

Each promise will be fulfilled before we return to you: CM Omar assures people

» Says NC's Rajya Sabha picks will 'truly' represent J&K » Accuses Centre of failing to honour statehood promise » Seeks court-led process for employee terminations

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Oct 30: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday assured people that every promise made by the National Conference (NC) will be fulfilled before seeking their support again. He said his party is committed to restoring Jammu and Kashmir's voice in Parliament and ensuring justice in governance.

Addressing a public gathering in Handwara, Omar, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the National Conference stands by its commitments. "The promises we made to you last September before the elections, we will fulfil each one of them. Only after delivering on those commitments will we come before you again to seek your trust once more," he said.

Abdullah said the party's focus is on strengthening



Pic: Waris Fayaz (KNO)/KT

representation, improving livelihoods and creating employment opportunities. "All this is possible only when representation is right," he said.

He congratulated senior party leader Chaudhary Ramzan for his victory in the recent Rajya Sabha elections, calling him the best choice to represent the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "Ramzan was the best option for

us. It was the need of the hour to send a strong voice that would represent the will of the people, fight for their rights and remind the Centre of our situation," Omar said.

The CM said the NC's nominees to the Rajya Sabha will raise Jammu and Kashmir's issues forcefully after years of silence. "We have sent three great candidates to represent the people.

Their voices will be heard again in Delhi, where ours had been missing since 2022," he said.

Abdullah said there must be a strong voice in Parliament to remind the Centre of its promises. "Someone should be there to remind the Centre of its commitments, including the restoration of statehood and the constitutional guarantees withdrawn from Jammu and Kashmir", he said.

He said a resolution was passed during the November session by MLAs seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and constitutional guarantees. The resolution, he said, represented the collective will of the people and reaffirmed their demand for political and constitutional rights.

The Chief Minister accused the Centre of failing to deliver on its assurance of restoring statehood. "The promises made to us remain unfulfilled. Our demand for restoration | More on P6

LG Sinha terminates two more terror-friendly govt employees

'Dismissed teachers were working as OGWs of LeT; radicalising youth, acting as conduits to spread terrorism'

Umair Gul Ganai

Srinagar, Oct 30: Reaffirming the administration's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday terminated two more terror friendly government employees by invoking Article 311 of Constitution of India.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the two terminated employees are Ghulam Hussain, a teacher in the Education Department, accused of acting as an Over Ground Worker (OGW) for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), maintaining links with terrorists and facilitating recruitment and funding in Reasi district, and Majid Iqbal Dar, a teacher and former lab assistant, allegedly engaged



in narco-terrorism, radicalization of youth, and terror financing through drug money, with connections to IED plots in Rajouri and continued subversive activities even during detention.

DISMISSAL ORDERS

A dismissal order of Ghulam Hussain S/o Ali Mohammad, R/o Kalwa Mulass, Tehsil Mahore, District Reasi reads: "In terms of sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India, the Lieutenant Governor is satisfied | More on P6

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas:

LG pays tribute to Sardar Patel

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 30: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha paid tributes to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his 150th birth anniversary.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said, "On the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, which commemorates the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, I extend warm greetings to the people and hope the celebration will further strengthen the spirit of oneness and peace.

Sardar Patel was the 'Architect of National Unity' and epitome of patriotism and integrity. His unwavering commitment laid the foundation of a | More on P6

Disqualification rules for J&K legislators to be tabled in Assembly

GST amendment bill to taken for consideration, passage

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Members of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (Disqualification on Grounds of Defection) Rules-2025 will be laid in the Legislative Assembly on Friday.

As per list of business scheduled in the House tomorrow as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Secretary,

Legislative Assembly will lay on table a copy of "Members of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (Disqualification on Grounds of Defection) Rules-2025" in the House.

Under section 28 of Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019, the 10th schedule of the Constitution of India is applicable to J&K Union Territory.

According to the list, a bill to amend The Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax -2025 will be taken up for consideration and passage. (KNO)

Uproar in Assembly over corruption allegations, flood relief discussion

BJP MLAs protest, 3 marshalled out after storming into well

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Legislative Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday witnessed uproarious scenes over alleged corruption in the Roads & Buildings Department and the Speaker's refusal to allow an adjournment motion, with BJP legislators disrupting proceedings throughout the Question Hour. Three of them stormed into the well of the House, leading to their removal.

As soon as proceedings began, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), BJP legislators were on their feet demanding a discussion on the recent floods, which have wreaked havoc in various parts



Jahangir Shah (KNO)/KT

of the Union Territory.

The BJP had submitted an adjournment motion seeking suspension of the House's routine business to discuss the

flood situation. However, the Speaker rejected the motion, stating that, as per the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in | More on P6

J&K Assembly passes 4 bills

Owais Gul

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Legislative Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir on Thursday passed four bills without much debate and discussion.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the House passed four bills: "Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2025," "Jammu and Kashmir Shops and Establishments (Licensing, Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Bill, 2025", "Jammu and Kashmir Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2025" and "Jammu and Kashmir Tenancy Bill, 2025".

The Bills were passed by the House through a voice vote.

As per details, the Jammu & Kashmir | More on P6

Justice Surya Kant appointed next CJI

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 30: Justice Surya Kant was on Thursday appointed as the 53rd Chief Justice of India and he will assume charge on November 24.

The Department of Justice in the Union Law Ministry issued a notification announcing his appointment.

Justice Surya Kant succeeds Justice Bhushan R Gavai, who demits office on November 23.

He will be the CJI for nearly 15 months and will demit office on February 9, 2027 on attaining the age of 65 years.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice



Surya Kant, Judge of the Supreme Court of India as the Chief Justice of India with effect from 24th November, 2025," Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said in a post on X.

Judge Surya Kant urges law graduates to be 'social engineers' to turn law into a tool for transformation | More on P6

Reservation policy sparks heated exchange in Assembly

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Thursday witnessed a heated exchange between a legislator advocating for the rationalization of the reservation policy and those representing reserved constituencies.

During Zero Hour, according to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Peoples Conference MLA Sajad Gani Lone accused the government of stonewalling questions and withholding information related to reservation.

"It is deeply concerning that we ask questions but don't receive answers. I had asked two questions regarding the reservation policy. I consider this a

matter of serious issue due to its long-term consequences," Lone said.

He said the government's response to his question during the budget session had revealed regional disparities in the implementation of reservation.

"I had asked the General Administration Department about the status of the Cabinet Sub-Committee report and whether data supports the reservation policy. The data lies only with the state government. I had also asked for merit lists and selection lists to understand which region is on the receiving end," he said.

Lone argued that the existing reservation framework limits opportunities | More on P6

MHA appoints Prosecutor for Pahalgam terror attack case

Advocate Shri Singh to represent NIA

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has appointed Advocate Shri Singh as the Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) to represent the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack case, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, and 16 others wounded.

A MHA notification in possession of the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) states that Shri Singh will handle the trial and related proceedings before the NIA Special



Court in Jammu and the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

His appointment will remain valid for three years from the date of notification or until the completion of the trial,

whichever comes earlier.

The order was issued under sub-section (1) of Section 15 of the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008, read with sub-section (8) of Section 18 of the Bharatiya | More on P6

CSC report on reservation submitted to cabinet: J&K Govt

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Thursday informed the Legislative Assembly that the Cabinet Sub-Committee (CSC) on reservation has submitted its report to the Council of Ministers. The report will be finalized after obtaining requisite approval from the competent authority, it said.

Responding to a question submitted by Peoples Conference President Sajad Gani Lone and Independent MLA Shabir Kulley, the Minister in charge of the General Administration Department stated— as per news agency—Kashmir News



Observer (KNO) that the CSC has submitted its report to the Council of Ministers. The report will be finalized after obtaining requisite approval from the competent authority, it said.

The Minister further stated that the existing reservation policy in the Union Territory broadly aligns with constitutional provisions and judicial principles. | More on P6

'2872 domestic violence cases registered across J&K in last two Fiscal Years'

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has revealed that a total of 2,872 domestic violence cases have been registered in the Union Territory over the last two financial years.

According to an official reply tabled in the J&K Legislative Assembly to an unstarred question raised by MLA Shamim Firdous, the Social Welfare Department stated that these cases were recorded through One Stop Centres (OSCs) for women



operating under the Mission Shakti initiative.

The government, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), informed that the One Stop Centres, also known as Sakhi Centres,

have been functional across J&K since 2018. These centres provide integrated support to women in distress, including medical aid, psycho-social counselling, legal assistance, temporary shelter, and police

support.

The reply mentioned that these centres are linked with the 181 Women Helpline Service and 122 ERSS, ensuring prompt coordination and response for women facing violence or harassment.

The official data shows that 893 cases of domestic violence were registered in FY 2023-24, while the number sharply rose to 1,979 cases in FY 2024-25.

The department added that the OSCs primarily handle cases of domestic violence, cyber | More on P6

LoP Sharma raises concerns over alleged scams, targets CM Omar

OWAIS GUL

Srinagar, Oct 30: Leader of Opposition (LoP) and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sunil Sharma on Thursday demanded a CBI inquiry into the alleged multi-crore scam in the PW (R&B) Department and called for the immediate resignation of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Sharma, while speaking to reporters outside the assembly secretariat, said that a newspaper has reported major financial deviations and scams in a government scheme.

He said that, on one hand, the government claims to be committed to employment resolutions, but on the other hand, it is itself entangled in corruption worth crores of rupees. "The division mentioned in the report falls within a particular constituency. The government should tell us who the MLA of that constituency is, and whether that MLA also serves as a minister. If he is a minister, how close is he to Omar Abdullah? Does he not meet Omar Abdullah privately and late at night? If such late-night meetings



are taking place with the minister from the same constituency where this scam has been exposed by a leading newspaper, Omar Abdullah must clarify what discussions are held behind closed doors. Are those meetings about corruption and financial deals?" he said.

Sharma said it is shocking that, in less than a year, such "large-scale

scams" have come to light. "We are deeply concerned. We expected the government to take action. Aaj jo ek akhbaar ne release kiya, us par humein bahut aitraaz hai, narazgi hai. Humein umeed thi ki sarkar koi action legi. Hum isme CBI inquiry ki demand karte hain, kyunki main keh raha hoon ki ye sirf ek division ka nahi, aise kitne hi divisions

honge jahan aise scandals hue hain," he told reporters.

Referring to the media reports, the LoP said that tenders were allotted to a single contractor. "Strange things are happening under this government, and we fail to understand where it is heading. Why has there been no CBI inquiry despite such a big loss to the public exchequer? Omar Abdullah's government has made tall claims, but this exposes the reality. He must clarify what happens in his meetings with the minister from the concerned constituency. Do they discuss contractors and deals or party politics?"

The BJP leader said corruption is the biggest disease in society, which hurts everyone, including casual labourers, who should have been regularised through fair use of public funds. "Instead, this money is being misused. If corruption is curbed, many other issues will automatically be resolved," he said.

When asked about the dismissal of two more government employees from service, Sharma said, "The government must act against anyone

who threatens the integrity and sovereignty of the nation. This is the clarity of the Modi government. Any individual involved in anti-national activities must be dismissed from service."

The LoP also criticised the government's "failure" to assess damages caused by recent heavy rains and floods in Jammu and Kashmir. "In August, heavy rainfall caused massive destruction. Poor people lost homes, land, crops, and livestock. Three senior cabinet ministers from the Union government visited for a loss assessment and directed the state government to prepare and send a report to the Centre for compensation. But till now, no such report has been prepared. This is an insult to those poor families who are waiting for relief," he said.

He added, "For the last three days, the Bharatiya Janata Party has been raising the issue of flood-hit people in the Assembly, demanding an adjournment motion to discuss their condition. The Speaker assured us that a discussion would be allowed, but the government is avoiding

Daily wagers regularisation policy under consideration: Rana KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Oct 31: Minister for Jal Shakti Department, Javed Ahmad Rana Thursday said that the policy for regularization of daily-wagers is under consideration. The Minister was replying to a question raised by Legislator Dr Sajjad Shafi in the Legislative Assembly. He said that there is shortage of staff due to the superannuation of several field employees in the department.

Sharing details, the Minister said that 125 of Assistant Lineman are present, while as only eight lineman posts are vacant in PHE Sub-Division Uri. However, the Minister said to ensure regular water supply to the people and continued operation and maintenance of Water Supply Schemes (WSS), interim arrangements have been ensured though the internal deployment of available manpower, including regular employees and daily wagers, until the vacant posts are filled through formal recruitment, promotion, or redeployment as per departmental norms.

LA Session

‘14.27 lakh cubic metres earthwork done in Jhelum’



WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Oct 30: The government on Thursday said that extensive dredging and desilting works have been carried out across Kashmir and Jammu to prevent floods, with major focus on the Jhelum and Tawi rivers.

Responding to a legislator's query in the Assembly, the government said the (I&FC) Department has dredged 2.85 lakh cubic meters of material from the Sopore-Baramulla Outfall Channel over the past two years. It said that around 60,000 cubic metres of silt have also been removed from

various canals across Kashmir during the current irrigation season.

Under the Flood Management Programme (Phase-I) of the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP), dredging was undertaken in the Srinagar and Baramulla reaches of River Jhelum to enhance its carrying capacity, involving 14.27 lakh cubic meters of earthwork.

The department said desilting is carried out every year on the Ranbir Canal and the Tawi Canal in Jammu.

The Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), in its 2018 flood routing study, concluded

that dredging the Jhelum between Sangam and Asham would not serve flood mitigation unless supported by hydraulic model studies.

The study indicated that floodwaters would reach Srinagar faster if dredging were done in this stretch, reducing response time during floods.

The report also noted bed degradation at Sangam due to local sand mining and insufficient silt deposition. It cautioned that continued dredging without natural sediment replacement could strain existing structures and fail to achieve flood mitigation goals—(KNO)

NIH surveying carrying capacity of Wular

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday said that a comprehensive bathymetric-hydrodynamic study of Wular Lake is underway to determine its current water carrying capacity and the rate of siltation.

The study is being conducted by the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), Roorkee, Minister in charge Jal Shakti Department, said in response to a query by MLA Irshad Rasool Kar.

According to the Forest Department, no prior baseline survey exists to accurately assess Wular's carrying capacity or silt levels. The ongoing study will also validate critically silted areas and identify major feeding channels contributing to silt deposition, it said.

The government said that measurable progress has been made on the ground. "About 4.55 square kilometres of critically silted area, roughly

455 hectares, have been restored or de-silted so far. Of the total dredged volume, approximately 63.93 lakh cubic meters have been removed from the SK Payeen area, resulting in the restoration of nearly 3.10 square kilometres within the main lake," it added.

Targeted de-siltation in the catchment and feeding channels has expanded the total restored footprint to around 4.5 square kilometres, the government said.

Cumulatively, around 78.25 lakh cubic meters of dredging have been completed, improving the lake's hydraulic connectivity and overall water regime, it added.

Meanwhile, the government said the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department Kashmir has dredged about 2.85 lakh cubic metres of material from the Sopore-Baramulla Outfall Channel over the past two years to enhance the Jhelum River's flow capacity—(KNO)

Contractor, GPF dues touch Rs 2,705 Cr

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday said that unpaid liabilities amounting to Rs 2,705.38 crore are pending in various treasuries across the Union Territory on account of contractors' bills and General Provident Fund (GPF) payments.

The minister in charge, while replying to a legislator's query, said that unpaid contractor bills stand at Rs 205.70 crore, while pending GPF liabilities total Rs 2,499.68 crore. The Finance Department informed that during the current financial year 2025-26, payments of Rs 1,890 crore towards contractors and Rs 1,953.80 crore towards GPF have already been released as of October 16, 2025. The department said the clearance of pending bills is being carried out in a structured manner across all sectors, depending on the availability of financial resources—(KNO)

Govt rules out trauma hospital on Magam, Gulmarg road

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday said there are no current proposals for the construction of a Trauma Hospital in Magam or on Gulmarg Road. It further added that there are also no plans to create new doctor positions for the Sub District Hospital (SDH) in Beerwah. Responding to a question by MLA Dr Shafi Ahmad Wani, Health Minister Sakeena Itoo stated in a written reply that, at present, there are no proposals

for building a Trauma Hospital in Magam or Narbal Road.

"The department is constantly working to undertake developmental projects to improve healthcare services, subject to feasibility, suitability, and after consultation with all stakeholders, including public representatives," she added.

Regarding the creation of new doctor positions for SDH Beerwah, the minister clarified that there are no such proposals currently under consideration. However, she said that improving healthcare

services is an ongoing process, and the department is prioritising improvements in a phased manner.

Itoo said the department is committed to strengthening existing healthcare facilities through manpower enhancement and digital initiatives, such as e-Sanjeevani and telemedicine, implemented via a well-structured hub-and-spoke model. She also clarified that the department is not actively planning to upgrade Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) to higher levels at this time. Currently, Jammu and

Kashmir is focusing on consolidating its existing healthcare infrastructure, which includes around 4,000 health institutes across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

According to a 2023 report by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, J&K ranks among the top states/UTs in health institution density, with approximately one health institution for every 3,500 people, compared to the national average of one per 6,000—(KNO)

‘NLU in J&K under active consideration’

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir Government Thursday said that the establishment of a National Law University (NLU) in the Union Territory is under active consideration, with a budget provision of Rs 50 crore already kept for the purpose.

In a written reply to an unstarred question tabled by MLA Reyaz Ahmad Khan, the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs informed that the proposal to establish NLU in J&K aims to drive legal education reforms and research in line with Bar Council of India standards and other regulatory bodies.

The government said that the Hon'ble Chief Minister, in the 2025 Budget speech, had already announced the establishment of a National Law University in the Union

Territory.

A high-level committee headed by Shantmanu (IAS), Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Higher Education Department, and comprising the Secretary Law, Director Colleges J&K, and HOD Law, University of Kashmir, has examined various aspects related to setting up the NLU.

The committee studied the functioning of similar NLUs established in other States and UTs, including factors such as land and infrastructure, faculty, hostel accommodation, admission process, and fee structure. Its report has been submitted and is presently under active consideration of the government.

The department added that the government is committed to establishing the first-ever National Law University in Jammu and Kashmir soon—(KNO)

17,953 posts vacant in different Deptts

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government has revealed that a total of 17,953 posts are lying vacant under the direct recruitment quota across various departments in the Union Territory.

According to the official figures tabled in the J&K Legislative Assembly in response to an unstarred question by Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra, the government said 2,960 Gazetted and 14,993 Non-Gazetted posts presently vacant in different government departments. The reply furnished by the General Administration Department (GAD), shows that the Health and Medical Education Department tops the list with 1,985 Gazetted and 5,300 Non-Gazetted vacancies. It is followed by the Finance Department, which has 104 Gazetted and 1,457 Non-Gazetted posts lying vacant. Other major departments with a significant number of vacancies include Power Development Department (61 Gazetted, 1,436 Non-Gazetted), Industries & Commerce (45 Gazetted, 1,130 Non-Gazetted), Jal Shakti (987 Non-Gazetted), and Public Works (R&B) (1,099 Non-Gazetted).

Departments such as Agriculture Production, Higher Education, Law, PD&MD, and Youth Services & Sports have also reported several unfilled positions.

The reply further mentioned that details regarding posts referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) and Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB), along with their current recruitment status, have also been compiled—(KNO)

1,512 local mining permissions for CME

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government has informed that a total of 1,512 short-term mining permissions have been issued to local residents across several districts to facilitate the extraction of construction materials such as sand, gravel, and clay, while also supporting local livelihoods.

According to the reply furnished by the Mining Department to an unstarred question tabled by Saif-ud-din in the Legislative Assembly, the department, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), has granted Mining Leases of RBM blocks in multiple districts including Jammu (30), Samba (19), Reasi (25), Rajouri (22), Poonch (15), Udhampur (7), Kathua (14), Kulgam (19), Baramulla (20), Pulwama (4), and Ganderbal (2) among others.

The government said these leases aim to ensure the availability of key construction materials for developmental

projects of national and UT importance.

In order to safeguard the livelihood of local residents, the Government of J&K issued S.O. 599 of 2022 on November 15, 2022, allowing short-term and disposal permits for the manual extraction of sand, silt, and clay by local Hanjis, Khanis, and Muleteers on payment of royalty and other charges — without requiring environmental clearance or e-auction.

The department said the amendment was introduced to support the lower strata of society and ensure uninterrupted construction activity for both government and private projects. As per official figures, the highest number of permissions were issued in Pulwama (565), followed by Baramulla (331), Anantnag (218), Bandipora (153), and Kulgam (141). Other districts like Kupwara (58), Ganderbal (25), Budgam (11), and Srinagar (10) also received permissions under the same provision—(KNO)

Recent floods claim 152 lives in J&K

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Oct 30: The Jammu and Kashmir government informed the Legislative Assembly that 152 lives were lost and over 69,707 hectares of crops were damaged due to recent flash floods, cloud-bursts and incessant rainfall across the Union Territory. In a written reply to an unstarred question tabled by MLA Dr. Bashir Ahmad Veeri, the Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Department shared division-wise details of the damages and relief provided so far. According to the official figures, Jammu Division recorded the highest loss with 151 deaths and 4,534 livestock deaths. A total of 1,591 houses were fully damaged, 4,326 severely damaged, and over 6,500 partially damaged (Pucca and Kutcha structures). Around 3,540 huts and cattle sheds were also destroyed. Crop losses in Jammu Division were reported over an area of 69,707.685 hectares, with Rs 5,246.47 lakh disbursed so far as relief to the affected victims.

In Kashmir Division, one death was reported, while 12 houses were fully damaged, 44 severely damaged, and 854 partially damaged. Additionally, 79 huts and cattle sheds suffered damage, and Rs 191.444 lakh have been paid as relief compensation.

In response to the question on the extent of flood damage in the Srigufwara-Bijbehara constituency, the government stated that several structures, including a residential house in Khiram village, Sakhras bridge, a service reservoir, and a graveyard at Pethnoo Sakhras, were partially damaged.

It further said that maize crops spread over 13 x 15 meters of land were affected, while 113.41 hectares of paddy land were damaged within the Bijbehara Tehsil area—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas: Strengthening The Fabric Of Our Nation

As we observe Rashtriya Ekta Diwas on October 31, marking the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, we are reminded that national unity is a continuous responsibility. The “Iron Man of India” did not just geographically unite 560 princely states; he forged the very soul of our nation, which is a diverse yet indivisible India. In today’s complex global landscape, where divisive forces constantly test social cohesion, Sardar Patel’s legacy becomes increasingly relevant. This year’s celebrations, from the grand parade at Ekta Nagar featuring indigenous dog squads

to the nationwide Run for Unity and youth marches, represent a living commitment to the ideals that bind us together. The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, born from this occasion a decade ago, has successfully transformed abstract unity into tangible cultural exchanges, linguistic appreciation, and interpersonal connections between different states. What makes this anniversary particularly significant is its emphasis on youth engagement. Through student exchanges, digital platforms, and leadership programmes, young Indians are learning that patriotism lies in celebrating diversity

rather than imposing uniformity. The participation of women officers leading ceremonial guards and the inclusion of specially-abled citizens in marathons demonstrate that true unity embraces every segment of society. However, beyond the celebrations lies a deeper challenge: to translate this annual enthusiasm into daily practice. Unity must manifest in our workplaces, educational institutions, and communities through mutual respect and inclusive attitudes. The true test of our national integration lies not in grand parades but in everyday actions and how we treat our neighbours,

respect regional differences, and uphold constitutional values in our conduct. Let us pledge to strengthen the legacy of Sardar Patel, not just with marches and pledges, but through conscious efforts to bridge divides, reject prejudice, and build a nation where every citizen feels equally valued and represented. The Statue of Unity stands as a constant reminder that our strength lies in our togetherness. In honouring Sardar Patel’s vision, we commit to preserving the integrity he fought to achieve, ensuring that India remains united in its beautiful diversity for generations to come.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas:
A Pillar of National Cohesion

Press Information Bureau

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, also known as National Unity Day, is observed annually on October 31 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and to honor his pivotal role in fostering national and political integration and unity in India. The day underscores the importance of maintaining the sovereignty, peace and integrity of the nation, encouraging citizens to pledge their commitment to unity in diversity.

The day was first celebrated in 2014, following a declaration by the Government of India to honour and celebrate Sardar Patel’s remarkable contribution to nation-building. Following this, during the Rashtriya Ekta Divas held on 31st October, 2015 Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced the initiative ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ for sustained and structured connect between people of different regions of the country for an enhanced understanding and bonding between them. More than ten Central ministries, state governments, schools, colleges and youth organisations have since been celebrating through various activities to promote such bonding between people from different parts of the country.

This year’s celebration of the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is particularly special as it marks the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Patel.

Foundational Legacy

India’s first Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played a crucial role in the national integration process following independence in 1947. Hewas tasked with unifying over 560 princely states—covering nearly 40% of India’s territory and population—into the Union of India. Under the Indian Independence Act, rulers of the Princely States were given the option to decide whether they wanted to accede to India or Pakistan or neither. Sardar Patel employed a combination of diplomatic negotiations, persuasion, and, where necessary, firm administrative measures to prevent balkanisation. Through the States Department he led, Sardar Patel successfully integrated these states by August 15, 1947, or shortly thereafter, ensuring the territorial integrity of modern India. His efforts averted potential fragmentation and laid the foundation for a united democratic republic. It was the decisive leadership of this “Iron Man” that ensured internal stability as the country went through its tumultuous partition period. He also created the All-India Services as the “Steel Frame” that would continue to protect the country’s unity and integrity.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat: Carrying Forward Sardar Patel’s Legacy

The “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” (EBSB) initiative, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 31 October 2015 during Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s 140th birth anniversary, embodies Sardar Patel’s vision of a united India. It promotes cultural exchange and mutual understanding among States and Union Territories, celebrating India’s diversity through interaction and reciprocity.

Its core objectives are to:
Strengthen emotional bonds among citizens,

Foster national integration through structured inter-state engagements,

Showcase and appreciate India’s diverse cultures,

Build lasting partnerships, and
Encourage mutual learning and sharing of best practices across regions.

EBSB promotes the idea of “unity in diversity” by pairing different States and Union Territories to strengthen emotional bonds through linguistic, cultural, and educational exchanges. These activities extend the message of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas beyond a



single day, transforming it into a sustained movement for national integration.

EBSB Events and Initiatives Inspired by Ekta Diwas:

The Bhasha Sangam App – for learning 100+ sentences of everyday use in 22 official Indian languages.

Cultural Showcases and Food Festivals.

Student Exchange Programmes – “Yuva Sangam” and EBSB Clubs in schools and universities facilitate youth interaction between paired States, fostering mutual understanding.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam - celebrates the cultural and spiritual bond between Kashi and Tamil Nadu, promoting unity through exchange of art, language, and traditions.

Digital and Outreach Campaigns – Initiatives like My Bharat Digital Portal and EBSB Quiz Competitions engage citizens online to promote unity, patriotism, and knowledge of India’s cultural diversity.

The EBSB Portal serves as a digital extension of the vision behind Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, providing a platform to document and promote initiatives that strengthen national integration. It hosts reports of inter-state cultural exchanges, youth activities, and campaigns conducted by various ministries under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat banner—an initiative launched on Ekta Diwas itself. With millions of participants and visitors, the portal keeps the spirit of unity alive year-round through its digital repository, showcasing programs like Dekho Apna Desh (Tourism) and indigenous sports features (Sports), and through the EBSB Wall, which highlights monthly activities reflecting India’s diversity and collective identity.

Importance in 2025: Marking the 150th Birth Anniversary

The occasion has been envisioned as a year-long, nationwide commemoration. This milestone highlights Sardar Patel’s enduring relevance in contemporary India, especially amid global challenges to unity and social cohesion. The spirit of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is also deeply aligned with the principles of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB), which seeks to strengthen emotional bonds among citizens through cultural exchange, linguistic appreciation, and mutual understanding between paired States and Union Territories. Together, these initiatives reinforce the concept of unity in

diversity, thus transforming national integration from a ceremonial observance into an ongoing people’s movement.

On 31st October, at around 8 AM, Prime Minister will offer floral tribute at the Statue of Unity, which will be followed by Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations marking the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The events and programs scheduled for Sardar Patel’s 150th birth anniversary is as follows:

Date of main event

31 October (annually) — the observance of National Unity Day.

Venue for main parade / celebration (this year)

- Ekta Nagar (formerly Unity Town) in Narmada District, Gujarat.

-Air show by the Indian Air Force’s Surya Kiran team.

Parade – Participating units

- 16 marching contingents from 9 States + 1 UT Police.

- 4 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)

- NCC cadets

- Special segments: e.g., BSF dog squad,

Assam Police motorcycle display, BSF camel contingent & band.

Women officers’ role / special highlight

The Guard of Honor presented to the Prime Minister will be led by a female officer.

Cultural programme & “floats”

- Floats representing different States/UTs under theme (Unity in Diversity).

- A large cultural programme by the Ministry of Culture with approx. 900 artists, showcasing Indian classical and folk forms.

Extended festival / “India Parv”

From November 1 to 15, 2025, Ekta Nagar will host the Bharat Parv, featuring cultural performances and a food festival from different states. The festival will culminate on November 15 with special programs celebrating God Birsa Munda Jayanti, highlighting the glorious culture and resilient spirit of our tribal communities.

Other logistic highlights

- “Run for Unity” marathon in Delhi (from Rajghat to Red Fort) featuring participation

from Persons with Disabilities, students, CAPF etc.

- Infrastructure projects worth –Rs. 280 crore to be inaugurated/laid foundation in Ekta Nagar during the event week.

Unique marching contingent of Indian breed dogs

The Rashtriya Ekta Diwas parade in 2025 will feature a unique marching contingent of Indian breed dogs, specifically Rampur Hounds and Mudhol Hounds, from the Border Security Force (BSF), showcasing their role as force multipliers in operations. These indigenous breeds, embodying the spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, will demonstrate their exceptional skills, with the Mudhol Hound “Riya” leading the squad after securing first place in the All India Police Dog Competition. Their participation in the parade at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, highlights their contribution to national security and underscores the theme of unity in diversity by celebrating India’s native canine heritage.

The Saradar@150 Unity March

The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, through the My Bharat platform, has organised a nationwide Unity March (Yatra) to foster unity, patriotism, and civic responsibility among the youth, aligning with the principles of ‘Ek Bharat, Aatmanirbhar Bharat’. Launched on October 6, 2025, by Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya on the My Bharat portal, the initiative includes competitions such as a Social Media Reels contest, an essay competition, and the Sardar@150 Young Leaders program, with 150 winners participating in the National Padyatra.

The Unity March will unfold in two phases. The first phase, taking place from October 31- November 25, 2025, will feature district-level foot marches across all districts within every Parliamentary constituency. These marches will be preceded by a series of awareness activities, including essay and debate competitions, seminars on Sardar Patel’s life and contributions, and street plays in schools and colleges. Alongside the padyatra, a range of developmental initiatives will be undertaken across districts — such as cleanliness drives at water bodies, tree plantation drives under the “Sardar Upvan” initiative, women’s welfare camps, yoga and health camps, and “Vocal for Local” promotional campaigns. The National March, from November 26 to

Key Takeaways

- Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, observed every year on October 31, honours Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s legacy in unifying India, promoting unity in diversity amid ongoing national challenges.
- The year 2025 marks Sardar Patel’s 150th birth anniversary.
- Prime Minister Modi to participate in Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations at Ekta Nagar, Kevadia.
- Annual programs like the Run for Unity and Unity March engage citizens, especially youth, in fostering patriotism and social harmony.

December 6, 2025, will cover 152 kilometers from Karamsad (Sardar Patel’s birthplace in Gujarat) to the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, incorporating community development activities in villages along the route with participation from NSS students, NCC cadets, My Bharat volunteers, and young leaders. An exhibition showcasing India’s diverse culture and Sardar Patel’s life will also be organised.

Run for Unity

Government-directed campaigns for Rashtriya Ekta Diwas prominently feature the “Run for Unity,” a nationwide marathon event symbolising collective strides toward national cohesion. In 2025, the Run for Unity is scheduled for October 31, ahead of the main observance, with participation expected from thousands across major cities, including flag-off events in New Delhi led by Union Ministers. Honourable Prime Minister Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi called upon citizens across the nation to participate in the Run for Unity event, commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Conclusion

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas stands as a timeless reminder of Sardar Patel’s visionary leadership in forging a united India from diverse princely states, a foundation that continues to underpin the nation’s progress. By blending historical reverence with contemporary engagement through oaths, marches, and cultural events—the observance not only commemorates past triumphs but actively counters modern divisive forces, reinforcing the ethos of “Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.” While Rashtriya Ekta Diwas marks a symbolic day of national integration, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat extends that mission throughout the year through structured activities like Rashtriya Bhasha Samarohs, Cultural Showcases, and Youth Parivartan Programmes. These sustained initiatives help ensure that the spirit of unity in diversity continues to resonate well beyond the annual observance.

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Govt to establish Mega Fruit Mandi in Kulgam: Javid Dar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 30: Minister for Agriculture Production, Javid Ahmad Dar today said that a mega fruit mandi at Aar Mohala, Kulgam on 300 kanals is being established and the transfer of land in favour of the department is under process.

The Minister said this while replying to a question raised by Legislator, Abdul Majid Bhat Larimi regarding compensation for crop losses to farmers in the Legislative Assembly today.

He said that the department has already established two Fruit and Vegetable Markets in the district Anantnag, at Batengo and at Jablipora, which are functional and adequately cater to the marketing needs of the growers and traders of the entire district. He also added that in Kulgam district one mandi namely Apni Mandi has been established at Nunmai, which is at developmental stage.

The Minister further informed that damages to Horticulture crops in J&K has been assessed over an area of 531.06 ha, however, as per SDRF/NDRF norms compensation is admissible only for crop losses exceeding 33% which accounts for an area of 431.091 ha.

He also added that in South Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Kulgam and Pulwama, a total compensation Rs 4.088 lakh has been paid.

The Minister further informed the house that there is one C.A. Storage Unit with capacity of



5000 MT in Anantnag district.

He said that CA stores are established by private entrepreneurs and the Government provides subsidies for the same. He added that the assistance is open to any entrepreneur who is willing to apply as per the norms and procedures.

The Minister also informed that most CA stores are located in the Industrial Growth Centre at Lassipora, Pulwama, and the Industrial Estate at Aglar, Shopian, while as efforts are underway with the Industries and Commerce Department to

establish sector-specific industrial estates for horticulture and post-harvest management in other districts.

He added that continuous awareness programs and seminars are organized in all districts including Anantnag and Kulgam, to create awareness among the fruit growers about available incentives for cold storage and other post-harvest related activities.

Legislators Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi and Showkat Ahmad Ganie raised supplementary questions on the subject.

'Legislators consulted for formulation, finalization of developmental plan'

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 30: Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar Thursday said that the Rural Development Department ensures due consultation with elected representatives including legislators and other stakeholders at various levels during the formulation and finalization of developmental plans.

The Minister was replying to a question raised by legislator G.A Mir in the Legislative Assembly today.

He said that during the current financial year, directions were issued for incorporation of Rs 20.00 lac under CD & Panchayat for each MLA. Moreover, Budget announcements based on the feedback from the MLAs are being accommodated as per resource availability.

The Minister said that an amount of Rs 3403.59 lac as projected by the MLAs have been incorporated in the current years Capex Budget (CD Panchayat).

He said that the proposals and recommendations of elected public representatives are duly accommodated

while formulating the developmental plans.

The Minister said that the works under CD & Panchayat, UT Capex, Budget are being executed in consultation with the concerned public representatives.

"Instructions are being issued from time to time to consult the elected representatives while formulating developmental action plans under various programmes being implemented by the Department," the Minister said.

The Minister informed that the elected representatives in Jammu and Kashmir, including members of District Development Councils (DDCs) and Block Development Councils (BDCs), are involved in developmental plans through various roles, such as approving district-level plans, participating in participatory planning campaigns like the People's Plan Campaign, and providing oversight. The establishment of DDCs, which replaced old planning boards, has formally integrated elected members into the process of preparing and approving district plans and capital expenditure.

FSW of D&FCO issues prohibition orders to 5 butchers

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 30: Ensuring strong cognizance of the Hygiene and Sanitary violations by the Retail Meat Shops, the Food Safety Wing (FSW) of the Drugs and Food Control Organization (D&FCO), J&K has taken strict action against 05 fresh meat sellers who were found keeping carcasses of meat hanging outside the shops at Hazooribagh and Nowgam by issuance of prohibition orders by Designated Officer in District Srinagar.

These Butchers were found to be repetitive offenders violating the FSS Rules and Regulations, despite being given warnings and sufficient time period in previous inspection drives. Under these orders, the sale and slaughtering activities within their shops have been prohibited until further notice.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, Smita Sethi, chaired a meeting with the Kashmir Butchers Association, led by its President, Khazir Mohammad Regoo, along with other office bearers.

The association members were briefed about the issues at hand which mainly related to sanitary and Hygienic conditions to be followed by the



retail meat shops as mandated under Schedule IV of Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses), Regulations 2011.

During the meeting, the Association also submitted their representation of the issues faced by them and they requested the authorities to grant an additional grace period of 15-day to implement all hygienic and sanitary requirements mandated under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 which was granted on the condition that, upon its expiry, strict action shall be initiated against any defaulters as per the relevant provisions of the FSS Act which may include suspension and cancellation of licenses other than penal action as per the Act.

JKTPO organizes export awareness drive

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 30: The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization organized an Export Awareness cum E-Commerce Onboarding drive as per the scheduled activities for the year 2025-26.

The workshop, organized in collaboration with the District Administration Srinagar, One District One Product (ODOP) Team, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and GeM, aims to empower local MSMEs, artisans and SHGs, entrepreneurs by providing them with vital knowledge about export schemes and benefits of digital commerce.

Speaking on the occasion, General Manager JKTPO, Shahid Ali Beigh emphasized on the pivotal role of JKTPO in organizing the district-level workshop aimed at promoting ODOP sellers and their facilitation on e-commerce platform.

Senior Consultant GeM, Maqbool Shah, in his address briefly explained working of GeM Portal, documents required for registration and benefits which could be



leveraged by the Sellers after getting themselves on-boarded on the said portal.

Business Development Consultant, APEDA, Dr.Azra Mufti, gave insights about the role of APEDA for export promotion of agri-products to other countries and documents required for registration with APEDA.

More than 120 Artisans, Exporters and FPOs of Srinagar district attended the workshop. They actively engaged in discussions and showed a keen interest in onboarding their products on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) platform.

This initiative is part of JKTPO's ongoing efforts to promote exports from all districts of Jammu & Kashmir under the District as Export Hub Scheme and the ODOP initiative. The event aimed to connect local producers and artisans with national

and international markets through digital platforms and to get well acquainted with different schemes of the Centre and State Governments.

Similar workshops are planned across the Union Territory to further strengthen the export ecosystem and empower local entrepreneurs to explore global trade opportunities. Expert-led sessions covered a wide range of topics including benefits of exports, branding local products for international markets, export financing options and credit risk insurance schemes to safeguard exporters.

Pertinently, Srinagar district is renowned worldwide for its high-quality Kashmiri silk Carpet, Papier Machie, Walnut Wood Carvings and Silk Carpets have been identified under ODOP by district Administration Srinagar and Handicrafts Department.

Sanitation drive conducted around Manasbal Lake

KT News Desk

MANASBAL (GANDERBAL), OCTOBER 30: The Wullar Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA), in collaboration with the District Police Ganderbal Thursday conducted a mega sanitation drive around the picturesque Manasbal Lake to promote cleanliness, environmental conservation, and community awareness among people.

The drive was aimed to preserve the lake's ecological balance and sensitize locals and visitors about the importance of maintaining a pollution-free environment so that tourists get pollution free experience.

Officers and officials of the WMDA, Police, residents and volunteers participated

enthusiastically in the cleanliness campaign, which covered the lakefront, Manasbal Park and adjoining pathways.

CEO, WMDA, Ahsanul Haq Chishti said that the sanitation drive is part of the ongoing conservation and rejuvenation programme being implemented to protect Manasbal Lake. He appreciated the active participation of District Police Ganderbal and the local community for their valuable contribution towards maintaining the lake's pristine charm.

He also urged citizens to adopt sustainable waste management practices and to take collective responsibility for keeping Manasbal Lake clean, vibrant, and ecologically healthy for tourists to make their visits memorable.

DC Srinagar inspects progress on Sanat Nagar Flyover

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Thursday conducted an onsite inspection to review the ongoing construction works on Rs 30 crore (882 meter span) Sanat Nagar Flyover, a key infrastructure project aimed at decongesting traffic on the City's busy bypass corridor.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar; Executive Engineer PC-Ist, Nasir Amin; Executive Engineer PDD, Syed Wani; Tehsildar Channpora, Kifayat Ali and other concerned.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the pace and quality of work and approved the remaining ongoing works being executed on the project.

The DC was informed that over 90 percent of the work on the flyover project has been completed. The approach road from the Channpora side has been macadamized and made motorable, while work on the Hyderpora side is in its final phase.

Executive Engineer KPDCL apprised the DC that the process of utility shifting has been already completed facilitating the timely completion of the project.

The DC instructed the concerned executing agency to complete the remaining works with accelerated pace to ensure that the flyover is fully made motorable soon.

The DC emphasized that the completion of the project will significantly improve traffic flow, ease congestion, and enhance connectivity along the Channpora-Sanat Nagar-Hyderpora-bypass corridor and benefit the commuters and local residents alike.

DC Kulgam flags-off farmers on exposure visit



KT News Desk

KULGAM, OCTOBER 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Thursday flagged off a group of 47 progressive farmer-entrepreneurs on a six-day exposure-cum-training programme under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) 2025-26.

During the tour, the farmers will visit Palampur Agriculture University (HP) to upgrade their skills and technical knowledge regarding the commercial promotion of medicinal plants like lavender, as well as cluster-based floriculture entrepreneurship aimed at generating employment opportunities for unemployed youth.

While interacting with the

farmers, the DC said that the objective of the tour is to make them aware of the latest technical advancements and progressive farming practices being adopted in the medicinal plants and floriculture sectors.

On the occasion, the Chief Agriculture Officer advised the participants to share and disseminate the knowledge gained during the tour among fellow farmers back home, enabling them to adopt modern agricultural techniques to improve their yields and income in these sectors.

The District Agriculture Officer, Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer, SMS (SDL), Agriculture Extension Officers, and other concerned officials were present on the occasion.

CS for accelerated implementation of key rural development schemes

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 30: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (RD&PR) Department to assess the progress of key flagship schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), and the placement-linked skill training programme Himayat (DDU-GKY).

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Rural Development Department, Aijaz Asad; Director General, Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra; and Managing Director, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, among other senior officers of the department.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary directed the department to adopt a mission-mode

approach to ensure timely completion of all pending PMAY-G houses and to expedite the sanctioning and roll-out of new placement plans under Himayat. He emphasized continuous monitoring, data-based progress tracking, and adherence to set timelines to maximize the impact of rural development interventions.

The Secretary, RDD, Aijaz Asad informed the meeting that Jammu and Kashmir has achieved 95% completion under PMAY-G. Out of a total sanctioned target of 3,34,718 houses, 3,18,542 have been completed, while 16,176 are under various stages of construction.

Of these pending houses, 6,933 are currently in progress, 1,240 at plinth level and 5,693 at lintel/roof cast level and are targeted for completion by December 31, 2025. An expenditure of Rs35.08 Cr has been



earmarked for their completion.

Under the upcoming PMAY-G 2.0 phase, it was added that 5,02,101 household surveys have been conducted to identify new beneficiaries. Additionally, the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, has approved 5,061 houses under a special project for families affected by natural calamities. Registration for this special project is scheduled to

conclude by October 31, 2025.

The Chief Secretary commended the department's significant progress in rural sanitation under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin, noting that the Union Territory is on track to achieve 100% ODF+ Model status across all villages.

DG, Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra, apprised that out of 6,216 villages, 6,115 have already been declared as ODF+ Model — achieving 98.38%

saturation. The remaining 69 villages are expected to attain ODF+ Model status by mid-November 2025.

Verification is also advancing steadily, with 5,409 villages having successfully completed the first round of verification. Verification of all ODF+ Model villages is planned to be completed by December 2025.

The meeting also reviewed progress on the formulation of key policies, including the Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Policy for Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) and the Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) Policy, which will regulate and license private desludging operators across rural areas.

Under the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2025-26, the department reported the completion of 738 Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs) and

1,905 Community Soak Pits, strengthening the rural sanitation infrastructure.

Reviewing progress under the Himayat programme, Managing Director, Himayat, Rajneesh Gupta, informed that 35,682 candidates have been trained so far, with 14,734 placed in various sectors against a sanctioned target of 81,797 trainees. The cumulative expenditure under the scheme stands at Rs318.80 Cr.

Under the revamped DDU-GKY 2.0, the scheme has an approved outlay of Rs 37.64 Cr. The Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU) has received 68 project proposals from prospective Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) and will conduct a Pre-PAC meeting in the first week of November 2025 to finalize project sanctions.

Highlighting the department's outreach initiatives, the

Chief Secretary was informed that during the Seva Parv placement drive, over 125 offer letters were issued to trained candidates. A Counselling-cum-Call Centre has also been established in collaboration with IIT Jammu to enhance post-placement support and guidance.

Concluding the review, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo directed all departmental heads to maintain strict timelines, ensure real-time monitoring, and adopt accountability-driven implementation mechanisms to accelerate progress across all flagship programmes.

He underscored that the primary goal of these initiatives is to deliver tangible benefits to rural citizens and strengthen grassroots governance through efficient, transparent, and people-centric development interventions.

Chief Secy listens to several public welfare issues raised by GCC

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 30: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Thursday held an interactive meeting with the Group of Concerned Citizens (GCC), a collective of eminent retired civil servants from Jammu and Kashmir led by former Advisor to the Governor, Khurshid Ahmad Ganai.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary patiently heard the concerns and suggestions put forth by the group regarding critical developmental, environmental, and civic issues in the Union Territory.

He appreciated the GCC members for their constructive engagement and assured that several of their suggestions are already under active consideration or implementation at various levels.

The Chief Secretary directed the concerned officers to take note of the valuable inputs offered by the retired officers, recognizing their deep institutional knowledge and field experience. He emphasized that such consultations help strengthen governance by aligning departmental initiatives with ground realities and public expectations.

Prominent officers who attended the meeting included the Additional Chief Secretary,



PWD; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF); Secretary, Health; Vice Chairman, LCMA; Commissioner, SMC; Chairperson, J&K Pollution Control Committee; and Chief Engineers of PWD, Jal Shakti, and Irrigation & Flood Control Departments.

The Group highlighted several priority areas requiring focused attention, particularly the scientific management of solid waste across Jammu and Srinagar cities. They underlined the need for a comprehensive waste treatment strategy, including the quantification and scientific disposal of legacy waste accumulated over the years.

The members also urged the administration to expedite flood mitigation measures for Srinagar, including the enhancement of the Flood Spill Channel's carrying capacity and the dredging of Wular Lake to increase its water-holding potential. They

described these steps as essential for protecting lives and properties in flood-prone areas.

Further, the GCC stressed the importance of preserving and rejuvenating the region's water bodies including lakes, wetlands, and springs calling them natural assets that define Kashmir's ecology, heritage, and scenic identity.

In the sphere of urban mobility, the group advocated for engineering-based traffic management rather than a purely enforcement-driven approach. They suggested that identified bottlenecks be systematically removed through better road design and planning interventions as suggested by the group.

The meeting also saw discussion on health infrastructure, with specific suggestions for the reuse and optimization of the GB Pant Hospital facilities and the augmentation of M&CCH

Anantnag to enhance healthcare delivery in South Kashmir in this important sector.

Among the GCC members who attended the meeting were Naseema Lankar, Lateef-uz-Zaman Deva, Kifayat Hussain Rizvi, S. Madni, G.J. Nehvi, A.R. Khan, Khaliq-uz-Zaman Bhat, Abdul Majeed Bhat, Iftikhar Hakeem, and Iftikhar Drabu.

Concluding the interaction, the Chief Secretary reiterated his appreciation for the GCC's informed perspectives and assured that their recommendations would be appropriately forwarded to the respective departments for examination and time-bound action.

He also encouraged continued engagement between the GCC and government departments to ensure that expert knowledge and experience meaningfully contribute to the UT's development journey.

Northern Rly's Jammu Div awards multipurpose store contracts at key stations to boost revenue

KT News Desk

Jammu, Oct 30: In a significant step towards increasing non-fare revenue, the Jammu Division of Northern Railway has successfully awarded the contract for setting up multipurpose (MPS) stores at various railway stations including Banihal, Anantnag, Srinagar, Sangaldan, Budgam, and Baramulla to the successful bidder.

Details of e-auction:

1. The multipurpose stall at Banihal Railway Station has been allotted through e-auction for a period of five years at a total cost of 11,02,037, with an amount of 1,86,786 charged for each year.

2. The allotment of multipurpose stalls through e-auction at Anantnag Railway Station has been done for a total of 15,55,240 for five years. An amount of 2,63,600 will be charged for each year.

3. The allotment of multipurpose stalls through e-auction at Srinagar Railway Station has been done for a total of 16,84,922 for five years. An amount of 2,85,580 will be charged for each year.

4. The allotment of multipurpose stalls through e-auction at Sangaldan Railway Station has been done for a total of 8,77,837 for five years. An

amount of 1,48,786 will be charged for each year.

5. The allotment of multipurpose stalls through e-auction at Srinagar Railway Station has been done for a total of 4,16,274 for five years. An amount of 70,555 will be charged for each year.

6. The allotment of multipurpose stalls through e-auction at Budgam Railway Station has been done for a total of 6,19,500 for five years. An amount of 1,05,000 will be charged for each year.

7. The allotment of multipurpose stalls through e-auction at Budgam Railway Station has been done for a total of 4,42,500 for five years. An amount of 75,000 will be charged for each year.

8. The allotment of a multipurpose stall at Banihal Railway Station through e-auction has been done for a total of 416,274 for five years, with a fee of 70,555 per year.

9. The allotment of a multipurpose stall at Baramulla Railway Station through e-auction has been done for a total of 829,274 for five years, with a fee of 140,555 per year.

This reflects the Division's continued focus on innovation and passenger-centric development. The store will offer a wide range of items needed by passengers,

including medicines, cosmetics, newspapers, books, toys, children's items, and daily use items.

This initiative was implemented through a transparent e-auction process, ensuring fairness and maximum revenue generation. This auction will generate a total revenue of 79,43,858 for Indian Railways over a period of five years.

This auction is a significant step towards modernization of railways and better utilization of resources. Today, a major and historic successful e-auction process was completed for train number 12414. The SLR of train number 12414 was charged for a total amount of 1,08,57,789 for three years.

Uchit Singhal, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu Division, said: "Increasing non-fare revenue while promoting local employment is perfectly aligned with our twin goals of cultural integration and financial sustainability. We are confident that this store will enrich the passenger experience and serve as a model for similar initiatives at other stations." He further explained that as a result of intensive marketing efforts undertaken by the division, the SLR of train number 12414 was allotted on a three-year contract. This is a significant achievement.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Each promise will

of statehood and constitutional rights continues," he said, adding that the National Conference will persist in raising these issues at every platform.

Omar criticised the previous MPs, saying their voices faded in Delhi. "We sent big names earlier, but they got affected by Delhi's pollution and their voices were never heard," he said. "This time, we are confident our representatives will speak for the people."

He said north Kashmir has long lacked meaningful representation. "After 2014, Handwara's voice did not reach either the Assembly or Parliament," he said, adding that the current Baramulla MP attends sessions only after court permission and remains disconnected from his constituency.

Reaffirming his commitment, CM Omar said Handwara deserves to be a district and will get that status once Jammu and Kashmir regains statehood. "You don't need to seek it; it will be given. Once we regain statehood, I will make Handwara a district," he promised, drawing applause from the gathering.

Abdullah welcomed former People's Conference (PC) leader Ashiq Neelum into the National Conference, calling him an influential figure in Kupwara and north Kashmir. "His joining will strengthen the party and benefit the people. We look forward to working together," he added.

Omar claimed that despite attempts by opponents to provoke and distract, the party remains focused on its promises and the people's trust.

Seeks judicial process in employee terminations

Responding to questions from reporters, CM Omar said the termination of government employees should follow legal procedure. "I have always said that termination should be done through the court. Everyone should get a chance to defend themselves. The current practice of ending services on suspicion is harmful," he said.

He said many employees dismissed under suspicion later returned to service after legal review. "It would be better to use the method of the court to punish the real culprits," he added.

Rejects MCC violation allegations

When asked about claims by the Leader of Opposition (LoP) that he was violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), the Chief Minister dismissed the charge, saying, "No problem."—(KNO)

LG Sinha terminates

after considering the facts and circumstances of the case and on the basis of the information available, that the activities of Gh Hussain, teacher in the School Education Department are such as to warrant his dismissal from service; and whereas the Lieutenant Governor is satisfied under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold an enquiry in the case of Gh Hussain. Accordingly, the Lieutenant Governor hereby dismisses his services with immediate effect.

The dismissal order of Maajid Iqbal Dar, teacher in the School Education Department, S/o late Mohammad Iqbal Dar, R/o Ward No.1, Kheora, District Rajouri, in terms of sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India reads: "The Lieutenant Governor is satisfied after considering the facts and circumstances of the case and on the basis of the information available, that the activities of Maajid Iqbal Dar are such as to warrant his dismissal from service, and whereas the Lieutenant Governor is satisfied under sub-clause (c) of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 311 of the Constitution of India that in the interest of the security of the State, it is

not expedient to hold an enquiry in the case of Maajid Iqbal Dar. Accordingly, the Lieutenant Governor hereby dismisses him from service, with immediate effect."

GHULAM HUSSAIN- TEACHER (EDUCATION DEPARTMENT)

Sources told KNO that Ghulam Hussain was appointed as Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teacher in 2004. He was regularised in 2009 and posted at Govt Primary School, Kalwa, Mahore, Reasi. According to sources, Hussain was covertly working for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) to carry out terrorist activities.

As an Over Ground Worker (OGW), he was tasked to strengthen the terror network in Reasi and surrounding areas.

"The evidence collected by the investigators from law enforcement and intelligence agencies revealed that Ghulam Hussain was in touch with LeT terrorists Mohammad Qasim and Ghulam Mustafa through encrypted messaging applications," sources said, adding, "Both were his handlers and Ghulam Hussain was carrying out the terror activities as per their directions. He received terror funds via local conduit which he subsequently delivered to families of known terrorists as a means to support terrorism and also distributed money for recruitment of terrorists and paid for logistics."

The investigations revealed that Hussain was receiving regular parcels and financial assistance through various conduits. He was arrested in 2023.

According to the sources it also came to fore that Hussain did not commit terrorist act solely for the greed of money but also due to his sympathies towards terrorism, both as an ideology and a violent campaign. He was planted within the system in District Reasi to radicalise youth and recruit them in terror fold. "Hussain displayed disloyalty, both towards the nation and towards the Education Department by turning into an accomplice and an OGW of LeT terror outfit. He was engaged in terror activities against the very nation that provided him with employment and fed his families," the sources said.

"The investigations established that his links to the terrorist ecosystem were through a network of other OGWs who have been operating at the behest of LeT terrorist outfit," sources said, adding that the investigators observed that having a dangerous terror collaborator working as a teacher in the school is a huge threat to the young and impressionable minds and it also puts at risk the lives of hundreds of children.

MAJID IQBAL DAR -TEACHER (EDUCATION DEPARTMENT)

Sources told KNO that Majid Iqbal Dar was appointed as a lab assistant in 2009 in School Education Department on compassionate ground after death of his father. He was later promoted as a teacher in 2019. Majid was working as an Over Ground Worker (OGW) of Lashkar-e-Taiba terror outfit and became one of the key figures involved in radicalising youngsters in Rajouri and surrounding region.

Investigations revealed that Majid Iqbal Dar was also involved in narco-terror and maintained a close link with LeT terrorist Mohammad Jabar. It has been learnt that Majid Iqbal Dar was a reliable asset of LeT and was using the drug money to finance terror activities and radicalise gullible youth.

"His terror link was exposed in January 2023 when police recovered an IED planted near J&K Bank in Rajouri. During the course of investigation police arrested three persons including the government teacher, Majid Iqbal Dar. It was later revealed that Majid, LeT terrorists Jabar and Zohaib Shazad had planted the IED on the instruction of their LeT handler based in Pakistan and they had also received money via a conduit," the investigators revealed.

Sources said subsequent to his detention under, Dar continued to display radical tendencies

inside the prison.

As per credible sources close Majid remained deeply committed to the terrorist ideology. "That Majid has been doing this since long and that too at the cost of government exchequer and has managed to evade the law for many years is a double jeopardy against public interest," sources added.

Pertinently, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has always reiterated that the people from all sections of society must realise that those who provide ideological and financial support for terrorism and create false narratives are dangerous to peace and development.

His zero-tolerance policy is based on key pillars of anti-terror crackdown against OGWs in administration & society, crackdown on narco-terrorism. His mantra of inclusive development has ensured peace and economic revival.

Recently LG Sinha had said, "Peace can only be achieved by completely dismantling the terror ecosystem. War against terrorism is not over yet. Kinetic and non-Kinetic operations must continue. We must maintain the momentum and take stringent action against terrorism and its entire ecosystem." (KNO)

LG pays tribute

modern India. Let us pledge to follow his ideals and uphold the spirit of unity, a common national identity and brotherhood as a tribute to Sardar Patel."

Meanwhile, a delegation of Dogra Samaj Trust, Mumbai led by its President Krishna Pandit called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The delegation, comprising Mukesh Rishi and Priti Sapru, film actors; Gagan Mahotra, Vice President and Nidhi Dogra, Advisor of the Trust, discussed with the Lieutenant Governor the establishment of Dogra Bhawan in Mumbai.

The proposed Dogra Bhawan will act a cultural, educational and welfare hub for the members of Dogra community living in Mumbai. The members of the delegation also put-forth several issues pertaining to promotion of business, tourism and film-related activities in Jammu Kashmir.

Up roar in Assembly

Jammu & Kashmir, an adjournment motion cannot be brought on the same issue once it has already been rejected.

Angered by the Speaker's response, Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma accused the government of evading discussion on the flood situation. "Every corner of Jammu and Kashmir was affected by floods caused by heavy rainfall. People have expectations that there will be discussions on the impact of the floods, but no such discussion is being allowed," Sharma said.

He demanded that the Question Hour be suspended to allow a discussion on the plight of flood-affected people.

Meanwhile, Sharma and other BJP legislators waved copies of newspaper reports alleging irregularities in allotment of tenders by Roads & Buildings department. Nowshera is the native constituency of Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary.

Shouting slogans such as "Corrupt Sarkar Hai Hai" (Down with the corrupt government), "NC Sarkar Hai Hai" (Down with the NC government), and "Tender Chor Hai Hai" (Down with tender thieves), the MLAs staged protests.

NC legislators also stood up and retaliated with slogans such as "Chor Machaye Shor" (The thief makes noise).

Despite repeated directions from the Speaker to return to their seats, the protesting legislators continued their demonstration.

Amid the commotion, three BJP legislators-RS Pathani, Sunil Bhardwaj, and Surinder Kumar-stormed into the well of the House, leading to their removal by the marshals.

The disruption continued throughout the Question Hour, with BJP and NC legislators

trading slogans and accusations.

Later, all BJP legislators staged a walkout but returned to the House shortly afterwards. (KNO)

J&K Assembly

Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2025 proposes to enhance the upper age limit of state election commissioner from existing 65 to 70.

The Tenancy Act-2025 is a new legislation for establishing Rent Authority to regulate renting of premises and to protect the interests of landlords and tenants and to provide speedy adjudication mechanism for resolution of disputes.

The Jammu and Kashmir Shops and Establishments (Licensing, Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Bill, 2025 provides for regulation of employment and other conditions of service of workers employed in shops and establishments.

The Jammu & Kashmir Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2025 seeks to streamline the appellate process for cooperative societies by omitting Section 157, which had mandated the Government to constitute a separate Cooperative Appellate Tribunal. (KNO)

MHA appoints

Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

It authorises the SPP to represent the NIA in case number RC-02/2025/NIA/JMU. Officials said the appointment is intended to ensure that the trial progresses efficiently and that the prosecution's case is presented effectively before the court.

Pertinently, three terrorists affiliated with the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) targeted a group of tourists, resulting in 26 deaths and injuries to 16 others.

The attackers identified as Pakistani nationals Suleiman Shah alias Asif, Hamza Afghani alias Afghan, and Jibran were later killed in an encounter with the security forces during 'Operation Mahadev' in the Harwan forest area on July 28.

Following the attack, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) held a review meeting and approved several measures to strengthen counter-terror operations, including the launch of "Operation Sindoor," aimed at dismantling terrorist infrastructure and cross-border networks.

The NIA took over the investigation from Jammu and Kashmir Police on April 27, 2025, under orders from the MHA, citing the case's national security implications. Since then, the agency has focused on identifying the broader network behind the assault, including foreign funding links and local support.

By June 2025, the NIA arrested two residents of Pahalgam Parvaiz Ahmad Jothar of Batkote and Bashir Ahmad Jothar of Hill Park for allegedly harbouring the attackers at a seasonal hut in Hill Park before the incident.

The two men were charged under Section 19 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967. The agency continues to investigate to uncover the complete network involved in the planning and execution of the attack. (KNO)

Reservation policy

for meritorious candidates. "If reservation had been applied in this manner earlier, would we have the doctors and engineers we see today? They reached those positions through open competition. Increasing reservation now will restrict talent that could represent J&K globally," he said.

He urged the government to make relevant information public instead of avoiding scrutiny. "There are people who want to research and analyze this issue. The government should provide data rather than block questions," Lone added.

His remarks drew a sharp response from NC MLA Nazir Ahmad Gurezi, who said such

comments ignored the challenges faced by students from remote regions like Gurez.

"You studied in London, while our children study in a school in Dawar where there are no teachers," Gurezi said.

He pointed out that students in backward areas often study without basic facilities. "There is no science stream in many high schools in Gurez, yet our students sit for the same tests. When a boy from Gurez gets selected, you say he cannot compete. He can, and he is as capable as anyone," Gurezi asserted.

The exchange led to protests in the House, with MLAs from reserved constituencies standing up to oppose Lone's comments. The Speaker intervened to restore order, and proceedings continued smoothly thereafter. (KNO)

Justice Surya Kant

"I convey my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to him," he added.

Justice Kant, born in a middle-class family on February 10, 1962 in Hissar district of Haryana, became a top court judge on May 24, 2019.

He brings to the country's top judicial office a wealth of experience spanning two decades on the Bench, marked by landmark verdicts on abrogation of Article 370, free speech, democracy, corruption, environment and gender equality.

Justice Kant was part of the historic Bench that kept the colonial-era sedition law in abeyance, directing that no new FIRs be registered under it until a government review.

He also nudged the Election Commission to disclose details of 65 lakh excluded voters in Bihar, showing his commitment to electoral transparency. He made history by directing that one-third of seats in Bar associations, including the Supreme Court Bar Association, be reserved for women.

Justice Kant was part of the Bench that appointed a five-member committee headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice Indu Malhotra to probe the security breach during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2022 Punjab visit, saying such matters required "a judicially trained mind".

He also upheld the One Rank-One Pension (OROP) scheme for defence forces, calling it constitutionally valid, and continues to hear petitions of women officers in the armed forces seeking parity in permanent commission.

He was on the seven-judge bench that overruled the 1967 Aligarh Muslim University judgment, opening the way for reconsideration of the institution's minority status.

He was part of the Bench which heard the Pegasus spyware case and which appointed a panel of cyber experts to probe allegations of unlawful surveillance, famously stating that the state cannot get a "free pass under the guise of national security".

*2872 domestic

harassment, eve teasing, sexual harassment and rape, providing safety and security to women across the UT. (KNO)

CSC report on

including those laid down in the landmark Indra Sawhney vs. Union of India (1992) judgment. In that ruling, the Supreme Court held that reservations should ordinarily not exceed 50% of available vacancies.

"However, it is also clarified that this ceiling is not an absolute rule and may be relaxed in extraordinary circumstances, where exceptional conditions and peculiar facts of a particular state or region justify such a departure," the minister's reply stated.

The government also clarified that it does not maintain region-wise or district-wise data on selections for junior scale posts in the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service, Jammu and Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service, and Jammu & Kashmir Accounts Service. (KNO)

Cong-RJD leaders insulting 'Chhathi Maiyya', Bihar will never forgive them: PM Modi

PTI

Chhapra/Muzaffarpur, Oct 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday charged the opposition Congress-RJD combine in Bihar with insulting 'Chhathi Maiyya', having "problems with Ram temple at Ayodhya" and "protecting infiltrators" for the politics of vote bank and appeasement.

He made the remarks at back-to-back rallies in Muzaffarpur and Chhapra towns, a day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that Modi had tried to enact a "drama" by planning to take a dip in the Yamuna on the occasion of Chhath Puja, but it was shelved after it was exposed that a puddle had been created with clean water since the river was filthy.

The PM urged the people of the state to repose their trust in the "Narendra-Nitish" combine, an obvious reference to the JD(U) president, who has been the longest serving chief minister of Bihar. "It is my first tour of Bihar after Chhath Puja, which is now famous world over. The festival stands not just for devotion but also for equality, a reason why my government is trying to get a UNESCO heritage tag for this festival," he said. "I listen to Chhath songs while travelling. I was once moved to listen to one of these songs rendered by a girl from Nagaland. But while this son of yours is



busy ensuring that Chhath gets the honour that is its due, the Congress-RJD people are heaping scorn on the festival, calling it a drama, a nautanki," he added, without mentioning any leader by name.

Gandhi had alleged that the PM would do "anything for votes, even dance".

Modi said, "Look at the depths to which these people can stoop while seeking votes. This is an insult to the festival of Chhath that Bihar will not forget for centuries."

"Just look at the contempt these people have for the people of Bihar. One of their leaders, while holding the post of Punjab CM, had declared at a public rally that Biharis should be driven away. And the daughter of a big family in the Congress, who is now sitting in the Parliament, giggled and clapped," he said. The allusion was to an incident involving former Punjab

CM Charanjit Singh Channi and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

"The INDI Alliance, the RJD-Congress, are capable of nothing except politics of appeasement and vote bank, for which they are protecting infiltrators," said the PM, in an apparent reference to the opposition coalition's strident stance against Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

"They always have a problem with our cultural heritage. Their leaders can take time off to go abroad on tours. But you may have never seen them visiting the Ram temple at Ayodhya, which was constructed after a struggle that lasted for 500 years," he said.

Terming his opponents as "naamdar" (people with a pedigree), Modi said they cannot stomach the fact that a backward class leader, who used to sell tea, has attained

such heights.

"They need to know I do not owe my achievements to their benediction but to the blessings of the people and the Constitution framed by Babasaheb Ambedkar," he said. He alleged that Ambedkar was insulted by the Congress and RJD leaders.

He claimed that all surveys were showing that the RJD-led coalition would face a humiliating defeat in the assembly polls, so it was making "unrealistic promises". "RJD-Congress manifesto is in fact a rate chart, their promises are for 'rangdaari', ransom, corruption, loot," he alleged.

"All surveys are indicating that the NDA is heading for a big victory. And the RJD-Congress combine will face the worst drubbing in their history," he claimed.

Modi also alleged that the Congress-RJD combine stood for five 'Ks' -- 'katta' (country-made weapons lawlessness), 'kro-orta' (cruelty), 'katuta' (social resentment), 'kushasan' (misgovernance) and corruption. He remarked, with a hint of alarm, "What type of songs are being played at the rallies of RJD. These speak of 'katta', 'chhura' (dagger), 'dunaali' (double-barreled guns), and kidnapping sisters and daughters."

Modi claimed 35,000-40,000 abductions took place during the RJD regime in the state, and "goons used to loot vehicle showrooms", an indirect reference to the

wedding of Misa Bharti, the eldest daughter of former Chief Minister Rabri Devi, who is currently the MP from Patliputra.

"The NDA, on the other hand, stands for preserving and honouring cultural heritage and ensuring all-round development of all states, including Bihar," asserted the PM, who began his speech by making the crowds chant 'phir ek baar NDA sarkar' and 'phir ek baar susashan sarkar' (NDA government once again, good governance once again).

"Your parents voted for ending 'jungle raj', you have to vote for a prosperous Bihar," he told the young voters. Referring to the land for jobs scam, in which the INDIA bloc's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav has been named an accused, Modi asked, "Can those who have looted railways, develop connectivity in the state?"

The PM also made a mention of the Golu kidnapping and murder case of 2001, involving the eight-year-old son of a bank employee in Muzaffarpur, which had remained in headlines.

He alleged that during the RJD regime, the Bihar CM's Office had turned into a haven for mafias.

Without mentioning Champa Biswas by name, he also spoke of "the wife of an IAS officer writing to the then governor of Bihar that she has been raped by leaders of the ruling party".

FM Sitharaman embarks on 4-day official visit to Bhutan



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 30: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday embarked on a four-day official visit to Bhutan to further strengthen the partnership with the neighbouring country.

She is leading the Indian delegation from the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

The visit underscores India's enduring partnership with Bhutan, rooted in mutual respect, trust, and shared commitment to progress and prosperity in the region, the finance ministry said in a statement.

The Finance Minister, on the first day of her official tour, will visit the historic Sangchen Choekhor Monastery, established

in 1765 and home to over 100 monks engaged in advanced Buddhist studies, it said.

As part of the visit, Sitharaman will visit and observe several key projects being implemented with support of the Government of India, it said, adding that these include the Kurichhu Hydropower Plant Dam and Powerhouse, the Gyalung Academy, the Sangchen Choekhor Monastery and Punakha Dzong.

She is scheduled to call on the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, and the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dashi Tshering Tobgay.

Sitharaman will also hold a bilateral meeting with the Finance Minister of Bhutan, Lekey Dorji, to

discuss avenues for further strengthening India-Bhutan economic and financial cooperation. The Finance Minister will also visit the Cottage & Small Industries (CSI) Market, where she will witness a transaction using India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI), reflecting the growing digital and financial connectivity between the two nations, it said.

In the last segment of her official visit, Sitharaman will visit the Punakha Dzong -- Bhutan's second-oldest and second-largest dzong.

On the way to the Punakha Dzong, Sitharaman will also interact with Bhutanese farmers to understand their agricultural practices, challenges, and opportunities, it added.

Insurance companies cannot deny compensation because of route deviation: SC



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 30: The Supreme Court has said that insurance companies cannot deny compensation to accident victims merely because there was deviation in route of the vehicle involved and that it was in violation of the permit.

A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Karol and Prashant Kumar Mishra said the purpose of an insurance policy in the present context is to shield the owner/operator from direct liability when such an unforeseen/unfortunate incident takes place. "To deny the victim/dependents of the victim compensation simply because the accident took place outside the bounds of the permit and, therefore, is outside the purview of the insurance policy, would be offensive to the sense of justice, for the accident itself is for no fault of his. Then, the insurance company must certainly ought to pay," the bench said. The top court made the observation while while dismissing appeals filed by a vehicle owner and insurer, The New India Insurance

Company Limited. On October 7, 2014, a motorcyclist was hit by the offending vehicle being driven in a rash and negligent manner, resulting in his death on the spot.

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal awarded an amount of Rs 18.86 lakh as compensation along with interest.

Being aggrieved with the amount of compensation awarded, the petitioner filed an appeal before the Karnataka High Court on the grounds that the compensation was not correctly calculated by the Tribunal. The insurance company also challenged the Tribunal's order on the grounds of violation by the insurer of the conditions enumerated in the policy.

The high court directed the insurance company to satisfy the award as passed by the Tribunal and granted the right to recover the amount from the owner of the bus. While the insurer challenged the high court's direction to pay compensation first and later recover from the owner, the owner challenged the high court's order allowing recovery from him.

Sensex crashes 593 points, Nifty ends below 25,900

Fed rate uncertainty weighs on markets

PTI

Mumbai, Oct 30: Equity markets fell sharply on Thursday, with the Sensex tumbling 592.67 points and the Nifty declining to 25,877.85 level, as fresh foreign fund outflows and no clarity on the future course of rate action by the US Federal Reserve dampened investors' sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 592.67 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 84,404.46. During the day, it dropped 684.48 points or 0.80 per cent to 84,312.65.

The 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 176.05 points or 0.68 per cent to 25,877.85.

From the Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Bajaj Finance and Reliance Industries were among the major laggards.

However, Larsen & Toubro, Bharat Electronics, UltraTech Cement and Maruti were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,540.16 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 5,692.81 crore in the previous trade.

"As expected, the US Fed cut interest rates by 25 bps. However, the market consolidated after Chair Jerome Powell indicated that this might be the



last rate cut of 2025, tempering hopes of further monetary easing. The resulting strength in the US dollar contributed to a risk-off sentiment across emerging markets, including India," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

In Asian markets, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled lower while South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index ended in the positive territory.

Markets in Europe were trading lower. US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

"Markets witnessed broad-based selling on Thursday as uncertainty over the US Federal

Reserve's future rate cut trajectory outweighed earlier optimism, dampening global risk sentiment and prompting investors to turn cautious. FIIs continued to book profits, while DIIs extended selective buying support, helping cushion the market from a deeper decline," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.59 per cent to USD 64.54 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the Sensex climbed 368.97 points or 0.44 per cent to settle at 84,997.13. The Nifty went up by 117.70 points or 0.45 per cent to 26,053.90.

PM2.5 pollution led to over 17 lakh deaths in India in 2022, fossil fuels caused nearly half: Report

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 30: Human-caused PM2.5 pollution was responsible for more than 17 lakh deaths in India in 2022 -- up by 38 per cent since 2010 -- with use of fossil fuels contributing to 44 per cent of the deaths, according to a global report published by The Lancet journal.

Use of petrol for road transport contributed to 2.69 lakh deaths, the '2025 Report of The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change' said. Estimates also suggest that premature mortality in 2022 due to outdoor air pollution in India translated into a financial loss of USD 339.4 billion -- about 9.5 per cent of the country's GDP.

An international team of 128 experts from 71 academic institutions and UN agencies, led by University College London, was involved in producing the ninth edition of the report.

Published ahead of the 30th UN Conference of the Parties (COP30), the report provides the most comprehensive assessment to date of the connections between climate change and health, the authors said.

The findings assume significance against a backdrop of Delhi seeing

consistently high levels of air pollution, with air quality shifting between "poor" and "very poor" over the past few days.

Cloud-seeding trials were conducted in parts of the national capital, such as Burari, Karol Bagh, and Mayur Vihar, over the past week in an attempt to address pollution. However, environmentalists describe it as a "short-term measure" that fails to tackle the root causes of the city's degrading air quality.

"There were over 1,718,000 deaths attributable to anthropogenic air pollution (PM2.5) in 2022 in India, an increase of 38 per cent since 2010. Fossil fuels (coal and liquid gas) contributed to 752,000 (44 per cent) of these deaths in 2022," the authors wrote in a country-related data sheet, accompanying the Lancet report.

They found fossil fuels continued to account for nearly all of road transport energy in India (96 per cent), and electricity accounted for only 0.3 per cent.

As of 2022, coal still made up nearly half of the total energy supply (46 per cent) and three-fourths of total electricity in India, while renewables made up two per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, the report said.

8 homemade drinks for kidney health & urinary wellness

Natural recipes to detox and support kidney function

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Oct 30: Kidneys are essential organs that filter waste, balance fluids, and maintain overall health. Supporting kidney function naturally through homemade drinks is a simple, effective, and refreshing approach to wellness. These kidney-friendly beverages are rich in antioxidants, nutrients, and bioactive compounds that help detoxify the body, reduce inflammation, manage uric acid levels, and prevent kidney stones.

Regular consumption can improve kidney function, promote hydration, and support urinary tract health. Incorporating these natural drinks into your daily routine complements a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle, enhancing overall well-being. From herbal teas to fresh fruit and vegetable juices, these eight homemade drinks are easy to prepare and highly effective for maintaining optimal kidney health. Take a look

Homemade drinks that support kidney health naturally

Dandelion root tea

Dandelion root tea acts as a gentle diuretic and supports liver and kidney function. It helps flush out excess fluids and toxins, promoting overall kidney health. Steep dried dandelion roots in hot water for 10 minutes, strain, and consume once or twice daily. According to a study published in *Nutrients*, dandelion leaf extract has nephroprotective effects through antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-apoptotic properties.

Celery juice

Celery is a natural diuretic and antioxidant-rich vegetable that promotes kidney detoxification. Drinking fresh celery juice may help reduce kidney inflammation and prevent the formation of stones. A study published in *Journal PMIP* Acclery juice and extract have significant protective effects on kidney function, including reducing crystal deposition, proteinuria, anaemia, and oxidative stress. Blend celery stalks with a little water, strain, and drink on an

empty stomach for best results.

Ginger-mint herbal tea

Ginger and mint together create a soothing, anti-inflammatory beverage that supports digestion and urinary tract health. Ginger contains compounds like gingerol, which help reduce inflammation, while mint eases urinary irritation. Simmer sliced ginger and a handful of mint leaves in water for 5 minutes, strain, and drink for kidney-friendly hydration. A study published in *Nutrients* confirms that ginger precludes the toxic impact of ethanol against kidney damage at both histological and biochemical levels

Amla infusion

Amla, rich in vitamin C and antioxidants, can reduce oxidative stress and inflammation, supporting detoxification and kidney health. It also helps boost immunity, improve digestion, enhance liver function, and promote healthy skin and hair. Slice fresh amla and steep it in hot water for 10 minutes. Drink the infusion without

sugar for maximum benefits.

Cucumber juice

Cucumber juice is hydrating and contains flavonoids that may inhibit enzymes responsible for uric acid production. This helps reduce uric acid levels, lowering the risk of gout and kidney stones. Blend peeled cucumber with water, strain, and enjoy a refreshing glass daily. Its high water and potassium content also support kidney function by flushing out toxins, preventing stone formation, and maintaining electrolyte balance for overall renal health.

Watermelon juice

Watermelon is low in purines and high in water content, making it ideal for hydration and supporting uric acid excretion. Blend deseeded watermelon pieces, optionally add a pinch of black salt for taste, and serve chilled to support kidney function naturally. Rich in antioxidants like lycopene and vitamin C, watermelon also helps reduce inflammation, supports detoxification, and promotes overall metabolic balance,

making it an excellent natural remedy for gout and kidney health.

Hibiscus tea

Hibiscus tea is a caffeine-free herbal drink made from dried Hibiscus sabdariffa petals. It has mild diuretic properties that help eliminate excess water, supporting kidney function. Studies also indicate hibiscus may help reduce blood pressure and LDL cholesterol, indirectly promoting kidney and cardiovascular health. Steep 1-2 teaspoons of dried petals in hot water for 5-7 minutes and enjoy without sugar

Unsweetened lemon water

Starting the day with a glass of lemon water can boost urine production and help flush out toxins. The citric acid in lemons may also prevent the formation of calcium oxalate kidney stones by increasing urinary citrate levels. To prepare, squeeze half a lemon into a glass of lukewarm water and drink it in the morning or between meals.

Trump cuts tariffs on China after meeting Xi in South Korea

AP

Seoul, Oct 30: President Donald Trump described his face-to-face with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday as a roaring success, saying he would cut tariffs on China, while Beijing had agreed to allow the export of rare earth elements and start buying American soybeans.

The president told reporters aboard Air Force One that the US would lower tariffs implemented earlier this year as punishment on China for its selling of chemicals used to make fentanyl from 20 percent to 10 percent. That brings the total combined tariff rate on China down from 57 percent to 47 percent

"I guess on the scale from 0 to 10, with ten being the best, I would say the meeting was a 12," Trump said. "I think it was a 12."

Trump said that he would go to China in April and Xi would come to the US "some time after that." The president said they also discussed the export of more advanced computer chips to China, saying that Nvidia would be in talks with Chinese officials.

Trump said he could sign a trade deal with China "pretty soon."

"We have not too many major stumbling blocks," Trump said. Sources of tension remain

Despite Trump's optimism after a 100-minute meeting with Xi in South Korea, there continues to be the potential for major tensions between the world's two largest economies. Both nations are seeking dominant places in manufacturing, developing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, and shaping world affairs like



Russia's war in Ukraine.

Trump's aggressive use of tariffs since returning to the White House for a second term, combined with China's retaliatory limits on exports of rare earth elements, gave the meeting newfound urgency. There is a mutual recognition that neither side wants to risk blowing up the world economy in ways that could jeopardize their own country's fortunes.

When the two were seated at the start of the meeting, Xi read prepared remarks that stressed a willingness to work together despite differences.

"Given our different national conditions, we do not always see eye to eye with each other," he said through a translator. "It is normal for the two leading economies of the world to have frictions now and then."

There was a slight difference in translation as China's Xinhua News Agency reported Xi as telling Trump that having some differences is inevitable.

China did not provide immediate comment on the meeting

or any outcomes.

Finding ways to lower the temperature

The leaders met in Busan, South Korea, a port city about 76 kilometers (47 miles) south from Gyeongju, the main venue for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

In the days leading up to the meeting, US officials signaled that Trump did not intend to make good on a recent threat to impose an additional 100 percent import tax on Chinese goods, and China showed signs it was willing to relax its export controls on rare earths and also buy soybeans from America.

Officials from both countries met earlier this week in Kuala Lumpur to lay the groundwork for their leaders. Afterward, China's top trade negotiator Li Chenggang said they had reached a "preliminary consensus," a statement affirmed by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent who said there was "a very successful framework."

Shortly before the meeting on Thursday, Trump posted on

Truth Social that the meeting would be the "G2," a recognition of America and China's status as the world's biggest economies. The Group of Seven and Group of 20 are other forums of industrialized nations.

But while those summits often happen at luxury spaces, this meeting took place in humbler surroundings: Trump and Xi met in a small gray building with a blue roof on a military base adjacent to Busan's international airport.

The anticipated detente has given investors and businesses caught between the two nations a sense of relief. The US stock market has climbed on the hopes of a trade framework coming out of the meeting.

Pressure points remain for both US and China

Trump has outward confidence that the grounds for a deal are in place, but previous negotiations with China this year in Geneva, Switzerland and London had a start-stop quality to them. The initial promise of progress has repeatedly given way to both countries seeking a better position against the other.

"The proposed deal on the table fits the pattern we've seen all year: short-term stabilization dressed up as strategic progress," said Craig Singleton, senior director of the China program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "Both sides are managing volatility, calibrating just enough cooperation to avert crisis while the deeper rivalry endures."

The US and China have each shown they believe they have levers to pressure the other, and the past year has demonstrated that tentative steps forward can

be short-lived.

For Trump, that pressure comes from tariffs.

China had faced new tariffs this year totaling 30 percent, of which 20 percent were tied to its role in fentanyl production. But the tariff rates have been volatile. In April, he announced plans to jack the rate on Chinese goods to 145 percent, only to abandon those plans as markets recoiled.

Then, on Oct. 10, Trump threatened a 100 percent import tax because of China's rare earth restrictions. That figure, including past tariffs, would now be 47 percent "effective immediately," Trump told reporters on Thursday.

Xi has his own chokehold on the world economy because China is the top producer and processor of the rare earth minerals needed to make fighter jets, robots, electric vehicles and other high-tech products.

China had tightened export restrictions on Oct. 9, repeating a cycle in which each nation jockeys for an edge only to back down after more trade talks.

What might also matter is what happens directly after their talks. Trump plans to return to Washington, while Xi plans to stay on in South Korea to meet with regional leaders during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, which officially begins on Friday.

"Xi sees an opportunity to position China as a reliable partner and bolster bilateral and multilateral relations with countries frustrated by the US administration's tariff policy," said Jay Treadale, a former State Department official who is CEO of TD International, a risk and intelligence advisory firm.

Nepal PM holds first talks since protests with parties, 'Gen Z'



AFP

Katmandu, Oct 30: Nepal's interim leader has held the first talks between political parties and youth representatives since last month's anti-corruption protests that toppled the previous government, officials said on Thursday.

"We have succeeded in creating an environment of cooperation and trust by ending the state of lack of dialogue," Prime Minister Sushila Karki, the former chief justice appointed as interim leader, said in a statement on social media.

The unrest on September 8-9 was triggered by a brief ban on social media, although it was fueled by long-standing frustration over economic hardship and corruption.

At least 73 people were killed during the two days of unrest, which left parliament, courts and government buildings in flames.

Karki, 73, who will lead the Himalayan nation until elections, held a four-hour meeting with youth representatives on Wednesday, according to her

media coordinator Ram Rawal.

The challenges ahead to ensure the March 2026 elections pass off smoothly are huge — including deep public distrust in Nepal's established parties.

The meeting, headed by Karki, was attended by all major political parties and several "Gen Z" representatives, Rawal said.

Also included were representatives of the party of ousted former prime minister KP Sharma Oli, the Communist Party of Nepal — Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML).

"After the protest, there was a trust gap between them," Rawal told AFP. "This meeting has helped create an environment of trust for the upcoming elections."

Karki said in a post on X that "the new generation, political parties and the government all have the same goal — to hold fair, secure and timely elections."

She has pledged to restore order and address calls for clean governance in the country of 30 million.

Minister for Communication Jagadish Kharel told reporters after the meeting that it was "important and fruitful."

Cricket Australia reports USD 7 million loss despite bumper India series

REUTERS

Melbourne, Oct 30: Cricket Australia (CA) announced a net deficit of A\$11.3 million (\$7.34 million) for the 2024-25 financial year on Thursday, with a steep increase in costs offsetting a jump in revenue from hosting the Border-Gavaskar series against powerhouse India.

CA said at its annual general meeting (AGM) that total revenue increased by A\$49.2 million from the previous year to A\$453.7 million, predominantly driven by a new domestic media deal and match revenue from the five-Test series against India.

Expenses increased by A\$24.1 million, which included marketing costs for the India



series and funding 70 extra days of touring for national teams. However, distributions to CA's member states and territories barely moved, rising by A\$800,000 from the previous year to A\$120.9 million.

Member state Cricket Victoria (CV) condemned CA for the annual loss, saying the governing body had delivered little financial improvement despite significant and costly reviews.

Indian students among UK's brightest & best, says envoy

PTI

London, Oct 30: Indians are not only the largest group of foreign students in the UK but also the brightest and best who help strengthen the bilateral relationship, Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami said at a special welcome reception for new arrivals to Britain.

The event, held in association with King's College London on Wednesday evening, followed a student registration drive by the High Commission of India and was live-streamed across Indian consulates around the UK. An annual fixture since 2023,



this year's welcome reception attracted hundreds of Indian students setting out on their academic journey at the start of a new term in the UK.

"The Indian student community is the largest for the

third year running, at 166,000 students across the UK," said Doraiswami, in his address to the gathering.

"Our students are among the brightest and the best that we have, and your

presence here is a reflection of all that you are capable of doing and the value that you bring to your studies, to your research... but you also add economic value, and it's important to emphasise that your presence here supports businesses," he said.

The senior diplomat highlighted Indian students' contribution to the larger educational establishment in the UK, with students providing significant value in terms of the tuition fees they pay and also in terms of what they will give back to societies, both in the UK and India.

"We think this is also a contribution to the larger

India-UK relationship. It is of considerable value to us that the relationship between our two democracies is taken forward by the custodians of that democracy, that is, the young people who will inherit the running of our respective countries," he said.

The event combined serious and light-hearted aspects, including important banking advice, crucial safety and healthcare tips for the newly arrived students setting out on their higher education courses.

A comedy sketch by British-Indian comedian Ahir Shah on life in the UK and cultural performances concluded the event.

Young Australian cricketer dies after being hit by ball

AFP

Melbourne, Oct 30: A promising young Australian cricketer has died after being struck by a ball, with his local club saying on Thursday it was "absolutely devastated".

Ben Austin, 17, was reportedly facing an automatic bowling machine in the nets with a helmet on before a Twenty20 game in Melbourne on Tuesday when he was hit in the head and neck area.

He was rushed to hospital in critical condition and died Wednesday.

"We are absolutely devastated by the passing of Ben, and the impacts of his death will be felt by all in our cricket community," the Ferntree Gully Cricket Club said in a statement.

Austin was an emerging bowler and batter, considered by his club as a "star cricketer, great leader and an awesome young man". Deaths in cricket remain rare. The most recent high-profile one in Australia came in 2014 when Test star Phillip Hughes was killed when hit in the neck by a ball during a domestic Sheffield Shield game. His death stunned Australia and the world cricket community, sparking an outpouring of grief and ushering in stronger protocols around concussion and the advent of better safety equipment.

Messi tops MLS earners ahead of Son Heung-min



AFP

Los Angeles, Oct 30: Inter Miami's eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi remains the highest-paid footballer in Major League Soccer (MLS), with Los Angeles FC's recent arrival Son Heung-min second, according to an updated salary list published on Wednesday.

The \$20.4 million guaranteed annual salary that Messi receives from Inter Miami remains far ahead of that of any other player in MLS.

The figure does not include other types of income, such as his extensive portfolio of sponsorships, which the Argentinian star received as part of the contract he signed upon his arrival in Miami in mid-2023, which concludes in December.

The Argentina captain will begin a three-season extension with Inter next year, the financial details of which are not yet known.

Messi, 38, has just been crowned top scorer of the regular season,

with 29 goals in 28 matches, and is favoured to retain the Most Valuable Player award.

His salary tops the list published by the MLS Players Association.

South Korea's Son, the star signing of the US summer, ranks second with the \$11.1 million annually established in his contract with LAFC.

The former Tottenham captain landed in California in August after the most expensive transfer in MLS history, estimated at \$26 million. His impact has been immediate, with Son producing nine goals in 10 matches as LAFC advanced to the MLS Cup playoffs.

The third spot on the list is occupied by Spaniard Sergio Busquets (\$8.7 million), who will retire at the end of the season with Inter Miami.

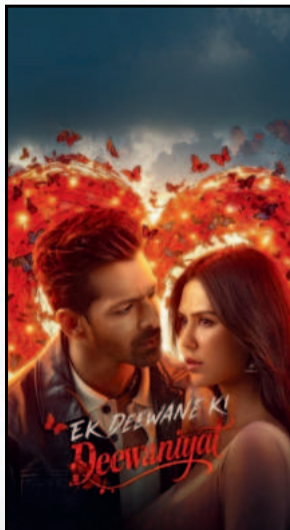
Paraguayan Miguel Almiron (\$7.8 million) is in fourth place, and Mexican Hirving "Chucky" Lozano (\$7.6 million) is in fifth, both notable signings for this season by Atlanta United and San Diego FC.



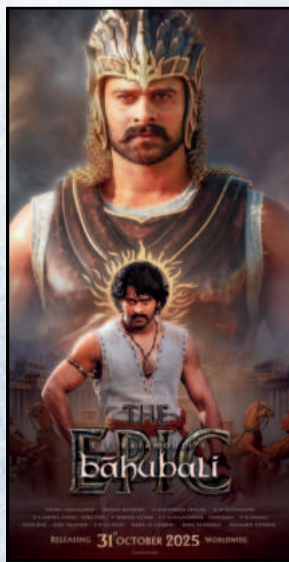
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THAMMA (UA16+) HINDI - 06:40 PM



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