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Dargah Hazratbal echoes with prayers, tears on Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW)

Thousands of devotees flock for glimpse of Holy Relic; emotional scenes witnessed at revered shrine

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Sept 12: With tears rolling down their cheeks and hands raised in devotion, thousands of devotees thronged the revered Dargah Hazratbal shrine on the banks of Dal Lake on Friday, marking the Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) with deep religious fervour.

The shrine reverberated with emotional prayers as the head priest displayed the Moi-e-Muqaddas—the hair strand believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

As per the details collected by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the sacred moment drew cries of “Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah” from the sea of worshippers, who had gathered



Photo by: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

from across the Valley to catch a glimpse.

“I have been coming here since childhood. Every time I see the

holy relic, my heart trembles with love and peace,” said a 70-year-old Ghulam Qadir, his eyes moist as he leaned on | [More on P6](#)

Processions, rallies across valley Speakers call for following teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Sept 12: Kashmir witnessed a vibrant display of faith and devotion as massive spiritual rallies and processions were held across the valley to celebrate the Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

From southern Anantnag to the central and northern districts, roads and rooftops turned green as thousands of people marched carrying flags, reciting praises, and sending salutations upon the Prophet (SAW).

Mohammad Yousuf, a participant from Srinagar, was walking along with his

children in the procession at Srinagar's Hazratbal.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Yousuf said, “The whole atmosphere is soaked in love and peace. It felt as if the valley itself was echoing blessings upon the Prophet (SAW).”

Similar processions were reported from parts of Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla and Shopian, where residents joined hands in reciting naats and chanting slogans of peace and unity. Many shopkeepers and local transporters voluntarily paused their work to join the rallies.

“This gathering is not about any | [More on P6](#)

PNGRB proposes LPG pipeline for J&K

Invites bids for 230-km corridor; project to save crores, cut tanker traffic, carbon emissions



KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Sept 12: In a significant development, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has initiated the process for laying a petroleum and petroleum products (LPG) pipeline to Jammu & Kashmir.

As part of its ambitious plan to expand the LPG pipeline network to the region, PNGRB has proposed a 230-kilometre-long LPG pipeline from Jalandhar (Punjab) to Jammu (Jammu & Kashmir).

To begin with, PNGRB has invited bids for the authorization

of a petroleum and petroleum products (LPG) pipeline connecting Jalandhar in Punjab to Jammu in Jammu & Kashmir.

Documents accessed news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal that the proposed pipeline is designed to operate with a minimum system capacity of 0.30 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) from its first year of operation and throughout its economic life.

According to the documents, the development of a common carrier petroleum and petroleum product (LPG) pipeline is essential to | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar, Dr Farooq offer prayers; pray for peace

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Sept 12: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and National Conference (NC) President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday joined the devotees in offering

the congregational Juma (Friday) prayers at the revered Hazratbal Shrine on the occasion of the Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

On this blessed occasion, the Chief Minister, along with NC President, Advisor to | [More on P6](#)

Srinagar Police crack down on sale of rotten meat

‘Six FIRs registered; flying squads formed’

KNO

Srinagar, Sept 12: Acting swiftly on the reports of the sale of rotten and unhygienic meat in the district, Srinagar Police, in coordination with Civil Administration and the Department of Food Safety, has launched a dedicated operation to curb the menace.

In the ongoing crackdown, a police spokesman in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said six cases (FIRs) have been registered against individuals and establishments found selling rotten meat in violation of public health and safety regulations, which



include case FIRs No. 45/2025 under section 271, 275 BNS of PS Lal Bazar, 90/2025 under section 272, 275 BNS of PS Bemina, 67/2025 under section 271, 275 BNS, 51 Food Safety Act of PS Batamalo, 102/2025 under section 271, 280 BNS of PS Safakadal, 73/2025 under section 271, 275 BNS of PS Ram Munshi Bagh and 48/2025 under section 61. | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar vows action on Hangul, Markhor Conservation recommendations

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sept 12: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday pledged that his government will act promptly on the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Hangul protection and other threatened Ungulates conservation (2IHUC-25), so that measurable progress is achieved in the population of Hangul and Markhor before the next such conference is held.

The Chief Minister, who is also Pro-Chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), was speaking at the valedictory session of the



three-day international conference at SKUAST-K's Shalimar campus.

Addressing a distinguished gathering of conservation experts, scientists, policymakers, and delegates from India and abroad, the Chief

Minister assured that the State Government would treat the outcomes of the conference with utmost seriousness.

“On behalf of my colleagues in government, I assure you that the recommendations emerging from | [More on P6](#)

Major boost for health sector

J&K Govt allocates Rs 124.83 cr for diagnostic, critical care upgrades

Patients expect relief from travel, long waiting hours

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Sept 12: In a significant step towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the government has announced an allocation of Rs 124.83 crore for key upgrades in the health sector, fulfilling an assurance made by the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the recent Budget speech.

Health Minister Sakina Itoo, in a post on X, said, “As assured by the Hon'ble CM in the Budget Speech, we have allocated 124.83 Cr for key upgrades in J&K's health sector: CT Scan at

GMC Jammu, MRI machines at GMC Baramulla, GMC Kathua & GMC Rajouri, Cath Lab at GMC Doda, PET Scan at GMC Srinagar, and strengthening Telemedicine across J&K (80 units). We remain committed to stronger, accessible healthcare.”

Currently, Kashmir has only a single PET scan facility at SKIMS Soura, which caters to thousands of cancer patients from across the valley. The installation of a second PET scan at GMC Srinagar is being widely welcomed. Meanwhile, a PET scan at GMC Jammu was made functional recently.

“This is a huge relief for us.

Earlier, I had to wait for over a month for my PET scan at SKIMS. Now, with GMC Srinagar getting one more machine, patients like me won't have to face such delays,” said Ghulam Nabi, a cancer patient from Pulwama.

Similarly, GMC Jammu currently has only one CT scan machine at GMC Jammu, leading to overcrowding. With an additional CT scan sanctioned, patients and attendants believe the waiting time will be reduced.

“My father had to be shifted to a private clinic last month because of the long queue at the GMC. It was | [More on P6](#)

Northall United FC inspires football culture in Kashmir

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Sept 12: In just two years, Northall United Football Club of Bandipora has emerged as a powerhouse of both football and education, offering free training to youngsters while making history on the field with a record-breaking debut season.

Training players across U-10, U-13, U-17, and senior categories, the club has quickly etched its name in the record books. The senior team, in its debut year, won 10 of 12 matches in the Super Division and secured qualification to the Premier Division — a feat never achieved before in Jammu and Kashmir football.



According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the initiative led by Head Coach Azhar Lone, alongside Malik

Adil and Irfan Sufi besides, Coach Maajid Bashir and Mentor Nasir Hussain Khan, and is entirely self-funded. Management | [More on P6](#)

Vaishno Devi Yatra to resume tomorrow

KNO

Katra, Sept 12: Following a temporary suspension necessitated by inclement weather conditions and essential maintenance of the track leading to the holy shrine, the Yatra to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji shall resume from September 14 (Sunday), subject to favourable weather conditions.

Pilgrims are advised to carry valid identification, follow designated pathways and cooperate with on-ground staff. For live updates, booking services and helpline support, devotees can visit the Shrine Board's official website “www.maavaishnodevi.org”.

According to the news agency—Kashmir | [More on P6](#)

Border residents welcome LG Manoj Sinha's initiative to rebuild houses damaged by Pak shelling, recent floods

Sajid Raina

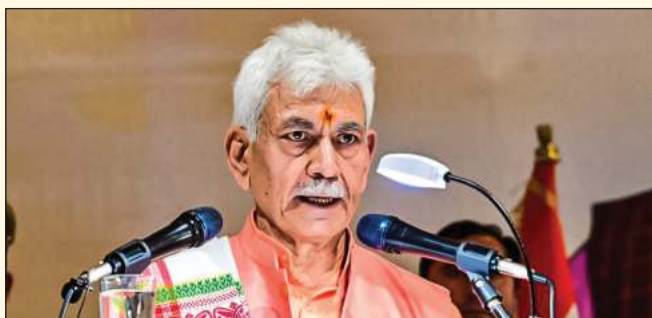
Jammu, Sept 12: Jammu, Sept 12: Residents along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir have welcomed the initiative of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to get the new houses constructed for families affected by Pakistan shelling, the recent floods and terrorism.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the High-Range Rural

Development Society (HRDS) India in collaboration with the Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir will build more than 1500 houses for the victims of Pakistan shelling, recent floods and the terrorism.

“We lived for years amid rubble and fear. The news of new houses being built feels like a sunrise after a long, dark night, giving us hope for the future,” residents of frontier areas told KNO over phone.

“Cross-border shelling



destroyed walls, roofs, and the peace we once had. Hearing

that new houses will be constructed for those affected by

Pakistan shelling gives us hope that our children can grow up without fear of the next attack,” said Fatima Bano from Poonch.

Residents in Poonch, Uri and Karnah Tangdar welcomed the announcement.

Mohammad Iqbal from Poonch, whose home was damaged during the cross-border shelling in May, said, “Finally, we will have a safe home for our children after all these months of living in

temporary shelters.”

“We hope the government begins construction of these houses soon. This is a much-needed relief for border residents who lost their homes during shelling,” he said.

Mehar Bano from Uri said, “Our house was partially destroyed by Pak shelling. This project gives us hope that we can start afresh without fear of the past returning.”

Rashid Ahmad from Karnah Tangdar said, “We have waited

for months for support. Many houses in our area were damaged, and some residents lost relatives during the shelling. No compensation was provided earlier, so the announcement that new houses will be constructed for sufferers is a welcome step for us and will help us rebuild our lives with dignity.”

Suhail Ahmad, another resident from Poonch, said, “The monthly health check-ups and digital | [More on P6](#)

‘Feels like sunrise after long, dark night, giving us hope for future’

DC, SSP Ramban inspect NH-44

Review progress of work on Bailey Bridge at Bhatti



KT NEWS DESK

RAMBAN, SEPTEMBER 12: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, along with Senior Superintendent of Police Arun Gupta Friday conducted an extensive review of traffic regulation and condition of Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) in the district. DySP Traffic, Sajjad Khan also accompanied the team during the inspection.

The Deputy Commissioner visited Nashri to take stock of vehicular movement and assess the prevailing situation. The visit focused on identifying bottlenecks, ensuring smooth vehicular flow and enhancing road safety and commuter convenience on this vital lifeline.

During the review, the DC held discussions with concerned officers and

agencies to formulate strategies for strengthening traffic management, minimizing congestion and improving inter-departmental coordination.

The DC stressed the importance of prompt measures to facilitate hassle-free travel for commuters, especially on NH-44, which plays a crucial role in maintaining connectivity between Jammu and Kashmir.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the progress on construction of the Bailey Bridge on the Karol-Maitra-Gool road at Bhatti being executed by the Army. He interacted with Army engineers on site and reviewed the progress of the work. The DC pointed out various bottlenecks on National Highway and directed the NHAI to clear that bottleneck at the earliest.

Govt committed to promote holistic youth development: Satish

Participates in virtual meeting with Union Minister

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 12: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services and Sports (YSS), Satish Sharma Friday participated in virtual meeting chaired by Union Minister for Youth Affairs to discuss issues related to youth engagement, sports development, and holistic empowerment.

The virtual meeting was also attended by Sports Ministers of other states and UTs.

Commissioner Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Yasha Mudgal; DG Youth Services and Sports, Anuradha Gupta and other senior officers of YSS also attended the meeting.

During the interaction, Satish Sharma highlighted the significant transformation taking place in J&K, adding that sports has become a bridge from conflict to aspiration. He also briefed the Union Minister about the impact of the J&K Sports Policy (2022), which has laid emphasis on talent scouting, infrastructure development and creation of culture of health and fitness across the region.

The Minister underscored the role of flagship programmes like Khelo India and Ab Khelega Jammu & Kashmir, supported by UT Capex funding, which together are training and engaging thousands of young athletes annually.



Citing recent success stories, Minister Sharma drew attention to inspiring youth icons from J&K including Arjuna Awardee and para-archery champion, Sheetal Devi, who brought laurels at Paralympics, Asian Para Games, and World Championships; Chain Singh, Olympian shooter from Doda, who has represented India in several prestigious international events. He also talked about cricketing talents including Umran Malik, Abdul Samad, Rasik Salam, Vivrant Sharma, who have excelled in the IPL. He also mentioned about Nasir Sofi, a young volleyball player from Baramulla recently selected for the U-15 National Coaching Camp for China.

Speaking on youth engagement, the Minister informed that over 70 lakh youth participated in

sports and related activities during 2024-25, with the figure expected to rise further this year. He emphasized the department's role in channelling youth energy towards positive pursuits, thereby diverting them from anti-social and anti-national activities.

Satish Sharma also placed before the Union Minister several key suggestions for strengthening youth and sports initiatives in J&K, which include Special funding for Sports Research Centres and Academies, use of AI-powered technology for real-time performance tracking and monitoring of schemes, enhanced inter-departmental coordination and Public-Private Partnerships to create a robust youth-centric ecosystem, greater emphasis on sports science, psychology,

and medicine to enhance athlete performance, besides positioning sports as a career pathway, creating employment opportunities, and encouraging startups in fitness, equipment manufacturing, and adventure tourism.

The Union Minister appreciated the initiatives taken by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir and assured continued support of the Centre in strengthening youth and sports programmes across Jammu and Kashmir.

Satish Sharma reaffirmed the J&K Government's commitment to promote holistic youth development, build world-class sports infrastructure, and bring national and international sporting events, making it a hub of sports excellence and youth empowerment.

LMD imposes Rs 1.5 lakh penalty on erring traders



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 12: The Legal Metrology Department has intensified its enforcement drive against violations of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, and the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011 across the Union Territory. In recent actions, the Legal Metrology Unit Sam-ba imposed penalties of ₹50,000 on four violators for non-compliance with provisions of the Act.

The Deputy Controller Enforcement Jammu levied a penalty of ₹50,000 on a manufacturer of packed beverages for failing to provide mandatory declarations. Similarly, the LMD Unit Kupwara recovered ₹50,000 from a company for not disclosing statutory information and for non-registration under

Rule 27 of the Packaged Commodities Rules, 2011.

The Department cautioned all manufacturers, packers, and traders to strictly comply with mandatory labeling requirements such as Maximum Retail Price (MRP), net quantity and Unit Sale Price (USP). It stressed that violations mislead consumers, constitute unfair trade practices and will be dealt with firmly under the law.

Controller Legal Metrology J&K, Rajinder Singh Tara, reaffirmed the Department's commitment to safeguarding consumer rights, stating that the Department remains resolute in protecting the consumer's right to be informed and will continue to take stringent enforcement measures against violators.

DC Ramban reviews preparations for upcoming campaigns



KT NEWS DESK

RAMBAN, SEPTEMBER 12: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan Friday chaired a meeting of District Officers to finalize arrangements for Seva Parv, Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar and Poshan Maah 2025 celebrations in the district.

Seva Parv, a nationwide citizen-centric initiative, will be observed from 17 September to 2 October, Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar will run concurrently, and Poshan Maah will be celebrated from 17 September to 16 October 2025 as a Jan Andolan to mobilize communities for improved health and nutrition.

The meeting was attended by ACR Shokat Hayat Mattoo, Chief Planning Officer Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather, CMO, DYSSO, AD FCS&CA, AD Handicrafts & Handloom, SDMs, DFOs, BDOs (virtually) and other senior officers. It focused on integrated planning for health, nutrition, sanitation, service delivery and financial inclusion across all blocks and panchayats.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to work in close coordination for the successful conduct of these programmes, which aim to bring governance closer to the people, ensure inclusive development and promote culturally

rooted nutrition practices in Ramban district.

While reviewing arrangements for Seva Parv, the DC instructed BDOs and the CEO Municipality to launch Swachhata drives in all panchayats and urban wards, and to simultaneously conduct community plantation drives and awareness campaigns on citizen services. He also asked DFOs to start community tree plantation drives under the theme "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, Ek Ped Shaheed Ke Naam" to honour the nation.

Degree Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools, and other educational institutions were directed to actively participate by organizing donation drives for books and stationery, undertaking school and campus beautification and arranging voluntary extra classes for students.

The DC said Swasth Nari Sashakt Parivar will promote women's health and well-being through outreach programmes, health check-ups, nutrition counselling and awareness on anaemia prevention, maternal health, menstrual hygiene and the active participation of self-help groups.

Poshan Maah 2025, themed "Suposhit Bharat," will focus on addressing obesity, Early Childhood Care & Education, Infant & Young Child Feeding and men-streaming with activities

such as BMI screenings, IYCF counselling, complementary feeding demonstrations, Poshan Chaupals and fitness challenges.

Emphasizing social outreach, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Social Welfare Department to engage with vulnerable sections by visiting old-age homes and orphanages, interacting with elderly persons, donating assistive devices such as wheelchairs and hearing aids and organizing community meals for the needy.

To strengthen health services, the Health Department was asked to organize health check-up camps, blood donation drives, and nutrition and awareness sessions under the Poshan Abhiyan across all blocks. Other departments were also directed to hold awareness and financial literacy camps on flagship schemes like PM-Kisan, Ayushman Bharat - PMJAY, PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), PM Atal Pension Yojana (PMAPY), PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and other financial inclusion initiatives to empower citizens.

It was informed that a district-level programme will be held at the Conference Hall, District Administrative Complex Ramban, in sync with the launch of the national programme by Prime Minister on September 17, 2025, ensuring maximum community participation.

KU & IIT Hyderabad sign MoU

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Sept 12: In a significant move to accelerate research and innovation, the University of Kashmir (KU) and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to deepen academic collaboration and drive breakthroughs in science and technology.

The MoU was formally signed by KU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan and IIT Hyderabad Director Prof. B. S. Murty during the valedictory session of the five-day International Conference on Nanotechnology for Better Living (NBL-2025), jointly hosted by KU's Department of Nanotechnology and IIT Hyderabad.

The event drew eminent scientists, academicians, industry leaders, researchers, and students from across India and abroad.

The MoU represents a landmark step towards long-term collaboration, paving the way for joint research projects in emerging and interdisciplinary areas of science and technology, faculty and student exchanges, enabling greater academic mobility and exposure, shared access to infrastructure and expertise between KU and IIT Hyderabad and innovation and commercialization opportunities, translating research into real-world impact. "This



collaboration is about building bridges between two premier institutions," said VC KU Prof Nilofer Khan. She added "Together, we can push the frontiers of nanotechnology, foster innovation, and transform knowledge into solutions that benefit society."

Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, Dean Academic Affairs KU, emphasized nanotechnology's role in tackling contemporary challenges, reaffirming the university's commitment to fostering such partnerships for the growth of students and researchers.

Director IIT Hyderabad Prof. Murty lauded the scientific depth of NBL-2025 and said the collaboration would fuel

impactful research, innovation, and capacity building in nanotechnology.

Earlier, Prof. Rabia Hamid, Head of KU's Nanotechnology Department and conference convener, presented the conference report.

The five-day event, held in hybrid mode, attracted over 200 delegates and 50 invited speakers from across the globe, and explored nanotechnology-driven solutions for sustainable development, disaster management, medicine, and industry. She noted that the conference recommendations, once implemented, could position India as a global leader in nanotechnology while fostering economic growth and better

living standards.

The conference also echoed the vision of Honourable Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Shri Manoj Sinha, who, while inaugurating NBL-2025 on September 7, had underlined the need for collaborative initiatives to leverage nanotechnology for disaster resilience, healthcare, and entrepreneurship ecosystems in the region.

The event concluded with the announcement of Best Paper Awards, distribution of certificates, and felicitation of the organising committee.

The valedictory session not only marked the conclusion of NBL-2025 but also the beginning of new collaborations and opportunities in frontier research.

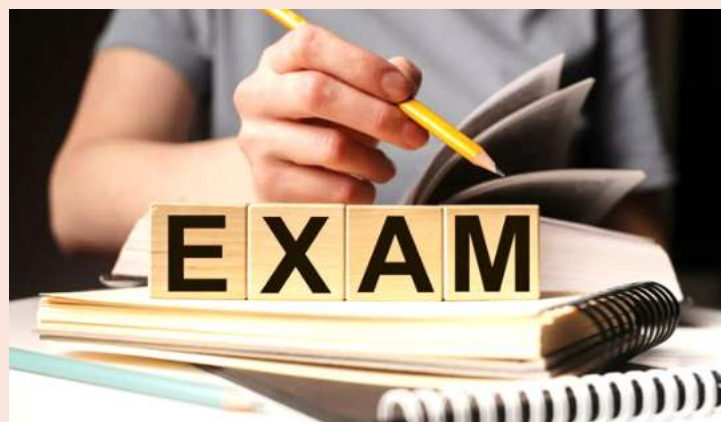
JKBOSE Exams to resume today

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 12: The ongoing examination of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education for class 10th (SSE) and 11th (HSP-12th) session Biannual/Annual Private 2025 shall resume from tomorrow on September 13 as per notified date sheet.

The examinees (candidates) are advised to carry their admit cards along with them for identification and display it to the authorities in case there are restrictions in place anywhere.

The Incharge superintendents of the examination centers shall ensure safe and smooth conduct of the examination.



Efforts on to develop EWSs for cloudbursts, quakes: Jitendra

‘Media serves as vital bridge between Govt, citizens’

RAJA SYED RATHER

Jammu, Sep 12: Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Dr Jitendra Singh, on Friday said that efforts are on to develop early warning systems for cloudbursts and earthquakes in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the media workshop ‘Vartalap’ organized by the Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting here, Dr Singh said, “Scientific initiatives are underway to study cloudbursts and earthquakes and provide timely early warning alerts to citizens in Jammu and Kashmir.”

Pertinently, more than 150 people lost their lives due to sudden flash floods and landslides triggered by cloudbursts in Jammu's Kishtwar and Katra Districts last month.

Dr. Singh said that while precise forecasting of earthquakes and cloudbursts remains a challenge, scientific efforts are underway to identify contributing factors and provide possible early warnings.

He explained that cloudbursts typically occur when heat and humidity accumulate



in a concentrated area and noted initiatives such as the Himalayan Ecology Mission to study these phenomena. “The government plans to establish a full-fledged India Meteorological Department (IMD) regional centre in Jammu and install four additional weather radars across the Union Territory, with the tendering process to be restarted following a limited initial response,” he added.

Dr Singh said the media serves as a vital bridge between the government and citizens, playing a key role in spreading

awareness about schemes, scientific achievements, and disaster preparedness. “The success of welfare programmes across sectors depends on how effectively information reaches beneficiaries. Timely and accurate dissemination ensures transparency and encourages public participation in governance,” he added.

Dr Singh cited the CSIR-Aroma Mission in Jammu & Kashmir as an example of a scheme whose outreach through media has motivated citizens to engage with rural entrepreneurship and agri-based startups. Referring

to young Indian space scientist Shubanshu Shukla, Dr. Singh said the media is crucial in highlighting the contributions of scientists and bringing their achievements into public awareness.

He added that while Indian media has advanced in outreach and technology, there is scope to develop domain-specific journalism to provide citizens with detailed and accurate insights on complex issues.

Dr. Singh also spoke about India's startup ecosystem, which has expanded from 350 startups in 2014 to over 1.5 lakh in 2025, making the country the third-largest startup hub globally. He said the media plays a transformative role in shaping innovation by creating awareness and sharing success stories.

Highlighting Jammu & Kashmir's contribution, he said more than 3,000 laven-der-based startups have been established across rural areas under the Aroma Mission, generating employment and income for local families.

He invited private

investment to set up perfume distillation facilities in Jammu to develop the region as a hub for the perfume industry and mentioned his visit to Grasse, France, to explore international collaboration opportunities.

Director PIB Jammu, Neha Jalali, said PIB will provide support to media professionals to access authentic information, helping ensure that government schemes reach citizens. Other speakers included Dr. Suphala Gupta, CSIR-IIM Jammu, who spoke on Aroma Mission Phase-III and rural entrepreneurship; Dr. Ashutosh Gupta, Principal, GMC Jammu, on improvements in public healthcare; and Sansar Chand Sharma, IMD Jammu, on early warning services and disaster risk management.

The workshop saw participation from around 100 media representatives and concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session on government flagship programmes, including the Aroma Mission and the growing start-up ecosystem. Zakir Nazir, M&CO, PIB Jammu, delivered the vote of thanks. (KNO)

HC junks 35-yr legal battle of Pak couple

Asks them to leave immediately

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Sep 12: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has dismissed a 35-year long legal battle of a Pakistani couple to allow them to stay in Srinagar and has directed them to leave the country forthwith.

According to the details, an 80-year-old man, Mohammad Khalil Qazi, and his 61-year-old wife, Arifa were residing in Srinagar since 1988 on Pakistani passports. They had challenged a 1989 deportation order, claiming Indian citizenship and rights to ancestral property. The High Court ruled that the couple had concealed facts to extend their stay in India and must leave the country immediately.

The court examined records, including a school certificate indicating that Qazi attended a Srinagar school from 1955 to 1957. This contradicted the couple's claim that he was stranded in Pakistan after the 1948 India-Pakistan war. The division bench, led by Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal, noted that the couple entered India on short-term visas that expired in 1988.

The judges stated that the appellants had not approached the court with clean hands and had attempted to manipulate the system by providing false information

to prolong their stay.

The judgment referred to recent legal precedents, including Supreme Court rulings warning against the use of falsehood in litigation. The court said that the couple's interim relief order in 1990 allowed them to remain in Srinagar for over three decades, but as of June 28, 2025, they were directed to leave India. The bench added that under India's Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, foreign nationals cannot enter, stay, or reside in India without valid visas or permits.

The court clarified that foreign nationals are entitled only to rights under Article 21 of the Constitution, which covers life and liberty, and not the right to settle in the country. The couple had arrived in India in July 1988 with their minor son, Nayeem, and had obtained short-term residential permits. Multiple extensions were granted, but the 1989 deportation order had curtailed their stay.

The High Court upheld the legality of the original deportation order and dismissed the appeal, stating that the appellants had failed to provide any valid grounds for staying in India.

The court also reinforced that the government has absolute authority to expel foreign nationals. (KNO)

Upset Apple growers say fruit fall hits orchard

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Sep 12: Apple growers across Kashmir are reeling under fresh distress as large-scale fruit fall has been reported from orchards at the peak of the harvesting season.

Already battered by extreme weather, pest infestations, and transport disruptions, farmers say this unexpected phenomenon is pushing them toward massive financial losses.

For months, the valley's orchardists have struggled against prolonged dry spells, hailstorms, high-velocity winds, and diseases such as spider mite and rusting. Highway closures further choked the supply chain, leading to delays and rising freight costs. Now, when growers were finally ready to reap the fruits of their year-long toil, the sudden drop in apples has left them shocked.

“This is the first time in my life I am seeing apples falling from trees like this,” Abdul Rashid, an orchardist from Shopian. “We worked hard the whole year, fought pests and dry weather, but now prolonged rain spells during harvest have caused the fruit to drop in large numbers. It



is heartbreaking.”

Growers say the fallen apples lose their quality instantly and are downgraded to second-grade produce, fetching extremely low prices in the market.

“We have faced weather and pest damages earlier too, but this sudden fruit fall is something entirely new,” said Ghulam Nabi, a grower from Pulwama. “If it continues, we may lose a major chunk of our produce. Our families depend solely on these orchards, and such losses threaten our very survival.” Agricultural experts point to the unusual weather pattern as the main reason behind the crisis. Prolonged wet conditions, they say, weaken the fruit's stem and attachment, causing premature drop.

“Continuous rainfall during the harvest period leads to physiological stress on trees. The moisture imbalance in soil and air directly impacts fruit holding capacity,” said Dr Shabir Ahmad Dar, a horticulture scientist. “But we need systematic field surveys to assess the extent and suggest preventive measures for the future.”

Officials from the Horticulture Department acknowledged receiving distress calls from multiple districts.

“While excessive rainfall seems to be the immediate trigger, we will work to find out other contributing factors like soil nutrition and orchard management practices,” said a senior horticulture officer. Growers, however, say the

government must go beyond assessments. “We urge immediate intervention. The authorities should not only study the problem but also announce compensation. This season has turned into a nightmare for us,” said Mohammad Yousuf, a farmer from Kulgam.

The crisis has cast a shadow over Kashmir's apple industry, which is the backbone of the region's horticulture sector. Employing lakhs of people and contributing thousands of crores to the economy, the industry was already struggling with transport bottlenecks and rising input costs.

Farmers fear that if the fruit fall persists, the valley's apple output—and their livelihoods—will take another severe hit this year. (KNO)

Floods Aftermath

Ramban: 18 houses develop cracks amid land sinking

SAJID RAINA

Ramban, Sep 12: Incessant rains, inclement weather conditions and flash floods that caused massive landslides in Ramban District last month have led to increase in land sinking and slipping incidents in the area, with a significant portion of land in Panchayat Tangar reportedly sliding towards the Chenab River.

According to the details, the slipping and sinking of land has created fear and panic in the area.

Locals from Tangar, located 28 kilometers from Ramban near the Sawlakote Power Project said that cracks had been appearing in the area for at least a year. However, after the recent rains, land sliding has accelerated. “So far, cracks have appeared in at least 18 residential houses, one shop, and the High School Tangar in several wards of Panchayat Tangar, with the high school building declared unsafe,” they said, adding, “If the land sliding continues, more than 13 additional houses and other infrastructure in the area will be at severe risk.”

Locals added that a 2.5 to 3-kilometer stretch of the Tangar

area is gradually sliding down towards the Chenab River, causing concern for nearly the entire population.

Due to the cracks, Ward No. 1, Ward No. 2, Ward No. 3, and other areas are at risk, while in Ward No. 7 (New Baas), there have been recent incidents of house collapses and fresh land sliding.

Since last night, several electric poles have collapsed due to the shifting land, causing a power outage in Ward No. 2. They also noted that land from the mountain above has slid several hundred feet downhill, and if this natural disaster continues, the ongoing land movement could spell a major catastrophe for large parts of Tangar.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Muhammad Ilyas Khan the Member of the Assembly for Ramban, Additional SP Mujeeb ur Rahman, along with district officers and engineers, visited Tangar to assess the situation and the extent of the damage.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed Tehsildar Rahmat to remain stationed in the area, while teams of Revenue Department, Police, and SDRF teams have been placed on alert in the affected areas to respond to any situation. (KNO)

Qazi Hamam street in shambles, locals seeks action

Baramulla, Sep 12: The residents of Qazi Hamam in Baramulla here have expressed strong resentment over the decades-long neglect of the vital street leading to Ziyarat Dastageer Sahab, saying that despite repeated pleas to the authorities, no repair work has been carried out since 2004.

Locals said that the vital street, which houses more than 300 households, has been lying in a dilapidated condition for years, yet no concrete repair or developmental work has been initiated.

Despite repeated representations to the Roads & Buildings (R&B) department and Municipal Council Baramulla, the residents say the issue has been left lingering with only estimates prepared over the last five years.

“Only tall claims of development are being made on social media, but on the ground, nothing changes. This road has not seen any proper repair for decades. Every time we approach the authorities, we only get assurances, never action,” said a local resident.

Muzamil Mushtaq, the Mohalla head, said that the lane was last repaired in 2004 and ever since, no official has visited the area to review its condition. “It is unfortunate that a street located barely a kilometre from the district headquarters has been left in such neglect.”

Residents noted that the street provides access to Masjid Shareef and the revered Ziyarat Dastageer Sahab while also serves as a major connecting route for the entire mohalla. They appealed to the authorities for immediate intervention to avert further hardship and damage.

Meanwhile, the officials at Municipal Council Baramulla said the matter will be looked into. (KNO)

SWJA constitutes body

Srinagar, Sep 12: The Sopore Working Journalists Association (SWJA) on Friday constituted a body to represent and strengthen the voice of journalists working in the region.

Mehraj ud Din Lone (ANN News) was unanimously elected President, while Aabid Nabi (Daily Excelsior) was chosen Vice President. Suhail Khan will serve as Secretary, Waris Fayaz (KNO – News Agency) as Spokesperson and Mohammed Ayoub as Treasurer.

The Association reiterated its commitment to upholding free, fair and responsible journalism while working collectively for the welfare of its members.

The office bearers assured that they would address the issues faced by journalists in Sopore and strengthen the association to ensure their professional interests are effectively represented.

The general members of the association, as per the statement, include Nadeem Qayoom (Voice TV Urdu),



Junaid Peer (KPS), Muneeb UI Haq (Varmul Post), Peerzada Tahir (Hindustan Reader/YB), Showket M. Lone (Hindustan Reader), Iqbal Amin (Greater Now), Junaid Bhat (Asian News Hub), Bilal Ahmed Dar

(Good Morning Kashmir), Adnan Dar (Kashmir Rays), Bilal Ahmed (Nida-e-Kashmir), Khan Jahangeer (JKNS), Yasir Najar (Kashmir Bulletin) and Aadil Nazir (Danik Save-ra). (KNO)

‘New Criminal Laws Exhibition’ enters its 2nd day

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Sep 12: The ongoing “New Criminal Laws Exhibition”, organized by the Economic Offences Wing (Crime Branch Kashmir) at JK Police Public School, Bema, entered its second day with continued zeal and enthusiastic participation from the public.

As per a statement, the three-day exhibition, which was inaugurated by the Lieutenant Governor of J&K on 11th September, aims to raise public awareness and understanding of the newly introduced criminal laws: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.



Following an overwhelming response on Day 1 with over 4,000 students and civil society members attending, today on Day 2 saw an additional 1,500 visitors from various walks of life, including concerned citizens.

The exhibition continues to serve as an

effective platform for engaging the public with vital legal reforms, promoting legal literacy, and fostering informed civic participation.

The closing ceremony of the event is scheduled for Saturday, 13th September 2025, and the general public

is cordially invited to attend.

The Economic Offences Wing (Crime Branch Kashmir) expresses sincere appreciation to all participants and stakeholders for their continued support in making this initiative a success.

DC reviews essential services, road connectivity

KT NEWS DESK

Doda, September 12: Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh Friday conducted a visit to Doda market to take stock of availability of essential supplies after giving relaxation of 2 hours for people to come out and get their supplies, etc.

He interacted with the Market Association and general public and assured them that all their issues and requirements shall be addressed on priority. He also visited Kandhote in Thathri Sub-division to take stock of damages caused to NH-244 and power infrastructure due to massive landslides in the area. Col (Retd) Ajay Shakur, GM NHIDCL briefed him about the ongoing restoration works and assured that the stretch shall be made roadworthy for ensuring that essential supplies be allowed.

He further reviewed the supply chain mechanism and uninterrupted transit of essential commodities and supplies to the Kishtwar District and subdivisions of Thathri and Gandoh.

EDITORIAL

LG Sinha's Transformative Initiative For Vulnerable

In a landmark step toward healing and recovery, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has unveiled a visionary initiative that promises to transform the lives of Jammu and Kashmir's most vulnerable families. The Memorandum of Understanding signed to construct 1,500 free homes for victims of floods, cross-border shelling, and terrorism marks a watershed moment in Jammu and Kashmir's journey toward stability and compassion.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed to construct 1,500 free homes for victims of floods, cross-border shelling, and terrorism transcends brick and mortar; it represents the restoration of dignity, security, and hope for those who have endured unimaginable loss. For years, families across the Union Territory have endured the trauma of displacement, their homes destroyed by natural disasters or violence. LG Sinha's recognition that "construction

of houses is more than just putting up a structure, and is about building dreams" captures the essence of this effort. Under his guidance, the project incorporates holistic support, including 15-year life insurance, monthly health check-ups, digital connectivity, and free internet access, ensuring these families are integrated into a framework of care and opportunity. The Lieutenant Governor's emphasis on modern, safe, and connected "Smart Houses"

demonstrates a forward-looking approach to rehabilitation. By partnering with organisations like HRDS India and BSNL, his administration has ensured that beneficiaries receive not only homes but also tools for education, communication, and growth. The provision for repainting homes every five years and regular volunteer engagement shows a commitment to long-term support, not short-term symbolism. This initiative highlights LG Sinha's empathetic

and pragmatic governance, a style that merges policy with compassion. In prioritising the needs of terror victims, flood-affected families, and victims of cross-border violence, he has sent a powerful message: the government stands with the people, especially in their most trying times. Through this bold and inclusive effort, LG Sinha has not only turned dreams into reality but has also reaffirmed the power of leadership that listens, cares, and acts.

15 September 2025: ITR Deadline What Every Taxpayer Should Know

Press Information Bureau

The 15 September 2025 deadline (extended from the usual 31 July) is for non-audit cases. This includes filers under ITR-1 to ITR-4.

Filing an Income Tax Return (ITR) is an important compliance requirement under the Income Tax Act. It enables individuals and entities to declare their income, report taxes paid, and claim refunds where applicable. Timely filing helps avoid penalties, ensures faster processing of refunds, and also serves as an official financial record for availing loans, obtaining visas, and fulfilling other financial requirements.

For FY 2024-25 (AY 2025-26), the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has extended the due date for non-audit taxpayers, including most individuals, Hindu Undivided Family (HUFs), and other entities not subject to audit, to 15 September 2025.

Non-Audit Tax Filing

A non-audit case is when a taxpayer's accounts are not required to be audited under the Income Tax Act. This generally includes:

Individuals and HUFs with income from salary, pension, house property, capital gains, or other sources.

Small businesses and professionals who opt for the presumptive taxation scheme (Sections 44AD, 44ADA, 44AE) and whose turnover does not cross the limit requiring audit.

Financial Year (FY):

The Financial Year is the year in which you earn your income. For example, if you earn income between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, that period is called Financial Year 2024-25 (FY 2024-25).

Assessment Year (AY):

The Assessment Year is the year immediately after the Financial Year, in which you file your Income Tax Return (ITR) and the government assesses (checks) the income earned in the previous year. For example, income earned in FY 2024-25 will be reported and assessed in Assessment Year 2025-26 (AY 2025-26).

IMPORTANCE OF FILING ITR

What is ITR and Who Should File?

An ITR (Income Tax Return) is a form to declare your income and taxes. You should file if:

Your income is above the basic exemption limit.

You want to claim refunds (for excess TDS deducted).

You need proof of income for bank loans, visa applications, or financial transactions.

Filing ITR goes beyond a statutory requirement and plays a vital role in strengthening both personal financial credibility and the nation's economy. It reflects rising incomes, employment, and the growing formalisation of the economy. For individuals, regular filing helps build creditworthiness, which is essential for availing loans, securing visas, and entering business contracts. It also enables taxpayers to claim refunds for excess taxes paid and ensures the carry-forward of losses for future setoffs.

For the government, ITR data is an important tool for policy planning, subsidy targeting, and broadening the tax base. It provides valuable insights into income patterns and economic activity, aiding in better governance. Subsequently, timely and accurate ITR filing contributes to a transparent, documented, and accountable economy, strengthening both compliance and financial inclusion.

Late Filing Fees

A late filing fee is levied if the return is furnished after the specified due date. A fee of Rs 5,000 is payable for returns filed after the due date. However, in cases where the total income does not exceed Rs 5 lakh, the late fee is restricted to Rs 1,000.

In addition, a delay in filing attracts 1% interest per month on the pending tax amount, in addition to the late filing fee.

Categories of ITR

The Income Tax Department notifies different ITR forms each year to suit various categories of taxpayers. Selecting the correct form is essential, as filing in an incorrect form may render the return defective. For FY 2024-25 (AY 2025-26), the following

INCOME TAX SLABS- OLD REGIME (FY 2024-25/AY 2025-26)			
Income Range	Individuals (<60yrs)	Senior Citizen (60-80yrs)	Super Senior Citizen (80+ yrs)
Up to ₹ 2.5 lakh	Nil	Nil	Nil
₹ 2.5 - 3 lakh	5%	Nil	Nil
₹ 3 - 5 lakh	5%	5%	Nil
₹ 5 - 10 lakh	20%	20%	20%
Above ₹ 10 lakh	30%	30%	30%

Source: Income Tax Department

forms are applicable to non-audit taxpayers, including individuals and small entities:

ITR-1 (Sahaj) – For Salaried Individuals

A salaried individual, as per the Income Tax Department, is a taxpayer whose income is earned from an employer in the form of salary, wages, allowances, perquisites, or pension and is chargeable under the head "Income from Salary."

Who Can Use ITR-1?

ITR-1 can be used by individuals who: Are Resident Individuals (Not Ordinarily Resident)

Have a total income up to Rs 50 lakh

Have income from: Salary or Pension, One House Property, Other Sources (bank interest, family pension), Agricultural income up to Rs 5,000

Who Cannot Use ITR-1?

ITR-1 cannot be used by individuals who: Have total income exceeding Rs 50 lakh Have income from more than one house property

Have income under the head Capital Gains (including short-term gains or long-term gains u/s 112A exceeding Rs 1.25 lakh) Are Directors in a company

Have held any unlisted equity shares at any time during the previous year Have any asset (including financial interest in any entity) located outside India

Have signing authority in any account located outside India Have income from any source outside India

Have income from business or profession Have deferred tax on ESOPs (Employee Stock Options)

Have income on which tax has been deducted u/s 194N

Have any brought forward loss or loss to be carried forward under any head of income

ITR-2 – For Individuals/HUFs (No Business/ Profession Income)

Individuals are natural persons who earn income from salary, pension, house property, capital gains, business/profession, or other sources and are taxed in their personal capacity.

HUFs (Hindu Undivided Families) are separate entities under income tax law consisting of all persons lineally descended from a common ancestor, including their wives and unmarried daughters. An HUF can earn income from property, business, or other sources, and it is taxed as a distinct "person" under the Income Tax Act.

Who Can File:

Individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who are not eligible to file ITR-1 (Sahaj)

Taxpayers not having income from "Profits and Gains of Business or Profession"

Taxpayers not having income in the nature of interest, salary, bonus, commission, or remuneration received from a partnership firm

Cases where the income of another person (such as spouse, minor child, etc.) is required to be clubbed with the taxpayer's income, provided the income to be clubbed falls under the eligible categories for ITR-2

Who Cannot File:

Individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) whose total income for the year includes income from "Profits and Gains of Business or Profession", and

Income is in the nature of interest, salary, bonus, commission, or remuneration received from a partnership firm

ITR-3 – For Individuals & HUFs With Business/Profession Income

Who Can File:

Individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) having income under the head Profits and Gains of Business or Profession

Individuals and HUFs whose income is chargeable to tax under the head "Profits and gains of business or profession" received from a partnership firm.

Who Cannot File:

Those eligible for ITR-1, ITR-2, or ITR-4

ITR-4 (Sugam) – For Presumptive Income Presumptive income, as per the Income Tax Department of India, refers to income that is calculated on a presumptive basis instead of maintaining detailed books of accounts.

Under the presumptive taxation scheme, the Income Tax Act allows certain taxpayers (small businesses, professionals, and transporters) to declare income at a prescribed rate of turnover or receipts, without the need to maintain regular accounts or undergo audits.

Who Can File:

ITR-4 can be filed by: Individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), and Firms (other than LLPs) who are residents

Those who have income from business or profession calculated on a presumptive basis

Income Tax Slabs - New Regime (FY 2024-25/AY 2025-26)	
Income Range	Tax Rate
Up to ₹ 3 Lakh	Nil
₹ 3 - 7 Laks	5%
₹ 7 - 10 Laks	10%
₹ 10 - 12 Laks	15%
₹ 12 - 15 Laks	20%
Above Rs. 15 Lakh	30%

Note: From FY 2025-26 (AY 2026-27), the income tax slabs under the New Regime have been revised. The zero-tax limit is now up to ₹12 lakh (with rebate), with new slab ranges notified in Union Budget 2025.

Source: Income Tax Department

Along with business income, they can also have salary or pension, income from one house property, income from other sources (such as bank interest, family pension, or dividend), and agricultural income up to Rs 5,000

Who Cannot File:

You cannot use ITR-4 if you: Earn more than Rs 50 lakh in a year Are a Director in a company Own more than one house property

Have capital gains (profit from selling shares, property, etc.), including long-term gains above Rs 1.25 lakh under Section 112A

Have held unlisted company shares at any time during the year

Own assets outside India or have foreign income

Have authority to operate a bank account outside India

Have deferred tax on ESOPs

Have any brought forward loss or loss to be carried forward under any head of income

Old vs New Tax Regime (For FY 2024-25 / AY 2025-26)

When filing an Income Tax Return (ITR), taxpayers are required to choose between the Old Tax Regime and the New Tax Regime. This choice determines how income will be taxed and whether deductions and exemptions can be claimed.

The Old Regime continues the traditional system of higher tax rates but provides a wide range of exemptions and deductions under the Income Tax Act, making it more suitable for individuals who plan their finances through investments and savings. In contrast, the New Regime, introduced in the Union Budget 2020, aims to simplify taxation by offering reduced slab rates with minimal exemptions. It is especially helpful for taxpayers who prefer a straightforward system without the need for detailed tax planning or documentation. From FY 2023-24 onwards, the New Regime has been made the default option, though taxpayers retain the flexibility to opt for whichever system benefits them more.

The old tax regime features higher slab rates, while the new tax regime offers lower slab rates.

Under the old regime, taxpayers could avail of a standard deduction of Rs 50,000, along with a wide range of exemptions such as those for investments, insurance, home loan interest, and others. In contrast, the new regime provides limited exemptions, including a standard deduction of Rs 75,000, deductions for employer's NPS contributions, and family pension deductions.

Regarding investments under Section 80C, the old regime allows deductions for investments in Provident Fund (PF), Life Insurance

Key Takeaways

- The last date to file Income Tax Returns (ITR) for FY 2024-25 (AY 2025-26) is 15 September 2025.
- Filing is now simpler with pre-filled forms and faster online processing.
- Over 7.28 crore ITRs were filed in AY 2024-25, showcasing rising digital adoption.
- Late filing attracts penalties and interest charges.
- File online at www.incometax.gov in with pre-filled details and simple Aadhaar OTP verification.

Corporation (LIC), Equity-Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS), Public Provident Fund (PPF), and similar instruments, up to Rs 1.5 lakh. The new regime does not permit these deductions.

In terms of medical insurance under Section 80D, the old regime allows deductions of up to Rs 25,000, which increases to Rs 50,000 for senior citizens. The new regime does not include provisions for such deductions.

For rebates, under the old regime, taxable income up to Rs 5 lakh results in no tax liability, whereas, under the new regime, the threshold for nil tax is increased to taxable income up to Rs 7 lakh.

As for the default option, the old tax regime is optional and must be chosen by the taxpayer, while from FY 2023-24 onwards, the new regime is the default, with taxpayers having the option to switch back to the old regime if it is more beneficial.

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How to File Your ITR

Log in at incometax.gov.in using PAN/ Aadhaar & password

Go to e-File > Income Tax Return > File Income Tax Return

Select AY 2025-26

Choose your applicable form

Review pre-filled details (salary, TDS, bank interest)

Add missing income/deductions & select tax regime (Old/New)

Submit return

GROWTH IN ITR FILING

Growth: Over 25% increase in ITR filings between AY 2022-23 and AY 2024-25

As per data released by CBDT, ITR filings have shown consistent growth over the years, reflecting rising compliance and widening of the tax base. For AY 2024-25, a record 7.28 crore ITRs were filed up to 31 July 2024, compared to 6.77 crore in AY 2023-24, registering a 7.5% year-on-year growth.

Out of the total filings, 72% of taxpayers (5.27 crore) opted for the New Tax Regime, while 28% (2.01 crore) continued with the Old Regime. The e-filing portal also handled record activity on the due date (31 July 2024), with 69.92 lakh returns filed in a single day. Importantly, the tax base continued to expand, with 58.57 lakh first-time filers joining in AY 2024-25.

Conclusion

The extension of the due date for filing Income Tax Returns for FY 2024-25 (AY 2025-26) to 15 September 2025 provides additional time for taxpayers to complete their compliance obligations. Data from CBDT shows that ITR filings have recorded steady growth, with 7.28 crore returns filed up to 31 July 2024, reflecting both increased digital adoption and widening of the tax base. The growing participation of first-time filers, alongside the majority opting for the New Tax Regime, indicates a shift towards simplified compliance and greater formalisation of the economy.

Timely and accurate filing of returns continues to play an important role in strengthening financial credibility for individuals and in supporting effective governance for the country. Rising ITR filings demonstrate the success of government initiatives aimed at ease of compliance, transparency, and expanding taxpayer participation in India's economic growth.

National Action For Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

Empowering sanitation workers for safety and dignity

Press Information Bureau

The National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme, launched in July 2023 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), aims to ensure the safety and dignity of sanitation workers by preventing hazardous cleaning and promoting safe, mechanized practices through trained and certified workers.

The scheme targets zero fatalities in sanitation work, eliminates direct contact with human faecal matter, ensures all cleaning is done with safety devices by skilled workers, strengthens Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs), and empowers workers through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and entrepreneurship.

The scheme is to be implemented in all 4800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the country, during the three years up to 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs. 349.70 crore[1].

Key Components of NAMASTE Scheme

Profiling of SSWs (Sewer/Septic Tank Workers): NAMASTE compiles a comprehensive database of SSWs by collecting their details from Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). Detailed profiling is conducted through dedicated profiling camps to gather essential information about SSWs.

Occupational Safety Training and PPE Kits Distribution: SSWs receive training on occupational safety and provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits to ensure their safety during work.

Support for Safety Devices to Sanitation Response Units (SRUs): SRUs engaged in hazardous cleaning operations are being equipped with necessary safety devices to enhance their safety and efficiency.

Health Insurance Coverage under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY: Identified SSWs and their families are being enrolled under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to provide a health safety net. The premium for those not previously covered, including manual scavengers and SSWs, to be funded through NAMASTE.

Livelihood Support and Enterprise Development: The Action Plan emphasizes mechanization and entrepreneurship by offering funding support and capital subsidies through the National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC). This includes assistance for SSWs, manual scavengers, and their dependents to acquire sanitation-related equipment and vehicles under the Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUY), fostering their transformation into Sanipreneurs. Additionally, capital subsidies for self-employment projects and skill development training (up to two years with a monthly stipend of Rs. 3,000) to be provided to identified manual scavengers and their dependents.

Convergence of MoSJE and

MoHUA Programs: NAMASTE aims to enhance coordination between the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to ensure the safety and welfare of SSWs. The Action Plan integrates financial resources from existing programs like Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), and National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC) to provide comprehensive occupational, social, and financial support to SSWs.

Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign: Extensive awareness campaigns being conducted by ULBs and NSKFDC, utilizing electronic and print media, hoardings at prominent locations, and social media platforms. These campaigns are in local languages, English, and Hindi to maximize outreach and inform SSWs about NAMASTE's interventions.

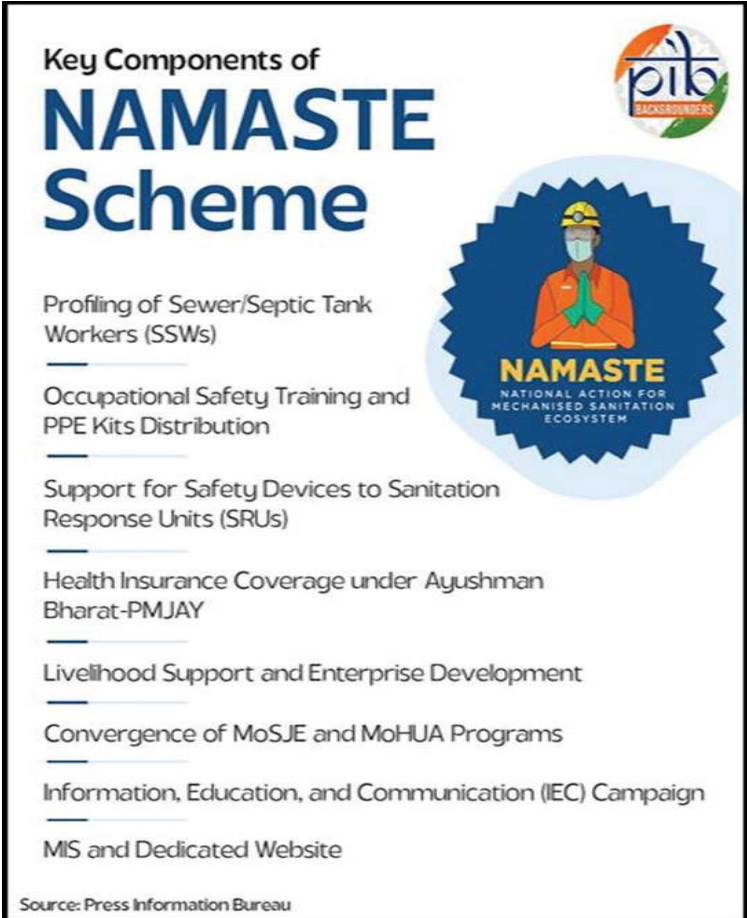
MIS and Dedicated Website: A robust Management Information System (MIS) being implemented, supported by a dedicated NAMASTE website, to ensure effective monitoring and data management of the program's initiatives.

Relevance of NAMASTE Scheme

The NAMASTE scheme is a critical initiative addressing the dire challenges faced by Sewer and Septic Tank Sanitation Workers (SSWs) in India, aiming to transform their occupational safety, health, and dignity through systemic interventions. The necessity and transformative impact of the NAMASTE scheme can be further exemplified through the following[2]:

Addressing Life-Threatening Occupational Hazards: SSWs are exposed to hazardous waste and extreme occupational risks, including toxic gases and physical dangers, while manually cleaning sewers and septic tanks, often leading to severe health issues or even loss of life. The NAMASTE scheme tackles these risks by promoting mechanization, which eliminates direct contact with faecal matter, significantly reducing morbidity and mortality rates. By providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety devices through Emergency Sanitation Response Units (ERSUs), the scheme ensures safer working conditions, protecting SSWs from the inherent dangers of their occupation.

Promoting Dignity and Social Security: SSWs often work in informal and unregulated conditions, facing social stigma and lacking access to basic protections like health insurance or financial stability. NAMASTE introduces transformative change by integrating SSWs into formal systems through profiling, providing health insurance under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY, and offering skill development and



Source: Press Information Bureau

livelihood support via initiatives like the Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUY). These measures empower SSWs with financial independence, social recognition, and access to welfare schemes, fostering dignity and improving their quality of life.

Driving Systemic Change through Mechanization and Convergence: The reliance on manual scavenging and unsafe practices underscores the urgent need for systemic reform in sanitation work. NAMASTE drives transformative change by prioritizing mechanization, equipping ERSUs with modern cleaning equipment, and fostering convergence between the Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). This collaborative approach leverages resources from programs like Swachh Bharat Mission and NSKFDC, ensuring sustainable, technology-driven sanitation practices that protect workers and enhance the efficiency of waste management systems across India.

Key Milestones Achieved

The NAMASTE scheme is revolutionizing the safety and livelihoods of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) by addressing their occupational hazards and socio-economic challenges through targeted interventions. With 84,902 SSWs validated, the scheme has made significant strides in formalizing their roles and enhancing their well-being.

Key achievements include:

Enhanced Safety Measures: To mitigate the life-threatening risks faced by SSWs, 45,871 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and 354 Safety Device Kits have been distributed to Emergency Response

Sanitation Units (ERSUs) across States and Union Territories, promoting safer working conditions and reducing direct exposure to hazardous waste.

Health and Social Security Coverage: The scheme has extended health insurance to 54,140 SSWs and their families under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and State health schemes, providing a critical safety net that ensures access to healthcare and improves their quality of life.

Economic Empowerment through Livelihood Support: A capital subsidy of Rs. 20.36 crore has been disbursed to 707 sanitation workers and their dependents for sanitation-related projects, fostering entrepreneurship and financial independence. Additionally, 1,089 workshops on the prevention of hazardous cleaning have been conducted to promote mechanization and safer practices.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Incorporation of Waste Pickers within NAMASTE Scheme

Waste Pickers are vital to India's solid waste management (SWM) ecosystem, significantly contributing to recycling efforts and reducing landfill waste, yet they face challenges like lack of formal recognition, poor working conditions, and limited access to social security. Despite being acknowledged in regulations such as the Second Labour Commission and the SWM Rules, 2016, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have not fully integrated Waste Pickers into waste collection, segregation, and recycling activities through Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). The Waste Pickers

component of the NAMASTE scheme seeks to address these gaps by formally integrating Waste Pickers into the solid waste value chain, enhancing waste management efficiency, promoting environmental sustainability, and improving their livelihoods. This initiative aims to provide formal recognition, access to financing, appropriate technologies, and a safe, sustainable work environment, while also linking Waste Pickers to social security and welfare schemes to enhance their overall well-being.

The Waste Pickers component of the NAMASTE scheme is tailored to tackle the challenges and needs of individuals engaged in collecting, sorting, and managing solid waste. It focuses on supporting Waste Pickers, Collectors, and Sorters, who are vital to the solid waste management system but frequently operate in informal and precarious conditions[3].

Waste Pickers have been added as target group under the scheme in June 2024. By August 2025, 37,980 waste pickers have been validated in various Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across the country[4].

Launch of Waste Picker Enumeration App[5]

On World Environment Day 2025, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC), launched the Waste Picker Enumeration App in New Delhi, marking a significant expansion of the NAMASTE scheme to include Waste Pickers alongside Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs). This initiative aims to profile 2.5 lakh Waste Pickers, providing them with occupational photo ID cards, health insurance under Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, skill development, capital subsidies, and support to strengthen Waste Picker Collectives for managing 750 Dry Waste Collection Centres (DWCCs). By formally recognizing Waste Pickers as vital contributors to India's circular economy, NAMASTE fosters safer working conditions, enhanced access to social protections, and sustainable livelihoods, driving an inclusive and resilient sanitation ecosystem.

Conclusion

The NAMASTE scheme, launched in July 2023, represents a transformative step toward ensuring the safety, dignity, and socio-economic empowerment of sanitation workers and Waste Pickers in India.

Progress made under NAMASTE scheme: 84,902 SSWs and 37,980 Waste Pickers have been validated; 45,871 PPE kits for SSWs & 354 Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units have been issued to States/UTs; 54,140 beneficiaries have been covered under Ayushman Bharat -PMJAY

Key Takeaways

- Till August 2025, the NAMASTE scheme has validated 84,902 Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) across the country.

- 45,871 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits have been delivered to SSWs and 354 Safety Device Kits to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) across States and UTs.

- 54,140 beneficiaries have been covered under Ayushman Bharat -PMJAY and State health scheme.

- On World Environment Day 2025, MoSJE, in collaboration with the MoHUA and the NSKFDC, launched the Waste Picker Enumeration App, with the aim to profile 2.5 lakh waste pickers.

and State health scheme; Capital Subsidy of Rs. 20.36 Crore released to 707 sanitation workers and their dependents for sanitation related projects. 1089 workshops have been conducted on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks. 568 Responsible Sanitation Authorities (RSAs) and 642 Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) have been constituted across the country.

The inclusion of Waste Pickers and the launch of the Waste Picker Enumeration App underscore its commitment to environmental justice and a resilient sanitation ecosystem. Through mechanization, inter-ministerial convergence, and robust awareness campaigns, NAMASTE is not only reducing fatalities and improving working conditions but also fostering sustainable livelihoods, making it a cornerstone of India's efforts to create an inclusive and equitable waste management framework.

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Finding Inspiration In Hard Times

What hurts can also heal—if we dare to face it fully

Faisal Hoque

The news is relentless at the moment.

In just the last few days, there have been headlines about price rises and job losses, about Israel bombing Qatar, the French government crumbling, Russian drones in Poland, and a new political assassination in the US.

Technology, which was supposed to make our lives easier, seems instead to be magnifying our problems. Serious people warn of the risk of AI taking over the world and making human beings extinct—and still we develop it unchecked. Social media is alive with howls of rage and polarization. Our phones buzz and ping without reprieve, external manifestations of the chaos inside.

We are exhausted and we are frightened. And we face our troubles alone, more alone than we have ever been, as community fractures and loneliness rises.

When Struggling Makes Sense

There is a taboo in our culture against struggling. Being unhappy is perhaps the last mortal sin.

And this taboo is actually one of the most exhausting parts of the hard times we live in right now. It's the source of the voice that tells us we shouldn't

be finding things hard. It's the source of the internal critic who tells us that we should always be grateful, that we should be calm, that we need to stay positive and upbeat and use a growth mindset to turn exploding bombs into a learning opportunity.

I've got nothing against gratitude or a growth mindset. As a matter of fact, I practice both daily and have written about it a fair amount. But there is also a place for grief and anger.

The truth is that life is hard right now.

In a world turned upside down, a world in which black is sold as white and good is insulted as evil, suffering is not a character flaw. Exactly the opposite, in fact.

Suffering is evidence that there is still something pure and true inside us. It tells us that our eyes can still see and our hearts can still feel.

In a world like ours, suffering is evidence that we remain alive to love and beauty and hope.

Staying With What Hurts

In Buddhism, there's a story about the two arrows that pierce human beings. We can think of the first arrow as the suffering that life directly throws up. It consists of things like physical pain,

grief when we lose someone we love, anger when we see injustice, and so on. In our context, the first arrow is the pain and anger and fear and sorrow we feel right now about how the world is.

The first arrow is inevitable. The second arrow isn't. The second arrow consists of the suffering we cause ourselves by how we react to the pain of the first arrow. Instead of simply feeling angry, we add the pain of thinking that we shouldn't feel angry. Instead of only the suffering of sorrow, we add the pain of resisting it, of thinking we are bad or weak for feeling it.

Our usual reflex, says the Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron, is to avoid the first arrow. We distract ourselves. We numb ourselves. We try to talk ourselves into feeling better.

But we all know how that goes: badly. The more we push it away, the more we distract ourselves, the more we will eventually suffer.

So instead, suggests Chodron, we might try leaning into the pain. What does this mean? It means having the courage to simply experience our suffering without pushing it away. One way of doing this is to try to meet our experience with curiosity instead of

commentary. If fear arises, we notice it: This is fear; I notice my breath is shorter. If grief swells, we give it space: This is grief, heavy in my throat.

And this kind of attention also reduces the suffering of the second arrow. Pain is unavoidable, but the layers of resistance, denial, and shame can be softened.

The Power of Pain

When we stay with our pain, something begins to happen.

Pain, you see, isn't just a weight. It's also information.

Our feelings—as philosophers and psychologists have long recognized—are just natural. They're also useful and even necessary for a well-lived life.

This is true of "negative" feelings as much as positive ones; for example, anger is hard to feel, but sometimes it is the right response, and it can motivate fighting against injustice.

When we stay with our grief and our anger, when we face it with honesty and tenderness, it ripens into a path to meaning. It tells us what matters and lights the path forward.

And that is why it matters that we stay with the pain. To stay with the pain means to stay with what matters. It means that we do not abandon our

values; instead, we have the courage to suffer for them.

This is not abstract theory. I write from hard-won experience. As I've written about before, this is exactly what happened to me when my teenage son was diagnosed with cancer. From pain came purpose.

The Gift of Meaning

Human beings have incredible, unimaginable strength. And the key to unlocking it is meaning.

Viktor Frankl gives us the most breathtaking proof of this when he writes of his experience in the concentration camps. The people who survived, he says, the people who remained whole, were those who found meaning in even those surroundings.

A person to love, a duty to fulfill, a vision of the future—just a single thread of meaning gives us the strength we need to endure almost anything.

Meaning doesn't erase or deny suffering. In fact, it may even magnify it. But meaning situates that suffering in a larger story. It roots us in what we love and reminds us why we fight.

Meaning is love refusing to give up. It is a candle lit in the darkness, a fist waved at the heavens. It is the strength

that allows us to say: This matters—and so do we.

Here are three small, ordinary practices that can help you access the power of meaning in your daily life:

Return to your body. Take three slow breaths, unclench your jaw, and place both feet firmly on the floor. Remind yourself: I am here. I can meet this moment.

Name your "why." When you feel overwhelmed, pause to recall what matters most—a person, a value, a cause. Write it down or speak it aloud.

Take one deliberate step. Choose a small action aligned with your values: Check in on someone vulnerable, offer time or resources, or protect an hour for genuine rest.

The world may still feel heavy. But meaning gives us the strength to bear its weight—and the energy to change it.

Autor is a management thinker and technologist. A best-selling author, Hoque is the founder of Shadoka, NextChapter, and other companies. His recent book, Transcend: Unlocking Humanity in the Age of AI, has been named a "must-read" by the Next Big Idea Club.

Source: Psychology Today

India-EU working to finalise ground-breaking FTA by year-end

PIB

New Delhi, Sept 12: India and the European Union are working with sincerity and commitment to finalize a comprehensive and balanced Free Trade Agreement that will benefit businesses and consumers on both sides, said Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal addressed the 65th Annual Session of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) today. The Minister noted that such an agreement cannot be a one-sided arrangement, as every negotiation involves a certain degree of give and take to ensure fairness and balance.

The Minister said that it is important not to let the search for a perfect deal become the enemy of progress, and stressed that the direction in which the negotiations are moving is extremely positive. He expressed confidence that the possibilities being unlocked through this process are immense and will open up opportunities for trade, investment, technology transfer, and deeper economic engagement.

The Minister said he is confident that a bold and forward-looking industry such as the automotive component sector, which has consistently demonstrated strength in earlier FTA negotiations, will find the

provisions being crafted under the India-EU partnership to be attractive and full of potential.

He expressed confidence that the automotive component sector, which has always lent strength in FTA negotiations, will find the arrangements being worked out between India and the EU attractive, exciting, and full of potential for businesses to grow, collaborate, innovate, and engage in research and development. The Minister underlined that the sector has consistently demonstrated resilience and foresight, not only by supporting India's domestic manufacturing base but also by integrating with global value chains.

Goyal said that the FTA will open new avenues for Indian manufacturers to partner with their European counterparts and with companies from other parts of the world, thereby encouraging joint ventures, technology partnerships, and collaborative innovation. He noted that India offers significant advantages in terms of cost competitiveness—be it in design, development, or R&D—and combined with the country's skilled talent pool, this will make India an increasingly attractive hub for global automotive companies. He added that such partnerships will help bring down costs, enhance productivity, create jobs



for Indian youth, and further position India as a leading centre for high-quality automotive component manufacturing.

The session was also addressed by the H.E. Maroš Šef ovi , Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency, European Union. He observed that India and the EU are negotiating a ground-breaking Free Trade Agreement with unprecedented momentum, describing the ongoing discussions as some of the most intensive and constructive ever held between the two

partners. He noted that while negotiations on an FTA had been attempted in the past, never before had the process reached such a level of seriousness, mutual trust, and shared ambition. The Commissioner said that efforts are being maximised to finalise the negotiations by the end of the year, in line with the commitment made earlier by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

He underlined that both sides are striving to put in place an economically meaningful package that balances the interests

of producers, exporters, and consumers in equal measure. He stressed that the objective is to arrive at a truly win-win agreement that not only facilitates the exchange of goods and services but also promotes investment, innovation, sustainable practices, and deeper cooperation between the two regions. He added that India is fast becoming a key engine of the global economy and that a strong economic partnership with India will add significant value to the European Union, just as Europe's technology and scale will benefit India's growth

story.

Goyal further underlined that the India-EU FTA will be a comprehensive economic partnership with strategic elements. He said that India will benefit from Europe's technology and innovation, while the EU will benefit from India's growth story, scale, and resilience. He also noted India's aspiration to increase vehicle penetration from 34 cars per thousand people today to significantly higher levels, creating opportunities for the auto component industry to expand globally.

The Minister recalled that as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said, the automobile industry has been the torchbearer of the Make in India programme. As India marks 10 years of Make in India, the Minister said this is an opportune time to aim higher, strengthen supply chains, build resilience, and contribute significantly to jobs, exports, and high-quality manufacturing.

The Minister praised India's resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that the country upheld every global commitment, from providing medicines and vaccines to over 100 countries, many free of cost, to ensuring availability of essential goods without profiteering. He said this earned India the trust of the world,

and today the country is looked upon as a reliable and trusted partner.

The Minister commended the recent GST reforms announced under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that reducing GST rates from 28 percent to 18 percent is a landmark reform and a huge relief for the auto industry. For tractors, GST has been reduced to 5 percent, giving a major boost to the agriculture sector. He said this reform deserves a standing ovation for the Prime Minister, as it will make spare parts more affordable, strengthen formalisation, generate jobs, and expand demand across the value chain. He stressed that the benefits must be fully passed on to consumers.

The Minister said that this round of GST reform is the biggest reform since Independence and every Indian stands to gain. He emphasised that there will not be a single citizen out of 1.4 billion who will not benefit from these reforms.

The Minister concluded by quoting Ratan Tata: "Take the stones people throw at you and build a monument." He said the sector and the nation must not be deterred by challenges, and with confidence, resilience and collective effort, India will continue to grow stronger.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Dargah Hazratbal

his walking stick amid the throng. Shazia Bano, who had travelled with her children from south Kashmir's Anantnag, shared that it is not just a tradition, but a moment when they renew their faith and love for the Prophet (SAW).

Moreover, the religious clerics, delivering sermons before the congregational prayers, urged people to follow the Prophet's teachings of compassion, truthfulness and service to humanity. The faithful also prayed for personal well-being, their families and lasting peace in the region.

Quranic verses echoed from loudspeakers as men, women and children stood shoulder to shoulder, their eyes fixed on the dome of Hazratbal glistening under the hot sun.

Additionally, the security arrangements had been tightened around the shrine, with medics and volunteers assisting the elderly and managing the swelling crowds.

Abdul Rashid, a shopkeeper selling prayer caps and other items outside the Hazratbal shrine, said days like this bring life to their stalls. "People come with devotion and they also buy something sacred to take back home as blessings. It keeps our livelihood alive." (KNO)

Processions, rallies

individual or organisation. It is about our collective devotion," said Shabir Ahmad, a shopkeeper from Anantnag. He said the green flags represent their love, and the message is one of brotherhood.

Meanwhile, security and traffic arrangements were put in place to ensure the smooth passage of the processions, which remained peaceful throughout the day.

Religious scholars who addressed the gatherings urged people to follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in their daily lives, describing his message as one of compassion, justice and harmony.

"The best way to honour our Prophet (SAW) is to embody his teachings—kindness, honesty and mercy towards all," said one of the clerics while addressing a gathering at Hazratbal in Srinagar.

Naats continued to echo from mosques and shrines, and illuminated streets reflected the fervour that swept across the valley. (KNO)

CM Omar, Dr Farooq

the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and other senior leaders, had the honour of witnessing the sacred glimpse of the Holy Relic, believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), after the prayers.

As per details collected by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), they prayed for lasting peace, prosperity and happiness for the people of Jammu and Kashmir while the Chief Minister's sons, Zamir and Zahir Abdullah, also accompanied the NC delegation.

Speaking to reporters after the prayers, Dr Farooq stressed the need for communal harmony, saying Hindus and Muslims should live in peace and harmony. "Everywhere, Muslims are being harassed," he said.

Expressing concern over the frequent closure of the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar, he said that it is unfortunate that Jamia Masjid remains shut on this auspicious day.

Meanwhile, the official account of the Chief Minister, J&K, on X, shared that the Chief Minister paid obeisance and offered prayers at Dargah Hazratbal on the occasion of the Friday following Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), praying for peace, harmony, and prosperity in J&K.

Similarly, a large gathering of devotees marked the occasion at Hazratbal, where emotional scenes unfolded as an ocean of worshippers raised their hands in prayer, seeking blessings and peace on the revered day. (KNO)

PNGRB proposes

ensure a reliable, safe, and competitive

supply of LPG from the existing Panipat-Jalandhar LPG Pipeline (PJPL). The project aims to connect bottling plants in Jammu's hinterland, thereby reducing road tanker traffic and alleviating congestion issues originating from Jalandhar and beyond to meet regional demand.

PNGRB initiated a suo motu proposal for the development of the Jalandhar-Jammu LPG pipeline to cater to the LPG requirements of bottling plants in the region.

"After completing the public consultation process and holding discussions with entities and stakeholders during the Open House, PNGRB has decided to invite online Application-cum-Bid for authorization of the Petroleum Product LPG pipeline to be developed from Jalandhar to Jammu, spanning approximately 230 km with a minimum system capacity of 0.30 MMTPA, including common carrier capacity throughout its economic life," the documents state.

An analysis of the project by Deloitte estimates that the pipeline will generate savings of Rs 231 crore , eliminate 0.4 million road tanker trips, and reduce carbon emissions by 0.42 million tonnes.

The study further reveals that the pipeline project would require an expenditure of Rs 830 crore. (KNO)

CP Radhakrishnan

BJP-led NDA.

On Tuesday, when he was elected as the vice president, his mother Janaki Ammal fondly recalled the story behind his name.

"When my son was born, the then President Radhakrishnan was in office. He was a teacher, and I too was a teacher. In his memory, I named my son after him. At that time, my husband looked at me and asked, 'are you giving this name because you want your son to become the President one day?'

After 62 years, just as my husband had said it has come true," she had told reporters in Tamil Nadu.

Radhakrishnan on Tuesday described his election to the second-highest Constitutional post as a victory of the nationalistic ideology and vowed to work towards making India a developed nation by 2047.

He won the vice presidential election by bagging 452 votes, while the opposition candidate, B Sudershan Reddy, polled 300 votes.

"The other side camp (opposition alliance) said that this (election) is an ideological fight, but from the voting pattern, we understand that the nationalistic ideology has emerged victorious," Radhakrishnan said in his first public remarks after the win.

"It is a victory for every Indian; we all have to work together. If we have to develop Viksit Bharat by 2047, which means we should not do politics in everything, now we will have to concentrate on development," he had said.

President Droupadi Murmu administers the oath of office of the Vice-President of India to CP Radhakrishnan during a swearing-in ceremony, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi, Friday, Sept. 12, 2025

A two-term member of the Lok Sabha from Coimbatore during the tenure of prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Radhakrishnan came close to becoming a Union minister, but had to lose out to fellow Tamilian Pon Radhakrishnan in 1998 after some confusion over his name by the then floor managers of the BJP.

Radhakrishnan joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as a teenager and rose through the ranks in the organisation and later in the BJP, gaining acceptance in the party and the state.

A member of the socially dominant and economically prosperous Kongu Vellalar Gounder community, he became the secretary of the BJP's Tamil Nadu unit in 1996 and served as the party's state unit president between 2003 and 2006.

An avid sportsperson, Radhakrishnan was a college champion in table tennis and a

long-distance runner.

He also enjoys cricket and volleyball.

Radhakrishnan is considered an untainted leader with rich political and administrative experience for the vice president's office and this would also prove useful as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

"Thiru CP Radhakrishnan Ji has rich experience as MP and Governor of various states. His Parliamentary interventions were always incisive.

During his gubernatorial tenures, he focused on addressing challenges faced by common citizens.

These experiences ensured that he has vast knowledge of legislative and Constitutional matters.

I am confident he will be an inspiring vice president," Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said after the NDA chose Radhakrishnan as the vice presidential candidate.

The Tamil Nadu leader is said to be held in high esteem across party lines in his state, resulting in the BJP giving him multiple gubernatorial assignments in Jharkhand, Telangana, Maharashtra and Puducherry.

Radhakrishnan's candidature also seeks to disarm the Opposition of a key political narrative, as he is the first OBC leader from South India to be named for the vice-president's office.

An official profile circulated by the NDA projects Radhakrishnan as a leader who is eminent, knowledgeable and untainted by any legal accusations.

Radhakrishnan's political innings started with his association with organisations such as the RSS and the Jan Sangh.

He took up student politics and has since used politics as a medium to serve the people.

Radhakrishnan's track record of holding electoral, organisational and constitutional responsibilities shows that he is set to create history as the vice president of India.

He was sworn in as the governor of Maharashtra on July 31, 2024.

Before this, he served as the governor of Jharkhand for nearly one-and-a-half years.

Born on October 20, 1957, at Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu, Radhakrishnan has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Starting as an RSS swayamsevak at the age of 16, he became a state executive committee member of the Bharatiya Janasangh in 1974.

Between 2004 and 2007, Radhakrishnan served as the Tamil Nadu BJP president.

In this role, he undertook a 19,000-km 'Rath Yatra' that lasted for 93 days.

CM Omar vows

this conference will be implemented at the earliest. My hope is that when we meet here next time, the population of Hangul and Markhor will have grown significantly," the Chief Minister said.

Recalling the words of eminent conservationist MK Ranjitsinh, he stressed that conservation is deeply tied to human well-being.

"Conservation is not only about animals—it is about human survival itself. Protecting Hangul, Markhor, or any threatened species is essentially about protecting life and the delicate ecological balance we depend upon."

Sharing his personal regret, Omar Abdullah noted that despite living close to Dachigam National Park, he had never seen a Hangul with a naked eye.

"I don't want a situation where our children and grandchildren know these species only through photographs in books, like the dodo or woolly mammoth. That would be a tragedy we must not allow," he warned.

The Chief Minister underlined the need for synergy between academic institutions and government agencies to ensure practical outcomes.

"Unless there is synergy between academic research and government implementation, we risk losing magnificent animals like the Hangul. Every species exists for a reason. When

they thrive, ecosystems thrive—and when ecosystems thrive, humankind thrives as well," the Chief Minister said.

Cautioning against complacency, he said that these species will not wait for files to move from one department to another. "We cannot afford bureaucratic delays. The findings of this conference must translate into action with urgency," he said.

The Chief Minister thanked international and national delegates for their participation and expressed hope that such conferences would be held more frequently.

The three-day event brought together more than 200 delegates, including eminent wildlife experts, conservationists, and biologists from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia. Participants shared research and strategies for conserving Hangul, Markhor, and other threatened ungulates of the Himalayan region.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister released a Vision Document titled 'Institute of Mountain Wildlife Sciences' and distributed awards and appreciation certificates to participants.

Others who addressed the gathering included Forest Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Vice Chancellor SKUAST-Kashmir Prof. Nazir A. Ganie, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Suresh Gupta and international expert Dr. Gonzalez.

Reiterating his commitment, Omar Abdullah concluded: "That is my hope, that is my belief, and I am sure that if we approach it the right way—as we saw success with Project Tiger and encouraging signs with Hangul and Markhor—that success will continue to grow."

Srinagar Police

271,275 BNS of PS Zakura.

A Flying Squad comprising of officials from the District Police, Civil Administration and the Food Safety Department has been constituted to carry out surprise inspections across the city. During these inspections, significant recoveries of rotten meat have been made and the items have been confiscated and destroyed as per protocol, police said.

J&K Police reiterated its commitment to safeguarding public health and ensuring that no individual or business indulges in activities that endanger the lives of citizens. Strict legal action will be taken against violators under relevant provisions of the law.

The general public is also requested to remain vigilant and report any such malpractices to the nearest police station or via helpline numbers. (KNO)

Northall United

is handled by Yawar Fayaz, Naveed Sufi and Showkat Ali.

In June this year, Jibran Khan, founder and owner of Zero Miles – Grill & Café, took over as President, bringing fresh energy and direction to the club.

"It is an honor to lead Northall United FC and Academy. Our goal is not just to win matches, but to build a strong grassroots foundation where young players can excel in football while continuing their education. In just two years, our team has made history, and we hope to inspire many more youngsters to follow their dreams", said Jibran Khan, President of Northall United FC.

Northall United's impact extends beyond the valley. Every year, 8–10 academy players represent Nationals, while several youngsters feature in Indian junior leagues. Recently, senior player Saahil Aijaz was signed by Elegant United FC, winners of the Kashmir Super League 2025.

The club, currently supported by Zero Miles – Grill & Café and DRM Public School Bandipora, remains true to its community-driven spirit, charging no fees from academy players while ensuring that education goes hand-in-hand with football training.

In just two years, Northall United FC has shown that passion, vision and grassroots

commitment can transform the football landscape in Kashmir, setting an example for others to follow. (KNO)

Vaishno Devi

News Observer (KNO), the Shrine Board expresses its gratitude to all devotees for their patience and understanding during the temporary suspension.

The resumption of the Yatra marks a reaffirmation of our collective faith and resilience and the Board remains committed to upholding the sanctity, safety and dignity of this revered pilgrimage.

J&K Govt allocates

both costly and stressful. Another CT machine at GMC Jammu will definitely ease things," shared Pooja Sharma, an attendant from Samba.

The government also plans to install MRI machines at GMC Baramulla, GMC Kathua, and GMC Rajouri, which will serve patients in North Kashmir, Pir Panjal, and Kathua. Until now, patients from these regions had to travel long distances to Srinagar or Jammu for scans.

"Travelling to Srinagar for an MRI was not only time-consuming but also expensive. With Baramulla getting its own facility, people of Kupwara, Bandipora, and Baramulla districts will save both time and money," said Mohammad Ashraf, a resident of Sopor.

A Cath Lab at GMC Doda has also been approved, a development expected to save lives in the Chenab Valley, where patients often had to be rushed to Jammu in emergency heart cases.

"This will be life-saving for people in Doda, Kishtwar, and Baderwah. In critical cardiac cases, even a few minutes matter. Now, patients won't have to travel 180 kilometres to Jammu," said Abdul Latif, a resident of Baderwah whose brother suffered a heart attack last year.

It is worth mentioning that a Cath Lab at GMC Anantnag has already been made functional, and work is underway to start an MRI facility there by year-end.

The government has also decided to strengthen Telemedicine services across J&K with 80 new units, aiming to connect patients in far-flung areas with specialists at tertiary care hospitals. "This will bridge the gap between rural areas and advanced medical care. Patients in border and hilly regions will be able to consult doctors without having to travel long distances," a senior health official said.

The series of diagnostic and treatment facility upgrades is being seen as a crucial step in reducing the dependence on private hospitals and easing the burden on existing government medical colleges.

With cancer, cardiac, and trauma cases on the rise in the Union Territory, patients and attendants believe these steps will not only save money but also save lives. (KNO)

Border residents welcome

connectivity will improve our standard of living. It is not just a house but a complete support system."

Officials said the initiative is expected to be completed in phases, prioritizing families who suffered the most damage. The project has been welcomed as a major step toward restoring normalcy and security for those living along the LoC.

Pertinently, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday presided over the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between HRDS India and the divisional administrations. "Construction of houses is more than just putting up structures. It is about building dreams and providing a fresh start for affected families," he said, adding that the initiative aims to support families whose homes were damaged by natural calamities and unprovoked shelling on civilian populations.

The HRDS India will provide three-bedroom "Smart Houses" with modern features ensuring comfort and safety.(KNO)

Stage set for PM's maiden visit to Manipur since 2023 ethnic clashes

PTI

Imphal, Sept 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to set foot in Manipur on Saturday, over two years after a deadly ethnic violence swept the northeastern state, and unveil projects to the tune of Rs 8,500 crore, officials said.

Modi will lay foundation stones for various development projects worth Rs 7,300 crore from Peace Ground in Churachandpur, where Kukis are in the majority. The PM will also inaugurate infrastructure projects totalling Rs 1,200 crore from Meitei-majority Imphal, they said. The prime minister's visit comes amid repeated criticism by opposition parties for not coming to the state following the ethnic strife between the Kuki and Meitei communities, which has left over 260 people dead and thousands homeless since May 2023.

The Manipur government had on Thursday evening put up a large billboard, announcing the PM's programmes at Churachandpur's Peace Ground and Kangla Fort in Imphal on Saturday.



The hoarding came up at Keisampat Junction, a key location in Imphal, which is also close to the BJP's state headquarters.

More such billboards were put up in the state's capital Imphal, ahead of Modi's visit.

Manipur has been under the President's Rule since February, following the resignation of chief minister N Biren Singh.

The state government on Thursday also issued an advisory,

asking the public attending the "VVIP programme" in Peace Ground not to bring "key, pen, water bottle, bag, handkerchief, umbrella, lighter, match box, piece of cloth, any sharp objects or arms and ammunition".

Another notification that did not mention the Prime Minister's name asked people to avoid bringing children below 12 years and sick persons to the venue.

The Manipur government

had earlier banned air guns in Churachandpur district in view of Modi's visit.

Meanwhile, security measures have been tightened in Imphal and Churachandpur district headquarters town, the officials said.

Both state and central forces' personnel were deployed in large numbers in and around the nearly 237-acre Kangla Fort in Imphal and the Peace Ground in Churachandpur, where a grand stage is being readied for the event. Central security teams, accompanied by state personnel, are conducting round-the-clock inspection of the Kangla Fort, and boats of the Manipur disaster management force have been engaged for patrolling the moats that surround the fort, they said.

Police and paramilitary forces have also been deployed and bamboo barricades constructed along the route leading to the Peace Ground.

Manipur's lone Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba described the PM's visit as a "very fortunate" one for the people and the state.

"It's a great fortune that Modi

will be listening to the hardships faced by the people... Manipur has had a history of violent clashes in the past. However, no prime minister has visited the state during such times and listened to people," the BJP MP said. Leading Kuki-Zo groups have also welcomed the Prime Minister's visit to Manipur, terming it as a "historic and rare occasion".

The Kuki-Zo Council, one of the organisations representing the community, claimed that the scheduled visit comes nearly four decades after a prime minister last came to the region.

"We place our trust in your leadership to heal our wounds, restore our dignity, and safeguard the future of the Kuki-Zo people," the council said, referring to Modi's visit.

Several other organisations representing the Kuki-Zo community also hailed the PM's visit, but opposed a planned dance programme as part of a ceremony to welcome him.

A women's organisation 'Imagi Meira' stated that Modi should direct officials to allow Meiteis to move along the National Highway and ensure their safety.

Fear of India's strength fuels tariffs: Bhagwat



PTI

Nagpur, Sept 12: Nagpur, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said tariffs were imposed on India out of fear of what might happen to them if the country became stronger. "Such measures are the result of a self-centred approach," he said without naming any country.

He was speaking at the 7th foundation day of Brahma Kumaris Vishwa Shanti Sarovar in Nagpur.

"People in the world are afraid of what might happen to them if India grows stronger and of what their own position will be. That's why tariffs have been imposed on Indian goods. But we have done nothing. When you are seven seas away and there is no connection, why the fear?" he asked.

US President Donald Trump has imposed a 50 per cent tariff on India, including a 25 per cent punitive duty for its Russian oil purchases. India has termed the tariffs

"unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

Bhagwat said human beings and countries will continue to face problems unless they understand their real self. "If we show compassion and overcome fear, we will have no enemies," he said.

The RSS chief said if humans change their attitude from "me" to "us", all issues will be resolved.

"The world today is looking for solutions, as it has been unable to find a way forward due to its incomplete vision. It is impossible for them to find the way because of their 'only me' approach," he said," he added.

Bhagwat said India is capable of finding solutions to the world's problems and showing the way forward.

The RSS chief said India is great and that Indians must strive to be great as well. He said India is big and it wants to grow bigger.

Bhagwat said Indians embody a strong sense of belongingness and remain happy and content even in times of scarcity.

SC flags hostile discrimination against persons with disabilities

PTI

New Delhi, Sept 12: Flagging the hostile discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, the Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre whether measures were taken to provide "upward movement" of such meritorious candidates if they secured more than the cut-off for the unreserved category.

The apex court also directed a nationwide monitoring of all state-run care institutions housing persons with cognitive disabilities to be undertaken under the name and style of "Project Ability Empowerment" by eight National Law Universities.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta delivered its verdict on the pleas seeking judicial intervention for addressing the systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities and ensuring enforcement of statutory safeguards.

The bench dealt with the aspect of reservation under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and said it was imperative to make a positive interpretation



of "reservation" as provided under Section 34 of the Act.

Section 34 of the Act deals with reservation in employment for persons with disabilities.

The bench referred to an important facet of reservation to persons with disabilities and the grave discrimination being faced by them, as against those who face discrimination as a result of a societal setup.

"The latter category of persons is entitled to social reservation under Article 16 of the Constitution of India, which provides an

upward movement in case the person belonging to such reserved category performs well in the evaluation process and stands higher in merit above the cut-off for the unreserved category," the bench said in its 65-page verdict.

It noted such a meritorious candidate would automatically move up to the unreserved category, leaving the reserved seat vacant to be occupied by a candidate from the reserved category who scored less in the evaluation process.

over Rs 7,300 crore at Churachandpur," the CS said at a press conference.

The PM will also inaugurate multiple development projects worth more than Rs 1,200 crore at Imphal.

"The PM's September 13

visit to Manipur will pave the way for peace, normalcy, and growth in the state," he said. The prime minister will interact with internally displaced people in Churachandpur and Imphal, he added.

Govt announces annual licensing policy for opium poppy cultivation for 2025-26 crop year

PIB

New Delhi, Sept 12: The Union Government on Friday announced the annual licensing policy for crop year 2025-26 during the Opium Crop Year from 1st October, 2025 to 30th September, 2026, of license for cultivation of opium poppy, for the farmers in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

As per the general conditions enshrined in the policy, nearly 1.21 lakh farmers are estimated to be eligible for the grant of licenses for opium cultivation in these states. This represents a 23.5% increase over the number of licenses actually issued in the previous crop year. The policy thus brings approximately 15,000 additional farmers into the fold, who are expected to benefit from opium cultivation this year.

The Central Government continues to ensure adequate supply of alkaloids to meet medical and palliative care



needs. Concurrently, efforts are underway to augment processing capacity through indigenous and self-reliant measures, with a view to meeting the requirements of alkaloids for the production of essential narcotic drugs.

Key features of the annual license policy include: Retention of existing opium gum cultivators who have achieved an average morphine yield (MQY-M) of 4.2 kg per hectare or above; and existing opium gum cultivators with morphine yields between 3.0 kg and 4.2 kg per hectare are now eligible to cultivate unlanced poppy straw under the Concentrate of Poppy

Straw (CPS) method, with a five-year license validity

Furthermore, the digitization of cultivators' data since 1995-96 has enhanced inclusivity, enabling marginal farmers from past years to access licenses by meeting the prescribed eligibility and relaxed criteria.

The Government proposes to incentivise high-performing farmers, who have achieved yields of 900 kg/hectare and above of unlanced poppy straw, by offering them the option to switch to the traditional method of opium gum cultivation. This transition is intended to promote higher yields of opium from

their holdings, while also serving as a positive reinforcement mechanism to reduce the risk of diversion from the field. Simultaneously, the Government will suspend licenses for the crop year 2025-26 for farmers under CPS cultivation who did not meet the prescribed Minimum Qualifying Yield (MQY) of 800 kg/hectare during the previous crop year (2024-25).

The Government has been actively working to upgrade the capacities of its Opium and Alkaloid Factories. Notably, this year, the Government Alkaloid Factory at Neemuch has achieved WHO GMP certification. The policy seeks to balance Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) for government-regulated alkaloid units, while simultaneously supporting Indian pharmaceutical companies in alkaloid APIs and formulations. By leveraging their technical expertise and brand credibility, the initiative aims to promote the "Make for World" vision.

Blood Cholesterol vs Brain Cholesterol: Difference and impact on memory & health

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Sept 12: Cholesterol gets painted as the villain in health conversations. It's linked to clogged arteries, heart disease, and lifestyle diseases that scare many households. But here's the twist: cholesterol is not just a "bad fat." In fact, without it, the brain wouldn't work the way it does. Nearly a quarter of the body's cholesterol lives inside the brain, where it powers memory, learning, and nerve cell communication. The interesting part? Blood cholesterol and brain cholesterol are two very different players, each with its own role in health and disease.

Two different worlds: Blood vs brain cholesterol

Cholesterol in the bloodstream and cholesterol inside the brain may share the same name, but they don't interact directly. The

brain is sealed off by a protective shield called the blood-brain barrier, which does not allow cholesterol from the blood to pass through. This means the brain manufactures its own cholesterol independently. In short, blood cholesterol is the courier for the body, while brain cholesterol is the architect for the mind.

Brain cholesterol

About 20-25% of the body's cholesterol sits in the brain. Its main task is to support synapses - the connections between nerve cells. These connections act like bridges where signals jump from one neuron to another, making it possible to learn new skills, recall a childhood song, or even recognise a familiar face. If brain cholesterol drops too low, these bridges weaken, and memory begins to falter. Scientists have linked imbalances in brain cholesterol to serious conditions like Alzheimer's and



Parkinson's disease, where memory and movement both break down.

Blood cholesterol

While the brain makes its own supply, blood cholesterol cannot be ignored. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL), commonly referred to as "bad cholesterol," builds up in blood vessels and restricts oxygen-rich blood

from reaching organs, including the brain. Over time, this raises the risk of strokes and memory decline. But, research adds another layer: in older adults, slightly higher cholesterol levels sometimes appear protective. This suggests that the story of cholesterol and cognition is not just black and white, but age-dependent.

The age factor

In midlife, high cholesterol is a strong risk factor for cognitive decline and dementia later on. But in later years, some studies hint that higher cholesterol may actually support brain resilience. One explanation is that the ageing brain may use cholesterol differently, perhaps needing more of it to maintain its nerve connections. This is why cholesterol's role in memory and health is best understood through the lens of time; what harms a 45-year-old might help a 75-year-old.

Statins and the memory debate

For years, people feared that cholesterol-lowering drugs like statins might damage memory. Early reports sparked concern, but recent large-scale studies have calmed those worries. Evidence now shows that statins do not cause dementia or long-term brain changes. In fact, by controlling high cholesterol, they may indirectly lower the risks of stroke and vascular dementia. This reminds us that context matters: treatment for blood cholesterol often protects the brain, even if the connection isn't immediately obvious.

Disclaimer

This article is meant for informational purposes only and should not be taken as medical advice. For personal health concerns, it is important to consult a qualified healthcare professional.

British Parliament panel opens inquiry into impact of India-UK FTA

PTI

London, Sept 12: The House of Lords International Agreements Committee has opened an inquiry this week into the impacts and implications of the UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), concluded during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Britain in July.

The cross-party panel, which includes British Indian Conservative peer Baroness Sandy Verma, is seeking evidence from experts and stakeholders as part of the parliamentary process before the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) can come into effect.

With a target to double bilateral trade to USD 120 billion by 2030, the CETA has been pitched by the Prime Minister Keir Starmer-led government as a "landmark agreement" that will increase trade by 25.5 billion pounds and UK GDP by 4.8 billion pounds annually in the long run.

"As we undertake a new programme of evidence gathering, covering the terms of the FTA, its potential benefits and disadvantages, and provisions for key UK sectors, among other issues, we encourage anyone with experience or expertise in this area to come forward and share their views with the full knowledge that they will have value and are welcome," said Lord Peter Goldsmith, chair of the International Agreements Committee. It comes as



Starmer prepares for his first visit to India as UK PM next month, when he is set to join Modi at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) scheduled for October 7-9. The House of Lords committee is seeking evidence on a set of specific aspects including: the potential benefits and risks of the FTA for the UK; how the agreement will affect sectors across the whole of the UK; the impact on consumers in the UK; the broader economic, social, and environmental impacts of the agreement; interaction with the UK's trade and industrial strategies; the implications for the UK-India relationship; and the wider geopolitical context of the agreement. The deadline for the public call for submissions in

writing is October 14, with the committee highlighting that it is keen to hear from a diverse range of individuals and organisations.

In the following stage, a select group of individuals and trade representatives will be invited to give oral evidence on a tailored set of topics before the committee.

The House of Lords International Agreements Committee is tasked with scrutinising all of the country's treaties that are laid before Parliament under the terms of the UK's Constitutional Reform and Governance Act. Its inquiries result in the publication of a report to be tabled in Parliament as part of the ratification process.

China's newest aircraft carrier, the Fujian, sails through Taiwan Strait

AFP

Beijing, Sept 12: China said on Friday that its third and newest aircraft carrier, the Fujian, recently sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait to carry out "scientific research trials and training missions" in the South China Sea.

Beijing has ploughed billions of dollars into modernizing its military in recent years, a trend that has unnerved some governments in East Asia despite China insisting its aims are peaceful.

China has two carriers in operation – the Liaoning and Shandong – with the Fujian currently undergoing sea trials. China's navy said on Friday that undertaking cross-regional trials "is a normal part of the aircraft carrier's construction process". It is "not directed at any specific target", a spokesman for the Chinese navy, Leng Guowei, said in a statement.

However, its transit through the sensitive Taiwan Strait was intended to signal "China's rise as a strong military power, and beyond that, a maritime great power", said Collin Koh, a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "It's to flex China's newfound military strength and send a veritable signal



to potential adversaries," he said. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said Friday it had used "joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance means to fully grasp the situation and responded accordingly".

Japan's defense ministry said that on Thursday afternoon it had identified three Chinese naval ships advancing southwest in waters approximately 200 kilometers (124 miles) northwest of one of the disputed Senkaku Islands, known in Chinese as the Diaoyu Islands.

"Among these, the Fujian aircraft carrier was confirmed by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force for the first time," it said in a statement.

Japan said in July that China's intensifying military activities could "seriously impact" its security, citing

the first confirmed incursion by a Chinese military aircraft into its airspace last August in an annual threat assessment.

China said that a coast-guard fleet had "patrolled within the territorial waters of the Diaoyu Islands" on Friday. Last year, Chinese vessels sailed near the Japanese-administered islands a record 355 times, according to Tokyo.

Expanding its reach Compared to the other seas, the South China Sea "presents a more challenging environment with harsher conditions, making the trials more rigorous" for the Fujian, said Song Zhongping, a Chinese military commentator.

After undergoing sea trials and completing further adaptive training, the Fujian will likely be commissioned into active service, Song said.

The Soviet-built Liaoning is China's oldest aircraft carrier, commissioned in 2012, while the Shandong entered service in 2019.

Analysts at Washington-based think tank CSIS have said the Fujian is expected to feature more advanced take-off systems, allowing the Chinese air force to deploy jets carrying larger payloads and more fuel.

China has stepped up a massive expansion of its naval forces in recent years as it seeks to grow its reach in the Pacific and challenge a US-led alliance.

The US Department of Defense said in a December report that China numerically has the largest navy in the world, with a battle force of more than 370 ships and submarines.

Beijing said in June that its Liaoning and Shandong carrier formations conducted combat drills in the western Pacific Ocean, unsettling regional neighbors including Japan.

A Taiwanese security official also said that month Beijing had deployed its two aircraft carrier groups around the island in May.

The Chinese Communist Party has refused to rule out using force to seize control of Taiwan, a democratic, self-ruled island that China insists is part of its territory.

Nepal protest death toll rises to 51: Police

AFP

Kathmandu, Sept 12: At least 51 people were killed during violent anti-corruption protests in Nepal this week, police said on Friday (September 12, 2025) in an updated toll, as the full scale of chaos that toppled the government emerges. Talks continue among the President, protest representatives, key potential figures who may lead an interim administration and the army – which has imposed a curfew and taken charge of the streets.

At least 21 protesters were among those killed, mainly on Monday (September 8, 2025) during a police crackdown on demonstrations against a government ban on social media, corruption and poor governance. On



Tuesday, protesters set the Parliament ablaze, KP Sharma Oli resigned as Prime Minister, and the army then took charge of the streets.

Nepal's army said on Friday (September 12, 2025) that had recovered more than 100 guns looted in the uprising, during which protesters were seen brandishing automatic rifles.

Police spokesman Binod Ghimire told AFP that "51 people have died so far this week in the protests, including at least 21 protesters and three policemen."

More than 12,500 prisoners who escaped from multiple jails countrywide during the chaos remain on the run, he added.

Rs 25 billion loss to Nepal's hotel industry

PTI

Kathmandu, Sept 12: Nepal's hotel industry, a vital revenue earner of its tourism-driven economy, has suffered a loss of over Rs 25 billion after nearly two dozen hotels across the country were vandalised, looted, or torched during recent student-led anti-government protests, according to a media report on Friday.

Among the worst hit is the Hilton Hotel in Kathmandu, which alone reported damages exceeding Rs 8 billion, My Republica news portal reported, quoting a statement issued by the Hotel Association Nepal (HAN). Many other leading domestic and international brand hotels located in Kathmandu Valley, Pokhara, Butwal, Bhairahawa, Jhapa, Biratnagar, Dhangadhi, Mahottari, and Dang-Tulsipur also bore the brunt of the violence.

Australia failing to combat persistent anti-Muslim hate: Report

AFP

Sydney, Sept 12: Australia has failed to tackle persistent and intensifying Islamophobia, a government envoy said Friday, calling anti-Muslim hate a "deeply ingrained societal challenge".

At a news conference in Sydney unveiling the results of a year-long inquiry, Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia Aftab Malik said that incidents had soared in recent years. "The reality is that Islamophobia in Australia has been persistent, at times ignored and other times denied, but never fully addressed," he said.

Without any remedies, "Islamophobia has intensified over the past two decades". Among the report's 54 recommendations to parliament and government were stronger measures to ensure accountability for hate speech and

greater support for victims.

"Islamophobia is not only interpersonal, it is also institutional and structural," Malik added.

It also called for an "independent review" of the country's counter-terrorism laws as well as an inquiry into the cause and solutions of anti-Palestinian racism.

"From vile, hate-filled graffiti, the vandalism of Muslim property, and the verbal, as well as physical, violence towards Muslim bodies, Islamophobia is a part of everyday life for Muslim communities in Australia," the report said.

Malik, appointed last year as the inaugural holder of the envoy post, shared the experiences of a Muslim family who were approached by a stranger on the train telling them he would "love to kill them all".

Mandaviya sets athlete-first vision, aims for India among top-10 sporting nations

PTI

New Delhi, Sept 12: Union sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday said Indian sport must place athletes at the centre of every decision, as he set out a long-term roadmap to push the country into the world's top-10 sporting nations.

Mandaviya said the government's ongoing reforms from Fit India and Khelo India to the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) were designed to build a holistic ecosystem where athletes, not administrators, remain the priority.

"Earlier, federations often focused more on their disputes than on athletes, but now our priority is to make athletes the epicentre of sports," Mandaviya said at the PlayCom Business of Sports Summit 2025.

"The Bill also ensures greater representation of women in sports, as we are committed to increasing women's participation.

"Sports governance should not be about creating disputes but about resolving them. That is why we have included provisions for immediate dispute redressal in the Sports Governance Bill. Special provisions have been created for athletes to safeguard their interests," he added.

The National Sports Governance Bill, 2025, which received presidential assent last month,



mandates the creation of a National Sports Board to oversee all federations, including the BCCI. It also ensures greater representation for women and clearer dispute resolution mechanisms.

"We want the best model, but it must be our own model. There is abundant talent across the country, and this talent must be given opportunities through the creation of a strong sports ecosystem. To ensure good governance, we introduced the Sports Governance Bill, which is athlete-centric," said the Minister.

He further outlined India's long-term ambition.

"We have also laid out a 10-year plan and a 25-year plan in line with the vision given by Prime Minister Modi ji-our target is to make India a developed

nation and to place India among the top 10 sporting nations in the world. These plans are ready and will be implemented soon, with corresponding policy changes to support them," he added. Indian Olympic Association president PT Usha urged that India's future lies in grass-roots development.

"Talent is not confined to big cities or academies. It is in the smallest towns and remotest villages. A child running barefoot to school. A girl playing kabaddi in her backyard. What they need is opportunity, proper training, nutrition, facilities and above all encouragement from parents and teachers," Usha added. Mandaviya, who inaugurated the summit, later visited different sports stalls to take a look and feel of the innovations and facilities on display.

Movies Schedule
Saturday, 13th September 2025

 The Conjuring Last Rites (A) English With English Subtitles 10:40 AM, 04:40 PM, 07:30 PM	 Demon Slayer Infinity Castle (UA13+) Japanese With English Subtitles 09:45 AM, 04:05 PM English - 07:15 PM Hindi - 12:55 PM	 Baaghi 4 (A) Hindi - 01:30 PM	 Mirai: Super Yodha (UA16+) Hindi - 06:15 PM
 Harmukh (U) Kashmiri and Partly Kannada With English Subtitles - 03:50 PM	 Heer Express (UA/13+) Hindi - 10:10 AM	 Love You Vietnam (UA16+) Hindi - 01:05PM	

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