

₹74,427 Crore vs ₹23 Crore: Why Mumbai's Civic Body Dwarfs Srinagar

Mumbai's civic body earns more than Srinagar many times over, while Maharashtra's economy towers over J&K. The gap shows why Kashmir must shift from high spending and high dependence to high earning and high autonomy.



Irshad Mushtaq

Srinagar: At first glance, the comparison feels mismatched. But the numbers erase that doubt.

Mumbai runs one city, while Jammu and Kashmir runs a Union Territory. The financial gap turns that hierarchy on its head.

Mumbai's municipal corporation plans to spend ₹74,427 crore in 2025-26. It expects to

raise about ₹43,159 crore on its own through property taxes, user charges and other local revenues.

That makes the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) the richest civic body in India, with annual income that dwarfs many state departments.

In comparison, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) earns only a few dozen crore

rupees a year. Official estimates place its own income at about ₹23 crore, and broader definitions place it near ₹65 crore.

Even if one takes the higher figure, Mumbai's civic income stands more than 650 times larger.

Compared with ₹23 crore, the gap rises to nearly 1,875 times.

Population does not close this gap. Mumbai city has about 1.7 to 1.8 crore people.

Srinagar has around 1.5 to 1.8 million. Mumbai has roughly ten times more residents. Its civic income, however, runs into hundreds of times more. Per resident, Mumbai's city government commands far greater financial power.

The contrast grows sharper at the state level.

Jammu and Kashmir's gross Budget for 2025-26 stands at

about ₹1.40 lakh crore. Revenue receipts amount to ₹90,529 crore. Of this, only ₹31,905 crore comes from its own resources. Around ₹58,624 crore flows from the Centre through tax devolution and grants.

Two-thirds of J&K's revenue arrives from Delhi. One-third rises within the Union Territory.

Own tax revenue stands at 21,550 crore. **| More on P10**

50th SASB Meeting

Set Up Shelter Sheds On Tracks: LG To Officials

Insurance Cover For Amarnath Yatris Increased To Rs 10 Lakh
Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board on Wednesday approved a series of key measures for the 2026 Amarnath Yatra, including a laser and sound show dedicated to Baba Barfani and enhancement of accidental insurance cover for pilgrims and associated stakeholders.

The decisions were taken at the 50th Board meeting chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chairman of the Shrine Board, at Lok Bhavan, Jammu.

The Board approved installation of a laser and sound show in Srinagar and Jammu as a cultural tribute to Baba Barfani. The show will also highlight the spiritual heritage of the Union Territory.

It was also announced that the Pratham Pooja for the 2026 pilgrimage will be performed on June 29, 2026, on the occasion of Jyeshtha Purnimaa. The

Board Approves Laser & Sound Show Dedicated To Baba Barfani



formal commencement date of the Yatra will be announced separately.

In a significant decision, the Board enhanced the accidental insurance cover from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh for registered yatris, service providers, officials, seasonal workers and pujaris.

Reviewing preparations for the upcoming pilgrimage, the Lieutenant Governor directed officials to identify suitable locations for **| More on P10**

'Youth Must Harness Spiritual Fire with Scientific Prowess'

LG Manoj Sinha on Thursday called upon the people to celebrate India's "grand renaissance", asserting that the country is poised to guide the world towards the **| More on P10**

'Inclusion Of Transgender Persons'

HC Expands Sexual Harassment Panel

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has reconstituted and expanded the mandate of its Sexual Harassment Probe Committee to include matters relating to transgender persons, in compliance with directions issued by the Supreme Court of India.

As per an order issued by the Registrar General, the existing committee will now prevent and

redress complaints of sexual harassment concerning both women and transgender persons. The move follows directions passed by the Supreme Court in Writ Petition Civil No. 1245 of 2025 titled Geeta Rani versus Union of India and others.

The order states that the committee already in place shall continue to function with its revised jurisdiction. Separate committees have been notified for the **| More on P10**



Children hold placards during a protest in Srinagar for regularisation of daily wagers. KO Photo By Abid Bhat.

Govt Seeks Rs 1,000 Cr For Flood-Damaged Roads In J&K

KO Web Desk

Srinagar Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Thursday said the government has submitted a proposal of Rs 1,000 crore to the Finance Department for permanent restoration of road infrastructure damaged by flash floods and heavy rains in September last year.

Winding up the discussion on the demands for grants of the Public Works, Industries, Mining and Labour departments in the Assembly, Choudhary said the proposal has been submitted



under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment scheme.

"The department is committed to permanent restoration of damaged road infrastructure due to heavy flash

floods and rains. An estimated Rs 1,000 crore has been projected for undertaking restoration works," he said.

He added that while temporary works have been executed in **| More on P10**

JKRTC Proposes 200 More E-Buses

The Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation has proposed procurement of 200 additional electric buses under the Prime Minister e-Drive scheme, the Assembly was informed on Thursday.

Replying to a question by BJP MLA Dr Devender Kumar Manyal, Transport Minister Satish Sharma said that upon induction of the new buses, feasibility for extending electric bus services to areas **| More on P10**

1,425 Illegal Structures Razed In J&K Since Oct 2024: CM

Observer News Service

Jammu: A total of 1,425 illegal structures, including residential and commercial buildings, have been demolished across Jammu and Kashmir since the formation of the National Conference led government in October 2024, the Assembly was informed on Thursday.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in a written reply to a starred question by PDP legislator Mir Mohammad Fayaz, said the demolitions were carried out under provisions of the J&K Public Premises Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants Act, 1988 and the Control of Building Operations Act, 1988 after following due procedure.

The demolished properties included the house of journalist Arfaz Ahmad Daing in Jammu, which was brought down by the Jammu Development Authority on November 27 last year. Referring to the case, the chief minister said Daing, in a written statement submitted on



November 19, 2025, had stated that he had no connection with the land or property in question. The demolition drive was conducted after due verification from the concerned revenue authorities and in accordance with procedure, he said.

Omar asserted that no construction is permitted without proper authorisation and that demolition drives are undertaken only after verification by revenue authorities and service of notices.

Of the 1,425 structures demolished, 1,194 were residential and 231 commercial. Srinagar accounted **| More on P10**

DIPR Hosts 'Cine Connect' Workshop To Boost Film Culture

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) today organised a one-day workshop 'CINE CONNECT'- a workshop on Cinema Art at Media Complex here.

The workshop was attended by students from Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu, Government Polytechnic College Gandhinagar as well as Artists from Academy of Art Culture and Languages.

The workshop was conducted by DIPR as part of ongoing efforts to promote film culture and create awareness about opportunities in the cinema industry under the Film Policy



of Jammu & Kashmir.

Speaking during the concluding ceremony of the workshop, Director Information and Public Relations, Nitish Rajora said that the initiative aims to strengthen the cinematic ecosystem and provide valuable

exposure to aspiring artists and filmmakers in Jammu & Kashmir. He added that the department will organise such kind of workshops on regular basis to acquaint the aspiring students and young minds about the **| More on P10**

Cheque Bounce Case

Court Fines Property Dealer Rs 1.44 Cr, Awards 1-Year Jail

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A court here on Thursday convicted a property dealer from Budgam in a cheque dishonour case and imposed a fine of Rs 1.44 crore—double the cheque amount—besides sentencing him to one year of simple imprisonment.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar, Ms Tabasum, awarded the sentence to Shafiq Ahmad Sheikh of Najan, Beerwah, Budgam, while disposing of a complaint filed in 2021.

The complaint was filed under Sections 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, by Mohammad Yaseen Mir, a resident of Lawaypora through advocate Marouf

Khan, who alleged that the accused had cheated him in a land deal at Dodpathri.

According to the complaint, the accused, who had close family relations with the complainant and was engaged in property dealings, assured him in 2018 that he would arrange over five kanals of land at Dodpathri, a tourist and health resort area in the central Budgam district. Trusting the accused, the complainant paid Rs 72 lakh in several instalments, according to the complaint.

However, when the promised revenue extracts (Intikhab-e-Jamabandi) were not provided, the complainant made independent inquiries and **| More on P10**

Working To Bring J&K Youth Into National Mainstream: MoS

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: The Centre is working to bring the youth of Jammu and Kashmir into the national mainstream and steer them away from the wrong path, Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Replying to supplementary questions during Question Hour, she said that while stone pelt incidents were once common in Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Territory is now moving toward employment generation and formalisation of jobs.

"For the first time in the last seven years, new EPFO subscribers have joined in large numbers. In Jammu and Kashmir alone, 1.6 lakh new subscribers



have joined. This is a very big thing," she said.

Karandlaje said the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is focused on integrating people of Jammu and Kashmir into the national mainstream. "Our purpose is to save the youth of Jammu and Kashmir and provide them with new employment," she added, accusing the Opposition of **| More on P10**



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OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death
Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Bashir Ahmad Dar S/O Gh Mohd Dar Sagipora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of Son Namely Saqlain Bashir who was Born on 03-02-2008 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate Bomai
fko

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR, GOOM AHMADPORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas an application has been received from Mr. Mohammad Maqbool Dar, S/o Ghulam Rasool Dar, R/o Maharajpora Kungamdara, for issuance of Date of Birth certificates in favour of his wards, namely: Iyman Maqbool, born on 05-02-2014; and Aashiya Maqbool, born on 02-01-2015.

As per the school record, the above-mentioned application is under process in the office of the undersigned. Any person having any objection with regard to the issuance of the said Date of Birth certificates may submit his/her objection, in writing, to the office of the undersigned within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar
Goom Ahmadpora

fko

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death
Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Gulzar Ahmad Ganaie S/Ogh Mohd Ganaie Zaloora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of wards Namely Humaria Gulzar 01-03-2015
Arwa Jan 22-12-2017
Asta Jan 22-12-2017

and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate Bomai
fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Farhad Zehra D/o Ghulam Mohammad Bhat R/o Diver Yakhmanpora Tehsil Singapora with verified date of birth 23/07/2021 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd
Naib Tehsildar Pattan
fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Hudah Binti Waseem D/o Waseem Mohmmad Ganie R/o Ganiepora Buran Tehsil Pattan with verified date of birth 05/06/2020 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd
Naib Tehsildar Pattan
fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth BDO Sherabad Khore has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Ab Hamid Lone s/o Mohd Sultan Lone R/o Hanjiwera Bala with verified date of birth 01/01/1969. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd
Naib Tehsildar Pattan
fko

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death
Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Imtiyaz Ahmad Mir S/o Ab Subhan Mir R/o Tujar, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of wards Namely Haya Imtiyaz 14-09-2016
Eeman Imtiyaz 20-06-2019
and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate Bomai
fko

Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Department of Urban Local Bodies Kashmir Srinagar OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL GANDERBAL

POINT NO:61:- SHG interviews - 2 No (attached list/details of interviews done at ULB level)

Subject: Engagement of Self Help Groups as Community Mobilizers in Municipal Council Ganderbal.

Reference: List of shortlisted candidates received from the office of the Mission Director SBM (U)-2.0 vide No. MD/SBM-U/2025-26/2153 dated 04/02/2026.

It is hereby notified for the information of all the shortlisted candidates, whose particulars have been received from the office of the Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)-2.0, for engagement of Self Help Groups (SHGs) as Community Mobilizers in Municipal Council Ganderbal, that the Interview of the said candidates shall be conducted as per the schedule detailed below:-

Sr. No	Candidates from Sr. No-To	Date of interview	Venue	Time
01	1609 TO 1667	16-02-2026	Town Hall MC Ganderbal	11:00 A.M

All candidates are advised to bring the duly filled Personal Interview Application Form (Annexure-3) along with original documents pertaining to their eligibility, including:

- Educational qualification certificates/marks sheets.
- Aadhaar Card.
- Endorsement Form.
- SHG Passbook/ SHG Member Card.
- SHG Registration Certificate (LOKOS Certificate).

Failure to produce the requisite original documents at the time of interview shall render the candidature liable for rejection. The relevant Annexures and list of shortlisted candidates are enclosed herewith for reference.

No:- MC/GBL/2025-26/541-46

DIPK-NB-3295/25 Dated:12/02/2026

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Municipal Council Ganderbal

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI

Subject: Application MUSHTAQ AHMAD SOFI S/O ABDUL GANI SOFI R/O SHEIKHPORA for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of SEERAT MUSHTAQ D/o MUSHTAQ AHMAD SOFI for the issuance of RBA in his/her / their favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the SOFI community having annual income 560000// the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- MUSHTAQ AHMAD SOFI self 49 years Farmer
- GULSHANA BEGUM wife 46 years H/W
- SEERAT MUSHTAQ applicant 16 years student
- MOHSIN MUSHTAQ son 12 years student
- MASROOR MUSHTAQ son 07 years student

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

fko NAIB TEHSILDAR KREERI

Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education New Campus, Bemina, Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the candidate mentioned below has reported the loss of his original Qualification Certificate issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE), New Campus, Bemina, Srinagar, and has applied for issuance of a Duplicate Qualification Certificate.

Particulars of the candidate are as under:

Name: Muazam Amin Wani

Father's Name: Mohammad Amin Wani

Mother's Name: Afroz Mirza

Roll No.: 2405220 Class: 12th

Year / Session: 2017 Registration No.: NI444 2850022

Date of Birth: 27-04-2001

Residence: Wata Magam, District Budgam - 193401

Now, if any person has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same to the office of the undersigned within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained. Further, the Qualification Certificate bearing Serial No. 718013 shall be treated as CANCELLED.

Deputy Secretary
Certificates, KD

bmg

اطلاع عام

برخاص وعام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کی جاتا ہے کہ مجھے اپنے بچے ایگر ہینسٹ زیر کنٹرول نمبر 0206010003154 جو کہ میرے سر کے نام پر یعنی محمد

رجب حجام کے نام پر ہے۔ اب اس کو میرے نام یعنی غلام حسن حجام کے نام پر کروانا مطلوب ہے۔ اس بارے میں اس اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر بلا ٹیکہ ڈانچہ پٹی ڈی ڈی بڈگام کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

غلام حسن حجام داماد محمد رجب حجام ساکن پار نیوہ بڈگام۔ فون

MBC- 9797816892

از نیابت یومی زینگیئر

عنوان:- درخواست منجانب فردوس احمد تیلی والد محمد رمضان تیلی ساکن سیلو ہمراد عطا لگی OBC تحت 176 SRO تین اولاد ان دیم فردوس دیمنا فردوس

اشتہار ہر خاص وعام

معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹیفیکٹ بذمرہ تیلی پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن واقعی تیلی ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساکن سیلو میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کبھی بھی ترک سکونت نہیں کی ہے ساکن کا کہہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

فردوس احمد تیلی والد محمد رمضان تیلی	مزدوری	45 سال
فہیمہ بیگم زوجہ فردوس احمد تیلی	گھریلو کام	43 سال
تمنا فردوس دختر	زیر تعلیم	18 سال
ندیم فردوس پسر	--	17 سال
سیرت فردوس	--	16 سال
ایت فردوس دختر	--	13 سال

ساکن مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفیکٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کنکری ہموار آمدنی 6000 روپے تک ہے۔ سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذریا اعتراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخبار سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنے مذریعہ اعتراض عدالت حد کو فوری اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نایب تحصیلدار

FKO

از نیابت یومی زینگیئر

عنوان:- درخواست منجانب جاویدا محمد کار و ولد عبدالرحیم کار ساکن سیلو ہمراد عطا لگی OBC تحت 176 SRO تین دختر با جاوید

اشتہار ہر خاص وعام

معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹیفیکٹ بذمرہ کار پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن واقعی کمار ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساکن سیلو میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کبھی بھی ترک سکونت نہیں کی ہے ساکن کا کہہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

جاویدا محمد کار و ولد عبدالرحیم کار	پیش بولڈر	48 سال
افروزہ بیگم زوجہ جاویدا احمد	گھریلو کام	44 سال
باہیہ جاوید دختر	زیر تعلیم	16 سال

ایشان جاوید

ساکن مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفیکٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کنکری ہموار آمدنی 46967 روپے تک ہے۔ سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذریا اعتراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخبار سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنے مذریعہ اعتراض عدالت حد کو فوری اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نایب تحصیلدار

FKO

Phone / fax no 01954-295614 Email id eomc-kunzer-jk@jk.gov.in

Government of Jammu And Kashmir

Office of the Executive Officer Municipal Committee Kunzer Sanitation Service Tariff & Penalties

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Municipal Council / Committee Kunzer hereby notifies sanitation service tariffs and penalties for non-compliance with Solid Waste Management Rules 2016, 2019 & 2026.

Category	Tariff ()
Residential	50
Commercial	100
Institutional	100
Industrial	500

Nature of Violation	Penalty (₹)
Non-segregation of waste at source	500
Littering / open dumping	500
Repeated non-compliance	1000

SD/-
Executive Officer
Municipal Committee Kunzer

No:MC/KZ/2026/244-46
Dated:-12-02-2026

Phone / fax no 01954-295614 Email id eomc-kunzer-jk@jk.gov.in

Government of Jammu And Kashmir

Office of the Executive Officer Municipal Committee Kunzer Sanitation Service Tariff & Penalties

User Charges for Solid Waste Management Services

PUBLIC NOTICE

As per Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, 2019 & 2026 and SBM-U guidelines, the Municipal Committee Kunzer hereby notifies User Charges for door-to-door collection, transportation of municipal solid waste.

Category	User Charge (Rs)
Residential Households	50
Commercial Establishments	100
Institutional Establishments	100
Industrial Units	500

Non-payment of user charges shall attract penal action as per notified.

SD/-
Executive Officer
Municipal Committee KUNZER
Dated:-12-02-2026

Phone / fax no 01954-295614

Email id eomc-kunzer-jk@jk.gov.in

Government of Jammu And Kashmir

Office of the Executive Officer Municipal Committee Kunzer Sanitation Service Tariff & Penalties

Ban on Single Use Plastic & Thin Plastic Carry Bags

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2022 (as amended), Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 and advisories issued under Swachh Bharat Mission—Urban, the Municipal Committee Kunzer hereby notifies that the use, sale, storage, manufacture, transport and distribution of Single Use Plastic (SUP), Styrofoam, thermocol and non-biodegradable plastic carry bags below prescribed thickness is strictly prohibited within municipal limits.

Enforcement shall be undertaken through inspections and challan mechanism. Violators shall be penalized as per notified rates.

Violation	Fine ()	Remarks
Plastic carry bags <120 microns	100-200	Per kg / per instance
Plastic carry bags <75 microns	200-500	Per kg / per instance
Single Use Plastic items	500-2000	Per kg / per instance

(Issued in public interest)

SD/-
Executive Officer
Municipal Committee Kunzer

No:MC/KZ/2026/238-40

DIPK-NB-3289/25 Dated:-12-02-2026

Locals Protest Against Forest Department Over Timber Log Safety

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: After the death of a six-year-old boy and critical injuries to his elder brother, inhabitants on Thursday staged a protest at Shalteng Ghat on the outskirts of Srinagar, alleging negligence in stacking of timber logs belonging to the State Forest Corporation.

The protest erupted following the tragic incident in which two brothers, Arhan Imran, 6, and Huzaif Imran, 10, sons of Muhammad Imran and inhabitants of Boatman Colony, Bemina, were reportedly playing near stacked timber logs at the site when the logs rolled down and crushed them.

Both children were imme-

diately rushed to JVC Hospital, Bemina, where doctors declared Arhan brought dead. His brother Huzaif is stated to be in critical condition and undergoing treatment.

Angered by the incident, locals assembled near the site and accused the Forest Department of piling up massive logs without adequate safety measures. They alleged that the timber was stacked in a hazardous manner, posing serious risk to public safety.

Protesters said the children belonged to a financially weak family and were living in a tin shed. They demanded immediate compensation for the bereaved family and strict action against the officials responsible for maintaining the timber yard. – (KNT)

GONGUL-2026

11th SKUAST-K AgriTech Mela to Showcase ‘NextGen Agriculture’



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) is set to host its 11th annual AgriTech Mela, ‘Gongul-2026’, from February 14 to 16 at its main campus in Shalimar, Srinagar.

The three-day mega agricultural event will be held under the theme “NextGen Agriculture: My Produce – My Price”, focusing on innovation-driven, farmer-centric growth and market empowerment. University authorities described Gongul as more than an exhibition, terming it a “living innovation ecosystem” aimed at bridging research, industry and the farming community.

The inaugural function, scheduled for Saturday, February 14 at 10:30 am, will be graced by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as the chief guest.

Considered one of the largest agriculture melas in the region, Gongul-2026 is expected to witness participation from over 400 agribusiness companies, university faculties, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), and line

departments. The university anticipates a footfall of more than five lakh visitors over the course of the event.

The mela will bring together a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including farmers, agriculture and allied government departments, researchers, entrepreneurs, industry partners, agricultural financiers, agribusiness firms, farmer producer organizations, and students from across the country.

According to Prof. Azmat Alam Khan, Registrar and Chairman of the Media Cell, the event aims to strengthen linkages between innovation and grassroots farming by providing a platform for showcasing cutting-edge technologies, value-addition models and market-oriented solutions.

Media representatives have been invited to cover the event, with the university stating that participation of the press is vital in disseminating technological advancements to the farming community. The invitation card along with the media card will serve as vehicle and entry passes for the event.

DC Chairs District Telecom Committee Meeting

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A meeting of District Telecom Committee (DTC) was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review and discuss the development of telecom infrastructure under Jammu & Kashmir Communication and Connectivity Infrastructure Project (JKCCIP).

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Dy Superintendent of Police, Syed Sleeth Shah; Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar; As-

sistant Commissioner Development; Tariq Ahmad Reshi, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad; DIO, NIC Srinagar, Shahnaz Nayeem, besides Officers from Forest, SDA, PCC and representatives of various telecom companies operating in district.

The Committee deliberated on key issues related to strengthening of telecom infrastructure and enhancement of network connectivity across Srinagar district. Detailed discussions were held regarding construction and commissioning of mobile towers, 4G saturation, status of Right of Way (RoW) applications for Optical Fiber Cable (OFC), progress under the amended BharatNet Project, 5G street furniture mapping and other related matters.



A BOY PLUNGES into the cold waters of Dal Lake as his friend watches from the embankment. .
KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Daily Wagers protest in City, Seek Regularization

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Daily wagers and casual labourers from various government departments on Thursday staged a protest at Sher-i-Kashmir Park in Srinagar, demanding immediate regularization of their services.

Scores of workers, accompanied by their children, gathered inside the park and raised slogans seeking justice and a clear policy decision from the government. Protesters were seen holding placards highlighting their long years of service and financial hardships.

The agitating workers said many among them have been serving different departments for over two decades but continue to remain on temporary status without job security, fixed pay structure, or service benefits. They expressed resentment over what they described as prolonged neglect of their demands despite repeated assurances over the years.

Speaking on the occasion, Sajad Parray said daily wagers across departments have consistently discharged their duties in essential public services yet remain without regular status. He said the uncertainty surrounding



their employment has severely impacted their families and children, many of whom were present during the demonstration.

The protesters urged the administration to frame and implement a comprehensive and time-bound regularization policy applicable to daily wagers across departments. They maintained that their extended tenure and contribution to public services

justify permanent employment. They called for a march towards the National Conference office on February 16.

According to KNT, the protest remained peaceful, with police personnel deployed in the area to maintain order. The workers said they would continue their struggle until a formal decision is taken regarding their regularization.

ASHA Workers Seek Implementation of Minimum Wages Act

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Accredited Social Health Activist workers on Thursday staged a protest in Srinagar demanding implementation of the Minimum Wages Act.

A large number of ASHA workers assembled in the city and voiced concern over what they described as inadequate honorarium and delay in ensuring statutory wage protections. The protesting workers demanded that they be brought under the ambit of the Minimum Wages Act and provided remuneration in accordance with government norms.

Carrying placards and raising slogans, the demonstrators said they have been rendering essential health services at the grassroots level for years but continue to face financial insecurity. They urged the government to acknowledge their contribution in strengthening public health outreach and to address their demands without further delay.

The protesting workers said they would continue to press for their rights until concrete steps are taken to ensure fair compensation and job security.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
CIVIL SECRETARIAT, J&K

Subject: Verification of Character & Antecedents.

NOTICE

Through the medium of this notice, Ms. Muzamil Ali D/o Mst. Haseena Bano [Ex-Daftari of J&K Secretariat (Subordinate) Service] R/o Saikdafar Near Bukhari, Tehsil Eidgah, District Srinagar A/p Stadium Colony Budshah Nagar Srinagar, Tehsil Channapora, District Srinagar is hereby informed to submit her E-mail ID, Phone Number and other relevant details in Room No. 14, Ground Floor, Winter Secretariat, Srinagar, in person, within a period of twenty one (21) days positively, for the purpose of filling up of e-verification roll to obtain her Character & Antecedents Report from the Criminal Investigation Department, J&K, failing which, she shall forfeit her claim under Jammu & Kashmir SRO-43 of 1994.

In case the candidate fails to report to General Administration Department within the prescribed time period, her claim for compassionate appointment shall be forfeited without any further notice.

No.: GAD-ESTB/122/2022-09 (174835)
Dated: 11.02.2026

DIPK-10865-25
DT: 12/02/2026

(Urvi Singh) JKAS
Under Secretary to the Government



- 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
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311


RAILWAYS


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

HIGHWAY STATUS


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

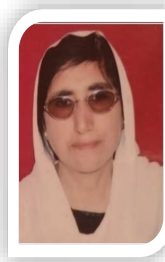


HIJRI
CALENDAR
24 Shaban
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	5:54
ZUHR	12:45
ASR	4:32
Magrib	6:15
ISHA	7:37

SAD DEMISE



With profound grief and deep sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Mrs Hajira W/o Late Mohammad Sidiq Sheikh** R/O Tankipora, Srinagar who left for heavenly abode on February 11, 2026 (Wednesday) after a prolonged illness.

May Almighty Allah grant the departed soul highest place in Jannatul Firdous. Ameen

The congregational **Fateha Khawani** will be held on February 15, 2026 (Sunday) at the ancestral graveyard at Shaheed Gunj, Srinagar, Kashmir.

Ladies are requested not to bring any kind of fruits, etc during the taziyat days.

Bereaved Sheikh Family:
Contact Number: 7051090944

All praises to Allah,
the Most Merciful and the Most Generous.



Ramzan Appeal 2026~

Ration Kits for Needy Families

Feeding a fasting family is among the most beloved deeds in the sight of Allah.

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,
As the blessed month of Ramazan 2026 approaches, Idara Falahi Aam Waqf humbly appeals for the distribution of Ramazaan Ration Kits for poor and deserving families.



Distributing Approximately
300 Ration Kits
Approximate cost of one kit: ₹2,400/-
Each kit provides essential food items for entire family.

Contribute Generously:
J&K BANK ACCOUNT
NO: 1112040102856261
J&K BANK Branch Alamgari Bazar
IFSC: JAKA0ALMGRI

Idara Falahi Aam Waqf
Alamgari Bazaar, Srinagar

Has Imran Khan Lost Vision? Pakistan SC Orders Exam

Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad (PTI) Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday ordered authorities to set up a medical board to examine jailed former premier Imran Khan's eyes following a report about vision loss in one of them.

The apex court also ordered authorities to allow the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder to speak with his children.



Khan has been in jail since August 5, 2023, when he was arrested at his Lahore residence after his conviction in a corruption case. Currently, he is incarcerated at the high-security Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan resumed hearing a case about the living conditions of the 73-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician and ordered a detailed check-up before February 16.

Last month, Khan was rushed to a hospital in Islamabad, where a medical procedure for an eye ailment was performed. However, his party has been raising concerns about his health.

"The issue of Imran's health is most important," Afridi said

during the hearing, adding that "intervention was necessary".

The court also ordered that Khan should be allowed to hold a phone call with his children.

Afridi noted that the issue of Khan's "telephone calls with his children is also important".

During the hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan affirmed that it was the state's responsibility to provide medical facilities.

The order came after the Supreme Court on Tuesday tasked PTI lawyer Salman Safdar to meet Khan in Adiala Jail and submit a report on the former prime minister's living conditions.

The lawyer submitted the report after the visit.

It was the first meeting with Khan by anyone since December 2, when his sister Uzma Khan was allowed to meet him for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, the Dawn newspaper, citing the report submitted by the lawyer, reported that it detailed Safdar's meeting with Khan, the cell conditions, the facilities and amenities provided to the ex-premier, a description of his living compound and the lawyer's process of reaching the jail.

In his report, Safdar quoted Khan as telling him that "despite the treatment administered (including an injection), he has been left with only 15 per cent vision in his right eye".

Khan told Safdar that approximately "three to four months earlier, until October 2025, he had normal 6 x 6 vision in both eyes".

He then began experiencing persistent blurred and hazy vi-



US-Israel Talks Highlight Rift Over Iran Approach

Trans Asia News

Washington — US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ended a closed-door White House meeting without a breakthrough on Iran policy, underscoring widening strategic tensions as Washington pursues nuclear diplomacy with Tehran despite mounting military pressure in the region.

The three-hour meeting on Wednesday — their seventh since Trump returned to office — came amid escalating fears of confrontation with Iran. While Netanyahu has pushed for a harder line, Trump later said he insisted negotiations must continue.

"There was nothing definitive reached other than I insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a deal can be consummated," Trump said in a social media post. "If it can, that will be a preference. If it cannot, we will just have to see what the outcome will be."

Netanyahu's brief readout said the talks covered Iran negotiations, Gaza and wider regional developments, but offered no sign of alignment on next steps. **Diplomacy under military shadow**

The muted outcome contrasts with rising military tension. The United States has expanded deployments across the Middle East, moving additional naval and air assets closer to Iran even as indirect nuclear talks continue under Omani mediation.

Pentagon movements in recent weeks — including carrier strike group repositioning and advanced fighter deployments — signal readiness for escalation. Analysts say the dual-track strategy reflects Trump's attempt to maintain leverage while avoiding immediate war.

For Netanyahu, facing domestic political pressures and an upcoming election, convincing Washington to permanently halt Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities remains central. Israeli officials fear diplomacy could leave Tehran's strategic infrastructure intact.

Yet Trump's insistence on continuing talks suggests reluctance to trigger a regional conflict that could destabilize global markets and risk American casualties — a scenario that could carry political consequences at home.

Tehran signals resilience

Iran responded to the atmosphere with defiant messaging.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said nationwide rallies marking the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution demonstrated that the country's "rights and dignity are not for sale."

He accused nuclear-armed adversaries of attempting to weaken Iran but said the Islamic Republic had endured through domestic resilience rather than foreign dependence. While reiterating support for diplomacy, Araghchi said any agreement must be "fair and balanced" and warned Tehran would defend its sovereignty "whatever the cost."

Iranian officials also framed recent US military buildup as coercive pressure designed to influence negotiations. Still, Tehran has kept diplomatic channels open, suggesting it wants sanctions relief while avoiding direct war.

A red line inside Iran

Inside Iran, public rhetoric has hardened around a symbolic boundary: Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Citizens interviewed by Iranian media warned that any direct attack on Khamenei would be viewed as an assault on national sovereignty, not merely a political strike.

US to Pay \$29 Million to Family of Slain Indian Student

Press Trust Of India

Seattle: The city of Seattle has reached a USD 29 million settlement with the family of a 23-year-old graduate student from India who was struck by a speeding police officer as she crossed a street in 2023.

Jaahnavi Kandula was hit by Officer Kevin Dave, who was driving as fast as 119 kph in a 40-kph zone as he responded to a drug overdose call. He had his emergency lights on and had been using his siren at intersections.

"Jaahnavi Kandula's death was heartbreaking, and the city hopes this financial settlement brings some sense of closure to the Kandula family," City Attorney Erika Evans said in a statement Wednesday. "Jaahnavi Kandula's life mattered. It mattered to her family, her friends and to our community."

Kandula had been working toward a master's degree in information systems at the Seattle campus of Northeastern University.

Attorneys for Kandula's family did not immediately respond to emails or phone calls seeking comment. The parties filed a notice of settlement in King County Superior Court last Friday. The local news website Puget Sound first reported about the agreement.



Kandula's death ignited outrage and demonstrations, particularly after a recording from another officer's body camera surfaced in which the officer laughed and suggested Kandula's life had "limited value" and the city should "just write a check."

Diplomats from India sought an investigation. The city's civilian watchdog found the comments by Officer Daniel Auderer, who was a union leader, damaged the department's reputation and undermined public trust.

Auderer was later fired and has sued the city for wrongful termination. He said his remarks were intended to criticise how attorneys were likely to respond to the death.

The police department also fired the driving officer, who was cited for negligent driving and ordered to pay a USD 5,000 fine. King County prosecutors declined to file felony charges against him, saying they could not prove he was deliberately disregarding safety when he struck Kandula.

Indian Students Going Abroad Steadily Declining

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The number of Indian students going abroad for higher education has steadily declined over the past three years, according to data shared by the Ministry of Education.

The information was shared by Union Minister of State for Education Sukanta Majumdar in response to a written question in Rajya Sabha.

According to the statistics shared by Majumdar, over 9.08 lakh Indians travelled overseas for study in 2023, a number that fell to 7.7 lakh in 2024 and further to 6.26 lakh in 2025.

The data is based on infor-

mation provided by Union home ministry's Bureau of Immigration (BoI) for the period 2023 to 2025.

"Studies abroad are a matter of individual will and choice, which is contingent on a variety of factors such as affordability, access to bank loans, exposure to foreign societies, aptitude for particular branch of studies etc. The government recognises the reality of a global workplace, especially in an era of knowledge economy," the MoS said.

"A successful, prosperous, and influential diaspora is viewed as an asset for India. The government's efforts are also aimed at harnessing the potential of the diaspora, including the sharing of knowledge and exper-

tise," he added.

The Minister said the government has taken multiple steps under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to improve the quality of higher education within India. These include upgrading infrastructure, strengthening accreditation, promoting research and innovation and expanding digital education initiatives.

"To offer global-quality education within India, foreign universities have been allowed to set up campuses in the country. So far, 14 foreign institutions have received approval, while five overseas universities have been cleared to operate in GIFT City, Gujarat," Majumdar said.

US Allies at NATO Focus on Europe as Trump Steps Back

Associated Press

Brussels: European allies at NATO on Thursday brushed aside concerns that the United States has stepped back from its leadership role of the world's biggest security organisation, leaving them and Canada to do the lion's share of defending Europe.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth did not attend Thursday's gathering of defense ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels. His no-show came after Secretary of State Marco Rubio skipped the last meeting of NATO foreign ministers in December.

It's rare for members of a US administration to miss a meeting of the organization's top decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, at the level of ministers, let alone two meetings in a row. Under Secretary of Defence Elbridge Colby was sent in Hegseth's place.

"Sadly for him, he is missing a good party," Icelandic Foreign Minister Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir told reporters. "Of course, it's always better that the ministers attend here, but I would not describe it as a bad signal."

"I'm not disappointed," German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said. "Each of

us has a full agenda. And one time the American defense minister is here, and one time not, so it's his decision and his duties he has to fulfill."

How times have changed

When asked what NATO's purpose was in its infancy in 1949, NATO's first secretary-general, the British general and diplomat Lord Hastings Ismay, was reputed to have replied: "To keep the Americans in, the Russians out and the Germans down."

Nowadays, Germany is stepping up. After Russia invaded Ukraine four years ago, it vowed to spend 100 billion euros (USD 118 billion) to modernise its armed forces in coming years.

A big part of NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte's job is to keep the Americans in.

"They have to take care of the whole world. This is the United States," Rutte told reporters before chairing the meeting. "I totally accept it, agree with it."

"They have always consistently pleaded for Europe doing more, Canada doing more, taking more care of the defense of NATO territory, of course in conjunction with the United States," he said.

Vande Mataram Order 'Attack on Religious Freedom': Jamiat



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prominent Muslim organisation Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind on Thursday described as "unilateral" and "arbitrary" the Centre's directive mandating the singing of all six stanzas of the national song Vande Mataram at official functions and alleged it is a "blatant attack" on the freedom of religion guaranteed by the Constitution.

Jamiat president Maulana Arshad Madani said Muslims do not prevent anyone from singing or playing Vande Mataram, but some verses of the song are based on beliefs that portray the homeland as a deity, which contradict the fundamental belief of monotheistic religions.

The Central government's "unilateral and coercive decision" to mandate all stanzas of Vande Mataram to be sung in all government programmes, schools, colleges, and functions is not only a "blatant attack on the freedom of religion guaranteed by the Constitu-

tion of India but also a systematic attempt to curtail the constitutional rights of minorities," he said in a post on X.

"Since a Muslim worships only one Allah, forcing him to sing this song is a clear violation of Article 25 of the Constitution and several judgments of the Supreme Court," he claimed.

Making this song mandatory and attempting to impose it on citizens is not an expression of patriotism; rather, it reflects electoral politics, a sectarian agenda, and a deliberate effort to divert public attention from fundamental issues, Madani said.

"The true measure of love for one's country lies not in slogans but in character and sacrifice. The shining examples of which can be seen prominently in the historic struggle of Muslims and the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind. Such decisions weaken the country's peace, unity, and democratic values and undermine the spirit of the Constitution," Madani said.

Man Held for Stealing Scooty to Work as Delivery Boy

New Delhi, Feb 12 (PTI) A 30-year-old man was arrested in southwest Delhi's Dwarka for allegedly stealing two-wheelers to use them for seeking employment on app-based delivery platforms, police said on Thursday.

The accused, identified as Aditya Kumar, a resident of Najafgarh, allegedly stole motorcycles and scooters because he did not own a vehicle. According to the police, Kumar wanted to register himself on delivery and transport applications to earn a livelihood, they said.

Based on the CCTV footage from Dwarka and adjoining areas, the police laid a trap and apprehended him near Uttam Nagar on February 9. A stolen motorcycle and a scooter were recovered from his possession, the police said.

With his arrest, two cases of motor vehicle theft registered at Chhawla and Bindapur police stations have been solved, they added.

Dispute Over Milk Takes Nasty Turn in MP Village

Raisen (MP), Feb 12 (PTI) A woman allegedly bit and chewed a farmer's finger following a heated argument after he refused to provide her with cow's milk in a village in Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district on Thursday, police said.

The incident occurred in Banskhedha village under the Salamampur police station area, about 26 km from the district headquarters, Salamampur police station house officer (SHO) Dinesh Raghuvanshi told PTI.

Farmer Laxman Singh Kori, in his complaint, said Maya Bai Kori, wife of his neighbour Maharaj Singh Kori, came to his house in the morning seeking cow's milk. When he declined, an argument broke out between the two and the woman allegedly started abusing him.



The incident occurred in Banskhedha village under the Salamampur police station area, about 26 km from the district headquarters

During the altercation, she allegedly grabbed his hand, put one of his fingers in her mouth and chewed it, leaving him bleeding, the SHO said.

The injured farmer was medically examined and a case was registered against the woman, Raghuvanshi added.

Drone Exposes Exam Copying; 17 Teachers Booked in Beed

Press Trust Of India

Beed: A case has been registered against 17 teachers after a drone camera exposed large-scale copying during an HSC (Class 12) examination paper at a centre in Maharashtra's Beed district, officials said on Thursday.

Close PlayerUnibots.com

The mass cheating took place on Tuesday, the first day of the Class 12 exams conducted by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, at Centre 224 in Chousala, an official said.

Drone-mounted surveil-



lance cameras deployed by the authorities captured supervisors in 16 examination halls not only failing to prevent copying but also allegedly helping students cheat openly, he said.

The episode undermined

the administration's efforts to ensure a "copy-free" examination system, the official said.

After learning about the incident, Beed Collector Vivek Johnson ordered strict action against those responsible for the lapse.

Asian Waterbird Census Begins Across Kashmir Wetlands

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The 2026 Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) began across Kashmir on Thursday, covering 27 major wetlands as part of a global exercise to monitor migratory bird populations and assess wetland health, officials said.

The annual census, conducted between December and March in different regions, is being organised in Kashmir by the Department of Wildlife Protection in coordination with the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA).

Deputy Conservator, WUCMA, Altaf Hussain told the KNO that the exercise aims to record migratory bird patterns and estimate their numbers across key wetlands, including Hokersar, Wular Lake, Shallabugh and Haigam.

"Basically, the exercise is called the Asian Waterbird Census. It is a global initiative where we try to understand and record the pat-



tern of migratory birds and their migration," Hussain said.

This year, 27 wetlands have been identified for the census, with 58 designated counting points across these sites. "For example, in Wular Lake alone, we have 10 different points. Teams visit each point and record species, numbers and location details on properly designed data sheets," he said.

Around 58 teams, accompanied by bird experts, were deployed to

the field on Thursday. The collected data sheets will be analysed by departmental experts to arrive at an estimated number of migratory birds visiting Kashmir's wetlands this season.

An orientation programme was held in Srinagar a day earlier, drawing over 350 participants, including students and volunteers from institutions such as the University of Kashmir, SKUAST, Amar Singh College, SP College and Govern-

ment Degree College Ganderbal, besides representatives of non-governmental organisations.

"We train volunteers on how to conduct field visits, record data, and follow standard protocols. They are briefed about the do's and don'ts while estimating bird populations," Hussain said.

He said most migratory birds visiting Kashmir originate from Siberia, Central Asian countries such as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia, and parts of eastern

Europe. Harsh winters in their native habitats, where temperatures can drop to minus 20 to minus 25 degrees Celsius, freeze water bodies and reduce food availability, forcing them to migrate.

"Kashmir is primarily a stop-over site. Birds rest here for days or even months before moving towards warmer plains. They cross the Himalayas, which is a challenging journey, and use our wetlands to rest and re-energise," he said.

The Deputy Conservator added that bird numbers serve as an important ecological indicator. "If migratory birds are staying in good numbers, it suggests that wetlands are in reasonably healthy condition. Though challenges remain, interventions over the past several years have shown positive impact," he said.

The census findings are expected to contribute to long-term conservation planning and wetland management strategies in the region.

28 Rebuttals Issued on Fake News Since April 2025: Govt

Draft Media Policy 2026 proposes regulation of digital platforms, under inter-departmental consultation

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday informed the Assembly that the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) has issued 28 rebuttals to fake and misleading news reports between April 1, 2025, and January 31, 2026, as part of its efforts to counter misinformation.

Replying to a question by BJP MLA R S Pathania, the government said a dedicated Media Monitoring Cell has been established within the DIPR to monitor fake and misleading news in real time.

Of the 28 rebuttals issued during the period, 20 were disseminated through press releases while eight were issued via the official social media handles of DIPR, J&K, it said.

The government clarified that regulation of websites, digital platforms, online news channels and Fact Checking Units (FCUs) does not fall within the purview of the Information Department. It also stated



that the department does not impose fines on organisations, corporate entities or individuals for spreading fake news.

In response to another query, the government said no private FCUs are recognised or authorised by the Information Department and that it does not currently verify or grade private fact-checking bodies.

The House was further informed that the Draft New Media Policy-2026 proposes provisions to regulate new and social media along with print media. The draft policy is presently under inter-departmental consultation for finalisation.

On cybersecurity, the government said comprehensive measures have

been undertaken in coordination with the IT Department to strengthen cyber infrastructure across departments and institutions.

It said mandatory security audits have been conducted for websites hosted on the State Data Centre and NIC Mini Data Centre, while redundant websites have been decommissioned or DNS de-mapped.

Cybersecurity governance has also been institutionalised through monthly review meetings chaired by the Chief Secretary, the establishment of an Information Security Steering Committee, nomination of Internal Security Officers and preparation of Cyber Crisis Management Plans by all departments, the government added.

BRO Reopens Gurez Road, Restores LoC Connectivity

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Thursday completed snow clearance operations on the strategic Gurez-Bandipora road, restoring connectivity to the remote valley and the Line of Control (LoC) in record time, officials said.

The road, which passes through Razdan Top at an altitude of around 3,300 metres, usually remains closed for nearly six months during winter due to heavy snowfall, cutting off Gurez valley from the rest of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This is the shortest time in which the Gurez road has been reopened after heavy snowfall. Despite extreme weather conditions, including sub-zero temperatures, icy stretches and strong winds, our teams worked relentlessly to restore connectivity," a senior BRO official told KNO.

The 35-kilometre stretch from Bandipora to Razdan Top is considered particularly challenging during winter. Officials said co-ordinated efforts between the district administration and the BRO enabled early



snow clearance this year.

"For the first time, we made a concerted attempt to keep the road open for a longer duration during winter. Our objective was to ensure that residents of Gurez do not remain completely cut off and have access to essential supplies and services," a district administration official said.

Gurez valley traditionally remains cut off for nearly half a year, forcing residents to stock essential commodities before the onset of winter, usually by October. The road is generally closed following the first major snowfall at Raz-

dan Top.

Authorities said that, subject to fair weather and final clearance from the BRO, traffic will be allowed to ply from Bandipora to Gurez on February 13, 2026, as per a regulated schedule.

Traffic will start from TCP Tragbal at 9:00 am, with a cut-off time of 10:00 am. No heavy motor vehicles (HMs) will be allowed on the route. Officials said vehicles without anti-skid chains will not be permitted, and no traffic will be allowed from the opposite direction, that is, from Gurez to Bandipora.

J&K HC to Hear Mehraj Malik's PSA Case Next Week

SRINAGAR: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh will hear next week AAP MLA Mehraj Malik's petition challenging his detention under the controversial Public Safety Act.

Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani heard the arguments of state counsels Sunil Sethi and Monica Kohli on Thursday.

The court listed the case for further hearing on February 19, Advocate Appu Singh Sialthia told reporters after the court hearing. According to PTI, the court had part heard the arguments of the state counsels last week. Malik, the MLA from Doda, was arrested under the Public Safety Act in September last year. The Aam Admi Party had challenged his detention in the high court. (Observer News Service)

Followed Norms While Procuring 133 Luxury Vehicles in 2024-25: Govt

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday said that it has purchased 133 luxury vehicles in the financial year 2024-25 and maintained that procurement of official vehicles was strictly in accordance with prescribed norms, denying any lack of standardisation in the process.

In a written reply to a question by BJP MLA Ranbir Singh Pathania, Transport Minister Satish Sharma said the State Motor Garages Department purchased 133 luxury vehicles in 2024-25 and 10 in FY 2023-24. He said there has been no deviation from norms in the procurement of vehicles by various departments and public sector undertakings (PSUs).

However, the minister added that in certain cases, procurement of high-end vehicles has been permitted by the government through relaxation of prescribed norms, considering difficult terrain, operational requirements and the nature of official duties.

According to PTI, the government also rejected the claim that the absence of a prescribed make or model has led to an additional burden on the public exchequer, reiterating that procurement is undertaken strictly as per laid-down norms. He further said that spare parts were procured in accordance with the General Financial Rules (GFR). (Observer News Service)

Residential House of Drug Peddler Attached in Bandipora

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday attached a three-story residential house belonging to an alleged drug peddler in Bandipora district.

Police have attached a three-storey house of notorious drug peddler Mohammad Shafi Sheikh, here in Ward No 5, Sheikh Mohalla, under Section 68-F of the NDPS Act 1985, a police spokesperson said. According to the spokesperson, Sheikh was found involved in several NDPS cases registered at the Bandipora police station.

According to PTI, during the investigation, the police identified the property as illegally acquired. It was prima facie acquired from the illicit trafficking of Narcotic drugs and Psychotropic Substances by the owner, the spokesperson added. (Observer News Service)

Policy for Setting Up Private Universities in J&K Framed: Govt

JAMMU: In a significant development, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has said that a policy regarding the establishment of private universities in the Union Territory has been framed.

In a written response to a cut motion moved by Peoples Conference MLA Sajad Gani Lone, according to KNO, Minister in-charge of Higher Education Sakina Itoo said that a policy for setting up private universities in Jammu & Kashmir has been prepared.

"...the demands regarding the setting up of private universities in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir have been framed by the Higher Education Department following comprehensive deliberations and are currently under examination in the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs," she said.

Suspension of Students Taken Up with Rajasthan Govt: Nasir Aslam

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, on Thursday said that the Jammu and Kashmir Administration has taken up with the Rajasthan Government the issue of suspension of 33 J&K students studying in a college there.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Kupwara, Wani, as per KNO said, the J&K has taken up the matter with the Rajasthan government and efforts are on to resolve the issue.

Responding to queries about education facilities in the district, the Advisor said the government has prioritised the education sector, describing it as vital for every society and nation. "Education is very important for every society, every nation, every area and every sector. We have taken it very seriously and our Education Minister, Sakina Ji, is working very hard," he said.

Wani, who inspected the district library in Kupwara, expressed concern over its condition and called for immediate improvements. "Today, I saw the condition of the district library. A new block is being constructed. There is a good inventory of books, but the arrangement and accessibility to children

is lacking."

"Equipment is insufficient, seating is improper and staff strength is inadequate," he said, adding that he will request Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and other concerned departments for additional funding to upgrade the facility.

"We will bring it to a level where children can truly benefit," he said.

On the issue of daily wagers, casual labourers and ongoing protests, the Advisor appealed for calm and patience, assuring that the government is actively working to address their concerns.

"My request to them is that since their issues are being resolved, they should have some patience. The report will be out soon. All genuine cases will be regularised. The process started last year and the government is committed to resolving their legitimate matters," he said.

He said that wherever there are pending cases, they will be cleared as soon as the committee's report is received. "In systems like ours, both the political and bureaucratic sides have to move together. This has been the pattern since independence with sometimes tense, sometimes smooth — but always evolving," he said.

Structural Imbalance Emerges in J&K Apple Sector

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A significant structural imbalance has come to light in Jammu & Kashmir's apple economy, with official data indicating that Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage capacity in South Kashmir has surpassed the region's total apple production, while North and Central Kashmir continue to face an acute shortage of such facilities.

Nearly 100 CA storage units are currently concentrated in the twin districts of Shopian and Pulwama. Together, these districts produce approximately 3,95,000 metric tonnes (MT) of apples annually. However, the total CA storage capacity in these areas is nearing 5,00,000 MT — exceeding their yearly output by a substantial margin.

Growers and industry stakeholders say the mismatch reflects a lack of region-wise planning in infrastructure expansion. While CA facilities were introduced to enable farmers to store produce and sell during the off-season for better price realisation, the concentration of units in already saturated districts has raised questions about equitable development.

In contrast, major apple-producing districts such as Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora, Budgam, Gander-



bal and parts of Srinagar have barely 10 to 15 CA units combined. Farmers from these regions are often compelled to transport their produce to South Kashmir, incurring additional transportation costs and facing handling losses.

Growers report that the situation has led to logistical bottlenecks during peak harvesting season. The shortage of local storage reduces their bargaining power, forcing many into distress sales when market arrivals are high and prices are low. Instead of promoting decentralised value addition, the current infrastructure pattern has concentrated economic activity in specific pockets.

Experts caution that disproportionate allocation of public subsidies and infrastructure in select districts could create long-term economic distortions. They note that CA storage facilities were envisioned as tools to stabilise prices and enhance farmers' incomes across all apple belts, not just in limited areas.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD Muthi, Akhnoor Road, Jammu/Zam Zam Complex Rambagh, Srinagar www.jkssb.nic.in

NOTICE

Subject: Issuance of Admit Cards to the candidates for Written Examination for the various post of Home Department.

1. The Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) is conducting the Written Examination for various posts mentioned below:

S. No.	Name of the post	Notification No.	Item No.	Date of Examination	Timing of Examination
1	Assistant Scientific Officer (Chemistry and Toxicology)	06 of 2025	19	18.02.2026 (Shift-I)	11:00 AM to 01:00 PM
2	Assistant Scientific Officer (Documents)		20	18.02.2026 (Shift-II)	03:00 PM to 05:00 PM

2. Candidates can download their Admit Cards from the JKSSB's Official website (www.jkssb.nic.in) w.e.f. 14.02.2026 using their credentials. They must read the instructions contained therein, carefully.

3. However, in case, a candidate is not able to download his/her admit card, he or she may represent before the board two days before the Examination Date with a valid proof of having filled in Online application form and online fee, failing which it shall be presumed that they are not interested in appearing in the said examination and no claim whatsoever shall be entertained.

4. Candidates are advised to report to their respective examination centres at least two (02) hours before the scheduled examination time for Biometric/Facial Authentication.

5. The candidates are advised to take printout of the admit card well in advance to avoid last minute rush.

6. The candidature of candidates claiming eligibility by misrepresentation/concealment of any material facts, impersonation, fraud, etc. shall be liable for cancellation and disciplinary action, as deemed appropriate.

7. The Board reserves the right to cancel the candidature of any candidate at any stage at which he/she is found ineligible.

8. The candidates are also advised to be in touch with the JKSSB's Official Website (www.jkssb.nic.in) for the latest updates on the examinations and Admit cards will not be sent by post.

Stepwise procedure to download JKSSB E-Admit Card:

i. To download E-Admit Card, first visit the official website of JKSSB, i.e. www.jkssb.nic.in

ii. On the homepage, there will be a link to download E-Admit Card.

iii. Click on the Download Admit Card Link.

iv. You can Download your Admit Card by using Username and Password.

v. Download and print your JKSSB Admit Card.

vi. Candidate must bring the clear printed copy of E-Admit card on the day of examination.

No. JKSSB-COEEXAM(UT)/8/2026-03 (7839130)

Reyaz Ahmad Malik (JKAS)

Dated: 11.02.2026

DIPK-10853-25

DT: 12/02/2026

Controller of Examinations

J&K Services Selection Board

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

KO VIEW

Kashmir’s Handmade Advantage

People around the world are buying more handmade goods these days. Shoppers in Europe, the Gulf, and North America want the real thing, rather than factory copies. Kashmir sits in a strong position to meet that demand.

The artisans already have the talent. What they need most is larger scale, sharper branding, and much easier ways to reach buyers.

The export numbers tell a mixed story. Handicrafts still bring in money, but many artisans say their margins are shrinking fast. Middlemen still control the supply chains and take most of the profit. Raw materials cost more than ever. Young people hesitate to enter these trades because the work brings pride but very little stable income. Families who once passed carpet-weaving from one generation to the next now push their children toward service sectors instead.

Government schemes and GI tags have helped. They protect products like Pashmina and cut down on counterfeits, and that matters a lot. But a tag alone does not put money in anyone’s pocket. Artisans still struggle with simple things like good packaging, digital marketing, and direct access to buyers abroad.

E-commerce is opening a fresh door. A shawl maker in Budgam can now post photos, sell online, and reach customers far beyond Lal Chowk. Social media lets small makers tell their own stories in their own words. Some young entrepreneurs are already blending old patterns with modern designs. They are selling successfully to city buyers in India and to Kashmiris living overseas.

This shift needs real support to grow. Affordable shipping, and simpler export rules are essential. Craft clusters should have shared workspaces, design labs, and practical training in pricing and negotiation. Banks must start treating artisans as genuine entrepreneurs, rather than just informal workers. A fair loan can turn a home workshop into a sustainable business.

Climate and logistics also frame the future. Unpredictable winters affect wool supplies, and highway closures often delay shipments. Global buyers expect things to arrive on time and in perfect condition. Meeting those expectations will take close teamwork between the government, exporters, and artisan groups.

Kashmir crafts can compete on the world stage. People everywhere still value heritage and the beauty of handmade work. The valley already holds that advantage.

With smart investment, transparent supply chains, and strong branding, this cultural wealth can become real economic strength.

The choice is straightforward. Kashmir can let these crafts survive as symbolic relics, kept alive by nostalgia and subsidies. Or it can place the artisans at the heart of its economic plans.

A region famous for its beauty should also become known for serious business discipline.

The hands that weave Pashmina and carve walnut still move with skill and confidence. Policy must now move with the same clarity.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Path to Prosperity
Daily positive choices create lasting financial abundance and peace.

Irshad Mushtaq

You know, building wealth starts with everyday choices that anyone can make. These habits create a bright financial future filled with security and freedom. Let me share some simple ways to get there, and you will see how easy it becomes once you start.

Begin by living within your means. Handle all purchases with cash you already have available. This keeps your finances balanced and lets savings grow naturally month after month. You feel in control and ready for whatever comes.

Next, choose items and experiences that bring real joy. Select what fits your values perfectly. Your budget remains strong, and life feels more fulfilling every day. Friends notice your contentment too.

Continue by aligning your lifestyle with your income. Pick reliable transportation and satisfying meals that match your resources. This approach builds a comfortable routine that lasts for years ahead. You enjoy the present while planning for tomorrow.

Build connections with supportive friends. Enjoy time together in ways that respect everyone’s budgets. Shared moments strengthen bonds and support mutual success. Laughter and good times flow freely.

Prioritize saving consistently. Set aside at least twenty percent of your income each time you get paid. This creates a growing safety net ready for future adventures. The habit becomes second nature quickly.

Strengthen stability through planning. Build an emergency fund and explore suitable investments. These steps provide lasting control over your financial path. Confidence grows as your assets increase.

Embrace learning about money at every opportunity. Books and discussions on finance become your guides to smarter decisions. Knowledge turns into real prosperity as you apply what you learn.

Putting these habits into practice leads to wonderful results. You gain confidence, peace of mind, and the ability to pursue your dreams. Start today and watch your wealth flourish with each positive step you take.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial educator.

India’s Job Market in 2026

A fresh salary guide shows booming paychecks in tech, finance, and beyond, but skills like AI and digital transformation are the real game-changers for climbing the ladder.



Arshid Mehraj

If you’re in India and wondering what your next paycheck might look like, or if you’re just curious about where the big money is flowing, the latest salary guide for 2026 has some eye-opening numbers.

We’re talking about base annual salaries (no bonuses included) across a bunch of industries, from banking to tech startups. And it’s like a roadmap to the job market, highlighting what’s hot, what’s paying top dollar, and what skills could land you that dream role.

Let’s break it down in simple, everyday language, sector by sector. Think of this as that relaxed chai conversation where someone asks, “Okay, but who’s actually making the big money these days?” And everyone starts sharing what they’ve heard.

Starting with banking and financial services, which feels like the heartbeat of India’s economy.

If you’re gunning for the corner office, roles like Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Chief Risk Officer are where the real bucks are, think 150 to 300 lakhs for a CFO in big firms, or even up to 600 lakhs for managing directors in global private equity funds.

But it’s not just the C-suite, even mid-level spots like vice presidents in corporate banking can pull in 30 to 80 lakhs.

What’s driving this? Skills like credit risk management, data analytics, and compliance are in huge demand because banks are going digital fast.

Sought-after jobs include financial planning pros and risk managers, especially in MNC banks where pay edges out domestic ones. For example, a director in M&A at an MNC bank might earn 160-220 lakhs, while the same at a local firm is 80-105 lakhs.

If you’re starting out, associates in private equity could see 30-120 lakhs depending on fund size. Global funds pay the premium.

Shifting gears to strategy consulting, this is the playground for sharp minds from top B-schools.

At global giants like McKinsey or BCG, a post-MBA associate might start at 35-45 lakhs, climbing to 130-180 lakhs for junior partners.

Boutique firms pay a bit less, but still solid, say, 30-40 lakhs for juniors.

The salary guide splits it by firm type: accounting/tech consultancies offer 28-35 lakhs for entry-level post-MBAs, while domestic boutiques are around 22-30 lakhs.

The highest pay packages go to engagement

The salary guide paints a picture of a job market rewarding tech-savvy, skilled pros amid India’s growth. But remember, these are base salaries, bonuses can double them. If you’re job-hunting, the guide makes it clear: focus on upskilling in AI, data, and digital.

managers, ranging between 60-85 lakhs at top firms. The most sought-after professionals are sharp analytical minds who can drive big-picture strategy without unnecessary fluff.

Now let’s turn to engineering and manufacturing, the industries that form the backbone of India’s industrial strength.

If you’re a hands-on type, plant heads or COOs can command 70-300 lakhs with 15+ years under your belt. Sought-after roles like project management or R&D heads pay well too, with heads of engineering hitting 120-200 lakhs as CTOs.

Skills like embedded design, lean manufacturing, and greenfield projects are gold. For instance, a production manager with 10-15 years might earn 40-70 lakhs, but jump to 75-100+ with more experience.

Safety and process experts are also raking it in, up to 75-120 lakhs for HSE heads.

In finance and accounting, it’s all about the numbers crunchers.

CFOs in massive companies (over 10,000 crore revenue) can hit 175-800 lakhs! Even specialists like FP&A pros earn 65-150 lakhs with 15+ years.

The hottest skills are IPO expertise and cost optimization. A financial controller in a mid-sized firm can earn between 50 and 120 lakhs. This sector values professionals who can manage mergers, treasury, or tax. Experienced tax specialists with a strong mix of skills can earn between 75 and 250 lakhs.

At the same time, another sector riding this growth wave is real estate and construction, driven by India’s rapid urban expansion.

P&L managers and sales heads can earn be-

tween 150 and 600 lakhs at the top level. Project managers with decades of experience can make 50 to 450 lakhs.

The most in-demand skills include design expertise, contract management, and M&A capability. Leasing directors can earn between 60 and 250 lakhs, reflecting the surge in real estate activity.

Over in healthcare and life sciences, it’s a mix of science and business. Sales directors in pharma can earn 100-250 lakhs if pedigreed, while R&D heads push 120-300 lakhs.

Skills in AI-driven clinical research and pharmacovigilance are in high demand. Senior professionals in medical device marketing can earn between 80 and 150 lakhs.

Human resources isn’t just paperwork anymore. CHROs in large firms earn 150-400 lakhs, with comp & benefits heads at 100-180 lakhs. Talent acquisition and HR analytics are key, think 65-120 lakhs for specialists.

Legal professionals are in demand too, especially with tech and multi-jurisdictional expertise. General counsels in big consumer firms hit 250+ lakhs, while in-house lawyers in fintech earn 120+ lakhs after 15 years. Company secretaries with IPO know-how get a 15-30% premium.

Procurement and supply chain rewards strategic thinkers. Heads can earn 125-250+ lakhs in FMCG, with skills like digital transformation shining. Logistics professionals can earn between 90 and 140 lakhs or more, depending on scale and complexity of operations.

Sales and marketing varies wildly. In FMCG, sales heads from top schools can hit 150-350 lakhs, while digital marketers earn 65-130 lakhs. Industrial sectors like building materials pay 50-100 lakhs for channel managers.

Technology is the star, with CTOs raking up to 170-350 lakhs, AI/ML engineers 150-250 lakhs. Cyber security and full-stack devs are hot, with captives paying 75-140 lakhs for seniors.

Finally, global capability centres and contracting show India’s outsourcing edge. GCC heads earn 100-700 lakhs, while contractors in AI/ML pull 35-48 lakhs mid-career.

Overall, this guide paints a picture of a job market rewarding tech-savvy, skilled pros amid India’s growth.

But remember, these are base salaries, bonuses can double them.

If you’re job-hunting, the guide makes it clear: focus on upskilling in AI, data, and digital.

The author is a Srinagar-based scribe.

Letter to Editor

Let Kashmir’s Young Entrepreneurs Get to Work

When the New Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu and Kashmir was announced in 2021, it brought hope. It promised jobs, new factories, and a stronger local economy. The plan runs until March 31, 2037, which showed that the government was thinking long term.

Young people across the region responded with enthusiasm. Many of them were first-time entrepreneurs. They applied for industrial land within the deadline. They prepared detailed project reports, arranged bank loans, and invested their own savings. They trusted the system and stepped forward to build businesses.

As time passed, the process slowed.

Developed industrial plots were limited. Applications moved through several stages. Many who applied in 2021 still wait for land allotment.

At the same time, the registration window under the scheme closed on September 30, 2024.

Today, these entrepreneurs hold loan approvals and detailed business plans in their hands, but the registration window has closed. They followed guidelines, completed forms, and met deadlines. They showed faith in the policy and prepared themselves to begin. But administrative delays changed their path.

This situation calls a practical response. Authorities can move ahead with priority land allotment for all applicants who applied within the prescribed

period. The government can also extend the registration window by at least five years. The scheme runs until 2037, so a longer registration timeline would stay aligned with its broader vision and give these ready investors the fair chance they deserve.

Jammu and Kashmir is going through economic change. Industrial growth here means reliable incomes for families, new opportunities for suppliers, transporters, and local workers. Each new unit strengthens the wider community.

Educated youth across the region want opportunity more than assistance. They are ready to invest, create jobs, and grow businesses. Clear support from the administration and flexible timelines will help turn plans into production.

The scheme started with a clear and hopeful vision. Updating it to match today’s realities will help that vision move forward with strength. Granting land to pending applicants and extending registration by five years will encourage growth while ensuring fair treatment for those who stepped in early.

Thousands of families are watching this decision closely. The Central Government can act now and support a generation that is ready to build the economic future of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sincerely,

Tajamul Islam Salroo
tajamul12@yahoo.co.in

The Last Horseman of Kashmir's Yarkand House

A legendary horseman ruled the Silk Road during its shining era, but four devastating events and one sudden heart stop in a distant mountain resort scattered his family to the ends of the world.

Syed Nissar H. Gilani

In the grainy hush of the photograph, Haji Syed Ahmed Gilani seems to drift through centuries.

His life flows like a river along the Silk Road, bearing the gentle grace of Kashmir, the strength of a powerful family, and the stirrings of a world falling apart.

Time bends around him as empires rise and fade and mountains and deserts hold their stories. In his eyes, time folds in on itself, endless and alive.

The tale starts at Yarkand House in Mallaratta, Old Srinagar.

This grand residence stood firm with stalwart composure for more than 115 years. It conveyed the strong character of the Gilani family.

Young Syed Ahmed grew up there and sustained his spirit in those walls. He attended the famous Islamia High School. There he recited Quranic verses with deep spiritual power.

Those verses guided him like a constant star through the many challenges he faced later.

Syed Ahmed walked the path of his respected father, Haji Syed Ghulam Mohammad Gilani. His father acted as Political Agent for the British Government and served as Administrator of Yarkand. The son chased bold endeavours.

He became a superb horse rider and played polo with passion. He owned his personal team and bred Egyptian horses. He took great pride in every one of them.

The Gilani family reached the peak of their influence. They gained high esteem in Kashgar and Yarkand through fair dealings in business and important government roles.

In Srinagar, they graced the impressive Yarkand House. They also ran commercial shops



in the Yarkand Sarai at Safa Kadal. That location served as a busy center for trade from Central Asia in those times.

The Sarai now crumbles into disrepair. New occupants fill its spaces. This sight contrasts sharply with the period when the Gilani name formed the backbone of the Silk Road.

Even during his prosperous years, four major events destroyed Syed Ahmed's world.

Grief entered his household when his first wife, Syeda Padasha, died at the age of 35. Family unity faced a new test when an overly eager brother-in-law showed up without invitation.

This relative attempted to use the Gilani prestige for his own gain. The family moved swiftly to safeguard their peace. They insisted

he vacate Yarkand at once.

Then tragedy unfolded in Kashgar.

Syed Ahmed's younger brother Haji Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani held the positions of Imam and Khatib at the Grand Mosque. Chinese forces executed him because he refused to sway his congregation toward communist beliefs.

His remains rest on the Khurmchi border today. He serves as an eternal witness to steadfast belief.

The most painful blow divided a father from his child.

Syed Ahmed had one daughter from his second marriage. Syeda Tarsoun Niaz came into the world in China. Authorities prevented her from leaving with her father in the 1954 deportations.



SYED AHMED WAS STAYING IN MURREE FOR A HOLIDAY, WHEN A SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST CLAIMED HIS LIFE THERE. His brother Syed Abdullah and his sister Syeda Mehtab Khanam organized the funeral rites in Rawalpindi. His funeral prayer turned into a significant event. The exiled Kashmiri leader Mirwaiz Maulana Yousuf Shah attended alongside hundreds of fellow exiles. They gathered to pay respects to a figure of exceptional distinction

These deportations followed Mao Zedong's rise to power. The forced parting created a deep wound that time failed to close.

Family members now report that she lives in Beijing. She retired from her work as a teacher and stays with her adult children. She remains unable to visit her family roots in Yarkand. The ongoing harsh policies against the Uyghur people continue to damage that area.

Displacement became her father's lifelong reality.

His brother Syed Abdullah Gilani established roots in Amman, Jordan. Syed Ahmed accepted an allocation of 40 kanals of land in Gilgit. He confronted this fresh displacement with the same steadfast composure he had shown while charging across polo fields.

His journey reached its end in 1964.

Syed Ahmed was staying in Murree for a holiday, when a sudden cardiac arrest claimed his life there. His brother Syed Abdullah and his sister Syeda Mehtab Khanam organized the funeral rites in Rawalpindi.

His funeral prayer turned into a significant event. The exiled Kashmiri leader Mirwaiz Maulana Yousuf Shah attended alongside hundreds of fellow exiles. They gathered to pay respects to a figure of exceptional distinction.

His passing led the remaining family to new beginnings.

His brother, his sister, and Syeda Mansoor, daughter of the martyred Abdul Qadir, moved to Amman through a United Nations program for refugees.

During a 2004 trip, the author and his wife reunited with them. This meeting healed a separation born from fifty years of wandering.

Today in Srinagar, Syed Ahmed's children preserve the family legacy. Syeda Sakina Gilani, Syeda Ashiya, Dr. Syed Mohammad Amin Gilani, and Syed Mohammad Ashraf continue to embody the Gilani grace.

Although Syed Ahmed passed away far from his beloved Mallaratta, he remained a true traveller at heart, someone who found peace beyond the divisions that tried to pull him apart.

— The author is a former civil servant from the administrative service.

A Childhood Trapped in the Shadows of War

Johanna Reiss's memoir plunges readers into the claustrophobic world of hiding during the Nazi occupation, showing how memory, fear, and survival impact a life forever.

Danish Mohi Ud Din

Johanna Reiss survived the Nazi occupation in Winterswijk, Holland, and The Upstairs Room captures moments of terror, tension, and small victories from her childhood.

In the 1930s, as Hitler rose in Germany, Reiss and her family faced mounting fear and uncertainty. Life became a calculated act, each step measured against the growing violence surrounding Jewish communities across Europe.

After enduring these years, Reiss immigrated to the United States with her father, carrying memories that would later become her writing.

Published in 1972, The Upstairs Room earned the Newbery Honor and other awards, reaching classrooms and readers worldwide.

Reiss begins her story at age ten, in 1938, with her family already sensing the shadow of what is to come.

By 1940, the narrative centers on Annie, a fictional version of Reiss, as her family responds to increasingly alarming reports about the German army. Annie's father pushes for escape to America, sensing the danger, while her mother resists, convinced that the threat is overstated. Restrictions tighten rapidly: Jews cannot run businesses, enter public spaces, or work freely.

When deportations begin, Annie's father insists the family must go into hiding. Annie leaves first, followed by her older sister Sini, setting the stage for a childhood suspended between fear and survival.

Their first refuge is with the Hannink family in Usselo, where bonds form quickly but

tension grows. Mr. Hannink senses the risk of keeping the girls, forcing a move to the Oosterveld household. There, Annie and Sini spend nearly two years in a single upstairs room, a confined world under constant threat.

Johan Oosterveld builds a secret hiding space, and together with his wife Dientje, they care for the girls while calculating every risk.

Dientje lives with relentless fear that discovery would mean death for both the girls and the family. The girls cannot leave the room, cannot look outside, and each day stretches into endless confinement.

Annie's legs weaken from lack of movement, forcing Sini to insist she walk within the small space to retain strength.

The tension escalates when German soldiers occupy the Oosterveld house as their headquarters. Soldiers roam below for hours, and Annie and Sini must remain unseen, every footstep and shadow magnified into danger.

Time blurs, and the small room becomes a world defined by fear and waiting. By the time Canadian troops arrive, Annie's body shows the cost of hiding. Her ability to walk nearly fails.

The narrative draws readers deep into moments of terror, calculated breaths, and small acts of endurance that define survival.

Memory drives the narrative as much as survival. Annie's story stays after the war ends, showing how experience molds identity and emotion.

Reiss demonstrates how confinement, fear, and repeated brushes with death leave marks that persist into adulthood. Scenes of German soldiers searching the house, or moments

when Annie is briefly exposed, stay in the reader's mind as vividly as they remain in the narrator's own recollections.

The memoir fuses historical events with personal experience, offering a lens into life under occupation that is both precise and haunting.

Critics often compare Reiss to Anne Frank, but Reiss writes with the weight of hindsight and survival. Leslie Garis observes that compared to Frank, Reiss's account is "sparer and sterner," shaped by the psychology of enduring trauma rather than the innocence of youth.

While Frank captured hope in her diary, Reiss conveys the tension, fear, and endurance required to survive.

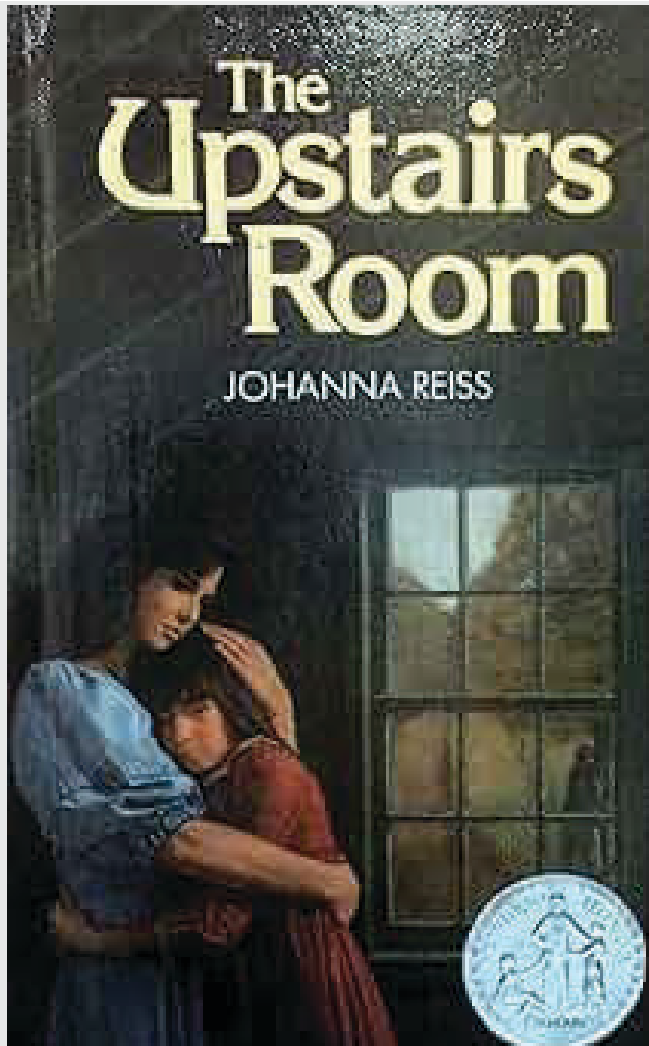
Annie's story is a testament to what children endure under prolonged danger and the ways memory continues to follow a survivor long after the immediate threat has passed.

Beyond a Holocaust narrative, The Upstairs Room forces reflection on the human experience under siege. It demonstrates how fear, confinement, and silent observation influence identity. Memory, rather than hope, often remains the last lifeline.

The book also resonates with current conflicts, highlighting experiences of children in modern war zones where danger persists in daily life, shaping bodies, minds, and futures.

Reiss's memoir remains a powerful reminder of the cost of war on innocence and the enduring impact of trauma.

— The author is Research Scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He can be reached at danishmeer18@gmail.com.



BEYOND A HOLOCAUST NARRATIVE, THE UPSTAIRS ROOM FORCES REFLECTION on the human experience under siege. It demonstrates how fear, confinement, and silent observation influence identity. Memory, rather than hope, often remains the last lifeline.

50% Of One's Life Span Could Be Heritable: Study

Press Trust Of India

Genetics may explain about half of a person's lifespan, a study has suggested, pointing to a far more significant role of genetics than earlier research indicated.

The findings, published in the journal Science, show that once mortality due to external factors such as accidents or infections are accounted for, "heritability of human life span due to intrinsic mortality is above 50 per cent".

The researchers from Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science and Karolinska Institutet in Sweden said understanding the heritability of human life span is central to ageing research, yet measuring genes' influence on longevity remains challenging.

Earlier studies have estimated that life span may be 15-33 per cent heritable across varied populations, with a typical range of 20-25 per cent, they said.

The researchers show that the estimates "are confounded by extrinsic mortality — deaths caused by extrinsic factors such as accidents or infections".

While genes linked to lifespan have been identified, external environment such as disease or living conditions can exert a powerful influence on how long one lives and often

obscure or confound potential genetic effects, they said.

"Extrinsic mortality systematically masked the genetic contribution to life span in traditional analyses," the authors wrote.

The team added that historical data from twin studies — often explored for understanding how genes



interact with environment and contribute to noticeable traits — lack sufficient cause of death information to correct for extrinsic mortality.

"We use mathematical modelling and analyses of twin cohorts raised together and apart to correct for this factor, revealing that heritability of human life span due to intrinsic mortality is above 50 per cent," they said.

"Correcting for extrinsic mortality raises the estimate for the heritability of human life span in twin and sibling studies to (nearly) 55 per cent, more than twice previous estimates and in line with heritability of most human traits," the team added.



The Jammu and Kashmir Board Of School Education Sub Office Pulwama

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, have passed/ appeared in SSE / HSE-I / HSE-II (11th/) under Roll No. 725536, Session B-A, Year 2006, through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education.



It is hereby notified that, due to an inadvertent error committed by the concerned office, my name has been recorded as Javid Ahmad instead of my correct name Javid Ahmad Wani. I have applied for correction of the said error before the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, New Campus, Bemina, Srinagar. If any person has any objection in this regard, the same may be filed before the Assistant Secretary, Sub-Office Pulwama, within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained. The correct particulars are as under: This notice is issued for the information of the general public.

Name: Javid Ahmad Wani
Father's Name: Ab Aziz Wani
Mother's Name: Zaiba
Date of Birth: 25-07-1988
Residence: Chandipora, Pulwama
Mobile No.: 7006356410

fk0

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded as Gh Mohd Dar instead of my correct and actual name Ghulam Mohammad Dar in my Aadhaar and other records.

Correct particulars are as under:
Name (Correct): Ghulam Mohammad Dar
Father's Name: Mohammad Shaban Dar
Address: Maldera, Tehsil Chitragam, District Shopian, J&K (UT)
Aadhaar No.: 9105 9929 8023

I hereby declare that Ghulam Mohammad Dar and Gh Mohd Dar refer to one and the same person, i.e., myself. This public notice is issued for the purpose of correction of my name in the concerned records.

If any person has any objection to the above correction, the same may be conveyed in writing to the undersigned within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that no one has any objection to the said correction.

Ghulam Mohammad Dar
S/o Mohammad Shaban Dar
R/o Maldera, Tehsil Chitragam, District Shopian, J&K (UT)

fk0

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION, SRINAGAR
NEAR J&K BANK, "ZALDAGAR"

Tele-fax No. 0194-2952696, e-mail Id: to-exenmidsrinagar@jk.gov.in

Corrigendum

Name of Work: Revamping / Modernization of Marval Lift Irrigation Scheme, Pulwama.
Ref to NIT: Executive Engineer, MID Srinagar's e-NIT. No. 34 of 2025-26, dated: 22.12.2025.

S. No.	Clause No.	For	Read
1	Section 1, ITB, S.No. 21 Page No. 22	Joint Venture Memorandum – Power of Attorney for MOU / Separate affidavits duly attested by First Class Judicial Magistrate.	Submission of a notarized copy of the Joint Venture Agreement shall be made mandatory at the bid submission stage, while formal attestation of the same by a 1st Class Judicial Magistrate shall be required prior to issuance of the work order or Letter of Acceptance.
2	SECTION 3 ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR BIDDERS A. Qualification Criteria Page No. 38	Part (A)- Composite works: Three similar completed works each costing not less than 16.00 Crore with each component of similar Electro-Mechanical works and similar civil works (as defined in Similar works) comprising at least 30% of each OR Two similar completed works each costing not less than 20.00 Crore with each component of similar Electro-Mechanical works and similar civil works (as defined in Similar works) comprising at least 30% of each OR One similar Composite completed work costing not less than 31.50 Crore with each component of similar Electro-Mechanical works and similar civil works (as defined in Similar works) comprising at least 30% of each.	Part (A) - Composite works: Successfully completed or substantially completed similar works during last 10 years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited should be either of the following: 1. One similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 31.50 crore with each component of similar works as defined in Similar works clause comprising at least 30% of each. 2. Two similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 20.00 crore with each component of similar works as defined in Similar works clause comprising at least 30% of each. 3. Three similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 16.00 crore with each component of similar works as defined in Similar works clause comprising at least 30% of each.
		Part (B)- Electro-Mechanical works: Three similar completed Electro-Mechanical works each costing not less than 9.6 crore. OR Two similar completed Electro-Mechanical works each costing not less than 12 crore. OR One similar completed Electro-Mechanical work costing not less than 18.9 crore. Part (C)- Civil works: Three similar completed civil works each costing not less than 6.4 Crore. OR Two similar completed Civil works each costing not less than 8 Crore. OR One similar completed civil work costing not less than 12.6 Crore.	Part (B) - Similar non-composite completed individual Electro Mechanical or E&I works: Successfully completed or substantially completed similar works during last 10 years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited should be either of the following: 1. One similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 18.9 crore. 2. Two similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 12.00 crore. 3. Three similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 9.6 crore. Part (C) - Similar Non-Composite completed individual Civil works: Successfully completed or substantially completed similar works during last ten years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited should be either of the following: 1. One similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 12.6 crore. 2. Two similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 8.0 crore. 3. Three similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 6.4 crore.
3	Section 1, ITB, S.No. 21 Page No. 27	Tie up agreement with reputed firm having expertise in SCADA installation in water sector. Such firm should have executed single work worth of at least Rs. 1.90 crore OR Two works worth of at least Rs. 1.2 crore OR Three works worth of at least 0.95 crore, during last 07 years in Government or Semi Government projects supported with documentary evidence.	SCADA Tie-up clause shall be read as: Tie up agreement with reputed firm having expertise in SCADA installation in water sector. Such firm should have executed single work worth of at least Rs. 1.90 crore OR Two works worth of at least Rs. 1.2 crore OR Three works worth of at least 0.95 crore, during last 10 years in Government or Semi Government projects supported with documentary evidence.
4	Section 1, ITB, S.No. 21 Page No. 28	Tie up agreement with reputed firm having expertise in HT electrical works including sub-stations. Such firm should have executed single work worth of at least Rs. 0.8 crore OR Two works worth of at least Rs. 0.5 crore OR Three works worth of at least 0.4 crore, during last 07 years in Government or Semi Government projects supported with documentary evidence.	HT Electrical works Tie-up clause shall be read as: Tie up agreement with reputed firm having expertise in HT electrical works including sub-stations. Such firm should have executed single work worth of at least Rs. 0.8 crore OR Two works worth of at least Rs. 0.5 crore OR Three works worth of at least 0.4 crore, during last 10 years in Government or Semi Government projects supported with documentary evidence.
5	SECTION 3 ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR BIDDERS Page No. 40	Note: Similar work will mean:- The overall Similar Work shall constitute a work comprising of: 1. SITC of Pumping systems for Clear Water or Irrigation Systems with at least three pumps in parallel operation with motor rating of at least 150hp each. 2. Civil Works for Irrigation or Water Supply Projects involving Construction of Sumps, reservoirs, retaining Walls, Lined Canals, Water retaining Structures, Drainage Works, STP's, 3. Specialized Services for the Project include construction of Electrical Sub stations.	SIMILAR WORK SHALL MEAN: 1. SITC of Electro-Mechanical (E&M) / Electrical & Instrumentation (E&I) works involving SITC of pumping system for clear water or irrigation projects or STP's or WTP's or drainage sector or water supply distribution schemes, having a cumulative motor capacity of 450 HP, with the number of pumps not exceeding five (05) OR SITC of Electrical Mechanical & Instrumentation (E&I) works involving SITC of Automation and SCADA system for complete pumping system for clear water or irrigation projects or STP's or WTP's or drainage sector or water supply schemes having authorisation certificate duly signed - the OEM shall also provide an undertaking for full technical support for SITC of the pumping machinery including its warranty. 2. Civil Works for Irrigation or Water Supply Projects involving

No.:MIDS/Ts/5324-26
DIPK-10839/25 Dated:12-02-2026

		4. Specialized service of SCADA system shall include SITC of SCADA system involving WTP's, STPS or Irrigation Projects.	Construction of Sumps, reservoirs, retaining Walls, Lined Canals, Water retaining Structures, Drainage Works, STP's, Pump Room Building.
			3. Specialized Services for the Project Include Construction of Electrical Sub-Stations or should have Manufacturing Facility of Substation Equipment's 11 Kv/33 Kv VCB Panel with all required Type Test Certificates.
			4. Specialized service of SCADA system shall include SITC of SCADA system involving WTP's, STPS or drainage sector or Water Supply Distribution Schemes or Irrigation Projects.
6	SECTION 3 ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR BIDDERS B. Joint Venture Page No. 40	1. The lead partner of the joint venture shall have to mandatorily satisfy the similar work criteria as defined above either through execution of stand-alone electro-mechanical component for any lift scheme or compositely through electro-mechanical and civil component commensurate with the value as per the table above. 2. Other partner existing in the joint venture will be required to satisfy the similar work requirement either through execution of electro-mechanical component for any lift scheme or civil component or compositely through electro-mechanical and civil component commensurate with the value as per the table above.	Joint Venture Clause shall be read as: 1. The lead partner of the joint venture shall have to mandatorily satisfy the similar work criteria as defined above either through execution of stand-alone Electro-mechanical or E&I Works component for any lift scheme or Water Supply Distribution Schemes compositely through electro-mechanical or E&I Works and civil component commensurate with the value as per the table above. 2. Other partner existing in the joint venture will be required to satisfy the similar work requirement either through execution of Electro-mechanical or E&I Works component for any lift scheme or civil component or Water Supply Distribution Scheme or compositely through electro-mechanical or E&I Works and civil component commensurate with the value as per the table above.
7	SECTION 3 ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR BIDDERS C. Bid Capacity Page No. 41	Bid Capacity: Bidders who meet the minimum qualification criteria will be qualified only if their available bid capacity for construction work (Electro Mechanical and Civil) is equal to or more than advertised value of the work. The available bid capacity will be calculated as under: Assessed Available bid capacity = (A*N*1.5/B)	BID Capacity Clause shall be read as: Bidders who meet the minimum qualification criteria will be qualified only if their available bid capacity for construction work (Electro Mechanical or E&I Work and Civil) is equal to or more than advertised value of the work. The available bid capacity will be calculated as under: Assessed Available bid capacity = (A*N*1.5/B)
8	Clause 41: part e (ii) Part-Bill- Running Account Electro Mechanical Works: Pg No. 183	Were, A = Maximum value of Electro-Mechanical and Civil engineering works executed in any one year during the last five years (updated to the price level of the current financial year at the rate of 7% per year), taking into account the completed as well as works in progress). N = 3.0 (Number of years prescribed for completion of the works for which bids are invited) (period up to 6 months to be taken as half-year and more than 6 months as one year). B = Value, at the current price level, of existing commitments and on-going works to be completed concurrently with the works specified up to the period of "N" above as per FIN 4 in section 4. Partners of JV should jointly Possess the bid capacity.	Were, A = Maximum value of Electro-Mechanical and Civil engineering works executed in any one year during the last five years (updated to the price level of the current financial year at the rate of 7% per year), taking into account the completed as well as works in progress). N = 3.0 (Number of years prescribed for completion of the works for which bids are invited) (period up to 6 months to be taken as half-year and more than 6 months as one year). B = Value, at the current price level, of existing commitments and on-going works to be completed concurrently with the works specified up to the period of "N" above as per FIN 4 in section 4. Partners of JV should Jointly Possess the bid capacity.
9	Clause 41: part e (iii) Part-Bill- Running Account Electro Mechanical Works: Pg No. 183	III. Part-Bill- Running Account Electro Mechanical Works: a). Secure advance against Supply of Electro-Mechanical/E&I items brought to site, after successful TPI, wherever applicable - 60% of the allotted cost of the items. b). After Installation, Testing and successful commissioning of Electro-Mechanical equipments / gadgets- 25% of the allotted Cost of the items. c). After Successful trial run of 600 hours for the already commissioned and tested equipment and machinery- 15% of the allotted cost of the items, however, 05% of this payment (of the allotted cost) shall be kept as security deposit/ retention money and shall be released after the completion of Defects liability period of 24 months from the release date of this Running Account Bill or Shall be released after submission of PBG. Provided all bills of Electro Mechanical Works shall be claimed in amounts not less than Rs 20.00 Lacs as per the following conditions, except where the total balance dues under the contract are less than Rs 20.00 lacs. Provided that all the payments claimed against supply of equipment/ machinery shall be subject to the condition that the same shall be used within a period of 90 (ninety) days and subject to other stipulations in the contract. The contractor shall however remain responsible for their safe custody till their incorporation in works. Before the secured advance under (a) above is released, the procuring entity may inspect the site to ensure that the Contractor has safeguarded the materials against pilferage and deterioration. The department reserves the right to recover the payments made on secured advances in subsequent interim running account bills if these goods are not incorporated into works within the stipulations given above.	The payment terms for Electro-Mechanical Works or E&I works shall be read as: a). Secure advance against Supply of Electro-Mechanical/E&I items brought to site, after successful TPI, wherever applicable - 70% of the allotted cost of the items. b). After Installation, Testing and successful commissioning of Electro-Mechanical equipments / gadgets- 15% of the allotted Cost of the items. c). After Successful trial run of 600 hours for the already commissioned and tested equipment and machinery- 15% of the allotted cost of the items, however, 05% of this payment (of the allotted cost) shall be kept as security deposit/ retention money and shall be released after the completion of Defects liability period of 24 months from the release date of this Running Account Bill or Shall be released after submission of PBG. Provided all bills of Electro Mechanical Works shall be claimed in amounts not less than Rs 20.00 Lacs as per the following conditions, except where the total balance dues under the contract are less than Rs 20.00 lacs. Provided that all the payments claimed against supply of equipment/ machinery shall be subject to the condition that the same shall be used within a period of 90 (ninety) days and subject to other stipulations in the contract. The contractor shall however remain responsible for their safe custody till their incorporation in works. Before the secured advance under (a) above is released, the procuring entity may inspect the site to ensure that the Contractor has safeguarded the materials against pilferage and deterioration. The department reserves the right to recover the payments made on secured advances in subsequent interim running account bills if these goods are not incorporated into works within the stipulations given above.
10	SECTION 3 ELIGIBILITY & QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR BIDDERS A. Qualification Criteria Page No. 37	1. The average Annual financial turnover from Mechanical & Civil Engineering Works during the last 3 years, ending 31st March of the previous financial year, should be at least 30% of the Advertised Cost. 2. The average annual financial turnover of the lead partner must be equal to or more than 50% of the requirement and for other partner(S) it must be equal to or more than 25% of the requirement. And all partners combined must meet the requirement together.	1. The average Annual financial turnover from Mechanical & Civil Engineering Works during the last 3 years, ending 31st March of the previous financial year, should be at least 30% of the Advertised Cost. Or The annual financial turnover in any one of the last three financial years, ending on 31st March of the previous financial year, shall be at least 30% of the Advertised Cost. 2. Already incorporated

SD/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar

Trade Unions Observe One-Day Strike; Normal Life Remains Largely Unaffected



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- A one-day nationwide strike call given by trade unions to protest against alleged anti-worker policies of the central government on Thursday evoked a fragmented response, and normal life remained largely unaffected throughout the country.

The trade unions mostly held gate meetings and demonstrations across many states, and at some places, workers reported late for duty to show their solidarity to the agitation.

According to reports, a mixed response was seen in states including Odisha, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

Trade unions claimed "a big resistance against anti-people, anti-national policies of Union Government", and stated that more than 30 crore workers, farmers and other sections joined the agitation.

The joint platform of the Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral Federations and Associations, along with the constituents of Samyukt Kisan Morcha and the joint front of agricultural workers' unions, succeeded in organising strike actions and massive mobilisations in more than 600 districts of the country, the forum stated.

In Delhi, trade unions organ-

ised processions in all industrial areas as part of strike actions. A meeting was held at the Jantar Mantar here, and it was addressed by central trade union leaders.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of All India Traders said that "markets across the country are open, trade is normal, and all business activities will proceed as usual". However, according to reports, normal life was partly affected in Odisha due to the agitation.

Public transport, markets, educational institutions, and business establishments were affected as major roads, including national and state highways, were blocked. The bandh's impact was felt in all major urban areas, including Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Balasore, Berhampur and Sambalpur.

In Jharkhand, banking, insurance and coal sectors have been affected by the strike, Bank of India (BOI) Employees' Union state Deputy General Secretary Umesh Das said.

Left parties and the Congress have also extended their support to the strike in the state.

In Chhattisgarh, several nationalised banks remained closed as employees joined the strike. Staff of insurance companies, post offices, along with labourers and farmers, also participated in the agitation, affecting operations in their respective sectors.

Gold Slips Rs 400 to ₹1.6 Lakh/10g; Silver Flat at ₹2.6 Lakh

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices fell by Rs 400 to Rs 1.6 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid weak global trends and receding expectations of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity declined Rs 400, or 0.25 per cent, to Rs 1,60,900 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 1,61,300 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

However, silver prices remained unchanged at Rs 2,68,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) in the local bullion market.

"Gold traded within range with modest declines on Thursday amid markets scaling back aggressive rate-cut expectations following stronger-than-expected data from the US labour market," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

The US non-farm payrolls report for January showed that the economy added 1.3 lakh jobs, while the unemployment rate fell to 4.3 per cent, signalling continued resilience in the labour market.

He added that the robust labour data has tempered expectations of an immediate rate reduction by the US Federal Reserve, which weighed on precious metals.

"However, the broader policy shift towards eventual rate cuts remains intact," Gandhi said.

In the global market, spot gold slipped USD 22.07, or 0.43 per cent, to USD 5,062.46 per ounce while silver was trading nearly 2 per cent lower at USD 82.84 per ounce.

According to Kotak Securities, spot gold is trading moderately lower near USD 5,070 per ounce after stronger-than-expected US employment data tempered expectations for an early Federal Reserve rate cut.

Loan Recovery Rules Tightening

RBI Proposes Mandatory Agent Training, Call Recordings

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The Reserve Bank on Thursday came out with draft rules governing banks' engagement of loan recovery systems, mandating training for agents and also recordings of all calls.

A bank must ensure that all phone calls made to a borrower by an agent are recorded, the RBI said, stressing that an agent interacts with a borrower in a "civil manner".

The proposed guidelines ask banks to put in place guidelines on the subject, and also ensure that customer information resting with the agents or employees is not misused.

"An employee/recovery agent shall interact with the borrower in a civil manner. Further, he /she shall maintain decency and decorum during visits to the borrower's place for collection / recovery of loan dues," the RBI said.

The RBI is also mulling to make it compulsory for the recovery agents to undergo the 'debt recovery training' conducted by the Indian Institute of Banking and Finance (IIBF).

The draft follows an announcement to this effect



An employee/ recovery agent shall interact with the borrower in a civil manner. Further, he /she shall maintain decency and decorum during visits to the borrower's place for collection / recovery of loan dues,"

made by Governor Sanjay Malhotra last week while announcing the monetary policy review.

CS Assesses Impact Of HIMAYAT Scheme In J&K

Stresses On Timely Target Achievement And Strong Placement Linkages



Observer News Service

JAMMU- Chief Secretary, Atal Dullloo, Thursday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) - HIMAYAT scheme in J&K, an initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, aimed at skilling rural youth and ensuring their sustainable placement.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD), Aijaz Asad; Chief Operating Officer (COO), HIMAYAT, Rajneesh Gupta; and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need to achieve the training targets under the revamped HIMAYAT 2.0 within stipulated timelines. He directed the department to adopt a result-oriented approach and strictly link payments to Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) with their placement performance to

ensure accountability and improved outcomes.

Reviewing the performance of the scheme's first phase, the Chief Secretary took note of the number of youth trained and the overall fund utilization. He also assessed the progress achieved during the current financial year 2025-26 and the targets earmarked under HIMAYAT 2.0.

On this occasion Secretary, RDD, Aijaz Asad, informed that the scheme provides job-linked skill training to eligible rural youth and facilitates their placement in regular employment, gig economy opportunities, or self-employment ventures, thereby promoting sustainable livelihoods.

He stated that the first version of the programme, implemented from 2016 to 2026, resulted in the training of 36,316 candidates across the Union Territory. Under DDU-GKY 2.0, which became effective from April 2025, Jammu and Kashmir has been assigned a target of training

2,248 candidates for the year 2025-26 with an approved outlay of ₹37.64 Cr. Of this, 1,838 candidates have already been trained so far.

Providing further details, COO HIMAYAT, Rajneesh Gupta, highlighted that during 2025-26, against a target of 996 candidates, 1,589 candidates were trained, with 850 of them successfully placed in various sectors. An expenditure of ₹27.49 Cr has been incurred during the year.

The meeting was informed about the key features of DDU-GKY 2.0, which mandate that PIAs must ensure a minimum of 70 per cent placement of trained candidates, with a minimum monthly wage of ₹12,000, to qualify for project cost claims. It was also apprised that batch-wise monitoring has been introduced, including live streaming of training sessions to the HIMAYAT office for real-time monitoring and quality assessment of training delivery by PIAs.

India Okays Procurement of 114 Rafale Fighter Jets

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- In its largest-ever defence acquisition push, India on Thursday cleared a long-pending proposal to procure 114 Rafale fighter jets under a government-to-government framework with France, nearly two decades after the plan was originally rolled out to boost the Indian Air Force's combat prowess.

In total, capital acquisition of military hardware worth Rs 3.60 lakh crore including procurement of an additional six US-made

ing P8-I surveillance aircraft for the Indian Navy, was approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Under the Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) project, 18 aircraft will be supplied by Dassault Aviation, the maker of Rafale, in a fly away condition and the rest will be manufactured in India with over 50 per cent indigenous content that will be to be met in phases, sources said.

Though the defence ministry did not provide the cost of the procurement, it is expected to be in the range of Rs 2.90 lakh

crore to Rs 3.15 lakh crore.

The approval for procurement of the Rafale jets came just four days ahead of French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India.

The Rafale purchase plan is expected to be taken up soon by the prime minister-led Cabinet Committee on Security. There is a possibility of India and France inkling an inter-governmental pact on the project during Macron's trip.

However, a formal contract on the deal is unlikely before end of the year as the defence ministry will now have to carry out negotiations with Dassault Aviation to finalise the cost and the finer details of the weapons package.

The Rafale jets are capable of carrying a range of potent weapons. European missile maker MBDA's Meteor beyond visual range air-to-air missile and Scalp cruise missile will be the mainstay of the weapons package of the Rafale jets.

In April 2019, the Indian Air Force issued an RFI (Request for Information), or initial tender to acquire 114 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft (MRFA) at a cost of around USD 18 billion.



China Tightens Grip on Rare Earths Amid US Push to Break Monopoly

Press Trust Of India

BEIJING- China has stepped up efforts to consolidate its monopoly over rare earth metals to counter the United States move to form an international alliance with over 50 nations, including India, to secure the supply chains of the precious metals to reduce reliance on Beijing.

Early this week, Chinese Premier Li Qiang visited Ganzhou in Jiangxi province, one of the world's largest production bases for heavy rare earth elements, a strategic resource essential to a range of hi-tech industries, where he called for China to consolidate its lead in industries like rare earths, over which it has a strategic edge over Washington.

Li also visited the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Ganjiang Innovation Academy, toured critical mineral producers, and had a meeting with local business leaders and researchers, official media reported.

"The value of rare earths in boosting advanced manufacturing and green, low-carbon transformation is increasingly prominent," he said.

China's dominance of global mining and processing of the minerals has become a crucial strategic advantage in recent years, giving it vital leverage when sparring with the US over a string of trade and technology disputes.

Li also met producers of the critical minerals, local business leaders and researchers during his tour, Xinhua reported.

"The value of rare earths in boosting advanced manufacturing and green, low-carbon transformation is increasingly prominent," he said.

Li's visit comes in the backdrop of intensified efforts by the US to form an international alliance after China increased its chokehold on its exports of rare earth metals to the US, EU, India and various other countries, creating supply chain chaos of the precious metals.

China accounts for about 70 per cent of global rare earth mining and nearly 90 per cent of their processing.

The minerals are critical for manufacturing electronics, automobiles, wind energy, and defence equipment and a host of modern gadgets. Beijing halted the exports of the key elements to use them as leverage to expand its trade interests.

China used its chokehold on rare earth exports to force US President Donald Trump to cut high tariffs and settle for a quid pro quo deal under which Beijing had agreed to resume rare-earth supplies to Washington, lifting the ban on exports of semiconductor chips.

China also restricted the exports of the rare-earth metals to India, resulting in shortages in automobile and other industries.

After this, the Trump administration, early this month, launched a major initiative to build a "metallic alliance" with over 50 nations, including India, to secure critical mineral supply chains and reduce reliance on China.

Up To 35 Million Tonnes Of Fish Wasted Each Year: Study

Press Trust Of India

KOCHI/PUDUCHERRY- Infrastructure inefficiencies in the marine fisheries sector lead to the wastage of 25 to 35 million tonnes of fish globally every year, according to a latest study.

The joint study by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) found that fish loss and waste account for 20-35 per cent of total production in developing countries, a press release said.

In some regions, losses are as high as 75 per cent, posing a major threat to nutrition security and economic sustainability, it added, quoting the study.

The findings were pre-

sented at a two-day international workshop on the Marine Fisheries Value Chain in the Bay of Bengal region, being held in Puducherry on Thursday.

The study further revealed that post-harvest fish loss across Asia is emerging as a silent crisis, with 20-60 per cent of the total catch lost along the aquatic food value chain, severely affecting food security and fishers' incomes, it said.

Conducted during 2025-26 across 11 Asian countries, including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, the study highlighted systemic inefficiencies in the marine fisheries sector.

According to the findings, 43.5 per cent of losses occur at landing sites due to inadequate icing facilities

and high ambient temperatures.

BOBP-IGO Director Dr P Krishnan, who presented the report at the workshop, said infrastructure and institutional gaps—such as the lack of cold storage facilities at landing centres, insufficient ice plants, poorly integrated cold-chain logistics, and weak processing and packaging systems—were among the critical deficiencies identified in the Bay of Bengal region.

The global workshop is being jointly organised by BOBP-IGO and the Puducherry government in association with FAO, the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, the National Fisheries Development Board, and the Environmental Defence India Foundation, the release said.

'Govt Examining Proposal To Notify New Tourism Areas In J&K'

Observer News Service

JAMMU- Minister for Agriculture, Javid Ahmad Dar Thursday informed the House that the government is examining a proposal regarding the notification of new tourism-worthy areas across Jammu and Kashmir, including several prominent locations in Bani Constituency like Bani town, Lowang and Sarthal.

The Minister stated this while replying to a question on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah raised by Legislator Dr. Rameshwar Singh in the House today.

Responding to a supplementary question, the Minister stated that the government is committed to take all necessary steps to strengthen the tourism infrastructure across Jammu division. He added that efforts will be made to establish rest houses and tourist huts at key tourist destinations to enhance facilities for the visitors and promote sustainable tourism.

The Minister further informed that, under the direction of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, a Winter Carnival was conducted on 8 February, 2026 at Bani as part of the government's broader initiative to promote tourism development in the region. He added that the event was held to showcase the natural beauty, cultural heritage and tourism potential of the area.

The Minister reiterated government's commitment towards exploring and developing new tourist destinations to boost local economy, generate employment and position Jammu and Kashmir as a premier travel destination

Industry-Academia Meet To Fast-Track Biotech Innovation

Observer News Service

JAMMU — The CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM) hosted a two-day Industry-Academia Meet (IAM-2026) in Jammu aimed at accelerating phytopharmaceutical research and strengthening lab-to-market partnerships in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

The meet brought together scientists, pharmaceutical leaders and regulators to promote evidence-based drug development from traditional knowledge and natural products, aligned with the Viksit Bharat@2047 vision. The inaugural session included the release of the institute compendium and signing of MoUs with industry partners.

Padma Shri Prof. V.K.

Singh, Institute Chair Professor at IIT Kanpur and mentor to CSIR-IIIM, said research institutions must demonstrate practical and economic value to attract industry collaboration. He highlighted global successes in nature-based drug discovery and said platforms like IAM help address regulatory and translational challenges.

Former Emami CEO Dr. C.K. Katiyar described CSIR-IIIM as a heritage institution and stressed the need to scientifically link traditional medicine with modern pharmacology. He flagged challenges in clinical validation, pharmacokinetics and regulatory clarity, while warning about India's heavy dependence on imported active pharmaceutical ingredients.

Director Dr. Zabeer

Ahmed said the meet seeks to build sustained partnerships between researchers, industry and regulators. He noted that CSIR's Phytopharmaceutical Mission is in Phase III, with ten laboratories working on lead discovery and extraction technologies. Three drug candidates have completed preclinical studies and are ready for clinical translation, he said, adding that limited GMP manufacturing and clinical infrastructure remain major bottlenecks.

Organising Secretary Dr. Qazi Naveed Ahmed said the scientific ecosystem is shifting from publication-focused research to patients, validation and societal impact, with IAM-2026 designed to bridge the gap through co-development with industry.

After Wangchuk's Detention, Violence In Leh Under Control: Centre To SC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Centre told the Supreme Court on Thursday that climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who is under detention in Rajasthan's Jodhpur jail, was the chief provocateur of the violence in Leh on September 24 last year.

Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, told a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P B Varale, that after Wangchuk's detention, the agitation and violence came under control.

"He was the chief provocateur that led to the violence in which four were killed and 60 injured. The detention

order shows expressed link, there is clear application of mind there.

"After his detention, the agitation and violence came under control. Hence it's proved that the detention order is perfect order which was justified in the situation," Nataraj told the bench.

The law officer submitted that all these procedural requirements

have been meticulously complied for Wangchuk's detention.

"All procedural requirements under the law has been meticulously complied with. Once there is compliance of statutory requirements, there is no question to sit over the subjective satisfaction of the detaining authority. Such order can be

passed on suspicion or reasonable probability," he said.

The top court has now posted the matter for hearing on February 16.

The Centre on Wednesday had said that Wangchuk has been examined medically 24 times since his detention and he is "fit, hale and hearty" and

there is nothing alarming.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had told the bench that grounds on which Wangchuk's detention order was passed continue and it will not be possible to release him on health grounds.

The top court was hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali Angmo

seeking to declare his detention under the National Security Act (NSA), 1980, as illegal.

The NSA empowers the Centre and states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India". The maximum detention period is 12 months, though it can be revoked earlier.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

₹74,427 Crore vs

The own tax to GSDP ratio sits near 7 to 7.5 percent.

Maharashtra presents a different picture. Its GSDP for 2025-26 stands at about 49.39 lakh crore. Total expenditure excluding debt repayment reaches about 7,00,020 crore, with revenue receipts of 5,60,964 crore. Its own tax revenue equals 7.8 percent of GSDP. The bulk of its budget rests on its own tax system, backed by a vast productive economy. Fiscal deficit remains targeted at 2.8 percent of GSDP.

The size gap between the two economies is immense.

J&K's GSDP hovers under 3 lakh crore. Maharashtra's economy exceeds 49 lakh crore. In earlier estimates, Maharashtra's GSDP stood around 40-42 lakh crore while J&K's remained near 2.4-2.5 lakh crore.

In rupee terms, Maharashtra's economy is roughly 16 times larger.

India's nominal GDP stands around 327-330 lakh crore. J&K contributes well below 1 percent. Maharashtra alone contributes roughly 15 percent.

Fiscal law ties borrowing limits to GSDP under FRBM rules. A larger GSDP expands legal borrowing space and strengthens tax capacity. A smaller GSDP compresses that space and ties spending to external support.

Per person, the numbers tell a striking story. J&K's Budget of 1.40 lakh crore for a population of about 1.5 to 1.6 crore translates to roughly 93,000 in public spending per resident.

The Union Government's Budget of about 48-50 lakh crore for a population of 142 crore works out to roughly 33,000 to 35,000 per resident. Public spending per head in J&K runs about 2.5 to 3 times the national average.

Income moves in the opposite direction. Per capita income in J&K stands near 1.68 lakh. India's average stands around 2.19 lakh. Maharashtra's average approaches 2.8 lakh, and Mumbai exceeds the state average.

An average Mumbaikar earns more than double an average person in J&K.

This produces a clear contrast: higher public spending per person in J&K, lower personal income per person than the national and Maharashtra averages.

Economic structure explains much of this divide.

J&K leans heavily on agriculture and allied sectors, especially horticulture such as apples. Tourism, including religious travel, adds seasonal income. Handicrafts such as carpets and shawls sustain traditional trades. Government and defence employment form a large share of services. Manufacturing exists in small pockets such as cement and food processing. Large-scale industry remains limited.

Maharashtra runs on deep industrial and service clusters. Automobiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, textiles and engineering spread through Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad and Nagpur. Finance, banking, stock exchanges, corporate headquarters, IT and media anchor Mumbai. Ports and airports connect global trade. High-value services dominate output.

This structure yields higher output per worker and a broader tax base. Corporate activity and formal employment generate steady GST, stamp duty and other levies. Urban property markets and user charges feed civic budgets.

In Srinagar, the municipal commissioner has stated that internal resources cover barely about 10 percent of financial liabilities. Grants bridge the rest. Mumbai's civic body largely finances itself through property tax, user charges and local revenues generated by a powerful city economy.

Education and skills fortify the divide.

Mumbai districts record literacy above 90 percent and host large professional institutions. J&K's literacy stands near 67 percent with significant rural-urban gaps. Skill levels influence entry into higher-paying service sectors.

Infrastructure follows a similar pattern. Mumbai operates suburban trains, metro systems and a major international airport, even as it handles congestion and high living costs.

J&K offers a striking natural landscape and rising tourist numbers. Urban services and industrial infrastructure continue to expand, with roads, power and digital connectivity improving.

The fiscal model reflects these realities.

J&K runs a grant-heavy Budget. Around 65 percent of revenue receipts come from central taxes and grants. Maharashtra operates a tax-heavy Budget backed by its own GSDP.

One model leans on transfers, the other stands on a strong internal revenue base.

The balance sheets deliver a clear verdict.

Kashmir must grow its own GSDP through hydropower monetisation, higher-value tourism, horticulture processing, light manufacturing and digital services. It must widen the GST and property base, improve excise and service collections, and plug leakages in power and utilities. It must channel central grants as seed capital that builds future income streams.

Public spending must tilt toward skills, logistics, digital connectivity and efficient urban services. A broader private sector can create stable jobs in MSMEs, IT and food processing. Better branding and value addition in apples and tourism can lift per tourist and per farmer income.

Stronger governance in Srinagar and Jammu can expand local revenues and civic capacity.

Mumbai proves the power of a deep tax base and strong industry, and Maharashtra shows how a large GSDP expands fiscal space and policy freedom.

Jammu and Kashmir spends heavily per person

today, and its future strength rests on higher earnings, broader taxation and an economy powered by its own output.

Assembly To Debate

such complaints are frequently received. "This is a question of someone's honour. Members have expressed concern over it last year as well as this year. These acts should be tackled sternly. Anyone can say whatever they want," Rather said, adding that the enforcement division should be activated.

Minister for Social Welfare Sakina Itoo said the issue concerns the entire House and informed that a meeting would be convened with the Information Department. "Every day someone is maligned. We cannot explain the havoc it has caused," she said.

MLA Nazir Gurezi from Gurez said a defamatory video was circulated against him accusing him of taking money in exchange for jobs. He requested the Chair to hold an hour long discussion on the matter.

Intervening, Itoo remarked that politicians themselves were often responsible for spreading defamatory content against one another. "If anyone is responsible, it is we politicians. We are maligning each other. These videos first appear on the social media accounts of politicians," she said.

Responding to the demands from members across party lines, the Speaker said the matter is extremely important and will be taken up for discussion. "Please give notice in writing. We will hold a half hour or one hour discussion on this issue during this session," he said.

Set Up Shelter

installation of toilet facilities along the Yatra routes. He also instructed installation of shelter sheds and rain shelters on tracks for pilgrims, service providers and security personnel.

The Board discussed disaster preparedness and mitigation measures, medical care facilities, telecommunication services, grid connectivity, weather forecasting systems, security and surveillance arrangements, and progress on various infrastructure works.

The meeting was informed that the Border Roads Organisation has made significant progress in maintenance, restoration and development of the Yatra tracks, achieving comfortable track width on both Baltal and Pahalgam routes.

The Board also reviewed measures related to dissemination of Yatra-related information, extension of online and prepaid services, digital prepaid system for hiring services, registration of pilgrims, insurance cover for ponies, installation of crash barriers and safety railings on vulnerable stretches, and arrangements for langar and volunteer services.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Chief Executive Officer of the Shrine Board, gave a detailed presentation on the arrangements for the 2026 Yatra.

The meeting was attended by Board members, senior officers of the UT administration, officials from the Border Roads Organisation and other departments, both in person and through virtual mode.

Youth Must Harness

right path in the near future.

He was speaking at the Dyar Daham celebrations, part of the Mahashivratri festivities, held at Mata Bhadrakali Temple in Thalwal, Jammu.

LG paid obeisance to Maa Shakti and Lord Shiva and prayed for peace and prosperity for all.

Addressing the gathering, Sinha said that for thousands of years, the sacred land of India has journeyed toward spiritual excellence, with saints and great souls reaching the pinnacle of consciousness.

"In near future, India alone will guide the world towards the right path. Society, especially the youth, must recognize and harness its spiritual fire alongside its technological and scientific prowess to surpass other nations in the developmental journey," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that India has always placed the pursuit of truth above all else. He said the country's ancient culture has championed peace, global brotherhood, the erasure of social divides, mutual love and steadfast adherence to dharma.

"In today's world, where nations race ahead with one technological marvel after another, we must connect hearts just as deeply," he said.

Highlighting the country's progress, Sinha said India is witnessing two revolutions simultaneously. "The outer revolution empowers infrastructure, artificial intelligence and the digital economy. The inner revolution transforms consciousness, values and a global vision for society," he said.

"We are not just conquering quantum computing, we are awakening a quantum consciousness in daily life. This dual revolution will make India not merely prosperous, but a balanced superpower," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor said India's strength lies not only in its human resources, innovation, startups, science and space technology, but also in its enduring spiritual flame ignited through centuries of wisdom and meditation.

He underlined that spirituality and scientific discovery are not adversaries but allies, stating that science laboratories and ashrams represent parallel milestones on the same civilisational path.

On the occasion, Sinha laid the foundation stone for a cultural heritage centre at Mata Bhadrakali Asthapan. He also commended NHPC for undertaking infrastructure development works worth Rs 6.60 crore at Thalwal, including enhancement of community facilities, development of ghat,

parking, yagya shala, protection wall, fencing and installation of a gate.

Senior officials, members of the Mata Bhadrakali Asthapan Trust and people from different walks of life attended the celebrations.

HC Expands Sexual

Jammu and Srinagar wings of the High Court.

For the Srinagar Wing, the committee will be chaired by Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, with members including Nazir Ahmad Beigh, Masooda Jan and Naseema Hassan Baqal.

For the Jammu Wing, the committee will be headed by Justice Sindhu Sharma as Chairperson. Members include senior advocates and officials such as U K Jalali, Seema Khajuria Shekhar, Deepika Mahajan, Rimpash Sangotra, Prem Sadotra and the Secretary of the High Court Legal Services Committee.

The High Court has directed that the order be circulated to all concerned judicial and administrative authorities for information and necessary action.

Govt Seeks Rs 1,000

several affected areas, permanent restoration remains urgent in many places. Field agencies have been authorised to initiate priority works worth Rs 25 crore.

The Deputy Chief Minister said he personally monitored restoration of 24 bridges to minimise inconvenience to the public. Permanent restoration of these bridges has been completed at a cost of Rs 19.15 crore. Restoration of the Jammu-Srinagar road is currently underway at a cost of Rs 5.30 crore, he said.

Highlighting infrastructure achievements, Choudhary said the Srinagar flyover was completed in record time and five long-pending bridges in Kashmir, which had remained incomplete for 10 to 15 years, have now been completed. Bridges sanctioned under World Bank funding have also been completed, with five more targeted for completion by March 2026.

To address traffic congestion in the twin capital cities, the department has proposed construction of elevated corridors under the Union Territory Capex programme. The proposed corridors include one from Convent School to Rajbagh in Srinagar and another from the National Highway flyover to Maheshpura Chowk in Jammu.

He said widening of the Jammu-Akhnour road under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund will be expedited, and a bridge at Akhnour connecting border areas is scheduled for completion during 2026-27.

Choudhary informed the House that more than 18 major National Highway projects worth Rs 10,600 crore are in the pipeline during the current financial year. Additionally, 22 strategically important bridge projects worth Rs 172 crore have been inaugurated.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, over 3,742 projects covering 22,581 km have been sanctioned under Phases I, II and III, of which 3,517 projects spanning 20,250 km have been completed. The Union Territory has also been on-boarded under PMGSY-IV, with 2,513 eligible habitations identified for all-weather connectivity.

Under Batch-I of PMGSY-IV, 316 projects covering 1,781 km and connecting 429 habitations have been sanctioned and are under execution. Proposals for 1,043 road projects spanning 5,265 km have been submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development, he said.

Choudhary said that under NABARD's Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, 1,145 projects worth Rs 5,245 crore have been sanctioned, while 2,294 projects under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund have been approved at a cost of Rs 4,377.21 crore.

He added that during 2025-26 under the Capex budget, 7,068 works were sanctioned, of which 2,140 have been completed and around 3,000 are in progress.

Reiterating the government's commitment to strengthening infrastructure, the Deputy Chief Minister said the focus remains on improving road connectivity, easing congestion and ensuring quality highway services for commuters across Jammu and Kashmir.

JKRTC Proposes

including Ramgarh constituency will be examined.

"At present, dedicated e-bus services from the airport, railway station or bus stand to tourist destinations in Ramgarh constituency are not available due to limited fleet strength and infrastructure constraints," the minister said, adding that extension of services will be considered after fleet augmentation and operational assessment.

He said that owing to limited fleet strength, JKRTC is currently unable to extend electric bus services beyond essential urban routes in Jammu.

In a separate reply to BJP MLA Ranbir Singh Pathania, Sharma said the financial health of JKRTC has improved in recent years. The corporation, which was operating at a loss prior to 2020-21, posted a deficit of Rs 15.55 crore in 2021-22 but recorded surpluses of Rs 12.27 crore in 2022-23, Rs 22.54 crore in 2023-24 and Rs 70.04 crore in 2024-25.

Total revenue rose from Rs 114.96 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 243.06 crore in 2024-25, while government support has reduced over the years, he said.

The corporation has cleared gratuity and leave salary dues of Rs 80.74 crore from its own resources since 2021-22. A balance liability of Rs 12.20 crore towards retirement benefits remains and will be cleared shortly, the minister added.

Sharma informed the House that cumulative budgetary support of Rs 788.92 crore has been

provided to JKRTC, against which Rs 2,014.70 crore, including Rs 1,225.15 crore as interest, is payable to the government. A proposal seeking waiver of the amount is being submitted.

To improve sustainability, JKRTC has initiated asset monetisation under Public Private Partnership mode by identifying six land parcels in Srinagar and Jammu. Two parcels at Pampore and Nagrota are being developed as Automated Testing Stations under PPP, expected to generate around Rs 3 crore annually.

On electric mobility, the minister said an EV policy is under active consideration. The Housing and Urban Development Department has procured 200 electric buses for Jammu and Srinagar over the last two years to promote clean mobility.

He said fuel is being provided to JKRTC staff vehicles based on actual mileage covered.

Regarding monitoring systems, Sharma said GPS tracking systems have been installed in field vehicles of the Housing and Urban Development Department and e-buses have been integrated with the Intelligent Command and Control Centre for real-time monitoring. All JKRTC buses and trucks are equipped with GPS devices, except staff vehicles. The State Motor Garages Department has approached the National Informatics Centre for preparation of a detailed project report for a GPS-based control system.

An Intelligent Transport Management System is also being implemented to enable real-time tracking, improve fleet utilisation, strengthen revenue monitoring and enhance passenger safety, he said.

The minister noted that due to an over-aged fleet, vehicles required frequent repairs. As many as 237 vehicles were auctioned in 2024-25 and another 236 have been identified for auction in 2026-27. Fleet augmentation is underway to restore routes and improve revenue generation, he added.

1,425 Illegal Structures

for the highest number with 1,133 structures, including 119 commercial establishments, removed by the J and K Lake Conservation and Management Authority, Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Srinagar Development Authority.

Jammu district recorded 237 demolitions, including 75 commercial structures, carried out by the Jammu Development Authority, Jammu Municipal Corporation and revenue authorities. This was followed by 19 demolitions in Ramban by the National Highways Authority of India, 10 in Anantnag by the Pahalgam Development Authority, seven in Kathua and four in Shopian.

Three structures each were demolished in Kulgam, Ganderbal and Udhampur, two in Budgam and one each in Baramulla and Kupwara. The commercial property in Baramulla and three houses in Ganderbal were demolished on directions of the High Court.

"The encroachments are regularly removed as per the provisions of the J and K Public Premises Act and other relevant laws. Any unauthorised construction is dealt with under the provisions of the Control of Building Operations Act by way of service of notices, sealing and demolition drives," the chief minister said.

He added that adequate time is given to violators or encroachers as per the relevant provisions of the law.

Responding to a query on how such constructions were allowed in the first place, Omar said no construction is permitted without proper approval. However, he noted that in some cases, delays occur due to legal intervention, lack of timely police assistance, construction at odd hours or deviation from approved plans, enabling offenders to raise structures to an advanced stage.

DIPR Hosts 'Cine

nitty gritty of filmmaking and art.

Joint Director Information (HQ), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina in his address appreciated the initiative and highlighted the importance of such workshops in nurturing local talent. He reiterated the commitment of DIPR towards implementing the J&K Film Policy effectively to promote Jammu & Kashmir as a preferred filming destination and to generate employment opportunities in the creative sector.

In his welcome address, Nodal Officer, Film Policy J&K, Maheer Thakur highlighted the objectives of organizing the workshop. He emphasized that Cine Connect aims to bridge the gap between aspiring artists and industry professionals by providing first-hand exposure to various aspects of cinema art. He also underlined the significance of the J&K Film Policy in fostering a vibrant film ecosystem in the Union Territory.

The workshop featured eminent resource persons from the film industry like Actor & Director, Ajay Paul Singh Andotra; Filmmaker & Founder, AVD Motion Pictures, Atul Vinod Duggal and Bollywood Actor, Mir Sarwar briefed the participants about performing arts, acting and film making.

Mir Sarwar conducted an engaging and interactive session on acting techniques. He provided a live demonstration explaining different types of acting, including method acting and situational performance, and actively involved participants in practical exercises. His interaction with the youth encouraged them to develop confidence, discipline, and dedication towards pursuing a career in acting.

Ajay Paul Singh Andotra spoke in detail about the scope and career opportunities in acting and direction. He shared insights from his professional journey and guided participants on the skills, training, and perseverance required to succeed in the film industry. He also emphasized the importance of theatre as a foundation for aspiring actors.

Atul Vinod Duggal delivered a comprehensive

presentation on filmmaking, outlining the various departments involved in film production such as direction, cinematography, editing, sound design, production management, scriptwriting, and art direction. He elaborated on the vast scope of employment in Bollywood and regional cinema, encouraging participants to explore diverse technical and creative roles beyond acting.

The Resource persons also provided participants practical exposure and professional insights in the field of performing arts, particularly in acting, film-making, and theatre arts.

An interactive session was also held by resource persons with the students and artists. The session witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and artists, who posed queries related to career pathways, auditions, filmmaking techniques, and industry challenges.

Director Information and Public Relations, Nitish Rajora; Joint Director Information (HQ), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina; Joint Director Information, Jammu, Deepak Dubey; Nodal Officer, Film Policy J&K, Maheer Thakur; officers and officials of DIPR; faculty members from Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Jammu and Government Polytechnic College, Jammu were also present on the occasion.

Pertinently, the workshop marked a significant step towards strengthening the film culture in Jammu & Kashmir and empowering the youth with knowledge and opportunities in the field of cinema

Court Fines Property

allegedly found that Sheikh had no authority over the land. On being confronted, the accused issued a cheque for Rs 72 lakh towards discharge of liability.

The cheque, when presented through Ellaquai Dehati Bank, Lawaypora Srinagar, was returned unpaid on February 18, 2021, with the remark "Insufficient Funds." A statutory legal notice dated February 26, 2021, was served upon the accused, but he neither responded nor made the payment within the stipulated period, prompting the filing of the complaint.

During trial, the accused denied the allegations and claimed that a blank signed cheque had been misused. However, the court observed that once the execution and signature on the cheque were admitted, statutory presumptions under Sections 118 and 139 of the NI Act arose in favour of the complainant. The court held that the accused failed to rebut these presumptions and termed the defence of misuse of a blank cheque as a bald assertion unsupported by evidence.

The court found that all essential ingredients of Section 138 of the NI Act—issuance of cheque, dishonour for insufficiency of funds, service of statutory notice, and failure to pay within the prescribed period—stood proved.

Accordingly, the accused was convicted and sentenced to one year of simple imprisonment. He was also directed to pay a fine of Rs 1.44 crore, double the cheque amount, as mandated under law.

Notably, the accused absconded at the time fixed for pronouncement of judgment. The court directed the concerned SHO to arrest him and lodge him in Central Jail Srinagar forthwith. It also ordered issuance of a levy warrant to the District Collector Budgam for recovery of the fine amount through attachment and execution against the movable and immovable properties of the accused.

Working To Bring

creating hurdles.

Highlighting financial inclusion and entrepreneurship measures, she said that Jammu and Kashmir Bank has extended nearly Rs 14,490 crore under the credit guarantee scheme, calling it the highest in the country. She also noted that nine separate clusters have been created in the Union Territory for manufacturing cricket bats.

The minister said that in Jammu and Kashmir, 8.2 lakh units have been registered and 32.3 lakh people have set up units in the past five years. Under the credit guarantee scheme, loans worth Rs 12 lakh crore have been extended to entrepreneurs across the country.

Under the Prime Minister's employment generation scheme, she said, nearly one crore units have been assisted with subsidy support of Rs 29,000 crore. In Jammu and Kashmir, 73,349 units have been supported with loans worth Rs 4,394 crore, including Rs 1,530 crore in subsidy.

Karandlaje also highlighted progress under the Prime Minister's Vishwakarma Yojana, stating that while the target was to register 30 lakh beneficiaries in four years, the government achieved that number in two years and provided training to 22 lakh people along with toolkits.

On gig workers, she said the government has signed agreements with 12 companies to bring nearly 25 lakh online platform workers under ESI and EPFO coverage.

In a written reply, Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that unemployment data is compiled through the Periodic Labour Force Survey conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation since 2017-18.

According to the latest Annual PLFS report, the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above declined from 4.8 per cent in 2019-20 to 3.2 per cent in 2023-24 at the national level, and from 6.7 per cent to 6.1 per cent in Jammu and Kashmir during the same period.

The Worker Population Ratio for persons aged 15 years and above increased from 50.9 percent to 58.2 percent in the country, and from 52.5 per cent to 60.4 per cent in Jammu and Kashmir between 2019-20 and 2023-24, the minister said.

Khelo India Second Leg

Gulmarg Winter Games to Begin from Feb 23



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The second leg of the Khelo India Winter Games will be held in Gulmarg from February 23 to 26 and is expected to draw close to 400 competitors, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced on Thursday. It will continue the sixth edition of the Games after the first leg, featuring ice sports, was held in Ladakh from January 20 to 26. Gulmarg will host the snow competitions and the Indian Army will defend its overall championship title. "The Gulmarg leg is coming at the back of the

Winter Olympics and this is the perfect time to host the Khelo India Winter Games," Mandaviya stated in a press release. "We had a very successful first phase in Leh and surely, we will see the same excitement in Jammu and Kashmir as athletes will once again battle with nature and challenging conditions. "In Leh, the addition of figure skating enhanced the competitive intensity, and in Gulmarg, we are expecting some impressive timings on the Kongdoori slopes," he added. Gulmarg will feature four medal disciplines -- Ski Mountaineering, Al-

pine Skiing, Nordic Skiing (Cross-Country), and Snowboarding -- with around 400 athletes expected to compete. Alpine Skiing will be drawing the highest participation. At the conclusion of the 2025 season, the Indian Army topped the team standings with 18 medals, while Himachal Pradesh finished second, followed by Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. At the end of the Ladakh leg this year, Haryana led with four gold medals, all won by its figure and ice skaters, followed by Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

Maiden win in T20 World Cup

Clinical Italy Trounce Nepal by 10 Wickets

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Italy trounced Nepal by 10 wickets to record a historic first-ever win in the men's T20 World Cup, producing a clinical show in only the second match of their maiden appearance in the competition, here on Thursday. After their spinners ruled the roost to bowl Nepal out for a paltry 123, brothers Anthony Mosca (62 not out) and Justin Mosca (60 not out) put on a ruthless unbeaten opening stand to crush the Rhinos, who failed to live up to the expectations. Chasing 124, Italy knocked off the runs with 7.2 overs to spare. Younger of the two, Justin smashed three sixes and five fours to make 60 not out off 44 balls, while Anthony too cashed in on a deflated Nepal bowlers, clobbering six sixes and three fours to score 62 not out off only 32 balls. It was only the second match in T20 World Cup history for Italy, who had lost the tournament opener to Scotland by a massive 73 runs in Kolkata. Nepal, who were touted favourites for this clash after their enormous effort against England at the same venue, cut a sorry figure. None of their batters could find a way to counter Italy's accurate spin bowling and fielding, while they



inexplicably held their best spinner Sandeep Lamichhane back for most of the powerplay. By the time Lamichhane, who has featured in various T20 tournaments including the Indian Premier League, was introduced into the attack, Italian openers had knocked 58 runs off from the modest target. Anthony smacked one over long-on in the first over to set the tone while Justin tore into Karan KC in the third, hammering two fours and a six, as Italy made a fiery start. The Mosca brothers hammered a six each off Lalit Rajbanshi in the fourth over as Italy raised their half-century in no time. The Italians cruised at

almost 10 runs an over with Nepal failing to produce any opportunity whatsoever, much to the disappointment of their fans who once again had filled up the Wankhede Stadium's stands in large numbers. Earlier, Ben Manenti (2/9) and Crishan Kalugamage (3/18) stifled Nepal batters in a remarkable display of spin bowling, as Italy bowled out their opponents for a low score. Spinners continued to dominate the proceedings here as Italy showed admirable precision with their line and lengths, combined with some terrific fielding, which kept Nepal constantly under the pump. Manenti strangled the Nepal batters from one

end, returning 4-0-9-2 while Kalugamage finished with three wickets. Former South African player JJ Smuts claimed 1/22 from his four overs for the T20 World Cup debuts, as Nepal crumbled against pressure. Manenti's exploits off the surface with his orthodox off-spin also made his younger brother Harry's job much easier, who has stepped in after Italy lost their skipper Wayne Madsen to a dislocated shoulder. But Madsen's absence was far from being felt in a unit which functioned like a well-oiled machine, with their fielders being present every time there was an opportunity of a catch. Kalugamage trusted

the grip off the surface to beat Dipendra Singh Airee (17) with a wrong-un that crashed into his off-stump, while opener Asif Sheikh's innings was cut-short with a brilliant stumping by wicketkeeper Gian-Piero Meade off Manenti in the eighth over. It was as clinical a bowling performance as it gets from Italy, as they allowed no freebies from the outset and did not drop a single catch, keeping the partisan crowd largely silent. The Nepal innings ended with a run-out via a direct hit from the stand-in skipper Harry. None of the specialist Nepal batters could counter Italy's charge on what remained a true batting wicket. Nepal, who had come agonisingly close to beating England in their last outing here, began with an early dismissal of Kushal Bhurtel and since the beginning of the contest they remained under pressure. Only Rohit Paudel appeared to be counter-attacking when he hit two sixes, but the Nepal skipper was caught at the ropes despite having picked Kalugamage's googly. Aarif Sheikh (27) hit three fours to lead the scorers for Nepal while Karan KC was left stranded on 11-ball 18 not out with one six and a four when the final wicket fell.

2026 AFC U17 Asian Cup

India Drawn with Uzbekistan, Australia & North Korea



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India were drawn with Uzbekistan, Australia and North Korea in Group D of the 2026 AFC U17 Asian Cup in the final draw held at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. The tournament will take place from May 5 to 22 in Saudi Arabia. India qualified for the AFC U17 Asian Cup for the 10th time in history after finishing ahead of Iran, Lebanon, Palestine and Chinese

Taipei in the qualifiers. The Blue Colts will begin their campaign against Australia, followed by Uzbekistan and Korea. Uzbekistan are the defending champions, qualifying automatically for the tournament. Australia were knocked out in the group stage of the 2025 edition and qualified for the 2026 tournament after victories over Jordan, Bhutan and Philippines. Two-time former champions North Korea were

semi-finalists in 2025, thus also qualifying automatically for the current edition. In Group A, hosts Saudi Arabia were drawn alongside Tajikistan, Thailand, and Myanmar. Group B contains Japan, Indonesia, China and Qatar. Group C has South Republic, Yemen, Vietnam and United Arab Emirates. The top two sides from each group will progress to the quarter-finals and also qualify for the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2026.

Afghanistan Players Withdraw from PSL Auction

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: The Afghanistan players withdrew their names from the first-ever Players' auction held ahead of the 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL). A franchise owner confirmed initially that players like Mujeeb ur Rehman, Seddiquallah Atal, Muhammad Nabi, Waqar Salamkheil, Fazal Haq Farooqi had registered for the auction held in Lahore on Wednesday. But they withdrew their names following the backlash over the direct signing of Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz by Peshawar Zalmi. However, Salman Naseer, the CEO of the PSL, said there were some players from Afghanistan who were on the roll but no franchise picked them. "They were a few Af-



ghanistan players in the auction but no franchise went for them," Naseer claimed. But Naseer said the strained relation between the two nations reflected in the auction. "There was a severe backlash after Zalmi signed Gurbaz because of the fractured relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and after Gurbaz pulled himself out of the PSL. So, the other

players also decided better to avoid backlash," he said. The relationship between the two nations has been fractured since late last year after the Pakistan military carried out aerial attacks in selected areas of Afghanistan on the pretext of targeting militants. Several Afghanistan players had lashed out at the Pakistan government on social media, receiving reciprocal response from Pakistan handles.

India U-17 Men Suffer Defeat Against Türkiye

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The India U-17 men's team lost 1-6 to Türkiye in their second friendly match against the hosts at the Manavgat Atatürk Stadyumu in Manavgat, Antalya, on Thursday. India had lost 0-1 in the first friendly on Tuesday. The Blue Colts are using these games to prepare for the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026, which will take place in May. In-

Efe Fettahoglu scored from the penalty spot in the 14th minute before Alaettin Ekici netted a quick brace -- converting a first-time shot from 10 yards in the 20th minute and heading in a cross from the right to make it 4-0 in the 28th. Captain Eren Sayar got in on the act and scored the fifth goal in the 30th minute. India showed some improvement in the second half and pulled a goal back



dia will take on Uzbekistan, Australia and North Korea in Group D. In the game played in windy and rainy conditions, Türkiye took an early lead via Efe Seçil, who smashed home a loose ball from a narrow angle inside the box in the seventh minute. After a period of brief resistance by India, the hosts overpowered Bibiano Fernandes' side again and raced to a 5-0 lead by half-time.

early after the restart. In the 47th minute, Diamond Singh Thokchom picked out Denny Singh Wangkhem just outside the box. The latter curled a stunning effort into the far corner from 20 yards out to bring India on the scoresheet. Türkiye wrapped up the scoring in the 85th minute, with Hasan Tuncel sneaking into the box and slotting home a left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

Court Slaps Rs 10 Lakh Translation Cost on Dhoni

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: The Madras High Court has directed cricketer M S Dhoni to pay Rs 10 lakh towards translation of content related to the defamation suit he had filed against retired IPS officer G Sampathkumar seeking Rs 100 crore as damages for allegedly linking him to the IPL betting scam of 2013. Justice R N Manjula gave the directive while passing further interim orders on February 11 on a suit filed by Dhoni. In her order, the judge said in pursuant to the order dated October 28, 2025, the interpreter of this court has taken up the task of transcribing and translating the contents of the CD's involved in this case. However, the order has been passed on the condition to pay necessary charges. The judge said it was learnt from the interpreter that it was a humongous task and it takes much time and energy of at least one interpreter and a typist for nearly three to four months to complete the same. Since the entire time of one interpreter and the involvement of a typist was also required and the additional cost was also involved in preparing the copies, the charges



for transcription and translation was fixed at a sum of Rs 10 lakh, which was payable by the plaintiff (Dhoni). The judge said that in normal circumstances and in a suit, it was the plaintiff who has to do this work and file the documents along with his plaint. As the engagement of official interpreter was needed in view of the extraneous circumstances and as mentioned in the earlier order dated October 28, 2025, it was obligatory on the part of the plaintiff to pay the cost of the job done, the judge said. Directing the interpreter to complete the transcription and translation of the contents of the CD's before the third week of March, 2026, the judge said the cost of Rs 10 lakh was required to be paid by the plaintiff to the account of Chief Justice Relief Fund, Madras High Court, on or before March 12, 2026, the judge added and posted to March 12, further hearing of the case.

Frustration Mounts Over Bundesliga Refereeing Errors

AP

BERLIN: Germany's referees are under scrutiny after a plethora of questionable decisions and incorrect calls compounded by anger over the video assistant referees' failure to correct them. It's leading to widespread frustration among players and coaches, while fans' patience is tested by lengthy VAR checks that don't always bring clarity, or contentious calls that aren't checked at all. The latest example came in the German Cup on Wednesday when Leipzig was aggrieved not to be awarded at least a free kick after Bayern Munich defender Josip Stanišić clearly fouled Antonio Nusa on the edge of the penalty area early in Bayern's 2-0 win. "It's absolutely crazy," Leipzig coach Ole Werner said. "If four people can't see that as a foul then it's not quarterfinal level, I'm sorry." Bayern also had a questionable call go its way in the Bundesliga against Hoffenheim last weekend, when defender Kevin Akpoguma was sent off early. There was no VAR intervention. The previous weekend,



there were contentious decisions in Bundesliga games between Eintracht Frankfurt and Bayer Leverkusen, Leipzig and Mainz, Hoffenheim and Union Berlin, and Augsburg's match against St. Pauli. Augsburg midfielder Elvis Rexhepaj called for VAR to be scrapped altogether after he was incorrectly penalized in the subsequent game against Mainz. A minutes-long delay for VAR failed to correct referee Patrick Ittrich's erroneous call. Ittrich acknowledged his mistake after the match but by then it was too late. "The biggest problem is there's no common denominator," Dortmund coach Niko Kovac said. "Whoever is sitting in the studio or whoever is refereeing has a different perception and

that makes it difficult. Regardless of who's sitting there the decisions should be consistent." **KEY MATCHUPS** Bayern visits relegation-threatened Werder Bremen on Saturday. The league leader has recovered from an uncharacteristic two-game run without a win and shouldn't face many problems against a team that failed to get a bounce in new coach Daniel Thione's debut last weekend. Bremen is 11 games without a win. Borussia Dortmund hosts Mainz on Friday when it will aim to maintain some pressure on Bayern by provisionally cutting the gap to three points with its sixth consecutive win. But Mainz has won its last three. The battle for Champions

League qualification remains intense with six points between third-placed Hoffenheim and sixth-placed Leverkusen. Only the top four qualify for Europe's most lucrative competition. Hoffenheim hosts Freiburg on Saturday, when Leverkusen hosts St. Pauli and fifth-placed Stuttgart hosts Cologne. Leipzig, which is ahead of Stuttgart on goal difference, welcomes Wolfsburg on Sunday. **PLAYERS TO WATCH** Colombia star Luis Díaz is in arguably the form of his life with five goals in his last three games for Bayern, including Wednesday's cup win over Leipzig and a hat trick against Hoffenheim last weekend. Christoph Baumgartner scored two in Leipzig's 2-1 win over Cologne and the Austria midfielder is instrumental to the team's Champions League push. Nadiem Amiri has led Mainz's revival under new coach Urs Fischer. Amiri scored two penalties last weekend to lift Mainz up to 14th. The team has lost only once in eight league games under Fischer. There were nine defeats in 13 games before that.

Over 1k Athletes Dropped from Khelo India

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday revealed that 1342 athletes in various disciplines have been weeded out of the Khelo India programme in the last three years for not measuring up in performance and doping violations. In his reply to a question in Rajya Sabha seeking details of the performance of the athletes enrolled into the programme, the minister stated 2905 fresh names have been inducted into the flagship scheme during the same period. "A total of 1,342 athletes have exited the programme during the last three years due to performance below the prescribed benchmarks and involvement in doping violations," stated the reply from the minister. "...performance bench-

marks are revised annually and are updated on the Khelo India website from time to time...Athlete performance is mapped and measured annually as per the prescribed protocols and in assessment camps," said the minister. Over 23,000 athletes are being trained and supported across the nation under the Khelo India programme. A Talent Identification and Development Committee (TIDC) of the ministry handles the induction and exit of athletes from the programme through an established protocol that includes performance assessment camps. Khelo India was launched in 2017 to identify and nurture sporting talent at the grassroots level and double Olympic-medallist Manu Bhaker is one of the most prominent beneficiaries of the scheme.



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Over 2,800 Posts Vacant in IAS, IPS & IFoS: Govt



Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Feb 12: More than 2,800 posts are lying vacant in the three All India Services—IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service (IFoS)—with the IAS alone facing a shortage of 1,300 officers, the government informed Parliament on Thursday.

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said that as per the Civil List compiled on January 1, 2025, there are 1,300 vacancies in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), 505 in the Indian Police Service (IPS) and 1,029 in the Indian Forest Service (IFoS).

According to the data, the IAS has a vacancy rate of about 18.9 per cent, with 1,300 posts vacant out of a sanctioned strength of 6,877. The IPS has around 9.9 per cent vacancies, with 505 unfilled against 5,099 sanctioned posts.

The IFoS is the worst hit, with 1,029 vacancies out of 3,193 sanctioned posts — translating into a vacancy rate of approximately 32.2 per cent.

Overall, across the three All India Services, 2,834 posts are vacant out of a combined sanctioned strength of 15,169, reflecting an overall vacancy rate of nearly 18.7 per cent.

The total authorised strength of IAS officers across cadres is 6,877, against which 5,577 officers are in position. In the IPS, 4,594 officers

are in place against a sanctioned strength of 5,099, while in the IFoS, 2,164 officers are in position against 3,193 sanctioned posts.

Cadre-wise data placed in the reply shows that Uttar Pradesh, which has the highest authorised strength of 652 IAS posts, has 571 officers in position. In Madhya Pradesh, 391 IAS officers are in place against a sanctioned strength of 459, while Maharashtra has 359 officers against 435 sanctioned posts.

Similarly, in the IPS, states such as Bihar, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu also show shortfalls between authorised strength and officers in position. The IFoS has seen particularly high vacancies, with several states reporting sizeable gaps between sanctioned and filled posts.

Responding to a separate part of the question, the minister said that during the last five years (Civil Services Examination 2020 to 2024), a total of 245 OBC, 135 SC and 67 ST candidates were appointed to the IAS through direct recruitment. In the IPS, 255 OBC, 141 SC and 71 ST candidates were appointed, while in the IFoS, 231 OBC, 95 SC and 48 ST candidates joined during the same period.

The data was shared in response to a question by CPI-M member John Brittas on the sanctioned strength, officers in position, representation of reserved categories and vacancies in the All India Services.

Tycoon Apologises for ‘UK Colonised’ by Immigrants Remark

Aditi Khanna

London, Feb 12: A prominent British billionaire was forced to apologise on Thursday after a backlash from Prime Minister Keir Starmer and other political leaders for claiming that the UK had been “colonised by immigrants”.

Jim Ratcliffe, one of the richest Britons as founder of the INEOS chemicals group and co-owner of the Manchester United football club, told ‘Sky News’ in an interview on Wednesday that Britain faces serious social and economic challenges due to a massive rise in immigration in recent years.

However, the 73-year-old businessman was forced to backtrack the following day and said he was “sorry” for his choice of language.

“The UK has been colonised by immigrants, really, hasn’t it? I mean, the population of the UK was 58 million in 2020; now it’s 70 million. That’s 12 million people,” Ratcliffe said during the interview.

“You can’t have an economy with 9 million people on benefits and huge levels of immigrants coming in. I mean, the UK has been colonised. It’s costing too much money,” he said.

It triggered an instant reaction, with Starmer dubbing the remarks “offensive and wrong”.

“Britain is a proud, tolerant and diverse country. Jim Ratcliffe should apologise,” he said in a social media post.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Manchester, also took to so-



cial media to condemn the comments as “inaccurate, insulting, and inflammatory” and said that should be withdrawn because they go against everything the city stands for.

“Calling for curbs on levels of immigration is one thing; portraying those who come here as a hostile invading force is quite another,” said Burnham.

Amid a barrage of criticism, including from Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey, who said the views were “totally out of step with British values”, Ratcliffe issued a statement to stress that his intention was to highlight the need for managed migration.

His statement reads, “I am sorry that my choice of language has offended some people in the UK and Europe and caused concern, but it is important to raise the issue of controlled and well-managed

immigration that supports economic growth.

“My comments were made while answering questions about UK policy at the European Industry Summit in Antwerp, where I was discussing the importance of economic growth, jobs, skills and manufacturing in the UK.

“My intention was to stress that governments must manage migration alongside investment in skills, industry and jobs so that long-term prosperity is shared by everyone. It is critical that we maintain an open debate on the challenges facing the UK.”

Downing Street responded to say that the businessman, who reportedly shifted his tax residency from the UK to Monaco over five years ago, was right to apologise.

“The Prime Minister asked for an apology, and one’s been issued, and it’s absolutely right that Jim Ratcliffe has

apologised for that language,” a spokesperson said.

“We are, of course, of the view that there should be a serious debate about immigration, but the Prime Minister believes in a Britain built for all, and that those comments were inflammatory and divisive,” the spokesperson said.

Ratcliffe, however, did receive support from far-right quarters with former prime minister Liz Truss – no longer Tory member of Parliament – and anti-immigration Reform UK led by Nigel Farage among those speaking out in support of his stance.

“Ratcliffe is right. Now let’s see him and fellow business leaders step up and help fix the country,” said Truss.

“One million people living in Britain don’t speak English. Areas of our towns and cities have been completely changed. Jim Ratcliffe is right,” said Farage.

Birth Caste Unchanged Even After Religion Change: HC



Press Trust of India

Prayagraj, Feb 12: The Allahabad High Court has observed that the caste of a person by birth remains the same even if he or she changes religion while granting relief to a woman, saying even marriage does not change her caste.

Justice Anil Kumar made this observation while dismissing a criminal appeal filed by Dinesh and eight others who challenged an order passed by the Special Judge, SC/ST Act, Aligarh, summoning them to face trial for offences under Sections of IPC and SC/ST Act.

A criminal complaint was filed by the woman against the appellants, alleging that she was assaulted by them, who also used casteist slurs against her during the altercation. She further alleged that three people, including herself, were injured in the incident.

The appellants had moved the court by filing the case and pleaded that though the woman originally belonged to the SC/ST community by birth and is originally a resident of West Bengal, she lost her caste status after she married a man belonging to the Jat community.

Therefore, summoning the appellants for offences under the SC/ST Act was not sustainable.

On the appellants’ plea that the woman has lost her caste after marrying someone from the Jat community, the court in its order dated February 10 observed, “Though a person may change religion, his or her caste remains the same despite conversion to another religion. Hence, marriage does not change a person’s caste. Therefore, the said contention is unsustainable.”

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