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India Seeing Sports Revolution Under PM: LG

'From Kashmir To Kanyakumari, Youth Redefining Sports Excellence'

Says Khelo India Beach Games Not Just About Medals, But India's Soft Power

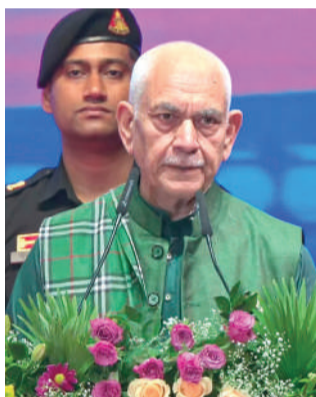
Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said India is witnessing a major sports revolution under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with youth across the country redefining sports excellence from grass-roots to the global stage.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the second edition of the Khelo India Beach Games at the Blue Flag certified Ghoghla Beach in Diu, the Lieutenant Governor said the event reflects the Government of India's commitment to building a strong sporting culture and harnessing the potential of young athletes.

A special message from the Prime Minister was read out during the ceremony, conveying his best wishes to the participating athletes and organisers. "We are committed to empowering youth through the power of sports. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, India's youth are redefining sports excellence and scripting a new history from playgrounds to podiums," Sinha said.

He said young sportspersons today are moving beyond conventional disciplines and are making their presence felt in emerging sports as well. "They



are conquering new grounds with sweat, dreams and victory," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor said the Khelo India Beach Games are not just about winning medals but also about showcasing India's soft power and promoting the country's coastal tourism potential. He said such events help build confidence, discipline and leadership qualities among young athletes and will contribute to the rise of Gen Z sportspersons in international competitions.

Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir is proud to be an active participant in the national sports movement and called upon athletes to act as ambassadors of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat by [More on P6](#)



A man walks across the cracked bed of the Jhelum River as prolonged dry conditions and deficient winter rainfall leave large stretches of the riverbed exposed in Kashmir. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Uniform MTS Cadre Mandatory For All Depts: CAT

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) here has held that the restructuring of the erstwhile Class-IV cadre through a uniform designation of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) is binding on all departments, leaving no discretion to continue with outdated or obsolete classifications.

A Bench comprising Justice Ritu Tagore (Member Judicial) and Prasant Kumar (Member Administrative) made the observation while quashing the final seniority lists of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) of the Sheep Husbandry Department for Budgam, Baramulla and Bandipora districts, holding them to be in violation of statutory orders governing cadre restructuring.

The Bench set aside the re-jection order on 15 May last year, along with the tentative and final seniority lists, and all related circulars that paved the way for district-level Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs).

The Tribunal observed that despite S.O. 133 of 2022, which redesignated all Class-IV posts as Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS), the department continued to reflect [More on P6](#)

PM Directly Monitoring 15 High-Priority J&K Projects: CS

Says Indus Treaty In Abeyance To Speed Up Power Projects

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: World-class infrastructure projects are being fast-tracked across Jammu and Kashmir through close coordination between the Centre and the Union Territory under the PRAGATI mechanism, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo said on Monday. Addressing a press conference organised by the Press Information Bureau Jammu and the Department of Information and Public Relations, Dulloo said 61 projects worth Rs 4.12 lakh crore are currently being monitored on the Project Monitoring Group portal in the Union Territory.

He said 15 projects worth Rs 69,000 crore have been completed, while 46 projects involving an investment of Rs 3.43 lakh crore are at different stages of implementation. Under the PRAGATI framework, 15 high-priority projects worth Rs 1.12 lakh crore in Jammu and Kashmir are being directly monitored by the Prime Minister.

Dulloo said 59 issues related to these projects have



- ◆ Rs 4.12 lakh cr projects under PMG monitoring in J&K
- ◆ 15 projects Rs 1.12 lakh cr worth Rs 69,000 cr completed
- ◆ 46 projects worth Rs 3.43 lakh cr under execution
- ◆ 15 high-priority projects under PM's PRAGATI review
- ◆ 96 percent project issues resolved
- ◆ Rail, road and power projects see faster progress
- ◆ AIIMS Srinagar likely by year-end
- ◆ Indus treaty suspension to speed up power projects

been taken up so far, of which 57 have been resolved,

reflecting a resolution rate of around 96 percent. The issues largely pertained to land acquisition, environmental clearances, financial approvals and construction-related bottlenecks. He said the projects span key sectors including connectivity, energy and social infrastructure.

Highlighting the impact of PRAGATI, the chief secretary said six high-priority projects worth Rs 53,000 crore have been completed or commissioned. These include the Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link, the NH-44 Srinagar-Banihal project, the Kishanganga hydroelectric project, utility shifting works for AIIMS Jammu and the Alusteng transmission system linking Srinagar with Ladakh.

Responding to queries on delays in AIIMS Srinagar, Dulloo said the facility is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

On the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, he said the restrictions earlier imposed under the treaty are no longer applicable, which is expected to further improve the execution [More on P6](#)

DGCA Bans Power Bank Use On Flights

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: In a move aimed at strengthening cabin safety, India's aviation regulator has barred passengers from using power banks to charge phones or electronic devices during flights, citing the growing risk posed by lithium battery-powered accessories.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in its latest advisory, has prohibited the use of power banks on board aircraft, including through seat power outlets. While passengers may continue to carry power banks and spare lithium batteries, these must remain in hand baggage and should not be placed in overhead bins or checked luggage.

The restriction follows a rise in global incidents involving overheating, smoke and in-flight fires linked to lithium batteries. The DGCA said such batteries can become ignition sources inside aircraft cabins due to uncontrolled heating, overcharging, physical damage, manufacturing [More on P6](#)

Temps Likely To Fall Further Till Jan 10: MeT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Sub-zero night temperatures continued across most parts of Kashmir on Monday, while Ladakh remained under severe cold conditions, the Meteorological Department said, forecasting a further dip in minimum temperatures over the coming days.

According to data released by the India Meteorological Department, minimum temperatures across the Valley are expected to fall by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius below normal levels till January 10, intensifying the ongoing cold spell. Thereafter, temperatures are likely to rise gradually by 1 to 2 degrees Celsius.

In Kashmir, Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 3.6 degrees Celsius, while the city airport also logged the same reading. Qazigund recorded a low of minus 2.0 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam minus 4.8 degrees, and Kupwara minus 1.8 degrees.

Gulmarg, the ski resort in north Kashmir, remained the coldest place in the Valley at minus 8.8 degrees Celsius. Other areas also witnessed freezing [More on P6](#)

'Reactivated On Paper, Missing On Ground' Is FCS&CA Enforcement Only Active During Festivals?

Agencies

Srinagar: The Enforcement Wing of the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Department, once instrumental in conducting market inspections, controlling prices and preventing black-marketing, appears largely dormant, with no major enforcement activity reported in recent years, even as the government completes a year in office.

In March last year, following directives from Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the department announced the "reactivation" of its Enforcement Wing and the formation of market-check teams across the Valley to ensure the display of official price lists and curb overpricing of essential commodities.

The then Director FCS&CA had said, "Nobody will be spared. We will take legal action against [More on P6](#)

Kashmiri Leaders Face The Rising Tide Of Youth Concerns

From rent to recruitment, Kashmir's young people are facing a crisis the leaders cannot ignore.

Arshid Mehraj

Srinagar: Youth concerns in Kashmir are breaking past rallies and protests, finding their way into the corridors of power.

This Sunday morning, the shift became clear when a young party leader showed up at his senior's home in Sonwar with a folder full of an entire generation's worries.

Hamid Rather, a young lawyer from Pattan and youth spokesperson for the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference, carried papers that told the story of long waits, growing frustrations, and hopes on hold.



There were electricity bills matching or even exceeding rent. Lists of daily-wage workers who hadn't been paid for months. Job rejection emails that all started the same way:

"We regret to inform you." "They're not asking for the impossible." Rather said. "They just want the work they applied for, the salaries they earned, bills they can pay.

That's it."

Sajad Lone, party president, sat in a bright living room with his phone face down, nodding thoughtfully, chin slightly raised.

Rather laid the papers on the table. "These are not just numbers," he said. "They are voices, that can't be expressed on the street right now, so they've come here."

The 2024 assembly elections, held nearly a decade after the last vote, had been shaped decisively by young voters. They came out in large numbers, motivated by hopes that their welfare, jobs, and future would finally matter. Many of them

overwhelmingly supported certain parties, believing their vote would translate into real change.

A year after the elections, young people are still waiting for change, and anxiety is growing.

Even parties they backed are now expressing helplessness or confusion over addressing their concerns.

Meanwhile, jobs remain hard to find for youth in Jammu and Kashmir, where unemployment ranks among the highest in India.

Official data from 2023 shows that over a quarter of 20-29-year-olds were out of work, far [More on P6](#)

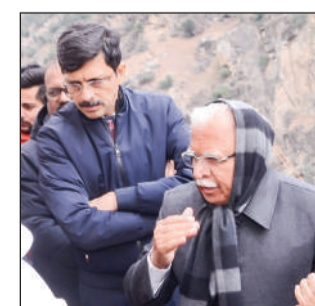
Power Minister Sets Hydel Project Targets For J&K

Pakal Dul 1,000 MW & Kiru 624 MW Targeted For December 2026

Kwar 540 MW Project To Be Commissioned By March 2028

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Union Power Minister Manohar Lal on Monday set firm commissioning deadlines for three major hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir, directing that the 1,000 MW Pakal Dul and 624 MW Kiru projects be commissioned by December 2026, while the 540 MW Kwar project is to be completed by March 2028.



The Minister, who was on a two-day visit to the Union Territory, issued the directions after inspecting the projects and reviewing their progress with senior officials and contractors.

According to an official hand-out issued to the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Manohar [More on P6](#)



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'Over 80% Of Psychiatric Patients In India Do Not Receive Timely Care'

Press Trust Of India

The Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) has expressed deep concern over the persistently high mental health treatment gap in India, noting that nearly 80-85 per cent of individuals suffering from psychiatric disorders do not receive timely or appropriate care. This stark reality, which is supported by national and global evidence, was highlighted during the curtain raiser event of the 77th Annual National Conference of the Indian Psychiatric Society, ANCIPS 2026, to be held from January 28-31 at Yashobhoomi in Delhi. Mental health experts warned that despite advances in treatment and increasing awareness, the majority of people with mental illness continue to remain outside the formal healthcare system. Data from the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) indicates that India faces one of the widest treatment gaps in the world, with over 85 per cent of people suffering from common mental disorders not seeking or receiving treatment. In a global context, more than 70 pc of individuals with mental illness do not receive care from trained healthcare professionals, and in many low-income countries, fewer

than 10 per cent of those in need actually access necessary treatment. India, with its vast population and limited mental health infrastructure, remains particularly vulnerable to this challenge. Addressing the gathering, Dr Savita Malhotra, President of the Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS), emphasised that mental illnesses are among the most treatable health conditions if identified early and managed appropriately. "Mental health disorders are highly treatable, yet the majority of patients in India continue to suffer in silence. The fact that over 80 per cent of people do not receive timely psychiatric care reflects deep-rooted stigma, lack of awareness, and inadequate integration of mental health services into primary healthcare. "This is not just a medical concern; it is a social, economic, and developmental issue that demands urgent national attention," she said. Experts at the event outlined several inter-linked reasons behind the long delays in seeking psychiatric care, which often range from several months to even years. Social stigma and discrimination remain major barriers, as individuals fear being labelled, judged, or marginalised by family, workplace and society. Lack of awareness further compounds the problem, with many people failing to recog-

nise early symptoms of mental illness as medical conditions requiring professional help. Another significant contributor to the treatment gap is the acute shortage of mental health professionals in India. Dr Nimesh G Desai, Chairperson, Organising Committee and former Director of the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), highlighted the serious consequences of delayed or absent treatment. When psychiatric care is delayed, the illness often becomes more severe and chronic, leading to greater disability, family distress, loss of productivity and a significantly increased risk of self-harm and suicide, he said. "Mental health must be addressed with the same urgency and seriousness as physical health. Strengthening community-based services, training primary care doctors, and improving referral systems are essential steps to bridge this unacceptable treatment gap," Desai said. Highlighting the role of the upcoming national conference, Dr Deepak Raheja, Organising Secretary of ANCIPS Delhi and Director, Hope Care India, said that that integration of mental health services into primary healthcare, increased budgetary allocation, expansion of the mental health workforce and sustained nationwide awareness campaigns are urgently needed

to reduce stigma and improve access. "ANCIPS 2026 Delhi will serve as a vital platform for mental health professionals, policy-makers, and stakeholders to come together and develop practical, evidence-based solutions to improve access, affordability, and acceptability of mental healthcare. Our collective aim is to ensure that no individual is denied mental health support due to fear, stigma, or lack of resources," Raheja said. The burden of untreated mental illness is particularly severe among vulnerable groups. Studies indicate that nearly 80 per cent of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental disorders in certain regions do not receive any form of treatment, affecting their education, emotional well-being, and long-term life outcomes. Similarly, close to 84 per cent of older adults with mental health conditions in India remain untreated, often due to neglect, lack of awareness, social isolation, or the mistaken belief that psychological symptoms are a normal part of ageing. Delayed treatment has far-reaching consequences not only for individuals and families but also for society and the economy. Untreated mental illness contributes to increased morbidity and mortality, higher rates of substance use disorders, unemployment, family breakdown and suicide, experts said.

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 ASIMA RASHID KUCKILOO
 W/o MOHAMMAD MUNEEB KHAN. mcb

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 Farid Shafi Sheikh
 S/o Mohammad Shafi Sheikh
 Mother's Name: Rifat Shafi
 DOB 07-08-2006 FKO

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I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer id no: 0213040004587 FROM Ab Jabar Bhat S/o Gh Ahmad R/o Aglar Goushugh Pattan Baramulla to Mohd Ashraf Bhat S/o Gh Qadir Bhat R/o Aglar Goushugh Pattan. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Mohd Ashraf Bhat
 S/o Gh Qadir Bhat
 R/o Aglar Goushugh Pattan fko

Study Links Insomnia, Anxiety To Weaker Immune System

Press Trust of India

Insomnia or anxiety could be linked to fewer number of immune cells, potentially resulting in a less effective immune system, a study in young women has found. Anxiety and insomnia are known to weaken the immune system and make one prone to disease. Researchers from Saudi Arabia's Taibah University said this may be because experiencing symptoms of either of the two can reduce the number of 'natural killer cells' -- cells that destroy threats such as pathogens or infected cells. The study, published in the journal Frontiers in Immunology, examined 60 female students who filled out questionnaires and reported insomnia or anxiety symptoms. Blood samples of the participants were analysed for the number of killer cells. The findings showed that in young women experiencing symptoms of insomnia, the total number of natural killer cells was lower. Among those experiencing anxiety symptoms, natural killer cells circulating in the body was found to be lower. "The results revealed that 75 per cent of participants experienced GAD-7 (generalised anxiety disorder) symptoms at

varying severity levels, and over 50 per cent reported insomnia," the authors wrote. "Interestingly, students with symptoms of GAD-7 had a lower percentage and number of circulatory NK (natural killer) cells and their subpopulation, compared to normal students. Moreover, among students who were suffering from insomnia, higher GAD-7 scores were negatively associated with the proportion of total peripheral NK cells," they said. The participants with moderate and severe symptoms of anxiety had a significant lower percentage of natural killer cells circulating in the body, while among those with minimal or mild anxiety symptoms, an insignificant decline in natural killer cells was noted. Among students with insomnia symptoms, a higher anxiety score was associated with a lower count of total peripheral natural killer cells. Reduced number of killer cells can impair the immune system, potentially increasing one's risk of disease, cancer and mental disorders, including depression, the researchers said. The findings could help better understand the physiological consequences of anxiety and insomnia, and in preventing immune-related disorders and cancers, the team said.

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I Haroot Mehraj want to change my name in my adhaar card bearing no 8908 1585 8174 from Haroon (old name) to Haroot Mehraj (new name) . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned centre within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. jvd



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Unpaid for Two Months, SMC's Low-Paid Workers Battle Hardship

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Low-paid employees of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, including sanitation workers, are facing severe financial hardship as they have not been paid their salaries for the last two months, triggering growing concern and distress among affected families.

The delay, employees said, has hit sanitation workers the hardest, many of whom depend entirely on their monthly wages to meet basic household expenses. With no alternative sources of income, workers said they are struggling to pay rent, purchase essential ration items and meet medical needs during the winter season.

Several employees alleged that despite repeated approaches to the concerned authorities, no clear timeline has been communicat-

ed regarding the release of pending salaries. They said the uncertainty has added to their mental stress, especially for workers with school-going children and elderly dependents.

The affected workers urged the Srinagar Municipal Corporation administration to intervene urgently and release the pending wages without further delay. They said timely payment of salaries is a basic right and essential for sustaining their livelihoods, particularly for sanitation workers who continue to perform frontline duties despite adverse conditions.

According to CNS, the employees warned that continued delay in salary disbursement could force them to explore protest options, stressing that they are left with no choice but to raise their voices if the issue remains unresolved.



Patches of the River Jhelum run dry amid prolonged rainfall deficit. KO Photo Abid Bhat

VPN Services Suspended in Srinagar for Two Months

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The District Magistrate Srinagar has ordered the immediate suspension of all Virtual Private Network (VPN) services within the territorial limits of District Srinagar for a period of two months, exercising powers under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

According to the order, the decision follows a report submitted by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, who expressed apprehensions over the potential misuse of VPN services by vested interests, which could pose serious threats to public order and cyber security in the district.

The order elaborates that VPN services function by transmitting encrypted data and creating point-to-point tunnels, enabling users to conceal their IP addresses and bypass website restrictions and firewalls. Such capabilities, the administration observed, carry a significant risk of being exploited for unlawful and anti-national activities.

“The order elaborates that VPN services function by transmitting encrypted data and creating point-to-point tunnels, enabling users to conceal their IP addresses and bypass website restrictions and firewalls. Such capabilities, the administration observed, carry a significant risk of being exploited for unlawful and anti-national activities.”

It further notes that VPNs could be misused for incitement of unrest, dissemination of inflammatory or provocative material, and coordination of activities prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order. The

District Magistrate has observed that unrestricted use of VPN services poses serious risks to public safety, cyber security, and the protection of sensitive data, necessitating immediate preventive action in the larger public interest.

However, the order makes it clear that the suspension will not apply to authorised VPN usage by government departments operating through the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

As serving individual notices to all concerned persons was found to be impractical, the order has been issued ex parte. The administration has directed that the order be given wide publicity through the district website, leading newspapers, and by affixing copies on the notice boards of the offices of the District Magistrate, Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar, Sub-Divisional Magistrates of Srinagar East and West, and all tehsildars.

The Senior Superintendent of Police Srinagar has been instructed to ensure strict implementation of the order in letter and spirit.

Fire Breaks Out Near LD Hospital Bund, Damage Contained

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A fire broke out in a residential structure near LD Hospital Bund in Srinagar on Monday, triggering concern among locals before being brought under control by the Fire and Emergency Services.

Officials said the fire affected a three-story structure. Fire personnel reached the spot and managed to contain the blaze, preventing it from spreading to other parts of the building or nearby structures.

Preliminary findings, as per an official, indicate that the fire was caused by a short circuit, reportedly due to haphazard electrical wiring. Locals said thick smoke was seen rising from the structure, causing panic in the vicinity before the situation was brought under control.

According to KNT, no loss of life or injuries were reported in the incident. Authorities said the situation is fully under control and further examination will be carried out if required to ascertain the exact cause.

Palapora Eidgah Locals File Complaint Against MLA

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Inhabitants of Palapora Eidgah in Srinagar have lodged a formal complaint against incumbent MLA Mubarak Gul, alleging misuse of the Constituency Development Fund and neglect of basic civic infrastructure in the area.

The complaint was submitted before Peer Afaq, the District President of the National Conference Srinagar, and was registered by Imtiyaz Khan on behalf of the people of the locality. The complainants alleged that funds meant for essential development works are being spent on immaterial projects, while critical issues such as dilapidated lanes, bye lanes and roads continue to remain unattended.

According to the complaint, the interior roads of Palapora Eidgah are in a dilapidated condition, causing daily inconvenience to inhab-

itants, particularly elderly people, children and patients. The people alleged that despite repeated appeals and representations, no concrete steps have been taken by the concerned MLA to repair the damaged road network or address long-pending civic grievances.

According to KNT, the complainants urged the District President of the National Conference to take up the matter with the party leadership and persuade the MLA to prioritize essential infrastructure works in the constituency. They said development should reflect ground realities and address basic needs rather than symbolic or non-essential projects.

Locals expressed hope that the party leadership would intervene and ensure that the grievances of the people are addressed at the earliest, warning that continued neglect of basic infrastructure would only deepen public resentment in the area.

“The complainants urged the District President of the National Conference to take up the matter with the party leadership and persuade the MLA to prioritize essential infrastructure works in the constituency

Locals Seek Removal of Road Divider at Abdullah Bridge

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Concerned citizens have appealed to the Traffic Police to remove the road divider at Abdullah Bridge, Srinagar, citing frequent traffic congestion at the busy junction.

Locals said that the recent removal of the

taxi stand near Zero Bridge has significantly improved the flow of traffic in the area. However, they alleged that the continued presence of the road divider at Abdullah Bridge has become a major bottleneck, leading to regular traffic jams, especially during peak hours.

According to com-

muters, vehicles coming from multiple directions are forced to slow down or halt due to restricted movement caused by the divider, resulting in long queues on both sides of the bridge. They said the problem worsens during office hours and in the evening when traffic volume increases.knt

Neglected Jhelum Channel Sparks Sanitation Crisis in Karfalli Mohalla

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The water channel linked to the Jhelum and passing through Karfalli Mohalla in Habba Kadal Srinagar has deteriorated into an open dumping ground due to prolonged neglect, causing growing concern among local inhabitants over sanitation, environmental damage and public health risks.

Originally meant to carry clean flowing water for irrigation and limited domestic use, the channel is now heavily clogged with plastic waste, household garbage and construction material. Inhabitants allege that the lack of regular desilting and cleaning, weak monitoring mechanisms and unchecked dumping by people from nearby localities have rendered the channel nearly non-functional.

According to locals, the obstruction has resulted in stagnant water, an overpowering foul smell and a noticeable rise in mosquito breeding. They said the situation poses serious health hazards, particularly for children, elderly inhabitants and those suffering from respiratory or skin-related ailments. During warmer days, the stench intensifies, forcing fami-



lies living close to the channel to keep doors and windows shut.

“This channel once served as a lifeline for our locality, providing clean flowing water and supporting daily needs. Today, it has become a source of disease due to official neglect,” said a local told KNT. He added that repeated complaints submitted to the concerned departments have failed to yield any tangible response so far. “If this continues, we fear outbreaks of water-borne diseases,” he

said. Locals have urged the concerned departments and district administration to take immediate corrective measures by removing the accumulated waste, restoring the natural flow of water and ensuring regular maintenance of the channel. They have also called for strict action against those found dumping garbage into the waterway, along with the installation of warning signboards and surveillance to prevent further misuse.

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RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

HIJRI CALENDAR
16 Rajab 1447

FAJR	6: 08
ZUHR	12:35
ASR	3: 57
Magrib	5:37
ISHA	7: 03

This Day in History

- 1661 - The Fifth Monarchists unsuccessfully attempt to seize control of London
- 1781 - Battle of Jersey: Major Francis Peirson and his men defeat invading French troops
- 1784 - Turkey & Russia sign treaty in Constantinople
- 1809 - Napoleonic Wars: Invasion of Cayenne, by combined British, Portuguese and colonial Brazilian forces, begins
- 1842 - 4,500 British & Indian troops leave Kabul, massacred before reaching India
- 1853 - Franklin Pierce, the President-elect of the United States at the time, and his family are involved in a train wreck in Massachusetts
- 1857 - Patent for reducing zinc ore granted to Samuel Wetherill, Penn
- 1887 - Abd-allah II of Harar opens the Battle of Chelenqo with an attack on the camp of the Shewan army of Negus Menelik II
- 1896 - 1st US women's 6-day bicycle race starts, Madison Square Garden
- message from a submerged submarine, by Simon Lake
- Event of interest Event of Interest
- 1907 - Maria Montessori opens her 1st (Montessori) school (Rome)
- 1912 - New Mexico becomes 47th state of the Union
- 1912 - Alfred Wegener, geophysicist and meteorologist, presents his controversial theory of continental drift in a lecture at the Geological Association (Geologischen Vereinigung) at the Senckenberg-Museum, Frankfurt.
- 1921 - The Iraqi Army is formed
- 1925 - Mussolini forms a cabinet composed entirely of Fascists in Italy
- 1929 - Mother Teresa arrives in Calcutta to begin a her work amongst India's poorest
- 1930 - 1st diesel engine automobile trip (in a Packard sedan) completed
- 1931 - Thomas Edison submits his last patent application
- 1941 - US President Franklin Roosevelt makes his "Four Freedoms" speech (freedom of speech and worship; freedom from want and fear) during his US State of Union address
- 1950 - Britain recognizes Communist government of China
- 1951 - Ganghwa massacre: Hundreds of South Korean communist sympathisers are slaughtered
- 1953 - The first Asian Socialist Conference opens in Burma
- 1968 - Surveyor 7 (last of series) launched by US for soft-landing on Moon
- 1971 - Berkeley chemists announces 1st synthetic growth hormones
- 1972 - Vladimir Bukovski is exiled from USSR
- 1976 - China performs nuclear test at Lop Nor, PRC
- 1980 - Indira Gandhi's Congress Party wins elections in India
- 1986 - STS 61-C scrubbed at T-31sec because of liquid oxygen valve problem
- 1987 - Astronomers at University of California see 1st sight of birth of a galaxy
- 1993 - Jean Mueller discovers comet Mueller/1993a
- 1993 - 55 Kashmiri civilians are killed in Sopore, Jammu and Kashmir by Indian Border Security Force units
- 1995 - A chemical fire in an apartment complex in Manila, Philippines, leads to the discovery of plans for Project Bojinka, a mass-terrorist attack.
- 2009 - Israel begins an assault on the Gaza Strip
- 2012 - A suicide bomber blows himself up at a police station in Damascus, Syria, killing 26 people and wounding 63
- 2014 - Truce begins between Free Syrian Army and forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad in northern Damascus
- 2016 - North Korea states that they have successfully conducted their fourth nuclear test, saying it was a hydrogen bomb in a claim disputed by most international experts.
- 2018 - Oil tanker Sanchi collides with a freighter off the coast of Shanghai with 32 probable deaths

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (C&W) Firozpur acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the works/services listed below. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make online payments against these tender. Document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender Type	Bidding System	Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Closing Date/Time	Date and Time of opening E-Tender
Open	Single Packet System	05.01.2026 before 15:00 hours	27.01.2026 Time 15 :00 hours	27.01.2026 Time 15 :05 hours
Details of Tender				
SN	Tender Number	Work of Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Seamless mild steel pressure pipeline at Coaching depot ASR.		
1	01-Comp-pipeline -ASR-2026	Advertised Value	Tender Document Cost	Earnest Money
		Rs 19,79,250/-	0.00	Rs. 39600/-
		Validity of Offer	Period of Completion	
		30 Days	02 Months	

For more details, please log on to www.ireps.gov.in

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RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 1947969705
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email: editor@kashmiobserver.net

KO VIEW

Homegrown Health Movement

In the backyards and courtyards of Srinagar and nearby villages, people are changing the way they eat and live.

More Kashmiris are growing their own vegetables and tending small gardens. Families pay closer attention to what they eat and try to avoid chemicals whenever possible.

Older generations once relied on homegrown produce, but consumer culture made that habit disappear. Now it is returning as more people focus on health and nutrition.

Young people, health-conscious families, and Kashmiris returning from studies abroad are bringing fresh ideas about organic living. They reshape kitchens, rethink how land is used, and influence how communities share food.

Daily life shows the shift. People grow vegetables on balconies, in courtyards, and neighborhood plots, and they ask where their food comes from and what goes into it.

Several organic farms and retreats offer hands-on experience. At Sagg Village in Ganderbal, visitors learn to grow vegetables without chemicals. BaagManzuk Farm in Palwama shows how to plant, harvest, and live in harmony with the land. Visitors see how daily choices about food shape health and community life.

Health concerns drive many people to change. Years of processed food and chemical fertilizers have left visible effects. Doctors link long-term exposure to pesticides and additives to rising health problems.

People are now taking action for their family future. Awareness of health, combined with old traditions and modern ideas, shapes this new way of living.

The eco-living movement in Kashmir thrives in kitchens, gardens, and communities.

Small choices today, such as growing food, avoiding chemicals, and making careful decisions, reconnect people to tradition while shaping a healthier and more sustainable future.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Practical Paths Forward

Everyday decisions can shape both income and life.

Irshad Mushtaq

Kashmir is admired for its landscapes, but the real challenge lies in how people handle the choices they make every day. Building financial stability and a life with purpose comes from noticing patterns, making thoughtful decisions, and learning from the outcomes of everyday actions.

The first step is understanding your resources. Track where money goes, question repeated expenses, and focus on what actually adds value. Small choices, like avoiding unnecessary gadget upgrades or reducing food waste, add up over time and open space for opportunities that matter.

Investing is a way to make money work for you. Stocks, bonds, or other financial tools chosen carefully can provide support and open new possibilities beyond immediate income. At the same time, a simple emergency fund protects against surprises and prevents reliance on costly loans.

Work is another area where choices make a difference. Focusing on meaningful tasks, giving your full attention, and directing energy toward results changes outcomes over time.

Growth in income and job satisfaction comes less from ambition alone and more from consistent, thoughtful effort. Spending follows the same logic: living within your means and ignoring social pressures keeps finances steady and purposeful.

Life moves forward through reflection and adjustment. Every experience is information for the next choice. Watching what others accomplish and learning from their mistakes sharpens judgment. Managing time carefully ensures effort goes toward what truly matters.

Thoughtful investing, deliberate work, mindful spending, and ongoing learning transform daily choices into the foundation of a life that is secure, meaningful, and self-directed.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



Wajahat Qazi



The US NSS 2025, released by the Trump administration, is not an airy-fairy document made public for the heck of it. It is a document whose declarative principles, themes, and intent must be taken seriously by states across the world. The swift invasion of Venezuela, the capture of Maduro, and a quick exit of sorts may, besides the immediate consequences for the country and the region, serve as a demonstration of this. The world, then, must take note and notice.

Maduro & the Monroe Doctrine Redux

The US operation in Venezuela underscores doctrine-backed regime change without prolonged military entanglement.

Three themes coalesce in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. One is the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).

This pertains to the remarkable and efficient reserve of hard power that the United States possesses. Because of RMA, the US military was able to 'take out' Maduro without resistance.

To employ a boxing metaphor, a 'knockout' blow was delivered that incapacitated Venezuela's military capabilities.

Two, the 'takeover' of Venezuela appears to be a corollary or a clear instance of the US National Security document.

The document made it clear that the US, under Trump, would orient itself toward Latin America through the grid of the 'Monroe Doctrine'.

Three, power is the ultimate ratio of world politics and international relations.

International law, no matter its philosophical and jurisprudential elan, remains a weak scaffolding for either. This is to state the obvious.

The 'how' of Maduro's capture raises an important set of questions.

No matter a given country's hard power capabilities, its technological sophistication, and elan, Human Intelligence (HUMINT) is the sine qua non of a successful operation.

While The New York Times claims that a CIA team had been clandestinely operating in Venezuela since August 2025, mostly to track Maduro's movements, this alone cannot be enough.

The exact whereabouts of a given 'target' who is constantly on the move can usually be known only by someone within the inner circle.

Moreover, taking out a 'high-value target' entails the possibility of reaction or resistance, either from individuals or from power elites loyal to the target.

Till now, this has not happened in Venezuela.

And this lends some depth to speculation: the months-long operation to oust and 'take' Maduro may also have been complemented by a 'softening up' of certain members of the Maduro regime.

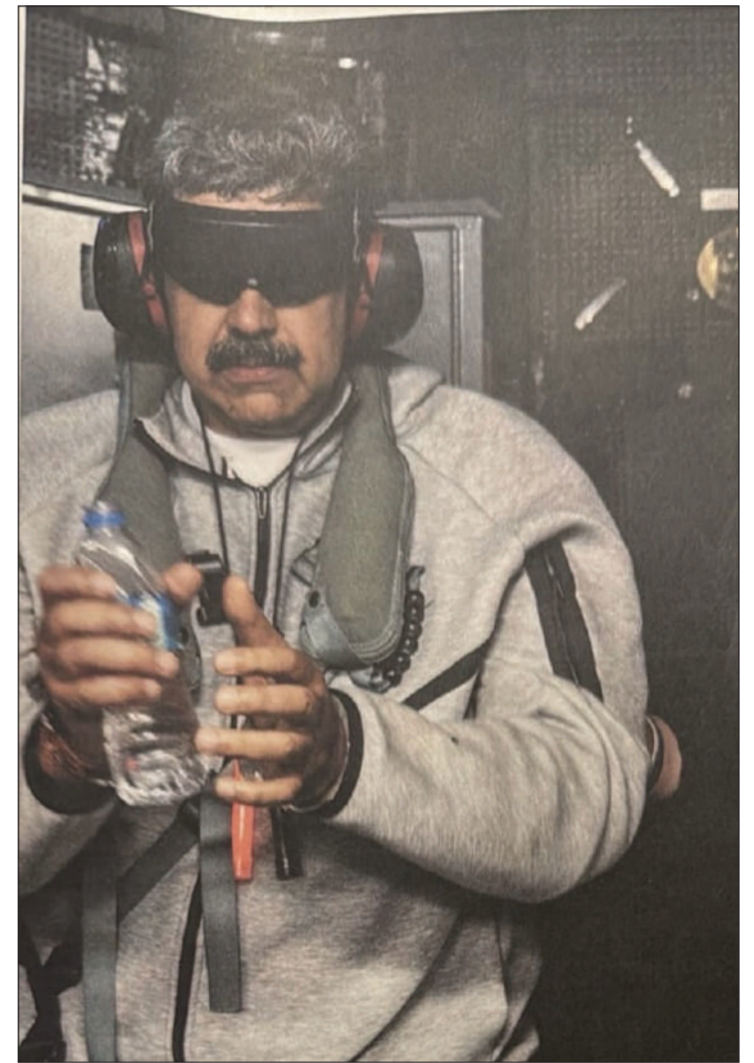
To stretch the speculation further, this may explain US President Donald Trump's post-invasion confidence and his chiding remarks toward the country's new president.

All this pertains to operations, tactics, and terrain, or battlespace, matters. The larger issue lies in the broader conceptual and political implications and consequences.

Inferentially, it may be prudent to refer to the Trump administration's billions-of-dollars bailout to Argentina. This helped the country's president, Javier Milei, salvage his government.

Pertinent to mention here is President Donald Trump's equation with the Uruguayan president. While Venezuela is far from being the centre of gravity of Latin America, Argentina and Uruguay are important countries in their own right.

There are, then, elements of the use of American power (through regime change), features of influence



There are, then, elements of the use of American power (through regime change), features of influence (the Argentina bailout), and aspects of 'soft power' (the equation with Uruguay, largely over illegal immigration) involved here.

(the Argentina bailout), and aspects of 'soft power' (the equation with Uruguay, largely over illegal immigration) involved here.

While there is no theoretical peg or neat precedent to which these actions can be traced, they nevertheless hark back to the US National Security document released by the Trump administration in the closing month of 2025.

The NSS 2025 made it very clear that the United States' orientation toward Latin America would be a 'Monroe Doctrine corollary'.

The inference that may be drawn here is that the actions taken by the US, including Maduro's capture, are part of this corollary.

In all likelihood, the US now sees Latin America as its 'sphere of influence'. (Obiter dictum, it may be that the swift invasion and capture of Maduro were also intended as a demonstration effect for others in the region.)

This has implications for the world at large.

Because of MAGA promises, President Trump's pledge to his base not to involve America in 'forever wars', and other allied reasons, it is

doubtful that the Trump administration would go whole hog with regime change elsewhere.

But it stands to reason that the world must take notice.

The US NSS 2025, released by the Trump administration, is not an airy-fairy document made public for the heck of it. It is a document whose declarative principles, themes, and intent must be taken seriously by states across the world.

The swift invasion of Venezuela, the capture of Maduro, and a quick exit of sorts may, besides the immediate consequences for the country and the region, serve as a demonstration of this.

The world, then, must take note and notice.

Wajahat Qazi holds a Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen and combines scholarship with real-world engagement. He has worked in academia and media, including as Associate Editor at Kashmir Observer.

Letter to Editor

What Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's Words Say About Kashmir Today

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's recent public statement creates space to think about how Jammu and Kashmir treats responsible religious and social leadership.

Public discussions in the valley shift often, which makes calm and thoughtful voices worth listening to.

The idea of reconciliation carries deep meaning for Kashmiri Pandits, whose link with Kashmir includes both roots and separation. The hope of return speaks to shared history and a way of life that once held communities together.

When a public leader repeatedly speaks about coexistence, restraint, and return, that voice deserves attention rather than distance.

The Mirwaiz holds a special place in Kashmir's public life. His role goes beyond leading prayers. He represents an institution with a long history of

work in education, charity, and social reform. This background shapes how he speaks in public.

Over the years, his words have shown consistency, care, and a clear preference for peaceful political expression.

A key part of his public thinking rests on the belief that peace in Jammu and Kashmir depends on political engagement and social reconciliation along with governance.

Earlier Indian governments recognised this view. Leaders under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh saw value in engaging the Mirwaiz through structured talks.

This approach reflected an understanding that public trust grows through conversation beyond administrative engagement.

Public appeals by the Mirwaiz calling for the return of Kashmiri Pandits

carry strong meaning in this setting. His statement that Kashmir's social and cultural life remains incomplete without Pandits speaks to a lived reality.

Official measures alone cannot rebuild social bonds. A meaningful return requires confidence, trust, and a sense of belonging for families who continue to hold the valley close in memory.

Security remains a central duty of the state, and vigilance remains necessary. At the same time, a shrinking space for public engagement weakens moderate social leadership.

Such leadership has repeatedly spoken against extremism and in favour of living together during difficult periods. Limiting these voices reduces chances for dialogue that can support communal harmony and shared understanding.

Progress in Jammu and Kashmir depends on engaging with responsible lead-

ers who hold social respect. Such engagement strengthens public trust, supports harmony between communities, and reassures displaced families that their concerns still matter in the region's future.

Listening to voices that speak of restraint, reconciliation, and inclusion reflects democratic confidence. Such listening strengthens institutions and public faith.

The Kashmiri Pandit community continues to look for signs that return and coexistence remain part of Kashmir's public thinking.

When these ideas find space in public speech, they affirm that reconciliation remains possible through sustained effort and shared responsibility.

Sincerely,

B. N. Trishal

Ashoka in Kashmir

Ancient Buddhist mounds uncovered in Baramulla reveal Kashmir's forgotten role as a bridge between India, Gandhara, and Central Asia.

Muskan Shafi Malik

In October 2023, far from home, archaeologist Mohammad Ajmal Shah sat in France staring at an old, pale photograph. It showed three low mounds in Zehanpora, Baramulla.

The earth seemed ordinary, almost invisible, but something beneath it was calling to him.

Baramulla has seen spades before. Records trace digs back to the 1860s.

At Ushkur, once called Hushkapura, the Archaeological Survey of India uncovered a stupa in the 1870s.

What came out of the soil surprised everyone: terracotta heads shaped in the Gandharan style, proof that Kashmir was tied into a larger Buddhist world of art and ideas.

Then the clock jumped to 1914. At Parihaspora, archaeologists exposed a monastery, a stupa, and a temple. The pieces were scattered, but the pattern was forming.

After 1947, the ground fell silent for decades.

Until now. Since July 2025, excavation has restarted at Zehanpora. This is the first major post-partition dig in the area, and it is changing how Kashmir's past is read.

These mounds point to Kashmir's long role as a meeting point of faith, learning, and power.

To see why, the story has to rewind more than two thousand years.

In the 3rd century BCE, Ashoka rose to power. Then came the Kalin-

ga war, remembered for mass killing on a scale that shocked even a conqueror. Ancient accounts speak of lakhs dead or displaced. What followed made Ashoka one of history's most discussed rulers.

He changed. Ashoka turned to Buddhism and shaped his rule around Dhamma. He spoke of moral conduct, restraint, care for subjects, and rule by example.

The historian Kalhana, writing the Rajtarangini, says Ashoka founded ancient Srinagar and built viharas and stupas.

Inscriptions in Kashmir are rare, but tradition holds that Ashoka sent the monk Majjhantika to Kashmir and Gandhara, planting Buddhism deep in the region.

Kashmir did not stay on the margins.

Between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE, the valley became a major centre of Buddhist thought.

Under King Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty, the Fourth Buddhist Council met at Harwan, near Srinagar.

Chaired by Vasumitra, with Ashvaghosha present, the council organised Buddhist teachings and strengthened ideas of compassion and universal salvation.

Then came the travellers.

From the 4th to the 7th centuries, the Baramulla-Uri route served as a northern Himalayan corridor linking India with Central Asia.

The Chinese pilgrim Faxian, travelling between 399 and 414 CE, described Kashmir as a land shaped by Mahayana Buddhism, filled with monasteries.



Two centuries later, Xuanzang, visiting between 631 and 633 CE, wrote of a region known for learning, with hundreds of monastic institutions.

Kashmir was not a distant edge. It worked as a knowledge corridor. Buddhism, born in India, moved outward from here toward Gandhara, China, and beyond.

Long before modern diplomacy, this was India's first major soft-power export, built on ideas rather than armies.

Zehanpora fits into this wider map.

It stands with other Buddhist traces at Ushkur, Harwan, Bijbehera, and Hutmura, all showing settlement layers, religious life, art, and economy. Together, they show how deeply Buddhism shaped Kashmir for centuries.

Ashoka's story still cuts close to the bone.

After Kalinga, the king understood that force can impose silence, but it cannot build harmony. He shifted from punishment to persuasion, fear to dialogue, and narrow pride to plural ethics.

Without erasing borders, his rule humanised governance.

Kashmir's modern conflicts mirror Ashoka's pre-Dhamma phase, when power focused on land over lives.

His lesson unfolds through measured moral movement. Peace rises from ethical authority, while louder power falls silent.

Archaeology brings this lesson to light, uncovering it beneath the soil for all who seek it.

While books tell us what might have happened, sites show how

people lived, built, worshipped, traded, and learned.

With Zehanpora, a Kashmiri village has stepped into history.

Layers of time are waiting to speak. Research will uncover more, scholars will follow, and heritage tourism can strengthen local livelihoods when guided by care and understanding.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking on Mann Ki Baat, called the Zehanpora excavation a proud moment for India. It is, but pride must turn into understanding.

People need to see heritage beyond religion or sect. Archaeological finds speak for humanity as a whole. Schools, media, museums, and public programmes must explain context, evidence, and long timelines.

Respect for antiquity grows criti-

cal thinking and shapes a society that values proof over emotion.

The Archaeological Survey of India, using tools like GSI mapping and carbon dating, has expanded excavation and conservation.

Skill programmes such as PM VI-KAS aim to train local youth in site



THE EARTH AT ZEHANPORA HAS STARTED SPEAKING. FROM KALINGA TO KASHMIR, the story circles back to a single question: What kind of power lasts when the dust settles? The answer may already be waiting under the next layer of soil.

management, conservation, and tourism.

These plans must move from paper to ground. Heritage walks, digital records, and museum outreach can create work while building community ownership of Kashmir's past.

The earth at Zehanpora has started speaking.

From Kalinga to Kashmir, the story circles back to a single question: What kind of power lasts when the dust settles?

The answer may already be waiting under the next layer of soil.

— The author is pursuing an M.A. in History at Aligarh Muslim University. Her academic focus is Ancient Indian history, archaeology, material culture, and early religious traditions.



I PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, SPEAKING ON MANN KI BAAT, CALLED THE ZEHANPORA EXCAVATION A PROUD MOMENT

FOR INDIA. It is, but pride must turn into understanding. People need to see heritage beyond religion or sect. Archaeological finds speak for humanity as a whole. Schools, media, museums, and public programmes must explain context, evidence, and long timelines.

Goodbye, My Brown Milk Teeth

A small girl tells the true story of pain, fear, gifts, and the day her smile finally changed.

Amal Bint Sajad

When I was very small, my milk teeth turned brown. The doctor said it was because of something called bottle-feeding caries. I did not know what that meant. I only knew my teeth looked different.

Other children had white, shiny smiles. My teeth were brown. When I smiled, I sometimes tried to hide them with my lips or my hand. It felt funny and a little confusing, like something was not right.

My teeth did not look like other children's teeth. Some children noticed and laughed. My heart felt hurt, and I wondered why my smile was not the same as theirs.

My milk teeth eventually became loose with time, but they did not fall out. They stayed inside my mouth for a long time, like they were holding on.

One day, my mother said, "We should go to the dentist and take out your tooth."

I thought it would not hurt. I was very, very wrong.

We went to the dentist. He asked me to open my mouth. He took a bottle and sprayed something inside. It tasted salty, bitter, and a little like lemon.

Then he used a small spoon with a tiny hook at the end. I had to keep my mouth open for a very long time. My mouth felt tired.

After that, the dentist opened a drawer. He took out the thing I hate the most.

The injection.



ONCE, MY MOTHER TRIED TO PULL OUT ONE OF MY TEETH TOO. She stopped. She felt more scared than I did.

I felt very scared. He put the injection inside my mouth, right near the root of my tooth. It hurt a lot.

I cried and cried. When it was done, there was a bump on my upper jaw where the tooth used to be.

I wanted to go home fast. But before we left, the dentist gave me gifts: a pencil box, a puzzle, and a book.

I felt happy when I saw them. I liked them very much.

The next day, my sister went to the dentist too. She got the same gifts.

The day after that, I had to go again because another tooth needed to come out. I told my mother, "I don't want to go to the dentist."

She still took me there. Some time later, another milk tooth had to be taken out. This time, my father pulled it out at home. It came out easily. It did not hurt at all. I felt surprised.

Once, my mother tried to pull out one of my teeth too. She stopped.

She felt more scared than I did.

Today, my last brown milk tooth fell out by itself.

I did not feel any pain. I did not even know it had fallen until I saw it.

Now my brown milk teeth are gone.

I feel happy when I smile.

— The author is a Class 3 student at Mallinson Girls' School.

The Stream My Mother Loved

My mother played here as a child. Today, it's almost unrecognizable. And I can't just watch it vanish.

Rahat Bint Sajad

I could barely contain my excitement when I learned that a branch of the Doodhganga River ran just fifty steps from our new house.

I kept thinking about the day we would move in.

I had visited the construction site many times, but my father never let me go near the stream. He promised I could see it once we moved.

The day finally came.

I slipped past the movers carrying our furniture, carpets, and boxes, and ran straight to the river. I imagined it would be blue and clear, full of fish and otters, just like my mother said it was when she was a child.

Our new home is in Gopalpur, my mother's hometown. She told me countless stories of her childhood there, and the stream was always at the center.

She said that when she was eight, she would rush home from school, throw her bag on the bed, change her clothes, and call her friends to join her at the stream. They would swim, wash clothes, and drink the cold, fresh water.

She said there were always fish swimming, playful otters chasing each other, and according to a wise old woman in the neighborhood, even a djinn, a supernatural being from the Quran.

I walked to the stream dreaming of the same scene. But when I arrived, my heart



MY COUSINS AND I DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING SMALL. We made a playful warning sign, threatening a family curse for anyone who polluted the stream. A few days later, the sign was gone. People had removed it, choosing to ignore the problem.

sank. The water was thick and brown, with dead fish drifting on top. Plastic bottles, wrappers, and polythene bags cov-

ered the banks.

The otters were gone, the children's laughter had vanished, and nothing remained of the stories my mother had told.

The stream that once overflowed with life and joy had become a pale shadow of itself. My disappointment crushed the excitement I had felt.

The next morning, I saw a neighbour walking to the stream with two trash bags. I thought maybe she was cleaning it, but she dumped the trash straight into the water.

Over the week, I saw more people throwing garbage, bottles, and other waste into the river.

It seemed like no one cared.

My cousins and I decided to do something small. We made a playful warning sign, threatening a family curse for anyone who polluted the stream.

A few days later, the sign was gone.

People had removed it, choosing to ignore the problem.

I realized the real problem was the community allowing it to happen.

I am determined to find a solution to this problem.

I refuse to let future generations feel the disappointment and shame I felt.

I refuse to accept a polluted Kashmir as normal.

My education and my love for this place push me to act, rather than just stand by.

The stream that once sparkled with life and laughter deserves to shine again.

I will do everything I can to bring it back.

— The author is a 10th Grade student at Mallinson Girls' School.

Modi Knew I Wasn't Happy, Can Raise Tariffs Quickly: Trump

Press Trust Of India

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said Prime Minister Narendra Modi knew he was not happy with India's purchases of Russian oil and that Washington can raise tariffs on New Delhi "very quickly".

These remarks were made by President Trump while talking to reporters on Sunday aboard Air Force One en route to Washington DC from Florida.

"They (India) wanted to make me happy, basically. Modi is a very good man; he is a good guy. He knew I was not happy, and it was important to make me happy. They do trade and we can raise tariffs on them very quickly. It would be very bad for them," Trump said.

Trump's remarks came after US Senator Lindsey Graham, accompanying him on Air Force One, said that the tariffs imposed on India by Trump are the "chief reason" New Delhi is now buying substantially less



Russian oil.

Graham spoke about his tariff bill that seeks to impose 500 per cent levies on imports from countries buying Russian oil.

Graham said that to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict, pressure must be put on Russian President Vladimir Putin's customers.

Trump said that the sanctions

are hurting Russia very badly and then mentioned India. Graham then said that the US put a 25 per cent tariff on India for buying Russian oil.

"I was at the Indian Ambassador's house about a month ago and all he wanted to talk about is how they are buying less Russian oil. 'Would you tell the President to relieve the tariff?' Graham said.

Cuba Says 32 Officers Killed in US Operation in Venezuela

Agencies

Havana- An American military operation in Venezuela killed 32 Cuban officers over the weekend, the Cuban government said Sunday in the first official death count provided of the American strikes in the South American nation.

The Cuban military and police officers were on a mission the Caribbean country's military was carrying out at the request of Venezuela's government, according to a statement read on Cuban state TV on Sunday night.

What the Cubans were working on in the South American nation was unclear, but Cuba is a close ally of Venezuela's government and has sent military and police forces to assist in operations for years. Rumours of the deaths circulated on the island over the weekend.

"You know, a lot of Cubans were killed yesterday," US



President Donald Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew Sunday night from Florida back to Washington. "There was a lot of death on the other side. No death on our side."

The US operation Saturday seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife to face prosecution on an indictment accusing them of participating in a narco-terrorism

conspiracy. While Venezuela's government has acknowledged that a number of people died in the American blasts, they did not confirm how many were killed to The Associated Press.

Cuba's government announced two days of mourning for the Cuban officers who were killed, and former president and revolutionary leader Raúl

Castro and President Miguel Díaz-Canel sent condolences to their families. The names of the dead and the positions they held were not immediately disclosed by Cuban authorities.

"Faithful to their responsibilities for security and defense, our compatriots fulfilled their duty with dignity and heroism and fell after fierce resistance in direct combat against the attackers or as a result of the bombings of the facilities," the official statement said.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, also pointed to Cuban involvement in Venezuela over the weekend, saying that Maduro's internal security apparatus was headed by Cubans and that they were "propping up Maduro."

"All the guards that help protect Maduro — this is well known — their whole spy agency, all that were full of Cubans," Rubio said. (AP)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

India Seeing

sharing the culture and hospitality of Diu with their respective regions.

"Sports unite people beyond caste, religion and region. These games also remind us of our shared responsibility towards environmental sustainability and the preservation of our coastal ecosystems," he said, urging collective efforts to make India a world-class sporting power.

He congratulated the administration of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu for successfully hosting previous editions of the Beach Games and extended his best wishes to all participating athletes.

The second edition of the Khelo India Beach Games will see more than 1,300 athletes from 31 states and Union Territories competing over five days in eight disciplines. Competitive events include beach soccer, beach volleyball, beach sepak takraw, beach kabaddi, beach pencak silat and open water swimming, while beach mallakhamb and beach tug of war are being showcased as demonstration sports.

Eminent sportspersons, senior officials, prominent citizens and a large number of youth attended the opening ceremony.

DGCA Bans

defects, ageing or internal short circuits. In extreme cases, the advisory warned, personal electronic devices can explode.

The regulator cautioned that fires involving lithium batteries are particularly dangerous as they tend to be intense and self-sustaining, making them harder to extinguish than conventional on-board fires. Batteries stored in overhead compartments or buried inside bags are difficult to monitor, delaying detection and emergency response and potentially escalating the threat to flight safety.

Airlines have been directed to reassess safety risks related to lithium batteries and strengthen preventive measures inside aircraft cabins. The DGCA has stressed the importance of early detection and swift firefighting, instructing carriers to ensure that firefighting equipment and protective gear are adequate and easily accessible.

Cabin crew training is also to be reinforced, with staff expected to recognise early warning signs such as unusual heat, smoke or odour and to follow correct firefighting procedures. Airlines have been asked to promptly report any lithium battery-related safety incident to the regulator.

Passengers will now be informed through mandatory in-flight announcements about the risks and rules governing power bank use. They have also been advised to immediately

alert crew members if any device shows signs of malfunction. Airports have been asked to display clear warnings and safety videos across terminals, from check-in areas to boarding gates, discouraging passengers from charging power banks just before boarding.

The advisory comes in the wake of several incidents worldwide. In October last year, a power bank reportedly caught fire on board an IndiGo aircraft while it was taxiing at Delhi airport. More recently, a passenger aircraft in South Korea was gutted by fire at an airport, with investigators pointing to a possible insulation failure inside a power bank.

With the new restrictions, the DGCA has signalled a zero-tolerance approach to risks linked to lithium batteries, underlining that convenience cannot come at the cost of flight safety.

Temps Likely

conditions, with Kokernag recording minus 1.2 degrees, Pampore minus 2.5 degrees, Awantipora minus 3.2 degrees, Budgam minus 3.5 degrees, Anantnag minus 3.2 degrees, Pulwama minus 4.2 degrees, Shopian minus 5.6 degrees, Baramulla minus 0.7 degrees, Bandipora minus 1.3 degrees, and Zethan Rafiabab minus 3.5 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, relatively milder temperatures prevailed. Jammu city recorded a minimum of 8.7 degrees Celsius, while the airport logged 11.1 degrees. Banihal recorded minus 1.3 degrees, Batote 2.1 degrees, Katra 5.6 degrees, and Bhaderwah minus 2.1 degrees. Kathua recorded 8.4 degrees, Udhampur 6.0 degrees, Ramban 2.7 degrees, Rajouri 1.6 degrees, Kishtwar 2.3 degrees, Reasi 8.3 degrees, and Doda 2.7 degrees Celsius.

Ladakh continued to experience harsher conditions, with Leh recording a minimum temperature of minus 9.6 degrees Celsius, Kargil minus 8.4 degrees, and Nubra Valley minus 7.5 degrees.

The weather advisory said there is a possibility of light snowfall over isolated higher reaches of north and central Kashmir on January 5 and 6. From January 7 to January 18, the weather is expected to remain partly cloudy, while January 19 and 20 may witness generally cloudy conditions.

The Meteorological Department has advised residents, particularly in higher reaches, to brace for colder nights over the next few days as the winter chill tightens its grip.

PM Directly

of hydropower projects in the region. He added that nine projects worth Rs 59,000 crore remain under active PRAGATI monitoring, including the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra

Expressway, AIIMS Awantipora, the Pakal Dul hydroelectric project and the 4G saturation scheme under the Universal Service Obligation Fund. Of the 29 issues identified in these projects, 27 have already been resolved.

Dulloo said the high resolution rate demonstrates the effectiveness of ICT-enabled monitoring and sustained follow-up at the Union Territory and district levels. He added that the PRAGATI platform also reviews social sector schemes and public grievances to strengthen governance outcomes.

Uniform MTS

obsolete designations such as Assistant Stockman, Chowkidar and Fieldman while fixing seniority. This, the Bench said, defeated the very purpose of the statutory reorganisation aimed at eliminating artificial distinctions among similarly placed employees.

Termining the consideration order as "cryptic and non-speaking," the Tribunal held that the department failed to meaningfully address the objections raised by employees or comply with earlier directions of the Tribunal.

The Bench also noted that identical relief had already been granted by the CAT Jammu Bench in similar matters, and denial of parity would amount to hostile discrimination.

Subsequently, the Tribunal directed the authorities to prepare and notify a fresh, uniform final seniority list of MTS strictly in accordance with S.O. 133 of 2022 within eight weeks.

It also directed the authorities to clearly notify any exceptions for posts requiring technical qualifications, as permissible under the statutory order.

Thereafter, the CAT directed them to convene DPC meetings expeditiously.

Is FCS&CA Enforcement

those involved in overpricing and violating the norms."

The reactivation came in response to rising consumer complaints about erratic pricing and lack of market discipline. A public notice issued by the FCS&CA Department had urged all retail shop owners to clearly display prices and warned that failure to do so would be treated as an unfair trade practice, inviting legal action. However, on-ground activity has been sparse, with few market checks conducted beyond sporadic operations.

During Ramadan, Diwali and other festive periods, a few inspections were reported in select districts, but residents say these were neither sustained nor comprehensive across the Valley.

The government has repeatedly assured consumers of continued enforcement efforts. In a statement issued over three months ago,

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Satish Sharma reiterated the administration's "zero-tolerance policy towards food adulteration" and assured that the enforcement campaign would continue.

Yet, residents and consumer activists argue that these assurances have not translated into consistent action.

A recent report also highlighted adulterated food and lax checks underscored public anxiety over weak enforcement, with local civil society groups decrying the lapse.

Repeated attempts to obtain an updated official comment on the current status of the Enforcement Wing, ongoing market checks, or steps being taken to strengthen enforcement went unanswered. Officials from the FCS&CA Department remained unresponsive to multiple calls and messages.

Residents said the Enforcement Wing's limited activity and lack of strong punitive powers have allowed price manipulation and quality compromises to persist. "Earlier, we used to see officials visiting markets, checking weights and prices, but now nobody comes. Shopkeepers fix rates as they please, and common people have nowhere to complain," said Bilal Ahmad, a resident of Nowhatta, Srinagar.

Another resident, Mubashir, said they only hear about fines or inspections in the news, but see no difference on the ground. "Vegetables, chicken and mutton rates change from shop to shop without any control," he said.

With government statements stressing intent but little visible enforcement on the ground, consumers say they are left waiting for meaningful action.(KNO)

Kashmiri Leaders

above the national average. "Many engineering graduates are now driving cabs or delivering parcels," says Shamim Bisati, a recruiter with a private firm. "Postgraduates spend years waiting for government jobs that never seem to open up. Daily-wage workers, who keep schools and offices running, are left unpaid for months."

Meanwhile, costs, from rent to electricity, continue to climb. "Private-sector opportunities remain scarce," Bisati continues. "And even the growing startup ecosystem offers limited relief."

Jammu and Kashmir has over a dozen incubation centers, but, insiders say, most young people struggle to find proper mentorship, guidance, or funding.

"As a result," says Tufail Hassan, a young startup founder, "many talented youth remain stuck, frustrated, and unsure about their future."

Back to Sonwar, Rather and Lone went through the folder, discussing unpaid wages,

delayed recruitment, and bills families could not afford.

Once the "dark horse" of Kashmir politics and a probable chief minister in the pre-2019 era, the PC chief absorbed the gravity of the situation in silence, breaking a paperclip as he read through the papers.

"If these issues aren't addressed here," Lone said, "they will appear somewhere else. And when that happens, no one can control how they are expressed."

Outside, Srinagar carried on with a normal Sunday. Inside a political room near Gupkar, the focus kept returning to youth concerns.

"It's obvious," Rather said later, "these problems are pressing. They don't wait for speeches or rallies, and ignoring them is no longer an option."

Clearly, youth anxieties stemming from scarce government jobs to limited startup opportunities are still influencing political debate, even a year after the elections.

In Sonwar, Sajad Lone's living room made it clear: ignoring the young is no longer possible.

Power Minister

Lal inspected all three projects being executed by Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited. These include the Pakal Dul, Kiru and Kwar hydroelectric projects in the Chenab Valley.

During the review meeting, the Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC briefed the Minister in detail on the current status, timelines and key challenges of the under-construction projects. Following the presentation, the Minister directed the agencies involved to ensure strict adherence to the revised deadlines.

"The Minister issued directions to commission the Pakal Dul and Kiru projects by December 2026 and the Kwar project by March 2028," the handout said.

The Power Minister also interacted with local residents and workers at various project sites, listening to their concerns and feedback. He appreciated engineers, staff and workers for executing the projects under difficult terrain and weather conditions and encouraged them to maintain momentum to meet the targets.

Manohar Lal concluded his two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on Monday. On the first day of his tour, he reviewed progress on other key hydropower projects, including the Salal, Sawalkot and Ratle projects.

Late on Sunday, the Minister visited NHPC's Dulhasti Power Station in Kishtwar, where he was received by senior officials of NHPC and Chenab Valley Power Projects Limited.

The three projects together are expected to add more than 2,100 MW of hydropower capacity, strengthening the region's power generation base and contributing to energy security



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Lack of Braille Institute Hampers Education of Visually Impaired in J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Visually impaired persons across Jammu and Kashmir have strongly advocated for the establishment of a dedicated Braille training institute in the Union Territory, saying such a facility is crucial for ensuring inclusive education, self-reliance, and dignity for persons with visual disabilities.

Speaking to KNO, individuals from different districts said that despite constitutional guarantees and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, their everyday challenges continue to be ignored by the administration. They said the absence of institutional support, accessible learning resources, and sensitisation has left the visually impaired community on the margins.

Sameer Ahmad, a visually impaired student from south Kashmir, emphasised the urgent need for a Braille training institute in Jammu and Kashmir. "Education is the foundation of empowerment. Without access to Braille training and adaptive learning tools, visually impaired students are denied equal opportunities," he said.



He also highlighted the persistence of discriminatory social attitudes. "Large-scale awareness campaigns and sensitivity training are essential to challenge such mindsets," he added.

Saima Jan, another visually impaired scholar from Bijbehara, said that equality in education and employment remains a distant goal for those with complete blindness. "People with partial disabilities often receive more acceptance, while those who are fully blind face deeper discrimination. With proper support systems, we are capable of achieving the same milestones

EDUCATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF EMPOWERMENT. Without access to Braille training and adaptive learning tools, visually impaired students are denied equal opportunities."

as anyone else," she asserted.

Sanya Zehra, a visually challenged legal scholar who completed her BA-LLB from the University of Kashmir and LLM from Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (RGNUL), Patiala, pointed to serious shortcomings within educational institutions. "Accessibility continues to be a major barrier. Many colleges and universities have failed to comply with mandatory guidelines under the RPWD Act. Accessibility is not an act of charity—it is a legal and fundamental right," she said.

Sanya called for mandatory training of teachers, administrators, and non-teaching staff on disability rights and reasonable accommodation. She also urged the government to strictly enforce existing rules and impose penalties on institutions that fail to comply.

Other visually impaired persons raised concerns about the lack of accessible infrastructure, stating that most educational institutions in the UT lack basic facilities such as ramps, tactile pathways, accessible classrooms, and adaptive study materials. "Neither roads nor campuses are designed keeping us in mind,

making even regular attendance a struggle," they said.

They further pointed out the complete absence of Braille libraries, along with scanned, e-text, or audio-recorded books, despite the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is home to nearly 66,000 visually impaired persons, according to the 2011 Census.

The community demanded that the administration conduct comprehensive accessibility audits of all schools, colleges, and universities. They also urged exam-conducting bodies such as JK-PCS and JKSSB to frame clear and standardised guidelines for candidates with visual disabilities.

Key demands include extra time during examinations, transparent policies for writer facilities, clear protocols for candidates opting to bring their own writers, and the provision of accessible examination centres.

"The government must move beyond tokenism and take concrete steps to ensure accessibility, equal opportunity, and a supportive ecosystem for visually impaired persons. Only genuine inclusivity can pave the way for a just and equitable society in Jammu and Kashmir," they said.

J&K Bank Settles Insurance Claims Worth Rs 2.02 Cr



SRINAGAR: J&K Bank has facilitated the swift settlement of insurance claims amounting to Rs 2.02 crore under its MetLoan & Life Suraksha (MLLS) scheme, providing financial relief to 38 bereaved families in the Kathua Zone.

The claims, linked to deceased borrowers, were settled across various branches, helping ease the financial burden on affected families during difficult circumstances. A symbolic cheque representing the total claim amount was displayed by Zonal Head Kathua Suresh Kumar Chowdhary along with PNB MetLife's Associate Director and Head Irfan Ali Zargar, in the presence of senior bank officials and representatives of the insurance company.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the Bank and PNB MetLife for the timely and seamless settlement of claims. Bank officials highlighted the importance of loan-linked insurance in protecting families from unforeseen financial liabilities, while PNB MetLife reiterated its commitment to honoring policyholder trust through prompt claim settlements.

The initiative reflects J&K Bank's customer-focused approach and its emphasis on providing financial security through insurance partnerships. (Observer News Service)

Pattan Gridlock Deepens as Bypass Drags On

SRINAGAR: The vital Pattan stretch on Srinagar-Baramulla highway has become synonymous with daily traffic chaos, with commuters, traders and residents enduring long tailbacks amid slow progress on the key 11-kilometre bypass project.

Commuters told KNO that they often get stuck for 30 to 45 minutes in the gridlock. They said patients, students and office-goers travelling on the vital Srinagar-Baramulla corridor are the most affected.

They said a town-to-town journey that should take minutes often stretches close to an hour.

Authorities said the Rs 432 crore 11-km Pattan bypass project from Pattan to Tapper is under execution and will eventually decongest the township. They said earth-filling and formation work on major portions of the alignment are almost complete, while bottlenecks have already been cleared to keep the project on track.

Officials indicated that if the current pace is maintained, the bypass is expected to be completed around July, giving commuters an alternative corridor and easing pressure on the town centre. Earlier, the project was scheduled to be completed in 2025.

Amid mounting public anger, Baramulla MP Engineer Abdul Rashid has formally taken up the issue of delayed Pattan bypass works with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.

In his representation, the MP flagged "slow execution" and its impact on commuters, traders, patients and students, terming the bypass and associated works lifelines for North Kashmir.

However, in a written reply, the minister has acknowledged the concerns and assured that the matter is being "looked into for action", raising hopes that the work speed will now be increased. (Observer News Service)

Police Nab Drug Peddler in Budgam

SRINAGAR: Continuing its drive against the drug menace, Jammu and Kashmir Police in Budgam nabbed a drug peddler and recovered a contraband substance from his possession.

According to a statement issued, a police party from Police Post Narbal at a checkpoint established at Syed Mohallah Narbal, near Peer Masjid intercepted a vehicle (Ertiga) bearing registration number JK05M-8910. During the search of the driver, 32 grams of charas-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Showkat Ahmad Wani, son of Abdul Ahad Wani, resident of Wanigam, Pattan, Baramulla. He has been arrested and shifted to a police station where he remains in custody. The vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 02/2026 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Magam, and further investigation is in progress.

Police reaffirm its commitment to eliminating drug abuse from society and urge the general public to share any information related to drug peddling or trafficking, the statement reads. (Observer News Service)

Flights to Leh Temporarily Halted

LEH: Heavy snowfall in Leh on Monday forced airlines to temporarily suspend all flight operations, affecting both take-offs and landings, an official said.

According to an advisory from Indigo Airlines, "Due to snowfall in Leh, flight operations, both take-offs and landings, have been temporarily put on hold. This may lead to extended wait times both onboard and on the ground. To ensure we are ready for departure as soon as we receive clearance, our team may complete boarding formalities in advance. We understand that delays can be inconvenient, and we assure you that our team remains fully committed to make your wait as comfortable as possible. We are closely monitoring the weather and will get you on your way as soon as conditions allow. Customers are advised to check their latest flight status before heading to the airport."

According to the IMD, Leh recorded a minimum temperature of -9.6 degrees Celsius on Monday with snowfall of 0.6 cm in the last 24 hours.

For the tourists, Leh has turned into a white wonderland with its first spell of snow. Thick layers of snow engulfed the place. Visuals from Leh showed trees completely covered in snow, and houses and fences were also blanketed in snow. (KNS)

Low Voltage Grips Kashmir as Power Demand Nears 3200 MW

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Amid peak winter, Jammu and Kashmir valley is reeling under 'severe low voltage issues,' officials said.

The official further said that the heating load is also picking up during early morning and night hours. "The demand may further increase in the coming days."

It also said that the severe voltage in Jammu and Kashmir is in violation of N-1.



N-1 in power systems is a security criterion ensuring that the grid continues to operate reliably without interruption, even if a single critical component like a generator, line, or transformer fails.

"As expected, with the increase in winter, demand for the J & K control area is on a higher side and it is hovering around 3200MW,"

reads an official document available with KNO.

It also reads that "It has been observed that the 400kV as well as 220kV Bus voltages at various stations in Kashmir valley are remaining critically low also reaching 347kV and 178kV—well below the Indian Electricity Grid Code (IEGC) band that is 380kV & 198kV respectively due to low hydro generation and heavy Megavolt-Amperes Reactive (MVAR) draw from the Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) nodes."

An official said that J&K SLDC was requested to take appropriate measures to maintain the 400kV & 220kV voltages within IEGC band in J&K control area to avoid any untoward incident. "For the installation of Capacitor Banks in the leftover Grid Substations without reactive devices, a source of funds shall be explored."

The official documents further reveal that in this backdrop NRPC has asked the authorities of J&K to obtain a detailed input, primitive for additional bus transfer from the field units of these old 220kV Substations. "Accordingly, final details shall be communicated to the Commission."

The commission had also asked the JKTPCL to expedite measures to improve the severe low-voltage issue in J&K grid.

EAC to Review Clearance Extension for 850-MW Ratle project



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Expert Appraisal Committee of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will consider the Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited's request for an extension of its Environmental Clearance for the 850-MW Ratle hydroelectric project in Jammu & Kashmir.

Documents accessed by KNO lay bare that the panel will decide on the extension of the clearance during its meeting scheduled for the 9th of this month.

The mega project was granted environmental clearance in 2012, and the clearance was transferred to RHPCL in 2021.

As per MoEF&CC norms, the validity of EC for river valley and hydroelectric projects is 10 years. That means the clearance granted in 2012 was valid up to December 2022.

The Ratle hydroelectric

project is a run-of-river scheme proposed on the Chenab River in Kishtwar district, with an installed capacity of 850 MW.

Initially, construction of the project was undertaken by the Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation through M/s GVK Limited. However, work was halted in 2014.

The plan for execution was revived by the Union Power Ministry in 2018 in consultation with the Government of J&K.

In February 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between NHPC (51%) and JKSPDC (49%) for the formation of a new joint venture-Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (RHPCL)-to execute the project.

The Union Cabinet accorded the investment sanction of Rs 5281.94 crore for the project in 2021.

Fare Hike Confusion Continues:

Commuters Slam Govt 'Silence', Demand Clear Order

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Confusion over passenger fare revisions in Jammu and Kashmir continues, with commuters reporting higher fares even as the government maintains that "no official order" has been issued.

Last week, it was stated that an 18 per cent hike in passenger fares had been "approved" following deliberations by the Fare Revision Committee (FRC), chaired by Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D. Vaidya, with rates reportedly set to take effect from January 1, 2026.

However, no formal notification has been issued so far, leaving both transporters and passengers in a state of uncertainty.

While some commuters report paying more on Srinagar and south Kashmir routes, transporters from the Kashmir valley say they have not yet implemented the hike officially.

"Meetings with the Jammu wing are scheduled for the next two days to decide the next steps, as we are approaching the government and Transport Minister," a senior transporter told KNO.

The transporters said they had planned to implement the hike earlier, but due to holidays last week, meetings could not take place. They added that discussions are now expected in the coming days.

"I used to pay Rs 25 from Brein Nishat to Lal Chowk; now they're charging Rs 30. Only issuing statements won't help. If the government is serious, it should issue a clear order," said Firdous Nazir, a commuter previously quoted by KNO.

Today, during a follow-up conversation, Firdous maintained his stance and confirmed paying the increased fare.

Meanwhile, speaking to a TV channel, MLA Zadibal and National Conference (NC) Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq said, "We have a proposal, but no order has come. If someone is charging money without an official order, they are in the wrong. There are genuine demands from transporters, but the proposal with the Finance Department is still under consideration."

He added, "Any decision will balance the interests of the general public and transporters. As of today, no hike has taken place, nor has any order been issued. I hope RTOs of Kashmir and Jammu will clarify this further to remove confusion."

With contradictory statements and on-ground fare increases by some operators, commuters remain unsure of the actual rates, while transporters await official direction.

A senior transport official summed up the frustration: "Until a clear order is issued, both consumers and operators are left in the dark."

GMC Jammu Issues Advisory on Cold-Weather Risks

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In view of the intensifying winter conditions across Jammu and Kashmir, Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu has issued a detailed public advisory warning about the serious health and safety risks associated with extreme cold and outlining preparedness and preventive measures for individuals, families and communities.

As per KNO, the advisory highlights that prolonged exposure to low temperatures can lead to life-threatening conditions such as hypothermia, frostbite, and carbon monoxide poisoning. It added that cold-related disruptions like power outages, frozen water pipes, and dead vehicle batteries can further endanger lives.

Major Health Risks Identified

According to GMC Jammu, hypothermia—a condition in which the body temperature drops below 95°F (35°C)—is among the most dangerous consequences of extreme cold and can prove fatal if not addressed promptly. The advisory notes that frostbite, which



causes damage to body tissues due to freezing, can occur rapidly, especially in exposed body parts like fingers, toes, ears and the nose.

"Cold weather causes the body to lose heat faster than it can produce it, leading to serious medical emergencies if early signs are ignored," the advisory states.

Another significant concern

flagged by health authorities is carbon monoxide poisoning, which can occur when people improperly use secondary heating sources such as coal burners, gas heaters, or generators in poorly ventilated spaces during power outages.

Vulnerable Groups at Higher Risk

Certain groups are particularly

vulnerable during extreme cold. These include elderly persons, especially those lacking adequate heating, food or warm clothing, people staying outdoors for long durations, such as homeless individuals, hikers or workers, individuals consuming excessive alcohol or illicit drugs and infants sleeping in inadequately heated rooms.

The advisory also cites statistics indicating that nearly 50% of cold-related injuries occur among people above 60 years of age, over 75% involve males, and around 20% take place inside homes.

Warning Signs of Hypothermia

Health experts at GMC Jammu urged people to seek immediate medical attention if symptoms of hypothermia appear. These include uncontrollable shivering, slurred speech, confusion or disorientation, memory loss, drowsiness and extreme fatigue.

"Preventing hypothermia is far easier than treating it," the advisory stressed.

For suspected hypothermia cases, the advisory recommends: moving the affected person to a

warm, dry place, removing wet clothing and covering the person with blankets, warming the body slowly, starting from the core, avoiding rapid warming of arms and legs, as it may push cold blood toward the heart and trigger cardiac complications, providing warm drinks if the person is conscious.

For frostbite, GMC Jammu advised shifting the patient to a warm environment, immersing the affected limb in warm (not hot) water until normal colour returns, removing tight clothing or jewellery from the affected area and avoiding rubbing or massaging frozen skin.

Cold-Weather Safety Measures

The advisory also outlined a range of safety precautions, urging residents to: stay indoors during extreme cold spells, check on elderly neighbours and bring pets indoors, keep flashlights and extra batteries ready and avoid using candles due to fire risk, ensure proper insulation of water pipes to prevent freezing, use heating appliances cautiously and maintain adequate ventilation.

Khelo India Beach Games Get Off To A Colourful Start

Press Trust of India

DIU: The second edition of Khelo India Beach Games got off to a colourful start at the Ghoghla Beach here on Monday with a special message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

More than 1,100 athletes from across the nation will compete in eight different sports -- volleyball, soccer, sepak takraw, kabaddi, pencak silat, open water swimming, mallakhamb and tug-of-war -- in the Games which will conclude on January 5.

The first six will be medal sports and 32 gold medals will be up for grabs.

Diu is wearing a festive look with the Khelo India Beach Games mascot 'Pearl' -- the happy and energetic dolphin -- welcoming athletes, support staff, volunteers and all stakeholders associated with KIBG 2026.

The Khelo India Beach Games, organised by the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, is being held under the technical supervision of the Sports Authority of India and national sports federations.

While wishing good luck to the athletes and congratulating the Union Territory for hosting



KIBG 2026, PM Modi said: "The Khelo India Beach Games occupy a special place in India's sporting landscape. Beach and coastal sports demand physical endurance, mental strength and the ability to perform under constantly changing conditions."

"By bringing emerging disciplines to the forefront, these Games expand the horizons of Indian sport and create new pathways for talent to be discov-

ered, recognised and nurtured." The PM reiterated the transformative power of sports.

"Today, India is witnessing a deep transformation of its sporting culture. Across the country a renewed emphasis on institutional outreach, grassroots participation and cultural change is reshaping how sporting talent is identified and supported."

"Modern infrastructure, scientific training methods and

transparent competition platforms are increasingly accessible to young athletes, irrespective of background or geography."

PM Modi lauded the UT organisers for choosing Ghoghla Beach as a venue.

"The choice of Ghoghla Beach, a Blue Flag certified beach, as the venue is particularly noteworthy. Sport, when hosted in harmony with nature, becomes a powerful medium for both athletic

achievements and environmental awareness. This setting reminds us that excellence and sustainability progress together."

Lt Governor Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha declared the Khelo India Beach Games 2026 open after the parade of athletes. A ceremonial torch relay was held with the participation of four athletes who have excelled in beach sports -- Don Remedios (beach football), Payal Parmar (beach volleyball), Ajish Patel and Jalpa Solanki (both tug-of-war).

Earlier in the day, competition began in Beach Soccer and Beach Kabaddi with top teams setting the marker early.

In women's Beach Soccer, defending champions Odisha hammered Maharashtra 11-3 in Group A while debutants Himachal Pradesh came from behind in the third quarter to beat hosts Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu 7-5 in Group B.

In Beach Kabaddi, Maharashtra men's and women's teams registered comfortable victories in their respective groups.

In the women's section, Maharashtra defeated Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu 64-22 while the men beat Delhi 47-20.

Utkhand cricketer Rajan Kumar fails dope test in rare case

Sprinter Dhanalakshmi banned for 8 yrs



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Uttarakhand left-arm pacer Rajan Kumar failed a dope test and was handed provisional suspension by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) in a rare case involving a cricketer.

The 29-year-old Kumar's dope sample was found to contain anabolic steroids Drostanolone and Metenolone, as well as Clomifene, which is generally used as a medication to treat infertility in women but also has the ability to restore testosterone levels among men. Kumar last played against Delhi in Uttarakhand's Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Group D match in Ahmedabad on December 8, 2025.

Cricketers have rarely failed dope tests. Madhya Pradesh all-rounder Anshula Rao was caught for doping in 2020, while Prithvi Shaw failed dope test in 2019.

Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi also became one of the rare footballers to fail a dope test as her name also figured in the latest updated list of athletes who were handed provisional suspensions. Her sample was found to contain anabolic steroid Metandienone.

Others in the list are Gaurav Patel (athletics), Khushboo Kumari (weightlifting), Achalveer Karwasra (boxing) and Siddhant Sharma (polo).

Tamil Nadu sprinter Dhanalakshmi Sekar, who has failed a dope test for the second time in her career last year, has been handed eight year ban effective from September 9, 2025. She had tested positive for anabolic steroid Drostanolone in September 2025, which was her second dope offence.

The 27-year-old had returned to action in 2025 after serving a three-year ban for a dope offence in 2022.

Don't Feel Secure In Sending Our Team To India: BCB

Press Trust of India

DHAKA: Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam on Monday said "we do not feel secure" in sending the national team to India for the T20 World Cup considering the current circumstances.

Aminul spoke to reporters a day after BCB formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC) to shift their T20 World Cup games out of India, a strong move triggered by pacer Mustafizur Rahman's release from the IPL on BCCI instruction.

"You know that we, along with all the directors of the cricket



board, held two meetings before taking this decision and at this moment we do not feel secure sending our team to India to play

the World Cup," Aminul said.

"So we wrote a letter to the ICC, and in the letter we clearly stated what we wanted to say. Because

to us, security appeared to be a major concern and that is what we are following.

"We have sent an email to the ICC and we are expecting them to tell us to have a meeting with them soon where we will express our concern," he said.

Aminul said BCB's next step will depend on ICC's response.

"But what our next step will be depend on the reply to the email we have sent. We are not communicating with BCCI because this is an ICC event. We are communicating with the ICC," he said.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia, while announcing the diktat to release Rahman, had merely stat-

ed that it was being done because of "developments all around", without explaining the specifics.

Bangladesh was scheduled to play three T20 World Cup matches in Kolkata and one in Mumbai.

Drawn in Group C, the team was due to face the West Indies in their opening match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on February 7 and subsequently compete against defending champions England, Italy and Nepal.

The Indo-Bangladesh relationship has hit a rocky patch after the ouster of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India in August last year following anti-government protests.

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