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Dated: 16-02-2026



**Nasha Mukta
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LG Orders Reopening Of 14 Tourist Spots

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday ordered the reopening of several tourist destinations across Jammu and Kashmir following a detailed security review. The sites had been temporarily closed as a precautionary measure.

According to officials, 11 tourist spots in the Kashmir Division and three in the Jammu Division will reopen with immediate effect.

In Kashmir, the destinations cleared for reopening include Yousmarg and Doodhpathri in Budgam district; Dandipora Park in Kokernag area of Anantnag; Peer Ki Gali, Dubjan and Padpawan in Shopian; Astanpora and Tulip Garden in Srinagar;



Thajwas Glacier and Hung Park in Ganderbal; and Wullar Watlab in Baramulla.

In the Jammu Division, Devi Pindi in Reasi district, Mahu Mangat in Ramban and Mughal Maidan in Kishtwar have been ordered to | [More on P10](#)

Tourism Stakeholders Hail Decision

Tourism stakeholders across Kashmir welcomed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's decision to reopen several tourist spots, terming it a major boost for the sector and a strong confidence building measure ahead of the upcoming tourist season. Industry players said the move comes at a crucial time as the Valley prepares for the spring season, when tourist arrivals typically begin | [More on P10](#)

J&K To Be Free Of Violence By 2029: Amit Shah

'Violence Down Over 80% Post Art 370 Abrogation'

Says J&K Moving Steadily Towards Lasting Peace

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that Jammu and Kashmir is steadily progressing towards lasting peace, asserting that incidents of violence have dropped significantly since the abrogation of Article 370.

Addressing the 79th Raising Day celebrations of Delhi Police, Shah said the country's internal security scenario has witnessed a remarkable transformation over the past decade. He stated that violence in Jammu and Kashmir, the Northeast and Left Wing Extremism-affected areas has declined by more than 80



percent. "In Jammu & Kashmir the security situation is gradually improving following the abrogation of the region's special status under Article 370. I can assure the | [More on P10](#)

₹209 Cr Online Investment Scam Unearthed In J&K, 9 Held

835 bank accounts collected showing deposits of Rs 209 crore

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police have unearthed a transnational online investment scam involving over 209 crore and arrested nine persons, including an MBBS doctor from Haryana, officials said on Monday.

The scam, which operated through phishing and fake trading platforms, was busted following a complaint lodged by Firdous Ahmad Mir of Safapora in Ganderbal district.

Based on the complaint, an FIR (No. 08/2026) under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Information Technology Act was registered at Police Station Ganderbal. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal Khalil



Ahmad Poswal constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the case.

During the investigation, police found that fake online investment websites circulated on social media and search engines lured people with promises of high returns through coin trading platforms. Once victims invested, the money was diverted to

bank accounts of individuals from Budgam, Srinagar, Ganderbal, Baramulla and other places, officials said.

The funds were subsequently layered through multiple accounts and transferred outside Jammu and Kashmir and even abroad to evade detection.

Police said the accused operated Telegram channels and

groups to circulate fresh QR codes whenever existing accounts were frozen by cyber units following complaints.

So far, details of 835 bank accounts have been collected and transactions in 290 accounts verified, showing deposits of Rs 209 crore from investors across the country. The amount is likely to exceed Rs 400 crore upon complete verification, officials said.

Further investigation is underway to trace the money trail and attach properties of the accused.

Police have advised the public not to fall prey to fake investment websites promising high returns and cautioned against renting out bank accounts for monetary gain. Victims can lodge complaints on the national cyber-crime portal or contact the toll-free | [More on P10](#)

Kashmir Landowners Flag Highway Payment Delay

As Srinagar Ring Road nears completion, affected farmers in Central Kashmir press for release of pending dues.

Syed Sammar Mehdi

Srinagar: More than three dozen families in central Kashmir's Budgam district say they are still waiting for compensation months after a fresh award was prepared in their favour, and have now appealed to Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari to intervene.

The land was acquired in 2019 for the Srinagar Ring Road project, a key highway initiative in Jammu and Kashmir.

Around 600 acres of agricultural land were taken at the time. While the initial payments were made, several landowners challenged the amount in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

In 2023, the High Court directed authorities to grant 20



percent additional compensation. The Jammu and Kashmir government appealed the ruling, but the Supreme Court of India rejected the challenge, effectively upholding the order.

Following the judgment, the Collector for Land Acquisition in Budgam, Afroza Bano, prepared a revised award in November last year.

In a communication dated

Nov. 27, 2025, the Collector forwarded documents to the Project Director of the National Highways Authority of India in Srinagar, seeking the release of more than Rs 125 crore for landowners in Wathoora Chadoora village.

But the families say the money has yet to reach them.

"It has been more than three months since | [More on P10](#)

2 Pak Nationals Escape Jammu Juvenile Home

Observer News Service

Jammu: Three inmates, including two Pakistani nationals, escaped from an Observation Home in the border area of RS Pura in Jammu on Monday evening after allegedly attacking and injuring two on duty police personnel, triggering a high alert in the region.

Official sources said the incident occurred at around 5.15 pm inside the juvenile facility when the inmates allegedly assaulted the policemen and managed to flee from the premises.

The escaped inmates have been identified as Karajeet Singh alias Gugga, a resident of Dablehar in RS Pura, and two Pakistani nationals, Mohammad Sunaullah and Ahsan Anwar, who were lodged at the Observation Home.

Two policemen, identified as Vinay Kumar and Praveen Kumar, sustained injuries in



the attack. An official said both are stable and were shifted to Government Medical College Jammu after being administered first aid.

Senior police officers rushed to the spot soon after the incident. A large scale search operation was launched, and special teams have been constituted to trace and apprehend the fugitives. Raids are being conducted at multiple locations, while security has been tightened across RS Pura and adjoining areas.

Police have | [More on P10](#)

Despite Similar GDP, Himachal Delivers Higher Earnings Than Kashmir

Factories, hydropower and stronger cities widen the gap between the two Himalayan apple heartlands.

Irshad Mushtaq

Srinagar: The Himalayas rise over Shopian and Shimla with the same snow and sun. Apples grow in both valleys, and rivers carve through both landscapes. The difference begins when the numbers are counted.

Jammu and Kashmir has about 1.23 crore people living across roughly 42,241 square kilometers. Himachal Pradesh



has around 68.6 lakh people spread over nearly 55,673 square kilometers.

Kashmir carries almost double the population on a slightly smaller land base. Literacy stands

near 67 percent in J&K and around 83 percent in Himachal. That gap defines everything that follows.

A more educated workforce in Himachal feeds industry,

services and entrepreneurship. Lower literacy in Kashmir limits how much each worker can produce and earn.

The total size of their economies appears similar at first glance.

J&K's GSDP stands near ₹2.65 lakh crore in 2024-25 and is projected to approach ₹2.86 lakh crore in 2025-26. Himachal's GSDP ranges between ₹2.1 and ₹2.3 lakh crore. The totals sit in the same league.

Income per person tells a different story.

J&K's per-capita income has climbed toward roughly ₹1.9 lakh. Himachal's has moved to about ₹2.57 lakh in 2024-25, up from | [More on P10](#)

Forfeiture of 25 Books HC Gives Centre More Time To File Reply

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has granted till time to the Centre to submit its reply in a batch of petitions assailing the forfeiture of 25 books dealing with Kashmir's political and social history.

A full-judge Bench comprising Chief Justice Arun Palli, Justice Rajnesh Oswal and Justice Shahzad Azeem noted in its order that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir had already filed its response and that the petitioners had also submitted their rejoinder.

However, despite opportunity, no reply had been filed by the Centre, the court said. Underling that there was

"hardly any justification to defer the proceedings any further," the Bench however adjourned the matter to March 25 after senior counsel for respondents (Centre) undertook to file a response before the next date of hearing, with an advance copy to the petitioners' counsel.

The petitions have been filed by Shakir Shabir, Swastik Singh, David Devadas, CPI(M) leader Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, Air Vice Marshal Kapil Kak, and others.

The petition filed by Kak and others, including Sumantra Bose, whose two books have been forfeited, author Radha Kumar, and former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat | [More on P10](#)

Mainly Dry Weather In J&K This Week: IMD

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The India Meteorological Department on Monday forecast mainly dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir over the next week, with only isolated light snowfall expected in higher reaches.

According to the latest forecast, light snow may occur at isolated higher reaches on February 17, while conditions from February 18 to 24 are likely to remain generally dry. The weather is expected to turn partly to generally cloudy on February 25 and 26, with light snowfall possible in isolated higher areas towards the evening and night of February 28.

In early March, particularly on March 1 and 2, generally cloudy | [More on P10](#)

PM Modi to Visit Israel on Feb 25-26

Press Trust Of India

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Israel on a two-day visit from February 25 to 26, sources said on Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu first broke news of Modi's visit while addressing the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations on Sunday.

"Parliament address on the anvil. Who's coming here next week? Narendra Modi," Netanyahu told the gathering.

"Tremendous alliance between Israel and India, and we are going to discuss all sorts of cooperation. Now, you know, India is not a small country. It has 1.4 billion people. India is enormously powerful, enormously



popular," he stressed.

A source here told PTI that PM Modi's visit is 'likely to be short from February 25 to 26', but "its impact is deep given the popularity Modi enjoys not only in Israel but around the world".

While the programme around the visit is being worked out, PM Modi is expected to address the Israeli Knesset (parliament).

Modi is likely to touch upon all issues of bilateral and regional interest during his two-day visit.

This would be his second visit to Israel, the first being in July 2017, which was also the first ever by an Indian Prime Minister to the Jewish state.

The high-profile visit of the Indian Prime Minister comes on the heels of several other high-level ministerial exchanges from both sides.

Minister of Tourism Haim Katz, Minister of Economy and Industry Nir Barkat, Minister of

Agriculture and Food Security Avi Dichter, and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich visited India last year as the strategic partners built up momentum to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The two countries signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) during Smotrich's visit and then a Terms of Reference (TOR) leading to FTA during the visit of Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal to Israel in November.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Israel in December when he called upon Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and Barkat.

In November, India and Israel inked a landmark agreement to enhance defence, industrial, and technological cooperation, enabling the sharing of advanced technology to promote co-development and co-production.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) of Israel and India met in Tel Aviv in November for their annual meeting, led by the Israel Ministry of Defence (MOD) Director General Maj. Gen. (Res.) Amir Baram and Indian Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

"This strategic dialogue with India takes place at a critical juncture for both countries. Our strategic partnership is based on deep mutual trust and shared security interests. We view India as a first-rate strategic partner and are determined to continue deepening cooperation in the fields of defence, technology, and industry," Baram had said after the meeting.

Separately, a special panel was held with the CEOs of major defence industries, during which innovative and groundbreaking Israeli technologies were presented, along with ideas and projects aimed at deepening industrial-defence partnerships between Israel's defence industries and India.

"A wide range of areas for cooperation have been identified in the agreement that will benefit both countries. Important areas include joint planning, training, defence industrial cooperation, and capabilities including Science & Technology, Research &



Diplomacy Resumes in Geneva as Iran-US Tensions Simmer

Trans Asia News

Geneva- Iran's top diplomat met with the head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency on Monday, ahead of a second round of negotiations with the United States over Tehran's nuclear programme.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and said he would also meet with Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi of Oman, which is hosting the US-Iran talks in Geneva on Tuesday.

"I am in Geneva with real ideas to achieve a fair and equitable deal," Araghchi wrote on X. "What is not on the table: submission before threats."

The IAEA chief added that the meeting was held "in preparation for important negotiations scheduled for tomorrow in Geneva."

The Monday meeting came as Iran and the United States are to hold a second round of indirect talks on the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear program on Tuesday. Oman is expected to continue its intermediary role.

Iranian and American delegations, led by Araghchi and US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, resumed nuclear talks in Muscat on February 6, months after

Israel's aggression of June 2025.

Iran's main demand in Muscat remains the effective and verifiable lifting of economic sanctions. Officials in Tehran have repeatedly stated that any agreement without tangible economic benefit would be meaningless in practice.

The negotiations will take place as US President Donald Trump has deployed military forces to the region, heightening concerns about possible new military action. US officials said on February 12 that the Pentagon was sending an additional aircraft carrier to the region, adding thousands more troops along with fighter aircraft and guided-missile destroyers.

In late January, Trump spoke of "another beautiful armada" of warships heading toward Iran and claimed that failure to reach a deal would bring consequences "far worse" than the June strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.

Anti-war organizations, however, caution that another confrontation would be disastrous, pointing to the 12-day war in June 2025 as a stark example.

Iran's drills take place against the US military buildup

Just before the talks, Iran announced its naval forces started the drill early Monday

morning in the waterways that are crucial international trade routes through which 20 per cent of the world's oil passes.

Separately, EOS Risk Group said sailors passing through the region received by radio a warning that the northern lane of the Strait of Hormuz, in Iranian territorial waters, likely would see a live-fire drill Tuesday.

The Naval forces of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have started military drills off the country's southern coast, practicing smart control of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, Press TV reported. The combined live-fire intensive drills, named "Smart Control of the Hormuz Strait," began on Monday and are directly supervised by the IRGC Chief Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour.

The drills aim to test the readiness of the IRGC Navy's operational units and review support programs and scenarios in the face of "possible security and military threats" in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Smart utilization of Iran's geopolitical advantages in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is another main objective of the military exercise. This is the second time in recent weeks sailors have received warning about an Iranian live fire drill.

SC to Examine Petitions on Women's Entry at Religious Sites

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- The Supreme Court on Monday said that a nine-judge bench will commence final hearing on a batch of petitions relating to discrimination against women in religions and at religious places, including Kerala's Sabarimala Temple.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymaya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said the bench, which will be constituted by the CJ, will commence the crucial hear-

the nodal counsel for parties supporting the review of the Sabarimala verdict.

It also appointed Shashwati Pari as the nodal counsel for those opposing the review of the verdict.

"We also deem it appropriate that senior advocate K Parameshwar along with Shivam Singh are appointed as the amicus. Singh shall submit the stand taken by all parties before this court," the CJ said.

"The nine judge bench will begin hearing the Sabarimala re-



ing on the petitions on April 7.

It said that the hearing is likely to conclude on April 22.

The bench asked the parties to file their written submissions on or before March 14.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Centre said he supported the pleas for review of the Sabarimala verdict that allowed entry of women of all age groups in the sacred hill-top shrine in Kerala.

The bench-appointed lawyer Krishna Kumar Singh is

view case on April 7, 2026 at 10:30 am. The review petitioners or the party supporting them shall be heard from April 7 to April 9. The ones opposing the review shall be heard on April 14 to April 16. The rejoinder submissions, if any will be heard on April 21, 2026 followed by the final and concluding submissions by the learned amicus.. which is expected to be over by April 22," the order said.

The bench asked the lawyer for the parties to adhere to the time schedule.

BJP Workers 'Cleanse' Temple with Cow Urine After Muslim MLA's Visit



Press Trust Of India

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar - Bharatiya Janata Party workers carried out a 'purification' ritual using cow urine at a temple in Sillod in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar after Muslim Shiv Sena MLA and former state minister Abdul Sattar entered it for darshan.

A video of Sattar's visit to the Shiva temple in Rahimabad in his assembly constituency Sillod on the occasion of Mahashivratri on Sunday went vi-

ral on social media, triggering protests from the BJP and other outfits.

Later, BJP workers spraying 'gomutra' at the temple to 'purify' it was also widely circulated on social media.

"Sattar eats cow meat and has harmed the sanctity of the temple (with his visit); that is why we sprayed gomutra to purify it. He fools both Muslims and Hindus. He went for Haj recently and now goes to a temple," Sillod unit BJP chief Manoj Morellu told reporters on Monday.

Tarique Rahman to Take Oath as Bangladesh PM Today

Press Trust Of India

Dhaka: Tarique Rahman will take oath as the new Prime Minister of Bangladesh on Tuesday after leading his party to a forceful victory in the crucial general elections.

Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has bagged 209 out of 297 seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami secured 68 seats in the 13th Parliamentary elections. Deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was barred from contesting polls.

Breaking with a long-standing tradition, the swearing-in ceremony of the 60-year-old BNP chairman would be held at the South Plaza of the Parliament Complex instead of

Bangabhaban.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin will administer the oath to the new cabinet members at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad on Tuesday afternoon, state-run BSS news agency reported on Monday.

"The Parliament Secretariat is set to hold the oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet members at 4:00 pm tomorrow," Secretary of the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat Kaniz Maula said.

Earlier Tuesday, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin would administer the oath to all newly elected members of the parliament.

All 297 newly elected lawmakers of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad (JS) will "first take oath as the members of parliament



(MPs) and then as the members of the Constitutional Reform Council," said a press release of JS Secretariat.

BNP has called a parliamentary party meeting at the Parliament Building at 11:30 am to elect the parliamentary party leader.

"As the leader of the major-

ity party, our party chairman, Tarique Rahman, will be the Prime Minister," said Salah Uddin Ahmed, a member of the standing committee of the BNP.

The Constitutional dictates - immediately after their swearing-in, the BNP MPs will elect their leader who will be

invited by the President to form the government, a Bangabhaban presidential palace official said on Monday.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of Rahman. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Secretary-General of Lok Sabha Utpal Kumar Singh are also likely to accompany Birla.

Rahman would become the prime minister for the first time. He will replace the interim government chief Muhammad Yunus, under whose tenure Dhaka's relations with New Delhi witnessed a significant downturn.

Yunus took charge in August 2024 after the collapse of Hasina's Awami League regime following the massive anti-government protests.

NEWS MAKERS

Indian Jailed in Singapore for Posing as Prison Officer

Singapore, Feb 16 (PTI) An Indian-origin man was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment by a Singapore court on Monday after he pleaded guilty to pretending to be a prison officer in an email sent to President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and the Secretariat of the Singapore Parliament.

Prakash Paramasivam, 25, had sent the mails to obtain help for his previous convictions, as he felt he was wrongly convicted, the prosecution said.

Without revealing details, the prosecutor added that between 2018 and 2023, Prakash had been in and out of jail for offences including criminal intimidation by anonymous communication.

Separately, Prakash pretended to be the prison officer in an email sent to Des-



Prakash pretended to be the prison officer in an email sent to Desmond Lee, then National Development Minister and current Education Minister, for help in some family matters

mond Lee, then National Development Minister and current Education Minister, for help in some family matters, reported The Straits Times.

He has also been accused of making a fake medical certificate.

His offence came to light when police contacted the doctor, who said he had not issued the certificate.

Prakash was arrested on July 8, 2025, and has been in remand since.

Calling for strong deterrence, DPP Chua urged the court on Monday to sentence him to between seven and nine months in jail: "The accused has... shown himself to be a serial and habitual offender with a marked proclivity towards sending false messages to third parties."

Tina Ambani to Appear Before ED Today

New Delhi, Feb 16 (PTI) Tina Ambani, former actor and wife of Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani, is expected to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday for questioning in a money-laundering case.

This is the second summons issued to 69-year-old Tina Ambani.

She was issued the first summons to depose before the federal probe agency here on February 10 but she had skipped it.

She was then issued a fresh summons, asking her to appear before the ED on February 17.

There was no immediate response from ED officials on the development.

Once Tina Ambani deposes, she will be questioned and her statement will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), officials had said.

Anil Ambani, 66, has also been asked to depose before the agency on February 18 for the second time as part of the investigation linked to multiple Reliance Group companies and their bank loans. He first appeared before the ED in August 2025.

The Reliance Group has not responded to news reports related to these summonses.

It is understood that Tina Ambani has been called for questioning with regard to a money trail linked to the purchase of a luxury condominium in New York's Manhattan.

The ED recently arrested former RCOM (Reliance Communication) president Punit Garg in the case.

The New York property was "fraudulently" sold in 2023 during the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) of RCOM by Garg, the ED had claimed in a statement earlier.

Kashmir Colleges Reopen After 52-Day Winter Break

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Colleges in Kashmir valley on Monday resumed activities following a 52 days of winter vacations. The Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Department on December-23-2025 had announced 52-days winter vacation for degree colleges falling in the winter zones of Kashmir division.

According to KNO, the government had said that the degree colleges in the Kashmir Division and those in the winter zone of Jammu Division shall observe winter vacations from December-24-2025 to February-14-2026. Pertinently, the schools in Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu division are all set to resume regular class work from February-23.

On November-25, School Education Department (SED)

had announced winter break in a phased manner for Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu division.

SED in an order had said that the vacations for Pre-primary (Balvatika) classes shall commence from November-26 to February-28-2026.

In case of middle classes upto 8th standard, the department had said that the vacations shall be observed from December-01 to February-28.

It also said that the winter break for 9th to 12th standard shall commence from December-11 to February-22. SED had ordered the teaching faculty to remain available for any academic activity during the vacation period. The Teaching staff was ordered to report back to their respective schools on February-20-2026 for making arrangements regarding opening of schools.

Locals Seek Urgent Attention to Drainage Woes in Baramulla Town

Mosin Ahmed

BARAMULLA: The persistent problem of poor drainage and waterlogging at several key locations has emerged as a serious concern for residents, pedestrians, commuters and shopkeepers in north Kashmir's Baramulla town.

One of the most alarming spots is near Cariappa Park, a prominent public space that houses the iconic 'I Love Baramulla' signboard mounted along its fence and a clock tower at the entrance. An uncovered underground drain lies adjacent to the park, posing a significant safety hazard. The risk is compounded by the presence of a busy road junction and a passenger stop in close proximity, where heavy footfall is witnessed throughout the day.

Pedestrians say the area remains crowded with children, elderly persons and daily commuters, and a momentary distraction could lead to a serious mishap.

"Throughout the day, hundreds of people pass through this area. One misstep can become a lifetime regret. Especially at dusk, the spot becomes more dangerous. Public safety should

not be compromised at any cost," said Dar Younis, a local pedestrian.

Meanwhile, a stretch of the national highway near Government Degree College for Women, Baramulla, turns extensively waterlogged during rainfall, causing major inconvenience to commuters and shopkeepers. Residents said the portion transforms into a virtual pool of water even after brief spells of rain, disrupting traffic movement and affecting business activity.

Shopkeepers complained that the recurring waterlogging discourages customers from visiting their establishments. "The most embarrassing moment is when vehicles splash dirty water over pedestrians or students. Two-wheelers also risk losing balance in such conditions," said Muhammad Feroz, a resident.

The drainage situation in the Sabzi Market and Main Bazar areas is equally troubling. With a large number of street vendors operating in the vegetable market, drains often get clogged with plastic waste and polythene bags, leading to frequent overflows. Similar issues persist in the Main Bazar, where choked drains and the absence of protective cover

grills have heightened safety risks. Shopkeepers have urged the authorities to undertake immediate cleaning drives and install proper grill covers over open drains to prevent accidents.

"During peak rush hours, someone could easily fall into these open drains. It's no longer just about inconvenience—it's about public safety. During rainfall, customers hesitate to enter our shops, which directly affects our livelihood," a shopkeeper said.

Efforts to contact the concerned departments for a response did not yield any comment at the time of filing this report.

The issue of public safety linked to neglected drains and open pits has also found mention at the national level. Recently, Aam Aadmi Party MP Ashok Kumar Mittal raised concerns during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha over incidents of fatalities caused by dug-up pits, open manholes and neglected ditches, underlining the need for greater accountability and preventive measures.

Residents here hope that similar attention will be paid to Baramulla's drainage concerns before inconvenience turns into tragedy.

MLA Bhaderwah Calls on LG Manoj Sinha



JAMMU: Daleep Singh Parihar, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Bhaderwah, on Monday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in Jammu. (Observer News Service)

Girl Dies, Mother Critical After Hit by Motorcycle

SRINAGAR: A 10-year-old girl lost her life while her mother sustained critical injuries after they were allegedly hit by a motorcycle at Bugam area of Chadoora in Budgam district on Monday, officials said. An official told KNO that the mother and daughter, residents of Kultreh, Chadoora, were struck by a motorcycle in Bugam.

He said both were immediately shifted to SDH Chadoora for treatment.

However, the girl identified as Qaira Mushtaq (10) succumbed to her injuries at the hospital, while her mother, identified as Shakeel Bano, wife of Mushtaq Ahmad Kumar, was referred to Srinagar for advanced treatment, and her condition is said to be critical, the official said. (Observer News Service)

Top Army Commanders Review Counter Terrorism Grid in Kishtwar



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Top Army commanders on Monday visited the general area of Kishtwar to review the Counter Terrorism Grid and assess operational preparedness of troops deployed in the region.

According to the details available with KNO, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of White Knight Corps (16 Corps), Lieutenant General P K Mishra, accompanied by the General Officer Commanding of Counter-Insurgency Force (Delta), during their visit assessed operational preparedness of troops deployed in the region.

"The senior commanders received updates on the prevailing security scenario, operational challenges and ongoing measures to strengthen the security framework and inter-agency coordination among the Army, police and Central Reserve Police Force in the hilly districts," said an official.

"The focus of deliberations was on enhancing

vigilance, accelerating intelligence-driven operations and sustaining a robust security posture in the Chenab Valley and adjoining areas," he added.

Pertinently the visit came against the backdrop of intensified counter-terror efforts in both Kishtwar and neighbouring Udhampur districts.

In recent weeks, joint operations by the Army, J&K Police, CRPF and other forces have led to significant engagements with terrorists linked to banned terrorist outfits, resulting in neutralisation of suspected operatives in both regions.

These actions form part of a coordinated campaign to dismantle terror networks and disrupt their movement through dense forests and mountainous terrain.

Security forces have continued search and cordon operations amid challenging weather and landscape, emphasising enhanced surveillance, aviation support and reinforcement of forward positions to maintain area dominance.

"Wellness Without Age: Yoga for Senior Citizens at Budgam"



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: In a heartening initiative aimed at promoting healthy and active ageing, the District Social Welfare Department Budgam on Monday organised a special yoga session for senior citizens at the Indoor Sports Stadium, Budgam, in collaboration with the District Youth Services & Sports Office Budgam.

A significant number of elderly men and women participated enthusiastically in the programme, turning the stadium into a vibrant space of positivity and collective wellness. The session was specifically designed keeping in

mind the physical needs and limitations of senior citizens, with instructors guiding participants through simple yoga asanas, gentle stretches, and breathing exercises suited to their age group.

Officials present on the occasion emphasised that yoga plays a crucial role in enhancing physical fitness, improving flexibility and mobility, reducing stress, and strengthening mental resilience among the elderly. They noted that such initiatives not only contribute to better health outcomes but also foster social interaction and emotional well-being among senior citizens.

NH-444 Link Road Thrown Open in Pulwama

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a major infrastructural milestone for south Kashmir, the long-pending NH-444 link road connecting Bonura to Gudoora in Pulwama district was opened for traffic on Monday.

As per KNO, the opening of the highway will bring much-needed relief to thousands of daily commuters and would significantly reduce congestion

mornings and evenings," said Mohammad Yousof, a shopkeeper at Bonura crossing. "With this NH-444 link finally open, vehicles are flowing smoothly from the very first day. It is a huge relief for traders, commuters and pedestrians alike."

Another resident, Mudasir Ahmad from Newa, highlighted the impact on emergency services and overall mobility. "Earlier ambulances



in Pulwama town.

The newly operational stretch connects several key routes, including Rajpora Road, Shopian Road, Pakherpora Road and Rohmoo Road, effectively creating an alternative corridor for vehicles that earlier had no option but to pass through Pulwama's overcrowded town centre. With this connectivity now in place, traffic is being smoothly diverted, easing pressure on internal roads that routinely witness long jams, particularly during peak hours.

Residents from Pulwama town and surrounding villages described the development as a "game changer" for daily life.

"For years we have suffered massive traffic congestion, especially in the

would often get stuck in town traffic, sometimes for several minutes. Now movement is much faster and safer. This road has truly improved accessibility," he said.

People also appreciated the efforts of the district administration and the executing agencies for completing the long-awaited project, urging authorities to ensure regular maintenance, proper signage and safety measures, especially during the winter season.

The opening of the NH-444 Bonura-Gudoora stretch has been widely welcomed as a timely and people-friendly initiative, expected to transform traffic management in Pulwama town while improving connectivity and economic prospects across the district.

Sopore Gets Drug De-Addiction Centre

Observer News Service

SOPORE: Sopore in north Kashmir gets its own drug de-addiction centre, with officials saying the facility will strengthen the subdivision's response to substance abuse and expand access to treatment facilities.

The facility was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Minga Sherpa, who said the centre was sanctioned earlier and completed in record time by the Rural Development Department.

He said the district already has a treatment facility at Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla and a facility run by the police. However, Sopore lacked such infrastructure, forcing patients to travel outside the subdivision for medi-

cal care. "With this centre, people from Sopore and nearby areas will have access to screening and basic treatment locally," Sherpa said.

According to KNO, the DC said the Government of India (GoI) had proposed setting up the facility in Sopore. The administration, he said, will now equip the centre in phases and post additional staff to make it fully operational.

"Efforts will be made to provide recovery and treatment services at the new facility, including indoor patient care in the future, so that patients do not have to depend entirely on GMC Baramulla," DC Sherpa added.

The facility was a long-pending demand of the people, especially families grappling with substance abuse cases.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT KHANSAHIB

Advertisement Notice: No. 01 of 2026

Dated: 13-02-2026

Subject: Advertisement for Recruitment of Sangini (Anganwadi Worker) in Anganwadi Centre Zampora-A Ward No 02 of Poshan Project Khansahib.

Reference:

- 1- Government order No: 222-JK (SWD) of 2022 dated: 30-11-2022.
- 2- Government order No: 103-JK (SWD) of 2023 Dated: 28-04-2023.
- 3- Joint Director Poshan Letter No: MD/POSHAN/47135-46 Dated: 24-12-2025.
- 4- District Programme Officer Poshan Budgam Vite No: PO-ICDS/Advt/AWW-H/01 Dated: 29-12-2025.
- 5- DPO/Bud/2026/4550-52 Dated: 12-02-2026.

Approval has been accorded, vide letter No: 103-JK (SWD) of 2023 Dated: 28.04.2023 for filling up of one vacancy of Sangini (Anganwadi Worker) in Anganwadi Center Zampora-A Ward No 02 of Poshan Project Khansahib, as per the details given below:

Sr. No	Name of Project	Name of Post	No. of Post
01	Poshan Project Khansahib	Sangini (Anganwadi Worker)	01 (One)
Total			01 (One)

Applications are invited in the Prescribed Performa in Annexure "A" from the eligible candidates for engagement as Anganwadi Worker on Honorarium basis for aforementioned posts of Anganwadi Center. The important dates/details with regard to the posts are as under:

- a) Date of commencement for submission of application 14-02-2026
- b) Last date for submission of applications is 28-02-2026
- c) Annexure B- Name of the Post, Location/Ward, Qualification and Criteria for selection
- d) Annexure C- Affidavit

ANNEXURE 'A' S.No.....

Format of Application

1. Name of POSHAN Project KHANSAHIB
2. Name of Anganwadi Centre _____
3. Post applied for _____
4. Name of the Candidate _____
5. Father's Name _____
6. Husband's Name _____
7. Residence _____ Ward No. _____
8. Address for correspondence _____
9. Contact No. _____
10. Date of Birth _____
11. Age as on 01.01.2026 _____
12. Academic Qualification: _____

Photograph of the applicant duly attested by Gazetted Officer

Sr. No	Examination passed	Board/University	Year of Passing	Marks Obtained	Total Marks	Percentage

13. Do the candidate belong to Retiring AWW/AWH (YES/NO)

14. Document Attached: _____

Date: _____

Signature of the Candidate _____

ANNEXURE 'B'

Detail of Vacant Posts (AWW)/(AWH) along with name and location of AWC.

S.no	NAME OF ANGANWADI CENTRE	NAME OF PANCHAYAT/ MUNICIPALITY WARD	NAME OF POST	NO. OF POSTS
01	Zampora-A	Zampora Ward No. 02	Anganwadi Worker	1

Eligibility:

A. For Anganwadi Workers

1. The candidate must be domicile of the UT of J&K.
2. Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years shall be eligible.
3. The candidate should be a resident of the electoral ward where Anganwadi Centre is situated. Name in the voter list for the ward shall be considered as the proof of residence of the candidate. In case the name of the candidate appears in the voter list along with her parents, then she must provide certificate of being un-married issued by the concerned Tehsildar. Where ever, there is any dispute as to residence for any reason, then a residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ ACR shall be considered.
4. Minimum qualification for Anganwadi Worker shall be 10+2 and maximum graduation. In case no 10+2 pass candidate is available in the ward, 10+2 pass candidate from the adjoining ward shall be considered which would require prior approval of Mission Director, Mission POSHAN.
5. In case suitable candidate is not available for adjoining ward, candidate from the nearest ward within the Panchayat can be considered subject to the approval of the Mission Director, Mission POSHAN.
6. Weightage shall be given on the basis of marks obtained in 10+2 and selection shall be done purely on merit basis and not other criteria to be considered.
7. In case of tie in merit of the eligible candidate, candidate with higher age will be preferred.
8. Candidate with qualification higher than graduation shall not be considered.

Document Verification

1. The candidate who is shortlisted for Document verification will be required to appear for Document Verification along-with the original documents as well as self-attested Photostat copy of each document as per the Advertisement Notification. The candidate must be in possession of the prescribed academic qualification and other document like Domicile Certificate, on or before the last date of submission of application form.

- a) Marks sheet(s)/Diploma/Degree of the qualification prescribed for the post as per Advertisement Notification.
 - b) Date of Birth/Matriculate Certificate.
 - c) Domicile Certificate.
 - d) Unmarried Certificate (where required)
- i) Aadhaar Card
 - ii) Voter ID card.
3. The candidate who are supposed to furnish various certificate issued by or before the prescribed cut-off date, shall be required to produce them at the time of Document Verification or as may be sought by the Committee; in case of failure, the committee shall take necessary decision which shall be final.

ANNEXURE C

All applicants to submit affidavit stating following facts:

1. All Documents submitted are correct, without any mismatch, scanning, duplicate or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.
2. Maximum qualification is Graduation for vacancy of Anganwadi worker and Class X for and this is as per facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.
3. The deponent has read the HR policy no. 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30.11.2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Anganwadi worker/ Anganwadi Helper.

No.: -CDPO/ICDS/KSB/POSHAN/Advt./2026/2413-26

Date: 13-02-2026

DIPK-10975-25

DT: 16/02/2026

Child Development Project Officer

Poshan Project Khansahib

New Jammu Assembly Complex to be Ready by Oct 2027

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that the new Modern Assembly Complex in Jammu would be ready for functioning by October 2027.

The Deputy Chief Minister stated this while inspecting the progress of works on the under-construction Assembly Complex. He reviewed

the pace and quality of execution and directed the concerned officers to expedite the remaining works to ensure timely completion. He said that the multi-storeyed Legislative Assembly Complex has been designed to provide state-of-the-art infrastructure, enhanced functionality and improved public convenience. The

building has been thoughtfully planned to integrate administrative efficiency, public access, media facilitation, healthcare support and adequate parking infrastructure, thereby strengthening institutional functioning and ensuring smooth conduct of House proceedings. (Observer News Service)

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

KO VIEW

Concrete Climate Risk

This winter's scanty snowfall in Srinagar has stirred a wider debate about how the city is growing. Residents anticipate another harsh summer ahead, with falling water levels and rising heat. Many point toward the expanding spread of concrete and steel that now defines much of the skyline.

Over the past decade, Srinagar has seen rapid construction that is changing both its appearance and its ecological base. Multi-storey apartments, shopping complexes, highways, and riverfront projects continue to rise. This wave of development stands on a weak Himalayan floodplain.

The city historically relied on wetlands, lakes, and open drainage channels to absorb excess water and balance seasonal flows.

Water defined Srinagar's origins. Lakes and marshes once acted as natural sponges during heavy rainfall. They reduced flood pressure and helped recharge groundwater. Over time, many of these wetlands have shrunk due to encroachment and land conversion.

Real estate demand has pushed construction into spaces that once managed overflow. During intense rain, water now collects in neighborhoods that rarely faced flooding in earlier years. Drainage systems struggle to cope with sudden runoff.

The 2014 floods revealed how exposed the city had become. Reconstruction improved roads and rebuilt homes. Urban growth gathered pace soon after. Expansion moved into low lying floodplains. Riverbanks were strengthened with embankments that altered natural flow patterns. Green cover declined as paved surfaces increased. These changes have accelerated runoff during heavy rainfall.

Climate trends add further pressure. Warmer winters reduce snow accumulation in surrounding mountains. Rainfall arrives in shorter and heavier bursts. Changing hydrological cycles mean that water flows differently across the region. When intense precipitation meets a city with reduced natural buffers, flood risk rises.

Srinagar needs housing, infrastructure, and economic opportunity. Growth can move forward alongside environmental care. Wetland restoration would restore natural protection during heavy rain. Clear zoning rules would guide construction toward safer areas. Strong drainage systems designed with climate projections in mind would reduce seasonal stress.

The season's scant snowfall shows a clear signal about shifting patterns in summer capital. Development guided by ecological awareness can create lasting stability.

The city's course rests on building urban growth in harmony with its geography and natural water systems.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Spending Over Saving

Kashmir moves from land-led security to lifestyle spending, and the shift carries real costs.

Irshad Mushtaq

Take a walk through Srinagar's markets. Bright showrooms flash new phones and designer outfits. Car dealers talk about fresh arrivals. Wedding planners stay booked through the season. Online parcels reach villages that once depended only on the local bazaar. Spending feels normal. It feels like growth.

Life looked simpler a few decades ago. Agriculture and orchards fed most homes. Land stood at the center of every big decision. Families saved first and bought later. Extra money went into a small plot, a few more apple trees, or a house built brick by brick. Land meant safety. Savings meant strength.

The 1990s changed the mood. Television, the internet, and global brands entered daily life. Young people saw new lifestyles and wanted a share. Shopping moved beyond need. A new phone turned into a status symbol. Big weddings became a public show of success. Small towns followed cities. Aspirations rose fast.

The problem shows up in bank accounts. Savings shrink when spending rises. Easy loans make big purchases simple. Families borrow for events that last a week and repay for years. Money that once built assets now buys items that lose value fast. Farmland gives way to concrete. Local enterprise waits for patient capital.

Future choices depend on today's habits. Savings create options. Investment builds income. Spending alone cannot carry an economy for long. Kashmir stands at a clear turning point. Energy fills the markets. Ambition runs high. A smarter balance between desire and discipline can protect wealth and create lasting opportunity.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial educator.



Achan at a Turning Point

Backed by the National Green Tribunal and powered by India's Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 under the Environment Protection Act, Srinagar now has the tools to move from landfill dependence to a circular waste economy.

Uzma Qadir Mir

You feel the fresh air of Kashmir the moment you step outside. Then you remember Achan.

This landfill in Srinagar began as a simple site in the mid-1980s. Today, it covers 123 acres and holds more than 1.1 million metric tonnes of waste. Workers process around 550 tonnes every day, but fresh material keeps arriving.

The growing mound invites everyone to focus on health and the environment with fresh energy.

Early 2026 lifts up this moment perfectly with a national breakthrough.

The Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 come into force on April 1. They replace the 2016 version and set clear directions for every city in India.

These rules open a direct path to better governance and lasting results for Srinagar and the Achan site.

The new rules mark India's boldest step forward in handling household and municipal waste. Officials framed them under the Environment Protection Act of 1986. They fix gaps that earlier guidelines left open and bring everyone into the solution.

Residents sort waste at home into four clear streams. Wet kitchen waste goes straight to composting. Dry items like plastics, paper and metals move to recovery centres. Sanitary waste follows its own safe channel. Special household items such as batteries and bulbs receive careful, separate treatment.

The rules apply the polluter-pays principle in everyday life. Those who create the load cover the costs of managing it.

Local bodies can collect environmental compensation for mixed waste or missed steps. Bulk producers such as apartment complexes and institutions handle their own material on site or earn certification when they arrange proper processing.

Teams now map every legacy site like Achan. They prepare detailed plans for biomining, bioremediation

and scientific restoration, then share updates every three months. A single online portal follows each load from doorstep to final step, so everyone sees the full picture.

The rules also push a circular model that rewards recycling, composting and waste-to-energy projects while guiding cities away from heavy dependence on landfills.

These changes lift waste handling from a side issue to a core duty of good governance. They spread responsibility, tighten follow-through and reward every participant.

The polluter-pays idea rests on solid economic thinking. People who generate waste pay the real price of handling it, so the community no longer absorbs hidden costs.

In practice, authorities charge compensation when waste arrives unsegregated. Facilities apply higher fees for mixed loads.

This approach makes the true expenses visible and encourages smarter choices at every level. Srinagar can build the collection systems that turn this principle into daily habit.

User fees play a helpful role in many Indian cities. They recover the money spent on collection, transport and processing. They also nudge households to sort waste and produce less.

In Srinagar, residents already expect high-quality services. A careful start builds trust. Officials begin with large generators and institutions, then expand. They offer reductions to families who segregate consistently.

Delhi's municipal teams now collect monthly charges based on property size and show how this model gains acceptance when paired with visible improvements. Srinagar can follow the same successful pattern and watch participation grow. The 2026 rules move waste policy from advice to real accountability. Earlier guidelines often stayed as suggestions. The new version ties performance directly to legal responsibility, so every result counts.

Srinagar now enforces the four streams



Srinagar stands at a defining opportunity. The Achan site holds 1.1 million metric tonnes of legacy waste. Court timelines align with the new national framework. The Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 deliver a complete, workable structure. Local leaders, residents and civil society together can deliver the results everyone wants to see. When they do, Achan stands as proof of effective governance and genuine care for Kashmir.

with clear records. Wet waste enters composting units. Dry waste reaches material recovery facilities. All streams receive proper monitoring and documentation.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation strengthens its teams through targeted training. Frontline workers master the new streams. Supervisors gain sharper oversight skills. The corporation also builds small processing centres close to neighbourhoods.

These local hubs cut transport distances and handle composting and recovery on a comfortable scale. Digital tools feed data into the central portal, so progress stays easy to check and share.

Court directions give Achan extra focus at exactly the right time. In March 2025, the National Green Tribunal asked the corporation for a firm plan to handle the 1.1 million metric tonnes within two years. That timeline sits neatly inside the 2026 rules framework.

The tribunal also reviewed earlier management practices to guide stronger steps ahead. In January 2026, it applied a fine to keep reports on schedule. An earlier penalty in October 2025

added further momentum.

These measures reinforce the value of visible action, and the new rules supply the legal backbone to sustain it.

People living near Achan notice daily life improve as the work advances. Cleaner surroundings reduce dust and flies. Local doctors record healthier breathing patterns in the area. The environment responds too.

Less leachate protects groundwater and keeps Anchar Lake clear. Fresher air benefits the whole city. Fishing, farming and tourism all gain from a cleaner landscape.

The rules hand the Srinagar Municipal Corporation a ready-made blueprint. Local leaders now take practical steps to turn it into reality. They create a web of neighbourhood composting and recycling hubs.

These centres lighten the load on Achan and save time and fuel. Community groups run awareness drives, neighbourhood events and school programmes that make sorting a shared habit. Incentive schemes reward consistent participants with rebates and public appreciation. Mobile apps let residents track their waste, pay bills and see results in real time. Private partners bring technical skill and investment to build advanced recovery facilities, biomining projects and waste-to-energy plants.

Srinagar stands at a defining opportunity. The Achan site holds 1.1 million metric tonnes of legacy waste. Court timelines align with the new national framework. The Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 deliver a complete, workable structure.

Local leaders, residents and civil society together can deliver the results everyone wants to see.

When they do, Achan stands as proof of effective governance and genuine care for Kashmir.

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

Letter to Editor

Kashmir's Battle for Its Young Minds

Roads in the valley daily fill with young faces heading to colleges, universities, and coaching centres. Discussions revolve around NEET, UPSC, engineering seats, government jobs, and business ideas. Energy and ambition define this generation.

Parents place deep trust in their children. Mothers prepare meals and remind them to eat on time. Fathers speak about discipline and focus. Teachers push them to aim higher. Society expects this generation to build stability, strengthen the economy, and bring pride to the valley.

Pressure grows alongside these expectations. Competition for government jobs remains intense. Private sector growth moves slowly. Many graduates wait years for stable work. Exam results frame confidence and self worth. Social media adds another layer of comparison. Young minds absorb all this stress while trying to stay strong.

Some young people search for quick relief. Drug abuse has spread rapidly across Jammu and Kashmir. Recent studies estimate that over 52,000 people in the valley struggle with drug dependence. Reports show that nearly 95 percent of them use heroin. A 2023 study placed the number of drug users at more than 67,000, with youth forming the largest group. These numbers represent students, friends, neighbours, and family members.

Addiction often begins with curiosity or peer pressure. Stress pushes some to experiment. Experimentation turns into habit. Habit tightens into dependence.

Families observe the shift slowly. A confident student grows distant. Grades begin to fall. Interest in sports and studies fades. Homes that once felt lively grow tense.

Young people who slip into addiction often battle disappointment and anxiety.

Unemployment drains motivation. Repeated failures hurt deeply. Family expectations feel heavy. Drugs seem to offer comfort and escape. That comfort fades quickly and leaves deeper damage.

Addiction harms health, weakens focus, and breaks trust. Families struggle emotionally and financially. Years of education lose value within months. Society loses doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs, and athletes who once dreamed big. Kashmir loses strength when its youth lose direction.

Hope shines through many powerful stories. Thousands of young Kashmiris continue to work hard despite obstacles. Students study late into the night. Many learn coding, design, and digital skills. Some start small businesses. Others take part time jobs while preparing for competitive exams. Athletes train on local grounds with dedication. This generation shows dedication and determination.

Families, schools, and community

leaders hold an important role. Open conversations build trust. Counseling in colleges creates awareness. Skill programs and job opportunities offer direction. Rehabilitation centres provide support to those seeking recovery. Collective effort strengthens young minds.

Kashmir stands at a decisive moment. Youth shape the next chapter of this valley. Dreams demand patience and effort. Heroin steals health and purpose. Strong choices today create a stronger tomorrow.

The real beauty of Kashmir lives in its young hearts, driven by ambition and courage. This generation has the power to choose hope, protect its future, and lead the valley toward growth and pride.

Sincerely,

Mehak Sajdar
mehaksajdar313@gmail.com

Kashmir's Game Changers

Female athletes of Jammu and Kashmir storm global arenas and turn hometown struggle into prime-time glory.

Ankit Patel

Noise builds slowly on a winter morning in Srinagar when a young archer fixes her gaze on a distant target and a small crowd leans forward as if the whole valley stands behind that single arrow.

That scene now plays out across Jammu and Kashmir, where girls who once trained behind closed doors compete under bright lights and draw cheers that resound far beyond their neighbourhoods.

Many families once felt unsure about sending daughters into sport, even though students widely agreed that faith supports athletics with modest dress, and nearly 67 percent of parents still believed competitive play did not suit girls.

Social pressure pushed almost 78 percent of female athletes to step away before age 21, and women accounted for only about 12 percent of professional players in the region.

Practice often meant travelling more than 10 kilometers for nearly half of these athletes, which tested time, money, and resolve.

Research now shows that girls who skip sport face a much higher risk of depression. Modern science has firmly dismissed myths about weak bones or small lungs, opening the door for more women to step into intense disciplines with confidence.

Policy met passion at the right moment, and that mix changed the game.

The Khelo India Asmita Women's League and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme created a pipeline that linked dusty local grounds to international podiums.

The J&K Sports Council pushed its "My Youth My Pride" campaign across towns and villages and reached more than 40,000 young people, building a competitive culture that felt organized and ambitious.

At the Voluntary Medicare Society in Srinagar, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone and his team turned rehabilitation into high-performance training, blending therapy with basketball and guiding para-athletes toward national colours with corporate backing from NTPC and support from the Archery Association.

At the center of this surge stands Sheetal



Devi, whose story feels almost cinematic and whose results speak even louder.

Born without arms, she draws and releases a compound bow using her legs, shoulders, and chin with a focus that commands silence before impact.

September 2025 brought a defining moment when she defeated the world No. 1 to become the first armless woman to win a World Championship gold in South Korea. She later stunned national observers by finishing third in able-bodied trials with a score of 703 points.

Fans in Kashmir track her scores the way cricket lovers track centuries, and every bull's-eye sends a message that ability thrives where belief meets support.

Fencing has carved its own lane through this rise as Shreya Gupta and Riya Bakshi

sharpen their craft with precision that reflects years of disciplined coaching.

Martial arts grew from a tool of self-protection into a medal machine as athletes like Sadia Tariq captured gold in Moscow and Munazah Gazi secured the valley's first international silver in her category.

The Chishti twins now defeat established strongholds such as Haryana, while Aafreen Hyder has maintained an unbeaten run that stretches over a decade.

Training halls buzz with ambition, and every podium finish fuels the next contender waiting for her turn.

Cricket tells a powerful chapter that blends geography, ambition, and bold decisions.

Jasja Akhtar left Shopian in 2013 to find stronger competition and better facilities in Punjab, where she piled up more than 5,000

runs and became the first woman from the region to enter the Women's Premier League.

She returned as state captain and a 2025 State Award recipient, setting a visible path for younger players.

Rubia Syed stayed rooted in Anantnag and forced attention with a blazing 64 off 46 balls against Gujarat, which earned her a Gujarat Giants contract and a place in the WPL 2025 auction with a 10 lakh base price.

Under pioneer coach Sakeena Akhtar, cricket in J&K now feels like a professional pursuit rather than a distant dream, and even Army-backed tours such as the Anantnag XI's visit to Pune highlight how sport bridges divides.

Para-sports continue to expand that horizon as Inshah Bashir and Ishrat Akhter represent India in wheelchair basketball after rebuilding their lives through competition at



JAMMU AND KASHMIR ONCE APPEARED ON SPORTS PAGES ONLY IN PASSING, and today its daughters headline tournaments, sign contracts, and inspire a generation that sees possibility instead of limits.

VMS.

On Dal Lake, Bilquis Mir rose to become India's first female Olympic judge in her discipline, proving that expertise from the valley can influence global arenas. Athletes such as Tajamul Islam and Afshan Ashiq have also built academies to create opportunities where none once existed, ensuring that talent finds guidance early and consistently.

A shift now runs through schools, neighbourhoods, and living rooms where parents follow match updates and daughters discuss selection camps over dinner.

Facilities still demand expansion and broader support will elevate this surge even further, although the base stands firm and the pipeline grows stronger each season.

Jammu and Kashmir once appeared on sports pages only in passing, and today its daughters headline tournaments, sign contracts, and inspire a generation that sees possibility instead of limits.

Packed practice grounds and medal ceremonies add chapters to a story that feels far from finished.

And fans across the valley watch with pride as their champions compete with skill, belief, and a fierce desire to win.

— The author is an MA New Media student at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu. He can be reached at ankitpateliiimc@gmail.com.

Idea of a Settled Girl

Security in Kashmir and India has long been tied to marriage. A new imagination places a woman's future in her own hands.

Palveen Kour

A daughter's wedding often marks a turning point in the valley. Parents speak of that day as the moment she becomes "settled."

They believe a husband's home offers stability, protection, and continuity.

This belief runs deep across India as well. Families measure success through ceremonies, gold, and the promise of a dependable groom. Discussions about a girl's future often circle back to marriage. Education enters the picture, though it sometimes serves as an ornament rather than a foundation.

A degree improves a proposal, a job strengthens a biodata, and marriage remains the final destination.

Early marriages grow out of this mindset. Parents arrange weddings at a young age with hope in their hearts. They trust that a husband will provide comfort and support. They see marriage as a secure bridge into adulthood. Their intentions spring from care and concern. They want their daughters to live with respect and stability.

This tradition holds an unspoken assumption.

A woman's future rests in another person's income. Her safety depends on the strength of a husband's earnings. Her place in society connects to her marital status. A ring becomes a symbol of assurance.

Modern India tells another story.

Universities open their doors to young women in Srinagar, Delhi, Mumbai, and countless small towns. Offices and startups welcome their talent. Competitive exams draw thousands of female aspirants. Girls excel in medicine, law, civil services, journalism, and technology. Families celebrate these achievements with pride.

A question rises in drawing rooms and classrooms alike. Does marriage alone secure a woman's future? Does protection flow only through a husband's house?

These questions can be heard across the mountains and mainland.

Cultural lessons still guide many girls toward a single script. They learn to be patient



A RING CAN MARK COMMITMENT. WINGS SECURE THE FUTURE. TRUE ASSURANCE GROWS WHEN A WOMAN HOLDS HER OWN identity, her own skills, and her own earnings. Marriage then becomes a choice enriched by strength, rather than a shelter built out of necessity.

daughters, devoted wives, and attentive mothers. Dreams often adjust themselves around this script. Career plans pause when a suitable proposal arrives. Parents act with love, though they sometimes narrow the horizon without realizing it. They invest deeply in wedding preparations while giving less thought to long term financial independence.

Dependency shows its cost when marriage faces strain. Every relationship encounters disagreements and stress. Some couples grow stronger through these phases. Some drift apart. A woman without her own income stands on uncertain ground during such moments. She may silence her own hurt in order to preserve shelter and security. She may choose endurance over change because she sees few alternatives.

Indian courts record rising cases of divorce and domestic conflict. News reports tell stories of women who return to their parental homes with children in their arms and limited savings in their accounts. Society often greets them with judgment rather than support. Economic vulnerability turns personal crisis into social isolation.

Financial independence shifts this equation.

Such a shift honours both tradition and progress. A ring marks commitment, wings secure the future, and true assurance grows when a woman owns her identity, skills, and earnings.

Marriage then becomes a choice enriched by strength, rather than a shelter built out of necessity.

An educated and earning woman views marriage as partnership rather than rescue. She enters a relationship with confidence. She contributes to household expenses and decisions. She supports her parents even after marriage. Her presence transforms the balance within the home.

Equality grows naturally when both partners earn and participate. Respect strengthens through shared responsibility. Conversations about money become transparent and collaborative. Children witness cooperation instead of hierarchy. A family built on mutual contribution stands on firmer ground.

Marriage itself holds beauty and value. Kashmiri weddings celebrate community and faith. Indian marriages weave together traditions that stretch back centuries. Commitment brings companionship and shared purpose. A ring can symbolize love and trust.

Security, however, flourishes when it rests on personal capability. Wings allow a woman to choose her path. She stays in a marriage because she finds joy and meaning there. She leaves a harmful situation because she possesses the means to rebuild. Her education and income offer options rather than dependence.

Parents hold the power to rewrite this narrative. They can speak of settlement as stability in life rather than relocation to an in-laws' house. They can dream of daughters who earn, invest, travel, and lead. They can plan for careers with the same enthusiasm they plan for weddings.

Such a shift honours both tradition and progress.

A ring marks commitment, wings secure the future, and true assurance grows when a woman owns her identity, skills, and earnings.

Marriage then becomes a choice enriched by strength, rather than a shelter built out of necessity.

— The author is a Srinagar-based Biotechnology postgraduate student and the author of three books. She also volunteers with NGOs, teaching children in rural Kashmir.

Physical Inactivity Behind 13% Of Heart Failure Cases Among Diabetics In India: Study

Press Trust of India

Over 13 per cent of heart failure cases among people living with diabetes in India could be linked to physical inactivity, a global study has estimated. The findings, published in the Journal of Sport and Health Science, also show that 9.6 per cent of coronary heart disease and 9.4 per cent of cardiovascular complication cases among people living with diabetes in India could be attributed to lack of physical activity. Globally, one in ten cases of macrovascular (large blood vessel) complications and retinopathy in people with diabetes is due to physical inactivity, researchers said. "Diabetes complications are often seen as inevitable consequences of the disease. Our findings challenge this idea by

showing that a meaningful proportion of these complications could be prevented through achievable increases in physical activity among people living with diabetes," lead author Jayne Feter, researcher in the school of medicine at Brazil's Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, said. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. The researchers analysed data from more than 2.3 million adults with diabetes across world regions, including South Asia. Physical inactivity was found to account for more than 10 per cent of strokes, 9.7 per cent of diabetic retinopathy, 7.3 per cent of heart failure and around five to seven per cent of cardiovascular and coronary

heart disease cases in people with diabetes. Women and people with lower education levels were consistently seen to experience a higher proportion of complications attributable to physical inactivity, highlighting deep social inequities, the researchers said. India is estimated to be home to more than one-fourth of the world's diabetics, according to a 2024 study published in The Lancet journal. Complications can arise due to long-term high blood sugar, which may damage blood vessels and nerves throughout the body. Treating complications consumes a growing share of health budgets, especially in regions already facing strained health systems, the researchers said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Hakim Asif Ali Father of Hakim Dayaan Mehdi resident of Hakim Mohalla, Baghwan Pora, Lal Bazar, District Srinagar, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, hereby notify that due to an inadvertent clerical error, my wife's name was wrongly recorded as Shabnam Asif in Birth certificate of my ward bearing SMC certificate no 011294 issued by SMC sgr. The correct name of my wife is Shabnam Baba as per her qualification certificates. I have corrected the records in SMC. Now I want to correct her name in school records at Burnhall Hr sec. School. Any objection in this regard from any person for quarter the same may be reported to the principal of the institute within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which it will be deemed that there is no objection from any quarter.

Hakim Asif Ali
F/o Hakim Dayaan mehdi bko
Class 9th Sec. C roll no 20
Burnhall Hr Secondary school sonwar
R/o Lal Bazar Bagwanpora Hakim
Mohalla srinagar J&K.
Contact 7006693212

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sajad Ahmad Rather, son of Abdul Khaliq Rather, resident of Keegam, Tehsil Keegam, District Shopian, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, do hereby inform the general public that I have changed my name from Sajad Ahmad Sajad to Sajad Ahmad Rather. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified for all purposes as Sajad Ahmad Rather. If anyone has any objection to the above change of name, the same may be conveyed in writing to 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. Sajad Ahmad Rather
S/o Abdul Khaliq Rather
R/o Keegam, Tehsil Keegam,
District Shopian, UT of J&K
Dated: 10 February 2026 fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Vilcy Jan, D/o Ghulam Mohammad Dar, resident of Wazir Check, Tehsil Barbugh Imamsahib, District Shopian, hereby inform the general public that my correct and actual name is VILCY JAN. It has come to my notice that due to a clerical error, my name has been wrongly recorded as SHARMEENA JAN in my Aadhaar Card. However, in all my other personal and official records, my name is correctly recorded as VILCY JAN. I am in the process of getting the said error rectified from the concerned authorities. If anyone has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same, in writing, to the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained. Vilcy Jan R/o Wazir Check, Tehsil Barbugh Imamsahib, District Shopian. fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Jaffar Ali S/o Ali Mohd Sheikh, resident of Bongam, Tehsil Shopian, District Shopian (J&K), hereby inform the general public that the name of my son has been wrongly recorded in his Aadhaar Card as Hammad Jaffar. The correct and actual name of my son is Sheikh Hammad Bin Jaffar. I am applying to the concerned authorities for correction of the said name. If anyone has any objection to this correction, he/she may submit the same to the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained. Sd/-
Jaffar Ali
R/o Bongam,
Tehsil Shopian
District Shopian fko

Government Of Jammu And Kashmir
Directorate of Economics & Statistics,
J&K SDA Colony Bemina Srinagar/Janipur Jammu
Fax(k) 2493376, (j) 2531731, (k) 25389807, (j) email: jandkdes@jk.gov.in

Subject - Tentative seniority list of Artist, Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Supervisors (UT/JDC/KDC), Key Punching Operators (UT/JDC/KDC), Punching & Verifying (P&V) Operators and Machine Cleaners of J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service as on 01.02.2026.

CIRCULAR NO. 05 - DES OF 2026
DATED: 13 -02-2026

WHEREAS, the Directorate of Economics & Statistics has notified Seniority List of Jr. Artist, Punching & Verifying (P&V) Operators and Machine Cleaners (UT Cadre) vide Order No. 67-DES of 2023 dated 16.03.2023, Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Supervisors vide Order No. 132-DES of 2024 dated 02.04.2024 and Key Punching Operators (UT/ JDC/ KDC) vide Order No. 12-DES of 2022 dated 15.11.2022;

AND WHEREAS, a number of changes have taken place in the seniority list maintained by the Directorate which necessitated the revised and updated Seniority List;

Now therefore, the Tentative Seniority List of Artist, Electronic Data Processing (EDP) Supervisors (UT/ JDC/ KDC), Key Punching Operators (UT/ JDC/ KDC), Punching & Verifying (P&V) Operators & Machine Cleaners borne on the J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service as on 01.02.2026 is hereby notified as per Annexure I, II & III respectively to this Circular for inviting objections, if any, from the members of the service. The Tentative Seniority List is also available on the Official Website of Directorate of Economics and Statistics, J&K i.e. www.ecostat.jk.nic.in for information of concerned members of the service.

Accordingly, the officials figuring in the tentative seniority list are advised to file their objections, if any, to the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, J&K SDA Colony Bemina, Srinagar /Ashok Vihar, Janipur, Jammu (email: jandk-des@jk.gov.in) within a period of 21 days from the date of issuance of this Circular with documentary proof in support of their claim. After twenty one days, no objection shall be entertained.

No. DES-HRM/29/2025-08/9064-71
For further information to the

(Signature)
Director General,
Economics & Statistics, J&K
Dated: 13.02.2026

Annexure "I" of Circular No: 05 DES of 2026 Dated: 13 -02-2026
Tentative Seniority list of Artist, Punching & Verifying (P&V) Operator and Machine Cleaners (UT Cadre) borne on J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service as on 01-02-2026

S.No	Name	D.O.B	Date of entry in to Govt. service	Date of Appt. to the present post	Present Status of the Official
Artist					
1	Bran Dutt Sharma	25.10.1995	06.11.2012	14.01.2021	Artist
P&V Operators					
1	Parveena Kumari	23.06.1990	07.12.2016	07.12.2016	P&V Operator
2	Yashika Raina	02.09.1989	04.04.2008	22.01.2026	P&V Operator
Machine Cleaners					
1	Subesh Chandier	17.01.1968	21.06.1993	21.06.1993	Machine Cleaner
2	Mohd Magbool Car	15.03.1969	14.10.1996	14.10.1996	Machine Cleaner
3	Mohd Ilyas Zargar	03.07.1965	01.03.2014	01.03.2014	Machine Cleaner

Notes:

- The Date of Birth will be subject to verification with reference to Matriculation certificate(s) issued by the respective Boards of School Education.
- The reserved category certificate(s) recorded in the seniority list are subject to further updation/ verification from the concerned competent authorities as per rules.

(Signature)
Joint Director (Central)

Annexure "II" of Circular No: 05 DES of 2026 Dated: 13 -02-2026
Tentative Seniority list of EDP Supervisors (UT/KDC/JDC) borne on J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service as on 01-02-2026

S.No	Name	D.O.B	Date of entry in to Govt. service	Date of Appt. to the present post	Present Status of the Official
UT					
1	Mohamad Shafi Wani (RBA)	08.04.1969	18.05.2018	18.05.2018	EDP Sup.
KDC					
1	Aazil Yaqub Naikoo	02.03.1969	09.06.2018	09.06.2018	EDP Sup.
2	Fayaz Ahmad Mir	25.11.1986	16.05.2018	16.05.2018	EDP Sup.
3	Manoj Kumar (SC)	15.04.1994	10.12.2018	10.12.2018	EDP Sup.
JDC					
1	Mubashir Ali Bhatt (RBA)	07.10.1987	16.05.2018	16.05.2018	EDP Sup.
2	Sanjeev Kumar (SC)	14.08.1985	16.05.2018	16.05.2018	EDP Sup.
3	Nimral Kumar (RBA)	14.12.1985	16.05.2018	16.05.2018	EDP Sup.
4	Neeru Salathia	13.06.1983	10.12.2018	10.12.2018	EDP Sup.

Notes:

- The Date of Birth will be subject to verification with reference to Matriculation certificate(s) issued by the respective Boards of School Education.
- The reserved category certificate(s) recorded in the seniority list are subject to further updation/ verification from the concerned competent authorities as per rules.
- Those candidates who have left the job (if any) without intimation to the department are not included in the list, action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against them separately. After acceptance of resignation of these officials by the competent authority they are required to obtain NDC from this Directorate. The lien of the officials (who have not followed due procedure) shall not be terminated from E&S service. As per records, the below mentioned EDP Supervisor (UT cadre) has resigned from the E&S service on being appointed in other departments/offices:-

- Tariq Ahmad Parray (UT Cadre) (resigned on 07.03.2019 lien yet to be terminated w.e.f 06.03.2019) appointed as Employment Officer in Labour & Employment Department.

(Signature)
Joint Director (Central)

Annexure "III" of Circular No: 05 -DES of 2026 Dated: 13 -02-2026
Tentative Seniority list of KPOs (UT/JDC/KDC) borne on J&K Economics & Statistics (Subordinate) Service as on 01-02-2026

S.No	Name	D.O.B	Date of entry in to Govt. service	Date of Appt. to the present post	Present Status of the Official
UT					
1	Ashik Alam Bhat	05.03.1972	21.06.1993	04.10.2007	W/ JSA
2	Mushiq Ahmad	16.04.1973	28.10.1994	04.10.2007	KPO
3	Parvez Ahmad Zargar	13.03.1976	29.12.1995	04.10.2007	KPO
4	Pawan Kumar	24.04.1976	14.10.1996	04.10.2007	W/ JSA
5	Muzamil Wani	24.04.1980	30.12.2011	30.12.2011	W/ JSA
6	Anurag Kotwal	12.10.1985	30.12.2011	30.12.2011	W/ JSA
7	Bandana Sathia	01.05.1975	30.12.2011	30.12.2011	W/ JSA
8	Kapal Charak	19.03.1984	30.12.2011	30.12.2011	W/ JSA
9	Nanohar Lal (SC)	05.04.1975	30.12.2011	30.12.2011	W/ JSA
10	Manish Abrol	30.06.1979	15.10.2016	15.10.2016	KPO
JDC					
1	Palvi Gupta	29.10.1987	14.01.2011	14.01.2011	W/ JSA
2	Sandhya Rathore	16.06.1985	14.01.2011	14.01.2011	W/ JSA
3	Rajeev Gandotra	27.07.1979	14.01.2011	14.01.2011	W/ JSA
4	Arjun Katali	05.10.1985	14.01.2011	14.01.2011	KPO
5	Punam Sharma (RBA)	05.06.1979	14.01.2011	14.01.2011	W/ JSA
6	Tajbir Singh	09.09.1973	20.06.2011	20.06.2011	W/ JSA
7	Kapil Mahajan	20.10.1984	06.09.2016	06.09.2016	KPO
8	Rakesh Singh	18.12.1987	15.10.2016	15.10.2016	KPO
9	Niketa Gupta (ALC)	28.02.1988	06.09.2016	06.09.2016	KPO
KDC					
1	Tarveer Ahmad Lone	06.05.1981	24.06.2009	24.06.2009	W/ JSA
2	Noor-ul-Idan	06.05.1986	06.03.2010	06.03.2010	W/ JSA
3	Intan Ali Mir	04.05.1986	18.12.2010	18.12.2010	W/ JSA
4	Tafazul Iqbal	01.04.1979	22.09.2011	22.09.2011	W/ JSA
5	Raja Mushiq Ahmad	08.10.1975	22.09.2011	22.09.2011	W/ JSA
6	Maqsood Hussain	12.03.1987	22.09.2011	22.09.2011	W/ JSA
7	Mohd Mudassir Naqshbandi	24.01.1981	22.03.2013	22.03.2013	W/ JSA
8	Ravi Kumar (SC)	01.04.1972	22.09.2011	22.09.2011	W/ JSA

Notes:

- The Date of Birth will be subject to verification with reference to Matriculation certificate(s) issued by the respective Boards of School Education.
- The reserved category certificate(s) recorded in the seniority list are subject to further updation/ verification from the concerned competent authorities as per rules.

(Signature)
Joint Director (Central)

DIPK-10927/25
DATED: 14-02-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Danish Ahmad Sheergojri, S/o Mohd Yousuf Sheergojri, R/o Vehil, Tehsil Shopian, District Shopian, hereby inform the general public that my correct and genuine name is Danish Ahmad Sheergojri. However, due to a clerical error, my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card as Danish Ah Shair Gojri. Through this public notice, I declare that Danish Ah Shair Gojri and Danish Ahmad Sheergojri refer to one and the same person, i.e., myself. I am applying to the concerned authorities for correction of my name in the Aadhaar records as per my correct name mentioned above. If anyone has any objection in this regard, he/she may raise the same before the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained. Deponent
Danish Ahmad Sheergojri
S/o Mohd Yousuf Sheergojri
R/o Vehil, Tehsil Shopian, District Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Suhaib Fayaz, S/o Fayaz Ahmad Thoker, R/o Nilly Poshwari, hereby inform the general public that my correct name is Suhaib Fayaz and my correct date of birth is 15-01-2010. Due to an inadvertent error, my name and date of birth have been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card as Suhaib Ahmad Thoker and 30-12-2007. It is hereby clarified that my correct name and date of birth, i.e., Suhaib Fayaz, D.O.B. 15-01-2010, are duly recorded in my school records and certificates. If anyone has any objection to the above correction, he/she may raise the same before the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained. fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Gh Ahad Dar while my correct name is Ghulam Mohamad Dar. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar within Seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.. Ghulam Mohamad Dar
S/o Abdul Ahad Dar
R/o Pahnoo Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) ASMAT SAIED ASMI to (New name) ASMAT SYED ASMI. In future i will be known as (new Name) ASMAT SYED ASMI. If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted. ASMAT SYED ASMI W/o SYED MOHAMMAD ASHRAF
R/o GEEN AVENUE PEERBAGH. mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Bilkees Jan, wife of Imtiyaz Ahmad Haji, resident of Bongam, Tehsil Shopian, District Shopian, hereby inform the general public that my name has been incorrectly recorded as Hansi Jan in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 5011 9683 5496. My correct and actual name is Bilkees Jan, which is duly recorded in all my other personal and official documents. The said discrepancy has occurred due to a clerical error. I am applying to the concerned authorities for correction of my name in the Aadhaar record from Hansi Jan to Bilkees Jan. If anyone has any objection to the said correction, he/she may submit the same before the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained. Deponent
Bilkees Jan
R/o Bongam, Tehsil Shopian, District fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mahajabeena Akhter, wife of Showkat Ahmad Mir, resident of Amshipora, Tehsil & District Shopian, hereby inform the general public that my correct and actual name is MAHAJABEENA AKHTER. It is hereby clarified that my name has been wrongly recorded as MAJABINA AKHTER in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 7030 7667 1793 due to a clerical error. The said entry is incorrect. All concerned authorities and the general public are requested to treat MAHAJABEENA AKHTER as my correct name for all legal and official purposes. If anyone has any objection in this regard, the same may be submitted to the undersigned within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained. Sd/-
Mahajabeena Akhter
W/o Showkat Ahmad Mir
R/o Amshipora, Shopian
Date: ___ fko

Exports Inch Up 0.61% In Jan; Trade Deficit Widens To 3-Month High



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI - The country's exports rose marginally by 0.61 per cent to USD 36.56 billion in January, while trade deficit widened to a three-month high of USD 34.68 billion, government data showed on Monday.

Imports rose 19.2 per cent - the highest so far this fiscal - to a three-month high of USD 71.24 billion in January, driven by a sharp rise in inbound shipments of gold and silver due to higher prices.

Gold imports surged 349.22 per cent to USD 12 billion during the month under review, while silver imports jumped by 127 per cent to USD 2 billion.

India mainly imports the yellow metal from Switzerland, from where the inbound shipments have climbed 836.85 per cent to USD 3.95 billion in January. Oil imports, however, dipped 0.24 per cent to USD 13.4 billion in January.

Cumulatively during April-January 2025-26 fiscal, the country's exports rose by 2.22 per cent to USD 366.63 billion.

Imports grew 7.21 per cent to USD 649.86 billion, leaving a trade deficit of USD 283.23 billion during the nine-month period of 2025-26. The gap was USD 247.38

billion in April-January 2024-25. Briefing media on the data, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said the country's exports "remain northwards" both in goods and services.

He expressed hope that, going by the trend, exports of goods and services are likely to cross USD 860 billion in 2025-26. It was USD 825 billion in 2024-25.

"In services, we will be crossing beyond USD 410 billion for the first time in this current year," Agrawal said.

During April-January this fiscal, the total exports are estimated at USD 720.76 billion as against USD 679.02 billion recorded in the same period of the previous fiscal.

The global trade has been disrupted due to tariffs imposed by the US. On India, the Trump administration has levied a steep 50 per cent tariffs from August. This is impacting the country's outbound shipments from the labour-intensive sectors, such as apparel.

The US has removed a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods from February 7. It will cut the remaining 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs to 18 per cent once a trade agreement is finalised between the two countries.

At the exports front, key sectors such as petroleum, engineering, electronics, iron ore, marine and coffee have recorded positive growth in January.

However, shipments of tea, rice, spices, leather and leather products, gems and jewellery, chemicals, ready-made garments of all textiles, and plastics have recorded negative growth.

Wholesale Price Inflation Rises To 1.81% In Jan



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI - Wholesale price inflation extended upward momentum for the third straight month, at 1.81 per cent in January, driven by an uptick in prices of food, non-food articles, and manufactured items on a month-on-month basis, government data showed on Monday.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was 2.51 per cent in January last year, while in the previous month (December 2025), it was 0.83 per cent.

"Positive rate of inflation in January 2026 is primarily due to increase in prices of manufacture of basic metals, other manufacturing, non-food articles, food articles, and textiles, etc," the industry ministry said in a statement.

According to WPI data, inflation in food articles was

Positive rate of inflation in January 2026 is primarily due to increase in prices of manufacture of basic metals, other manufacturing, non-food articles, food articles, and textiles, etc,"

1.55 per cent in January as against deflation of 0.43 per cent in December.

In vegetables, inflation was 6.78 per cent in January as against deflation of 3.50 per cent in December.

In the case of manufac-

tured products, WPI inflation inched up to 2.86 per cent, as against 1.82 per cent in December.

Non-food articles category inflation spiked to 7.58 per cent in January, against 2.95 per cent in December.

Negative inflation, or deflation, continued in the fuel and power sectors, at 4.01 per cent in January, as against 2.31 per cent in December.

The country's retail inflation inched up to 2.75 per cent in January, data released last week showed.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced policy interest rates by 1.25 percentage points in the current fiscal year as inflation remained low.

The RBI mainly tracks retail inflation for deciding on benchmark interest rates. Earlier this month, the RBI retained key policy interest rates at 5.25 per cent.

Silver Slumps 2% As Gold Gains ₹700 Per 10 Grams



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI - Silver prices declined by 2 per cent to Rs 2.5 lakh per kilogram, while gold increased by Rs 700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal depreciated by Rs 5,000, or 1.96 per cent, to Rs 2,50,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from Rs 2,55,000 per kg on Friday.

However, gold of 99.9 per cent purity advanced by Rs 700 to Rs 1,59,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of Rs 1,58,500 per 10 grams.

"Silver began the week on a softer note, as investors booked profits after the weekend's rally. However, ongoing central bank purchases, heightened safe-haven demand amid the correction in tech and AI stocks, and a weaker dollar index have helped cushion the downside," Gaurvav Garg, Re-

search Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

In the global market, spot silver fell nearly 1 per cent to USD 76.94 per ounce, while gold slipped USD 40.10, or 1 per cent, to USD 5,003.01 per ounce.

"Gold edged lower on Monday, as a modest recovery in the US dollar and a lack of follow-through buying weighed on precious metals," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

He noted that trading activity remained subdued, with Chinese markets closed for Lunar New Year holidays. Chinese participants have played a key role in recent volatility, particularly in silver, and their absence contributed to thinner market conditions.

Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said traders are now focused on key macro data releases, including the US Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge -- the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index, due on February 20, which could shape rate-cut expectations for June.

She added that the Federal Open Market Committee meeting minutes, US advance GDP data for December, and flash PMI readings from major economies will also be tracked for further direction.

Interim Trade Pact: Indian Team To Hold Talks In US

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI - A team of Indian officials will visit the US next week to finalise the legal text for an interim trade agreement, which is likely to be signed in March, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Monday.

The visit is likely to start on February 23.

Earlier this month, India and the US released a joint statement to announce that a framework for an interim trade agreement has been finalised.

"The joint statement lays down the contours of the deal. Now, the contours of the deal have to be translated into a legal agreement, which will be signed between the two sides," he told reporters here.

Both sides are engaged in finalising that legal agreement, and virtual talks are going on for that.

"Next week, (India's) chief negotiator Darpan Jain will be leading a delegation to the US to finalise the legal (pact) to work towards the legal agreement. That work will carry on next week in Washington and, if need be, thereafter in July and March," Agrawal said.

Jain is the joint secretary in the Commerce Ministry.

The secretary said that there is an effort to close and



sign the deal in March, "but I have not put a deadline on it". "Because legal agreement finalisation also has certain intricacies, which both sides will have to resolve," he said.

Under the interim trade pact, both sides would extend duty concessions to each other on a number of goods traded between them.

The US has announced that it will reduce the reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from 25 per cent to 18 per cent. It has already eliminated the 25 per cent punitive tariffs on India for buying Russian crude oil.

Agrawal said that the US is working on reducing the reciprocal tariffs from 25 per cent to 18 per cent.

"I am told they are processing it. It should be done fast," he said, adding that "our expectation is that it should be

done this week. But, in case it is not done, the team is there next week, and we can pursue and see why it is taking time".

Normally, the agreement is that 18 per cent will be done in the interim pact, and the remaining tariff lines, wherever reciprocal tariffs are expected to go down to zero, that will only be done after the legal agreement is signed, he said.

"And from our side also, any reduction in tariff, any market access, preferential market access will be extended only after the legal agreement is signed," the secretary said.

On cotton, he said India imports around 200-250 million dollars of US cotton on average.

"And the variety being imported, I presume, is the same variety which we get the preferential market access," he added.

Unemployment In India Rises Slightly To 5% In Jan : Govt Survey

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI - The rate of unemployment in the country among persons aged 15 years and above rose slightly to 5 per cent in January this year from 4.8 per cent in December 2025, according to a government survey released on Monday.

The UR (unemployment rate) or joblessness recorded a marginal increase in January in both rural and urban areas, showed the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). The data also showed lower labour force participation rate (LFPR) as well as workers population ratio (WPR) across the rural and urban areas.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, said in a statement that the decline in LFPR and WPR, and rise in UR in January was primarily rural-driven, with seasonal factors, post-harvest slack, and discouragement effects playing a key role. "Many activities like construction, agriculture allied work, transport, small trade, etc. slowdown in winter. Urban areas remained stable," it explained.

The pace of joblessness among those aged 15 years and above rose to 5 per cent in January 2026 from 4.8 per cent in December last year.



The rural UR edged up from 3.9 per cent to 4.2 per cent, while the urban UR increased from 6.7 per cent to 7.0 per cent during December 2025 to January 2026.

Among males aged 15 years and above, the UR continued to remain stable in January 2026. In contrast, unemployment among females in the same age group was higher in January 2026 than in December 2025.

It stated that the female UR remained within the range observed during the period April to December 2025, indicating a short-term increase rather than a significant weakening of female labour market conditions.

Overall LFPR among persons aged 15 years and above was reported at 55.9 per cent in January, lower than 56.1 per cent in December 2025.

Rural LFPR also declined to 58.7 per cent last month compared to 59.0 per cent in December 2025. Urban LFPR stood at 50.3 per cent in January 2026 as against 50.2 per cent in December 2025.



SKUAST-K Holds Academia-Industry Dialogue To Boost Inclusive Growth

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - In a significant stride toward fortifying the regional economy against both global and local headwinds, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir hosted a landmark Academia-Industry Trade Dialogue during its 11th annual Technology-cum-Trade Fair, Gon'gul 2026.

The meet saw an overwhelming response from a diverse spectrum of society, bringing together prominent trade body members, leading industrialists, influential civil society members, academicians, and senior bankers to collectively chart a roadmap for Jammu & Kashmir's economic resilience and environmental sustainability.

The dialogue was set against a challenging global landscape characterized by geopolitical tensions, trade volatility, and segmented supply chains, with SKUAST-K leading the effort to identify actionable insights for a more diversified regional economy.

Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir A. Ganai, while speaking on the occasion,

shared the success of the university's unique education model, which has transitioned from traditional academics toward a Skill-Innovation-Entrepreneurship-oriented framework in line with NEP-2020. He noted that while universities are not the sole solution to regional challenges, they serve as vital platforms where industry experts and policymakers can meditate on sustainable solutions, further highlighting the university's strategic collaborations with premier institutions like IIT Mandi, IIT Bombay, and IISc Bengaluru. He emphasized that building a truly resilient community requires leadership characterized by integrity and character, which will ultimately guide Jammu & Kashmir toward the national goal of becoming a developed region by 2047.

Prof. Farhat Shaheen gave a comprehensive overview of the meeting's objectives, emphasizing the urgent need for a collaborative approach to create a resilient ecosystem. He flagged critical issues such as the sensitivity of the tourism sector and existing infrastructural deficits, calling for a policy-oriented framework to address structural gaps.

PM Modi Inaugurates India AI Impact Expo, Interacts With Startups

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI - Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the India AI Impact Expo here featuring over 600 high-potential startups and 13 country pavilions showcasing international collaboration in the AI ecosystem.

He also interacted with startups participating in the expo.

The prime minister visited various stalls and spoke with the companies participating in the expo. He was seen asking questions from company representatives to better understand what they are showcasing.

The prime minister spent several minutes at various stalls while interacting with the representatives. The Expo brings together global technology firms, startups, academia and research institutions, central and state governments and international partners.

Spread across 10 arenas covering more than 70,000 square metres, the Expo brings together global technology firms, startups, academia and research institutions, Union ministries, state gov-



ernments and international partners.

The Expo also features 13 country pavilions, showcasing international collaboration in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem. These include pavilions from Australia, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Serbia, Estonia, Tajikistan and Africa.

The Expo will host over 300 curated exhibition pavilions and live demonstrations, structured across three thematic chakras -- people, planet and progress. In addition, the Expo will feature over 600 high-potential startups, many of them building globally relevant and population-scale solutions. These startups will demonstrate working solutions that are already deployed in real-world settings.

Markets Rebound Nearly 1% On Buying In Power, Banking Stocks

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI - Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply by nearly 1 per cent on Monday, driven by strong buying in power, banking, and financial stocks amid a mixed trend overseas.

Besides, a largely stable rupee and global crude oil prices amid US-Iran talks supported investors' sentiment, traders said.

Snapping its three-day decline, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 650.39 points, or 0.79 per cent, to close at 83,277.15. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 211.65 points, or 0.83 per cent, to settle at 25,682.75.

A total of 2,565 stocks declined, while 1,747 advanced, and 184 remain unchanged on the BSE. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms increased by Rs 3,11,982.13 crore to Rs 4,68,58,625.33 crore (USD 5.17 trillion).

"After a range-bound opening, domestic markets edged higher, supported by renewed buying interest in banking and power stocks. The power sector gained on expectations of sus-

tained demand momentum, while improved loan growth and stable asset quality bolstered confidence in banks.

"Meanwhile, stability in the rupee and range-bound crude oil prices ahead of US-Iran talks are offering additional support to domestic equities," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

PowerGrid emerged as the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 4.45 per cent, followed by HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, NTPC, ITC, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Reliance Industries and State Bank of India.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki India, Bajaj Finance, Trent, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Infosys, ICICI Bank, and Ultra-Tech Cement were the laggards.

"PSU bank stocks rebounded after two sessions of decline, supported by increased mutual fund allocation to the sector in January, which rose to a three-year high," Siddhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Five New FPOs Receive Registration Certificates At SKUAST-K Conclave

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - In a major boost to farmer collectivisation in Jammu & Kashmir, five newly formed Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) were formally provided registration certificates during a high-level Farmer Organisations Conclave hosted at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Shalimar campus.

The conclave was organised under the Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project in Jammu & Kashmir (JKCIP), an initiative supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), reaffirming the project's commitment to strengthening farmer institutions and rural entrepreneurship across the Union Territory.

Held on the second day of the AgriTech Mela (Gon'gul), the event brought together over 200 delegates, including more than 100 FPO representatives, national financial institutions, government agencies, and agri-marketing stakeholders.

A major highlight of the event was a comprehensive panel discussion featuring senior officials including representatives from NABARD, NCDC, crop insurance experts, and university leadership. Discussions focused on institutional convergence, financial inclusion, infrastructure gaps, branding frameworks, value chain development, and expanding market access for farmer collectives.

Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai emphasized the critical role of FPOs as engines of rural transformation and stressed the integration of technology and data-driven systems for ensuring fair price realization for farmers. He also directed the creation of an FPO data portal to further strengthen governance and coordination.

The interactive session allowed nearly 100 FPO CEOs and Directors to directly voice grassroots-level challenges related to credit access, value addition facilities, and market integration. Experts responded with strategic recommendations to build resilient and professionally managed farmer institutions.

Cheque Bounce Cases

Delhi HC Permits Temporary Release Of Rajpal Yadav From Jail

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: In a relief to actor Rajpal Yadav, the Delhi High Court suspended till March 18 his sentence in the cheque bounce cases and permitted him to be released from jail.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma passed the order after noting that Yadav deposited Rs 1.5 crore in the bank account of complainant M/s Murali Projects Pvt Ltd.

"We are granting you an interim suspension of sentence... It is till the next date of hearing,"

said the judge.

Yadav sought suspension of his sentence on the ground of a marriage in his family on February 19.

The court directed Yadav to surrender his passport and not leave the country without permission.

It further directed Yadav to remain present, either physically or virtually, on the next date of hearing on March 18.

The court's proceedings came on revision petitions by Yadav and his wife challenging a 2019 decision of a sessions court,

which upheld their conviction by a magisterial court here in the cheque bounce cases in April 2018.

The magisterial court had sentenced him to undergo six months' imprisonment.

In June 2024, the high court had temporarily suspended his conviction, subject to his adopting "sincere and genuine measures" to explore the possibility of reaching an amicable settlement with the opposite party.

At that time, Yadav's counsel had said it was a genuine

transaction to finance the production of a movie, which bombed at the box office, resulting in huge financial losses.

In the order passed on February 2, while directing him to surrender by 4 pm on February 4, the court had observed that Yadav's conduct deserved to be deprecated as he repeatedly breached his undertakings to the court to repay the amount to the complainant M/s Murali Projects Pvt Ltd.

The court had noted that Yadav was required to make

payment of Rs 1.35 crore in each of the seven cases against him and directed that the amount already deposited with the registrar general of the high court be released in favour of the complainant.

In October 2025, two demand drafts (DDs) of Rs 75 lakh were deposited with the registrar general and an amount of Rs 9 crore remained payable, it noted in the order.

On February 4, the court refused to extend the deadline given to Yadav to surrender to jail authorities. (Agencies)

SC Issues Notice To Centre On Plea Challenging 2023 Data Protection Law

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday issued a notice to the Centre on a plea challenging the constitutional validity of several provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023.

The plea, moved by The Reporters' Collective and renowned journalist Nitin Sethi, argues that the new data regime severely dilutes the Right to Information (RTI) Act and grants the Centre "sweeping powers" over personal data.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M

Pancholi, while agreeing to examine the legal complexities of the Act, refused to grant an interim stay on the impugned provisions.

Representing the petitioners, advocate Vrinda Grover said that the Act lacks surgical precision in its attempt to protect privacy.

"Instead of using a chisel, (the legislature) has used a hammer, and has thus rendered a body blow (to RTI)," the senior lawyer said.

The petition said the DPDP Act creates a blanket bar on the disclosure of personal information, effectively dismantling the transparency framework established by the RTI Act.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG Orders Reopening

reopen immediately. Officials said that certain high-altitude destinations will reopen after snow clearance. These include Gurez and Athwato in Bandipora district and Bangus in Kupwara in the Kashmir Division, along with Ramkund in Ramban district of the Jammu Division.

The decision follows a comprehensive review of the security situation and is expected to facilitate tourism activity across both divisions.

Tourism Stakeholders

to rise. "We are thankful to LG Sinha for giving a boost to the tourism sector at an appropriate time," tourism stakeholders said, expressing hope that the decision would help restore bookings and reassure travel partners across the country.

Tawkeer, a tour operator in Srinagar, said the reopening would help revive advance reservations. "From March onwards, we see a steady rise in tourist arrivals. The reopening of key destinations will help us restore advance bookings and reassure travel agents across the country," he said.

Those associated with the tourism trade in Doodhpathri and Yusmarg also expressed gratitude, saying the decision has revived optimism among locals dependent on visitor footfall.

"We are sincerely thankful to the LG administration for reopening Doodhpathri. Hundreds of families here depend directly on tourism, from pony owners and food stall operators to guides and transporters. This decision has restored hope among us," said a local resident from Doodhpathri.

Abdul Rashid, a resident of Dujan in Shopian, said the temporary closure had severely affected livelihoods. "Most families here are directly or indirectly dependent on tourism. From tea stall vendors to taxi drivers and guides, everyone suffered losses. This decision has brought much needed relief," he said.

Hoteliers in Yusmarg described the move as timely, noting that bookings had slowed after the precautionary closure but are expected to improve now.

Four operators in Srinagar said reopening destinations across Budgam, Shopian, Ganderbal and Baramulla would send a positive message nationwide about stability and improved security conditions. Hoteliers from Pahalgam and Gulmarg echoed similar sentiments, saying that the perception of safety and normalcy across Kashmir benefits the entire tourism ecosystem.

Meanwhile, the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the decision and termed it a major relief for tourism and allied trade sectors that had suffered losses since the April 2025 terror attack.

KCC&I President Javid Tenga said the Chamber had consistently urged the administration to reopen the closed destinations and thanked the Lieutenant Governor for the move. The Chamber maintained that reviving tourism is critical for employment generation, revenue creation and sustaining local businesses.

Stakeholders expressed confidence that the upcoming tourist season could mark a strong rebound for Jammu and Kashmir's tourism industry.

209 Cr Online

helpline 1930, they added.

J&K To Survey

expand inpatient Addiction Treatment Facilities and establish long-term rehabilitation centres in one region of Jammu and Kashmir, she said.

Highlighting the existing infrastructure, Itoo said Jammu and Kashmir currently has the highest number of functional Addiction Treatment Facilities in the country. A total of 21 ATFs are operational in the public health sector, with at least one facility in each district. These facilities have collectively provided around 1.5 lakh patient consultations so far.

The minister further said drug de-addiction rules are being finalised and are expected to be implemented soon to strengthen the legal and regulatory framework. In addition, a bill aimed at tackling the drug menace will be introduced in the ongoing session.

On food safety measures, the minister said enforcement efforts have been intensified during 2025 to 26. Inspections increased by 25 per cent, with 19,115 inspections conducted against a target of 7,080, achieving the highest food inspection target under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

Twelve special enforcement drives were conducted focusing on high-risk items such as meat, paneer, ghee, sweets and milk products. During mobile food safety operations, 57 tonnes of unsafe food products worth Rs 99.40 lakh were seized and destroyed. Authorities also launched 1,007 prosecutions, including 63 criminal and 944 civil cases, with penalties amounting to Rs 1.72 crore. Forty stop-use notices were issued.

To improve compliance and awareness, 66 licence and registration camps were organised benefiting 7,516 stakeholders, while 3,463 awareness and training camps were conducted at the grassroots level through mobile food testing vans, she added.

2 Pak Nationals

taken cognisance of the incident and initiated an investigation to ascertain the circumstances that led to the security breach.

Kashmir Landowners

the award was prepared, and we have not been paid," said Nazir Ahmad, a farmer from Wathoora Chadoora. "Our land had a much higher market value. If the award is ready, we don't understand why the compensation is still pending."

The Srinagar Ring Road, a four-lane semi-ring road, is about 90 percent complete in its first phase and is expected to open by May 2026.

Stretching 60.84 kilometers, the road connects Galander to Narbal in Phase 1 and Narbal to Ganderbal in Phase 2.

The project is part of the Prime Minister's Development Package for Jammu and Kashmir and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018.

For the farmers in Budgam, however, the promise of smoother roads and faster travel remains overshadowed by an unresolved question: when will their compensation finally arrive?

J&K To Be Free

countrymen that J&K and North-East would be free of violence by 2029," Shah added.

He stated that terror-related violence, including gun violence and killings of civilians and security forces personnel, has declined sharply since the Centre revoked Article 370 and 35A from the erstwhile state.

Shah noted that prior to 2014, India faced major internal security challenges in these three regions, which had persisted for three to four decades. Since then, he said, measures undertaken by the government have substantially reduced violence.

During the event, the Home Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed Delhi Police Special Cell Integrated Headquarters, built at an estimated cost of Rs 375 crore. He described it as the

country's most advanced anti-narcotics and anti-terrorism centre, adding that it would serve as a benchmark for police forces nationwide.

Shah further highlighted reforms in the criminal justice system, stating that with the complete implementation of the three new criminal laws within the next two years, the time taken from FIR registration to the Supreme Court's final verdict will be reduced to under three years. He noted that terrorism has now been clearly defined in criminal law, enabling stronger and more effective action.

He reiterated that the government remains committed to strengthening national security and ensuring durable peace and development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Elaborating on the three criminal laws, Shah mentioned that a separate chapter has been added for crimes against children and women, and e-FIR and Zero FIR have been given legal backing.

Under the ICJS (Integrated Criminal Justice System), the police, judiciary, forensic science, prosecution, and prisons have been integrated, and their services have been made online, the home minister said.

For the first time, community service has been introduced as a legal form of punishment for minor offences, and terrorism has been clearly defined, with provisions for trial in absentia for fugitives who flee the country, Shah highlighted.

Shah also stated that forensic visits are now mandatory for crimes carrying a punishment of more than seven years, and provisions have been made to attach the properties of declared offenders residing outside India.

Additionally, in the new laws, the director of prosecution has been given more importance. The definition of documents has been expanded to grant legal recognition to electronic and digital records, he added.

The home minister also launched various new initiatives of the Delhi Police, including an integrated headquarters for the Special Cell and the first phase of the Safe City project.

Mainly Dry

conditions with isolated light snowfall in higher reaches are anticipated.

The weather department has advised farmers to continue routine farm operations as no major disruption is expected. It also said that both minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to rise gradually over the next seven days. Visitors and locals have been cautioned against venturing into snow bound higher reaches prone to avalanches or slippery conditions.

Temperature readings reflected a mix of near normal and below normal values across the region. In the Kashmir division, Srinagar recorded

a maximum of 10.4 degrees Celsius against the normal 18.0 degrees Celsius, while the minimum settled at 1.3 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum of minus 3.8 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg registered minus 1.6 degrees Celsius. Kupwara and Qazigund recorded daytime highs of 9.5 degrees Celsius each, with minimum temperatures of minus 1.4 degrees Celsius and 0.2 degrees Celsius respectively.

In the Jammu division, Mirpur recorded a high of 28.0 degrees Celsius. Kathua and Katra saw maximum temperatures of 24.8 degrees Celsius and 24.1 degrees Celsius respectively. Jammu recorded a minimum of 11.5 degrees Celsius, while Banihal settled at 10.6 degrees Celsius.

Other stations including Bhadarwah, Batote and Katra also reported below normal night temperatures. The department said isolated precipitation may occur at 1 to 25 percent of stations, while the overall outlook remains largely dry across both divisions.

HC Gives Centre

Habibullah, has invoked Section 99 of the BNSS to set aside the order of forfeiture.

The petitioners contend that merely quoting statutory provisions without detailing specific grounds is insufficient and that the notification fails to distinguish between the government's "opinion" and the "grounds" for that opinion, which must be evident in the order itself.

The pleas underscore that the ban order contains mere broad statements, without elaborating on how the contents of the books impact national security or honest narratives.

According to the pleas, the forfeiture order did not detail how the 25 books were identified as secessionist.

The petitioners seek to quash the notification dated August 5, 2025, issued by the Home Department of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir that declared the 25 listed books as forfeited.

The books include political commentaries and historical accounts like The Kashmir Dispute 1947-2012 by noted constitutional expert A G Noorani; Kashmir at the Crossroads and Contested Lands by Sumantra Bose; In Search of a Future: The Kashmir Story by David Devadas; Arundhati Roy's Azadi; and A Dismantled State: The Untold Story of Kashmir After Article 370 by journalist Anuradha Bhasin.

Despite Similar

₹2.34 lakh a year earlier. A Himachali earns far more on average.

Recent national data sharpens the comparison. India's per-capita income stands

near ₹1.7 lakh. J&K, at around ₹1.4 lakh in 2022-23 and improving since, remains below that mark.

Himachal, at ₹2.2 lakh and rising beyond ₹2.3 lakh in the same period, stands comfortably above.

J&K performs better than the poorest large states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where per-capita incomes stay below ₹1 lakh, though it remains behind smaller, richer regions like Delhi or Goa that post incomes above ₹3 to ₹5 lakh.

J&K sits in the middle by population within India's federal map and in the lower-middle tier by income.

The composition of output explains why.

In J&K, agriculture accounts for about 20 percent of gross value added, industry around 18.3 percent and services close to 61.7 percent. Fruits, walnuts, almonds and saffron generate roughly ₹45,000 to ₹50,000 crore. Agriculture and allied sectors contribute about 20 percent of the economy, with horticulture alone adding another 6 to 7 percent. Tourism contributes around 7 percent.

Farm and horticulture income together outweigh tourism by more than three times, and far more households depend on them. Much of the produce leaves as raw goods, with limited grading, branding or processing.

Industry in J&K leans heavily on construction and government contracts, alongside small units and power projects, adding another ₹45,000 to ₹50,000 crore. Services generate roughly ₹1.45 to ₹1.55 lakh crore, with a large portion tied to government and defence salaries, trade and transport.

Himachal shows a more diversified engine.

Agriculture and horticulture account for roughly 13 to 15 percent. Industry and hydropower contribute 40 to 43 percent. Services make up 43 to 45 percent.

Industrial belts such as Baddi-Barotiwala and Paonta Sahib host pharmaceuticals, food processing, textiles and engineering units. Hydropower projects convert mountain rivers into long-term revenue. Processing, packaging and branded produce add value before goods leave the state. Tourism integrates homestays, adventure sports and hospitality services into a broader private ecosystem.

Growth rates in both regions hover around 6 to 7 percent in recent years, even after the pandemic and natural disasters. The employment picture separates them.

Overall unemployment in J&K stands near 6 to 6.7 percent. Youth unemployment reaches about 17.4 percent, and urban female unemployment approaches 28.6 percent.

Self-employment schemes such as PMEGP, REGP, Mumkin and Tejaswini

have created thousands of small ventures, though many operate at thin margins and in low-value segments.

Himachal faces its own challenges, though it begins with a higher income base and stronger private industry.

Public finance brings the sharpest contrast. J&K's 2024-25 total budget stands around ₹1,18,390 crore. Expenditure excluding debt in 2025-26 is about ₹1,06,641 crore, with debt repayment of roughly ₹33,669 crore.

Himachal's comparable expenditure reaches about ₹52,965 crore, with debt repayment near ₹5,479 crore.

J&K runs a government budget nearly twice the size of Himachal's despite similar economic output.

Revenue sources show how that budget is sustained.

J&K's total revenue in 2025-26 is estimated at ₹90,535 crore. Own taxes and fees contribute ₹31,905 crore, about 35 percent. Central devolution and grants add ₹58,624 crore, nearly 65 percent.

Himachal's total revenue stands around ₹42,153 crore, with 44 percent from its own resources and 56 percent from the Centre.

J&K keeps its fiscal deficit at about 3 percent of GDP largely because of high transfers. Himachal's debt remains around 42 to 43 percent of GDP, with a deficit near 4.7 percent, supported by stronger internal revenue generation and industrial taxes.

Hydropower captures the difference in how potential turns into income. Himachal has developed roughly 40 to 45 percent of its identified capacity and turned rivers into a major revenue stream. J&K has harnessed only about 23 to 24 percent of its potential, even though it holds vast water resources. Share of potential used builds fiscal strength.

Urban finance shows the same pattern.

Srinagar Municipal Corporation reported own revenue of about ₹23 crore in the first nine months of 2024. Shimla Municipal Corporation manages annual income between ₹188 and ₹247 crore, with property tax alone contributing around ₹21 crore each year and scheduled hikes to strengthen collections.

Stronger municipal revenue in Shimla supports roads, water systems, waste management and tourism infrastructure. Srinagar and Jammu are still building that capacity.

The contrast fits into a single line.

Per person, Himachal earns more. But per budget, Jammu and Kashmir receives more from Delhi.

One economy grows through factories, hydropower and value addition, the other runs on a larger public sector financed heavily by grants.

The mountains remain the same, so do the apples. The difference appears in the balance sheets.



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OR SCAN



Kashmir's Racing Champ Atiqa Mir Excels Following WSK Move

Press Trust Of India

SARNO (ITALY): Having made a voluntary switch from the mini to a much more demanding junior category, 11-year-old Indian racing prodigy Atiqa has shown the skill and maturity beyond her years to produce standout performances in the early part of her 2026 international karting season.

In sub zero temperatures in Europe and on tracks she has little experience of, the only female in a world class WSK Super Masters grid, Atiqa announced herself in the paddock with a sizzling P2 in qualifying of the season opener.

In the following round at the iconic Circuit di Napoli, the F1 Academy-backed driver

gave another fine exhibition of her rare talent by setting the sixth fastest time in the treacherous wet conditions. In the race, she pierced through the male-dominated field of 45 plus karts to gain as many as 16 positions.

Moving from mini (age 8-12) to OKNJ junior class (12-14) is a massive step up but the F1 aspirant has embraced the challenge with open arms and has adjusted to the much heavier karts like duck to water.

To put things in perspective, the OKNJ karts are 30kg heavier (115kg in mini to 145kg in junior) and have three times the horse power (10 bhp with top speed 105 kmph to 29bhp with top speed of 126 kmph).



Atiqa's head turning performances were duly discussed in the paddock, leaving her coach, Felice Tiene, impressed as well. Tiene is one of the best in the business and has coached multiple world champions in the karting arena.

"I started working with Atiqa this year at the first test in La Conca. Straight away she showed what she is capable of. In her first qualification, in a new category, new environment, new people, basically everything new for her, straight away she qualified P2," said Tiene.

"Not only the result itself but also her approach and her attitude towards working are something special

and great. We are in a learning process, after La Conca, Sarno and Viterbo.

"She has also been doing great on tracks she doesn't know and she is able to pick things straight away and be fast.

"She is young, she has time to learn what it takes to be one of the best driver in motorsport! I see her winning in karting and graduate to have a place in some big Formula 1 series in motorsport," said the Italian in a glowing reference to Atiqa, who aims to break the Formula 1 barrier for a female racer.

Atiqa's father Asif Mir too knows what it takes to be a successful racer, having finished runner-up in the Formu-

la Asia series in early 2000s. He too has been left impressed by Atiqa's performances so early in the season.

"We took a big risk by putting Atiqa so early in Junior and too straight to WSK level. We skipped UAE and other championships and this was a big risk and asking a lot from Atiqa.

"If you consider the challenges she was up against one can then appreciate her performances. Atiqa certainly exceeded my expectations so far and I hope she continues the progression against all odds. It will surely toughen her up for the future," said Asif.

Atiqa will be action at WSK Super Masters round three in Italy later this week.

Marsh, Head Fire Before Sri Lanka Bowl Out Australia for 181

Press Trust Of India

PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA): Skipper Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head blazed away to explosive fifties before Sri Lanka rallied to bowl out Australia for 181 in their T20 World Cup match here on Monday.

Coming back into the playing XI after missing the team's first two matches of the tournament due to an injury, Marsh got into the act straightaway, clobbering 54 in 27 balls.

Head was equally brutal during his 29-ball 56, as the opening duo added 104 runs in less than nine overs to set Australia up for a 200-plus total.

But the Sri Lankans did much better in the back 10, with leg-spinner Dushan Hemantha (3/37 in 4 overs) emerging as the most successful bowler for the home team. The last four wickets fell for only six runs.

The move to field first backfired on the Sri Lankans as Australia got off to a rollicking start with Marsh and Head marking their reunion with a flurry of fours and sixes.

Following their 23-run defeat to Zimbabwe, Australia began the game in



earnest, collecting as many as 16 runs in the very first over by Dushantha Chameera. Marsh started his innings in great style as he punched one beautifully off the back foot through the off-side.

Head clipped a Chameera half-volley off his pads to get off the mark with a four before Marsh pulled the pacer for a six over midwicket. Head got two fours against Maheesh Theekshana to maintain the momentum.

If the early onslaught by Head and Marsh was not enough, Sri Lanka suffered a massive blow in the third over when Matheesha Pathirana, the 23-year-old slinger, hobbled off the

field after suffering a hamstring injury, leaving Dasun Shanaka to complete the over.

Shanaka was whacked through point for a boundary by Head in his first ball, and then the left-handed power-hitter clobbered the bowler over deep square leg and into the stands for a big maximum.

Marsh smashed Maheesh Theekshana for five successive boundaries as Australia raced to 70 for no loss in the power play.

Hoping to arrest the free flow of runs, skipper Shanaka introduced leg-spinner Dushan Hemantha into the attack, and Head welcomed him with a six and a four, and in the next over, Marsh

plonked left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage for a four and a maximum.

Marsh brought Australia's hundred with a six off Hemantha.

However, Australia lost a cluster of wickets thereafter and from 104 for no loss, they slipped to 130 for four and never recovered from that.

Glenn Maxwell made 22 of 15 balls before a leaping Pathum Nissanka made amends for an earlier drop catch by pulling off a diving stunner at point. Inglis, who got a life even before he opened his account, contributed a 22-ball 27 but Australians ended well short of what was an expected total at the halfway stage.

Gulmarg Eyes Tourism Boost as Khelo India Winter Games Begin Feb 23

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR- The Khelo India Winter Games, starting from February 23 and to be held at Kashmir's Gulmarg, will witness participation from more than 700 athletes and officials, officials said.

"There has been good snowfall this winter, which is a boost for skiing and sledging activities. Khelo India Winter Games is being held here, and it will help us earn our livelihood," said Mohammad Rafeeq Chechi, a ski assistant.

The first leg of the Khelo India Winter Games for ice events was held in Ladakh's Leh, from January 20 to 26 this year, while the second leg of the games, for snow events, will be held at Gulmarg from February 23 to 26.

"Gulmarg Tayyar hai, Aapka intezaar hai (Gulmarg is ready, We are waiting for you)," Chechi said in a video released by the Department of Youth Services and Sports.

Gulmarg will feature four medal disciplines, namely Ski Mountaineering, Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing (Cross-Country), and Snowboarding, with around



400 athletes expected to compete, and Alpine Skiing drawing the highest participation, they said.

Aijaz Ahmad Wani, a tourist guide from the nearby Tangmarg area, said a large section of youngsters in and around Gulmarg earn their living from tourism-related activities.

"The more the tourists, the better our income. The tourist arrivals had dropped significantly after the Pahalgam terror attack last year. However, the tourists have started coming again, and we hope the winter games will kickstart

a good year for tourism in Kashmir," Wani said.

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya announced the dates for the Gulmarg leg of the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 last week.

"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 had said.

The event will be the sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, and all six have been held in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

After a successful first phase in Leh, a similar excitement would be witnessed in Jammu & Kashmir, he added.

At the conclusion of the KIWG 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 KIWG 2026 Ladakh leg, Haryana led the medal tally with four gold medals, all won by its figure and ice skaters, followed by Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

Pakistan Lost Game in First Innings Itself: Younis

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Pointing out Pakistan's tactical errors in the 61-run loss to India, pace legend Waqar Younis said the side was out of the high-profile T20 World Cup clash the moment Suryakumar Yadav's men reached 175 after being invited to bat.

Speaking on Star Sports, Younis said Pakistan didn't stand a chance after India posted the stiff target in Colombo on Sunday night.

"Pakistan lost the game in the first innings. Once India reached 175, the game was out of Pakistan's reach. The ball was spinning, and Suryakumar Yadav was smart with his bowling changes," Younis said.

When you look at how much spin Pakistani bowlers got, I don't think they used them as well as India did. But the game was over

in the first innings because India scored too many runs.

"We always knew Pakistan's batting is not great. But if India had scored 140 or 150 instead of 175, things might have been different," he added.

India rode on a blazing 40-ball 77 by opener Ishan Kishan and some handy contributions in the middle order to post the imposing total. In reply, Pakistan folded for 114 in 18 overs.

"He (Suryakumar) gave the new ball to Hardik Pandya up front. Jasprit Bumrah was outstanding as always, attacking the stumps, swinging and seaming the ball. It was very difficult for Pakistan after that. Salman Ali Agha allowed that to happen by not introducing Usman Tariq early.

"Tariq was superb, taking a wicket and conceding just 24 runs. We have

been talking about him for weeks. But he was held back for too long. By the time he got the ball, Ishan Kishan had already done the damage. That is where the match was lost," he explained.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar credited Suryakumar for having situational awareness.

"He has led from the front. In the match against the USA, when India were in trouble at 77 for 6, Surya bailed the team out and here against Pakistan, when he came out to bat, India was at 88-2, and then he batted till the 19th over, scoring 32 runs.

"Yes, he didn't bat at a high strike rate, but he ensured that the wickets didn't fall, keeping hold of one end. So, the rest of the team understands that in T20 cricket, you don't want dot balls," he said.

Too One-sided: 'India-Pak Matches Will Lose Commercial Value Soon'

Press Trust Of India

KARACHI- With every one-sided India-Pakistan clash invariably dominated by India, the commercial value of this once marquee showdown is going down at least on this side of the border, according to former players and observers of the game.

India's victory on Sunday has hit Pakistan harder than before as there were expectations that after the tough posturing by the country's administrators during the recent deadlock with the ICC, the players too would fire on all cylinders on the field.

The 61-run defeat was, however, a sobering reminder of the gulf that now exists. India has defeated Pakistan in eight out of nine matches in the T20 World Cup. This is in addition to the three straight defeats that Salman Ali Agha's men endured at last year's Asia Cup.

India's domination over Pakistan in white-ball cricket has been such that since the 2017 Champions Trophy final win, Pakistan has not won a single ODI against the arch foes.

Former Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, Lt General (rtd) Tauqir Zia noted that with every loss, the much-hyped games are losing commercial value in the ICC.

"The fact is Pakistan and India matches have become too one-sided. This time the hype built up because the PCB announced the boycott of the game against India then un-boycotted it. But



sooner or later the Pakistan and India games will lose their value to the ICC and member boards," he cautioned.

Pervaz Mir, who runs an advertising agency here, agreed that fans on this side are losing hope for a revival of the once equal rivalry.

"Now fans are also losing hope because no one wants to see one-sided encounters including sponsors, advertisers," Mir said.

He noted that the bulk of the revenues that the ICC and its broadcaster earn from India-Pakistan matches comes from the Indian consumer market. But even there, the mis-match has

not gone unnoticed.

"When the boycott decision was announced there were many Indians who said it doesn't matter as the matches have already become too predictable.

"The commercial value of these matches will diminish unless the matches become more close and competitive," he said.

Nadeem Mandviwalla, a film distributor and owner of a cineplex in Karachi, said that during the screening of the match most of the assembled made a beeline for the exit when Pakistan lost four early wickets.

"The thing is even if we qualify for the semi-finals

we are likely to come up against India again and we all know what the result will be and that hurts the most," cricket writer and analyst, Omair Alavi noted.

Stalwarts like Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Saqlain Mushtaq, Ramiz Raja, and Aamir Sohail, who were part of the Pakistan teams that won a number of matches against India in the '80s and '90s, are now commentators.

According to Shoaib and Saqlain it is a painful experience for them to watch the current Pakistan and India matches.

"Where is that character

and fire that we had when we played India? Yes we lost some matches but everyone knew it was always going to be a tough match," Shoaib said.

Saqlain also recalled how whenever Pakistan played against India captain Wasim Akram and other senior players would push players to not give up.

"I remember how we won that Test against India in Chennai in 1999. Sachin was (Tendulkar) batting and as India inched closer to victory, Wasim bhai kept on urging us that we just need Sachin's wicket and we will win. Where is that spirit in this team?" he asked.



CBSE Tells Class 10-12 Students Ignore Exam Leak Rumours

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Feb 16: The CBSE has "strongly" urged students and all concerned stakeholders not to get misled by rumours about question paper leaks in the Class 10 and 12 CBSE Board exams beginning on Tuesday.

Over 46 lakh students from India and abroad are set to appear in the board exams, according to officials.

While the Class 10 exams will conclude on March 10, the Class 12 exams will end on April 9.

Class 10 students will appear for the mathematics exam on Tuesday, while the Class 12 examination is scheduled for four subjects -- Biotechnology, Entrepreneurship, Shorthand (Hindi) and Shorthand (English).

"As observed in the past, certain unscrupulous elements attempt to mislead students and parents by spreading fake news on various social media platforms during the course of exams. Such misinformation often includes false claims of question paper leaks and circulation of purported question papers for Class 10 and 12 examinations of the Board," a senior official of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) said.

"The CBSE, therefore, strongly urges parents, students, schools and all concerned stakeholders to remain vigilant and not be misled by unverified news and rumours or fake news. Believing in, engaging with or forwarding such baseless content may create unnecessary anxiety and confusion and may adversely affect the preparedness of students at this crucial stage," the official added.

The Board has directed students to reach their examination centres by 10 am, keeping in mind the local conditions, traffic, weather conditions and distance.

"As the examination starts at 10.30 am, hence, all the students have been directed to reach their examination centre on or before 10.00 am. Keeping in view the important national and international summits, high-level meetings and other programmes scheduled to be held during the examination days, due to the anticipated traffic regulations, there may be congestion, route diversions and delays in different parts of the country," the official said.

"Hence, all the students are advised to leave their homes early so that they can reach the examination centre well on time as per instructions issued by the CBSE," he added.

Shah Rukh Khan: Being 'King' Means Duty, Not Power

Manik Gupta

New Delhi, Feb 16: He's King Khan to his fans and the industry, and his next film quite coincidentally is called "King" too. Shah Rukh Khan, however, brushes off the power the title bestows on him, saying it's less an identity and more "a reminder to live with heart, humility, and purpose."

"The word 'king' has never meant power to me. It has always been about responsibility -- to the people who believe in you and the stories you choose to tell..." Shah Rukh told PTI in an email interview.

The star, first seen in the TV show "Fauji" in 1989, has worn the 'Bollywood king' crown with ease over three decades. Maybe not any more.

"As time passes, you realise that what truly matters is not the title, but the intention behind your work," said Shah Rukh, who has lent his voice to the fire-works show "The Lion King: Celebration in the Sky" aboard Disney Cruise Line's latest ship, Disney Adventure, next month.

"At this stage of my life and career, the title 'King' feels less like an identity and more like a reminder to live with heart, humility, and purpose. Whether it's narrating a story aboard the Disney Adventure or choosing my next film, what matters most to me is creating work that brings people together, makes them feel something, and leaves behind a little bit of joy," the 60-year-old said.

Shah Rukh, who began his acting career in English theatre in Delhi, gave voice to Mufasa in the Hindi version of Disney's 2024 film "Mufasa: The Lion King". His sons joined in too -- the older Aryan (28) was the voice for Simba and the younger AbRam (12) was the young Mufasa.

He and wife Gauri have a third child. Daughter Suhana, 25, shares the screen with her father in Siddharth Anand's upcoming film "King".

While "The Lion King" clearly holds a special place, classics like "The Jungle Book" continue to entertain the Khan clan. The children are also drawn to Pixar favourites like "Toy Story", and almost anything from the Marvel universe are "huge hits".

"Each generation finds its own con-



nection, but what never changes is how these stories bring us together. Whether it's rewatching a classic at home or sharing a magical moment on a Disney Cruise or at the Parks, that sense of connection stays the same," he said.

Discussing "The Lion King", he said it will always be close to his heart, as it's a timeless story about growing up, understanding responsibility and finding your place in the world.

Disney's "The Lion King" is the coming-of-age story of Simba, a young lion prince who must reclaim his kingdom after the death of his father, Mufasa.

The film explores themes of responsibility, loss, and the circle of life.

Shah Rukh, whose association with Disney began in 2004 with the Hindi version of "The Incredibles", titled "Hum Hain Lajawaab", said animation's limitless possibilities continue to inspire him and the films have been a big part of their family time.

"I find that there's an emotional honesty to animation... There are no human beings in 'The Lion King', and yet this is a deeply human story at its core, centered around the relationship between a father and son, exploring themes of love and loss. That's the magic of animation. It helps us reflect on our own lives and relationships in profound ways. I

believe this is why stories such as 'The Lion King' endure and are so well-loved even after 30 years," he said.

Termining his latest project with Disney, which will debut during the vessel's maiden voyage from Singapore on March 10, a "full-circle moment", Khan said returning to the world of "The Lion King" feels like "coming home".

"I'm excited that more families and fans across Asia will now get to celebrate this classic tale and its iconic music in a brand-new way, creating lasting memories at sea."

"That emotional connection and celebration of storytelling, where nostalgia and newness come together to make magic, are what make this project truly special and why I happily said 'yes,'" he added.

"The Lion King: Celebration in the Sky" will feature elaborate pyrotechnics, immersive lighting effects and a music-driven narrative unfolding above the ship. The soundtrack includes beloved songs from the franchise such as "Circle of Life", "Hakuna Matata", "He Lives in You" and "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?".

In Shah Rukh's view, cruises teach you to slow down. "And I think we all need that sometimes."

"When you're surrounded by the ocean, there's calm and perspective. The world feels vast, and your worries feel just a little smaller," he mused.

ED Slaps Rs 184-cr FEMA Penalty Against NewsClick Promoter

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Feb 16: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it has imposed a Rs 184-crore FEMA penalty against news portal NewsClick and its founder and editor-in-chief, Prabir Purkayastha, who came under the scanner of the probe agencies on allegations of peddling "pro-China propaganda" through its stories.

PPK NEWSCLICK Studio Private Limited, the company that owns NewsClick, has been penalised for an amount of Rs 120 crore while Purkayastha has been imposed with the same order for Rs 64 crore under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the federal agency said in a statement.

The order has been issued by the Adjudicating Authority of FEMA (a special director rank officer of the ED) after completing the adjudication process (end of investigation) against the two entities related to "violations" of foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign inward remittances.

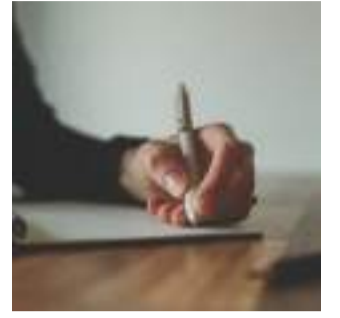
"The Adjudicating Authority observed that the contraventions were substantial, deliberate, and systemic in nature, involving large-scale foreign exchange transactions and breach of statutory declarations furnished to regulatory authorities," it said.

There was no immediate response from NewsClick on the development.

The agency said the penalty was imposed after the ED carried out a detailed examination of records, evidence and submissions made by the noticees (PPK NEWSCLICK Studio and Purkayastha).

The ED has a separate money laundering case registered against the portal and had first raided the premises of NewsClick located in the Saidulajab area of the national capital in September, 2021. It also filed a FEMA case against it.

The agency has recorded the statements of more than 25 peo-



ple in the money laundering case, including that of Purkayastha. The Delhi Police has also investigated these entities.

The BJP, in 2023, had quoted a New York Times news article to allege that the portal and its promoter were "pushing pro-China agenda" through its stories.

The news article had stated the portal was part of a global network that received funding from American billionaire Neville Roy Singham, who allegedly works closely with the Chinese government media machine.

The ED said its probe found that FDI of Rs 9.59 crore was received (by the company) during the 2018-19 fiscal by "misrepresenting" the nature of business activity in statutory filings, thereby bypassing prescribed sectoral conditions and entry route requirements under FEMA.

It was also detected that foreign inward remittances of Rs 82.63 crore, purportedly received between 2018-19 to 2023-24 financial years, for export of services, were found to be in "contravention" of FEMA provisions due to "misclassification" of exports and "failure" to comply with mandatory reporting requirements, including submission of SOFTEX (used for software or information technology exports) forms.

"The transactions were deliberately structured in a manner that defeated the objectives of the foreign exchange regulatory framework," the ED said.

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