

29th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Friday 02 October 2026 | Srinagar | Vol: 29 | Issue: 242 | Pages: 12 | Price: ₹3

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Unity Makes Every Goal Possible: LG Sinha

Urges youth to embrace fitness and shun drugs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said unity and collective resolve can help overcome even the most difficult challenges, as he addressed the closing ceremony of the Kashmir Marathon-Run for Unity organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Sinha lauded the enthusiasm of participants and congratulated the runners, describing the marathon as a symbol of peace, unity and progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Run for Unity is not merely the speed of our steps. It is the speed of our resolve and faith which tells us that when people walk together, no destination remains impossible,”



he said.

Highlighting India's diversity, the LG said differences in language, traditions, food and attire do not diminish the sense of national unity.

“Unity is India's strength, and when millions of steps move in

one direction, even the highest mountains can be crossed,” he said.

Sinha said the Kashmir Marathon had sent a message that no goal was too distant for a united India. He described the participation as an investment in a shared future and

said the event reflected the aspirations of a new generation in Jammu and Kashmir working towards a self-reliant and developed Union Territory.

He urged participants to embrace discipline, fitness and brotherhood and stay away from drugs. Recalling the success of the 100-day Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Campaign, he called upon young people to become ambassadors of the Fit India Movement and contribute to nation-building.

“The real victory of a marathon lies not just in reaching the finish line, but in holding each other's hands and moving forward together,” Sinha said.

He also called for a collective resolve that despite

[| More on P10](#)

J&K Youth Choosing Peace Over Violence: DGP

Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Nalin Prabhat on Wednesday said increasing participation of children and youth in sports and constructive activities was helping the Union Territory move towards peace and prosperity while countering the “nefarious designs” of the neighbouring

country. Addressing the flag-in ceremony of the ‘Run for Unity’ marathon, Prabhat said the growing participation reflected the younger generation's commitment to a peaceful and prosperous future. “The increase in participation every year shows that our children and

[| More on P10](#)



“India has adopted unique and innovative energy conservation methods, which are furthering sustainable development and also benefitting citizens.”

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

National Painting Competition On Energy Conservation–2026

THEMES

Save Energy at School and Home

Energy Conservation is the Key for Energy Security

Group A
5th, 6th & 7th Standard

Group B
8th, 9th & 10th Standard

Prizes Worth Painting For

Prize Category	State/UT Level Prize			Prize Category	National Level Prize		
	No of Prize	Group A	Group B		No of Prize	Group A	Group B
First Prize/ Gold Medal	01 No	₹ 50,000/-	₹ 50,000/-	First Prize/ Gold Medal	01 No	₹ 1,00,000/-	₹ 1,00,000/-
Second Prize/ Silver Medal	01 No	₹ 30,000/-	₹ 30,000/-	Second Prize/ Silver Medal	01 No	₹ 50,000/-	₹ 50,000/-
Third Prize/ Bronze Medal	01 No	₹ 20,000/-	₹ 20,000/-	Third Prize/ Bronze Medal	01 No	₹ 30,000/-	₹ 30,000/-
Appreciation Prize	10 Nos	₹ 7,500/-	₹ 7,500/-	Appreciation Prize	10 Nos	₹ 15,000/-	₹ 15,000/-

National winners will also receive laptops/tablets and an opportunity for a study tour in India

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF PAINTINGS: 15th OCTOBER 2026

CBC 34106/13/0011/2627

Government of India

Nation salutes Gandhi ji and Shastri ji on their birth anniversaries

2 October, 2026

On the birth anniversaries of **Mahatma Gandhi** and **Lal Bahadur Shastri**, the nation pays tribute to these two great leaders who dedicated their lives to the service of the nation.

“Gandhi ji demonstrated the way of courage, simplicity, service, and power of compassion, while Shastri ji continues to motivate us in the endeavour of building a strong and self-reliant India.”

- Narendra Modi

CBC 63101/13/0015/2627

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J&K May See First Major Snowfall Spell From Oct 8



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness the season's first major spell of rain and snowfall between October 8 and 11, with a strong Western Disturbance expected to affect the Union Territory, according to a weather forecast.

The weather is likely to remain mostly dry across J&K until October 5, while conditions may change from October 8, Kashmir Weather Forecast said, putting

the current possibility of the spell at around 55 per cent.

Snowfall during the period is mainly expected over the higher reaches, while rain could occur across the plains and lower-lying areas.

The forecast, however, cautioned that the assessment is an early indication and that the exact timing and intensity of the weather system could change as it approaches the region.

"More updates will be shared as the dates | [More on P10](#)

J&K Notifies EV Policy, Targets 1.4 Lakh EVs By 2032

Policy envisages 900 charging sites and a ₹50-cr annual scrappage incentive

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Thursday notified the J&K Electric Vehicle Policy-2026, setting a six-year roadmap to expand clean, affordable and weather-resilient electric mobility across the Union Territory.

The policy, covering 2026-32, was notified following its approval by the Council of Ministers chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. It aims to accelerate EV adoption, strengthen charging infrastructure and create an enabling ecosystem across all 20 districts of J&K.

The policy targets 1.40 lakh electric vehicles by 2032, supported by demand incentives, climate-specific infrastructure, power-grid integration, public-private partnerships, skill development and employment generation.



Under the infrastructure roadmap, the government plans to establish 900 public charging sites, including 140 fast-charging hubs, across urban grids and highway corridors.

The policy also provides for EV-ready parking, with building bye-laws mandating EV-readiness for 20 per cent of parking capacity.

Recognising J&K's cold

and challenging climatic conditions, the policy introduces a Specialized Winter Validation Protocol for testing EV performance, particularly in snow and sub-zero temperatures.

The framework also seeks to integrate EV charging demand with the power system in a managed manner.

To encourage adoption, the policy provides 3-5 per cent

interest subvention on EV loans for up to 36 months for eligible beneficiaries.

It also provides scrappage-linked incentives, backed by an annual budgetary provision of ₹50 crore, to encourage replacement of old vehicles with electric vehicles.

The policy further provides early-adopter top-up incentives for the first 15,800 eligible adopters. These include 15 lakh for the first 300 e-buses, 1 lakh for the first 1,500 personal cars and 5,000 for the first 10,000 two-wheelers, subject to prescribed conditions.

It also envisages phase-wise electrification of fleets, expansion of charging networks, greater private-sector participation and development of skilled manpower for the emerging EV sector.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated Transport Minister Satish Sharma and | [More on P10](#)

LG Greet People On Gandhi Jayanti

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday extended greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of the 157th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, which will be observed on October 2.

In a message, Sinha paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and said his ideals of truth, non-violence and self-reliance continue to inspire people across the world.

"Pujya Babu showed the world that truth, non-violence and self-reliance are eternal paths to peace," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said Gandhi's ideals of Satya, Ahimsa, Swadeshi, Swachhata and Sarvodaya continue to guide humanity and inspire people to contribute towards the country's growth and prosperity.

He called upon people to pay tribute to Gandhi by pledging to follow his principles and work towards building a peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir and a developed India.

"Together, let us build a peaceful and prosperous Jammu Kashmir and developed India," Sinha said.

Man Charged for Forging LG's Signature

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Economic Offences Wing of the Crime Branch has filed a chargesheet against a man for allegedly forging the signature of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Thursday.

The chargesheet was filed before the court of Sub Judge Srinagar against Saqlain Mushtaq Dar, a resident of Pulwama district, under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

According to a Crime Branch spokesperson, the case relates to a forged communication purportedly addressed to the Senior Superintendent of Police, Anantnag, in which the accused allegedly impersonated the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

The communication was allegedly prepared using a counterfeit official letterhead and forged | [More on P10](#)

25-Yr-Old Commercial Vehicles To Face Seizure, FIRs In J&K

Transport Department asks owners to voluntarily scrap over-age vehicles

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Transport Department has directed its field offices to seize commercial vehicles that have completed 25 years and register FIRs against those found operating on roads.

Transport Commissioner Vishesh Mahajan urged owners of such vehicles to voluntarily scrap them, citing concerns over commuter safety.

In a post on X, Mahajan said the department had instructed field offices to take action against commercial vehicles that have crossed the 25-year age limit.

"Request all Commercial Vehicle owners to Scrap the vehicles which have attained the age of 25 years as today. We have written to field



offices to seize and lodge FIRs in case they are found moving on the roads. We are concerned about Commuter Safety," he said.

The directive comes as part of measures aimed at keeping over-age commercial vehicles off the roads and addressing safety concerns associated with their continued operation. | [More on P10](#)

At A Kashmir Science Congress, Young Minds Confront A Changing Future

At IUST, scientists and students spent three days examining climate risks, emerging technologies and the challenge of turning Kashmir's talent into opportunity.

Syed Sammar Mehdi

Srinagar: By the final afternoon at the Nund Reshi Auditorium in Awantipora, the stage had become a meeting point for two versions of Jammu and Kashmir's future.

Scientists had spent three days discussing climate change, shrinking glaciers, disaster risks and emerging technologies. Nearby, school students presented models, posters and projects, giving a younger generation its own place in the proceedings.

The J&K Science Congress 2026, held at the Islamic University of Science and Technology under the theme "Science, Innovations and Emerging Technologies for Sustainable and Viksit J&K," brought together about 700 researchers and 4,000 participants for 26 technical



sessions covering 14 themes. Five plenary lectures and two panel discussions added to the programme.

At the closing session on Thursday, School and Higher Education Minister Sakina Itoo said the future of Jammu and Kashmir would depend on more than roads, buildings and other physical infrastructure. "The knowledge created and

the young minds empowered," she said, would define what comes next.

Her message turned toward employment, one of the central challenges facing a young population. Students, she said, need preparation to become "creators of employment."

Talent exists throughout the region, she added, while opportunity | [More on P10](#)

Human Trafficking Probe

SIA Conducts Searches In Kulgam

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Thursday conducted searches at two residential premises in south Kashmir's Kulgam district as part of an investigation into an alleged organised transnational human trafficking and cyber fraud network.

An SIA spokesperson said searches were conducted at the residences of Gulam Nabi Khanday, alias Charlie, Mohsin and Jerry Khan, and Ashiq Hussain Sheikh, both residents of Kulgam.

The searches were part of an ongoing investigation into an alleged network involved in trafficking unemployed youth from Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country under the guise of overseas employment and subsequently exploiting them in cyber fraud operations in Myanmar.

During the searches, the agency seized | [More on P10](#)

ACB Arrests Agriculture Officer, Middleman Over ₹50k Bribe

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Anti-corruption Bureau (ACB) in Jammu and Kashmir have arrested a senior government officer and a middleman accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000, an official said.

Deputy Director (Law Enforcement) in the Agriculture Department, Naseer Ahmad Khan and middleman Mohammad Owais were arrested while allegedly demanding and accepting the illegal gratification, a spokesperson for the agency said.

The ACB, acting on a written complaint, conducted a preliminary verification and found that Khan had allegedly sought Rs 2 lakh from a seed dealer for allowing him to sell plant seeds at his shop.

"Under compulsion, the complainant had already paid the bribe amount of Rs 1 lakh. Following negotiations, the



further amount was to be paid in two instalments of Rs 50,000 each," the spokesperson said.

The ACB registered a case and laid a trap, during which Khan and Owais were arrested while allegedly demanding and accepting the bribe on Wednesday, he said.

The tainted bribe money of Rs 50,000 was recovered from their possession on the spot, the spokesperson said.

Both accused | [More on P10](#)

'Attempt' Became 'Completed Rape': HC Acquits Budgam Man

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has overturned the conviction of a man in a 2007 rape case, observing that the prosecution case had evolved from an initial allegation of an attempt to rape into one of completed sexual assault during the course of investigation.

While allowing an appeal filed by Mohammad Ashraf Ganie, a bench of Justice Sanjay Parihar set aside the October 10, 2023 judgment and November 7, 2023 order passed by the Additional Sessions Judge (Fast Track), Budgam. The trial court had sentenced Ganie to seven years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1 lakh under Section 376 RPC, besides five years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 450 RPC and one year's simple imprisonment



under Section 506 RPC, with all sentences directed to run concurrently.

The case arose from FIR No. 309/2007 registered at Police Station Budgam concerning an alleged incident of July 15, 2007. The prosecution case was that the Ganie entered the house when the prosecutrix was alone, threatened her

and committed rape. The FIR was initially registered under Sections 376/511 RPC, relating to rape and attempt to rape, but Section 511 was subsequently dropped and Sections 450 and 506 RPC were added after the medical examination.

The Court observed that the earliest version of the case referred | [More on P10](#)

Hawala Funding Court Orders Framing of Charges Against Malik, 6 Others

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: A Delhi court has ordered the framing of money laundering charges against jailed JKLF chief Yasin Malik, separatist leader Shabir Ahmad Shah, Baramulla MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid and four others in a case concerning alleged funding through hawala channels for secessionist activities.

In an order dated September 9, Special Judge Prashant Sharma said there was prima facie sufficient material giving rise to a strong suspicion against the seven accused for offences under Section 3 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, punishable under Section 4.

The accused named in the order are Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali, Naval Kishore Kapoor, Trison Farms and Constructions

Pvt Ltd, Mohd Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmad Shah, Masarat Alam and Abdul Rashid Sheikh.

The court had listed the matter for formal framing of charges on September 30. However, according to court sources, the accused could not be physically produced due to security-related issues. The Enforcement Directorate was subsequently directed to obtain their signatures on the charges at the respective prisons.

The matter has now been listed for further proceedings on October 30.

The ED case stems from a 2017 National Investigation Agency case in which the accused were booked under various provisions, including criminal conspiracy and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The prosecution has alleged that the | [More on P10](#)

22 Killed in Targeted Pak Airstrikes in Afghanistan

Sajjad Hussain

Islamabad, Oct 1 (PTI) Pakistan on Thursday, said it carried out targeted airstrikes using aerial and drone capabilities in Afghanistan, killing at least 22 terrorists and destroying their hideouts at two places as part of a campaign to eliminate militants' hideouts across the border.

In a post on X, the Ministry of Information provided the details of air attacks against terrorists across the border and also attached a video clip of strikes.

"Through precise aerial and drone strikes, as reflected in the attached clip, terrorist hideouts and camps" belonging to Tehreek-e-Taliban and Baloch militant groups at two locations in

This comes amid a sharp escalation in already strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, with the two sides trading allegations over militant sanctuaries, cross-border attacks, airstrikes and border incursions.

Pakistan's information ministry, earlier in a statement, said the country's security forces conducted "well-planned and calibrated aerial strikes" against the hideouts and safe havens of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), killing multiple terrorists.

It said that "selective targeting" of terrorist camps and hideouts at two locations in Afghanistan was carried out based on credible intelligence with "precision and accuracy".



areas under the Afghan Taliban's control were comprehensively destroyed, the ministry said.

It added that large quantities of weapons and ammunition stockpiled at the terrorist hideouts and camps were also destroyed through calibrated and precisely targeted aerial strikes.

Afghanistan's Taliban government, meanwhile, said that Pakistani strikes killed nine Afghan civilians, including women and children, and injured 11 others.

"Targets were destroyed with precision and initial reports suggest the killing of 22 terrorists," it said.

The ministry said Pakistan has always strived for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. However, "the safety and security of our citizens remains our foremost priority".

It alleged that Afghanistan continues to remain a hub of terrorism and the threat to Pakistan emanates from there.

Most Americans Blame Trump for High Prices

JILL COLVIN and LINLEY SANDERS

Washington, Oct 1 (AP) Americans are deeply frustrated with President Donald Trump's handling of the economy and rising prices, with most panning his performance and blaming his policies as higher costs threaten his party's chances in November.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research finds that only 17 per cent of US adults approve of the Republican president's handling of the cost of living. Just 26 per cent approve of his handling of the economy overall, marking a new low.

A majority, 65 per cent, of US adults now blame Trump's policies for persistently high costs more than factors outside of his control, signalling growing weariness over his aggressive use of tariffs and continued unhappiness with the war with Iran.

The dismal numbers come just weeks before midterm elections that will determine whether Republicans maintain control of Congress, while Trump is hitting the campaign trail with an aggressive schedule of rallies. But Trump - who has asked voters to pretend that he is on the ballot as he tries to bolster turnout

-- remains deeply unpopular, with even many Republicans faulting him for failing to deliver on promised relief.

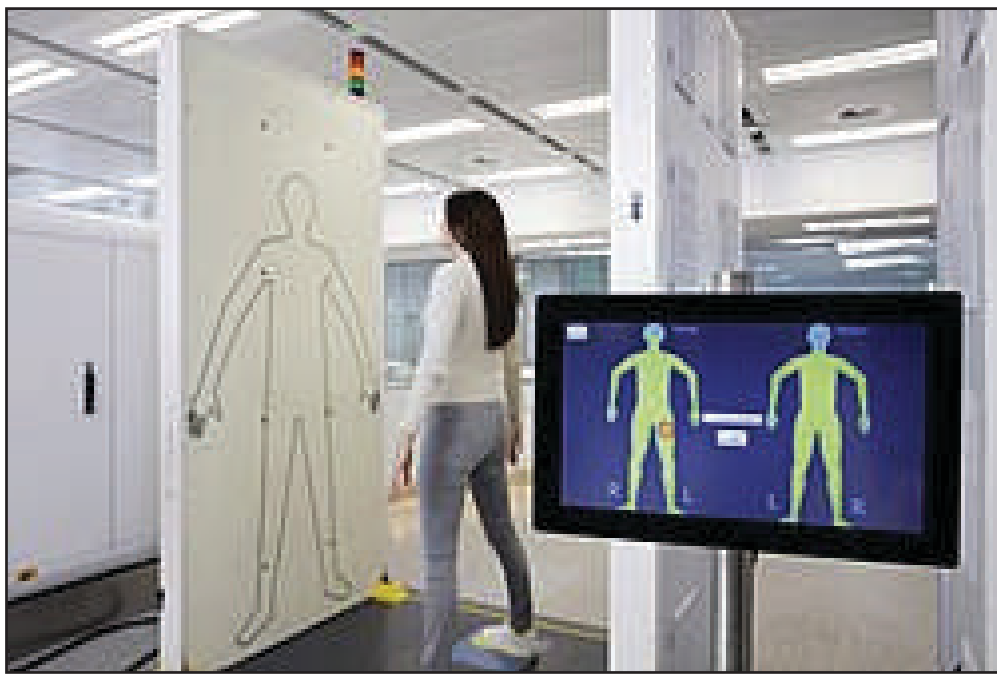
"I was hoping it would be better or different, but it's not really good," said Robert Gault, 66, a retired factory worker from Bradford, Pennsylvania, who describes himself as a Republican.

"Our president, I thought, was going to help the country, and so far he has not really seemed to have done that with the economy or in general. He's not really done what I was hoping he would," said Gault. "He said, 'Make America Great Again.' And I have not seen him do that."

Costs drag on Trump as the economic pain keeps coming

Over the last few months, Americans have grown more worried about being able to afford basics like groceries and gas. About half of US adults now say they are "extremely" or "very" concerned about being able to fill their tanks, up from 39 per cent in July. About half are also highly concerned about being able to afford food.

Prices are "extremely exorbitant. Just the cost of everything is going up as a result of fuel," said Pedro Sanchez, 52, of Perris, California, who voted for Trump and works in law enforcement.



Full-Body Scanners Trialled at 2 Airports

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Oct 1 : Aviation security watchdog BCAS is collecting data from the ongoing trials of full body scanners at Bengaluru and Cochin airports and the algorithms will be refined based on the outcome before deciding on introducing the scanners at the airports.

Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) Director General Rajesh Nirwan on Thursday said full body scanners have been mandated for eight airports.

Trials of the scanners are being done at Bengaluru and Cochin airports, from where data and information such as how many alarms are generated are being collected. The gathered data will be assessed, he said at a briefing in the national capital.

Cochin is not among the eight airports where full body scanners have been mandated. Details about the eight airports could not be immediately ascertained.

The idea of full body scanners was introduced a few years back, but due to various issues, including those related to passenger privacy, the technology is

yet to be deployed at the airports.

In response to a query about the privacy concerns, Nirwan said that one issue was about the image that was coming out after scanning and now the scanners are being made 'image agnostic' as it will just be a model of a person. The technology will display on the screen if something suspicious is detected or where something is kept on the body and will show only that particular part. Amid concerns that wearing certain ornaments and even mangal sutra could trigger alarms by full-body scanners, BCAS is working on refining the algorithms used by these scanners in close coordination with the vendors and original equipment manufacturers.

"What we are getting today in India is based on algorithms that have been designed for foreign markets. There are certain typical things that are on the body of Indian citizens or people living in India. So, those algorithms are also being continuously refined," the BCAS DG said.

All such details will be available from data from the ongoing

trials and accordingly, Nirwan said the algorithms will be refined.

In response to a query, Nirwan said BCAS is working on the technical specifications for Computed Tomography X-Ray (CTX) machines.

These machines, once installed at airports, will allow passengers to keep electronic items in their hand baggage and not take them out during security checks at airports.

At present, passengers have to remove electronic items from their hand baggage and keep them in separate trays during the security check.

When asked about the use of AI and data analytics in the technological initiatives of BCAS, Nirwan said it recently issued guidelines for the use of facial recognition and AI in CCTVs at airports. These would give pointers to unclaimed baggage at airports as the CCTV system would throw up those alarms, he noted.

Specific details could not be ascertained. "India is one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets, and there are now 165 airports.

SC: Violence Threats Hamper Doctors' Judgment

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Oct 1 : A doctor cannot be expected to exercise sound and independent judgment while working under the apprehension of physical violence, intimidation or coercion, the Supreme Court has said while cancelling the bail of Shiv Sena corporator Ramesh Mhatre and three others, accused of assaulting and verbally abusing doctors at a municipal hospital in Maharashtra's Thane district.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, which cancelled the bail while setting aside a Bombay High Court order on September 28, said in its detailed order that physical violence, intimidation or coercion cannot become a means of expressing dissatisfaction with medical treatment, securing compliance with a demand or raising grievance for an adverse medical outcome.

"A doctor cannot reasonably



be expected to exercise sound and independent judgment while labouring under the apprehension of physical violence, intimidation or coercion. The safety and dignity of the medical professional are consequently not matters of personal privilege. They are the safeguards which serve the larger public interest in ensuring that medical care is rendered with the concentration, composure and judgment that the profession demands," it said.

The court directed Mhatre and three of his associates -- Ramesh Laxman Pawar, Pramod

alias Prakash Uddhav Nikam and Akshay Sharad Karande -- who were also granted bail in the case to surrender before the trial court by October 5.

All four are accused of assaulting and verbally abusing three doctors, including a lady doctor, who were on duty in the labour ward of the Shastri Nagar Municipal Hospital in Dombivli on July 6.

The bench said an elected representative is entrusted with the responsibility of serving the public and strengthening the institutions through which grievances are addressed and justice is administered.

"He/she cannot supplant those institutions by assuming the role of the police, the administrator or the court. The use of personal influence to secure compliance through fear or intimidation has consequences extending beyond the immediate victim and carries the potential to erode public confidence in the rule of law itself," it said.

Adhir Asks Mamata to Rejoin Congress

Says no objection to her leadership in Bengal

Press Trust Of India

Kolkata, Oct 1 : Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Thursday made a direct pitch to TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee to rejoin the Congress along with her remaining MLAs and MPs, saying there would be no objection to her leading the party's Bengal unit.

Chowdhury also appealed to the Congress high command to facilitate such a development and said Banerjee should, as a gesture of cooperation similar to the October 6 Nandigram assembly bypoll, extend support to the Congress candidate in Rejinagar.

His appeal came at a time when the TMC is battling what may be its deepest organisational crisis since its formation, with its legislative and parliamentary wings witnessing separate rebellions following its defeat in the 2026 Assembly elections.

"There is no need for any separate entity at this moment. Not much is left of the TMC after its defeat in the Assembly elections," Chowdhury, a former state Congress president, said, referring to the split in the party.

Banerjee had left the Congress and formed the Trinamool Congress nearly three decades ago.

"We would urge Mamata Banerjee to join the Congress along with all the leftover MLAs and MPs. I will also make this appeal to Congress high command that let her rejoin the party. We would accept her leadership in Bengal and work with her," he said.

Seeking to build on the TMC faction's recent support for the Congress in Nandigram, Chowdhury said Banerjee should make a similar move in Rejinagar.

"As a friendly gesture, just



2026 elections, in which the BJP emerged as the largest party. Within weeks of the poll verdict, however, the TMC legislature party itself split, with 58 rebel MLAs backing expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee as their Leader of the Opposition and the Assembly Speaker recognising the rival bloc.

The rebellion was followed by a parallel churn in the TMC's parliamentary wing, with rebel MPs also challenging Mamata Banerjee's leadership.

While the Assembly rebels have sought to establish a separate legislative identity, the rebel parliamentary group has moved closer to the little-known NCPI and extended support to the BJP-led NDA at the Centre.

Iran Seeks Iraq's Help as US Sanctions Hit Flights

Trans Asia News

Baghdad - Iran has urged Iraq to act against the fallout from US sanctions that has disrupted Iranian flights to the country, warning that the measures are threatening the historical ties between the two neighbours.

The Iranian embassy in Baghdad on Thursday called on the Iraqi government to make an "immediate decision" to address restrictions that have prevented Iranian aircraft from receiving services at Iraqi airports.

In a post published on its official X account, the embassy said relations between Tehran and Baghdad are founded on "deep bonds and shared interests," stressing that the latest flight restrictions had effectively prevented various groups of people, including pilgrims, students and patients, from traveling between the two countries.

"The independent Iraqi government is expected, on 'Sovereignty Day', to take an immediate decision to safeguard these historic relations against

provocative measures and the consequences of US sanctions," it emphasised.

Iranian flights to Baghdad, Najaf, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah were suspended after airport service companies in Iraq, fearing secondary US sanctions, refused to provide services to Iranian aircraft following Washington's imposition of a new round of sanctions on Iranian airlines.

In recent weeks, Baghdad has undertaken extensive diplomatic efforts to ease tensions between Tehran and Washington over the flight issue, but has secured only a limited, one-month exemption from Washington.

Iraq has reportedly offered safeguards, including passenger screening and information sharing with the US, in a bid to secure a waiver from the US Treasury, Reuters reported.

Earlier this week, Washington issued a limited authorisation allowing only pilgrimage flights operated by Iraqi Airways to depart from the holy city of Najaf, while Iranian airlines remain barred from entering Iraqi airspace.

NEWS MAKERS

Machchhar Fought Valiantly: PM Modi

New Delhi, Oct 1 (PTI) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar's bravery for fighting valiantly and preventing another 9/11-like attack, without fearing for his own life.

Addressing the centenary celebrations of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) here, he said that Captain Machchhar has shown the world the highest form of courage.

The prime minister said that without fearing for his own life, Captain Machchhar fought valiantly and prevented another 9/11-like attack from happening, a statement issued by his office said.

He said that 140 crore Indians salute Captain Machchhar and are praying for his well-being.

The prime minister said



that he also spoke with the injured Captain's father, mother and wife.

"He is undergoing treatment. Today, the entire world is proud of him. I urge my fellow citizens to pray for Smit's long life and excellent health, and to honour our brother Smit, who has brought glory to India," PM Modi said.

For every Indian, Smit's bravery fills our heart with pride, he said.

SpaceX Launches 4 Astronauts to ISS

MARCIA DUNNAP Aerospace Writer

Cape Canaveral, Oct 1 (AP) Four astronauts blasted off Thursday on a space station mission that will stretch until spring, among them a Canadian whose wife will give birth while he's away.

SpaceX launched commander Jessica Watkins and her crew for NASA after a three-week delay to fix the capsule's leaking fuel system.

Although their stay at the International Space Station will last a long six months, the flight there promised to be the quickest yet for Elon Musk's company: a mere eight-hour transit with an arrival well before bedtime.

With the late morning liftoff from Cape Canaveral Space Flight Station, Watkins became the first Black woman to lead a crew to orbit. A geologist who worked with NASA's Mars rover Curiosity a decade ago, Watkins is making her second trip to the space station fol-



lowing a lengthy stay in 2022.

The others are newcomers to space: NASA's Luke Delaney, a retired Marine; Canada's Joshua Kutryk, a colonel in the Royal Canadian Air Force; and Russia's Sergey Tetryatnikov, a former submariner. They will replace four astronauts who have been living at the orbiting laboratory since February.

"We feel like some of the luckiest people in the world," Kutryk said ahead of the launch.

This was the 13th crew launched by SpaceX for NASA, not counting 2020s test flight. All four embrace their Crew-13 designation that pays homage in their mission patch to Apollo 13. The harrowing 1970 moonshot ended with the astronauts' safe return.

Zimbabwe Tycoon Dies in Crash, Had Powerful Friends

FARAI MUTSAKA

Harare, Oct 1 (AP) The death in a helicopter crash of Zimbabwean businessman Wicknell Chivayo, his wife and four others has reverberated across government and industry circles on the continent, as investigators began examining what caused the aircraft to go down.

Family spokesperson Herbert Chivayo said the process of identifying the victims was "painful" because of the impact and damage of Wednesday's fiery crash near the capital, Harare.

Wicknell Chivayo was a close ally of Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa, and often posted pictures of encounters, including dinners, with heads of state from across Africa.

In a condolence message, Mnangagwa said he was "numbed" by the death, describing Chivayo as "consummately philanthropic".

The Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe said preliminary observations showed that the helicopter hit the ground, spilling fuel that ignited and burned surrounding grass.

GMC Mourns Demise of Prof Mohammad Yousuf Bhat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar has expressed profound grief over the demise of Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Yousuf Bhat, former Professor and Head of the Department of



Medicine, who passed away on October 1, 2026.

Prof. Bhat was remembered as an accomplished physician, academician, dedicated teacher and com-

passionate clinician whose contribution extended beyond patient care to medical education. Generations of students and postgraduate trainees recalled his distinctive teaching style and his ability to bring clinical medicine into the classroom, helping students develop a systematic approach to patients and clinical problems.

He also contributed to medical literature through his books on Emergency Medicine and Hypertension.

In her condolence message, GMC Srinagar Principal/Dean Prof. (Dr.) Iffat Hassan expressed deep sorrow over his passing, saying his demise had left a profound void among colleagues, students and patients.

Faculty, residents, students and staff conveyed condolences to the bereaved family, while acknowledging his lasting contribution to medicine, medical education and patient care.

A Run across Generations: Kashmir Marathon Draws Over 6,000 Participants

Agencies

Srinagar: From toddlers taking their first steps into the world of sports to an 84-year-old participant completing the course, the Kashmir Marathon, Run for Unity, brought together people across generations, drawing applause and appreciation at its closing ceremony in Srinagar on Thursday.

Organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the marathon saw participation from more than 6,000 runners across various categories, turning the event into a celebration of fitness, unity and community spirit.

According to details obtained by KNO, a two-year-old girl and three-year-old Mohammad Hamza were among the youngest participants and emerged as crowd favourites. Their presence, alongside young athletes and senior citizens, highlighted the marathon's inclusive spirit and its appeal across age groups.

Participants said the in-

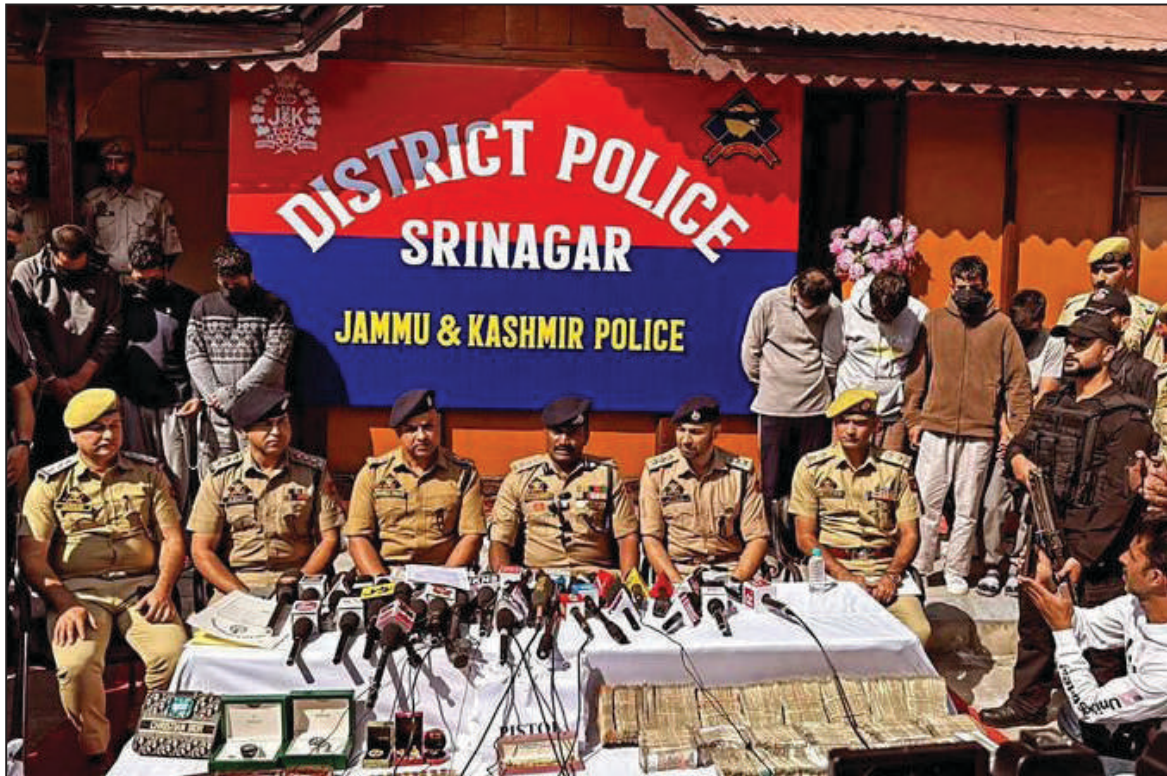
volvement of both children and elderly runners made the event especially memorable.

"The participation of children and senior citizens made the marathon particularly special," said Zubair Ahmed, a resident of Anantnag.

Zahid Nadeem of Srinagar's Jawahar Nagar also lauded the initiative, saying such events bring people together while promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

The elderly participants received special appreciation during the event. A 61-year-old woman was awarded a cash prize of 2,500, while 84-year-old Haji Ghulam was applauded for completing the marathon.

The closing ceremony, held at the Police Golf Course on the banks of Dal Lake, was attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, ADGP Armed Police Nitish Kumar, ADGP CID M.K. Sinha, senior civil and police officers, sports personalities and youth—(KNO)



Srinagar Police Bust Inter-State Drug Network, Eight Held

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police busted an inter-state narcotics network operating from downtown Srinagar, arresting eight persons and recovering over 2.19 lakh pharmaceutical tablets and capsules, along with codeine, a heroin-like substance, cash, gold and a pistol.

Addressing a press conference, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr G.V. Sundee Chakravarthy, said the action followed an investigation into FIR No. 135/2026 registered at Police Station Safakadal under relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, Arms Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

According to the SSP, the investigation uncovered what police described as a structured narcotics network involved in the procurement, transportation, storage, distribution and financing of banned pharmaceutical drugs, with linkages extending beyond Jammu and Kashmir.

"There was an organised network in downtown Srinagar with a well-established supply chain," Chakravarthy said.

The arrested accused have been identified as Mohammad Waseem Zargar of Malik Sahib, Safakadal; Inam Ahmad Zargar of Haftiyarbal, Safakadal; Sahib Ahmad Ganie of Damamazar, Safakadal; Ansar Hussain Bhat of Zabar Mohalla, Budgam; Peer Shakoor of Palpora, Noorbagh; Haroon Tariq Pandit, Aquib Saleem and Haris Hameed Malla, all residents of Guzarbal, Chattabal.

Police said Malla was traced

through technical surveillance and arrested from Bengaluru in Karnataka.

The seizure includes 2,19,425 pharmaceutical tablets and capsules, 3.83 kilograms of codeine-containing liquid and around 40 grams of a heroin-like substance. Among the pharmaceutical drugs recovered were nearly 2,18,500 tapentadol tablets, 1,200 pregabalin capsules and 414 tramadol tablets and capsules.

Besides narcotics, police recovered a .32-bore pistol with two empty magazines and a dagger, as well as approximately 85.75 lakh in cash.

The investigation also led to the identification and freezing of nearly 1.07 crore held in multiple bank accounts allegedly linked to the accused and other persons under scrutiny.

Chakravarthy said two lockers maintained by Mohammad Waseem Zargar at Axis Bank, Bemina, were searched following court orders. Police recovered around 65 lakh in cash, along with gold coins, biscuits and other gold articles from the lockers. The total value of the locker recoveries has been estimated at around 2.20 crore.

The seized valuables also included 108 gold coins, gold biscuits and assorted gold articles, two Rolex watches, a Dior handbag, a DSLR camera with lens and an iPhone 16 Pro Max.

Police have also attached a residential house allegedly belonging to one of the accused and two vehicles—a Maruti Brezza bearing registration number JK01AK-7523 and a Suzuki Ertiga bearing registration number JK01AX-4601—in accordance with law.

The SSP said teams investigating the source of the pharmaceutical

drugs travelled to Chandigarh, Panchkula and Ambala, where pharmaceutical establishments and transport agencies were examined. Investigators collected invoices, bills, goods receipts and other documents as part of the probe.

Police are now scrutinising alleged discrepancies involving drug licences, purchaser details, invoices and payment records, besides examining the functioning of certain establishments in coordination with regulatory authorities. The role of transport agencies allegedly used in the supply chain is also being investigated.

Punjab Police and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) assisted Srinagar Police during the investigation. Two accused—Faizan Firdous alias Farzan Khanday of Safakadal and Mohammad Shahvar Gaur—remain absconding, police said. Their alleged roles and wider linkages are being examined.

Investigators are also analysing digital devices seized during the operation to establish the complete procurement, transportation, distribution and financial chain.

Chakravarthy said the investigation remains ongoing and evidence-driven, with further arrests, recoveries, asset attachments and other legal action possible as the probe progresses.

"Our objective is to dismantle the entire narcotics supply chain rather than limit the action to individual arrests and recoveries," the SSP said, adding that efforts were underway to identify suppliers, transporters, distributors, financiers and other alleged facilitators involved in the network.

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

AIRPORTS
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RAILWAYS
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BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
BIJBERA: 01932-228243
PAMPOR: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS
Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
Mughal Road - (Open)
Srinagar- Leh- (Open)

HIJRI CALENDAR 19 Rabi-ul-Sani 1448	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	5: 05
	ZUHR	12: 22
	ASR	4: 35
	Magrib	6: 21
	ISHA	7: 41

This Day In History

- 939 - Battle at Andernach: King Otto & Hermann of Zwa-
- 976 - Hisham II appointed kalief of Cordoba
- 1187 Sultan Saladin captures Jerusalem from Crusaders
- 1540- Venice and Turkey signs peace
- 1760 - Russian and Austrian army evacuates Berlin [NS=10/13]
- 1799 Duke of York & Russians capture Alkmaar in Netherlands
- 1835 Battle of Gonzales fought between Texan settlers and Mexican forces. First engagement of the Texas revolution
- 1851- The pasilalinic-sympathetic compass (a contraption built to test the pseudo-scientific hypothesis that snails create a permanent telepathic link when they mate) is demonstrated but proves to be a fake.

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS! IMPORTANT INFORMATION

RUN OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAIN

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during this festival season, Northern Railway has decided to run the following additional Special Train as per details given below:

04081/04082 NEW DELHI-SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI KATRA-NEW DELHI FESTIVAL SPECIAL EXPRESS				6 Trips	
Train No. 04081	STATIONS		Train No. 04082		
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.	
----	23:45	New Delhi	10:00	----	
00:58	01:00	Panipat	07:25	07:27	
01:50	01:52	Kurukshetra Jn.	06:25	06:27	
02:30	02:40	Ambala Cantt.	05:40	05:50	
04:15	04:20	Ludhiana Jn.	03:45	03:50	
05:22	05:27	Jalandhar Cantt.	02:45	02:50	
07:15	07:20	Pathankot Cantt.	00:45	00:50	
09:15	09:25	Jammu Tawi	23:00	23:05	
11:08	11:10	Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan	21:28	21:30	
12:00	----	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	----	21:00	

Days of run :- 04081 Ex. New Delhi on 02.10.2026, 03.10.2026 & 04.10.2026 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) and 04082 Ex. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on 03.10.2026, 04.10.2026 & 05.10.2026 (Saturday, Sunday & Monday).

Composition : 3 Tier AC, Sleeper and General.

For detailed information, please call
RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry
website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

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حاجی عبدالرحمان بٹ



یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ حاجی عبدالرحمان بٹ ولد مرحوم محمد رجب بٹ صاحب منہ بٹ بٹ پورہ زونی مر سیر بٹ بٹ / ۳۰ ستمبر ۲۰۲۶ کو انتقال کر گئے، اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو بخیر رحمت میں جگہ دے اور لواحقین کو یہ صدمہ برداشت کرنے کی توفیق عطا کرے مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی ۳/ اکتوبر ۲۰۲۶ بروز اتوار ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع ٹھیکہ پورہ زونی مر سیر بٹ بٹ میں جانی جائے گی۔

سوگواران : معراج الدین محمد یوسف فاروقی احمد بشاقی احمد (فرزدان)
انتہایا احمد بشاقی احمد (فرزدان)
Contact number 9796521841

CRPF Personnel Falls Unconscious, Dies

Agencies

Srinagar: A CRPF personnel died after being found unconscious in Lal Bazar area of Srinagar city, officials said on Thursday.

An official told KNO, that the CRPF per-

sonnel collapsed and fell unconscious at Mill Stop, Lal Bazar, Srinagar.

He was shifted to a hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

Meanwhile, cognizance of the incident has been taken up, while the exact cause of death is being verified—(KNO)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

District Employment & Counseling Center, Anantnag.

Email: ddemp-ana@jk.gov.in

Phone No: 01932-22220

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Inviting Proposals for Three-Month Skill Development Training Programme "Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing"

The District Employment & Counselling Centre, Anantnag invites proposals from Government / Government-Recognized Institutes of District Anantnag for conducting a three-month skill development training programme in the healthcare sector titled "Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing"

The programme shall focus on psychiatric and Mental Health care skills, including patient handling, daily care, behavioral management, communication skills, Ethical skills etc

Interested institutes must submit a brief proposal indicating:

1. Course content and training methodology.
2. Intake capacity and eligibility.
3. Faculty and infrastructure details.
4. Assessment/certification mechanism.
5. Financial implications, including per-trainee cost and other incidental expenses.

Proposals, duly signed and sealed, shall be submitted to the office of the undersigned by or before of 03-10-2026.

Sd/-
Deputy Director Employment
Anantnag

No:-DECC/ANG/Skill-Dev/2026-27/ 745-47
DIPK-6300/26
Dated: 01/10/2026

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr.DEE/G/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders (www.ireps.gov.in) against below titled Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only.

Tender No.	Name of work	App. Cost. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)
251-Elect-T-02-R1-2026-27	Electrical work in c/w Augmentation of Service building for SSE(C&W) office in lieu of old building for C&W Coaching Depot, FZR, Electrical work in c/w General Watering Arrangements at FKA, MOGA & LNK of Firozpur Division, Electrical work in c/w Provision of 15 bedded male barrack at Attari and Electrical work in c/w Improvement to washing line no. 4 and Sick line / Ac pit at Amritsar Railway Station in the section of ADEN-I/ASR."	Rs. 76,73,907.22/-	Rs. 1,53,500.00/-
Completion period: 06 Months		Opening of tender 23.10.2026 after 15:00 Hrs	Website Particulars www.ireps.gov.in

No.251-Elect/T-Notice No.02-R1-Elect/2026-27 Dated: 01.10.2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 3433/26

Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Ltd. Office of the Executive Engineer, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, KPDCL, Srinagar

Email ID: xened-2@jk.gov.in Tel No./Fax: 0194-2311374

Cancellation Notice - e-NIT No. 05 of 2026-2

It is hereby notified that e-NIT No. 05 of 2026-27 Dated: 01-07-2026, titled "Rate Contract for Supply of Aluminium/Copper Winding Wires/Strips of various sizes and other allied material & T&P items required for Reclamation/Repair of Damaged Distribution Transformers of various capacities at Electric Division-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar, Kashmir", issued by this office, is hereby cancelled.

The cancellation is pursuant to the recommendation of the Cost Engineering Committee-V (CEC-V) in its meeting held on 19-09-2026, wherein it was observed that the subject requirement is to be processed through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Portal, in accordance with the applicable procurement procedure.

Accordingly, the procurement process initiated under the subject e-NIT shall stand cancelled and the requirement shall be processed afresh through the GeM Portal in accordance with the applicable rules, terms and conditions.

No: ED-II/TS/11923-30
DIPK-NB-1774/26
Dated: 01-10-2026

-SD-
Executive Engineer
KPDCL,ED-2nd, Rajbagh

KASHMIR OBSERVER™

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of
Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex,
Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
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RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
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KO VIEW

Kashmir Is Still Unprepared

The latest CAG report has once again served Kashmir an eye-opener on a danger it already knows too well. The audit exposes serious weaknesses in flood management and preparedness, raising a basic question: how many assessments, plans and recommendations will it take before flood defence becomes a standing governance priority? Kashmir has little room for complacency. The September 2014 flood inundated 843.74 square kilometres, or 78.56 percent of the Jhelum floodplain examined in one study. Srinagar remained under water for more than a week, with flooding reaching about 30 feet in some areas. That disaster should have permanently changed the way the valley plans its settlements, waterways and wetlands. Research since then has added to the concern. A study of the Upper Jhelum Basin using rainfall and river-discharge data from 1980 to 2020 found a marked rise in multi-day extreme precipitation events after 2000. Such events also became somewhat longer, particularly at higher elevations. The research found that severe floods can develop when monsoon moisture combines with western disturbances and produces prolonged rainfall over the basin. Human land-use decisions can intensify that risk. A study covering 1980 to 2020 found that deforestation, urbanisation and other land-cover changes increased peak discharge and sediment yield. Its modelling put peak discharge under comparable conditions at about 98,965 cubic feet per second in 1980 and 118,366 cusecs in 2020. Kashmir therefore faces a flood problem influenced by both changing rainfall and decisions about land. The government has already identified 654 vulnerable villages involving about 7.22 lakh people. Rescue centres, boats, emergency equipment and evacuation plans have been prepared. Such measures are essential during a crisis. They do little, however, to reduce the conditions that make flooding more destructive. The National Institute of Disaster Management's recommendations after 2014 were clear. They included additional flood channels, stronger embankments, desilting of the Jhelum and its tributaries, restoration of valley-floor lakes and wetlands, flood-hazard maps, controls on construction near riverbanks and stronger early-warning systems. The CAG findings on Kashmir lakes show how far the problem extends. The audit found inadequate demarcation, encroachment, untreated sewage and fragmented institutional responsibility. Wetlands form part of the valley's natural capacity to store and regulate water. Their degradation weakens one of the protections available against flooding. Kashmir therefore needs to stop treating flood defence as an emergency exercise. It is a land-use issue, a water-management issue and an accountability issue. The government knows where the vulnerable villages are. It knows what happened in 2014. It has the recommendations. The public now needs to know which of them have been implemented, which remain pending and why. A flood-prone region cannot keep learning the same lesson through fresh disasters and fresh audits. The next CAG report should not have to serve another eye-opener. It should find that Kashmir has acted on the ones it has already received.

Kashmir Needs
a Climate Council

Where will the water go, which communities face the greatest risk and which public projects need protection? J&K needs an institution that asks these questions in advance.



Sri Varshith Kumar Reddy E

The water that killed people in Nepal this season gathered in the mountains and followed the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli systems down into the weaknesses of the valleys below. Roads, bridges, hydropower facilities and homes went under. By September 19, the disaster authority had counted 1,357 dead and 5,326 missing, figures that will change as rescuers reach isolated valleys and search hydropower tunnels. Scientists link the flood to extreme rainfall, glacier instability, thawing ground and a warmer Himalaya, and a later study named climate change a likely factor. That finding retires the old distinction between natural and climate disasters, which never helped anyone living beneath an unstable slope. The argument that remains concerns institutions, and India's mountain regions are already inside it. Jammu and Kashmir has met the sequence in fragments: cloudbursts, flash floods, landslides, erratic snowfall, warmer winters. In September, the Centre sent teams to assess damage in J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab, drawing in the Home Ministry, the National Disaster Management Authority and several sectoral ministries. The order of events is known: rescue comes first, then assessment, then talk of relief, and finally roads rebuilt along the routes the next flood will use. A cloudburst belongs to disaster management for a few hours, public works for several weeks, finance for several months and climate policy for decades, while it also touches farming, tourism, electricity, water, health and migration. Government answers through separate doors. Environment drafts climate policy, Home handles disasters, Jal Shakti handles water, Power handles electricity, and roads, agriculture, health and rural development run their own schemes. All of them do necessary work, and none holds the authority to join it. In the Himalayas, however, a road alters drainage, a tunnel changes local risk, a resort rises on a floodplain and a stripped catchment speeds the water below. Officials take these decisions one at a time, and the river receives them together. Nepal has sought international support and climate compensation, arguing that a country with a tiny share of global emissions bears a heavy share of the damage. India's scale and emissions differ, but

A ceremonial council would only add another name to an already crowded system. A serious one would have a say in public spending, publish uncomfortable facts and hold departments accountable. The disasters of 2025 and 2026 have already shown why such an institution is needed.

the same injustice operates inside its borders, where mountain communities that add little to the national total pay for unstable weather, broken infrastructure and failing livelihoods. Larger relief packages leave that injustice untouched, while money spent before the disaster addresses it. India holds many of the parts. The National Action Plan on Climate Change sets the frame, state and Union Territory plans bring it to local administration, the disaster authority and the India Meteorological Department supply expertise and alerts, and a National Adaptation Plan is being prepared to set priorities and estimate financing. The missing piece is a place where these bodies answer to one another. Adaptation draws less political attention than large infrastructure or emergency relief, and projects face scrutiny over cost and completion more often than over their exposure to future rain, heat, flood, drought and slope failure. A national Climate Council could fill that place. Chaired at the highest political level and backed by a permanent secretariat of scientific, financial and legal staff, it would publish a preparedness roadmap every three years, naming the districts, river basins and infrastructure corridors at greatest risk, assigning responsibility, estimating costs and tracking delivery in public. A climate plan then gains a deadline, a budget and a named official answerable for delay. The council would also read public spending through a climate lens. A road, dam, railway or urban expansion would state its exposure to future conditions, and that account would influence design, insurance, maintenance and location. A project that becomes unusable after one extreme event is a fiscal failure, even when it met its construction deadline. J&K has made a beginning. In March 2026, the administration formed a Union Territory Level Steering Committee, chaired

by the Chief Secretary, to oversee the Climate Change Action Plan, with departments covering water, power, agriculture, disaster management, housing, health, forests, rural development, transport and environment. The membership matches the breadth of the problem and exposes the limit of the arrangement, since a committee coordinates departments but cannot set priorities, secure funds or outlast a change of government. The revised action plan was still awaiting departmental inputs in September 2026, seven months after it was described as nearing final draft. The delay looks bureaucratic, but a year without an approved plan leaves districts with no settled basis for directing adaptation money, screening infrastructure or choosing which communities come first. The J&K Climate Council should grow from that committee, with a small professional secretariat, a reporting line to the Chief Minister and the legislature, and public meetings, decisions, expenditure and progress reports. Five tasks would fill its early work. District risk maps would combine rainfall, flood exposure, landslide susceptibility, glacier and snow data, land use, population and critical infrastructure. A dedicated climate budget would identify adaptation spending in every department and add allocations for early warning, drainage, catchment restoration, slope stabilisation, wetland protection and public buildings built to withstand floods. Hydropower would enter basin-level planning, because J&K's estimated potential of about 18,000 MW and its target of roughly 11,000 MW installed by 2035 depend on rivers whose flows, sedimentation and slopes are changing. Energy security will rest on ecological security. Apple growers, tourism operators, livestock keepers and small enterprises would receive climate information, insurance, sturdier infrastructure and support in transition, so that a farmer stops learning about a changing climate through a lost crop and a hotelier stops learning about floodplain risk from a damaged building. A climate finance cell would approach the Centre, development institutions and international funds for adaptation grants and carefully designed private investment, since borrowing to rebuild the same failures leaves the bill with a later generation. Relief begins after the state has already lost its advantage of time. Adaptation uses that time earlier, strengthening a bridge before the flood and placing a siren where a village can hear it before the river arrives. A ceremonial council would only add another name to an already crowded system. A serious one would have a say in public spending, publish uncomfortable facts and hold departments accountable. The disasters of 2025 and 2026 have already shown why such an institution is needed.

The author is a pracademic working on government policy and public institutions. He can be reached at varshith7.reddy@gmail.com.

A Ledger Cannot Measure Loneliness

The state has made ageing a matter of policy and public spending. Families, neighbours and communities still determine much of what growing old feels like.



B L Verma

On this International Day of Older Persons, my ministry can point to an impressive ledger: lakhs of senior citizens helped and crores spent. Since 2014-15, old age homes and continuous care homes under the IPSrC programme, run by non-governmental organisations, panchayats and local bodies, have assisted more than 10.76 lakh senior citizens. Government money for the effort has climbed from about 15 crore a year to more than 124 crore. Camps under the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana have handed more than 53 lakh wheelchairs, hearing aids, walking sticks and spectacles to over 9 lakh people, roughly six items per person. Those figures describe real help. Spectacles restore print, a hearing aid restores voices, and a walking stick restores the walk to the market. But we know a ledger of this kind covers only part of old age. Urbanisation, jobs, education and mobility have changed the structure of families, and many senior citizens now live

apart from their children and grandchildren. A hearing aid sharpens the sound of a telephone, though no scheme of ours decides whether anyone calls. The helpline shows the disparity most plainly. ELDERLINE 14567, which we launched in 2021, has received over 29 lakh calls. Through 21 September 2026, the National Institute of Social Defence, which monitors its implementation, has logged 8.67 lakh as actionable, a category covering information, guidance, emotional support and field intervention. That comes to about three in ten calls, and our figures do not say how the others ended. We list emotional support among the services a government number now provides, which shows how far a telephone line has moved into ground that family once occupied. The human presence behind that line is modest. Since 2023, we have trained more than 30,000 geriatric caregivers, who assist senior citizens in rural and urban areas. Set against 29 lakh calls and 53 lakh devices, 30,000 is a small number of people to place beside so many voices. To close the distance between generations, we have turned to events and partnerships. Schools hosted the Dada-Dadi Milan Samaroh, where children listened to life stories. Walkathons brought old and young onto the same road. We signed seven memoranda of understanding with social and spiritual organisations in elderly care, among them the Brahma Kumaris, the Ramakrishna Mission and the All World Gayatri Pariwar, and we compiled the experiences gathered between 2024 and 2026 into the SNEHA e-Book. These activities have dates, venues and a record at the

end. An event closes when the hall empties, whereas the distance between generations belongs to ordinary weeks. Our Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, running since 17 September, says so in plain terms. Service to senior citizens means helping an elderly neighbour with chores, assisting with digital services, filling out an important form, accompanying someone to the bank or the hospital, or listening to them patiently. Look at where those tasks happen: a bank counter, a form, a phone screen, a hospital. These are the places where an institution meets an old person, and we hand them to the

neighbour. The state builds the home, supplies the device and staffs the helpline, then leaves the hardest minutes of the day to whoever lives next door. Tradition points the same way. The Taittiriya Upanishad gives students who complete their education the instruction "Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava," regard your mother as God, regard your father as God. That instruction goes to the young, at the moment they leave their schooling for the world, and no government is its addressee. The task today is to connect such values with the modern social order, an admission that the connection needs making. Our account closes with a unit of measure that no scheme uses. One hour of genuine human connection can begin a change in an older person's life. Our reports count homes, devices and calls. That hour remains uncounted. We define a Viksit Bharat as a country where citizens of any age live with respect and security, and respect is the one item that cannot be distributed through a camp. The figures show what the state has built, but the hour shows what remains to be given, by people who will never appear in a lakh.

— The author is Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment.

Kashmir's Chinar Leaves Could Become a Village Business

A seasonal collection system could turn autumn leaf waste into mulch, compost and local income while reducing open burning, if villages secure buyers before investing in equipment.



Irshad Mushtaq

The leaves begin falling before anyone has finished clearing the first pile.

Around a village park in Kashmir, Chinar leaves spread over paths and lawns in shades of red, gold and brown. Leaves from other trees gather beside them. Workers sweep them into heaps, residents clear courtyards and school grounds, and the piles keep returning with the season.

For many people, the quickest solution is a match.

The smoke rises beside homes and roads, while a useful material disappears into ash. The practice solves the immediate problem of clearing the ground, but it also throws away something that could become garden mulch or compost and creates a seasonal collection problem that villages have largely left to individual households.

A different system could turn that autumn routine into seasonal work.

Local groups could collect leaves before they are burned, keep clean garden and park leaves separate from contaminated roadside waste, and sell suitable material as mulch or mature compost. The work could also become a public service, with villages charging parks, schools, hotels and households for scheduled clearance.

The idea depends on a simple discipline: secure customers first, then invest.

The scale of the opportunity remains unclear. The J&K government has told the Legislative Assembly that the Forest Research Institute surveyed around 30,000 Chinar trees across Kashmir, excluding trees within security campuses and installations. The figure gives a sense of the landscape, though it does not show how many tonnes of leaves fall during autumn or how much material can safely be collected and sold.

A serious pilot would have to measure those quantities rather than assume them.

Health provides another reason to examine the practice. The World Health Organization links exposure to

fine-particle air pollution with serious cardiovascular and respiratory harm. A study published in The Lancet Planetary Health estimated that illness and premature deaths associated with all sources of air pollution cost India \$36.8 billion in lost economic output in 2019, equivalent to 1.36 percent of the country's gross domestic product that year.

Those figures do not measure Kashmir's leaf fires. They do, however, show why avoidable smoke can carry an economic cost as well as a health cost.

The J&K Legislative Assembly passed a Health and Medical Education grant of about ₹8,654.77 crore for 2026-27. That allocation covers the department across the Union Territory and does not measure pollution-related illness. Families also spend money on treatment, travel and time away from work, but a Kashmir leaf programme should establish its own evidence rather than attach invented medical savings to the business case.

The first step is therefore collection.

A village cannot simply tell residents to stop burning leaves while leaving them with nowhere to put them. A workable programme would announce collection days, provide a way to separate leaves from other waste and send a team to collect them.

India's Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, which came into force on April 1, provide a framework for segregation and waste handling. J&K pollution-control guidance also addresses village waste planning and discourages waste burning. Public-space collection and a shared processing site would still need the relevant permissions and approved arrangements.

A large village park could become the first customer.

Its manager already has a recurring problem: paths and public spaces need clearing during the leaf-fall season. A local group could sign a seasonal contract covering the area, number of visits, collection method, destination of the leaves and payment.

Nearby schools, hotels, housing colonies and large gardens could join the same route. Households could book individual clearances or bring separated leaves to an approved collection point.

Keeping customers close together would reduce transport costs. More important, collection fees would create the first income before a batch of compost became ready for sale.

The quality of that material would determine whether the idea survives.

Clean leaves from suitable parks and gardens could be collected separately from plastic, ash, glass and dirty roadside sweepings. Research commissioned by England's



Environment Agency found contamination problems in seasonal street-leaf sweepings, with much of the composted material tested deemed unsuitable for agricultural or horticultural use.

The lesson for Kashmir is clear. Roadside sweepings should never be mixed automatically with material intended for nurseries or orchards. Products intended for growing would need appropriate testing.

Other places provide useful examples.

Pune's Brown Leaf initiative, started in 2016, connected people with surplus dry leaves to users who could turn them into mulch or compost. Its organisers have reported thousands of gunny bags exchanged. The model demonstrates the value of finding a nearby user before paying to transport leaves over long distances. Since some leaves are donated, the bag count does not represent profit.

Delhi has used shredders and composting facilities for green waste that includes leaves and prunings. The equipment demonstrates what machines can do, though Kashmir would need to solve sorting, processing and sales before buying expensive machinery.

Thanet Council in Britain separated nine tonnes of leaves in a 2023 trial rather than mixing them with street litter. The council later introduced dedicated leaf bins for residents, schools, community gardens and businesses.

Islington provides another example. The council charges £77.85 for 12 months of fortnightly household garden-waste collection. That figure represents what one subscribing household pays, rather than council profit. It shows that people can pay for convenient clearance, while Kashmir would need to establish its own

prices from local costs.

New York City takes the system further. Its sanitation department separately collects food and yard waste and reported returning more than eight million pounds of finished compost to residents in 2025. The city gave that compost away, so the figure provides no evidence of sales revenue. Its relevance lies in the discipline of separate collection and quality control.

Kashmir could start much smaller.

A park could use suitable leaves as mulch in its own garden beds. That could reduce the need to purchase a comparable material and avoid transporting the leaves elsewhere. Such a saving belongs to the park. It should not be counted as a sale by the village group.

Surplus clean leaves could then be shredded or composted at a shared site. BARC has developed a dry-leaf and garden-waste composting method involving equipment such as a shredder, sprinkler, rake and sieve.

The machine can speed up shredding. It cannot produce mature compost immediately.

A well-maintained home compost pile can take roughly three to five months, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A Kashmir pilot would need to record its own results under local weather and material conditions.

Product names also need discipline. Leaf mulch is different from compost. Leaf compost is different from vermicompost. Vermicomposting requires earthworms and suitable feed and conditions. ICAR has demonstrated vermicomposting with dry leaves mixed with poultry litter, but an untreated pile of Chinar leaves does not become vermicompost simply through time.

The real test comes when a nursery is asked to buy.

A local nursery may welcome a nearby supplier if the material is clean, consistent and competitive after delivery. Before producing large quantities, the village group could ask nurseries what they currently buy, what they pay and whether they would test a small sample.

A simple trial could compare the nursery's usual growing mix with a measured quantity of local leaf material. The group could record plant growth, losses, labour and costs.

A repeat order would provide stronger evidence than a warehouse filled with unsold bags.

The economics can be illustrated without pretending to forecast Kashmir prices.

Suppose one village group secures a ₹25,000 clearance contract for a large park, two school or hotel contracts worth ₹10,000 each and 20 household clearances at ₹500 apiece. Collection revenue would total ₹55,000.

Suppose buyers then purchase ₹10,000 worth of usable mulch and finished compost. Cash received would reach ₹65,000.

Wages, including family labour, might total ₹28,000. Transport could cost ₹10,000, while sacks, water and site expenses could take another ₹6,000. Equipment hire, packaging, testing and other expenses could add ₹11,000.

The illustrative operating cost would then reach ₹55,000, leaving ₹10,000 in operating profit.

The same calculation shows how quickly the idea can fail. If the park contract disappears while costs remain, the example produces a ₹15,000 loss. If the expected product order disappears, the operating profit falls to zero. A purchased shredder, building, interest or tax would alter the calculation again.

That is why equipment should come last.

The first tools could be reusable sacks, hand tools, a handcart or small vehicle and a suitable sorting and processing site. A shredder could be hired or shared if volumes justify it. A leaf vacuum might help in a large open area, while a wood chipper would serve branches better. Larger composting equipment should wait until volumes and buyers become clear.

Kashmir also has a local complication. Some biodegradable material is traditionally burnt to make charcoal for winter kangris. J&K's solid-waste action plan recognises that seasonal heating needs must be considered when addressing open burning.

Any no-burning policy therefore needs a practical alternative.

Fuel pellets and briquettes could be

studied separately, but compressed leaves do not automatically become a clean fuel. A group would need an industrial buyer, tests for moisture and ash, emissions and fuel performance, permissions and a complete production and delivery calculation. India has a biomass briquette and pellet programme, though that does not establish that Chinar leaves are a profitable or approved fuel for a particular Kashmiri factory.

A village pilot could begin with a panchayat, a park authority, local workers and two or three nursery buyers.

The group could publish collection days, secure written service agreements, establish a suitable processing site and keep clean leaves separate from road waste. Throughout autumn, it could record loads collected, contaminated loads rejected, visits completed, worker-days paid and the full cost of transport and equipment.

The following months would show the other half of the equation: finished-product yield, quality, use and actual sales.

The village could then publish its profit or loss and record whether leaf burning declined in the participating area. Air-quality readings, where available, would need careful interpretation because weather and other pollution sources also influence them.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen Phase II includes village solid-waste management, so a panchayat could examine whether its approved rural waste plan can support the public-service component of such a pilot. Eligibility and funding would need to be checked rather than assumed.

The autumn leaves of Kashmir already create work. The question is whether that work ends with a broom and a match or begins with collection and leads somewhere useful.

A village does not need a factory to find out.

It needs a contract, a collection route, clean material, a buyer and accounts that tell the truth.

If those pieces work, the Chinar leaf can become mulch, compost and seasonal income. If they fail, the records will show where the idea broke before families spend their savings on machinery.

The first business lesson may be the simplest one: collect before the fire, find the buyer before the machine and measure the rupees before calling autumn a source of income.

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The Feed That Keeps Us Angry

Social media feeds are learning what Kashmiris react to, then serving more of the same, sharpening disputes around religion, identity and politics.



Khalid Mustafa

A few years ago, anyone curious about a subject went looking for it.

They opened a book, asked somebody who knew, read an article from its first line to its last, or watched a whole programme.

Now a few seconds of thought, one search or one video is enough, and the feed seems to know what caught the mind.

One reel becomes five and five becomes twenty.

Facebook and Instagram, both run by Meta, use recommendation systems that learn from what people watch, search for, like, share, skip or spend time viewing.

A phone should help us think, and the trouble starts when it begins to think for us.

The benefit is real.

Someone taking up fitness finds videos on exercise, healthy food, running and the gym. A student preparing for an examination receives study material, and an amateur photographer meets tutorials, cameras and editing

techniques without searching item by item.

The internet brings knowledge that people might never have found alone, but the same machinery behaves differently once emotion enters.

Picture a person after an argument with a friend, or under pressure at work, or feeling ignored by someone at home. They open Instagram for a break and meet a reel telling them to walk away from people who do not value them.

The message may help, since a few kind words at the right moment can send someone to exercise, study or work harder. Motivation turns into instruction when the same mood keeps receiving the same message.

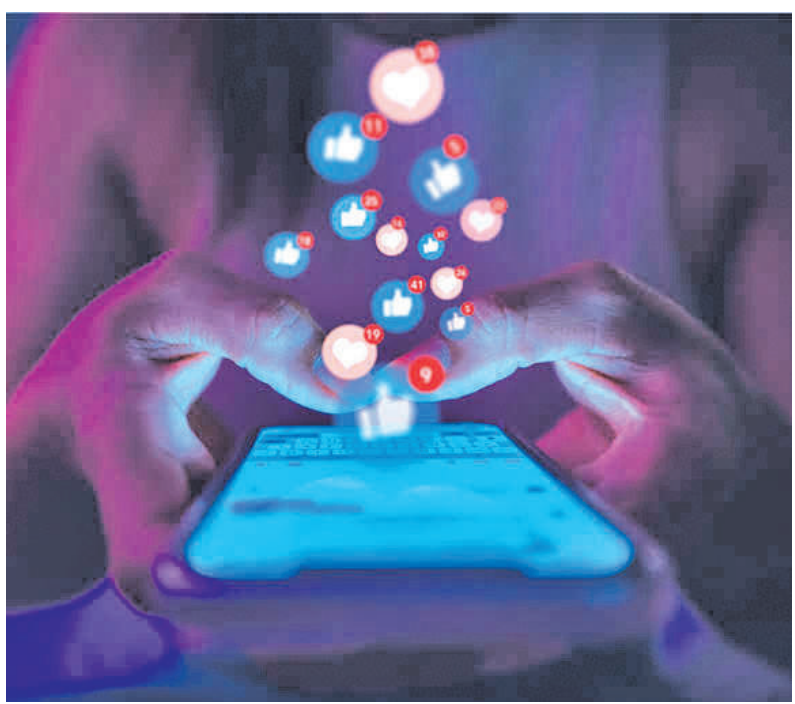
The angry person is shown how to cut people off. The insecure partner is shown signs that someone is hiding something. The employee at odds with a manager hears that difficult bosses are toxic, while the manager in a dispute hears that staff are lazy and disloyal.

One reel follows another, and the phone stops merely showing content and joins the person's emotional surroundings.

The algorithm knows nothing of the heart or the full story behind a quarrel. It responds to digital behaviour, but repeated exposure to one kind of message makes one reading of events feel increasingly settled to the viewer.

Short video also creates an illusion of complete knowledge.

A thirty-second reel can hold a wise-sounding sentence, dramatic music, a confident speaker and millions of views. It cannot know what



passed between two people five years ago, what a spouse said in private, what parents gave up, what pressure an employer faces, or whether a friend slipped once or behaved badly for years.

A reel saying that someone who truly loves you will always do certain things can draw millions of views, even though real people get tired, misunderstand one another and live with very different fears.

A teenager shown videos about controlling parents may read each boundary at home as oppression, and

a parent shown videos about disrespectful children may read ordinary disagreement as defiance.

Neither sees the whole picture. The algorithm does not hear the family conversations, while the person watching does.

We also tend to notice the things that confirm what we already believe.

A husband suspicious after a quarrel watches a reel on signs of a hidden partner, then another, and soon ordinary behaviour looks guilty. A wife angry with her husband meets content about red flags, and children and par-

ents fall into the same loop.

Real betrayal, manipulation and abuse exist, and they call for proper attention and, where necessary, professional help, not a feed that may ruin lives.

Offices follow the same course.

The videos about toxic bosses or disrespectful staff are not always false, but they are general, and a dispute needs particulars.

Was the instruction reasonable, the communication poor, the performance genuinely lacking, the employee treated unfairly, the manager under strain, or the whole thing a misunderstanding?

A reel cannot investigate any of that, whereas people talking to each other can.

Jammu and Kashmir gives these online arguments a deeper edge. Communities live alongside one another in a social, political and historical setting of its own, and religion and identity hold deep emotional weight.

Incomplete information spreads faster there than careful understanding.

A short religious video quotes a line without its context, another presents one interpretation as the only one, and someone from another community answers with a clip of their own.

Soon people argue over a subject neither side has studied, especially when the content was built to provoke anger.

A ten-second clip cannot explain centuries of religious scholarship, a thirty-second reel cannot fairly describe a community, and a screenshot cannot settle the meaning of a teaching.

Before sharing, check the source, find the full statement and read the surrounding context. On serious subjects, consult reliable books or qualified scholars. The same duty falls on users everywhere.

Artificial intelligence is no enemy. It helps people learn languages, grasp difficult subjects, organise information, find ideas and educational resources, and solve everyday problems.

Convenience becomes dependence when a system tells us what to watch, what to read and what is worth attention, and we stop looking beyond it.

Something keeps appearing, so it must be important. Thousands liked it, so it must be correct. It feels personal, so it must describe our situation.

None of that follows.

Algorithms work from signals and past behaviour, they sit in no one's home, and mirroring our interests does not make them a judge of our life, character or future.

Privacy belongs here too: users should know what they share, review their settings, think before giving sensitive details or unnecessary access, and remember that digital footprints reveal more than they suppose.

Slower sources still matter. Books, serious articles and longer talks give ideas time, context and evidence. They can still be wrong, but they leave room to see the fuller picture.

The break before believing what the screen shows us is ours to make.

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J&K Bank Marks 88 Years, Reaffirms Sustainable Growth Commitment



Observer News Service

JAMMU- Marking 88 years of its journey of financial empowerment, J&K Bank Thursday reaffirmed its commitment to serving the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh while sustaining the institution's growth for future generations.

MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee chaired the commemorative event at the Bank's Regional Business Centre in Jammu in the presence of Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, Chief General Managers, General Managers and Divisional Heads. General Managers from the Corporate Headquarters also joined through video conferencing.

The function began with floral tributes to Maharaja Hari Singh, honouring his visionary role in founding the Bank to financially empower the people of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and support the region's economy.

Congratulating stakeholders on the occasion, the MD & CEO underscored the responsibility of carrying forward the Bank's founding mission while ensuring its continued strength and relevance. "Our responsibility is twofold: to serve the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh through best-in-class financial services and support the region's economic development; and to sustain the Bank's

business growth so that it continues to serve coming generations in J&K, Ladakh and beyond. These goals are interlinked and interdependent," he said.

Calling for a renewed commitment to this purpose, he added, "Today is an occasion to pledge that we will do everything possible, in a fair and transparent manner, to achieve both these goals. Very few banks in the country have this dual responsibility, and we are fortunate to be entrusted with it."

Paying tribute to the Bank's founder, MD & CEO said, "We should be thankful to Shri Maharaja Hari Singh for his remarkable vision and foresight in establishing J&K Bank. For the last 88 years, the Bank has carried forward the mission of financial empowerment and today sits at the heart of the economic architecture of Jammu and Kashmir."

Notably, carrying forward this vision, the Bank, as principal financier of Mission YUVA - the J&K Government's flagship employment generation programme - has so far sanctioned loans totaling Rs 1,902 crore to nearly 40,000 entrepreneurs, helping to bring their business aspirations closer to reality. To highlight its commitment to the programme, the bank is launching YUVA UDAAN - a video series featuring the inspiring success stories of ambitious youth - on its official social media platforms.

CBI Files Second Chargesheet In Reliance Home Finance Case

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The CBI filed its second chargesheet on Thursday against 11 accused, including three then executives of the Reliance ADA Group, in a loan fraud case related to alleged diversion of Rs 7,429 crore borrowed by the Reliance Home Finance Ltd (RHFL), officials said.

In its chargesheet filed before a special court in Mumbai, the CBI has named Amit Bapna, Director and CFO, RHFL; Amitabh Jhunjhunwala, Group MD and Vice Chairman, RCL; and Suresh Nagarajan, CFO, Reliance Power Ltd, the agency said in a statement here.

Seven companies -- Reliance Infrastructure Ltd, Reliance Power Ltd, Reliance Big Entertainment Pvt Ltd, Reliance Broadcast Network Ltd, Reliance Business Broadcast News Holdings Ltd, Reliance MediaWorks Financial Services Pvt Ltd and Kunjibihari Developers Pvt Ltd-- and one private person, Vijay Napawaliya, CA and statutory auditor of RHFL, have also been listed as accused in the chargesheet, a CBI spokesperson said.



No immediate reaction was received from the Reliance ADA Group on the development.

"The accused have been chargesheeted for offences of criminal conspiracy and cheating under the IPC. Investigation conducted so far has revealed that funds amounting to Rs 7,429.16 crore, borrowed by Reliance Home Finance Ltd., were allegedly diverted through intermediary and conduit entities to various Reliance ADA Group companies in violation of the terms and conditions stipulated by lenders," the spokesperson said.

It caused "wrongful loss to the lending banks and financial institutions and corresponding wrongful gain to the accused persons and related entities", according to the spokesperson.

GST Mop-Up Grows 15% To Over Rs 2.03 Lakh Cr In Sep

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gross GST collections rose 14.7 per cent in September to over Rs 2.03 lakh crore, aided by domestic consumption and strong growth in revenues from imports, according to government data.

Gross GST collections from domestic activities rose 10.1 per cent to about Rs 1.38 lakh crore, while revenues from imports were up 26 per cent to Rs 65,525 crore, the data showed.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) refunds, however, slowed to Rs 27,001 crore in September, a decline of 3 per cent year on year.

After adjusting for refunds, net GST collections rose 18.1 per cent to over Rs 1.76 lakh crore in September.

This is the third month in the current fiscal year when GST collections have crossed Rs 2 lakh crore. Earlier in April and July, the GST revenues had touched record highs of about Rs 2.43 lakh crore and over Rs 2.11 lakh crore, respectively.

During the first half of the fiscal (April-September), gross GST collections grew 11.6 per cent to over Rs 12.46 lakh crore. Net collections rose 10.4 per cent to over Rs 10.66 lakh crore.

EY India Tax Partner Saunabh Agarwal, said the Rs 2 lakh crore mark in gross GST collections, with growth of close to 15 per cent, shows that domestic demand continues to do well in spite of global pressure. The growth in the tax mop-up is broad based with Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Karnataka each up 16 per cent to 18 per cent. Assam, Manipur,



Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have done considerable growth, which showcases holistic development across the country, Agarwal added.

Grant Thornton Bharat Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader, Manoj Mishra said the sharp 25.9 per cent growth in import-linked GST in September, compared with around 10 per cent growth in domestic GST, reflects a combination of currency, commodity prices and import dynamics. Rupee depreciation has increased the landed rupee value of dollar-denominated imports, while elevated crude and commodity prices have pushed up the overall import bill and, consequently, the GST base, Mishra said.

"Stronger imports of higher-value categories such as electronics, machinery, gold and fertilisers have further supported the buoyancy in import-linked collections. While this is providing a significant near-term boost to GST revenues, the trajectory of global commodity prices, the rupee and import volumes will be important vari-

ables in determining how much of this buoyancy can be sustained in the months ahead," Mishra added.

Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP, Partner, Vivek Jalan said the growth in GST collections highlights the strength of manufacturing and consumption, but a contraction in refunds suggest that departments may be holding back disbursements -- a trend that warrants close monitoring to ensure liquidity for businesses.

"Even after a drastic reduction in GST rates under GST 2.0, collections have remained resilient. It must also be noted that part of the September 2026 growth reflects a low base effect, as September 2025 turnover was subdued due to the gap between the announcement and notification of GST 2.0," Jalan said.

While the rate rationalisation under GST 2.0 was announced on September 3, 2025, it was effective from September 22, 2025. This resulted in customers holding back purchases till the rate reduction and resultant price cuts took effect.

India's Manufacturing Sector Growth Hits 7-Month High In Sep

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India's manufacturing sector activity growth touched a seven-month high in September, boosted by accelerating new orders and output that fuelled solid expansion in factory hiring, a monthly survey reported on Thursday.

Indian manufacturing activity regained its upward momentum in September, driven by strong domestic and export demand. Moreover, business optimism reached a four-month peak.

The seasonally-adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose by more than two index points in September, to 55.1 from 52.8 in August, signalling the strongest improvement in the health of the sector for seven months.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's factory sector ended the quarter on a firmer footing. The PMI rose to 55.1 in September, up from 52.8, as stronger domestic and overseas demand lifted sales and production. Hiring resumed at its fastest pace since



May, and manufacturers became more optimistic about the months ahead," Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said.

On the price front, there were quicker increases in both input costs and selling prices, but rates of inflation remained mild by historical standards.

Firms also procured more materials for use in production processes and to add to inventories. Overall buying levels expanded at a quicker pace than in August.

"Companies bought more materials and built up stocks to prepare for anticipated sales. Finished goods inventories recorded

their second-largest increase in nearly 12 years, signalling a clear shift from leaner stock levels," Bhandari said.

Strong demand across electronics, food, pharma, and textiles pushed total sales growth to its highest level since February. Moreover, export orders also expanded at a quicker pace from clients in Brazil, Europe, the UAE and the US.

According to panellists, job growth resumed in September, following a blip in the previous month and the pace of expansion in employment was solid and the most pronounced since May.

Govt Tightens Sugar Stock Limit For Dealers To 1,000 Quintals

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The government on Thursday further tightened the stock holding limit for sugar dealers to 1,000 quintals, effective from October 15 to November 30, in a bid to ensure adequate supplies of the sweetener at reasonable prices during the festival season.

Dealers will be allowed to hold stock for only 15 days. The amended norms will not apply to Kolkata and its extended metropolitan areas, and Assam, the food ministry said in a statement.

With the new sugar season beginning October 1, the Centre said it was strengthening measures to ensure availability of sugar to consumers at reasonable prices during the festive period.

"By restricting the quantity and storage period of sugar, the government aims to facilitate the orderly movement of sugar through the supply chain and ensure its continuous availability to consumers at reasonable prices," the ministry said in a statement.

Keeping in view region-specific market requirements, the limit has been fixed at 2,000 quintals for Kolkata and its extended metropolitan areas and for Assam.

Kolkata buys sugar from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, and supplies it to eastern India, including the northeast. The limit for Assam takes into account geographical constraints, transportation facilities and consumer interest in the northeast, the ministry said.

"The objective of the amended rules is to ensure that there is no unnecessary



accumulation of sugar in the distribution chain and that there is a smooth flow of supply from sugar mills through dealers to the end consumer," it said. The move is aimed at curbing hoarding, discouraging speculation and preventing accumulation of stocks by dealers.

In August, citing a tight supply year, the government had imposed a nationwide stock holding limit on dealers of 4,000 quintals, applicable from August 1 to November 30, along with a maximum holding period of 30 days from the date of receipt. The limit was later tightened to 2,000 quintals from September 15.

According to the ministry, average retail sugar prices have fallen 15 per cent from their August peak and are expected to decline further as lower prices in the supply chain are realised. Ex-mill prices have dropped by around 28 per cent and have remained stable for the past three weeks.

The government reiterated that mills, dealers, wholesalers and other market participants must ensure uninterrupted movement of sugar and prevent hoarding and speculation. Wholesalers and retailers have also been urged to "immediately pass on" the benefits of the sharp fall in ex-mill prices to consumers.

Gold Rises Rs 500 Per 10g In Delhi On Weak Rupee

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices rose for the second straight session, rising Rs 500 to Rs 1,49,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, as a weaker rupee and a firm global trend supported the precious metal.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,49,300 per 10 grams in the preceding session.

Silver, however, declined by Rs 5,000 to Rs 2.27 lakh per kilogram, inclusive of all taxes, from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 2.32 lakh per kg, according to local traders. Despite the two-session recovery, gold lost Rs 2,800 or nearly 2 per cent, this week, while silver shed Rs 10,000, or 4.2 per cent.

The rupee's slide below the 96-per-dollar mark provided some support to domestic gold prices. The Indian currency closed at 96.31 against the greenback on Thursday, its weakest level in more than two months.

Bullion markets will remain shut on Friday on account of Gandhi Jayanti. Gold gained on Thursday after soft US inflation data reduced expectations of a rate hike by the US Federal



Reserve, while silver remained volatile amid an upside move in the US dollar, said Gaurav Garg, Head of Research at brokerage platform Lemonn.

In global markets, spot gold rose USD 11.94, or 0.29 per cent, to USD 4,169.06 per ounce, while silver was up nearly 1 per cent at USD 60.79 an ounce.

"Gold spiked higher on softer inflation data; however, the rally was thwarted by a spike in oil prices as uncertainty in Hormuz continues and refined product shortages continue to linger," said Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

According to Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, investors' attention will shift to the upcoming US ISM Manufacturing PMI, weekly jobless claims, and comments from the Federal Reserve officials for further cues on the monetary policy outlook.

Markets Fall For 4th Day, Sensex Hits 52-Week Low

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty extended losses for the fourth straight session on Thursday as heavy FII selling, high bond yields and a fresh spike in crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment.

The BSE Sensex dropped 570.59 points, or 0.79 per cent, to settle at 71,909.70.

The 30-share benchmark shed as much as 1,187.41 points to hit a fresh 52-week low of 71,292.88 during the session.

The 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 198.50 points, or 0.88 per cent, to end at 22,421.95.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, Adani Ports, ITC, Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever and Eternal were the major laggards.

Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech and HDFC Bank were among the winners.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 10,148.41 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. In five consecutive sessions till Wednesday, FIIs have offloaded equities worth Rs 34,203.14 crore.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 2.77 per cent to USD 100.8 per barrel.

"The market sell-off has been driven largely by external factors, with bond yields reaching multi-year highs and crude oil prices remaining elevated, raising concerns about the economic outlook for 2026-27," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

The BSE SmallCap Select index tanked 0.96 per cent and the MidCap Select index was down 0.71 per cent.

HDFC Bank Appoints Anup Bagchi As MD, CEO For 3 Years

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- HDFC Bank on Thursday appointed Anup Bagchi as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for three years with effect from October 27, 2026.

Bagchi, currently serving as the MD and CEO of ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, will succeed Sashidhar Jagdishan, who informed the board in August that he would not seek reappointment when his term ends on October 26.

In a regulatory filing, HDFC Bank said the Reserve Bank of India has approved the appointment of Bagchi as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for three years.

Consequently, the Board of Directors of the Bank, based on the recommendation of the Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee, at its meeting held on October 1, 2026, approved the appointment of Bagchi as an Additional Director of the Bank with effect from October 2, 2026.

The board also approved the "appointment of Anup Bagchi as the MD & CEO of the Bank on such terms and conditions, including remuneration, as approved by the RBI, for a period of 3 (three) years with effect from October 27, 2026, subject to approval of the shareholders as per the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013", HDFC Bank said.



Apple Production Falls 48% So Far This Year In Himachal

Press Trust Of India

SHIMLA- Apple production in Himachal Pradesh has dropped 48 per cent so far this year as climate change, unseasonal rains, hailstorms, and snowfall have caused severe damage to the crop.

So far this year, 1.15 crore apple boxes have reached the market compared to 2.18 crore boxes last year, a decline of nearly 48 per cent, State Horticulture Director Satish Kumar said on Thursday.

Apple production in Himachal this year is set to hit a 10-12 year low as climate change, unseasonal rains, hailstorms and snowfall have severely damaged the apple crop, he added.

The apple crop, with a Rs 5,000 crore economy, is the backbone of the horticulture sector in Himachal Pradesh, and about 2.5 lakh families in the state are associated with the crop cultivation.

The apple season runs from June 15 to the end of October. However, the early varieties start hitting the market at the end of June, while the apples from higher reaches and tribal areas continue to pour in till the end of October. The drop in production will impact both the farmers and the state's GDP.

According to the horticulture department, total apple production this year is estimated to reach only 1.5 crore boxes. In terms of metric tonnes, apple production stood at 7 lakh metric tonnes last year, but this year, it is expected to drop to between 3.5 lakh and 3.75 lakh metric tonnes.

Procurement under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) has also been affected, and till date only 10,462 metric tonnes of apples have been procured under the MIS, whereas by this date last year, 76,674 metric tonnes had been procured.

Rupee Slumps 31 Paise To Close At 96.25 Against US Dollar

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The rupee slumped below the psychologically important 96 per dollar mark on Thursday to close at 96.25 against the US dollar, the lowest level in more than two months, on risk aversion in global markets amid surging global bond yields and selling pressure from foreign investors.

Forex traders said the rupee is expected to trade with a negative bias amid risk aversion in global markets and worries over rising global treasury yields.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.95, then lost ground to touch an intraday low of 96.34 against the American currency. At the end of Thursday's trading session, the domestic unit was quoted at 96.25 against the greenback, lower by 31 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee pared gains to settle flat at 95.94 against the US dollar.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on risk aversion in global markets and worries over rising global treasury yields. A strong dollar and surge in global crude oil prices may further pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

Choudhary further noted that uncertainty over the US-Iran deal may also pressurise the rupee. However, any intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the strength of the greenback against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.90, higher by 0.45 per cent.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 2.54 per cent at USD 100.52 per barrel in futures trade.

FDA Intensifies Food Safety Enforcement across UT

348 Inspections conducted, 180 Food Samples lifted, 31 Complaint Cases initiated

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its food safety surveillance and enforcement activities, FDA, J&K conducted inspections in the last couple of days across the Union Territory to ensure compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the regulations framed thereunder.

During the enforcement drive, Food Safety teams conducted 348 inspections of Food Business Operators (FBOs) across various districts and lifted 180 food samples covering major commodities, including edible oils, ghee, milk and milk products, spices and other food products. The samples have been forwarded to NABL-accredited food testing



laboratories for analysis against the prescribed safety and quality parameters. The establishments inspected during this round of inspections belonged to various categories which included Ho-

tels, Restaurants and canteens.

As part of the enforcement action, six Improvement Notices were issued to FBOs found deficient in complying with prescribed food safety requirements

and the Food business operators have been directed to report compliance within the stipulated timeline failing which legal action as necessary shall be initiated.

Further, 31 complaint cases were initiated under Sections 56 and 58 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 against violations detected during inspections and filed before the Adjudicating Officers (Additional Deputy Commissioners) of the respective districts.

In addition, 17 cases were compounded under Section 69 of the FSSA, 2006, involving a cumulative fine of ₹37,000. Two cases were also dealt with under Section 52 in respect of misbranding and labelling-related violations, wherein a cumulative

fine of ₹55,000 was imposed.

The FDA, J&K, reiterated that all Food Business Operators are required to strictly adhere to statutory requirements relating to licensing/registration, hygiene and sanitation, food handling and processing, storage, labelling and other prescribed food safety standards. The field enforcement authorities have been directed to maintain regular inspections and sampling and to initiate appropriate regulatory and penal action against violations in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.

Consumers have been requested to report any suspected unsafe or adulterated food product through Toll-Free Helpline No. 104 or email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in

Ladakh Admin Extends Public Consultation on Draft 'Nautor Land' Regularisation Rules

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: The Ladakh administration has extended by 30 days the period for submitting comments and suggestions on the draft rules for regularisation of 'nautor land' in the Union Territory, officials said.

The decision came following criticism of the Draft Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Nautor Regularisation) Rules, 2026, notified by the Lt Governor administration on September 4.

Nautor land refers to barren or wasteland owned by the government and historically allotted to individuals for cultivation or other productive purposes. More than 60,000 acres of land in Ladakh is presently recorded in revenue records as nautor holdings.

"The extension, approved on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Vinai

Kumar Saxena, follows representations from various stakeholders, including the Ladakh Buddhist Association, Ladakh Gonpa Association and Anjuman Imamia, Leh, seeking more time to examine the draft rules," an official spokesperson said.

The administration said stakeholders can now submit their comments and suggestions to the revenue department by November 1, 2026, including through email at secy-rev.ladakh@gov.in.

The draft rules were placed in the public domain on September 4 with the objective of establishing a clear, transparent and uniform framework for regularisation of eligible nautor land holdings across Ladakh, he said.

"The nautor issue is closely connected with the lives, livelihoods and aspirations of the people of Ladakh. We want every genuine concern, sugges-

tion and apprehension to be heard and examined carefully," Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

The proposed rules provide for a one-time mechanism to regularise eligible nautor land occupied before October 27, 2020, following the repeal of the J&K Tenancy Act, 1980.

Under the draft framework, eligible holders may be granted proprietary rights over nautor land up to 10 acres, while land beyond the 10-acre limit may be considered for leasehold allotment in accordance with the rules, he said.

On September 4, Saxena approved the regularisation rules of 'nautor lands', paving the way for the grant of proprietary rights over eligible barren land and resolving a long-pending issue concerning thousands of landholders in the Union Territory.

2 Uri Govt Schools Have Zero Students, Zero Teachers

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Uri's government schools present a contrasting picture of enrollment and staffing, with two schools reporting zero students and teachers, while another set of schools are grappling with exceptionally high pupil-teacher ratios.

Government data, accessed by KNO, reveals that two schools among 375, including Boys Primary School Ghati Choolen Kalsan and Primary School Khalabhat, have recorded zero students and zero teachers, with both schools showing a PTR of zero.

The data also throws up a number of schools functioning with extremely low enrolment. Primary School Tula Wari has just one student and one teacher, while Primary School Kakroo Mohalla Nambha has two students and one teacher.

Similarly, Primary School Sokdhani has four students and one teacher; Primary School Pakhlan has four students and two teachers; and Girls Primary School Kanderwan Mohura also has four students with two teachers. Other schools with very low enrolment include Primary School Laribal Nambha, with five students and one teacher, and Primary School Marthan, with six students and one teacher.

High PTR at other end While some schools have negligible or zero enrolment, the data shows that schools where teachers



are catering to substantially larger numbers of students, with only 10 out of the 375 government schools having a PTR above 40.

Primary School Dara tops the PTR table with 120 students against just two teachers, recording a PTR of 60.

It is followed by Higher Secondary School Sultan-dakhi, which has 441 students and eight teachers, resulting in a PTR of 55.

Primary School Gujjar Nalla has 100 students against two teachers, recording a PTR of 50, while Boys Primary School Naik Mohalla Salamabad Dachana has 146 students and three teachers, giving a PTR of 49.

Other schools among the highest PTR cases include Primary School Kalsee, with 91 students and two teachers (PTR 46), and Middle School Nawa, with 86 students and two teachers (PTR 43).

Govt initiates rationalisation

The government, responding to MLA Uri Dr Sajjad Shafi in the Autumn session of the Assembly, said the staffing requirements of schools with relatively higher PTR are being addressed through ratio-

nalisation and judicious deployment of available teaching resources.

The minister incharge Education Department said applications from eligible teachers have already been invited under the Annual Transfer Drive (ATD)-2026, with staffing requirements of schools having higher pupil-teacher loads to be considered during the process.

The government further stated that 22 Laboratory Assistants have recently been promoted as Teachers, of whom eight have been adjusted in Uri constituency.

In addition, five Masters have been transferred to Uri, with the government saying the move is aimed at supplementing existing arrangements, particularly in schools where the pupil-teacher load is relatively high.

The government said the rationalisation exercise for the current academic year has also been initiated to address identified gaps in teacher availability.

It further said that additional staff, including computer and skill-based teachers, are being provided to understaffed schools on a consolidated-remuneration basis—(KNO)

Bijbehara Residents Demand Filling of 17 Vacant Posts at SDH

SRINAGAR: Residents of Bijbehara in south Kashmir's Anantnag district have demanded the immediate filling of 17 vacant posts at Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Bijbehara, expressing concern over the shortage of staff and its potential impact on healthcare services.

According to details obtained by KNO, the hospital has 34 employees against a sanctioned strength of 51, leaving 17 posts vacant.

The vacancies include six Junior Grade Nurses, one Consultant Gynaecologist, one Medical Officer, one Head X-Ray Technician, one Head Pharmacist, one Senior Pharmacist, one Supervisor Lab Technician, one Junior Lab Assistant, one Electrician, one Junior Physiotherapist, one Dhoobi and one Chowkidar.

The shortage of nursing staff is particularly significant, with only one Junior Grade Nurse posted against seven sanctioned positions, leaving six posts vacant.

Residents said the hospital caters to a large population from Bijbehara and adjoining areas, making adequate staffing essential for providing timely and effective healthcare services.

They said the shortage of nurses and other technical and support staff could put additional pressure on the available workforce, particularly during emergencies and periods of increased patient rush.

"The hospital caters to a large population, and people depend on it for treatment and emergency medical services. The government must ensure that all vacant posts are filled without further delay," local residents said.

They added that while the hospital has several specialist doctors and other medical personnel in position, the shortage of nursing and technical staff could affect the overall functioning of the institution.

"The government should not focus only on infrastructure and equipment but also ensure that hospitals have adequate manpower. Without sufficient staff, providing quality healthcare becomes difficult," residents said.

They urged the Health and Medical Education Department to take immediate steps to address the vacancies, particularly in nursing and diagnostic services, so that patients do not face inconvenience.

Motorcyclist Killed in Pulwama

SRINAGAR: A 22-year-old motorcyclist died after being struck by a vehicle in Kangan area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday, officials said.

An official told KNO that the youth was riding a motorcycle when a vehicle hit him in Kangan, Pulwama.

He said the youth was initially taken to District Hospital Pulwama, from where he was referred to SMHS Hospital Srinagar in critical condition. However, he was declared dead upon arrival at the hospital.

The deceased was identified as Adil Ahmed Chopan (22), son of Ghulam Mohammad, a resident of Yousmarg, Budgam.

Cognisance of the incident has been taken, while details regarding the incident and the vehicle involved are being verified—(KNO)

4 Injured in Bear Attack in Kulgam's Nandimarg

KULGAM: Four people were injured after being attacked by a wild bear in Nandimarg Nard area of Damhal Hanjipora in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Thursday, officials said.

An official told KNO that four people, comprising two men and two women, were injured after they were attacked by a wild bear in the area.

He said the two women are stated to be in critical condition, while the two men are stable. They were identified as Shafiq Banoo (60), wife of Bashir Ahmad Dar, Aayesha Bano (50), wife of Abdul Salam Magrey, Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, son of Abdullah Bhat and Abdul Salam, all residents of C R Pora.

Meanwhile, a wildlife team has been deployed in the area to trace the animal. Further details are awaited—(KNO)

Infant Dies after Falling into Water Tub

KUPWARA: A two-year-old boy died after he accidentally fell into a water tub at his home in Qalamabad area of Handwara in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Thursday, officials said.

An official told KNO that the child was hospitalised after he accidentally fell into a water tub at his home in Qalamabad.

He said the child was shifted to NTPHC Qalamabad, where he was undergoing treatment since yesterday. He was later shifted to a hospital in Srinagar, where he succumbed to his injuries today. He was identified as Shahnaz Shafat (02), son of Shafat Ahmad Reshi, a resident of Qalamabad.

Meanwhile, cognisance of the incident has been taken, while a probe is underway—(KNO)

New Rice Varieties Double Yields in Kashmir, Farmers Rejoice

Agencies

SRINAGAR: New rice varieties introduced and distributed by the Agriculture Department in Kashmir are yielding encouraging results, with farmers reporting a significant increase in production and reduced incidence of crop diseases compared to traditional varieties.

Farmers from different parts of the Valley told KNO that the newly introduced varieties, particularly SR3 and SR4, have helped them achieve higher yields this season, with some reporting nearly double the production compared to previous years.

They said the improved varieties have not only increased productivity but have also shown greater resistance to diseases, including rice blast, which continues to affect paddy cultivation in several areas of Kashmir.

Mansoor Ahmad, a farmer from south Kashmir's Kulgam district, said



he had been cultivating traditional rice varieties for years but faced recurring problems due to rice blast, which affected crop production.

"Rice blast was a common problem in my fields every year, resulting in considerable losses. However, this season I cultivated the SR3 variety supplied by the Agriculture Department, and the results have been very encouraging," he said.

Ahmad said his production had almost doubled this year, adding that the crop remained free from disease during the growing season.

He said farmers who continued cultivating tra-

ditional varieties faced similar disease-related problems this year, highlighting the difference in performance between the old and newly introduced varieties.

Another farmer, Nazir Ahmad from Pulwama district, said the new varieties had brought a noticeable improvement in paddy production, particularly for farmers struggling with declining yields in recent years.

Nazir said he owned four kanals of agricultural land, where production had generally remained around 2.5 quintals per kanal in previous years. "However, this year, after cultivating the new variety, I harvested around four quintals per kanal. This is a considerable improvement for a farmer like me," he said.

The new varieties, Nazir said, were also performing well in terms of grain quality and market value, providing farmers with the possibility of better returns.

Sleeper Bus Overturns on Jammu-Srinagar Highway, 33 Injured



Press Trust of India

JAMMU: At least 33 passengers were injured after a sleeper bus travelling from Srinagar towards Jammu overturned inside a tunnel near Maroog on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, in Ramban district on Thursday, officials said.

Among the injured, nine have been referred to Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu for further treatment, they said.

Police said the injured passengers were shifted to district hospital Ramban

with the assistance of police, State Disaster Response Force, Central Reserve Police Force and Army personnel and Civil Quick Response Team volunteers.

Traffic officials said the West Bengal-registered sleeper bus had 55 passengers on board when the accident occurred. Following the accident, a single carriageway has been open in the affected tunnel to facilitate movement of traffic, officials said.

Senior officials are present at the spot and supervising the rescue and traffic management operations.

IN THE COURT OF THE JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS BANDIPORA

Present: Amandeep Singh Jo Code: JK00352

In the case of: Asifa Shafi
UT through P/S _____ Case FIR No. _____ U/s 138 NI Act
Versus

1. Mohd shafi Mir
S/o: Ab Mayeed Mir
R/o: Bandipora Bandipora (Accused)

Proclamation U/S 84 BNSS

In the Matter of: Proclamation requiring the appearance of accused No. Mohd shafi Mir

Whereas the in the above titled Challan supra mentioned accused person have been arrayed as accused and general warrant of arrest has been issued against him which returned with the report that the said accused could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the above mentioned accused has absconded or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant.

As such Proclamation is hereby made that the above name accused person is required to appear before this court within the period of 30 days from the date of publication of proclamation failing which appropriate proceedings as warranted under law shall be initiated against them.

Given under my hand and seal of this court today on 29-09-26

Sd/-
Judicial Magistrate 1st Class
Bandipora
DIPK-6301-26
DT: 01/10/2026

IN THE FORUM OF THE AUTHORIZED OFFICER, SINDH FOREST DIVISION, GANDERBAL.

Excerpt of order passed by the Authorized Officer-cum-Divisional Forest Officer, Sindh Forest Division, Ganderbal dated: 29-09-2026 in Confiscation Case arising out of FIR No. 18-2026, P/S Kangan of Manasbal Range.

The seized forest produce, i.e., Kail timber measuring 139.22 cft (08 logs = 137.00 cft and 04 sawn pieces = 2.22 Cft), is hereby confiscated in favour of the Government. The confiscated forest produce shall continue in the custody of the Range Officer, Haran-Shallabugh Range, Fatehpura, Ganderbal, and shall be disposed off as per the rules in force after making necessary entries in the depot records. The Range Officer Haran Shallabugh shall report compliance of this order with respect to the disposal of the forest produce to this forum after expiry of the specified period of revision.

The copy of this order be communicated to the Conservator of Forests, Srinagar Circle, Hon'ble Courts of District Ganderbal, Divisional Manager FDC, Ganderbal Division, Range Officer Manasbal, Range Officer Haran Shallabugh and to both accused/respondents. The copy of this order be published in two leading newspapers having wide circulation in the Union Territory.

The file be consigned to records after its due completion.

No. DFO/Sindh/Lease/A.O/ 3194-3207 Authorized Officer-cum-Divisional Forest Officer,
Dated: 29-09-2026. DIPK-6306-26 Sindh Forest Division, Ganderbal.
DT: 01/10/2026

Asian Paints Wood Adhesives announces a new chapter with Hydronaa & Ultraa and a monumental 384 sq. ft. mosaic

Observer News Service

Srinagar, 01 October 2026: Some of the most enduring things in life are built one small piece at a time and held together by a bond strong enough to make them last. Bringing this thought to life, Asian Paints Wood Adhesives has launched Asian Paints Hydronaa and Asian Paints Ultraa, two new products designed to bring

together durability, ease and performance to the woodworking community. To celebrate the launch, the brand brought in 250 distributors from across India to create a monumental 384 sq. ft. wooden mosaic creating a landmark moment for the brand. The achievement is now officially recognised in the Asia Book of Records as the 'Largest Wooden Mosaic Artwork Created by an

Organization'.

Built around the thought 'A Better Bond Starts Here', the activation turned a product benefit into a shared experience. Each distributor applied the new launched Asian Paints Hydronaa adhesive to individual wooden panels, and affixed together, with the individual pieces coming together to create one striking installation. In doing so, all

the distributors who are instrumental in taking Asian Paints Wood Adhesives to the market became an integral part of the brand's launch story.

The 384 sq. ft. mosaic comprised individual wooden panels, each affixed by a participating distributor. The panels were then placed onto the larger installation using Asian Paints Hydronaa, making the product

an intrinsic part of the record.

As panel after panel came together, the artwork took shape, transforming hundreds of individual contributions into one cohesive piece. The final mosaic installation also served as the backdrop for the reveal of Asian Paints Hydronaa and Asian Paints Ultraa, creating a visual connection between the record attempt and the brand's next chapter.

The activation brought together three elements: the scale of the installation, the participation of 250 distributors and the collaborative nature of its creation. More importantly, it gave the distributor community an active role in marking the launch and the record attempt, bringing alive the important role they play in the brand ecosystem. The initiative reflects Asian Paints'

broader approach to the homes and spaces it serves, bringing together products, people and expertise to create solutions that make a meaningful difference to everyday life. As a brand with a long-standing understanding of the home, its expansion into Wood Adhesives builds on this expertise while addressing an important need within the woodworking ecosystem: creating furniture that is built to last.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Unity Makes Every

different paths and identities, the destination remains one, with India moving forward with the vision of a developed nation by 2047.

More than 6,000 runners participated in different categories of this year's Kashmir Marathon-Run for Unity.

DGP Nalin Prabhat, ADGP Armed Police Nitish Kumar, ADGP CID M.K. Sinha, senior officers of the police and civil administration, sports personalities and a large number of participants attended the felicitation ceremony.

J&K Youth Choosing

youth are working towards a peaceful and prosperous future," he said.

The DGP said the youth were increasingly choosing "peace over violence and progress over destruction", adding that the police were supporting them through sports tournaments and the Civic Action Programme.

"The energy of J&K's youth is being channelled in a very positive direction," he said.

Highlighting the police's anti-drug campaign, Prabhat said 3,257 cases had been registered since April 11, with around 4,000 people arrested and 170 convictions secured. More than 2,500 cases had also been disposed of, he said.

He said 288 properties worth over 138 crore had been attached and more than 80 lakh in cash seized. As many as 144 persons had been booked under the PIT-NDPS Act, which he described as the highest figure in the country.

Referring to counter-terrorism efforts, Prabhat said September witnessed several major operational achievements for the J&K Police. He added that the force remained engaged in crime prevention, crime detection and maintenance of law and order.

The DGP also highlighted the role of 19 Mountain Rescue Teams of the J&K Armed Police deployed during this year's Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, saying they performed their duties effectively.

He also lauded the rescue operation following the disruption of the Gulmarg Gondola service, saying J&K Police, along with its Mountain Rescue Teams and SDRF personnel, evacuated

stranded tourists in record time.

Prabhat highlighted the Armed Police's achievements in mountaineering and sports, including successful summit expeditions to Kang Yatse in Ladakh and Kolahoi Peak in Anantnag, besides winning a medal at the Asian Championship in Vietnam.

He said sustained engagement through such initiatives was bringing the police and youth closer.

"The bond between J&K Police and the youth is growing stronger with each passing day," he said.

ADGP Armed Police Nitish Kumar, ADGP CID M.K. Sinha, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, senior police and civil administration officers, sportspersons and a large number of young participants attended the

ceremony.

J&K May See First

come closer," Kashmir Weather Forecast said.

Meanwhile, evening weather parameters issued by the India Meteorological Department showed dry conditions across Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, with no rainfall recorded at the listed stations during the observation period.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 29.3°C and a minimum of 10.2°C, while Jammu recorded a maximum of 32.6°C and a minimum of 20.4°C.

Gulmarg recorded a maximum of 20.6°C and a minimum of 7.2°C, while Pahalgam recorded 25.5°C and 6°C, respectively. (KNO)

J&K Notifies EV

the Transport Department on the notification of the policy.

Abdullah said the policy provides a structured framework for advancing clean transport while taking into account the specific terrain and cold-weather conditions of Jammu and Kashmir.

At A Kashmir Science

needs to reach the same places.

That question gained a sharper scientific dimension during a plenary lecture by IUST Vice Chancellor Shakil Ahmad Romshoo on climate change and the changing cryosphere of the

Upper Indus Basin.

Romshoo described the region through its exposure to climate change, disaster vulnerability and emerging glacial hazards. Changes in the basin's glaciers and snowfields have consequences extending beyond mountains, affecting water security and infrastructure in a region where millions depend on seasonal flows.

The subject placed the congress's larger theme in a practical setting.

Science, Romshoo said, has to serve society and sustainability. He pointed to the contrast between serious climate risks in the Upper Indus Basin and the creativity displayed by school-children during the event.

The student programme, organised with the National Children's Science Congress, brought together more than 80 students from 20 schools. Their posters, models and projects placed young people alongside researchers who spent the same three days examining problems that will define their future.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani praised IUST and the Jammu and Kashmir Science, Technology and Innovation Council for creating a platform where scientists, researchers and students could meet.

The closing ceremony also recognised the strongest oral and poster presentations. Dean Research Aabid Hussain Shalla presented the congress report, while Dean Academic Affairs Ajaz Bashir welcomed participants and Dean Outreach Ruheela Hassan delivered the vote of thanks.

The scale of the gathering suggested an ambition larger than a three-day academic event. Jammu and Kashmir is trying to build an economy in which scientific knowledge produces new ideas, enterprises and solutions to local problems.

That ambition now faces the realities discussed inside the auditorium: changing glaciers, water pressures, disaster exposure and a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Romshoo put the challenge in terms that reached beyond the congress itself. A developed Jammu and Kashmir, he said, can emerge only when young people learn to think scientifically and act for a sustainable future.

The students who displayed their

projects in Awantipora were already beginning that work.

SIA Conducts

alleged incriminating material, including mobile phones, identity documents, PAN cards, a passport and job agreements. The material is being examined as part of the investigation.

According to the spokesperson, preliminary investigation has indicated an alleged modus operandi in which local facilitators, in coordination with foreign-based handlers, lured unemployed and vulnerable youth with promises of overseas employment.

The victims were allegedly moved through Thailand to the Myawaddy region of Myanmar, where they were subsequently exploited and allegedly forced to participate in cyber scam operations.

The agency said the emerging details point to a transnational chain spanning multiple jurisdictions and involving recruitment, movement, facilitation and exploitation of victims.

The investigation is being pursued to identify the complete network, including its local and overseas linkages, as well as the financial and logistical channels allegedly supporting its operations.

The spokesperson said cooperation from national agencies and international partners had also been sought in the investigation.

Man Charged

signature, the spokesperson said.

The agency said the communication was intended to unlawfully influence the functioning of the Anantnag district police administration.

During the investigation, the allegations and evidence collected were found to substantiate the commission of offences under relevant provisions of the BNS, the spokesperson said.

The chargesheet has been filed before the competent court for further proceedings.

Court Orders Framing

accused received funds from Pakistan through hawala channels and other means for secessionist and subversive activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the ED, more than

8.94 crore in alleged proceeds of crime was generated and subsequently received, routed, transferred, concealed, possessed, acquired or used through different channels.

The agency has alleged that funds were routed through cash couriers and conduits who collected money from the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and delivered it to Hurriyat leadership, including Yasin Malik.

The ED has further alleged that documents recovered from the residence of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, who worked as cashier-cum-accountant with Watali, showed foreign contributions were received by Malik, Shabir Shah and Masarat Alam through Watali during 2015-16.

Regarding Malik, the agency has alleged that he received more than 3 crore in foreign funds as alleged proceeds of crime and subsequently laundered the money.

The agency has also alleged that Shabir Shah played a key role in the separatist militant movement and received support through Hurriyat representatives based in Pakistan.

In relation to Abdul Rashid Sheikh, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, the ED has alleged that he received funds from abroad and had links with JKLF and its overseas branches. The agency has cited emails allegedly retrieved from Malik's account and claimed that Rashid received funds through Watali.

The allegations remain subject to the proceedings before the trial court.

'Attempt' Became

to an attempt to commit rape, while the prosecution case later developed into one of completed rape. The Investigating Officer had acknowledged that the statements of the material witnesses recorded during investigation initially referred to an attempt.

The Court said the distinction between an attempted and completed act was not a minor discrepancy but went to the very nature of the principal offence. It held that the subsequent explanation offered by the prosecutrix did not entirely remove the doubt arising from the variation.

The Court also examined the medical evidence, noting that while the

doctor found that sexual intercourse had taken place, the medical examination could not establish when the intercourse occurred or identify the person involved. The Court further noted that no biological or forensic material connecting Ganie with the alleged act was obtained.

The judgment also referred to inconsistencies concerning the timing of the medical examination, the movements of the witnesses, the preparation of the complaint and other circumstances. While holding that individual minor discrepancies would not ordinarily be sufficient to reject a prosecution case, the Court said their cumulative effect had to be considered.

It further held that Ganie's failure to establish his plea of alibi could not be treated as affirmative proof of the prosecution case. It reiterated that the prosecution must succeed on the strength of its own evidence and that a weakness in the defence cannot cure deficiencies in the prosecution case.

"Criminal conviction requires proof beyond reasonable doubt," the Court observed, holding that the cumulative circumstances created reasonable doubt regarding the prosecution version.

"Where two reasonably possible views emerge from the evidence, the view favourable to the accused must prevail," the court said, adding, "The benefit of doubt is not a matter of grace but a necessary consequence of the prosecution's failure to cross the required threshold of proof."

Accordingly, the Court set aside the conviction and sentence imposed by the trial court and acquitted Ganie of the charges under Sections 376, 450 and 506 RPC by extending to him the benefit of doubt.

"On an independent reappraisal of the entire evidence, this Court is unable to hold that the prosecution has established the charges against the appellant beyond reasonable doubt. The findings of the Trial Court, therefore, cannot be sustained."

ACB Arrests Agriculture

were subjected to medico-legal formalities and lodged at Police Station Shaheed Gunj in Srinagar, he added.

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India Cannot Afford Silly Mistakes Against Pak: Harmanpreet

Press Trust of India

KAKAMIGAHARA (JAPAN): India captain Harmanpreet Singh was clear about one thing after the defending champions survived a Pakistan fightback to reach the Asian Games hockey final -- against a team of such calibre, there is no room for silly mistakes, especially when tempers flare and emotions threaten to take over.

India's dramatic 4-3 semi-final victory on Thursday came at a cost, with a commanding 3-0 lead squandered as Pakistan fought back to draw level.

The contest also threatened to boil over, with a heated exchange in the 37th minute resulting in Pakistan's Ammad Butt receiving a yellow card and India's Dilpreet Singh being shown a green card, leaving the defending champions temporarily short-handed.

Harmanpreet had to step in to defuse the situation, urging his teammates to keep their composure as the intensity of the contest threatened to distract them from the task at hand. For the Indian captain, the priority was to play hockey, not get drawn into confrontations.

"We are here to play hockey. If we want to fight, we have to be calm. They were trying to distract us. Our focus is on the game. We don't want to fight. I think we handled it well. They punished us. We took the card," Harmanpreet said after the match.

The captain acknowledged that India had largely stuck to their game plan and started strongly, creating chances and converting them into goals. But the loss of control in the second half, coupled with disciplinary lapses, allowed Pakistan to claw their way back into a contest that India had appeared to have firmly in their grasp.

"We stuck to the plan most of the time. We started well, created opportunities and scored good goals. We made the same mistakes in the second half. We took a silly card. They also had a card. It was a good opportunity for us, and we were smart. We could score goals," he said.

"These are the areas we have to improve, especially in such matches. If you come to a good tournament and play against a good team, you can't make such mistakes."

Harmanpreet described the contest as memorable, but



admitted that India had been caught off guard by Pakistan's ability to punish their errors. The defending champions had enjoyed a relatively comfortable passage through the tournament, but the semifinal presented a different challenge.

"Memorable. I think it's not an easy match. We knew it wouldn't be easy. The way we started was good. We scored good goals. Suddenly, you get a good match after playing (a pool game) against Bangladesh in the last game (which Indian

won 10-0)," he said.

The captain felt India had been guilty of expecting more goals rather than consolidating their advantage, allowing Pakistan to capitalise on lapses in concentration. The comeback was a reminder that even a brief

loss of focus could prove costly against a quality opponent.

"We were expecting to score more goals. We made mistakes, and they punished us," Harmanpreet said.

Veteran midfielder Manpreet Singh echoed the need for composure, revealing that coach Craig Fulton's message to the team had been to keep their emotions in check and remain focused on the contest rather than the occasion.

"Keep your heart on fire, but keep your mind calm. That's what our coach always says. He says, play the game, not the occasion. You will get the result automatically," Manpreet said.

Pakistan's fightback exposed India's defensive vulnerabilities, particularly when they were reduced to 10 players following Dilpreet's green card. Ammad's five-minute suspension had also briefly left Pakistan short-handed, but India failed to make the most of the numerical advantage and subsequently paid for their own disciplinary lapse.

Manpreet acknowledged that India's defensive organisation could have been better, particularly during the period when they conceded a goal while tem-

porarily down to 10 players.

"Unfortunately, no one wants to get a card. They got a five-minute card and we got a two-minute card. But the defensive players could have done better. When we conceded a goal in those two minutes, we knew how to handle it normally, but there was a little mistake," he said.

The Indian midfielder admitted that the team had felt the pressure after surrendering its three-goal advantage, but insisted they were prepared for a shootout had the match remained tied. "Yes, there was pressure. But even if there was a draw, we were ready for the shootout because we have very good shooters," he said.

India's last-minute winner eventually spared them a shootout and kept their title defence alive, but Manpreet cautioned against expecting an easy final, stressing that the team would need to maintain its intensity until the final whistle.

"It was good today, but I don't think the final will be easy. All the teams in the final will give their 100 per cent. Our personal plan is to play until the last whistle and execute whenever we get an opportunity," he said.

Poor Shot Selection By Pant As J&K Bowl Out Rest Of India For 237

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: Skipper Rishabh Pant paid for his impetuosity while a set Sarfaraz Khan played a loose shot as Rest of India were bowled out for a below-par 237 by a spirited Jammu and Kashmir attack which missed its spearhead Auqib Nabi on the opening day of the Irani Cup.

Medium pacers Umar Nazir Mir (2/65 in 18 overs), Sunil Kumar (3/36 in 20.1 overs) and Lone Nassir (3/59 in 13 overs) shared the bulk of spoils with able support from spinners Abid Mushtaq and Sahil Lotra, who picked a wicket apiece.

At the end of the day's play, comeback man Akash Deep showed the requisite sharpness to remove night-watchman Nazir (4) with a sharp bouncer as Jammu and Kashmir were left reeling at 21 for 2. Left-arm



seamer Mukesh Choudhary had accounted for opener Shubham Pundir (1).

For Rest, Jharkhand left-hander Shikhar Mohan (60, 118 balls), who made quite an impression in the Duleep Trophy, struck a fine half-century while Ravichandran Smaran (68 off 83 balls) also looked impressive but failed to convert it into three-figure mark.

But two of the biggest disappointments on the day were Rest skipper Pant (10

off 36 balls) and his deputy Sarfaraz (45 off 97 balls) who should have consolidated the innings after the fall of initial wickets.

Sarfaraz did enjoy a 76 run-stand with Mohan, who hit nine fours and a six. The southpaw's cover driving was top notch and he also hit a six off spinner Lotra over long-on. In the case of Sarfaraz, he looked in a mood to slowly build his innings and hit five fours.

However, as he closed

in on a fifty he just tickled an innocuous delivery from Nazir, which was going down the leg-side, and Kanhaiya Wadhawan completed a fine catch. As far as Pant was concerned, he was watchful to begin with and he was on 10 off 35 balls, when his patience ran out.

In a typical Pant fashion, he gave Nazir the charge by trying to hit inside out, but J&K skipper Paras Dogra had wisely stationed Qamran Iqbal at short cover and he completed an easy catch.

In the middle-order, Smaran, who had a terrific 2025-26 Ranji Trophy season, provided glimpses of his talent with some exquisite shots but ran out of partners at the other end. Only Akash Deep (22) and Mukesh Choudhary (2) gave him company with stands of 39 and 43 for the eighth and ninth wicket, respectively.

Nitesh's Story: From Helping Father Sell Milk In Panipat To Asiad Silver In Greco-Roman Wrestling

Press Trust of India

NAGOYA: As a 15-year-old, the Asian Games silver-winning Greco-Roman wrestler Nitesh Siwach was busy helping his father sell milk in Panipat, Haryana.

After two years of hard work, getting up at 5am and returning home at 5pm, Nitesh started training in wrestling with his family's permission.

The toil bore fruits in distant Japan. The 23-year-old Nitesh on Thursday lost to Yuri Nakazato of Japan in the 97kg final to settle for a silver, but the medal still has a lot of sheen to it.

"My father is a milkman. When I was 15, I had a knee operation. I started working as a milkman with my father. I used to sell milk every day," Nitesh said after his final bout.

"I was alone at home, so my father told me 'why are



you alone at home? Come with me (to sell milk)'. I used to go to Panipat with my father," said Nitesh, hailing from Jagsi village in Haryana's Panipat district.

From 2017 to 2019 he worked as a milkman. It was a tough 12-hour job and he left it after two years, and sought permission from the family to restart a career in wrestling, which came to a temporary halt with the knee operation.

"My village is 40 km from Panipat. I used to wake up at 5 a.m. and come back home

at 5 p.m. I sold milk for two years. I didn't have a day off, so I thought of requesting my family. I asked for six months, and then I started wrestling again," he said.

He then started training at Pratap School in Kharkhoda.

"My teachers Om Prakash Dahiya and Sandeep gave me a lot of attention. They motivated me to become a world champion one day. I haven't become a world champion yet, but I feel that I will become a world champion one day."

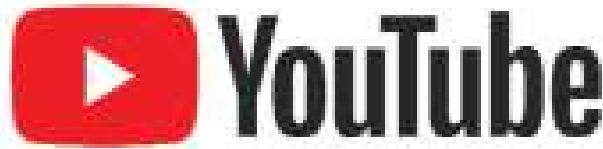
In 2022, Nitesh won a

bronze medal at the U23 World Championships. In 2025, he bagged a bronze in Asian Championships before upgrading to silver this year.

Asked if he ever thought of going to a 'Dangal' when he started Greco-Roman wrestling, he said, "After the knee operation, I started playing in Greco-Roman. After the injury, I never thought of going to 'Dangal'. I started playing Greco-Roman on the mat."

He hoped that Greco-Roman would be included in the Pro Wrestling League. "I will request the Pro Wrestling League organisers to include Greco-Roman."

Asked about his daily diet, he said, "I would like to eat churma (a sweet dish) at home. I mostly eat vegetarian food. I eat home-made paneer, butter, churma and drink milk. I also eat chicken sometimes," he added.



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