



Terrorists, their supporters peddled false narratives for decades to whitewash Pakistan's sins: LG Sinha

Vows culprits will be brought to justice | Meets terror victim families at Dardpora, assures help | Says NOKs of 250 sufferers given appointment letters

Waris Fayaz

Kupwara (Dardpora), Oct 15: Assuring full support and assistance to terror victim families, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that elements who peddled false narratives for decades at Pakistan's behest will not be spared.

LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) visited Dardpora in North Kashmir and met the families of civilian martyrs killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

While addressing the terror victim families, the Lieutenant Governor said, "The culprit Pakistani terrorists and their support system in the valley ran a false narrative for three decades to absolve terror country Pakistan for its sins."

"Pakistan, the breeding ground of terrorism, is exposed now and those involved

in peddling a fake narrative on behalf of terrorists will be brought to justice," he said.

He assured the terror victim families of proper rehabilitation and strictest punishment to the culprits. "Justice, respect and dignity to family members of civilian martyrs killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists is top priority of the government," he said, adding, "The criminal justice system will ensure perpetrators and elements of the terror ecosystem are punished, providing a sense of justice and closure for victim's family and the society."

"I have assured the family members that their decades-long trauma, torment and suffering is over. We will ensure all the support so that they can reclaim their lives," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also observed that families of civilian martyrs have gone through deep trauma,



suffered various challenges including unemployment and education and felt loss of hope in the past three decades.

"Families of civilians who were killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists also suffered

systemic barriers which stifled their progress. They were denied their rights and access to resources. All obstacles are now removed and we are ensuring justice and dignity for terror victim families," he said.

So far around 250 terror victim families have been provided with government jobs. This mission will continue till justice is done to every affected family. This is the beginning of a new era of justice in Jammu Kashmir."

and suffering of terror victim families due to their profound emotional and psychological trauma and the administration will handle each case with full sensitivity and responsibility.

He said, "So far around 250 terror victim families have been provided with government jobs. This mission will continue till justice is done to every affected family. This is the beginning of a new era of justice in Jammu Kashmir," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Recalling his earlier interactions with victims' families in 2024, the LG said many had lost their breadwinners to terrorism, leaving them in deep distress. "Some families received government jobs, but many others continued to struggle. After reviewing their situation with officials, we collectively decided that every district must take responsibility for rehabilitating such families," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor also promised action on pending cases. "If FIRs have not been registered in any circumstances, the FIRs will be registered," he said.

He also spoke on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the High-range Rural Development Society (HRDS India) and Divisional Commissioner Jammu and Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, under which the houses of terror victims having their own land will be constructed. Under the initiative, the HRDS India and Divisional Commissioners of both the divisions will identify terror victim families whose houses were destroyed by the terrorists.

Reiterating the administration's stand, LG Sinha said the government stands with every innocent victim of terrorism. "Together we will build a peaceful, prosperous and self-reliant Jammu and | More on P6

Cabinet gives nod for introduction of 3 key bills in Assembly



- SEC's upper age limit to be enhanced to 70 years
- New law for shops, business establishments to be enacted
- Qualification requirement for marriage assistance scheme removed
- Engineering recruitment rules to be amended

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 15: The cabinet on Wednesday gave its nod for introduction three key bills in the upcoming session of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the cabinet gave its nod for amendments to the Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 and the Goods & Services Tax Act, 2017, as well as for the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Shops and Business Establishment

Bill, 2025.

According to sources, the amendment to the Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 proposes to raise the upper age limit for the State Election Commissioner (SEC) from 65 years to 70 years.

With the proposed amendment, the upper age limit would be enhanced to 70 years.

The government also gave its go ahead for the Jammu and Kashmir Shops and Business Establishment Act-2025.

The proposed legislation mooted by the Labour & Employment Department aims at regulating working conditions, employment practices, and operational standards for shops and other business establishments in the Union Territory.

It also gave go-ahead for introduction of amendments in the Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax Act 2017. | More on P6



A woman carrying cockscomb flowers, locally known as Mawal, in a field in Srinagar on Wednesday October 15, 2025. This vibrant flower serves the dual purpose of an ornamental garden plant as well as a prized culinary ingredient in Kashmiri kitchens.

Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

Army's Vajr Div's Roshan Mustaqbil empowering local youth: LG Sinha

KT News Desk

Kupwara, Oct 15: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday visited 'Roshan Mustaqbil', a youth empowerment centre at Zangli, run by Indian Army's Vajr Division to channelise local talent into education, skills and livelihood. He was accompanied by Maj

Gen K Mohan Nair, YSM, SM, General Officer Commanding, Vajr Division and other senior officers.

The centre currently has over 690 youth enrolled, who are building a better future for themselves and the society. The centre offers classrooms for competitive exam preparation, digital learning and computer



Ranji Trophy returns to Srinagar

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 15: After years of anticipation, the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar roared back to life on Wednesday as the Ranji Trophy 2025-26 season began with Jammu and Kashmir facing the mighty Mumbai side.

The October morning quickly turned electric as fans packed the stands, waving flags and cheering for their home team.

"It feels historic to see top-level cricket back in Srinagar. We have waited years for this," said Cricket enthusiast Aamir Rashid, who travelled from Baramulla to witness the match while speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Earlier, J&K Skipper won the toss and opted to field first — a decision that immediately paid dividends when pacer Auqib Nabi struck in the very first over, removing Mumbai's Sarfraz Khan caught behind.

However, the absence of J&K's pace sensation Umran Malik became the talking point of the day. Residents | More on P6

CM Omar calls for time-bound mineral exploration in J&K

- » Reviews readiness of Integrated Mining Surveillance System
- » Directs implementation of robust system in mining operations

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 15: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Mining Department at the Civil Secretariat here to assess the department's modernization initiatives, regulatory framework, and ongoing reforms in mineral management and surveillance.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary,



Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Mining Department Anil Kumar,

Director Geology & Mining, all Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, and other senior officers of the department. | More on P6

Pressure to deliver mounts as Omar-led govt completes one year in office

From comprehensive job package to reinstating free education, people await progress on manifesto vows; opposition slams NC regime for 'failure'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 15: The pressure to deliver on the promises has been mounting for the ruling regime in Jammu and Kashmir as the National Conference (NC) government completed one year in office on Wednesday,

while all the promises from one lakh jobs to free units of electricity and 12 gas cylinders remain unfulfilled.

On October 16, 2024, the first government in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, led by Omar Abdullah, assumed office here after the NC-Congress alliance secured an absolute majority in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, winning 48 seats. NC carried the alliance to victory by winning 42 seats, while Congress could win only six seats.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the mood across Jammu

and Kashmir is a mix of cautious hope and growing impatience.

Riding a wave of optimism, the NC swept to power last year, pledging 12 flagship promises made on the party's manifesto ahead of the 2024 Assembly elections.

Yet, as the government marks its first anniversary, many of those promises remain in the realm of rhetoric.

The ruling regime after taking over has kept its promise so far only on passing the resolution on statehood restoration in the first Assembly Session while the other pledges like free 200 units of electricity, 12 gas cylinders to economically weaker sections,

Rs 5,000 per month to women belonging to EWS, establishing a medical trust to fight against serious diseases like cancer, reinstating free education up to the university level have remained unfulfilled.

The NC had also promised a comprehensive job package for youth, and redrawing the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, and the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019 have also been overlooked so far.

For many, the past 12 months have felt | More on P6

Judge this Govt after 5 years report card: Deputy CM

Inspects developmental projects in Chanpora Constituency

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary Wednesday reiterated that the present dispensation is fully committed to the overall development and welfare of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He made these remarks during an extensive tour of Chanpora Constituency in Srinagar.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Omar Abdullah-led government is focused on ensuring equitable and sustainable development across all regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

“People will judge this government after our five-year report card,” he asserted.

During his tour, the Deputy Chief Minister, accompanied by local legislator Mushtaq Ahmad Guroo, inspected several ongoing developmental projects in the constituency.

The projects inspected include Community Centre Hyderpora, Marriage Hall Haranbal Natipora, Bailey Bridge project at Chanpora, as well as widening of Rawalpura-Mocho Road. He also reviewed the progress on the Bund Road project from Chanpora to Natipora Junction and other ongoing works across the constituency.

While inspecting the Community Centre Hyderpora, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to submit a detailed report for early resumption of works so that the facility can be dedicated to the public at the earliest.

He also issued instructions for utility shifting and removal of bottlenecks along the Rawalpura-Mocho Road to expedite work and ensure smooth and enhanced road facility to the general public.



To enhance connectivity and mobility for residents of the Chanpora area, the Deputy Chief Minister directed the concerned departments to initiate work on the construction of the Bailey Bridge at the earliest.

He further instructed officers to ensure that all ongoing works, including the Bund Road, Chanpora-Natipora Junction and other road projects, are completed within the stipulated time frame.

During his visit to Baghe-Mehtab, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected ongoing

macadamization works in Baghe Mehtab area and assured strict action against use of sub-standard material or any other negligence are reported.

During the tour, various delegations called on the Deputy Chief Minister and appreciated the Deputy CM for taking spot inspections of the ongoing works.

Among others, Chief Engineer R&B Sushil Kumar; SEs from R&B, SMC, Housing, and other senior officers from concerned departments accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the tour.

GCW M. A, Road key in empowering women: Sakeena

Addresses 75th year celebrations of College

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo Wednesday remarked that Government College of Women (GCW), M.A Road has made an immense contribution towards the overall development of Jammu and Kashmir from the last 75 years.

The Minister made these remarks while addressing the celebrations to commemorate the 75th year of existence of the Government Women's College, Srinagar, '75 Years: A Celebration of Excellence in Women's Education', one of Jammu & Kashmir's premier institutions dedicated to women's education and empowerment.

Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education, Shantamanu; Director Colleges, Prof. Sheikh Aijaz; Principal GCW, Srinagar, Prof. Yasmeen Farooq; Nodal Principal, Prof. Seema Naz; Dean Academic Affairs, Cluster University Srinagar, former Principals and Professors of College, other Alumni of college and a large number of students were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister lauded the College's rich legacy and its transformative contribution to the intellectual, cultural, and social development of Jammu and Kashmir. She added that the college has made a major contribution towards the overall development of



Jammu and Kashmir.

“This institution has, over the decades, been a cornerstone of women empowerment, nurturing generations of leaders, educators and professionals, who have contributed meaningfully across various fields”, the Minister said. The Minister further said that GCW, Srinagar, stands as a beacon of empowerment and enlightenment for women across J&K. She added that for seventy-five years, it has opened doors of opportunity for thousands of young women, fostering not only academic excellence but also confidence, leadership, and a spirit of service to society.

Sakeena Itoo, in her address, also remembered the contribution of various Alumni members and expressed gratitude to them for their presence in these celebrations. She commended the faculty and alumni for their sustained dedication and called upon

students to carry forward the institution's legacy with renewed vigour in the era of knowledge-driven growth.

The Minister further emphasized the government's commitment to strengthening higher education infrastructure across J&K, with special focus on enhancing access, quality, and innovation in women's education. She added that Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah has given immense importance to Education, Health sectors and kept sufficient outlay for them in the Budget.

The Minister further said that newly established degree colleges have been made functional by this government in the last one year, besides sufficient faculty has been recruited to improve the educational outcomes of colleges across J&K. Vice Chancellor Cluster University Srinagar, Additional Chief Secretary Higher Education and Director

Colleges also addressed the gathering.

In her welcome address, Principal GCW Srinagar termed the celebrations as a momentous day in the history of college. She also highlighted various achievements of the college since its inception.

During the event, the Minister also unveiled a Coffee Table Book depicting 75 years of college. She also released College Times, Zoological Chronicle as well as many books of Alumni, faculty members and students.

The Minister on the occasion also felicitated outstanding students in academics, faculty members as well as Alumni of the college.

During the celebrations, the institutional journey of the college was showcased through an AV presentation, documentary, and alumni interviews and a pictorial representation of college during 2014 floods, highlighting the college's commitment to excellence in women's education.

On the occasion, intergenerational story-telling sessions were also held, where alumni shared their experiences and insights. Prof. Neerja Mattoo, Prof. Naseem Shafiaie and Nancy Dhar regaled the audience with their stories.

The College's cultural committee also organized a vibrant showcase of diverse art forms, featuring performances like Hindi invocation songs, Punjabi dance, poetry recitations, classical music, Baet Baazi, Ladakhi song, skit, group songs, Ladakhi dance, Ladi Shah, Qawwali, and Kashmiri Rauf.

Speaker reviews arrangements for LA Session at Sgr



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15: Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather Wednesday convened a high-level meeting at Assembly Secretariat here, to review arrangements for the upcoming Assembly session, scheduled to begin on October 23rd, 2025.

During the meeting, the Speaker impressed upon the officers from various departments to put in place all required facilities and ensure that all necessary preparations are made in advance to facilitate the smooth conduct of the forthcoming session.

He took an in-depth review of all the arrangements and called upon the concerned to work in a coordinated manner to ensure the session runs smoothly.

“It is our collective responsibility to ensure the smooth functioning of the assembly and all departments have to be prepared in advance in this regard,” he said.

He asked the General Administration Department to ensure that the reply to the Assembly Questions shall reach the Assembly Secretariat as early as possible and necessary instructions need to be issued to all the departments in this regard.

He also called upon the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs that Government Bills be forwarded to the Assembly Secretariat well on time and necessary instructions be issued to all the concerned departments.

Speaker called upon the Information Department to ensure proper coverage of the proceedings of the House. He also asked the Information Department to provide logistical support by making available technical equipment like public address systems, mikes and other related items for the media.

Information Technology Department was asked to ensure Wifi and Internet Services with High Speed and installation of Routers wherever required before the ensuing Assembly Session.

He also called upon the security agencies for deployment of adequate staff well versed with

Parliamentary traditions within the premises of J&K Legislative Assembly at Srinagar and make adequate arrangements for safety and security of Legislators.

Speaker further called upon the Estates department to expedite execution/completion of repair/renovation works within the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Srinagar particularly in the Assembly Hall and VIP Chambers.

They have been also asked to install intercom telephone facilities within the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly at Srinagar, besides checking of telephones already installed within the VIP Chambers.

To ensure proper regulation of traffic on roads leading to J&K Legislative Assembly Complex/Civil Secretariat Srinagar and MLA's Hostel Srinagar, Speaker called upon the concerned to put in place necessary measures for avoiding inconvenience to general public on this account.

Regarding water supply, Speaker called upon the Jal Shakti Department to keep necessary measures for providing sufficient and regular water supply to the Legislature Complex and Legislator's Hostel, Srinagar.

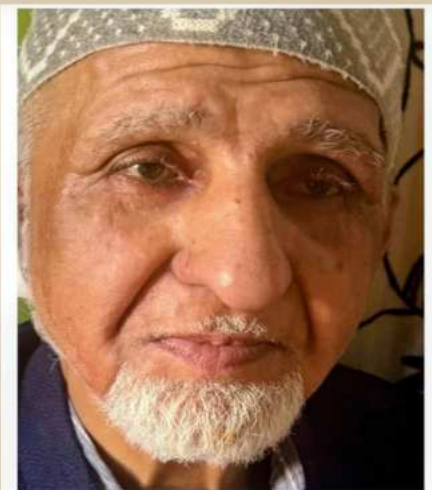
He also called upon the Power Development Department to check loopholes in transmission lines, if any, in order to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the course of session, besides ensuring uninterrupted power supply in the MLA' hostel.

Srinagar Municipal Corporation was asked to keep the entire premises and lawns of the Assembly and MLA's Hostel neat and clean, before the commencement of the session.

Speaker also issued necessary directions to the concerned departments to make advance preparations and put in place foolproof arrangements to provide timely medical support, installation/restoration of telephones in VIP chambers, emergency assistance, fire safety, cafeteria, proper hospitality for members, staff, and visitors throughout the session.

The Speaker emphasised that all protocol measures should be meticulously followed to ensure smooth functioning and the safety of all stakeholders during the proceedings.

DEMISE



With profound grief, it is mentioned that Pir Mohammad Latif S/O late Pir Mohammad Ahsan Shah R/O Hakeem Bagh Rawalpura near Masjid Aisha, has passed away on 14/10/25. There will be a 3 days mourning at their Residence.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION KUPWARA - 193222.

CORRIGENDUM

019551-3221002
No: IFCDK/2061-72
Dated: 14/10/2025.

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF DATES

Reference: This office e-Nit No. IFCDK/ 06 of 2025-26 Dated: 25.09.2025 issued vide endstt. No. IFCDK/CS/1782-93 Dated: 25.09.2025. Due to poor/nll response for the works published under Tender ID. No's 2025_IFC_289617_2, 2025_IFC_289617_3 & 2025_IFC_289617_5 advertised vide e-NIT No. referred above, the dates are hereby extended as per following schedule.

S.No	Bid submission end date.	Date and time of opening of Tender (online)
01	22-10-2025 16:30 Hours	23-10-2025 (11:30 AM)

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the original e-NIT.

Sd/-
DIPK-7212/25 Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Division Kupwara
DATED: 15-10-2025

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION, GANDERBAL

PIN: 191201, PHONE: 0194-2416246, EMAIL: exenifcdganderbal@jckashmir.com
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No: 21 of 2025-26 (e-Tendering)

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Tenders (in Two Cover System) are invited on Aggregate Percentage Basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with Union Territory of J & K Government for the following work to be opened by the Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Jal Shakti Division Ganderbal:-

S N o.	Name of Work	AAA	Advertiseme nt Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Doc. (In Rs)	Earnest Money in Rs.	Time of Completion	Class of Contract	Head of A/C M-H
01	Restoration of Critical spots of S.E. Canal (Phase-Ist)	SE Hydraulic Circle Srinagar/ GBL's Order No: 42 of 2025-26 Dated: 07.10.2025	97.290	5000/-	2,92,000/-	150 Days	AAY	MH 4711 UT CAPEX

Total Number of Work is 01 (One Work)

Position of Funds: 100% Budgetary Provision.

Position of AAA: Accorded

Position of TS: Accorded

1) The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions and other details can be seen/ downloaded on e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

01	Publishing Date	15-10-2025 11:00 A.M
02	Download Date Start	15-10-2025 11:00 A.M
03	Bid submission Date Start	15-10-2025 11:00 A.M
04	Pre Bid Meeting Date	16-10-2025 02:00 P.M
05	Bid submission Date End	27-10-2025 04:00 P.M
06	Bid opening Date	28-10-2025 11:00 A.M

2. The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in

3. The bids uploaded on the Web site up to due date and time will be opened on 28.10.2025 at (11:00 AM) in the Office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Ganderbal in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case of Holidays or office happening to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The complete bidding process will be online.

4. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document (Non- Refundable/ Non- transferrable) to be deposited under MH: 0702-Rev. Misc. in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt or e-Challan (mentioning therein e-NIT No and Serial No of Work) to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Jal Shakti Division Ganderbal and earnest money/ bid security in shape of CDR/ FDR pledged to the Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Ganderbal, besides the dates on the instruments must not be prior to date of issuance of this Notice. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of Price bids.

NO: IFCD/GBL/ 5819-68 Dated: 14.10.2025

DIPK-7222/25

DATED: 15-10-2025

(Er. Iftikhar Nadeem Mattoo)
Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Ganderbal

Private schooling costs parents over ‘Rs 37,000’

RIYAZ BHAT

Srinagar, Oct 15: In Jammu and Kashmir, on an average a student of private senior secondary institute bears a cost of over Rs 37,000 on school expenditure during the current academic year.

Besides, the students of government secondary schools also spent over Rs 14,000 on school expenditure during the current academic year.

The official figures reveal that on an average, a senior secondary student in both rural and urban areas of Jammu and Kashmir reported spending of Rs 37,291 on school expenditure during the current academic year. It also states that on an average the student government higher secondary spends at least Rs 14,652 on school expenditure during the current academic year. Earlier



in September, KNO reported that in Jammu and Kashmir, 87 percent of students are paying course fees in schools. However, on the

contrary only 57.1 percent students pay such charges at the national level.

The official figures reveal that at least 87

“THE OFFICIAL FIGURES REVEAL THAT ON AN AVERAGE, a senior secondary student in both rural and urban areas of Jammu and Kashmir reported spending of Rs 37,291 on school expenditure during the current academic year. It also states that on an average the student government higher secondary spends at least Rs 14,652 on school expenditure during the current academic year.

percent of students reported expenditure on course fees by level of current enrolment for

Jammu and Kashmir including 89.3 percent among the male and 84.3 percent among the female students.

It also said that the national percentage of students reported expenditure on course fees by level of current enrollment for each state and UT was 57.1 percent in 2025.

According to the official figures, in the rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir, 85 percent persons including 87.7 percent males and 81.7 percent females enrolled in school reported expenditure on course fees by level of current enrolment.

Likewise, in the urban areas of Jammu and Kashmir at least 96.1 percent persons enrolled in school reported expenditure on course fees by level of current enrolment. This includes 95.9 percent of male and 96.3 percent female students respectively—(KNO)

BJP fields Devyani Rana on legacy ticket for Nagrota Bypoll

YOGESH

Jammu, Oct 15: In a move poised to leverage family legacy and voter sympathy, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday officially announced Devyani Rana as its candidate for the high-stakes Nagrota Assembly bypoll, setting the stage for a fiercely contested battle in the Jammu region.

The announcement comes just weeks before the November 11 polling date, with the constituency – a traditional BJP stronghold – having fallen vacant following the untimely death of Devyani's father and senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana, on October 31, 2024.

Devyani Rana, 32, the daughter of the late MLA and niece of Union Minister Jitendra Singh, expressed unbridled confidence in carrying forward her father's "winning streak" during a media interaction at her residence in Jammu.

Surrounded by jubilant BJP workers and supporters who celebrated the news with traditional dhol beats, she stated, "I would like to continue with my father's winning streak. I have received a lot of love and blessings from the people, especially the youth, and the party. We are confident of winning. The work done over the past year has been appreciated by people. I intend to take



forward the vision of Rana sahib for Nagrota."

Emphasizing the enduring bond with the electorate, she added, "Nagrota will always remain with BJP. I am sure the voters will bless me with overwhelming support."

The BJP's Central Election Committee (CEC) cleared Devyani's name alongside Aga Syed Mohsin for the Budgam seat in Kashmir, as confirmed in an official release from the party headquarters in New Delhi.

This decision overrides speculation around other contenders like Nand Kishore Sharma and Anil Sharma, banking instead on the sympathy wave generated by Devender Rana's passing.

The senior Rana had scripted history in the 2024 Jammu and

Kashmir Assembly elections by securing a record 48,113 votes – the highest margin in the Union Territory at 30,472 votes – defeating National Conference (NC) candidate Joginder Singh.

A former NC loyalist, who defected to the BJP in 2021, Devender Rana had previously won the seat in 2014 on an NC ticket, underscoring the constituency's volatile yet BJP-leaning dynamics since 1996.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Panthers Party (India) Chairman and former Minister Harsh Dev Singh on the same day issued a fervent appeal to the NC and Congress – allies in the ruling INDIA bloc – to back him as their consensus opposition candidate.

Positioning himself as a viable

alternative to the BJP's "dynastic politics", Singh argued that a united front was essential to counter the ruling party's dominance in Nagrota, a seat where the NC-Congress alliance had faltered in 2024 by fielding separate candidates.

In a statement shared via social media and addressed to NC president Farooq Abdullah and Congress leaders, Harsh Dev Singh said, "I make a strong appeal to the National Conference (NC) and Congress to support me as the consensus candidate from the INDIA Alliance in the upcoming Nagrota assembly by-poll elections. The people of Nagrota deserve a united opposition voice against the BJP's machinery, not fragmented efforts that dilute our strength. Let us set aside differences for the greater good of democracy and the aspirations of the youth and marginalized sections in our constituency."

Singh, a two-time former MLA from the Ramnagar (now reserved post-delimitation), highlighted his grassroots connect with people during the tenure as Education Minister in Mufti Sayeed's government during 2002-2006. He cautioned that without unity, the bypoll could reinforce BJP's grip, potentially at the expense of the coalition's broader agenda on statehood restoration and regional equity.

The appeal comes amid

reported strains within the NC-Congress partnership, which failed to consolidate votes in Nagrota during the last polls – NC's Joginder Singh polled 17,641 votes, while Congress's Balbir Singh managed 5,979.

Neither the NC nor Congress has announced its candidate yet, leaving room for Singh's overture.

Political analysts view this as a tactical bid by the Panthers Party leader to exploit alliance fissures, especially as the bypoll serves as a litmus test for the ruling coalition's cohesion post the 2024 elections.

Nagrota, encompassing parts of Jammu district with a diverse voter base including urban professionals, farmers, and ex-servicemen, remains a prestige battleground.

The BJP's 2024 triumph here was pivotal in its Jammu sweep, contrasting with the NC's Valley dominance. With counting slated for November 14, the bypoll – alongside Budgam – is expected to draw national attention, gauging public mood on governance, development, and the push for J&K's full statehood.

As campaigns gear up, Devyani Rana's camp is already mobilizing on themes of continuity and progress, while Harsh Dev Singh's plea underscores the opposition's high-wire act—(KNO)

Sajad Lone should mind his language: Dy CM

Says have high regard for his father



RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Oct 15: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Wednesday said he holds great respect for senior politician Sajad Lone's late father, but advised him (Lone) to exercise restraint in his language while making public statements.

Speaking to reporters, Choudhary recalled his earlier interactions with Sajad Lone and acknowledged his educational background and political legacy.

"I respect Sajad Lone Sahab because he is well-educated and has studied abroad. More importantly, he is the son of a man who contributed significantly to Jammu and Kashmir. I met him around 1995-96 when I was a trade union leader and we had a detailed discussion," he said.

The Deputy CM said that while he continues to regard Sajad Lone as a "brother," he was disappointed by his recent remarks in a video clip that has been circulating on social media.

"I saw his video yesterday. I want to remind Sajad that his late father had his own ideology,

but he maintained civility and culture in his language. I would request Sajad Sahab to be mindful of that legacy," Choudhary said.

He further stated that their past political associations and discussions have always been respectful and constructive.

"We have sat together, even when he was a minister. My intention is not to criticize, but to advise. I hope he doesn't take my words otherwise," he added.

On political issues, Choudhary responded to Sajad Lone's alleged remarks targeting another politician.

"He directly accused Rajesh of being with the BJP. My question is: if you're against the BJP, then support the candidate who is contesting against them. Why abstain? Why not take a clear stand?" he asked.

Calling it a "test of sincerity," the Deputy CM said that this is the time for all leaders and self-proclaimed sympathizers of Jammu and Kashmir to show where they truly stand.

"This is not just about Sajad Lone. Anyone who claims to stand with the people of J&K must prove it now – through action, not just words," he said—(KNO)

GoI's special package for affected farmers soon: Javed Dar

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Oct 15: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar on Wednesday said the Government of India's special package for farmers affected is expected to be announced soon.

Speaking to reporters at SKUAST Wadura, the Minister said loss assessments have been completed and the proposal has been sent to the Centre.

He expressed hope that the package would be announced soon, assuring farmers of timely compensation and support.

On the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections, the Minister said four nominated candidates have filed their nominations and the party is optimistic of winning all seats—(KNO)

KNO bureau chief south Kashmir, Jahangir Ganaie bereaved

Chief Editor Nasir Azam

Khan condoles demise

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 15: Mohammad Yousuf Reshi, 42, an employee of the Power Development Department (PDD), passed away on Wednesday. The deceased was the uncle of Jahangir Ganaie, South Kashmir Bureau Chief of the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Editor-in-Chief of the KNO and Kashmir Thunder, Nasir Azam Khan and the entire team of the KNO media group expresses solidarity with the bereaved family, particularly with Jahangir Ganaie.

The KNO team prays for the courage to the bereaved family and for eternal peace to the departed soul—(KNO)

Police arrest 3 accused in Qamarwari axe attack case



KNO

Srinagar, Oct 15: Srinagar Police on Wednesday said to have arrested three individuals involved in an axe attack on 18-year-old boy near Haroon Bakery, Qamarwari, on October 14 (Tuesday).

The police said the arrests were made during overnight raids across the city, and the weapon used in the assault has been recovered. A police spokesperson in a statement said that in a swift and effective response to a violent assault in Qamarwari, Srinagar Police have arrested all three accused persons involved in the case during a series of overnight raids conducted across different parts of the city.

The statement reads, the incident occurred on October 14, 2025, near Haroon Bakery at Hilal Abad, Qamarwari, where a youth, Noman Yaqoob Khanday, was attacked with an axe by unidentified assailants.

The victim's father, Mohd Yaqoob Khanday, a resident of Bilal Colony, Qamarwari, promptly reported the matter at Police Post Qamarwari.

It reads, upon receipt of the complaint, a case FIR number 100/2025 under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) – Sections 126(2), 115(2),

and 109 – was registered at Police Station Parimpora.

"An intensive investigation was immediately launched, which included cordoning off suspected areas, collecting CCTV footage, and verifying vehicle details linked to the incident. The probe led to the identification and subsequent arrest of the following accused individuals: Sahil Yaqoob Grustoo, son of Mohd Yaqoob Grustoo, resident of Boatman Colony; Farooq alias Farhan Ahmad Dar, son of Gh. Nabi Dar, resident of Boatman Colony and Bilal Ahmad Guroo, son of Zahoor Ahmad Guroo, resident of Boatman Colony, Bemina," it reads.

The statement reads, all three were apprehended during overnight raids, and the weapon of offence has been recovered. Preliminary investigation indicates that the assault stemmed from a personal grudge, though further inquiry is ongoing to determine other possible angles. Srinagar Police reiterates its firm commitment to taking prompt and decisive action against all forms of social crimes that threaten public peace and order. No leniency will be shown to those involved in such acts, and efforts will continue to ensure the city remains safe and secure—(KNO)

AP's Chief Spokesperson expelled from basic membership

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 15: Apni Party on Wednesday expelled Muntazir Mohiuddin from the basic membership of the party with immediate effect.

A meeting of Parliamentary Affairs Committee (PAC) of Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party was held today at the party headquarters, Church Lane, Srinagar, under the chairmanship of Mohammad Dilawar Mir.

During the meeting, the Committee took serious note of the recent irrelevant and inappropriate press statements issued by the Party's Chief Spokesperson, Muntazir Mohiuddin, which were found to be not in the interest of the Party.

"After thorough deliberations, the PAC unanimously decided to expel Mr. Muntazir Mohiuddin from the basic membership of Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party with immediate effect," the statement reads.

Meanwhile, the party reiterated its commitment to maintaining discipline, unity, and collective responsibility among all its members and office bearers—(KNO)

3 absconders arrested in Sgr, Shopian: Police

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 15: In its ongoing crackdown on absconders and proclaimed offenders, Police on Wednesday said to have apprehended three long-time absconders in Srinagar and Shopian.

"In Srinagar, the two absconders identified as Waseem Bhat son of Abdul Majeed Bhat resident of Al-Farooq Colony, presently residing in Hamdaniya Colony, Bemina, who has been absconding since 2021 have been arrested following specific intelligence inputs," a police spokesman in a statement.

Subsequently, the necessary legal formalities were completed, and the accused persons were produced before the concerned Court in Srinagar, the statement reads.

Similarly in Shopian, Police arrested an absconder who had been evading arrest for the past 10 years. The arrested



individual has been identified as Ab. Hamid Sheikh, son of Gh. Mohd Sheikh, resident of Peerpora, who was wanted in Case FIR No. 81/2015, under section 307 RPC. A warrant under Section 512 CrPC had been issued against him by the Hon'ble Court of Law. After his arrest, the accused was produced before the Hon'ble Court, as per legal formalities, the statement added.

Meanwhile, J&K Police reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring that no individual evading justice remains beyond its reach—(KNO)

Multi-pronged strategy needed to combat rising drug abuse among youth

The alarming spread of drug abuse in Jammu and Kashmir has evolved from a law-and-order issue into a full-blown public health crisis. This threatens to derail an entire generation. Collective action is needed; government efforts alone cannot stem this tide. The fight against narcotics demands a societal response that combines enforcement with empathy, and policy with public participation. The statistics are

sobering. From urban centres to remote villages, substance abuse has infiltrated homes, schools, and workplaces, leaving broken families and shattered futures in its wake. What begins as experimentation often spirals into addiction, fueling cycles of crime, poverty, and disease. While the government's initiatives, which include awareness campaigns, treatment facilities, and youth engagement programs like the Red Run Marathon, are

commendable, they represent only one front in this multi-dimensional war. Families must become the first line of defence, recognising behavioural changes and seeking early intervention. Educational institutions should integrate substance abuse prevention into curricula, equipping students with resilience and critical thinking. Religious and community leaders can leverage their moral authority to destigmatise addiction and promote

rehabilitation. Equally crucial is targeting the supply chain. Law enforcement must dismantle trafficking networks with zero tolerance, while financial investigations trace and seize illicit proceeds. The judiciary can ensure speedy trials to deliver deterrence. However, enforcement must be balanced with compassion. Addiction is a disease, not a crime, and rehabilitation should focus on reintegration, not retribution. Counselling,

vocational training, and post-recovery support can empower survivors to rebuild their lives. Jammu and Kashmir stands at a crossroads. By uniting government agencies, civil society, and citizens in a sustained, multi-pronged strategy, we can reclaim our youth from the grip of addiction. The time for isolated efforts is over; only through collective resolve can we secure a drug-free future for our society.

The Growing Relevance Of Traditional Medicine

The ancient system can offer sustainable health-care solutions in an era of climate change and lifestyle diseases

Prataprao Jadhav

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that traditional medicine is practised in 88% of its member-states — 170 out of 194 countries. For billions, particularly in low- and middle-income nations, it remains the primary form of health care due to accessibility and affordability considerations. Yet, its significance extends beyond treatment, supporting biodiversity conservation, nutrition security, and sustainable livelihoods.

Market projections underscore this growing acceptance. Analysts estimate that the global traditional medicine market will reach \$583 billion by 2025, with annual growth rates of 10%-20%. China's traditional Chinese medicine sector is valued at \$122.4 billion, Australia's herbal medicine industry at \$3.97 billion, and India's Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) sector at \$43.4 billion.

This expansion reflects a fundamental shift in health-care philosophy — from reactive treatment models to proactive, preventive approaches that address root causes rather than symptoms alone.

India's Ayurvedic transformation
India's traditional medicine sector has witnessed remarkable transformation. The AYUSH industry, comprising over 92,000 micro, small and medium enterprises, has expanded nearly eight-fold in less than a decade. Manufacturing sector revenues have grown from 21,697 crore in 2014-15 to over 1.37 lakh crore currently, while the services sector has generated 1.67 lakh crore in revenue.

India now exports AYUSH and herbal products worth \$1.54 billion to more than 150 countries, with Ayurveda gaining formal recognition as a medical system in several



nations. This represents both economic opportunity and soft power projection on the global stage.

The first comprehensive survey on AYUSH by the National Sample Survey Office (2022-23) revealed near-universal awareness — 95% in rural areas and 96% in urban centres. Over half the population reported using AYUSH systems in the preceding year, with Ayurveda emerging as the preferred choice for rejuvenation and preventive care.

Scientific validation, global expansion
India has invested significantly in research through institutions including the All India Institute of Ayurveda, the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, the National Institute of Ayurveda, and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences.

These institutions focus on clinical validation, drug standardisation and developing integrative care models that combine

traditional knowledge with modern medical practices.

India's global Ayurveda outreach has achieved unprecedented scale through the Ministry of AYUSH's International Cooperation Scheme. India has signed 25 bilateral agreements and 52 institutional partnerships, established 43 AYUSH Information Cells across 39 countries, and positioned 15 academic chairs in foreign universities.

The establishment of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in India represents a significant milestone. Supported by the Government of India, the centre aims to harness traditional medicine's potential through modern science, digital health and emerging technologies including artificial intelligence.

WHO's recent publication on AI integration in traditional medicine highlights how advanced technologies can strengthen clinical validation, enable big-data analytics, and enhance predictive care within Ayurveda and related systems.

The theme this year Ayurveda's core philosophy of balance — between body and mind, humans and nature, consumption and conservation — offers relevant solutions for contemporary challenges. As the world grapples with lifestyle diseases and climate change, Ayurveda provides a framework that addresses both personal and planetary health.

As India leads efforts to mainstream traditional medicine globally, the approach emphasises health care that is preventive, affordable, inclusive and sustainable. Ayurveda represents not merely a medical system but a wellness movement that bridges traditional knowledge with contemporary needs.

The convergence of ancient wisdom with modern science and technology positions traditional medicine systems to play an increasingly important role in global health architecture. Ayurveda Day this year serves as a reminder of the potential for traditional knowledge systems to contribute to a more balanced and sustainable future for people and the planet.

The author is Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) and Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

How To Train Yourself To Be More Open-Minded

Matthew Facciani

When we talk about media literacy, the focus is often on skills such as checking sources, spotting logical fallacies, or identifying manipulated images. This approach, sometimes called "prebunking," aims to expose people to common misinformation tactics before they encounter them in the wild. These strategies are valuable, and I've both studied and advocated for them. But our mindset matters too.

Cultivating open-mindedness or intellectual humility can help protect us against polarization and misinformation. Crucially, these mindsets aren't fixed. New research shows we can train ourselves to think more openly, which in turn improves our ability to separate facts from falsehoods.

What the Research Found

Researchers conducted two experiments to test whether people could be "prebunked" against the common pitfalls of closed-minded thinking. Participants received a brief message reminding them that most people agree it's important to weigh evidence carefully (a subtle use of social norms). Then they were warned about five common reasoning traps:



Being overconfident in your position
Ignoring alternative viewpoints
Believing you understand something until asked to explain it

Only seeking evidence that supports your opinion

Twisting all evidence to fit your view

This short intervention significantly increased Actively Open-Minded Thinking (AOT), which is a cognitive style that involves questioning assumptions, considering alternatives, and avoiding overconfidence. That shift produced measurable ripple effects.

In both studies, this brief intervention increased actively open-minded thinking (AOT) compared to a control group. In Study 1, participants became less likely to believe conspiracy theories and more cautious about what they shared online. The second study replicated the boost in AOT and the indirect reduction in conspiracy beliefs, and additionally found that the intervention directly improved people's ability to discern factual information from falsehoods.

Why This Matters

We all have moments when it's easier to double down than to pause and reconsider. This research suggests open-mindedness isn't a fixed trait; it's a trainable mindset. A simple reminder to think carefully can strengthen our defenses against being misled.

How to put it into practice:

Pause before you share. Ask whether the content avoids the five pitfalls above.

Play devil's advocate with yourself. Before committing to a strong opinion, ask: "What would change my mind?" Reflect on why you consider it important and how you came to that conclusion.

Be humble about what you know. Try explaining your view clearly and thoroughly; if you can't, dig deeper. This connects to my "Revise" step on having more productive conversations as well.

Normalize curiosity. Create spaces where questioning, double-checking, and admitting uncertainty are expected. It's easier when you surround yourself with thoughtful, curious people.

The Bigger Picture

Strengthening AOT may protect against many kinds of misleading beliefs, not just political misinformation but also pseudoscience and health myths. In a world where conflict entrepreneurs, charlatans, and attention-driven social media platforms compete for our focus, cultivating open-minded thinking is a simple but powerful habit we can build, train, and cultivate.

Matthew Facciani, Ph.D., is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Notre Dame in the Computer Science and Engineering Department.

Source: Psychology Today

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

Ensure benefits of Govt schemes reach tribal communities: Rana

Calls for multi-pronged strategy to accelerate tribal empowerment

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15: Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana Wednesday called for a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach to accelerate the pace of tribal empowerment across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Zainpora, Showket Hussain Ganie; Director, Tribal Affairs, Mumtaz Choudhary; Mission Director, Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM), Dr. Shubhra Sharma; and other senior officers.

Chairing a detailed review meeting on the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VVDKs) established across the Union Territory, their operational effectiveness, and the tangible outcomes achieved in terms of income generation and employment creation.

He emphasised that PMVDY has the potential to be a game changer by promoting value addition to minor forest produce (MFP), thereby empowering tribal entrepreneurs and enhancing their access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Minister sought detailed information regarding the



At the outset, Rana enquired about the status of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VVDKs) established across the Union Territory, their operational effectiveness, and the tangible outcomes achieved in terms of income generation and employment creation.

He emphasised that PMVDY has the potential to be a game changer by promoting value addition to minor forest produce (MFP), thereby empowering tribal entrepreneurs and enhancing their access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Minister sought detailed information regarding the

training and capacity-building efforts undertaken under the scheme, particularly those targeting tribal artisans and small-scale entrepreneurs in far-flung areas.

Rana urged the officials to intensify efforts to expand market linkages for tribal products at both regional and national levels. He asked departments to identify existing implementation gaps, strengthen inter-agency collaboration, and submit fresh proposals in areas where interventions are most urgently needed.

The Minister highlighted the need for timely and

well-planned initiatives to bridge developmental disparities and enhance the reach and relevance of the Van Dhan scheme.

He reiterated that the success of PMVDY lies in its ability to create self-reliant, skilled and empowered tribal communities capable of participating actively in the economic progress of Jammu and Kashmir.

He affirmed the Government's firm commitment to integrating tribal populations into the mainstream economy while simultaneously preserving and promoting their rich cultural and artisanal

heritage.

Calling for a data-driven and structured approach to planning, monitoring and execution, the Minister emphasised the importance of continuous progress tracking, impact evaluation, and replication of successful models across tribal-dominated areas.

Rana also called upon the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM) to work in close coordination with local Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) while formulating and implementing livelihood initiatives.

He noted that MLAs possess deep insights into the needs and aspirations of their constituencies and can play a pivotal role in ensuring that government programmes are both need-based and impactful.

He stressed that active collaboration between administrative agencies and elected representatives can significantly enhance the outreach, efficiency, and responsiveness of developmental interventions.

The Minister urged all stakeholders to work in synergy to realise the shared vision of an inclusive, equitable and empowered tribal society in Jammu and Kashmir.

Secy S&T chairs TAC to finalise Research Projects



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15: The Department of Science and Technology, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, organized a two-day meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the J&K Science, Technology & Innovation Council (JKST&IC) on 14th and 15th October 2025 at the SKICC, Srinagar. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary, Science & Technology, as the Chairperson of the Committee.

The TAC convened to evaluate and finalise research proposals under the Sponsored Research and Extension Programme (SREP)—a flagship initiative of the Science & Technology Department aimed at promoting indigenous research and supporting scientists in developing solutions to region-specific socio-economic and environmental challenges.

This year, the Department received 525 project proposals, including 306 from the Kashmir region and 219 from the Jammu region, from a wide range of universities, medical and technical institutions, and research laboratories across the Union Territory. The proposals were reviewed across 20 thematic areas, focusing on climate change, glacier studies, water and energy security, food sufficiency, environmental protection, public health, and natural disasters, among others.

The Committee comprised eminent scientists and academicians, including Dr. Anish Yadav (SKUAST-Jammu), Dr. Parvinder Pal Singh (CSIR-IIIM Jammu), Dr. Mudasar Andrabi (SKUAST-Kashmir), Dr. Aabid Hussain Shalla (IUST-Kashmir), Dr. Meena Sharma (University of Jammu), Dr. Kumud Ranjan Jha (SMVDU), Dr. Ambika Prasad (IIT Jammu), and Dr. Anil Bhat (SKUAST-Jammu).

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat, Additional Director, JKST&IC, served as Member Secretary of the Committee.

In his remarks, Dr. Shahid Choudhary emphasised that novelty, methodology, and societal impact should be central to the evaluation process. He reiterated the Government's resolve to build a strong ecosystem for research, innovation, and technological advancement in Jammu & Kashmir. "The R&D funding policy is designed to provide early-stage support to promising ideas, enabling researchers to transform their innovative concepts into scalable and sustainable solutions," he stated.

Dr. Choudhary further underlined that the Science & Technology and Biotechnology Departments have a major mandate to finance and facilitate R&D across diverse disciplines. He urged researchers to maintain high ethical standards, ensure the efficient use of public funds, and align research priorities with societal needs while safeguarding academic freedom and scientific excellence.

The Chairperson also directed the Council to develop an online portal for submission, evaluation, and tracking of research proposals to ensure transparent and merit-based funding. He suggested that universities and research institutions nominate expert panels for internal screening before forwarding proposals to the Department.

The TAC concluded its deliberations with the finalisation of select high-impact, regionally relevant projects that will be placed before the Government for approval. The selected projects are expected to contribute significantly to scientific advancement, policy innovation, and sustainable development in Jammu & Kashmir.

QUL Fruits leads awareness drive on HDP, schemes



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, OCT 15: QUL Fruits, in association with the Jammu & Kashmir Bank, on Wednesday successfully organized a landmark awareness drive for farmers across South Kashmir, focusing on High Density Apple Plantation Scheme (financial schemes) and institutional support for High-Density Plantation (HDP).

The programme was conducted at three distinct QulGahs (phygital farmer-engagement centres) in south Kashmir's Anantnag region — Mattan at 11:30 AM, Bijbehara at 1:30 PM, and Achabal at 3:30 PM — drawing a large and enthusiastic turnout of farmers from surrounding areas.

Farmers actively interacted with officials, raised pressing questions, and discussed challenges related to financing. The events served as a vital platform for two-way engagement, allowing experts to clarify doubts while giving farmers the opportunity to share on-ground realities.

At every QulGah, officials highlighted how QUL Fruits, offers year-round guidance, supported by a dedicated scientific team that advises farmers on soil health, disease diagnostics, and scientifically backed cultivation practices.

Speaking at the event, Nahida Fayaz, Incharge QulGah, highlighted the importance of farmer awareness about the financial schemes and opportunities available under the High-Density Plantation model. She said, "High-Density Plantation is the future of Kashmir's apple industry. It not only enhances yield and income but also empowers our farmers to compete on a global stage."

She further added, "QUL Fruits is not just a company — it is a mission to empower farmers and nurture a sustainable horticultural ecosystem that begins in the Valley of Kashmir and reaches the world."

Representatives from Jammu & Kashmir Bank Mutton,

Corporate Branch, Bijbehara and Achbal reaffirmed their commitment to providing tailored credit facilities, low-cost financing, and accessible schemes to support farmers in adopting modern, sustainable practices for HDP.

Officials emphasized that QUL Fruits and its partners remain deeply committed to social welfare and inclusive growth. This initiative is part of a broader mission to place Kashmir firmly on the global map of apple production.

"Programs like this give farmers like me not just knowledge, but also confidence. Such programs aware us about financial support available through banks helps us to plan better for the future," said Mohammad Iqbal a farmer from Kherbal Anantnag.

He adds, "I feel hopeful that with these resources, I can increase my orchard's productivity and provide a better life for my family."

QUL Fruits is a pioneering, tech-enabled horticulture enterprise based in Kashmir, committed to transforming the region's traditional orchards through modern, sustainable, and technology-driven interventions.

Over the years, QUL has evolved into a fully integrated horticultural platform, spanning orchard installation and management, controlled-atmosphere storage, and digital supply chain integration with national markets. The company has already impacted over 10,000 farmer lives and established more than 1,000 hectares of high-density plantations.

By raising awareness, providing scientific guidance, and facilitating access to finance, QUL Fruits and Jammu & Kashmir Bank aim to accelerate the transition from traditional orchards to high-density, globally competitive enterprises — leading Kashmir's apple industry toward a sustainable, high-value, world-class future while helping reduce unemployment across the region.

KU holds awareness prog on legal metrology, GST reforms

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar Oct 15: The Department of Law, University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with the Department of Legal Metrology, Kashmir Division, J&K, organised a Mega Awareness Programme on Legal Metrology, GST Revision, and Consumer Protection at the Main Campus.

The programme aimed to enhance understanding of legal metrology standards, disseminate knowledge about GST 2.0 revisions, promote compliance among traders, and empower consumers to seek redressal through informed legal awareness. The day-long event featured interactive sessions, expert lectures, and open discussions with officers from the Department of Legal Metrology, GST experts, legal professionals, and academicians.

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her message, said that such initiatives serve as vital platforms for bridging academics with public policy.

"By promoting awareness on legal metrology, GST reforms, and consumer protection, we

strengthen civic responsibility and also empower our students and citizens to make informed and ethical economic choices," she said.

Saurabh Bhagat (IAS), Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, J&K, in his address, emphasised the importance of awareness regarding consumer rights and market regulations.

"In an evolving marketplace, consumer protection laws and GST reforms are essential for ensuring transparency, fair trade, and accountability. Awareness is the first step towards an empowered society," he said.

Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, highlighted the role of academic institutions in bridging the gap between policy and public understanding through such collaborative initiatives.

Owais Ahmad, Director, FCS&CA Kashmir, discussed the emerging challenges in the digital economy, including online payments, e-commerce transactions, and consumer redressal mechanisms.

Rajinder Singh Tara (JKAS), Controller, Legal Metrology, J&K, presented an overview of the department's scope and regulatory functions, while Shabir Ahmad Mir, Assistant Controller, Legal Metrology, highlighted its role in implementing GST reforms and the key provisions of the Legal Metrology Act.

Earlier, Prof. Shahnaz, Dean and Head, School of Law, KU, in her welcome address, stressed on the importance of legal literacy in strengthening consumer protection and promoting responsible business practices.

The event proceedings were conducted by Dr. Yasir Abbas, faculty, Department of Law, KU, and the vote of thanks was presented by Tanveer Ahmad, Joint Controller, Legal Metrology, Kashmir.

The event was attended by various university officers, deans, heads of the departments, faculty members, law students, experts from consumer affairs, food supply department, district and state consumer disputes redressal commission, J&K, and members of trade and commerce.

DC Bla holds Block Diwas at Nambla

KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, OCTOBER 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Wednesday presided over a Block Diwas programme at Nambla, Uri, aimed at strengthening public outreach and ensuring effective on-ground delivery of government services.

During the event, various departments set up stalls to generate awareness among locals about key welfare schemes

and flagship initiatives of the Government.

The DC accompanied by SDM Uri and ACD, inspected the stalls and interacted with officials to review the status of public service delivery. He also distributed sanction letters, Golden Cards, and Job Cards among the beneficiaries.

Public representatives and residents from adjoining border villages raised several issues pertaining to basic amenities and developmental needs.

CS reviews roadmap for mega youth engagement programme

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 15: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Wednesday reviewed a detailed presentation by the Planning, Development & Monitoring Department on "Youth Engagement: Building Tomorrow's Leaders", which outlines an integrated framework aimed at empowering the youth of Jammu and Kashmir through sports, culture, education, entrepreneurship, and digital innovation.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Culture; Commissioner Secretaries of GAD, Youth Services & Sports, and Floriculture; Secretaries of School Education, Health & Medical Education, and Skill Development Departments; besides several other Heads of Departments and senior officers.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary termed the youth engagement programme a significant step towards nurturing creativity, innovation, and leadership among young people across the Union Territory. He emphasized the need to make the initiative multidisciplinary so that every young person is engaged meaningfully in line with their individual talents and aspirations.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon departments



including Youth Services & Sports, Culture, School Education, Higher Education, Health, Rural Development, and others to devise strategic departmental plans for engaging maximum youth across their respective sectors. He also directed the Deputy Commissioners to prepare district-specific action plans for effective on-ground implementation.

Highlighting the centrality of coordinated efforts, the Chief Secretary designated the Planning Department as the nodal agency for overall implementation and monitoring of the initiative. He instructed it to develop a unified online platform for uploading and tracking all youth engagement activities across departments. The General Administration Department (GAD) was tasked with framing a Steering Committee to ensure smooth inter-departmental

coordination and effective execution of the programme.

Underscoring the need to leverage existing national-level initiatives, he called for tapping into schemes and platforms of the Ministry of Youth Affairs such as My Bharat, NSS, Youth Exchange Activities, and Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, which provide valuable exposure and skill-building opportunities for youth.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took feedback from Administrative Secretaries and Deputy Commissioners regarding their proposed strategies for maximizing outreach and participation under the programme. He urged all departments and district administrations to adopt a collaborative and convergent approach, pooling resources and expertise for impactful implementation at

the grassroots level. He further enjoined upon the Information Department to create necessary awareness among the public about the youth welfare schemes and other orientation programmes for furthering their career pursuits.

Presenting the framework, Director General, Planning, Satvir Kour, highlighted that the initiative seeks to harness the creativity and dynamism of youth recognizing them as key drivers of social transformation and economic progress. She said the programme would equip young people with life skills, values, and self-confidence, steering them away from vulnerabilities such as substance abuse, unemployment, and social evils.

The Strategic Action Plan presented covers multiple dimensions of engagement, including Sports and Cultural Development. Revival of traditional arts, crafts, and cultural festivals such as Sufi festivals, classical arts performances, literary gatherings, and visual arts exhibitions promoting J&K's rich heritage while creating livelihood opportunities is going to be the innate part of this programme.

With respect to furthering the Education and Skill Development the action plan focuses on making education and vocational training more accessible, market-relevant,

and skill-oriented to enhance employability and promote sustainable livelihoods.

Another key pillar of the strategy includes entrepreneurship and business development which envisages expanding access to startup ecosystems, incubation centres, and financial assistance through schemes like PMEGP, REGP, NRLM (Lakshpati Didis), and Startup J&K, to nurture a new generation of self-reliant entrepreneurs across agriculture, technology, tourism, and handicrafts.

Encouraging productive digital engagement through webinars, innovation contests, and online learning platforms to connect rural youth with experts and mentors, is another strategic feature of this youth engagement programme.

Further, the District Development Commissioners (DDCs) are going to identify two socio-economically backward blocks in each district and prepare targeted plans for youth engagement across education, skilling, cultural activities, sports, and livelihoods. The DDCs were also instructed to ensure extensive awareness among young citizens regarding various government welfare and empowerment schemes to encourage their proactive participation.

SC nod for green firecrackers: BJP says party vindicated, AAP compelled court to enforce ban

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 15: The BJP on Wednesday said the Supreme Court allowing the sale and use of green firecrackers in Delhi-NCR has vindicated the party's stand that the former AAP government presented arguments in court that led to the ban on firecrackers.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government's intentions towards Sanatan Dharma were dishonest, it said.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday relaxed the ban on green firecrackers in the capital with certain conditions.

The court said the sale of green firecrackers will be permitted from October 18 to 21 and their use shall be confined from 6 am to 7 am and from 8 pm to 10 pm on the day before Diwali and on Diwali day.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said the top court's ruling has vindicated his party's stand.

"We have been saying for a long time that former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal presented arguments that compelled the Supreme Court to ban firecrackers. The people of Delhi have now chosen the right government. Air pollution has multiple causes and the present government is working to resolve them. This is a victory for Sanatanis," he said.

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said the court order was possible because of the "positive recommendation" made by the current Delhi government.

"Earlier, the AAP government



used to give negative recommendations to the court and wanted to ban even green firecrackers. The AAP's intentions towards Sanatan Dharma and its festivals were dishonest," he alleged.

Delhi Art and Culture Minister Kapil Mishra described the verdict as "a reflection of change".

"After the change of government, the ban on Hindu festivals has stopped. The last government never went to court to protect the right to celebrate Diwali. We presented people's views and now the festival can be celebrated in the traditional way with green firecrackers," he said.

Echoing similar sentiments, Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Verma said the decision has "restored the dignity" of Diwali celebrations.

"For years, the people of Delhi were made to feel that

celebrating Diwali was a crime. The order brings back the light, pride and freedom to celebrate our traditions responsibly," he said.

Relaxing the ban on firecrackers, the bench of Chief Justice of India B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran said, "We have to take a balanced approach, permitting it in moderation while not compromising with the environment".

AAP leader and former Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai said he hoped that the BJP government would continue working to improve the air quality.

"We tried our best to reduce pollution. With the Supreme Court's decision on allowing green firecrackers during Diwali, we hope that the Delhi government will follow the rules and continue working towards improving air quality during the festival," he said.

REUTERS

New Delhi, Oct 15: Apple is lobbying India's government to modify its income tax law to ensure the company is not taxed for ownership of high-end iPhone machinery it provides to its contract manufacturers, an issue seen as a hurdle to its future expansion, sources say.

The push coincides with Apple's growing India presence as it diversifies beyond China. Counterpoint Research says iPhone's share in the Indian market has doubled to 8% since 2022. And while China still accounts for 75% of global iPhone shipments, India's share has quadrupled to 25% since 2022.

India is the world's second-largest mobile market. Apple's contract manufacturers Foxconn and Tata have pumped in billions of dollars to open five plants, but millions of those expenses go into acquiring pricey machines for iPhone assembly.

Experts say Apple potentially faces billions of dollars in additional taxes if it changes its business practices without convincing New Delhi to change a 1961 law covering foreign ownership of equipment used in India.

In China, Apple procures the machines used to make iPhones and gives them to its contract manufacturers, and is not subject to tax even though it still owns them.

But that's not possible in India as the Income Tax Act would consider such ownership by Apple as a so-called "business connection", making



the U.S. firm's iPhone profits liable for Indian taxes, said a senior government official and two other industry sources.

Apple executives have held talks with the Indian officials in recent months to tweak the law as it fears the current legislation could hamper its future growth, said the sources.

"Contract manufacturers cannot put up money beyond a point," said the first industry source. "If the legacy law is changed, it will become easy for Apple to expand ... India can become more competitive globally."

Reuters is first to report Apple's concerns and lobbying efforts on the law.

Apple did not respond to Reuters questions, and neither did India's IT and finance ministries who are involved in the discussions.

INDIA CAUTIOUSLY REVIEWING APPLE REQUEST

Smartphone manufacturing is a key plank of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's agenda, and India's deputy IT minister last year privately said China and

Vietnam could race ahead as major smartphone export hubs due to their lower tariffs on phone parts.

A senior Indian official said "discussions on taxation rules impacting Apple are ongoing", but New Delhi is cautious as any changes to the law could diminish its sovereign right to tax a foreign company.

"It's a tough call," said the official, who highlighted that Apple's increased investments are equally important.

"India needs investments. We have to find a solution."

Apple has since 2023 opened a handful of directly-owned retail stores in India, though it also sells its products through online and offline distributors. Foxconn and Tata have over the years invested more than \$5 billion in setting up Apple manufacturing.

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT CAN COST BILLIONS

One precedent of Indian law often cited by tax experts involves UK-based Formula One. India's Supreme Court held in 2017 that even though F1 did

not own a circuit near New Delhi, it was liable to pay tax on profits for the days when it exerted full control during its Grand Prix India event.

If Apple were to own machines inside Indian iPhone factories, it would amount to exerting control under current laws, experts said.

"If the activities of Apple constitute a business connection, then the global revenue may be used as a basis to compute the income attributable in India, leading to billions in tax exposure," said Riaz Thingna, a partner at Grant Thornton Bharat LLP.

Taiwan's Foxconn is Apple's largest contract manufacturer in India, having shipped products worth \$7.4 billion this year by August, compared to \$7.5 billion in all of 2024, commercially available customs data shows.

The income tax law, however, does not bother Apple's South Korean rival Samsung as almost all of its phones are made in its own Indian factories.

The India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA), which backs Apple, has in a confidential representation to the government called for changes to the law, saying tax certainty is "paramount for businesses seeking to expand and scale."

"Typical CMs (contract manufacturers) are unable or unwilling to invest in such large quantities of specialized equipment ... The cost of the equipment can rise to billions of dollars," ICEA said, without naming any company.

"In certain cases (it) may also be supplied ... free of cost."

Zubeen death: Protesters clash with police, set vehicles on fire outside prison

PTI

Guwahati, Oct 15: Assam Police on Wednesday resorted to lathi-charge and fired tear-gas shells to disperse an agitated mob that attacked and set ablaze some vehicles and hurled stones at the convoy carrying the five accused arrested in cultural icon Zubeen Garg's death case as they were being brought to Baksa District Jail.

Prohibitory orders have been imposed under Section 163 of BNSS in Mushalpur town and adjoining areas of the jail, while internet and mobile data services have been suspended in the entire Baksa district till further

orders, District Commissioner Gautam Das said.

Several people, including police personnel, journalists and local residents were injured and glass panes of vehicles were smashed, a senior officer said.

A large number of protesters gathered outside the prison in Mushalpur area, and as the convoy of vehicles carrying the accused for being lodged in the prison arrived, they started pelting the vehicles with stones, he said.

Some even demanded that the accused be handed over to the public to ensure "justice for Zubeen".

Although the convoy managed

to enter the jail premises, the protesters scuffled with the policemen deployed at the gates as they attempted to breach the cordon, the officer said.

Despite the requests of the policemen to the protesters to move back, they kept pressing forward, following which the law enforcers resorted to lathi-charge to control the situation, he said.

The situation, however, turned worse after a while, with the protesters setting ablaze some vehicles, including those belonging to the police department and television channels, with the law enforcers firing tear gas shells to bring the

situation under control.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the incident at Baksa is "very sad and we are pained by it".

"In a civilised state like Assam or our country, we must always have faith and trust in the court of law to ensure justice for anyone," Sarma told reporters in New Delhi.

Even after Mahatma Gandhi's death, Nathuram Godse was punished only after the court went through the due legal process, he said.

"Whether it was Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi's killing, the guilty were punished only according to the law of the

land," Sarma said.

He alleged that since the day Zubeen died, a section of people was trying to create a false narrative to fulfill its vested political interests.

Some political parties are attempting to instigate the common people, who are the real fans of the singer, to create a situation which is condemnable, the chief minister alleged.

"This is not in the interest of the people and it will harm the state for a long time just like the movement against the Citizenship Amendment Act did," he said.

Sarma appealed to the people to believe in the judiciary and

not be misguided by those who are doing politics for their vested interests.

Assam Police will complete the investigation within the stipulated time-frame and approach the court of law with the charge-sheet against those responsible for Zubeen's death, he added.

The common people are not doing politics but they are emotional and it is a section that is giving false information for its own political benefits.

"Most of these people were never Zubeen's fans and had even criticised him but, now, overnight they have deleted their previous social media

posts and are claiming to be his ardent fans," he said.

Sarma alleged that this section will not allow the situation to settle down till there is violence or a Nepal-like situation in the state.

IGP (Law and Order) Akhilesh Singh, who rushed to the spot, said that "minimum force was used to bring the situation under control".

Asked about the number of people who have suffered injuries, Singh said, "Our immediate priority was to bring the law and order situation under control. It is now under control and we will do the documentation part after this."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Terrorists, their supporters

Kashmir", he said.

On tourism concerns, the Lieutenant Governor said several tourist spots in Kupwara district have already been opened after security reviews and those left will be reopened after consulting the district administration.

After visiting Dardpora, Office of J&K, LG, posted on X: "Today interacted with terror victim families at Dardpora, Kupwara. Also, addressed the NoKs of terror victims at GDC, Kupwara. I have assured family members that their decades-long trauma, torment & suffering is over. We'll ensure all the support so that they reclaim their lives. Families of civilians who were killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists also suffered systemic barriers which stifled their progress. They were denied their rights & access to resources. All obstacles are now removed & we're ensuring justice & dignity for terror victim families."

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg; DIG NKR Baramulla, Maqsood-Ul-Zaman; Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse; SSP Kupwara, Syed Al-Tahir Gilani; Chairman, Save Youth Save Future Foundation, Wajahat Farooq Bhat and other members of the Foundation, senior officials and family members of victims of terrorism were present. (KNO)

Ranji Trophy

hailed the match as a milestone for the region.

"Hosting Mumbai in a Ranji opener is not just about cricket, but about bringing confidence back to Kashmir's sporting landscape," said Waseem, a local from Srinagar.

It is worth mentioning that the return of Ranji Trophy matches to Srinagar comes after a significant gap, with most fixtures in recent years being held outside the valley due to security and logistical concerns.

Moreover, the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium, once a regular venue for domestic and international matches, last hosted a full Ranji game several seasons ago. (KNO)

Cabinet gives nod

The cabinet has also given nod for the removal of the qualification requirement under the State Marriage Assistance Scheme. As per

existing guidelines, a girl availing benefits of the scheme must be middle pass.

The cabinet has also given nod to in Schedule II of Jammu and Kashmir Engineering (Gazetted) Services Recruitment Rules 1978 which would pave the way for filling the posts of Chief Engineers and other higher-ups in different engineering departments.

It has been learnt that cabinet has given nod to e-auctioning of limestone mineral blocks in J&K. Besides, it has also given go-ahead to administrative approval for a sewerage scheme at tourist resort of Gulmarg at a cost of Rs 45.80 crore. (KNO)

Army's Vajr Div's

success in a very short span of time and youth trained at the centre are getting placement across the country. The Centre has also fostered revenue generating startups, women's digital inclusion and strengthening national integration.

CM Omar calls for

During the meeting, the Additional Chief Secretary, Mining, gave a detailed presentation on the department's performance, highlighting technological advancements, regulatory reforms, exploration projects, and financial outcomes achieved in recent years.

A major highlight of the review was a presentation and live demonstration of the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSS) — a digital initiative developed in collaboration with BISAG (Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics). The IMSS portal and mobile application provide real-time monitoring of mining activities through dashboards integrated with e-Challan and e-Market systems. This innovation aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance in mineral operations across Jammu and Kashmir.

He informed the meeting that over 243 triggers have already been generated for field verification through features such as vehicle tracking, GPS-enabled monitoring, PoS-linked e-challanning (integrated with J&K Bank), and on-the-spot enforcement to curb illegal mining.

While appreciating the initiative, the Chief Minister directed the developers to explore delineating and delegating PoS functions to

expand the use of digital monitoring systems. He also called for integration of the department's existing portal with the IMSS platform to ensure seamless implementation and improved results.

Omar Abdullah further suggested that the application should allow citizens to register complaints through mobile gadgets to be integrated in the system with satellite imagery or other evidence, strengthening public participation and grievance redressal.

The Chief Minister instructed the department to categorize active and non-active mineral vendors or suppliers and establish a dedicated monitoring cell at the Directorate level for continuous data tracking and real-time oversight.

Reviewing ongoing reforms under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) 2025-26, the Chief Minister was informed that the department has initiated a series of key measures aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and ensuring greater transparency in the mining sector. These include a shift towards an auction-based system for allocation of mineral blocks, introduction of mine closure and rehabilitation provisions, and the implementation of advanced survey and mapping mechanisms. The department has also operationalized the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) framework to ensure that mining revenues directly contribute to local area development and welfare initiatives.

Further, the meeting was informed, efforts are underway to revise royalty fee structure and penal provisions to align with current market realities while improving compliance.

The Mining Department has made the use of GPS-enabled transport and PoS-based transactions mandatory to track mineral movement and prevent leakages. Legal enforcement mechanisms have been reinforced through the requirement of royalty clearance certificates, in line with recent directions from the Hon'ble High Court, thereby tightening regulatory oversight and ensuring responsible mineral extraction practices.

The department also presented the status of major and minor mineral blocks, highlighting progress in auctioning and granting of mining leases across districts. The Chief Minister emphasized that all clearances and NoCs must

be obtained in advance before blocks are allocated through auction to avoid procedural and operational delays faced by successful allottees & bidders who have to run from pillar to post in obtaining environmental and other clearances.

Speaking on the issue of illegal mining, Omar Abdullah underscored the need to eliminate collusion at lower levels of administration, asserting that illegal operations cannot persist without internal complicity.

"In my previous tenure, illegal mining was never a concern. With the technological tools now available, any such activity is only possible if there's collusion at the lower level. The department must use these systems effectively to eliminate that possibility. The more we reduce such collusion, the lesser the chances of illegal mining," the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also reviewed exploration projects currently being carried out by MECL and GSI, covering sapphire, lithium, lignite, and shallow biogenic gas reserves in various districts. He was informed about ongoing exploration of granite, graphite, gypsum, copper, and base metals, supported by detailed geological mapping, drilling, and feasibility assessments.

He stressed on ensuring strict compliance with environmental regulations, particularly in eco-sensitive zones, while expanding mineral development activities in a sustainable manner.

The Chief Minister commended the Mining Department for adopting digital innovation and institutional reforms and urged continued focus on transparency, efficiency, and environmental responsibility in the sector.

Pressure to deliver

more like a year of waiting than one of transformation.

One of the key planks of NC was tackling unemployment, promising a comprehensive job package for the youth. However, the unemployment rate, instead of witnessing a decline, has increased further as no major recruitment has taken place in the year, and the policy is nowhere in sight.

"We have been promised employment. But a year has elapsed; it seems nothing is going to happen for the educated youth with no measures in sight over the promised job policy," Aijaz Ahmad, one of the unemployed youth, told KNO.

Looking Ahead

As the Omar Abdullah government enters its second year, the pressure to deliver is mounting.

With the government continuing to make promises over delivering their pledges mentioned in the manifesto, the road ahead is far from easy.

The Chief Minister has repeatedly mentioned that they have been given a five-year time to deliver on the promises, insisting that systemic change cannot happen overnight.

But for the people, time is a luxury and a year without making any positive change on the ground, over-delivering on the promises has made them quite disappointed.

Opposition Reacts

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary and J&K in-charge, Tarun Chugh, slammed CM Abdullah, saying that despite completing one year in office, his government has "failed" to fulfil even a single promise made to the people.

Chugh said the people of Jammu and Kashmir demand accountability from the government, as none of the commitments made during the elections have been honoured.

Accusing the NC government of "not fulfilling" its pre-poll promises, People's Democratic Party (PDP) president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, a few days ago, drew parallels with the then Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi, saying the latter focused on developmental works despite governing in a Union Territory.

"It has been one year since the government has been in power here, but they haven't done enough despite promising jobs, free power supply and other incentives. Kejriwal gave free electricity to people, while over here, consumers are being charged heavily. There are even talks of water charges now," Mehbooba said.

Taking a dig at the NC government, Apni Party president and former minister, Syed Altaf Bukhari, said the party has failed to deliver on its promises.

"The people have lost faith as NC has failed to fulfil its commitments. There is no visible development, no electricity waiver, no social welfare schemes, no free 200 units of power, no release of jailed youth, and rising unemployment," he said. (KNO)

Bihar polls: BJP releases second list of 12 candidates



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 15: The BJP on Wednesday released its second list of 12 candidates for the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls, fielding singer Maithili Thakur from Alinagar seat and former IPS officer Anand Mishra from Buxar. According to the list, Ram Chandra Prasad will contest from Hayaghat seat, while Chhoti Kumari and Rakesh Ojha

from Chhapra and Shahpur, respectively.

Birendra Kumar and Mahesh Paswan will fight the polls from Rosera and Agiaon seats, reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

According to the list, Ranjan Kumar will contest from Muzaffarpur and Subhash Singh from Gopalganj seat. Elections to the 243-member assembly will be held in two phases, on November 6 and 11. The votes will be counted on November 14.

Small cars to stay relevant in India, will not abandon entry segment: Hyundai Motor Co chief



PTI

Mumbai, Oct 15: Small cars will continue to have relevance in the Indian market, considering the number of two- and three-wheeler users aspiring to upgrade, and Hyundai will not abandon the entry segment, Hyundai Motor Co President & CEO Jose Munoz said on Wednesday.

While the company will continue to develop the fast-growing SUV segment in India, it will also use the entry segment to tap customers who will look to upgrade in future.

In an interaction with reporters here, Munoz said, given the population and the expected motorisation in India, there are projections that this market will become "more than 5.6 million" units annually.

"If you look at the number of people who are driving motorcycles or three wheelers, you will see that all these people, sooner or later, their aspiration is going to have a passenger car. So I never see India as one market like many other markets, but as two Indias."

Elaborating further, Munoz said on one side is the Indian market, which is becoming like all global markets that would like to have more SUVs and more off-road vehicles. "And on

the other side, you have all these markets, which are a massive market, where the current users of three-wheelers and motorcycles will move into passenger cars," he noted.

Munoz was responding to a query on how the company saw the role of small cars, which have seen a decline in sales in the past few years in India, as SUVs gained momentum.

He further said, "So we cannot say only one. We need to be involved. Hyundai has been a very, very popular brand."

Asserting that Hyundai's older small cars, which are "humble vehicles", are reliable and solid, offering very low cost of ownership and is "customers resonate with those products".

"So we will develop the SUV market because it's growing, and it is something that we do very well. We've done in other countries very successfully but we are not going to abandon the entry market, which makes it more competitive and allows us to continue to be very popular," Munoz said.

He said it is much easier to upgrade a "consumer who has been driving a very reliable entry Hyundai" to a bigger SUV with higher content and better features.

Crewed Gaganyaan mission would be possible by 2027: ISRO chief

'New Mars mission is upcoming project'

PTI/AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 15: ISRO chairman V Narayanan on Wednesday said the space agency has set a target of landing Indians on the Moon by 2040, while its maiden human spaceflight mission 'Gaganyaan' is on track for launch in 2027.

Narayanan said a slew of ambitious space projects and sector reforms were currently underway, including a national space station by 2035, and three uncrewed 'Gaganyaan' missions by 2026, with the first one that includes a half-humanoid robot 'Vyommित्रा', targeted for December 2025.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a guideline for an indigenous crewed lunar mission by 2040, under which we have to land our own citizens on the moon and bring them back safely. A Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM) has also been approved to study the planet," Narayanan said in an exclusive interview with PTI.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced these ambitions on 17 October, 2023, and also asked scientists to work on missions to Venus and Mars. He expressed confidence in India's capabilities and affirmed the nation's commitment to scaling new heights in space exploration.

"Prime minister directed that India should now aim for new and ambitious goals, including setting up 'Bharatiya Antariksha Station'



(Indian Space Station) by 2035 and sending first Indian to the moon by 2040," the government said in a statement on October 2023.

"To realize this vision, the Department of Space will develop a roadmap for moon exploration," it added. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief said the Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) is expected to come up by 2035, and initial modules in space are expected as early as 2027.

He was here to attend the 35th convocation ceremony of Ranchi-based Birla Institute of Technology (BIT) Mesra as the chief guest.

"There are a lot of developments in 'Gaganyaan'. We are planning some more experiments. Before the crewed mission, we are planning three uncrewed missions.

'Vyommित्रा' is going to fly on that in December this year. Two more uncrewed missions will take place next year. Crewed 'Gaganyaan' mission would be possible by 2027 first quarter," Narayanan added.

With Modi defining a clear roadmap and rolling out reforms for the space sector, ISRO is moving with confidence and clarity towards realising the dream of a self-reliant and vibrant space ecosystem, he said.

He said India's upcoming projects include Chandrayaan-4 and Chandrayaan-5, a new Mars mission, and AXOM, a high-priority astronomical observatory mission.

"The Aditya-L1 mission has already yielded over 15 terabits of solar data, with valuable insights into coronal mass ejections and

space weather," Narayanan added.

"We are open to international collaborations," he said, emphasising that while India is committed to self-reliance, climate science and space research, which are global concerns, "how and where we collaborate will be debated and decided based on scientific and strategic priorities." Highlighting the role of reforms, Narayanan said the space sector has been transformed through the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), which integrates startups and private players into the national ecosystem.

"Just a few years ago, there were barely one or two startups in the space sector. Today, there are over 300 working on satellite manufacturing, launch services, and space-based data analytics," he said.

"This shift is seen as crucial to meeting India's rising demand for satellite-based applications in agriculture, disaster management, telecommunication, real-time train and vehicle monitoring, and fisheries," he added. For missions like crewed lunar landing, India needs to enhance its launch capacity and space infrastructure and has already started work to build its space station.

"From launching 35 kg initially to now envisioning 80,000 kg — that is the scale of transformation we are aiming for," he said.

Talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, and Big Data, he said these are becoming integral

to space missions.

"Just like no one imagined the computer revolution 35 years ago, AI and robotics will define the next era of space exploration," the scientist remarked.

He said today India stands as the world's fourth-largest economy, with a burgeoning space sector that is not only matching, but often surpassing global benchmarks.

"From discovering water on the Moon with Chandrayaan-1, to the first soft landing near the lunar south pole with Chandrayaan-3, India has set multiple world records in space. Today, we are No. 1 in nine areas globally," he asserted.

The ISRO chief added that India has become the fourth country to successfully achieve docking and undocking in space with the success of SPADEX mission.

"We also completed the 100th launch from Sriharikota — the GSV F15/NVS-02 Mission — and received final approval for a third launch pad catering to all launch vehicles, including the next-generation NGLV, at an estimated cost of Rs 4,000 crore," Narayanan said.

On Atomic energy, he said, currently India has 23 nuclear reactors across eight major nuclear plants, including Tarapur and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

Narayanan took charge as ISRO Chairman in January 2025. He earlier served as director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), one of ISRO's key facilities.

Several states, entities have encroached upon defence lands; efforts on to evict them: Centre to SC

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 15: The Centre on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that several state governments and their entities, besides others, have encroached upon defence lands and efforts are being made to remove them.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi asked the high-powered independent committee constituted by the Centre to oversee the steps taken to remove the encroachments on defence lands and file its interim report in two weeks.

The bench was told by Attorney General R Venkataramani that the panel has been visiting the sites and identifying the encroachments, but facing some resistance, and hence some directions and indulgence of the court were required.

Advocate Prashant Bhusan, appearing for NGO Common Cause -- which filed the PIL in 2014 seeking a probe into alleged encroachment of defence land across the country -- said the panel has to look at the micro level.

He added that the need, as suggested by the Comptroller and Auditor General in its report, was for an independent regulatory body.

The bench told Bhusan that whatever body is set up, it will have to take the help of local revenue authorities and law enforcement.

"Once the interim report is filed, we will see what directions can be issued," the bench said as it posted the matter for further hearing on November 10.

On July 30, the Centre, in its affidavit, informed the court that 2,024 acres out of 75,629 acres of defence land in the country are currently encroached upon by individuals, and 1,575 acres are under unauthorised possession of those who took the land on lease for agricultural purposes.

According to the status report filed



by the Ministry of Defence, nearly 819 acres of land are under the occupation of state and central government departments or their undertakings for various public-utility purposes, such as laying roads, constructing schools, public parks and bus stands, besides for administrative reasons.

"Approximately 75,629 acres of defence land fall under the administrative purview of the Defence Estates Organisation (DEOs), primarily Class A-2, B-3, B-4 and C land. Out of this land, around 52,899 acres lie within cantonments, while 22,730 acres are situated outside cantonments. At nearly 2,024 acres are encroached by individuals," the affidavit has said.

It said additionally, 1,575 acres of land is under the unauthorised possession of former agricultural lessees, "against whom eviction proceedings have been initiated by respective DEOs".

The Centre said efforts are on to engage with the government authorities concerned with regard to the occupation of defence land so as to explore the possibility of land exchanges, wherein the defence ministry may be allotted equivalent land parcels

in lieu of those under the unauthorised occupation of state government organisations.

"To augment efforts of encroachment removal, the Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) has operationalised an encroachment module under the aforesaid real-time record management (RTRM) system, developed in-house by the DGDE.

"This digital tool enables Defence Estates Officers and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of cantonment boards to report cases of encroachments directly and transparently to the designated estate officers," the Union government has said.

Highlighting the preventive measures, the ministry said steps taken by the defence estates organisation to protect defence land (falling under its management) include raising boundary walls and fencing vulnerable plots.

"In the last 10 years, about 1,715 acres of defence land under the management of the DE Organisation have been removed by the CEOs and DEOs of the defence estates department.

"In the current year itself, with the help of technological advantages of CoE survey and improved support of local administration, encroachment of about 220 acres has been removed from defence land," the defence ministry has said.

It pointed out that the DEO routinely encounters operational impediments in implementing eviction proceedings against unauthorised encroachments, including non-availability of police and magistrates, judicial stays and other infrastructural and procedural issues. These challenges often result in delayed enforcement.

The affidavit highlighted several other measures adopted by the Centre to remove the encroachments and unauthorised occupations and complete the digitisation of records.

China files complaint against India in WTO over EV, battery subsidies



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 15: China has filed a complaint against India in the World Trade Organization (WTO) over New Delhi's subsidies for electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that the ministry will look at the detailed submissions made by China. Confirming the move, an official said that China has also filed similar applications against Turkey, Canada and the EU.

"They have sought consultations with India," the official said. Seeking consultation is the first step of the dispute settlement process

as per WTO rules.

If the consultations requested with India do not result in a satisfactory solution, the EU can request that the WTO set up a panel in the case to rule on the issue raised. China is the second-largest trading partner of India.

In the last fiscal, India's exports to China contracted 14.5 per cent to USD 14.25 billion against USD 16.66 billion in 2023-24.

The imports, however, rose by 11.52 per cent in 2024-25 to USD 113.45 billion against USD 101.73 billion in 2023-24.

India's trade deficit with China has widened to USD 99.2 billion during 2024-25.

Markets rebound: Sensex jumps 575 points, Nifty tops 25,300 on global rate cut hopes

PTI

Mumbai, Oct 15: Benchmark Sensex spurted by 575 points while Nifty closed above 25,300 on Wednesday on buying in banking and financial shares, driven by a rally in Asian and European markets amid hopes of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve later this month.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 575.45 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 82,605.43. During the day, it surged 697.04 points or 0.84 per cent to 82,727.02.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 178.05 points or 0.71 per cent to 25,323.55.

Among Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance and Bajaj Finserv were the biggest gainers. Asian Paints, Larsen & Toubro, Trent, UltraTech Cement, Eternal and Adani Ports were also among the winners. However, Tata Motors, Infosys, Tech



Mahindra and Axis Bank were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled sharply higher. Markets in Europe were trading in the positive territory.

US markets ended on a mixed note on Tuesday.

"The national market inched higher after two days of selling; a dovish comment by the Fed chair on rates and considering an end to its quantitative tightening sparked the global market sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Powerhouse of nutrients: How Amla may lower bad cholesterol, support heart health

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Oct 15: Indian gooseberry, or Amla, is known for its medicinal properties, since ancient India. Its health benefits are also a subject of interest in modern science. Many studies have validated amla's benefits, especially in managing cholesterol levels. A systematic review and meta-analysis of six studies published in ScienceDirect concluded that amla supplementation significantly improves lipid profiles by reducing total cholesterol, LDL (bad cholesterol), and triglycerides, while

increasing HDL.

How Amla supports heart-health NIH study suggests amla is rich in polyphenols, including emblicanin A and B, and pedunculagin, which have potent antioxidant properties. These compounds help prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, a critical step in the development of atherosclerotic plaques. By inhibiting LDL oxidation, amla reduces the risk of plaque formation in arteries, thereby supporting cardiovascular health.

Amla reduces inflammation Amla may enhance endothelial



function

Amla supplementation has been associated with improved endothelial function, which is crucial for maintaining vascular health. By enhancing endothelial function, amla helps ensure

proper blood flow and reduces the risk of cardiovascular events. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6926135/>

Consume amla the right way Amla can be incorporated into your diet in several forms. To get the cholesterol-lowering and heart-protective benefits, it's important to choose preparations that retain its natural nutrients and avoid excessive sugar or additives.

Fresh amla This is the most effective way to retain amla's full potency. When one eats fresh amlas, maximum

vitamin C and polyphenols remain intact, and are consumed better. Eating fresh raw amla gives the heart and body the strongest antioxidant and cholesterol-lowering benefits.

Amla juice This method preserves the maximum antioxidant and polyphenol content of amla. Without added calories, consuming amla this way can provide protective benefits. Drinking unsweetened juice in the morning on an empty stomach may provide best results.

Afghanistan-Pakistan border war flares again, over 12 civilians killed in fierce clashes

REUTERS

Peshawar, Oct 15: Fresh fighting broke out on Wednesday along the volatile Pakistan-Afghanistan border, killing more than a dozen civilians and troops to shatter a fragile peace after weekend clashes that killed dozens.

The weekend fighting was the worst between the neighbours since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in 2021, despite regular clashes between their security forces along the contested 2,600 km (1,600-mile) frontier.

The Afghan Taliban said more than a dozen of its civilians were killed and 100 wounded as Pakistani forces launched attacks in the early hours of Wednesday in the district of Spin Boldak.

Fighting between troops and militants in a second incident in Pakistan's border district of Orakzai killed six Pakistani paramilitary soldiers and wounded six, two security officials told Reuters.

Nine militants were also killed, they said, adding that the violence broke out during a search in the area by troops after a militant attack last week killed 11 Pakistani soldiers.

Once allies, the recent friction between the South Asian nations erupted after Islamabad demanded that the Afghan Taliban administration act against militants who have stepped up attacks in Pakistan, saying they operate from havens in Afghanistan.

The Taliban denies the presence of Pakistani militants in Afghanistan. "Early this morning,



Pakistani forces launched attacks...more than 12 civilians were martyred and over 100 others were wounded," Afghan Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said on X.

The Taliban also said it had killed "a large number of Pakistani soldiers", captured their posts and centres, seized their weapons and tanks, and "destroyed" most of their military facilities.

Pakistani officials blamed the Taliban for the clashes and said four civilians were wounded on their side of the border.

"Taliban forces attacked Pakistani post near Chaman (district)," Habib Ullah Bangulzai, the regional administrator in Pakistan's Chaman district, told Reuters. The fighting continued for about five hours in the early hours of the day, he said, adding that Pakistani forces had "repulsed" the attack.

Pakistan army said on

Wednesday that it repulsed multiple attacks by the Afghan Taliban while killing over 40 attackers in separate incidents of border clashes between the two countries.

The Afghan Taliban attacked four locations in the Spin Boldak area of PoK's Balochistan province, which were effectively repulsed by Pakistani Forces, the army said. "While repulsing the attack, 15-20 Afghan Taliban have been killed and many injured," the army said, adding that the situation is still developing as there are "reports of further build up in staging points of Fitna Al Khwarij and Afghan Taliban."

The term Fitna al-Khawarij is used by Pakistani authorities to refer to militants of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The attack was orchestrated through divided villages in the area, with the Taliban showing no regard for the civilian

population, it said.

"The Afghan Taliban also destroyed Pak-Afghan Friendship Gate on their side that clearly displays the mindset with regard to mutual trade and easement rights of the divided tribes," the army said.

The attack in PoK's Spin Boldak was not an isolated event, as on the night of October 14, Afghan Taliban and Fitna Al Khwarij (TTP) tried to attack Pakistani border posts in Kurram Sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

"These attacks were effectively repulsed, causing heavy losses to Afghan Posts. Eight posts, including six tanks, were destroyed in the effective yet proportionate response of Pakistani troops, (and) 25-30 Afghan Taliban and Fitna Al Khwarij fighters were suspected to have been killed," it said. The army rejected the insinuations that Pakistan initiated the attack by calling it "outrageous and blatant lies, just like the claims of capturing Pakistani posts or equipment."

It further said that the propaganda of the Taliban regime can be debunked with basic fact checks.

Although clashes regularly break out between the countries' security forces along their contested 2,600 km (1,600-mile) frontier, last week's fighting was their worst since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in 2021.

The neighbours have closed several crossings along their border in its aftermath, bringing trade to a halt and leaving scores of loaded goods vehicles stranded on both sides.

UN's World Food Programme warns donor cuts are pushing millions more into hunger

AP

Geneva, Oct 15: The United Nations' food aid agency said Wednesday that severe funding cuts from its top donors are hurting its operations in six countries and warned that nearly 14 million people could be forced into emergency levels of hunger.

The World Food Programme, traditionally the UN's most-funded agency, said in a new report that its funding this year "has never been more challenged" – largely due to slashed outlays from the US under the Trump administration and other leading Western donors.

It warned that that 13.7 million of its food aid recipients could be forced into emergency levels of hunger as funding is cut. The countries facing "major disruptions" are Afghanistan, Congo, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, it said.

"We are watching the lifeline for millions of people disintegrate before our eyes," Executive Director Cindy McCain said.

WFP said it expects to receive 40 percent less funding this year, leading to a projected budget of \$6.4 billion – after receiving some \$10 billion last



year. "This is not just a funding gap – it's a reality gap between what we need to do and what we can afford to do," McCain said. "We are at risk of losing decades of progress in the fight against hunger."

The Rome-based agency says global hunger is already at record levels, with 319 million people facing acute food insecurity – including 44 million at emergency levels. Famine has broken out in Gaza and Sudan.

In Afghanistan, food assistance is reaching less than 10 percent of people who are food insecure – meaning that they don't know where their next

meal will come from, the agency said.

WFP says it has received about \$1.5 billion from the United States this year, down from nearly \$4.5 billion last year, while other top donors have also cut funding.

Many United Nations organizations, including the migration, health and refugee agencies, have announced sharp aid and staffing cuts this year because of reduced support from traditional big donors. The humanitarian aid community has also been affected by sharp cuts to the US Agency for International Development, or USAID.

India, EU trade pact talks in last leg: Commerce Secy



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 15: The negotiations between India and the European Union on the proposed free trade agreement are progressing "very well" and have reached the last leg, a senior government official said on Wednesday.

The two sides concluded their 14th round of negotiations in Brussels last week, but some Indian officials have stayed back to conclude talks on Rules of Origin (ROO), Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal told reporters here.

"We are in the last leg of negotiations. The last leg is the most arduous leg of negotiations because these are the toughest things that are decided at the end. Progress in the last round has been very positive," he said. The 'Rules of

Origin' (ROO) provision prescribes minimal processing that should happen in the FTA (free trade agreement) country so that the final manufactured product may be called originating goods in that country.

"That (ROO) is one area where a lot of work needs to be done. So we have left the team there. It was planned to have the negotiations for two weeks at a stretch to see that we can make substantial progress," Agrawal said.

He added that the dates for the next round of negotiations have not been finalised yet, but discussions are on as there are some issues for which both sides need to be engaged on a continuous basis. "Instead of waiting for a round, there are engagements that are going between the two sides virtually also," he said adding "negotiations are progressing very well. Chances are that it may get closed by December".

As talks intensify, some officials from the EU are expected to visit New Delhi next month to carry forward the discussions.

Agrawal joined the discussions as the 14th round was winding down. He met Director General (Trade) of the European Commission (EC) Sabine Weyand to assess the progress of talks.

In June 2022, India and the EU bloc resumed negotiations for a comprehensive FTA, an investment protection agreement and a pact on geographical indications after a gap of over eight years. Talks were stalled in 2013 due to differences on the level of market opening.

It might be last chance for Aussie fans to see Rohit-Virat playing on Australian soil: Cummins

IANS

New Delhi, Oct 15: India's highly anticipated tour of Australia, kicking off on October 19, carries added significance as it marks the return of stalwarts Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli to Australian shores. However, Australian pace spearhead Pat Cummins believes this series could be the final opportunity for home fans to witness the Indian legends in action Down Under.

Kohli and Rohit, who have now retired from Tests and T20Is, will participate in the ODI series, the only international format they are playing, starting on October 19 in Perth. India



are scheduled to play three ODIs and five T20Is on their limited-overs tour of Australia.

"Virat and Rohit have been part of almost every Indian side for the last 15 years, so this might be the last chance for the Australian public to see them playing out here. They've obviously been champions of the game for India and are always very well supported. Whenever we play them, the crowd gets loud," Cummins said on JioHotstar.

Cummins, who is continuing his recovery from lumbar bone stress in preparation for the Ashes, will miss the series against India and Mitchell Marsh will lead the ODI side.

FIFA World Cup 2026

England qualifies after routing Latvia Portugal made to wait despite Ronaldo double

AP

London, Oct 15: England became the first country from Europe to qualify for the 2026 World Cup on Tuesday (October 14, 2025) but Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal will have to wait after conceding a stoppage-time equalizer against Hungary.

England won 5-0 at Latvia, with captain Harry Kane scoring twice in the first half, to assure first place in its group with two matches to spare. The English, who will be appearing at an eighth straight World Cup, haven't conceded a goal in six matches in qualifying so far under German coach Thomas Tuchel.

"Sometimes we make it look easy," said Kane, who already has a total of 21 goals for England and Bayern Munich this season, "but these groups and games can be tough.... We talk about high standards no matter who we play against to keep the momentum, and that showed."

Ronaldo's record Portugal looked set to join England in next year's tournament in North America after two goals from the 40-year-old Ronaldo established a 2-1 lead over Hungary in Lisbon. A win would have guaranteed Portugal a first-place finish but Dominik Szoboszlai made it 2-2 in the first minute of added-on time to leave second-place Hungary five points back with two games left.

Ronaldo at least left the



match with another scoring record. He now has 41 goals in World Cup qualifiers, breaking a tie for 39 he had with Guatemala player Carlos Ruiz.

Italy defeats Israel in politically charged match

Italy, which has failed to qualify for the last two World Cups, guaranteed itself at least a place in the playoffs after beating Israel 3-0 in a match laced with tension, played amid a hefty police and military presence, and preceded by a pro-Palestinian march attended by an estimated 10,000 people.

The match was placed in the highest risk category despite a breakthrough ceasefire deal that has paused two years of war in Gaza. The second-placed Azzurri moved three points behind Norway, which has a much healthier goal difference. Both teams have two matches left next month, including a game against each other in Italy in the final round of qualifiers.

Spain stayed top of its group, three points clear of Turkey, by beating Bulgaria 4-0 to

maintain its 100% start to the qualifying campaign.

Turkey also won, 4-1 at home to Georgia, and at least looks set for the spot in the playoffs.

Tuchel impressing with England

Tuchel is putting his own stamp on the England team – and might potentially be winning over some critics who wanted an English person in charge of the national team.

He has made some big calls, like leaving out high-profile players like Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden from the squad and taking on England's fans for being too quiet in the last match, but is getting some impressive results – albeit against mediocre opposition.

If the 5-0 win in Serbia last month was the statement result in Tuchel's tenure so far, this latest thrashing was another sign of the assuredness and ruthlessness in the team. Anthony Gordon opened the scoring, Kane added two more in the first half, and there was an own-goal as well as a strike from substitute Eberechi Eze after halftime.

SUNNY SANSKARI KI TULSI KUMARI (UA15+)
HINDI - 02:10 PM, 07:15 PM

JOLLY LLB 3 (UA16+)
HINDI - 12:00 PM, 05:05 PM

KANTARA A LEGEND: CHAPTER 1 (UA16+)
HINDI - 11:00 AM, 02:30 PM, 03:40 PM, 06:00 PM

SAIYAARA (U/A16+)
HINDI - 11:10 AM

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