



Serving divyangjan citizens brings 'punyas': LG Sinha

Urges officers to extend every possible support to persons with disabilities

Says under PM Modi, equal opportunities, rights provided to all

Lauds J&K for securing top position in Vande Matram programme

Yogesh

Jammu, Dec 03: Asserting that serving persons with disabilities is an act of virtue that brings "punyas" and reflects the administration's commitment to inclusive development, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday urged officers to extend every possible support to divyangjan citizens.

Addressing "International Day of Persons with Disabilities" event here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Assisting divyangjan must not be treated as a routine administrative task but as a moral responsibility. Providing help to divyangjan will fetch more punyas (virtues). Officers must ensure that no effort is spared in supporting them."

He said, "I salute the resilience, determination and



potential of divyangjans. We are committed to building a system that aligns with their dreams and aspirations, eliminating all challenges and barriers."

The Lieutenant Governor called upon all to take a pledge to protect and promote the rights of divyangjans. "Inclusion of divyangjan is the foundation of equitable development. We must work with sensitivity,

awareness, and a shared resolve to ensure their dignity and meaningful participation and guarantee access to education, skills, and livelihoods," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor shared the key initiatives of the UT Administration towards providing comprehensive support for socio-economic empowerment of divyangjans. He stated that, under the

leadership of PM Modi, special efforts have been made to provide equal opportunities, equal rights, and a quality life to Divyangjans.

"Together, we must build a J&K where accessibility is the norm, where every Divyangjan has access to all facilities, equal employment opportunities, and the advanced technical tools needed to live a life with dignity and respect," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Highlighting Jammu & Kashmir's strong performance in the Vande Matram programme, LG Sinha informed that despite having only about one percent of India's total population, the Union Territory secured the top position in the first phase of the initiative. He added that nine out of the top ten performing districts in the country were from J&K, with Kishtwar | More on P6

Shakeup in J&K reservation policy

J&K cabinet clears proposal to slash EWS by 7%, RBA by 3%

Open Merit share to rise by 10%; decision to be sent to LG for approval

Umer Maqbool

Jammu, Dec 03: The Jammu & Kashmir cabinet on Wednesday greenlit a proposal to slash quotas in the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Reserved Backward Area (RBA) categories to enhance the share of Open Merit (OM) by 10 percent.

Authoritative sources revealed to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the cabinet approved a seven percent cut in the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota and a three percent cut in the Reserved Backward Area (RBA) quota. The shake-up is designed to boost the Open Merit share by a staggering 10 percent.

"The cabinet has implemented the sub-committee's



recommendations in toto," they disclosed.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee (CSC) had recommended against tinkering with Scheduled Tribe-I, Scheduled Tribe-II, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, and Actual Line of Control/International Border categories.

The proposal will now be sent to the Lieutenant Governor for approval. If cleared, this decision is expected to enhance the OM share by 10 percent.

With this move, the Open

Merit (OM) share would rise to 50 percent in vertical reservation.

The Lieutenant Governor may have to make a prior reference to the Union Government on the matter, as the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019 mandate that the Lieutenant Governor shall consult the Central Government in the Ministry of Home Affairs, or the appropriate Ministry, with a copy to the Ministry | More on P6

Govt notifies revised ex-gratia relief structure

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 03: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Wednesday issued a consolidated set of instructions for sanctioning ex-gratia relief under Security Related Expenditure (SRE) for persons affected by law-and-order disturbances.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the General Administration Department has issued an order in this regard after taking the approval from Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

As per the order, the revised structure covers magistrates, police personnel, paramilitary forces, government employees, civilians and others.

For magistrates and police personnel, including SPOs, the relief has been fixed at Rs 2 lakh

and 5 lakh respectively. In case of a death of ex-serviceman Rs 2 lakh will be given to NOKs.

Permanent disability will receive Rs 0.75 lakh and partial disability 0.10 lakh.

For Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), Rs 5 lakh is sanctioned for non-domicile personnel killed in J&K.

Domicile personnel dying within the UT and those dying outside the UT will receive 25 lakh. Permanent disability has been fixed at 0.75 lakh and partial disability at 0.10 lakh.

Under the category of government employees other than police personnel, ex-gratia for death has been fixed at 1 lakh, permanent disability 0.75 lakh, serious injury requiring hospitalization beyond 24 hours 0.05 lakh, hospitalization less than 24 hours 0.01 lakh, and minor injury discharged | More on P6

Rationalised reservation policy in line with commitments made with people: CM

» Tried to ensure there is no injustice with anyone

» Not done to satisfy any individual

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Dec 03: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the cabinet tried to rationalise the reservation policy in the way they had promised to the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Talking to reporters after chairing a cabinet meeting in Jammu, Omar, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the cabinet tried to ensure that there should be no injustice to anyone. "An effort was made to rationalize the reservation in the way we had promised to the people. Effort was also made to ensure that there should be no injustice to anyone," he said.

The cabinet today morning



met at Jammu to discuss implementation of the cabinet sub-committee's report on rationalization of the reservation policy.

Without naming anyone, Omar said those who were accusing them of doing nothing on the reservation are now threatening agitation. "It is

easy to do politics on the issue. Those who were taunting us, saying that we had done nothing on reservation, are now saying if you do this, we will launch an agitation," he said.

The CM said that they couldn't have done more on the reservation. "We couldn't have carried out a more detailed exercise than this. Every issue was looked into. The issue was discussed more than once. This is the third or fourth time that the issue has come before the cabinet. The cabinet sub-committee took six months to complete the exercise," he said.

Omar, however, refused to disclose the cabinet's decision on the reservation. "It wouldn't | More on P6

CM for close coordination btw depts & banks for Mission YUVA success

Calls for stronger synergy to boost youth entrepreneurship

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 03: Chief Minister on Wednesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of Mission YUVA, a flagship initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for the youth across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking at the meeting, the Chief Minister said that the real strength of Mission YUVA lies in the success stories emerging from the ground. "Wherever we find a speed breaker or friction, we will remove it swiftly," he said, emphasizing that seamless coordination between departments and banks is essential to ensure that young entrepreneurs succeed.



He underlined that although the Mission is still in its early operational phase, the results are encouraging. "We have been discussing this for some time. The actual operational duration of these schemes is barely a few months, and in any scheme,

that is a very short life cycle. The first year or so is spent in learning and fine-tuning. To that extent, with more than 10,000 sanctions and around 600-670 disbursements, I believe the success of Mission YUVA will feed | More on P6

Omar promises transparency, simplified process in compassionate appointments

Hands over appointment letters, regularisation orders

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 03: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday reiterated his government's commitment to clearing the backlog of compassionate appointments under SRO-43 and the Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (RAS-2022), assuring that all necessary relaxations would be granted wherever required to simplify and make the entire process fully transparent.

The Chief Minister was speaking at a function organised at the Convention Centre here where he handed over appointment orders to candidates under SRO-43 and RAS-2022, besides issuing regularisation



orders to Contingent Paid Workers (CPWs) of the School Education Department.

The event was attended by Minister Sakina Itoo, Minister Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary GAD M. Raju, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh

Kumar, Secretary School Education Ram Nivas, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Rakesh Minhas, and a large gathering of beneficiaries and family members.

In his address, the Chief Minister, who is the Minister in charge of the General Administration Department,

assured the beneficiaries that the government is determined to clear the backlog of cases under SRO-43 and RAS-2022.

"As far as the orders of SRO-43 are concerned, I assure you that we will try our best to dispose of the pending cases. We will grant relaxation in cases as per the norms and make this process as transparent as possible," the Chief Minister said.

Expressing deep empathy with families who approach the government during their most difficult hours, the Chief Minister stressed that compassionate appointments are not acts of favour but rightful entitlements under an established policy.

"On behalf | More on P6

'We're hidden, not celebrated': On Disability Day, Kashmir's specially-abled decry stigma

Accuse authorities of indifference, broken promises

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Dec 03: As the world marked World Disability Day, persons with disabilities in Kashmir used the occasion not to celebrate, but to highlight the grim realities they continue to face.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), several specially-abled persons said that despite the promises



and schemes announced over the years, their lived experiences tell a completely different story. "It is painful that on a day

meant for acknowledging us, we are compelled to raise our voices for basic rights," they said. "If we had been truly empowered,

we would have been celebrating this day instead of complaining for basic rights."

They lamented that the guarantees under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, remain largely unimplemented in Kashmir. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Accessible India Campaign with much fanfare, but on the ground, barely anything changed. A few token works were done here and there, and most funds lapsed without meaningful results," one of them said.

Many accused the government of failing | More on P6

Foundation Day of Assam, Nagaland celebrated in J&K Lok Bhavan

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 03: The Foundation Day of Assam and Nagaland was celebrated in Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. Statehood was officially conferred to Nagaland on 1 December 1963 while Assam celebrates its Foundation Day on 2nd December. The Foundation Day programme was organised as part of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative of Government of India.

Addressing the gathering, LG Sinha said celebration of the



foundation days of other states and Union Territories in the Lok Bhavans across the country has strengthened the cultural bonds and inspired citizens to learn about other state's unique traditions, language

while building a deep bond of brotherhood.

The Lieutenant Governor also paid tribute to Swargadeo Sukapha, founder of the Ahom kingdom, Lachit Borphukan, the renowned | More on P6

Div Com Kashmir reviews progress on key administrative matters

‘Expedite processing of SRO-43 cases to ensure timely appointments for eligible family members of terror victims’

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 03: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, chaired a meeting with all Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to review the progress on several important matters, including appointments under SRO-43 for families of terror victims, implementation of self-employment schemes, land transfer cases involving security agencies, and construction of houses for families affected by terrorism and cross-border shelling.

The meeting, as per an official statement issued on Wednesday also assessed the status of under-construction BSNL towers, public grievance disposal, and revision of stamp duty rates across districts.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioners apprised the Divisional Commissioner of the current status of all pending and ongoing cases in their respective districts.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the DCs to expedite the processing of SRO-43 cases to ensure timely appointments for eligible family members of terror victims. He also emphasized the need to motivate affected families, including minorities, to take full benefit of available self-employment schemes.

Issuing separate instructions regarding land transfer cases to security agencies, Garg asked the DCs to strictly adhere to the relevant provisions of land mutation laws.

He further instructed the officers



to prioritize the disposal of public grievances received through the e-office platform.

Reviewing the progress on BSNL tower installation in shadow zones, the Div Com directed DCs to ensure timely completion of all related works. Also, the Deputy Commissioners of Budgam, Baramulla, Srinagar, and Bandipora were asked to adopt a uniform policy for relocation of

transmission poles affected by the Ring Road alignment.

Garg also instructed the officers to club families of terror victims with those affected by cross-border shelling for providing benefits under the housing construction scheme.

With respect to annual revision of Stamp Duty, the Div Com called for changes in considering market rates and land acquisition issues.

DC Srinagar reviews capex budget works, calls for timely completion

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR DECEMBER 03: To review the progress of the developmental works being executed under District Capex Budget 2025-26 in the District, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Wednesday chaired a comprehensive meeting of all District/Sectoral Officers here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

Besides, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Joint Commissioner SMC, Sajad Kawoosa the meeting was attended by Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE, KPDCL, SMC, Assistant Commissioner Panchayats, Block Development Officers, District/Sectoral Officers, Engineers and other



concerned.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, took a detailed review of ongoing works taken up as well as new works allotted under District Capex Budget during financial year 2025-26.

On the occasion, the DC directed all line departments to accelerate the

pace of works to ensure timely physical and financial completion of the developmental projects. He stressed the importance of regularly updating progress on the E-Nigrani Portal for effective monitoring and transparency. He further instructed departments to immediately start all

remaining allotted works, keeping in view the limited working season.

The DC further called upon all Engineering divisions and concerned departments to intensify efforts to meet public expectations by achieving 100% completion of targets within stipulated timelines.

SWD marks World Disability Day at Abhedananda Home in Srinagar

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 3: The Department of Social Welfare Wednesday observed the International Day of Persons with Disabilities by organising a special programme at Abhedananda Home, Solina Rambagh, Srinagar.

This year's global theme, "Fostering Disability-Inclusive Societies for Advancing Social Progress," guided the day's proceedings.

Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez was the chief guest on the occasion.

In his address, the Commissioner Secretary reaffirmed the department's commitment towards building an inclusive society where every individual can live with dignity, access their rights and enjoy equal opportunities. He highlighted several ongoing government initiatives aimed at addressing the needs and aspirations of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs),

emphasizing the goal of empowerment, socio-economic upliftment and social integration. "Inclusion is not charity; it is a fundamental right," he stated, calling for collective action to dismantle physical, social and attitudinal barriers that limit the opportunities for persons with disabilities.

During the programme, Sarmad Hafeez engaged in an interactive session with the staff, management, students and parents. He asked the staff to work with renewed dedication and compassion.

The Commissioner Secretary also felicitated "15" Distinction Holders and staff members with Appreciation Certificates in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and service.

A series of cultural activities were presented by the students of Abhedananda Home, including the National Anthem in Indian Sign Language, various cultural performances, a Ladakhi song in

Sign Language and a play depicting inclusivity and talent.

Prominent speakers, including Shabir Khan, SP South, and Dr Khair-un-Nisa, Chairperson CWC Srinagar, delivered insightful deliberations on the protection of rights of persons with disabilities under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016.

Other dignitaries present included the Director, Social Welfare Kashmir, District Social Welfare Officer, Srinagar, Principal BHSS Jawahar Nagar, among others.

The event concluded with a collective call to action, urging all stakeholders to work together to build a more inclusive, accessible and equitable society.

Following the programme, the Commissioner Secretary inspected the infrastructure and facilities at Abhedananda Home to assess requirements for further improvements, ensuring enhanced care and quality education for specially-abled students.

DC Shopian reviews Birth & Death registration system

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, DECEMBER 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee on Births and Deaths here at Mini-Secretariat to review the performance, recent reforms and overall registration process across the district.

District Statistics & Evaluation Officer (DSEO) presented a detailed briefing regarding current status, recent improvements and issues faced at field level.

The DC, as per an official statement emphasised the critical importance of timely, accurate and error-free registration of every birth and death, as entries form the basis of multiple legal, social and developmental processes.

He highlighted that linkage of Aadhaar at the time of birth, ensuring proper documentation and maintaining complete, verified data are essential for smooth service delivery. He directed for daily updating and monitoring of birth & death entries, zero pendency and strict adherence to timelines.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PROJECT OFFICER, GAGRIBAL, SRINAGAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applications are invited from the registered / bonafide fishermen, cooperative societies , self-help groups of Dal Circle, Falling under jurisdiction of Chief Project Officer, Gagribal District Srinagar for availing financial assistance regarding the sanction of Three Wheeler with E-Rickshaw / replacement of boats and nets under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "PMMSY" fisheries sector under action plan with funding pattern of 40:60 (40% of Government share and 60% of beneficiaries share) for the year 2025-26.

The applications shall be submitted in the Office of the concerned Inspector Fisheries, Dal Circle by or before 9th December, 2025.

Terms and conditions

- The applicant should be domicile of J & K (UT)
- That the beneficiary shall be a bonafide fisherman registered with the Department possessing last 5 years consecutive professional fishing licence.
- That the beneficiary must possess a valid driving licence.
- That the cost of the E-Rickshaw shall be borne as per the guidelines of PMMSY Scheme on 40:60 proportional basis between the Department and the beneficiary.
- That the beneficiary has to furnish an affidavit from the 1st class magistrate that he shall use the auto-rickshaw exclusively for the fish trade.
- If the applications are received more than no. of allotted units, then the selection shall be made through draw of lots by the District Level Steering Committee (DLSC) under the chairmanship of District Development commissioner, District Srinagar.
- The other terms and conditions shall be obtained from the office of the Chief Project Officer, Gagribal Srinagar.

DIPK-8679/25
DATED: 03-12-2025

Chief Project Officer,
Gagribal, Srinagar.

GOVT. OF UT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY

COMMISSIONER PULWAMA

Tele No: 01933-241243 Fax No:01933-241306

Subject: Acquisition of land measuring 03K-14.5M required for establishment of Police Post Pakharpora at village Khaigam Tehsil Rajpora regarding the issuance of declaration under section 19 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Act 2013.

Reference: DCP/Co11/2025/379, dated: 01-12-2025

Notification No. 08 of –Rev/LA of 2025 Dated: 02/ 12/2025

Whereas, it appears to the District Collector (Appropriate Government) that a land quantum of 03K-14.5M is required for establishment of Police Post Pakharpora at village Khaigam Tehsil Rajpora.

Whereas, Collector Land acquisition (Assistant Commissioner Rev.) Pulwama issued Preliminary Notification under section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Act 2013 vide No DCP/CoIV2025/296-301, dated: 27-09-2025 for calling upon the objections, if any, from the interested persons/land owners.

Whereas, in response to the said notification, no objection stands received with regard to the area and suitability of the land proposed to be acquired, within the stipulated time.

Whereas, as per the 5.0. 17 Dated 14-01-2022 in exercise of the powers conferred by provision to clause (e) of Section 3 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (30 of 2013), the Government of Jammu & Kashmir whereby designated Deputy Commissioner / District Collector of each District of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as "Appropriate Government" within their respective jurisdiction for acquiring land for public purpose under the said act for an area not exceeding 400 kanal (50 acre) .

Whereas, in accordance with S.O.17 the Collector Land Acquisition (Assistant Commissioner Rev.) Pulwama submitted the instant acquisition case for issuance of Declaration under Section 19(1) of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 vide above referred communication.

Whereas, the "Appropriate Government" (District Collector) is satisfied after considering the report made by the Collector Land Acquisition (Assistant Commissioner Rev.) Pulwama that the said land is required for the public purpose.

Now, therefore, it is hereby declared under the provision of Section 19(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, that the land measuring 03K-14.5M is required for establishment of Police Post Pakharpora at village Khaigam Tehsil Rajpora,

The land statement and plan can be inspected in the office of Collector Land Acquisition (Assistant Commissioner Rev.) Pulwama and Tehsildar concerned.

No: DCP/LA/2025/484-91 / Dated: 02/12/2025

DIPK-8661/25
DATED: 03-12-2025

Dr. Basharat Qayoom (IAS)
District Collector
Pulwama.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF HORTICULTURE, KASHMIR

RAJBAGH-SRINAGAR OPPOSITE PRESENTATION CONVENT SCHOOL -190008

TELE-FAX:01943100919 website: http://hortikashmir.gov.in Email:dhk-kashmir@jk.gov.in

E-NIT No:71 of 2025-26
Tender ID:2025_HP D_296466_1
Dated: - 26/11/2025

Note: All the Bidding Process will be done on www.jktenders.gov.in

Subject: - National Tender for Import of clonal and other rootstocks of different fruit crops and Fruit Plants under the Scheme "Importing of Planting Material" for Public Sector Nurseries under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). For and on behalf of the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Director Horticulture, Kashmir invites bids/offers from reputed/registered fruit plant Nursery Growers/Suppliers/Importers for supply of imported Clonal Rootstocks and fruit plants of different fruit crops detailed in Table-A and Table-B.

Table-A Root Stocks		
S No	Kind of fruit crop	Varieties
1	Apple	M9 T-337, M-26, M-7, MM-106MM-111
2	Cherry	GiSela 3, GiSela 5, GiSela 6
3	Pear	Quince A, Quince C, Quince BA-29C
4	Almond/ Peach	Garneem, GF-677, Rootpac-20, Nemaguard
5	Pistachio	UCB-1, PG1, AI/ AXR-1 hybrids
Table-B Fruit Plants		
1	Apple	Gala: High-Colour latest Clones Red Delicious: High-Colour latest Clones Fuji: High-Colour latest Clones
2	Pear	Regal Red@ Comice, Abate Fetel, Conference (P), Carmen, Santa Maria, Red William
3	Cherry	Regina, Kordia, Lapins, Stella
4	Olive	Coratina, Frantoio, Leccino, Pendolino
5	Kiwi	Sungold G3, M-33, M-91, Abbot, Hayward, Tomuri, , Sunred, Allison (P), Chieftain (P)
6	Almond	California Paper Shelled, Non-Pareil, Tuono, Independence, Merced, Drake, Primorskij
7	Chandler, Franquette, Fernor	
8	Pistachio	Kerman, Siirt, Red Aleppo, S Fax
9	Raspberry	Heritage, Meeker, Tulameen, Zawadi, Caroline, Autumn Bliss
10	Hazelnut	Toda Di Giffoni, Jefferson, Barcelona, Ennis.
11	Grapes	Thompson Seedless, Flame Seedless, Crimson Seedless, Red Globe, Sarita
12	Chestnut	Colossal, Bouche de Bétizac, Marsol, Vignols

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility Criteria, specifications, Bill of Quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the Tender Website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below in table C: -

Table-C		
Date of Issue of Tender Notice		26-11-2025
Date of downloading of bidding documents		26-11-2025
Bid Submission Start Date		01-12-2025
Bid submission End Date		18-12-2025
Deadline for receiving the Hard Copy of the documents uploaded on the website along with Demand Draft of Rs.1000/- only in original (No financial bid to be submitted)		18-12-2025
Date & time of opening of technical bids (online)		19-12-2025

DIPK-8691/25
DATED: 03-12-2025

Sd/-
(J.A.Bhat)
Deputy Director Horticulture
(Central)

World Disability Day

Anantnag couple cultivates hope and mushrooms

UMAISAR GULL GANIE

Anantnag, Dec 03: Defying societal expectations and their physical challenges, a specially-abled couple from south Kashmir's Anantnag district has skillfully nurtured a thriving mushroom cultivation unit under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) scheme.

With the support of the agriculture department, Mehroka Jan and her husband Muzafar Ahmad who have physical disabilities affecting their legs have turned their challenges into strength to earn a dignified livelihood through their home-based mushroom unit.

Recalling her struggle, Mehroka said that her family used to be dependent on her husband.

"My husband is also specially-abled. My father-in-law has only one kidney and my mother-in-law also remains unwell. So the only earning member in the family was my husband who too wasn't able to work properly. We would often worry about how to run the household," she said.

She said the turning point came after participating in an



Pic: Umaisar Gull (KNO/KT)

agriculture-related event. "I enrolled in the HADP scheme under which I was given 90 mushroom bags. I set up the unit at home and by the grace of God, it has helped us stand on our feet," she added. Speaking about unemployment, Mehroka advised youth to broaden their perspective. "Government jobs are not easy to get. If you do not find a government job, you can work in the private sector or set up a small scale unit. Visit departments, explore schemes and make use of them. You can earn with dignity."

Her husband, Muzafar, urged young people to remain focused and avoid distractions. "When people sit idle, negative thoughts take over. Many youngsters in Kashmir are getting distracted. I request them to leave such things behind. Your real world is your home, your parents, your family," he said. Muzafar appealed to the youth to shun the wrong path. "Choose any field you like, work hard and earn your livelihood. That is the right direction."—(KNO)

Padma Shri Tak decries ignored disability rights

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Dec 03: On a day meant to celebrate inclusion and dignity, Padma Shri awardee Javed Ahmad Tak expressed deep concern that disability rights in Jammu and Kashmir remain largely un-addressed, despite clear directions from the Supreme Court of India and robust provisions under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Tak, one of J&K's most prominent disability rights advocates, said that even fundamental guidelines, such as reservation in promotions for employees with disabilities, have not been implemented on the ground.

He said it was heart-breaking that people with disabilities had to take to the streets on World Disability Day, a day meant to acknowledge their potential. "Instead of celebrating our abilities, we are forced to protest for basic rights. That alone reflects our reality," he said.

According to Tak, the spirit behind the global



observance is being misunderstood. "World Disability Day isn't about charity. It is about strengthening our capabilities and ensuring we are part of every sphere of society," he added.

He lamented that despite nationwide initiatives, including the Accessible India Campaign, accessibility in Jammu and Kashmir remains negligible. "A few cosmetic changes were made at some locations, but most funds lapsed without meaningful work. Ramps, tactile pathways, accessible transport—these are still missing almost everywhere," he said.

Tak said the government must at least issue

clear instructions mandating accessibility in all new constructions. "If new buildings continue to be built without ramps, lifts or accessible washrooms, how do you expect a wheelchair user to participate in daily life? Such oversights push our community to the margins," he noted.

He said the four per cent reservation in jobs for persons with disabilities is also not being honoured consistently. "Many officials don't even know what our legal rights are. Even though the exam fee exemption exists, disabled applicants are still compelled to pay because lower-level staff are unaware of the rule," he said.

Tak spoke emotionally about the social mindset that continues to stigmatise disability. "At times, we aren't treated as humans. The rules guarantee medical support and assistive devices, but on the ground, people are left to manage alone," he said.

Comparing J&K's disability pension to other regions, he said the amount offered is "shockingly low". "While several states provide between Rs 5,000 and Rs 15,000 per month, J&K still gives only a few hundred. It should be raised to at least Rs 6,000 so that families can manage basic expenses," he urged.

He also called for complete exemption from electricity and water charges, as well as free ration, for households where a disabled person is the head and relies solely on a pension.

Tak warned that unless the administration acts swiftly, promises of inclusion will remain hollow. "Rights written on paper mean nothing until they change lives on the ground," he said—(KNO)

Inclusive education key for specially-abled: DIG Pandey

RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Dec 03: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Central Kashmir, Rajeev Pandey on Wednesday said that specially-abled persons should not be segregated from mainstream education and society, emphasising the need for inclusivity to ensure their overall development.

Speaking during a World Disability Day event in Ganderbal, DIG Pandey said the term "disabled" should be avoided and that "specially-abled" individuals deserve equal opportunities and participation. "If we create separate schools for them, that in itself becomes discrimination. It is better that they study and grow with other children and are accepted as they are," he said.

DIG Pandey added that inclusive cultural and educational activities play a crucial role in helping specially-abled persons lead a normal life.

He also addressed the growing

drug menace in Kashmir, stating that the Jammu and Kashmir Police have intensified its campaign under the NDPS Act to curb drug peddling and consumption. "If you look at the statistics, there has been a sharp rise in NDPS cases across J&K. There is no leniency and no vacancy in action," the DIG said. The police officer said hot-spots linked to drug trafficking have been identified and focused operations are underway to break supply networks.

He added that both coercive action and corrective rehabilitation measures are being implemented simultaneously. "We are running de-addiction centres at the range level. Police teams are carrying out awareness campaigns in schools, colleges and youth organisations," DIG Pandey said, urging media outlets to amplify anti-drug messaging and help provide a healthier environment for young people—(KNO)



JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Dec 03: As Jammu and Kashmir marks World Disability Day, parents of specially-abled children have once again highlighted a longstanding concern—the acute shortage of special schools across the Union Territory, a gap they say is depriving their children of quality education and essential developmental support.

Several parents expressed frustration, saying that despite repeated appeals, dedicated educational facilities for children with special needs remain virtually non-existent in most areas. They lamented that children are losing precious years due to missing infrastructure.

Parents said the absence of accessible, disability-friendly education centres forces many children to remain confined to

their homes.

Nelofar Akhter, a mother from south Kashmir, said countless families like hers struggle daily. "There are so many specially-abled children who simply cannot attend school because there are no special schools nearby," she said.

Akhter added that her own son would also have remained out of school had it not been for Zeba Apa School in Bijbehara, an institution started by Javed Ahmad Tak, a Padma Shri awardee who himself is physically challenged.

"If this school hadn't existed, my child would have been at home like many others. There are no government-run special schools that offer such support," she added.

Other parents said that Abhenandana Home in Srinagar is the only prominent facility available, but it cannot meet the needs of

children across the entire Union Territory.

Parents said that children admitted to Abhenandana Home often require a family member to stay with them—something not feasible for most families from far-off districts. "Not everyone can shift to Srinagar to look after their child. We need schools closer to home," a parent from Pulwama said.

To ease the burden on families, parents suggested that special schools should be established at the tehsil level, ensuring accessibility and reducing travel difficulties and dedicated colleges for differently-abled students should be set up at the district level to open pathways for vocational and higher education.

Creating such infrastructure is essential for helping children with disabilities become self-reliant and confident contributors to

society, they said.

Meanwhile, Abhenandana Home Higher Secondary School, Solina Rambagh, run by the Department of Social Welfare, Kashmir, marked World Disability Day with a vibrant and inspiring event. The programme featured a historic moment as deaf and mute students performed the national anthem in Indian Sign Language for the first time in Kashmir, drawing emotional applause from the audience. Students also presented cultural performances, including a Ladakhi song and a drama, all in sign language.

The event was attended by senior officials, including Child Welfare Committee Chairperson, Dr Khairun Nisa, Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez, Director Social Welfare Kashmir, Mohd Akbar Wani, DSWO Srinagar, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, SSP South, Shabir Khan and others.

The dignitaries lauded the teachers and staff of Abhinandan Home for their commitment to empowering children with disabilities.

Sarmad Hafeez reaffirmed the government's commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible society. He called for equal opportunities and rights for persons with disabilities.

The cultural performances, including the national anthem and Ladakhi song in Indian Sign Language, were appreciated by the audience. The play/drama by students showcased the talents and abilities of individuals with disabilities, promoting a sense of pride and belonging.

The event concluded with a call to action, urging the community to work together to create a more inclusive and accessible society for all—(KNO)

Parents plead for special schools

JKHA protests for welfare schemes

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 03: On 'World Disability Day', scores of differently-abled persons under the banner of the Jammu and Kashmir Handicapped Association (JKHA) Wednesday morning staged a protest at Press Enclave, Srinagar—demanding implementation of welfare schemes for persons with disabilities. The protesters were carrying placards that read 'Insaaf Karo, Disabled Ke Saath Nafrat Nahi' and 'We Need Accessibility', they said "We facing the government's apathy and indifference." They further said that despite repeated assurances, the administration has failed to provide them the basic facilities like job reservations and accessible infrastructure.

Chairman of J&K Handicapped Welfare

Society Sajad Anwar Masoodi said, "Despite tall promises, nothing has changed for us. We continue to struggle for pensions, employment opportunities, and barrier-free spaces."

He said, "We are not asking for sympathy, we are demanding our rights. The government must ensure accessibility and inclusion at every level." The members of the JKHA appealed the government to implement special employment schemes for disabled youth and requested to provide them laptops with screen-reading software for the visually impaired students. Besides, the association urges the government to strengthen the Braille system of education from primary to university levels. They also demanded four percent job reservation in all government departments, fuel-operated scooters for mobility and zero-interest loans to help them



start small businesses and live with dignity.

Masoodi said that while other states have rolled out robust welfare policies, "The disabled community in J&K continues to be ignored and sidelined."

"We are struggling every single day to survive with dignity. Without government support, our lives become a daily struggle for existence," he said, urging Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and the concerned departments to intervene immediately.

The protestors also called for an increase in monthly assistance for the disabled individuals, many of whom face financial hardships amid rising costs of living. They urged the government to take concrete measures to uplift the differently-abled community rather than confining their issues to ceremonial observances on World Disability Day—(KNO)

J&K has Rs 196 Cr MGNREGS liabilities: Centre

SAJID RAINA

New Delhi, Dec 03: Jammu & Kashmir has pending liabilities of Rs 196.29 crore under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), according to data presented in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Responding to a question on funds owed to States under the scheme, Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the Union Territory has dues of Rs 5.48 crore under the wage head, Rs 188.50 crore under material costs and Rs 2.31 crore under administrative expenditure as on November 26, 2025. The Minister said wage payments

are issued daily by the Centre through the Public Finance Management System (PFMS) after receiving fund transfer orders from States and UTs.

He added that all admissible wage liabilities up to FY 2024-25 have been cleared across the country, except in the case of West Bengal.

On the release of funds for the current financial year, Chouhan informed that rupees 68,393.67 crore has been disbursed nationwide under MGNREGS as of November 26, 2025, including rupees 57,853.62 crore for wages and rupees 10,540.05 crore for material and administrative expenditure.

He noted that funds for material

and admin components are released in tranches based on factors such as labour budgets, work demand, pending liabilities, utilisation rate and submission of relevant documents by States and UTs.

Data tabled in Parliament also shows that Jammu & Kashmir received Rs 1,151.20 crore under MGNREGS in 2024-25, compared to Rs 921.60 crore in 2023-24, Rs 1,051 crore in 2022-23 and Rs 950.14 crore in 2021-22.

The minister also stated that funding to West Bengal remains suspended since March 2022 due to non-compliance with directives issued by the Centre—(KNO)

SHG network crosses 94,000 mark

Aijaz Asad calls for mission-mode expansion of JKRLM

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Dec 03: Secretary, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR), Mohammad Aijaz Asad on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM), focusing on financial progress, institution building and convergence of livelihood interventions across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Mission Director JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma, AMD Jammu & Kashmir, State Programme Managers and other senior officers.

The Secretary was informed that JKRLM has significantly expanded its outreach, implementing the

programme across 285 blocks in all 20 districts of the UT. A total of 7,65,583 rural households have been mobilized into 94,962 Self-Help Groups (SHGs), supported by 7,422 Village Organizations (VOs) and 649 Cluster Level Federations (CLFs).

Under the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), 7,678 enterprises have been supported across 14 blocks, with 18.71 crore disbursed as Community Enterprise Fund (CEF). Farm-based livelihood initiatives are now active in every block, benefiting 5,62,944 Mahila Kisans through agro-ecological and livestock-based interventions.

Commending the Mission for the progress achieved, Secretary Asad called for intensified efforts in lagging areas and urged the team to fully leverage the SHG platform to enhance rural income generation.

EDITORIAL

Honouring The Hands That Preserve The Heritage

The conferring of the National Award upon master artisans Manzoor Ahmad Khan and Khawaja Nazir Ali is a moment of immense pride for Jammu and Kashmir. This twin glory in carpet weaving and sozni embroidery is not merely a personal achievement for these exceptional craftsmen; it is a resounding validation of Kashmir's enduring cultural legacy and its living heritage. Their skilled hands, which have painstakingly preserved and perfected centuries-old techniques,

remind us that true luxury and artistry are born from patience, tradition, and profound dedication. This national recognition must also be seen as a welcome outcome of sustained policy focus and institutional support. Government initiatives, from the Union Ministry of Textiles' awards to the UT's own artisan-focused programmes, have played a crucial role in creating an ecosystem where such excellence can be identified and celebrated. Schemes like the Guru-Shishya Hastashilp

Prashikshan Programme and platforms such as the 'Know Your Artisan' event at the Jhelum Riverfront are vital. They provide not just training and visibility but also a renewed sense of dignity and economic viability to traditional crafts. The active role of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, in facilitating participation and now organising felicitations, underscores this supportive framework. The inclusion of special mentions for artisans in sozni and papier-mâché

further highlights the depth of talent within the Valley. It signals that Kashmir's artistic wealth is woven with diverse threads of excellence waiting for their moment in the national spotlight. Ultimately, these awards are a powerful catalyst. As Director Handicrafts and Handloom rightly noted, they provide invaluable traction in targeting niche global markets. However, their greater significance lies in the message they send to the next generation: that heritage is an asset, skill is

honoured, and a life dedicated to craft is a life of national importance. To build on this momentum, sustained efforts in marketing, design innovation, and securing fair trade practices for artisans are essential. By honouring its master craftsmen today, Jammu and Kashmir weaves a stronger, more prosperous, and culturally vibrant future for tomorrow. The nation's highest recognition for these artists is a stitch in time, preserving the past while securing the legacy for the future.

Sanchar Saathi App: Telecom Empowerment At Citizens' Fingertips

Launched in January 2025 to enhance transparent and secure mobile services

Press Information Bureau

Sanchar Saathi: A Timely Response to India's Growing Cyber Crimes

With over a billion subscribers, India has emerged as the world's second-largest telecom ecosystem. Mobile phones now serve as critical gateways to banking, entertainment, e-learning, healthcare, and government services, making mobile security more important than ever.

Rising cyber threats have made safeguarding mobile users a pressing national concern. According to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), cybercrime incidents surged from 15,92,917 in 2023 to 20,41,360 in 2024. Digital Arrest Scams and related cybercrimes reported on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal alone totalled 1,23,672 in 2024, with 17,718 cases already reported by February 2025.

In response to these escalating threats, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) introduced the Sanchar Saathi mobile app—a citizen-centric tool that brings robust security features and fraud-reporting capabilities directly to users' smartphones. The app complements the existing Sanchar Saathi portal by providing convenient, on-the-go protection against identity theft, forged KYC, device theft, banking fraud, and other cyber risks. To strengthen the initiative, the Department of Telecommunications has issued Directions on November 28, 2025, mandating mobile manufacturers and importers to facilitate the availability and accessibility of the Sanchar Saathi app on devices for users in India.

A Citizen-First, Privacy-Safe Platform
Sanchar Saathi app puts citizens first and protects their privacy at every step. It works only with user's consent and gives full control over its activation and use.

Activates only after user chooses to register

User may activate, deactivate, or delete it any time

Designed to strengthen India's cybersecurity without compromising privacy

Sanchar Saathi: Impact and Tangible Results

Sanchar Saathi has shown clear and consistent impact since its launch. The platform has strengthened user safety and reduced digital fraud across the country.

Key achievements of the platform include:
Over 21.5 crore visits to the portal (<https://sancharsaathi.gov.in/>)
More than 1.4 crore app downloads
Over 42 lakh stolen/lost mobile devices



have been successfully blocked

1.43 crore+ mobile connections disconnected after citizens marked them as "Not My Number"

26 lakh lost or stolen phones traced, with 7.23 lakh returned to their owners

40.96 lakh fraudulent connections removed following citizen reports

6.2 lakh fraud-linked IMEIs (International Mobile Equipment Identity) blocked

Financial Fraud Risk Indicator prevented losses worth 475 crore

Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has developed the Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI), a risk-based metric that classifies mobile numbers as Medium, High, or Very High risk of financial fraud. FRI helps banks, NBFCs, and UPI service providers prioritise enforcement and take extra customer protection measures for high-risk numbers.

Building on these achievements, the initiative has further curtailed telecom fraud through targeted actions, delivering tangible results across multiple platforms. More than 3 crore fraudulent mobile connections have been terminated, 3.19 lakh devices blocked, 16.97 lakh WhatsApp accounts disabled, and over 20,000 bulk SMS senders were

blacklisted, significantly curbing telecom-related fraud and enhancing user security across the country.

By empowering citizens with easy-to-use tools and real-time access to vital security features, the Sanchar Saathi mobile app represents a timely and effective response to India's growing cybercrime challenges.

The application is available in Hindi and 21 other regional languages, making it inclusive and accessible across the country. Available on both Android and iOS platforms, the app has already crossed 1.4 crore downloads since its launch.

Citizen-centric services offered by Sanchar Saathi

The Sanchar Saathi mobile app brings all citizen-centric services of the portal directly to users' smartphones, including security, verification, and fraud-reporting features.

Sanchar Saathi has the following features –

Chakshu – Enables users to report suspected fraud communications via calls, SMS, or WhatsApp – especially KYC-updating scams. This proactive reporting tool helps the DoT monitor and act swiftly on forged KYC and identity-theft cases, and encourages citizens to report unsolicited commercial

communication (UCC).

IMEI Tracking and Blocking – Allows tracking and blocking of lost or stolen phones anywhere in India. It assists police authorities in tracing stolen or lost devices, prevents counterfeit phones from entering the black market, and blocks attempts at device cloning.

Another important feature is – the option to verify the number of mobile connections. If any suspicious connections—potentially created using forged KYC details—are found, users can report and block them immediately.

Know Your Mobile Handset's Genuineness—offers an easy way to verify whether a purchased mobile device is genuine.

Reporting of International Calls with Indian numbers – Allows citizens to report international calls disguised as domestic calls from numbers starting with +91 (10 digits after the country code). Such calls originate from illegal telecom setups abroad.

Know your Internet Service Provider – Lets users check details of wireline Internet Service Providers across India by entering a PIN code, address, or ISP name.

This initiative strengthens telecom security by empowering citizens to secure

their digital identities and combat telecom fraud. Sanchar Saathi also supports enforcement of TRAI's Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCCPR) by enabling users to report spam and fraudulent calls and messages at the click of a button.

Cybercrime is "any unlawful act where computer, communication device or the computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of crime".

User Empowerment

The Sanchar Saathi initiative exemplifies Jan Bhagidari—people's participation in governance. User reports play a crucial role in preventing misuse of telecom resources for cybercrime and financial fraud. The DoT continues to act swiftly on these reports, and status dashboards on the portal ensure public transparency.

Privacy and Security

The app is designed to strengthen telecom security while protecting user data and privacy. It complies with the Information Technology Act 2000 (IT Act), India's primary law governing cybercrime, e-commerce, secure transmission, and data privacy. This legal framework defines and penalizes offenses such as hacking and data theft.

Sanchar Saathi prioritizes user privacy and collects only the minimum personal information necessary to provide services. The platform does not create profiles for commercial marketing, nor does it share user data with third parties. Data sharing is strictly limited to law enforcement when legally required, ensuring protection against unauthorized access and misuse of data.

The platform's privacy practices align with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 (DPDP Act), which emphasizes individual control, transparency, and accountability. Sanchar Saathi limits data collection to legitimate purposes, minimizes data capture, and implements clear consent mechanisms.

Conclusion

The Sanchar Saathi App has emerged as a powerful tool for securing India's growing telecom ecosystem. By integrating services like blocking lost devices, reporting fraud, verifying mobile connections, and safeguarding user privacy, it empowers citizens to protect their digital identity with ease. Its wide language availability, alignment with cyber laws, and strong privacy safeguards make it both inclusive and trustworthy. As adoption continues to rise, Sanchar Saathi is not just reducing telecom fraud; it is reinforcing digital confidence and shaping a safer, citizen-centric future for India's mobile users.

What Happened To The Internet We Once Loved?

Shainy Sharma

There was a time—nostalgic, sepia-toned, and almost mythical—when social media feeds overflowed with sunset photos, cheerful selfies, and the occasional unsolicited monologue on politics, gluten, or the meaning of existence. Today, the digital amphitheatre feels strangely quiet. Timelines that once brimmed with performative enthusiasm now resemble deserted railway platforms. And before we congratulate ourselves for having collectively achieved spiritual detachment, it is necessary to diagnose the real ailment: enshittification.

Coined by digital critic Cory Doctorow, this colourful term captures the slow, almost biological decay of online platforms. It describes the predictable cycle in which platforms move from serving users, to serving advertisers and finally to serving shareholders with unwavering devotion.

The trajectory rarely changes. First, users enjoy features, updates, and a sense of community. Then the platform quietly pivots. Advertisers become the new aristocracy, users are demoted to serfs, and shareholders ascend the throne.

This cycle is now unfolding everywhere. Instagram's beloved chronological feed has been replaced by an algorithm that behaves like a mischievous deity—blessing some posts while banishing others into obscurity. Facebook, once a powerhouse of organic reach, has tumbled from 12 per cent visibility in 2013 to a nearly invisible 2 per cent in 2023. TikTok creators routinely complain that their videos disappear from public view unless they pay for algorithmic favour. And as the global social media advertising market ballooned to USD 226 billion in 2024, platforms responded with relentless ad-stuffing.

The authenticity that once made social



media addictive has been replaced by a parade of curated façades and commercial theatrics. According to Pew Research, 64 per cent of users hesitate before posting publicly, fearing judgment, trolling, or unintentionally stepping on political landmines. Posting once as effortless as breathing now requires the caution of a diplomat. Meanwhile, social feeds have become glossy runways dominated by influencers equipped with ring lights, editing tools, and aesthetic precision. Algorithms worsen the fatigue by prioritising whatever is viral, extreme, or emotionally explosive. Birthday updates, dinner photos, and life milestones are sidelined in favour of sensational, engagement-hungry content. Even Meta admits that one in four users feel they "no longer see anything meaningful" on their timelines. If the emperor has no clothes, today's social feed has no soul.

Yet users have not disappeared; they

have simply migrated from public squares to private parlours. Encrypted messaging apps have become new social sanctuaries where people can rant, gossip, laugh, and overshare without fear of algorithmic punishment. WhatsApp alone handled over 100 billion messages a day in 2024. The quiet on social media is not cultural decline; it is a subtle rebellion. Users are sending a message: we're tired of being the product. If platforms want relevance again, they must rediscover user-centricity. Until then, public posting will continue to fade, not the death of social media, but its long-overdue evolution. People are not going silent; they are choosing spaces that feel human again. And in a world engineered for noise, that silence speaks the loudest.

The writer is an educator; views are personal

Source: The Pioneer

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

Govt committed to inclusive, accessible environment for SAPs in J&K: Sakeena Itoo

Attends International Day of Persons with Disabilities event at Jammu

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 03: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo Wednesday said that the Government led by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah is very particular about rights and needs of specially abled persons and constant efforts are being made to create an inclusive and accessible environment for Specially Abled Persons (SAPs) across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister, as per an official statement, stated this while addressing a grand event held at Convention Centre here to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, under the theme 'Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress'.

Addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo reaffirmed the Government's unwavering commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible environment for persons with disabilities, highlighting that empowerment, dignity, and equal opportunity remain at the core



of all programmes undertaken by the Government.

"The Government is consistently working to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the support, care, and opportunities they rightfully deserve," Minister Sakeena said.

She underlined that Government is consistently improving the facilities for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) in schools to ensure a conducive atmosphere for their educational purposes.

The Minister also stressed the importance of community participation and inter-departmental coordination in enabling persons with disabilities



to lead independent and fulfilling lives. She called on all stakeholders to maintain a collective and compassionate approach, aligned with global best practices and the principles of universal inclusion.

She called upon the education department and social welfare department to conduct a detailed survey regarding the achievements of persons with Disabilities, adding that such achievements need to be highlighted in events like these to inspire others.

Appreciating the Specially Abled Children of various schools for presenting colourful cultural performances, Minister

Sakeena asked them to consider themselves stronger than their challenges and never consider disability as an obstacle for success.

The Minister further highlighted that the present Government led by Omar Abdullah is of the people and for the people, the Government will do everything for the upliftment of Specially Abled Persons.

Addressing the gathering, Minister for Youth Services and Sports, IT and Transport, Satish Sharma said that equality must be championed in every sector and this Government remains committed to give equal opportunities for all specially abled

persons. He added that under NEP-2020, education has been made compulsory for Children with Special Needs.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Secretary School Education, Ram Niwas Sharma highlighted about the significance of this event, adding that this day is dedicated to promote rights and needs of persons with disability.

During the event, the specially abled school children of various schools presented mesmerizing cross regional cultural performances in Kashmiri, Hindi, Dogri, Punjabi, Shina, Pahari and other languages, which was highly appreciated and recognised by the audience.

Earlier, Sakeena Itoo also inspected stalls established by various Government Schools of Jammu showcasing innovative products and projects created by Children with Special Needs.

The Minister interacted with them and commended them for their innovative ideas in making these unique products. She assured them all possible assistance and support from the Government.

Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul reviews Baramulla Court functioning

Inaugurates Senior Lawyers' Lounge



KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 3: Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and the Administrative Judge for District Baramulla, Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Wednesday conducted an administrative visit of District Court Complex Baramulla.

During the visit, the Justice, as per an official statement, inaugurated the newly constructed Senior Lawyers' Facilitation Lounge in the District Court Complex Baramulla in the presence of District and Sessions Judge, Baramulla, Jawad Ahmad; Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa; SSP Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh, Col. Bindu Nair, 173 Engineer Regiment (TA); President Bar Association Baramulla, Advocate Neelofar Masood, and other officers from the District Administration.

The aesthetically designed structure is aimed at providing senior advocates of Bar Association Baramulla a comfortable resting space within the district court complex Baramulla for the efficient delivery of their services.

Following the inauguration, the Justice held an interaction with members of Bar

Association Baramulla and representatives of other Bar Associations of the District.

The participating advocates presented several demands and concerns, to which Justice Koul assured the legal fraternity of full support from the judiciary and expressed commitment to promptly addressing the issues raised.

The Justice also held a detailed review meeting with the District Administration regarding ongoing court infrastructure projects in Baramulla and stressed the need for timely completion of the projects and expeditious transfer of land so that judicial infrastructure across the district may be strengthened at the earliest.

Later, the Justice convened a separate meeting with all Judicial Officers posted in district Baramulla and emphasized speedy and efficient disposal of cases, reduction of pendency, and adherence to timelines for disposal of priority and targeted matters.

The visit of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul concluded with the strong message of strengthening court infrastructure including coordination between Bar and Bench and ensuring better and faster delivery of justice in District Baramulla.

KVIB holds Divisional Bankers meet to strengthen PMEGP, JKREGP implementation

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 3: The Division Office of Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), Srinagar, Wednesday organized a Divisional level Bankers Meeting at the Conference Hall, Sannat Ghar, Bemina, to review and strengthen the implementation of the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) in Kashmir Division.

The meeting, as per an official statement, chaired by Additional Commissioner Kashmir, Akramullah Tak, was attended by General Manager Convenor Bank, Ashutosh Sareen; Managing Director J&K Cooperative Bank, Deputy General Manager Agri & MSME Credit, State Director KVIC, Deputy General Manager SBI, Deputy General Manager UTILBC, Regional Manager J&K Grameen Bank, Assistant Manager PNB, District Officers of KVIBs, LDMs and Director RSETIs of Kashmir Division, Cluster Heads of J&K Bank, besides representatives from various other leading financial institutions operating in Kashmir Division.

The meeting focused on enhancing coordination between KVIB and banking partners to accelerate employment generation and foster entrepreneurship across the region.

While applauding the performance of J&K KVIB Kashmir Division, Additional Commissioner Kashmir appreciated KVIB's mandate to identify and mobilize prospective entrepreneurs, provide

training and handholding support throughout the application process, facilitate project formulation with techno-economic viability assessments, and ensure timely submission of complete applications to banks and sanctioning of the application within the TAT period fixed.

He further directed the Banking partners to expedite processing and sanctioning of eligible loan applications within stipulated timelines, conducting thorough field visits and due diligence, and ensuring transparency in credit disbursement.

It was informed that during the year 2025-26, Margin Money to the tune of Rs 4268.80 crore was released for establishment of 2164 units thereby creating employment opportunities for 17042 entrepreneurs under PMEGP and JKREGP till ending November. During the last five years (2020-2025) under both the schemes (PMEGP/JKREGP) Margin Money to the tune of Rs 79127.64 crores was released for establishment of 35902 units creating employment for 35902 persons and out of which 13940 number of units (39%) are only Women entrepreneurs.

The meeting identified critical implementation gaps requiring immediate attention and co-operation between Government agencies and Banks.

The meeting resolved to implement a fast-track approval process for complete applications, conduct regular credit camps in potential clusters to increase outreach, and develop a common digital platform for seamless application tracking and monitoring across all stakeholders.

DC Srinagar, SMC Commissioner review winter preparedness, stress swift snow clearance

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR DECEMBER 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo and Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Faz Lul Haseeb Wednesday chaired a joint meeting of District/ Sectoral Officers of all line Departments at Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review the overall winter preparedness measures in Srinagar District.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on ensuring that all line departments have comprehensive and coordinated plans in place to deal with snowfall, frost, waterlogging and unhindered supplies and essentials across Srinagar District.

The DC and Commissioner stressed the need for a robust mechanism to ensure swift snow clearance, particularly along major roads, inner lanes and critical service points including roads leading to hospitals, emergency service stations and vital installations.

The Officers were directed to plan proactively and develop a coordinated and strategic approach for snow clearance in both urban and rural roads. Emphasis was laid on the deployment of essential machinery and fully utilization of resources to ensure prompt road clearance and restoration of connectivity.

The DC also instructed Officers from Departments of MED, R&B, SMC and PMGSY ensure all necessary machinery and manpower is kept in ready state to clear snow from all main roads, especially



for emergency services viz hospitals, vital installations, besides inner lanes and by-lanes across the district.

Instructions were also given to maintain power, water, and essential supplies and to ensure that adequate stocks of essential commodities are available.

Furthermore, the DC and SMC Commissioner directed for establishing a special district level Control Room for coordination among departments and redressal of public grievances.

Both officers directed close inter-departmental coordination, round-the-clock control room functioning, and prompt response systems to address

public grievances during winter emergencies. They emphasized proactive planning, timely deployment of men and machinery, and effective communication to ensure the smooth functioning of essential services.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid; SP Headquarter, Umar Shah; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; SDM East, SDM West, Superintending Engineers, ASP Traffic Police, Director IMD Srinagar, Executive Engineers and District/Sectoral Officers of various Departments.

Javid Ahmad Dar reviews RDD functioning, calls for transparent, people-centric reforms

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 3: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Wednesday said that assets developed under rural programs must serve the public interest, adhere to the stipulated annual timelines and genuinely reflect the needs of local communities.

During a review meeting in Jammu, the Minister, as per an official statement, evaluated progress on key programs, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin, SBM-G including O&M Policy, RGSA, WDC-PMKSY-2.0 (IWMP), Infrastructure for DDC/ BDC and DDU-GKY-Himayat.

The Minister stressed that any reform required in the RDD would be taken up immediately to meet people's expectations, adding that "70 percent of public sentiment revolves around

the performance of rural development programmes and we cannot afford any compromise."

Javid Dar expressed concern over issues faced by the marginalised families under MGNREGA. He directed the officials to ensure timely payments, 100% e-KYC completion and strict monitoring of works. He highlighted persistent water scarcity in the upper Jammu kandi belt and said that MGNREGA could be used effectively to create water conservation structures, improve irrigation channels and support land development.

"Water collected through conservation works must be channelled into productive assets and livelihoods," he maintained.

The Minister noted that several beneficiaries under IAY/ PMAY(G) had not received payments saying that the matter would be taken up with the Union Ministry for Rural Development. He directed the department to clear bottlenecks in delayed houses and ensure that genuine beneficiaries are not deprived.



Calling for seriousness and transparency at all levels, Dar said that the RDD must function with a "zero-compromise approach" towards corruption, delays and service inefficiencies.

Under MGNREGA, the Minister reviewed district-wise performance on timely payments, e-KYC completion, Aadhaar-based attendance, social audit coverage and asset creation.

The officials presented details of irrigation channels, panchayat paths, cattle sheds, wells, ponds, compost pits and

desilting works executed during the current financial year.

The Minister stressed that MGNREGA must prioritise water conservation, land development and livelihood-oriented assets, particularly in drought-prone kandi areas.

Reviewing Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (Phase-II), the Minister examined ODF-Plus model village verification, door-to-door waste collection and construction of assets for solid and liquid waste management.

The officers apprised the Minister about the finalisation

of J&K's O&M Policy and FSSM Policy, both currently placed before the Cabinet for approval. He stressed that rural sanitation must improve through community waste systems, greywater management and 100% functional waste collection in all blocks.

Under the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), progress on Panchayat Ghars, land identification, Panchayat Learning Centres, People's Plan Campaign (PPC) and fund utilisation under SNA-SPARSH was reviewed.

The Minister noted improvement in construction and upgradation of Panchayat Ghars but called for faster execution. He emphasized timely submission of data for the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI-2.0) and capacity-building programmes to strengthen grassroots governance.

The meeting discussed watershed development projects covering 69,493 hectares across 17 districts. The officials highlighted progress on natural resource

management works, production systems, spring rejuvenation DPRs and integration with the treasury under SNA-SPARSH.

The Minister was informed about MoUs with Kashmir University, SKUAST-K and NIRDPR for spring mapping, DPR preparation and mid-term evaluation. He directed for timely tendering and execution of watershed works. He stressed the community participation under the Janbhagidari Watershed Cup initiative.

The Minister reviewed the physical and financial achievements under the DDC and BDC infrastructure development plan.

He directed that all district-level and block-level council buildings must adhere to quality standards and be fast-tracked to ensure functional spaces for grassroots governance.

Under Himayat, the Minister examined the physical and financial progress in placement-linked skill training programmes conducted for rural and urban youth.

The officials reported ongoing training, placement performance, fund utilisation and targets approved under DDU-GKY 2.0.

The Minister called for strengthening counselling, ensuring quality skill training and improving placement support so that more youth become economically independent.

Secretary, RDD, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, briefed the Minister on the status of ongoing initiatives and schemes aimed at rural development and improving rural life in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was also attended by the Secretary in Department of RDD&PR, DG Rural Sanitation, J&K, Special Secretary, RDD, Director, Panchayati Raj, Director, RDD, Kashmir and Jammu, Chief Executive Officer, IWMP (PMKSY), Additional Secretary RDD, Assistant Commissioner(s) Development and Assistant Commissioner(s) Panchayats while Kashmir based officers participated through video conferencing.

LG unveils sacred coin of Shri Sukrala Mata Ji

UK-based business delegation calls on Sinha



KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 03: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday unveiled the sacred coin of Shri Sukrala Mata Ji. The coin, prepared by Shri Mall Mata Sukrala Devi Dharmik Trust, features the holy image of Shri Sukrala Mata Ji. This special token will be offered along with prasadam to devotees visiting the revered Shri Sukrala Mata Shrine in

Billawar, District Kathua. The launch of the sacred coin is intended to provide devotees with a cherished symbol of the Mata's blessings to take home. Shri Tript Shastri, Chairman, Shri Mall Mata Sukrala Devi Dharmik Trust and Trust members Shri Dinesh Mahajan and Shri Raj Kumar were present. Shri Garib Dass, Director, Udhampur Police Academy was also present during the launch ceremony at Lok Bhavan, Jammu.

Meanwhile, a United Kingdom based business delegation led by Vikrant Gupta, Managing Director, RVS iGlobal called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday. The delegation discussed important matters pertaining to Jammu's growing IT infrastructure, support for digital expansion, and opportunities to strengthen international cooperation in the technology and services sector.

Secretary H&ME reviews preparation for National Immunization Day 2025

KT News Desk

Jammu, Dec 03: Secretary Health & Medical Education Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the State Task Force on Immunization (STFI) to review and finalize the preparedness for the National Immunization Day (NID)/Pulse Polio Programme-2025 scheduled to be held on 21st December 2025, followed by mop-up house-to-house rounds on 22nd and 23rd December 2025.

The meeting was attended in person by Mission Director NHM J&K, Mission Director ICDS J&K, Additional Secretary H&ME J&K, Director Family Welfare MCH & Immunization J&K, State Immunization Officer J&K, Surveillance Medical Officer WHO (Jammu), Joint Director Information Jammu, Joint Director School Education Jammu and Under Secretary H&ME.

Deputy Commissioners of all districts, Directors Health Services (Jammu/Kashmir), Municipal Commissioners Jammu/Srinagar, Assistant



Director Family Welfare MCH & Immunization Jammu/Kashmir, Chief Medical Officers, Deputy Chief Medical Officers, District Immunization Officers (All J&K), State Mass Education and Media Officer J&K and Surveillance Medical Officer WHO (Kashmir) attended the meeting virtually.

The meeting was apprised of India's sustained polio-free status, with the last wild poliovirus case reported on 13 January 2011 and polio-free certification granted in March 2014.

The Secretary highlighted that the ongoing global circulation of polio virus poses a significant risk of importation, particularly from Afghanistan and Pakistan, where WPV1 transmission persists. He

emphasized the need for sustained vigilance, robust surveillance and high vaccination coverage to safeguard children in Jammu & Kashmir.

He exhorted on completing intersectoral District Task Force meetings and training of all the engaged vaccinators well in time.

The Secretary directed all the districts to ensure 100% booth activity on National Immunization Day (21st December 2025) and achieve zero missed children during mop-up rounds on 22nd and 23rd December through systematic house-to-house verification. It was emphasized that CMOs and Dy CMOs will be responsible and accountable for district performance,

supervision and timely reporting.

Special focus must be placed on High-Risk Areas (HRAs), including slums, migratory settlements, nomadic groups, brick kilns, construction sites and industrial locations, along with transit points such as railway stations, airports, bus terminals, markets and religious places as detailed in the STF presentation, he added.

The Secretary urged all line departments, particularly Education, ICDS, Municipal Bodies and the Information, to extend full cooperation in planning and field execution.

He asserted that districts must ensure timely training of teams, adequate mobility support, vaccine logistics, IEC materials, media engagement and community mobilization.

He further directed that ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers, school teachers, NGOs, religious leaders and community influencers be mobilized for last-mile coverage to ensure that every child under five years receives the polio vaccine drops as scheduled.

IndiGo grapples with significant disruptions on crew woes; cancels over 100 flights

PTI

Mumbai/New Delhi, Dec 03: IndiGo cancelled more than 100 flights at various airports and scores of services were delayed on Wednesday as the country's largest airline grappled with significant operational disruptions mainly due to crew shortage and announced calibrated schedule adjustments for the next 48 hours to normalise the operations.

As part of the calibrated adjustments, there will be

cancellations and rescheduling of flights, sources said on Wednesday, a day when airports witnessed chaos as hundreds of passengers faced hardships due to services getting cancelled and getting delayed for long.

The airline, which operates around 2,300 domestic and international flights daily, on Wednesday said a "multitude of unforeseen operational challenges" have significantly disrupted its operations across the network for the past two days, and apologised to the passengers



for the inconvenience.

The challenges include "minor

technology glitches, schedule changes linked to the winter

season, adverse weather conditions, increased congestion in the aviation system and the implementation of updated crew rostering rules (Flight Duty Time Limitations) had a negative compounding impact on our operations in a way that was not feasible to be anticipated," an airline spokesperson said in a statement.

The sources said over 100 IndiGo flights were cancelled at various airports, including at Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Hyderabad. At least 42 flights were cancelled at the Bangalore

airport, 38 flights at the Delhi airport, 33 at the Mumbai airport and 19 at the Hyderabad airport, they added.

Besides, scores of flights were delayed.

"IndiGo has been facing acute crew shortage since the implementation of the second phase of the FDTL (Flight Duty Time Limitations) norms, leading to cancellations and huge delays in its operations across the airports," a source told PTI.

"The situation turned bad on Tuesday for the airline and

the shortage turned worse on Wednesday with scores of flights cancelled and delayed from across airports in the country," the source said, adding that there are crew rostering issues.

Social media was flooded with videos showing frustrated passengers arguing with airline staff over the flight cancellations.

IndiGo, which is known for its punctuality, recorded an On Time Performance (OTP) score of 35 per cent on December 2, according to the latest official data.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Serving divyangjan

emerging as the best-performing district nationwide.

The event was organized by Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (CRC), Jammu under the theme: "Celebrating Ability, Preserving Culture". The global theme for this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities is "Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress".

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the Composite Regional Centre, Jammu for its commendable efforts in rehabilitation and empowerment of Divyangjans.

"Since 2024, CRC Jammu has conducted over 35,000 clinical surveys and distributed assistive devices worth over Rs 2 crore, transforming countless lives," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor handed over the assistive devices and kits to beneficiaries and also visited stalls put up by various social service organisations.

The event was organized by Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (CRC), Jammu under the theme: "Celebrating Ability, Preserving Culture". The global theme for this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities is "Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress".

Vikram Randhawa, Member of Legislative Assembly from Bahu; Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director Colleges; Dr. Rohnika Sharma, Director, CRC Jammu (Samba); senior officials, Heads of educational institutions, prominent citizens, members of various social organisations, students and people in large numbers were present on the occasion. (KNO)

J&K cabinet clears

of Home Affairs, in respect of cases that affect or are likely to affect the interests of any minority community, Scheduled Castes, or the Backward Classes.

Currently, the ST-I, ST-II, RBA, and EWS categories each have 10 percent reservation, while the Scheduled Castes and OBCs each have 8 percent, and the ALC/IB category has 4 percent reservation.

Opposition parties yet to react

The opposition parties are yet to react to the cabinet proposal.

The BJP said that they do not know what the cabinet has proposed and will comment only after the proposal is in the public domain. "It would be premature to comment on the issue at this juncture," BJP spokesman Sunil Sethi told KNO.

MP Agra Ruhullah Mehdi, one of the politicians spearheading the campaign for rationalisation, could not be contacted for comments.

Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone, who was also advocating rationalisation of reservation, has also not reacted to the proposal but accused the government of pitting Kashmiris against each other. "I will reiterate that in the context of the reservations issue, the elected government is passing on the buck and trying to create a wedge in the Kashmiri ranks, pitting one Kashmiri against another," he said

in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Lone said the elected government can easily restore district and divisional recruitment through an Act in the Assembly. (KNO)

J&K to establish

AI to enhance technological self-reliance and reduce dependence on major global players.

Secretary IT, Dr. Piyush Singla, informed the meeting that a preliminary Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been prepared in consultation with IIT Jammu, aligned with MeitY's guidelines for the CoE scheme. He stated that this DPR forms the foundational blueprint for establishing a Centre of Excellence tailored to the UT's needs, in partnership with premier higher educational institutions and industry leaders.

Prof. N.T. Arvind, Chief Innovations Officer, IIT Jammu, emphasized that the upcoming CoE must be designed to serve real industrial requirements to ensure its long-term sustainability and to enable seamless translation of research from lab environments to market applications.

Representatives from Nasscom expressed their commitment to extending full technical support for the initiative. They offered assistance in setting up the required digital infrastructure, ensuring data readiness, providing skill development and capacity-building programmes, enabling private sector participation, scaling-up associated projects, and supporting monitoring and evaluation frameworks essential for the success of the CoE in J&K.

Rationalised reservation

be right to comment on this issue more unless we will sign minutes of the cabinet meeting and send it to LG for approval," he said.

The CM said the reservation has not been rationalised to satisfy any individual, but was an election commitment made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "The friends you are referring to wouldn't be satisfied with anything. They wouldn't be satisfied by any measure. We have not done this to satisfy anyone. Nobody should presume that it was done to satisfy him. It is an effort from our side to fulfill the commitment made to the people of J&K," he said.

The Chief Minister said that the Election Commission of India should address concerns of the political parties over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

"It is the duty of the Election Commission to hold elections in a transparent manner and ensure that nobody should have grievances about it. If there are apprehensions with regard to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), the Election Commission should call all political parties and make them understand there is no need to panic about SIR," he said.

Omar said he has never raised finger of suspicion on electronic voting machines. "I don't believe that elections can be manipulated through EVMs," he said.

He, however, added that election can be manipulated through other means. "If you look at the delimitation exercise carried out here, it was also an election manipulation. You increased six seats in Jammu to benefit one party," he said. (KNO)

Govt notifies revised

after first aid 500.

For persons other than government employees, 1 lakh has been earmarked for death of civilians, those killed on the IB/LoC, surrendered militants and militants turned informers.

Permanent disability will receive 0.75 lakh. Serious injury with hospital stay beyond 24 hours attracts 0.05 lakh, hospitalization less than 24 hours 0.01 lakh, and minor injury 500. For defence forces personnel, Rs 5 lakh will be paid for death of non-domiciles. Domicile personnel dying within the UT are eligible for 25 lakh, while those dying outside the UT will receive Rs 5 lakh.

The order also specifies compensation for damage to immovable property due to bomb blast or sabotage — 50% of loss or 1 lakh, whichever is lower.

In cases of actual loss up to Rs 10 lakh, Rs 7 lakh will be given for immovable property and Rs 3 lakh for movable property. Damage on IB/LoC due to shelling or firing will be compensated at 50% of the loss or Rs 1 lakh, whichever is less. (KNO)

CM for close

on itself," he said.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Secretary Labour & Employment Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, MD & CEO J&K Bank Amitava Chatterjee, vice chancellors of several universities, Deputy Commissioners, Mission Director Mission YUVA, Director JKEDI, MD JKRLM, Directors of IIT and IIM Jammu, and representatives of BISAG, NABARD and other concerned institutions.

Outstation officers participated via video conferencing.

Earlier, Secretary Labour & Employment made a detailed presentation on the implementation status of Mission YUVA—from its conception to its evolution till date. He briefed the meeting about UDYAM Jagriti, a comprehensive awareness campaign, outlining its key features, phases and its role in amplifying success stories, objectives of district-level conferences and workshops, social media outreach and the dedicated mobile application.

The meeting discussed, threadbare, the next steps required to ensure the Mission's successful implementation. It was informed that over 60,000 applications were received within just six months of the scheme's launch.

The Chief Minister reviewed district-wise data of applications received over the last two years, the status of applications at various processing levels, average timelines for verification, week-on-week sanctioning trends by banks, progress at registration cells, training coverage and trainee monitoring.

J&K Bank also made a detailed presentation on the status of loan sanctions under Mission YUVA. It was informed that from the inception of the scheme, J&K Bank has sanctioned 10,172 cases, of which 9,393 have been collateral-free, reflecting strong institutional support for young entrepreneurs.

The Chief Minister directed all departments, financial institutions and implementation

agencies to work in synergy and maintain momentum to ensure timely sanctions, smooth disbursement and robust monitoring mechanisms, enabling Mission YUVA to deliver transformative outcomes for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Omar promises

of the government, our only effort is to help you in this difficult time. You should not feel that you are alone or that no one stands with you. If the government supports you in your moment of helplessness, this is not a favour—this is your right."

Speaking about the long-pending cases of CPWs and their regularisation, the Chief Minister said

"For CPWs, this day carries a different meaning. As Sakina Sahiba has already mentioned, we will do our best to regularise CPW and issue orders. For those under RAS and SRO-43, I know many of you have suffered a lot to reach here. And I apologise to you for that."

Regarding delay in processing of SRO 43/ RAS cases, he said

"This should not happen. When there is a government system, it should work automatically. I assure you—we will simplify the procedure further. We will reduce the difficulties you face. Since I hold the GAD portfolio myself, I will personally ensure that bottlenecks are removed."

The Chief Minister said delivering these orders is a matter of duty, not generosity.

"If we increase your problems during this difficult time, we fail in our duty. These compassionate jobs are your right, and delivering them is our responsibility. If you had to wait long, I apologise for that. But I promise we will do everything possible to make the process easier."

He urged the newly appointed beneficiaries to shoulder their responsibilities with sincerity and dedication.

"A heavy responsibility has come your way, perhaps earlier than expected. Do your best to fulfil it. We will always stand with you to make your work easier. If you face any difficulty, do not hesitate to knock on my door—I am always there for you."

The Chief Minister added that more regularisation orders for CPWs would soon be issued by the Education Department under the supervision of Minister for Education, Sakina Itoo.

Speaking on the occasion, Sakina Itoo said that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has accorded top priority to clearing SRO-43 and RAS-2022 cases to ensure long-pending grievances are addressed.

She noted that many deserving candidates had been waiting for nearly a decade.

"After around 10 years of struggle, the deserving candidates finally received their due under the present government," she said.

The Minister added that the regularisation of CPWs aligns with the government's broader vision of extending relief to those who have devoted precious years of service to the School Education Department.

Foundation Day

General of Ahom Army and Rani Gaidinliu, Naga spiritual and political leader who led a

revolt against British rule in India.

"They had demonstrated courage and resilience and their bravery in face of adversity continue to inspire generations. The ideals of these great men and Rani Gaidinliu are empowering others to build a strong and self-reliant India," he said.

The LG highlighted the literary and cultural heritage of Assam and Nagaland. He said the rich traditions are integrated into the larger fabric of Indian society and strengthening the spirit of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat".

'We're hidden, not

even in ensuring that newly constructed buildings have mandatory accessibility features like ramps, lifts, tactile paths, and disabled-friendly washrooms. "Without such facilities, we are being pushed further to the margins," they added.

Another major concern raised was the lack of special educators, accessible classrooms, and teaching materials in schools. "How can children with disabilities pursue education when the system itself is not inclusive? The four per cent job reservation for disabled persons also exists only on paper," one speaker pointed out.

"Society still hides us," said Sania Jan, a specially-abled woman from Srinagar. She said the challenges begin right at home. "Many parents hesitate to put effort or money into the education of children with disabilities. Due to the lack of awareness, some children face emotional and even physical neglect," she said.

Sania said that social stigma remains deeply rooted: "Families hide their disabled children and avoid taking them to gatherings. People worry about what others will say. This discrimination isolates us even further."

She added, "Even when private schools allow admission, they often fall short of providing trained teachers, accessible classrooms, or safe environments. Bullying and negative attitudes are common. Transport barriers and lack of support services worsen the situation."

Mohammad Rafee, who lives with a facial hemangioma and a spinal injury and has been using a wheelchair for 15 years, shared a powerful message of resilience: "Every wound is a step forward, every challenge a leap ahead. On International Disability Day, it is crucial to confront accessibility issues, attitudinal barriers, stigma, lack of employment, and the shortage of assistive technology. These issues cannot stop us."

He urged persons with disabilities to embrace their strength: "Your disability doesn't define you. It is a part of your journey, not your identity. Don't let fear or doubt hold you back. Follow your dreams—the world needs your voice."

Despite the hardships, Rafee said his disability has only strengthened him. "Living with disability hasn't weakened me. It has shaped me into who I am. Let's build a world that is inclusive and empowering for all," he said.

Officials in the Social Welfare Department said the government is working "tirelessly" for the welfare of persons with disabilities and assured that efforts are being intensified to address the gaps. (KNO)

Delhi MCD bypolls: BJP wins 7 wards, AAP 3, Congress opens account

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 03: The BJP won seven wards and AAP three, while the Congress and the All India Forward Bloc emerged victorious in one ward each in the MCD bypolls for 12 wards. These civic body bypolls were a litmus test for the BJP, as they were its first big electoral battle after coming to power in Delhi in February this year. BJP's Suman Kumar Gupta defeated Aam Aadmi Party candidate Harsh Sharma by a margin of 1,182 votes. The saffron party also comfortably won the Shalimar Bagh B ward, with Anita Jain defeating AAP's Babita Rana by a margin of over 10,000 votes. The Shalimar Bagh B ward was vacated after sitting BJP councillor Rekha Gupta won the assembly polls in February and became Delhi's chief minister. AAP won the Mundka and Dakshinapuri wards, while Congress's Suresh Choudhary won the Sangam Vihar A ward by defeating BJP's Subhajeet Gautam. Choudhary polled 12,766 votes while his opponent managed to get 9,138



votes. BJP's Veena Asija was locked in a close fight with AAP's Seema Goyal but surged ahead to win the Ashok Vihar ward by a margin of 405 votes. All India Forward Bloc candidate Mohd Imran won the Chandni Mahal seat by defeating AAP's Mudassar Usman by a margin of 4,692 votes.

The BJP also won the Dichaon Kalan and Greater Kailash wards and the Dwarka-B ward, which was earlier held by its Kamaljeet Sehrawat. Sehrawat is now a BJP MP. The saffron party's Manisha Rani won the Dwarka-B ward by a comfortable margin of 9,100 votes against

President Murmu hails achievements of Divyang community Calls for equal participation, dignity

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 03: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday praised the achievements of persons with disabilities and urged society to ensure their full and equal participation. Speaking at an event honouring achievers in the field of 'Divyangjan Sasaktikaran' with National Awards, the President said she was "especially pleased" to present the awards, and expressed gratitude to Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar for the initiative. Calling for a shift in societal attitudes, the President stressed that a developed society is one "in which persons with disabilities have equal participation". She reiterated that they "should be able to contribute equally to the development of the nation", and said it is the collective responsibility of all citizens to ensure dignity, opportunity and



generosity towards them. Recalling her interaction with the winners of the Blind Women's T20 World Cup, Murmu said the players had "crossed all barriers to achieve international recognition". "I am proud of all these girls," she said, adding that their grit made them an

inspiration to millions across the country. The President also spoke about a young girl she met earlier in Dehradun, noting how her singing "brought tears to everyone's eyes". Murmu highlighted recent initiatives at the Rashtrapati Bhavan that aim for inclusion, including a "Purple

Fest" organised in 2024 and this year as well, to celebrate the talent of persons with disabilities. She said a cafeteria run by persons with disabilities had offered visitors a memorable experience of "their efficiency and hospitality", demonstrating how "small efforts can bring big change".

Fake news threat to democracy, govt working to curb it, says Vaishnaw



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 03: Terming fake news as a threat to democracy, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday said there is a need to take strict action against those who create AI-generated deep fake videos and spread false information. Vaishnaw also informed the Lok Sabha that the government is working on framing new rules for curbing fake news and AI-generated deep fake videos and strengthening the institutional mechanism for that. "Fake news is a very serious issue. Fake news is a threat to democracy. There is a need to take strict action against fake news and AI-generated deep fake videos," he said during Question Hour. The minister said the people and the ecosystem which spread fake news don't follow Indian laws, and there is a need to take action against them. Appreciating the recommendations

made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, headed by BJP member Nishikant Dubey, he said the panel has given many good suggestions, and the government is working on framing new rules and regulations. "There is need for making fine delicate balance between fake news and freedom of speech," he said. Replying to a question on online betting activities, Vaishnaw said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has enacted a very strong law to curb the online money games. "Modi government never shies away in taking strong action against such misconduct," he said. On another question regarding some TV news channels indulging in disseminating alleged false information, the minister said the government and the Press Council of India actively look into such complaints and take action wherever required.

Snooping will never happen with Sanchar Saathi App: Scindia in LS



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 03: Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday said snooping is neither possible nor will it happen with the Sanchar Saathi safety app, amid a row over his ministry's order asking smartphone makers to preload the state-run cybersecurity app on all new devices. In Lok Sabha, Scindia said the app is for the protection of the people. Sanchar Saathi app se "na snooping sambhav hai, na snooping hoga", the minister said during Question Hour. In the context of the discussions about the app, the minister also said the government want to give power in the hands of the people to help them protect themselves. The ministry's order dated November 28, mandates all mobile phone manufacturers to pre-install Sanchar Saathi app in all handsets to be sold in India as well as in existing devices through software update. It mandates mobile phone companies to ensure that the pre-installed Sanchar Saathi application is readily visible and accessible to the end users at the time of first use or device setup and that its functionalities are not disabled or restricted. On Tuesday, Scindia said users are free to delete the app if they don't want to use it.

New Bihar govt committed to creation of 1cr jobs in next 5 yrs: Guv

PTI

Patna, Dec 03: Bihar Governor Arif Mohammad Khan on Wednesday said the Nitish Kumar government was committed to the creation of 1 crore jobs in the next five years. He was addressing a joint session of both Houses of the state legislature, which had been convened upon the NDA's return to power in the assembly elections. "50 lakh jobs have been created in the state already. The government has set a target of creating 1 crore jobs in the next five years," he said. Khan also made a mention of the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana, launched a month ahead of the announcement of assembly polls, which has been credited for tilting the scales in favour of the NDA. "A sum of Rs 10,000 each



has been transferred to 1.56 crore women under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana. In due course, it will reach those who are yet to receive the benefit," he said. Khan ended his speech thanking the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for extending "generous assistance" to the state, helping its speedy progress. "Special announcements were made in the Union budget this year, which included the setting

up of a Makhana Board and a number of airports," he said. "PM Modi visited Bihar several times for the launch of a number of projects, work on which is being done at a great speed. We thank the PM for the attention he has paid to the state," he added. In his speech, the governor also mentioned populist measures such as 125 units of free electricity, announced a few months ago, and efforts made by the government to keep communal tensions at bay by proper fencing of places of worship and graveyards. Khan also spoke of the NDA's commitment to the uplift of women, especially girls, through measures like free uniforms and bicycles to those in school, which were announced shortly after Kumar's ascent to power in 2005.

Andaman's Pahargaon police station ranked second best in country

PTI

Sri Vijaya Puram, Dec 03: Despite limited resources, challenging geographical location and difficult terrain, the Pahargaon police station in Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been adjudged the second best in the country by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, a senior official said on Wednesday. Director-General of Police HS Dhaliwal said it was a proud moment for the force. "The MHA announced the national ranking of police stations

at the recently-concluded DGP/IGP Conference in Raipur. It gives me immense pleasure to share that Pahargaon police station in South Andaman district has achieved a remarkable distinction by securing the second rank at the all-India level in this prestigious assessment," he told PTI. "They examined everything, including public feedback, crime rate, corruption, community policing, assistance in case of SOS, and coastal security. This recognition is the result of a rigorous, objective, and multi-layered evaluation process

conducted by the MHA, using standardised national indicators," he said. Among the other parameters evaluated were FIR disposal and charge-sheeting efficiency, the DGP said. "Service delivery and public-friendliness are key factors, with criteria like accessibility and responsiveness of police personnel, their behaviour and discipline, and ease of registering complaints being assessed," he said. Dhaliwal said the police station has created a dedicated room for women and child complainants.

How everyday foods increase risks of esophageal cancer What to avoid and what to eat instead

TOI HEALTH

New Delhi, Dec 03: Esophageal cancer continues to gain attention as researchers investigate how everyday eating habits may influence irritation, inflammation and long term vulnerability within the oesophagus. People often underestimate just how much temperature, processing and acidity can affect the delicate lining that protects this passage. Yet scientific evidence suggests that repeated exposure to certain foods can contribute to chronic irritation or chemical stress that weakens tissue over time. Which foods could be increasing your esophageal cancer risk? A detailed review published in Annals of Palliative Medicine outlines several dietary patterns consistently associated with increased oesophageal cancer incidence. These foods are not dangerous in a single sitting but may contribute to cumulative irritation, inflammation or chemical exposure when consumed frequently over many years. Foods and habits commonly advised to avoid:

- Very hot beverages such as steaming tea or coffee

- Extremely hot foods including boiling soups or rapidly served fried snacks
- Processed meats such as sausages, salami, ham, bacon and cured deli slices
- Pickled vegetables or vinegar-heavy fermented foods
- Foods high in nitrites or nitrates due to curing and preservation
- Fried items made with oxidised or reheated oils
- Frequent alcohol intake, especially when paired with processed meats or hot drinks

How do steaming drinks and piping hot foods affect your oesophagus? The temperature of what we consume has become a focal point in oesophageal cancer research. The oesophagus is lined with tissue that is far more sensitive to heat than many people assume. When extremely hot beverages or foods are swallowed, the temperature can cause microtears in the mucosal lining. The body repairs this damage, but when such injury occurs repeatedly over years, the ongoing cycle of cell turnover may increase the likelihood of abnormal changes. Regions where hot tea is consumed quickly and customarily have shown higher rates of oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma,

suggesting that heat, rather than the beverage itself, plays a significant role. Allowing hot drinks or soups to cool for a short period is a simple and effective way to ease this stress. Are processed meats silently increasing your cancer risk? Processed meats present a different concern. These products often contain nitrosamines, heterocyclic amines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, all of which can form during curing, smoking or high heat cooking. These compounds have been studied extensively for their potential to damage DNA and contribute to carcinogenesis. When processed meats are charred or fried, the concentration of these chemicals can increase further. The risk becomes even more pronounced when combined with heavy alcohol intake or smoking, as these behaviours can intensify oxidative stress within the oesophagus. Replacing processed meats with fresh, minimally handled protein sources can significantly reduce exposure to these compounds while still allowing for a varied and enjoyable diet. Can acidic and pickled foods worsen reflux and oesophageal stress? Acidic and heavily pickled foods are not carcinogenic on their own, but they play a

noteworthy role in aggravating gastro oesophageal reflux, a condition closely linked with long term oesophageal vulnerability. Foods high in vinegar, citrus, salt or fermented acids can intensify reflux symptoms, exposing the oesophageal lining to repeated acid contact. Over time, this may increase the likelihood of developing Barrett's oesophagus, a well-documented precursor to cancer. In certain regions where pickled vegetables are consumed regularly, researchers have observed higher oesophageal cancer rates, likely due to the combined influence of acidity, salt concentration and fermentation by-products. Moderation, alongside attention to individual sensitivity, helps maintain a more balanced digestive environment. What to eat instead to support oesophageal health Supportive dietary choices can reduce irritation and promote a healthier digestive atmosphere without requiring restrictive eating. Many alternatives offer familiar flavours while providing a gentler experience for the oesophagus. Safer foods to choose instead:

- Warm drinks such as cooled tea, herbal infusions or lightly warmed coffee
- Fresh lean proteins including chicken, fish, tofu, lentils and beans

- Low acid fruits such as bananas, melons, papayas and sweet apples
- Mildly cooked vegetables like carrots, courgettes, spinach and green beans
- Whole grains including oats, brown rice, barley and wholegrain bread
- Healthy fats from avocado, olive oil, flaxseed or fresh nuts
- Light cooking methods such as steaming, baking, stewing or poaching
- Fresh oils rather than reheated or repeatedly fried oils
- Simple broths, yoghurt, soft porridges and other soothing textures

Choosing these foods helps minimise chemical exposure, reduce inflammation and stabilise the digestive tract. Slow eating, smaller portions and steady hydration further relieve pressure on the oesophagus and create a calmer internal environment that supports natural healing processes. Disclaimer: This article is for general informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the guidance of a qualified healthcare provider regarding any medical condition or lifestyle

US halts immigration applications for 19 nations

AFP

Washington, Dec 03: The US government has halted immigration applications for citizens from 19 nations including Afghanistan, Yemen and Haiti, an official memorandum said Tuesday, deepening the nation's sweeping crackdown on migration.

Authorities paused green card and citizenship processing, according to the memo, for people from countries already subject to travel restrictions announced in June by President Donald Trump.

Those 19 nations also include Venezuela, Sudan and Somalia.

Senior US officials have signaled in recent days they would starkly tighten restrictions on immigration, a move fueled by the shooting of two National Guard soldiers last week.

The main suspect in the shooting, which killed one, is an Afghan national.

The man, who on Tuesday pleaded not guilty to murder charges, entered the United States during



mass evacuations as foreign forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021.

"USCIS plays an instrumental role in preventing terrorists from seeking safe haven in the United States and ensuring that USCIS' screening and vetting and adjudications prioritize the safety of the American people and uphold all US laws," the memorandum said, referring to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The memorandum said the US had recently seen "what a lack of screening, vetting, and prioritizing

expedient adjudications can do to the American people," citing the suspected shooter in last week's attack as an example.

Trump, who campaigned for the White House on a pledge to deport millions of undocumented migrants, said on November 26, following the shooting that he planned to "permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the US system to fully recover."

US Homeland Security chief Kristi Noem also urged on Monday an expansion of the list of countries covered by the

June travel restrictions.

"I just met with the President. I am recommending a full travel ban on every damn country that's been flooding our nation with killers, leeches, and entitlement junkies," she said on X, without naming which countries she believed should be included.

The travel restrictions currently also apply to Burundi, Chad, Republic of Congo, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, Laos, Libya, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Turkmenistan.

Also on Tuesday, US media reported federal authorities planned in coming days to launch a major immigration enforcement operation in Minnesota that would focus on Somali immigrants, sparking pushback from local leaders who said state police would not cooperate.

"Our values and our commitments to the Somali community, to every community of immigrants and people in our city is rock solid and will be unwavering," said Minneapolis mayor Jacob Frey.

'If equality prevails, next UN chief will be a woman'

REUTERS

London, Dec 03: Rebeca Grynspan, Costa Rica's former vice president and a frontrunner to become the next United Nations secretary-general, said that if equality triumphs over discrimination, the world body will finally see its first woman lead it.

The process to elect the next UN chief formally kicked off last week as member states were asked to nominate candidates to take over the role from Antonio Guterres of Portugal from January 1, 2027.

Despite the UN's 80-year history as an international agency for peace and cooperation, the secretary-general role has never been held by a woman, a reality Grynspan says defies explanation given how many women have the merit and credentials to lead.

Publicly declared candidates for the role include Grynspan, who currently serves as secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, Chile's former President Michelle Bachelet, and Argentine diplomat Rafael Grossi. "We don't need special treatment. What we are really asking for is no discrimination," Grynspan, 69, said in an interview in London. "If equality will prevail, we will be able to get there. That's the only thing that we are asking: equal treatment."

Calls have been growing for a woman to assume the role, and the next secretary-general will likely come from



Latin America as the position traditionally rotates among regions. Latin America, along with the Caribbean, is next on the list.

Grynspan said the UN must become more inclusive, pointing out that when it was founded in the aftermath of World War Two, it had 51 member states, whereas today there are 193, most of which had no role in shaping the institution's original 1945 architecture.

"Those voices have to have wider space to be heard," Grynspan said, adding that granting permanent Security Council seats to Africa and Latin

American nations would be a welcome reform.

UN should embrace reform, Grynspan says

Should Grynspan be elected, she would assume leadership of the UN during Donald Trump's tenure as president of the United States.

Trump has maintained the same wary stance on multilateralism that was a hallmark of his first term from 2017 to 2021 and accused the world body of failing to help him broker peace in various conflicts. He describes the UN as having "great potential" but says it has to get its "act together."

UK medical team treating Bangladesh's critically ill ex-PM Zia

PTI

Dhaka, Dec 03: A four-member specialist medical team from the UK arrived in Bangladesh on Wednesday to assist in the treatment of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, who remains in a critical condition in a private hospital here.

The delegation, led by Dr Richard Buell, visited Evercare Hospital soon after arrival and reviewed the condition of the 80-year-old Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson, news portal tbsnews.net reported.

The UK doctors also held an initial round of discussions with the local medical team treating her, it said, quoting hospital sources.

Buell arrived in Dhaka in the morning, BNP media cell member Shayrul Kabir Khan was quoted as saying by the state-run BSS news agency.

Khan hoped the arrival of foreign specialists will mark significant progress in Zia's ongoing medical care.

According to vernacular daily Pratidin, Buell is a professor of intensive care medicine at King's College London and a consultant in intensive



care medicine at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

The UK-based experts are in Dhaka to help formulate an advanced treatment plan and provide recommendations in coordination with local physicians.

Another team of Chinese specialists is scheduled to arrive later in the day. A Chinese medical team had already reached Dhaka on Monday and joined the medical board supervising Zia's treatment. The board is led by Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

Zia's personal physician and BNP standing committee member Dr AZM Zahid told reporters on Tuesday that she is "maintaining the treatment" being administered despite her critical state.

Virat Kohli moves up to No. 4 in ICC ODI rankings

PTI

Dubai, Dec 03: Star Indian batter Virat Kohli on Wednesday moved up to No. 4 in the latest ICC rankings with a match-winning hundred against South Africa in the first ODI at Ranchi boosting his ascend.

Kohli made his 52nd hundred in the 50-over format, a 120-ball 135 that propelled India to a 17-run win over the Proteas on Sunday.

The 37-year-old now has 751 ranking points, and trails former India skipper Rohit Sharma (783), who retained his top spot, New Zealand batter Daryl Mitchell (766) and Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran (764).

Kohli overtook India ODI captain Shubman Gill, who moved down to No. 5 after missing the ongoing three-match series against South Africa with a neck injury.

Shreyas Iyer, who is also recovering from an injury that he sustained during India's recent white ball tour to Australia, stood



firm on 9th position.

Meanwhile, left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav gained one place to move to sixth after picking up four wickets in the first match against the Proteas.

In the Test batter's list, India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal continued to station at No. 9, while Gill slid one place down to 12.

Wicketkeeper batter Rishabh Pant was also on a downward spiral, moving down from 12th

to 14th.

In the rankings for Test bowlers, India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained on top of the pile with 879 points, well clear of New Zealand pacer Matt Henry (846).

However, modest outings in the two-match series against SA recently affected the rankings of pacer Mohammed Siraj (from 11th to 13th) and Kuldeep (from 13th to 15th).

Fit-again Gill, Pandya picked for T20I series against South Africa

PTI

Raipur, Dec 03: Flamboyant all-rounder Hardik Pandya and star batter Shubman Gill on Wednesday returned to the Indian T20I squad for the upcoming five-match series against South Africa after recovering from their respective injuries.

Gill, who missed a major part of the Test series and the ODIs against South Africa due to a neck injury, has been picked for the T20 games as vice-captain after recovering from his condition.

Gill's participation, however, is subject to fitness clearance from the BCCI Centre of Excellence, the board said in a statement.

Pandya, who missed the Asia Cup 2025 final and the five-match series in Australia, also made a comeback in India's setup after proving his fitness on Tuesday during the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match against Punjab in Hyderabad.

Gill, who is India's Test and ODI skipper, sustained the injury during the opening Test against the Proteas in Kolkata. He was subsequently ruled out of the second Test in Guwahati and the ODI series that followed.

The selection committee meeting to pick the T20 squad took place here on Wednesday. The five-match series begins December 9 in Cuttack. The other matches are scheduled in Chandigarh (December 11), Dharamsala (December 14), Lucknow (December 17) and Ahmedabad (December 19).

New Zealand vs West Indies, 1st Test

Duffy bags five as NZ takes control on Day 2 against WI



REUTERS

Christchurch, Dec 03: Seamer Jacob Duffy claimed a maiden five-wicket haul to secure New Zealand a handy first innings lead and the upper hand in the opening test against West Indies at Christchurch's Hagley Oval on Wednesday. Duffy claimed five for 34 to help bundle out West Indies for 167 in a spectacular collapse from 100 for two at one stage.

Opener Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Shai Hope made half-centuries in their otherwise feeble reply to New Zealand's first innings total of 231.

New Zealand finished a stop-start day two on 32 for no loss, for an overall lead of 96 runs. Tom Latham (14) and Devon Conway

(15) will come out on Thursday hoping to bat West Indies out of the contest. Earlier, New Zealand took two early wickets when the track looked lively, but Hope and Chanderpaul put on 90 for the third wicket.

Hope fell caught behind off a Duffy short ball for 56, and Matt Henry (3/43) drove home the advantage by removing touring captain Roston Chase and Justin Greaves in the space of four deliveries.

Chanderpaul did not look convincing at the start and was dropped twice, but he dug in, found his rhythm, and raised a hard-earned fifty. His marathon 169-ball stay finally ended on a pull off Zak Foulkes that did not get past square.

Israel to allow Gazans to exit to Egypt

AFP

Jerusalem, Dec 03: Israel said on Wednesday it would open the Rafah crossing from Gaza to Egypt to allow residents to exit the Palestinian territory "in the coming days."

"In accordance with the ceasefire agreement... the Rafah Crossing will open in the coming days exclusively for the exit of residents from the Gaza Strip to Egypt," COGAT, the Israeli defense ministry body that oversees civil affairs in the Palestinian territories, said in a statement.

'Cyclone Ditwah' devastation to cost Sri Lanka up to USD 7 billion'

PTI

Colombo, Dec 03: Sri Lanka's total economic loss from Cyclone Ditwah is estimated to be between USD 6 billion and 7 billion, which is roughly 3-5 per cent of the island nation's GDP, a senior official overseeing recovery efforts said on Wednesday.

At least 465 people died so far, and 366 remain missing as Sri Lanka grapples with widespread flooding, landslides and severe infrastructure collapse, leaving several districts isolated and severely straining the country's disaster-response capacity.

"Given that all 25 districts are affected, we estimate the cost would be USD 6-7 billion," Prabath Chandrakirthi, Commissioner General of Essential Services, told reporters here.

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