29th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Sunday 08 November 2026 | Srinagar | Vol: 29 | Issue: 274 | Pages: 08 | Price: ₹3

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Private Varsities In J&K To Have 25% Local Quota



AI generated illustration

Govt notifies rules; CM says rules will ease approvals and safeguard local interests

New framework provides for 30-day preliminary scrutiny and regulatory oversight

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has notified the Jammu and Kashmir Private Universities Rules, 2026, paving the way for the establishment of private universities by reputed national and international institutions in the Union Territory, with a mandatory minimum 25 per cent reservation for J&K domiciles in admissions and employment.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday described the notification as a significant milestone in the government's efforts to expand access to quality higher education and strengthen the region's academic ecosystem.

Congratulating Education Minister Shamim Firdous on the notification Abdullah said the new Rules establish a comprehensive regulatory framework for setting up and operating private universities in Jammu and Kashmir, creating an enabling environment for reputed national and international institutions to establish their campuses | More on P6

Kashmir's Cluster University Faces Mid-Course Fee Row

Postgraduate students challenge a 36.1% increase in recurring fees, saying the revised demand came after they had completed two semesters under the original fee structure.

Syed Sammar Mehdi



Srinagar: On a crisp October morning in Srinagar, postgraduate students of the 2025 batch in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning gathered outside the Cluster University offices after receiving an unexpected bill.

The university demanded 18,435 for Semesters III and IV.

Many of these students come from families of modest means. They had planned their budgets around the fee structure fixed at the time of their admission.

The new figure represented an increase of 4,885 over the original recurring component.

The original structure appeared in Notification No. 08-CUS of 2025. It fixed the total fee for the first and second semesters at 16,050.

This amount included a one-time enrolment fee of 2,500 and a recurring university component of 13,550.

Students paid it, completed two semesters, and moved into the third.

On October 7, 2026, the university released Notification No. 09-CUS of 2026. The document carried the title "Revision of Fee Structure for admission to 1st & 2nd Semesters" and raised the total to 20,935.

The same day, Notice No. CUS/Adm-Reg/PG/2026/5646-66 applied the revised amount minus the one-time fee to the 2025 batch already enrolled.

The increase amounted to 30.4 per percent on the original total and 36.1 percent on the recurring component.

Students drafted a formal representation dated 10 October 2026 and submitted it under Dispatch No. 530 to the Vice-Chancellor. Copies went to the registrar, the dean of academic affairs, the controller of examinations, the finance officer, the assistant registrar for admissions, the students' grievance redressal committee and the university ombudsperson.

The letter stating their position with | More on P6

J&K NHM Employees To Get 5% Annual Hike

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has sanctioned a 5 per cent annual increment for eligible contractual employees engaged under the National Health Mission (NHM) for the financial year 2026-27.

According to an order issued by the Mission Director, NHM J&K, the benefit will cover eligible employees working at the state, divisional, district and block levels, including those engaged under the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) and various disease control programmes.

The increment has been sanctioned following approval of the NHM State Programme Implementation Plan (SPIP) for 2026-27 by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on June 19, 2026.

As per the order, employees who completed one year of service on or before March 31, 2026, will be entitled to the increment with effect from April 1, 2026.

Those completing one year of service between April 1 and September | More on P6

HC Rejects Bail Plea Of Accused In Heroin Trafficking Case

M Ahmad



Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has rejected the bail application of a man, accused of financing an alleged narcotics trafficking network.

A bench of Justice M A Chowdhary dismissed the bail plea of Shabir Ahmed Wani, a resident of Syedpora Eidgah Srinagar, who is facing trial in FIR No. 17/2023 registered at Police Station Rajbagh under Sections 8, 21, 27 and 29 of the NDPS Act read with Section 201 IPC.

Wani had approached the Court, challenging the rejection of his bail application by the Special Court (NDPS Cases) here on 5 August last year.

He argued that no contraband had been recovered from his possession and that his implication was primarily based on disclosure statements of co-accused, which were inadmissible in evidence.

Wani's counsel submitted that the prosecution had relied upon a transfer of Rs 1.50 lakh to his bank account, which was related to a proposed sale of a vehicle. Since the deal did not materialise, Rs 1.48 lakh was returned to the sender on the same day, he said.

Wani has been in custody for approximately two years and five months, while 18 of the 33 prosecution witnesses had already been examined, the counsel said. The witnesses examined so far, the counsel contended, had not implicated | More on P6

Rs 1 Lakh Deposit, Licence Fee Worry Kashmir Ration Dealers



Agencies

Srinagar: Fair Price Shop dealers in Kashmir have raised concerns over additional financial requirements, including a Rs 1 lakh security deposit, licence fee and advanced demand of cash before taking a ration digital verification.

A ration dealer said the new face authentication system could create difficulties for beneficiaries, particularly elderly and ailing people.

"If this system is implemented, it will create many problems," he said.

Another dealer said arranging the required equipment and meeting additional financial requirements was becoming difficult with their existing earnings.

"We are being asked to arrange mobile phones for the new system. These things involve considerable expenses. How are small dealers supposed to manage all this with their existing income?" he said.

The dealers also expressed concern over the requirement of a Rs 1 lakh security deposit, saying such a financial burden would be difficult to manage.

They also flagged the | More on P6

PM Modi To Celebrate Diwali With Soldiers

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Nov 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday conveyed his Diwali greetings to the nation, saying that, like in previous years, he will celebrate the festival with the brave soldiers of the country.

In a video message posted on his social media handles, Modi said he will celebrate the festival with great enthusiasm.

He also said the whole country was being illuminated with lights on the eve of Deepavali, and added that it reflects the country's resolve against darkness.

"My heartiest greetings to all of you for Diwali. I wish for peace, prosperity and happiness for all of you in the coming days. I also celebrate Deepavali like you with great enthusiasm," he said.

The prime minister said he has been celebrating Diwali with the brave soldiers of the country every year.

"This time also, I will continue the tradition," he said, adding, "Have a great Diwali".

He, however, did not disclose at which military station or post he | More on P6

J&K Bank Recruitment Age Cap Triggers Discontent

Leaders, aspirants seek raising upper age limit from 30 to 40 years

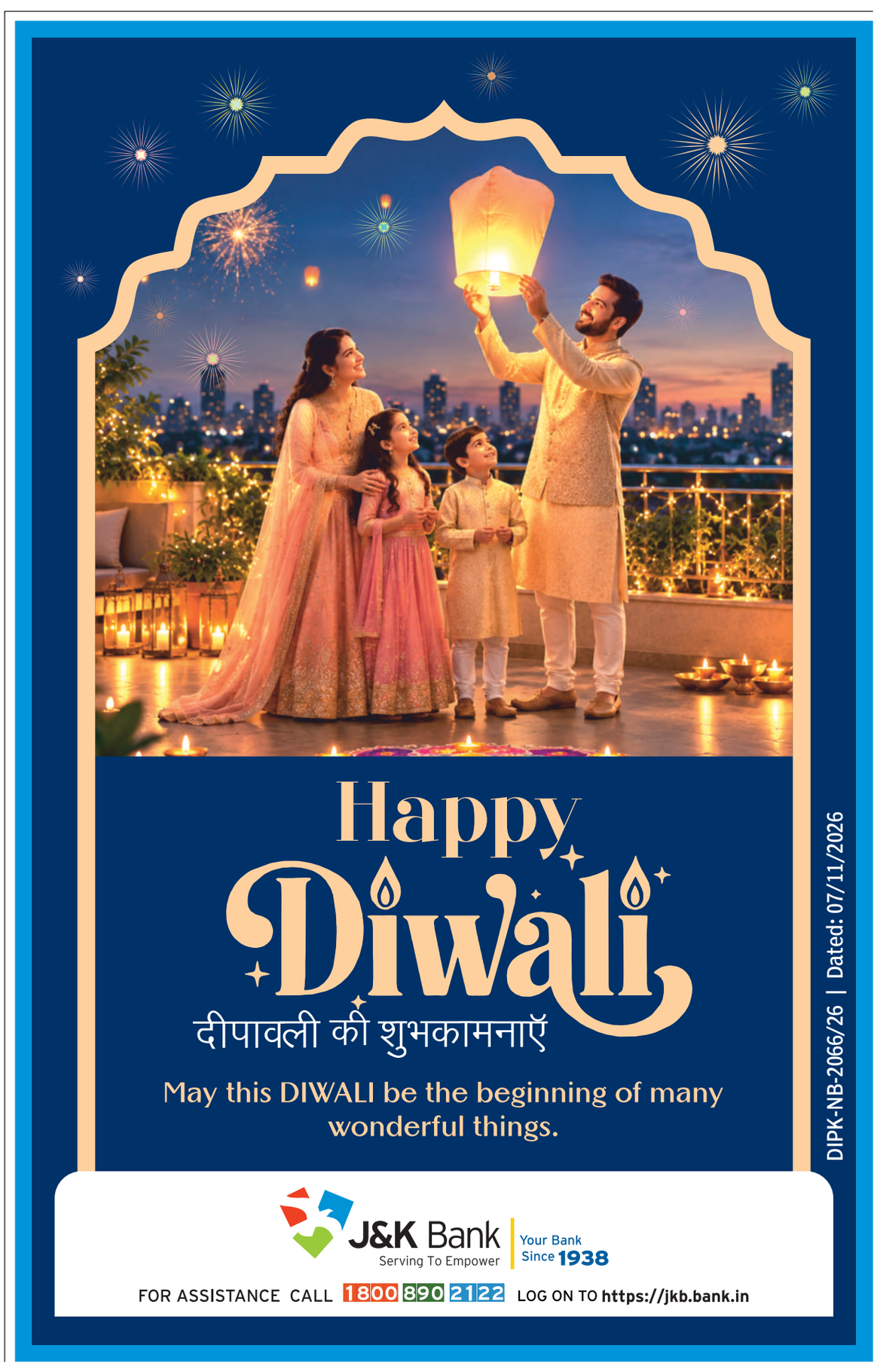


Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Bank's latest recruitment drive for 1,356 posts has triggered discontent among political leaders and job aspirants over the prescribed upper age limit, with demands growing for raising the ceiling from 30 to 40 years.

The bank has advertised 323 Probationary Officer (PO) posts and 1,033 Banking Associate posts. The online application process began on November 7 and will continue until November 26, while the examinations will be conducted by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS).

As per the notification, candidates | More on P6



Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: ONGC Merit Scholarship 2026-27

Description: The ONGC Merit Scholarship 2026–27, offered by the ONGC Foundation, supports meritorious first-year students from SC, ST, OBC, and economically weaker General categories pursuing Engineering, MBBS, MBA, or a Master's degree in Geology/Geophysics.
Eligibility: Applications are open to Indian nationals from SC, ST, OBC, and economically weaker General categories pursuing the first year of Engineering, MBBS, MBA, or a Master's in Geology/Geophysics. Applicants must be under 31 years of age, have at least 60% marks or a 6.0 CGPA, and meet the applicable family income criteria.
Prizes & Rewards: An award of 48,000 per annum.
Last Date to Apply: 30-11-2026
Application mode: Online Application Only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/ONGM1
QR Code: https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ongc-merit-scholarship-2026-271793617381.png

Scholarship Name 2: Vylor Agritech Scholarship Program FY 2026–27

Description: The Vylor Agritech Scholarship Program FY 2026–27 provides financial support to students pursuing UG, PG, or PhD courses in Agriculture and allied streams at eligible institutions. Selected students receive up to INR 35,000 per year to support their education and career growth in agriculture.
Eligibility: Students enrolled in any year of UG, PG, or PhD in Agriculture (and allied courses) at government colleges, including IITs, NITs, IISc, ICAR-recognized colleges, and State Agricultural Universities, are eligible.
The applicant's annual family/parental income from all sources must not exceed INR 6,00,000.
Children of employees of Vylor and Buddy4Study are not eligible to apply.
Prizes & Rewards: INR 25,000 for undergraduate courses per year.
INR 35,000 for postgraduate and PhD programmes per year.



Last Date to Apply: 30-11-2026
Application mode: Online Application Only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/VASP1
QR Code: https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/vylor-agritech-scholarship-program-fy-2026-271793617190.png

Scholarship Name 3: Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan 2026-27

Description: The Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan 2026-27, an initiative by Mahindra & Mahindra Limited, supports the educational aspirations of daughters of truck drivers across India. The scholarship provides financial assistance to eligible girls studying in Class 11, Class 12, Graduation, and Post-Graduation, helping them continue their education despite financial challenges.
Eligibility: Open to girls studying in Class 11, Class 12, Graduation, or Post-Graduation.
Applicants must be daughters/wards of truck drivers.
Students from across India are eligible to apply.
Children of Buddy4Study or Mahindra & Mahindra employees are not eligible.
Note: If the latest semester results are unavailable, the previous odd-semester results may be considered for selection.
Prizes & Rewards: INR 10,000 as a fixed scholarship award for each selected scholar.
Last Date to Apply: 30-11-2026
Application mode: Online Application Only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MHSA4
QR Code: https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/mahindra-saarthi-abhiyaan-2026-271793670927.png

Scholarship Name 4: SDEF India Scholarship Program 2026-27

Description: The SDEF India Scholarship Program 2026-27, an initiative of the Swami Dayanand Education Foundation (SDEF), supports academically meritorious students from financially constrained families who are beginning professional undergraduate courses in India. Selected students can receive up to INR 50,000 per academic year, renewable for up to four years, subject to annual review and continued eligibility.
Eligibility: Open to students admitted to the first year of a full-time eligible professional undergraduate programme in 2026-27.
The applicant's annual family income must not exceed INR 12 lakh from all sources.
Applicants should not have taken a drop or gap year after Class 12.
Students must meet the applicable academic, entrance examination and category-wise eligibility criteria for their course.
Eligible programmes include B.Tech./B.E., MBBS, BDS, and B.Arch.
Applicants must be willing to participate in further assessment and selection stages, if shortlisted.
Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 50,000 per academic year, renewable for up to four years, subject to annual review and continued eligibility. The scholarship amount is disbursed directly to the student's college or university towards approved educational expenses.
Last Date to Apply: 30-11-2026
Application mode: Online Application Only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SDEF1
QR Code: https://dle9eg0t055l3.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/sdef-india-scholarship-program-2026-271793670884.png

Health & Medical Education Department, Govt. of J&K
GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG

College Campus, Dialgam Anantnag J&K-192210

Email ID: principal-gmca@jk.gov.in

Subject: Conduct of written test for the post of Senior Resident in various disciplines advertised vide Advertisement Notice No. 12 GMCA of 2026, Dated: 08.09.2026

NOTIFICATION

It is notified for information of all the eligible candidates who have applied for the post of Senior Resident in GMC Anantnag advertised vide Advertisement Notice **No.:- 12 GMCA of 2026, Dated:- 08.09.2026**, that the written examination for the said post in the following disciplines shall be conducted as per the schedule given below:

Name of the Post	Discipline	Exam Date/ Day	Time	Venue
Senior Resident	1. Anesthesiology 2. Dermatology 3. Orthopaedics	13.11.2026 (Friday)	11:30 AM to 12:30 PM	Lecture Hall II, Main Campus, Dialgam GMC Anantnag.

Candidates are advised to download their admit cards from the official website, **www.gmcanantnag.ac.in** from **09.11.2026** (Monday) onwards, or collect the same from the Office of IT Section, GMC Anantnag.

Note:

1. The candidates should read carefully all the instructions mentioned on the admit card.
2. Candidates are also advised to report at the examination center one hour prior to the schedule time along with Admit Card, ID Proof (original) and one recent Passport size photograph. Candidates failing to meet above-mentioned pre-requisites on the day of examination shall not be allowed to appear in the examination.
3. No electronic gadgets shall be allowed in the examination center. If any such device is found with the candidate in the examination center, his/her candidature will be cancelled and legal action under rules will be initiated against him/her.

DIPK-7449/26

DATED: 07-11-2026

Muqbil Lateef Hussain (JKAS),
Administrative Officer,
Govt. Medical College, Anantnag

No.: GMCA/Estt/2026/ 9375-79 **Dated:** 07 -11-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name GHULAM HASSAN R/O MANAGAM Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040005444 wants to be registered on my name SYED SAREER AHMAD S/O SYED GHULAM HASSAN If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication ofthis notice after that no objection will be entertained
Name.....SYED SAREER AHMAD
S/O..SYED GHULAM HASSAN R/O ... MANAGAM
BLOCK ....WAGOORA FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the number plate of our official vehicle bearing Registration No. JK01AH 3322 has been lost from Qamarwari to Parimpora. We have now applied for a duplicate number plate. Anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same before the concerned office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Sd/- General Manager
Kashmir Observer
Contact No.: 8899256463

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE AT PATTAN

Coram: Mr. Anjeet Sing

In the case of
Ab Hamid Shah
S/o Gh Ahmad Shah
R/o Buchoo Tehsil Pattan, Applicant
V/S
BDO Pattan (Registrar of Births and Deaths).
In the matter of APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF AB HAMID SHAH S/O GH AHMAD SHAH R/O BUCHOO, PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMILLA

PUBLICATION NOTICE

Through the medium of this publication, the public at large is hereby informed that the applicant have instituted the above captioned petition in which the next date of hearing is fixed on 14-11-2026.If anybody have any objection or want to become a party in the petition/case as applicant/non-aplicant, he/she may approach this court on or before the next date of hearing, failing which the petition/case shall be heard and appropriate orders warranted under law shall be passed.
Let a copy of this publication notice be published in any daily local newspaper of Kashmir. Put up on 14-11-2026.
Announced
06.11.2026 Sd/-Sub Judge Pattan
FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Ghulam Hassan Hajam, S/o Mohd Kamal Hajma, R/o Check Frastareshi Devpora, Dardpora, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, hereby inform the general public that my ward, namely Sarwar Hassan, born on 17-11-2014, has his name wrongly recorded as Sarwar Hajam in his Aadhaar Card bearing No. 8947-4294-1453, whereas his correct name, as per school records, is Sarwar Hassan. Now, I have applied for correction of the same before the concerned authority. Anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same before the concerned office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.
Deponent:
Ghulam Hassan Hajam
S/o Mohd Kamal Hajma
R/o Check Frastareshi Devpora, Dardpora,
Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla. fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

To The General Public And All Concerned Departments,
Registrar Of Industrial Cooperatives.
SEARCH FOR ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

This is to inform the general public that the original documents of ALSA Arts and Craft Society, Registration No. 4596, registered approximately 20 years ago, have been lost.The Society intends to make certain changes to its official records, for which the original documents are required.Anyone who has found these documents or has any information regarding them is requested to kindly contact the President of the Society at the following numbers:
Contact Numbers: 9419427034 , 6006466609
Address: Alamgri Bazar, Zadibal, Srinagar.
Futher, all concerned are hereby informed to stop the ongoing work within this society and contact the President of the society for further instructions.

By Order of the President
ALSA Arts and Craft Society
Media line advt

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Mohd Rafi Shah to (new name) Mohammad Rafi Shah . In future I will be known as (new name) Mohammad Rafi Shah. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within & 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.
Media line advt

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform to the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my aadhar as SHOIB ASHRAF SOFI While as my actual name is SHOAIB ASHRAF SOFI C/O MOHAMMAD ASHRAF SOFI R/O BATTARGAM KUPWARA District KUPWARA 193222 Now I want to apply for the correction of the same if anybody is having any objection he/she may contact concerned authority within the period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.
SHOAIB ASHRAF SOFI
C/O :- MOHAMMAD ASHRAF SOFI
R/O :- BATTARGAM , KUPWARA fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform to the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my aadhar as TANIYA JAAN While as my actual name is TAYYIBA TALIB C/O TALIB HUSSAIN LONE R/O HATMULLA KUPWARA District KUPWARA 193222 Now I want to apply for the correction of the same if anybody is having any objection he/she may contact concerned authority within the period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.
TAYYIBA TALIB
C/O :- TALIB HUSSAIN LONE
R/O :- HATMULLA , KUPWARA qns

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as ARVINDER SINGH on my Adhaar card bearing Adhaar No .. 4335 6550 9559 while my correct name is S. ARVINDER SINGH S/O KISHAN SINGH which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/ her objection in the office of concerned Adhaar authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained
Name...S.ARVINDER SINGH
S/O....KISHAN SINGH fko
R/O..BERWAH TANGMARG

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Syed Mohideen Shah, S/o Late Syed Mohammad Sadiq Shah, R/o ShahtulPora, Sarai Dangerpora, hereby inform the general public and concerned authorities that I intend to transfer the electricity connection bearing Consumer ID 0215010001474, registered with Electricity Sub-Division Sumbal, Sonawari, in my name, Syed Mohideen Shah, S/o Late Syed Mohammad Sadiq Shah.
The concerned department is requested to update the electricity records accordingly and transfer the connection in my name.
Sd/-
Syed Mohideen Shah
S/o Late Syed Mohammad Sadiq Shah
R/o ShahtulPora, Sarai Dangerpora x

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE AT PATTAN

Coram: Mr. Anjeet Sing

In the case of
Fayaz Ahmad Lone S/o Ghulam Rasool Lone
R/o Wanigam Payeen, Tehsil Pattan. Applicant
V/s
BDO Pattan (Registrar of Births and Deaths).
In the matter of: APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF UBAID FAYAZ LONE S/O FAYAZ AHMAD LONE R/O WANIGAM PAYEEN, PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMULLA.

PUBLICATION NOTICE

Through the medium of this publication, the public at large is hereby informed that the applicant have instituted the above captioned petition in which the next date of hearing is fixed on 14-11-2026.If anybody have any objection or want to become a party in the petition/case as applicant/non-aplicant,he/she may approach this court on or before the next date of hearing, failing which the petition/case shall be heard and appropriate orders warranted under law shall be passed.
Let a copy of this publication notice be published in any daily local newspaper of Kashmir. Put up on 14-11-2026.
Announced 06.11.2026
fko Sd/-Sub Judge Pattan

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE AT PATTAN

Coram: Mr. Anjeet Sing

In the case of
Fayaz Ahmad Lone
S/o Ghulam Rasool Lone
R/o Wanigam Payeen, Tehsil Pattan Applicant
v/s
BDO Pattan (Registrar of Births and Deaths)
In the matter of APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF ABRAR AHMAD LONE S/O FAYAZ AHMAD LONE R/O WANIGAM PAYEEN, PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMULLA

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Sd/-
fko Sub Judge Pattan

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE AT PATTAN

Coram: Mr. Anjeet Sing

In the case of
Nazir Ahmad Tantary
S/o Ghulam Qadir Tantary
Ro Palhallan, Tehsil Pattan Applicant
V/S
BDO Pattan (Registrar of Births and Deaths)
In the matter of APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF SONOBER NAZIR D/O NAZIR AHMAD TANTARY R/O PALHALLAN, PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMULLA

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06.11.2026 Sd/-
FKO Sub Judge Pattan

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE AT PATTAN

Coram: Mr. Anjeet Sing

In the case of
Ab Rashid Khan
S/o Samander Khan.
R/o Palhallan, Tehsil Pattan. Applicant
V/s
BDO Pattan (Registrar of Births and Deaths)
In the matter of APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF AAFAQ RASHID S/O AB RASHID KHAN R/O PALHALLAN PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMULLA

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fko Sub Judge Pattan

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE AT PATTAN

Coram: Mr. Anjeet Sing

In the case of

Mehraj Ud Din Ganie S/o Abdul Gani Ganie R/o Hanjiwera Bala, Tehsil Pattan Applicant
V/s
MC Pattan (Registrar of Births and Deaths)
In the matter of APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF BIRTH AND ISSUANCE OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE IN RESPECT OF MOHAMMAD NUMAAN S/O MEHRAJ UD DIN GANIE R/O HANJIWERA, PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMULLA

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Commissioner SMC Reviews NGT Action Plan, AMRUT 2.0 Projects

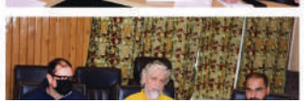
Observer News Service

Srinagar: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Basharat Qayoom, chaired a review meeting at the SMC Headquarters, Karan Nagar, to assess the implementation of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) Action Plan and review the progress of ongoing projects under AMRUT 2.0.

The meeting took stock of the progress achieved under various components of both initiatives, with particular focus on water supply augmentation, quality parameters, inter-departmental coordination and timely execution of approved works.







Reviewing the progress under AMRUT 2.0, the Commissioner stressed that strengthening the city's water supply infrastructure and addressing areas facing water shortages must remain a priority. He directed the concerned executing agencies to expedite the ongoing works and ensure that all projects are completed within the stipulated timelines while maintaining the prescribed technical and quality standards.

The Commissioner observed that the commissioning of the approved AMRUT 2.0 projects is expected to bring further improvement in supply of different localities of Srinagar, including Batamaloo, Aloochibagh, Jenab Sahab Soura, Bagwanpora, Lal Bazaar, Natipora, Malbagh, Jawahar Nagar, HMT and Lawaypora.

Emphasising the importance of quality in public infrastructure, Dr. Basharat directed the concerned officers to ensure that all prescribed quality parameters are duly addressed during execution, with no compromise on technical specifications or standards. He called for closer field-level supervision, regular assessment of physical and financial progress and prompt resolution of bottlenecks affecting the pace of work.

The Commissioner remarked that the people of Srinagar deserve better basic civic facilities and that ongoing developmental initiatives must translate into tangible improvements in the quality of services delivered to citizens. He stressed that all concerned departments and executing agencies must work in close coordination and with a clear sense of responsibility to address existing infrastructure gaps and improve the availability and reliability of essential civic services.

Taking up the NGT Action Plan, the Commissioner reviewed the status of various environmental interventions and stressed the need for coordinated efforts by all stakeholder departments to ensure effective implementation of the prescribed measures and compliance with the directions of the National Green Tribunal. He called for regular monitoring and timely action on all pending issues.

The Commissioner further directed the concerned departments and executing agencies to submit comprehensive and updated reports on the status of works under their respective jurisdictions, clearly indicating the progress achieved, pending activities, implementation-related challenges and proposed timelines for completion. The reports shall facilitate a detailed assessment of project implementation, identify areas requiring intervention and ensure effective monitoring and timely follow-up.

Kashmir Families Press for Jhelum Footbridge to Link Divided Banks

A proposed pedestrian crossing between Shivpora and Kursu Rajbagh has entered the consultancy stage, but residents fear a change in alignment could undermine the project's original purpose.

Ansar Hussain



Srinagar: Afternoon light falls on the Jhelum as residents gather near the proposed crossing between Dhar Bagh-Shivpora and Kursu Rajbagh.

Children chase one another along the embankment while elders discuss the same subject that has occupied these lanes for years: a simple pedestrian bridge that would let families walk straight to schools, hospitals, and relatives on the opposite bank.

The Civic Reforms Forum Rajbagh-Zero Bridge, formed by masjid committees, mohalla committees, and local residents, has made its demand public through posters and newspaper appeals.

The group insists the footbridge must rise at the original site.

Forum members have written to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Advisor Nasir Sogami, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, and local MLA Ahsan Pardesi, seeking their intervention so the project moves forward without relocation upstream toward Soiteng.

Mehwish Hassan, a college student who lives on the Shivpora side, walks the embankment most evenings.

"My classes and the better coaching centers lie on the other bank," she says. "A direct crossing would turn an hour-long detour into a short walk. The main roads stay packed with traffic. This bridge would give students like me a practical path."

Javed Mustafa, a banker who lives nearby, shares the same view.

"We have watched other footbridges open on the Jhelum and change ordinary routines overnight," he says. "People raise secondary concerns, but the real question remains whose daily movement receives priority. Public interest belongs at the center of this decision."

A government official who also lives in the area speaks with equal clarity.

"Opposition to this very much denies the basic fundamental rights," he says.

"Right to communicate is a part of right to live. Accessibility to education includes several schools such as New Era, Tiny Hearts, Linton Hall, and Aspire on the Kursu side, Woodland on the Shivpora side, and Akaash NEET on the Kursu side. Lala Ded Hospital, Modern Hospital, the airport, and the railway station all become closer. People remain cut off from these facilities."

Many related families live on either side. A footbridge already stands at Batwara and connects it with Gandabal. That crossing lands straight into the Cantonment Board gate at 15 Corps Headquarters.

"If that arrangement raises no difficulty," the official added, "the proposed Kursu-Shivpora bridge should raise none either. A motorable bridge may wait, but a pedestrian bridge has become imminent."

Official records support the residents' timeline.

On July 29, 2026, the Public Works Department published a tender for consultancy services for construction of the footbridge on the River Jhelum from Dhar Farm Shivpora to Kursoo Rajbagh. The tender carried ID 2026_PWDJK_318441_1 and NIT No. 08/e-tendering/SE-South/2026-27/3435-36.

The estimated project value stood near seven crore rupees. Noorjehan Engineering Consultants Pvt. Ltd. submitted the lowest bid for the consultancy work at 4,98,000 rupees.

The Forum has asked the department to publish the allotment order, the current status of the tender and subsequent approvals, the approved project cost, the agency responsible for civil works, the officially approved alignment, and a clear schedule for start and completion.

Imtiyaz Khan keeps a small shop near the proposed alignment.

"We learned the consultancy process had advanced," he says. "Then talk began of moving the site. Relocation upstream would leave the people who first sought this connection without the benefit they expected. Shivpora residents need easier reach to health facilities, the airport side, and the railway station. A bridge at Soiteng fails to deliver those gains."

Rukaya Mushtaq, a homemaker in Kursu Rajbagh, describes the practical cost of the present gap.

"Families live on both banks and still share the same kinship ties," she says. "Visits to relatives, trips to the doctor, and school runs require long detours. The older neighborhoods continue to function as one community. The bridge would keep that internal link intact."

Forum materials list the localities that stand to gain most: Kursu Rajbagh, Zero Bridge, Amwari, Khujbagh, Kanilpora, Pathan Bagh, Gadhanjipora, Iqbal Colony, Rajbagh Extension, Rajbagh, and Shivpora.

Members argue that any change in alignment needs transparent technical justification and a proper assessment of impact on the intended beneficiaries. They maintain that public interest must prevail over narrower considerations.

Srinagar's long relationship with the Jhelum has always turned on the need for reliable crossings.

Earlier pedestrian bridges have eased movement for schoolchildren, workers, and families who once faced lengthy road journeys.

Residents point to those examples when they argue that a well-placed footbridge reduces pressure on congested arterial roads and restores neighborhood-scale travel.

- 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: Kashmer EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR

27 Jumada al-Awwal
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 31
ZUHR	12:14
ASR	3: 55
Magrib	5: 35
ISHA	6: 57

This Day In History

- 1895- German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen produces and detects electromagnetic radiation in a wavelength range today known as X-rays or Röntgen rays
- 1901- Bloody clashes take place in Athens following the translation of the Gospels into demotic Greek
- 1904- American President Theodore Roosevelt (R) defeats Alton B. Parker (D)
- 1904- Inventor and manufacturer Harvey Hubbell receives the first U.S. patent for a separable electric attachment plug
- 1907- In a landmark decision for Australia, the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration rules that the Sunshine Harvester Work must pay 'fair and reasonable wages'
- 1910- 1st Washington State election in which women could vote
- 1910- For the first time since 1894, the US elects a Democratic Congress, including the first socialist ever to sit in Congress, Victor L Berger of Milwaukee
- 1923 Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party stage "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich.
- 1932 - Amidst the Great Depression, Democrat candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected President of the United States, defeating Republican incumbent Herbert Hoover
- 1942 - Adolf Hitler proclaims fall of Stalingrad from Munich beer hall
- 1942 - Vichy-France drops diplomatic relations with US
- 1943 - France arrests government of Lebanon after they abolish the French mandate
- 1950 - A US aircraft shoots down a North Korean jet in the Korean War, the first jet-to-jet dogfight in history
- 1956 - UN demands USSR leave Hungary
- 1957 - Great Britain performs atmospheric nuclear test at Christmas Island
- 1960 - John F. Kennedy is elected President of the United States, defeating Republican candidate Richard Nixon who was the incumbent Vice President
- 1964 - IMF grants Great Britain credit of $1 billion
- 1965 - British Indian Ocean Territory formed
- 1965 - Vietnam War: US, Australian and New Zealand forces launch Operation Hump, a search-and-destroy operation near Bien Hoa in South Vietnam
- 1980 - Voyager 1 space probe discovers 15th moon of Saturn
- 1983 - STS-9 vehicle again moves to launch pad
- 1984 - STS 51-A mission launches
- 1987 - Australia beat England by 7 runs to win cricket World Cup
- 1988 - 900 die as earthquake hits China
- 1988 - Vice President George H. W. Bush is elected President of the United States, defeating Democrat candidate Michael Dukakis
- 1990 - Saddam fires his army chief & threatens to destroy Arabian peninsula
- 1990 - Unconfirmed rumors emerge that Bush might announce an airlift of supplies to US embassy in Kuwait, which could ultimately trigger a military clash
- 2002 - Iraq disarmament crisis: UN Security Council under Resolution 1441 unanimously approves a resolution on Iraq, forcing Saddam Hussein to disarm or face "serious consequences"
- 2004 - War in Iraq: More than 10,000 U.S. troops and a small number of Iraqi army units participate in a siege on the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah.
- 2008 - John Key leads the National Party to victory in New Zealand's general election, defeating nine year Prime Minister Helen Clark and her Labour-led coaliton government.
- 2014 - Mikhail Gorbachev warns that tensions between America and Russia over Ukraine have put the world on the brink of a new Cold War

Search For SKUAST-Kashmir VC Begins

LG constitutes selection panel, applications invited from eligible candidates

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The process for the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir (SKUAST-K) has begun, with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha constituting a selection committee to recommend a panel of suitable candidates for the post.

The selection committee has started its task by inviting applications from eligible candidates for the position.

According to a notification issued by the Agriculture Production Department, the Vice-Chancellor's post will be filled on a tenure basis for a period of up to three years or until the incumbent attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

Candidates applying for the post should not be more than 62 years of age as on the closing date for submission of applications.

As per the eligibility criteria, applicants must be eminent agricultural scientists or academicians with outstanding credentials and a Ph.D. in Agriculture, Veterinary Sciences, or a related discipline. They should have at least 10 years of experience as a Professor or in an equivalent position in a reputed academic institution. The candidates must also possess a minimum of three years' administrative experience as a Dean, Joint Director, Director, or in an equivalent position at a university or national institution.

GOVERNMENTOF(U.T)JAMMU&KASHMIR

Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.

Ground Water Division Srinagar
Baghi-Ali-Mardan,NowsharaSrinagar.
E-mail:- hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

Extension Notice 6th.

Subject: 1. Construction of 125 mm dia Machine Drilled hand Pump well near house of Nazir Ahmad Sheikh and others at Sheikhpora Tulail in district Bandipora.

Reference: This office e-NIT No. 53/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/6911-22, dated: 12-08-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_321465_1.

Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. The bid documents was scheduled to be submitted till 06-11-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM are extended as per the details given below: -

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	16-11-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM
2.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	17-11-2026 02:00 PM

NOTE:
All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

DIPK-7447/26
DATED: 07-11-2026

Sd/=
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

ZONAL IMPAIRED ASSET AND RECOVERY CENTRE
THE JAMMU & KASHMIR BANK LTD.
ZONAL OFFCE SRINAGAR, M.A ROAD SRINAGAR

REF/ZIARB/2026-2027- Date: 07.09.2026

Mr. Shakir Ali Kuchay (Borrower cum Mortgagor)
S/O. Mr. Ali Mohammad Kuchay
R/O. Mulfaq Burzuhama
Chesti Colony, Srinagar

Subject: Notice for Redemption of the property in terms of right vested with Borrower under Section 13(8) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("SARFAESI Act, 2002")

Dear Sir,

As you are aware that the Authorised officer of the Bank had issued a demand notice on 17.04.2025, under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 (hereinafter called the Act), against secured interest mentioned therein, which has been offered as security by you towards your loan facility/ies.

Subsequently, the Authorised Officer took possession of the secured assets in the nature of residential house along with land underneath and appurtenant thereto measuring 04 Marlas falling under Khasra No. 1924/373, Khata No.789, Khewat No.105 situated at Mouza Burzahama, Tehsil North, District Srinagar, Standing in the name of the borrower namely Mr. Shakir Ali Kuchay. on 21.08.2026 under Section 13(4) of Act.

Whereas you have failed to satisfy your liabilities to the Bank even after receipt of notice under Section 13(2) and 13(4) of the Act. Therefore, the Bank in exercise of its rights granted under the Act and Rules made thereunder, intends to initiate process of sale for recovery of the amount due.

You are hereby called upon to discharge in full your liabilities amounting to Rs.32,32,149.28 (Rupees Thirty Two Lacs Thirty Two Thousand One hundred Forty Nine and Twenty Eight Paisa) as on 31.07.2026 with interest, costs and other charges within 30 days from the date of this notice, failing which, the Bank shall proceed to realize the outstanding by sale of the mortgaged property.

May note that your right to redeem the mortgaged property shall extinguish on the date the Bank issues notice of sale as per Act and Rules made thereunder.

Sd/ Authorised Officer

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my name has been changed from MARYAM to ZIYA JAN.
Parentage: Father's Name: SHABIR AHMAD SHAH
Mother's Name: KHALIDA AKHTAR
Residential Address: Asar Colony, Hazratbal, Srinagar.
As per the school records, my previous name was Maryam, and my new and correct name is Ziya Jan.
If anybody has any objection regarding this name change, they are requested to contact New Presentation School, Gogji Bagh, Srinagar, within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice.
Contact No.: 9797194751 fko

Celebrating the Strongman

Why societies repeatedly reward physical power and unshakable self-belief, even when sound judgement is missing.



Syed Nissar H Gilani

There is a word in Kashmiri that can describe a whole character without needing a lengthy explanation: Mushtanda.

It brings to mind a tall, heavily built man, someone whose physical presence commands attention but whose understanding of the world appears rather limited.

His body seems to have received more attention than his mind. He speaks with certainty, acts without much thought and approaches difficult situations with the confidence of someone who believes that size and force can settle almost anything.

The expression belongs to a wider South Asian vocabulary, appearing in Urdu and Punjabi as well. Its continued use says something about a known human contradiction.

Societies praise intelligence, wisdom and foresight, but their public life often rewards people who possess the opposite qualities.

The Mushtanda, for all his limitations, frequently finds a way through life that leaves more thoughtful people wondering how he managed it.

His usefulness has historically been quite practical.

The comparison with a powerful bull pulling a heavy plough across difficult farmland captures the idea well. Such an animal has the strength for demanding physical work. Nobody expects it to understand the farmer's plans or decide which field should be cultivated. Its job is to pull.

Human societies have similarly found uses for men whose physical strength exceeds their intellectual abilities.

Traditional accounts from Punjab describe families hiring local wrestlers to settle disputes. These men spent their lives training in wrestling arenas, developing imposing physiques and formidable strength.

When disputes turned heated, their presence often pressured opponents into backing down. Their employers made the decisions, while the wrestlers used their muscle to enforce them.

There was an arrangement of convenience in this relationship.

A clever person could achieve through physical intimidation what negotiation or persuasion might take much longer to accomplish.

The Mushtanda became an instrument in somebody else's hands, often without understanding the larger calculations behind the assignment.

> **Perhaps the most revealing** feature of the Mushtanda is that he rarely sees himself through the eyes of others. He considers his own certainty sufficient proof of his ability. Those around him may see the limitations, but they can also see the advantages of having someone who acts without hesitation.

History and mythology have recorded several versions of this character.

Goliath, the giant warrior of biblical tradition, remains the classic example. His enormous size, heavy armour and reputation for strength made him appear invincible. David confronted him with a different kind of advantage. Rather than matching the giant physically, he relied on speed, judgement and strategy.

The encounter became an iconic story about the limits of brute force when confronted with intelligence.

Feudal courts also employed physically imposing guards and enforcers. Their presence could frighten opponents and protect powerful rulers, although their understanding of politics and strategy often remained limited.

The ruler made the calculations, and the strongman executed the instructions.

Such arrangements gave physical power a place in political life while leaving the intellectual work to others.

The more interesting question concerns the Mushtanda who rises beyond this supporting role and begins to command attention himself.

His confidence provides part of the explanation.

A thoughtful person sees several possibilities before making a decision. He considers the consequences, weighs competing arguments and recognises that his understanding may be incomplete.

Such caution can be useful, but it can also delay action.

The Mushtanda approaches the same situation with a much simpler calculation. He sees an immediate problem and acts. Doubt rarely interrupts his thinking because he seldom spends much time examining the possible consequences.

In unpredictable circumstances, this certainty can look like leadership. People watching from the sidelines may mistake a loud voice for conviction and an imposing physical presence for competence.

A person who speaks without hesitation can appear more capable than someone who takes time to examine the facts.

The difference between confidence and judgement becomes difficult to see, particularly when circumstances favour quick decisions.

This helps explain why the Mushtanda remains a recognisable figure in public life.

His success often has less to do with the quality of his thinking than with his ability to project certainty. While others debate, he moves. And while others consider the consequences, he acts. His apparent fearlessness attracts attention, and attention can easily become influence.

There is a bigger danger in this arrangement.

Physical force and aggression can settle an immediate dispute, frighten an opponent or impose a decision. They are far less useful when the problem involves competing interests, long-term consequences or a situation demanding patience and judgement.

A ruler who mistakes obedience for understanding may discover that the people executing his instructions have little idea of the consequences.

The Mushtanda is therefore more than a comic character in Kashmiri speech.

He represents a recurring tension between appearance and ability, confidence and competence, physical strength and intellectual judgement.

His presence in the language also suggests that people have long recognised the difference, even when society continues to reward the outward display of power.

Perhaps the most revealing feature of the Mushtanda is that he rarely sees himself through the eyes of others. He considers his own certainty sufficient proof of his ability. Those around him may see the limitations, but they can also see the advantages of having someone who acts without hesitation.

A society that confuses these qualities will keep finding room for him.

The stronger test of leadership, however, lies in knowing when to act, when to think and when physical force has reached the limits of its usefulness.

A large body can command a room, while a loud voice can silence an argument, but neither can substitute for a mind capable of understanding what comes next.

The author is a former civil servant from the administrative service. He can be reached at nisargilani57748@gmail.com.

Living Without Applause

Qazi Touqeer's return to television after years outside the entertainment spotlight raises a larger question about how we measure success, personal worth and the ability to enjoy life.



Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

We have grown used to judging people by their professional positions. A job title, salary, promotion or public recognition often becomes our measure of success.

We celebrate people when they rise, but when they fade from public view, our attention shifts elsewhere. Somewhere along the way, we have begun to confuse professional success with a person's worth.

The story of Kashmiri singer Qazi Touqeer challenges this way of looking at people.

His journey from winning a national television competition to returning to the spotlight through Bigg Boss shows how to find happiness in life even when things do not turn out as we had hoped.

In 2005, Qazi became a household name after winning Fame Gurukul, a popular television singing competition.

A young man from Kashmir, he captured the affection of millions with his singing, confidence, energy and entertaining personality. His victory opened the door to expectations of a successful career in the entertainment industry.

Many imagined that he would become a regular presence on television and build a lasting position in Indian popular culture.

His professional journey, however, took a different direction.

His television appearances became less frequent, and the visibility that followed his victory gradually faded. For someone who had experienced national recognition at such a young age, the years outside the spotlight could easily have become a source of disappointment.

But Qazi's public personality appears to have retained its cheerfulness, humour and enthusiasm.

His presence in the Bigg Boss house has brought him back into public discussion. He sings, jokes, participates in activities and interacts with fellow contestants. There is an ease in the way he approaches the experience. He seems as interested in enjoying his time inside the house as he is in entertaining viewers.

His story raises three important lessons about how we approach our own lives.

The first is that professional disappointment should never become a verdict on personal worth. Life rarely follows the plans we make for it. Opportunities disappear, careers take unexpected turns and years of effort sometimes produce results far removed from our ambitions.

A person who once occupied a prominent professional position may find himself starting again, while someone with modest achievements may discover happiness in family, friendships and everyday experiences.

Our society often makes this distinction difficult. We introduce ourselves through our professions, judge others by their occupations and attach social standing to income and recognition.

This line of thinking can become particularly restrictive in a place like Kashmir, where competition for government employment remains intense and professional designations often influence social standing.

A young person who fails to secure a government job may begin to see himself as unsuccessful. Someone whose business struggles may feel that years of effort have been wasted. Such thinking turns a professional setback into a personal burden.

Qazi's journey suggests another way of looking at life.

A career can fall short of expectations while the person behind it continues to find reasons to enjoy living.

His second lesson concerns human relationships. Public recognition is temporary. The people who applaud us today may turn their attention elsewhere tomorrow. Television programmes change, institutions move on and new personalities occupy the space once held by others. A person's social identity becomes vulnerable when it depends entirely on public attention.

Relationships provide a more lasting source of connection. Friendship, humour, kindness and the ability to make others comfortable build bonds that professional achievements alone cannot create.

Qazi's present appearance on television illustrates this through his interactions with fellow contestants. He sings, jokes and participates without appearing preoccupied with proving his superiority. His willingness to engage with others makes him an interesting presence in the house. His appeal lies partly in his ability to enjoy the company of people around him.

There is a lesson here for young people who spend years building professional identities while giving little attention to friendships and personal relationships. A designation may introduce you to someone, but the way you treat people often determines whether they remember you. Professional success can bring recognition. Human warmth gives relationships their lasting value.

The third lesson may be the most difficult to practise: happiness should not become a reward that we keep postponing.

We frequently tell ourselves that life will become enjoyable after the next achievement. A student waits for admission, a researcher for publication, an employee for promotion and an entrepreneur for profit. We imagine that a better financial position, a larger house or professional recognition will finally allow us to enjoy ourselves.

Meanwhile, the present becomes a waiting room for an imagined future.

Qazi's approach suggests a different relationship with ambition. He sings because he enjoys singing, entertains because he enjoys making people laugh and participates because he finds pleasure in the experience. His enthusiasm does not appear to depend entirely on the outcome.

Ambition remains important. People should pursue their dreams, work hard and seek professional excellence. But ambition loses its purpose when it consumes the very happiness that achievement is supposed to bring. We can work towards a better career while enjoying friendships, family life, music and ordinary pleasures along the way.

This is particularly relevant in Kashmir, where young people face intense competition for limited employment opportunities. Families invest years of savings in education, coaching and professional preparation. A young graduate may spend years preparing for examinations, while parents organise household finances around the hope of securing a government position for their children.

Such aspirations are understandable. But children also need to learn that a particular job is only one possible destination in life. An unsuccessful business does not make someone a failure as a human being. A career that takes an unexpected direction need not deprive a person of happiness.

Kashmir needs ambitious young people who pursue professional excellence. It also needs people who can accept setbacks without losing their interest in living, who maintain friendships beyond professional circles and who find pleasure in life before achieving their biggest ambitions.

Qazi Touqeer's greatest lesson may have little to do with winning a singing competition or returning to television. His journey reminds us that a person's life continues long after public recognition fades.

The applause may become distant, professional opportunities may take different directions, and public attention may move elsewhere. What remains is the person and his ability to enjoy the life he has.

Perhaps we should pay greater attention to that part of success.

A career tells us what someone has achieved professionally, but the way a person lives tells us something much larger.

The author is Assistant Professor Design Innovation Centre, IUST Awantipora, and can be reached at bhatashraf@gmail.com.

Beyond the Bullish India Story

The stock market's recent performance reveals why investors must look beyond economic projections, political developments and fashionable investment themes.



Irshad Mushtaq

A family's investment portfolio represents years of hard work, sacrifices and hopes for the future. When its value falls, the loss feels personal.

The economy may be growing, businesses may be doing well and the government may be talking about new opportunities, but families looking at their investment statements may see a different picture.

Indian investors are now dealing with several mixed signals. Foreign investors have pulled billions of dollars out of Indian stocks, although some have recently returned. Artificial intelligence is attracting huge interest around the world, while political changes in Washington are raising new hopes. Gold, too, is drawing investors who want to protect their money from uncertainty.

With so much happening, it is easy to mistake these developments for signs of when to buy or sell. But successful investing depends on understanding stock prices, company earnings and the risks involved, rather than simply believing that the economy is doing well.

Consider the Nifty 50 Total Return Index.

The official NSE Indices dashboard for October 2026 recorded a monthly gain of 1.95%, while its one-year return stood at minus 9.45%.

Over three years, it delivered annualised growth of 7.74%, and over five years, 6.70%. These figures include reinvested dividends.

The apparent contradiction disappears when the periods are examined separately. A market can recover during one month, remain negative over a year and still deliver positive longer-term returns.

The figures also cannot establish what happened over an exact two-year period without matching the beginning and ending dates.

An investor's experience depends on the purchase price, the particular shares or funds selected and the dividends received. Someone who entered the market at an expensive valuation may remain disappointed even while the broader economy expands.

Buying a business is rather like purchasing a shop. Its sales can grow, but an excessive purchase price can leave the owner with modest returns. Indian economic growth therefore provides a reason to examine businesses, rather than a guarantee that their shares are attractive.

Foreign investment flows tell another part of the story.

Reuters reported that overseas investors withdrew approximately $31 billion from Indian equities during 2026 by early November. Rupee depreciation and weak market performance contributed to their disappointing returns.

Currency movements can change the calculation substantially. An overseas investor measuring returns in US dollars may see a 5% gain in an Indian investment largely erased by a roughly 5% fall in the rupee against the dollar.

India also competes with other destinations for international capital. Some investors have favoured artificial intelligence and semiconductor opportunities in Taiwan and South Korea. Their decisions highlight comparisons involving expected growth, share prices and currency movements, rather than a single judgment about India's future.

Recent foreign buying has brought some relief. Better quarterly earnings, softer crude oil prices and expectations of capital-gains-tax relief have supported sentiment. Reuters reported provisional foreign net purchases of approximately 3,115 crore on November 2.

Such purchases provide evidence of improving interest, although several positive sessions cannot establish a lasting recovery. Investors should watch corporate earnings and sustained capital flows rather than treat one day's exchange figures as proof of a new direction.

The sector figures also reveal how uneven the market has been.

Telecommunications delivered a one-year total return of 28.81% by October 2026, followed by pharmaceuticals at 23.05%, MidSmall Healthcare at 18.18%, healthcare at 12.50% and metals at 12.38%. Media returned 6.63%, while public-sector banks gained 1.36%.

Information technology presents a different picture. Its index rose 18.06% during October but remained down 7.13% over one year. Metals gained over the year despite falling 7.51% during October.

Such differences show why a sector's recent performance cannot establish the quality or valuation of an individual company.

Tax expectations create another confusion. Long-Term Capital Gains, or LTCG, generally attract 12.5% tax on eligible aggregate annual gains exceeding 1.25 lakh when listed shares or equity-oriented mutual funds are held for more than 12 months. Eligible short-term gains on holdings of 12 months or less generally attract 20% tax. Applicable surcharge and cess can add to the liability.

These taxes apply to realised profits, rather than the full sale amount. SEBI has proposed limited tax relief for some foreign investors and domestic mutual fund switches, but this does not mean equity LTCG tax has been abolished. Tax concessions on eligible government securities are separate.

Political developments in the United States have created further speculation.

Democrats won control of both the House of Representatives and Senate in the November midterm elections. Donald Trump remains president, and the new Congress begins in January 2027. Congressional opposition may influence legislation and oversight, although the president retains powers including the veto.

Indian investors should watch the consequences for tariffs, trade policy, American business spending, the dollar, bond yields and international capital flows. Election results alone provide little basis for predicting the Nifty's direction.

Artificial intelligence presents a similar contrasting case between promise and profit.

India's IndiaAI Mission has an approved five-year allocation of 10,371.92 crore. A government update on October 29 reported more than 45,000 GPUs onboarded for shared computing access. This indicates substantial public support for computing infrastructure, although onboarded capacity does not mean the government owns every processor.

The commercial beneficiaries remain an open question. Companies must convert technology into paying customers, sustainable earnings and reasonable returns on investment. Indian IT businesses face opportunities in implementation and productivity, alongside pressure from automation on routine services and pricing. The Nifty IT index's contrasting monthly and annual performance captures that uncertainty.

Gold presents another investment calculation. Lower bond yields, a weaker dollar and demand for protection can support its price. Softer oil and improving corporate earnings can support equities at the same time. Indian gold returns also depend on currency movements and product expenses.

Investors should therefore judge gold as part of a wider portfolio, rather than assume that political uncertainty or enthusiasm for AI predicts its direction.

The real test is how a portfolio performs for the family investing in it.

A portfolio that grows from 1 crore to 1.40 crore tells only part of the story. The investment period and any money added or withdrawn also matter. CAGR measures annual growth on a lump-sum investment, while XIRR accounts for money invested or withdrawn on different dates, making it useful for SIPs.

Dividends, fees, taxes, inflation and risk also affect the final return. Money needed soon should be treated differently from savings meant for long-term growth.

Families do not need to predict Washington's next move, pick the next big AI company or track foreign investors' every move. They need to know where their money is invested, when they will need it and how much loss they can afford.

Markets will always be unpredictable. Family savings should not depend on guessing what happens next.

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The author is a Srinagar-based financial educator, and can be reached at drm757@gmail.com.

The Other Side of Kashmir's Borderlands

A journey through Jumagund's mountain settlements reveals the people, landscapes and everyday realities behind the geography of the LoC.







Ali Sajid and Farah Zaidi

We left Srinagar at seven on a cold autumn morning, heading towards Kupwara.

The mountains were beginning to take on their late autumn colours, and there was a sense of anticipation about the journey ahead.

Our destination was Jumagund, a remote cluster of settlements in the upper reaches of Kupwara, along the Line of Control (LoC).

Jumagund is hardly a conventional tourist destination. Access is regulated, and our visit had been arranged with prior permission and coordination with the Army.

We wanted to see a part of Kashmir that remains largely outside regular travel itineraries and, more importantly, meet the people who have made their homes in this difficult mountain landscape.

After about two and a half hours, we reached Zirhama, a village at the foothills of Puta Khan Gali. The road began climbing through narrow bends and increasingly rugged terrain.

Traffic was sparse. We passed only a few vehicles, including a passenger transport vehicle and a construction truck.

By around 11:30 am, we reached Puta Khan Gali, where the Army personnel welcomed us with traditional Kashmiri kehwa and pakodas.

After a brief stop, we continued towards Jumagund, taking the road that descended from the mountain pass.

The drive that followed was among the most beautiful we have experienced in this part of Kashmir.

Mountain slopes were covered in patches of crimson and golden foliage, set against the deep green of evergreen pine forests. Some trees had already shed their leaves, while others still held their autumn colours. The narrow road followed the mountain contours, passing through forests and open slopes.

We stopped frequently to take photographs and enjoy the scenery.

At one point, we found ourselves beside a clear stream flowing through a narrow valley surrounded by tall trees. We unfolded our camping chairs, warmed our packed lunch and ate beside the water.

There were few signs of human activity. The sound of flowing water, rustling leaves and occasional birdsong made the place feel far removed from the bustle of city life.

As we continued downhill, the valley opened up.

A river flowed along its floor, while the road followed its course along the mountainside. We noticed workers engaged in forestry-related activities, and soon the first houses appeared.

These were old wooden structures, tucked against the mountain slopes and seemingly built around the demands of their surroundings.

The houses gave the landscape an old-world character, although there were signs of modern connectivity. Mobile networks worked intermittently, and electricity infrastructure was visible along the route.

We eventually reached Chanjwali and discovered that Jumagund was not a single village but a collection of eight small villages and hamlets, each with its own settlement and community.

Our destination was Attad, where we were expected to stay with a local resident, Mushtaq.

After asking a few children and other residents for directions, we continued towards his hamlet.

The road changed considerably after Chanjwali. The paved stretch gave way to narrow, unpaved tracks with steep gradients, sharp bends and uneven surfaces. We engaged the 4X4 system of our Scorpio-N and proceeded carefully. Along the way, we passed Goolnera, Doga and Kuchiban before reaching Attad.

It was around four in the afternoon when we arrived.

Mushtaq was waiting for us and walked towards the vehicle to welcome us. After parking, we collected our essentials and walked the short distance to his house.

Attad was a tiny settlement with barely seven or eight houses. Mushtaq's home was a modest wooden structure overlooking the valley, with views extending towards the LoC landscape.

Our room was clean and warm. Tea and freshly prepared rotis were served soon after we settled in.

After resting for a while, we stepped outside to explore the hamlet. Children were playing with whatever they could find, including simple wooden sticks. Chickens wandered around the houses, goats and sheep moved along the slopes, and horses grazed nearby. Birds could be heard in the surrounding trees.

There was something refreshing about these countryside scenes. Life seemed closely connected to the land, animals and changing seasons. The children had their games, households had their routines, and the surrounding mountains provided the setting for daily life.

Mushtaq helped us understand the geography of the area and its proximity to the LoC.

Living in such a location gives residents a different relationship with the border. It is not simply a line discussed in news reports or marked on maps. It is part of the landscape surrounding their homes.

The Army, too, is an integral presence in these settlements, and our visit gave us an opportunity to understand another dimension of life in the region.

As daylight faded, we returned to Mushtaq's house. His family was preparing dinner in the kitchen, where a traditional chullah burned. The fireplace provided warmth and served as the centre of household activity.

We were first served locally prepared saag, rotis and Kashmiri nun chai. Before long, another villager joined us, and conversations began. There was no formal gathering or elaborate hospitality ritual. People simply came together, shared stories and made room for their guests.

Dinner was served beside the burning chullah. Rice, potatoes, rajma, Kashmiri saag and chicken made up the meal, prepared with locally sourced ingredients. The family lived in the same house, and its simple arrangements gave a glimpse of domestic life in a remote mountain settlement.

There were no conventional beds. Our bedding had been spread on the floor, and the toilet was outside the house. The arrangements were basic, but the room was warm and the bedding comfortable.

We had come expecting a remote mountain experience, but the ease with which the family welcomed us made the evening particularly memorable.

Night brought another side of Jumagund into view.

At intervals, sharp reports echoed through the valley. Mushtaq told us that these were sounds of gunfire. They continued through the night, interrupting the stillness of the surroundings. We found the sounds unsettling, although residents were accustomed to living with the realities of a border region.

The following morning, we noticed a mark on the exterior wooden wall of the house.

When we asked Mushtaq about it, he explained that it had been left by a splinter during Operation Sindoor.

It was a small mark on an otherwise ordinary wooden wall, but it gave us a direct understanding of how close the consequences of conflict could come to a family's home.

Our exchanges also turned to the changing mountain seasons. Residents recalled that November had once been a time when snowfall could already be expected.

During winter, snow accumulation could reach several feet, sometimes as much as ten to twelve feet, according to local recollections.

Our visit, however, coincided with relatively mild weather.

A single visit cannot establish a climatic trend, but the memories of people who have lived in these mountains for generations share an important perspective on changing seasonal conditions. Their recollections of earlier winters provide a useful account of how the mountain environment has changed in their experience.

The next morning began with the sounds of the household coming to life.

Our room was directly above the kitchen, and we could hear wood being split and prepared for the chullah. We later learnt that one of the family's daughters was arranging the firewood.

The household had a simple but practical arrangement for hot water. A metal tank placed above the kitchen chullah was heated by the fire below. Breakfast consisted of tea, freshly prepared rotis and boiled eggs.

After breakfast, we spent more time talking to residents, taking photographs and observing the morning routines. When it was time to leave, Mushtaq decided to accompany us for part of the return journey.

Our expedition was not quite over. We had also been invited for lunch by an Army officer serving in the region. We retraced our route and continued towards the location where the officers were stationed.

The drive offered another opportunity to enjoy the narrow mountain roads, steep gradients and sweeping views.

The weather had changed considerably. Clouds had gathered over the mountains, and as we reached our destination, the first snow flurries of the season began falling.

It was our first encounter with snowfall that autumn.

The officers welcomed us warmly, and we spent time exchanging experiences over a generous lunch. The interaction gave us another perspective on the responsibilities and experiences of people serving in these remote mountain areas.

When we began our return journey, light snow was still falling. Mushtaq accompanied us for part of the way before we said our goodbyes and continued towards Zirhama.

What remained with us after leaving Jumagund was the contrast between its reputation as a border region and the ordinary lives unfolding within its eight settlements.

The gunfire at night and the splinter mark on Mushtaq's house showed us what it means to live so close to the LoC.

At the same time, the family gathering around the chullah, children playing outside, animals grazing on the slopes and villagers sharing meals gave us a glimpse of the simple, everyday life that continues here.

Jumagund is usually seen through the geography of the border. Spending time there brought its homes and people into view.

Behind the maps and military positions are families preparing for long winters, children growing up in mountain hamlets and people going about their daily lives in a landscape few outsiders get to experience.

We had set out to explore a remote corner of Kupwara. We returned with memories of autumn forests, difficult mountain roads, a warm wooden home, shared meals, conversations around a chullah and the first snowfall of the season.

The landscape was beautiful, but the people we met gave the journey its meaning.

— The authors are co-founders of Kashmir Off Road, a family-led Himalayan exploration and storytelling platform.









Experts' warning against Diwali binge, pollution

'Eat Sweets in Moderation, Avoid Outdoors'

Press Trust Of India



New Delhi: Doctors have advised people to be moderate when consuming sweets and take precautions against rising air pollution, warning that exposure to polluted air can pose serious health risks, particularly to children and people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Cardiothoracic surgeon and actor Madhuri Dixit's husband, Dr Shriram Nene, said people need not feel guilty about indulging occasionally during festivals but should remain mindful of the consequences.

He said people could enjoy sweets once in a while but should avoid them in excess.

Former AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria advised people with comorbidities to avoid outdoor activities in the morning and late evening, when ground-level pollution tends to rise during winter.

Mumbai-based ENT surgeon Dr Varun Dave said breathing air with an AQI of around 250 is equivalent to smoking 10 to 15 cigarettes a day.

Air with a high AQI contains higher concentrations of smoke, dust and carbon particles, and these pollutants enter the body through the nose and sinuses before travelling through the trachea to the lungs, potentially harming the respiratory system, he said.

Pulmonologist at Medanta Lucknow, Dr Abhishek Tandon, advised people to minimise exposure to polluted air by staying indoors, keeping doors and windows closed and using good-quality air purifiers, particularly in bedrooms.

Wear a good-quality N95 mask while stepping outdoors, he recommended.

Internal medicine expert Dr Ruchita Sharma said air pollution contains extremely fine particles that are invisible to the naked eye but can penetrate deep into the body's tissues.

She said these particles could increase oxidative stress and inflammation, aggravate asthma and raise the risk of cardiovascular conditions, including heart attacks.

Senior consultant paediatrician Dr Ravi Malik warned that children were particularly vulnerable to air pollution as their respiratory systems were still developing and their airways were highly sensitive.

Exposure to polluted air can cause eye irritation, skin allergies and respiratory illnesses, besides triggering asthma attacks, bronchitis and allergic rhinitis, he said.

Dr Malik advised parents to keep children indoors when pollution levels are high and avoid exposing them to firecracker smoke.

Wangchuk Seeks President's Help

Alleges smear campaign by Ladakh administration

Press Trust Of India



Leh: Climate activist and educationist Sonam Wangchuk on Saturday appealed to President Droupadi Murmu for urgent intervention in Ladakh, alleging that the Lieutenant Governor-led administration was orchestrating a targeted smear and defamation campaign against him and other critics in the Union Territory.

The appeal comes amid a series of administrative actions involving institutions associated with Wangchuk, including the cancellation of the land lease of the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh (HIAL), in August 2025.

The Ladakh administration had cancelled the lease, citing failure to execute the lease deed and pay the required premium within the stipulated period, as well as alleged non-compliance with the land's intended use.

The administration has also directed HIAL to refrain from undertaking further activities related to the functioning of its Desert Flower School.

Separately, the labour court in Leh on Saturday reserved its order in a case involving allegations of non-payment of statutory maternity benefits and unfair treatment of a former HIAL employee.

Wangchuk and his wife, Gitanjali J Angmo, HIAL's co-founder and CEO, have attributed the delay in finalising the land deal to bureaucratic hurdles. They have alleged that the cancellation was part of a politically motivated witch-hunt linked to the campaign for Sixth Schedule safeguards and statehood for Ladakh.

In a video message posted on X, Wangchuk released excerpts of what he described as a "sting operation" conducted by his lawyers, alleging that a creative agency associated with two social media pages was involved in efforts to target him and promote the work of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

Wangchuk said two Facebook and Instagram pages, 'Ladakh Lens' and 'Ladakh Vision', surfaced on October 14, a day after Saxena made remarks about him at the India Today Conclave in Mumbai on October 13.

He alleged that both pages were created by the same creative agency and that their similar appearance and timing prompted his lawyers to investigate the agency.

The video features excerpts of a conversation between the lawyers and the agency's alleged owner, who speaks of possible links with the LG's team, offers to facilitate contacts in Ladakh and refers to a Pune-based company handling the work.

Wangchuk alleged that the conversation pointed to the involvement of the LG administration in orchestrating online campaigns against its critics.

He further claimed that national resources were being used for activities aimed at discrediting Ladakhi leaders.

In his appeal to the President, Wangchuk raised broader concerns over governance in Ladakh, alleging restrictions on democratic rights and freedom of expression under the LG administration.

He claimed that even social media comments and likes had led to FIRs and arrests.

Questioning several administrative policies, he alleged that the land, industrial, power and tourism policies favoured corporate interests at the expense of local communities.

He also criticised the liquor policy, claiming that the administration was facilitating the establishment of liquor outlets in villages by reducing the number of mandatory No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from 16 to six.

Wangchuk further alleged that institutions associated with him were facing administrative harassment.

He said he had initially shared the sting-operation material with a senior official in the Union Home Ministry, seeking intervention, but communication stopped after a few exchanges.

Wangchuk said he had been reluctant to make the material public out of concern that it could affect the country's dignity and morale.

CONTD. FROM **FRONT PAGE**

Private Varsities

in the region.

He said the simplified approval mechanism, which includes a provision for preliminary scrutiny within 30 days, would facilitate a more efficient and transparent process for institutions seeking to invest in the higher education sector.

At the same time, the framework provides for effective regulatory oversight to ensure accountability, quality assurance and adherence to prescribed academic standards, the Chief Minister said.

Emphasising the importance of safeguarding local interests, Abdullah said the provision for a minimum 25 per cent reservation for J&K domiciles in student admissions, as well as teaching and non-teaching positions, would ensure that the benefits of institutional expansion translate into meaningful educational and employment opportunities for local youth.

He said the Rules also envisage a dedicated regulatory mechanism to monitor admissions, fee structures and academic standards, backed by stringent penalties for violations.

These include irregularities in admissions, excess fee collection, issuance of invalid degrees, deficiencies in faculty strength and qualifications, and inadequate infrastructure.

The Chief Minister said the new framework would open avenues for establishing institutions across a wide range of disciplines, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Medicine, Law, Business Studies and Liberal Arts.

He observed that this would broaden academic choices for students, promote interdisciplinary learning and create greater opportunities for teaching, research and innovation within Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah expressed confidence that the entry of reputed institutions would enable local students to access quality, globally benchmarked education closer to home while attracting leading academics, researchers and scholars.

He said the initiative would also encourage research collaborations and institutional partnerships with universities and organisations from across the country and abroad.

Reiterating the government's commitment to creating a transparent, predictable and investor-friendly environment, Abdullah said the framework would encourage responsible private investment while protecting students' interests and maintaining the highest standards of academic quality.

He also acknowledged the contribution of Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo, who held the Education portfolio at the time the Jammu and Kashmir Private Universities Bill was passed during the Budget Session of the J&K Legislative Assembly earlier this year.

The Chief Minister appreciated her role in advancing the legislative process and said the notification of the Rules marked an important step towards translating the legislative initiative into an effective institutional framework for the growth and modernisation of higher education in Jammu and Kashmir.

HC Rejects Bail

him in the alleged offences.

Opposing the plea, the prosecution maintained that Wani was involved in financing and facilitating the trafficking of commercial quantities of heroin and that his release could enable him to indulge in similar activities.

Examining the chargesheet, the Court observed that Rs 5,000 had been transferred from Wani's bank account to the account of co-accused Gairat Ali, from where the amount was subsequently transferred to the principal accused, Sajad Ahmad Badana.

The prosecution relied upon this financial transaction as one of the circumstances connecting Wani with the alleged narcotics trafficking network.

The court observed that the prosecution case was not confined to physical possession of contraband but also alleged Wani's involvement in financing narcotics trafficking and association with co-accused in furtherance of a criminal conspiracy.

"The absence of recovery from the petitioner, therefore, is a circumstance which may be examined during trial but does not, at this stage, conclusively displace the allegations founded upon the other material collected by the investigating agency," the court observed.

Where an offence involves commercial quantities of narcotic substances, the court said, the twin conditions prescribed under Section 37 of the NDPS Act must be satisfied before an accused can be enlarged on bail.

It observed that the court must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is not guilty of the alleged offence and that he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail.

Finding that the material on record did not enable it to arrive at the requisite satisfaction regarding the petitioner's innocence, the court held that the first condition under Section 37 of the NDPS Act had not been fulfilled.

On the argument of prolonged incarceration, the court observed that although the period of custody and progress of trial were relevant considerations, they could not, in the circumstances of the case, override the statutory restrictions governing bail in offences involving commercial quantities of narcotic substances.

"Prolonged incarceration and delay in conclusion of trial may, in an appropriate case, furnish an independent ground for consideration of bail," the court observed, while dismissing the plea.

Rs 1 Lakh Deposit,

proposed licence fee of Rs 2,000 and the demand for advance payments, questioning why dealers were being asked to pay before procuring the required machines and other equipment.

On face authentication, they sought continuation of fingerprint and OTP-based verification options alongside face recognition to ensure elderly and ailing beneficiaries do not face difficulties in collecting ration.

The concerns come amid the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department's push for Aadhaar-based e-KYC and face authentication in ration distribution. During a review meeting on November 5, Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA Sourabh Bhagat directed officials to intensify efforts to complete the e-KYC of pending beneficiaries and introduce the Face Authentication Application from the current month's ration distribution cycle.

A top official of the department said that the upgradation of machinery was part of a routine process and there was no need for worry.

He said the new e-KYC machines would have all verification options, including OTP and face recognition, adding that the move was part of efforts to ensure transparency. "Everything is transparent these days and there is no need for any sort of panic," he said. (KNO)

Kashmir's Cluster

precision raised no objection to fee revisions for future admissions. Their objection focused on the application of a revision framed expressly for first- and second-semester admissions to students who had already completed two semesters under the 2025 structure.

The representation requested three clear steps: confirmation that the 2026 notification did not apply to their batch, written authority and reasons for the demand, and interim protection against any adverse academic action while the issue remained open.

That afternoon at 3:34 p.m., Sarfaraz Mir sent the representation by email from sfmir000@gmail.com to vc@cusrinagar.edu.in. He copied the registrar, controller, dean of academic affairs, admissions office and other senior officials.

The message attached the full document and summarized the core request concerning the enhancement from 13,550 to 18,435.

Ten days later the students issued a second letter. They noted the passage of time and the absence of any acknowledgement or diary number.

Meanwhile, Semester III had begun. Registration forms, examination processes and attendance records remained unsettled.

Students described the practical effects in direct language. Many found concentration difficult during classes, assignments and practical sessions. The financial pressure and the open questions about academic records produced stress that pulled attention away from coursework.

The letter asked for a written acknowledgement of Dispatch No. 530, a reply within five working days, assurance that registration, admit cards, attendance and results would continue without interruption, clarity on interim fee handling, an early decision, and a short hearing for five student representatives.

Authorised contacts listed on the letter included Sarfaraz Mukhtar Mir, Siyaan, Anees Ahmad Lone and Ganga Maya.

Students also prepared a grievance for the JK Samadhan portal. The document restated the facts and asked the government authority to direct the university to examine the representation, clarify the legal basis for applying a first-and-second-semester revision to an already-enrolled batch, hold the disputed amount in abeyance, and protect students from academic consequences while the grievance remained under review.

Parallel to this, they drafted a detailed Right to Information application under Section 6(1) of the RTI Act. The application sought the complete file on Notification No. 09-CUS of 2026 and the accompanying notice, including original proposals, noting sheets with names and dates, drafts, correspondence and the statutory authority behind the decision.

The episode unfolds against a recent Supreme Court ruling on professional education fees.

The Court examined self-financing higher education institutions and upheld the principle that fees fixed at the start of a course remain binding through the programme.

The judgment balanced the need of institutions for adequate resources against the need of students for certainty about costs. It required fee-fixation processes to follow clear institutional procedures.

University administrators have given limited public response. One senior official spoke in a low voice when asked about the demand. "It's a routine kind of a matter," the official said, then declined further comment. Other officers declined to discuss the revision, the representation or the pending demand.

The students continue attending classes while the financial question remains open.

They state their readiness to meet legitimate dues under the applicable rules. Their formal letters, email trail, grievance draft and RTI request remain on the record.

The central request stays simple: a clear written decision that allows them to return full attention to their studies.

The outcome will determine whether a fee fixed at admission holds steady through the course or shifts after students have already invested two semesters of time and money.

J&K NHM Employees

30, 2026, will receive the benefit from October 1, 2026.

Employees completing one year of service after September 30, 2026, will be entitled to the increment with effect from April 1, 2027.

The order directs the concerned Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) and Controlling Officers to extend the benefit after verifying the qualifying service of employees and their satisfactory performance in accordance with NHM guidelines.

Meanwhile, Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo said the government had fulfilled its commitment by sanctioning the annual increment for NHM employees.

In a post on X, Itoo said the decision recognised the dedication and contribution of NHM employees towards strengthening healthcare delivery in Jammu and Kashmir.

She reiterated that the government remained committed to the welfare of healthcare workers and strengthening the healthcare system under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Routine Increment, Not Special Concession: NHM Employees

The announcement has, however, drawn a lukewarm response from NHM employees' representatives, who have termed the increment a routine annual exercise rather than any special concession, reiterating their demand for salary enhancement, job security and other service-related benefits.

JKNHMEAK Chief Spokesperson Abdul Rauoof rejected the government's claims of fulfilling its commitments towards NHM employees, saying the 5 percent increment was part of the routine annual budgetary framework and should not be projected as a special achievement.

He said the annual increment was already incorporated into the NHM budgetary framework approved by the Government of India and did not address the broader concerns of employees who have been demanding better service conditions for years.

"NHM employees are still waiting for meaningful decisions on salary enhancement, equal pay for equal work, job security, social security and retirement benefits. A routine annual increment cannot be considered a substitute for these long-pending demands," he said.

Rauoof particularly appealed to Health and Medical Education Minister Sakeena Itoo to recall the meeting held on September 18, 2026, in her Civil Secretariat chamber in Srinagar with representatives of the JKNHMEA Joint Coordination Committee, during which several employee-related issues were discussed and assurances were reportedly extended.

He said employees were expecting concrete decisions following the meeting but were disappointed over the continued delay in addressing their grievances.

"Government must honour the commitments made during that meeting instead of expecting NHM employees to remain silent indefinitely. The continued delay, despite repeated assurances, is pushing employees towards the streets once again. We do not want confrontation, but the patience of NHM employees is not unlimited," he said.

The JKNHMEAK spokesperson urged the government and the Health and Medical Education Department to take concrete steps towards resolving the employees' demands, warning that continued inaction could leave them with no option but to resume democratic and peaceful protests to secure their legitimate rights.

He maintained that NHM employees, who have been contributing to the healthcare delivery system across Jammu and Kashmir, deserve a comprehensive policy addressing their financial and service-related concerns rather than periodic assurances.

PM Modi To Celebrate

will celebrate the festival.

Earlier, in a message posted on the government's 'Jan Sampark Portal', Modi said the festival celebrates the eternal victory of light over darkness, goodness over evil and hope over despair.

He hoped that this festive season inspires everyone to spread kindness, embrace positivity and work towards a brighter future.

"Dear fellow citizen, warm greetings on the auspicious occasion of Diwali! This festival celebrates the eternal victory of light over darkness, goodness over evil and hope over despair," he said

The prime minister said Diwali is also an occasion to cherish India's rich traditions and strengthen the bonds of togetherness.

"May Diwali illuminate every home with happiness, harmony and prosperity. May this festive season inspire us to spread kindness, embrace positivity and work towards a brighter future," he said.

Modi urged everyone to move forward with renewed energy and determination to build a prosperous and 'Viksit Bharat'.

"Once again, wishing you a Happy Diwali," he said.

J&K Bank Recruitment

must be between 20 and 30 years of age as on January 1, 2026, with age relaxations applicable to eligible reserved categories.

The age criterion has drawn criticism from political leaders and aspirants, who argue that the upper age limit should be aligned with the recruitment norms followed by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB), which permits candidates up to 40 years of age.

PDP MLA from Pulwama Waheed Ur Rehman Parra questioned the decision to fix the upper age limit at 30 years, saying thousands of aspirants who have been waiting for recruitment opportunities for years could be excluded.

He pointed out that JKSSB allows candidates up to 40 years of age and sought an explanation for the lower age ceiling prescribed by the bank.

CPI(M) leader and MLA Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami also urged the bank to reconsider the age criteria in view of rising unemployment, calling for its alignment with JKSSB recruitment norms.

PDP MLA from Budgam Muntazir Mehdi similarly demanded that the upper age limit be increased to 40 years, saying the existing criterion could deprive several deserving candidates of an opportunity to compete.

Several aspirants have also raised concerns over the age restriction, particularly in view of the prolonged gap since the previous recruitment drive.

"Please provide age relaxation. The examination is being conducted after almost six years. Even the age limit for PO posts in the previous recruitment was 32 years, which has now been reduced to 30," an aspirant said.

The recruitment has also drawn attention to the reservation matrix, under which 60 per cent of the advertised vacancies have been earmarked for reserved categories and 40 per cent for the open category.

The distribution includes 20 per cent reservation for Scheduled Tribes, 10 per cent each for residents of backward areas and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), 8 per cent each for Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes, and 4 per cent for residents of areas adjoining the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border.

The selection process for Probationary Officers will comprise preliminary and mains examinations, followed by an interview. Banking Associate candidates will be selected through an online examination.

The examination schedule is yet to be announced. Aspirants maintain that the age restriction, particularly after a prolonged gap in recruitment, could deny many qualified candidates an opportunity to compete for the advertised positions.

AIIMS Awantipora To Start OPD Services This Month: Minister Sakina

Says Union Health Minister has directed officials to expedite operationalisation; MBBS seats increased from 50 to 100, seeks advanced cancer diagnostic facilities

Agencies



KULGAM: Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Saturday said that Outpatient Department (OPD) services at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Awantipora, are expected to commence during the ongoing month.

Taking to reporters on the sidelines of inauguration of developmental projects at Gudder here in South Kashmir', Itoo, according to KNO, said that the OPD facility getting operational at AIIMS would provide much-needed respite to the people. "It would be an important step towards ensuring access to advanced healthcare facilities closer to people's homes, reducing their dependence on hospitals outside the Union Territory."

She said Union Health Minister J P Nadda, who visited AIIMS Awantipora earlier this week to review the progress of the institute, had issued necessary directions to the concerned authorities for expediting the process and starting OPD services at the earliest.

The Health Minister further said she had raised the issue of increasing MBBS seats at AIIMS Awantipora from the existing 50 to 100 with the Union Health Minister, adding that the demand stands accepted.

Itoo said the increase in MBBS seats would create additional opportunities for aspiring medical students from Jammu and Kashmir while also strengthening the region's medical education infrastructure.

She added that she had also urged the Union Health Minister to ensure the availability of advanced medical machinery, modern diagnostic equipment and adequate infrastructure at the institute so that patients could receive specialised treatment without being compelled to travel to other states.

CANCER CASES INCREASING AT ALARMING RATE

Highlighting the growing burden of cancer in Jammu and Kashmir, Itoo said she had specifically requested the installation of advanced cancer diagnostic equipment at AIIMS Awantipora to facilitate early detection and timely treatment.

"Cancer cases are increasing at an alarming rate in Jammu and Kashmir. I have requested the Union Health Minister to ensure that advanced machinery and diagnostic facilities, particularly for cancer detection, are made available at AIIMS Awantipora. Early diagnosis is crucial, as it can help patients receive timely treatment and improve their chances of recovery," she said.

She said the availability of modern diagnostic and treatment facilities at the institute would help strengthen the healthcare system in Jammu and Kashmir and provide significant relief to patients, particularly those from economically weaker sections who often face difficulties travelling outside the Union Territory for specialised medical care.

Pertinently, AIIMS Awantipora is among the major centrally sponsored healthcare projects in Jammu and Kashmir and is expected to emerge as a major centre for tertiary healthcare, medical education and research in the region. The institute's early operationalisation has remained a longstanding demand of residents, who have been awaiting the commencement of services after several deadlines were missed—(KNO)

Parents Seek Change In School Timings

Agencies



SRINAGAR: Amid freezing morning temperatures, parents of school children of winter zones of Kashmir division on Saturday demand for a change in school timings.

KNO received calls from several parents of school children—urging School Education Department to revise the timing in educational institutes of the region from 10 am to 3 Pm in Srinagar and 10:30Am to 3:30 outside the Srinagar Municipality Limits.

One of the parents, Nasreena Jan said, "My two kids are primary-level students, and for more than a week now, they have been constantly telling me that they shiver in the cold when they leave for school."

She said, "There is a dire need for a change in school timing for the students. The winter has already arrived and the government must take a call on revising the school timing."

Another parent, Showkat Ahmad Dar narrated the same ordeal. He said, "As the new academic session started this week, the School Education Department must revise its current school timing in both the Srinagar and peripheries of Kashmir region."

Dar said, "Nothing is more important than the health and wellbeing of our kids. If the government does not change the school timing, I would prefer to keep my kids at home rather than risking their health."

The parents urged the government to revise the school timing. "In view of the cold temperatures in the morning, the government must change the school timing from 10 am to 3 Pm in Srinagar and 10:30 Am to 3:30 outside the Srinagar Municipality Limits. The School Education Department must prioritize the health and wellbeing of the students."

Pertinently, the government in mid-October had ordered a change in school timing for all government and private schools from October-15 asking schools falling in the Srinagar municipal limits to function from 10am to 3:30 Pm and 10: 30 am to 4 pm to the school falling outside the Srinagar municipal limits—(KNO)

Jammu Ring Road Works Reviewed, Div Com Stresses Timely Completion

Observer News Service



JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Vikas Kundal conducted an extensive inspection of the ongoing works under the Jammu Ring Road Project to review the pace of construction of tunnels and other infrastructure components.

The Divisional Commissioner was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Minga Sherpa, Project Director NHAI Rajiv Kumar, members of the NHAI team, ACR Jammu and other concerned officers.

During the inspection, the Divisional Commissioner visited Tunnel-1 and Tunnel-2 connecting Kheri to Jagti and took on-site feedback regarding the pace of construction, execution-related challenges and other issues affecting the smooth progress of the project.

The Project Director NHAI apprised the Divisional Commissioner of the challenges being faced during the construction of Tunnel-1, particularly loose soil conditions, which have been affecting the pace of work.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Project Director NHAI and executing agencies to expedite the pace of construction across all ongoing components and ensure close coordination among the concerned agencies for timely completion of the project. He also stressed the need to address the site-specific challenges through appropriate measures and maintain close monitoring of the ongoing works.

Later, the Divisional Commissioner also inspected Balicharan Road towards Satwari and reviewed the condition and related infrastructure aspects.

IAF's IL-76MD Creates Record With Landing at 13,629 Feet in Ladakh

Observer News Service



LADAKH: The Indian Air Force (IAF) achieved a major aviation milestone on Saturday when its IL-76MD transport aircraft successfully landed at Nyoma air base in Ladakh at an altitude of 13,629 feet, setting a world record for the highest-altitude landing by the aircraft.

Located around 25 kilometres from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, the Nyoma Advanced Landing Ground holds strategic importance for the deployment of troops, equipment and essential supplies along the border.

In a post on X, the IAF said the successful landing marked a new milestone in aviation history and demonstrated the aircraft's capabilities as well as the exceptional skills and professionalism of its crew. "13,629 feet. A new height in aviation history. An Indian Air Force IL-76MD has scripted history with a successful landing at Nyoma, marking the highest-altitude landing ever achieved by the aircraft anywhere in the world," the IAF said.

The IAF also lauded the crew for executing the challenging landing with precision and professionalism.

It may be recalled that the Nyoma air base became fully operational in November last year. Its three-kilometre-long runway was developed to facilitate rapid mobilisation of defence forces and strengthen India's strategic capabilities along the northern frontier.

The project, sanctioned in 2021 at an estimated cost of Rs 214 crore, was designed to support emergency operations and the movement of heavy aircraft in extreme high-altitude conditions.

Kashmir Markets Wear Festive Look On Diwali

Observer News Service



ABID BHAT/KO

SRINAGAR: Markets across Kashmir wore a festive look on Saturday as people thronged shopping areas for last-minute purchases ahead of Diwali, with shops decorated with colourful lights, flowers and other festive items.

Sweet shops, firecracker stalls and stores selling decorative items witnessed a rush of customers, while families were seen purchasing sweets, lamps, gifts and other items associated with the festival.

"The markets look beautiful with colourful lights and decorations. We have come out with our family to buy sweets and other items and enjoy the festive atmosphere," Rahul Sharma a resident told KNO.

Shopkeepers said the demand for sweets, decorative lights, traditional lamps and gift items had picked up ahead of the festival, with customers continuing to visit markets for last-minute shopping.

Markets across the city were illuminated with colourful lights and decorations, adding to the festive atmosphere as people prepared to celebrate the festival with their families.

Diwali, the festival of lights, will be celebrated across the country on Sunday, with people marking the occasion by lighting lamps, offering prayers and exchanging sweets—(with KNO inputs)

Minister Javid Calls For Sustainable Transformation Of Agriculture Sector

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Agriculture Production, Finance, Mining and Cooperatives Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar on Saturday called for a concerted approach towards transforming the agriculture sector of Jammu and Kashmir through adoption of scientific farming practices, technological interventions, crop diversification and sustainable management of natural resources.

The Minister was addressing a District-Level Exhibition-cum-Kissan Mela organised by the Department of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare, Kashmir, under the National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET)–Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) at Darbagh, Harwan, Srinagar.

MLA Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar; Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah; Chief Agriculture Officer Srinagar, Mir Aijaz Hassan; senior departmental officers, agricultural experts, progressive farmers and other stakeholders attended the programme.

The event commenced with a vibrant band display by the local youth club, reflecting community participation and youth engagement.

The dignitaries subsequently visited various departmental stalls showcasing modern agricultural technologies, improved crop production practices, farm machinery, innovative farming interventions and farmer-oriented schemes.

Addressing the gathering, Javid Dar described agriculture and allied sectors as vital pillars of Jammu and Kashmir's economy and emphasised the need to make farming more productive, remunerative and sustainable. He urged the farmers to move towards scientific and technology-driven agricultural practices, adopt crop diversification and make informed use of modern farming techniques to enhance productivity and improve their income. He stressed that agricultural development must be guided by the needs of farmers, with particular emphasis on strengthening grassroots extension services and ensuring effective delivery of government support.

DC Pulwama Visits Various Areas Ahead Of Diwali

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha visited various areas of the district ahead of Diwali and reviewed the arrangements put in place for the smooth and peaceful celebration of the festival.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner extended warm Diwali greetings and interacted with the residents. He listened to their issues and concerns and took stock of the availability of essential services and civic amenities in these areas.

The DC reviewed the status of drinking water supply, electricity, sanitation, cleanliness, road connectivity, street lighting, illumination and other essential facilities. He also assessed the arrangements for uninterrupted power and water supply, proper waste disposal and maintenance of public spaces to ensure that residents face no inconvenience during the festive period.

As part of the visit, the DC visited Pandit Colony Hawal, Murran and Batnag Noorpora, where he interacted with community members and reviewed the arrangements on the ground. On the occasion, he also distributed sweets and presented flowers to community members for the Puja on the auspicious occasion of Diwali.

He also paid obeisance at the Murran Temple and extended his wishes for peace, prosperity and happiness on the auspicious occasion of Diwali.

Rs 7.93 Cr Approved For Border Tourism Infrastructure Dev In Uri

SRINAGAR: The government has accorded administrative approval for the creation of tourist infrastructure to promote border tourism in Uri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district at an estimated cost of Rs 7.93 crore.

According to a post shared by the Office of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on X, the project will cover Uri town, Bosiyan-Gingal, Mahura, Garkote and Bela Boniyar.

The project includes the development of tourist huts, facilitation centres, riverfront and scenic parks, viewpoints, trekking paths and public conveniences.

The initiative aims to strengthen touriasm infrastructure in the border areas of Uri and promote the region as a tourist destination while creating opportunities for local economic growth. (Observer News Service)

Rare Female Sambar Deer Spotted In Sinthan Top Forest

ANANTNAG: A female sambar deer has been spotted in the forests of Sinthan Top in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, with wildlife officials describing the sighting as rare.

The animal was reportedly sighted by passengers travelling on the Kashmir side of Sinthan Top near Daksum. Officials believe the deer may have become separated from its group.

Wildlife Warden South, Bijbehara, Sajad Ahmad Bhat said the Sinthan Top forest area is connected to the Kishtwar belt, and the animal may have either migrated from that side or moved to lower elevations in search of habitat.

"Our men are deployed in the area and are receiving such inputs. Wild goats have also been sighted there," he said.

Another wildlife official said sightings of female sambar deer in Kashmir are uncommon, as the species occurs in relatively smaller numbers in the Valley and is more commonly found in the Jammu region.

The sambar (Rusa unicolor) is the largest deer species found in the Indian subcontinent.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the sambar has been listed as a Vulnerable species on its Red List since 2008 due to significant population declines caused by hunting and habitat loss.

Jammu and Kashmir is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including several rare and endangered species such as the Hangul, Kashmir musk deer, Markhor and Asiatic ibex—(KNO)

Mortal Remains Of Adnan Likely To Reach Srinagar Today

SRINAGAR: Mortal remains of a Kashmiri student Adnan Altaf Rathar, who died in Bangladesh on November 4, are likely to reach Srinagar on Sunday.

A source told KNO that the repatriation process has entered its final stage, with only packing and handover of the mortal remains to the family remaining. "It is likely to be completed by Sunday morning," he added.

Pertinently, the matter to get the mortal remains of Adnan from Bangladesh was taken up by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with the Ministry of External Affairs, while Jammu and Kashmir Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo had requested Union Health Minister J P Nadda to intervene to help the grief-stricken family. (KNO)

Youth Found Dead In Miran Sahib

JAMMU: A 23-year-old youth was found dead inside his rented room in the Miran Sahib area of Jammu district on Saturday morning, officials said. An official said that the youth was found dead inside his rented accommodation in Miran Sahib, Jammu.

He was immediately shifted to Government Hospital, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, where doctors declared him brought dead. The deceased has been identified as Chander (23), a native of Bihar who was residing in Jammu. Meanwhile, cognizance of the incident has been taken up—(KNO)

Body Found Afloat In Chenab In Doda

DODA: A body was found floating in the River Chenab near Bhaghyana Dalwal area of Doda district on Saturday, officials said.

An official said that the body was spotted floating in the river near Bhaghyana Dalwal in Doda tehsil during the morning hours.

He said police rushed to the spot and took the body into custody. The identity of the deceased is yet to be established.

Meanwhile, cognisance of the matter has been taken and further investigation has been initiated. (KNO)

Sagar Visits Alusteng Grid Station

SRINAGAR: Minister for Power Development Department (PDD), Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation, Disaster Management and Elections, Ali Mohammad Sagar, today visited the 220/132/33 KV Grid Station at Alusteng to review the power supply scenario and assess the preparedness of the department for the upcoming winter months.

During the visit, the Minister took a detailed assessment of the functioning of the grid station, its existing capacity, power distribution arrangements and measures being undertaken to ensure adequate and reliable electricity supply to consumers, particularly in Srinagar and Ganderbal districts.

Emphasising the need for uninterrupted power supply during the winter months, the Minister directed the officers to minimise unscheduled power cuts and ensure that consumers are provided adequate electricity as per the prescribed curtailment schedule. He stressed that effective planning, timely maintenance and better coordination among field functionaries were essential to address the challenges associated with increased power demand during winter.

The Minister asked the Chief Engineers and other senior officers to maintain close coordination with local representatives and residents, regularly assess ground-level requirements and address public grievances promptly to ensure positive feedback from consumers. He also directed the officers to pay special attention to Kangan and adjoining areas and take appropriate measures to resolve issues related to power supply.

The Minister also stated that an amnesty scheme for electricity consumers is in the pipeline, adding that the proposal is under consideration.

The Minister was informed that the Alusteng Grid Station, having an existing transformation capacity of 320 MVA, caters to several areas of Srinagar and Ganderbal districts, including Alusteng, Shuhama, Nagbal, Gadoora, Tulbagh and adjoining areas through its associated receiving stations. (Observer News Service)

Iran Lifts Self-Imposed Missile Range Limit

AP

DUBAI: Iran's Revolutionary Guard says it has lifted a self-imposed limit of 2,000 kilometres on the range of its ballistic missiles, suggesting the country may seek to develop missiles capable of reaching more distant targets as fears of renewed all-out war rise.

Meanwhile, Saudi airstrikes near Yemen's capital killed 25 people, according to a spokesman for Yemen's Health Ministry.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard lifts its missile-range limit

The comments by the spokesman of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard came days after the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khomeini, warned that "any kind and level of threat" from the US or Israel would face a response without geographic limits.

Asked at a Tehran news conference about the limit on missile ranges, General Hossein Mohebbi said, "That restriction has been lifted for us."

He did not say whether Iran had missiles capable of exceeding the limit, saying only Iran would "demonstrate these capabilities in practice" rather than make statements.

Iran is not known to have missiles that can go beyond the 2,000-kilometre limit -- a range that puts parts of Greece and the Balkans, the entire Arabian Peninsula, the Levant and most of Egypt within reach. However, US officials have said technology from Iran's space programme can be repurposed to build intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The Iranian military, meanwhile, said a tanker east of the Strait of Hormuz had hit a mine and caught fire. It did not identify the tanker's flag or destination. It said the vessel had turned off its navigational beacon and was sailing in a "prohibited area."



US says its blockade on Iranian port continues, announces new task force

US Central Command said Saturday that "strict enforcement" of the US blockade on Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz continues.

It also announced a new task force focusing on hampering Iran's options to transport what it called "advanced weapons and other materials" through its land borders and the Caspian Sea.

Iran established a chokehold on the strait, a vital strategic waterway in global trade, at the beginning of the war, and has claimed attacks on tankers. The US says its blockade had redirected 144 commercial vessels through the end of October.

Airstrikes kill 25 people near Yemen's capital

Airstrikes in a village near Yemen's capital, Sanaa, killed 25 people and wounded 30 others, mostly women and children, Anees Alasbahi, a spokesman for Yemen's Houthi-run Health Ministry, said.

Since the summer, fighting has escalated between the Iranian-aligned Yemen and their Saudi-backed opponents based in the south and east.

Sonia Recalls Heartbreak Over Rajiv Becoming PM

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: "I felt as if a knife had been plunged right into my heart," says Sonia Gandhi of the moment when Rajiv Gandhi told her that he had been asked to be sworn in as the prime minister on the day his mother and then PM Indira Gandhi had been assassinated.

When she begged him not to take the prime minister's post as it would put his life at risk, Rajiv replied, "They will kill me anyway."

This and many more defining moments are narrated in Sonia Gandhi's upcoming memoir - 'Belonging: A Journey of Love', published by HarperCollins India and set to hit the stands on November 10.

According to an edited extract from the book published by the British daily, The Guardian, Sonia Gandhi narrates the events of the fateful day on October 31, 1984, when then PM Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her own bodyguards at her 1, Safdarjung Road residence. "I return to my room as my mother-in-law leaves for her office in the building adjacent to our home. I am about to start my bath when I hear a series of explosions, as of firecrackers, but different. I freeze.

"Someone comes pounding frantically on my bathroom door. It is Ongmu, the children's nanny, crying hysterically. I fling open the



door, my heart thumping. She is gesticulating wildly, speechlessly, towards the garden," the former Congress chief says.

"I run along the path leading to Akbar Road. I see the white Ambassador car slowly moving towards the same path. I hesitate. I stop, heart in my mouth. Dread, panic, fear. I feel suffocated. I can't breathe. I am about to collapse. No, no, I can't. I have to walk to the car. I see her being carried into it. I understand; I scream," says Sonia Gandhi in the book, according to the edited extract.

"I'm in the car now, crouching on the floor, facing her. Blood, blood on her sari, blood on her chest. Her large eyes are wide open; her face wears a surprised expression. She doesn't move. I attempt to speak to her, to call out, 'Mummy, Mummy', but no word comes out. I try again; she doesn't reply," Sonia Gandhi narrates the harrowing moments of the assassination. She says Indira's aides were in the front of the car, screaming, and in heavy, slow traffic, the car barely moved. The car had no siren and faced one red light, then another, she recalls.

"Then the hospital. The gate isn't opening. Chaos. We are stopped; someone looks through the window in a questioning attitude. They let us in. We reach the emergency department, teeming with people. We are stopped again, not allowed in; we have to wait for our turn. Someone calls out to the driver, signals him to move forward. They identify us; she is placed on a trolley. We are led somewhere, an operation theatre? They ask me to follow. I'm taken to a room nearby. No, no, I want to stay by her, I insist. I want to know. I have to see. They don't reply; they are immersed in their emergency procedures," Sonia Gandhi says.

"I feel confused, lost; I don't recognise anyone there. I'm shivering under my dressing gown. I feel scared, my mind is racing. Where is Rajiv? I try to remember. I can't, I can't. The children, yes, they're in school; they must be brought home. Oh God, no, no. Let them be safe, let Rajiv be safe. Whom do I tell, whom do I speak to?" she says.

MBBS Student Loses Rs 12.33 Lakh in 'Rigged' Ludo Game

Press Trust of India

NAGPUR: An MBBS student lost Rs 12.33 lakh in an online Ludo game that promised high returns through gameplay, a police official said on Saturday.

The 23-year-old final-year student of the Government Medical College had come across an advertisement for a Ludo app named 'Try Players' while watching YouTube videos, he added.

"The app promised users money through gameplay. Initially, the student made small profits. This encouraged him to invest more money.

He transferred Rs 12,33,184 in all through different UPI IDs and bank accounts," the official said. "However, he then started suffering continuous losses. When he contacted the app's helpline, he realised that the game was rigged. The fraudsters later blocked him," the official said.

A case was registered against the holders of two mobile numbers under Information Technology Act, and efforts are on to nab them, he added.

'E20 Became 420': Rahul Accuses Govt of Fuel Theft

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked the Modi government over the rollout of E20 petrol, citing test results of samples collected by the Karnataka government, and asked the Centre to come clean on the actual ethanol content in fuel being sold across the country.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "E20 turned into 420 – stealing petrol from the public's cars!" The reference was to Section 420 of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code, which dealt with cheating. Gandhi said the government claims that petrol contains 20 per cent ethanol but tests conducted on samples collected from seven districts in Karnataka had revealed higher levels.

"The Karnataka government collected petrol samples from 7 districts and had them tested at an accredited lab. Look at the results – 11 out of 14 samples contained more than 20 per cent ethanol; 31.2 per cent at IOCL, 30.5 per cent at HPCL; IOCL, HPCL, BPCL, Nayara, Shell – whether



government-owned or private – all exceeded the limit," he claimed. He also alleged that the companies' own laboratories had not reported the ethanol content.

Gandhi claimed that excessive ethanol blending could affect vehicle performance, resulting in lower mileage and higher maintenance costs. He also questioned the absence of labels at fuel stations disclosing the ethanol content of petrol.

"Modi ji, tell us – what's being put in the country's tank? How much ethanol is actually in the petrol? When will action be taken against companies mixing more than 20 per cent ethanol?" he said.

Gandhi also reiterated his challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for an open debate, saying the issue of ethanol blending could be included in the discussion.

His remarks came a day after the Karnataka government alleged that major oil marketing companies (OMCs) were supplying petrol with ethanol content exceeding the prescribed 20 per cent limit, with tests recording levels as high as 31.2 per cent. It had sought action against the companies.

Addressing a press conference, Karnataka Food, Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology Minister Rizwan Arshad said the allegations were based on tests conducted on samples collected from Bengaluru, Kolar, Chikkaballapura, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Mangaluru and Tumakuru.

According to test results issued by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories-accredited and ISO-certified Shriram Research Institute in Bengaluru, samples from Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) recorded ethanol content of 31.2 per cent and 30.5 per cent, respectively.

