



Sacrifices of security forces, police, others laid foundation of 'Atamnirbhar' J&K: LG Sinha

Says PM Modi's efforts in steering J&K towards peace, dev widely hailed

Urges people to safeguard contributions of fallen heroes

'World acknowledges India's unity in diversity, Bharat's growing global stature'

Yogesh

Jammu, Nov 19: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that the foundation of an 'Atamnirbhar and adhunik' Jammu and Kashmir has been built on the sacrifices of security forces, J&K Police personnel, farmers, youth and women.

The Lieutenant Governor paid obeisance at ancient Shiv Temple, Purmandal and also attended the Devika Maha Aarti.

While addressing a gathering LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The people of J&K must take a collective pledge to ensure that the sacrifices of the fallen heroes do not go in vain. They laid down their lives to secure peace in the region."

"The efforts put in by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to put



J&K on the path of peace and development over the past five to six years are being appreciated by one and all. Despite facing challenges, the administration has worked tirelessly to ensure sustained progress," he said.

LG Sinha asserted that several landmark laws implemented in

recent years have safeguarded the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "Today, the entire country recognizes J&K's strength, and the Union Territory will play a significant role in building a Viksit Bharat," he added.

Highlighting the

transformation underway in the Union Territory, the LG said that in the past few years hundreds of religious places have been restored as part of heritage protection and cultural revival. "We have always treated everyone equally. The world acknowledges India's unity in diversity

and recognizes Bharat's growing global stature. Under the leadership of PM Modi, we are committed to taking J&K to new heights," he said.

Emphasizing environmental responsibility, LG Sinha said it is the duty of every citizen to safeguard the environment for future generations.

He urged the youth to embrace hard work, noting that nothing meaningful can be achieved without dedication and perseverance. "Together, we can make J&K a shining example for the world," he said.

The LG also announced that Purmandal Degree College will be handed over to the Higher Education Department next month. "From 2021 onwards, Purmandal has witnessed a new era of development. Efforts are underway to develop Purmandal as a premier religious tourism | [More on P6](#)

Valley's fruit industry suffered Rs 2,000 cr losses due to August disaster: KVFG Urges govt to announce compensation, revive support schemes



Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Nov 19: In the wake of the devastating natural disaster that struck Jammu and Kashmir in August 2025, the valley's fruit industry, one of the region's major economic lifelines, has reported massive losses estimated at nearly Rs 2,000 crore, the growers said on Wednesday.

At an emergency meeting convened by the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-Cum-Dealers Union (KVFG) at Fruit Mandi, Apple Town, Sopore, the representatives from all major fruit growers' associations across the valley expressed grave concern over the crisis

and urged the government to immediately announce a comprehensive relief package.

The meeting, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was chaired by KVFG Chairman Bashir Ahmad Basheer, who said the valley's apple economy had been crippled after an unprecedented deluge in August, followed by the closure of the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway for more than 20 days.

Basheer said the disaster hit at the peak of the apple harvesting season, turning the situation catastrophic for growers, traders, and buyers. "Thousands of trucks carrying fresh apples | [More on P6](#)

J&K set to make child rights body functional

Appointment of chairperson, members on cards

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Nov 19: Jammu & Kashmir is set to make the Commission for Protection of Child Rights functional with appointment of its chairperson and members.

Officials told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that a three-member committee headed by Minister for Social Welfare Sakina Masood Ittoo has finalized the selection process.

"The committee held interviews of the shortlisted candidates earlier this month. The selection process has been almost completed. The government will soon notify the appointment of chairperson and members of the body," they said.

The selection panel also

included the Administrative Secretaries of the Social Welfare and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Departments.

The committee headed by the Minister was tasked to submit recommendations for appointment of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission.

As per the committee's terms of reference, it was also mandated to prepare a waitlist of two candidates for each post.

In August this year, the J&K government had informed the High Court that it had shortlisted 21 applicants for the post of chairperson and 28 applicants for the posts of members of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. (KNO)

'J&K has seen enough bloodshed, it must stop now': Omar Abdullah

CM decries suspicion faced by Kashmiris across country

Says driving J&K-registered vehicle in Delhi now seen as 'crime'

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Nov 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that Jammu and Kashmir has seen enough bloodshed over the last more than 30 years, which must stop now.

Speaking to the reporters, CM Omar, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Centre claimed that such a situation would stop after 2019, but that didn't happen. "Why has it hasn't it happened? Those responsible for



security should answer," he said, adding, "We don't have control over security."

He added, "What can we say about the present situation? If it is not exploding in Delhi, then it explodes in Kashmir. I visited the families of five victims yesterday. Today, I am visiting two more families. We want such bloodshed to stop. Jammu and Kashmir, especially the valley, has seen enough bloodshed in the last more than 30 years."

Earlier, addressing a gathering, the Chief Minister said that

a few people are responsible for the Delhi terror blast. "But an atmosphere was being created as if all of us were guilty, as if we were all involved. I don't even like saying what I am saying. But the truth is the truth," he said.

Abdullah said driving a Jammu and Kashmir-registered vehicle in Delhi is considered a crime. "I even have to think whether I would take out my car without security or not. I don't know who will stop me and ask where I am from and what I am doing there," he said, adding that the families are now reluctant to send their children outside the valley as the people from J&K are being looked at with suspicion.

Meanwhile, Omar told reporters that 30,000 DPRs have been approved under Mission YUVA, but only 9,000 cases have been | [More on P6](#)

Pvt schools face JKBOSE action for textbook norm violation

Affiliation of four schools cancelled, eight penalized

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Nov 19: The Jammu Kashmir Board of School Education (BOSE) Wednesday said that is cancelling the affiliation of four private schools and has fined several private schools for violating prescribed textbook norms.

Addressing a press conference here at Srinagar board headquarters, Joint Secretary BOSE Shahnaz Choudhary as per news agency—Kashmir News

Observer (KNO) said, "We have our teams and sub-offices in every district who are dealing and taking care of these matters."

"They have inspected the schools and whosoever private school was found violating the government norms by prescribing the private publication of books were fined," she said.

Choudhary added that "We have cancelled the affiliation of four schools that were violating the prescribed norms."

"Besides, the inspection team of JKBOSE have fined at least eight schools for violating textbook guidelines of the board," she said.

The JKBOSE Joint Secretary also said | [More on P6](#)

CM terms entrepreneurship as driving force of J&K's future growth

Inaugurates two-day J&K Trade Fair in Kulgam

KT News Desk

Kulgam, Nov 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday inaugurated a two-day J&K Business & Trade Fair organised by the District Administration Kulgam in collaboration with Mission YUVA.

The fair aims to promote entrepreneurship and provide a platform for business innovation and growth for businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs.

After formally inaugurating the event, the Chief



Minister inspected various stalls established by entrepreneurs and business establishments. He interacted with the participants and lauded their contribution towards promoting

business enterprises and generating livelihood opportunities in the district.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that while the government is working to | [More on P6](#)

Omar lays foundation for Automated Testing Station in Pampore

KT News Desk

Pampore, Nov 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the Automated Testing Station at Pampore, marking a significant step toward enhancing road safety and strengthening the transport infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. | [More on P6](#)

Nowgam blast: Govt stands firmly with victims, says CM

Visits bereaved families in Kulgam, Tral

KT News Desk

Kulgam/Tral, Nov 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday met the families of two victims who lost their lives in the accidental explosion at Nowgam Police Station, extending his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

At Chancer village in Kulgam, the Chief Minister visited the home of Late Arshid Ahmad Shah and expressed his deepest sympathies to the grieving family. He assured them that the government stands firmly with them in this hour of immense pain.



Later, the Chief Minister went to Hariparigam, Tral, where he met the family of Late Javid Mansoor Rather. He

offered condolences and shared moments of solidarity with the bereaved members, conveying that no words can ease the loss they have suffered.

During his interaction, the Chief Minister consoled both families, offering words of comfort and reassurance. He emphasised that while no amount can compensate for the precious lives lost in the unfortunate accident, the government will extend every possible assistance to help the affected families rebuild their lives.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Minister Sakina Ittoo and other senior officials.

India among 7 countries expected to add over 500 million city residents between 2025 and 2050: UN

PTI

United Nations, Nov 19: United Nations, India, along with six other countries, "will shape the future growth of the city population" of the world as they are expected to add more than 500 million city residents between 2025 and 2050, the UN said.

The 'World Urbanisation Prospects 2025: Summary of Results', released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), said that the world is becoming increasingly urban, with cities now home to 45 per cent of the global population of 8.2 billion.

The report said that the growth of the world's city population between now and

2050 will be concentrated in seven countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Bangladesh and Ethiopia.

These seven countries, which host nearly one third (30 per cent) of the global population in 2025, "will shape the future growth of the city population" and are projected to contribute over half of the global growth of city dwellers by 2050.

Taken together, these seven countries are expected to add more than 500 million city residents between 2025 and 2050, accounting for over half of the projected 986 million increase in the global number of city dwellers over that period.

"The success or failure of urbanisation in these key countries

will shape global development outcomes. Their ability to manage city growth sustainably will have profound implications not only for their populations but also for global progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and climate objectives," the report said.

The report said that the two most populous countries, India and China, will also have the largest populations residing in towns between now and 2050. As of 2025, the proportion of people living in towns has reached 44 per cent in India and 40 per cent in China. Together, India and China account for more than 1.2 billion town population, representing over 40 per cent of the population living in towns globally.



However, both countries also have substantial city populations, with a combined population of nearly 1.2 billion (627 million in China and 589 million

in India in 2025).

Between 1950 and 1975, both countries experienced rapid growth in their city populations, but this pace slowed between

1975 and 2000 and in subsequent years, largely due to declining fertility rates and slower overall population growth.

Despite this deceleration, city

population growth has outpaced town population growth, resulting in a decrease in the share of people living in towns. Each country still has more than 200 million people residing in rural areas, a figure that is expected to remain relatively stable through 2050, it said.

The report said that the number of megacities quadrupled from eight in 1975 to 33 in 2025, with 19 in Asia. Projections indicate that there will be 37 megacities globally by 2050, as the populations of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania), Hajipur (India) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) grow to over 10 million.

Among the 33 megacities with 10 million | [More on P6](#)

Govt committed to J&K's overall development: Dy CM

Meets various public delegations in Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 19: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary Wednesday said that the Government is committed to overall and inclusive development of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Deputy CM stated this while meeting a wide range of public delegations from various districts at the Civil Secretariat here today.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has undertaken significant developmental initiatives in every district of J&K with a focused approach towards infrastructure growth, socio-economic upliftment, and improved public service delivery.

The delegations that called on the Deputy Chief Minister included job aspirants, students, members of various business associations, and representatives of civil society groups. They apprised him of their concerns, demands, and several pressing issues



concerning them.

Deputy Chief Minister listened to them patiently and assured them that all genuine issues would be taken up with the concerned departments for prompt and effective redressal. He emphasized that the administration is committed to resolving public grievances in a time-bound and transparent manner.

On-the-spot directions were issued to the concerned officers to ensure amicable and speedy

resolution of several matters brought to his notice.

He further reiterated prompt service delivery to the general public and maximum coverage of beneficiaries under various welfare and developmental initiatives of the Government.

Various individuals and delegations expressed gratitude to the Deputy Chief Minister for his proactive approach and immediate intervention in addressing their genuine issues.

Kashmir home to centuries-old cultural treasures: Div Com

Inaugurates exhibition, flags off Heritage Walk in Sgr

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 19: As part of the celebrations for World Heritage Week 2025, the Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J&K Wednesday organized a Special Exhibition of Archival Records and Rare Manuscripts at the Art Gallery, Shergarhi Complex, Srinagar.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg, who also flagged off a Heritage Walk from the Shergarhi Complex to the SPS Museum at Lal Mandi.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from heritage lovers, scholars, and students from various educational institutions, all joining to promote the importance of preserving and conserving the region's centuries-old cultural treasure.

Speaking on the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner highlighted the significance of World Heritage Week and the collective responsibility to safeguard cultural heritage for future generations. He noted that the exhibition showcases numerous invaluable treasures and urged students and scholars to visit



the gallery to connect with the region's heritage and cultural identity.

"Kashmir is home to

centuries-old cultural and civilizational treasures and represents a confluence of Shaivism, Sufism, and

Buddhism," he said and added that "Our rich traditions of arts, crafts, and music have earned global recognition, and our archaeological sites continue to attract large numbers of tourists. This Heritage Week is dedicated to celebrating and honoring these sites."

He also highlighted the ongoing initiatives of the Directorate to revive and preserve cultural and archaeological sites across Jammu & Kashmir. "The observance of World Heritage Week provides an opportunity to revisit our history and traditions, helping to build greater awareness about heritage conservation," he added.

The Divisional Commissioner noted that in the past four years, substantial efforts have been made to preserve the unique local heritage developed over centuries by previous generations, ensuring its safe transmission to the future.

He emphasized the need to create awareness among students and the general public about Kashmir's rich cultural heritage so they can better appreciate the importance of protecting and preserving the region's glorious past.

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan Capacity Building Program held at Anantnag



KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 19: A comprehensive one day training cum capacity building program for the resource persons under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBAB) was held Wednesday at Khana-bal, Anantnag, organised by District Administration in collaboration with Govt Medical College Anantnag.

The session was presided over by Additional District Magistrate and attended by HoD Psychiatry, GMC, senior doctors, Tehsildars, and other concerned officials from various colleges of the district.

The programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of frontline administrative and academic functionaries in effectively addressing the issue of substance abuse across the district.

On the occasion, HoD Psychiatry, GMC, provided an in-depth briefing on causes, types and prevalence, precautionary measures, early signs along with the prevention and treatment of drug abuse adding there is need for coordination among administration, educational institutions, health authorities and community members for eradicating the menace from society.

The session underlined the importance of proactive community engagement, timely reporting, and institutional support to mitigate drug-related challenges.

Addressing the session, ADM urged the participants to adopt a sensitive, preventive, and structured approach while dealing with drug-affected individuals in their respective jurisdictions.

At the conclusion, an interactive question-answer session was held on multiple aspects of drug abuse, field-level challenges and practical intervention techniques.

Dr Bilal chairs District Road Safety Committee meeting

KT NEWS DESK

Budgam, November 19: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Wednesday chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee at the Conference Hall Budgam to review the status of road safety measures and enforcement of traffic regulations across the district.

The meeting focused on strengthening coordinated efforts to minimise road accidents and ensure safer travel for the public.

During the meeting, the DC emphasised the urgent need for strict and effective implementation of all road safety regulations in letter and spirit.

He called upon all concerned departments to reinforce road safety mechanisms, identify accident-prone locations, improve road infrastructure, and intensify enforcement of traffic rules.

The DC also stressed the importance of organising awareness programmes in schools, colleges and other institutions to promote a culture of safe and responsible road usage.

While discussing the traffic and safety measures concerning the ongoing Ring Road construction, the DC issued firm directions to ensure complete compliance.

He instructed that all entry



and exit points leading to the under-construction Ring Road shall remain closed for public movement and commercial vehicular traffic, permitting only vehicles directly associated with construction activity. He further directed that the list of entry points which are open or closed for public movement be published for the general public to ensure clarity and avoid inconvenience.

The DC also called for close coordination between NHAI, Ring Road authorities, the Traffic Police and the Transport Department so that no unauthorized public or commercial movement takes

place on the under-construction project. He additionally directed that 100% CCTV installation shall be ensured at all entry and exit points of the project to curb violations and strengthen monitoring.

The DC said that the district administration is committed to enhancing road safety standards and fostering a secure travel environment for the people of Budgam.

The meeting was attended by ADC Budgam, all SDMs, DySp Traffic Budgam, ARTO Budgam, Officers from NHAI and besides representatives of other concerned departments.

DC Bla chairs DLSCC meeting

Reviews terror victim compassionate appointment cases

KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, NOVEMBER 19: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa Wednesday chaired a meeting of the District Level Screening-cum-Coordination Committee (DLSCC) at the meeting hall of the DC Office to review pending compassionate appointment cases of terror-affected families.

The DC took a detailed review of all applications presented by the concerned departments and stressed that cases related to terror-affected families must be processed with transparency, sensitivity, and

strict adherence to the notified guidelines.

During the meeting, the committee examined 20 cases. After thorough scrutiny, 14 cases were approved, 4 cases were rejected for not fulfilling the required criteria, while 2 cases were referred for re-verification to validate essential documents.

The DC directed the officers to ensure that all genuine cases are resolved promptly and families receive timely support through the compassionate appointment mechanism.

Senior officers from Civil, Police, Army, BSF and other concerned officers participated in the meeting.

MSME Sgr organizes Capacity-Building progs

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 19: MSME Development & Facilitation Office, Srinagar in collaboration with district administration conducted twin capacity-building programmes for registered PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries at Kupwara and Pulwama, witnessing a combined participation of over 200 artisans.

At Kupwara, the programme was inaugurated by DC Kupwara, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse, who highlighted the growing participation of artisans in the scheme.

Sessions on Micro Business Development, enterprise growth, and e-marketing were delivered by Assistant Director Incharge Br MSME DFO Srinagar and state consultant GeM.

At Pulwama, GM DIC Pulwama, Wasim Malik, addressed the artisans on the scope under PM Vishwakarma. Dedicated sessions on digital cataloguing, and e-commerce were conducted by Asst. Professor IUST while representatives from J&K Bank briefed participants on financial literacy and credit support. Both programmes concluded with an interactive Q&A, where queries were addressed by the officials.

The twin events strengthened artisans' awareness on enterprise development, digital marketing, financial access, and opportunities under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

Forest deptt begins supply of firewood

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 19: The Forest department has commenced supply of firewood to the registered mosques and other institutions at PC Depot, Qamarwari, Srinagar for the upcoming winter.

The vehicles laden with firewood were formally flagged off at PC Depot Srinagar today by Divisional Forest Officer, Urban Forestry Division Dr. Sheikh Mehraj in presence of Range Officer, Timber Transport Range and Range Officer, Central Forest Control Room, Srinagar.

The Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir

directed the Divisional Forest Officer, Urban Forestry Division, Srinagar to accelerate the process of distribution of firewood and ensure the process is completed well before the onset of winters.

Accordingly, all the registered mosques of Srinagar City and other units have been informed to approach the Range Officer, Timber Transport Range, PC Depot, Qamarwari, Srinagar with their indent through proper channel. The representatives of the mosques have also been advised to book their indents by or before December 20, 2025, after which no applications shall be accepted by the Department.

OFFICE OF THE JOINT DIRECTOR FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES, KASHMIR RANGE SRINAGAR

Shri Mushtaq Ahmad Mir
Sub Officer (M)
S/o Mohd. Sultan Mir
R/o Mir Mohalla Kupwara

No. JDF&ES-K/Estt/F-21/2025/ 4520-24

Subject: - Attendance Notice-III

You, Shri Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, Sub Officer (M) posted at Range Office Fire & Emergency Services Srinagar absented yourself unauthorizedly from duty with effect from 26.08.2025 and have been accordingly marked absent. You were several times informed telephonically to attend the duties but unfortunately you failed to do so till date.

Whereas, you have a history of irregular attendance for which you have been warned many times and also directed to resume duties but you have preferred to remain unauthorizedly absent from the duties till date. Whereas, this office has Issued Attendance Notice II vide this office No. JDF&ES-K/Estt/F-21/2025/3907-10 dated 08.10.2025 and Attendance Notice II vide this office No. JDF&ES-K/Estt/F-21/2025/4172-75 dated 24.10.2025. Wherein you have been directed to report this office but you failed and did not report till date. Now, through this medium of this notice, you are given last opportunity to report the office within seven days of publication of this notice failing which, action In terms of Article 128 J&K (CSR Vol. I and action under rules will be taken against you.

DIPK-8244/25 DATED: 19-11-2025

Joint Director
Fire & Emergency Services Kashmir Range, Sgr

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla

e-mail, id, xennhd.bla@jk.gov.in

CORRIGENDUM-I

This office e-Tender/2025-26/63 issued vide this office No. M&HDB/TS/e-tendering-63/3248-55; Dated: - 18-11-2025.

Tender ID: 2025_PWDJK_295525_1

Name of Work: - Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning and allied works of Effluent Treatment Plant of 5KLD capacity based on MBBR technology at Sub District Hospital Uri.

In continuation of this office's above-mentioned e-NIT, it is hereby notified that Annexure "G", appended herewith, shall be treated as an integral part of the Tender. The same must be downloaded, duly accepted, and signed by the bidder, and subsequently uploaded along with the bid documents.

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

DIPK-8243/25 DATED: 19-11-2025
No. -M&HDB/TS/3283-86

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical & Hospitals Division
Baramulla

Dated: - 19-11-2025

Ex-ministers, Azad loyalists rejoin Congress

YOGESH

Jammu, Nov 19: In a major boost to the Congress party in Jammu and Kashmir, several prominent leaders, who had left the party with Ghulam Nabi Azad in 2022, made a formal "Ghar Wapsi" (homecoming) on Tuesday.

Former ministers including Jugal Kishore Sharma and Abdul Majid Wani, ex-MLC and former Kathua DDC chairman Subhash Gupta and senior leader from Udhampur Brij Mohan Sharma joined the Congress in the presence of top party leadership during a grand function held in Jammu to mark the 109th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The ceremony was attended by AICC general secretary and J&K in-charge Dr Sayeed Naseer Hussain, AICC General Secretary and CLP leader G A Mir, JKPC President Tariq Hameed Karra, newly appointed AICC Secretary Pargat Singh, AICC Mahila Congress President Alka Lamba and IYC President Uday Bhanu Chib.

Party sources described



the development as the homecoming of grassroots leaders, who had resigned from Congress following Ghulam Nabi Azad's dramatic exit in August 2022 to float the Democratic Progressive Azad Progressive Party (DPAP).

Several of Azad's close aides, including former deputy CM Tara Chand, former PCC chief Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed, and former ministers G M Saroori and Taj Mohiuddin, had already returned to Congress in the past

year. Highly placed Congress sources revealed that the re-entry of Jugal Kishore Sharma, Abdul Majid Wani, G M Saroori, Taj Mohiuddin and others was earlier "blocked due to alleged sabotage by a few senior leaders within the J&K unit" just before the 2024 Assembly elections.

Speaking on the occasion, JKPC Chief Tariq Hameed Karra welcomed the leaders and said their return would further consolidate the Congress as the principal opposition force

in Jammu and Kashmir.

AICC in-charge Dr Sayeed Naseer Hussain termed the development a "big morale booster" and asserted that more leaders disillusioned with the DPAP and other regional outfits are in touch with the Congress. The string of high-profile returns comes at a time when Ghulam Nabi Azad's DPAP has been facing internal dissent and poor electoral performance, having failed to open its account in the 2024 Assembly polls.

Meanwhile, senior DPAP

leader, Salman Nizami called the leaders who rejoined Congress today as "deadwood," noting that some had left the party, contested independently & are still using Azad's name, but they had lost by large margins.

He added that former chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had told these leaders to go anywhere, as he did not want the burden of such leaders again.

Nizami said Congress, weakened in many states including J&K, cannot expect revival by relying on these deadwood leaders.

He also noted that Congress lacks a strong face in J&K, with even their alliance partner NC not taking them seriously. "Since Azad's departure, Congress has lost 8 assembly elections and 1 Lok Sabha election, Nizami praised Azad as a national leader with significant contributions, emphasising that the people of J&K did not fully understand his vision, a mistake they now regret."

He added that Azad will visit J&K soon, after which future strategy will be decided—(KNO)

Kashmir fully prepared for harsh winter: Garg

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Nov 19: As the valley braces for sub-zero temperatures, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday said that Kashmir is "fully prepared for the coming winter," with essential services, supplies and emergency systems firmly in place, even as the region celebrates its centuries-old heritage under the spirit of unity and cultural pride.

Speaking to media persons during the inauguration of World Heritage Week 2025 in Srinagar, Garg said the administration has ensured seamless coordination across departments to guarantee uninterrupted services through the season.

"Our people are seasoned in facing winter, but the administration has also ensured every mechanism, from snow clearance to power restoration, is active and ready," the Div Com Anshul Garg said.

He said that in far-flung and border districts such as Kupwara and Bandipora, the administration has set up 872 ration dumping sites, each stocked with four months of essential supplies. "Special arrangements have also been made to ensure smooth LPG availability and to maintain road connectivity during snowfall," he added.

The Div Com said the winter stocking process has been completed in advance across all remote regions, while emergency response teams, snow-clearance machinery and power restoration units stand fully mobilised.

"The Srinagar Integrated



Command and Control Centre, along with district control rooms, is functional 24x7 to monitor conditions and coordinate quick response," he said.

According to him, the people of Kashmir have naturally adapted to the winter challenges over generations. "Their resilience is remarkable and the administration is complementing that spirit with proactive planning and preparedness," he said.

District administrations, he said, are continuously reviewing local needs to ensure smooth supply chains and uninterrupted services. "Any weather-related disruption will be dealt with swiftly, and all departments have been placed on high alert throughout the season," he said.

"World Heritage Week is celebrated every year, and the Department of Culture has taken a wonderful initiative. Many students from schools and colleges are participating, and several priceless treasures have been displayed. I encourage everyone to visit from November 19 to 25," Garg said. He said such events create a bridge between generations, allowing youth to connect with their identity. "Kashmir has preserved

unique civilizational treasures for centuries, whether through Shaivism, Sufism, Buddhism or other influences. Our arts, crafts and music have earned global recognition, and our archaeological sites continue to attract visitors from across the world," he said.

Highlighting the link between heritage and governance, the Div Com said the administration has intensified efforts over the past four years to revive archaeological sites, restore monuments and document rare manuscripts.

"The Department of Culture is running a major campaign for the revival of heritage sites. Many projects are underway to bring our cultural wealth closer to people and ensure public participation," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner added that the World Heritage Week is not only a celebration but also "a reflection to reconnect with our roots and recognise the work being done to safeguard them".

"Understanding where we come from helps shape how we build the future," he said, underscoring that cultural awareness and civic preparedness are integral to Kashmir's resilience—(KNO)

Know your risk, prevent diabetes: endocrinologist

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Nov 19: As diabetes continues to rise at an alarming pace across the globe, a leading endocrinologist has stressed the urgent need for people to understand their individual risk factors and adopt lifestyle changes to prevent the disease.

Dr Shariq Masoodi said that awareness, early detection and disciplined living remain the strongest tools against the diabetes epidemic.

He said diabetes is no longer a disease limited to the elderly, and younger populations in both urban and rural areas are now increasingly vulnerable. "People first need to understand their risk factors to stay away from diabetes. If someone in your family is diabetic, if you are obese or have other lifestyle-related issues, your chances of developing diabetes are significantly higher," he explained.

According to Dr Masoodi, nearly 90 per cent of all diabetes cases worldwide are Type II, and a majority of these cases are being reported from underdeveloped or developing countries. "Rapid



urbanisation and drastic lifestyle changes are major contributors. People are not exercising the way they used to, physical activity has reduced sharply, and our diets have become calorie-dense," he said.

The endocrinologist said the prevalence of diabetes in Kashmir stands at around 10 per cent, while Jammu has nearly 20 per cent, making it the region with a comparatively higher

burden of the disease. These rising numbers demand a stronger preventive approach at the community level, he said, adding that around 40-50 per cent of patients are unaware that they are diabetic because of no symptoms and regular screening is a must.

Recommending dietary discipline, Dr Masoodi said maintaining a balanced diet is crucial

for prevention and management. "We need to limit carbohydrates and proteins in our meals and ensure our food intake is balanced throughout the day," he said.

He advised that breakfast should account for 40 per cent of daily food intake, followed by 30 per cent each for lunch and dinner.

He pointed out a widespread habit in Kashmir that worsens health outcomes. "People here often take heavy, unlimited dinners and go to sleep almost immediately. This is harmful and creates multiple health issues. There should be at least a three-hour gap between dinner and sleeping, and dinner should ideally be taken early," he stressed.

Around 50 per cent of the plates we eat should be fruit and vegetables, he advised.

Underscoring the immense role of physical activity, Prof Masoodi said that daily exercise is essential for keeping diabetes and many other lifestyle diseases at bay. "Lifestyle and diet play a major role in prevention. Regular walking, simple physical activities and healthier food habits can drastically reduce disease risk," he added—(KNO)

Winter break until 8th grade from December: Minister Itoo



RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Nov 19: Minister Sakina Itoo Wednesday said that the winter break for students up to the middle classes is likely to begin from the first week of December amid cold temperatures.

Speaking to reporters, the minister said that the parents repeatedly requested for the announcement of the schedule for winter break. "The winter season becomes difficult for younger children."

Itoo further said that, "We have already conducted a meeting regarding the winter break and we have tentatively decided that for lower classes from Class 1 up to middle grade, will probably observe the vacation from the first

week of December."

About the textbook issue, the minister said, "We have already streamlined the matter to a large extent."

"Directions have been issued to ensure there is no shortage of books or uniforms," she said.

Minister Itoo also said that strict instructions have been passed to the JKBOSE Secretary, Chairman, Education Secretary, and other concerned officials to act tough against the private schools who violate the government norms.

"Wherever we will receive a complaint against any private school regarding the books or fees, we will definitely take strict action against them," she said. Pertinently, KNO in

previous week had reported that the School Education Department has tentatively decided to announce the winter vacations in a phased manner from the first week of December for the winter zone of Kashmir division.

The news agency had reported that Education Minister Sakina Itoo in a recent review meeting informed the officials of the department that the government will likely announce winter vacation for primary level classes from the first week of December.

The official sources further informed that in case of other classes upto 12th standard, the vacations are likely from the second week of December—(KNO)

Cricket fever to grip valley for CRPF cup's 3rd edition

KNO

Srinagar, Nov 19: Cricket fever is once again ready to grip the Valley as the 3rd Edition of the CRPF Cup 2025, is about to begin this week, bringing a wave of excitement among young cricketers and fans across central Kashmir.

Organised by the CRPF Srinagar Sector, the annual tournament, now in its third year has emerged as one of the region's best anticipated local cricket events, offering a professional platform for grassroots players from Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal.

As per the details, each participating team comprises 16 registered players, including three under-19 and two under-23 players, a step designed to encourage youth participation and groom local talent for higher-level cricket.

"This tournament is not just about winning matches; it is about creating opportunities for our youth to showcase their talent," said an official. He said, over the past two seasons, they have seen extraordinary performances from young players who are now representing local leagues and state teams. "That is the true success of the CRPF Cup," he said. Similarly, the 2025 edition will see 12 teams competing, with the final line-up decided through a district-wise draw. Six teams will represent Srinagar, while Budgam and Ganderbal will field three each. Four invited teams will also join the challenge.

Launched in 2023, the inaugural CRPF Cup drew over 20 teams and generated great local enthusiasm. Also, in 2024, the second edition expanded its reach with 16 teams, offering cash prizes and improved facilities. That season, the matches drew hundreds of spectators, reflecting the Valley's growing appetite for competitive cricket.

Building on that legacy, this year's edition is expected to be even more competitive, featuring young players eager to make their mark, alongside seasoned local cricketers who have been part of all previous tournaments. "This has become Kashmir's own T20 carnival," said a local coach player from Srinagar. "The CRPF Cup gives young players a stage to dream big, right here in their own districts."—(KNO)

Delhi terror blast....

Victim's body arrives home to grief



RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Nov 19: Grief spread across the mountainous terrain of Babanagri Wangan in Kangan, approximately 56 Kilometers from Srinagar, on Wednesday as the villagers gathered to mourn the 30-year-old labourer, Bilal Ahmad Sango, who was among thirteen people killed in the recent terror blast near Delhi's Red Fort.

Bilal's body, wrapped in a white shroud, arrived from Delhi to the village, nestled among pine-covered slopes and rugged hills.

Hundreds of residents assembled, their faces etched with sorrow, trying to come to terms with the sudden loss of a man remembered for his humility and tireless dedication to his family.

Meanwhile, hundreds attended his funeral in his native village, with family and relatives wailing and mourning the unexpected loss.

"Bilal left home in 2005 to earn for his family. After returning in 2016, he went back to Delhi to continue supporting his loved ones. His whole life was spent

trying to fulfil his family's dreams," said Atta Mohd, a neighbour.

Ghulam Ali recalled his last conversation with Bilal over the phone. "Just last month, he said he would return in January. 'None of us imagined he would come back like this. The home feels emptier without him,'" he said.

Villagers remembered Bilal as someone who quietly carried the dreams of his family on his shoulders while always offering help to anyone in need. "He was like a mountain stream, giving life and support wherever he flowed," said another resident.

MLA Kangan Mian Mehar Ali visited the family and offered condolences, assuring them that the government would provide compensation and support. He noted that the Chief Minister had clarified that Kashmiris should not be treated as suspects in such incidents.

"Bilal had spent his life chasing dreams far from home, and his return, in a coffin, left a trail of grief, memories, and the silent hope that his family would be cared for as he had cared for them," he said—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan: A United Front Against Drug Addiction

The comprehensive review of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan in Jammu and Kashmir marks a critical step in the war against substance abuse, a war that threatens to derail an entire generation. The administration's strategic, multi-departmental approach, backed by concrete data and clear directives, demonstrates a commendable understanding that this complex social evil cannot be fought with isolated efforts alone. The sheer scale of

outreach, with over 1 crore citizens engaged, including a significant focus on women and youth, is a testament to the campaign's extensive groundwork. However, the most significant development is the strategic pivot from awareness to sustainable rehabilitation. The directive to form a dedicated Rehabilitation Task Force and train 4,000 counsellors to ensure every panchayat and educational institution has access to professional support addresses

the most critical gap in addiction care: post-treatment relapse prevention. This shift acknowledges that awareness alone is insufficient without a robust support system for recovery and reintegration. The plan to train master trainers at IMHANS and decentralise this expertise across districts is particularly praiseworthy. It creates a sustainable, locally-accessible mental health infrastructure that will serve communities long after the current campaign concludes.

The mandate for all departments to synchronise their efforts on a single portal brings much-needed accountability and prevents duplication, ensuring resources are utilised optimally. The focus on vocational training and sustainable livelihoods recognises that addiction often thrives in environments of hopelessness and economic despair. By linking de-addiction with skill development, the administration is treating the cause, not just the symptom.

This holistic, compassionate, and systematic approach sets a national benchmark for tackling substance abuse. It reflects a government that is not merely enforcing laws but is actively building a caring ecosystem to rescue its citizens from the grip of addiction. For the sake of Jammu and Kashmir's future, this momentum must be sustained until every individual trapped in addiction is given a genuine path to recovery and dignity.

Powering Creative Technology: India's Leap Into The Future Of Media And Entertainment

Press Information Bureau

India's Creative Economy at an Inflection Point

India's Media and Entertainment sector has emerged as one of the country's fastest-growing industries, powered by digital innovation, youth-driven demand, and a surge in creative entrepreneurship. Recognised by the government as a high-potential segment within the services economy, the sector is projected to grow at a compound annual rate of about 7 percent, reaching approximately 3,067 billion by 2027. The national outlook envisions this ecosystem scaling up to USD 100 billion by 2030, signalling a decisive shift from a content-consuming nation to a global creator and exporter of intellectual property.

The strategic vision for the sector rests on three core pillars:

Current initiatives aim to strengthen domestic capability in animation, visual effects, gaming, and extended reality through investments in training, digital infrastructure, and innovation-driven institutions. At the same time, inclusive participation across regional and linguistic boundaries remains a key policy priority, ensuring that creative opportunities extend beyond metropolitan clusters and into emerging cultural economies.

Economically, the Media and Entertainment sector contributes significantly to value addition and job creation, with its gross value-added share steadily increasing over the last decade. India offers a 40 to 60 percent cost advantage in animation and VFX services, supported by a large skilled workforce. This comparative edge has attracted a steady inflow of international projects and positioned India as a preferred destination for global post-production work. The sector's growing global resonance is equally visible in digital media, where nearly 25 percent of total viewership for Indian OTT content originates from overseas audiences. This reflects not only the commercial appeal of India's creative output but also its expanding role in cultural diplomacy, as Indian stories continue to build emotional and cultural connections across continents.

The AVGC-XR Revolution

This creative resurgence finds its most dynamic expression in the AVGC-XR sector, where technology, storytelling, and innovation converge to define the next chapter of India's media and entertainment growth. It is here that India's creative ambition meets its digital capability marking a shift from producing content for audiences to shaping experiences for the world.

Genesis and Institutional Framework
India's creative economy has entered a transformative phase with the formal recognition of the Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) sector as a key driver of growth. The policy journey gained momentum in 2022 with the constitution of the AVGC Promotion Task Force, established to formulate a comprehensive national strategy for nurturing India's AVGC-XR ecosystem as a global hub for creative technology and digital content production. The Task Force recommended the establishment of a National AVGC-XR Mission with a "Create in India" focus to position the country as a global hub for digital content creation and creativity. The AVGC Promotion Task Force's report projected the creation of around 20 lakh direct and indirect jobs in the coming ten years, while estimating that the sector could contribute to India's GDP through production, exports, and allied services.

IICT – From Vision to Action

May 2025: Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) was formalised as a Section 8 company to advance India's AVGC-XR ecosystem through education, research, and innovation, transforming policy intent into institutional action.

May 2025: IICT onboarded Google, YouTube, Meta, Adobe, Microsoft, NVIDIA, Wacom, and JioStar as industry partners to co-develop curricula, offer internships and scholarships, and support creative-tech

startups through incubation and mentoring.

July 15, 2025: Admissions opened for the first academic session featuring specialised courses across Gaming, Post-Production, Animation, Comics, and XR, designed in consultation with industry experts. The institute has also signed an MoU with the University of York (United Kingdom) to facilitate faculty exchange, collaborative research, and globally benchmarked curriculum development.

July 18, 2025: The first IICT campus was inaugurated at the NFDC Complex, Mumbai, with an initial budget of 400 crore and a goal of training around 300 students in the inaugural batch alongside professional upskilling modules.

August 30, 2025: The WaveX Media-Tech Startup Incubator was launched to nurture creative entrepreneurship. The first cohort included 15 startups, receiving mentorship, infrastructure, and access to global partners.

October 7, 2025: IICT signed an MoU with FICCI and Netflix to co-create curricula, conduct masterclasses, and provide scholarships under the Netflix Fund for Creative Equity, integrating global content expertise into India's creative-education ecosystem.

One of the most significant milestones in India's AVGC-XR journey has been the creation of a dedicated institutional framework to nurture talent and innovation. The National Center of Excellence (NCoE) for AVGC-XR, approved by the Government in 2024, was envisioned as the country's apex body for training, research, and industry collaboration in animation, visual effects, gaming, and immersive media.

In 2024, the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) was unveiled in Mumbai, Maharashtra, as the National Centre of Excellence for AVGC-XR. Set up as a Section 8 company—a not-for-profit entity that reinvests its resources into institutional growth—the institute brings together academia, industry, and government on one platform. By developing modern curricula, fostering joint research, and promoting global industry linkages, IICT is shaping a new generation of creators and innovators, positioning India at the forefront of the global creative economy.

Policy Momentum

Complementing national initiatives, several states are advancing the AVGC-XR vision through targeted policies and institutional frameworks. Karnataka has been one of the firsts to implement a dedicated AVGC-XR Policy 2024–2029, focusing on skilling, incubation, and global market competitiveness. Maharashtra, too, has taken significant steps with the approval of its AVGC-XR Policy 2025 in September this year, backed by a financial plan of 3,268 crore and a long-term roadmap extending to 2050. The policy seeks to attract investments, create employment opportunities, and strengthen state-level production infrastructure through dedicated clusters and training initiatives.

Policy Reforms and Infrastructure Development

From updated cinema laws and digital-governance frameworks to the development of integrated production facilities, the following initiatives collectively demonstrate India's commitment to building a globally competitive and future-ready media and entertainment industry:

Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023

The Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023, represents a landmark reform in India's film legislation. The amendment strengthens the regulatory and enforcement framework of the Cinematograph Act, 1952, introducing for the first time stringent anti-piracy provisions to curb unauthorised recording and distribution of films. Sections 6AA and 6AB make digital piracy a punishable offence, with imprisonment of up to three years and fines that may extend to 5 per cent of a film's audited gross production cost. The newly introduced Section 7(1B) (ii) authorises the Government to direct online intermediaries to remove or restrict access to pirated film content hosted on their platforms, ensuring

timely action against digital infringement.

The Act also modernises certification by introducing age-based, streamlining recertification for television and OTT release, and enabling permanent certification validity for films. Together, these provisions align creative freedom with audience protection and content integrity. As one of the key policy milestones under the government's broader media-reform agenda, the amendment underscores India's commitment to a transparent, secure, and innovation-friendly cinematic ecosystem.

National Broadcasting Policy

The National Broadcasting Policy is being developed to create a modern, inclusive, and growth-oriented framework for India's broadcasting ecosystem. It will focus on promoting content diversity, fair competition, and investment in digital infrastructure, while ensuring ethical standards, intellectual property protection, and audience trust. The policy also aims to strengthen India's global footprint in media and entertainment by fostering innovation, supporting local content creation, and integrating traditional broadcasting with emerging digital platforms to build a future-ready communication environment.

India Cine Hub

India Cine Hub (ICH), developed under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and managed by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), serves as the Government's single-window platform for film facilitation across India. It streamlines processes, promotes transparency, and enhances India's appeal as a global filming destination.

By integrating permissions, incentives, and production resources, India Cine Hub has become the digital backbone of India's film facilitation ecosystem, reinforcing the country's position as a premier global filmmaking hub.

WAVES: India's Global Platform for Creative Collaboration

The World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) is India's first integrated platform to showcase and strengthen the country's creative economy on a global scale. The platform serves as a convergence point for policymakers, industry leaders, creators, and investors across the film, television, OTT, animation, VFX, gaming, and XR sectors.

The inaugural edition, held from 1st - 4th May 2025 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai and inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, brought together participants from across the world and global majors in content, technology, and investment. The four-day summit combined ministerial roundtables, market screenings, investor forums, masterclasses, and B2B networking, setting the stage for India's leadership in the global media landscape.

Key highlights included the adoption of the WAVES Declaration on Global Media Cooperation, a 1,328 crore business pipeline generated through the WAVES Bazaar, and a 50 crore investment pool unveiled at WaveX for media-tech start-ups. Anchored in the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, WAVES underscores India's growing role as a hub for creative technologies, digital storytelling, and international co-production partnerships.

Achievements and Impact

India's technological evolution in this sector reflects a decade-long progression from experimentation to excellence. The use of motion capture and CGI in films such as Ra.One (2011), Baahubali: The Beginning (2015), and Brahmastra (2022) etc. demonstrated early domestic capability in high-end production. Since then, Indian studios have advanced rapidly, adopting real-time rendering, volumetric capture, and virtual-production pipelines to produce immersive storytelling experiences. This growing technical maturity has strengthened India's competitiveness in global post-production and VFX markets, with an increasing number of international studios outsourcing advanced

creative work to Indian facilities.

The AVGC-XR ecosystem has also witnessed remarkable progress in professional training and creative capacity building.

Skilling and Workforce Development

Through initiatives led by the Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESC), professionals are being trained in specialised disciplines such as animation, VFX, gaming, and post-production. Industry-academia collaborations have led to the development of competency standards and modular courses that reflect international benchmarks.

Ecosystem Growth and Global Visibility

RRR: Featured over 2,800 VFX shots. All animal scenes were synchronised using radio-controlled cars, programmed to operate at specific speeds, reflecting the high sophistication of India's VFX workflow

Thor: The Dark World: The VFX work was partially executed by a Mumbai-based studio, illustrating India's expanding participation in international productions

Game of Thrones: The iconic dragons (Khaleesi's dragons) were animated in India, highlighting India's growing technical credibility in high-end animation and creature design

Avatar: Over 200 VFX shots for Avatar were completed by an Indian company, reflecting India's collaboration on top-tier global productions

India's growing mastery in visual effects and animation has positioned it among the world's most sought-after creative destinations. The country's studios are now integral to large-scale domestic and international productions, contributing to some of the most visually complex projects in global entertainment. This evolution reflects the sector's shift from service-based outsourcing to high-value creative collaboration, where Indian talent drives innovation, precision, and storytelling at par with global standards.

Innovation and Enterprise

India's gaming industry, driven by titles such as BGMI (Battlegrounds Mobile India) and FAU-G (Fearless and United Guards), represent the emerging home-grown gaming ecosystem and local IP creation

The Indian comics industry continues to thrive with iconic characters like Suppandi, Chacha Chaudhary, Tenali Raman, and Shikhar Shambhu, several of which are being adapted into animated series and films, signalling the convergence between traditional storytelling and new media platforms.

The rise of start-ups in gaming, XR, and immersive storytelling marks a major shift toward indigenous innovation. Indian studios are now developing mobile and console games rooted in local narratives, mythology, and heritage—reflecting a move from service-driven work to original content creation. Indie developers have introduced culturally resonant titles such as Raji: An Ancient Epic and Indus Battle Royale, which have earned global attention for their design and storytelling depth. These ventures also attract increasing investor interest, signalling growing confidence in India's creative-tech potential and its readiness for the metaverse economy.

Academic-Industry Integration

The creation of dedicated AVGC hubs and the establishment of the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) have enabled long-term academic-industry collaboration. They serve as incubation grounds for digital creators, offering specialised courses and collaborative spaces that connect students with production studios and technology companies. Several state-level initiatives are also promoting regional clusters for animation and gaming, ensuring that creative opportunities expand beyond metropolitan centres.

Further reinforcing India's creative technology infrastructure, the WaveX Media-Tech Startup Accelerator has partnered with T-Hub, Hyderabad, to establish dedicated innovation hubs for the AVGC-XR ecosystem. The collaboration will focus on nurturing

Key Takeaways

- India's media and entertainment sector is a sunrise industry, projected to cross USD 100 billion by 2030, powered by digital innovation and creative-tech growth.
- The Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) is reshaping creative education through global partnerships with Netflix, Google, Microsoft, NVIDIA and others, building a world-class talent ecosystem.
- Indian VFX and animation studios now play a key role in global cinema, contributing to blockbusters like Avatar, Thor: The Dark World, and Game of Thrones.

media-tech start-ups, facilitating access to mentorship, funding, and infrastructure, and building bridges between creative professionals and technology enterprises.

The Road Ahead for India's AVGC-XR Sector

India's AVGC-XR sector is entering a phase of strategic growth marked by innovation, skill development, and policy convergence. The focus ahead lies in transforming the creative economy into a global powerhouse, driven by indigenous talent, technological advancement, and creative entrepreneurship.

Animation and Visual Effects (VFX)

Develop Centres of Excellence and introduce fiscal incentives to strengthen India's position as a global VFX and post-production hub.

Promote co-productions and international partnerships to integrate Indian talent into global content ecosystems.

Encourage IP-led animation projects that reflect India's cultural depth and creative diversity.

Gaming and eSports

Foster a structured gaming and eSports ecosystem to support original Indian games and professional tournaments.

Expand start-up incubation and investment avenues for gaming technologies across entertainment, education, and healthcare.

Institutionalise ethical gameplay and monetisation frameworks to build a credible and responsible gaming environment.

Extended Reality (XR) and Emerging Technologies

Scale XR applications across education, tourism, defence, and healthcare, extending beyond entertainment.

Create standards for accessibility and interoperability, ensuring responsible and inclusive technology use.

Comics and Digital Intellectual Properties

Digitise and reimagine Indian comic and folklore IPs for animation, gaming, and cross-platform storytelling.

Promote new transmedia franchises that blend cultural authenticity with global market appeal.

Strengthen collaborations among artists, publishers, and studios to expand creative ecosystems.

Strategic Enablers and Cross-Sectoral Priorities

Integrating AVGC-XR courses within mainstream higher education and vocational training, supported by certification standards and a national talent registry.

Strengthening intellectual property frameworks and facilitating access to global markets through "Create in India" and "Brand India" initiatives.

Collectively, these measures envision a holistic ecosystem that integrates policy reform, human capital, and creative technology to accelerate India's emergence as a global powerhouse in the AVGC-XR domain.

‘Govt to ensure safe drinking water to rural households’

Mission Director JJM reviews working of DPUs

KT News Desk

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 19: Mission Director Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) J&K, Khurshid Ahmad Shah Wednesday convened a virtual meeting to review the working of District Project Management Units (DPMUs) across the UT.

The meeting was attended by Technical Advisor Kashmir and Jammu along with Technical Officers and I/C DPMUs.

The review focused on strengthening implementation mechanisms, monitoring progress of key JJM deliverables and streamlining coordination between district and the Directorate for timely execution of water supply schemes.

All districts were directed to ensure immediate uploading of updated Minutes of District Water & Sanitation Mission (DWSM) meetings on the designated portal. Timely documentation was emphasized as essential for compliance and



transparency.

A detailed review of the onboarding process of the JJM 2.0 Dashboard was undertaken. District teams presented the current status of data migration, reporting formats and real-time entries. The Mission Director stressed that complete onboarding will significantly enhance monitoring accuracy and accountability.

Districts shared updates regarding geo-tagging of functional and under-construction

assets. The Mission Director instructed all DPMUs to complete pending geo-tagging activities at the earliest to support field verification and improve asset traceability.

Amendment-related procedures were discussed and DPMUs were advised to strictly adhere to guidelines while seeking modifications in project components. Uniform compliance across districts was underscored as a priority.

The status of Information,

Education & Communication (IEC) initiatives was reviewed. Districts were encouraged to intensify awareness campaigns on water quality, safe drinking practices, community participation and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) responsibilities under JJM.

Strengthening coordination with Deputy Commissioners (Chairman District Water & Sanitation Mission) was emphasized, especially for resolving administrative issues, accelerating tendering and execution process, and ensuring inter-departmental support at the district level.

All DPMUs were directed to adhere to timelines, strengthen monitoring mechanisms and maintain close coordination with the Mission Directorate to ensure quality execution on the ground.

The review meeting concluded with the Mission Director reiterating the Government's commitment to ensure universal, safe and sustainable drinking water supply to all rural households of Jammu & Kashmir in alignment with the objectives of the Jal Jeevan Mission.

DC Budgam reviews progress under Social Security Schemes

KT News Desk

Budgam, November 19: A review meeting on the implementation of major Social Security Schemes was Wednesday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, at the DC Office Complex.

The meeting was attended by the CPO, LDM Budgam, DSWO, ALC Budgam, representatives from ICDS, and branch managers from public and private sector banks operating in the district.

During the meeting, a detailed assessment of PMJJBY, PMSBY and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) was presented as per the progress report updated till 15 November 2025. Under PMJJBY, 5,749 applications were sourced, out of which 4,427 eligible beneficiaries were enrolled, with the district's cumulative enrollment reaching 29,221. Under PMSBY, 36,440 applications were received and 27,863 enrolments were completed, taking the total district enrolment under the scheme to 91,121. For APY, 511 applications were sourced and 372 persons were enrolled, with overall district enrolment reaching 6,129.

It was noted in the meeting that a total of 42,700



applications had been received under the three schemes during the period, of which 32,662 were successfully enrolled, while 9,727 applications had been rejected or returned for various discrepancies. The cumulative net enrollment across all three schemes in the district now stands at 1,26,471.

The DC stressed for minimizing the gaps between applications sourced and final enrolments, especially under APY and PMJJBY.

He emphasized that these financial protection schemes act as essential safety nets for low-income and vulnerable households, and therefore wider outreach is required.

Directions were issued that awareness activities be intensified across all blocks, with village-level enrolment camps being organised in coordination

with BDOs, Anganwadi Workers, CSCs and Self-Help Groups.

He also stressed that door-to-door mobilisation be strengthened in unbanked and under-banked areas to ensure better coverage.

Further, the DC directed that scheme-wise progress be monitored on a weekly basis through the LDM office and that coordinated action be ensured through better convergence among Social Welfare, Labour, ICDS, RDD and all banks. It was reiterated that achieving saturation of these schemes must be treated as a priority governance deliverable in the district.

The DC called for renewed efforts so that no eligible beneficiary in Budgam is left outside the financial safety net, and full saturation under all social security schemes is ensured.

21st Instalment of PM-KISAN

KVK Anantnag facilitates Live Webcasting



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 19: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Anantnag, SKUAST-K, Wednesday organized a live webcasting event across the district as the Prime Minister released the 21st instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme.

At KVK Anantnag, the programme was attended by MLA Shangus Anantnag East, Riyaz Ahmad Khan, who lauded the PM-KISAN initiative and acknowledged the vital role played by KVK Anantnag in uplifting the farming community. He emphasized that KVK Anantnag is emerging as a nucleus for agricultural and allied sector development in the region, owing to its consistent outreach and impactful

interventions.

The MLA praised the dedicated efforts of the KVK-Anantnag team in advancing rural livelihoods and strengthening agriculture through scientific knowledge, capacity building, and farmer-centric programmes.

Earlier, the Head KVK Anantnag and a team of scientists conducted an awareness session focusing on key government flagship schemes, climate-smart agriculture practices, Cluster Front Line Demonstrations (CFLDs) on oilseeds, capacity building of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and the promotion of Natural Farming.

Farmers actively participated and appreciated the initiatives aimed at enhancing productivity, sustainability, and income generation.

DC Shopian presents ATR in Block Diwas at Zainapora

KT News Desk

Shopian, November 19: Block Diwas, weekly engagement program of the administration with the public at their doorsteps for grievance redressal was held Wednesday at CFC Zainapora.

The camp was organised by Sub divisional Administration Zainapora and was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Shishir Gupta.

The camp was attended by a diverse group of citizens including senior citizens, youth groups, delegations as well as officials and frontline staff of departments.

The citizens from Aglar, Cheermarg, Zainapora, Sofipora, Khajapora, Safanagri, Durpora, and other villages raised many issues and demands of public importance including health care functioning, power infrastructure, water supply issues, renovation of Animal Husbandry centre, expediting the work on GDC Zainapora, construction of CA stores, control of leaf minor disease, flood control measures, rural development works, marriage assistance



disbursal, improving education outcomes, canal repairs and desiltation, encroachments removal, among others.

All highlighted issues, grievances and public demands were keenly listened to, noted and assured action promptly and as per feasibility. Some issues requiring urgent action were redressed on the spot.

The DC addressed the gathering and assured that demands were noted and will be taken up for the larger benefits of the public.

He presented action taken reports of highlighted demands of previous Block Diwas and intimated that some works stand completed already while others are in pipeline for development. Funds for various

highlighted works have been released and shall be completed soon, said the DC.

DC Shopian commended the locals for actively participating in the event and apprised the gathering about the ongoing development works in the subdivision for inclusive and equitable development.

Later on, the DC instructed the officers to take up their sector wise demands and public welfare issues with promptness while focusing on their intended public benefits.

Alongside, a drug free pledge was administered to participants, emphasising the issue of the drug problem and the need to control it with the collaborative efforts of citizens and government.

Mahajan inspects land for DL trial ground, vehicle fitness facility

KT News Desk

REASI, NOVEMBER 19: Transport Commissioner J&K Vishesh Paul Mahajan Wednesday conducted an extensive tour of Reasi.

He inspected the land identified for the establishment of a Driving Licence (DL) Trial Ground and Vehicle Fitness Facility, as well as assessed the

condition of road connectivity in the district. He was accompanied by ARTO Reasi, Nasir Ahmed, Tehsildar Reasi, MVD officials and other concerned officers.

The Commissioner inspected the land earmarked for the new facility, reviewed the infrastructural and procedural requirements and directed the concerned authorities

to complete the process and documentation for registering the land in the name of the Transport Department. He stressed that timely completion of these formalities will allow the department to initiate further work without delay.

The Transport Commissioner also inspected the damaged road stretches. He assured that

the matter would be taken up with the Road Safety Council and the Deputy Commissioner Reasi, for speedy restoration and repair.

In line with strengthening enforcement measures, he asked for launching a sustained enforcement drive to check road safety and traffic violations.

Later, ARTO along with MVD Staff conducted an enforcement

campaign at Serli Katra. As many as 15 vehicles were e-challaned, 5 vehicles were seized and a fine of ₹58,000 was imposed on violators.

The Transport Commissioner reiterated that such drives will continue to ensure safer roads, disciplined driving and strict compliance with transport regulations across the district.

DC Bla, SDM Uri felicitated

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, NOVEMBER 19: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, has been honoured with the prestigious Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Commendation Card and Disc in recognition of his outstanding leadership during Operation Sindoor and his sustained efforts in strengthening civil-military coordination in the region.

The commendation was presented to him by Lieutenant General Prateek Sharma, SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, SM, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, during a special ceremony held at Kathi

Post, Nawarunda, Uri.

In the same ceremony, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Uri, Shubhankar Pratyush Pathak, was also conferred with the GOC-in-C Northern Command Commendation Card and Disc for his exemplary service and exceptional commitment during Operation Sindoor.

The honours bestowed on the Deputy Commissioner and SDM Uri reflect the seamless synergy between civil administration and the Indian Army, and acknowledge their pivotal roles in ensuring effective coordination, public safety, and timely execution of critical operational responsibilities in the sensitive border region.

GBHSS Zainakote secures 2nd rank in National Water Award

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 18: In a proud moment for Jammu & Kashmir and the School Education Department, Government Boys Higher Secondary School (GBHSS) Zainakote has secured 2nd Rank in the 6th National Water Award 2024, announced by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The award ceremony was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 18th of November, 2025 and was presided over by the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu.

The award was received by the Ex-Principal of the school, Ali Mohamad Rather and Senior Lecturer, Nyla Ali, who represented the institution at the national event.

The school has been applauded for its focused initiatives, including rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, eco-club awareness

drives, innovative student-led projects, and community outreach programmes on responsible water use. These efforts align closely with the goals of NEP 2020, which emphasises experiential learning, sustainability, and preparing children to become active contributors to environmental protection.

This national recognition highlights the school's role as a leading institution in environmental stewardship and water conservation.



DESJK hosts one-day GeM training workshop

KT News Desk

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 19: The Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Jammu & Kashmir (DESJK) organized a One-Day Training Workshop on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) for the Drawing & Disbursing Officers (DDOs) of Jammu Division, here Wednesday.

The programme was held under the aegis of the Regional Director Evaluation & Statistics Jammu Ashu Gupta with an aim to strengthen digital procurement practices across the region.

The workshop was graced by Director General, Economics & Statistics J&K, Satvir Kour Sudan. She delivered the inaugural address and highlighted the Jammu & Kashmir Government's strong thrust on adopting digital, paper-light and transparent procurement systems, in alignment with the broader vision of



good governance and administrative reforms.

The technical sessions were led by Senior Consultant Government e-Marketplace (GeM), Sarthak Khoda and Senior Assistant Director (GeM), Amir Ali as the key resource persons. They provided hands-on training on different aspects of GeM operations, including vendor selection, bid management, order placement, contract execution and payment processes through PFMS. The resource persons also addressed practical

challenges commonly faced by departments and offered actionable solutions to streamline procurement workflows.

Participants included Chief Planning Officers, the Principal School of Applied Economics & Statistics, District Statistics & Evaluation Officers, DDOs and officers and officials from the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Regional Director Evaluation & Statistics, Jammu and several other offices of Jammu Division. The workshop witnessed enthusiastic

participation, reflecting the growing commitment of field officers toward adopting transparent and efficient procurement systems.

Speaking on the occasion, the Regional Director Jammu Ashu Gupta emphasized the crucial role of DDOs in implementing procurement reforms at the grassroots level. He reiterated the Directorate's commitment to continuous capacity building and strengthening institutional frameworks to ensure accountability, integrity and seamless integration of digital governance tools across the Jammu Division.

The workshop concluded with an interactive session during which participants raised queries and shared challenges faced in their respective offices. The initiative is expected to significantly enhance the efficiency, accuracy and transparency of procurement activities undertaken by the participating offices.

Capacity building prog under NMBA held

KT News Desk

Shopian, November, 19: The District Administration Shopian Wednesday organised a capacity building and orientation Training programme under J&K IEC Campaign against Drug Abuse here at Mini-Secretariat.

The training was imparted to Principals, Headmasters and masters designated by the School education department for making a dedicated and trained human resource for drug and substance abuse awareness across the district.

The initiative is part of a larger district-wide campaign to eradicate drug abuse and create a safer and healthier environment for youth.

The training embodies the commitment of the District Administration to endeavour and take concrete steps under the banner of Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan, ensuring

meaningful grassroots-level impact through employing services of an equipped team of trainers/counsellors.

The programme focused on early identification of risk factors, sensitisation on the harmful effects of substance abuse and equipping trainees with strategies to create a drug-free and supportive environment for students.

Resource persons emphasised strengthening counselling mechanisms, engaging parents and promoting co-curricular activities aimed at enhancing student well-being.

During the session, professionals from Addiction Treatment Facility, District Hospital Shopian, Police and Education departments emphasized the growing concern of drug abuse among adolescents and highlighted the crucial role educational institutions play in early prevention.

They explained in detail the physical, psychological and social consequences of substance abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, Master Trainer, Dy.SP, Shopian, Mohammed Ashraf sensitised about the rising challenges of drug abuse and shared responsibility in combating it along with highlighting NDPS Act and other legal provisions.

Medical Officer, ATF threw light on various aspects of drug abuse, highlighting its harmful physical, psychological and social consequences. He elaborated on the causes, symptoms and long-term impact of drug abuse.

Other Trainers from the Education department explained the ill-effects of drug abuse on youth, emphasizing preventive measures and the importance of early counselling and collective responsibility of society to curb the menace.

Nitish Kumar to take oath as Bihar CM for record 10th time today

PM Modi, HM Shah to attend

PTI

Patna, Nov 19: JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar is set to be sworn-in as Bihar chief minister for a record 10th time on Thursday, days after the NDA secured a landslide victory in the assembly elections.

Preparations for the swearing-in ceremony at Patna's historic Gandhi Maidan are in the final stages, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and several top NDA leaders expected to attend.

Apart from the main stage, several pandals have also been erected to accommodate VIPs.

Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place, and over three lakh people are anticipated at the event, a senior BJP leader said.

Kumar submitted his resignation as the outgoing CM to Governor Arif Mohammad Khan on Wednesday.

He was accompanied by Union minister Chirag Paswan, RLM chief Upendra Kushwaha and Uttar Pradesh Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya.

State BJP chief Dilip Jaiswal told reporters that the governor accepted his resignation and asked him to continue as caretaker CM till a new government was formed.

Kumar was elected leader of the NDA legislature party following meetings of newly elected MLAs, where senior leader Samrat Choudhary was chosen as the BJP legislature party leader and Vijay Kumar Sinha as the deputy leader.

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, who was appointed as the central observer for the election of the legislature party leader in Bihar by the BJP, was present at



the meeting.

Besides, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and former Union Minister Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti, who were made co-observers for the election process of the legislature party leader, were also present.

Meanwhile, lobbying among NDA allies to finalise cabinet berths continued throughout the day.

The new Bihar Cabinet is expected to include 16 ministers from the BJP and 14 from JD(U), including the party chief.

Sources said consensus has been reached among NDA partners to appoint BJP's Prem Kumar as the Assembly Speaker. The Deputy Speaker's post is likely to go to JD(U).

Sources said the new Cabinet will have five to six new faces from the main constituents of the NDA — the BJP and the JD(U).

Umesh Singh Kushwaha, JD(U) state chief who won from Mahnar assembly seat, is likely to be inducted in the new Cabinet.

While JD(U) is likely set to retain its current ministers, BJP may bring in a few new faces.

Smaller allies — LJP(RV)

led by Union Minister Chirag Paswan, HAM-S led by Jitan Ram Manjhi, and RLM led by Upendra Kushwaha — will also get representation.

"The LJP (RV) is likely to get three berths in the new state cabinet while the HAM-S and RLM one berth each. A maximum of 16 ministers from the BJP and 14 ministers, along with CM Nitish Kumar from JD(U), will take oath on November 20", sources said.

JD(U) leaders likely to be part of the new Cabinet include Bijendra Prasad Yadav, Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Shrawan Kumar, Sunil Kumar, Lesi Singh, Sheila Mandal, Madan Sahni, Ratnesh Sada, Mohammad Zama Khan, Jayant Raj, Umesh Singh Kushwaha, and Ashok Chowdhary.

Other probable inductees from JD(U) are Rahul Kumar Singh, Sudhanshu Shekhar, Kaladhar Prasad Mandal, and Panna Lal Singh Patel, sources said.

BJP sources said most ministers from the outgoing Cabinet will be retained, with the party considering three new faces.

Those likely to continue

include Samrat Choudhary, Prem Kumar, Mangal Pandey, Vijay Kumar Sinha, Nitish Mishra, Renu Devi, Jibesh Kumar, Neeraj Kumar Singh, Janak Ram, Hari Sahni, Kedar Prasad Gupta, Surendra Mehta, Santosh Kumar Singh, Sunil Kumar, and Motil Lal Prasad.

Potential new faces from BJP include former IPS officer Anand Mishra (elected from Buxar), Rana Randhir, Gayatri Devi, and Vijay Kumar Khemka, sources said.

"We are aiming for greater representation in the new cabinet," a JD(U) leader said.

In the outgoing government, the BJP had 15 ministers, JD(U) 12 including CM Nitish Kumar, Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) had one, and one minister who was an Independent candidate.

"Given that our MLA count has risen sharply since 2020, when we had fewer than 50, we expect more berths this time, a JD(U) leader said.

The NDA stormed back to power in Bihar, winning 202 seats in the 243-member assembly, with BJP bagging 89, JD(U) 85, LJP(RV) 19, HAM 5 and RLM 4.

Meanwhile, Jan Suraaj founder Prashant Kishor described his decision not to contest the Bihar polls as a "mistake," noting that his party secured less than 4 per cent of votes. He affirmed his commitment to future electoral efforts in the state.

In an interview with NDTV India, Kishor said, "My decision not to contest polls can be considered a mistake. We have to do a lot to achieve a satisfactory result. I had never expected that our party would get less than 4 per cent votes in the assembly polls."

The former poll strategist also asserted that his effort would continue to win future elections. "I will not back down without winning Bihar. I don't know how much time it will take," he said during the interview.



A delegation of Shri Lakshmi Narayan Temple Management Trust, Gandhi Nagar Jammu, led by its President V.K Abrol, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday

Dharmkund cloudburst Timely relief, compensation provided to victim families: Ramban Admin

Refutes 'incomplete, one-sided' news on cloudburst tragedy
KT News Desk

Ramban, Nov 19: District Administration Ramban has strongly refuted a news item published in a local daily on November 14 regarding Dharmkund Cloudburst, terming it an incomplete and one-sided narrative, lacking proper ground truthing and factual verification.

While refuting the news item, the administration said that in the news item, several critical facts have been overlooked, leading to a misleading portrayal of the situation.

"Contrary to the claims made in the news, all families affected by the cloudburst and flash-floods on April 20, 2025 in Dharmkund, Tehsil Ramban, have been provided due relief and compensation strictly as per

SDRF norms," the administration said. "Immediately after the incident, the District Administration Ramban extended comprehensive support, temporary shelter, food, water, medical care, and other essential logistics".

The administration said it undertook timely damage assessments, processed cases under SDRF guidelines, and released compensation accordingly. Every affected household received the assistance mandated under SDRF provisions.

The district administration said that constructive feedback is always welcomed, however, reports published without verification can create unnecessary panic and undermine the hard work of officials who responded promptly and diligently during the disaster.

The administration reiterated that relief as per SDRF norms has been provided to the cloudburst affected families.

Presidential reference SC judgement on question over fixing timeline for guvs' nod to clear bills today

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 19: The Supreme Court is slated to pronounce on Thursday its verdict on the presidential reference, which asked if a constitutional court can impose timelines for governors and the president to give assent to bills passed by state legislatures.

A constitution bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P S Narasimha and A S Chandurkar, which heard the arguments for 10 days, had reserved the verdict on September 11.

In May, President Droupadi Murmu exercised powers under Article 143(1) of the Constitution to know from the top court whether timelines could be imposed by judicial orders for exercise of discretion by the President while dealing with the bills passed by state assemblies.

The president's decision had come after the April 8 verdict of the apex court, on powers of the governor in dealing with bills passed by the Tamil Nadu government. In a five-page reference, Murmu posed 14 questions to the Supreme Court and sought to know its opinion on powers of governor and the president under Articles 200 and 201 in dealing with bills passed by the state legislature.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Sacrifices of security

destination in the region," he said.

"Purmandal-Utterbehni Teerth Kshetra is a confluence of faith, cultural unity, and diversity in Jammu and Kashmir. It is a sacred pilgrimage for self-purification and self-realization, showering blessings and fostering love, respect, and brotherhood. Purmandal embodies the soul of our eternal culture. The sacred Umapati Mahadev Temple, nestled on the banks of Gupt Ganga Devika, is one of the most important spiritual pilgrimage sites in J&K," he said.

"For centuries, Purmandal has served as a beacon for social harmony, community service, and environmental protection, providing renewed purpose and direction to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Responding to the demands projected by Purmandal-Utterbenhi Teerth Seva Trust, the Lieutenant Governor assured that the administration and stakeholder departments will work with a whole-of-government approach to preserve the religious and cultural heritage of Purmandal- Utterbehni.

LG Sinha said that in the past year, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board has constructed five temples as part of its expansion and service enhancement. He said that helicopter services between the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and Shiv Khori will begin soon to provide greater convenience to pilgrims.

"The Shrine Board is ready to extend all possible support to anyone who wishes to run a Ved Pathshala or any other religious teaching institute," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the District Administration Samba to identify government land for a new Ved Vidyalaya. He said the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) will fund its establishment, following its support for several ved vidyalayas, sanskrit pathshalas and gaushalas.

The Lieutenant Governor assured financial assistance from SMVDSB for establishment of Gurukul, Sanskrit Pathshala, or Ved Pathshala in the region.

He also said the issue of connecting Purmandal with a 4-lane road will be taken up with the Government of India.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that, under the leadership of PM Modi, the remarkable transformation of Jammu Kashmir is both tangible and intangible, focusing on physical infrastructure as well as revival of cultural and spiritual heritage. "Numerous ancient religious and historical sites have been reconstructed. Nearly 62 such important sites have been restored in past 4 years. Restoring and reviving our rich spiritual heritage, and spiritual tourism in the UT has remained our prime objective," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the Purmandal-Utterbehni Teerth Seva Nyas, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other organisations for their significant contribution for preserving and promoting J&K's rich spiritual and

cultural heritage.

He also urged the social organisations and all sections of society to join the efforts in protecting the natural heritage.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament; Keshav Dutt Sharma, DDC Chairperson Samba; Dr Devinder Kumar Manyal, Member of Legislative Assembly from Ramgarh; Suresh Gupta, President, Purmandal-Utterbehni Teerth Seva Nyas; Rajesh Gupta, President Vishwa Hindu Parishad (J&K and Ladakh), heads of various religious organisations, prominent citizens and devotees in large number were present on the occasion.

Anil Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shiv Kumar Sharma DIG Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range; Ayushi Sudan, Deputy Commissioner Samba, and senior officials of civil and police administration were also present. (KNO)

Valley's fruit industry

remained stuck for days together, resulting in massive rotting and damage to the produce. Prices crashed to levels never seen before. Farmers who worked tirelessly the entire year were forced to sell their produce at throwaway rates," he said.

Since mid-August, recurring landslides and repair work on the national highway have led to repeated closures, causing fruit consignments to pile up in mandis and orchards, further triggering a price crash, the growers said.

The Union expressed disappointment that neither the central government nor the UT administration has announced any compensation or support package so far, despite the enormous losses.

It urged the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to address the crisis through a set of key demands that include an immediate Rs 2,000 crore relief package, implementation of crop insurance for horticulture, revival of the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) and declaration of Mughal Road as National Highway and construction of alternative routes.

The growers also demanded Waiver of KCC Loans, interest exemption on farmer loans, ending municipal Chungi on Fruit Transportation, establishment of 200-300 Additional CA/ Cold Stores, standardisation of Packaging (Bardanna), quality Control on Pesticides and Fertilisers, ban on artificial colouring chemicals and fully equipped Fruit Mandis

The Union urged CA store owners to adhere to the 2024 decision, allowing growers to use their own packaging material if they choose.

KVFG called for effective quarantine measures for high-density plantation rootstock to avoid the entry of infected plants and prevent crop losses.

The Union said the fruit economy, which employs lakhs and contributes significantly to the region's livelihood, is at a breaking point and requires urgent government intervention to

prevent long-term damage. (KNO)

Pvt schools face

that the private schools affiliated with JKBOSE have to abide by the norms of the board under the SRO-123.

"The books JKBOSE have a nominal charges while the books recommended by the private schools through a private publishers are very costly," she said. (KNO)

J&K has seen

sanctioned by the bank. "We are putting our efforts to reduce the gap so that sanctioning of cases is further increased," he said.

Notably, CM Abdullah inaugurated a two-day J&K Business & Trade Fair organised by the District Administration Kulgam in collaboration with Mission YUVA. The fair aims to promote entrepreneurship and provide a platform for business innovation and growth for businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs.

After formally inaugurating the event, the Chief Minister inspected various stalls established by entrepreneurs and business establishments. He interacted with the participants and lauded their contribution towards promoting business enterprises and generating livelihood opportunities in the district.

Addressing the gathering, Omar said that while the government is working to create jobs, it is not possible to provide government employment to everyone. Therefore, it is essential to create self-employment avenues, and schemes like Mission YUVA have been devised to fulfil this objective, he said.

The CM emphasised that banks must ensure smooth disbursement of cases under various entrepreneurship schemes and assured budding entrepreneurs of all possible support from the government. "The Mission Youth is aimed at empowering young people to explore innovative ideas, build sustainable businesses, contribute to the region's economic progress, and evolve into job creators," he said.

Highlighting the importance of trade fairs, Omar said they play a crucial role in strengthening the economy by offering emerging entrepreneurs opportunities to showcase their talent, connect with wider markets, and expand their business networks.

During the event, the CM visited entrepreneur stalls, business units, and departmental exhibits and interacted with the participants. He distributed sanction letters to beneficiaries under the Mission YUVA scheme. (KNO)

CM terms entrepreneurship

create jobs, it is not possible to provide government employment to everyone. Therefore, it is essential to create self-employment avenues, and schemes like Mission YUVA have been devised to fulfil this objective. He emphasised that banks must ensure smooth disbursement of cases under various entrepreneurship schemes and assured budding entrepreneurs of all possible support from the government.

He added that the aim of Mission Youth is to empower young people to explore innovative ideas, build sustainable businesses, contribute to the region's economic progress, and evolve into job creators.

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During the event, the Chief Minister visited entrepreneur stalls, business units, and departmental exhibits and interacted with the participants. He also distributed sanction letters to beneficiaries under Mission YUVA scheme.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Education, Health & Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo, said that youth are actively participating in entrepreneurship schemes. She informed that many beneficiaries have already been identified and numerous cases approved. She stressed the need for smooth processing of cases to maximise the benefits and urged youth to avail themselves of these opportunities.

MLA Kulgam, M.Y. Tarigami, encouraged young people to seize every opportunity to build prosperous and progressive lives.

The programme was attended by Minister for Education, Sakeena Itoo; DDC Chairperson Kulgam, Mohammad Afzal Parrey; MLA Kulgam, M.Y. Tarigami; MLA Devsar, Peerzada Feroz Ahmad; Secretary Labour and Employment, Kumar Rajiv Ranjan; Secretary in Information Department, Muneer Ul Islam; DDC Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan; Mission Director, Mission YUVA, Shadab Aalam; other senior officers; representatives of business organisations; entrepreneurs; and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Capacity-building completion certificates were distributed, Mission YUVA sanction letters were handed over to beneficiaries, and MoUs were exchanged between Mission YUVA and ONDC.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan presented the welcome address and highlighted the aim of organising the two-day fair. Mission Director Shahzad Aalam presented the vote of thanks and highlighted achievements under Mission YUVA.

Omar lays foundation

The ceremony was attended by Minister for Transport Satish Sharma, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Secretary Transport Department Avny Lavasa, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Basharat Qayoom, Managing Director J&K Road Transport Corporation A.R. War, and other senior officers and officials concerned.

The establishment of the Automated Testing Station is aimed at ensuring scientific and reliable vehicle fitness assessment, reducing manual intervention, and promoting safer mobility across the region.

India among 7 countries

SC strikes down key provisions of Tribunals Reforms Act

> Says Parliament can't override verdicts

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 19: The Supreme Court on Wednesday struck down several provisions of the 2021 Tribunals Reforms law related to the appointment, tenure, and service conditions of members of various tribunals, saying they had been re-enacted by the Centre with minor tweaks.

A bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran said the impugned provisions violated the principles of separation of powers and judicial independence, and they should not have been brought back.

The bench said that dealing with the backlog of cases was not the sole responsibility of the judiciary, and the onus must be shared by the other arms of the government.

The bench held that Parliament had sought to "legislatively override" binding judicial precedents by re-enacting clauses



previously quashed by the court.

"We have compared the provisions of the Ordinance and the 2021 Act, and it shows that all provisions

struck down, with minor tweaking, have been re-enacted again," the CJI said while reading the judgment. "Thus, we have held that the provisions of the 2021

Act cannot be sustained as it violates separation of powers and judicial independence. It amounts to legislative overriding without curing any defects and binding

judgment It falls foul. Thus, it is struck down as unconstitutional," he said.

The court restored the earlier judicial directions on tenure, making it clear that members of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) and the Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) shall continue to be in service until the age of 62, while their chairpersons or presidents shall remain in office until the age of 65.

The details of the judgment are awaited. On November 11, the top court reserved its verdict on a batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Act, 2021. The law abolished several appellate bodies, such as the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal, and amended provisions governing appointments, age criteria, and tenure across the tribunal framework.

Nitish Kumar elected as leader of NDA in Bihar



PTI

Patna, Nov 19: JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar was chosen leader of the NDA in Bihar during a meeting of newly elected MLAs of the alliance partners here on Wednesday, state minister Shrawon Kumar said.

Kumar will take oath as the chief minister for a

record 10th time at Patna's historic Gandhi Maidan on Thursday.

The proposal for the leader of NDA was moved by JD(U)'s Vijay Choudhary and seconded by BJP leaders Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Sinha. MLAs of the LJP(RV), HAM and RLM also seconded the proposal, Shrawon

Kumar said.

Earlier in the day, Kumar was elected as leader of the JD (U)'s legislature party by the newly elected MLAs of the party.

The NDA stormed back to power in Bihar, winning 202 seats in the 243-member assembly, with BJP bagging 89, JD(U) 85, LJP(RV) 19, HAM 5 and RLM 4.

Al Falah chairman had reasons to flee, ₹415 cr tainted funds identified: ED

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 19: Chairman of the Al Falah group Jawad Ahmed Siddiqui had "incentives" to flee India as his close family members are settled in Gulf countries and he is in receipt of at least Rs 415 crore tainted funds generated "dishonestly" from students of educational institutions run by his Trust, the ED informed a court.

Siddiqui was taken into custody by the federal probe agency on Tuesday night after it conducted day-long searches against the Al Falah University group of Faridabad. The University is central to the investigation into the November 10 Red Fort area blast which killed 15 and injured several others.

He was produced at the residence of Additional Sessions Judge Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan (Saket court) where the agency sought his 14-day remand for custodial interrogation. The court sent him to 13-day ED custody till December 1.

The agency informed the court that the university and its controlling trust, under the direction of Siddiqui, generated proceeds of crime of Rs 415.10 crore by dishonestly inducing students and parents to part with money on the basis of false accreditation and recognition claims.

It further claimed that Siddiqui's arrests was necessary as there was an apprehension of his absconding and of non-cooperation.

"Accused has significant financial resources and influence and has a history of serious economic offences. His close family members are also settled in Gulf countries and he has incentives to flee India.

"Given the gravity of the present allegations (with proceeds of crime



quantified in hundreds of crores) and the potential consequences under PMLA, there is a reasonable apprehension that if not arrested he may abscond or remain unavailable for effective interrogation, relocate assets and himself beyond the jurisdiction, and continue to delay or obstruct the investigation," the ED told the court.

It said Siddiqui was the founder and managing trustee who was "controlling the mind" of Al Falah charitable trust and exercises de facto influence over Al Falah University and its institutions.

It alleged Siddiqui's custodial interrogation was necessary to unearth and quantify the full extent of the "proceeds of crime", including those not yet visible in the disclosed income tax return (ITR) figures and to enable the timely attachment and confiscation under the PMLA.

The ED also claimed that Siddiqui has "command" over the staff that handles admission registers, fee ledgers, accounts and IT systems of the University and other institutions under the Trust and he

could "destroy or alter records". The entire Al Falah educational ecosystem is controlled by him (Siddiqui) and only a portion of the proceeds of crime worth Rs 415.10 crore has been identified so far..., the ED informed the court seeking his remand.

The agency said the entire Al Falah group has seen a "meteoric rise" since the 1990s, metamorphosing into a large educational body.

"However, the financials of the various entities are at variance with the huge amount of assets/wealth accumulated by the group," it told the court.

Siddiqui's lawyer told court that his client has been falsely implicated in the present matter.

The court gave Siddiqui's 13 days remand to ED saying his arrest was as per the PMLA provisions and considering the "gravity" of the offence and that the investigation was at a nascent stage.

The ED has taken cognisance of two Delhi Police FIRs to register its case under the anti-money laundering law against the Al Falah group.

Indian Army secures intellectual property rights for new coat combat (digital print)

PIB

New Delhi, Nov 19: Following the unveiling of the New Combat Uniform (Digital Print), the Indian Army introduced the New Coat Combat (Digital Print) in January 2025, marking another milestone in its ongoing journey towards modernisation, indigenisation, and enhanced soldier comfort.

The New Coat Combat has been designed and developed by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi, as a consultancy project under the aegis of the Army Design Bureau. The three-layered garment incorporates advanced technical textiles and features an ergonomic design tailored to improve comfort, mobility, and operational efficiency in diverse climatic and tactical conditions.

The Indian Army has successfully registered the design of the New Coat Combat (Digital Print) with the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, Kolkata, under Design Application No. 449667-001, dated 27 February 2025 and published in the Official Journal of the Patent Office on 07 October 2025.

With this registration, the exclusive Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for both the design and camouflage pattern rest solely with the Indian Army. The registration establishes the Army's sole ownership and legal protection against unauthorised manufacturing, reproduction, or commercial use by any non-authorised entity. Any infringement of these rights will attract legal



consequences, including injunctions and claims for damages, as per the provisions of the Designs Act, 2000 and Designs Rules, 2001 and Patents Act, 1970.

The New Coat Combat ensemble includes

Outer Layer: Digitally printed camouflage coat designed for operational durability and concealment in varied terrains

Inner Jacket: Insulated mid-layer using lightweight, breathable materials providing warmth without restricting movement. Thermal Layer: Base layer ensuring optimal thermal regulation and moisture control in extreme weather.

These garments together represent a leap forward in the integration of combat functionality with comfort and protection, reinforcing the Army's commitment to continuous transformation and soldier welfare.

SIR Phase II

Nearly 99 pc enumeration forms distributed to electors in 12 states, UTs

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 19: More than 50.35 crore of the nearly 51 crore electors in nine states and three Union territories have received enumeration forms under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, the Election Commission said on Wednesday.

Phase two of the SIR exercise began on November 4 with the enumeration stage and will continue till December 4.

In its daily SIR bulletin, the poll authority said over 50.35 crore enumeration forms have been distributed in the 12 states and Union territories. In other words, 98.79 per cent of the 50.97 crore electors have received the partly filled forms.

These states and Union territories are: Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep.

Among these, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal will go to the polls in 2026. In Assam, where elections are also due in 2026, the EC announced a 'special revision' of electoral rolls on Monday.

Apple expands AppleCare+ in India, introduces Theft & Loss coverage with new flexible plans

IANS

New Delhi, Nov 19: Apple on Wednesday expanded its AppleCare+ protection plans for customers in India, introducing more flexible options, including AppleCare+ with theft and loss for iPhone.

With new monthly and annual subscription choices, users now have greater freedom in how they protect their Apple devices and can keep coverage for as long as they want.

Apple said the updated plans aim to make device protection easier and more affordable. "AppleCare gives our customers peace of mind knowing that their products are protected and supported by Apple experts," said Kaiann Drance, Apple's vice president of Worldwide iPhone Product Marketing.

"With today's updates in India, we're making it easier and more affordable to get trusted protection, including access to our most complete coverage for iPhone," Drance added.

The newly introduced AppleCare+ with Theft and Loss covers up to two incidents of theft or loss each year.

Besides offering reassurance in case an iPhone goes missing, the plan also includes all the benefits of regular AppleCare+.

Users get 24/7 priority support, battery replacement services, and unlimited accidental damage repairs using genuine Apple parts at Apple Stores and authorised service centres. Prices for the Theft and Loss plan start at Rs 799.

Customers can view these protection options and purchase plans directly through the Settings app on their iPhone, iPad, or Mac. Coverage begins immediately, whether they choose a monthly or annual subscription.

The expansion of AppleCare+ in India comes at a time when Apple is also strengthening its health and safety features globally.

Recently, Apple announced that the Apple Watch's new hypertension notification feature could warn more than one million users about signs of chronic high blood pressure — a condition that affects around 1.3 billion adults worldwide.

The feature uses machine learning to detect early signs of hypertension by analysing blood vessel responses over a 30-day period.

Gold climbs Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,27,300/10g on renewed safe-haven buying globally

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 19: Gold prices climbed Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,27,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday tracking a strong rally in the international rates, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,26,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

Silver prices also bounced back, surging Rs 4,000 to Rs 1,60,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes), snapping a three-day losing run in the local bullion market.

"Gold advanced on Wednesday, supported by renewed safe-haven demand, while persistent signs of weakness in the US labour market kept expectations for a potential rate cut alive," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst -- Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. On the global front, spot gold extended its gains for the second straight session rising USD 46.32, or 1.14 per cent, to USD 4,114.01 per ounce. "Spot gold is trading above

USD 4,084 level as investors await Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) minutes of October meeting to be released tonight," Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

Kaynat Chainwala, AVP & Analyst Commodities Research, Kotak Securities, noted that gold recovered from a one-week low on Tuesday to settle above USD 4,065 per ounce, supported by softer US employment data and caution ahead of several delayed macro releases.

Meanwhile, the US jobless claims rose mid-October, while continuing claims increased to 1.9 million, signalling a cooling labour market conditions. Federal Reserve officials offered mixed cues, with Thomas Barkin highlighted balanced risks between inflation and employment, while Christopher Waller struck a more dovish tone, citing weakening labour conditions.

Spot silver rose appreciated 3.09 per cent to USD 52.26 per ounce in the overseas trade.

Markets bounce back: Sensex jumps 513 points, Nifty reclaims 26,000

PTI

Mumbai, Nov 19: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty bounced back sharply on Wednesday, driven by a rally in IT stocks and sustained buying from domestic institutional investors amid growing hopes for an India-US trade deal.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 513.45 points, or 0.61 per cent, to settle at 85,186.47. During the day, the benchmark surged 563.75 points, or 0.66 per cent, to 85,236.77.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 142.60 points, or 0.55 per cent, to 26,052.65.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Sun Pharma and Titan were among the biggest gainers.

In contrast, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Maruti, Adani Ports and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards.

Meanwhile, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said "you will hear good news" on the proposed trade pact between India and the US once the



deal is fair, equitable and balanced.

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

Markets in Europe were trading mostly lower in mid-session deals.

US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth

Rs 728.82 crore on Tuesday. However, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 6,156.83 crore, according to exchange data.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.39 per cent to USD 64.64 per barrel.

On Tuesday, the Sensex declined 277.93 points or 0.33 per cent to settle at 84,673.02. The Nifty dipped 103.40 points or 0.40 per cent to 25,910.05.

What former leader Sheikh Hasina’s death sentence means for Bangladesh

AP

Dhaka, Nov 19: This week’s sentencing to death of Bangladesh’s former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on charges of crimes against humanity is seen by her opponents as a chance to move forward for a nation traumatized by the scale of the violent uprising that drove her from power into exile.

Hasina has been in India since Aug. 5 last year, when her 15-year rule ended during the violence that left hundreds of people dead and thousands injured. She has rejected Monday’s verdict, calling it “biased and politically motivated.” Challenges are enormous for Bangladesh’s interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus, under pressure to hold a credible election in February after decades of rule by either Hasina or her longtime rival.

Here’s what to know. A tense election ahead Bangladesh’s new leaders are determined to move the South Asian nation back to democracy through the upcoming election, one they have made sure won’t include Hasina and her Awami League party. But emotions remain high. “The interim government has fully suppressed the Awami League ... So the level of polarization is at a fever pitch,” said



analyst Michael Kugelman, a senior fellow with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

The biggest concern is violence involving the election, he said. “Awami League spoilers may try to disrupt the election with unrest. And with Bangladesh’s police force dealing with serious morale issues, there would be concerns about the state’s capacity to manage the violence,” Kugelman said.

Police in Bangladesh were on the frontlines of the deadly crackdown in 2024 and some in their ranks were killed after protesters attacked police stations. Hasina’s son has warned that the party could try to block the election if the ban on its political activities is not lifted and that only an inclusive election could stabilize the country. A ‘long game’ for Hasina

India is unlikely to extradite Hasina, despite Bangladesh’s renewed call for that following Monday’s verdict.

“Hasina will likely bide her time, continue to manage her party’s affairs from India and play a long game with the hope of a return to politics if circumstances change in the coming years,” Kugelman said. “In the region, dynastic leaders and their parties may take hits, but they never go away.”

Analyst Sabir Mustafa, former head of BBC’s Bengali Service, said that the Awami League could be seriously demoralized without Hasina’s leadership, but that the party needs to reform if it wants to move forward.

“So, Hasina needs to start the party’s reforms herself,” he said, indicating that she has to look to the future if she wants

to eventually get back to politics. Mustafa said the trial was “seriously flawed” and that a death sentence was unjust for a case held in absentia. Despite that, he said it would be a challenge to get her supporters and others out into the streets to protest anytime soon.

Mustafa said that without party reforms and new leadership under the guidance of Hasina, it would be difficult for the Awami League to make a comeback.

“That’s the kind of bullet they have to bite,” he said. New leader under pressure

Human rights groups and the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights have expressed mixed reactions to the verdict and trial process.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International raised questions of fairness in the trial process, while the UN rights body said the verdict was “an important moment” for victims of last year’s crackdown that killed hundreds, although it remains opposed to the death penalty in all cases.

Given that, the Yunus-led administration will need to convince the international community about the credibility of the trial process.

For Kugelman, Yunus’ first priority — and his biggest challenge — is ensuring a safe and peaceful environment for the

election. These are high stakes polls: It’s the first election in nearly 20 years in Bangladesh in which there are strong expectations that the vote will be free and fair. The January 2024 election, which swept Hasina to power for a fourth consecutive term, was boycotted by opposition parties and marked by violent protests and international scrutiny.

Mustafa said Yunus has already failed his legacy as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate by presiding over many violations, including blatant mob justice, custodial deaths, blanket arrests and jailing of people, some without any specific and credible charges, especially among Hasina supporters. But he thinks the international community will continue to support the interim leader.

“The challenge before him between now and February is to ensure that things run smoothly and the elections do happen in February in a peaceful and credible manner,” Mustafa said. He said that, given the electoral ban of the Awami League, Yunus should ensure the election is not rigged by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, headed by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, or the country’s largest Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami.

“Thus he can revive his legacy as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.”

Afghanistan needs \$129 million for quake recovery, UN says, as donor support falls

REUTERS

Karachi, Nov 19: A UN-led assessment says Afghanistan requires \$128.8 million to restore housing, schools and key services in its quake-hit eastern provinces, warning that reconstruction faces “significant shortfalls” as donor support for the country falls sharply.

The Joint Rapid Recovery Needs Assessment (JRRNA), conducted with the World Bank, EU and ADB, outlines a three-year plan to rebuild homes, health facilities, water systems and farmland in the eastern provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Laghman.

It comes as aid to Afghanistan shrinks, with the UN estimating a \$3.2 billion need this year and a similar requirement in 2026, less than half of which has been funded.

“The earthquakes-hit communities are already strained by drought, mass returns and a sharp economic contraction,” UN Resident Representative Stephen Rodriguez told Reuters. “There is very limited capacity left to cope with another shock.”

Spokespeople for the Taliban administration and the government’s disaster management authority did not respond to requests for comment.

The JRRNA says the quakes caused \$86.6 million in damage across 10 districts, affecting 56,000 families, with more than 6,200 homes collapsed, 2,000 severely damaged, and 22



health facilities and 80 schools hit. The full recovery bill is higher at \$128.8 million.

Housing is the biggest challenge, costing \$54.9 million to rebuild thousands of homes. Education needs \$14.9 million, with more funding needed for water, irrigation, farmland and rural roads.

UN agencies have provided emergency tents and cash to thousands of families, with nearly 10,000 households needing urgent shelter support and 7,700 people still displaced.

Rodriguez said the assistance eased immediate pressures but was “nowhere near enough” to move families out of survival mode without longer-term investment.

TIGHTENING AID ENVIRONMENT

Rodriguez said a major donor cut \$80–90 million this year, forcing more than 400 health centers to close in the first half of 2025, adding that basic services had already been scaled back as needs rise. He did not identify the donor.

The UN Development Programme plans to seek \$150 million for infrastructure, jobs and private-sector support next year, including \$43 million for re-integration of refugees who have returned, but Rodriguez said it was unclear how much donors would provide.

Afghanistan has also absorbed one of the world’s largest forced return of refugees. Rodriguez said 4.3 million to 4.5 million Afghans have returned since 2021, with UN refugee agency data showing up to 2.5 million more in Iran and 1.7 million in Pakistan could return if current policies continue.

“The absorptive capacity is already exceeded,” he said, noting that 88 percent of returnees are in debt and only 4 percent have salaried jobs. With 400,000 young Afghans entering the labor market each year, Rodriguez warned that delays in reconstruction risk fueling social tensions and outward migration.

Mumbai, J&K complete formalities to notch easy wins

PTI

Mumbai, Nov 19: Mumbai needed just over half an hour to complete the formalities as they beat minnows Puducherry by an innings and 222 runs on the final day to top Group D in Ranji Trophy here on Wednesday.

Following on after conceding a mammoth 498-run first innings lead to their formidable opponents, Puducherry added just 45 runs in 8.3 overs for the loss of four wickets on the fourth morning to be all out for 276.

Puducherry were staring at a defeat after beginning the day on 231 for 6. Tushar Deshpande scalped two wickets while captain Shardul Thakur and Ayush Mhatre got one each as Mumbai



completed the formalities in quick time.

Both Deshpande and Thakur ended the match with five wickets apiece while Siddhesh Lad and Akash Anand scored centuries in Mumbai’s huge first innings total of 630 for 5 declared.

Mumbai collected seven points from their third win while Puducherry got none.

Jaishankar inaugurates two new Indian consulates in Russia

PTI

Moscow, Nov 19: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday (November 18, 2025) inaugurated two new Indian consulates in Russia, saying their establishment will boost trade, tourism, economic, scientific, technological, academic and cultural ties between the two countries.

Expanding its diplomatic footprint in Russia, India opened the new Consulates General in the cities of Yekaterinburg and Kazan.

Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko



and India’s Ambassador to Russia Vinay Kumar were also present at the function held to mark the opening.

“This is a very important day in the diplomatic history of India in the Russian

Federation,” Mr. Jaishankar said. The top Indian diplomat alluded to the days when he had served in diplomatic assignments at the Indian Embassy in Moscow. “This is an important day

for us, when we are adding two more Consulates General in this country... Over the last few months, consistent work has been underway to establish these consulates,” he said and asserted that India recognises the support received from the Russian government.

Mr. Jaishankar said Yekaterinburg is often called the “third capital of Russia” due to its industrial importance, and is a “gateway to Siberia”.

It is known for its heavy engineering, gem cutting, defence manufacturing, metallurgy, nuclear fuel, chemicals and medical equipment, he said.

Indonesia raises alert level as volcano near Bali erupts

AFP

Surabaya (Indonesia), Nov 19: A volcano on Indonesia’s main island of Java erupted on Wednesday, throwing ash and gas kilometers into the sky and forcing officials to raise the alert status to its highest level. Mount Semeru in eastern Java, about 310 kilometers west of the tourist hotspot of Bali, erupted at 2:13 p.m. local time (0713 GMT), spewing what are known as pyroclastic flows, Indonesian geological agency head Muhammad Wafid said.

“The public is advised not to engage in activities within an 8 kilometer (5 mile) radius of the crater or peak of Mount Semeru due to the risk of being struck by ejected rocks,” he said in a statement.

The national disaster agency said the plume of ash had risen as far as 13 kilometers (eight miles) into the air. Its spokesman Abdul Muhari said at least 300 villagers living near the volcano have been evacuated to two temporary shelters. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

2nd ODI: Ravindra, Conway pave way as NZ clinches series against WI



REUTERS

Bengaluru, Nov 19: Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra’s early attack helped New Zealand beat West Indies by five wickets with three balls to spare in a rain-curtailed second one-day international in Napier to seal the three-game series 2-0 on Wednesday.

Chasing 248 for victory in a 34-overs-a-side contest, Conway and Ravindra powered the Black Caps with attacking half-centuries, putting on a 106-run opening stand that

dismantled the Caribbean bowling attack early on.

After being put into bat, West Indies’ top order faltered, losing half its batters for only 86 in 15.3 overs, as Kyle Jamieson (3-44) dismissed John Campbell and Keacy Carty early on.

Wicketkeeper-batter Shai Hope anchored the innings with a counterattacking century - his 19th in ODIs - featuring 13 fours and four sixes.

Late contributions from Justin Greaves and Romario Shepherd,

alongside Hope, helped the visitors reach 247-9.

New Zealand started well, but after Ravindra (56) fell in the 17th over, the host lost Will Young and Mark Chapman in quick succession. Conway (90) also departed in the 26th over, leaving it on shaky ground at 166-4.

But unbeaten innings by Tom Latham (39 off 29) and captain Mitchell Santner (34 off 15) kept the pressure off New Zealand even as the required run rate went above 10 at times.

INOX CINEMA

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Movies Schedule

Thursday, 20th November

SPIDERMAN 3 - RE RELEASE (U)

ENGLISH - 03:00 PM

THAMMA (UA16+)

HINDI - 06:10 PM

DE DE PYAAR DE 2 (U/A13+)

HINDI ATMOS - 11:25 AM, 02:30 PM, 05:40 PM

HINDI - 12:45 PM, 04:00 PM

EK DEEWANE KI DEEWANIYAT (A)

HINDI - 12:00 PM

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