian homes, with ginger, cardamom, and cinnamon, take your pick.

Next came the barrage of dedicated black tea followers. Green tea, though, made a spectacular entry with its



Well, I say, chaps, thank God it travelled all over the world so that I get my cuppa even on the coffee-soaked shores of the United States of America.

host of benefits. Lemon and honey wormed their way into the pretty cups.

A simple long glass, which keeps the hands warm in Indian winters, is a favorite.

The porcelain and bone china, with fancy brand names and their snooty value, add to the classy experience.

The Japanese knew what they were doing when they dedicated a whole ceremony to it.

Well, I say, chaps, thank God it travelled all over the world so that I get my cuppa even on the coffee-soaked shores of the United States of America.

— Lily Swann is an internationally acclaimed poet, novelist, and essayist, author of *A Drop of Cosmos*. She is the 2023–24 International Beat Poet Laureate India and a Peace and Humanity ambassador.



Festive Season Car Care: 6 Smart DIY Hacks Every Owner Must Try

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: With vehicle ownership surging during the festive season and buoyed further by the recent GST overhaul, demand for car care solutions is witnessing rapid growth in India. The domestic car care market, valued at about USD 425 million in 2024, is expected to touch USD 554 million by 2033, according to IMARC Group. Rising consumer preference for do-it-yourself (DIY) upkeep is driving the trend, with brands like Turtle Wax offering innovative solutions designed for Indian conditions.

From battling dust and pollution to restoring trims and interiors, here are six smart hacks that can help car owners protect their vehicles this festive season:



Using improper cloths can scratch surfaces and reduce shine. A curated range of microfiber towels and applicators ensures safe, streak-free application across car surfaces, maintaining finish and efficiency during cleaning.

1. Ensure Clear Vision in All Weathers

Poor visibility during monsoon, fog, or frosty mornings is a major safety risk. Turtle Wax's Clearvue™ Rain Repellent, with silicone-based technology, helps rain, sleet, and fog slide off easily while also preventing frost build-up.

2. Protect Your Shine Against Harsh Conditions

Sunlight, grime, and pollution dull paintwork over time. Easy-to-use ceramic-based products like Hybrid Solutions Ceramic Wash & Wax and Ceramic Spray Coating not only clean but also seal surfaces with a hydrophobic, glossy layer that preserves

shine and safeguards paint.

3. Groom Between Washes

Busy schedules often leave cars dusty between regular washes. Products like the Ceramic 3-in-1 Detailer allow waterless cleaning of light grime, enhancing gloss and leaving a streak-free finish without scratches.

4. Interiors Matter Too

Dust, spills, and humidity create unpleasant odors and reduce cabin hygiene. The Ceramic + Graphene Inside Job with Odor-X® offers a multi-

surface clean while conditioning interiors with an aloe-enriched, UV-resistant finish and neutralising odors for long-lasting comfort.

5. Revive Faded Trims

Exterior trims often fade under sun and pollution. The Trim Restorer revives dull plastics and rubber, restoring depth of color while protecting against UV, grime, and weather extremes — ideal for bumpers, cladding, and window trims.

6. Wipe and Shine Right

Using improper cloths can

scratch surfaces and reduce shine. A curated range of microfiber towels and applicators ensures safe, streak-free application across car surfaces, maintaining finish and efficiency during cleaning.

Why It Matters:

Experts say India's evolving car care culture is driven by premiumisation, rising DIY momentum, and the need to combat urban dust and pollution. As festive demand peaks, these easy-to-use hacks offer car owners affordable, effective ways to preserve both the look and life of their vehicles.

Droughts Across India's Rivers Occurring In Sync Amid climate Change: Study

Press Trust Of India

Climate change could be driving a co-occurrence of droughts across multiple river basins in India, causing severe water shortage and affecting food and water security, a study from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar has found.

Researchers Vimal Mishra and Dipesh Singh Chuphal said droughts and a widespread drying of rivers are becoming more common, together driving an increase in sync between droughts across several rivers.

The findings, published in the journal American Geophysical Union (AGU) Advances, have "profound implications associated with water scarcity" for the country, the team said.

The authors modelled water flow at 45 gauge stations on major rivers across India, including Ganga and Brahmaputra, from 1200 to 2012. Historical data and observations on water flow were used for the analysis.

"Drought synchronicity has increased across the Indian rivers in the present period (1850-2012) than in the (pre-industrial era) (1200-1849)," the authors wrote.

They added that "the most substantial increase in drought synchronicity occurred from the early 20th century", with about two-thirds of the gauge stations (30 of 45) registering their worst drought in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The findings provide critical insights into long-term trends in droughts across Indian rivers and "underscore the growing risk of large-scale water scarcity", the team said.

Identifying major droughts during the study period of 1200-2012 using reconstructed data, the authors found "exceptional" events in 1987, 1721, 2002, 1358, 1566, 1972, and 1694 -- most driven by a failure in monsoons and "reduced flow in several rivers in India".

For instance, the 1721-1723 drought affected three-fourths of the country and was recorded the last millennium's most severe drought during a monsoon. Ganga and the east-flowing Subarnarekha were among the most affected rivers, the team said.

Severe monsoon deficits seen in 1987 and 2002 across the Indian re-



gion -- except for parts of the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins -- resulted in droughts in over 90 per cent of the stations, the study found.

The findings are in line with those from previous studies that link climate change with droughts becoming more common and severe across the world, the authors said.

"Synchronous streamflow droughts across multiple river basins can lead to large-scale water scarcity and disruptions in food and water security," they wrote.



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UNRAVEL KASHMIR

J&K Bank Organizes Workshop On eNWR With WDRA, NERL

Workshop aims to promote innovative financing solutions and enhance agricultural supply chain infrastructure in J&K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR-Aimed at creating awareness about the benefits of eNWR-based financing, J&K Bank Wednesday organized a one-day workshop on financing against Electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (eNWR) at its Corporate Headquarters in Srinagar.

Conducted in collaboration with Warehouse Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) and National E-Repository Limited (NERL), the event witnessed large participation of farmers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), CA Store owners and warehouse operators.

Additional Chief Secretary (J&K) Shailendra Kumar was the Chief Guest on the occasion, while Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee participated as the Guest of Honour. Member (WDRA) Shanti Lal Jain attended as the Special Guest. The event was also attended by MD & CEO (CCRL) Kamalendra Srivastava, Bank's Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, Chief General Managers Sunit Kumar and Imtiaz Ahmad Bhat along with General Managers, Deputy General Managers, and other senior officials from J&K Bank, WDRA, and NERL.

In his remarks during the workshop, Addl. Chief Secretary

Shailendra Kumar highlighted the Government's commitment to enhancing Agri-infrastructure. He stated, "The current capacity of CA stores in Kashmir is around four lakh metric tonnes, and the Government is planning to increase this to 10 lakh metric tonnes over the next five years. We urge entrepreneurs to establish more such facilities across districts like Kupwara, Bandipora, Budgam, and Kulgam, ensuring better logistics for agricultural produce and greater benefits for growers."

He further elaborated, "For this purpose, we are taking measures to encourage expansion of CA stores into other districts, which will democratize access to benefits like eNWR based financing within this new digital ecosystem."

Speaking on the performance of agricultural loans in the region, he said, "The remarkable thing I would like to share is that J&K has very low NPAs in agricultural credit, meaning almost all farmers are repaying their loans in time."

On addressing infrastructure challenges, he added, "The growing and better connectivity of roads and railway infrastructure across J&K will soon revolutionize the entire agricultural value-chain."

J&K Bank Organizes Mega Financial Camp at Ambgrota, Jammu



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Aimed at enhancing financial inclusion and spreading awareness about government-backed social security schemes, J&K Bank Wednesday organized a Mega Financial Camp at Ambgrota in Jammu. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, with many availing benefits and enrolling under various schemes.

Regional Director of Reserve Bank of India (RBI - Jammu) Chandrashekhar Azad was the Chief Guest at the event attended by General Manager & Divisional Head (Jammu) Ashok Gupta, DGM (RBI) Vibha Gupta, Bank's Zonal Head (Jammu) Anita Nehru along with other senior officials from RBI and the Bank.

Lauding the Bank's efforts in reaching underserved areas, Chandrashekhar Azad emphasized the importance of extending banking services to every

corner of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. He elaborated on the various financial protections provided to vulnerable groups under government social security schemes and urged greater awareness and participation to ensure maximum coverage.

Speaking on the occasion, he also highlighted the critical role of Re-KYC in ensuring uninterrupted banking services and urged customers to update their KYC documents on time. Advising the public on safe banking practices, he cautioned individuals to remain vigilant against digital frauds and to adopt secure methods while transacting.

While addressing the gathering, Bank's Divisional Head (Jammu) Ashok Gupta said, "At J&K Bank, we are committed to empowering communities through financial literacy and inclusion. Our aim is to ensure that every household has access to formal banking channels and the benefits of government schemes."

Centre Notifies CGST Rates For Goods Effective Sep 22

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Union Finance Ministry has notified Central GST (CGST) tax rates for goods, which will be effective from September 22.

States will now have to follow suit and notify the State GST (SGST) rates to be levied on goods and services beginning Monday.

Under GST, the revenues are shared equally between the Centre and the states. Effective Monday, GST will be a two-tier structure, wherein the majority of goods and services will attract tax of 5 and 18 per cent.

A 40 per cent tax will be levied on ultra luxury items, while tobacco and related products will continue to be in the 28 per cent plus Cess category.

Currently, Goods and Services Tax (GST) is levied in 4 slabs of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent. Besides, a compensation cess is levied on luxury items and demerit or sin goods.

With the reduction in rates on most goods, the onus is now on trade and industry to pass on the benefit of these tax rate changes to consumers and align compliance in a timely manner.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said by issuing clear schedules in the notification, the government



WITH THIS CLARITY IN PLACE, THE BALL IS NOW IN THE INDUSTRY'S COURT. Businesses must promptly update their systems, revise pricing, and ensure smooth implementation of the new rates across supply chains,"

has provided the much-needed clarity on applicable rates across a wide spectrum of goods.

"With this clarity in place, the ball is now in the industry's court. Businesses must promptly update their systems, revise pricing, and ensure smooth implementation of the new rates across supply chains," Mohan said.

The success of this reform will depend on how effectively and transparently the industry adopts these revised tax rates, he added.

EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal said that as rate

notifications are now being released, it is imperative for industries to align their ERP systems, pricing decisions and supply chain.

"This strategic alignment is critical to ensure a smooth implementation and, crucially, to guarantee that the benefits of this rate rationalisation are effectively passed on to the end consumer," Agarwal said.

The decision to lower tax rates to benefit the common man was taken by the GST council, comprising the Centre and states, at its meeting on September 3.

GST Reforms To Inject ₹2 Lakh Cr To Economy: FM

Press Trust of India

VISAKHAPATNAM- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the next generation GST reforms will infuse Rs 2 lakh crore into the economy, leaving people with more cash in hand that otherwise would have gone as taxes.

Addressing the Outreach and Interaction Program on Next Gen GST Reforms, she also said, following the tax reforms, 99 per cent of goods under the 12 per cent GST slab have moved to five per cent. The rejig has resulted in 90 per cent items under 28 per cent tax slab slipping into the 18 per cent bracket.

She said several companies, including some FMCG giants, are voluntarily coming forward to give rate cuts and pass on the benefit to consumers even before September 22, the implementation date for the new GST regime.

"With this new gen tax regime, with only two slabs (5 per cent and 18 per cent), Rs 2 lakh crore is injected into the economy. People will have cash in hand," she said.

She said before undertaking the rate rejig, the NDA government kept five filters-reduction of rate for poor and



middle class, fulfilling aspirations of middle class, benefiting farmers community, pro-MSME and sectors that are useful for the country in creating jobs and export potential.

The minister highlighted that the GST revenues grew to Rs 22.08 lakh crore in 2025 from Rs 7.19 lakh crore in 2018 (FY 2017-18).

According to Sitharaman, the taxpayer's number grew to 1.51 crore from the earlier 65 lakh.

Sitharaman said the GST Council is a prime example of cooperative federalism, noting it is the only constitutional body created since

independence. Playing the previous UPA regime, she described the earlier tax structures as "tax terrorism" and said a lot of exercise went into the implementation of GST as part of one nation-one tax.

"The UPA government went for 10 years. You could not come with GST. You could not convince the states about GST... I could have given a harsh political reply. But not today," she said.

The restricted GST rate slabs will come into effect from September 22. The GST council has reduced rate slabs from four (5, 12, 18 and 28) to just two (5 and 18 per cent).

Gold Retreats From Peak Level To Trade Rs 1,300 Lower At Rs 1.13 Lakh/10 G

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices retreated from peak levels and traded Rs 1,300 lower at Rs 1,13,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, as investors rushed to book profits ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined by Rs 1,300 to Rs 1,13,300 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity had jumped Rs 1,800 each to touch a lifetime high of Rs 1,15,100 and Rs 1,14,600 per 10 grams, respectively, in the Delhi bullion market.

"Gold traded weak on profit booking ahead of the crucial Fed policy decision, as participants trimmed risk before the outcome. The sentiment remains cautious, with markets awaiting not just the rate cut but also the Fed's forward guidance on further easing."

"Any neutral stance or less dovish comments without a clear roadmap for additional rate cuts could trigger a couple of percentage points of downside in bullion," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

Silver too gave up gains and drifted lower, with profit-taking weighing on sentiment.

The white metal slumped Rs 1,670 to Rs 1,31,200 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. In the previous session, it had scaled a new record of Rs 1,32,870 per kg, after rising Rs 570.



Globally, gold and silver also witnessed a pullback after hitting fresh peaks, as investors stayed cautious ahead of the Federal Open Market Committee's (FOMC) policy announcement later in the day.

Spot gold slipped nearly 1 per cent to USD 3,664.82 per ounce after scaling an all-time high of USD 3,703.23 per ounce on Tuesday.

"Spot gold eased slightly to USD 3,664 per ounce as the dollar attempted a recovery from near its lowest level in three years ahead of the highly anticipated Federal Open Market Committee rate decision."

"Investor attention now turns to Federal Reserve (Fed) Chair Jerome Powell's post-decision press conference and the updated dot plot, with markets seeking guidance on the Fed's policy path through the remainder of 2025," said Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities.

Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities and Currencies at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said, "The US Fed is expected to slash the benchmark rate by 25 basis points, but Fed governors such as Stephen Miran and Michelle Bowman may dissent to pave the way for aggressive interest rate cuts later."

Silver too dropped by nearly 3 per cent to USD 41.38 per ounce.

Commissioner State Taxes Chairs Review Meeting To Strengthen Tax Admin In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- To evaluate ongoing departmental activities, address key operational challenges, and strategize enhanced tax compliance and revenue augmentation, Commissioner State Taxes J&K, P.K. Bhat, chaired an extensive review meeting of the State Taxes department, Kashmir division.

The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner State Taxes Kashmir, Parveez Ahmad Raina; State Taxes Officers from all circles across the division besides others.

The meeting discussed threadbare identification of fake ITC suppliers, realisation of revenue from fake ITC cases, monitoring of TDS payments, timely filing of returns, action on intelligence reports, addressing dormant dealers, audit and revenue realization, verification of e-Way bills, leveraging MIS & GST prime tools, sector-specific enforcement, and taxpayer engagement and education.

Commissioner highlighted the critical need to identify taxpayers who issue Input Tax Credit (ITC) through GSTR-1 but fail to file GSTR-3B returns, leading to significant revenue shortfalls. He also stressed the

importance of expediting efforts to recover revenue from fake ITC cases that have already been identified.

Officers were instructed to ensure that taxpayers receiving Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) payments from deductors are filing their GSTR-3B returns on time. Emphasis was also laid on strict adherence to return filing deadlines to ensure consistency in revenue inflow.

CST directed prompt and decisive action against taxpayers flagged through intelligence inputs. Officers were asked to thoroughly analyze these cases and initiate necessary corrective measures.

Commissioner underscored the need to track and scrutinize dormant dealers who file Nil returns but continue receiving goods using PAN and Aadhaar details. Officers were asked to ensure such practices are identified and curbed.

On the occasion, a review of audits conducted under Section 65 of the J&K GST Act, 2017 was undertaken. Officers were directed to submit action-taken reports along with details of revenue realized post-audit.

Commissioner also advised officers to ensure timely responses to AG Audit queries to prevent delays in revenue recovery.

PAG, Finance Dept Hold Workshop On Accrual Accounting In J&K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With an aim to enhance fiscal management and improve transparency in financial reporting of State Autonomous Bodies (SABs) and State Public Sector Enterprises (SPSEs), the office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit), Jammu & Kashmir, in collaboration with the J&K Finance Department, organised a one-day workshop on accrual accounting and audit of financial statements on Monday at Srinagar.

Principal Accountant General (Audit) KP Yadav, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh Vaidya, Director General (Accounts & Treasuries) Fayaz Lone and Director General (Expenditure) Sajjad Hussain addressed the participants. Many officers from Jammu joined the session virtually.

The workshop, divided into two sessions, focused on the preparation of financial statements under the accrual system of accounting. The morning session covered SABs, highlighting

compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAPs), while the afternoon session was dedicated to SPSEs, emphasizing the Companies Act, 2013 and adoption of accrual-based accounting.

Officials noted that the transition from a cash-based to accrual-based system would provide a more accurate picture of organizational financial health, thereby strengthening fiscal discipline and transparency in J&K's public sector institutions.

JKEDI Organizes Startup Idea Challenge - Boot Camp' At GDC Boys Udhampur

Observer News Service

UDHAMPUR- To foster innovation and entrepreneurship among youth, the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute on Wednesday organized the 'Startup Idea Challenge - Boot Camp' at Government Degree College Boys Udhampur. The initiative, held under the aegis of the J&K Startup Policy 2024-2027, drew enthusiastic participation from over 150 students, aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators and faculty members from across the district.

A three-member team from JKEDI conducted the session, which featured expert insights, mentorship, and idea evaluation.

Out of the 150 participants, 11 students and innovators presented their startup ideas to a distinguished panel comprising academic leaders, industry professionals and



officials from JKEDI and the District Industries Centre, Udhampur. The panel praised the originality and enthusiasm showcased by the participants, offering constructive feedback and guidance. Seven standout ideas were shortlisted for the next phase of the Startup Idea Challenge.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Sanjay Kumar Verma, Principal, GDC Boys Udhampur, who commended the government's role in promoting innovation, research and entrepreneurship. He highlighted the importance of such initiatives in equipping the youth with critical skills and a forward-thinking mindset

essential for driving economic growth.

During the interactive session, Yash Paul, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Udhampur, emphasized the impact of Idea Challenge workshops in nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship across Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Vinod Sharma, Incharge, CNEC JKEDI, provided an in-depth overview of the J&K Startup Policy 2024-2027, detailing the structured three-phase format of the Startup Idea Challenge—idea submission, mentorship, and a grand finale—as well as the incentives and institutional support available for startups.

Agri Deptt Jammu Reviews Crop Loss Claims Under PMFBY

Observer News Service

JAMMU- Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta Wednesday chaired a meeting with State Heads of Insurance Companies here at Krishi Bhawan Talab Tillo to expedite the process claims under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for crop loss induced by heavy rains and landslides in the region.

The meeting stressed on strengthening coordination among the Agriculture Department and Insurance Companies for timely clearance of the Insurance claims.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director (SLUB/Farms) S. Sohan Singh; Deputy Director (Planning) Priyanka Parihar; State Head Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Sonu Kashyap; State Head Reliance General Insurance Mahavir Singh; Nodal Officer PMFBY (DAJ) Anirudh Bhat, besides other functionaries from insurance companies and the Agriculture department. The meeting was informed that the preliminary reports suggest that over 1.03 lakh hectare land has been affected in Jammu Division, with 1.00 lakh hectare suffering more than 33% damage.

The Director asked the insurance companies to immediately deploy their field staff in the affected areas and work in close coordination with functionaries of Agriculture department at the Panchayat level for awareness generation, timely crop loss intimation, and on-ground assessment. He further instructed all Chief Agriculture Officers of Jammu Division to ensure accurate crop-cutting surveys so that the actual extent of damage is assessed properly.

Serial Entrepreneur Backs Kashmir's Emerging Startups

Mushtaq Chaya urges young entrepreneurs to embrace resilience and vision, as Startup Kashmir's event highlights a growing drive for innovation amid economic challenges

Syed Sammar Mehdi

Srinagar: Kashmir's top hotelier Mushtaq Chaya walked into the Radisson Hotel Srinagar on Wednesday as an eager listener. Within minutes, he had become the heartbeat of Startup Kashmir's second pitch deck event, encouraging young founders to see opportunity where others see obstacles. "We face challenges every day," Chaya told the audience of founders, investors, and mentors. "Every challenge is an opportunity. Persistence, resilience, and clear vision will take you farther than you imagine."

The conversation quickly turned global. USA-based angel investor Tasawur Jalali

emphasized the importance of connecting Kashmir's startups with international markets. "These ideas have potential far beyond the Valley," he said. "With the right guidance and support, founders here can access US markets, attract investors, and scale globally."

The event brought together five of the valley's most promising early-stage ventures: Abdul Bari's Zorawar, Syed Zaman's Makaseb International, Furqan Qureshi's Cartzu, Sheikh Rizwan's Biowealth-Helixion, and Abul Kalam Azad's Credistralia.

Each founder spoke with hope, determination, and ambition, presenting ideas that reflected the drive to create meaningful change in Kashmir.



Among them was Fiza Masoodi of The Healing Grove, whose startup on mental

wellness impressed the audience and the chief guest alike. "Mushtaq Chaya appreciated our approach to building resilience," she said. "That recognition strengthened my belief that what we do matters."

Mushtaq Chaya addressing founders. Chaya's words carried the weight of experience. Having built businesses amid uncertainty, he spoke as someone who had faced failure, learned from it, and emerged stronger.

"This ecosystem needs belief," he said. "It needs people who think beyond barriers. Each one of you is part of that movement. You are the change Kashmir seeks."

Syed Rais, President of J&K Bank, emphasized the value

of mentorship and financial support.

Khair ul Nissa Shah, Director at Alson Motors and Startup Kashmir, emphasized the importance of mentorship and access to networks, reminding entrepreneurs that guidance can be as crucial as capital.

Meanwhile, Shahid Ansari, Founder and CEO of Startup Kashmir, spoke of a larger vision, building platforms that not only nurture local talent but also connect them with international markets and global opportunities.

For Kashmir, the Pitch Deck Event was a statement that ambition is alive, innovation is possible, and the valley's entrepreneurial ecosystem is gaining momentum.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Pak Brought To

day Hyderabad was liberated. "The Indian Army safeguarded the rights of the people and reinstated the pride of India," he said, noting that the day is now observed as Hyderabad Liberation Day.

Trump's Call To

doing a tremendous job and thanked the prime minister for his support in ending the war in Ukraine.

The US president's call to PM Modi came on a day India and the US held a fresh round of talks in New Delhi on their proposed bilateral trade agreement.

"Thank you, my friend, President Trump, for your phone call and warm greetings on my 75th birthday," Modi said on X.

"Like you, I am also fully committed to taking the India-US Comprehensive and Global Partnership to new heights," he said.

"We support your initiatives towards a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine conflict," he added.

Trump's call came a day before the prime minister's 75th birthday.

"Just had a wonderful phone call with my friend, Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I wished him a very Happy Birthday! He is doing a tremendous job," Trump said on Truth Social.

"Narendra: Thank you for your support on ending the war between Russia and Ukraine," he added.

The phone call, first after the US imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, is seen as significant as it came days after the two leaders exchanged messages on the social media that indicated an intent to rebuild the ties.

The relations between New Delhi and Washington were reeling under severe stress after Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent including a 25 per cent additional duties for India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

India described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

In the last few weeks, several Trump administration officials including White House trade advisor Peter Navarro have used offensive language to target India, especially on its energy ties with Russia.

Defending its purchase of Russian crude oil, India has been maintaining that its energy procurement is driven by national interest and market dynamics.

India turned to purchasing Russian oil sold at a discount after Western countries imposed sanctions on Moscow and shunned its supplies over its invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022.

Earlier in the day, India and the US held a new round of trade talks.

A spokesperson at the US embassy in India said the two sides discussed next steps in bilateral trade negotiations.

"Assistant US Trade Representative Brendan Lynch had a positive meeting in Delhi with his counterpart Ministry of Commerce and Industry Special Secretary Rajesh Agrawal on September 16 to discuss next steps in bilateral trade negotiations," a US embassy spokesperson said.

The decision to hold the trade talks came after Modi warmly responded to President Trump's remarks last week on efforts to address "trade barriers" between the two sides.

The US president had said he was looking forward to speaking to PM Modi in the "upcoming weeks" and sounded confident that both sides would be able to seal the proposed trade deal.

On his part, Modi said India and the US are natural partners and teams from both sides are working to conclude negotiations on the trade deal.

The exchange between the two leaders on social media were largely seen as part of efforts by both New Delhi and Washington to reset their ties.

In the last few months, India and the US held several rounds of negotiations for a bilateral trade deal but it could not be sealed in view of sharp divergences in certain critical areas including agriculture and dairy. (PTI)

Prof Ghani Passes

different calling.

His formal entry into politics came in 1986 when he co-founded the Muslim United Front (MUF), a coalition that challenged the ruling NC-Congress alliance in the 1987 Assembly elections. The MUF's defeat—widely blamed on large-scale electoral rigging—proved to be a watershed moment in Kashmir's modern political history. Bhat's activism cost him his teaching post, as he was dismissed from government service on what the state termed "security grounds."

In the years that followed, Prof Ghani rose to become one of the key figures in separatist

politics. He was among the founding members of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, formed in 1993, and later went on to serve as its chairman. He also led the Muslim Conference, a party that was eventually banned in 2019.

Despite his separatist stance, Prof. Ghani was seen as a moderate voice within the Hurriyat. He was known for his candid remarks, sharp intellect, and readiness to critique not only the state but also his colleagues within the separatist fold. His insistence on honesty in political discourse and his often unconventional views set him apart.

In November 2022, he was questioned by the Jammu & Kashmir State Investigation Agency in connection with an alleged hawala-linked terror financing case—a reminder of the difficult and contested path that defined much of his public life.

Yet, for many Kashmiris, Prof. Ghani will be remembered less for the controversies and more for the imprint he left as a scholar and thinker. His speeches, debates, and interviews often carried a reflective tone, calling for imagination, compromise, and fresh approaches to resolving the region's complex future.

PM Modi Turns

dream of a Viksit Bharat.

Keeping with his practice of unveiling development programmes from different states on his birthday, Modi travelled to Dhar in Madhya Pradesh to launch a nationwide campaign focusing on the health and nutrition of women and children.

Several world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, extended birthday greetings to Modi.

Putin praised Modi for his "great personal contribution" to strengthening the partnership between the two countries.

"Through your activities as head of government, you have earned the high respect of your compatriots and enormous authority on the world stage," Putin said in a message published on the Kremlin website.

A day earlier, US President Donald Trump had dialled Modi and extended birthday greetings, sparking hopes of a reset in the bilateral ties that came under severe strain after Washington doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent.

Trump said Modi is doing a tremendous job and thanked the prime minister for his support in ending the war in Ukraine.

In a video message, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates wished the prime minister "good health and continued strength" as he leads India's "fantastic progress" and contributes to "global development."

"The Gates Foundation values our partnership with the government of India immensely," he said.

"Together we are supporting progress towards Viksit Bharat and sharing lessons and innovations for the countries in the Global South," he added.

Indian-origin former UK prime minister Sunak said it was a "great pleasure to wish Prime Minister Modi a happy 75th birthday."

"In these uncertain times, we all need good friends, and Modi Ji has always been a good friend to me and to Britain. I'm delighted to see UK-India ties going from strength to strength," he said in a video message.

"As someone from a British-Indian family, this relationship will always have a special place in my heart," he said, adding that he will "fondly" remember his 2023 visit to India as the prime minister for the G20 summit.

"It was a superb event befitting India's standing on the world stage. Modiji, I wish you all the very best for your birthday and look forward to seeing you soon," he said.

Extending his greetings to Modi, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said his country is "proud to share such a strong friendship with India, and we are grateful every day for the contribution of the Indian community here in Australia."

Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay also wished PM Modi on his birthday, praying for his "good health, happiness and long life."

Other leaders, including New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon, Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing, President of Guyana Irfan Ali, and the Prime Minister of Dominica Roosevelt Skerrit, also greeted Modi on his birthday.

In a post on X, Modi said the innumerable wishes and the faith people have reposed in him are a source of great strength. The prime minister said he sees them as a blessing not for him alone, but for the work "we are doing together to build a better India".

"Gratitude to Jana Shakti. I am truly

overwhelmed by the countless wishes, blessings and messages of affection that have poured in from across the nation and overseas. This affection strengthens and inspires me. I thank the people for the same," he said.

Noting that people across India have been undertaking various social service initiatives, many of which will continue in the coming days, Modi said this inherent goodness in the people sustains the Indian society and gives all the courage to overcome all challenges with hope and positivity.

He complimented everyone who is at the forefront of such endeavours.

"I resolve to continue working with even greater energy and devotion, so that we realise our dream of a Viksit Bharat," the prime minister said.

"I have not been able to reply to the wishes individually, but I will say again - this affection has touched my heart deeply. I pray for everyone's good health and well-being," Modi said.

In the national capital, Shah inaugurated 17 welfare schemes of the Delhi government on the occasion of Modi's 75th birthday.

Modi is the third-longest serving prime minister of India after Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi and second in terms of an uninterrupted tenure.

BJP governments in states and the party's organisation in different places started or have lined up an array of outreach, welfare and awareness programmes covering health camps to cleanliness drives, get-togethers of intellectuals and fairs to promote indigenous products. The exercise will continue till October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Birthday wishes for Modi, who was born in a poor family in Gujarat's Vadnagar and has led the BJP to unprecedented geographical expansion and electoral successes since 2014, poured in.

President Droupadi Murmu praised him for instilling a culture of achieving great goals in the country. "Today, the global community is also expressing its faith in your guidance," she said.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan said India is making a mark on the global stage and moving steadily towards the goal of a developed nation under his visionary leadership.

BJP leaders and members of other parties extended birthday wishes to Modi.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Modi, with his visionary leadership, dedication to the nation and untiring hardwork, has given the country new energy and shown it a new direction.

He has enhanced India's capability and respect globally, and his commitment to people's and the poor's welfare is exemplary, Singh said.

Home Minister Amit Shah said Modi has been working tirelessly for people's welfare for more than five decades, and he is a living inspiration of the "nation first" motto for every citizen.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha wished him good health in their greetings.

In posts on X, Shah described the prime minister as a symbol of sacrifice and dedication, and inspiration for crores of countrymen.

The home minister said from the RSS to the party and the government, Modi's journey in life shows the possibility of extensive transformations when resolve is as unwavering as the Himalayas and vision is as vast as the ocean.

"Workers like me are fortunate to have had the chance to work with him in every role he has undertaken," he said.

BJP president J P Nadda said PM Modi has taken many transformative steps to build an "aatmanirbhar and Viksit Bharat" with the goal of progress of every section of society.

Under his leadership, India's spiritual and cultural heritage has received global prestige, he added.

'Long, Healthy Life

"Heartfelt birthday wishes to Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi ji. I pray for your long & healthy life. Under your visionary leadership, the nation is achieving unprecedented progress in every sphere. Your commitment & dedication to people's welfare continue to inspire us all."

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah posted his greeting on X, saying, "Wishing the Hon PM @narendramodi Sb a very happy 75th birthday. May he be blessed with good health & a long life in the service of our nation & all its citizens."

Ladakh L-G Kavinder Gupta greeted the PM by posting on X, "Heartfelt birthday wishes to the world's most popular leader, the pioneer of New India, and the true servant of Mother India, the honorable Shri @narendramodi ji on his 75th birthday. Your visionary leadership is giving India a new identity on the global stage. I pray to Lord Shri Ram for your healthy and long life."

Gupta also posted a picture of sand art drawn by renowned sand artist, Padma Shri Sudarsan Pattnaik, who created a beautiful sand art in Puri

to celebrate the 75th birthday of the PM.

Transport Dept

reports to the Transport Commissioner's office. In Srinagar, ARTO Mauzam Ali has been instructed to cover two districts and report any actions taken in response to complaints.

The initiative follows directives from Horticulture Minister Javid Ahmad Dar, who highlighted the financial stress faced by apple growers due to high transport costs, especially in the aftermath of the highway closure.

"To support the growers, the government will also provide State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) trucks upon request," Dar said. He added that fruit growers at the Sopore Mandi have already requested SRTC trucks, and the Transport Commissioner has been instructed to dispatch the vehicles accordingly.

The move is expected to bring relief to hundreds of fruit growers and traders in the region, ensuring smoother transportation of apples to markets across the country.

Terror Financiers

growth was very slow, but in the last 11 years India has emerged as the fastest growing economy and today stands as the world's fourth largest economy. Nearly 25 crore people have risen above the poverty line and are now living dignified lives," he said.

LG Sinha pointed out that corruption, once deeply entrenched, has been curbed to a large extent. "I don't claim corruption has ended, but a lot has changed under PM Modi's rule," he said.

On women empowerment, the LG said that women have played a vital role in shaping the country's progress. "In PM Modi's rule, many women-oriented schemes have been launched. Women have been provided all facilities and opportunities, and they are leading from the front," he said.

In Jammu and Kashmir, LG Sinha said more than 9 lakh women are associated with Self-Help Groups (SHGs), forming the backbone of grassroots economic empowerment. "There are more than 42,000 Lakhpati Didis in J&K today. Our daughters are winning more gold medals than men, a reflection of their determination and talent," he added.

Women in J&K are carrying forward Prime Minister Modi's vision of empowerment and inclusivity, playing a pivotal role in the Union Territory's developmental journey," he added.

Talking to the reporters on the sidelines of the function, LG Sinha extended his heartfelt birthday wishes to Prime Minister Modi.

"Selfless service fosters community bond and a sense of shared purpose. From 17th September to 2nd October, various Sewa Parv campaigns are being dedicated to women empowerment and health.

"The Prime Minister spent his life dedicated to nation's service. Under his leadership, the past 11 years are seen as a milestone in India's transformation and it has emerged as the world's fourth-largest economy," he said, adding, "The Prime Minister has ensured that benefits of economic growth reach the poor and marginalised section of society. 25 Crore people have been lifted out of poverty. India's prestige in the world has greatly increased under his visionary leadership. We pray for his long and healthy life."

Lauds Army

conditions to build the bridge.

"The bridge is a symbol of hope and a lifeline for thousands. It will boost connectivity and ease of living for the people of this region," Sinha said.

He noted that recent natural calamities had severely impacted lives, damaged infrastructure and disrupted the key route connecting Gool, Sangaldan and surrounding areas. "This Bailey Bridge is a testament to the dedication, expertise and unwavering service of the Indian Army. It has given new hope to the entire region," he added.

The LG said the bridge will ensure uninterrupted access to essential supplies, medical assistance and emergency services for the affected communities. "In times of need, the Indian Army always stands with the nation and its people," he said while congratulating the Army and civil administration for their efforts.

Maj Gen APS Bal, GOC Delta Force, senior Army, civil and police officials attended the virtual inaugural ceremony.

HC Seeks Govt

authorities including the Directorate of Food Safety, the Municipal Corporation(s), the Health Department as also the law enforcement agencies to curb this menace, demonstrate gross administrative negligence and apathy, the court was informed.

Therefore, it was urged that the recent

discovery of large quantities of rotten meat in Kashmir underscores the immediate need for a strict regulatory mechanism. The PIL has been filed practicing lawyer Mir Umar and among others, he seeks enforcement of food safety laws, accountability of authorities, and directions for the establishment of stringent preventive and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that only safe, hygienic meat and poultry products are permitted for sale in J&K, thereby protecting public health and upholding constitutional guarantees.

The petitioner says that in Jammu & Kashmir, meat and poultry consumption is predominantly by the Muslim majority population, for whom adherence to "Halal dietary principles is not merely a preference but a religious obligation.

"Given this demographic reality, "Halal certification" of all meat and poultry products is not just desirable, but necessary to safeguard religious rights, public health, and consumer trust," the petitioner says, adding, "The recent discovery of large quantities of rotten meat in Kashmir has underscored the urgent need for strict regulatory mechanism."

Such incidents reveal serious lapses in quality control, hygiene standards, and supply chain monitoring, the petitioner says.

The petitioner has sought directions to the government to ensure all necessary measures to prevent the sale, storage, distribution, and transportation of rotten, unhygienic, and unsafe meat and poultry products in J&K.

He has also sought establishing and implementing, within a time-bound framework, a permanent inspection and monitoring mechanism at all entry points, slaughterhouses, and markets to ensure that all meat, fish and poultry products entering and sold in the J&K are duly certified safe for human consumption by competent veterinary authorities.

Fruit-Laden Trucks

the stranded vehicles along the highway and those waiting at the fruit mandis will be cleared on priority basis.

He said the drivers should follow the traffic advisory with regard to movement of heavy vehicles and avoid overtaking along the highway.

"Traffic violations can lead to accidents which can in turn lead to road blockade," he added.

The highway suffered heavy damages due to incessant rains and flash floods last month, leading to closure of the arterial road.

The highway was closed for heavy vehicles, giving rise to fear among fruit growers that the crop this year might not reach the terminal markets of the country.

The authorities have used Mughal Road to take out fruit from the valley but the terrain of the road is not feasible for operating heavy vehicles.

CM Seeks Centre's

to affected families, while urging the Centre to provide a comprehensive relief package on the lines of those given to Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

Omar said the administration has been directed to prepare a rehabilitation plan, including granting five marlas of land to displaced families, for Cabinet approval. "Wherever the land has sunk or is sinking, people cannot be resettled there again. They will need to be resettled somewhere else," he said.

The Chief Minister assessed the damage caused by recent rains and landslides, which affected over 1,000 people, damaging more than 95 houses, a graveyard, and a mosque. Residents have been relocated to safe shelters. He announced immediate relief of Rs 38 lakh to the affected families, in addition to Rs 50 lakh released under the SDRF.

Highlighting the extensive impact of the rains across Jammu and Kashmir, Omar said, "There is hardly any district in J&K that has not suffered damage from floods, landslides, or heavy rains. Whatever financial resources we have, we will use them to ensure relief reaches the people."

The Chief Minister also inspected the ongoing restoration work on Jammu-Srinagar NH-44 and directed officials to expedite repairs to facilitate smooth movement of traffic, particularly fruit-laden trucks and essential supplies.

Omar emphasized that the government remains in close coordination with the Centre, which has sent teams to assess the situation. "We will put forth our demand and expect a comprehensive package for J&K like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand," he said.

During his visit, Omar interacted with affected families, listening to their concerns and assuring them that the government stands firmly with them during this difficult time.

Union Minister Javed Rana accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.

DRAMA IN DUBAI

ICC Rejects PCB Demand, Pak Players Come To Ground After Pycroft 'Apology'

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Pakistan withdrew its pullout threat and showed up for a crucial Asia Cup game against the UAE here on Wednesday but not before causing a delay and claiming that it received an "apology" from match referee Andy Pycroft, who was retained by the ICC despite the country's repeated demand for his removal.

Pycroft tendered an "apology for miscommunication" during Pakistan's game against India last Sunday in which Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav refused to shake hands with rival skipper Salman Ali Agha as a gesture of solidarity with the victims of Pahalgam terrorist attack.

Pakistan lodged two separate complaints with the ICC for the removal of Pycroft but the world body summarily rejected both. The logjam ended after Pycroft "apologised" to the manager and



captain of the Pakistani cricket team for "prohibiting" the handshake at toss on Sunday.

The Pakistan Cricket Board also asserted that the ICC would

be investigating its complaint against the 69-year-old Pycroft, who is a former Zimbabwe cricketer and officiated in over 200 games since being included in

the ICC Elite Panel.

"The ICC has expressed its readiness to investigate the violation of the Code of Conduct during the match on September 14," the PCB stated.

In response, a source in the ICC said the apology was only for the "miscommunication."

"...and the ICC will only conduct its investigation when the PCB furnishes further evidence as to who was at fault for this entire mess," the source said.

Earlier on Wednesday, there was intense drama in the run-up to the game as the Pakistan team refused to leave its hotel after learning that Pycroft will be persisted with.

Teams are required to report at the stadium two hours before the start of the game which Pakistan failed to do in protest.

That Pycroft would remain match referee was communicated to PCB chairman and Asian

Cricket Council head Mohsin Naqvi by ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta in a conference call.

The ICC maintained that the Zimbabwean will remain in charge as he has followed the rules and regulations to the "T".

Pakistan had held Pycroft responsible for the embarrassment it faced after Salman and Suryakumar did not exchange a handshake and their team sheets during the toss on Sunday.

The PCB alleged that Pycroft had prohibited Salman from shaking hands with Suryakumar and told the two captains to not exchange team sheets.

The Indian players avoided the traditional niceties with the rivals even after the match.

Pycroft was present at the Dubai International Stadium and left the venue surrounded by bodyguards after he was called to the ICC Headquarters just a kilometer away from the ground.

DYSS 'Seva Parv' Activities Begin Across Budgam & Anantnag Districts



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports on Wednesday launched the "Seva Parv Activity Calendar," scheduled from September 17 to October 2, with a series of sports and cultural events across the districts of Budgam and Anantnag.

On the opening day in Budgam, various sports competitions and traditional games were organised in all zones. The events were conducted under the overall supervision and directions of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam, Ghulam Hassan Lone.

The district will continue to witness a range of activities including pledge ceremonies, cleanliness drives, cultural programs and inter-school competitions until the culmination of the celebrations on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti.

Meanwhile, DYSS Anantnag kicked off "Sewa Parv Programme" with series of sports activities across the district. On the opening of events, Anti Drug and Sewa Parv Pledge ceremonies were

held, followed by series of sports events along with cleanliness drives.

Earlier, the District Office YSS Anantnag conducted Pledge Ceremony and Cleanliness drives in office building in which all stakeholders took active part with enthusiasm and energy.

At Zonal Level, Zone Bijbehara conducted several athletic events under Sewa Parv Programme, with Running and Throwing events held in U-14 and U-17 age group girls.

In District Level event of Softball, Zone Dooru clinched the title of the tournament in U-14 boys section, by defeating Zone Achabal at HSS Dailgam Anantnag. In District Level Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament at Gund Fatehpura, Zone Dooru and Zone Bijbehara registered Victories in U-14 age category. While in U-17 age category, Zone Dooru registered victory over Srigufwara.

Zone Shangus organised Athletic Meet in U-14 age category of boys and girls at Sports Stadium Nowgam, with Running, Throwing and Jumping events.

District Anantnag Carrom C'ship 2025-26 Concludes In Bijbehara

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The District Anantnag Carrom Championship 2025-26 concluded on Wednesday at the Multi-Purpose Indoor Sports Complex, Bijbehara, Anantnag, witnessing participation from carrom players across the district.

Mohammad Shafi (Manager, Indoor Sports Complex) and Arif Sultan Khan (Treasurer, J&K Carrom Association) distributed medals and certificates among the winners, runners-up and participants.

The closing ceremony was attended by Adil Malik (General Secretary, District Anantnag Carrom Association), Ishfaq Ahmad (Joint Secretary, District Anantnag Carrom Association), and other dignitaries and members of the association.

The event was originally scheduled for August 27, but it was postponed due to the flood situation in South Kashmir.

The championship, organised by District Anantnag Carrom Association



RESULTS

CADET BOYS

- 1ST PLACE: SHEIKH MOHAMMAD HUMAYON
- 2ND PLACE: KHUBAIB MUZAFFAR
- 3RD PLACE: REHAN

CADET GIRLS

- 1ST PLACE: NABEELA
- 2ND PLACE: KAISER FAROOQ
- 3RD PLACE: KANVI RAINA

SUB JUNIOR BOYS

- 1ST PLACE: AYAAN KHAN
- 2ND PLACE: M. RAIF
- 3RD PLACE: SAQIB SABZAR

SUB JUNIOR GIRLS

- 1ST PLACE: FATIMA
- 2ND PLACE: BHAT AROOBA

3RD PLACE: SADAF IQBAL

JUNIOR BOYS

- 1ST PLACE: IZAN KHAN
- 2ND PLACE: HAZIK SABZAR
- 3RD PLACE: FAISAL HUSSAIN

JUNIOR GIRLS

- 1ST PLACE: AYAT AMIR
- 2ND PLACE: AFREENA RASHID
- 3RD PLACE: HUDA MANZOOR

SENIOR BOYS

- 1ST PLACE: MUNEEB
- 2ND PLACE: YAHYA
- 3RD PLACE: KHALID

SENIOR GIRLS

- 1ST PLACE: ARBEENA JAVID
- 2ND PLACE: QURRATULAIN
- 3RD PLACE: SHARIYA

under J&K Carrom Association and as part of J&K Sports Council's initiative "My Youth My Pride," featured competitions across four categories in boys', girls', men's and women's sections.

Aazim Parveez: From Downtown Heroes To India U17 – A Rising Star Scores On Debut

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Downtown Heroes FC have hailed the achievement of forward Aazim Parveez, who made his international debut with the India National U-17 Football Team at the SAFF U-17 Championship 2025 in Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Aazim had a memorable debut, marking the beginning of his international career with a debut goal.

Aazim began his football journey training with Downtown Heroes, where his discipline, energy and raw talent quickly stood out. His outstanding performances led to his selection in the Kashmir Super League, representing New JK United FC, where he further impressed both fans and selectors.

Aazim came on as a substitute



in minute 84 and had an immediate impact, making it 6-0 for India

in their Group B opener against Maldives.

Coaches Hilal Rasool Parry and Ajaz Ahmad, who have closely guided his development, expressed their pride:

"Azim is a gifted player with immense potential. If he continues with the same energy, discipline, and hard work, his future in football will be very bright."

Downtown Heroes FC Chairman, Irfan Shahmiri, extended his heartfelt congratulations:

"At just 17, Azim's selection and his debut goal for India is a remarkable milestone. This is a true testament to his talent, discipline, and determination. Very few achieve such an honor at such a young age, and Azim has made his family, his team, and his community extremely proud. At Downtown Heroes FC, our mission

is clear – we produce players who can shine at the highest levels of the game."

"Azim Parveez's journey is an inspiration for young footballers across Jammu & Kashmir. His story reflects the vision of Downtown Heroes FC in nurturing grassroots talent and giving them a platform to rise to the national and international stage," the Heroes said in a statement.

Downtown Heroes FC is a professional football club based in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, dedicated to developing young football talent and promoting sportsmanship. With a strong focus on grassroots programs, the club aims to produce players capable of representing the country at the highest levels.

Afghanistan & Sri Lanka Clash As Both Eye Super 4 Spot

Afghanistan will need to play with more flair and freedom in their must-win Asia Cup group match against Sri Lanka here on Thursday.

After their loss to Bangladesh, Afghanistan will need to get past a steady Sri Lanka to have a shot at making the super fours. A win for Afghanistan will leave them, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh on four points each.

However, what could go in their favour is their superior net run rate of (2.150) compared to Bangladesh (-0.270), who are done with their league commitments.

Having reached the semifinals of the T20 World Cup, expectations have increased from the Rashid Khan-led side. The spin heavy unit is yet to hit top form in Asia Cup, especially with the bat.

Sri Lanka, who have won both their games, too would be looking for an improved batting performance, having got themselves into a precarious situation in the chase against Hong Kong.

Captain Charith Asalanka knows they would need to be much more professional against a wounded Afghanistan. (PTI)

Chakravarthy No.1 T20I Bowler In ICC Rankings For 1st Time

Mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy on Wednesday rose to the top of the ICC T20 Bowlers' Rankings for the first time in his career, becoming only the third Indian to achieve this feat.

The 34-year-old emulated fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi by moving up three spots following spells of 1/4 against the UAE and 1/24 in against Pakistan.

Chakravarthy, whose previous best was second place in February 2025, displaced New Zealand's Jacob Duffy, who had held the top position since March.

Left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav has made a significant leap, jumping 16 places to 23rd, while spin all-rounder Axar Patel has moved up one place to 12th.

Bumrah has also improved his position, rising four spots to 40th.

In the all-rounders' rankings, Hardik Pandya continues to hold the top spot, while Abhishek Sharma has climbed four places to 14th.

His opening partner Shubman Gill has moved up four places to 39th. However, Tilak Varma and captain Suryakumar Yadav have slipped in the rankings. (PTI)

Injured Yamal To Miss Barcelona's Champions League Opener



Lamine Yamal will not play in Barcelona's Champions League opener at Newcastle on Thursday because of an injury.

The Catalan club said Wednesday that Yamal was not in its squad for the trip to England in the league phase of the Champions League. The star forward had already missed the Spanish league game against Valencia on Sunday.

Yamal was nursing "discomfort in the pubic area" after playing with Spain's national team during the international break.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick had said he was upset with Spain for having played Yamal for what he considered unnecessary minutes during big wins in two World Cup qualifiers. Flick accused Spain of being aware that Yamal was feeling discomfort and playing him anyway.

The federation said in response to Flick's statements that it had not received any notification from Barcelona that Yamal was injured.

Barcelona will have midfielder Frenkie de Jong available. He had also missed the game against Valencia after getting injured with the Netherlands national team during the international break. (AP)

Mourinho Touted As Next Benfica Coach After Lage's Firing

Benfica fired coach Bruno Lage after the team's home loss to Qarabag in the Champions League, and José Mourinho was quickly touted as the top candidate to replace him.

Benfica president Rui Costa announced the decision to part ways with Lage after the league-phase loss in which Benfica squandered a two-goal lead in front of its fans.

Costa cited the club's poor results recently. Benfica was coming off a disappointing 1-1 home draw against 10-man Santa Clara in the Portuguese league on Friday.

Costa said he expected to announce a new coach in time for the team's league match in Vila das Aves on Saturday.

Portuguese media said Mourinho was set to take over the club. His time with Fenerbahce ended last month after the Turkish club was eliminated by Benfica in a qualifying playoff of the Champions League.

Mourinho started his coaching career at Benfica but lasted only three months in 2000 before leaving in a contract dispute with the board of directors. (AP)

Messi Sends Signed World Cup Jersey For PM Modi's 75th Birthday

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Bracing up for his much-anticipated tour of India, Argentine superstar Lionel Messi has sent his signed 2022 World Cup victorious jersey to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his 75th birthday.

Promoter Satadru Dutta, who is bringing Messi to India, told PTI on Wednesday that the football icon's World Cup jersey will be delivered to the PM in two to three days.

"When I met him in February to discuss the visit, I had told him that the PM's 75th birthday is also coming and he said he would send a signed jersey for the Prime Minister," Dutta said.

Dutta said he is also trying to ar-

range a meeting with the PM during Messi's tour of India, which will comprise stopovers at Kolkata, Mumbai, and Delhi from December 13.

The football-mad city of Kolkata will be the first stop in Messi's whirlwind trip named 'GOAT Tour of India 2025', followed by Mumbai and New Delhi.

The visit is scheduled to conclude after a meeting with the prime minister at his residence in the national capital on December 15.

This will be the Argentine great's first trip to India since 2011 when he visited the country with his national team to play a FIFA friendly against Venezuela, at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.

Dutta had met Messi's father

earlier this year to present the proposal, and on February 28, Messi himself met him at his residence for a 45-minute discussion.

A host of programmes are lined up during his stay in the country. Last month, Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurahiman also confirmed that the Argentina football team, along with star player Messi, will arrive in Kerala to play a friendly match in November this year.

Abdurahiman was speaking to reporters in Kerala following the Argentina Football Association's (AFA) announcement that their national team, led by manager Lionel Scaloni, would play friendly matches in Luanda, Angola, and Kerala.



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