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Kashmir's Cold Season Triggers Rush for Controversial Syrups

Deaths linked to cough syrups in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have failed to slow the feverish winter buying of these medicines in Kashmir.

Hirra Azmat

Srinagar: Despite a cough syrup crisis in mainland India, early snowfall in Kashmir's upper reaches and a sudden drop in temperature have made these medicines must-have for local parents this autumn. Shelves are emptied daily as families rush to pharmacies to treat children with coughs, sneezes, or mild fevers.

The surge comes even as the Union Health Ministry has warned states and union territories to use cough syrups carefully. Officials say most childhood coughs are self-limiting and rarely need medication.

Pediatricians in Kashmir echo the caution, emphasizing that overmedication can be harmful. "Coughs and colds are common in winter, and most resolve within a week," said Dr. Suhail



to February 2022 surveyed 471 households to examine home medicine storage and practices. Most families earned less than 20,000 rupees per month, and nearly half were illiterate.

Commonly stored medicines included antibiotics, vitamins, painkillers, proton pump inhibitors, and cough syrups. Families often reused medicines, shared them, or gave drugs based on old prescriptions | [More on P6](#)

More States Impose Ban On Coldiff

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Punjab and Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday joined a growing list of states banning Coldrif cough syrup after at least 14 children in Madhya Pradesh reportedly died following its consumption. The move comes amid nationwide

concerns over drug safety and regulatory lapses.

Similar restrictions have already been imposed by Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the Drugs Control Administration also issued | [More on P6](#)

2 Soldiers Go Missing In South Kashmir

Forces Launch Massive Search, Deploy Helicopters



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Security forces have launched a massive search operation in the dense forests of Kokernag area in south

Kashmir's Anantnag district to trace two missing soldiers who lost contact with their unit during an anti-terror operation, officials said on Wednesday.

According to | [More on P6](#)

HM To Chair High-Level Meeting On J&K Security Today

LG Sinha, Chief Secretary, Security Top Brass To Attend

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair a high-level meeting in New Delhi on Thursday to review the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, sources said.

The meeting aims to enhance synergy between security agencies and review ongoing counter-terror operations across the Union Territory, sources said, adding that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and top officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Intelligence Bureau, Army, CRPF, BSF, and Jammu & Kashmir Police are expected to attend.

Top J&K officials, including the Chief Secretary and other senior officers reached Delhi



this evening to participate in the meeting.

The Home Minister is expected to take stock of the overall security scenario, and strengthen collaboration among agencies to maintain peace and stability in Jammu

and Kashmir.

The meeting will focus on counter-infiltration measures, ongoing anti-terror operations, winter preparedness, and steps to enhance coordination among security agencies, sources said.

Pertinently, the Union Home Minister during his visit to Jammu last month chaired a comprehensive security review meeting and reiterated the Central Government's unwavering zero-tolerance policy against terrorism under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Shah had directed all security agencies to maintain high vigil and operate in a coordinated manner to completely eradicate terrorism from the Union Territory.

Shah had praised the UT administration and security forces for their exemplary efforts in ensuring the peaceful and successful conduct of the Amarnath Yatra 2025.

It may be recalled that in the last week | [More on P6](#)

Sleeper Cell Module SIA Raids Multiple Locations Across Kashmir

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Wednesday conducted simultaneous searches at multiple locations across the Valley as part of an ongoing probe into a sleeper cell module of terrorist organisations, officials said.

According to officials, the raids were carried out at eight locations across seven districts spanning all three police ranges—North, Central, and South Kashmir. The searches were conducted in connection with FIR No. 01/2025 registered at Police Station CI/SIA Kashmir.

"The case pertains to a sleeper cell operating in the Valley under the directions of commanders of proscribed terrorist outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)," officials said.

The module, they added, was being used to spread secessionist propaganda, radicalise youth, and recruit them into terror ranks.

During the | [More on P6](#)

Search Op Intensified In Rajouri & Udhampur

Security forces on Wednesday stepped up their search for terrorists believed to be hiding in remote forest areas in Rajouri and Udhampur districts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. While a brief encounter took place between police and some terrorists in Beeranathub | [More on P6](#)

Colleges Reopen In Leh After Two Weeks

LG Orders Lifting Of Other Curbs

Press Trust Of India

Leh: Colleges across Leh district opened on Wednesday, after remaining closed for two weeks following the September 24 violence, officials said.

Ladakh Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta chaired a security review meeting and ordered lifting of other restrictions to restore complete

normalcy in the Union territory, they said.

All colleges reopened on Wednesday morning after remaining closed since September 24, when Leh was rocked by widespread violence during an agitation spearheaded by Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance for statehood and extension of Sixth Schedule safeguards | [More on P6](#)

JKBOSE Issues Date Sheet For Class 11, 12

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) Wednesday issued annual regular examination date sheet for 11th and 12th classes. The annual regular exams for 11th standard will commence from November-19 till December-13. JKBOSE further said that the exams for 12th standard will commence from November-08 till December-03.

Earlier, JKBOSE notified date sheet for 10th standard wherein the board had said that the exams will commence from November-03 to November-27. Pertinently, JKBOSE has announced 15 percent syllabi | [More on P6](#)

Around 100-120 Terrorists At LoC Launch Pads: IG BSF

Say Infiltration Attempts Foiled by Alert Forces, Modern Surveillance

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Infiltration attempts by terrorists from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have so far been unsuccessful due to the alertness of security forces and the use of modern surveillance gadgets along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, a senior Border Security Force (BSF) officer said on Wednesday.

Inspector General, BSF, Kashmir Frontier, Ashok Yadav, said intelligence inputs indicate that terrorists are waiting at launch pads on the other side of the LoC. "All the terrorists at



launching pads are foreigners. According to intelligence analysis, around 100 to 120 terrorists are generally present at any given time, though the numbers keep changing," Yadav said.

Speaking about the situation after | [More on P6](#)

National Policy Base For Our Politics: PM

Says India Provides Befitting Response To Terror

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday while referring to 'Operation Sindoor' launched against terror hubs following the Pahalgam massacre said, "for us, nothing is more important than the safety and security of our nation and its citizens."

"For us, national policy is the base for politics," he said, adding for the government, every rupee spent on infrastructure is a means to enhance citizens' convenience and capability.

Modi attacked the Congress party demanding it disclose to the nation who prevented India from mounting a military



response following the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, which were linked to Pakistan.

Speaking at a function after the opening of the first phase of the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMA), Mumbai metro's Aqua Line and other projects, | [More on P6](#)

SC Upholds Legality of Oral 'Hiba' in Muslim Law

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi—The Supreme Court on Tuesday said a gift (hiba) under Mohammedan Law does not require a written document to be valid.

The court said there are three essential conditions for an oral gift — a clear manifestation of the wish to give on the part of the donor, an acceptance of the gift by the donee and the taking of possession of the subject-matter of the gift by the donee, either actually or constructively.

A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and S V N Bhatti said an oral gift that fulfils the three essential requisites is complete and irrevocable.

"A gift under | [More on P6](#)

J&K Surpasses 1.05 Crore Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts

Ranks Among Top Four States with Over 82.8 Lakh OPD Scans and Shares

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir has achieved a landmark milestone in digital healthcare by generating over 1.05 crore Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHAs) under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), officials said. The achievement marks a major step in transforming healthcare delivery across the Union Territory through technology-driven, integrated services.

The total number of ABHAs in J&K has reached 1,05,04,499, reflecting rapid adoption of digital health infrastructure.



"Jammu & Kashmir is not only advancing in health services and digital payments, but is also emerging as a frontrunner in digital healthcare," an official associated with ABDM said. Launched nationally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

in September 2021 and rolled out in J&K in July 2022, the mission aims to create a robust digital ecosystem connecting healthcare stakeholders nationwide to enable seamless service delivery. In September 2025 alone, 7.5 lakh ABHA cards were generated in the UT.

Under the guidance of Secretary Health and Medical Education, Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, and ABDM Mission Director Anant Dwivedi, J&K has achieved 100% registration of public health professionals, public hospitals, and private health facilities.

Under the | [More on P6](#)

Early Onset Of Winter Likely In J&K: Weatherman

Says Above-Normal Snowfall Expected

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Renowned weatherman and former Director of the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, Sonam Lotus, on Wednesday said winter is expected to arrive earlier than usual this year in Jammu and Kashmir, though it is too early to predict whether the season will be harsh or mild.

Lotus said early snowfall and the onset of icy winds could cause temperatures to drop sooner than usual. "As per current meteorological



patterns, winter may begin earlier than usual, and Jammu and Kashmir could experience below-normal temperatures in October and November due to early snowfall and cold winds," he explained.

Addressing social media speculation about La Niña causing a severe winter, Lotus clarified, "We cannot confirm this at the moment. Weather patterns | [More on P6](#)

Jammu-Srinagar Highway Opens Partially

The traffic on the 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway was also partially allowed after a day-long suspension, while all government and private schools reopened in Jammu and elsewhere after two days' closure, the officials said.

After day-long closure due to multiple landslides, the officials said the traffic on Jammu-Srinagar national highway resumed this morning. | [More on P6](#)

Dy. CM Takes On-Spot Assessment Of Road Infrastructure At Lasjan-Sumerbugh

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary conducted an extensive tour of the Lasjan-Sumerbugh area and took stock of various public issues in these areas.

MLA Chadoora, Ali Mohammad Dar; Chief Engineer R&B, senior officers of PW (R&B) department and other officers also accompanied the Deputy CM during the tour.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with several public delegations who apprised him of various local issues related to road connectivity and infrastructure.

He directed the Chief Engineer to immediately start work on the Lasjan-Kadlabal road, which is being upgraded at an estimated cost of 11 crores by way of the rigid pavement.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned officers to complete the pending work by November ending so that the road can be dedicated for general public use by December.

He further instructed the concerned officers to ensure the timely completion of the Seer-Sumerbugh bridge by 15th December.

The Deputy Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening road infrastructure and ensuring time-bound completion of all ongoing developmental projects for the convenience of the public.

He also inspected the ongoing macadamization at Wanabal-Nowgan road and instructed the concerned XEN to check the standard of material to maintain the quality of road.



Div Com Reviews Progress On Comprehensive Sewerage Scheme Of Greater Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of the Comprehensive Sewerage Scheme - Zone III of Greater Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC); Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Chief Engineer, KPDCI; Superintending Engineer, UEED; along with officers from R&B, NBCC, and the Revenue Department.

During the meeting, officials from NBCC presented a detailed status report on the project. It was informed that Trunk Sewer Line is 99% complete, Lateral Sewer Line is 100% completed, 60 MLD STP is 98% complete, Household connections have been fully achieved

“
Div. Com called for swift resolution of all outstanding issues, including those hindering household connectivity.

and 60 MLD Infall Pump Station is 100% complete.

It was directed that trial runs of the completed system shall be started on 16th October 2025, which would cover 2 out of the 3 zones of the city being taken up

under the Project targeting a coverage of over 13000 households in all.

The meeting also discussed key challenges affecting the project, including the relocation of shops, realignment of PHE lines, and shifting of 11KV and 33KV power lines.

Emphasizing timely completion, the Divisional Commissioner called for swift resolution of all outstanding issues, including those hindering household connectivity. He also instructed the concerned departments to explore suitable land for the relocation of shops, which is essential for linking Sector-I to the main sewerage network.

The Div Com directed all executing agencies to ensure that the entire segment of the project is commissioned as per the scheduled timeline.

Sakeena Addresses White Coat Ceremony At GMC

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo addressed the White Coat (apron) wearing ceremony of new MBBS batch at Government Medical College Srinagar and formally welcomed the students.

Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; Principal GMC Srinagar, faculty members of the college and a large number of students were present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Sakeena congratulated the fresh batch of students for securing admission to one of the oldest and most reputed medical institutions of J&K. She underlined that pursuing medicine is not merely an academic journey but a lifelong commitment to serve humanity with compassion, integrity, and professionalism.

“The medical profession is built on trust and empathy. As future doctors, your duty extends

beyond treating diseases”, she stated.

The Minister urged the students to blend scientific excellence with ethical responsibility, reminding them that medicine is both an art and a science.

Highlighting the government's continued focus on strengthening healthcare infrastructure and medical education, the Minister noted that GMC Srinagar has played a pivotal role in shaping the healthcare landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. She assured full government support for ongoing projects aimed at upgrading teaching, research, and hospital facilities.

Secretary Health and Medical Education in his address spoke about the importance of the medical profession, ethics and emerging sciences and urged upon students to become best physicians.

Principal GMC Srinagar, Dr. Iffat Hassan in her speech touched various aspects of the college including its origin and journey of becoming one of the major Medical colleges in J&K.

Sgr Police Attach Property Under NDPS Act

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant step towards combating drug trafficking, Srinagar Police has attached a residential property and land valued at approximately Rs 75 lakhs under the provisions of the Nar-

cotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS Act).

The attached property — a shared double-storey residential house and 2.5 marlas of shared land (out of a total of 15 marlas) — is located at Kenihama, BK Pora, Nowgam, a police spokesman said

in a statement.

As per revenue records, the property is registered in the name of Mohammad Jaffar Ganie, father of Parwaiz Ahmad Ganie alias Pawa, who is presently lodged in District Jail Kathua under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

- 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: +919484100200

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)

HIJRI CALENDAR	PRAYERS	
	15 Rabi-ul-Sani 1447	FAJR
	ZUHR	12:18
	ASR	4: 26
	Magrib	6: 09
	ISHA	7: 28

This Day In History

- 1617 - Peace of Pavia between Spain and Savoy
- 1621 - Turkey & Poland signs Peace of Chotin
- 1962 - Uganda becomes independent from the United Kingdom
- 1963 - French air force gets first nuclear weapons
- 1963 - Hurricane Flora ravages Cuba & Haiti, kills 6,000
- 1970 - Khmer Republic (Cambodia) declares independence
- 1973 - Israel announces loss of Bar-Lev defense line in Suez Canal
- 1975 - Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov wins Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1977 - Soyuz 25 launched to Saluyt 6, but returned after failing to dock
- 1990 - Saddam Hussein threatens to hit Israel with a new missile
- 1997 - Nobel prize for literature awarded to Italian playwright Dario Fo.
- 2006 - North Korea conducts its first nuclear test, with an estimated yield of between 0.4-2 kilotons.
- 2009 - First lunar impact of the Centaur and LCROSS spacecrafts as part of NASA's Lunar Precursor Robotic Program
- 2012 - Women's rights and education activist Malala Yousafzai is shot three times by a Taliban gunman as she tried to board her school bus in Swat district of northwest Pakistan
- 2013 - 60 people are killed in clashes between militias and Seleka rebels in the Central African Republic
- 2013 - Martin Karplus, Michael Levitt and Arieh Warshel win the 2013 Nobel Prize in chemistry for their work on multiscale models for complex chemical systems

From KO Archives

Rs 4 Cr Spent Over 20yrs To Build 1-Km 'Road' Stretch!

Rajinder Singh

RAJOURI : History of sorts was created in this far-flung border district when the state government last year handed over a major road construction project to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) after having squandered an astronomical Rs four crore on 'creating' just a kilometre of an improvised fair-weather path- over a period of 20 years. In sharp contrast, the BRO's Project Sam-park had completed 20 km stretch of the road, by September 10 this year

According to reports, the park's very own public works department (PWD) had taken up the construction of 35-km Ghambir Tarkundi road in Rajouri district in 1980 While its physical execution went on at a snail's pace, the department displayed a mad haste in the booking of expenditure It spent a near Rs four crore till the time the project was finally entrusted to the BRO last year

Locals told Observer News Service that road proved to be a goldmine for the executing agencies. It was first entrusted to the PWD and subsequently to its 'notorious cousin', the rural development department. With political blessing, the "worthies" of the two hyper-active 'state outfits managed an apology of a small 1-km stretch which defies the description of road. Even light motor vehicles cannot ply on it. Sources alleged fictitious draws were made, on a massive scale to swindle the crores provided by the government. Apprehending cognizance of the huge scam, all the records pertaining to the road project were allegedly consigned to flames in a mysterious fire. With the entire evidence destroyed thus, they alleged, the sea maters managed their escape from the vigilance dragnet.

Construction of the road had been conceived to provide connectivity to 20 villages in areas close to the line of control (LoC). Even after 53 years of independence, nearly 80 per cent of population in the isolated villages remains landlocked for want of roads. Absence of roads has also retarded the overall development of the chronically back-ward areas As a result, the funds provided for them under various welfare programmes have allegedly been swindled by officials and their political patrons.

Fictitious draws are believed to be common in most development departments in the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri. Sources alleged various PWD and rural development officers had drawn bills for bridge paths and other works executed by the security forces. Likewise, works executed by one agency were charged by more than one department defrauding the state exchequer to the extent of crores of rupees. The state vigilance organisation (SVD) had, in 1988, established a case pertaining to construction of a water tank at Sari in Poonch district. It had been built by the public health engineering (PHE) department. However, two more departments - PWD and rural development - also have allegedly drawn bills for the scheme even after 12 years, no action has been taken against the accused.

(Kashmir Observer, October 09, 2000)

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

Dy. Chief Elect. Engineer/Const., Northern Railway, Jammu for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-

Tender Notice No.	17-Elect-C-JAT-EOG-2025 Dated 07.10.2025
Name of work and location	Electrical work in connection with provision of 750 V AC EOG testing facility for 5 nos. new constructed washing line at JAT coaching depot for LHB Rakes and additional Trip shed at SVDK.
Approximate Cost of the Work	₹8,76,23,035.11 (including GST and all other taxes)
Completion Period	12 (Twelve Months)
Bid Security to be deposited	₹5,88,100/-
Sale/availability of tender document on Rly. Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 07.10.2025.
Last date/Time of upload of tenders	31.10.2025 upto 15:00 hrs. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website.
Date/Time of Opening of tenders	31.10.2025 upto 15:00 hrs. (Immediately after close of uploading of tender).

Detailed tender notice & tender document

Above tender documents will be available on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in from 07.10.2025 to 31.10.2025 upto 15:00 hrs. and for submission from 17.10.2025 to 31.10.2025 to 15:00 hrs.

The bidders who desire to participate against e-tenders are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to obtain class-III digital certificate (if already not obtained) issued by CCA under IT Act-2000.

All other terms and conditions in respect of above tender are given in tender document. Only e-tenders will be accepted and tenders submitted in any other form will be summarily rejected.

The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No.: 17-Elect-C-JAT-EOG-2025 Dated 07.10.2025 3096/2025
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PUBLIC NOTICE

I Shabir Ahmad Rather S/o: Ghulam Hussain Rather R/o: Dab, Wakura Ganderbal hereby inform the general public and concerned authorities that I have applied for the renewal of my fertilizer license (License No.89/FR/Gbl/2012) for the sale of fertilizers (Retail Only) at my existing sale depot located at Dab, Wakura. I am now seeking renewal through the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Ganderbal. If anyone has any objections regarding this renewal, they may contact the Chief Agriculture Officer, Ganderbal within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections will be entertained thereafter.

I Shabir Ahmad Rather
S/o: Ghulam Hussain Rather
R/o: Dab, Wakura Ganderbal

AB

Kashmir *Aspire. Strive. Achieve.*

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

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

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT Building (First Floor), Daresh Kadal Chowk, Srinagar
9070806160

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Kashmir's Agri Turnaround

Recent GST reforms offer a rare window of relief and opportunity for Jammu and Kashmir's farmers, if implemented with awareness and care.

Agriculture still drives the economy and puts food on millions of tables in India. So even small changes in taxes can affect a lot of lives. The government's latest GST reforms are one of those changes. For farmers in Jammu and Kashmir, they might bring a long-awaited relief.

By lowering GST rates on key agricultural goods and services, the government has lifted a heavy weight from the shoulders of small farmers. Fertilizers now attract just 5% tax instead of 12%, and machinery like tractors and threshers has become more affordable.

These changes mean more savings, higher productivity, and a better chance at survival for farmers who often operate on the edge.

For decades, agriculture in Jammu and Kashmir has been defined by hard terrain, harsh weather, and high costs.

Many farmers here work small patches of land where mechanisation has long felt out of reach. With lower taxes on equipment, that barrier begins to fall.

Harvesters, solar-powered irrigation pumps, and threshers can now reach more fields, saving time and labour while improving the quality of produce.

For an apple grower in Shopian or a saffron cultivator in Pampore, that difference could mean the leap from subsistence to sustainability.

The ripple extends to Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and rural agri-startups. These collectives give small farmers the power to pool resources, share technology, and find markets beyond their villages.

Earlier, complicated compliance rules and high taxes slowed their expansion. Simplified GST procedures now open new paths for these groups, especially in high-value sectors like apple



packaging, walnut processing, and saffron branding.

The reforms also energize the food processing industry, which has long suffered under high taxes and low investment.

India loses nearly 30% of its farm produce to poor storage and lack of processing facilities. For Jammu and Kashmir, where fruits and organic products are abundant, affordable machinery could change that.

Local entrepreneurs can set up small units to dry fruits, extract oils, or brand indigenous produce, creating jobs and keeping value within the region.

Women stand to gain immensely. Across India, nearly half of self-employed farmers are women, many of whom in Kashmir manage farms as men migrate for work.

Cheaper agri-inputs and equipment give women-led Self-Help Groups a chance to launch micro-enterprises, from pickle making and seed production to small nurseries. These ventures could redefine empowerment.

There's also a sustainability dividend. Lower GST on solar pumps and drip irrigation systems encourages climate-smart farming, a vital step in regions where unpredictable rain

and shrinking glaciers already threaten yields.

These incentives align farming with climate resilience, making the sector both greener and more stable.

Of course, tax cuts alone can't solve deep-rooted agricultural challenges. Awareness will be key. Farmers must know their new rights and rates to ensure they actually benefit.

Training programs and simplified GST systems for FPOs and SHGs can help bridge that gap.

The bigger picture, though, is encouraging.

These reforms reflect a change in how the country values its farmers as partners in growth.

For Jammu and Kashmir, where agriculture still anchors the rural economy, this shift could spark something larger: confidence, innovation, and renewed purpose.

Taxation has long felt like a burden to the farmer. For once, it feels like a helping hand.

The author is an Agricultural Analyst writing on farming, climate and culture. He can be reached at waseembhatspn@yahoo.com

Dr. Waseem Ahmad

“These reforms reflect a change in how the country values its farmers as partners in growth. For Jammu and Kashmir, where agriculture still anchors the rural economy, this shift could spark something larger: confidence, innovation, and renewed purpose. Taxation has long felt like a burden to the farmer. For once, it feels like a helping hand.”

KO VIEW

Coldrif Tragedy: J&K Must Act

The recent tragedy surrounding Coldrif cough syrup has once again drawn national attention to the dangers posed by spurious and substandard medicines in India. Following the deaths of at least 14 children in Madhya Pradesh, allegedly linked to the consumption of the syrup manufactured by Shreesan Pharmaceutical, multiple states—including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Arunachal Pradesh—have moved swiftly to ban its sale and use. The Uttar Pradesh government, for instance, not only prohibited the medicine but also ordered investigations, with the Food Safety and Drug Administration conducting raids on medical stores. Similarly, Punjab had earlier banned Coldrif after the Madhya Pradesh Drugs Testing Laboratory declared it “not of standard quality.” States such as Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand had already imposed restrictions.

The deaths in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara and Betul districts have raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of India's drug safety mechanisms. This crisis casts a long shadow over Jammu & Kashmir, where weaknesses in pharmaceutical oversight and public health practices could amplify the risks posed by toxic medicines like Coldrif.

While no incidents linked to Coldrif syrup have yet been reported in J&K, past experiences indicate a high potential threat. In 2020, about 12 children in the Ramnagar area of Udhampur district died after consuming a cough syrup called Coldbest-PC. Medical investigations confirmed that the syrup was contaminated with diethylene glycol (DEG), a toxic substance that can cause acute kidney failure and, in severe cases, damage multiple organs, including the brain and liver. This tragic episode serves as a stark reminder that J&K is not immune to the circulation of substandard or counterfeit medicines.

Several factors make Jammu & Kashmir particularly vulnerable. First, regulatory oversight is limited, with inadequate monitoring and enforcement of pharmaceutical standards creating opportunities for unsafe products to reach consumers. Second, the prevalence of unregulated markets—including unregistered medical stores and online platforms—amplifies exposure to counterfeit and potentially lethal drugs. Third, public awareness remains low, leaving patients and healthcare providers ill-equipped to identify substandard medicines promptly. In such an environment, even a single contaminated batch of a common medicine can have devastating consequences.

The Coldrif incident, juxtaposed with the previous Coldbest-PC tragedy, underscores the urgent need for authorities to act decisively. Despite clear warnings and extensive media coverage, including in this newspaper, the J&K Health Department has yet to issue public advisories or take proactive measures against the possible sale of Coldrif or similar toxic medicines in local markets. This inertia is deeply concerning. Children are among the most vulnerable to chemical toxicity, and any delay in regulatory intervention heightens the risk of a repeat tragedy.

To safeguard public health, J&K authorities must adopt a multi-pronged strategy. First, regulatory mechanisms must be strengthened, with routine inspections of pharmacies and strict enforcement of prescription requirements. Any violation, particularly in the sale of paediatric medicines, should attract immediate penalties. Second, public awareness campaigns are essential to educate parents and caregivers about the dangers of spurious medicines and the importance of sourcing drugs only from licensed providers. Third, collaboration with national agencies such as the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) can ensure that medicines circulating in the Union Territory meet rigorous quality standards. Finally, transparent reporting and rapid response protocols must be established to promptly address any suspected case of medicine contamination.

The Coldrif crisis is more than a regional or isolated tragedy; it is a stark reminder of systemic weaknesses that endanger children's lives. Jammu & Kashmir cannot afford complacency. Repeated incidents of paediatric fatalities linked to contaminated syrups demand urgent action—both preventive and punitive. Protecting the health and safety of children is not merely a regulatory obligation; it is a moral imperative.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

From Savings to Strategy

What a decade of steady markets tells Kashmir about the future of wealth creation.

Irshad Mushtaq

Investing is often less about timing and more about temperament. Between 2015 and 2025, Indian markets offered a remarkable lesson in patience. For Kashmir's growing pool of small investors, this decade silently reshaped ideas of wealth creation.

Take Goldbees, the exchange-traded fund mirroring gold prices. It grew by 300 percent in ten years, turning 10 lakh into 40 lakh. Mahindra multiplied six times, reflecting India's growing appetite for automobiles and rural development. Havells followed close behind, rewarding investors with over 500 percent growth through its expansion in electrical goods. Even market barometers like the Nifty Index tripled, signaling broad economic momentum.

For many investors in Kashmir, where traditional saving habits long favoured gold and real estate, these numbers show that consistent, disciplined participation in India's stock market can outperform conventional investment options. Maruti and Hindustan Unilever, steady performers in consumer sectors, proved how innovation and brand resilience can drive wealth.

The next decade will likely see opportunities in sectors like renewable energy, technology, and consumer growth. Markets will fluctuate, but time has shown that informed investors who stay patient often emerge stronger.

Kashmiri investors now stand at a turning point, ready to transform saving habits into strategic wealth-building for a more confident financial future.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

For as long as I can remember, success in Kashmir has been measured in government job postings.

From a young age, children are told that the safest, most respectable path is through an office window with fixed hours and guaranteed retirement benefits. Parents take pride when their son becomes a doctor or their daughter clears the civil services.

These dreams are rarely about passion or purpose. They are about safety, a word that has silently replaced freedom in our collective imagination.

A government job looks like security. It offers steady paychecks, paid leaves, and the comfort of a pension. In a place where economic opportunities are scarce, it feels like winning a lifelong safety net. But this very comfort often becomes a cage.

Most employees spend decades doing routine work, bound by hierarchy and fear of risk. The system rewards compliance over creativity, routine over reinvention.

It keeps you content, but not necessarily fulfilled.

This mindset is reinforced early in school. Our education system prizes memory over imagination. Students learn to obey, not to question. Success is defined by grades

The Comfort Trap

A culture built on the promise of security has shaped generations of Kashmiris into job-seekers rather than risk-takers. It's time to rethink what real success means.

Aamir Wani

and degrees, not by the ability to create or solve. We produce skilled workers, not innovators.

Many of the most influential figures across the globe succeeded because of their courage to think differently.

The overreliance on government employment has created a dangerous dependency in Kashmir, where unemployment is nearly double the national average.

Thousands of educated youth wait for vacancies that never come. Instead of building businesses or exploring new industries, they spend their best years preparing for exams that promise stability but rarely deliver satisfaction.

True financial independence begins with ownership. A small business, a farm venture, and an online enterprise are exercises in freedom.

“

It's time to shift our collective dream. Parents should inspire their children to build, explore, and lead — not just to qualify for a post. Safety has its place, but a life lived only within the limits of security is a life half-lived. Kashmir needs risk-takers as much as it needs reformers.

They teach creativity, and the courage to adapt.

Investing in assets, whether land, startups, or ideas, builds lasting wealth that grows even when you stop working.

Entrepreneurship, in this sense, is more than a career. It's a mindset. It teaches one to create value, to fail and learn, to think beyond the boundaries of comfort.

Every major innovation in history began with someone who refused to live by the rules of security.

It's time to shift our collective dream. Parents should inspire their children to build, explore, and lead, not just to qualify for a post. Safety has its place, but a life lived only within the limits of security is a life half-lived. Kashmir needs risk-takers as much as it needs reformers.

The world remembers those who create, not those who simply comply.

Real success lies in shaping something of your own, in turning courage into contribution and work into purpose.

The author is a doctor and medical entrepreneur advocating innovation and self-reliance in Kashmir. He can be reached at iamaamirwani@gmail.com

Letter to Editor

The Cough Syrup Crisis Kashmir Can't Ignore

Every Kashmiri home has a bottle of cough syrup in its cabinet. It's the first thing we reach for when the cold sets in or when a child starts coughing through the night.

The syrup promises comfort, relief, and quick recovery. But that same syrup, when taken beyond its prescribed limit, can turn fatal.

Most cough syrups contain substances like dextromethorphan, codeine, or chlorpheniramine, chemicals that work well in small doses but can act like psychoactive drugs when taken excessively.

Dextromethorphan, in particular, can alter brain function, leading to dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, and in severe cases, respiratory failure.

Codeine-based syrups, though available only on prescription, also carry the risk of addiction and overdose because of their opioid content.

In recent years, Kashmir has seen a worrying rise in the misuse of cough syrups, especially among teenagers and young adults. Some use them to escape stress or emotional pain, mixing syrups with soft drinks to create what they call “lean.”

The concoction may sound harmless, but it suppresses breathing, damages the liver, and can even push the heart into sudden failure.

Hospitals in the valley have reported a growing number of such cases, pointing to an emerging pattern of over-the-counter drug abuse.

Behind this misuse lies a deeper social crisis. High unemployment, anxiety, and lack of recreational spaces have made many young people vulnerable to substance use.

Unlike hard drugs, cough syrup feels accessible and legal, which makes it even more dangerous. It slips past the stigma attached to narcotics,

entering homes undetected.

Pharmacists and doctors in Kashmir can play a vital role in reversing this trend. Restricting sales of codeine-based syrups, enforcing prescription rules, and spreading awareness about dosage safety are small but essential steps.

Schools and parents must also talk openly about the risks, treating this as a health issue rather than a moral one.

A spoonful of syrup should bring relief, not risk. Learning the difference between medicine and misuse may save more lives than we realize.

Sincerely,

Adil Rashid
Pharmacy Student

Kashmir's Forgotten Mountain Spirit

Between mountain science and myth, an ancient sound still echoes in Kashmir Valley. Some call it a trick of the wind. Others call it the voice of a guardian that refuses to leave.

Zaid Bin Ishaq

That terrifying sound often comes in the middle of frozen nights, when the valley lies under snow, the rivers are trapped beneath ice, and the air feels ready to crack. It rings out like a thunder-clap: "Whaaap." A pause, and then again: "Whaaap." It drifts through the mountains like something alive, heard but never seen. Those who recognize it call it the Yach.

The Yach is neither animal nor ghost, neither storm nor spirit. It belongs to a belief older than explanation, a spectral guardian of Kashmir mountains whose presence is felt rather than seen.

"When we were children, our grandmothers would tell us to stay quiet when we heard it," recalls 72-year-old Ghulam Nabi from Gurez. "They said it was the Yach passing through, watching over the mountains. If you spoke, it might take your voice away."

For centuries, the Yach has lived in the collective imagination of Kashmir highlands. Travellers crossing icy passes said the sound guided them when they were lost. Shepherds in Shopian whispered that a certain meadow "belonged to a Yach," a warning to keep away from what the mountains wanted to keep untouched. It was not a creature of fear, but of reverence, a reminder that nature listens back.

"Mountains have memories," goes the old Kashmiri saying. "We only pass through them."

To understand the Yach is to step into a time when Kashmiris saw the natural world as alive. Every spring, stone, and breeze carried a presence. A mountain was a being, a stream was continuity. The valley's ancient saints and mystics spoke to these forces, calling them rooh-e-zameen, the soul of the earth.

The Yach was part of this sacred geography. In Kupwara, old men



tell of how the sound appears only on certain nights when the snow is fresh, and the moon leans low over the ridges.

In Drangyari, near the Line of Control, villagers once believed the Yach's call warned of avalanches. In Pahalgam, elders said it emerged from the forests that no one dared to cut.

These stories are Kashmir's old philosophy, spoken through wind and echo. They tell of a relationship with the land that was both intimate and humble. "He who cannot hear the silence cannot hear God," wrote the poet-mystic Lal Ded.

The Yach's cry was that silence given sound, a natural voice of warning, belonging, and awe.

In recent years, scientists have

offered their own interpretations. Acoustic experts describe how valleys surrounded by steep cliffs can trap sound waves, making them bounce back and forth to create "fixed echoes." A single clap or crack in such a space can repeat at regular intervals, seeming alive to the ear.

Physicists studying alpine acoustics have found that temperature, ice density, and air pressure can all shape how sound behaves. When the surface of a frozen lake contracts, for instance, it produces sudden "whaps" or "booms" that travel for miles.

But these explanations only deepen the mystery.

How did villagers, centuries ago, identify the exact places where such sounds repeat? How did they mark them on their maps of memory as Yach-hund thaan, the place of the Yach?

Science explains the mechanism, but folklore preserves the meaning. The Yach, in this sense, was Kashmir's ancient acoustics, a poetic language for resonance, translated through reverence.

"The more I learn of reason,"

wrote Sufi saint Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, "the more I bow to mystery."

And yet, mystery is fading from Kashmir's modern landscape.

The younger generation rarely hears the Yach, both because few venture into the silent, snow-heavy upper reaches, and because the valley's new noise has drowned out its older music.

In Srinagar, children recognize cartoon characters faster than their own mountain myths. Schools teach physics but not wonder. Roads and resorts now cut through forests that once echoed with unbroken stillness.

Every myth that dies is a relationship severed.

The Yach's disappearance signals the erosion of the Kashmiri way of listening. Where once silence was sacred, now it is inconvenient. Where once nature spoke, now it is measured.

"We have learned to hear decibels, not echoes," says cultural researcher Dr. Sameer Amin. "The tragedy is that we mistake explanation for understanding."

A people without myths, it's said, are a people without roots.

For Kashmir, whose soul was once a blend of science and mysticism, this loss feels almost geological, a silent landslide in its cultural terrain.

There is still time to listen again. If universities and researchers treated legends like the Yach as living heritage, they could uncover a deeper science within folklore.

Departments of earth sciences and cultural studies could collaborate to record and analyze these sounds. Ethnographers might collect oral accounts from elders who still remember where the Yach was heard. Audio engineers could map resonance points across mountain valleys, comparing local myths with measurable data.

Such work would unite reason and wonder. It would remind the valley that ancient knowledge and modern science are reflections of the same curiosity. In that way, the Yach could return as symbol than superstition.

An old Himalayan saying goes, "Preserve the stories, and the land will preserve you."

In the end, the Yach's truth may never fit neatly into science or sto-

ry. It exists in the space between, a sound that keeps the border between seen and unseen open.

On a still night in Gurez, when snow muffles every step, one might still hear it: a soft "whaaap" rolling down the ridge, pausing, then rising again.

Perhaps it is only an echo, or a contraction of frozen wood, or air escaping a crack of ice. Or perhaps it is something older: the mountain exhaling, the valley remembering.

Either way, it calls us to listen. To hear the world as conversation. For when the Yach disappears completely, it will not only be a sound



In the end, the Yach's truth may never fit neatly into science or story. It exists in the space between, a sound that keeps the border between seen and unseen open.

lost to time. It will be a silence we no longer know how to understand.

Kashmir's future will depend on whether it builds only in concrete or also in echo. The Yach, half legend and half physics, waits for the next listener.

And in remembering its voice, we might remember our own.

— The author is a Kashmiri writer and independent researcher. He can be reached at zaid.bin.ishaq786@gmail.com.

Kashmir's future will depend on whether it builds only in concrete or also in echo. The Yach, half legend and half physics, waits for the next listener. And in remembering its voice, we might remember our own.

The Rise of Childhood Myopia

World Sight Day 2025 draws attention to the silent epidemic of childhood myopia in Kashmir and its long-term impact on vision.

Dr. Syed Yasir Mustafa

Every day, I see children holding books too close, squinting at the blackboard, or complaining of headaches after studying.

Their eyes tell a story of change, a silent shift in childhood that affects how they learn, play, and see the world around them.

By 2030, nearly half of the world's children could be nearsighted. That future is already starting to arrive in the valley.

This World Sight Day shines a light on childhood myopia, a condition that has grown from a minor concern into a serious global warning for parents, schools, and communities alike.

The cause is familiar. Screens dominate children's lives. Phones, tablets, and computers replace hours once spent running in courtyards or playing cricket under sunlight.

Their eyes are under constant strain, and the absence of natural light accelerates myopia.

Sunlight helps regulate normal eye growth, but indoor routines deprive children of this essential exposure.

Every hour spent indoors under artificial light is an hour lost in building healthy eyes.

Parents often notice problems only when children struggle with schoolwork or daily activities.

By then, the condition may have progressed, increasing the risk of long-term complications such as amblyopia, retinal detachment, or glaucoma.

Early detection is critical. I advise families to make annual eye exams a habit. Children who already wear glasses should have checkups every six months, while all others should be examined at least once a year.

Simple lifestyle adjustments can make a lasting difference. Limiting recreational screen time, encourag-



For a generation growing up indoors and online, reclaiming sunlight and healthy routines is the clearest prescription to secure their vision and future.

ing at least two hours of outdoor activity every day, and ensuring proper lighting and posture while reading or studying protect developing eyes.

Diet is also important. Leafy greens, yellow fruits, and milk, rich in vitamins A and C, support eye health.

Schools and healthcare providers must contribute through vision screenings and awareness programs, helping families act before problems arise.

The rising incidence of myopia signals that eye health must be a priority. That's why World Sight Day 2025 carries a clear message: children's vision matters today because it shapes tomorrow.

I tell parents repeatedly: reduce screen time, bring children closer to sunlight, and make vision care part of daily life.

Protecting children's eyes shapes how they learn, play, and engage with the world.

For a generation growing up indoors and online, reclaiming sunlight and healthy routines is the clearest prescription to secure their vision and future.

— The author is a Senior Consultant at Sharp Sight Eye Hospitals, Srinagar, specializing in pediatric and adult eye care.

Rising Beyond the Odds

Once labelled backward, Budgam and Bandipora are producing scientists, doctors, and civil servants, proving determination can defy geography and poverty.

Kaisar Ahmad Malla

Budgam and Bandipora were once footnotes on Kashmir's educational map. The 2011 Census placed them among the least literate districts in the region, often spoken of with pity or neglect.

But today, the narrative is shifting. From the villages of Budgam to the scenic valleys of Bandipora, a new story of tenacity and transformation is taking shape.

In Sonawari, one of Bandipora's most economically challenged areas, a young man recently made history by qualifying for the Indian Statistical Services.

Across the two districts, similar stories are emerging. Youth are clearing national-level exams in civil services, research, and engineering, proving that ambition does not bow to circumstances.

Economic hardships have long marked these regions. Unlike Baramulla or Anantnag, Budgam and Bandipora offer little in tourism or horticulture, the twin engines of Kashmir's economy.

Government jobs have remained the lifeline for most families. But limited resources and exposure have not stopped students from breaking barriers.

Budgam, once dismissed as educationally lagging, now produces the highest number of scientists from Kashmir, many serving in premier research institutions nationwide.

Wadwan, a small Budgam village, now boasts the highest number of doctors in the district, a remarkable feat for a place with scarce educational infrastructure.

Budgam is also India's largest producer of handmade crafts, including the legendary Kani Shawls, a tradi-



Budgam and Bandipora are no longer "backward." They are symbols of a forward journey. Their youth chase respect and recognition, crafting futures from grit.

tion that mirrors the persistence of its youth.

Nursing graduates from the district are serving across India and abroad, bringing skill, compassion, and pride to communities that once had little to hope for.

Bandipora, famed for Wular Lake, is now emerging as a lake of talent. Its youth are opting for education over escapism, qualifying in competitive exams and proving intellect thrives beyond privilege.

This transformation is as much emotional as it is educational.

Families sell land to fund their children's studies. Villages pool resources to send a student to college.

Teachers work without infrastructure but with unwavering hope. Progress here has often risen from sacrifice and perseverance rather than policy.

Budgam and Bandipora are no longer "backward." They are symbols of a forward journey. Their youth chase respect and recognition, crafting futures from grit.

The next census may not just count literacy in numbers, it will measure the dreams these districts have helped fulfill.

— The author is a health worker from Radbunh Magam with a deep interest in social and health issues affecting Kashmir.

J&K Govt Enhances Children Education Allowance, Hostel Subsidy By 25%

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Finance Department has announced a 25 percent increase in the Children Education Allowance (CEA) and Hostel Subsidy for government employees following the enhancement of Dearness Allowance by 50 percent from January 1, 2024.

As per an order, the revised monthly rates are Rs. 2812.50 for CEA, Rs. 8437.50 for Hostel Subsidy, and Rs. 5625 for CEA for

Divyang children.

Under the rules laid down in G.O. No. 473-F of 2019, the limit for CEA and Hostel Subsidy is automatically raised by 25% every time the DA goes up by 50%, it said.

Additionally, the Finance Department modified the eligibility clause, stating that CEA and Hostel Subsidy will now be admissible for children studying from three classes before Class 1 up to Class 12, regardless of the class nomenclature.

IAF Chief: Op Sindoor Revived Nation's Faith In Offensive Air Strategy

Press Trust Of India

Hindon: The Indian Air Force's "bold and precise" attacks on enemy targets during Operation Sindoor restored the rightful place of offensive air action in the national consciousness, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said on Wednesday.

The Chief of Air Staff also said his force has proved to the world how air power can be effectively used in shaping military outcomes in just a few days.

Air Chief Marshal Singh was addressing air warriors on the occasion of the 93rd Air Force Day at the Hindon air base. The

Indian Air Force (IAF) was officially established on October 8, 1932.

While hailing the success of Operation Sindoor, he called upon air warriors to "remain prepared" for future security challenges, emphasising that the IAF's planning must be "innovative, practical and adaptive" and its training must be based on the principle of "train like we fight".

"Our performance in Operation Sindoor fills us with professional pride. We proved to the world how air power can be effectively used in shaping military outcome in just a few days," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff described Operation Sindoor as a shining example of what can be achieved through "meticulous planning, disciplined training and determined execution."

"India's bold and precise attacks restored the rightful place of offensive air action in the national consciousness," he said.

"Our robust air defence architecture and offensive employment of long-range surface to air missiles systems limited the adversary's ability to operate and ensured safety of our vital assets," he said.

"The outstanding performance of the indigenously

developed and integrated weapons which delivered precise and devastating blows deep inside enemy territory, vindicates our faith in home-grown capabilities," he said.

In response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, using air power to destroy several terror infrastructures in territories controlled by Pakistan.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

In his remarks, Air Chief Marshal Singh also noted that

the increasing pace of integration of new systems, weapons and equipment into the IAF's operational plans has been a "significant success".

"I can see that there is an increased culture of accountability, safety and security amongst the air warriors and this is directly reflecting in our reduced incidents and accidents," he said.

"At all levels, leaders are leading from the front, demonstrating exceptional vision and empathy. They are ensuring that every individual is empowered with the necessary training and is motivated," he added.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir's Cold Season

without medical guidance.

Dr. Sartaj Ali Bhat, pediatric consultant at the Department of Health, said overuse is fuelled by easy access and weak regulation. "Many parents give a syrup on their own if it worked once before. They do not consult a doctor for every illness."

According to Dr. Bhat, 70-80 percent of outpatient pediatric cases currently involve respiratory infections, mostly viral, with or without fever.

Most improve with simple medicines such as paracetamol or antihistamines. "Cough syrups should be used only under the guidance of a qualified pediatrician," he said.

Doctors warn that self-medication carries serious risks. Wrong doses or inappropriate drugs can suppress a child's natural cough reflex, increasing the risk of pneumonia or sepsis.

Certain medicines can also trigger heart rhythm problems. "Parents may think they are helping, but giving the wrong medicine can be dangerous," Dr. Bhat said.

He advised immediate medical attention if a child has high fever, difficulty breathing, bluish lips or tongue, abnormal movements, a cough lasting more than seven days, or low body temperature in infants.

Health experts say home remedies remain the safest first step. Warm fluids such as ke-hwa or soup, nutritious food, fresh fruits, and exclusive breastfeeding for infants under six months can ease symptoms. Medicines, medics say, should complement these measures rather than replace them.

Notably, all medicines sold in India are approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, and state authorities conduct regular market surveillance.

Dr. Bhat said enforcement needs to be stronger. "Laws exist to ensure safety, but implementation is uneven. Parents rely on these medicines to care for their children, and the system must protect them."

More States Impose

an advisory banning the sale, distribution, and stocking of the syrup, manufactured by Sresan Pharmaceutical. The advisory cited alerts from the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) and reports linking the drug to child deaths in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Retailers have been directed to report existing stocks to authorities, while doctors have been cautioned against prescribing cough syrups to children.

The deaths in Chhindwara and Betul districts of Madhya Pradesh have triggered nationwide concern over India's drug safety system. The state government has pledged to cover treatment costs for children who developed kidney complications after consuming the syrup.

Supreme Court PIL Seeks Probe and Reforms Advocate Vishal Tiwari has filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court, seeking a court-monitored probe and systemic reforms in the country's drug regulatory framework. The plea calls for setting up a National Judicial Commission or Expert Committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge and transferring all related investigations to the CBI for a unified inquiry.

IMA Condemns Arrest of Paediatrician Amid mounting outrage, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) condemned the arrest of Dr. Praveen Soni, a senior paediatrician from Chhindwara, for allegedly prescribing the tainted syrup.

In a statement, the IMA said the responsibility for drug quality lies with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the Madhya Pradesh FDA. "Arresting a doctor who prescribed a drug approved by competent authorities sends a wrong message," the association said, terming the move "legal illiteracy" and "intimidation of the medical profession."

The IMA demanded the doctor's release and urged authorities to hold the manufacturer and regulators accountable instead.

Persistent Oversight Flaws Exposed

The Coldrif case is the latest in a string of toxic cough syrup tragedies that have exposed persistent flaws in India's pharmaceutical oversight. Experts and public health advocates have renewed calls for a comprehensive overhaul of the drug regulation system, with stronger quality control, traceability, and transparency mechanisms.

As the matter reaches the Supreme Court and more states impose bans, pressure is mounting on both state and central governments to ensure such preventable tragedies never recur.

SIA Raids Multiple

raids, several suspects were detained for questioning, and substantial incriminating material was seized from various locations.

Preliminary investigation, officials said, has revealed active involvement of the suspects in a terrorist conspiracy aimed at propagating anti-India narratives, promoting public disorder, and inciting communal hatred.

"The operation underscores SIA's continued

and resolute efforts to dismantle the entire network and strike at the roots of the terror ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir," they added.

HM To Chair

of September, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha chaired the Unified Headquarters (UHQ) meeting in Srinagar and discussed the situation across J&K with the security top brass.

"Threadbare discussions were held on counter infiltration and counter terrorism operations during the meeting."

"War against terrorism is not over yet. Kinetic and non-kinetic operations must continue. We must maintain the momentum and take stringent action against terrorism and its entire ecosystem," LG Sinha had told the officers, during the meeting.

National Policy

he blamed the Congress-led UPA government (2004-14) for "weakening the fight against terror," which he alleged had "paid a heavy price" on the nation.

"A Congress leader, who has also been Union home minister, has said a country prevented India's military retaliation post-26/11 Mumbai terror attacks in 2008. The party should clarify," the PM, who is on a two-day Mumbai visit, said.

Modi was referring to comments made by former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram, who had himself been in favour of taking military action against Pakistan but pointed out that the UPA government went for diplomatic action, under some pressure from world powers, including America, not to initiate a war. The PM did not mention Chidambaram's name during his address.

Modi highlighted Mumbai as the financial hub and cosmopolitan city, which has been repeatedly a victim of terror attacks, such as the November 2008 assault by ten well-armed terrorists from Pakistan, which claimed 166 lives, including that of foreign nationals.

Continuing to target the Congress, Modi alleged the weakness of the grand old party to firmly combat terror made the hands of the terrorists stronger and asserted the country has the right to know who prevented India from proceeding with a military response after the 26/11 attacks.

"If a top Congress leader, who has been a Union minister, is to be believed, the then UPA government buckled under pressure of a foreign country against attacking Pakistan even though our defence forces were ready and the mood of the nation was to strike (the neighbouring country)," the PM asserted.

In contrast, Modi maintained that today's India provides a "befitting response to terror attacks and strikes by entering inside the home of enemies."

Beyond national security, the PM highlighted the new infrastructure as a symbol of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India).

He contrasted this with a political stream in the country that prioritises power over public welfare and said such individuals obstruct development work and derail projects through scams and corruption.

Taking a jab at the Maharashtra opposition bloc MVA, he said NMIA had been delayed due to "hurdles in development" and "rampant corruption" under the previous state regime.

"This (creating hurdles in development) is no less than committing a sin," he said.

"Gati" (speed) and "Pragati" (development) are the hallmarks of Viksit Bharat where people's welfare is the topmost priority, he said, adding that for the last 11 years, work has been happening in this direction.

Be it the Vande Bharat trains, expediting the bullet train project, new highways and expressways linking new cities, tunnels, and sea bridges, speed and development can be seen in the country, Modi said, adding the new airport, with the shape of a lotus, is a glimpse of Viksit Bharat.

The airport is situated on the land of Shivaji Maharaj and it is a symbol of culture and prosperity, Modi said, adding farmers and fisherfolk can get access to global markets because of the airport.

The PM remarked this new airport will connect Maharashtra's farmers to supermarkets in Europe and West Asia, enabling fresh produce, fruits, vegetables, and fishery products to reach global markets swiftly besides reducing export costs for nearby small and medium industries that will give a boost to their investment and lead them to establish new enterprises.

Modi recalled his vision of 2014 when he took over as PM and said he always wanted that even those wearing 'hawaii' chappals (slippers) should be able to travel by air.

To realize this dream, it was essential to build new airports across the country, he said, adding the Centre took this mission seriously and, over the past 11 years, new airports have been constructed one after another.

The PM said in 2014, there were 74 airports in the country, and now there are more than 160 airports and added India has become the third-largest domestic aviation market in the world.

Pointing out that as the number of aircraft increases, the demand for maintenance and repair operations also rises, Modi highlighted India is developing new facilities domestically to meet this need.

The goal is to establish India as a major MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) hub by the end of this decade, he noted and added this initiative is also creating numerous new employment opportunities for youth.

"India is the youngest country in the world, and its strength lies in its youth," he said emphasising that every government policy is focused on creating maximum employment opportunities for young people.

He said efforts are underway to integrate all modes of transport to ensure seamless travel, eliminating the need for commuters to switch modes with difficulty.

India is progressing towards the vision of 'One Nation, One Mobility', he said, adding the Mumbai One App is another step in this direction, enabling citizens to avoid long queues for tickets.

"With this app, a single ticket can be used across local trains, buses, metros, and taxis," he said.

Modi said with the new international airport and the underground metro, the metropolis will be Asia's largest connectivity hub with seamless travel and connectivity due to the Mumbai One app.

The Prime Minister congratulated the workers and engineers who constructed the 33.5-km-long underground metro in Mumbai while keeping the heritage buildings secure.

He announced the new airport will be named after Loknete D B Patil, a popular local politician and social activist, and recalled his contribution for the welfare of farmers.

Modi underscored that empowering the poor, the neo-middle class, and the middle class is a "national priority," asserting their collective strength makes the nation stronger.

The PM highlighted that recent "next-generation reforms in GST" have made several goods more affordable, which has boosted people's purchasing power.

Citing market data, he said the recent Navratri season broke multi-year sale figures, with a record number of people buying consumer goods such as scooters, motorbikes, TVs, and washing machines.

Modi issued a strong call to the nation to embrace indigenously made goods and urged everyone to adopt the mantra, "this is Swadeshi," ensuring it resonates in everywhere.

Concluding his remarks, the PM praised Maharashtra's role in accelerating India's development and affirmed the governments at both the Centre and state levels will continue to work tirelessly to enhance the capabilities of every town and village.

The event was attended by dignitaries including Maharashtra Governor Acharya Devvrat, CM Devendra Fadnavis, Union ministers, and Japan's Ambassador to India Keiichi Ono.

Around 100-120

Operation Sindoor, Yadav told reporters, "The way BSF and Army have dominated the LoC through alertness and use of modern surveillance gadgets has ensured that infiltration attempts have not succeeded. With winter about two months away, terrorists may continue trying, but any attempt will be detected and neutralised."

When asked about the recent collaboration between Lashkar-e-Taiba and Islamic State outfits, Yadav said such developments are closely monitored by intelligence agencies. "Based on the analysis, we carry out operational planning together with all security forces. We are aware of the situation and are taking necessary countermeasures," he added.

The BSF officer's statement highlights ongoing vigilance along the LoC as security forces continue to strengthen area domination and prevent any cross-border infiltration attempts in the Union Territory.

2 Soldiers Go

officials, the operation was launched two days ago in the Ahlan Gadole area of Kokernag following intelligence inputs about the presence of a group of terrorists.

However, two soldiers, who are part of the elite para unit, went missing as their communication line went out, the officials said, adding that helicopters were pressed into aerial reconnaissance in a bid to locate the missing soldiers.

Srinagar-based Chinar Corps of the Army said the operational team was caught in a severe snow storm on Monday night.

Chinar Corps of the Indian Army, in a post on X wrote, "On the intervening night of 6/7 Oct an operational team on Kishtwar range confronted a severe snow storm and white out conditions in the mountains of South Kashmir."

"Since then, two soldiers have gone out of communication. Intense Search and Rescue operations have been launched but hampered

due to prevailing adverse weather conditions," the post further reads.

An official said that search teams have been deployed on the ground, and helicopters are conducting aerial reconnaissance to trace the missing personnel.

The Ahlan Gadole area has emerged as a recent hotspot of terrorism in south Kashmir. The forests witnessed two major encounters in August 2024 and September 2023.

In last year's gunfight, four security personnel, including two Army officers and a police officer, were killed while tracking down militants. Two soldiers and a civilian also lost their lives in a fierce exchange of fire in the area in August this year.

The ongoing operation was continuing in the region till last reports came in, officials added.

Search Op Intensified

area of Kandi in Rajouri on Tuesday evening, three suspected terrorists were also noticed moving in Dharni top area of Basantgarh in Udhampur.

Police assisted by army and CRPF strengthened the cordon around the areas and a massive search operation was launched this morning to track down and neutralise the terrorists, the officials said.

They said the cordon and search operation was extended to adjoining areas but there was no fresh contact with the terrorists so far.

Inspector General of Police, Jammu, Bhim Sen Tuti said on Tuesday that "Exchange of fire took place between terrorists and SOG (Special Operations Group) team in Beeranhub area, Police Station Kandi, Rajouri. Joint parties of police, Army and CRPF have rushed to the spot and cordoned off the area." (PTI)

Colleges Reopen

for Ladakh.

The violence left four persons dead and scores injured. The authorities reopened schools up to class eight on October 3 and later up to class 12 as the situation improved.

However, mobile internet services remain suspended. They are likely to be restored within the next couple of days, the officials said.

Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) Act, banning assembly of five or more persons, are likely to continue for the time being, they said.

During the security review meeting chaired by LG Gupta, officers briefed him about the latest developments, including the phased reopening of schools, colleges, markets, and other public institutions across Ladakh.

Expressing satisfaction over the gradual return of normalcy, Gupta lauded the resilience, maturity and cooperation of the people of Ladakh in maintaining peace and harmony. He said the reopening of educational institutions and markets is a positive indication of the public's trust in the administration's measures aimed at restoring normal life.

In view of the encouraging public response and overall improvement of the situation, Gupta directed the concerned authorities to gradually lift the remaining restrictions and ensure that all normal activities are resumed at the earliest.

He emphasised that the relaxation process should be carried out in a phased and coordinated manner to safeguard public safety while facilitating smooth movement and economic activity.

The LG appealed to people, especially the youth, to continue exercising restraint and not to be swayed by any attempts to disrupt peace or communal harmony.

"The progress of Ladakh depends on peace and stability. Every citizen has a role in upholding the values of unity and mutual respect," he said.

Reiterating the administration's firm commitment to the welfare of people, Gupta assured that all necessary steps are being taken to address public grievances, strengthen local governance and accelerate ongoing development projects.

He said the administration remains dedicated to making Ladakh a model of peace, sustainability and inclusive growth.

JKBOSE Issues

relaxation for all board exams for the ensuing academic year.

In a notification, the Board said the relaxation has been provided due to the delayed commencement of the academic session this year, and disruptions in the academic calendar due to heat waves, torrential rains and floods.

"It is hereby notified that the prospective eligible students appearing in class 10, 11 and 12 in the ensuing Annual Regular, 2025 examination (October-November session) in Kashmir Division and winter zone areas of Jammu Division including UT of Ladakh, shall attempt 85 per cent marks which will correspond to 100 per cent marks, availing thus 15 per cent relaxation in syllabus," the Board said.

The question papers will be set from the

whole prescribed syllabus and the students will have to attempt any 85 per cent marks from the question paper(s) within internal choice, it added.

SC Upholds Legality

Mohammedan Law does not require a written document to be valid. The mere fact that a gift is reduced to writing does not change its nature or character. A written document recording the gift does not become a formal instrument of gift," the bench said.

The court said delivery of possession is a critical and necessary element for a valid gift.

"It can be actual or constructive. Constructive possession can be demonstrated by overt acts by the donor that show a clear intention to transfer control. For example, the donor applies for the mutation of the donee's name in the revenue records," it said.

The apex court said the evidence of acting under the gift (collecting rent, holding title, mutation) is essential to substantiate the claim of possession.

"While Mohammedan Law allows for a gift to be made orally without a written document, the validity of such a gift is contingent on the demonstration of all three essential elements, particularly the delivery of possession.

"The courts will scrutinise 'contemporaneous' and 'continuous' evidence of the donee's actions and control over the property to determine if possession was indeed transferred. The lack of evidence (failure to collect rent, donor's continued control, lack of mutation) will lead to proving that a gift was never completed, regardless of any written declaration," the bench said.

The top court's judgment came on a plea relating to the partition and possession of agricultural land at Kusnoor village in Karnataka's Gulbarga district, which was given under an oral gift (hiba).

J&K Surpasses 1.05 Crore

"Scan & Share" service, J&K ranks among the top four states nationally, recording 82,87,701 scans and shares for OPD-based token generation. Patients can now book OPD slots from home by scanning a QR code via the ABHA app or abdmj.in, generating tokens in advance to minimize hospital queues.

The UT has also recorded 90,44,810 Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) linked to citizens' ABHA IDs, enabling patients to access their complete health histories through the Personal Health Record (PHR) app.

J&K's digital health efforts have earned the territory the Arogya Manthan Award, recognizing its achievements in modernizing healthcare. Officials noted that the ABDM ensures paperless tracking from admission to discharge, evidence-based treatment, faster claims processing, price transparency, and support for remote consultations.

"The participation of health workers, allied staff, and professionals has been pivotal to the smooth operation and implementation of ABDM in the UT," officials said, adding that the initiative is transforming patient access, strengthening healthcare infrastructure, and setting a benchmark for digital health services nationwide.

Early Onset Of

beyond three weeks are difficult to forecast reliably."

According to him, current meteorological models indicate a likelihood of above-normal snowfall during October and November. However, he emphasized that these are short-term trends and should not be interpreted as indicators of the overall severity of winter.

Regarding peak winter months, Lotus said temperatures in December and January could drop to around minus 8°C, particularly in higher reaches, but extreme dips below that are unlikely at this stage.

He also urged the public and administration to remain prepared for winter-related challenges, including snowfall, cold waves, and possible disruptions in transport and power supply. "Early preparation helps minimize hardship once the full winter sets in," he advised.(inputs from KINS)

Jammu-Srinagar

"Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) has not been fully restored...the road is in poor condition at Tharad (Udhampur), Nashri-Dalwas and between Marog and Kishtwari Pather (Ramban), therefore only one-way traffic of Light Motor Vehicles was allowed from Srinagar towards Jammu this morning," a traffic department official said.

He said the Mughal road connecting Poonch and Rajouri districts in Jammu with south Kashmir's Shopian district is cleared of snow at Peer Ki Gali and is open for light motor vehicles from both sides.

The traffic on Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road, also another alternative link between Jammu and Srinagar, is still closed due to snow accumulation at Sinthan top, the official said.

20 Years On, Quake Memories Haunt Kashmir's Border Villages

Agencies

KARNAH: Ghulam Nabi Khan, now 80, still lives in a house rebuilt with government aid, but the pain from that day has never left him.

On this day 20 years ago, the Karnah Valley in north Kashmir's Kupwara district faced a devastating earthquake, claiming over 150 lives, destroying thousands of homes, livestock, and vital infrastructure, and leaving deep scars on the mountains and fields.

"It's been 20 years since the deadly earthquake devastated and shook the Karnah Valley, yet people here still carry fresh memories of that day," Khan recalled.

He said people lost their loved ones in the tragedy, and the pain that kept us awake for months still haunts us to this day.

"We were busy in the fields when the earth started shaking violently. I ran back home to find the roof collapsing like a deck of cards. My two grandsons were playing inside. They

never came out alive. I still see their faces when I close my eyes," he recalled.

Today, Khan tends a small orchard near his home. "I work every day, but the silence at home reminds me of what I lost," he said, adding, "It was a natural disaster; no one could have stopped it, but we suffered beyond anything imaginable."

Locals said that villages like Tangdhar, Tithwal, and other border areas were among the worst hit.

Almost all the 'kachcha' houses made of mud and brick collapsed, especially in low-lying areas where over 90% of structures were destroyed.

Even army installations, bridges, and culverts were severely damaged. Roads, including the crucial Karnah-Tangdhar route, were blocked by landslides, isolating the valley for days.

Fatima Begum, 68, was a widow even before the earthquake, but lost her son and many neighbours in the disaster.

"I was fetching water from



IT'S BEEN 20 YEARS SINCE THE DEADLY EARTHQUAKE DEVASTATED and shook the Karnah Valley, yet people here still carry fresh memories of that day,"

the spring when the earth trembled. By the time I reached home, everything had fallen: the walls, the roof, and my son trapped inside."

For days, she searched through the debris alongside others, hoping for a miracle that

never came. Now, Fatima lives with her daughter in Tangdhar.

Zubeeda, 35, was newly married and full of hope in 2005. "We had just finished building our mud house when the quake struck at dawn. The walls shook, and then everything fell around

us. I held my husband's hand tightly as we escaped, but our home was gone," she said.

Since then, Zubeeda has become a community volunteer, helping women rebuild livelihoods after disasters. "I want young women to be empowered to face such hardships, to not lose hope like we almost did," she said.

Mushtaq Ahmad, now 28, was only eight when the earthquake destroyed his school. "I remember the classroom shaking, the dust, and the cries of friends trapped beneath fallen beams. Some didn't make it," he said.

Ahmad recalled that as a child, he thought it was the end of the world, as everything around him shook violently and buildings collapsed to the ground.

Almost 1,700 families in Karnah were forced into temporary shelters after the quake, surviving without electricity, water, or communication for days. Roads were blocked by landslides, isolating the valley—(KNO)

LG Ladakh Kavinder Gupta Chairs Review Meeting

Says Reopening Of Schools, Markets, Public Institutions Show People's Trust In Administration



Observer News Service

LEH: The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta chaired a high-level meeting to review the prevailing situation in the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Director General of Police Dr. S.D. Singh Jamwal, IG CRPF Pawan Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Leh, Senior Superintendent of Police Leh and other senior officials. They briefed the Lt Governor on the overall law and order scenario across the Union Territory. They further briefed on the latest developments, including the phased reopening of schools, colleges, markets, and other public institutions across Ladakh.

Expressing satisfaction over the steady return of normalcy, the Lt Governor lauded the resilience, maturity, and co-operation of the people of Ladakh in maintaining peace and harmony. He said

the reopening of educational institutions and markets is a positive indicator of the public's trust in the Administration's measures aimed at restoring normal life.

In view of the encouraging public response and overall improvement in the situation, the Lt Governor directed the concerned authorities to gradually lift the remaining restrictions at the earliest and ensure that all normal activities are resumed at the earliest. He emphasised that the relaxation process should be carried out in a phased and coordinated manner to safeguard public safety while facilitating smooth movement and economic activity.

The Lt Governor appealed to the people, especially the youth, to continue exercising restraint and not to be swayed by any attempts to disrupt peace or communal harmony. "The progress of Ladakh depends on peace and stability. Every citizen has a role in upholding the values of unity and mutual respect," he said.

Digital Payment Volumes Surge 35% In FY25

Urban India Sees Broader Digital Adoption Beyond Metros, Finds Kearney-Amazon Pay Report

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Digital payment volumes in urban India surged by 35% in FY25, powered by women, Gen Z, millennials, and small-town consumers embracing new modes of payment, according to the "How Urban India Pays 2025" report released on Wednesday by Kearney India in collaboration with Amazon Pay.

The study highlights that aspirational buyers are increasingly adopting digital payment options not just for high-value purchases such as electronics and apparel, but also for everyday categories like utility bills—where digital transactions grew from 83% in 2024 to 87% in 2025. This shift reflects India's steady march toward a \$7 trillion digital economy by 2030.

Women, Young Professionals Driving Growth

Women have emerged as major contributors to this growth, with 89% preferring digital modes for online purchases. Among women entrepreneurs, 80% now run their businesses digitally, led by UPI (34%), cards (20%), and wallets (8%). Affluent women are increasingly adopting



credit cards (69%), while middle-income groups continue to rely on UPI and wallets for daily expenses.

"India's digital payment revolution is accelerating at an unprecedented pace," said Shashwat Sharma, Partner & Financial Services Lead, Kearney India. "With growing financial independence, 57% of women are now taking charge of their finances, while Gen Z and Millennials are redefining credit adoption. Around 65% applied for their first credit card early in their careers."

Digital Momentum Spreads Beyond Metros

The report finds a strong surge in small-town adoption, with offline digital payment usage rising to 50% in FY25, compared to 62% in metros. Cities like Lucknow, Jaipur,

Kochi, and Bhubaneswar are fast catching up, driven by tap-and-go payments, co-branded credit cards, and buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) options.

"India's payment landscape is evolving rapidly across the entire nation," said Vikas Bansal, CEO of Amazon Pay India. "The preference for offline digital payments rose from 48% to 56% in just one year, signalling a fundamental shift in behaviour."

From Cash to Convenience Digital payments are becoming the default mode for both online and offline transactions. Offline adoption grew from 48% in 2024 to 56% in 2025, with UPI, cards, and contactless payments dominating. Credit-based payments are also expanding, particularly through shopping-linked co-branded cards.

J&K Bank & J&K Grameen Bank Disburse Rs 100 Cr Loans To 2673 SHGs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In line with the Government's vision of promoting financial empowerment of women through self help groups, J&K Bank and its sponsored entity J&K Grameen Bank have successfully disbursed Rs 100 Crore in loans to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) operating under the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM).

Marking the culmination of a month-long campaign aimed at strengthening women-led entrepreneurship across the Union Territory, the Bank presented a symbolic cheque of Rs 100 Crore to JKRLM during the ongoing SARAS Mela



here at Municipal Park.

During the event, Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, who was the Chief Guest, was handed over the sym-

bolic cheque by the Bank's General Manager (Retail, Agri & MSME/GSS) Rakesh Magotra and J&K Grameen Bank GM Raja Sajad in presence of Mission Director JKRLM Dr. Shu-

bra Sharma, Addl. Mission Director JKRLM (Kashmir) Mohammad Imran Khan, Bank's DGM Aneet Kanwal Singh, and other senior officers of NABARD, Bank and JKRLM.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister Javid Ahmad Dar lauded the Bank along with J&K Grameen Bank for sanctioning Rs 100 crore to 2,673 SHGs saying, "it is a significant step toward promoting self-employment and women-led enterprises in rural areas."

General Manager Rakesh Magotra highlighted the Bank's continued partnership with JKRLM as a key contributor to the Government's mission of empowering rural communities through inclusive

financial interventions.

He said, "J&K Bank takes pride in being an active partner in realizing the Government's vision. The achievement of this Rs 100 Crore milestone under JKRLM reflects our deep commitment to strengthening the Self-Help Group (SHG) ecosystem and ensuring easy access to credit that enables rural women to build and expand their enterprises with confidence."

The Bank's proactive efforts in facilitating access to finance for SHGs reinforce its broader mission of promoting inclusive growth, women empowerment, and sustainable livelihood generation across Jammu and Kashmir.

BJP Election Panel To Discuss Candidates For Budgam, Nagrota By-Polls

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Bharatiya Janata Party's election committee will meet on Thursday to discuss the upcoming by-elections for the Nagrota and Budgam assembly segments, sources disclosed.

Sources revealed that the party's election committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow to deliberate on probable candidates for the Budgam and Nagrota constituencies, which are set to go to polls on November 11.

The meeting will be attended by BJP state president Sat Sharma, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, MP Jugal Kishore, Gen-

eral Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul, and other members of the committee.

Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Dr. Jitendra Singh, and party's national general secretary and in-charge for Jammu & Kashmir, Tarun Chugh, will also attend the meeting. The committee is expected to discuss potential candidates for both seats and submit its recommendations to the party high command, which will finalize the names. The BJP is likely to field Devyani Rana, daughter of Devinder Singh Rana, who won the Nagrota seat by a record margin of 30,472 votes. The seat became vacant following Rana's demise.—(KNO)

BJP Never Wanted Alliance With NC: J&K LoP

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The BJP on Wednesday said the party never intended to join the National Conference government headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah after the assembly elections held in Jammu and Kashmir last year.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Sunil Sharma, said the party was content with sitting in the opposition. He also said the BJP will not ally with the National Conference and its doors were shut to the regional party.

The LoP said Abdullah recently stated that he had two options -- "to either form the government on his own or ally

with the BJP.

"I do not know what dream he had where the BJP offered to form the government together. If any BJP leader offered him this, he should bring it to the fore, or stop the lies and misleading stories," Sharma said.

He asked Abdullah to either bring the facts about BJP's support to the public domain or apologise.

"You say that you had the opportunity of going with the BJP? No, the doors of the BJP are closed for you. The BJP has no need to form the government with you. If anyone has made an offer to you, confirm it publicly, or else apologise to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and say that you lied," Sharma said.

Toppers Talk Held At Exceptional Academy

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Exceptional Academy, Parraypora, Srinagar, organized a special session under its "Toppers Talk" series titled "How to Prepare for IAS/JKAS Exam", featuring Sanjeev Kumar (JKAS 2024-Rank 1, UPSC CSE 2024-Qualified) as the guest speaker.

Addressing the gathering, Sanjeev Kumar shared valuable insights on exam strategy, time management, and maintaining focus during preparation. He encouraged students to adopt a disciplined and smart approach while preparing for civil services examinations.



The event, held at Exceptional Academy, Near Ginger Hotel, Parraypora, Srinagar, J&K, saw active participation from students of Amar Singh College, S.P. College, and other leading institutions across the Valley. The interactive session allowed aspirants to engage directly with the achiever and seek practical guidance for their preparation journey.

Chenab Valley's Hazardous Roads Worsen After Floods

The roads in the Chenab Valley have become increasingly hazardous, claiming lives and damaging infrastructure with each passing day. After the recent torrential rains and floods, the region's fragile road network has suffered severe damage, while funds for restoration remain stuck awaiting government approval.

In the mountainous district of Doda, the condition of link roads has worsened dramatically.

Commuters, describe travelling on these dilapidated routes as sheer torment.

Although the government has launched several road reconstruction projects under schemes like PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and R&B (Roads and Buildings Department), many stretches have been left incomplete after excavation. As a result, large rocks and debris continue to accumulate on these unfinished roads, making even light rainfall enough to block vehicular movement.

Residents told KNO that the roads were already in poor shape before the rains. Now, with contractors and departments abandoning work midway, the situation has turned alarming, they said.

The recent downpour has washed away entire patches of link roads, pushing them to the verge of collapse. Frequent landslides and rockfalls have become a daily occurrence along roads. In several areas, the ground beneath the roads has begun to slip, leaving cracks and deep fissures.

"The condition of the roads is miserable. Every time it rains, we get trapped. Vehicles can't move, and landslides continue to block the road. It feels like we are cut off from the rest of the world," said a resident from Thaki.—(KNO)

Div Com Reviews Winter Preparedness Measures

In view of the upcoming winter season, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Wednesday chaired a meeting with Deputy Commissioners and Heads of Departments to review the preparedness for the forthcoming cold months.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Directors of FCS&CA, ULB, and IMD, Commissioner SMC, Chief Engineers of KPDC, KPCL, PHE, R&B, PMGSY, and officers from Horticulture, BRO, NH, NHIDCL, and other concerned departments.

Div Com conducted a detailed review of snow clearance strategies of key departments including MED, BRO, PMGSY, SMC, ULB, and R&B. He emphasized prioritizing snow clearance on roads leading to vital installations and habitations, ensuring minimal disruption to public movement and essential services.

He also reviewed buffer stocking of ration, LPG, petroleum products, and distribution transformers besides functioning of water supply schemes, lift stations, and deployment of water tankers.

On the occasion, Div Com instructed Deputy Commissioners to ensure seamless coordination among departments to avoid service disruptions. He called for advance vetting of road stretches to be cleared by respective agencies and stressed the need to complete tendering and contractor allotments by October-end.

The departments were directed to map manpower and machinery to ensure timely snow clearance.

KPDC was directed to enhance workshop capacity to reduce transformer repair time besides maintain adequate buffer stock of transformers, poles, and wires.

He called for distribution of sufficient transformer oil to all districts to prevent shortages.

Also, both KPDC and KPCL were instructed to expedite tree branch cutting to prevent power line damage.—(Observer News Service)

PDP To Introduce 'Anti-Eviction' Bill In LA Session: Mehbooba

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief and former chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday said that her party will introduce the 'anti-Eviction Bill - The J&K Land Rights & Regularisation Bill, 2025' in the upcoming Legislative Assembly Session in Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking with reporters, Mehbooba Mufti, urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to take a strong stand for the livelihood of locals and asked him to fulfill the promises of his party.

She said that post 2019; there has been a persistent sense of land and job insecurities among the locals in Jammu and Kashmir. "Since we have an elected government now, it must take a stand against these insecurities," she said.

The PDP Chief added that taking over hotels at prime tourist destinations and bulldozing schools, houses and shops is a matter of great concern.

She also said that earlier, PDP MLA Waheed Parra had tabled a proposal for the protection of land and jobs in Jammu and Kashmir. "Today again, I am proposing a bill for the protection of land and hotels. I urge the Chief Minister either to consider the bill or come up with the solution that eases problems faced by the locals," she said.—(KNO)

Waste Piles Up On Sopore-Kupwara Highway

The Sopore-Kupwara highway at Shankergund Model Town has turned into a garbage-laden stretch, causing serious inconvenience to commuters and raising concerns about sanitation and public health.

Piles of household waste, plastics and other litter now cover the roadside, with officials from neighboring blocks passing responsibility to each other. BDO Sopore, Nazima, said that the site falls under the jurisdiction of BDO Zaingeer. "We have visited the site several times, but the area pertains to BDO Zaingeer," she said while acknowledging the problem.

In response, BDO Zaingeer, Abdul Rasheed Angar, said the area particularly Shankergund comes under Sopore's administrative control. "We have already written a letter to BDO Sopore regarding this issue. Once she visits the site, I will accompany her to ensure proper action is taken," he said.

Meanwhile, commuters and residents expressed frustration over the stalemate. "It has become difficult to travel this stretch. Garbage is everywhere and it not only affects the appearance of the town but also poses health hazards," said a daily commuter.—(KNO)

Host Team J&K Storms Into Next Stage of 69th National School Games

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The third day of the 69th National School Games Football (U-19 Boys) witnessed another exciting display of skill, determination and sportsmanship across different venues in Srinagar, with several high-scoring and closely fought encounters captivating spectators and football lovers alike.

At the TRC Ground, Kerala outplayed Uttarakhand with a confident 2-0 victory, with Jaleel and Sheril emerging as the goal scorers. In another match at the same venue, Central Board of School Education registered one of the most dominant wins of the tournament by defeating Puducherry 7-0, led by a brilliant hat-trick from Keith, while Ujj-



wal, Jagran, Nandan and Prahlad added a goal each to the scoreboard.

Maharashtra, too, showcased attacking brilliance, overpowering Odisha 6-2 in an entertain-

ing clash that saw Saad score a superb hat-trick, supported by Akash, Mayur, and Pritham, while Montu Nag and Shankra netted one goal each for Odisha.

Meanwhile, at the Kashmir University Ground, Manipur displayed exceptional form by defeating Telangana 6-0, with Hitler Singh standing out as the top performer of the match. Andhra Pradesh continued their winning run with a clinical performance against DAV College Management Committee, ensuring another crucial victory in the group stage by 4-0, while as in another interesting battle between Vidya Bharti locked their horns against Uttar Pradesh but the match ended in a tie as no team was able to score.

At the Green Valley Ground,

Meghalaya stunned Tamil Nadu with a remarkable 9-0 goal win, thanks to an extraordinary performance by Kyrmens Khem, while International Board Schools Sports Organisation edged past Gujarat in a closely contested encounter by 2-1, demonstrating impressive composure under pressure.

At Rugby Ground, host team Jammu and Kashmir defeated Punjab 3-1, in another battle Madya Pradesh defeated Chandigarh by 1-0 while as Chattisgarh won another battle by 2-0 after defeating Rajasthan.

With every passing day, the tournament continues to gain momentum, showcasing the future stars of Indian football and the growing sporting culture in J&K.

Indian ODI Squad To Leave For Australia In 2 Batches on Oct 15



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian ODI squad will depart for Australia in two separate batches on October 15 from the national capital with logistics and ticket availability determining the final travel schedule.

India will play a three-match ODI series followed by a five-match T20I affair Down Under.

According to sources in the BCCI, one group of players will leave in the morning while the second batch is likely to fly out later in the evening, depending on the availability of business class tickets for the long-haul flight.

Former captains Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli,

along with newly appointed vice-captain Shreyas Iyer, are expected to join the rest of the Test squad members in New Delhi ahead of the team's departure.

The team is scheduled to fly to Perth, where the first ODI against Australia will be played on October 19.

In a significant development, Shubman Gill has been named captain of the ODI side, taking over from Rohit Sharma. Despite mounting speculation regarding their long-term ODI futures, both Rohit and Kohli are believed to have expressed their desire to continue until the 2027 ODI World Cup, even though India will play relatively few 50-over games in the lead-up to the marquee event.

India v West Indies 2nd Test: Good Batting Strip On Cards

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A good batting surface is in store for the second and final Test between India and the West Indies at the Feroz Shah Kotla, with curators expecting the pitch to aid strokeplay for the first two days before offering only slow turn as the game progresses.

The traditionally black-soil surface at the Kotla has a reputation for assisting batters early on before gradually breaking down to bring spinners into play.

For this Test, however, a fresh centre strip has been prepared, and the early part

of the contest is expected to be dominated by batters.

"The centre strip has been prepared for the Test. This is a different track from the one on which Smriti Mandhana scored a 50-ball hundred," a BCCI source told PTI on condition of anonymity.

According to the official, the curators have deliberately focused on ensuring even bounce and true carry in the initial stages.

"If West Indies bat better, then the match won't end inside three days. The pitches would only offer turn from Day Three and that too slowish in nature," the source added.



UK PM, Owen Meet Young Indian Footballers, Coaches In Mumbai



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and legendary soccer player Michael Owen visited Mumbai's Cooperage Football Ground on Wednesday and interacted with young Indian footballers and a few coaches during a Premier League Community Showcase event.

Starmer, who is on his first India visit since becoming the Prime Minister in July 2024, took part in a closed-door event while also meeting the young players from Oxford Foundation.

The Premier League Showcase programme focuses on the Community Coach Development Programme, a collaboration between the English Premier League and the British Council that aims to expand access to the sport for social groups across India.

"It was lovely, great to see so many kids. They were so enthusiastic and of course their coaches. The Premier League does a lot of work around the world," Owen, an English former professional footballer, told the media.

India Set To Remain Unchanged For 2nd West Indies Test

India are unlikely to tinker with their winning combination for the second Test against West Indies, with assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate confirming that the think-tank wants to give young Nitish Kumar Reddy an extended run as part of a long-term plan to develop a seam-bowling all-rounder.

The match starts here from Friday.

"I'd say we're unlikely to change the combination," Ten Doeschate said on Wednesday. "One of the objectives, one of the sort of medium-term objectives, is to develop a seam bowling all-rounder for India."

The long-term focus explains why the team management is keen to continue with Reddy despite his limited role in the previous Test.

The 21-year-old from Andhra didn't get much of a look-in last week, but the coaching staff views the series as a platform to nurture his all-round potential rather than judge him by one outing. (PTI)

Women's WC: India Eye 3rd Win Of Tournament v South Africa

India's top-order batters will have to shed their confident ways against a rejuvenated South Africa to instil more momentum into their slow-brewing ICC Women's World Cup campaign here on Thursday.

A glance at the points table will show India's comfortable second position — the hosts can slip to third if Australia beat Pakistan on Wednesday in Colombo — with two wins from as many games. But beneath that glossy exterior, India have a mounting worry in the lack of runs so far from talismanic Smriti Mandhana, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and the energetic Jemimah Rodrigues.

The trio faltered against Sri Lanka and Pakistan, forcing India to rely on the second line in Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Richa Ghosh and Deepti Sharma for the rescue act. A repetition of the script will be disastrous against a more well-equipped side like South Africa, and India need a heftier contribution from their star triumvirate in this game. (PTI)

Cummins, Head Offered ₹58 Cr Each To Play Only T20 Leagues

A group of leading IPL franchises offered Australia captain Pat Cummins and his deputy Travis Head staggering multi-year deals worth AUD 10 million (Rs 58.46 crore) each to play exclusively in T20 leagues, but both players turned them down, according to a report.

The offers, nearly six times more than what top Australian players earn under their board's central contracts, were made earlier this year as part of a push by IPL-backed investors to assemble full-time franchise squads, according to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald.

"The offers, made this year by an IPL team group, were politely rebuffed by two of Australia's most valuable cricket assets, who remain firmly committed to the national team," stated the report.

Senior Australian players earn around AUD 1.5 million (Rs 8.77 crore) annually from Cricket Australia (CA) contracts, with Cummins' total income rising to AUD 3 million (Rs 17.54 crore) including captaincy allowances. (PTI)

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