

J&K Assembly's autumn session begins with obituary references

Speaker, CM, LoP, Dy CM, others pay respect to former Guv Malik, others

Owais Gul

Srinagar, Oct 23: The nine-day autumn session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly commenced on Thursday with obituary references for seven departed souls, including the former Governor of the erstwhile J&K State, Satya Pal Malik, and six legislators, ministers, who passed away since the last session, held in Jammu.

The proceedings began with the Speaker of the House, Abdul Rahim Rather, remembering all seven deceased and paid homage to them, highlighting their contributions.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the departed, who were remembered, included former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik, former minister, Gulchain Singh



Photo: KNO | Shah Jehangir

Charak, former MLA Dina Nath Bhagat, former MLC, Ghulam Nabi Shaheen, former MLC, Ramesh Arora, former MLC, Sardar Mohammad Akhlaq Khan and former legislator

Mohammad Sultan Pandithpuri. During the obituary reference, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah; Leader of Opposition, Sunil Kumar Sharma; Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar

Choudhary; Minister Javed Ahmed Rana and the MLAs including Dr Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri, Dr Devinder Kumar Manyal, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, Dr Rameshwar Singh, Mubarak Gul, Salman Ali Sagar, M.Y Tarigami, Khursheed Ahmad Sheikh, Pawan Gupta, Sajad Gani Lone, Aijaz Jan, Abdul Majid Bhat Larmi, Nizamuddin Bhat, Vikram Randhawa, Balwant Singh Mankotia, Choudhary Mohammad Akram, Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, Iftikhar Ahmed and Narinder Singh paid tributes to the departed souls.

The session comprises six sittings, including the obituary references held today.

The Assembly proceedings are expected to be stormy, with the opposition expected to target the

CM Omar suggests Parliament-like procedure for obituary references

Speaker Rather welcomes advice

Owais Gul

Srinagar, Oct 23: Paying tributes to the former MLAs during obituary references on the first day of Assembly Session, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday suggested changing the system at par with the Parliament and requested to adopt a similar concise procedure for offering condolences.

The Chief Minister also urged the Speaker to seek an explanation over the omission of late Sultan Panditpuri's name in the obituary reference.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer



Photo: KNO | Shah Jehangir

(KNO) said that those (former MLAs) whom we are paying respects today worked to do something better. "Nobody among us is an angel. Mistakes are bound to happen either intentionally or unintentionally," he said.

The Chief Minister firmly urged the Speaker to

streamline the obituary proceedings by paying respects without lengthy speeches. "We are politicians and always bring politics into everything. I suggest that we must change the system at par with the Parliament and let the reference come from the Speaker | [More on P6](#)

'Op Sindoor' showed India's readiness to hit enemy hard: Rajnath Singh

Lauds Indian Navy for keeping Pak confined to its harbour, coast

KNO Monitoring Desk

New Delhi, Oct 23: Describing 'Operation Sindoor' as India's message to the world that it is always ready to respond to every challenge, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday lauded the Indian Navy for its combat readiness.

Addressing top naval commanders in the national capital, the Defence Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The world witnessed the Indian Navy's strength during Operation Sindoor as its deterrent posture forced Pakistan to remain in the harbour or near its coast."

He said that 'Operation Sindoor' has sent a clear



message to the world that "India is capable" of giving a befitting reply to the enemy and would respond to every challenge.

Singh commended the Navy for creating a "deterrent posture" during the operation. "It forced Pakistan | [More on P6](#)

J&K MLAs to vote in Rajya Sabha polls today

All eyes on 4th seat as NC, BJP locked in 28-28 tie

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 23: With MLAs of Jammu & Kashmir set to vote on Friday to elect four members of the Rajya Sabha, all eyes are on the outcome of the fourth seat, where the National Conference and the BJP each have 28 MLAs.

The MLAs will cast their votes at three separate polling booths set up in the Legislative Assembly complex between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). The counting of votes will take place at 5:00 PM and



is expected to conclude within minutes.

While the National Conference's victory on three seats is a foregone conclusion, the result of the fourth seat is

being closely watched, where the BJP's advantage has diminished following support for the National Conference from the Congress, PDP, and independent | [More on P6](#)

PDP to support NC's RS candidate to block BJP: Mehbooba

Sajid Raina

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday said that her party

will extend support to the National Conference (NC) candidate as a third preference in the Rajya Sabha elections to ensure that the Bharatiya Janata | [More on P6](#)

Obituary reference

Speaker slams Kup admin over ex-MLA omission

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 23: Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday slammed the administration after the name of former Langate MLA Muhammad Sultan Panditpuri was missing from the obituary references in the House.

During the obituary reference, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the Speaker castigated the district administration Kupwara for failing to inform the Assembly Secretariat about Panditpuri's death.

"This is an irresponsible attitude," the Speaker said, adding that district administration Kupwara didn't inform the Assembly secretariat regarding his demise. (KNO)

Courts are custodians of democracy, not just law interpreters: CJI Gavai

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 23: Observing that public trust is the judiciary's "most valuable asset", Chief Justice of India B R Gavai on Thursday said that courts have an active and indispensable role to play in the system of constitutional governance and in fulfilling the mandate of the Constitution.

The CJI noted that perhaps the most enduring role of courts in constitutional governance is to sustain public faith in the rule of law, adding that decisions delivered by courts, even if unpopular, must reflect fairness and moral courage.



Justice Gavai, who is presently on a four-day official visit to Bhutan, delivered the keynote address at an event organised by the Jigme Singye Wangchuck

(JSW) School of Law at the Royal Institute of Management, Thimphu.

Speaking on the theme of "courts and constitutional

governance", he touched upon many aspects, including the active role of courts.

"I will not burden you with more case examples, but I wish to emphasise a larger point: that the courts of any nation have an active and indispensable role to play in the system of constitutional governance and in fulfilling the mandate of the Constitution," the CJI said.

He said the judiciary contributes to this process not merely by interpreting constitutional text, but by serving as a mediator between institutions, as a guardian of fundamental rights, and as a protector of the environment and | [More on P6](#)

'Separation of powers is democracy's architecture, judicial review its heartbeat'

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 23: Seniormost Supreme Court judge Justice Surya Kant on Thursday said that while separation of powers is the architecture of India's constitutional democracy, judicial review is its heartbeat.

Justice Surya Kant, who was delivering a lecture on 'The Living Constitution: How the Indian Judiciary Shapes and Safeguards Constitutionalism' at the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, said that the country has robustly adhered to the doctrine of separation of powers.

He said, "India presents a compelling illustration of the substantive application of the doctrine of separation of



powers. A prominent example lies in the judiciary's dominance over appointments to the Supreme Court and high courts."

Justice Surya Kant said the mechanism preserved the judiciary's autonomy regarding

its administrative functionality, both inside the courtroom as well as outside.

The apex court judge said that the independence of the judiciary allowed it to shape the democratic imagination of a society and to function as the architects of democratic life.

"If the separation of powers is the architecture of India's constitutional democracy, judicial review is its heartbeat," he said.

Explaining it, Justice Surya Kant said that under the aegis of judicial review, the Indian judiciary was entrusted with the profound power of examining the constitutionality of actions undertaken by every organ of the state, including the decisions made | [More on P6](#)

Toxic autumn tradition: Burning of leaves, branches choke Kashmir's air, endangers health

Experts warn of long-term environmental, health impacts

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Oct 23: As autumn draws to a close in Kashmir, a familiar haze begins to settle over the valley, not from mist or fog, but from the widespread burning of fallen leaves and tree branches.

The practice, deeply rooted in local tradition, is meant to produce charcoal for Kangris (traditional firepots) to keep homes warm during the freezing winter months. But environmentalists and health experts warn that this seasonal ritual is causing

severe damage to both public health and the environment.

Every year, as the pruning season begins in apple-growing districts like Pulwama, Shopian, Baramulla, Kulgam, and Anantnag, smoke rises from orchards and roadsides alike. The burning of heaps of leaves and twigs fills the air with thick smog, reducing visibility and worsening air quality.

"The smoke from burning leaves contains fine particles and harmful gases that can easily reach deep into the lungs," said Dr Umar Mushtaq a scientist at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST).

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO),

Dr Umar said, "This can trigger respiratory problems, especially among children, the elderly, and those already suffering from asthma or heart diseases."

Besides irritating the eyes and throat, leaf smoke contains carbon monoxide and Benzo(a)pyrene, a compound linked to lung cancer, he said, adding that carbon monoxide reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of blood, making it particularly dangerous for vulnerable groups.

Dr Umar said the practice is not only harmful but also illegal. "Burning leaves in the open is against environmental regulations and Supreme Court guidelines," he said. "People should instead compost the leaves or use urea sprays to accelerate



decomposition and produce organic fertilizer."

Despite these warnings, many residents say they are forced to continue burning leaves due to a lack of viable alternatives.

"We have no other option," said Waqar Ahmed, an orchardist from Pulwama. "We need charcoal for our Kangris, and with frequent power cuts in winter, this is the only way to

stay warm."

Echoing similar concerns, Muhammad Abdullah, a resident of Pulwama, said that electricity remains unreliable during the harsh winter months. "Each year we face long power outages. Without Kangris, survival becomes difficult."

Environmentalists say the combined smoke from thousands of small fires across the valley leads to a toxic blanket of pollution during the transition from autumn to winter.

"Open burning releases particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and greenhouse gases, all of which contribute to poor air quality and climate change," said Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, an environmentalist. "Because of

Kashmir's topography, these pollutants often get trapped in the atmosphere due to temperature inversion, forming smog that lingers for days."

Such fires, Dr Ahmad said, also harm soil health, destroying beneficial microorganisms and reducing fertility.

Experts and agricultural scientists have proposed several eco-friendly solutions. They suggested promoting sheep grazing in orchards, saying, "Sheep eat the fallen leaves and their droppings enrich the soil naturally. This reduces waste and adds nutrients back to the earth."

They urged farmers to adopt composting, turning leaf litter into valuable organic manure instead of | [More on P6](#)

CS reviews implementation of Mission YUVA

Directs time-bound loan disbursal

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress and implementation of Mission YUVA, taking a detailed appraisal of achievements made so far and charting the future course of action with concerned departments and stakeholders.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretaries of Higher Education, Planning, and Agriculture Production Departments; Principal Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Secretaries of Employment and Rural Development Departments; Director Employment; Director, Handicrafts (Kashmir), besides other senior officers.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities, Managing Director, J&K Bank, and Deputy Commissioners participated through video conferencing.

While reviewing the progress under Mission YUVA, the Chief Secretary directed the Employment Department and J&K Bank to adopt proactive measures to meet the targets set for the current financial year. He emphasized that loans worth 1,000 crore must be disbursed to facilitate grounding of projects worth 2,000 crore, thereby enabling aspiring entrepreneurs to establish viable



business ventures.

He underscored the need for enhancing the capacity of beneficiaries to transform their ventures into successful enterprises and called for convergence of all employment generation initiatives such as Lakhpati Didis under JKRLM, PMEGP, HADP, JKCIIP, and PMFME with Mission YUVA to maximize their collective impact.

Highlighting the significance of grassroots-level support systems, Dulloo directed that the Single Block Development Units (SBDUs), Block Handholding Desks (BHDs), and YUVA Doots under the Mission be optimally utilized to facilitate on-ground execution and synergy with other government schemes.

He further instructed banks to depute their representatives to the BHDs at block level to

streamline the process of approvals and ensure timely sanction and disbursal of loans. Deputy Commissioners were asked to closely monitor the establishment of enterprises by beneficiaries and expedite processes from District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) approvals to bank sanctions and loan disbursals. The Chief Secretary also urged districts to complete the recruitment of required manpower for smooth functioning of Mission YUVA structures.

To ensure wider outreach, the Chief Secretary called for involving legislators, public figures, and local influencers in awareness campaigns. He advised strategizing engagement with focus groups such as Lakhpati Didis, PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries, PMKVY

trainees, and artisans from the handicraft sector, encouraging their participation under Mission YUVA. Administrative Secretaries and Vice-Chancellors shared their insights and suggestions during the meeting, highlighting best practices from other regions and recommending measures for capacity enhancement and time-bound implementation of the Mission.

Commissioner Secretary, Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, presented a detailed overview of Mission YUVA's achievements and objectives. He informed that the Department aims to create successful entrepreneurs in every panchayat, building local role models to inspire others.

He highlighted that the fourth phase of the UdyamJagriti

campaign is currently underway, focusing on students from Degree Colleges, Polytechnics, and ITIs; women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs); and beneficiaries with sanctioned loans. So far, 16,000 college students out of about 50,000 and 45,000 women SHG members out of 7 lakh have been reached under this phase. The Department is also contemplating capacity-building sessions for legislators to familiarize them with employment and livelihood schemes for better outreach at the constituency level.

The meeting was informed that 1,23,350 registrations have been made on the Mission YUVA portal, with 53,138 applications received—of which 50,544 pertain to nano-enterprises, 1,975 to new MSMEs, and 551 from existing units. Out of these, 27,369 applications have been approved by DLICs, 7,462 bank sanctions have been issued, and 4,673 disbursals completed, with subsidies granted in 281 cases. The average project cost is around 6.44 lakh, and 262 crore has been disbursed till date.

The Chief Secretary was also apprised about the buyer-seller app developed under the Mission to facilitate market linkages for registered enterprises and about initiatives to promote incubation and innovation-driven entrepreneurship in the Union Territory.

Budgam Bye- Elections

First randomisation of polling staff held

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 23: The first randomisation of polling staff designated for deployment across 173 polling stations for the Bye-Elections to 27-Assembly Constituency Budgam was Thursday held at Budgam. The randomisation was carried out by the District Election Officer (DEO) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, in accordance with the guidelines stipulated by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Through this process, software-generated deployment of 1020 employees, including a 50% reserve, was completed to ensure transparency, fairness, and impartiality in the deployment of polling staff. Returning Officer (RO) 27-AC Budgam, Deputy District Election Officer (Dy. DEO), Nodal Officer ETBPS, and other officers were present during the randomisation process.

Speaking on the occasion, the DEO Budgam emphasised that the District Administration is fully committed to conducting



free, fair, inclusive, and peaceful elections in the constituency. He further directed all concerned officers to ensure that every arrangement from training of polling staff to logistics and communication facilities is completed well in advance as per the ECI mandate.

The DEO also reiterated that transparency and accountability shall remain the guiding principles throughout all stages of the electoral process for bye-Election to 27-AC Budgam.

Div Com inspects operational readiness of 60 MLD STP Noorbagh

Project to be commissioned on October 31: Garg

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg Thursday conducted an on-site inspection of the 60 Million Litres Daily (MLD) Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) at Noorbagh, Srinagar, to assess its operational readiness ahead of its commissioning scheduled for October 31.

The inspection was carried out after completion of a project of the Comprehensive Sewerage Scheme for Greater Srinagar, initiated under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) at a cost of Rs 143 Cr which was later revised to Rs 157 Cr.

During the visit, Div Com highlighted the critical importance of the project in strengthening urban sanitation infrastructure and improving environmental and health standards in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Garg informed that the project was executed by the Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED) under the supervision of the Housing and Urban Development Department.

"We have commenced the trial run of the 60 MLD STP after NBCC and UEED geared up their resources to complete this long-pending project", Div Com said and added that once



commissioned it will immediately benefit around 15,000 households in Srinagar city.

Acknowledging the city's expanding population since the project's inception, Garg announced that the administration is already planning the second phase of the project of 70 MLD capacity to cater increasing requirements in proportion to growth of the city.

He also directed the Superintending Engineer, UEED, to initiate the process for acquiring a dedicated power supply line to ensure

uninterrupted functioning of the plant and also get the DPR finalised for the utility shifting, tertiary treatment, automated quality monitoring and other infrastructural requirements within 1 week for consideration of the Administrative Department.

During his interaction with local residents, the Div Com listened to their grievances regarding sewerage and stormwater issues and assured them that their concerns would be resolved at the earliest.

Addressing media queries about the power scenario in the valley, Garg said that power supply remains a top priority for the administration. "Regular reviews are being conducted at both the UT and Divisional levels to ensure regular power supply", he said.

"Currently the concerned department is conducting pruning of trees, maintenance works, and augmentation of buffer stock of transformers to ensure overall preparation for winter", he said. The power scenario this winter is expected to be better than in previous years," he added.

The Div Com was accompanied by the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, and officers from the Revenue Department and UEED during the visit.

DC Sgr reviews progress on ABHA ID enrolment, TB control measures

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 23: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Thursday chaired a meeting here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to review the progress of health initiatives in the district, including the enrolment of Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) IDs and the coverage under the PMJAY-Sehat (Golden Card) scheme.

The meeting also assessed the ongoing Tuberculosis (TB) control measures and related health interventions.

At the outset, the DC emphasized the importance of achieving universal coverage under the ABHA ID initiative to ensure seamless access to digital health services. He directed the Officers to intensify awareness campaigns and expedite the registration process across all Medical Zones/Blocks in the district so that citizens are benefited from the government initiatives. On the occasion, the DC also reviewed the progress of the Ayushman Bharat—Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), under which Golden Cards are issued to eligible beneficiaries.

The DC called for coordinated efforts to saturate the process so that all eligible families can avail benefits of cashless healthcare services at empanelled hospitals.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner

also took stock of the performance of Srinagar District under the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP). He commended the Health Department and associated teams for their accelerated efforts and improved performance in efforts towards TB elimination.



The DC emphasized the need to sustain the current momentum and further strengthen grassroots-level initiatives to achieve the goal of a TB-free district.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad; Medical Superintends of SKIMS, JLN, SMHS, CD Hospital, District Tuberculosis Officer, and all Zonal Medical Officers.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

HEALTH AND MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENT NURSING COLLEG/GNMS PULWAMA

(Website: www.gmcnanantnag.net Tele: 01933224470)

Sub: Merit cum Provisional selection list of candidates for admission in GNM and FMPHW Course in Govt. Nursing College Pulwama and selection there-of.

Ref: 1. No: ANC-25/157/3006-3014 Dated: 08-10-2025.

2. Notification No: GNC/Pul/Estt./546-49 Dated: 10-10-2025.

NOTICE:

It is for information of all the stakeholders that the merit list of candidates who have applied for the admission in GNM and FMPHW Courses (leftover seats) in Govt Nursing College Pulwama vide advertisement Notification No: GNC/Pul/Estt./546-49 Dated: 10-10-20205 is annexed with this notice as Annexure "A" and the provisional selection list of candidates for the admission in GNM & FMPHW Courses in Govt. Nursing College Pulwama is attached as Annexure "B".

The candidates in Annexure "B" are hereby informed to report in Govt. Nursing College, Pulwama for admission by or before 28-10-2025 during official working hours along with the below mentioned documents in original and three sets of xerox copies of all the relevant documents.

1. Date of Birth Certificate.
2. Marks Card 10th & 12th Class. (For FMPHW candidates, 10' Class Marks card only)
3. Domicile Certificate.
4. Category Certificate issued from competent authority. (far candidates, selected under reserved category)
5. Provisional/Character/Discharge Certificate issued from the Institution attended last.
6. Migration/Transfer Certificate if any.
7. Time Gap Affidavit from 1st Class Magistrate if required.
8. Undertaking/Affidavit (Format will be available at College)
9. Medical Fitness Certificate.
10. 04 Passport size photos.
11. Xerox copy of Aadhaar Card.

Fee @ Rs: 9000/- for GNM course and Rs: 4000/- for FMPHW course. (Fee slip will be available at College)

The selection for the admission in WO & WNW courses is strictly issued as per the guidelines of JK-BOPEE.

If any selected candidate fails to submit his/her admission form along with all relevant documents up to the stipulated time period, his/her selection will be cancelled and waiting list will be automatically operated for the said seat without any further notice.

No: GNC/Pul/Estt/588-95

Dated: 22-10-2025

Principal, Govt. Nursing College,

Pulwama.

Annexure "A"					
Merit list of candidates who have applied for the admission in GNM Course in Govt. Nursing College/ GNMS Pulwama vide Advertisement Notice No: GNC/Pul/Estt./546-49 Dated: 10-10-2025.					
S.NO	Name of Candidate	Parentage	Address	Category	Marks Obtained %age
1	Mehvish Ashraf	Mohammad Ashraf Ahanger	Dalwan Budgam	OBC	437 87.40%
2	Insha Iqbal	Mohammad Iqbal Shiekh	Trehgam Kupwara	OM	426 85.20%
3	Tawkeer Ali	Ali Mohammad Yatoo	Dalipora Chadoora	OM	381 76.20%
4	Umaisa Jan	Altat Ahmad Bhat	Goosu Pulwama	OM	371 74.20%
5	Fiza Farooq	Farooq Ahmad Bhat	Litter Pulwama	OM	366 73.20%
6	Sufoor Ul Islam	Ab. Hamid Dar	Qalam Pora Rajpora	RBA	361 72.20%
7	Mukadas Showkat	Showkat Ahmad Rasray	Gulababagh Tral	OM	360 72.00%
8	Soni Ma nzoor	Manzoor Ahmad Mir	Hunipora Pulwama	OM	352 70.40%
9	Danish Yousuf Zargar	Mohammad Yousuf zargar	Keegam Shopian	OM	345 69.00%
10	Syed Tawheeda	Syed Mushtaq Ahmad Shah	Batpora Damhal	RBA	341 68.20%
11	Raja Munee Ahmad	Nazir Ahmad Dar	Tujan Pulwama	RBA	338 67.60%
12	Anisa Farooq	Farooq Ahmad Ahanger	Kanlibagh Baramulla	OM / OBC	327 65.40%
13	H a f s a B a s h i r	Bashir Ahmad Mallia	Naina Pulwama	OM	3 2 7 65.40%
14	Tofial Rafiq	Abdul Rafiq	Karnah Kupwara	OM	324 64.80%
15	Iqra Nazir	Nazir Ahmad Ganie	Katroosa Kulgam	OM	304 60.80%
16	Sheikh Harts Hussain	Mohammad Hussain Sheikh	Chitragam Shopian	OM	289 57.80%
17	Reshi Ruksana Qadir	GH. Qadir Reshi	Dnusu Pulwama	OM	271 54.20%

Merit List of candidates who have applied for the admission in FMPHW Course in Govt. Nursing College/ GNMS Pulwama vide Advertisement Notice No: GNC/Pul/Estt./ 546-49 Dated: 10-10-2025					
S.NO	Name of Candidate	Parentage	Address	Category	Marks Obtained %age
1	Fiza	Fayaz Ahmad Malik	Kokernag Anantnag	OM	398 79.60%
2	Insha Iqbal	Mohammad Iqbal Shiekh	Trehgam Kupwara	OM	367 73.40%
3	Monisa Jan	Mohd. Abdullah Mallah	Pulwama	OM	366 73.20%
4	Inshah Fayaz	Fayaz aAhmad Malik	Wasoor Pulwama	OM	341 68.20%
5	B a z i l a B a s h i r	Bashir Ahmad Bhat	Khunmoh Srinagar	OM	338 67.60%
6	Mahida Bashir	Bashir Ahmad Shah	Zainapora Shopian	OM	334 66.80%
7	Mehkee Ayoub	Mohammad Ayoub Bhat	Dogripora Awantipora	RBA	319 63.80%
8	Iqra Yousuf	Mohammad Yousuf Mallia	Arabal pulwama	OM	313 62.60%

Provisional Selection List of candidates for admission in GNM course (leftover seats) in Govt. Nursing College/ GNMS Pulwama under OM Category					
S.NO	Name of Candidate	Parentage	Address	Category	Marks Obtained %age
1	Mehvish Ashraf	Mohammad Ashraf Ahanger	Dalwan Budgam	OM / OBC	437 87.40%
Waiting list under OM Category:					
1	Insha Iqbal	Mohammad Iqbal Shiekh	Trehgam Kupwara	OM	426 85.20
Provisional Selection List of candidates for admission in FMPHW course (leftover seats) in Govt. Nursing College/ GNMS Pulwama, under OM Category.					

S.NO	Name of Candidate	Parentage	Address	Category	Marks Obtained %age
1	Fiza	Fayaz Ahmad Malik	Kokernag Anantnag	OM	398 79.60%
2	Insha Iqbal	Mohammad Iqbal Shiekh	Trehgam Kupwara	OM	367 73.40%
3	Monisa Jan	Mohd. Abdullah Mallah	Pulwama	OM	366 73.20%
4	Inshah Fayaz	Fayaz Ahmad Malik	Wasoor Pulwama	OM	341 68.20%
Waiting list under OM Category:					
1	Bazila Bashir	Bashir Ahmad Bhat	Khunmoh Srinagar	OM	338 67.60%
2	Mahida Bashir	Bashir Ahmad Shah	Zainapora Shopian	OM	334 66.80%
3	Iqra Yousuf	Mohammad Yousuf Mallia	Arabal Pulwama	OM	313 62.60%
Provisional Selection List of candidates for admission in FMPHW course (leftover seats) in Govt. Nursing College/ GNMS Pulwama, under RBA Category.					
1	Mehkee Ayoub	Mohammad Ayoub Bhat	Dogripora Awantipora	RBA	319 63.80%

DIPK-7421/25

DATED: 23-10-2025

Principal
Govt. Nursing College, Pulwama

Fire damages 9 houses, godown in Habba Kadal

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Oct 23: A fire incident tore through Karfali Mohalla, Habba Kadal Srinagar, in the night hours of Wednesday-Thursday, reducing nine homes and one godown to ashes. For the residents, it was more than a blaze; it was the destruction of memories, dreams and the security of a lifetime.

"It was a night of cries and chaos," said Sahil, a resident, his voice trembling. He added, flames rose so high, lighting up the entire neighbourhood. People ran screaming, clutching whatever belongings they could grab.

"Some barely escaped with their children in their arms," Sahil said.

Another resident, whose home was completely destroyed, recalled helplessly: "We tried buckets of water, but the fire was too strong. Everything we had built over decades, our photos, clothes,



documents, savings, turned to ashes in minutes. It feels like life itself burned away."

The fire reportedly started in a godown around 2:30 AM, officials said. They said firefighters rushed from nearby stations and headquarters too but narrow lanes and congested houses typical of old Srinagar slowed the rescue.

By the time flames were under control, nine houses lay in ruins, and families were left homeless in the chilly October night. Meanwhile, amidst the rubble and cries residents huddled together, sharing clothes, blankets and food salvaged from neighbours. Some cried silently, staring at charred walls where their lives once unfolded. "We

have nothing now. Not even a roof over our heads," one elderly resident said.

Moreover, the tragedy has drawn attention from political and social leaders.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti tweeted: "First Ganpat Yaar, then Baan Mohalla, and now Karfali Mohalla within less than a month, devastating fires have engulfed the homes of the poorest of the poor. Dozens of families have been left without a roof over their heads in this harsh winter, losing not just shelter but a lifetime of belongings. It's heartbreaking to see people standing amidst the ashes of what was once their home."

She appealed to the government to provide urgent financial assistance, along with timber and tin sheets, so these families can rebuild their lives again."

Officials said investigation have been launched to ascertain the cause of the fire—(KNO)

Staff infusion likely for hanging schools

RIYAZ BHAT

Srinagar, Oct 23: Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister Sakina Itoo has directed the School Education Department (SED) to move a proposal for creation of staff for 184 hanging schools for the concurrence of the Finance Department. The minister in a meeting with top officers was apprised that there are 184 Hanging Schools upgraded from time to time without creation of staff and are functioning through internal arrangement. In this regard, director planning and director finance for SED were directed that the department shall move a proposal for creation of staff for these hanging schools for the concurrence of the Finance Department, J&K.

The minister issued directions to all the officers for immediate disposal of files and warned for unnecessary delay in processing files of urgent nature. Secretary, School Education Department, J&K was asked to seek the suggestions of both the Directors for framing

of transfer policy for RETS and other inter district interdivisional transfers.

About the timely execution of civil works, Itoo while reviewing the progress of civil works, directed Project Director Samagra Shiksha, DSEJ, DSEK and Chief Engineers were directed that a mechanism for physical monitoring should be introduced at district level. "The services of 82 Engineers engaged under Samagra Shiksha be utilized for monitoring of Civil works at individual level. Chief Education Officer concerned and SE, XEN from PW(R&B) Department shall jointly review the progress on monthly basis," Minister Itoo directed.

The minister further directed for preparation of DPRs of new works. In the meeting, Itoo directed that the DPRS of the new works approved under PAB approvals 2025-26 be prepared immediately

and handed over to PW(R&B) Department by Samagra Shiksha, J&K for initiation of tendering process and allotment.

In the meeting, the issue of non-utilization of funds released to CEOs for procurement and meeting



of other exigencies of urgent nature was viewed very seriously by the minister Itoo.

The minister accordingly directed that the funds available with the CEOs and ZEOs be utilized immediately after following proper procedure and action will be taken for unnecessary parking of funds by the concerned—(KNO)

RS Polls... NC issues 3-line whip to party MLAs

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 23: Ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections, the National Conference on Thursday issued a three-line whip to its MLAs, directing them to cast their votes in favour of the party's official candidates and to refrain from abstaining or voting against party instructions.

In the whip issued by the NC's Chief Whip, Mubarak

Gul, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), MLAs have been instructed to remain present in the Assembly tomorrow, the scheduled day for Rajya Sabha polling, and to vote in favour of the party's nominated candidates.

They have also been explicitly directed not to abstain, remain absent, or vote contrary to the party's directions—(KNO)

Ex-Jr Engineer convicted in Pulwama

KNO

Pulwama, Oct 23: The Special Judge Anti-Corruption Pulwama (Additional Sessions Judge) today convicted and sentenced Sonaulah Wani, a former Junior Engineer with the Rural Development Department, Block Keller, to a maximum effective term of seven years in prison and fine after charges of corruption, cheating, and forgery were proved against him.

Additional Sessions Judge Noor Mohammad Mir while delivering the judgment, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) declared that the charges against the accused, Sonaulah Wani, under multiple statutes "have been proved beyond any shadow of doubt," thus ending a case initiated over two decades ago.

Specifically, the conviction rested on serious offences under section 5(2) of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act Svt. 2006 (now Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988), alongside sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security), and 471 (using a forged document) of the J&K RPC (now IPC).

In its reasoning for the sentence, the Special Judge emphasized the severity of the convict's actions, noting that the acts "strike at the heart of public administration integrity."

The court highlighted that the accused, a public servant, forged official documents not only to illegitimately siphon off public money (salary) but also to occupy a public post for which he was not eligible, deeming it a "form of corruption and fraud on the system."

Dismissing the idea that the crime was trivial or victimless, the judgment

asserted that the primary victim is the public exchequer and the public trust in government record-keeping.

While acknowledging that the monetary amount (2.62 lakh) might not be extremely high, the court found the modus operandi and breach of trust "egregious." The offence was described as premeditated, requiring careful falsification of documents and indicating a high degree of culpability.

The Court concluded that a "strong message of deterrence is needed that such abuse of public office will not be treated lightly."

Concurrent sentences result in seven-year term. In sentencing, the court prescribed varying terms for the individual offences, which are set to run concurrently.

Corruption Charge (5(2) PC Act): Wani was sentenced to simple imprisonment of five (05) years and a fine of 2,62,760/-.

Forgery of Valuable Security (S. 467 RPC/IPC): This offence carried the highest term, resulting in seven (07) years of simple imprisonment and a fine of 90,000/-.

Cheating and Using Forged Document (S. 420 & S. 471 RPC/IPC): He was also sentenced to three (03) years simple imprisonment and a fine of 10,000/- for each of these two charges.

Crucially, the judgment mandated that all the sentences awarded to the convict shall run concurrently, meaning the maximum substantive simple imprisonment will be the highest single term, which is seven (07) years. The convict was also ordered to deposit a total cumulative fine of 3,52,760/- for all the committed offences—(KNO)

Statehood for J&K soon: Chugh

NAVEED UL HAQ GANAIE

Budgam, Oct 23: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary, Tarun Chugh on Thursday said that statehood for Jammu and Kashmir would be restored soon, reiterating that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah already announced this in Parliament and during their visits to the region.

Speaking to the media after addressing the BJP Budgam Assembly Constituency Convention at Alamdaar Colony, Mirgund, Chugh said the decision on statehood has already been made by the Prime Minister in Parliament. "The Home Minister has also confirmed this. The process is underway, and it will happen soon," he said.

Chugh accused Chief Minister Omar Abdullah of betraying the people of Budgam and failing to deliver on promises made in his manifesto despite being in office for over a year. "Omar Abdullah betrayed Budgam. Not a single commitment from his manifesto has been fulfilled. The public is ready to respond to that betrayal by voting for Aga Syed Mohsin in the Budgam by-elections," he said.

The BJP leader dismissed Abdullah's claims that the Lieutenant Governor's administration was hindering governance. "Except for the police, all ministries are under your control. Your ministers are enjoying red-beacon cars and government bungalows meant for public service, not luxury," he said. "Even senior National Conference leaders have



acknowledged the government's failure to keep its promises."

Chugh accused the NC government of neglecting important areas like tourism. "Not a single new tourism project has been started. It's PM Modi and the BJP who are working hard to make Jammu and Kashmir an international tourism hub," he said.

The rally, part of the BJP's ongoing campaign in Budgam, was attended by senior party leaders including J&K BJP President Sat Sharma, General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, Vice-President Dr Shehnaz Ganai, State Secretary Mudasir Wani, Prabhari Budgam Sheikh Bashir, District President Ghazi Rahulla, and senior leaders Dr Ali Mohd Mir, Ashraf Azad, Sameer Shah, Imtiaz Ahmed, and Er. Aziz Hussain.

Chugh urged the people to support BJP candidate Aga Syed Mohsin. He said, "This election is not just about one seat; it's about ending dynastic misrule and giving Budgam a leader who stands with the people. The BJP is committed to transparent governance, real development, and dignity

for every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir."

Sat Sharma, while addressing the rally, said the BJP has made significant progress in Jammu and Kashmir through consistent effort and the trust of the people. "The acceptance of BJP has grown across regions because the party represents every section and community. Today, people look to BJP with hope because it stands for everyone," he said.

He added, "The Congress and its allies exploited the nation for years, while the Modi government has built a corruption-free system that serves the poor and marginalised."

Ashok Koul said the BJP's growing strength in Kashmir reflects the people's faith in Prime Minister Modi's vision. "The enthusiasm among the workers and people shows that J&K is ready for change. We are moving towards a new era of peace, progress, and empowerment," he said.

Regarding the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections, Chugh said the BJP is contesting on its own strength and expects to perform well—(KNO)

Govt failed on all fronts: LoP Sharma

Says session too short to discuss public issues

UMAISAR GUL GANAIE

Srinagar, Oct 23: Jammu and Kashmir Leader of Opposition and BJP MLA Sunil Sharma on Thursday expressed disappointment over the limited duration of the autumn session of the Assembly, saying the government has failed to provide sufficient time to discuss pressing public issues. "It is unfortunate that the government has allotted very limited time for it, just 5-6 days," Sharma said.

He said that several key public issues particularly electricity, water, and road need urgent attention. "People are waiting for basic facilities. The government has failed on all fronts," he said. Sharma also targeted Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, saying the opposition had high expectations from him. "It is



unfortunate that he neither gave ample time for the session nor is he working for the people," he said.

He further stated that the opposition is prepared to raise public issues effectively during the limited session. "We are ready for it," Sharma added.

On Rajya Sabha polls, he said that the BJP is fully confident that it will win—(KNO)

BJP slams NC MLA's 'communal' remarks

OWAIS GUL

Srinagar, Oct 23: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday held a protest against remarks by the National Conference (NC) MLA Bashir Ahmad Veeri, who had called it a "communal party". According to details, the NC MLA, while paying tributes to BJP ex-MLC, Ramesh Arora, highlighted the role and works done by the leader.

He also said that Arora despite being affiliated with the 'communal party' was having a 'secular mindset'.

Soon after his remarks, BJP legislators stood from their benches and held a protest, demanding action against the NC legislature.

The party raised objections over his remarks, with BJP legislator, Sham Lal Sharma stating that such derogatory comments have been made while paying tributes to anyone during the obituary.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather also asked the legislators not to use any controversial remarks during obituary references—(KNO)

Frequent fires in Karnah prompt call for more stations

YOGESH

Srinagar, Oct 23: Fire incidents have become a frequent occurrence in the Karnah region, where even a small spark during dry weather can turn into a major disaster. The data shows that around 20 to 25 fire incidents are reported in Karnah every year, leaving many poor families devastated and homeless.

As per the reports, recently in the frontier district, a poor resident's house was completely destroyed in a fire. Around noon on Wednesday, another tragic incident occurred in Chitterkoot, where the residential house of Zahooh Ahmad Khawaja suddenly caught fire. Within minutes, the flames engulfed the entire structure.

The army and local residents launched a joint effort to control the blaze,



but it was too intense to be contained. The Fire and Emergency Service vehicle reached the spot after a delay and eventually extinguished the fire, but by then the house had already been reduced to ashes.

Officials from the Fire and Emergency Service said the vehicle was

delayed due to the difficult and poorly maintained roads in Karnah, which make access to such areas extremely challenging.

Residents expressed deep concern, noting that there is only one Fire and Emergency Service station in Tangdhar, where large vehicles are stationed. However, because of the

mountainous terrain, distant villages, and narrow roads, these vehicles often fail to reach incident sites in time.

Locals have urged the government to establish at least three more fire stations in mountainous areas like Chitterkoot and Karnah. They also called for the deployment of small,

fast-response vehicles to ensure timely action during emergencies.

People have appealed to the district administration and senior officials of the Fire and Emergency Service to take this issue seriously, as dozens of poor families lose their homes and lifetime savings to fire incidents every

Woman killed in Awantipora road accident



KNO

Awantipora, Oct 23: A woman from Tral lost her life after being struck by a motorcycle near Charsoo, Awantipora on Thursday, officials said.

An official said that the woman was crossing the road when she was hit by a motorcycle, sustaining multiple injuries.

He said she was first treated at PHC Awantipora before being referred to SMHS Hospital in critical condition, where she succumbed to her injuries.

She was identified as Khateja, wife of Ab Majeed Bhat and a resident of Mundoora, Tral.

Meanwhile, officials have taken up investigations into the incident—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: The Cosmos As Divine Revelation

The Quran repeatedly urges humanity to observe the universe with thoughtful attention, presenting nature not as a random occurrence but as a profound testament to divine wisdom and power. This intellectual and spiritual engagement with creation is considered a fundamental pathway to recognising the Creator. The Quran declares: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding" (3:190). From the intricate orbit of planets to the complex biology of a single leaf, every aspect of the cosmos is presented as an Ayah—a sign—pointing

toward a singular, intelligent source. This divine invitation to inquiry is not passive; it is an active duty to seek knowledge and reflect. The Quran challenges humans to "travel through the earth and observe how He began creation" (29:20), encouraging empirical investigation of the natural world. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) embodied this spirit, often spending nights in deep contemplation before his prophethood. He encouraged seeking knowledge, stating, "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim" (Ibn Majah). In Islam, science and faith are not adversaries but complementary avenues to truth, with one revealing the

'how' of creation and the other revealing the 'why'. The observed order and precision in the universe are highlighted as clear evidence of design. "He who created the seven heavens one above another; you will see no fault in the creation of the Most Merciful. So look again: can you see any flaw?" (67:3). This repeated command to 'look' underscores that observation is a form of worship, leading from the marvel of creation to the majesty of the Creator. This reflection is meant to cultivate humility and responsibility. Recognising God's artistry in the world instills a sense of Tawhid (divine oneness) and positions humans as stewards (khalifah) entrusted

with protecting this delicate balance. It transforms a believer's relationship with the environment from one of exploitation to one of reverence. In an age of scientific advancement, this Quranic directive is more relevant than ever. It calls upon believers to bridge the gap between the laboratory and the mosque, seeing the study of physics, biology, and astronomy not as secular pursuits, but as profound acts of faith. By observing the universe, we fulfil a divine command and draw closer to the ultimate truth: that this magnificent creation could only be the work of Allah, the All-Wise and All-Knowing.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission A Blueprint For Empowering Rural Communities

Press Information Bureau

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) is a flagship poverty alleviation program being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India to reduce poverty by enabling poor households to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities resulting in sustainable and diversified livelihood options for the poor. DAY-NRLM aims at mobilizing rural poor households into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and continuously nurturing and supporting them to take economic activities till they attain an appreciable increase in income over a period of time to come out of abject poverty.

The success of DAY-NRLM is evident in the way it has transformed rural lives. One such tale is of Meghalaya's, Heinidamanki Kanai, who's journey of becoming a successful entrepreneur began when she joined the Kyrshanlang Self-Help Group (SHG) in January 2020. With the support of her SHG and guidance from the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Heinidamanki began making hand-made soaps—rose, aloe vera, orange, and lemon grass. Her hard work began to pay off in August 2023, just a few months after starting her business in April. Seeing her potential, she secured a bank loan of Rs. 1.8 lakh through her SHG. With this, she bought new machinery, tools, and even conducted lab testing to ensure the quality of her soaps.

Slowly but steadily, Heinidamanki's venture flourished. Her annual income crossed Rs. 1 lakh, transforming her life and giving her the confidence to dream even bigger. She didn't stop at her own success, she began training other SHG members from her village in soap making, spreading knowledge and inspiring others to follow their entrepreneurial dreams.

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) was launched in 2010 as a mission-mode scheme by restructuring the erstwhile Swarnajayanti Grameen Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY). In 2016, the program was renamed Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM). The central and state governments jointly fund this centrally sponsored scheme. It is one of the world's largest initiatives to improve the livelihoods of the poor. The Mission seeks to achieve its objective through investing in four core components: social mobilization and promotion and strengthening of self-managed and financially sustainable community institutions of the rural poor women; financial inclusion; sustainable livelihoods; and social inclusion, social development and access to entitlements through convergence.

Objectives of DAY-NRLM

DAY-NRLM promotes building strong institutions such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for the poor, particularly women, and enabling these institutions to access a range of financial services and livelihoods. These institutions provide them with long-term support to diversify their livelihoods, enhance their incomes, and improve their quality of life. Most of the mission's interventions are being implemented and scaled up by the SHG women themselves who are trained as community resource persons (CRPs) - Krishi Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis, Bank Sakhis, Bima Sakhis, Banking Correspondent Sakhis, etc. The Mission is also working on empowering the SHG women through awareness generation and behaviour change communication on issues like domestic violence, women's education and other gender-related concerns, nutrition, sanitation, health, etc. The aim of the SHGs created under this scheme is to facilitate:

- Access to formal credit;
- Support for diversification and strengthening of livelihoods; and
- Access to entitlements and public services.



Women Empowerment via DAY-NRLM

The mission's core objective is to reduce poverty by enabling poor households, particularly women, to access financial services, diversify their livelihoods, and improve their quality of life. Financially, the mission empowers women by fostering community institutions that provide crucial financial, technical, and marketing resources. A significant landmark milestone has been achieved under the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) by disbursing over Rs. 11 lakh crores in credit to women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through formal financial institutions. This is facilitated by women trained as Bank Sakhis and Banking Correspondent Sakhis, who act as liaisons between SHGs and formal banking institutions. The Rs. 11 lakh crore disbursement, supported by collateral-free loans, interest subventions, and other financial assistance, is further underscored by an exceptional repayment rate of over 98 percent, showcasing the effectiveness and sustainability of these programs.

In terms of livelihood, DAY-NRLM supports both farm and non-farm activities. It empowers women farmers, known as 'Mahila Kisans', by promoting agro-ecological practices and has covered 4.62 crore women under these interventions. A strong network of trained livelihood Community Resource Persons called as KrishiSakhi and PashuSakhi are deployed to handhold and provide round the year extension services to the mahilakisans.

The mission also promotes micro-enterprises in areas like handicrafts and food processing through sub-schemes such as the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Program (SVEP), which has supported over 3.74 lakh enterprises. The Mission is also working on empowering the SHG women through awareness generation and behaviour change communication on issues like domestic violence, women's education and other gender-related concerns, nutrition, sanitation, health, etc.

Krishi Sakhi is a Community Agriculture Service Provider (CASP) who ensures last-mile support in rural areas where farm-based services are scarce or costly. Promotes awareness and builds community capacity in sustainable agriculture, while also facilitating the aggregation and marketing of

agricultural produce to improve farmers' incomes.

Bank Sakhi is a trained Self-Help Group (SHG) member stationed at a bank branch to support SHGs with financial services. She helps open SHG savings accounts, facilitates both credit and debit transactions, and plays a key role in enabling credit linkage so SHGs can access loans and other banking facilities.

Pashu Sakhi is a Community Animal-care Service Provider (CASP) who ensures last-mile livestock services in rural areas where veterinary care is scarce or costly. Pashu Sakhi raises awareness, builds community capacity in livestock-based livelihoods, and helps aggregate and market livestock products to improve rural incomes.

DAY-NRLM has mobilized 10.05 crore rural women households into more than 90.90 lakh SHGs across 28 States & 6 UTs. Other notable achievements include:

- 4.62 crore SHG members engaged as Mahila Kisans.
- 3.5 lakh Krishi Sakhis & Pashu Sakhis deployed.
- 6,000 Integrated Farming Clusters formed.
- 1.95 lakh Producer Groups, benefiting over 50 lakh rural women.
- 3.74 lakh enterprises supported in 282 blocks.

Women SHGs accessed 11 lakh crore in loans since 2013-14. 47,952 Bank Sakhis deployed in the bank branches to facilitate credit linkage of the SHGs

High-performing states under DAY- NRLM

As of June 30, 2025, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh are among the states with largest number of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and have mobilized the highest number of women households into SHGs since the inception.

In terms of financial support and inclusion, several states have shown exemplary performance in FY 2024-25 as on 28th Feb 2025. For capitalisation support provided to Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have disbursed 1,23,326 lakh and 1,05,132 lakh respectively, both exceeding their targets. When it comes to facilitating bank loans for SHGs, Andhra Pradesh leads the nation with a disbursement of 34,83,725 lakh.

Regarding the promotion of sustainable

Takeaways

- Mobilized 10.05 crore rural households into 90.9 lakh SHGs across India.
- Supported 4.6 crore Mahila Kisans and 3.74 lakh enterprises through entrepreneurship programs.
- Trained 17.5 lakh rural youth under DDU-GKY, with a total of 11.48 lakh already placed.
- Deployed 47,952 Bank Sakhis to boost rural financial inclusion and credit access.
- Promoted sustainable livelihoods through agriculture, non-timber forest produce, livestock, and non-farm enterprises.

livelihoods, different states have excelled in farm and non-farm sectors. In farm-based initiatives, Maharashtra stands out for covering the highest number of 'Mahila Kisans' (women farmers) under Agro-Ecological Practices, with 12,97,051 women covered, followed by Uttar Pradesh (11,37,950) and Andhra Pradesh (10,43,085). For promoting non-farm micro-enterprises under the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), Assam is the leading state, having supported 9,557 enterprises, with Kerala (5,802) and West Bengal (4,933) also showing strong performance.

Skill Development and Employment Programs under DAY-NRLM

The Ministry implements two Centrally Sponsored Schemes under DAY-NRLM, which aim to equip rural poor youth with skills for gainful employment and contribute to poverty alleviation through the following programs:

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY): Provides placement-linked skill training for rural youth aged 15-35 years. The program ensures practical skill development aligned with job placements, enabling participants to earn wages at or above the minimum wage in the formal job market. A total of 17.50 lakh candidates has been trained and a total of 11.48 lakh have been placed, as of June 2025.

Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs): Bank-sponsored centres for youth aged 18-50 that provide entrepreneurship training and promote self- and wage-employment, with financial support for infrastructure and training costs. A total of 56.69 lakh candidates has been trained and a total of 40.99 lakh have been settled since inception till June 2025.

High-performing states under DDU-GKY (2014-15 to June 2025)

Under DDU-GKY, Uttar Pradesh has trained the highest number of candidates at 2,44,528, followed by Odisha with 2,15,409 and Andhra Pradesh with 1,33,842. When it comes to job placements, Odisha leads with 1,77,165 candidates placed, while Andhra Pradesh also shows strong performance with 1,17,881 placements.

Top states in RSETI (2014-15 to June 2025)

Under the RSETI programme, Uttar Pradesh stands out as the top-performing state, having trained the highest number of candidates (7,55,966) and successfully settled the most entrepreneurs (5,54,877). Other states with significant achievements in both training and settlement include Rajasthan (4,34,478 trained; 3,19,948 settled), Madhya Pradesh (4,36,835 trained; 3,08,280 settled), and Karnataka (4,19,299 trained; 3,05,397 settled).

Advanced and Marketing Training under DAY-NRLM

Steps taken by the Government to impart advanced training and marketing skills to SHG members, particularly women are:

National and State-level SARAS Aajeevika Melas are organized annually, providing specialized training for marketing and related competencies. The most recent one took place in New Delhi from 5 - 22 September 2025.

(Know more about SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2025 click @ <https://www.pib.gov.in/FeaturesDeatils.aspx?Notelid=155247&ModuleId=2>)

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) conducts Training of Trainers on marketing skills to build the capacity of SHG members and rural entrepreneurs supported under DAY-NRLM. Over the past three years, NIRD&PR has conducted 44 training and capacity-building programs.

Conclusion

The DAY-NRLM has become a cornerstone of rural poverty alleviation and women's empowerment in India. It has expanded access to formal credit, skills, and market opportunities, enabling sustainable livelihoods and financial resilience. Through focused initiatives in skill development, entrepreneurship, and convergence with key government schemes, NRLM has diversified income sources and strengthened the rural economy. Its robust monitoring systems, strong SHG-bank linkages, and capacity-building measures ensure transparency and accountability, making it a powerful driver of inclusive growth and improved living standards in rural communities.

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CS calls for early screening to make J&K TB-free

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and assess the measures undertaken by the Health & Medical Education Department to achieve the vision of a Tuberculosis-free Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME), Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah; Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary; Managing Director, JKMSCL; Principals of Government Medical Colleges (GMCs); Directors of Health Services, Jammu and Kashmir; HoD, Chest Medicine, GMC Srinagar; and senior faculty members from various medical institutions across the UT. Deputy Commissioners joined the deliberations through video conferencing.

While reviewing the current scenario, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for early identification and comprehensive management of TB patients to ensure their complete recovery. He directed health professionals to undertake end-to-end monitoring of patients, encouraging them to personally adopt a few cases each, extend individualized medical support, and maintain regular contact with patients to track their progress.



Underscoring the importance of vigorous contact tracing, Dulloo called for strengthening the network of ASHA workers to facilitate home visits and ensure 'at-home' care and counselling, thereby improving adherence to treatment and recovery outcomes.

The Chief Secretary held an extensive interaction with Deputy Commissioners to review the availability, utilization, and functionality of diagnostic equipment, screening mechanisms, and treatment facilities across all districts. He urged the district administrations to optimise resources, ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines, and strengthen coordination between district health teams and field functionaries for timely service delivery.

He also called for annual analysis of TB-related deaths to determine underlying causes and implement corrective measures to prevent avoidable fatalities. He directed the Health

Department to ensure integration of patient records with the Sehat App and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) portal for seamless record management and monitoring.

The Chief Secretary further reviewed the action taken on directions issued in earlier meetings, emphasizing their strict and time-bound implementation to secure better outcomes under the Abhiyan.

Providing updates, Secretary H&ME, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, informed that significant progress has been achieved in strengthening TB surveillance, infrastructure, and early diagnostic systems. He stated that J&K has achieved 100% notification of TB cases, with 11,499 cases reported, while 92% of the vulnerable population has been screened placing the Union Territory among the best-performing regions in the country.

He added that all District TB Centres (DTCs) are adequately

equipped to meet screening and treatment targets, and efforts are underway to ensure patient adoption by doctors and regular home visits by ASHA workers for sustained patient engagement.

Mission Director, NHM, Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary, informed that 22.09 lakh individuals from the vulnerable population have been screened for TB so far, with a presumptive testing ratio of 4,636 per lakh population in J&K. A total of 5.59 lakh people have been tested.

He further apprised that community support worth 3.5 crore has been extended to benefit 6,982 patients, while 7,891 patients are currently under treatment. Of these, 6,618 have been linked to Nikshay Mitras for additional nutritional and emotional support, with the total number of registered Mitras reaching 6,728 across J&K.

Reiterating the UT Administration's commitment to eradicate TB, the Chief Secretary underscored that co-ordinated inter-departmental efforts, community participation, and optimal use of available resources are key to achieving the objectives of the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

He emphasized that through sustained awareness, technological integration, and compassionate outreach by medical professionals, Jammu and Kashmir can emerge as a model TB-free region in the country.

Kashmir Marathon Edition-II

Div Com reviews arrangements, directs seamless facilities

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg Thursday chaired a meeting to review the preparations for the 2nd Edition of the Kashmir Marathon, scheduled to be held on November 2.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner SMC, Director Tourism, Vice Chairman LCMA, ADC Srinagar, SSP Traffic, Director Health, and officers from departments including Information, KPDCI, R&B, PHE, Youth Services & Sports, and other concerned agencies.

During the meeting, Div Com emphasized ensuring comprehensive arrangements at the flag-off cum finishing spot, including electricity, sanitation, first-aid, and toilet facilities.

He directed the Director Tourism to share the detailed Marathon route plan with all concerned departments for effective coordination of responsibilities and arrangements.

The Director Tourism and SSP Traffic were instructed to arrange an adequate number of barricades for smooth traffic management on the event day.

To strengthen emergency response, the Div Com directed the Health Department to deploy a water ambulance in Dal Lake and instructed the SDRF to keep their boats ready to assist



the Tourism Department in case of exigencies. He also directed the Health Department to establish a field hospital at Polo View for post-Marathon recovery of participants and to set up seventeen aid stations along the route, adequately staffed to assist runners.

Commissioner SMC was directed to beautify the Marathon route with potted flower plants in collaboration with SKUAST-K, and to ensure sanitation along the entire stretch as well as dog-catching measures for the safety of participants.

The R&B Department was instructed to ensure a pothole-free track, while arrangements for bottled drinking water and refreshments were also reviewed.

The Div Com stressed the importance of training and sensitizing volunteers regarding their roles and responsibilities during the event.

The meeting also discussed organizing a joint medal ceremony for the Full Marathon (seven hours) and Half Marathon (three hours) at SKICC.

It also discussed arrangements for a three-day exhibition showcasing local products by departments including Handicrafts & Handloom, Horticulture, and Agriculture.

To ensure real-time coordination among departments, the Div Com directed the establishment of a Command & Control Centre for the smooth and successful conduct of the event.

MLA Habba Kadal visits Karfali Mohalla fire victims

Seeks immediate relief from district admin



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 24: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Senior Leader and MLA Habba Kadal Shameema Firdous Thursday visited Karfali Mohalla, Habba Kadal to meet the families affected by the massive fire incident that occurred in the area during the early hours of Tuesday. Upon receiving information about the incident, Shameema Firdous immediately rushed to the spot to assess the situation and interact with the victims. She expressed deep sympathy with the affected families and assured them of all possible support and assistance.

Firdous has also reached out to the District Administration

Srinagar, urging them to initiate immediate relief and rehabilitation measures for those affected. She emphasized the need for timely assistance, including temporary shelter and essential supplies for the displaced families.

She appreciated the Fire and Emergency Services Department, local residents and volunteers for their prompt response in controlling the blaze and preventing it from spreading further.

Reiterating her commitment to the welfare of her constituents, Shameema Firdous said she stands firmly with the affected families in this hour of distress and will ensure that all necessary support reaches them without delay.

DC Sgr inspects progress of Noor Jehan Bridge

Directs for speedy completion of remaining works

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 23: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Thursday conducted an onsite visit to Rs 14.77 crore nearing completion vital project of Noor Jehan Bridge over River Jhelum at Qamarwari and assessed the progress of ongoing works.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Executive Engineers of R&B, SDA, Tehsildars of Eidgah & Shalteng and other concerned.

During his visit, the DC reviewed the pace and quality of work on the bridge being constructed over the River Jhelum connecting Noorbagh with Qamarwari. He directed the concerned executing agencies to expedite the completion of remaining works to ensure speedy commissioning of the vital project, which is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion and improve connectivity in the area.

He also instructed concerned Officers to remove all bottlenecks, ensuring proper road alignment and complete finishing works on a par footing.

The DC emphasized that the completion of the Noor Jehan Bridge will significantly



decongest traffic on the existing Qamarwari-Cement Bridge and provide alternative connectivity between Noorbagh and Qamarwari areas across River Jhelum.

Pertinently, load testing of the bridge has been completed on the bridge.

Later, the DC visited the Parimpora Fruit Mandi, one of the largest horticultural markets in Kashmir and held a detailed interaction with Mandi members and traders.

He reviewed the progress on works undertaken for development and upgradation of the Mandi including macadamisation and upgradation of approach roads and internal links, besides

other infrastructure improvements being carried out by the Srinagar Development Authority and R&B Department.

On the occasion, the DC assured the members of the Fruit Mandi that land for truck terminal has been identified and shall be developed under National Clean Air programme (NCAP) to facilitate smooth movement of vehicles, traders, and goods.

Besides, senior Officers of District Administration, President of New Kashmir Fruit Association Parimpora, Basheer Ahmad Basheer, Vice President, Anil Kumar, General Secretary Mohammad Ayoub and other members of the Association accompanied the DC during the visit to Fruit Mandi Parimpora.

Director Agri kick-starts onion seedling sale



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah Thursday kick started sale of onion seedling at Kitchen Garden Lalmandi, Srinagar.

During interaction with the farmers and kitchen garden lovers Director Agriculture said that Department is vigorously enduring to attract more and more farmers and kitchen garden lovers towards the vegetable sector.

He further said that department is producing seedlings of different vegetable crops in hi-tech poly houses under controlled conditions in all the districts of Kashmir division and the seedlings would be distributed among the farming community of the region in a phased manner so that the produce reaches market in a way where it could fetch the farmer maximum possible returns.

He expressed satisfaction and said that Department has already met with the target of providing seedlings of different vegetable crops to the farming community of the region.

Highlighting the ongoing Rabi season activities, the Director said the department is working to bring maximum area under cultivation of different crops, while also linking agricultural produce with the market chain through a well-devised strategy to safeguard farmers' interests.

"The Department is committed to producing and providing quality vegetable seedlings, as quality planting material plays a pivotal role in the overall success of agricultural enterprises," he added.

On the occasion, Joint Director agriculture extension kashmir, seed production officer kashmir and some senior officers of the department were also present.

SKUAST-K takes Modern wheat Technology to Tribal farmers of Gurez

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 17: In a remarkable stride towards agricultural empowerment of tribal communities, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) conducted a two-day mega outreach programme, under the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) – AICRP on Seeds (Crops), NSP Srinagar Centre, in collaboration with KVK/MAR&ES Gurez.

The initiative marked the formal introduction of SKUAST-K's most novel wheat variety 'Shalimar Wheat-3' (SW-3) to the tribal farmers of Gurez valley, ensuring that the benefits of latest agri-technology reached even the last villages along the LoC, including Chorwan, Gujraan, Abdulain and Chakwali.

A record 70 quintals of SW-3 seed, coupled with the scientific package of practices, were



distributed among 700 tribal farmers, covering over 70 hectares (1400 kanals) of land across the valley. The event drew wide appreciation for bringing cutting-edge research directly to the doorstep of the most remote farming communities.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Investigator NSP (Seeds), SKUAST-Kashmir, Prof. Gowhar Ali, highlighted that Shalimar Wheat-3 represents the university's latest innovation, a bio-fortified, disease-resistant, and high-yielding variety capable of producing up to 38 quintals per hectare, significantly enhancing nutritional and economic security.

The key contributor to the

development of SW-3, Dr. Shabir Hussain Wani, emphasized that adoption of the technology on scientific lines would boost productivity and minimize dependency on external seed sources in Gurez.

Speaking on the occasion, Head KVK/MAR&ES Gurez, Dr. Hilal Ahmad Malik, reiterated SKUAST-K's commitment to preserving traditional crops while introducing University Released Varieties (URVs) to improve livelihood opportunities under natural and organic farming systems.

He added that the impact assessment and monitoring of the technology adoption will continue to ensure long-term benefits for the tribal farming community.

DLSA Sgr holds legal awareness programme

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, under the aegis of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority, organized an awareness programme at Central Jail, Srinagar, with the objective of spreading awareness among inmates regarding their legal rights and available legal remedies.

The programme was held under the chairmanship of Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar, Tasleem Arief and was conducted under the supervision of Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Srinagar, Sajad Ur Rehman.

The programme focused on educating the inmates about the process of filing Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) before the Supreme Court of India and the assistance available

through Legal Aid Defence Counsels.

Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel delivered an insightful session on the filing procedure of SLPs and apprised the inmates of their legal rights as undertrial prisoners.

Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels spoke about ensuring access to justice at every crucial stage, including pre-arrest, arrest, and remand and emphasized the importance of timely legal representation to safeguard constitutional rights. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to premature release, parole, and furlough of prisoners was also highlighted.

The awareness programme served as an important step towards promoting legal literacy, access to justice, and rehabilitation through informed awareness among the jail inmates.

SWD Sgr organizes exposure visit for CCI students

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: The Social Welfare Department (SWD), SANKALP – Hub for Empowerment of Women, Mission Shakti Srinagar Thursday organized an Exposure Visit for students of Child Care Institutions (Palash/Pareesha) Shalimar to the SPS Museum and SPS Library, Lal Mandi Srinagar under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative.

The visit was aimed at providing opportunities for observation, discussion, and knowledge exchange among the students.

During the visit, students first visited the SPS Museum, where they learned about history, science, art, and culture through firsthand observation of artifacts and exhibits. They explored sections showcasing

ancient sculptures, coins, animal skins, heritage crafts, weapons, and papier-mache art, gaining valuable insights into the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir.

Later, the students visited the SPS Library, where they explored various books and resources while learning about modern library systems, information management, and potential career opportunities in library sciences. The visit aimed to encourage lifelong learning and academic curiosity, highlighting the importance of libraries as free and open sources of information and knowledge.

The students were accompanied by staff members from SANKALP – Hub for Empowerment of Women Srinagar, along with educators and caretakers from Palash and Pareesha.

Secy Health reviews operational efficiency of JKMSCL

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 23: Secretary Health and Medical Education Department, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, chaired a review meeting of the Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL) to assess its operational efficiency and procurement processes.

The meeting focused on strengthening the operational efficiency of JKMSCL, particularly through the Drug & Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) portal, and ensuring strict adherence to procurement guidelines and Rate Contracts (RCs). The Chair underscored the importance of maintaining transparency, accountability, and timely procurement through established processes.

The Secretary directed JKMSCL to implement DVDMS at all healthcare facilities, from GMCs to sub-centers, to track drug requirements and consumption. He also emphasized the need to execute tenders for Machinery & Equipment in a time-bound manner and formulate an Essential Equipment List (EEL) for scientific planning of future procurements



to align procurements strictly to Dir patient care and public welfare.

Dr. Shah stressed the importance of implementing penal clauses for any delays in executing supplies and taking strict disciplinary action against defaulters. He also emphasized the need for statutory audits and quality testing of drugs, and the operationalization of the

modern testing laboratory at Kathua.

"All officers must gear up for improved performance, clear all legal pendency without delay, and ensure timely and effective implementation of projects and contracts. JKMSCL must maintain the highest standards of transparency and efficiency in its operations," said Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah.

Baramulla Police arrest ‘journalist’ for extortion, blackmail

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 23: Baramulla Police have arrested Riyaz Ahmad Mugloo for his involvement in multiple cases of extortion, blackmail, and criminal intimidation.

A police spokesperson, in a statement issued here, said Mugloo allegedly misused the title of a journalist to threaten and extort money from individuals and public officials through social media for unlawful financial gain.

"A complaint was received from employees of the Municipal Council Baramulla alleging that the accused had extorted money from them and was demanding additional payment under the threat of publishing defamatory content. Acting promptly, FIR No. 186/2025 under Sections 308(2), 351, and 356(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered at Police Station Baramulla, and an investigation was initiated," the spokesperson said.

"During the course of the investigation, video evidence showing the accused accepting bribe money was seized by the investigating team," he said. "Digital devices and other incriminating materials

have also been seized and are being examined to determine the extent and nature of the accused's online activities and possible involvement in other similar cases.

The spokesperson said a similar complaint had been received earlier at Police Station Baramulla, wherein a citizen was allegedly threatened by the same individual with uploading videos of his construction work on social media to malign his image. On this complaint, a previous FIR was registered and is already under active investigation.

Following repeated allegations and verification of his activities, the media organisation with which he was associated had already terminated his services a few days ago, the spokesperson said.

He said both cases are being investigated thoroughly to establish the full extent of the accused's criminal conduct and to identify any possible accomplices. "Baramulla Police reiterate their firm commitment to take strong action against elements involved in extortion, intimidation, and blackmail, and to ensure the protection of citizens from such illegal activities," the spokesperson added.

Enhanced safety measures in place for festive travel: Northern Rly's Jammu Div

KT News Desk

Jammu, Oct 23: In view of the increased passenger traffic during the upcoming festivals, Northern Railway, Jammu Division, is implementing several proactive measures to enhance passenger convenience and safety. Special guidelines have been issued to ensure safe, orderly, and smooth operations at stations and on trains, with strict adherence by railway staff. These arrangements aim to improve crowd control, passenger safety, station amenities, and public awareness.

To manage the surge in travelers, additional staff have been deployed across major stations in the division, including Jammu, Pathankot Cantt, Pathankot City, Katra, and Srinagar. Continuous monitoring by joint teams of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Commercial Department is being maintained for effective traffic management.

Enhanced crowd management measures include deploying extra personnel on platforms, foot overbridges (FOBs), and trains to facilitate orderly boarding and disembarkation.

Passengers are being informed through public announcement systems and signage about proper queueing and safe boarding procedures. They are advised to allow passengers to disembark before boarding and to refrain from attempting to board or alight while the train is in motion. Passengers are also being encouraged to safeguard their luggage for a safe journey.

The RPF and Government Railway Police are actively managing crowds using whistles, loudspeakers, and other tools to ensure smooth boarding and to prevent overcrowding.

All major stations are equipped with adequate lighting, drinking water, sanitation facilities, as well as first-aid booths and medical teams to address any emergencies.

Digital ticketing options such as M-UTS and RailOne App are being promoted to facilitate easy and contactless ticket purchases, allowing passengers to buy platform and unreserved tickets without long queues.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Uchit Singhal, stated, "Our goal is to ensure that no passenger faces inconvenience during the festive season.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Assembly's

government over governance failures, unfulfilled promises made in the NC's election manifesto, demands for statehood, and reservation-related concerns. (KNO)

CM Omar suggests

only that will save time for the House. The Speaker is requested to adopt a similar concise procedure for offering condolences," he stated.

The Speaker welcomed the suggestion and said it would be duly considered.

"Those we remember today once stood where we stand. One day, we too will be remembered. Let us strive to learn from their example," Omar said, adding that these leaders have served the people after being elected by them or while being associated with any party.

Highlighting the work of former J&K Governor, Satya Pal Malik's role, the Chief Minister said that he has worked as an MLA and served as Governor in different states besides serving as a minister. "We may have different opinions, but Satya Pal Malik might have taken a decision that suits the time," he said.

Paying tribute to G M Shaheen, the Chief Minister described him as a courageous leader who continued to serve the people with determination even after surviving a major landmine blast.

Moreover, the Chief Minister expressed concern over the negligence of the concerned district administration for failing to inform the Assembly Secretariat about the demise of former Legislator Mohammad Sultan Pandithpuri. "You (Speaker) have already taken note of the lapse, and I am sure the Chief Secretary must have also acted on it. An explanation must be sought from the concerned officers," he said. (KNO)

'Op Sindoor' India's

to remain in the harbour or near its coast," he added.

The Defence Minister described the Indian Navy's presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as a matter of "comfort for the friendly nations" and "discomfort for those who seek to destabilise the region".

Singh said the Indian Navy, through its multi-dimensional capabilities, has played a leadership role in the region.

"In the last six months, our ships, submarines and Naval aircraft have been deployed at an unprecedented scale. In addition, our Navy has provided safe passage to approximately 335 merchant vessels, equalling approximately 1.2 million metric tons of cargo and a trade value of USD 5.6 billion," he said.

This, he said, is proof that India has now become a trusted and capable partner in the global maritime economy.

Singh lauded the Indian Navy for enhancing its capabilities through indigenous equipment and emerging as the flag bearer of Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).

"In the last 10 years, nearly 67 per cent of the Navy's capital acquisition contracts have been with Indian industries. This proves that we are no longer dependent solely on imports," he said.

Singh said the Indian Navy is working on 194 innovation and indigenisation projects.

"Today, our Navy has become a pioneer in the country's self-reliance, innovation, and industrial development," he said. (KNO)

J&K MLAs to vote

MLA Shabir Kulley.

Based on current political equations, National Conference candidates have the support of 57 MLAs, including 41 NC MLAs, six Congress MLAs, six independents, three PDP MLAs, and one CPI(M) MLA, while the BJP has 28 MLAs. The choices of two MLAs - Mehraj Malik and Sheikh Khurshheed - remain undisclosed. Malik, who is currently in detention under the Public Safety Act, cast his vote on Monday inside Kathua district jail.

The victory of National Conference candidates Choudhary Muhammad Ramzan and

Sajjad Kichloo on the first two seats is certain, as each is expected to secure 57 votes against the BJP's 28.

Unlike the first two seats, a combined election is being held for the third and fourth seats, where three candidates- Gurwinder Singh Oberoi, Imran Dar of the National Conference, and Sat Sharma of the BJP - are locked in a direct contest. The two highest vote-getters in this combined election will be declared winners.

For the third and fourth seats, MLAs of the ruling alliance would split their votes between Gurwinder Singh Oberoi and Imran Dar, while all BJP MLAs would vote for Sat Sharma.

It is expected that the National Conference will allocate 29 votes to Oberoi and the remaining 28 to Imran Dar, with the BJP also holding an equal strength of 28 votes.

The composition of the voting blocs- specifically, which MLAs will vote for which candidate -within the ruling alliance for the third and fourth Rajya Sabha seats will be interesting to watch, given that independents are not required to display their votes.

Unlike party-affiliated MLAs, independent legislators are not required to show their marked ballot papers to authorized polling agents. The J&K Assembly currently has seven independent MLAs. (KNO)

Congress backs NC,

leadership and internal deliberations over the past two days.

"We have taken this stand after considering the sensitivities of our region and our identity as a secular, democratic force," Karra said. "We have chosen to set aside our differences with the National Conference to uphold the larger values we represent."

Karra said that while the Congress had earlier expressed displeasure over NC's approach to seat-sharing within the alliance, the party ultimately decided to "rise above political friction" and prioritise the broader national challenge of countering the BJP.

"Rajya Sabha elections this time have posed a moral test. We want the NC to stay united against any external pressure, and we extend our support for that cause," he said.

Stating that the Congress's fight was not limited to Jammu and Kashmir, Karra said the decision reflected the party's national commitment to defending India's secular ethos. "Our strength may not be in numbers, but it lies in standing for what is right. We are guided by moral uprightness, not expediency," he said.

Karra said that all six Congress legislators participated in the discussions and unanimously backed the move. "A formal whip has been issued to our MLAs to vote for the National Conference candidates in the Rajya Sabha elections," he said.

He also praised NC candidate Shammii Oberoi for his positive role in maintaining dialogue between the two parties. "Mr. Shammii Oberoi's approach helped turn negotiations into mutual understanding and differences into dialogue," Karra said, adding that two formal communications addressed to NC President Dr. Farooq Abdullah would soon be made public.

Karra said the decision should be viewed as part of a larger political effort to safeguard Jammu and Kashmir's plural character. "We ignored the past treatment from our ally for the greater cause of unity and the collective good of the people," he said.

With Congress's six votes secured, the NC-led alliance now appears poised to comfortably win three of the four Upper House seats when the voting takes place on Friday. (KNO)

PDP to support

Party (BJP) does not gain a seat.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Mehbooba said the ongoing Assembly session had started on a constructive note but added that several pending issues concerning the people of Jammu and Kashmir require urgent consideration.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News

Observer (KNO), she said that among these are the protection of land rights and the regularisation of daily wagers, who have served in different departments for years.

Mehbooba said that her party has brought a bill to the Assembly aimed at securing ownership rights for locals over houses, shops and hotels they have been occupying or running for decades.

According to her, many hotel owners in Kashmir are being informed that their leases will not be renewed and that the properties may be auctioned. "Hotel owners who have been operating for decades are being told their leases will be terminated and handed to outsiders," she said.

The PDP leader said that safeguarding land ownership was a central concern after the abrogation of Article 370 and the recent government measures threaten that assurance.

She said she has reached out to NC President Dr. Farooq Abdullah, seeking his party's cooperation in ensuring that the bill on land rights is passed. "When I presented the bill, it was called 'Land Jihad' by some, but we hope it will get the support it deserves," she said.

Speaking about the Rajya Sabha polls, Mehbooba said that the PDP has decided to give its three votes to the NC's third candidate, Shammii Oberoi. "Our intention is clear, we do not want the BJP to win a seat and our votes will go to the NC candidate as the third preference," she said.

Mehbooba also spoke about the bill concerning daily wage employees, saying that thousands of workers from departments such as PHE, R&B, Irrigation, Health, and Education have been serving for 20 to 25 years without being regularised.

She said that the PDP's bill seeks to grant them permanent status and financial security, and urged the NC to help in getting it passed during the current session.

"In exercise of the powers vested in me as Chief Whip of the Jammu & Kashmir People's Democratic Party (PDP), all members of the Party in the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly are hereby strictly directed to remain present in the Assembly on 24th October, 2025, the date fixed for polling of the Rajya Sabha elections," PDP, MLA Fayaz Mir said.

He asked the legislators to cast their vote in favour of the official candidates of the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, as decided by the party and asked them to refrain from abstaining, remaining absent, or voting in a manner contrary to the directions issued by the party.

"Any violation of this Whip will be treated as a breach of Party discipline and attract necessary action under relevant provisions," he said. (KNO)

Courts are custodians

collective welfare.

"Courts thus occupy a unique position: they are entrusted with the duty of upholding constitutional balance while ensuring that the spirit of justice pervades governance itself," the CJ said.

He emphasised that judicial authority ultimately rests not on coercive power, but on moral legitimacy: the trust and confidence that citizens place in the impartiality, independence, and integrity of the judiciary.

Justice Gavai said courts earn this trust through transparency, reasoned judgments and consistent adherence to constitutional principles.

"Each decision, even if unpopular, must reflect fairness and moral courage. When citizens believe that justice will be done without fear or favour, the legitimacy of the entire constitutional system is strengthened," he added.

The CJ remarked further, "Public trust is the judiciary's most valuable asset. It is what transforms judicial decisions from mere legal orders into instruments of social conscience".

He stated that by upholding this trust, courts become not only interpreters of law but custodians of democracy, guarding both the letter

and the spirit of the Constitution.

"Lastly, there is one aspect of the judiciary's role that is often discussed far less than it deserves: the responsibility of promoting constitutional literacy and cultivating public understanding of constitutional values," Justice Gavai said.

He said that too often, the attention remains confined to the immediate outcome of a case or its impact on the parties involved.

"Yet, the true influence of judicial decisions extends much further. Each judgment becomes a point of reflection, a subject of public dialogue, and a catalyst for civic awareness. It shapes how citizens perceive their rights, their duties, and the moral foundations of their democracy," the CJ said.

He said courts are not only institutions of adjudication, but are also educators of constitutional consciousness.

He highlighted that judges, through their words and reasoning, contribute to the public's understanding of justice, equality and liberty, adding that every judgment is a lesson in democracy and an invitation to citizens to engage with their Constitution.

"As judges, we must remain conscious of this educative role, while being mindful of the delicate balance between judicial aloofness and social engagement," he said.

The CJ said even while maintaining the dignity and impartiality that the office demands, judges can still contribute meaningfully to the spread of constitutional awareness.

He asserted that courts are vital organs of constitutional governance that safeguard the rule of law, protect fundamental rights and ensure that every exercise of power remains accountable to constitutional principles.

"The judiciary stands as both a guardian and a moral conscience of the Constitution. Its role goes beyond interpretation. It embodies the living spirit of constitutionalism by maintaining the delicate balance among the organs of the State," he said.

The CJ mentioned that courts ought to be guided by the spirit of the Constitution and by the vision of the people who framed it.

He stated that over the last 75 years, the Supreme Court of India has consistently interpreted fundamental rights expansively, upholding the Constitution as a shield against arbitrariness, discrimination, and abuse of power.

Justice Gavai also referred to some landmark judgments, including the Kesavananda Bharati case verdict.

The 1973 Kesavananda Bharati judgement on "basic structure" doctrine clipped the parliament's power to amend the Constitution and simultaneously gave the judiciary the authority to review any amendment, he stated.

In his address, the CJ also spoke about public interest litigation and how it was a powerful tool for social justice, enabling the judiciary to address issues affecting vulnerable and marginalised communities.

He noted that courts often influence the direction of public policy.

'Separation of powers

by constitutional functionaries.

He said that judicial review ensured that no act of governance was beyond the purview of judicial oversight.

"This expansive power of review is a cornerstone of India's constitutional democracy and a part of our basic structure, affirming that legality and constitutionality are fundamental preconditions to the exercise of public power," Justice Surya Kant said.

"Judicial review, therefore, is not merely a procedural safeguard; it is a structural commitment to accountability, legality and the supremacy of constitutional norms," he added.

Regarding the country's three-tiered structure of the judiciary, comprising the district courts, high courts and the Supreme Court, Justice Surya Kant said that it reflected a remarkable constitutional commitment that justice should not be a privilege reserved for the

powerful but a right accessible to every citizen.

The Supreme Court judge said that the Indian Constitution had an inherent flexibility allowing it to grow with the times.

"A whole host of rights have emerged as a result of expansive judicial interpretation, including the right to speedy trial, the right to free legal aid in a criminal trial and even the right to die with dignity," Justice Surya Kant said.

He said the judgments of the apex court spanned virtually every facet of human life, ensuring that constitutionally guaranteed rights and even the Directive Principles of State Policy were meaningfully realised.

"These pronouncements have affirmed, among others, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to live in a pollution-free environment, the right to shelter, the protection of marine ecosystems and the right to health."

"Together, these experiences reaffirm the judiciary's enduring responsibility to ensure that justice reaches even those who are too often left unheard," Justice Surya Kant said.

He then posed a few questions: "How far can courts go in shaping policy? Is judicial creativity a virtue or a vice?"

Justice Surya Kant said that intent and integrity were of paramount importance in answering the questions and that when courts acted to empower the powerless, while being grounded in constitutional text and moral clarity, they did not usurp democracy. They deepened it instead, he added.

"Through these decades of interpretation, the Indian judiciary has emerged as the Constitution's fiercest protector. Yet, its power is not coercive — it is moral and intellectual. "It derives not from the force of arms but from the force of reason; not from command, but from conscience," the Supreme Court judge said.

He underlined that the judiciary's legitimacy rested on the trust of the people and that it was a trust earned through fairness, restraint and courage in moments of crisis.

Justice Surya Kant said that courts in the country had consistently striven not to merely protect the rights of individuals but also to uphold the deeper principle of fairness that underpinned justice itself.

He said, "This commitment extends even to those accused of the gravest offences, ensuring that every person, regardless of circumstances or means, has access to effective legal representation."

Concluding his speech, the apex court judge said that both countries shared a deep constitutional kinship.

"Both our nations have wrestled with the same questions how to reconcile democracy with stability, rights with duties, and law with justice?"

"The judiciary's answer, in both contexts, has been to act not as a rival to the legislature or the executive but as their conscience-keeper," he said.

Toxic autumn

letting it go up in smoke.

Doctors across the valley have reported a spike in respiratory ailments during this period. Health officials said that children and elderly citizens are the most affected. "Every autumn and early winter, we see an increase in cases of breathing difficulties, coughing, and chest infections — much of which can be linked to the smoke from leaf burning," they said.

Shabid Ahmed, a biology scholar at the University of Kashmir, believes awareness is the key. "Most people simply don't know how harmful this practice is. The government must launch campaigns to educate farmers and provide support for eco-friendly disposal methods," he said.

Experts agree that without stricter enforcement and public awareness, Kashmir's picturesque autumn will continue to end in smoke — literally — posing a silent but deadly threat to the valley's environment and people. (KNO)

Tejashwi named as INDIA bloc's CM candidate for Bihar polls

PTI

Patna, Oct 23: The opposition INDIA bloc on Thursday declared RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav its chief ministerial candidate for Bihar assembly polls, in what is being seen as a last-ditch effort to put an end to squabbles and project unity ahead of the elections.

Senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot, who has been camping in Patna since Wednesday to iron out differences with the RJD, said the decision had the approval of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi.

Addressing a crowded press conference here, Gehlot also said Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) chief Mukesh Sahni and leaders from other sections of society will be deputy CMs if the INDIA bloc comes to power in the state, "keeping in mind the complex social structure of Bihar".

"We have decided, after consultations with our national president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, besides all coalition partners who are here, to name Tejashwi Yadav ji as our chief ministerial candidate", Gehlot said. Incidentally,



demands have been made by a section of Congress leaders in Bihar that it would like one of its leaders, preferably a Muslim or a Dalit, as a deputy CM if the multi-party coalition came to power.

Speaking at the same press conference, Yadav, who had led the Mahagathbandhan in the last assembly polls, thanked his allies for reposing his trust in him again and said, "It was not a big issue for us, but since there was so much media speculation, we decided to make it clear."

Later, Congress media and publicity department

head Pawan Khera, who was present at the press conference, told reporters, "We have taken the lead by announcing our face. Now it is for the NDA to stop equivocating on the issue and declaring whom it proposes to make the CM if it forms the government".

Notably, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the second most powerful leader in the NDA after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently said that the coalition would contest the assembly polls "under the leadership" of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar,

who heads the JD(U), but "the legislators would decide" who will occupy the top post after the elections.

The remark has been seen by many as a sign that the BJP, which had outperformed the JD(U) in the last assembly elections, now wanted to have its own chief minister in the only Hindi heartland state where it is yet to occupy the seat of power.

Meanwhile, the NDA insisted that attempts at putting up a united face notwithstanding, cracks within the INDIA bloc were there for all to see. The BJP

shared on its X handle a photograph of the poster put up at the press conference, with a huge image of Yadav, highlighting the fact "there are not even thumbnails of other INDIA bloc leaders, including Rahul Gandhi".

Independent MP Pappu Yadav, who supports the Congress but has been critical of the RJD, said, "Dalits and the extremely backward classes would vote for the INDIA bloc only because of Rahul Gandhi. His image should have been there. Alliance partners like Dipankar Bhattacharya (CPI-ML Liberation general secretary) should also have been in the poster." Union minister Chirag Paswan, whose LJP(R) is the NDA's third largest constituent, said, "Our campaign has already picked up. My voice has gone hoarse addressing rallies. But leaders of the INDIA bloc are yet to step out of their rooms".

JD(U) MLC and spokesman Neeraj Kumar called Tejashwi Yadav "an angry child who has been handed over a lollipop" and recounted "massive defeats of 2019 and 2024" when the RJD leader was spearheading the INDIA bloc's campaign in Lok Sabha polls.

Maruti Suzuki's 'Jimny 5-door' crosses 1 lakh units exports milestone



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 23: Maruti Suzuki India Ltd on Thursday said its compact SUV Jimny 5-door has crossed cumulative exports of 1 lakh units from India.

Export of the Jimny 5-door had started in 2023, shortly after its India debut, to more than 100 countries, including Japan, Mexico and Australia, the company said in a statement.

In Japan, where it is exported as 'Jimny Nomade', since January 2025, the model crossed 50,000 orders within days of introduction, it added. The company said

its overall export volumes have been growing year-on-year, crossing 3.32 lakh units in 2024-25 as compared to 2.83 lakh units in 2023-24.

"The Jimny has over half a century of heritage, globally. Jimny 5-door crossing the 1 lakh export mark is a proud achievement for Maruti Suzuki," company Managing Director & CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said.

He further said the Jimny, along with 16 other models are exported by Maruti Suzuki and the year-on-year rise highlights India's rise as a hub for world-class automobile manufacturing.

'Country's well-being linked to lower mortality levels from chronic diseases'

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 23: A new study has proposed a threshold level of subjective well-being in a population that may be associated with lower mortality from chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

"We show that subjective well-being, or happiness, appears to act as a population health asset only after a threshold of approximately 2.7 on the Life Ladder scale is crossed," said lead author Iulia Iuga, a researcher at 1 Decembrie 1918 University of Alba Iulia in Romania.

The scale asks individuals to evaluate their lives on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating the worst possible life and 10 the best. Data from 123 countries gathered during 2006-2021 and sourced from health organisations, global development statistics, and public opinion polls were analysed for the study, published in the journal Frontiers in



Medicine. The study "identified a single threshold at 2.7 Life-Ladder points".

A score of 2.7 can be found towards the lower end of the ladder, with people or countries finding themselves unhappy or struggling — "An adjective that fits this level could be 'barely coping,'" said Iuga.

However, "above this level, each one per cent rise in happiness decreased non-communicable disease mortality by 0.43 per cent; below it, the effect was nil," the authors wrote.

The 0.43 per cent rate refers to the percentage of deaths due to chronic conditions among individuals aged between 30 and 70,

they said.

Improvements in happiness begin to translate into measurable health benefits, the team said.

The study found that the average Life Ladder score across the countries analysed was 5.45, with the lowest recorded score at 2.18 and the highest at 7.97.

The governments can raise a country's score above 2.7 through promoting healthy living, such as by addressing obesity and tightening alcohol consumption.

Improving the environment through stricter air-quality standard and increasing per capita health spending were other suggestions by the authors.

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Oct 23: High uric acid, or Hyperuricemia is a condition when your body produces too much uric acid, a waste product from the breakdown of purines. The condition can be extremely painful, and can lead to gout, kidney damage, joint pain, and other issues, if not treated on time. The good news is that apart from medications, Uric Acid can be controlled through basic diet and lifestyle changes, in under 3 months. However, these tips are not a substitute for medications, and should be done alongside a medical line of treatment. Here are 5 such tips...

Consume a low purine diet

Your dietary choices determine how well you can control uric acid levels in your body. The body transforms purines which exist in numerous foods into uric acid, during its breakdown process. The consumption of foods containing low purine levels helps decrease uric acid amounts in the body. Your diet should consist of fresh fruits and vegetables, together with whole grains and low-fat dairy products. The diet should restrict red meat consumption, together with organ meats and certain seafood types including sardines and shellfish, because they contain high purine levels.

Drinking enough water throughout the day helps your body eliminate uric acid through urine. The consumption of beer and sugary drinks together with excessive alcohol consumption should be avoided, because they lead to increased uric acid levels. A balanced eating pattern combined with portion control, helps control blood sugar and body weight which are essential for uric acid management.

Maintain a healthy weight

Excess body weight leads to higher uric acid production and decreased excretion, which results in body-wide uric acid accumulation. Even a small amount of weight reduction, will result in decreased uric acid concentration in your body. A combination of healthy eating and regular physical exercise, should be used to achieve steady weight reduction.

The body produces higher uric acid levels when you follow crash diets or fasting plans. A long-term approach to weight management, involves eating more fruits and vegetables, decreasing processed food intake while practicing portion control. Working with a healthcare professional or dietitian to monitor your progress, will help you stay focused on your weight loss journey.

Exercise regularly

Exercise in any form is good, but it is also excellent for weight control,



that reduces Uric acid. Even if you are not overweight, exercising is a must if you want to reduce your uric acid in control. You can choose an exercise that suits your body, that include walking, cycling, swimming and yoga. Strength training will help as well, and you do it thrice a week.

Exercise helps decrease inflammation, while enhancing blood flow, which enables your kidneys to effectively eliminate uric acid from your body. People with joint pain or gout symptoms, should choose low-impact exercises because they provide better relief. The process of starting with low-intensity workouts then moving to more challenging levels, helps people build lasting exercise habits while avoiding injuries.

Avoid alcohol

The body produces more uric acid when you drink beer and spirits, while these beverages also decrease how well your body removes uric acid. When we drink alcohol, the body loses water through dehydration, which causes uric acid to become more concentrated in blood

plasma. Reducing your alcohol consumption will help decrease uric acid levels in your body, while also decreasing the frequency of painful attacks.

The consumption of sugary drinks including soda and high-fructose corn syrup beverages leads to increased uric acid production. You should drink water and herbal teas, and consume fresh fruit juices (only in small amounts). The body can easily dilute uric acid while maintaining healthy kidneys when you stay hydrated.

Manage your stress levels

The combination of ongoing stress and inadequate sleep creates inflammation, which damages kidney function and hinders uric acid elimination. Deep breathing meditation and enjoyable hobbies serve as stress reduction methods which help you maintain mental calmness.

Your body requires 7-8 hours of sound sleep during each night. The body uses sleep to perform its natural repair functions, while maintaining hormone equilibrium that affects uric acid production. Establish a daily sleep schedule and reduce screen exposure during your bedtime preparation, to overcome sleep difficulties.

Disclaimer: This article is informational only and not a substitute for medical advice

US sanctions on Russian firms to hit Reliance PSUs likely to keep buying Russian oil via traders

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 23: US sanctions against two of Russia's largest oil companies are expected to impact Reliance Industries' crude imports from Russia, while state-run refiners may continue purchases through intermediary traders for now.

Industry sources said public-sector units are assessing compliance risks but are unlikely to halt Russian crude flows immediately as they buy almost all of their needs from traders, mostly European (who are out of the sanctions net).

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd - India's largest buyer of Russian crude, accounting for roughly half of the country's 1.7 million barrels per day of imports from Moscow - may however have to recalibrate its imports as it buys crude oil directly from Russia's Rosneft, they said.

Reliance had in December 2024 signed a term deal with Russia's Rosneft - now sanctioned - to import as much as 500,000 barrels per day of Russian oil for 25 years. It also buys oil from intermediaries.

The company did not immediately



respond to an email sent for comments.

The US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed further sanctions on Open Joint Stock Company Rosneft Oil Company (Rosneft) and Lukoil OAO (Lukoil) - Russia's two largest oil companies that the Trump administration accuses of helping fund the Kremlin's "war machine" in Ukraine.

The two companies together export

3.1 million barrels of oil per day. Rosneft alone is responsible for 6 per cent of global and nearly half of all Russian oil production.

India became the largest purchaser of Russian crude since Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, capitalising on steep discounts that followed Western buyers' withdrawal.

Russian oil is bought both by private sector firms - Reliance Industries

Ltd and Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy - and state-owned refiners Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL). State-owned refiners do not have any term or fixed quantity deal with either Rosneft or Lukoil and typically buy Russian oil through tenders. In these tenders, oil traders, mostly European or ones based in Dubai and Singapore, who had purchased oil from Russian entities, participated.

These traders have not been sanctioned by the US, sources said adding European Union sanctions too had not targeted these traders.

And even if some traders shy away from picking Russian volumes, Moscow is capable of overnight resurrecting new ones with Dubai registration, sources said, adding these traders can buy oil from Russian firms and sell to refiners such as those in India and China.

"The measures by the Trump administration are 'half-hearted'," a source involved in the business said. "For months, US President Donald Trump

has resisted pressure from US lawmakers to impose energy sanctions and even now the ones who do bulk of the trade are out of its net."

Another source said the markets are somehow not buying into Trump's latest sanctions. "If sanctions were so impregnable, international oil prices would have jumped at least USD 5-10 per barrel on news of such large volumes going out of the market. Instead what we saw was just a USD 2 per barrel increase, implying the market believes not all of the oil that is exported from Russia is going anywhere."

Nayara Energy, in which Rosneft holds a 49.13 per cent stake, is the other big private sector buyer of Russian oil.

The company, which operates a 20 million tonnes a year oil refinery at Vadinar in Gujarat, has already been sanctioned by the European Union and it may have to recalibrate its purchases, sources said. Nayara did not respond to an email seeking comments.

Kesani Enterprises Company Limited - a consortium led by Mareterra and Russian investment group United Capital Partners (UCP) - holds another 49.13 per cent stake in Nayara. Sources

said the Indian government has not so far given any instruction to refiners on stopping or reducing Russian oil imports. They said Trump's recent comments on India agreeing to stop all purchases of Russian oil (with no such commitment being made by New Delhi) may have got to do with the European Union (EU) sanctions on import of fuel made from Russian oil.

The EU has banned import of fuels refined from Russian crude with effect from January 21 next year. Reliance, whose one of the two refineries is only-for-export, refines Russian crude into fuels like petrol and diesel, some of which is exported to the EU. MRPL also exports to the EU.

From January, such exports will have to stop and in a way Reliance and MRPL will have to cut Russian oil purchases if they have to continue to export to EU, they said adding Nayara has already stopped fuel exports to EU after being sanctioned. With three big buyers of Russian oil recalibrating their purchases, Russian flows will reduce by January and this is something that Trump may be using as a bargaining chip to beat around his point, they added.

Trump heads to Asia aiming to make deals with Xi

AFP

Washington, Oct 23: US President Donald Trump is set to embark on a major trip to Asia this week with all eyes on an expected meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping that has huge implications for the global economy. Trump said on Wednesday he was making a "big trip" to Malaysia, Japan and South Korea, his first visit to the region since he returned to the White House in a blaze of tariffs and geopolitical brinkmanship.

Much of the trip remains shrouded in uncertainty. The White House has given almost no details, and Trump has warned that his anticipated sit-down with Xi in South Korea may not even happen amid ongoing tensions.

But Trump has made it clear he hopes to seal a "good" deal with China and end a bitter trade war between the world's two largest economies that has caused global shockwaves.

The host nations are meanwhile set to roll out the red carpet to ensure they



stay on the right side of the unpredictable 79-year-old, and win the best deals they can on tariffs and security assistance.

Malaysia and Japan His first stop is expected to be Malaysia for the October 26-28 summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — a grouping Trump skipped several times in his first term.

Trump is set to ink a trade deal with Malaysia — but more importantly to oversee the signing of a peace accord between Thailand and Cambodia, as he continues his quest for a Nobel Peace Prize.

"President Trump is keen to see the more positive results of the peace negotiations between Thailand and Cambodia," Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Wednesday.

The US leader may also meet Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on the sidelines of the summit to improve ties after months of bad blood, officials from both countries told AFP.

Trump's next stop is expected to be Tokyo where he will be able to meet conservative Sanae Takaichi, named this week as Japan's first woman prime minister. Japan has escaped the

worst of the tariffs Trump slapped on countries around the world to end what he calls unfair trade balances that are "ripping off the United States."

At the same time, Trump wants Japan to halt Russian energy imports and has also urged Tokyo to follow Western allies in increasing defense spending.

Xi in South Korea?

But the climax of the trip is expected to be in South Korea, where Trump is due to arrive on October 29 for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit — and potentially meet Xi.

The first meeting between the two leaders since Trump's return to office could smooth over the trade war between Washington and Beijing — but Beijing's rare earth curbs have also infuriated Trump.

Trump initially threatened to cancel the meeting and imposed fresh tariffs, before saying he would go ahead after all. But he added on Tuesday that still "maybe it won't happen."

He said on Wednesday that he hoped to make a

deal with Xi on "everything" and also hoped the Chinese leader could have a "big influence" on getting Russia's Vladimir Putin to end the Ukraine war.

Analysts warned not to expect any breakthroughs.

"The meeting will be a data point along an existing continuum rather than an inflection point in the relationship," said Ryan Hass, a senior fellow at Brookings Institution.

South Korea, seeking its own trade deal, is reportedly considering the rare step of awarding Trump the Grand Order of Mugunghwa — the country's highest decoration — during his visit.

North Korea will also be on the agenda. The country fired multiple ballistic missiles on Wednesday, just days before Trump was due to visit.

Trump has said he hopes to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un following several meetings during the US president's first term, but there has been no confirmation of reports that the White House was looking at a new meeting this time.

EU leaders seek role in Gaza at summit focused on Ukraine, Russia

AP

Brussels, Oct 23: European Union leaders are seeking a more active role in Gaza and the occupied West Bank after being sidelined from the US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

At a summit Thursday in Brussels largely focused on Ukraine and Russia, EU heads of state are also expected to discuss the shaky ceasefire in Gaza and potential EU support for stability in the war-torn coastal enclave. The EU has been the biggest provider of aid to the Palestinians and is Israel's top trading partner.

"It is important that Europe not only watches but plays an active role," said Luc Frieden, the prime minister of Luxembourg, as he headed in to the meeting. "Gaza is not over; peace is not yet permanent," he said.

Outrage over the war in Gaza has riven the 27-nation bloc and pushed relations between Israel and the EU to a historic low.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced in September



plans to seek sanctions and a partial trade suspension against Israel, aimed to pressure it to reach a peace deal in Gaza.

Momentum driving the measures seemed to falter with the ceasefire deal mediated by US President Donald Trump, but European supporters say they should still be on the table as violence continues to flare up in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

In the run-up to the ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said earlier this month that "Europe has essentially become irrelevant and displayed enormous weakness."

The deal came about

with no visible input from the EU, and European leaders have since scrambled to join the diplomacy effort currently reshaping Gaza.

The EU's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, has said the EU should play a role in Gaza and not just pay to support stability and eventually reconstruction.

The EU has provided key support for the Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the occupied West Bank, pledged to help flood Gaza with humanitarian aid, and said it could bring a West Bank police support program to Gaza to buttress a stabilization force called for in the current 20-point ceasefire plan.

Bangladesh court to deliver verdict against Hasina on Nov 13

AFP

Dhaka, Oct 23: The verdict in the crimes against humanity case against ousted Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina will be delivered on November 13, the attorney general said, as the trial ended on Thursday.

Hasina, 78, has defied court orders to return from India to face charges of ordering a deadly crackdown in a failed attempt to crush a student-led uprising. "If she believed in the justice system, she should have returned," Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman said in his closing speech of the nearly five-month-long trial in Dhaka.

"She was the prime minister but fled, leaving behind the entire nation — her fleeing corroborates the allegations."

Her trial in absentia, which opened on June 1, heard months of testimony alleging Hasina ordered mass killings.

Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024, according to the United Nations.

Prosecutors have filed five charges, including failure to prevent murder, amounting to crimes against



humanity under Bangladeshi law.

They have demanded the death penalty if she is found guilty.

Chief prosecutor Tajul Islam has accused Hasina of being "the nucleus around whom all the crimes were committed" during the uprising.

Her co-accused are former interior minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, also a fugitive, and ex-police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who is in custody and has pleaded guilty. "We want justice"

Witnesses included a man whose face was ripped apart by gunfire.

The prosecution also played audio tapes — verified by police — that suggested Hasina directly ordered

security forces to "use lethal weapons" against protesters.

Australia seal ODI series vs tactically errant India despite Rohit's 73

PTI

Adelaide, Oct 23: Rohit Sharma's defiant 73 went in vain as India surrendered the three-match ODI series against Australia after losing the second game by two wickets here on Thursday, a setback that will reignite the debate on proven match-winner Kuldeep Yadav's omission from the playing XI.

Under pressure, Rohit mixed grit with grace in a 97-ball knock on a spicy track that formed the cornerstone of India's total of 264 for 9 which was at least 25 short of what should have been a par-score.

In reply, Australia struggled against Indian spinners but with Nitish Reddy being shoe-horned as a multi-skilled player instead of a genuine match-winner in Kuldeep, the visitors paid the price in a close situation.

Cooper Connolly (61 not out off 53 balls) and Mitchell Owen (36 off 23 balls), two cricketers,



who are also appearing for IPL auditions, played the pacers and spinners alike as Australia survived a late collapse to canter home in 46.2 overs to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three match series.

The duo added 59 in just 6.3 overs to end Australia's

three-series losing streak in the format. The ongoing rubber will end in Canberra with the inconsequential third ODI on October 25.

Connolly, who was recently in Kanpur for an 'A' series, brought back memories of a certain Michael Bevan to finish

the match by finding the gaps with ease in a pressure-cooker scenario.

In the process he also exposed how difficult it could get for India in the 2027 World Cup if the obsession with all-rounders is not reconsidered.

Reddy, coming in at No.8, scored 8 off 10 balls and gave 24 in three overs although in his defence, Axar Patel dropped a sitter offered by Matthew Short (74), who laid the foundation for Australia's victory.

However, the absence of Kuldeep was felt more than ever when the Australian batters struggled against the two finger spinners.

Axar Patel (1/52 in 10 overs) just slowed the pace and shortened the length as Matt Renshaw (30) gave the charge to be bowled. At the other end, Washington Sundar (2/37) had an impatient Alex Carey (9) trying to sweep and getting bowled in the process.

However, once the burly Mitchell Owen came into the scene, he smashed the day-lights out of Harshit Rana (2/59 in 8 overs) to tilt the game decisively in favour of Australia.

Earlier, the Indian innings was about Rohit's determination and he had to survive a lot of anxious moments in the Powerplay when Josh Hazlewood (0/29 in 10 overs, including two maidens) made the ball talk.

There was a point when Rohit had played 17 consecutive dot balls off Hazlewood and both him and Iyer looked overtly cautious due to the underlying moisture and lateral movement.

While Rohit fought, Virat Kohli was dismissed without scoring for a second consecutive game.

He was shaping for an out-swing but Xavier Bartlett got one to move in sharply after pitching and the maestro was caught plumb in front.

Ukraine says Russia returned 1,000 bodies



AFP

Kyiv, Oct 23: Russia on Thursday returned 1,000 bodies to Ukraine, which Moscow said were the remains of Kyiv's soldiers killed in battle, a Ukrainian government agency said.

The exchange of prisoners of war and killed soldiers is one of the few remaining areas of cooperation between Kyiv and Moscow, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

"Repatriation measures took place today," Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War announced on social media.

"One thousand bodies, which according to the

Russian side belong to Ukrainian servicemen, were returned to Ukraine," the agency added.

Ukraine has said that Moscow handed over to Kyiv the bodies of killed Russian soldiers during previous repatriations. Kyiv also announced in September, August and July that it had received the remains of 1,000 killed soldiers from Russia, illustrating the intensity of fighting across the sprawling front line.

The Coordination Headquarters said law enforcement would soon begin the process of identifying the repatriated remains and thanked the International Committee of the Red Cross for its role in the

repatriation.

Tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed on both sides since Russia invaded, though neither side regularly publishes data on their own casualties.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in February this year told US media that Ukraine has lost more than 46,000 soldiers and that tens of thousands are considered missing in action.

The BBC and independent outlet Mediazona say they have documented more than 135,000 Russian soldiers killed in the three-and-a-half-year campaign, using open-source data, with the actual number likely higher.

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