



Centre steps in to clear stranded apple trucks on Sgr-Jmu highway

- » Union Minister Gadkari chairs high-level meeting
- » CM Omar seeks uninterrupted movement of fruit-laden trucks
- » 2,800 trucks cleared via Mughal road in past two days
- » Heavy vehicle movement from Sgr-Jmu today

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Sept 16: Amid growing public outrage in Kashmir Valley over the stranding of apple-laden trucks along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway (NH-44), the Union Government stepped in on Monday to address the escalating crisis. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, chaired a high-level review meeting in New Delhi to assess the situation. As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the meeting was attended by



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, his cabinet colleagues, senior bureaucrats from Jammu & Kashmir, and officials from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). Following the meeting, Gadkari reaffirmed the government's commitment to restoring the highway to full operational capacity at the earliest. "We are determined to restore this vital national highway to full strength at the earliest, ensuring safety and convenience for all road users," Gadkari stated in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

He added that NHAI teams are working tirelessly to keep the highway functional despite relentless rains and a major landslide.

"A two-lane temporary diversion has been built, and traffic movement has resumed. Over a dozen excavators and more than 50 earthmovers are deployed round the clock for clearing and repairs," he said.

An official spokesperson said that Chief Minister Omar

Abdullah urged the Union Minister to ensure uninterrupted passage for heavy vehicles. Omar emphasized that while road maintenance and blacktopping are important, they should not come at the cost of prolonged disruption to vital traffic movement.

"Blacktopping can wait for its turn. But large vehicles, especially 4-axle and 5-axle trucks, cannot be diverted through the Mughal Road. This is the only viable route for them. With a huge number of trucks stranded on the Kashmir side alone, clearing this backlog is crucial," the Chief Minister said.

The CM further said that the fruit season is at its peak, and continued delays in transportation are causing significant losses to growers and traders.

He stressed that while small vehicles could be diverted, NH-44 must remain open for heavy traffic until all stranded vehicles are cleared. He recommended that blacktopping work be | [More on P6](#)

PM Modi-led regime determined to make India great nation by 2047: Amit Shah

» Directs law enforcing agencies to be ruthless against drug mafia

» Praises CBI, urges ANTF heads to arrange extradition of fugitives

KNO Monitoring Desk

New Delhi, Sept 16: Asserting that the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target of 2047 to make India a fully developed and great nation, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that to achieve this goal country has to be fully secure.

Addressing the second national conference of heads of Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) of States and Union Territories here, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "PM Modi has set forth the vision of creating an India by 2047 that will be the



world's number one in every aspect and fully developed — a nation secure enough that no one can penetrate. For this, our youth are the biggest hope, and if they are

determined, nothing is impossible, as they are the foundation of any nation."

The Union Home Minister said that the government led by PM Modi is determined

to wipe out the drug menace from the country and is making all-out efforts to achieve this goal.

He asked the law enforcing agencies to adopt a ruthless and strategic approach to dismantle the drug supply chain. "The time has come to bring those people within the ambit of the law who sit abroad and run the drug trade in the country," Shah said, adding, "The CBI has done very good work for this. I appeal to all heads of the ANTF that with the help of the CBI, they should make the arrangement for the extradition of fugitives here. This will not only help in breaking the narcotics gangs but also terrorism gangs too." | [More on P6](#)

Remain alert to deal with invisible challenges: Rajnath to Armed Forces

PTI

Kolkata, Sept 16: Asserting that the nature of warfare is continuously evolving, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday exhorted the Armed Forces to go beyond the traditional concepts of war and remain alert and ready to deal with invisible challenges.

He said that the recent



global conflicts have underlined the relevance of a "technology- | [More on P6](#)

Parl committee visits Pahalgam to discuss tourism revival

'Efforts on to restore normalcy after terror attack'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pahalgam, Sept 16: Parliamentary Committee on Commerce delegation led by its Chairperson, Dola Sen, interacted with stakeholders in

Pahalgam on Tuesday to review the challenges faced by the tourism sector in the aftermath of the terror attack in April earlier this year.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Sen, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the committee has been touring different parts of Jammu and Kashmir to | [More on P6](#)

Losses rising as transport costs triple, prices fall: Apple growers

'Rs 1,200 cr already lost'

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Sept 16: Freight charges for apple consignments in Kashmir have tripled from Rs 100 to over Rs 350 per box, even as market rates for apples have crashed by nearly half due to non-transportation on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. This has prompted desperate growers to demand unhindered movement of fruit trucks and urgent government intervention to save the industry.

The growers, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News

Observer (KNO), said transporters have hiked charges per box from Rs 100 earlier to Rs 300–350, citing the closure of the national highway and diversion through the longer, hilly Mughal Road.

"On one side, our apples are not reaching markets, and on the other, transport costs have tripled", said Faisal War, one of the transport in-charge at Sopore's Asia's second-largest fruit mandi.

Tantry Tajamul, a seasoned grower from Sopore, said, "The market has also collapsed due to the glut. Delicious apples, which fetched Rs 1,000–1,300 per box earlier, are | [More on P6](#)

Committed to maintain peace, security: IGP



KNO

Srinagar, Sept 16: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Zone, V.K. Birdi Tuesday chaired a security review meeting at PCR Kashmir to assess the prevailing security situation across the Kashmir Zone.

A police spokesman in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) | [More on P6](#)

Extend telecom services to far-flung villages: CM Abdullah

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sept 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday chaired a review meeting on strengthening telecom and digital communications infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, with a particular focus on extending services to far-flung villages, dark zones and railway tunnels.

The meeting, attended by Minister for Information Technology



Satish Sharma, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the

CM Dheeraj Gupta, several Administrative Secretaries, and officials of BSNL, discussed the status of ongoing projects

and the challenges delaying their execution.

Underlining the significance of connectivity as a bridge to progress, the Chief Minister said robust mobile and internet services are essential for effective governance, quality education, accessible healthcare, vibrant tourism and overall public welfare. Officials from BSNL briefed the meeting on the progress of the Amended BharatNet Project | [More on P6](#)

Vaishno Devi Yatra to resume today

KNO

Katra, Sept 16: The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) on Tuesday announced that the pilgrimage to the holy shrine will resume from September 17, 2025 (Wednesday), subject to favorable weather conditions.

In a statement on X, the Board has advised devotees to remain updated through official communication channels regarding the status of the Yatra.

"Following the cloudburst at the Ardhuwari section, rescue operations were immediately | [More on P6](#)

'Save Apple, Save Kashmir': NH blockade sparks outcry

Pol leaders accuse admin of neglect; seek relief, storage facilities, traffic restoration

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Sept 16: Amid growing outrage over disrupted movement of fruit-laden trucks, the political parties on Tuesday backed growers and urged

urgent steps to restore highway access and safeguard the Valley's fruit industry.

Srinagar Member of Parliament Aga Ruhullah voiced concern over the prolonged closure of the highway during the peak apple season, warning that the disruption is inflicting heavy losses on growers.

Speaking at the Fruit Mandi in Shopian, he alleged that halting fruit trucks appeared to be an attempt | [More on P6](#)

SWASTH NARI SASHAKT PARIVAR ABHIYAAN

17th September to 2nd October 2025

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

"Resolved to Serve, Nation first the Inspiration...75 years"

#SwasthNariSashaktParivar

Countrywide Medical and Health Camps, Inauguration of the 8th Rashtriya Poshan Maah, & Distribution of Maternity Benefit under Pradhan Mantri Mantru Vandana Yojana

Special Services:

Provision of medical and health services for women

- Check-up for ENT, Eye, Blood Pressure, Blood Sugar and Dental check-up
- Anemia and Sickle Cell Anemia Screening with Counseling
- Screening for Tuberculosis (TB) and Cancer
- Antenatal check-up for pregnant women
- Telemedicine facilities and vaccination services

Components of Healthy Lifestyle

- Reducing obesity with 10% reduction of Sugar and Edible oils
- Promotion of local and regional food
- Early Childhood Care & Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices
- Promotion of Menstrual hygiene
- Distribution of Take Home Ration (THR)

Distribution of Digital Cards and Special Registration

- Mother and Child Protection (MCP) Card
- Sickle Cell Card
- Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana enrollment
- Registration of beneficiaries in Poshan Tracker

Active Participation of citizen

- Blood donation camp
- Nikshay Mitra Volunteer Registration
- Organ Donor Registration

Swasth Naari Sashakt Parivaar, Yahi hai Viksit Bharat ka Aadhaar

Women and Children may Contact their nearest Ayushman Arogya Mandir, Community Health Centre, or Anganwadi Centre to avail these services

Issued in public interest by:
Health & Medical Education Department, J&K

DIPK-6301/25

Govt committed to strengthen water services across J&K: Rana

Reviews measures to address water woes in Habbakadal constituency

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana Tuesday convened a meeting with senior officials of the Jal Shakti Department to address the ongoing water supply challenges in Habbakadal Constituency and its adjoining areas.

During the meeting, Rana emphasized the need for urgent and sustained interventions to improve water distribution and service delivery.

He directed officials to prepare and implement a structured water supply roster aimed at ensuring timely and predictable distribution of water supply to all areas within the constituency.

To provide immediate relief in water-stressed areas, the Minister directed to install ten new hand pumps, particularly in localities where piped water



supply remains inconsistent.

The Minister also underscored the importance of upgrading critical water infrastructure, including ageing pipelines, pump

stations, and filtration systems.

Rana reaffirmed the Omar Abdullah Government's commitment to strengthen water services and infrastructure across

Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in urban areas like Habbakadal facing supply constraints.

Officials were instructed to identify existing bottlenecks and submit a phase wise plan for infrastructure modernization to ensure a reliable and sustainable water supply system.

The meeting also agreed on the construction of a new water reservoir in Habbakadal, aimed at enhancing storage capacity and bolster the area's water security.

In response to the damage caused by recent floods, the Minister also directed immediate desiltation and restoration of the ghats at Nawakadal and Alikadal.

During the meeting, MLA Habbakadal, Shamim Firdous conveyed the concerns of the local residents, particularly in light of recurring water shortages and the damage to water infrastructure caused by recent floods.

COPU reviews Audit Paras of I&C Department

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: The Committee on Public Undertakings of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Tuesday held a meeting at the Assembly Complex, Srinagar, to review audit paras pertaining to the Industries & Commerce Department.

The meeting was chaired by Committee Chairman Ali Mohammad Sagar and attended by members including Saifullah Mir, Bashir Ahmad Veeri, and Saif Ud Din Bhat.

Also present were Principal Accountant General KP Yadaw, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce Vikramjit Singh, DG Expenditure Sajad Hussain, Director Handicrafts & Handloom Mussarat Islam, MD SIDCO/SICOP Pradeep Singh, MD JK Cement Vikram K Gupta, GM SICOP Waseem Bashir Dev, and Director Finance Reyaz Hussain.

The Committee held a detailed discussion on Audit Para 5.3



relating to JK Cements Limited and examined issues such as low capacity utilization of the cement grinding-cum-packing unit at Samba.

At the outset, the Chairman called for a comprehensive report on the alleged failure of JK Cements Limited to fully utilize the Samba unit and effectively market its cement to private parties and government departments, which had resulted in an operating loss of Rs.1.26 crore during 2017-18.

He Instructed that responsibility be fixed on officers for

lapses in ensuring smooth operations of the unit and directed that detailed information be submitted regarding account maintenance, asset valuation, and plans for revival of the unit.

Emphasizing the need to tap Jammu & Kashmir's industrial potential for revenue generation and job creation, the Chairman called for sustainable measures to strengthen industrial units across J&K.

The Committee also directed the concerned departments to submit status reports on operations and defunct units in J&K.

FDCL Board agrees to adopt RAS

Rana chairs meeting in Srinagar

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Minister for Forests, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana Tuesday chaired the Board meeting of Forest Development Corporation Limited (FDCL) here.

The Board, during the meeting held detailed deliberations on key administrative, financial and strategic matters concerning the Corporation's operations and future trajectory.

During the course of the meeting, the Board approved the proposal to outsource human resources for FDCL in order to enhance operational efficiency and streamline workforce management.

The Balance Sheet for the financial year 2023-24 was also formally approved by the Board after thorough review, reflecting the Corporation's

financial performance and progress over the past year.

In connection with SRO-43 cases, the Board agreed for adoption of the RAS and directed the Managing Director to submit a comprehensive analytical report outlining its potential impact and implementation framework.

Further, the addition of new members to the Board was given formal approval, with a view to bringing in fresh perspectives and expertise to support FDCL's evolving role.

The Board also took significant strategic decision to diversify the functional scope of FDCL.

The Board agreed in principle to explore potential ventures in allied sectors such as ecotourism and creation of commercial assets under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. In this regard, the Managing

Director was tasked to prepare and submit a detailed project report to assess viability and roadmap for execution.

To ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Corporation, the Managing Director was also directed to proactively identify and develop revenue-generating avenues that would help stabilise and strengthen FDCL's economic health.

Additionally, in order to protect the Corporation's legal and financial interests, the Board directed the Managing Director to pursue all pending court cases with renewed focus and urgency. The Board emphasised on shared commitment towards repositioning FDCL as a dynamic, self-sustaining public sector entity, aligned with the broader goals of sustainable forest management, ecological conservation and economic development.

CSR initiative

DC dedicates ambulance to Kathua people

KT NEWS DESK

KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 16: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma Tuesday dedicated an ambulance to the people of the district, donated by the Welspun Group under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The dedication ceremony was held at the DC Office Complex. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the generous contribution of the Welspun Group and extended gratitude for its support in strengthening healthcare facilities at the district level.

"The ambulance will play a vital role in timely evacuation and transportation of patients during medical emergencies, thereby ensuring better outreach and effective service delivery," the DC said. He further stressed that partnerships under CSR contribute significantly in augmenting public services and complement government efforts in welfare delivery. The ambulance will be operated by the Health Department to ensure its optimal use for the benefit of patients across the district.

On behalf of the donor company, Vice President Welspun Group, Brigadier (Retd) Inderjeet Singh Chauhan formally handed over the keys of the ambulance to the Deputy Commissioner.

JKJA organizes technical training prog

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy (JKJA), under the guidance of the Governing Committee, organized a one-day technical training programme on strengthening digital capacity within the judicial system.

The sessions were chaired by Anoop Sharma, Registrar IT, and Sonia Gupta, Director, JKJA and brought together senior experts from the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Pune who delivered comprehensive sessions on critical components of the e-Courts Project.

The training emphasised on modernising case management systems, data monitoring, and digital filing processes, with the objective of equipping staff with updated technical skills essential for effective integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in judicial functioning.

The programme commenced with an address by Jagdish Chhailkar, Scientist-F, who introduced participants to the upgraded features of Case Information System (CIS 4.0) and explained how its advanced functionalities can streamline court procedures and improve accessibility.

This was followed by Ashish Shiradhonkar, HOD COEE and Scientist-F, who spoke on the e-Courts Project, outlining its nationwide implementation and impact on ensuring uniformity and efficiency across courts.

In the subsequent session, Bharati Jadhav, Scientist-D, delivered a presentation on Data Centre operations, Virtual Machines, and Replication systems, stressing their importance for ensuring security, reliability, and continuity of judicial data.

Munishwar Bajolia, Scientist-D, then addressed the

gathering on e-Filing and the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS), highlighting the role of these platforms in enhancing transparency, speeding up case processing, and enabling seamless coordination between courts, police, and other justice sector institutions.

This was followed by a session conducted by Amol Avinash, OIC-Infra and Scientist-F, who spoke on NJDG Intra, establishment tagging, JSON import, and data monitoring tools. He emphasized how these digital solutions support real-time analytics and enable better management of judicial resources.

The concluding technical session was conducted jointly by Wasim Khan, Senior Technical Officer, and Tajamul, Developer, who provided hands-on insights into practical aspects of system development, troubleshooting, and user support in the judicial ICT framework. They emphasized the importance of continuous monitoring, adaptive solutions, and user-oriented development in sustaining the digital transformation of courts. Their session blended technical depth with practical demonstrations, enabling participants to gain a clearer understanding of real-time challenges and solutions in judicial technology platforms.

The programme remained highly interactive throughout the day, with participants actively engaging in discussions, seeking clarifications, and sharing their experiences, which enriched the overall learning environment.

The JKJA reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a technology-driven judiciary and to conducting regular training programmes for strengthening institutional capacity.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXCISE COMMISSIONER, J&K EXCISE & TAXATION COMPLEX, RAIL HEAD JAMMU / SOLINA SRINAGAR

E-mail:excise.commr@JK.gov.in

Subject: Verification of Character and Antecedents of Candidates recommended under the waiting list for the post of sub -Inspector in the Finance Department (advertised Vide Notification No. 04 of 2020 dated 16.12.2020 Under item No.121)
Reference Finance Department Civil Secretary J&K's letter No FD -ESTB /13/2024-03-01-part (1) Dated -09-09-2025.

NOTICE

The following Candidate who has been recommended under the waiting list by the J&K Service Selection Board for appointment to the post of Sub-Inspector (advertised Vide Notification No 04 of 2020 Dated :16-12-2020 under item No 121),pursuant to letter No,JKSSB -Scry /12/2024-06(E-7479108) Dated : 21-07-2025 is hereby directed to submit his e-mail ID and Contact Number detail in the Establishment section of the Excise Commissioner,J&K ,Jammu in person or an e-mail ID :excise.Commr@jk.gov.in within a period of 21 days positively for uploading the same on the Employee Verification System (EVS),Failing which it shall be presumed that he is not willing to take up his appointment as Sub -Inspector in the Department and shall forfeit the right of appointment without any further notice :

S.No. 1	Name of the candidate	Father's Name	Address	Category	Cadre
1.	Neeraj Digra	Krishan Lal Digra	H .No.76 upper Barnal Town ,P.O .Muthi ,Jammu -181205.	SC	Jammu.

By order of the Excise Commu,J&K .

(Ankit Gupta) JKAS
Technical personal -Assistant
To the Excise Commissioner, J&K

Dated 13-09-2025
No:EC /Adm/ Appt/ of Sub -Inspector/3631-33

DIPK-6289/25
DATED: 16-09-2025

LOOK OUT NOTICE

No:-CB /Look out Notice/2025/61316-36

DPHQ UDHAMPUR Dated:15.09.2025

As requested by SHO P/S Chenani that on 11-09-2025 applicant Namely Mukham Din S/O Jalal Din R/o Satyalta,Tehsil Chenani District Udhampur lodged a report at p/s Chenani to the effect that on 08-09-2025 at about 1200 hrs, applicants niece namely Shamim Akhtar D/o Abdul Rashid age 13 years who had been living with him since childhood,went missing from applicant's home.Applicants has conduct her search,but she not been traced out. Accordingly,a case FIR No.86/2025 U/S 137(2) BNS has been registered at P/S Chenani and investigation Started .The Photograph with description roll of missing girl is as under :-



Description
Name =Shamim Akhtar
AGE =13 yrs
Complexion= Whitish
Hair =Black
Height=5'2"
Dress= green colour Kameez and green colour Salwar

It is therefore requested that have a sharp lookout may please be maintained and if traced out or any clue leading to the whereabouts of said missing

person is received an information may kindly be shared on the below mentioned Telephone -No's /Fax/ e-mail address for further Course of action.

E-mail:sspoudh@jkpolice.gov.in
Fax:01992-270027
Phone :01992-276915
PCR -Udhampur:01992-276915
SHO PS Chenani:- 9419134268

DIPK-6285/25
DATED: 16-09-2025

SSP Udhampur

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT. GROUND WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN,NOWSHARA SRINAGAR.

E-mail: hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in.

Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

EXTENSION NOTICE 12TH

Subject: Construction of 01 No. 200mm Nominal Dia Casing Production Well at Sheep Breeding Farm Khimber District Srinagar.
Reference: This office Fresh e-NIT No. 06-JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2025-26, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/25-26/Camp./1321-31, dated: 15-05-2025. Bearing Tender ID No. 2025_PHE_277195_1.
Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 15-09-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM are extended as per the details given below: -

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	24-09-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	25-09-2025 11.00 AM

NOTE:

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

No:-JS-PHE/GWDS/25-26/Camp./6752-61
Dated: 15-09-2025

DIPK-6286/25
DATED: 16-09-2025

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Irfan Khan, resident of Zainakote Shaltang Ghat, Srinagar, hereby inform the general public that I intend to change the name of my son in the school records from Hamaas Hasan Khan to Fahad Hasan Khan. If any person has any objection to this name change, they may kindly contact the authorities at Foundation World School, Ellahibagh, Srinagar, within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of this period, no objections shall be entertained.

Irfan Khan
Zainakote Shaltang Ghat,
Srinagar

NH-44 closure fallout....

2,200 fruit-laden trucks cleared via Mughal road

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Sep 16: Divisional Commissioner Anshul Garg on Tuesday said the administration is working on a priority basis to ensure the smooth movement of fruit-laden trucks from Kashmir, while also maintaining the supply of essential commodities into the valley.

Speaking to reporters in Shopian, the Div Com confirmed that 2,200 fruit-laden trucks were successfully evacuated via the Mughal Road during the past 24 hours.

He said the government is sensitive to the concerns of fruit growers and traders and is making every effort to minimise their losses during the ongoing harvest season.

Garg undertook a comprehensive visit to Peer Ki Gali Mughal Road to ensure the smooth movement of fruit trucks. He visited the



Fruit Mandi in Shopian and interacted with growers, traders, and transporters to assess the difficulties faced in transportation.

"The administration is there for the people. Our top priority is to clear the stranded fruit-laden trucks so that produce reaches the markets on time. At the same time, we have to ensure that essential supplies, including

food grains and fuel, continue to reach the valley without disruption," he said.

The Div Com added that 10-type trucks are being allowed movement via Mughal Road as part of a coordinated approach to ease congestion on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44), which continues to face disruptions.

"All government departments are working in close coordination. Timing relaxation is being given from the Shopian side so that as many fruit-laden vehicles as possible can move out. However, we also need to balance it with the requirement of essential commodities coming into Kashmir. That is why a one-day up, one-day down traffic schedule is being followed," he said.

Garg assured the fruit growers that the administration is committed to ensuring a hassle-free transportation season. He directed concerned officials to remain in constant touch with farmers and traders to resolve their issues on priority. "Efforts are being made to fully restore traffic on NH-44, which is vital for the valley's economic activity," he added.

The Div Com said the Mughal Road is being used

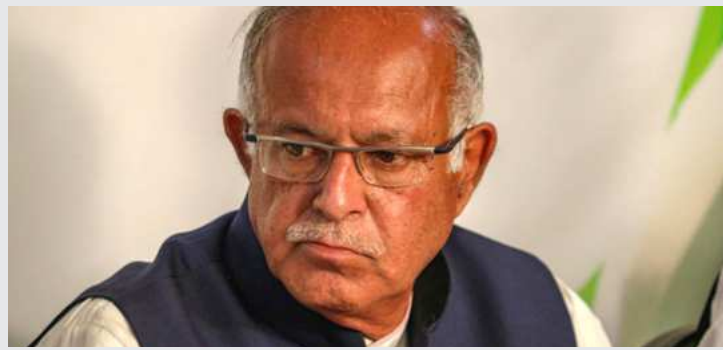
extensively to divert fruit trucks, thereby preventing further losses. He urged all stakeholders to adhere to traffic regulations and designated movement timings to maintain order and ensure continuous flow along the Mughal Road.

The restoration work on the National Highway (NH), he said, is being carried out on a war footing to enhance connectivity.

Addressing concerns about damages incurred due to delays, the Divisional Commissioner said the government has already initiated steps to assess the losses suffered by fruit growers due to prolonged highway disruptions.

"The damage assessment process will be taken forward, and we are hopeful that adequate compensation will be provided to the affected farmers," he said—(KNO)

Dedicate Mughal road for heavy trucks: Karra



MUBASHIR ALAM WANI

Srinagar, Sep 16: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra on Tuesday urged the government to dedicate the Mughal Road exclusively for heavy vehicles to ease the crisis faced by fruit growers and transporters due to prolonged closures of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

Speaking to reporters at the party headquarters here, Karra said thousands of trucks carrying fruit had been stranded for days now, leaving produce damaged and growers devastated. "If these vehicles return, it will be waste material. The losses are colossal, and the growers as well as transporters are under severe stress," he said.

The Congress leader also voiced strong environmental concerns, arguing that the widening of NH-44 by blasting mountains has destabilised ecology, triggering recurring landslides. "We have challenged nature, and this is punishment from nature. Without tunnelling, this road will remain a failure," he said.

Karra, the MLA from Central Shalteng constituency, said the problem was not just logistical but environmental. "This highway has surrendered. We have challenged nature by blasting mountains and ignoring ecology. Landslides are inevitable, and this is nature's punishment," he said, adding that widening projects had 'failed' to factor in environmental sustainability.

The JKPCC chief said the crisis had hit multiple green industries, including tourism, mutton, horticulture, and transport, warning that the economic damage in the coming months will be "very bad" if immediate corrective measures are not taken.

Karra expressed solidarity with the affected families, saying the horticulture sector, which is the backbone of Kashmir's economy, has been pushed to the brink.

He announced that Congress would soon prepare a comprehensive programme regarding compensation for fruit growers and transporters—(KNO)

AIP leaders protest against blockade



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Sep 16: Police on Tuesday detained several leaders of the Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) after the party staged a protest in Srinagar against the prolonged blockade on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, which has left thousands of fruit-laden trucks stranded.

Scores of AIP activists led by MLA Langate Sheikh Khursheed assembled at Press Colony and held a sit-in demonstration, raising slogans of "Save Apple, Save Kashmir."

Protesters carried placards, highlighting that the continued halt of apple consignments has devastated the

Valley's horticulture sector.

Speaking to reporters, Sheikh Khursheed said the delay in clearing trucks was causing heavy losses to growers. "Lakhs of families depend on horticulture for survival. Keeping apple consignments stranded for days amounts to an economic assault on Kashmir," he said, urging authorities to intervene immediately.

However, several AIP protesters were detained during the protest.

The details shared by AIP revealed that those held include MLA Langate Sheikh Khursheed, Chairman PAC Ishtiyaz Qadri, Party Spokesperson

Firdouse Baba, senior leaders Ajaz Ahmad Lone, Professor Naseer Rather, DDC Khursheed Ahmad Dar, Spokesperson North Kashmir Adv. Shahnawaz Mir, former BDC Chairmen Showkat Ahmad Pandit and Bashir Ahmad, Adv. Muzaffar, and Sheikh Tariq.

Meanwhile, AIP's Chief Spokesperson Inam Un Nabi, in a statement, criticised the detentions, alleging that the government was "trying to silence those raising genuine concerns of growers," and said the party would continue its campaign until the highway is cleared for apple trucks—(KNO)

Nursing students protest against INC college derecognition

RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Sep 16: Students of the Royal Institute of Paramedical Sciences, Ganderbal, staged a protest on Tuesday, blocking the road and demanding justice after the Indian Nursing Council (INC) withdrew national recognition for their college.

The INC withdrew its approval after an inspection found serious deficiencies under Section 14 of the Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947.

As per the order, degrees obtained from the institute after March 2025 will be valid only within Jammu and Kashmir and will not be accepted for national recruitment exams such as NORECT, CRE, ESIC, and RRB.

Students said the decision has jeopardized their future and accused the college administration of remaining silent. "INC has withdrawn recognition for our college. Now, we cannot apply for jobs outside J&K or sit in national-level exams," said one student. "We got admission here through BOPEE,

and only today we came to know that our college is not INC-recognized. We appeal to the administration to fulfill our demands so that our future is not destroyed."

Another protesting student said, "We have spent lakhs of rupees on our education, and now we are being told our degrees will have no national value. Who will be responsible for our careers?"

Parents, who had joined the demonstration, also expressed anguish. "Our children were admitted through proper government channels, yet today they are being pushed into uncertainty. Authorities must intervene immediately to safeguard their future," one of the parents said.

Meanwhile, responding to the issue, College Administrator, Dr. Mohammad Isaq said the institute's state registration remains valid. "Regarding INC registration, we will address the matter urgently. We appeal to students not to panic, he assured—(KNO)

Sgr Airport to celebrate 'Yatri Seva Diwas' today

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Sep 16: As part of Yatri Seva Diwas, the Officiating Director of Srinagar International Airport, Anil Kumar Gupta, announced on Tuesday that the airport will celebrate the day tomorrow with a host of passenger-focused initiatives aimed at enhancing traveller experience.

During a media briefing at the Airport Ceremonial Lounge, Vinod Jeldi, DGM Operations said the airport, under the motto "Suraksha Sahit Seva", is organizing a special program in line with government guidelines to improve passenger facilitation.

Gupta said this year's celebration will feature cultural programs,

quizzes and painting competitions with a patriotic theme, highlighting the spirit of the day.

"Passengers arriving at the airport will be welcomed with gestures of hospitality, while health camps, blood donation drives and awareness initiatives will also be organized," he said.

He added that a tree plantation drive will be conducted with participation from local dignitaries and senior citizens. "Photo booths will be installed at strategic locations for travellers to capture memorable moments. Passenger feedback will be collected to further improve airport services and ensure smoother journeys," Gupta said.

He noted that these initiatives reflect AAI's

commitment to passenger comfort, safety, and satisfaction, while strengthening the connection between the airport and the community. He added that the day will also serve as a platform to showcase AAI's ongoing efforts to make Indian airports inclusive, sustainable and traveller-friendly.

It is worth mentioning that Yatri Seva Diwas is an annual initiative by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), celebrated on September 17, to enhance passenger experience and reinforce its commitment to traveler-centric services. Srinagar Airport is among several airports across India participating in the observance—(KNO)

CM Omar reviews development of emerging tourist destinations



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Sep 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the development of emerging tourist destinations across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, Director Tourism Kashmir Raja Yaqoob Farooq, MD JKTDC Shreya Singhal, Director Tourism Jammu, representatives from BISAG-N, and other concerned officials, both in person and through virtual mode.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister emphasized the need to initiate site-specific Tourism Development for the identified destinations with focus on Master Plan for each destination. He highlighted the importance of creating dedicated solid and liquid waste management systems to ensure environmentally sustainable tourism. He also underlined the need to have Project Management Unit in place

with adequate staff to strengthen institutional mechanism. He called upon Tourism Department to furnish the proposals for cabinet approval in earnest.

The Chief Minister further stressed the importance of establishing multi-tiered coordination among tourism authorities, local bodies, line departments and between J&K Government and Government of India to ensure smooth execution of projects as per time lines.

On the occasion, a presentation was given on the tourism potential of emerging destinations and the employment opportunities they could generate for local youth.

The Chief Minister urged the concerned departments to ensure that while developing emerging destinations, a careful balance is maintained between Economy, Ecology, and Equity (the 3E principle).

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also launched the Tourism App which would help tourists and all interested to explore J&K tourism destinations, facilities available and host of other relevant information.

CS reviews flagship schemes implementation

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Sep 16: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Tuesday convened a high-level meeting to review the progress of flagship schemes being implemented by major departments including Housing & Urban Development (H&UDD), Rural Development (RDD), School Education, Social Welfare, Health & Medical Education (H&ME), Revenue, Skill Development (SDD), Industries & Commerce (I&C), and Cooperatives.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Planning Development & Monitoring Department; Administrative Secretaries of the concerned departments; Director General, Planning; Director Planning; and other senior officers.

During the review, the Chief Secretary took a detailed appraisal of both physical and financial progress under each scheme, assessed achievements vis-à-vis the set objectives, and examined timelines for completion.

For Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD) projects under AMRUT 2.0 including 65 Water Supply Schemes, 3 Sewerage & Septage Management projects, and 22 projects for rejuvenation of water bodies were reviewed. Progress on preparation of GIS-based master plans for major towns, the Jal Hi Amrit initiative, PMAY-U 2.0, and sanitation projects under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) also came up for discussion.

With respect to the Rural Development Department (RDD) the review covered livelihood generation under Rural Livelihood Mission, with special focus on converting potential groups into "Lakshpati Didis." Progress under SBM-G (Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen) was also discussed, including Solid & Liquid Waste Management, Grey Water Management, construction of IHHLs and Community Sanitary Complexes, Plastic Waste Management, Faecal Sludge Management, and establishment of Gobardhan units. In the School Education Department scheme implementation of PM SHRI scheme was reviewed, under which 396 schools are to be transformed with the establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs, STEM and Robotics Labs, ICT facilities, smart classrooms, and the introduction of vocational



education.

The progress of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Poshan 2.0, and Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) was deliberated over for their implementation through the Social Welfare Department.

The Chief Secretary reviewed implementation of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and its components, progress under PM-ABHIM, and the ongoing works for completion of AIIMS Awantipora through the Health & Medical Education Department.

The Revenue Department schemes included SVAMITVA for generation of property cards, digitization of land records, geo-referencing of cadastral maps, and computerization of the registration process were assessed. Schemes of Skill Development Department (SDD) the progress of PM Vishwakarma, and the National Scheme for ITI Upgradation was reviewed. The Chief Secretary directed the sanctioning and disbursement of loan cases under PM Vishwakarma to be scaled up to one lakh beneficiaries from the current 13,756 applications. The implementation of the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme was discussed. The scheme focuses on MSME formalization, establishment of MSME Health Clinics, Entrepreneurship & Skill Development programmes, and related initiatives.

Underscoring the importance of outcome-oriented governance, the Chief Secretary impressed upon officers to ensure regular monitoring, smooth execution, and timely completion of these schemes. He stressed that the original objectives of these flagship programmes must be realized on the ground to deliver maximum benefit to citizens.

EDITORIAL

J&K Industry Leaders' Commendable Step For Economic Revival

The engagement between industry bodies in Jammu and Kashmir and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce marks a pivotal moment for the region's economic future. The presentations by PHDCCI, KCCI, and FCIK underscore a unified vision: strategic reforms, infrastructure development, and sector-specific support are urgently needed to unlock J&K's immense potential. Their proposals call for pragmatic and inclusive policy action. The demand for

a Special Economic Zone in Srinagar, modernised industrial estates, and a dedicated logistics corridor reflects the need to overcome decades of infrastructural neglect. The repeated disruptions of the Srinagar-Jammu Highway, especially the ongoing blockade, have exposed the vulnerability of J&K's trade arteries. A dry port and all-weather logistics infrastructure are not merely aspirational but essential for stability and growth. Equally critical is the revitalisation of key sectors such

as handicrafts, tourism, and agriculture. The alarming decline in handicraft exports, from Rs 1,162 crore to Rs 733 crore in just a year, demands immediate intervention, including warehousing support at international platforms like Dubai's Bharat Mart and interest subventions for exporters. The tourism sector, still reeling from recent setbacks, requires loan restructuring and confidence-building measures to restore its role as an economic lifeline. The industry chambers have also highlighted

systemic hurdles: bureaucratic delays, an expired industrial incentive scheme, and inadequate access to credit. Local entrepreneurs face an uphill battle, with delays in approvals, expired NoCs, and flawed CIBIL scoring further stifling growth. A genuine single-window system, backed by legally binding timelines, and an independent grievance redressal commission could transform this landscape. Perhaps most importantly, these proposals highlight fairness and local empowerment. From

reserving 25% of public procurement for local MSMEs to ensuring that industrial incentives prioritise existing units over prospective outsiders, the message is clear: growth must be inclusive to be sustainable. The Parliamentary Committee's visit is a welcome step. Now, the government must translate these recommendations into action. J&K's industries, and its people, deserve policies that are not just promises but pathways to prosperity. It is high time for decisive and empathetic governance.

Modi – The Architect Of A Strong And Self-Reliant India



Amit Shah

The 17th of September is significant in history for a good number of reasons. On this day, artisans and workers across the country joyfully celebrate Vishwakarma Jayanti. It was on this day that Hyderabad was liberated from the cruel Nizam and the Razakars. And, on this day was born a statesman who has dedicated his entire life to the service of the nation and its people – our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. This birthday of Modi ji is even more significant, as it marks his 75th year. On behalf of 140 crore Indians, I extend my heartfelt greetings to Modi ji and pray to the Almighty to bless him with long life, energy and good health to achieve greatness for India.

Having worked alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji for decades, I have deeply felt that his personality is beyond that of a politician. It embodies a mission-driven leader dedicated to the nation's welfare. For him, the rise of the nation and the well-being of its citizens are not just ideals but guiding principles. What makes his leadership unique is his constant focus on ensuring the all-inclusive model of governance. His policies and their implementation always emphasize that no individual or community is left behind in the development journey. For him, governance is not a tool of power but a medium of service. Under his leadership, numerous welfare schemes for the poor have not only been launched but have also achieved their intended goals successfully.

We can see that the Jan Dhan Yojana brought over 50 crore people into the banking system, scripting a glorious episode of financial inclusion; the Ujjwala Yojana freed millions of households from smoke and gave them a life of dignity; Ayushman Bharat provided the security of healthcare to the poor; and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana helped economically weaker sections realise the dream of owning a home. Whenever I look into the eyes of a beneficiary and see contentment and trust, I understand how Modi ji's governance is truly bringing the vision of public welfare to life.

As a Pracharak of the RSS, he travelled across the nation and engaged with all sections of society. He not only closely witnessed the soul of India but

Having worked alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji for decades, I have deeply felt that his personality is beyond that of a politician. It embodies a mission-driven leader dedicated to the nation's welfare. For him, the rise of the nation and the well-being of its citizens are not just ideals but guiding principles.



also experienced its inner strength. This later reflected in his governance, through his empathy for the poor and the marginalised. It was also as a Pracharak that Modi ji acquired the art of organisation. Later, while recasting the Bharatiya Janata Party's organisation, he introduced innovative reforms that transformed the party's functional dynamics. I am fortunate that, as BJP's National President, I had the opportunity to implement his vision and organizational insights at the national level.

The hallmark of strong leadership lies in the ability to decide in difficult circumstances. In this regard, Modi ji's leadership is made of a different metal. I have witnessed him maintain extraordinary patience and clarity of vision, even in the most challenging situations. Since 2014, there have been several occasions when the nation needed a bold and decisive steps. Modi ji firmly upheld the principles of leadership and made decisions in the interest of the nation. The historic demonetization and GST opened a new chapter in our economic reforms. The abrogation of Article 370 will be remembered as a decision that demonstrated not only political courage but also Modi ji's unwavering commitment to national unity and integrity. The erasing of the social evil of Triple Talaq was a bold step to protect the dignity and rights of women. None of these decisions were easy. Many of them faced opposition, but Modi ji never wavered. He held firm the belief that the nation's interest must be pursued, regardless of resistance or criticism.

When the Covid-19 pandemic shook the whole world, Modi ji not only reassured the public but also advanced the country's industries, scientists and youth towards self-reliance. The world was anxious about India during the pandemic. But it was because of our astute leadership that not only was the vaccine manufactured in the country in record time, but through the technology-driven free vaccination campaign, we presented an exemplary model of

Covid management to the world.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, India has repeatedly proved that national security and self-respect are sacrosanct for our national life. The surgical strike after the Uri attack showed the world that India will no longer remain a silent spectator to terrorism. The Balakot airstrike after the Pulwama incident further strengthened this resolve. Recently, 'Operation Sindoor' conducted on 7 May 2025 in response to the Pahalgam attack decisively established the policy that whenever the country's identity and the safety of citizens are messed with, India will respond with courage and determination. These actions not only strengthened the sense of confidence and pride among the people of India but also gave the message to the world that the new India is ready to face every situation to protect its national well-being.

Modi ji's strategy is unique in the field of foreign policy as well. Today, when he stands on an international platform and confidently puts forth India's stand, a wave of pride runs through all of us. While India was often seen as an emerging nation in the past, now under Modi ji's leadership, India is moving towards taking the role of a global leader. Be it the Paris Climate Agreement, the G-20 Conference, or the address given at the United Nations – everywhere his confidence has been a symbol of India's growing power and pride.

From what I know about Narendra Modi ji, I can say that his personality is not limited to policies and programs. He has a special charisma, which connects him directly with the public. His speech has the flair of spontaneity and simplicity, which makes him reach the hearts of the public. When he talks in the 'Mann Ki Baat' program crores of people feel that the Prime Minister is directly communicating with them. Be it a farmer from a village or a student from the city or a housewife, everyone starts feeling a sense of affinity with him. This is no

Modi Ji, who has the right understanding of India's internal strength, has a vision that in 2047, when India completes 100 years of independence, our country should restore its stature as 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and a great country, and to achieve this, he is advancing the country in this direction rapidly with his visionary policies.

common attribute.

Looking back, I see that Shri Narendra Modi Ji has empowered India not merely in economic and political terms, but also mental and cultural terms. Modi Ji, who has the right understanding of India's internal strength, has a vision that in 2047, when India completes 100 years of independence, our country should restore its stature as 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and a great country, and to achieve this, he is advancing the country in this direction rapidly with his visionary policies. He has instilled the belief in every Indian that we are second to none in this world. In the last 11 years, under his leadership, the country has touched new heights in self-respect, self-reliance and self-confidence, which in my view is both historic and unique.

In fact, true leadership is that which dedicates every moment to the nation and whose vision looks far beyond the present into the future. Today, this personality of Narendra Modi ji is the biggest strength of India.

Author is a Union Home Minister

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Aadi-Karma Abhiyan Campaign intensified in Poonch



KT News Desk

POONCH, SEPTEMBER 16: The 'Aadi-Karma Abhiyan' entered a crucial new phase in Poonch district Tuesday with the launch of Block-Process Labs across all 11 blocks of the District.

The two-day training initiative starting from today represents the subsequent step in a cascading training model, following earlier state and district-level sessions.

Organized by the Rural Development Department (RDD), the labs are being supervised by the respective Block Development Officer (BDO) acting as the nodal officer for the event.

The labs have gathered 'Aadi-Karmyogis'—frontline government officials from key line departments including Education,

Health, ICDS, Revenue, Forest, RDD, Jal Shakti, PDD, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Horticulture.

With the abhiyan covering 58 revenue villages in the district, a minimum of seven Aadi-Karmyogis from each village are participating at their designated Block Headquarters.

This grassroots training is part of a structured bottom to top approach. Following these block-level labs, the training will be further replicated at the village level, with all efforts aimed at formulating concrete action plans by October 2nd.

The entire Aadi-Karma Abhiyan is being conducted under the overall guidance of Khalid Hussain, Programme Officer ICDS who serves as the Nodal Officer for the Aadi-Karmyogi initiative.

Swachhata Pakhwada 2025 launched in Ramban schools



KT News Desk

RAMBAN, SEPTEMBER 16: In line with the nationwide initiative, the School Education Department today launched Swachhata Pakhwada 2025 in all schools across Ramban district. The fortnight-long campaign, starting from Tuesday, will continue till September 30, 2025.

The objective of Swachhata Pakhwada-2025 is to promote among children a culture of cleanliness, hygiene and a sense of responsibility towards the environment.

The district-wide programme commenced with a Swachhata Pledge, administered simultaneously across the schools.

The inaugural day witnessed enthusiastic participation from 800 schools, with more than 47,630 students and 3,000

teachers actively taking part in the inaugural event. The activities chalked out for the campaign include cleanliness drives in and around school premises, promoting hand-washing and hygiene awareness among students and community members, besides hosting painting, essay and quiz competitions on the theme of cleanliness and waste management.

The campaign also envisages Community participation to encourage active participation of parents, panchayats and other stakeholders in maintaining hygiene and sanitation standards.

Meanwhile, the Chief Education Officer has appealed to all educational institutions to organise innovative activities during the fortnight to make the campaign more impactful and result orientated.

Conduct load survey before power tariff hike: Sakeena

Reviews power sector scenario in Kulgam



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Tuesday chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here and conducted an extensive review of the electricity supply and distribution framework in Kulgam district.

The meeting was attended by MD KPDCI, Mehmoood Shah; Special Secretary Power Development department; Chief Engineer KPDCI, SE KPDCI Bijbehara ; Executive Engineer KPDCI Kulgam; all Assistant Executive Engineers of Kulgam and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the Minister took detailed assessment of ground-level challenges, gauge the adequacy of power infrastructure and address consumer grievances, besides measures taken for augmentation of power infrastructure in the district.

Speaking during the meeting, Minister Sakeena

expressed serious concern over arbitrary and unjustified hikes in electricity bills of common masses, particularly belonging to lower income families, causing acute distress among households. She stressed upon the officers to ensure reliable power supply, affordability and transparency in billing.

The Minister impressed upon the Chief Engineer KPDCI to conduct load survey in the district before any hike in power tariffs is made. She also asked the Executive Engineer to submit a detailed report regarding load revisions carried across the district in last three years.

The Minister also asked the officers to organise grievance camps in D.H Pora, Malwan, Khull and other far off areas having maximum disputes related to arbitrary hike in power bills. She also asked them to implement stringent monitoring mechanisms to prevent any arbitrary escalation in the electricity charges. She further instructed the PDD officers to conduct thorough audits of

billing systems and load sanction to ensure accuracy and fairness in consumer billing practices.

Minister Sakeena reaffirmed the Government's commitment to providing uninterrupted, affordable and efficient electricity supply to every citizen, adding that any malpractice in billing or power distribution will not be tolerated at all.

Meanwhile, during the meeting, the Minister also took stock of ongoing works regarding the establishment of 10 MVA Receiving Station at Manzgam, aimed to strengthen the power infrastructure in the area.

She directed the officers to work with dedication so that the project can be completed before the actual date of completion.

The Minister added that after the completion of project, a long-pending demand of the people of the area will be fulfilled as it is expected to significantly augment the power supply scenario, ensuring improved electricity availability and reliability for the residents.

Branding, packaging of Kashmir Handicrafts key to target newer markets

H&H Dept organizes day-long workshop

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, successfully conducted another one-day Capacity Building Programme on Branding and Packaging of famed Kashmir Handicrafts here Tuesday.

The programme, which was inaugurated by Director, Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Mussarat Islam, under the World Bank-aided Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme, of the

Government of India.

Deputy Director, Trainings, Mirza Shahid Ali, Senior faculty from Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) were also present on the occasion.

In a press statement issued here today, a spokesman of the Department of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, stated that the session was designed to equip artisans and weavers with practical insights and strategies for effective product branding and modern packaging, which are the critical components in enhancing market reach and competitiveness in both domestic and international markets. "The training was conducted by experts and

faculty from the JKEDI, who shared hands-on guidance, case studies, and design approaches," he added.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 100 trainees, artisans and producers, particularly those engaged in G./ODOP/DEH products. The programme aimed to empower grassroots craft producers by introducing them to evolving consumer preferences, branding tools, and value-added packaging techniques.

This initiative is part of a broader series of capacity-building efforts under RAMP scheme, aimed at strengthening MSMEs and the artisan community of Kashmir by improving product positioning and market access.

CS condoles demise of Rajesh Mattoo's father

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, has expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of the father of Rajesh Mattoo, Operator, who left for his heavenly abode today.

In his condolence message, the Chief Secretary conveyed heartfelt sympathies to Rajesh Mattoo and the bereaved family. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family members to bear this irreparable loss with courage and fortitude.

JMC Commissioner visits flood-hit areas



KT News Desk

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 16: To mitigate hardships being faced by people due to the recent floods, Commissioner Municipal Corporation Jammu Dr. Devansh Yadav Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of Ward No. 56, Gangyal-Babliana and its surrounding areas.

The visit was aimed at assessing the condition of the local nallah, which has been identified as one of the major causes of recurring water-logging in the locality.

During the inspection, Dr. Yadav examined the drain alignment, interacted with officials on-site, and listened to the grievances of the local residents. People informed the Commissioner that every year, during the rainy season, the drain overflows and water enters into more than 200 houses, causing extensive damage to household property. They explained that the low height of the drain wall and unauthorised encroachments along the alignment are the primary reasons for flooding. Residents said that during heavy rain water enters residential areas through the narrow streets, forcing families to evacuate their homes. Elderly citizens and school-going children, in particular, face immense hardship during such situations.

After listening to the concerns of the people, Dr. Yadav assured them that the Jammu Municipal Corporation will find out a permanent solution for this long-standing issue. He instructed the engineering staff to expedite the demarcation of the drain to clearly define the boundaries to facilitate the widening and wall strengthening work at the earliest. He stressed to start the ground

work without delay to save the residents from further distress.

The Commissioner also made a strong appeal to local residents to extend full cooperation to the Jammu Municipal Corporation in its endeavours. He urged them to voluntarily remove encroachments along the drain, reminding them that such structures not only obstruct cleaning operations but also directly contribute to flooding. He said that drainage problems cannot be solved by the Corporation alone and that people's cooperation is equally important. "Wherever there are encroachments, residents should come forward to remove them so that widening and cleaning work can be carried out smoothly," he added.

In addition to engineering measures, Dr. Yadav directed officials from the Health and Sanitation wings to intensify cleanliness and anti-water logging measures in the affected localities. He emphasized that a proper drainage solution will significantly improve the standard of living in Gangyal-Babliana and adjoining areas. He stressed that the Corporation will continue to prioritize the welfare of residents through sustainable infrastructure development.

The Commissioner was accompanied by former Deputy Mayor, Baldev Singh Billawaria, who also assured full support to the people in addressing their issues.

Senior officials present on the occasion included Joint Commissioner (Works) Firdous Ahmed Qazi; Health Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma; Executive Engineer (UEED) Ashwani Khajuria; Executive Engineer Division 5 Yasir Bashir Kichloo; Chief Transport Officer Dharamveer Singh and others.

SewaParv-25

Labour Commissioner pitches for honouring services of workers

KT News Desk

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 16: Labour Commissioner Jammu and Kashmir Charandeep Singh Tuesday chaired a meeting of officers of the Department to review the preparations for SewaParv 2025 to be observed from 17th September to 2nd October 2025.

During the meeting, the Commissioner took a detailed review of the proposed activities to be organized across the Union Territory as part of the fortnight-long programme. He emphasized to celebrate SewaParv-2025 in a vibrant, impactful and participative manner reflecting the true spirit of public service and outreach.

The Labour Commissioner directed the stakeholders including the DLC Central, DLC Jammu, Kashmir, all Assistant Labour Commissioners, Insurance Medical Officers, Inspectors of Factories, Labour Officers and Labour Inspectors to actively participate and ensure wider awareness about the initiatives of the Labour Department.

He stressed on the importance of involving workers, employers, trade unions, industry representatives and the general



public in the campaign so that the benefits of the government welfare schemes and services of the department reach every section of society.

The activities outlined in the calendar issued by the department will be organized at multiple venues including labour chowks, labour colonies, industrial estates, major establishments, schools, hospitals and other labour-centric places to ensure maximum participation and outreach.

The Labour Commissioner further called upon the officers to work in coordination and synergy to make SewaParv 2025 a meaningful and result-oriented exercise, aligning with the vision of public service, outreach and inclusive development.

DC Doda reviews preparations for Seva Parv-2025

KT News Desk

DODA, SEPTEMBER 16: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda Harvinder Singh Tuesday chaired a meeting in the Conference Hall of the DC Office to finalize preparations for the Seva Parv 2025, scheduled from September 17 to October 2, 2025.

The meeting was attended by the district officers, representatives from educational institutions and officials of the line departments.

The DDC highlighted the key objectives of Seva Parv, a nationwide campaign aimed at promoting environment conservation, social service, community participation and awareness about sustainable development. He informed that the fortnight-long campaign will include plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns, water conservation initiatives with active involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, urban local bodies, civil society and Educational Institutions.

The DDC reviewed

department-wise action plans, directing them to maintain close coordination, ensure timely execution of plantation and sanitation activities with active public participation. The Municipal authorities and Information department were asked to put up hoardings to spread maximum awareness about the campaign. Special focus was also laid on the identification of the sites for plantation and the availability of saplings.

The DDC directed the Chief Education Officer (CEO) to restrict the participation of students outside activities during Seva Parv and focus on completing the syllabus and compensating the loss of studies due to inclement weather. "However, awareness programmes on the listed themes of the campaign shall be conducted during morning assemblies in all schools," he added.

The Agriculture Department was asked to organize special camps under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) to ensure wider coverage of government-sponsored schemes. Similarly, the

Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department was directed to hold awareness camps regarding ration card distribution and related entitlements. The Lead District Manager (LDM) was asked to organize camps across the district to enhance the coverage under different financial and welfare schemes. The line departments were asked to showcase their flagship and sponsored programmes during Seva Parv to maximize public outreach.

A wide range of activities were planned, including health awareness programmes, handwash campaigns, blood donation drives, road safety and pollution control campaigns in collaboration with the Transport Department, cleanliness and sanitation drives across towns and villages, disaster management awareness programmes with mock drills in vulnerable areas, drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation awareness in schools and colleges, plantation drives in all government and private institutions, and sports competitions to engage youth and promote fitness.

NH blockade crushing Kashmir’s horticulture sector: MP Ruhullah

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Sept 16: Member of Parliament (MP) from Srinagar Lok Sabha Constituency, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and senior National; Conference leader Tuesday strongly criticised repeated restrictions on truck movement and the partial closure of the Srinagar–Jammu National Highway during the peak apple season, calling it a “deliberate war” on Kashmir’s economy that is pushing farmers

and traders to the brink.

Speaking to reporters at the Fruit Mandi in Shopian, Mehdi as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the valley’s horticulture — particularly apple cultivation — is the backbone of the local economy and must be protected from what he described as avoidable administrative decisions.

“Horticulture is the backbone of Kashmir’s economy,” he said, adding that nearly 70 per cent of the valley’s economy is linked

to the sector and that it is far more important than tourism for many families.

He expressed deep concern that trucks laden with apples and other fruit are repeatedly being stopped, citing last year’s deliberate stoppages and a repeat of similar restrictions this season.

“Last year, trucks were intentionally stopped, and this year the same situation is being repeated,” he said. “This is not merely an administrative issue — stopping trucks during the

peak season is an attack on the economic survival of our farmers and traders.”

He warned that the curbs come at the worst possible time. “Today is the peak of the apple season. Preventing trucks from moving is not an administrative inconvenience; it is an assault on our growers’ livelihoods,” Mehdi said.

Traders at the Mandi have already warned that fruit worth millions of rupees could spoil further if supply lines are not

restored without delay.

He also questioned the logic behind permitting vehicles from Jammu into the valley while allegedly stopping fruit-laden trucks moving from Srinagar towards Jammu. “There is no justification for allowing vehicles into the valley from Jammu while preventing our produce from being transported out,” he said.

Calls For Immediate, Concrete Administrative Action

The MP urged the administration to ensure that apples

and other perishables reach external markets unimpeded. “Authorities must take concrete steps to protect the Kashmiri economy and prevent further loss to our orchardists and traders,” he said, warning that continued neglect of the problem would prove even more destructive for the valley’s economy.

He welcomed a recent Supreme Court order halting the implementation of certain clauses of the Waqf Amendment

Act and said the law must be applied uniformly across faiths.

He criticised arrests under the Public Safety Act (PSA), saying the law poses a threat to every citizen: “Under the PSA, no one is safe — whether MLA, MP or ordinary people. If someone raises their voice for their rights, they are not secure. This will only stop when we all unite and stand against it.”

“If we remain silent today, tomorrow we may face the same fate,” he said. (KNO)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Centre steps in

undertaken only after the backlog is fully addressed.

Union Minister Gadkari assured the Chief Minister that his concerns would be taken into account.

According to an official handout, Gadkari said the backlog of trucks and other heavy vehicles will be cleared on priority before resuming blacktopping activities.

The Chief Minister also directed the Chief Secretary to ensure lane discipline and regulate traffic on the highway to facilitate smooth clearance.

Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that as an interim measure, the government has proposed a traffic management plan allowing heavy vehicles to move in one direction while permitting light vehicles from the opposite side.

When contacted, the General Manager and Regional Officer of NHAI, Jammu, stated that soiling work is being carried out on a 300-metre stretch at Tahard in Udhampur.

“We have to carry out soiling repeatedly because intermittent rains keep affecting the surface,” he said, adding that blacktopping will commence once the weather improves.

Minister for Agriculture Production and Horticulture, Javid Dar, said that while traffic flow has improved, full restoration will take time.

“The one-way movement of heavy motor vehicles will help in clearing stranded apple trucks,” he said, adding that the government is continuously monitoring the situation.

Inspector General of Police (Traffic), M. Suleman Choudhary, announced that heavy motor vehicles will be allowed to move from Srinagar to Jammu on Wednesday (September 16).

“We are hopeful of clearing the stranded fruit-laden trucks en route to Jammu,” he said, adding that 2800 trucks were cleared via the Mughal Road over the past two days.

He said that movement of fruit-laden trucks has been consistently allowed for two consecutive days on the Mughal Road.

“We used to allow traffic only in one direction on the Mughal Road. But to clear the stranded apple-laden trucks, we permitted traffic from Srinagar to Jammu on this route on Monday and Tuesday,” he said. (KNO)

PM Modi-led regime

Shah said that strict action is being taken against drugs cartels which are smuggling and selling drugs ‘pudiyā’ (small packets) in ‘paan’ shops or kiosks.

He said a triangular strategy has to be adopted in the fight against drugs. “For the drug supply chain, we should have a ruthless approach, a strategic approach in demand reduction, and a human approach in harm reduction. The ANTF should move forward with these three approaches,” he said.

The Union Home Minister said that action is also being taken against those involved in the retail trade of drugs.

“Strict action is being taken against those cartels operating at all entry points of the country, cartels distributing from entry points to states,” he said.

Shah said the time has come to deal a big blow to drug cartels. “I believe that it can happen only when the officers responsible for working against drugs decide to take strong action against them,” he said.

According to Shah, in some parts of the world, people have seen the link between a nation’s development and the challenge of drug abuse. “Unfortunately, two of the regions from where drugs are supplied globally are very close to us. So this is the time that we fight against it strongly.”

The Home Minister said it is very important to save the young generation from drugs to achieve the goal of a fully developed India as the foundation of any great state is its young generation.

He said during the previous UPA government tenure, drugs worth Rs 40,000 crore were seized, whereas under the NDA government, over the past 10 years, drugs worth Rs 1,65,000 crore have been seized, which is a very significant achievement.

“But making numbers in the fight against drugs is not our goal. Our goal is to build an India where the need to create such numbers doesn’t even arise. This will be possible through a top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top approach,” he said.

Referring to the ‘Narcotics-Free India’ campaign carried out by the NCB, Shah said it has a decisive role for ANTF.

“Until every district, police of every district and the education officer of every district become sensitive towards this campaign, this campaign cannot be successful,” he said.

At the event, Shah also set in motion the process of destroying 1.37 lakh kg of narcotic substances worth Rs 4,794 crore seized in different parts of the country.

He also released the NCB’s annual report 2024. The NCB has been actively coordinating with the GST department, state drug controllers, Income Tax authorities and financial

institutions to uncover the full extent of the drug diversion network. (KNO)

Remain alert to deal

friendly” military.

Addressing the 16th Combined Commanders’ Conference (CCC) 2025 in Kolkata, the defence minister asked the Armed Forces to be ready to deal with “invisible challenges emanating from unconventional threats such as information, ideological, ecological and biological warfare.”

Singh emphasised the need for constant assessment of the changes taking place across the globe, and its impact on the security system of the country, in view of the turbulent global order, regional instability and the emerging security landscape.

“Wars of today are so sudden and unpredictable that it is extremely difficult to foretell their duration. It can be two months, a year, or even five years. We need to be prepared... We need to ensure that our surge capacity remains sufficient,” he said.

He commended the Armed Forces for their “outstanding performance” and “exemplary professionalism” in the planning and execution of Operation Sindoor in May, that was launched in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians, mostly tourists.

“Operation Sindoor has demonstrated that strength, strategy and self-reliance are the three pillars that will give India the power it needs in the 21st century. Today, we have the capability to face any challenge with the help of indigenous platforms and systems coupled with the indomitable courage of our soldiers. This is the real strength of Aatmanirbhar Bharat,” Singh said.

Operation Sindoor, which was conceived as a punitive and targeted campaign to dismantle the terror infrastructure across the Line of Control and deep inside Pakistan, showcased a calibrated, tri-services response embodying precision, professionalism and purpose, according to an official.

Terming India’s defence sector as an amalgamation of offensive and defensive capabilities, the defence minister called upon the commanders to be proactive in their approach and strive to build the ‘Sudarshan Chakra’, an air defence mechanism, as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Stating that a committee has been formed to examine the project and prepare a “realistic action plan”, he suggested devising a medium-term plan for the next five years and a long-term plan for the next ten years to bring the vision to fruition.

The defence minister underscored the importance of synergy among the Armed Forces as well as with other agencies, terming it as “essential” to deal with future challenges.

In this context, he mentioned the creation of tri-service logistics nodes and tri-service logistic management application to promote integration and jointness in the defence sector, while also highlighting the attention being paid to greater civil-military fusion.

Maintaining that the country’s defence sector is centred around modernisation, operational readiness, technological superiority and credible deterrence, Singh called for focusing on the mantra of ‘JAI’ (Jointness, Aatmanirbharta and Innovation) given by PM Modi in the inaugural session of the conference on Monday.

Batting for deeper engagement with the industry and academia in developing future-ready technologies, Singh reaffirmed PM Modi’s vision to further enhance the role of the private sector in creating a robust defence innovation ecosystem and “making the domestic industry the biggest and best in the world”.

Reiterating the government’s commitment to ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’, the defence minister said, “Self-reliance is not a slogan, but a necessity, which is key to strategic autonomy..”

He emphasised that defence production indigenisation is fueling economic growth, generating employment and enhancing the capacity of shipyards, aerospace clusters and defence corridors..

Singh also pointed to his approval of the Defence Procurement Manual 2025, which aims to streamline the procurement process.

He added that the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 is being revised and the objective is to simplify the processes, reduce delays, and provide operational strength to the forces quickly..

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and other senior officers were present at the meeting.

Inaugurating the three-day Combined Commanders’ Conference at the Eastern Command headquarters of the Indian Army at Vijay Durg, the erstwhile Fort William, here on Monday, Modi complimented the Armed Forces for the success of Operation Sindoor.

He instructed the Defence ministry to implement steps to achieve greater jointness, self-sufficiency and innovation to meet future challenges.

Parl committee visits

assess the ground situation.

“We are here in Pahalgam today after meeting stakeholders in Srinagar yesterday, and tomorrow we will be in Leh to continue the discussions. Our primary objective is to understand the concerns of all stakeholders and prepare a comprehensive report that will be submitted to the concerned ministries and higher authorities of both the Union and the local government,” she said.

The Chairperson acknowledged the tragic loss of innocent lives in the recent incident, calling it an unfortunate event that has deeply saddened the nation. “While we share the grief of the victims’ families, we are also determined to ensure that such incidents do not permanently derail the growth of tourism and commerce in Jammu and Kashmir,” she said.

Sen said the committee is committed to acting as a catalyst for the revival of commerce and tourism in the region. “We have a duty and responsibility to stand with the people of Kashmir. That is why we are on the ground today—to see the reality for ourselves. Based on our observations, a time-bound policy will be framed to restore confidence among tourists and revive the economy as early as possible,” she added.

Reiterating the delegation’s solidarity with the people of the valley, the delegation chairperson assured that every effort is being made to bring back normalcy and encourage tourists to visit Kashmir. “We are optimistic and confident that with collective efforts, the negative impact on commerce and tourism can be overcome. We are people’s representatives, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in this difficult time,” she said.

The meeting in Pahalgam saw participation from local hoteliers, travel agents, traders, and representatives of the tourism industry, who highlighted the urgent need for confidence-building measures, improved infrastructure, and safety assurances to revive tourist inflow in the valley. (KNO)

Losses rising as

now selling for just Rs 500–800. American apples, which were usually exported to Bangladesh, are lying idle in mandis, and much of it is rotting.”

Low shelf-life varieties such as Galla and Kiser have been hit hardest, with growers estimating that their shelf life has been reduced by half due to chemical ripening and prolonged storage.

Reyaz Ahmed, a grower from Rafiabad, said poor packaging is worsening the crisis. “The silicon-coated cardboard boxes trap heat when stacked for days, accelerating ripening and spoilage. That is why so much of our produce is getting ruined before it even leaves the valley,” he explained.

The losses are mounting by the day.

The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-cum-Dealers Union has already estimated losses at over Rs 1,200 crore, but growers at Sopore mandi fear the damage could be far worse.

“The loss is going to touch around Rs 5,000 crore, as nearly four lakh apple boxes are lying here in Sopore mandi due to non-transportation. It could be the biggest loss the industry has ever faced,” the growers at Sopore Mandi said, appealing to the government for urgent intervention.

“Let them ensure unhindered movement along the national highway,” the growers added. “We feel everyone is responsible for the crisis, be it the LG administration, local government, or even the associations”.

They said the blockade has also forced many orchardists to halt harvesting, as there is no transport available to lift the produce.

The growers and traders earlier accused the government of destroying the apple economy by restricting heavy vehicles and failing to manage traffic. “If immediate measures are not taken, lakhs of metric tons of apples will rot and the industry will collapse,” said the protesting fruit growers at Shopian mandi.

With the apple season at its peak, growers fear the crisis could push many orchardists into bankruptcy if the authorities don’t intervene urgently. (KNO)

Committed to maintain

said that the meeting was attended by all Range DIsG, district SSsP of Kashmir Zone, and other senior officers.

During the meeting, Range DIsG and SSsP briefed the IGP on the law & order scenario in their respective districts. The IGP emphasized the need to strengthen investigations, build stronger cases to improve conviction rates in narcotics and terrorism-related matters, and establish effective follow-up mechanisms for successful prosecutions.

He directed officers to intensify area domination, conduct night patrolling in sensitive areas and maintain strict surveillance on anti-national elements (ANEs). Shri V.K Birdi also stressed the need to enhance market checking to prevent unlawful activities.

Concluding the meeting, Birdi reaffirmed J&K Police’s commitment to maintain peace and security in the region and urged officers

to ensure transparency, accountability, and timely resolution of cases to safeguard citizens’ rights.

Extend telecom

(ABP) Phase-III, which aims to deliver high-speed internet to Gram Panchayats and rural areas. The Chief Minister directed that strict timelines be maintained and stressed the need for priority coverage of uncovered and remote habitations.

During the discussions, several issues were highlighted which require the intervention of the Government for timely completion of projects. These included early allotment of land for installation of telecom towers and equipment, and the expeditious grant of Right of Way permissions by departments such as R&B, PMGSY, BRO, and Forests for the laying of optical fibre cables.

The need for uninterrupted services was also emphasized, with a focus on providing electricity connections to all Gram Panchayats to operationalise BharatNet, implementing centralized billing and smart metering systems, and ensuring the availability and functionality of Panchayat or alternate government buildings where digital services are to be hosted.

Assuring full support from the government, the Chief Minister said: “Digital empowerment of our villages and towns is a cornerstone of inclusive growth. We are committed to ensuring that no part of Jammu and Kashmir remains disconnected—whether it is a remote hamlet, a dark zone, or a railway tunnel.”

The Chief Minister directed BSNL and concerned government departments to work in close coordination, resolve bottlenecks swiftly, and ensure timely delivery of connectivity projects across Jammu and Kashmir.

Vaishno Devi Yatra

launched to ensure the safety of all pilgrims and locals. The route has now been cleared, and teams are continuously monitoring the situation,” an official said, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said that all necessary arrangements, including security, medical aid and traffic management are being taken into consideration to ensure the safe resumption of the Vaishno Devi Yatra.

The pilgrimage had remained suspended since August 26, 2025, following heavy rainfall that triggered a landslide and a cloudburst in the Ardhkuwari section, causing casualties and rendering the route unsafe.

‘Save Apple, Save

to undermine Kashmir’s economy. Ruhullah said trucks from Jammu were being allowed movement towards Srinagar, while apple-laden vehicles remained stranded. He urged authorities to restore traffic on the highway and cautioned that growers may be forced to protest if the situation continues.

Peoples Conference (PC) President and MLA Handwara Sajad Gani Lone criticised the government over the prolonged closure of the highway.

In a post on X, Lone said it takes “hundreds of crores of losses in terms of rotting apples to wake up a wandering CM to actually issue a statement.”

He said the apple industry forms the backbone of Kashmir’s economy, and that an economy already affected by tourism losses is now facing heavy setbacks in horticulture as well.

Lone said that expression of concern from those in power was not enough. “Mere expression of concern from the ruling establishment is a luxury,” he wrote.

He also questioned the role of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in handling the road closure and asked why there was no coordination with local authorities to address the issue.

“What stopped the shawl gifting CM sahib to land in Delhi, meet ministers and ensure expeditious clearance of the highway. Did you even go there. Did you even pretend to be bothered,” Lone asked.

He said that while he could understand the Union Government treating the blockade like any other highway closure, the state administration should have recognised that the situation had a far greater impact on local livelihoods.

“I can understand Union Government treating it like yet another highway closure. But you should have known it is not yet another closure,” he added.

CPI (M) leader and MLA Kulgam, M. Y. Tarigami said that the floods in September had resulted in loss of lives, property and crops. He said the prolonged closure of the Srinagar–Jammu National Highway had affected farmers and fruit growers.

Tarigami said that despite assurances from the National Highway authorities, the situation on the road remained uncertain during the peak season when apple produce needed to be transported to markets outside the Valley. He urged the Government of India to take immediate steps to ensure smooth passage of trucks carrying apples.

He said intermittent rains had caused leaves

and apples to fall prematurely, leading to losses. He added that Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology should have given timely advice to farmers on preventive measures. According to him, the recommendations of the Dr. Swaminathan Commission on distressed agriculture had not been implemented fully, and apple had not been included under the Minimum Support Price.

He further said that despite the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in 2016, apple had not been covered under the scheme, while insurance companies had earned large amounts of premium.

Tarigami said there was a need to reintroduce the Market Intervention Scheme so that rotten apples could be procured for juice and jam manufacturing. If the Government of India did not support the scheme, he said, the UT administration should include it under the CAPEX Budget to compensate growers.

He pointed out that cold storage facilities were insufficient in the Valley, despite announcements that government land was available for this purpose.

“The government cannot remain indifferent. Protecting horticulture means protecting the livelihood of farmers, which is central to Kashmir’s economy,” Tarigami said.

He demanded that the Government of India announce sufficient relief for flood victims and for apple growers and traders who had suffered losses because of weather, floods, and the highway blockade.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has also raised concern over the crisis faced by apple growers in Jammu and Kashmir following highway disruptions, with party leader Iltija Mufti writing to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha seeking urgent intervention.

In her letter, she said horticulture forms the backbone of the Union Territory’s economy, contributing nearly seven percent to the GDP and providing livelihood to over 25 lakh people. She noted that recent floods, landslides, and consequent road closures have brought the apple trade to a halt, adding that the Srinagar–Jammu National Highway has remained shut for two weeks, leaving trucks carrying apples stranded while vehicles with other goods were allowed passage.

Iltija urged the administration to expedite repair work on the highway and announce an interim relief package for affected orchardists. She said the Mughal Road and Mughal Tunnel had failed to ease the situation due to their limited capacity.

Stressing the importance of the sector, she wrote that horticulture had supported the economy during the years of militancy by providing livelihood and dignity to thousands of families. She appealed for immediate relief to end the distress that has gripped apple growers in the Valley.

People’s Democratic Front (PDF) President and former Minister Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen expressed deep concern over the frequent closure of the Srinagar–Jammu National Highway, stating that it has badly hit the economy of Kashmir, particularly the horticulture sector.

He said it is unfortunate that despite the highway being known for frequent disruptions, successive governments have failed to put in place a long-term and concrete plan to address the crisis.

Yaseen said those who are crying today for the restoration of the highway had enough time and power in the past but failed to deliver.

“Had the governments constructed sufficient cold storage and preservation facilities in the Valley, fruit growers and traders would not have been facing these recurring losses year after year. It is a shame that despite crores being spent under various schemes, only a handful of cold storage units have been established so far, which are insufficient to cater to the Valley’s requirements,” he remarked.

He said that horticulture is the backbone of the Kashmir economy and provides livelihood to lakhs of families, yet the sector has remained neglected.

“Every time the highway is closed, fruit-laden trucks are stranded for days, resulting in rotting of perishable produce and losses worth crores of rupees. The closing of the highway due to landslides and floods is a natural process, but the lack of alternative routes, storage facilities, and disaster preparedness is a man-made failure,” Yaseen observed.

Meanwhile, Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) workers, led by MLA Langate Sheikh Khurshed, held a demonstration at Srinagar’s Press Colony to press for the reopening of the Srinagar–Jammu National Highway for heavy vehicles. Protesters said the continued blockade had stranded thousands of apple-laden trucks, putting the Valley’s horticulture sector at risk.

Chanting “Save Apple, Save Kashmir,” they accused authorities of inaction and warned that growers faced mounting losses with no relief in sight. Participants carried placards highlighting the challenges of orchardists and demanded immediate steps to restore traffic flow and safeguard Kashmir’s fruit economy. (KNO)

Modi 'steals hearts ' not votes: Delhi CM Gupta

PTI

New Delhi, Sept 16: Hitting out at Opposition parties over their "vote chori" allegation, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi "steals hearts" and has earned international respect, with countries like even the US "saluting" India.

Speaking at the 'Vishwakarma Puja' programme held at Delhi Secretariat, she said PM Modi has instilled a "new energy" in the country through his leadership.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi faces abuse because they (opposition) are troubled at why the country is progressing, the poor are being benefited, and even countries like the US are



saluting India," she said while addressing a gathering of workers.

The Opposition parties are indulging in "dirty" politics, Gupta alleged.

"They allege 'vote chori' but Modi steals hearts and

he has stolen hearts of us all," she asserted.

Like 'Makhanchor' (Lord Krishna fondly called by the name for his love for fresh butter during his childhood), Modi is "Mann Ka Chor," said Delhi CM, heaping praise on

the prime minister.

Modi does not need to steal votes, she asserted, and added that this allegation was being drummed up by parties that have lost power and are now scared to face elections. Gupta assailed the

Gandhi family, accusing it of nepotism, while asserting Modi is a "saint" who devoted his life to the service of the country and never benefited anyone in his family.

In an apparent attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, she said, "(He) gave land to his brother-in-law, post to his sister and made his mother prime ministerial candidate and himself indulges in whatever nobody understands."

The Congress has been at the forefront of accusing the BJP of "vote chori" (vote theft) ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections. The party has been levelling allegations of collusion between the Election Commission and the BJP government at the Centre to influence election results.

'Govt initiatives help oil companies thrive in unfavorable global environment'

IANS

New Delhi, Sept 16: The Indian government's decisive initiatives have helped oil marketing companies (OMCs) thrive in a volatile global environment, a report said on Tuesday.

In the last six months, Indian oil marketing companies have witnessed volatility in refining margins, potential risk on the US urging India to reduce its intake of Russian oil and depreciation of the Indian currency against the US dollar.

"The Indian government has been backing OMCs by supporting decisions (even in August 2025, India imported 1.3 million barrels per day), which are in the best commercial interests of these companies and also promising to pay LPG under-recovery incurred in FY24," HSBC Global Investment Research said in a report.

All this resulted in OMC stocks surging by 14-23 per cent as compared to the NIFTY50 (up 12 per cent) in the last six months.

Combined refining and marketing (R&M) margins have been the hallmark of this steady performance.

While refining margins expanded in the interim and then contracted, and Indian currency depreciation ate away some of the marketing margins,



combined margins have stood steady at \$22-25/ barrel, which are much higher than our and the street's full-year estimates, the report mentioned.

This leaves a comfortable margin of safety for these companies, which historically have been associated with highly volatile earnings.

"Our HSBC global team forecasts a big surplus in oil from Q4 CY25 onward, with a downside risk to HSBC's Brent oil forecast of \$65 per barrel for 2026. This provides further cushioning to estimates," the report noted.

Moreover, auto fuel demand continues to maintain momentum despite weakness in ATF. In August 2025, auto fuel demand maintained momentum, growing 2.6 per cent year-on-year (YoY).

Gasoline demand grew a strong 5.5 per cent YoY, while diesel

demand grew 1.2 per cent YoY. ATF demand is negative for a second consecutive month at -2.9 per cent (after -2.3 per cent in July).

"With recent trends in air traffic improving, we expect the decline also to reverse," the global investment firm said.

OMCs will continue to add new outlets, which grew 8 per cent YoY in July 2025. At the same time, they have added EV outlets, which now account for 30 per cent of their total outlets.

According to the report, OMCs have to fund large capital expenditure plans, which gives us comfort that the government is unlikely to take away a large part of their margins by tweaking duties.

Also, a downside risk in oil prices provides further support to earnings, said the report.

One lakh cataract surgeries in Maha to mark Modi's birthday: BJP

PTI

Mumbai, Sept 16: More than one lakh cataract surgeries will be performed in Maharashtra during a fortnight-long drive to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday, state BJP president Ravindra Chavan said on Tuesday.

The party will also

arrange eye check-up of at least 10 lakh people and distribute spectacles to the needy during the drive, to be held from September 17 to October 2, Chavan told reporters in Mumbai.

Modi will be celebrating his 75th birthday on September 17.

"We will bring together NGOs, other organisations

and social groups to perform more than one lakh cataract operations, ensure eye check-ups for 10 lakh people and provide spectacles to the needy, Chavan said.

The drive is being projected as a service initiative by the BJP. "This is an attempt to connect with people in the state," Chavan said.

Blood donation camps will also be organised during the drive, Chavan said. "We have chalked out 17 programmes to be implemented during this fortnight," he added.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has held meetings with state ministers and BJP leaders to ensure the successful organisation of events, he said. On criticism

by opposition parties over the state's financial condition, Chavan said, "Instead of what the opposition is saying, it is necessary for the state to do what is good and required for common people. We are determined to provide 'roti, kapda and makaan' to people and will continue to work on our chosen path."

High demand pushes iPhone 17 Pro Max Cosmic Orange out of stock in US, India

PTI

New Delhi, Sept 16: Apple's iPhone Pro Max 17 in cosmic orange has witnessed a considerable surge in demand, and it has gone out of stock within three days after pre-booking went live for pick up of the devices at the company's official stores in the US and India, as per information shared by company staff.

In India, the entire iPhone Pro Max series is not available for pre-order with pick-up option at Apple stores, according to information sourced from the Apple India website.

The cosmic orange devices were not available for pre-orders in both iPhone Pro Max and iPhone Pro series in India for the pick-up at store option.

"I am really sorry to inform you, but due to the large number of pre-orders, all the cosmic orange iPhone 17 Pro Max are being sold very fast, due to which, they are not available in any storage variant," an Apple specialist said.

The executive mentioned that the device in deep blue colour is available at some stores. "I am really sorry for the inconvenience, but the back-end team is trying their best to restock the orange colour as soon as possible," the



specialist said.

An email query sent to Apple did not elicit any reply.

Apple unveiled the iPhone 17 series in the price range of Rs 82,900 to Rs 2,29,900, which will be available in India starting from September 19 onwards for customers who have pre-booked the device.

According to the specialist, some stores will also have limited devices available on September 19, which can be picked up without pre-order, but those devices will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. The pre-orders for the devices were opened on September 12.

Consumers interested in purchasing 'out of stock' devices can continue to book, but the devices will be delivered to them at their address

after October 7. In India, the entire range of iPhone Pro Max devices was not available for pick-up at Apple stores as of September 15, according to information sourced from the Apple India website.

In the US, the iPhone 17 series is priced between USD 799 (about Rs 70,370) and USD 1,999 (Rs 1.76 lakh) apiece.

Taiwanese electronics giant Foxconn is the biggest producer of iPhones, with manufacturing facilities located in China and India.

All iPhones produced in India are shipped to meet the requirements of the US market. The company recently commenced production of the iPhone 17 series at its second-largest manufacturing unit based in Bangalore, operating under informal

restrictions imposed by China.

According to multiple sources, Apple plans to increase iPhone production to 60 million units this year, from about 35-40 million units in 2024-25.

Apple assembled 60 per cent more iPhones, worth an estimated USD 22 billion, in India in the year ended March 31, 2025.

An analysis by S&P Global said that iPhone sales in the US were 75.9 million units in 2024, suggesting a need to double shipments either through new capacity or redirecting shipments bound for the domestic market.

However, according to sources, China has been informally restricting the supply of capital goods, skilled manpower etc, required for the expansion of iPhone production in India.

Apple's supplies within India grew by 21.5 per cent annually to 5.9 million units in the first half of 2025, with iPhone 16 being the highest-shipped model across the country during the period.

During the second quarter, Apple's iPhone supplies in India grew 19.7 per cent year-on-year in the June 2025 quarter, clocking 7.5 per cent market share in the country's smartphone market.

ED summons Uthappa, Yuvraj, Sood in betting app case

PTI

New Delhi, Sept 16: Widening its probe into an alleged illegal online betting linked money laundering case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned cricketers Robin Uthappa and Yuvraj Singh, and actor Sonu Sood for questioning, officials said Tuesday.

Uthappa (39), Singh (43) and Sood (52) have been asked to depose beginning next week at the agency's headquarter investigation unit in Delhi and get their statements recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a case linked to a platform named 1xBet, the officials said.

While Uthappa has been asked to depose on September 22, Singh has been called on September 23 followed by Sood on September 24, they said.

The federal probe agency has questioned former cricketers Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan apart from former TMC MP and actor Mimi Chakraborty over the last few weeks as part of this investigation.

Bengali actor Ankush Hazra (36) appeared before the ED on Tuesday on his scheduled summons in the case, while actor Urvasi Rautela (31), the India brand ambassador of 1xBet, is yet to appear on her given date for Tuesday, the sources said.

The probe pertains to the operations of the 1xBet betting app as part of ED's wider probe against such platforms on allegations of



during numerous people and investors worth crores of rupees and reportedly evading a huge amount of direct and indirect taxes.

According to the Curacao registered company, 1xBet is a globally recognised bookmaker with 18 years in the betting industry.

The brand's customers can place bets on thousands of sporting events, with the company's website and app available in 70 languages, according to the company.

An email sent by PTI seeking a response from 1xBet on the ED probe remained unanswered till the filing of this report.

More sportspersons, movie actors, online influencers and celebrities are expected to be questioned by the agency in the coming days as part of this probe.

The ED's line of investigation, according to the sources, is to know from the celebrities as to

how they were contacted by the said betting company seeking their endorsement, the nodal person(s) for contact in India, the mode of payment (cash through hawala or banking channel) and place of the payment (in India or abroad) etc.

The agency, while recording the statements of the cricketers and actors, is understood to be asking them if they knew that online betting and gaming was illegal in India. It has also asked them to furnish a copy of their contracts and all relevant email and paper documentation made by them with 1xBet.

The agency is also looking at the end use of the money taken by the celebrities to check if any of them can be categorised as the "proceeds of crime" under the PMLA, as per the sources.

The Union government recently banned real money online gaming in India by bringing a legislation.

Metabolic doctor reveals 5 simple daily habits to detox, heal fatty liver naturally

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Sept 16: Fatty liver disease has become a common health issue affecting many people worldwide these days. Stress and modern lifestyles which includes—having too much of processed foods, sugary drinks, sedentary routines, obesity—are all some of the biggest reasons for increasing cases of fatty liver these days. Even young adults are increasingly diagnosed, making it no longer a condition limited to older age groups. If left undiagnosed and untreated, fatty liver can slowly and silently progress into serious complications like liver inflammation and cirrhosis in the long run. However, the good part is that fatty liver is largely preventable and reversible with better lifestyle choices, weight management, and timely medical guidance.

Recently, popular metabolic doctor and sports physio, Dr Sudhanshu Rai took to social media wherein he shared some simple steps in which one can naturally detox and heal fatty liver in 28 days. Here's what these eight daily habits are:

"No alcohol. No sugary drinks"

Having excess sugar, in the form of sugary drinks and through processed foods, can seriously damage the liver in the long run. When eaten in large amounts, sugar—particularly fructose—is converted into fat by the liver. When unutilised, this fat accumulates on the liver and can even cause non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). While the body uses glucose for energy, the liver metabolises fructose thus, creating strain and even triggering inflammation. Excess sugar also worsens insulin resistance, further triggering fat storage in the liver. And so, cutting down on sugar intake can help protect and

improve liver health.

According to a 2022 study, a 12-week randomised dietary intervention in adult NAFLD patients found that a low free sugar diet significantly decreased liver enzymes, triglycerides, fasting blood sugar, insulin resistance markers, inflammatory markers, and liver fibrosis score. This showed that reducing sugar intake can significantly improve liver health and may even help reverse fatty liver changes in the body.

"Start day with warm lemon water"

Lemons are a rich source of Vitamin C and antioxidants, which help reduce inflammation and oxidative stress in the liver, thus improving overall liver function and reducing liver damage. And so, having warm lemon water first thing in the morning not only helps in Vitamin C intake but also hydrates the body.

"Eat turmeric with black pepper daily"

Turmeric is rich in curcumin (an active compound), and the piperine in black pepper helps in its absorption and bioavailability. When consumed daily, eating turmeric with black pepper daily can help improve liver health and fatty liver disease (NAFLD) as the curcumin in turmeric has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects which helps in reducing fat accumulation and oxidative stress in the liver.

"Choose lean protein with every meal"

Having lean protein with every meal can help in healing or managing fatty liver. How? Lean protein helps in reducing liver fat, improving insulin sensitivity, and supporting liver cell regeneration. Some sources of lean protein include: deskinmed chicken, fish, beans and lentils, low-fat dairy products, eggs, and tofu.

A recent study in 2025 showed that

a protein-rich diet (plant or animal protein) helps in reducing liver fat by roughly 50% in half of the participants. It also improved the patients' insulin sensitivity and lipid metabolism, which are important for reversing fatty liver.

"Drink dandelion tea twice daily"

Dr Rai further suggests people suffering with fatty liver to have dandelion tea at least twice a day. Drinking dandelion tea twice daily may help support in reducing fatty liver as dandelion root and leaves are rich in antioxidants, polysaccharides, and bioactive compounds that protect and detoxify the liver. Research suggests dandelion extracts help reduce oxidative stress, inflammation, and fat accumulation in the liver—all of which are important in managing or treating NAFLD.

Also, since dandelion tea also act as a mild diuretic, it helps the body remove toxins and excess water.

"Add cruciferous vegetables daily"

Eating cruciferous vegetables daily can help reduce and even cure fatty liver. How? Cruciferous vegetables—like broccoli, cabbage, kale, and cauliflower—can help reduce fat accumulation on the liver, inflammation, and even oxidative stress. In turn, the bioactive compounds like indoles, glucosinolates, and sulforaphane in them help improve liver function and it overall health, as highlighted in a 2016 study.

"Replace refined grains with Quinoa"

Refined grains are rich in carbohydrates, which when eaten in excess is converted into fat that may get further get stored in the liver. Meanwhile, Quinoa is rich in protein and low in carbs. Thus, reducing the intake of refined grains and replacing them with Quinoa can help in healing the liver by reducing fat deposition.

What will happen if Pak pulls out of Asia Cup? It won't receive 15% share from ACC's revenue

PTI

Dubai, Sept 16: Pakistan's reported threat to pull out from the ongoing Asia Cup after demanding ICC match referee Andy Pycroft's removal won't be particularly easy to go ahead with as any such move could result in a revenue loss of anything between USD 12 to 16 million for the country.

Five Test-playing nations -- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan -- earn 15 percent each constituting 75 per cent of the Asian Cricket Council's annual revenue. The remaining 25 per cent is shared by Associate nations.

The revenue verticals include share from broadcast deals (linear and digital), various sponsorships, and ticketing among others.

From this Asia Cup alone, the Pakistan Cricket Board's projected earning is between USD 12 to 16 million and any decision of a pullout could well spell doom for a cricketing body which isn't as flush with cash as the BCCI.

Sony Pictures Network India (SPNI) inked an eight-year deal (2024-2031) with the ACC for USD 170 million. The deal also includes broadcast of women's Asia



Cup and the Under-19 men's Asia Cup.

Naqvi, who also holds the post of Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control in Pakistan, is currently the head of ACC as well.

But in his capacity as PCB chief, he has not minced words while lashing out at Pycroft, holding him responsible for the furore that was triggered by the Indian team's refusal to shake hands with Pakistani players after their match on Sunday. The ICC has refused to remove Pycroft, rejecting PCB's demand.

"Can Naqvi risk Pakistan losing around USD 16 million out of a projected budget of USD 227 million

for the fiscal year? That will be roughly seven per cent of the annual PCB revenue gone. "It will be walking on thin ice for him. But again as one of the important ministers of Pakistan, he also needs to keep his respect in front of his countrymen," a source privy to developments in PCB told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

It is clear that if PCB decides to pull out then it would be left alone in the ACC board room where other directors might object to it getting the 15 per cent annual share without playing the matches of a marquee event.

Naqvi, as the head of ACC, will also have to bear the

brunt and face the ire of the official broadcaster, which can refuse to pay the agreed upon fee.

The India-Pakistan match is the biggest revenue generator and a pull-out would potentially mean huge loss for the broadcaster which always sells advertisement slots for the marquee match at a premium. In all, Naqvi and Pakistan have a lot to lose and very little to gain. Therefore, Pycroft is likely to continue as the referee in their game against the UAE on Wednesday.

Unless other ACC nations decide to offer them some leeway by swapping Pycroft and Richie Richardson's matches.

UN warns Israel's Qatar attack as assault on 'regional peace & stability'

AFP

Geneva, Sept 16: The United Nations rights chief warned on Tuesday that Israel's airstrike targeting Hamas leaders in Qatar last week threatened regional peace and stability and urged "accountability for unlawful killings."

"Israel's strike on negotiators in Doha on September 9 was a shocking breach of international law," Volker Turk told the UN Human Rights Council.

Israel targeted Hamas leaders last week in strikes on the Qatari capital, killing five Hamas members and a Qatari security officer.

The attack drew widespread international condemnation, including from Gulf monarchies allied with the United States, Israel's main backer.

Opening an urgent debate on the strike before the council, Turk described it as "an assault on regional peace and stability, and a blow against the integrity of mediation and negotiating processes around the world."

"As such, I condemn it and call on this Council and all governments to



do the same."

The council announced on Monday that it would convene the 10th urgent debate since its creation in 2006 following two official requests from member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation of the Arab States of the Gulf.

Israel, which disengaged from the rights council earlier this year, reacted angrily to the news of the urgent debate. "This marks yet another shameful chapter in the Human Rights Council's ongoing abuse," Israel's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Daniel Meron, told journalists.

He accused the council of "serving as a platform for anti-Israeli propaganda, while ignoring the brutal

realities on the ground and the atrocities committed by Hamas."

Turk said Israel's September 9 attack "violated the right to life under international human rights law and the principles of international humanitarian law."

"Targeting parties engaged in international mediation on its territory undermines Qatar's key role as a facilitator and peace broker."

"It is an attack on global efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully," he said.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called on the council "to reaffirm the central importance of mediation processes and to call for accountability for unlawful killings."

Nepal: Cremation of Gen Z protest victims performed with state honour



PTI

Kathmandu, Sept 16: Funerals of some of the victims of Gen Z protests were performed on Tuesday at Pashupati Aryaghat in Kathmandu with state honour, while some bodies were taken to various districts for cremation.

Four bodies were taken to Pashupatinath near the bank of the Bagmati river for cremation with state honour, an official at the Pashupati said.

Minister for Energy and Physical Infrastructure Kulman Ghising and Minister for Home Affairs Om Prakash Aryal joined the family members of the deceased for the last rites.

The funeral procession started from the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Maharajgunj of Kathmandu, where the bodies were kept for postmortem, and ended at Pashupati with thousands present to pay tribute.

Six dead bodies were taken outside Kathmandu to various districts for cremation after their postmortem on Tuesday, the officials said.

The rest of the bodies were handed over to the family members after the postmortem on Sunday and Monday.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Sushila Karki had announced that those killed during the Gen Z protest on September 8 and 9 would be declared "martyrs". The government has announced NRs. 1.5 million compensation each to the family of the victims. There will be a public holiday on Wednesday to mourn the death of the protestors. The national flag will be put at half-mast.

Seventy-two people, including 3 policemen and 10 prisoners, were among the dead during the violent protests on September 8 and 9 that toppled the government led by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

Meanwhile, several ministries in Nepal began assessing the damage caused during the Gen Z protests, My Republica news portal reported on Tuesday.

They have started collecting data on burnt cars, damaged equipment and properties.

The Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT) has formed a nine-member damage assessment committee to gather information on losses at the ministry's departmental, divisional, and project offices, it reported.

Taliban leader bans WIFI in Afghan province to 'prevent immorality'

AP

Jalalabad, Sept 16: The Taliban leader banned fiber optic Internet in an Afghan province to "prevent immorality," a spokesman for the administration said Tuesday.

It's the first time a ban of this kind has been imposed since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, and leaves government offices, the private sector, public institutions, and homes in northern Balkh province without WIFI Internet. Mobile Internet remains functional, however.

Hajji Attaullah Zaid, a provincial government spokesman, said there was no longer cable Internet access in Balkh by order of a "complete



ban" from the leader Hibatullah Akhundzada.

"This measure was taken to prevent immorality, and an alternative will be built within the country for necessities," Zaid told The Associated Press. He gave no further information, including why Balkh was chosen for the ban or if the shutdown would spread to other provinces.

Luxembourg to recognize Palestinian State at UN summit

AFP

Brussels, Sept 16: Luxembourg has said it will join a raft of countries recognizing the State of Palestine at a United Nations summit in New York next week.

French President Emmanuel Macron is spearheading the drive on recognizing a Palestinian state as international condemnation grows of Israel over its nearly two-year offensive in Gaza.

Speaking to journalists late Monday, Luxembourg's Prime Minister Luc Frieden said that "the situation on the ground has deteriorated considerably in recent months."

"A movement is now



emerging in Europe and around the world to demonstrate that the two-state solution is still relevant," Frieden said. "That is why the Luxembourg government intends to join those who

at the meeting at the UN General Assembly.

Israel and its ally the United States have blasted the push, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio saying Monday the move "emboldened" Hamas.

The war in Gaza was sparked by Hamas' October 2023 attack on Israel that resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, most of them civilians, according to an AFP tally of official figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign in Gaza has killed at least 64,905 people, also mostly civilians, according to figures from the territory's health ministry that the United Nations considers reliable.

China Masters: Sindhu overcomes Jakobsen in first round

PTI

Shenzhen, Sept 16: Star India shuttler P.V. Sindhu overcame the first-round hurdle with ease, defeating Denmark's Julie Dawall Jakobsen in straight games to advance to the women's singles pre-quarterfinals of the China Masters Super 750 in Shenzhen on Wednesday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, needed just 27 minutes to dispatch Jakobsen 21-4, 21-10. The result comes less than 10 days after her opening-round loss at the Hong Kong Open Super 500, where she fell to another Dane, Line Christophersen.

The 30-year-old, who has endured six first-round exits on the BWF World Tour this season, looked sharp from the outset. She raced to a commanding lead in the opener, wrapping it up in just over 10 minutes. The second game followed a similar pattern: Sindhu went up 4-1 before Jakobsen briefly levelled at 4-4. From there, Sindhu asserted control with her experience and superior shot-making, reeling off six straight points to move from 11-8 to 17-8 before closing out the match.

The two had last met in the opening round of the Yonex Swiss Open in March, where Jakobsen had pushed Sindhu to work much harder.

Apollo Tyres new jersey sponsor of Indian cricket team in deal worth Rs 579 crore



PTI

New Delhi, Sept 16: Apollo Tyres has been locked in as the new jersey sponsor for the Indian cricket team following the exit of online game platform Dream11, a senior BCCI official said on Tuesday.

The BCCI was left without a shirt sponsor for the team after the government banned real money gaming platforms including Dream 11 under a new legislation.

The team is currently playing the Asia Cup in Dubai without a title sponsor.

"The deal has been signed with Apollo Tyres. We will announce it soon," said a senior BCCI official.

It is reliably learnt that the three-year deal is valued at Rs 579 crore, higher than the Rs 358 crore agreement with Dream 11 for the same duration.

The deal with the tyre major covers 121 bilateral games and 21 ICC games. Dream 11 shut

down its real money games due to the 'Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act 2025', which states that "no person shall offer any, aid, abet, induce, indulge, engage in offering online money gaming services nor shall involve in any advertisement which directly or indirectly promotes any person to play any online money game".

The BCCI had released the invitation for Express of Interest for the team's lead sponsor rights earlier this month, confirming that there will be no shirt sponsor for the ongoing Asia Cup.

The Board had barred companies dealing in real money gaming, cryptocurrency, tobacco, and alcohol from the process. Apollo Tyres is a multinational company headquartered in Gurugram.

The tyre maker has manufacturing units in India and abroad, including Europe.

INOX CINEMA SRINAGAR

Movies Schedule

Wed, 17th Sept.

MIRAI: SUPER YODHA (UA16+)
HINDI - 07:05 PM

LOVE YOU VIETNAM (UA16+)
HINDI - 10:20 AM

THE CONJURING LAST RITES (A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
11:00 AM, 05:30 PM

BAAGHI 4 (A)
HINDI - 02:00 PM

DEMON SLAYER: KIMETSU NO YAIBA (UA13+)
JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
11:45 AM, 06:15 PM
ENGLISH - 03:00 PM
HINDI - 01:05 PM

HEER EXPRESS (UA/13+)
HINDI - 04:15 PM

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