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Child Helpline Number:

1098

Dated: 09-01-2026
DIPK-9880/25

Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K

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Cold Wave Shows No Let-Up; Srinagar Hits -6°C



Observer News Service

Srinagar: A severe cold wave continued across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Friday, with several places recording a further dip in minimum temperatures compared to the previous night.

Srinagar recorded the coldest night of the season at minus 6.0 degrees Celsius, down from minus 5.1 degrees a day earlier. The minimum temperature at Srinagar airport dropped to minus 7.4 degrees

from minus 6.8 degrees.

Qazigund registered minus 6.2 degrees compared to minus 5.4 degrees the previous night, while Anantnag recorded minus 7.1 degrees, down from minus 6.3 degrees.

In south Kashmir, Pulwama settled at minus 7.5 degrees against minus 6.8 degrees a day earlier, while Kupwara recorded minus 5.8 degrees, down from minus 5.1 degrees.

Gulmarg witnessed a relatively warmer | [More on P10](#)

NH-44 Choked For Nearly 24 Hrs; Day Travel Advised

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) remained severely congested for nearly 24 hours as single-lane traffic restrictions and vehicle breakdowns disrupted movement at several key stretches, officials said on Friday. Traffic movement was severely | [More on P10](#)

SC Allows JKCA Polls, Stays Result Declaration

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea relating to the upcoming elections of the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) and directed that the poll results should not be declared.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta on Thursday passed the order while hearing a petition seeking the appointment of an independent electoral officer to prepare the electoral rolls and conduct JKCA elections strictly in accordance with the association's | [More on P10](#)

CM Omar Welcomes IWT Suspension

Says Treaty Harmed J&K For Decades

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Welcoming the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said the agreement had caused long-term harm to the region and curtailed its rightful use of water resources.

Addressing a press conference here, Omar said he had opposed the treaty from the very beginning. "The Indus Water Treaty has greatly harmed us. Its suspension is a good step. Now steps must

IED Blasts Among Most Challenging Internal Security Threats: HM

» Launches NSG's National IED Data Platform

» Platform Next-Gen Security Shield Against Terror

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Improvised explosive device blasts continue to pose one of the most serious challenges to India's internal security, having killed thousands of civilians and security personnel and left many others critically injured over the years, officials said on Friday. Against this backdrop, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched a national digital IED data management platform, describing it as a next generation security shield and a comprehensive deterrent against terror-related bombings in the country.



The platform, named the National IED Data Management System, has been developed by the National Security Guard

with technical and academic support from Rashtriya Raksha University, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, the National Investigation Agency, and the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre.

Equipped with artificial intelligence and machine learning tools, the system is designed to accurately study and analyse all forms of bombings. Officials said the platform will help security agencies understand patterns, link incidents through signature analysis, and support predictive assessments to prevent future attacks.

Shah inaugurated the

facility through video conferencing from New Delhi, connecting to the system housed at the NSG garrison in Manesar. He said the platform would serve as a national asset by providing comprehensive data access to police forces, investigative agencies, state Anti-Terrorist Squads, and central forces.

In his address, the home minister said the database would function as a one nation, one data repository for IED-related incidents, improve the quality of forensic evidence, speed up prosecution, and strengthen coordination among | [More on P10](#)

KU Announces Winter Break

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir on Friday announced its winter break for the current academic year.

"It is for the information of all concerned that the teaching departments of the main and off-site campuses shall observe winter vacations with effect from January 10, 2026, to February | [More on P10](#)

WINTER SEASON FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY

To ensure safety during winter, follow these simple precautions:

Safety Tips:

Unplug heaters, stoves & turn off LPG after use.

Store dry grass/wood away from homes.

Use only good-quality electrical appliances.

Stay in the kitchen while cooking — never leave the stove unattended.

Ensure proper ventilation when using LPG heaters.

Keep exits & water points clear.

Avoid throwing burning cigarette butts.

Use Kangris with utmost care, keep them at safe places and avoid their toppling

Avoid using substandard-high wattage electrical appliances and defective electric blankets

Call Fire & Emergency Services – 101

Control Room Srinagar: 0194-2452155, 2452222

Courtesy- Office of District Magistrate, Srinagar

DIPK-9886/25 Dated: 09-01-2026

Hydel Power Generation Falls By 77% In J&K

Agencies

Srinagar: In Jammu and Kashmir, hydel power generation has reduced by nearly 77 percent.

An official said that the Power Development Department is able to generate only 277 Megawatts (MWs) of power out of the total generation capacity of 1197 MW.

The official further said that on Friday, the 900 MWs power projects in Baglihar were able to generate only 129 MWs of power.

It also said that from Jammu PDC, the department was able to generate only 80 MWs of power followed by 10 MWs by



Independent Power Producers (IPP) of Jammu.

The official figures also reveal that PDD was generating only 58 MWs of power from the Kashmir based power plants.

Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is likely to witness power deficiency of more than

34 percent during the peak demand in the month of January.

According to the official figures, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh during the peak demand will likely have a power deficit of 34.2 percent against the available power position. The updated | [More on P10](#)

MLA Salman Levels Corruption Charges Against LCMA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar on Friday leveled serious allegations of abetment of murder, corruption and institutional high handedness against the Lakes Conservation and Management Authority, accusing the body of harassment and selective action that allegedly led to the death of a young man.

Addressing the issue, Salman Sagar said the deceased, identified as Shakeel Ahmed Dar of Shanpora Habak, was humiliated and harassed by LCMA employees to such an extent that he suffered a fatal heart attack. The MLA described the incident as a clear case of abetment of murder and demanded immediate compensation for the bereaved family from the department. He also sought the direct intervention of the Chief Minister in the matter.

The Hazratbal legislator accused LCMA of what he termed as hooliganism and blackmailing of locals, urging the authority to immediately stop harassing inhabitants of Hazratbal and Khanyar assembly segments. He said LCMA must clearly define its jurisdiction and concentrate on genuine conservation of Dal Lake instead of targeting the poor.

Salman Sagar, as per the

news agency Kashmir News Trust alleged that while poor families are subjected to demolition drives and intimidation, influential and business families are being facilitated. He cited an example from Boulevard Road, claiming that a construction initially permitted on 2,200 square feet has allegedly expanded to over 65,000 square feet with a four storey structure coming up unchecked. He said such instances raise serious questions about the credibility and intent of LCMA.

The MLA further alleged that illegal filling of water bodies is taking place behind Nigeen, with material being transported openly in autos, while in areas like Saida Kadal, sheds are being erected, plantations carried out and lakes subsequently filled. He questioned why such activities continue unabated if LCMA claims to be serious about conservation.

Criticizing the authority's functioning, Salman Sagar said that despite procurement of machinery worth crores of rupees, the condition of Dal Lake remains alarming. He urged LCMA to focus on core conservation measures such as establishing treatment plant and restoring the lake ecosystem instead of concentrating on peripheral areas like Dar, Harwan and Theed.

New Wave of Urban Renewal Visible Across Srinagar: MLA Tanvir



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Conference Chief Spokesperson and MLA Zaidal, Tanvir Sadiq, on Friday said that Srinagar is witnessing a visible and meaningful wave of development under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, with focused attention being given to all parts of the city, including downtown, peripheral and historically neglected areas.

Sadiq made these remarks during an extensive tour of the Zaidal constituency, covering Lal Bazar, Bharar, Alamdar Colony, Soura, Alamgiri Bazar, Dal, Mir Behri and adjoining localities. During the visit, he interacted with residents, traders, youth and elders to take stock of local issues and ongoing development works, according to a press release.

He said that after years of stagnation and selective development, Srinagar is finally receiving the attention it deserves. "What was left midway in 2014 was allowed to deteriorate for years due to the absence of a holistic and inclusive vision. It is only under the National Conference-led government headed by Omar Abdullah

that equitable, citywide development has once again become a clear priority," Sadiq said.

Highlighting development initiatives in Zaidal, the MLA said the constituency—home to some of the most densely populated and historically significant areas of Srinagar—is witnessing focused interventions aimed at improving road connectivity, drainage networks, public spaces, community infrastructure and overall urban renewal.

He added that several long-pending projects across Lal Bazar, Bharar, Alamgiri Bazar, Soura, Makdood Sahib, Dargah Hazratbal and Mir Behri areas of Dal Lake are now being executed on the ground, bringing much-needed relief to residents.

Sadiq reiterated the government's commitment to balanced and inclusive development, stating that the Omar Abdullah-led administration is determined to ensure that no locality of Srinagar remains neglected. He assured the people that their concerns and aspirations would continue to guide future planning and implementation of development works across the city.

Fire Breaks Out in Hari Parbat Forest Area



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A fire broke out on Friday in the forest area of Hari Parbat, adjacent to the revered Makdood Sahib Shrine in Srinagar.

Officials said that the fire engulfed dry grass, dry bushes, and trees in the forest belt surrounding the hill. An in-charge at the site said the presence of highly flammable dry vegetation contributed to the spread

of the fire.

Fire and emergency response teams rushed to the spot soon after receiving information and initiated efforts to bring the blaze under control. Officials said firefighting operations were carried out to prevent the fire from spreading further.

According to KNT, authorities said the situation was being closely monitored and efforts were continuing to fully douse the fire.



QUIET STRUGGLE: An elderly man sells vegetables near Hazratbal shrine on Friday.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Relief for Consumers as Egg Samples in Srinagar Pass Safety Tests

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The first batch of egg samples collected from various parts of Srinagar has been found safe for consumption and compliant with the standards of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), officials said on Friday.

Assistant Commissioner of Food Safety, Srinagar, Yameen ul Nabi, told KNO that eight samples collected from supermarkets and wholesalers in the city were found to be of standard quality.

"The results came late last evening, and all samples have been declared fit for human consumption," he said.

The officer said that both loose and packaged eggs were taken during routine surveillance drives aimed at ensuring the safety of food items sold in local markets. "The tests confirm that eggs available in Srinagar meet FSSAI standards," he added.

Meanwhile, a senior official from Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Kashmir, told KNO that a total of 49 egg samples were collected from across Jammu and Kashmir. "This is the first



THE RESULTS CAME LATE LAST EVENING, and all samples have been declared fit for human consumption,"

batch of reports received, which have come safely," she said, adding that three to four more batches are still pending.

The official further said that the samples were collected as part of a wider quality assurance initiative launched after mislead-

ing social media posts claimed that eggs contained cancer-causing substances.

KNO had earlier reported that the FSSAI had categorically dismissed claims linking eggs to cancer, stating that eggs available in the country are scientifically safe and compliant with national standards.

In its clarification issued last month, the FSSAI had described the viral claims as "misleading, scientifically unsupported and capable of creating unnecessary public alarm". The regulator reaffirmed that the use of nitrofurans is prohibited in poultry and egg production and that trace residues below detection limits do not pose any health risk.

Officials said the ongoing testing and surveillance are aimed at reinforcing public confidence in food safety and preventing the spread of misinformation.

"We appeal to the public and media to share only verified updates and avoid amplifying unverified content," Nabi said. "Such drives will continue to safeguard public health and ensure that the food available in markets remains safe and of standard quality."

DC Reviews Progress in Implementation of UIDIC/CRS

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Friday reviewed the progress in implementation of Civil Registration System (CRS) and status of Mandatory Biometric Updates for Aadhaar in a meeting of stakeholder Departments held at Meeting Hall of the DC Office.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was given a detailed overview of the progress on Mandatory Biometric Updates for Aadhaar, status of the Civil Registration System (CRS) with a focus on the Birth Registration-Based Aadhaar Enrolment (BRBAE) initiative aimed at enrolling newborns for Aadhaar at hospitals aligning with the goal of transforming the CRS for real-time digital registration of births and deaths.

On the occasion, the DC stressed the need to ensure time-



ly completion of mandatory biometric updates, particularly for children who have attained the ages of 5 and 15 years.

Meanwhile, the DC also reviewed the progress regarding the establishment of a Centre of Excellence-CSC in the district. He also emphasized time-bound clearance of pending Aadhaar cases, especially those involving applicants above 100 years of age. The DC further directed all departments to create and opera-

tionalize official Gov.in email IDs.

While reviewing the progress on the establishment of the Centre of Excellence-CSC, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the concerned departments to complete all pending requirements within the stipulated timeline to ensure that the centre becomes operational in all respect at the earliest. He assessed the current status of infrastructure and preparedness and instructed the concerned to expedite the process.

DLSA Conducts Legal Awareness Program Under DAWN

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, in continuation of its awareness drive on the eve of National Youth Day, scheduled to be observed on 12th January, 2026, organized an awareness programme in collaboration with Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Forum, marking the third day of the ongoing campaign.

The programme was held at Aakash Institute, Rajbagh, as part of the sustained efforts to sensitize youth on issues of legal awareness, drug abuse prevention and youth welfare.

The awareness programme

was conducted under the NALSA DAWN (Drug Awareness and Wellness Navigation - For a Drug Free India) Scheme, 2025.

Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel, Jahanara, deliberated in detail on the objectives and significance of the NALSA DAWN Scheme, highlighting the legal, social and health implications of drug abuse and the role of youth in building a drug-free society. She emphasized early intervention, legal support mechanisms and wellness navigation as key components of the scheme.

Member of the Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC), addressed the participants on the

NALSA (Child Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme, 2024, sensitizing them about child-centric legal safeguards, access to justice for children and the role of legal services institutions in protecting child rights.

Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel, also interacted with the students and emphasized the importance of National Youth Day, underscoring the responsibility of young individuals in shaping a lawful, healthy and responsible society.

The participants actively engaged in the programme, reflecting keen interest in the issues discussed.

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
20 Rajab
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	6:08
ZUHR	12:37
ASR	4:01
Magrib	5:45
ISHA	7:08

This Day In History

- 236- St Fabian begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 381- Roman Emperor Theodosius issues edict ordering all churches be surrendered to bishops of the Catholic faith as he saw it
- 532- Constantinople chariot racing green and blue supporters due to be executed escape, prompting Nika revolt
- 1072- Robert Guiscard's Norman force conquers Palermo
- 1356- German Emperor Charles I promulgates the 'Golden Bull', to regulate the election of a new king - the most important constitutional document of the Holy Roman Empire
- 1475 - Stephen III of Moldavia defeats the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Vaslui.
- 1514 - Complutensian New Testament in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek & Latin finished
- 1861 - US forts & property seized by Mississippi
- 1861 - Florida secedes from the Union (US Civil War)
- 1906 - The British and French begin consultations on military and naval issues
- 1912 - World's 1st flying boat's maiden flight, (Glenn Curtiss in NY)
- 1914 - Yuan Shih-k'ai, president of the new Chinese republic, dissolves parliament and prepares a constitution of his own design: he will set himself up as dictator, preparatory to an attempt to make himself emperor
- 1916 - Russian offensive in Caucasus
- 1916 - In retaliation for President Woodrow Wilson's recognition of the Carranza government, members of Pancho Villa's revolutionary army take 17 US mining engineers from a train and shoot 16 of them in cold blood
- 1917 - The Allied Governments respond to US President Woodrow Wilson's December 1916 note, giving their terms for ending the war
- 1923 - Last US troops leave Rhineland (Germany)
- 1923 - Lithuania seizes & annexes country of Memel
- 1925 - Allies refuse to evacuate the Cologne area of Germany as agreed
- 1928 - Soviet Union orders exile of Leon Trotsky
- 1944 - British troops conquer Maungdaw, Burma
- 1946 - UN General Assembly meets for 1st time in London
- 1951 - UN headquarters opens in Manhattan NY
- 1954 - A Comet jet airliner crashes in the Mediterranean; 35 people are missing
- 1966 - India & Pakistan sign Tashkent Declaration peace accord
- 1968 - US Surveyor 7 lands near lunar crater Tycho
- 1969 - USSR's Venera 6 launched for parachute landing on Venus

January 10, 2026
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

AN INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH

Saturday Mentorship Program

Dr. Saad Parvez
Director, Greenovator Incubation Foundation, NIT Srinagar

JOIN US

ON GOOGLE MEET

Video call link:
<https://meet.google.com/neu-zwjg-fpw>

INCUBATION CENTERS & THEIR ROLE

Startup Kashmir
15/1, Polo View Srinagar J&K 190001
E: info@startupkashmir.org | W: 9596012240
<https://startupkashmir.org>

As US Flexes Muscle, China, Russia, Iran Hold Drills

GERALD IMRAY

Cape Town, Jan 9 (AP) Chinese, Russian and Iranian warships arrived in South African waters for a week of naval drills starting Friday off the coast of Cape Town as geopolitical tensions run high over the United States' intervention in Venezuela and its move to seize tankers carrying Venezuelan oil.

The Chinese-led drills were organised last year under the BRICS bloc of developing nations and South Africa's armed forces said they will bring members of the bloc together to practice maritime safety and anti-piracy operations and "deepen cooperation."

China, Russia and South Africa are longtime members

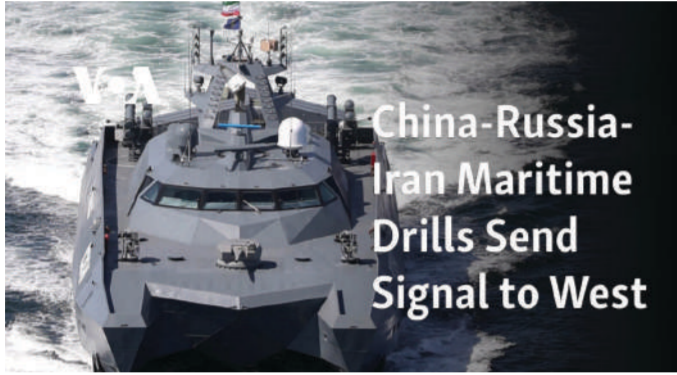
China's ships include the Tangshan, a 161-metre (528-foot)-long destroyer class vessel.

South Africa also hosted Chinese and Russian ships for navy drills in 2023.

The latest drills were meant to happen in late November but were delayed for diplomatic reasons because South Africa hosted Western and other world leaders for the Group of 20 summit around the same time.

The drills are bound to further strain ties between the US and South Africa, which is the most advanced economy in Africa and a leading voice for the continent but has been especially targeted for criticism by the Trump administration.

US President Donald Trump



China-Russia-Iran Maritime Drills Send Signal to West

of BRICS, while Iran joined the group in 2024.

The Iranian navy was taking part in the drills while protests grow back home against the Islamic Republic's leadership.

It was not immediately clear if other countries from the BRICS group — which also includes Brazil, India and the United Arab Emirates among others — would take part in the drills. A spokesperson for the South African armed forces said he wasn't yet able to confirm all the countries participating in the drills, which are due to run until next Friday.

Chinese, Russian and Iranian ships have been seen moving into and out of the harbour that serves South Africa's top naval base in Simon's Town, south of Cape Town, where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic Ocean.

said in an executive order in February that South Africa supports "bad actors on the world stage" and singled out its ties with Iran as one of the reasons for the US cutting funding to the country. China and Russia have often used BRICS forums to launch criticism of the US and the West.

South Africa has long claimed it follows a nonaligned foreign policy and remains neutral, but Russian presence on the southern tip of Africa has strained its relationship with the US before. The Biden administration accused South Africa in 2023 of allowing a sanctioned Russian ship to dock at the Simon's Town naval base and load weapons to be taken to Russia for the war in Ukraine. South Africa denied the allegation.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee leads a protest march against ED's searches in Kolkata on Friday. Photo: PTI

Mamata Hits Streets, Protests Against ED Action

Press Trust Of India

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday led a massive protest march in south Kolkata against the Enforcement Directorate's searches linked to political consultancy firm I-PAC, as her TMC mounted a show of street strength ahead of the 2026 assembly polls.

Escalating her confrontation with the Centre, Banerjee chose the streets as her political battleground, turning the ED action into a rallying point prior to the high-stakes elections.

As she walked from the 8B Bus Stand area towards Hazra More, the TMC supremo was flanked by senior ministers, MPs, MLAs and party functionaries, with sloganeering crowds accusing the BJP-led Centre of "misusing central agencies for political vendetta".

The mega rally came a day after Banerjee's dramatic appearance at I-PAC chief Pratik Jain's Loudon Street residence during an ED raid, an episode that has

since escalated into a full-blown Centre-state confrontation.

The march, however, unfolded with a cultural credence unmistakably Bengali.

Party workers lustily sang Pratul Mukhopadhyay's iconic anthem 'Ami Banglay Gaan Gai', while women blew conch shells, lending the protest the texture of a street festival layered with po-

Party workers lustily sang Pratul Mukhopadhyay's iconic anthem 'Ami Banglay Gaan Gai', while women blew conch shells, lending the protest the texture of a street festival layered with political defiance.

litical defiance.

Clad in her trademark white cotton sari, shawl and slippers, Banerjee walked steadily at the head of the procession, occasionally pausing to wave at onlookers lining both sides of the road, many of them filming the moment on their phones.

Adding both star power and organisational heft to the rally

were actor-politicians Dev, a sitting Lok Sabha MP, and Soham Chakraborty, along with other familiar faces from the Bengali film and television industry, who now double as party representatives. Their presence drew cheers and whistles, blurring the line between cinema and politics that the TMC has increasingly embraced.

TMC leaders said the

march was the first in a series of statewide agitations planned by the party, signalling that Banerjee intends to take the political battle out of conference rooms and courtrooms and back onto the streets — a terrain she knows best, and where her politics, steeped in spectacle and symbolism, finds its most potent expression.

Amit Shah Unveils National IED Data Platform

Press Trust Of India

Gurugram: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a national digital IED data management platform that will act as "next generation security shield against terror" and a comprehensive deterrence against all forms of bombings that take place in the country.

The national IED data management system (NIDMS) has been developed by the federal counter-terrorist commando force NSG with the help of Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in Gandhinagar, IIT-Delhi, National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Indian cyber crime coordination centre (I4C).

It is armed with artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools for "accurately" studying all types of bombings.

Improvised explosive device (IED) blasts in the country have been categorised as one of the "most challenging" threats in the internal security domain, killing thousands of civilians and security personnel, and critically injuring many others over the years.

Shah inaugurated the facility through a video conferencing link that connected the platform, housed at the National Security Guard (NSG) garrison in Manesar here.

The minister said the NIDMS will act as a "shield" and "national asset" against terrorist incidents, as it will provide a "comprehensive" data to the police, various investigative agencies, state Anti-Terrorist Squads, federal agencies like the NIA and central forces to analyse the patterns and modus operandi of various types of bombings.

In his address, Shah said, this platform will act as a 'one nation one data repository' for IED blasts, help to speed up prosecution by adding quality to the forensic evidence gathered and enhance inter-agency coordination.

NSG Director General (DG) Brighu Srinivasan said the NI-

DMS is a "real-time" exchange of information platform, for government agencies in the anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency domain, that will collect, analyse and disseminate data on all bombing incidents of the country.

The platform is "unique" as during its preparatory stage, 26 "friendly" countries were approached and they did not have such a facility, he said.



According to NSG, the database has 800 users (various agencies) and will also be able to capture 'signature linkages' among different bomb blast incidents, conduct post-blast investigation and can also perform "predictive" analysis to thwart certain bombing incidents.

The ambitious project has been in the works for some time and is part of the NSG's National Bomb Data Centre (NBDC), which analyses all types of bombings that occur in the country, apart from major explosions that take place globally.

Shah also said that once the newly commissioned NSG hub in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, is operational, its commandos will be able to reach any part of the country within 1 to 1.5 hours. The NSG has five active hubs in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

The NBDC, established in the year 2000, has a database of all bombings that took place in the country since 1999.

Raised in 1984, the NSG's 'black cat' commandos are tasked to undertake specific counter-terrorist and counter-hijack operations besides protecting select high-risk VIPs.

India Rejects Claim Trade Deal Stalled Over Modi Call

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, : India on Friday rejected as "inaccurate" US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick's remarks that a proposed trade deal between the two countries could not be sealed last year as Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not make a telephone call to President Donald Trump.

New Delhi also asserted that it remained interested in concluding a "mutually beneficial" trade deal between the two "complementary economies" and noted that Modi and Trump held phone conversations on eight occasions in 2025 covering different aspects of ties.

Negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement between the two sides hit a major roadblock after Trump slapped a whopping 50 per cent tariff on India, including a 25 per cent additional duty for its purchase of Russian crude oil.

The fresh row between the two sides came as their relations continued to reel under possibly the worst phase in the last two decades.

In his controversial comments in an interview on Thursday, Lutnick detailed how the India-US trade deal has not happened till now.

The decision to negotiate the trade deal was taken at a meeting between PM Modi and President Trump at the White House on

February 13.

"We have seen the remarks. India and the US were committed to negotiating a bilateral trade agreement as far back as February 13 last year," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"Since then, the two sides have held multiple rounds of negotiation to arrive at a balanced and mutually beneficial trade agreement," he said at his weekly media briefing.

"On several occasions, we have been close to a deal. The characterisation of these discussions in the reported remarks is not accurate," he added.

Jaiswal said India remained interested in a mutually beneficial trade deal between the two complementary economies, and it is looking forward to concluding it.

"Incidentally, the prime minister and President Trump have also spoken on the phone on eight occasions during 2025, covering different aspects of our wide-ranging partnership," he said.

People familiar with the matter said there was no occasion in the course of last year when a phone call could have helped seal the trade pact.

In his comments, Lutnick said India and the US were pretty close to firming up the trade pact, as he elaborated on negotiations for a similar deal with the UK.

Protesters 'Ruining Own Streets' to Please Trump: Iran

Trans Asia News

Tehran: Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei signalled Friday that security forces would crack down on rioters, directly challenging US President Donald Trump's pledge to support anti-government protesters inside Iran.

Iran leader dismissed Trump as having hands "stained with the blood of Iranians" as supporters shouted "Death to America!" in footage aired by Iranian state television.

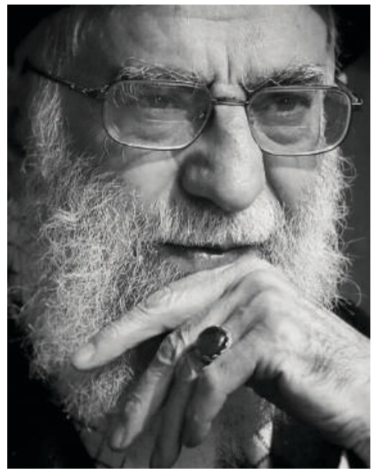
Protesters are "ruining their own streets ... in order to please the president of the United States," Ayatollah Khamenei said to a crowd at his compound in Tehran. "Because he said that he would come to their aid. He should pay attention to the state of his own country instead."

Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejeli separately vowed that punishment for what he described as foreign backed rioters "will be decisive, maximum and without any legal leniency."

There was no immediate response from Washington, though Trump has repeated his pledge to strike Iran if protesters are killed, a threat that's taken on greater significance after the US military raid that seized Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Internet cut off

Despite Iranian authorities restricting access to internet, short online videos aired by Western backed Persian satellite



channels purported to show protesters chanting against Islamic Republic around bonfires as debris littered the streets in some areas into Friday morning.

Iranian state media alleged "terrorist agents" of the US and Israel set fires and sparked violence. It also said there were "casualties," without elaborating.

The full scope of the protests couldn't be determined due to the communications blackout, though it represented yet another escalation in protests that began over Iran's ailing economy and that has morphed into the most significant challenge to the government in several years. The protests have intensified steadily since beginning December 28.

The protests also represented the

Iran dismisses foreign interference

Iran's foreign minister says the nation's internal affairs are exclusively a matter of the Iranian people, dismissing any outside interference as unacceptable.

Speaking to reporters after Wednesday's weekly cabinet session, Abbas Araghchi stressed that Iran will not tolerate any foreign interference in its domestic affairs.

"Internal matters in Iran concern no one but the Iranian people. Any foreign attempts to interfere are unacceptable. The government is working with the people to resolve any issues, and no outside power has the right to dictate our internal affairs," he emphasized.

Turning to international diplomacy, Araghchi denounced Washington's obstructive approach, which he said makes meaningful negotiations impossible at present

first test of whether the Iranian public could be swayed by fugitive Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose father Raza Pahlavi fled Iran just before the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Pahlavi has been calling for protests with backing from Western governments and the US, whose crippling sanctions have contributed to Iran's currency decline.

State TV reported the protests saw violence that caused casualties but did not elaborate. It also said the protests saw "people's private cars, motorcycles, public places such as the metro, fire trucks and buses set on fire." State TV later reported that violence overnight killed six people in Hamedan, some 280 kilometres southwest of Tehran.

Iranian officials have acknowledged the legitimacy of economic grievances raised by peaceful protesters and have vowed to address them, while emphasizing a clear distinction between lawful assembly and foreign-instigated violence.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly voiced support for protesters, warning that Washington could attack Iran if what he described as "peaceful protesters" are harmed.

Iran has faced rounds of nationwide protests in recent years. As sanctions tightened and Iran struggled after the 12-day war, its rial currency collapsed in December, reaching 1.4 million to USD 1. Protests began soon after, with groups chanting against Iran's Islamic system.

ED Conducts Searches in 6 States in Fake Job Scam

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi : The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has conducted a search operation in six states in connection with a fake government job scam, seizing documents and digital evidence linked to alleged money laundering.

A "sophisticated" racket was operated by issuing fake joining letters, running bogus training centres and creating forged identity cards and email IDs resembling official

government addresses, the ED said in a statement.

One such email ID impersonated the Ministry of Railways to send fraudulent appointment letters.

To lend credibility to the scam, the gang allegedly paid salaries for two to three months through bank accounts with government-sounding names such as "Treasury Office RO", "FCI RO", "RRB" and "By Salary", it said.

The searches were carried out by ED's Patna office on January 8 at premises in Muzaffarpur and Motihari in Bihar; Kolkata in West Bengal; Er-

nakulam, Pandalam, Adoor and Kodur in Kerala; Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Rajkot in Gujarat apart from Gorakhpur, Prayagraj and Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. The action was initiated under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

During the operations, the agency recovered and seized documents related to sale deeds, bank account details, handwritten notes, cheques, loan agreements, investment records, copies of fake job advertisements and digital evidence, the ED said.

The money laundering probe was initiated on the basis of an FIR



To lend credibility to the scam, the gang allegedly paid salaries for two to three months through bank accounts with government-sounding names such as "Treasury Office RO", "FCI RO", "RRB" and "By Salary"

registered at the Sonpur Government Railway Police Station in Bihar against some persons identified as Deepak Kumar Tiwari and Saksham Srivastava. They were allegedly found soliciting job seekers at Sonpur Railway Station.

According to the ED, interrogation revealed that the two were part of a larger gang involved in defrauding aspirants by promising government jobs, particularly in the Indian Railways and other departments. The gang allegedly targeted candidates for posts such as RPF personnel, TTEs and technicians.

Winter Snowfall Crucial for Kashmir's Agriculture, Water Security: Experts

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Winter snowfall remains the backbone of Kashmir's agriculture, horticulture and overall water security, experts said, warning that a continued dry spell during the winter months could have far-reaching consequences for irrigation, drinking water supply and farm productivity across the Valley.

Agriculture specialists point out that around 60 to 70 per cent of orchards in Kashmir are rain-fed and heavily dependent on winter snowfall and subsequent spring rains.

They said that in the absence of adequate snow accumulation or abundant winter precipitation, the region faces a high risk of water scarcity during the crucial summer months, affecting not only farming but also domestic water availability and allied sectors.

Speaking to KNO, Dr Mudassir Ahmad Dar, an environmental expert and lecturer in the School Education Department, said winter snowfall plays a decisive role in sustaining agriculture and horticulture in Kashmir.

"Snowfall acts as a natural



reservoir. When it melts gradually during spring and summer, it ensures steady water availability for crops, orchards and drinking purposes," he explained.

Dr Dar expressed concern over the below-normal or no snowfall witnessed so far this winter, warning that it could translate into acute water stress later in the year. "If snowfall remains deficient, water-intensive crops like paddy will be the worst hit. Paddy cultivation depends heavily on assured irrigation, and any disruption in water supply can severely impact both yield and livelihoods," he said.

While noting that it is still

SNOWFALL ACTS AS A NATURAL RESERVOIR. When it melts gradually during spring and summer, it ensures steady water availability for crops, orchards and drinking purposes,"

early to draw firm conclusions, Dr Dar added that February, March and April are traditionally wet months in Kashmir. "We are hopeful that these months may compensate for the current defi-

cit. Adequate rainfall or snowfall during this period can still help replenish water sources," he added.

Dr Suhaib A Bandh, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science at S P College Srinagar, said prolonged dry weather poses a serious threat to orchards and fruit crops, which form the economic backbone of Kashmir. "Dry spells disturb natural irrigation cycles, reduce soil moisture and weaken trees, making them more vulnerable to pests and diseases," he said.

He explained that insufficient winter moisture adversely affects root development and flowering in fruit trees, which can ultimately impact fruit size, quality and overall production. "Apple, pear and other fruit crops are particularly sensitive to moisture stress during critical growth stages," he said.

Dr Bandh called for long-term adaptation measures, saying: "Strategic water management practices, promotion of drought-resistant crop varieties, efficient irrigation systems and climate-resilient agricultural techniques are essential to mitigate the impact of prolonged dry spells on

Kashmir's horticulture sector."

Meanwhile, Dr Umar Mushtaq, a scientist at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), highlighted the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the current winter on the next farming season. "At this stage, it is difficult to precisely predict how the present dry conditions will affect next year's crops," he said.

Dr Mushtaq said that if sufficient precipitation occurs in the remaining winter days, the situation may still improve. However, he cautioned that a largely dry winter could have implications for fruit quality in the coming year. "If the entire winter remains dry, there are chances of fruit quality issues next season, depending on other climatic and agronomic factors," he said.

Experts warn that the consequences of a snow-deficient winter go beyond agriculture. Reduced snowfall, they said, can lead to declining spring discharge in rivers, streams and springs, affecting drinking water schemes, hydropower generation and overall ecological balance in the Valley.

Shallabugh Wetland Emerges as Eco-Tourism Hotspot



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Shallabugh Wetland Conservation Reserve here in Central Kashmir is fast emerging as a major eco-tourism hotspot.

According to details, the wetland spread over 1,675 hectares across Srinagar and Ganderbal districts was designated as a Ramsar site on June 8, 2022. Since then it has gained global recognition for playing a crucial role in preserving biodiversity.

Notably, this protected wetland is home to a diverse array of bird species, including the Pintail, Common Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall, Mallard, and the rare Pallas's Fish Eagle.

Additionally, Steppe Eagles, Eastern Imperial Eagles, and Yellow-eyed Pigeons, among others, contribute to its status as an avian paradise. An annual bird census, held on February 23 and 24, provides valuable data to track and monitor these bird populations.

Ghulam Rasool, a local while talking to KNO said, "The wetland is one of Asia's largest and home to lakhs of birds. With better support and more staff, it can be managed and protected even more effectively."

Wildlife Department officials said that the wetlands are important for migratory birds. "Every year a huge number of birds flock to the site. We are committed to safeguarding these birds, especially during peak migration seasons. We urge hunters to respect the wildlife and refrain from any harmful activities," the officials said.

They said that February, in particular, is expected to see an influx of additional migratory birds.

Currently, the bird population is estimated to be between 2 to 2.5 lakh. To aid during the winter months, the department provides grains to feed the birds and ensures their well-being amid freezing temperatures. "Compared to last year, the number of birds has notably increased," officials said.

Pertinently, the Shallabugh Wetland stands as an exemplary model of community-driven conservation. Local residents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government bodies are working hand in hand to preserve the ecological balance.

The Ramsar status of the wetland highlights its global importance. It calls for continued efforts to protect it.

Prof Rehman Rahi Remembered as Conscience of Kashmiri Literature

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages organised a one-day seminar in memory of Gyanpeeth Awardee and renowned Kashmiri poet, critic, researcher and intellectual Professor Rehman Rahi at the Conference Hall of Tagore Hall here.

The seminar was aimed at highlighting the multifaceted literary, intellectual and linguistic contributions of Professor Rahi, a towering figure in Kashmiri language and literature, whose creative vision not only provided new intellectual directions to Kashmiri literary thought but also harmonised it with contemporary sensibilities. Speakers observed that Professor Rahi's literary legacy was not confined to the past but continues to remain deeply relevant in present-day intellectual, cultural and academic discourse.

The programme began with a welcome address by Editor Sheeraza Kashmiri of the Cultural Academy, Javid Iqbal Khan, who shed light on the multidimensional personality of Professor Rahi. He described Rahi as an architect of Kashmiri literature who successfully blended tradition with modernity, thereby imparting new dimensions to Kashmiri poetry. Khan noted that Professor Rahi's poetry, critical thought and linguistic services provided intellectual stability to Kashmiri literature and helped it gain recognition at the global level.

The inaugural session was presided over by Prof Bashir Bashir, former Head of the



Sheikh-ul-Aalam Chair, University of Kashmir. In his presidential address, he termed Professor Rehman Rahi an authentic and powerful reference point in Kashmiri literature, whose creative works reflected artistic maturity, intellectual refinement and deep cultural consciousness. He said Rahi's literary contributions would continue to guide future generations of writers and scholars.

Noted short story writer and former Head of News, All India Radio Srinagar, Mushtaq Ahmad Mushtaq, attended the occasion as Chief Guest. He said that Professor Rahi provided crucial intellectual support to the Kashmiri language during a sensitive historical phase and played a vital role in preserving its literary and cultural heritage. Mushtaq added that Rahi's vast literary corpus remains highly significant for contemporary academic and literary debates.

The keynote address was delivered by renowned writer and poet Shahid Dalnawi, who elaborated on the intellectual, symbolic and cultural dimensions of Professor Rahi's poetry. He remarked that Rahi

endowed Kashmiri poetry with philosophical depth and symbolic richness, elevating it to new aesthetic and intellectual heights.

The second session of the seminar was also presided over by Prof Bashir Bashir. Eminent short story writer Mohi-ud-Din Rishi participated as Chief Guest, while noted writer and poet Fayaz Tilgami was present as Guest of Honour. The dignitaries, while paying rich tributes, described Professor Rehman Rahi as the conscience of Kashmiri literature, whose influence transcended generations.

Research-oriented papers on Professor Rahi were presented by Shabir Ahmad Ganaie, Dr Qaiser Ahmad Malik, Mushtaq Ahmad Kumar, Lone Imtiyaz and Gulshan Badrani. The papers critically examined various aspects of Rahi's poetry, criticism and linguistic contributions. Speakers emphasised that Professor Rahi built a strong bridge between tradition and modernity, enriched Kashmiri poetry with intellectual depth and preserved the aesthetic elegance of the language.

VC SKUAST-Jammu Calls on LG Manoj Sinha

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhavan on Friday. The Vice Chancellor briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the progress achieved by the University in the areas of education, research, and extension, including major initiatives undertaken under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the J&K Climate Innovation Programme (JKCIP).

Prof. Tripathi informed that SKUAST-Jammu has been designated as a Centre/Regional Outreach Unit of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) for Jammu. The Centre will facilitate the collection of region-specific data on crop costs, prices, and farmers' issues, thereby strengthening evidence-based Minimum Support Price (MSP) recommendations and farmer-centric policy planning.

The Vice Chancellor also apprised about the sanction of an ANRF-PAIR IIT Bombay Hub project under the Partnership for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) for development of an AI-driven agriculture



system aimed at enhancing farmer market linkages and operational efficiency, with a focus on traditional products, involving an outlay of over Rs 6 crore.

In addition, an ICAR-NASF project for genome analysis amounting to Rs 2 crore has been sanctioned. He further informed that the establishment of an AICRP Centre for Poultry Breeding at SKUAST-Jammu is at an advanced stage of approval, while regular centres for beekeeping and mushroom cultivation are under active consideration by ICAR. At present, the University is implementing externally funded projects worth approximately Rs 100 crore.

CS Reviews Progress of Major Health Infrastructure Projects

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of ongoing and proposed health infrastructure projects across the UT, reiterating that strengthening healthcare facilities remains a top public service priority of the government.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Secretary, Health & Medical Education; Director, SKIMS; Managing Director, NHM; Principals of Government Medical Colleges; Director, Health Services, Kashmir/Jammu; Managing Director, HSCC; Chief Engineers of R&B, and other senior officers.

The review covered a wide spectrum of projects being executed by the Health & Medical Education Department, including works related to Government Medical Colleges,

SKIMS, Dental Colleges, Health Services, SASCI projects and flagship centrally sponsored schemes such as PM-ABHIM and ECRP-II.

Taking a comprehensive project-wise review, the Chief Secretary examined physical and financial progress, utilisation of funds and issues hampering timely execution. He issued clear directions for expediting approvals, resolving inter-departmental bottlenecks, particularly those related to land and utilities, and ensuring strict adherence to timelines and quality standards.

He took this occasion to emphasise that delays in healthcare projects have a direct bearing on public welfare, he cautioned that such lapses would be reviewed seriously at the highest level and stressed the need to avoid cost overruns through efficient use of resources.

Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh took

note of project-wise deadlines and issued on-the-spot directions to Chief Engineers to resolve site-specific bottlenecks so that works progress without interruption.

Secretary, Health & Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah presented an overview of the progress achieved since the last review meeting and outlined the department's mechanism for regular monitoring of works.

During this meeting a detailed review was conducted of major infrastructure projects at GMC Jammu, GMC Srinagar and their associated hospitals, including the construction of the Bone and Joint Hospital, Jammu, and expansion of tertiary care facilities. The progress of works at Indira Gandhi Government Dental College & Hospital, Jammu was also reviewed, with emphasis on augmenting dental education and patient care infrastructure.

JKAS Officers Hold Condolence Meetings in Jammu & Srinagar

Officers of the 2019 batch of the Jammu & Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) held condolence meetings in the twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar today to express their solidarity and grief over the sad demise of the mother of their batchmate, Iqbal Zargar, who is presently serving as Tehsildar Eidgh in District Srinagar.

The condolence meetings witnessed a gathering of JKAS officers who came together to pay their respects and offer support to Zargar during this difficult time.

Speakers, on the occasion, described the departed as an embodiment of compassion and virtue. Her dedication to her family and her strong moral values left a lasting impression on all who knew her. The officers acknowledged the profound loss suffered by Zargar and his family.

The gatherings were marked by prayers for the departed soul, with officers seeking divine blessings for her eternal peace. The JKAS fraternity expressed their unwavering support to Zargar and assured him that they stand with him and his family in this hour of grief. (Observer News Service)

Baramulla-Uri NHW to Remain Closed on Sunday

Baramulla: Authorities on Friday ordered temporary closure of Baramulla-Uri National Highway on Sunday in view of the proposed hill cutting works.

The order issued by the district magistrate, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer cites the apprehensions of landslides as seen in the past days for the closure of the vital highway.

"The restrictions at Danakha Mode and NS Bridge Uri from 07:00 AM to 05:00 PM on Sunday (11.01.26) are necessary in order to avert loss of life and property", reads the order.

Pertinently, the highway had witnessed multiple landslides in the recent past, causing severe inconvenience to commuters. The incidents compelled authorities to halt traffic movement and divert traffic flow through the dilapidated Khadnihar-Gantamulla road. (Observer News Service)

Two Army Porters, Soldier Lose Lives in Separate Incidents

Baramulla: Two army porters and a soldier lost their lives after falling from a height in separate incidents in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Officials told KNO that the bodies of two porters, identified as Layakat Ahmad Deedard and Ishaq Ahmad Khatana, both residents of Chandoosa, were recovered following an extensive search operation.

The duo, officials said, had slipped into a nallah on Thursday evening while heading towards the forward Anita Post in Gulmarg heights.

Following the incident, rescue teams launched an overnight operation and retrieved the bodies after sustained efforts.

Meanwhile, in another incident, an Army soldier identified as Hira Lal, a resident of Haryana, posted at the Fathagard Sheeri Camp, died after slipping and falling from a height during night patrol duty in Sheeri area of the district. He was immediately rushed to GMC Baramulla, where doctors declared him dead, an official said. (Observer News Service)

Leakage Turns Lurow Jagir Playground into Marsh

The continuous water pipeline leakage at the only playground in Lurow Jagir area of Tral in south Kashmir's Pulwama district has created serious difficulties for local athletes and residents, who have strongly criticised the Jal Shakti Department for failing to address the issue despite repeated appeals.

Local youth, who regularly gather at the ground for football and cricket practice, told KNO that for several weeks, a damaged water supply pipe running through the playground has been leaking continuously, flooding large portions of the ground.

They said the constant flow of water has turned the playing surface into slush, making it impossible for children and young athletes to use the facility for sports and physical activities.

"The situation has brought sporting activities in the village to a complete halt. This playground is the only space available to us for sports, but due to the leakage, it has become unusable," said Nazir Ahmad, a cricketer.

"We have approached the concerned officials many times, yet no concrete action has been taken. Such negligence is discouraging young players and damaging the sports environment in our area," Ahmad added.

Residents have also raised serious concerns over the massive wastage of drinking water caused by the unattended leakage. They said thousands of litres of clean water are being lost daily, even as several areas in Tral continue to face intermittent water supply.

"It is heartbreaking to see potable water being wasted like this when many villages are struggling to get a regular supply," said Mohammad Abdullah, a senior resident of Lurow Jagir. "The authorities must be held responsible. Allowing such a major leakage to continue for weeks reflects poor governance and a lack of accountability." (Observer News Service)

Police Recover Contraband Substance from Residential House

In its continued crackdown against drug menace, Jammu and Kashmir Police in Shopian recovered a significant quantity of contraband substance from a residential house in Barbugh, Imamsahib and arrested the accused person.

As per the statement issued to Kashmir Observer, acting on specific information, Police Station Imamsahib registered a case under FIR No. 02/2026 of NDPS Act and obtained a search warrant from the competent authority. A team from Police Station Imamsahib accompanied by the Tehsildar Barbugh raided the residential premises of Mushtaq Ahmad Khanday, resident of Barbugh. During the search, 20,720 Kgs of cannabis & 130 grams charas-like substance was recovered from the residential house. The accused has been arrested and further investigation is underway. (Observer News Service)

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 1947969705
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email: editor@kashmirobserver.net

KO VIEW

Kashmir and Central Asia

Young people from Kashmir are traveling to Central Asia and sharing what they see through videos and photos. They show snow-covered mountains, old towns, wooden houses, and meals that look strikingly familiar back home.

Many viewers feel they are seeing places that look like extended versions of their own towns, kitchens, and streets.

This feeling comes from a shared past. Before 1947, Kashmir stood within a wide cultural space that reached deep into Central Asia. Traders, scholars, craftsmen, and spiritual figures moved through mountain passes and river routes with ease. Along the Jhelum in old Srinagar, this movement shaped daily life. The city grew as a meeting place where ideas, faith, and habits mixed over generations, giving Kashmir a character that felt open and connected.

Signs of that connection still shape the valley. Traditional wooden homes with balconies and inner courtyards resemble architecture found across Central Asia. Kashmiri food reflects shared climates and cooking styles that value warmth, spices, and long preparation.

Spiritual life also carries this history. Saints and mystics from Central Asia arrived centuries ago, settled in Kashmir, and became part of everyday belief. Their shrines remain active, and their influence continues through stories and practice.

Political changes after 1947 disrupted these old routes. Travel slowed, borders hardened, and shared cultural memory faded from public conversation. The connection did not disappear, though it became less visible, living silently in homes, rituals, and language rather than public life.

The journeys of young Kashmiris are bringing this history back into view. Their travel content shows how closely linked these regions remain in landscape, design, and daily habits. Viewers are beginning to see Kashmir as part of a larger cultural map rather than an isolated place shaped only by recent history.

This rediscovery also carries economic meaning. Culture now plays a central role in how regions attract visitors and create livelihoods. Kashmir draws tourists for its natural beauty, while its deeper appeal lies in cultural difference.

Architecture, crafts, food, music, and spiritual heritage shape travel experiences and encourage longer stays. Cultural and heritage tourism remain key reasons people visit the valley.

Discussions around development often focus on infrastructure and skills, while culture receives less attention as a living asset. Stronger cultural ties with Central Asia through exchanges, travel, and shared platforms can support both identity and local economies.

Such connections allow Kashmir to present itself with clarity and confidence.

Kashmir's Disrupted Snow Economy

As the valley is witnessing yet another snowless winter, decades of economic reliance on snow are colliding with climate change, threatening tourism, energy, and agriculture.

Uzma Qadir Mir

Kashmir, long known for white-carpeted hills, frozen lakes, and lively winter resorts, is entering winters that increasingly lack snow.

The Chillai Kalan, once a period of intense cold and accumulation, now often passes with bare slopes and dry landscapes.

For January, which traditionally fuels winter tourism and seasonal livelihoods, empty hotels and silent streets have become a growing reality.

What appears as unusual weather is part of a long-term decline in snowfall with consequences that ripple through the economy, water supply, energy production, and agriculture.

Tourism in Kashmir depends heavily on snow. Ski resorts, bustling lodges in Gulmarg, and scenic landscapes drive lodging, transport, guided tours, dining, equipment rentals, and local craft sales.

Recent winters, however, have disrupted this economic ecosystem.

Data shows that snowfall in many years has dropped more than 40 percent from historical averages.

When snow falls, it melts faster than before, shortening the period during which winter businesses can operate at full capacity.

Tourist bookings are falling sharply. Visitors are canceling trips or choosing destinations with more reliable winters. Hotel occupancy is declining, while local incomes linked to seasonal tourism are under stress.

Shops in towns such as Tangmarg, which once flourished selling snow gear and handicrafts, now see empty streets. Horse riders, guides, and seasonal workers are sitting idle.

Even events like the Khelo India Winter Games face uncertainty as organizers struggle with snow-deprived venues.

Tourism is a major source of employment and foreign exchange in the valley, so the economic and social impact is significant.

The lack of snow carries a deeper threat beyond tourism.

Snow is Kashmir's natural water reservoir. Unlike rain, which runs off quickly, snow accumulates through the winter and melts gradually, feeding rivers, springs, wetlands, and groundwater.

This steady release of water supports the Jhelum River system, irrigates farmland, and replenishes rural and urban supplies. Measurements show reduced river flows, shrinking wetlands, and drying springs, which are early signs of rising water stress.

Reduced snow coverage is increas-



Every development plan in Kashmir must now consider climate risk. Budgets, policies, and projects should integrate snow data, early warning systems, and economic assessments of seasonal risks. Collaboration between water, agriculture, energy, and tourism sectors should be institutionalized to ensure coordinated responses.

ingly affecting agriculture, domestic use, and energy generation.

Hydroelectric power relies on snow-fed rivers. Lower river flows reduce electricity generation, forcing the region to import power or rely on fossil fuels. Industries face outages that slow production and discourage investment. Households must spend more on kerosene, LPG, and heaters just as tourism income declines.

The economic impact of reduced hydropower extends beyond electricity generation to affect industry, commerce, and daily life.

Agriculture, especially horticulture, is vulnerable to these changes.

Apples, cherries, walnuts, and saffron require specific chilling hours to bloom and produce quality fruit. Warmer winters and decreased snow cover lead to irregular flowering, lower yields, and higher pest infestations.

Farmers face increased costs to irrigate fields when snowmelt is scarce. Groundwater extraction rises, and some farmers shift to drought-tolerant

crops that provide lower income.

Traditional staples such as paddy are declining, disrupting local markets and rural livelihoods.

These challenges reflect a larger climate trend.

Research shows consistent reductions in winter precipitation across the western Himalayas. Average temperatures are rising, winters are milder, and glaciers are retreating, reducing natural water storage.

These changes indicate that declining snowfall is part of a persistent pattern linked to climate change. This trend challenges assumptions about water availability, agricultural planning, and economic stability in the region.

Public policy in Jammu & Kashmir has lagged behind these changes. Water management focuses on building reservoirs and channels but underestimates demand-side strategies. Programs to recharge groundwater, conserve springs, and manage watersheds based on snow and runoff patterns are limited.

Without these tools, water short-

ages worsen vulnerabilities, especially for rural populations.

Agricultural policies assume stable water availability. Support for drought-resistant crops, climate-adapted farming, and crop insurance linked to snowfall variation is limited.

Rural incomes remain exposed, while tourism policies concentrate on infrastructure and marketing.

These policies fail to address the economic impact of declining snow. Diversification into cultural, eco-adventure, and off-season tourism remains underdeveloped.

Without shifts in policy and strategy, both tourism and agriculture risk stagnation.

Tackling these challenges demands a coordinated strategy. Water security depends on capturing winter precipitation, protecting high-altitude springs, and replenishing groundwater through aquifer recharge.

Agriculture must shift to climate-adapted crops, backed by insurance tied to seasonal patterns, and adopt technologies that cut water use.

Energy systems should diversify with solar, wind, and community micro-grids to reduce dependence on shrinking rivers.

Tourism needs to move beyond snow-dependent models, emphasizing off-season attractions, cultural experiences, and eco-tourism.

Carefully planned artificial snow can support winter sports in select areas without harming the environment.

Every development plan in Kashmir must now consider climate risk.

Budgets, policies, and projects should integrate snow data, early warning systems, and economic assessments of seasonal risks.

Collaboration between water, agriculture, energy, and tourism sectors should be institutionalized to ensure coordinated responses.

Kashmir's next decade will determine whether the valley can adapt to declining snowfall while sustaining livelihoods, water supply, and economic stability.

Winters without snow are no longer isolated events. They signal the need to rethink economic planning, strengthen water systems, support climate-adapted agriculture, diversify energy sources, and broaden tourism strategies.

Each snowless winter exposes vulnerabilities and makes proactive policy action essential.

Farmers, entrepreneurs, and families in the valley will continue to feel the impact until economic planning catches up with changing winters.

The author is pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at a Delhi-based university. She can be reached at muzmaqadirmir@gmail.com.

Cold wind cuts through Kashmir's streets these days, biting into bones and carrying the chill of long nights and short days.

Life feels heavier this time of year. People wake to frost on windows and struggle with routines that once seemed simple.

The mind can feel as harsh as the winter, stuck in repeating cycles of worry, anxiety, and exhaustion.

Mental health issues are real, but help is distant, expensive, or hard to even ask for.

Trained mental health professionals are few. Finding a counselor or psychiatrist requires time, money, and sometimes permission from family or society.

Conversations about emotional struggles can be met with judgment or dismissal. Complaints are often labeled as overthinking, weakness, or attention-seeking.

Many suffer silently, convinced that reaching out will make things worse.

Years of violence, unemployment, uncertainty, and collective trauma have added layers to these struggles. Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress affect people widely.

Stories of breakdowns, rising suicides, and emotional exhaustion are not isolated incidents.

The tragic Pratap Park case, where a woman set herself on fire, showed the consequences of prolonged, unaddressed suffering.

Pain that builds in silence can erupt in the most public and shocking ways.

Even without professional help, the mind can find moments of relief. Physical movement releases stress and shifts mood.

Walking along Dal Lake, stretching indoors, or even pacing a room for twenty minutes can lift tension. Deep breathing works in tandem with movement. Inhaling slowly through the nose, exhaling through the mouth, calms the

Frozen Thoughts

Winter in Kashmir amplifies emotional exhaustion, but small daily habits can offer relief even without professional help.

Fazila Fayaz



body and eases anxious thoughts. Sunlight is another small but powerful ally. Stepping outside, even briefly, helps mood and

energy. Natural light reaches the brain, nudging it toward balance. Connection to others matters.

Sharing struggles with a friend, family member, or neighbour can ease the burden. Isolation intensifies stress, while conversation,

even imperfect or hesitant, provides relief.

Paying attention to the present moment also helps.

Mindfulness is not about apps or silent rooms. Focusing on the taste of food, the feeling of cold on the skin, or the rhythm of steps while walking can pull attention away from spiraling thoughts.

Technology opens doors where local help is limited.

Telemedicine and online counseling platforms provide guidance, crisis support, and advice when in-person care is scarce. Services like iCall and AASRA allow conversations with trained professionals who can offer perspective and options.

Even short interactions can change the way someone feels, preventing pain from building unchecked.

Every small step matters. Movement, breathing, sunlight, connection, and focused attention do not replace therapy but help manage daily strain.

Speaking, acting, and seeking help in available forms prevents isolation from taking over. Mental health is as important as physical health, and giving it attention can make the cold of life feel slightly easier to bear.

Winter may be harsh, streets may be cold, and past experiences may weigh heavily, but taking care of the mind matters.

Each day, small actions and choices create room to feel better, even when support is limited.

Pain may remain, but care, however small, brings relief, hope, and a sense that life can still be lived despite the burden.

The author can be reached at fazi872345@gmail.com

Kashmir Under the Kushanas

From Central Asia to the Valley of Kashmir, the Kushanas carved an empire of warriors, scholars, and artisans. Through towns, temples, and trade routes, the valley became a theater of culture, religion, and ambition.

Mohsin Nazir Parray

The story begins in the windswept plains of Kansu, in the eastern reaches of China. Here, the Kusanas, warriors with restless eyes and dreams of empire, first gathered under Kujula Kadphises.

He gazed westward, imagining lands beyond mountains, rivers, and deserts. One march led to another. Kucha, Aksu, and the steppes of Kyrgyzstan fell under his command. By thirty CE, Kabul, Gandhara, Taxila, and Kashmir bowed before him. The empire he forged spanned from Central Asia to the heart of India.

Kujula's coins, unearthed along the Tarapura route near Sopore, whisper of his footsteps. These paths linked Kashmir to Gilgit, Chitral, Yasin, Badakhshan, and far-off China.

Travelers, merchants, and soldiers streamed along them, carrying silk, ideas, and rituals. The valley was no longer a secluded paradise. It was a nexus of the known world.

From Kujula came Vima Tak, a son stepping into his father's shadow, and then Vima Kadphises, whose brief reign is remembered only in a single copper coin.

Their presence was subtle, but the empire's momentum pressed forward, preparing the stage for Kaniska I.

Kaniska arrived like a storm, around 100 CE. His gaze fell on Kashmir, and he saw opportunity.

Kalhana writes of Kaniska building a town, establishing mathas, and erecting chaityas. Coins minted under his rule testify to wealth and order. He called together Buddhist scholars from across the empire, hosting the Fourth Buddhist Council in the valley.

Huien Tsang, visiting centuries later, found

the memory alive, the valley still echoing with Kaniska's vision. Kaniskapur endured, a living monument to his ambition.

Juska, likely Vasiska, followed, and then Huvishka, whose reign spanned 34 years.

Huvishka minted coins adorned with gods from distant lands, blending Persian, Indian, and Central Asian divinities. The valley prospered. Fields expanded, settlements multiplied, and towns grew into cultural centers.

Vasudeva I closed this line of Kushana rulers, leaving Kashmir a jewel of imperial design. Kashmir under the Kusanas was a theater of migration. Soldiers from distant lands became damaras, the warrior aristocracy whose power would echo through centuries.

Administrators, scribes, and priests arrived to govern, educate, and guide. Craftsmen stamped tiles at Harwan, their faces carrying the features of Central Asia, their techniques reflecting China, Persia, and Bactria.

Temples and monasteries rose from the earth, creating nodes of spiritual and cultural power.

Kaniska, Juska and Huvishka were the directors, Kashmir their stage.

In the north, Wushkur, Kanisapur, and Singhpur bustled with newcomers. Central towns like Harwan and Zakura reflected planning and order. The south saw Semthan, Nagbal, and Hutmur thrive under the watchful eyes of satraps appointed by the empire.

Beyond simple villages, these were nodes of governance, religion, and trade. Each settlement reinforced imperial authority while blending with local life.

Religious life pulsed. Magas, Zoroastrian sun worshippers, consecrated temples in sunlight. Buddhist monks from Gandhara and Bactria wandered the valleys, their Sanskrit



texts inscribed with devotion and ambition.

Kalhana describes Vihara construction at Kaniskapura, Juskapura, and Huvishkapura. Even today, ruins at Ushkur and Zakura testify to a society where faith, power, and artistry coexisted.

The Kusanas left architecture as their signature. Rubble stone walls gave way to pebble

and diaper masonry, culminating in semi-ashlar foundations.

Harwan, Ushkur, Hoinar, and Hutmur preserve glimpses of a design philosophy shaped by earthquakes, climate, and aesthetics.

Though domestic homes were simple, temples, stupas, and monasteries bore the imperial imprint: decorated tiles, intricate

patterns, and bold construction.

Language and scholarship flourished under Kushanas in Kashmir. Greek, Persian, Bactrian, Prakrit, and Sanskrit became instruments of governance, devotion, and prestige.

Buddhist scholars poured ink onto palm leaves in Sanskrit, their words weaving new ideas into the very fabric of Kashmiri life. Temples and monasteries became arenas where faith and culture collided and merged.

Brahmanas watched, adapted, and absorbed the newcomers, recognizing their knowledge, skills, and prestige, while carefully preserving the structures of local hierarchy.

The valley itself changed. New villages arose, new lands were cultivated, and population swelled.

Administrators, priests, and artisans formed an elite, setting cultural benchmarks. Local farmers and laborers tilled fields that supported this expanding society.

Each stone laid, text written, and temple consecrated reflected a broader story of migration, conquest, and synthesis.

Kashmir under the Kushanas was a crucible where armies met scholars, art met devotion, and distant empires left their imprint on mountains and rivers.

Kaniska's council, Huvishka's coins, Harwan's tiles, and the settlements across the valley tell the story of a civilization built on movement, adaptation, and cultural convergence.

The Kushanas made Kashmir a living bridge between worlds, an empire in motion, a stage where the human story unfolded in bronze, stone, and ink.

— The author is pursuing a Master's degree in History at the University of Kashmir. He can be reached at parraymohsin28@gmail.com.



Kashmir under the Kushanas was a crucible where armies met scholars, art met devotion, and distant empires left their imprint on mountains and rivers. Kaniska's council, Huvishka's coins, Harwan's tiles, and the settlements across the valley tell the story of a civilization built on movement, adaptation, and cultural convergence. The Kushanas made Kashmir a living bridge between worlds, an empire in motion, a stage where the human story unfolded in bronze, stone, and ink.

Highways in Bloom

Highways are reshaping the valley's iconic saffron fields, changing both the look and the value of this treasured landscape.

Tazeem ul Haq

Saffron fields that once stretched like golden carpets now jostle with roadside shops, towering billboards, and mismatched buildings.

Open skies and traditional architecture are swallowed by a chaotic patchwork that grabs attention in every direction, leaving travellers unsettled and changing the way the valley is seen and remembered.

Pampore's saffron fields are part of a living system where culture, design, and ecology come together.

Jammu & Kashmir produces over 90% of India's saffron, and the Pampore-Pulwama belt covers nearly 3,500 hectares.

In the past five years, roadside commercial construction in these areas has surged by 40 to 50%, fuelled by land speculation and limited oversight.

The saffron remains in the soil, but its visibility and prominence fade as unplanned structures rise along the highways.

Travellers encounter tin sheds beside unfinished concrete blocks, glass façades clashing with raw brick, and buildings that vary wildly in height and alignment.

More than 70% of these constructions lack approved architectural designs, and many gain legal status only after completion.

Highways have shifted from scenic journeys to stretches of visual competition, where every new structure fights for attention.

This transformation affects both the economy and culture.

Saffron cultivation has declined by

The growth of the valley depends on decisions that balance transport, economy, and culture, ensuring architecture contributes to identity and respect for local heritage. With clear policy, sensitive design, and firm governance, the valley can retain the beauty and value of its saffron fields while still embracing development.

over 40% since the 1990s, influenced by land conversion, soil degradation, disrupted drainage, and pollution.

As the fields shrink and lose prominence, they also lose cultural weight, transitioning from a symbol of Kashmiri identity to a backdrop for roadside commerce.

The challenge stems from architectural decisions and governance rather than infrastructure itself.

India's national highway network spans over 146,000 kilometers, the second-largest in the world. Each kilometer of highway can trigger three to five kilometers of ribbon development without proper zoning. Sadly, highways have become

magnets for unregulated growth, altering landscapes and local character in Kashmir.

Architecture along highways reflects how a region presents itself to the world. Aggressive, chaotic, or mismatched construction reduces both cultural and economic value.

Cultural tourism suffers, regional branding weakens, and saffron, as a premium product, cannot command respect if the land that produces it loses its visual appeal.

Highways function best as integrated cultural and ecological corridors. Design regulations, uniform building lines, height limits, and landscape buffers help preserve aesthetics and identity.

Evidence from similar regions shows that careful planning can reduce visual disruption by up to 60% and improve economic returns from tourism.

Kashmir's infrastructure can frame its landscapes, highlight its heritage, and increase the value of its natural and cultural assets.

Thoughtful planning turns roads into avenues of pride, rather than visual conflict.

The growth of the valley depends on decisions that balance transport, economy, and culture, ensuring architecture contributes to identity and respect for local heritage.

With clear policy, sensitive design, and firm governance, the valley can retain the beauty and value of its saffron fields while still embracing development.

— The author is a climate activist and can be reached at tuhaq220@gmail.com



The Shadows of Power

Behind promotions and applause lies a hidden world of exploitation, fear, and lost potential. Misused power leaves silent scars that few see.



Nowshen Mushtaq

We are raised to believe that power carries duty and that true leadership stands for protection, guidance, and fairness.

"With great power comes great responsibility," we are told, a phrase meant to inspire.

But in practice, the moment power lands in someone's hands, ideals often give way to ambition. Responsibility shifts into permission to dominate, silence, and treat people as steps on a ladder. In many institutions, offices, schools, and social circles, power becomes a career push. Those at the top rarely rise alone, but the people who helped them often fade into silence, or worse, face exploitation.

Subordinates become tools, with efforts claimed, voices ignored, and respect sacrificed, all in the name of "success."

What makes this more disturbing is how normalised it has become.

Exploitation wears the mask of discipline. Humiliation is justified as authority. Overworking others is called "pressure of responsibility." And questioning power is seen as rebellion rather than courage.

Slowly, people start believing that suffering under someone powerful is the price one must pay to survive.

Power, in such a setup, flows only in one direction.

Orders go down, credit goes up. Mistakes travel downward, while achievements are claimed upward.

Those at the lower rungs are expected to be loyal, obedient, and endlessly grateful, even when they are being used. Their growth is delayed, so that someone else can shine faster.

The tragedy is that many who misuse power were once victims of the same system. They know what it feels like to be unheard, overlooked, and underestimated.

But instead of breaking the cycle, they repeat it. Power intoxicates, and it creates an illusion that success achieved at the cost of others is justified, and that stepping on people is strategy. Over time, this mindset hardens into habit,

and habit turns into culture.

This culture seeps into everyday interactions. Meetings become one sided. Ideas from those in power are applauded, while the same ideas, if voiced by someone junior, are ignored or ridiculed. Promotions reward obedience rather than merit. Fear replaces trust.

People stop speaking honestly, because they know honesty has consequences.

The emotional cost of such abuse of power is often invisible. People carry stress, self-doubt, and silent frustration. They question their own worth, unaware that the system itself is broken.

Talented individuals shrink themselves to survive in unsafe spaces. Some leave silently. Others stay, and slowly, their spark dims.

But real power has a different language. It listens, protects, and shares credit and absorbs blame.

True authority does not need to crush others to stand tall. In fact, leadership that relies on exploitation is weak. It stands on fear. And fear never builds anything lasting.

History and experience both tell us that the strongest leaders are those who rise with others. They understand that empowering people strengthens authority.

When people feel valued, they give their best. When they feel safe, they grow. And when they grow, the entire system benefits.

A society where power is used as a weapon breeds silence, resentment, and moral decay. Talented people withdraw. Honest voices fade. Creativity dies. And success, though visible, becomes hollow.

The pedestal may look impressive from a distance, but up close, it is built on broken trust and wounded worth.

If power is inevitable, responsibility must be intentional. It must be chosen every day, in small decisions and moments.

Otherwise, power stops being a position and turns into a curse.

The author has done her Masters in English Literature, and is currently working as an English educator. She can be reached at nowshen9051@gmail.com.

Study Estimates 49 Lakh Cases Of Typhoid Fever In India In 2023

Press Trust Of India

A study has estimated 49 lakh cases of typhoid fever and 7,850 deaths in India in 2023, with Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka together accounting for nearly 30 per cent of the national burden.

Findings published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia also show that six lakh of the 7.3 lakh hospitalisations across the country were attributable to fluoroquinolone-resistance — a type of antibiotic, or antimicrobial, resistance.

Typhoid fever is a bacterial infection that spreads through contaminated food and water. Symptoms can start one to three weeks following exposure and include high fever, headaches, abdominal pain and fatigue. Treatment involves antibiotics and supportive care.

Researchers, including those from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Christian Medical College in Vellore, India, found that the states of Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka also had the highest rates of fluoroquinolone-resistant cases and deaths among the ten highest-burden states.

The authors "estimated 4.9 million typhoid cases and 7,850 deaths in India in 2023".

"Delhi, Maharashtra, and Karnataka together accounted for 29 per cent of the national burden and had the highest rates of fluoroquinolone-resistant cases and deaths among the ten highest-burden states," they said.

"Fluoroquinolone-resistance drives a large share of typhoid-related hospitalisations and deaths, especially in children under five and in high-burden states of India," the team said.

The researchers reviewed studies published up to July 2025 that carried data on typhoid fever incidence, mortality and antibiotic resistance.

A persistently high fluoroquinolone-resistance was found (more than 60 per cent), steadily increasing from 1989 to 2024 and peaking at 94 per cent in 2017.

Resistance to third-generation cephalosporin and azithromycin — both common and effective first-line antibiotics used for treating typhoid fever — remained consistently low and multidrug resistance steadily declined over the last three decades, the team said.

The authors also found that children aged 5-9 exhibit the highest number of typhoid fever and antibiotic resistance cases, while children aged 6 months to four years experience the highest number of hospitalisations and deaths.

Delhi, Maharashtra, and Karnataka were identified as priority states for introducing the typhoid conjugate vaccine — a single-dose providing long-lasting protection.

The team added that relying solely on routine immunisation programme, which targets the typhoid conjugate vaccine around nine months, would be insufficient for an immediate control of typhoid fever in India, as it could take decades to reach older people, who also bear a significant disease burden.

Measures to control antimicrobial resistance (AMR) are also essential, including antimicrobial stewardship programmes, infection prevention and control strategies, and an enhanced monitoring of both AMR and antimicrobial usage, the authors said.

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GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT INFORMATION OFFICER ANANTNAG

Ph./Fax: 01932-464427 Email: infdic-ang@jk.gov.in Short Term Quotation

For and on the behalf of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, short term quotations are invited from experienced vendors/firms/service providers for Hiring, Installation and Operation of Public Address/Music System (as service) which must cater audience of 6000 (six thousand) persons for Republic Day Celebrations-2026 including the Full Dress Rehearsal to be held at Shaheed Himayun Muzamil, Government Boys Degree College, Kanabal Anantnag. The terms and conditions are given below:

1. The tenders/quotations in sealed envelope should reach this office by or before 20.01.2026 till 02:00 PM during working days personally or through representative or registered post. The bids shall preferably be opened in presence of bidders or their representatives at 04.00 pm on the said date.
2. The rates should be quoted in figures as well as in words without cutting and shall include GST and any other tax as applicable under rules. Incomplete/conditional quotations in any respect will be rejected.
3. The High Quality PA/Music System, cordless mics, speakers, wired mics, pendrive and any other items/equipment needed for providing the service alongwith necessary backup shall be made available and installed by the vendor at the venue on 23.01.2026 and operated smoothly on 24.01.2026 during Full Dress Rehearsal and 26.01.2026 for the main Republic Day function.
4. The labor, transportation, refreshment for labor, etc required during transport, installation, operation, etc. of the PA/Music Systems shall be arranged by the vendor on own expenses.
5. The vendor must ensure proper power/battery backup and there shall be zero tolerance for any malfunction.
6. The quality of sound output must be superior and aimed at both cultural programme and speech. Any deviation on this ground shall be deemed as non delivery of service and treated accordingly.
7. No tenders shall be entertained after after the last date i.e., 20.01.2026, 02:00 PM under any circumstances. This office reserves the right to reject or modify any or all the tenders at any time with out assigning any reasons thereof.
8. The payment to the vendor shall be subject to the satisfactory job and availability of funds in the relevant Head.

For any clarification, the interested parties may contact on Ph.No. 01932-464427 on working days during office hours within the stipulated time.

DIPK-9865/25 dated: 09-01-2026

Sd/-
District Information Officer,
Anantnag

Date: 09/01/2026

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office Of The Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Bandipora.

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: Construction of One Number Pre-fabricated Hut at Gori Hajin Shamthan-Arin Bandipora

Ref: - Fresh e-NIT No.68 R&B Bandipora of 2025-26 dated:-22-11-2025 under Endorsement no.EE/R&B/Bpr/6007-14 Dated:-22-11-2025.

Due to Inadequate, un-confirmatory documents uploaded by the participated bidders, the above subjected work advertised vide this office fresh e-NIT No in reference is hereby canceled.

Fresh NIT for the same shall be issued/up-loaded shortly.

No.:-EE/R&B/Bandi/7252-59
DIPK-9875/25
Dated:-09-01-2026.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Bandipora.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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Subject: Filling up of Faculty posts in Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, Srinagar in Health & Medical Education Department- Extension thereof.

NOTICE
Dated: 08-01-2026

It is notified for information of all the concerned candidates that the last date for filing the online application forms for the posts in Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, Srinagar in Health & Medical Education Department **notified vide Notification No. 15-PSC (DR-P) of 2025 dated 08.12.2025**, is hereby extended up to 23.01.2026.

However, the cutoff date for determination of the eligibility shall remain 11.01.2026.

(Signature)
8.1.2026

(Mushtaq Ahmad) JKAS,
Additional Secretary,
J&K Public Service Commission

DIPK-9869/25
dated: 09-01-2026

PSC/DR/Gazetted.SKIMS/2025

Dated: 08.01.2026



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PMAY Housing 'Fraud' Case

ED Books Gurugram Realty Group Promoter

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Enforcement Directorate on Friday filed a chargesheet against a promoter of Gurugram-based realty firm and some others as part of a money laundering probe into an alleged fraud with homebuyers under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

The prosecution complaint was filed before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court at Patiala House courts. The chargesheet has been filed under various sections of the anti-money laundering law, and Swaraj Singh Yadav, promoter of Ocean Seven Buildtech Pvt Ltd (OSB-PL), and his linked entities have been named as accused, the agency said in a statement.

Earlier this week, the ED had attached a villa, a hotel, and a resort, besides land parcels and deposits worth over Rs 50 crore of Swaraj and his associated entities.

Calling Yadav a "key" decision-maker of the realty company, the ED said he played a "central role" in orchestrating the "fraudulent" scheme and deliberately diverted funds collected from homebuyers for the construction of affordable houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) in Gurugram.

Yadav was arrested by the central probe agency in November as part of the investigation and is currently lodged in jail under judicial custody.

The ED had said it conducted a "detailed financial investiga-



tion which revealed systematic misuse of funds collected from a large number of homebuyers who had invested their savings in affordable housing projects."

Instead of being utilised for the construction and delivery of the promised units, it said, the projects remained incomplete, allotments were cancelled in an "arbitrary" manner, and the homebuyers were subjected to prolonged uncertainty and financial loss.

The funds entrusted for project development were "diverted" for purposes unrelated to the housing projects.

The money laundering investigation against OSBPL and Yadav stems from FIRs filed by the Delhi and Haryana police on charges that the company duped homebuyers of affordable housing projects through arbitrary cancellations and re-allotments.

The ED told a court, while seeking Yadav's remand, and in a public statement, that his wife Sunita Swaraj "relocated" to the US in August 2025 and was found residing at Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts.

UN Projects 6.6% Growth For India Despite US Tariff Impact

Press Trust Of India

UNITED NATIONS- India is projected to grow at 6.6 per cent in 2026, registering an "exceptionally high growth in a challenging global environment", with resilient private consumption and strong public investment largely offsetting the impact of high US tariffs, the United Nations has said.

The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026 report released on Thursday by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs said that economic growth in India is projected to "moderate" from an estimated 7.4 per cent in 2025 to 6.6 per cent this year. India will remain the world's fastest major economy, it said.

"Resilient private consumption, strong public investment, recent tax reforms, and lower interest rates are expected to support near-term growth. However, higher US tariffs could weigh on export performance in 2026 if current rates persist, as the US market accounts for about 18 per cent of total exports from India," the report said.

It added that while tariffs may adversely affect some product categories, key exports such as electronics and smartphones are expected to remain exempt.

"Moreover, strong demand from other major markets, including Europe and the Middle East, is projected to partially offset the impact," it



"Moreover, strong demand from other major markets, including Europe and the Middle East, is projected to partially offset the impact,"

said, adding that on the supply side, continued expansion in manufacturing and services sectors will remain a key driver of growth throughout the forecast period.

The report stressed that India's growth will be supported by resilient consumption and strong public investment, which "should largely offset the adverse impact of higher US tariffs".

"Recent tax reforms and monetary easing should pro-

vide additional near-term support," it added.

Ingo Pitterle, Senior Economist and Officer-in-Charge, Global Economic Monitoring Branch, Economic Analysis and Policy Division, UN DESA, told reporters at a briefing here that South Asia will remain the world's fastest growing region expanding by 5.6 per cent and much of this growth "comes from India where robust domestic demand, easing inflation supported by a strong harvest and continued policy support are driving growth".

On the macroeconomic situation in India, Pitterle said the agency has "significantly upgraded" its 2025 and 2026 GDP forecast for the country, reflecting an "exceptional combination of factors which have all worked in the direction of stronger growth in India, of a very dynamic economy".

He pointed to the strong consumer demand, public investment and falling inflation in India, partly due to a very abundant harvest.

Global Growth Seen At 2.7% This Year: UN Forecast

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS- The United Nations is forecasting that the global economy will grow by 2.7 per cent this year, slightly lower than last year's estimate, citing the impact of higher US tariffs, economic uncertainties and geopolitical tensions.

UN economists predicted that growth would edge up to 2.9 per cent in 2027. That's still well below the average 3.2 per cent growth between 2010 and 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic hurt economies around the globe. The estimate for 2025 is 2.8 per cent.

"A combination of economic, geopolitical and technological tensions is reshaping the global landscape," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday in a statement, "generating new economic uncertainty and social vulnerabilities."

But the UN economists said there was "unexpected resilience" to the sharp increases in US tariffs last year. This was supported by solid consumer spending and easing inflation, which helped sustain growth, but they cautioned that un-



derlying weaknesses persist.

According to the UN's World Economic Situation and Prospects report, growth in Europe, Japan and the United States is projected to hold broadly steady.

In the United States, the UN said growth declined from 2.8 per cent in 2024 to an estimated 1.9 per cent in 2025, "as strong consumer spending and AI-related investment were partly offset by weak residential and commercial construction."

The UN projected a very small rise in US economic growth this year to 2 per cent, and it forecast that growth will edge up to 2.2 per cent in 2027.

Japan's economy is fore-

cast to grow by 0.9 per cent this year and by 1 per cent in 2027 — below the 1.2 per cent growth estimated for 2025, the UN said.

"Private consumption is expected to recover gradually, while exports — particularly of automobiles — will likely remain constrained by higher United States tariffs and policy uncertainty," the economists said of Japan.

The European Union's economic growth is forecast to decline from 1.5 per cent in 2025 to 1.4 per cent in 2026 "as higher US tariffs and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty dampen exports," the report said. But it projected growth will increase to 1.6 per cent in 2027.

Gold Hits ₹1,41,700 Per 10g On Safe-Haven Demand

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Silver rebounded by Rs 6,500 to Rs 2,50,000 per kg in the national capital on Friday, while gold advanced to Rs 1,41,700 per 10 grams on renewed demand for the safe-haven asset amid global uncertainty, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

In the previous session, the white metal had tanked by Rs 12,500, or nearly 5 per cent, to Rs 2,43,500 per kilogram, due to profit booking by the traders. It had touched a record Rs 2,56,000 per kg on Wednesday.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity jumped by Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,41,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) compared to the previous close of Rs 1,40,500 per 10 grams.

"Gold advanced on Friday, buoyed by renewed haven demand and positive inflow from exchange-traded funds," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

He noted that markets were weighing threats from US President Donald Trump against Iran, while traders also positioned themselves to hedge against key event risks and anticipated volatility ahead of US Supreme Court rulings on tariff decisions.

"These factors combined to strengthen hedging demand for gold, reinforcing its role as a preferred haven amid rising uncertainty," Gandhi added.

However, an expert said that "if the court rules against the



tariffs, concerns over an intensifying global trade war could ease, potentially limiting further upside in gold and silver prices in the near term."

On the global front, spot gold was marginally trading higher at USD 4,479.38 per ounce while silver went up by USD 1.37, or 1.79 per cent, to USD 78.38 per ounce.

The white metal had plunged by USD 4.32, or 5.53 per cent, to hit an intraday low of USD 73.83 per ounce before settling at USD 76.92 per ounce in the international trade.

Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said the safe-haven demand for gold and silver was supported by reports that US President Trump is considering imposing steep tariffs, potentially as high as 500 per cent, on countries that continue to buy Russian oil.

Meanwhile, US Senator Lindsey Graham said such sanctions would give Trump leverage over major buyers such as China, India, and Brazil, pressuring them to halt purchases of discounted Russian crude that helps finance the war in Ukraine.

Stock Markets Take Downtrend For 5th Day; Sensex, Nifty Tank Nearly 1%

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure for the fifth straight session on Friday, falling nearly 1 per cent, as investors turned cautious due to growing concerns over potential US tariff hikes amid lingering geopolitical worries.

The relentless foreign capital flight from Indian equities also affected the market sentiment, traders said.

After a brief rebound in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex failed to carry forward the momentum and tumbled 604.72 points, or 0.72 per cent, to sink below the 84,000-level and settle at 83,576.24. During the day, it dropped 778.68 points, or 0.92 per cent, to 83,402.28.

A total of 3,104 stocks declined, while 1,062 advanced and 176 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 193.55 points or 0.75 per cent to 25,683.30.

In the past five trading days, the BSE benchmark declined 2,185.77 points, or 2.54 per cent, and the Nifty tumbled 645.25 points, or 2.45 per cent.

"Market sentiment stayed subdued amid elevated geopolitical and global trade-related concerns, particularly renewed uncertainty around potential US tariff actions and related Supreme Court developments. Persistent foreign institutional



selling and weakness across broader risk assets further compounded the negative bias, while heavyweights also added to the downside pressure," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the Sensex pack, NTPC, ICICI Bank, Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma and Bajaj Finance were among the biggest laggards.

In contrast, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Bharat Electronics and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

"On the macro front, market participants remained cautious ahead of the domestic inflation data for December, scheduled to be released on Monday.

"On the global front, market participants stayed on the sidelines amid caution ahead of a US Supreme Court decision on the validity of American tariffs. Sentiment was further dented after US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick indicated on Friday that the India-US trade agreement had been delayed," Ashika Institutional Equities said in a note.

Polarising Yet Exciting: 2026 Kia Seltos Set for Srinagar Debut

Mohammed Mudassir

SRINAGAR- The automotive scene in Kashmir is abuzz as the 2026 Kia Seltos is set to make its much-anticipated debut at the Pal Kia showroom, Pantha Chowk, on January 13. With a bold design refresh and a host of upgraded features, the latest iteration of Kia's popular SUV has already sparked lively debate, emerging as one of the most discussed car launches of the year.

Bold Design Draws Mixed Reactions

The 2026 Seltos commands attention with its sharper exterior styling. A redesigned front fascia, an updated "tiger-nose" grille and sleeker LED lighting give the SUV a more aggressive, modern stance. Many prospective buyers have welcomed the new look, calling it a significant upgrade over the outgoing model.

However, the bold styling

has also divided opinion. Some critics feel the design may be too aggressive for traditional SUV buyers. Despite the mixed reactions, there is little disagreement that the new Seltos stands out.



brings a fresh presence to Srinagar's roads.

Multiple Engine Options, Improved Ride

Under the hood, the 2026 Seltos continues to offer a range of powertrains catering to different driving needs:

- ▶ A 1.5-litre naturally aspirated petrol engine for

daily city use

- ▶ A 1.5-litre turbo-petrol engine for enhanced performance

- ▶ A 1.5-litre diesel engine aimed at efficiency and long-distance travel

The updated suspension and

ride quality are expected to be a highlight, particularly on Kashmir's winding and uneven roads, including routes around Dal Lake and Gulmarg. The SUV promises a balanced mix of comfort and handling, an important consideration for local buyers.

These upgrades are likely to appeal to younger and tech-savvy buyers across the Valley.

Pricing, Launch and Local Buzz

While Kia is yet to officially announce prices, the 2026 Seltos is expected to be competitively priced, reflecting its premium upgrades. The launch event at Pal Kia on Friday is likely to reveal variant-wise pricing, with strong interest already seen for test drives.

Six-Year Relief Plan Caps VI's Annual Payout At ₹124 Cr

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Offering a lifeline to struggling debt-laden telecom operator, the government has capped annual payouts to clear past dues at Rs 124 crore over the next six years, easing near-term cash flows, the company said on Friday.

Between March 2032 and March 2035, the yearly outgo will be trimmed to Rs 100 crore, Vodafone Idea said in a stock exchange filing citing a communication received from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

It went on to state that the remaining of the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues shall have to be paid in equal installments annually over six years starting March 2036.

The government had on December 31 approved a partial moratorium Vodafone Idea's past dues, freeing them at Rs 87,695 crore that was to be cleared from 2031-32 to 2040-41. This amount, too, will be reassessed by a committee based on an audit.

The payment schedule details sent Vodafone Idea shares higher by 9 per cent in morning trade but stock pared most of its gain by afternoon as analysts remained cautious about upcoming funding needs to support its 5G expansion plans. The stock closed at Rs 11.27, down 2 per cent, on the BSE.

Forex Reserves Drop By USD 9.80 Bln To USD 686.80 Bln

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- India's forex reserves dropped by USD 9.809 billion to USD 686.801 billion in the week to January 2, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the forex reserves had jumped by USD 3.293 billion to USD 696.61 billion.

For the week ended January 2, foreign currency assets, a major component of reserves, decreased by USD 7.622 billion to USD 551.99 billion, the central bank's data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Value of the gold reserves dropped by USD 2.058 billion to USD 111.262 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 25 million to USD 18.778 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF dropped by USD 105 million to USD 4.771 billion in the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data.

India, Pakistan Were Ready To Go At It Big: Trump Claims Again

Press Trust Of India

New York: US President Donald Trump has once again claimed he stopped the war between India and Pakistan, the two nuclear powers "ready to go at it big" while reiterating that eight planes were shot down in the conflict last year.

Trump has so far repeated the claim nearly 70 times that he stopped the conflict in May between India and Pakistan.

"I did put out eight wars, eight and a quarter, because, you know, Thailand and Cambodia started going at it again," Trump said in an interview with Fox News Thursday. He said that "in theory", one should get a Nobel prize for stopping each war.

"Because some of these wars were going on for 30 years. India, Pakistan were ready to go at it big. And these are two nuclear countries. I got that one stopped. Eight planes were shot down. They were really at it, and I got it stopped. It was a



big one," Trump said.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 civilians.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

India has consistently denied any third-party intervention in

resolving the conflict.

Trump added that he also stopped the war between Congo and Rwanda, which had been fighting for 30 years.

"And I got it stopped. I got so many wars (stopped). So it's such a beautiful thing. It makes me feel so good, not because of a Nobel Prize, but because I saved millions and millions of lives, and that's what really makes me feel good."

Trump was asked about Venezuela's opposition leader

María Corina Machado, who dedicated her Nobel Peace Prize last year to Trump, and has said she wants to give the honour to him for "liberating her country."

"Well, I understand she's coming in next week sometime, and I look forward to saying hello to her. And I've heard that she wants to do that. That would be a great honour," Trump said when asked if he would accept the Nobel Prize from Machado.

He added that it's been a "major embarrassment" for Norway that he didn't get the Nobel Peace Prize.

"Now, I don't know what Norway has to do with it, but that's where the committee is located, a lot of Norwegian people, and it's been a very big embarrassment to the country of Norway, whether they have anything to do with it or not. I think they do," he said.

Trump added that when "you put out eight wars, in theory, you should get one for each war."

Man Sentenced To Death For 'Sacrificing' 10-Year-Old Cousin

Press Trust Of India

Bahraich: A court here on Friday sentenced a man to death and imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh for killing his 10-year-old cousin as part of a human sacrifice ritual.

Additional District Government Counsel Sunil Kumar Jaiswal told PTI that the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Sunil Prasad convicted Anoop Verma of brutally murdering the boy, allegedly under the influence of a tantrik.

According to the prosecution, Verma, a resident of Parsa Agaiya village under Nanpara Kotwali area, had a two-year-old son who was mentally unwell.

Despite prolonged medical treatment, the child did not recover, following which Verma allegedly fell under the influence of the tantrik, who told him that sacrificing a child from the family would cure his son.

Jaiswal said on March 23, 2023, when other family members had gone to attend a 'mundan' ceremony, Verma was at home with his brother's



10-year-old son Vivek Verma.

He lured the boy to a nearby field on the pretext of buying him toffees and slit his throat with a spade. The body bore nine injury marks, he said.

A case was registered in this connection and Anoop Verma, Chintaram and the tantrik Jangli were named as accused. During questioning, Verma confessed to the crime

and the murder weapon, an iron spade, was recovered on his instance, the government counsel said.

While the police filed a chargesheet against all three, the court acquitted the other two due to lack of evidence, he said, adding that the court held Anoop Verma guilty and sentenced him to death, besides imposing a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Cold Wave Shows

night at minus 7.2 degrees Celsius compared to minus 9.2 degrees the previous night.

In the Jammu region, night temperatures also fell at several places. Jammu recorded a minimum of 5.6 degrees Celsius, down from 7.1 degrees, while Banihal slipped below freezing at minus 0.9 degrees compared to 3.7 degrees on Thursday.

Udhampur recorded minus 1.0 degree against 2.0 degrees a day earlier, while Rajouri saw a slight dip to minus 1.7 degrees from minus 1.0 degree.

Ladakh continued to reel under extreme cold conditions. Drass, the coldest place in the region, recorded minus 24.6 degrees Celsius, nearly unchanged from minus 24.7 degrees a day earlier.

Leh settled at minus 14.4 degrees compared to minus 14.6 degrees, while Nyoma witnessed a sharper fall to minus 21.6 degrees from minus 20.1 degrees. Padum recorded minus 20.3 degrees against minus 17.2 degrees on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department said no significant weather activity is expected across the region till January 21. It forecast the possibility of light snowfall at isolated higher reaches on January 22 and 23.

Officials said minimum temperatures are likely to fall further till January 10 and then rise gradually by one to two degrees Celsius thereafter. Dense fog is also expected at a few places in the Jammu division over the next five days, the MeT said.

NH-44 Choked

affected at Balinalla, Dewal, Nashri-Dalwas, and the stretch between Marog and Kishtwari Pather, where vehicles were forced to move on a single lane, leading to long queues and delays.

"Passengers and Light Motor Vehicle drivers are strongly advised to travel on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway during daylight hours only," the traffic officer said, warning that night travel remains particularly difficult.

He said the situation worsens after dark due to heavy movement of Heavy Motor Vehicles between the Nashri and Navyug tunnels, which often leads to congestion and traffic bottlenecks.

The official cautioned motorists against overtaking and wrong-lane driving, stating that such violations further aggravate congestion. Traffic regulation, he said, would depend on fair weather and road conditions, with both Light Motor Vehicles and Heavy Motor Vehicles allowed to ply from Jammu and Srinagar.

Real-time traffic updates will be coordinated through Traffic Control Units (TCUs) in Jammu

and Srinagar in coordination with the Ramban TCU, the official added.

He further said that movement of security forces convoys on NH-44 will also be allowed from both directions, subject to prevailing road and weather conditions. Convoy commanders have been instructed to confirm the highway's operational status with the Ramban TCU before commencing their journey.

Meanwhile, major alternate routes remain closed. The Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road (NH-244) has been shut due to fresh snowfall and accumulation of snow, while the Mughal Road continues to remain closed for the winter season.

Traffic on the Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumari road towards Kargil will be allowed only after clearance from the Border Roads Organisation and under favourable weather conditions. A strict travel window from Sonamarg towards Kargil will be enforced daily between 11 am and 3 pm.

During this period, only Light Motor Vehicles and Heavy Motor Vehicles with up to six tyres fitted with anti-skid chains will be permitted to travel. Motorists have been advised to carry anti-skid chains to ensure safer movement on slippery stretches. Final cut-off timings will be announced by the TCU Srinagar and the Police Control Room Kargil.

Security forces convoys travelling from Srinagar towards Kargil have been directed to plan their movement in a manner that does not disrupt civilian traffic.

The traffic department has urged all commuters to check the latest route status before undertaking their journey to avoid inconvenience. (KNS)

IED Blasts Among

security and investigative agencies. NSG Director General Brighu Srinivasan said the platform allows real-time exchange of information among government agencies working in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. He described it as a unique initiative, noting that during its development, 26 friendly countries were consulted and none had a comparable system in place.

According to the NSG, the database already has around 800 registered users from various agencies. It is capable of supporting post-blast investigations, identifying linkages across incidents, and aiding in predictive analysis to thwart potential attacks.

The project is part of the NSG's National Bomb Data Centre, established in 2000, which maintains records of all bombings in the country since 1999 and also tracks major global

explosion incidents for analytical purposes.

Shah also said that once the newly commissioned NSG hub in Ayodhya becomes operational, commandos will be able to reach any part of the country within one to one and a half hours. At present, the NSG operates active hubs in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Kolkata.

Raised in 1984, the NSG's black cat commandos are tasked with specialised counter-terrorism and counter-hijacking operations, as well as protection of select high-risk individuals.

Budget Session

February 1, a Sunday. After discussions on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address and Union Budget, Parliament will adjourn for a near month-long recess on February 13.

Parliament will reconvene on March 9 and the session will conclude on April 2, a Thursday. Usually Parliament is adjourned on a Friday but keeping in mind Good Friday on April 3 and the subsequent weekend, the session could conclude on April 2, officials said.

The recess in the Budget session helps department-related standing committees to examine demands for grants of various Union ministries and departments.

KU Announces

22, 2026," said an order.

The directive clarifies that departmental and campus offices will remain functional. It further instructs Heads, Directors, and Coordinators to ensure "that their offices function as per routine and examinations, if any, and other activities are conducted as per schedule."

This university break aligns with the phased winter vacation pattern currently observed across the Kashmir valley. For the 2025-2026 academic session, schools commenced breaks on a staggered schedule students from pre-primary to Class 8 began their vacation on December 1, 2025, which will continue until February 28, 2026. Students of Classes 9 through 12 started their break on December 11, 2025, which will conclude on February 22, 2026.

CM Omar Welcomes

tourists, were killed.

The Chief Minister said the J&K government has already submitted two major proposals to the Centre to ensure effective utilisation of river waters. One of the projects is the Tulbul Navigation Barrage, also known as the Jhelum Navigation Barrage. He said the project would raise the water level of Wular Lake, improve the

flow of the Jhelum and enhance electricity generation while also making the river navigable.

He said utilisation of Chenab river water would end water scarcity in Jammu for the next 30 years. "Suspension of the IWT will also allow us to desilt our rivers, something that was not possible earlier," he added.

Omar Abdullah said Jammu and Kashmir had borne heavy losses under the treaty while Punjab enjoyed greater rights over rivers flowing through its territory. "Dams constructed downstream caused submergence in several areas of J&K. Despite this, we never complained and maintained cordial relations with Punjab," he said.

On political developments after the abrogation of Article 370, the Chief Minister said the promises made at the time had not been fulfilled. "We were told that terrorism, unemployment and violence would end. These claims have proved to be false," he said.

Referring to the security situation, he said the year began with the Pahalgam tourist attack and ended with blasts in Delhi, highlighting the gap between assurances and reality.

He said the government made sincere efforts to revive tourism after the Pahalgam attack but stressed that the tragedy should not be viewed through economic figures. "Precious lives were lost. Tourism numbers should not be exaggerated as it can turn tourists into targets," he said, adding that recent snowfall has improved tourist footfall.

Criticising the Centre, Omar Abdullah said renaming MGNREGA was a wrong move as Mahatma Gandhi's name was removed, and accused the Centre of shifting the financial burden of the scheme onto the states.

On the Chattisinghpura killings, he said a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation had identified the perpetrators. Some of the accused have died, while efforts are continuing to bring the remaining individuals to justice.

Responding to speculation about separate statehood for Jammu, the Chief Minister said Ladakh had suffered after being granted Union Territory status and warned against repeating the experiment. "If they want to ruin Jammu, they are free to do so," he said.

He said even the establishment of a single medical college was resisted and questioned how a separate state could function under such an approach. Omar Abdullah said Jammu's economy had earlier depended largely on the Darbar Move, which was discontinued but later restored by his government.

The Chief Minister also acknowledged the drug problem in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the government was making firm efforts to prevent

drug smuggling and curb substance abuse.

Commenting on reports of minorities being targeted in Bangladesh, he said protecting minorities is the responsibility of every nation. "While lessons are offered to others, the same principles must be implemented at home as well," he said.

SC Allows JKCA

constitution. The bench sought a response from the JKCA on the petition and posted the matter for hearing on February 2.

It said that in the meantime, the election may be conducted, but its results should not be declared.

The plea, filed by several cricket clubs, has also sought a direction to appoint a retired apex court judge as administrator of the JKCA with full powers to take over charge of the day-to-day administration of the association from the existing BCCI sub-committee.

Several clubs affiliated with the JKCA had raised objections over the preparation of electoral rolls for the upcoming elections, alleging violation of the constitution and the exclusion of 16 clubs from the poll process.

Hydel Power

anticipated power supply position for January-2026 for both the Union Territories reveals that there will be a peak availability of 2460 Megawatts (MWs) against the requirement of 3737 MWs—keeping a loophole of 1277 MWs.

However, the official documents also said that representatives of HP SLDC, Punjab SLDC and J&K SLDC informed that the shortfall would be met through real-time exchanges and Banking arrangements.

Jammu and Kashmir, hydel power generation has already reduced by nearly 70 percent from the local generation plants.

An official had informed that the power generation from all the power plants owned by Jammu and Kashmir has decreased by nearly 800-900 Megawatts (MWs).

The official had also said, "The power generation from across local power plants is currently ranging from 330 MWs to 400 MWs."

It also said, "From one of the plants from Baglihar, the power generation is ranging from 250-380 MWs and in case of another power plant of Baglihar, Kishenpur and New Wanpoh, we are generating a maximum of one MW."

The official further informed that the department is able to generate only 71 MWs from Kashmir based power plants. (KNO)



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BCB official calling Tamim 'an Indian agent' invites wrath of Bangladesh players

Press Trust of India

A senior Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official calling former captain Tamim Iqbal "an Indian agent" has not gone down well with the players in the country.

Tamim, one of the finest openers to have come out of Bangladesh, had advised BCB to not be driven by emotion while deciding the way forward on the national team's participation in the T20 World Cup in India.

Nazmul, chairman of BCB finance committee, called the left-hander opener "an Indian agent" in a Facebook post.

"This time, the people of Bangladesh witnessed, with their own eyes, the emergence of yet another proven Indian agent," he wrote.

The post received immediate backlash from former and current cricketers, including Taskin Ahmed, Mominul Haque and Taijul Islam.

Even Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) expressed shock at Nazmul's comments.

"A comment made by BCB di-

rector M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal has come to the attention of Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh. We are stunned, shocked, and outraged by it.

"Such a remark by a board official about the most successful opener in Bangladesh's history, who represented the country for 16 years, is utterly condemnable.

"Not only because it concerns a player like Tamim, but such comments about any cricketer of the country are unacceptable and insulting to the entire cricketing community," the players' body said in a statement.

The 36-year-old Tamim played 70 Tests, 243 ODIs and 78 T20 Internationals for his country in a fairly accomplished career.

"We strongly protest against this comment. When a responsible board director makes such remarks on a public platform, it also raises serious questions about the code of conduct of board officials," it said.

"We have already submitted a protest letter to the



BCB president, demanding a public apology from the concerned board director and that he be brought under accountability. We hope the BCB president will take appropriate action as soon as possible," CWAB added.

Bangladesh wrote to International Cricket Council to move their T20 World Cup games out of India after BCCI instructed IPL franchise KKR to release Mustafizur Rahman ahead of the 2026 edition without giving a specific reason.

"Cricket is the life of Bangladesh. A recent comment surrounding a former national captain who has made a major contribution to the game has caused many to reflect," said pacer Taskin.

"I believe that such remarks directed at a former cricketer of the country are not helpful in the interest of Bangladesh cricket. I hope the concerned authorities will consider the matter seriously and adopt a more responsible stance in the future," he said.

Back in 2007, it was Tamim's fine half-century that had

helped Bangladesh knock India out of the ODI World Cup in the Caribbean.

Former Bangladesh captain Mominul said the comments made by Nazmul against Tamim were unacceptable.

"The comment made by BCB director M Nazmul Islam regarding former national captain Tamim Iqbal is completely unacceptable and insulting to the country's cricketing community. Such behaviour towards a cricketer is in direct conflict with the board's responsibility and ethics," said Mominul.

"A senior cricketer was not given even the minimum respect; instead, he was deliberately humiliated in public. Such remarks show a lack of even basic decorum regarding where and how to speak while holding such a high responsibility.

"I strongly condemn this comment and firmly demand a public apology from the concerned director and that he be brought under accountability. I call upon BCB to take swift and strict action," said Mominul.

ODI Cricket Still Has Two World Events: Will Young

Press Trust of India

VADODARA: The relevance and context of ODI cricket has been questioned time and again but New Zealand batter Will Young on Friday pointed out that the format still has two "world events with so much wonderful history".

On a breezy Friday noon, a new-look New Zealand side spent nearly three hours sweating it out ahead of the three-match ODI series to kickstart a long tour of the Indian subcontinent, which also includes a five-match T20I series followed by the T20 World Cup next month.

With a heavy dose of T20 cricket lined up — some of their players will also feature in the Indian Premier League — Young acknowledged that the three-match ODI series, starting here on Sunday, could be lost in the "greater context".

"Especially with the T20 World Cup round the corner, it is easy to have the series lost in the greater context," Young told the media here at the Baroda Cricket Association Stadium.

"(But) when you're playing for your country, there should always be those two things (passion and motivation). It is a slightly different format from Test and T20 cricket, and these days you probably play a little bit less as well."

"But you've got to remember, there's still two ICC world events — the Champions Trophy and the World Cup — which has had so much wonderful history over such a long time," Young added.

Young, who was the Player of the Series when the Kiwis left India shellshocked with a 3-0 win in the Test series in 2024-25, admitted it was his best performance in the longest format.



"You'd have to put it right at the top, yeah," he said.

Young said there will be no thought of avenging the loss to India in the final of the Champions Trophy as the Kiwis are not thinking on those lines.

"It's a completely different challenge (than) that was the Champions Trophy, they were different sides so that's behind us," he said.

"It's not even in our minds at all, we're excited by a three-match bilateral series in one-day cricket and when the game starts," he added.

New Zealand squad features some young talent across the department and Young said it's up to the players to ensure they are delivering what they are required to.

"It is a slightly different team, but one thing the Black Caps group over

the last few years has had to deal with is different personnel coming in and out," he said.

"There's franchise leagues, there's personal matters that come up and it's been awesome to see that the youngsters come into this group and excel and do well right from the word go."

"One thing we talk about is, putting into the bucket — a nice metaphor — what I mean by that is you're putting in more than you're taking out and that's expected from everyone in this group, not just the senior players," he added.

Young continued, "We'll try and get around those young guys who haven't had experience yet in these conditions and back them to the hilt, that's the main thing is, (for) them to know they've got the backing of their teammates to go out and express themselves and have a great time."

Young said he was not surprised to see Indian superstars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma back in their prime form.

"Kohli and Sharma are incredible players and they've been at the top of their game in world cricket for a long, long time. (They are the) players that I look up to, (along with) a lot of the other players in this Black Caps group, we've always looked up to too," he said.

Young backed rookie Vellore-born leg-spinner Adithya Ashok to come good on his maiden tour of India.

"Adi has played a reasonable amount of domestic cricket at home (and) he's an incredibly talented leg spin bowler," Young said.

"He's got all the tricks and he bowls at a really nice pace too, and he can extract a bit of bounce out of the surface it's going to be really exciting to see how Adi goes in one-day cricket."

Viral Instagram Video Teases ₹10 Crore Gold Giveaway

Gurgaon: Gurgaon-based fintech founder and influencer Rayan Malhotra has announced a ₹10 crore gold giveaway on his app NeoZAP if Virat Kohli scores a century in the upcoming three-match ODI series against New Zealand, starting 11 January. Kohli, who currently stands at 84 international centuries, needs 16 more to equal Sachin Tendulkar's long-standing record of 100 centuries. In a video posted on Instagram, Rayan points out that Kohli has a limited number of matches left in his career,

making every innings count.

"If Virat scores even one century in this series, I will give away ₹10 crore worth of gold to users on NeoZAP," Malhotra says in the video, which is circling around social media.

NeoZAP app lets users buy & sell gold digitally (as low as ₹50) and get an additional 5% return over gold's annual market appreciation by leasing it to popular jewellery brands like BlueStone. Known for offering a virtual 'Gold Account' with HDFC Bank, it further allows users to withdraw their

gold balance anytime as cash or physical jewellery at Tanishq stores through their association with SAFEGOLD.

NeoZAP is a product by NeoFintly, a fintech venture backed by Neo Group. The announcement has sparked conversation online, with the video already garnering thousands of organic views.

(Disclaimer: This content is sourced from a syndicated feed and is published as received. Kashmir Observer takes no editorial responsibility for the above press release.)

Nikhat Zareen Rebuilds After Setbacks, Targets LA Olympics

Aparajita Upadhyay

GREATER NOIDA: The last year proved to be a period of reflection for Nikhat Zareen, one that taught her to temper expectations while also strengthening her resolve to fulfil her dream of becoming an Olympic champion.

After a stellar run that included back-to-back world titles, a Commonwealth Games gold and an Asian Games bronze, expectations were sky-high for Nikhat heading into the 2024 Paris Olympics.

However, fate had a different script in store as the Telangana boxer returned empty-handed after losing to eventual champion Wu Yu in the round of 16.

"In sports, there are ups and downs. You can't just expect one athlete to perform all the time and be at her peak level. But you don't lose hope," Nikhat told PTI during the ongoing National Championships.

"Setbacks are a part of sport, a part of life. That's when you realise where you are going wrong. So you work on that. Take a pause and come back stronger."

That is exactly what Nikhat attempted to do after the Paris Games, taking a break to reset. But her comeback was derailed by a knee injury that required months of rehab.

She eventually returned to competition at a national tournament in June-July, followed by an appearance at the



World Championships, where she lost to two-time Olympic silver medalist Buse Naz Cakiroglu.

"I lost to a two-time Olympic medalist. So no regrets but obviously, there is disappointment that I came empty-handed." The 29-year-old is no stranger to adversity, having waited patiently for years while boxing legend M C Mary Kom reigned supreme in her weight category.

"Nikhat Zareen has been stubborn since childhood. I knew it from the start that my life won't be easy. There will be ups and downs in life. So I don't expect I will be handed things on a platter."

"If I decide that I want to become a world champion, I will give it my all. That quality sets me apart from others."

"And I have decided I want to become an Olympic champion. Because until you don't think it in your mind, how will it happen?"

Working closely with coach Sunny

Gehlawat, Nikhat recently ended her medal drought by winning the World Cup final. The focus, Gehlawat said, has been on fine-tuning technique. "There was a gap after the Olympics when we started rehab," Gehlawat said.

"We worked on small mistakes, going back to the basics and improving her counter-attacks."

"She used to box more on the back foot, so we worked on moving forward. We focused on both technique and tactics."

With age now a factor — Nikhat will be 32 at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics —, sports science and nutrition have become central to her preparation.

"We have incorporated sports science and are paying close attention to her nutrition as well, because age does matter now," Gehlawat said. "We need to keep her in top form until LA."

With a packed season ahead featuring the Asian Championships, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, Nikhat is keen on starting the season with a gold and she is a step away from that. She reached the National Championships final with a split 4-1 win over Kusum Baghel in the semifinals on Friday.

"At the beginning of 2026, I want to be a national champion because this is an important year," Nikhat said.

"It won't be easy, but my spirits are high. Hopefully, I will continue this motivation throughout the year," she added. (PTI)

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