



# Justice, jobs, dignity for terror victim families top priority: LG Sinha

Hands appointment letters to 39 NoKs of terror victims from Kashmir

Terrorism claims lives, destroys families

Each terror killing leaves home shattered, children parentless

Terrorists' funerals were glorified; victims forgotten

Supporters of terrorists will face heavy consequences

**'He's gone forever': Father recalls daughter's wish to see her brother**

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 13: Reiterating his commitment to deliver justice, jobs and dignity to terror victim families, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday handed over appointment letters to 39 Next of Kins (NoKs) of terror victims from Kashmir Division, at Lok Bhavan here.

LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "For these families, today the long wait for justice has ended. With concrete steps for rehabilitation, we have restored their dignity and faith in the



system." The LG said that today, 39 families were given

appointment letters, while 41 such families were handed over these letters earlier in

Jammu. "Nine families affected by the recent Nowgam blast were also

**'Only LG Sahab understood our pain'**

Rehan Qayoom Mir

After Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's event for next of kin (NoKs) of terror victims concluded at Lok Bhavan in Srinagar, a young woman stood outside the hall clutching her appointment letter tightly. Pakiza Riyaz, from south Kashmir's Anantnag district was there in memory of her grandmother, who raised her from infancy. Pakiza's voice quivered as she spoke to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), expressing her happiness upon receiving the appointment. "We have struggled a lot to reach this point. My father was martyred when I was just six | [More on P6](#)

Says LG Sinha understood pain, recognised their sacrifice

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 13: Barely ten minutes after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's function at Lok Bhavan in Srinagar concluded, a father who had attended the ceremony stood inside hall, his eyes moist, his voice trembling.

He had just received an appointment letter for his family, but his words carried the weight of years of loss and longing.

"We have made many sacrifices, but today we feel we have received our due because of LG Sahab," he said in a brief conversation with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), on the sidelines of a function,

soon after the event.

"My son was martyred. He was the only earning member in our family. My daughters and elders stood by me in every difficult moment," said Manzoor Ahmad Najar.

His voice broke when he mentioned his daughter, now married whose grief still lives quietly in the corners of their home.

"When she got married, she used to wish she could come home and stay with her brother for a few days," he said, pausing as his eyes filled again. "But when her brother isn't there anymore... what can she do?"

Clutching the appointment letter in his hand, he said the family feels a sense of respect and recognition after years of silence. "There are only my two daughters, my wife and | [More on P6](#)

**'Proof my father's sacrifice was not forgotten': Son's emotional moment after 25 yrs**  
Says LG Manoj Sinha gave his family 'dignity, hope & reason to live again'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

For 25 years, he carried a silence too heavy for words. On Saturday afternoon, standing inside the Lok Bhavan Auditorium in Srinagar, 26-year-old Syed

Anwar from Gurez finally spoke, his voice trembling, his eyes moist, and his heart full of memories he never got to make.

"My father was killed in 2002 in Chattera, Bargaun. I was only one and a half years old then," Anwar said, in | [More on P6](#)

## KNO EXCLUSIVE

### Oath vs Constitution: J&K Govt seeks legal opinion to decide dissolution date of district dev councils

'Will term of Councils end in Dec 2025 or stretch to February 2026, govt unsure when clock began'

Umer Maqbool

Srinagar, Dec 13: In a significant development, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has sought a legal opinion to determine when the five-year term of District Development Councils (DDCs) began, a decision which will decide on the date of their dissolution.

Authoritative sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has written to the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to clarify whether the DDCs tenure started the day members took oath or from the day the Councils were constituted.

The legal opinion would answer whether the DDCs expire on December 27, 2025 or survive until February 24, 2026.

While the DDC members were administered oath on December 28, 2020, the DDCs

were constituted on February 25, 2021

The legal opinion would answer whether the DDCs expire on December 27, 2025 or survive until February 24, 2026.

As per Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act- 1989, the term of District Development Council shall be five years except for holding common elections to all the tiers of the Panchayats simultaneously so that all the tiers have co-extensive terms in the district.

While the Act clearly stipulates that the term of Panchayats begins from the date of their constitution, no such clarity exists for DDCs.

It is also clear in law that there is a deadline for administering the oath to elected members.

According to the Act, the Deputy Commissioner must, within one week of the declaration of results, convene a meeting of the elected members for the purpose | [More on P6](#)

## CM Omar calls for reopening of closed tourist destinations in J&K

### Advocates snow machines, floodlit slopes in Gulmarg to revive adventure tourism

Waris Fayaz

Gulmarg, Dec 13: Asserting that closed tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir should be reopened, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said that keeping these destinations shut is sending a wrong message to the people.

Talking to reporters after inaugurating Asia's longest ski drag lift here in North Kashmir, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "We can only make infrastructure. Closing down tourist destinations or reopening these is not in our hands. Had I been sitting there, I would have opened all the destinations."

The Chief Minister maintained that the present situation does not warrant prolonged closure of tourist spots, noting that Kashmir has faced far more difficult circumstances in the past. "We have seen much more difficult situations than the present one," he remarked.



Recalling the period when tourism was revived in the Valley in the mid-1990s, CM Omar said that despite a tense security environment, destinations were kept open. "When tourism restarted in 1996, the situation was very tense, but even then we never closed any tourist destination," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of tourism to Kashmir's economy and livelihoods, the Chief Minister said that

unnecessary closures hurt local stakeholders, including hoteliers, tour operators, transporters and thousands of families dependent on the sector.

He reiterated that closed tourist destinations should be reopened to restore confidence and support economic activity in the region. "By keeping these destinations closed we are sending a wrong message that | [More on P6](#)

## Military actions like 'Op Sindoor' underline need for close coordination: Army Chief

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 13: Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday said that military actions like 'Operation Sindoor' underline the need for close coordination between diplomacy and decisive military offensive in an increasingly complex security environment.

Reviewing the 157th Passing Out Parade at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) here, General Dwivedi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Modern conflict now spans military, technological and societal domains, requiring armed forces to adapt continuously."

He said the nature of warfare has evolved, placing greater responsibility on young officers to respond to fluid situations with sound judgement, adaptability and integrity.

Referring to "Operation Sindoor," the Army Chief said contemporary military engagements demand synchronised decision-making across multiple levels, combining strategic restraint with operational



readiness.

He said the Indian Army continues to transform through modernisation and innovation to meet emerging challenges and safeguard national interests.

A total of 525 Officer Cadets, including 34 cadets from 14 friendly foreign nations, were commissioned during the ceremony.

The newly commissioned officers belong to the 157th Regular Course, 46th Technical Entry Scheme Course, 140th Technical Graduate Course, 55th Special Commissioned Officers Course and the Territorial Army Online Entrance Examination 2023 Course.

General | [More on P6](#)

## Valedictory Ceremony of SKIMS Annual Festival Week

### Accessible, affordable healthcare has become reality in J&K under PM Modi: LG Sinha

Says govt added 800 additional MBBS seats within just four years

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Dec 13: Asserting that accessible and affordable quality healthcare has become a reality in Jammu and Kashmir under the leadership of PM Modi, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that the Union Territory's medical education and public health landscape has witnessed transformative changes during the past five years.

Speaking at the valedictory ceremony of SKIMS Annual Festival Week here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "It took almost seven decades to create 500 MBBS seats in Jammu and Kashmir. In contrast, we have added 800 additional MBBS seats within just four years."



The event also marked the commencement of 29th Post-Graduate Research Presentation Programme (PGRP-2025) and felicitation of PGRP Awardees, Doctors, Nursing Staffs and Employees of SKIMS by the

Lieutenant Governor.

LG Sinha noted that long-pending challenges such as the absence of adequate government medical colleges and the dominance of unaffordable private institutions are now issues

of the past. "Through bold and systemic reforms undertaken between 2020 and 2024, we have ensured that quality medical education is more accessible and affordable for aspiring students from all sections of society," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed massive expansion of healthcare infrastructure and the adoption of innovative solutions in the post-2019 period. New medical colleges, improved hospital facilities, and strengthened primary and secondary healthcare systems have significantly enhanced service delivery across urban and rural areas, he added.

Reaffirming the administration's commitment to inclusive development, LG Sinha said the healthcare | [More on P6](#)

## Fog, sub-zero temperatures grip Kashmir; snowfall likely



Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Dec 13: Ahead of Chillai Kalan, the harshest 40-day period of winter in Kashmir, Meteorological Department on Saturday predicted light snowfall at isolated places in the upper reaches in the coming days.

Officials told the news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that weather is likely to remain generally dry, with a possibility of very light snowfall at isolated higher reaches of north and central Kashmir between December 13 and 17.

From December 18 to 19, the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy.

The | [More on P6](#)

## Srinagar suffers amidst air pollution

Sajid Raina

Simply stepping outside in Srinagar on a polluted day may be doing the same harm as smoking several cigarettes, an independent weather expert, Faizan Arif told the news agency | [More on P6](#)

## Major crackdown against OGW network in Kashmir

Ahmad Taimur

Srinagar, Dec 13: Jammu and Kashmir police along with other security agencies launched a massive crackdown against Over Ground Workers (OGWs) of terrorists in several parts of the Kashmir Valley, with over 150 suspects detained, sources said.

A top official told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that over 150 suspected individuals have been detained so far in Srinagar while crackdown is going on against OGWs in several parts of the Valley.

He said that the crackdown has been launched against OGWs to dismantle the terror network of banned outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad and other terror outfits across the Valley.

He said that raids are underway at several locations across several parts of the Kashmir Valley as part of the massive crackdown against OGW network.

The action | [More on P6](#)



# Chief Secretary inspects Jagti mini-township

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Chief Secretary Atal Duloo Saturday visited the mini-township Jagti Nagrota to inspect development works besides inaugurating vital projects.

The Chief Secretary, as per an official statement, inspected the Sub District Hospital and Government Higher Secondary School, Jagti, the ongoing work on multi purpose community hall being constructed with an estimated cost of Rs 6.5 crore and other development works. He also inaugurated five bore wells and visited the NFSA integration centre.

Later, the Chief Secretary distributed sanction orders under various Social Security Schemes like Old Age Pension, Widow Pension and Disability Pension among about 125 migrant beneficiaries. He also handed over allotment orders to the eligible migrant beneficiaries for 48 government shops and 12 residential quarters.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary also felicitated the meritorious girl students of Government Higher Secondary School, Jagti and distributed digital ration cards among the beneficiaries. Besides, regularization orders were also handed over to some employees of the School



Education Department.

Commissioner Secretary, FCS & CA, Saurav Bhagat; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez; IGP Jammu, Bhim Sen Tuti; Commissioner, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Dr Arvind Karwani; Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Rakesh Minhas; Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Devyansh Yadav; Director School Education Jammu; Director FCS&CA besides other Heads of Departments

and district officers accompanied the Chief Secretary. A sizeable gathering of migrants from Nagrota, Purkhoo and Muthi camps was also present. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of historic moment of extending social sector schemes benefit to the Kashmiri and Jammu Migrants, who were earlier deprived of these benefits since the ration cards were non-digitized and not integrated with the national database. He appealed

all the migrants to avail the benefits of various government schemes by getting their ration cards integrated on the national portal.

He directed all the government departments to keep budgetary provisions for operation and maintenance of services pertaining to their department in migrant camps and transit accommodations in Jammu and Kashmir in line with the recent directions issued through the General Administration Department on the subject. The Chief Secretary directed the Science and Technology Department to install solar lights in the Mini Township Jagti. He directed the Public Works Department to ensure time bound completion of repair and renovation works, with emphasis on maintaining all the quality parameters.

The Chief Secretary asserted that strenuous efforts are being made by the administration to sort out the issues and concerns of the migrant population. The latest initiatives included maintenance of old and damaged residential quarters, proper sanitation by the Jammu Municipal Corporation and Transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley. Besides, issues of PM Package employees are also being addressed. He conveyed that under the Mission Youth of J&K

government, several young people are given opportunities to become entrepreneurs.

The Chief Secretary urged the migrant youth to avail the benefits of self-employment schemes. He directed the Employment Department to create maximum awareness among the migrant youth about the self-employment and entrepreneurship schemes.

The Chief Secretary directed the Culture Department to draft a proposal for utilizing the upcoming Multi-Purpose Community Hall at Jagti for showcasing rich cultural heritage of Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary further said that religious places of the migrant community are also being renovated in Kashmir.

Earlier, Commissioner, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Dr Arvind Karwani, presented a detailed overview of steps being taken by the Relief Organization. These inter alia included upkeep of infrastructure, major repair and renovation works, yearly maintenance, development of playground, integration of migrant community with Social Security Schemes, digitization of migrant records and outreach initiatives for Ayushman Bharat and other schemes.

## Justice Sanjeev Kumar inaugurates National Lok Adalat in Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: A National Lok Adalat was held Saturday under the leadership of Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-In-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority), Arun Palli and Chairmanship of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of J&K Legal Services Authority.

The event, as per an official statement, was held in presence of Justice Sindhu Sharma, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for District Jammu and under the guidance of R. N. Watal, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District & Sessions Judge) Jammu and overall supervision of Maleeka Sharma, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Jammu.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of J&K Legal Services Authority inaugurated the National Lok Adalat 2025 at District Court Complex, Janipur, Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, Justice Sanjeev Kumar emphasized the importance of National Lok Adalat in amicable settlement of long pending disputes. He also added that alternative dispute resolution is a vital tool in the Justice delivery system



which ensures speedy and one time settlement of disputes. The general masses can take the benefit of Lok Adalats as the award passed by the Lok Adalat Benches attains finality, he added.

Further, while addressing the gathering, Justice Sindhu Sharma highlighted the importance of National Lok Adalat. She said it has an important role in resolving the cases by providing fast, affordable and accessible alternative to traditional Courts in India and providing forum which promotes settlement through compromise and mutual agreement fostering harmony between parties and saving time and money for the litigants. On the occasion, Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Sindhu Sharma also

distributed MACT cheques among the claimants.

In 4th National Lok Adalat, different kinds of cases were taken up wherein the litigants settled their cases in an amicable and conducive manner.

A Total of 30 benches were constituted in different Courts to deal with the matters of Civil nature, Bank Recovery, Criminal Compoundable, MACT, Matrimonial, NI Act u/s 138, Revenue Cases, BSNL Cases and other Civil Cases.

The total number of 3717 cases pertaining to different nature were taken up in this national lok adalat, of which, 2522 cases were settled. The total Amount recovered is Rs. 13,34,67,277.

## Secretary RDD inspects development works in Marh Block

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Saturday undertook an extensive tour of the Marh constituency in Jammu district to assess the progress and impact of key developmental works being executed in the area.

Member of Legislative Assembly, Marh, Surinder Kumar, also participated in the on-site review and highlighted priority issues of the constituency, seeking intervention of the Administrative Department for resolution of important public matters.

The Secretary, as per an official statement, was accompanied by Director Panchayati Raj J&K, Sham Lal; Director RDD Jammu, Shehnaz Akhter; Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Jammu, Er. Danish Rasool Mir; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Jammu, Mukhtiyar Ahmed and Block Development Officer Marh, Kirandeep Kaur.

During the visit, the dignitaries inspected several completed works at the Bawa Talab Complex and reviewed projects executed under the UT CAPEX programme. Emphasising durability, quality and public utility, the Secretary directed the field functionaries to strictly adhere to prescribed standards, ensure transparency in execution and complete all



sanctioned works within stipulated timelines.

The Secretary also inaugurated a Community Sanitation Complex at Jhiri Temple, Kalyanpur.

He emphasised the importance of proper upkeep and maintenance of such facilities to sustain their long-term impact. He said the facility would significantly improve the sanitation and hygiene arrangements at the prominent religious site,

catering to the needs of the devotees. He also directed that beautification works at the Baba Jitoo Temple be taken up on priority. The Secretary also laid the foundation stone for Dewat Complex at Ganguchak Panchayat to be constructed at an estimated cost of 53.13 lakh. He observed that the project would substantially enhance the community infrastructure in the area. He instructed the

executing agencies to ensure timely completion without compromising on quality.

Additionally, a newly constructed Panchayat Ghar at Panchayat Sari Rakhwalan, Marh, built at a cost of 30 lakh, was also inaugurated. The facility is expected to further improve the functioning of local self-governance.

Interacting with the local residents and former PRI representatives, the Secretary patiently listened to their concerns and suggestions related to ongoing and future development initiatives. He assured them that all the genuine public issues would be addressed on priority. He directed the officers to remain accessible to the public, conduct regular field inspections and ensure that planning and execution reflect local needs. The MLA appreciated the coordinated efforts of the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj departments. He stated that such infrastructure projects are vital for improving the civic amenities and enhancing the overall quality of life in rural areas.

The Secretary also conducted a comprehensive review of major projects being implemented under MGNREGA, PMAY-G, SBM-G, NRLM and RGSA. He directed the officials to expedite execution, address bottlenecks at the grassroots level and ensure steady progress across all programmes for timely and effective service delivery.

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL AND HOSPITALS DIVISION SRINAGAR

(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id

Subject: - Repairs/replacement to departmental inspection vehicle (Bolero) bearing no:-JKO1AE9877  
Ref :- This office e- NIT no: M&HDS/TS/2025-26/115/e-tendering Dated 12.02.2025

#### CORRIGENDUM

The warranty Period for the item No 02 and 06 of BOQ will be minimum three year and one year respectively.

And read payment terms as

90% of the contract value on successful completion of work in all respects as per BOQ and report to the same effect from the concerned engineer in charge. Verification of bill must be accompanied by return indent of old part duly (if applicable) vetted by store incharge/AEE concerned.

2. Balance 10% of the contract value shall be released after successful completion of DLP period i.e one year

Payments shall be released against

1. GPS photographs
2. Warranty card for battery duly stamped by authorized dealer of OEM mentioning date of end of warranty period or from OEM(However any extended warranty given by OEM shall be applicable)
3. Verification from concerned AEE,

All other Terms and Conditions of the NIT shall remain the same.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
Mechanical & Hospitals  
Division, Srinagar

DIPK-8978/25  
No: M&HDS/TS/6936-39 DATED: 13-12-2025 Dated:13.12.2025

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE SRINAGAR

Subject : Revised/Final Answer Key(s) of the written test(s) (OMR Based) held on 08.12.2025 & overall merit/result of the candidates thereof.

Reference: Advertisement Notice No: 02 of 2025; Dated: 31.10.2025 for engagement of Medical Officers on Academic Arrangement Basis in terms of S.O. 364 of 2020; Dated:27.11.2020.

Notification No.: 48-EC of 2025  
Dated: 13.12.2025

Whereas, the Government Medical College, Srinagar conducted written test(s) of the candidates for selection/engagement as Medical Officer on 08.12.2025 (Monday).

Whereas, vide this office Notification No: 46-EC Of 2025; Dated: 08.12.2025, the Answer Key(s) framed by the paper-setter(s) of these tests were notified for information of all concerned candidates with a provision that if any candidate feels that the key to any question(s) is/are wrong, he/she can submit objection/representation on the prescribed format within two days i.e., upto 10.12.2025 (02:00 PM) along with a sufficient documentary proof/evidence and fee of Rs. 300/- (Three Hundred) per question; Whereas, in response to the said notification Nine (09) representations against Eight (08) questions were received within the stipulated time.

Whereas, the representations so received were referred to and discussed with the concerned subject expert(s) for the examination who held some claims justified/genuine & some unjustified as per the details below:

Post	Question No.'s of Booklet Series				Previous option/ Answer as per provisional key	Revised option/Answer recommended by the expert
	A	B	C	D		
Medical Officer	02	52	32	22	B	D
	07	57	37	27	B	C
	19	09	49	39	C	C ( no Change)
	34	24	04	54	C	A
	36	26	06	56	C	B
	49	39	19	09	D	D (no Change)
	55	45	25	15	C	B
	60	50	30	20	B	D

Whereas, the recommendations of the experts have been accepted and necessary changes wherever required have been made in the revised key; and

Therefore, with the adoption of above changes/modification in the answer keys already notified vide this office Notification No. 46-EC of 2025; Dated: 08.12.2025 are hereby declared as final and no further claim whatsoever shall henceforth be entertained in this regard.

On the basis of evaluation carried out in accordance with the Revised/Final Key(s), the overall merit/ result of the candidates of the written test(S) held on 08.12.2025 is hereby notified as Annexure- "A" to this notification.

No: GMCS/EC/Res/MO/559-64 Dated: 13-12-2025

DIPK-8992/25  
DATED: 13-12-2025

Prof. (Dr.) Iffat Hassan Shah  
Principal/Dean



# ‘Decades of Unheard Pain’ Terror victim families find recognition and a voice

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 13: It wasn't a usual government function. At Srinagar's Lok Bhavan Auditorium on Saturday, silence often spoke louder than words.

Eyes filled with tears and hands trembled as they recalled memories of lost fathers, husbands and brothers. Victims of terror whose families had waited years, even decades, to be heard.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, handing over appointment letters to the next of kin of terror victims, called it a "tribute to their sacrifice". At Lok Bawan, families took turns to speak; the hall turned into a space of collective grief and long-delayed dignity.

Among the packed hall was Amir Nazir Lala, who lost his father when he was just four years old. "I was just four years old when my father was killed in the main market," he said. "My mother struggled beyond



limits... for 25 long years, we received no justice, no help. Today, LG Sahab has given us dignity and our rightful place. For the first time, it feels like someone truly listened to our pain," he said.

For another lady, Shaista Akhtar from Srinagar, whose father was killed 20 years ago, the appointment letter was more than employment as it was an acknowledgement.

"No one ever helped us. Our file just kept moving from one office to another. But LG Sahab felt our pain; he understood what we went through. May Allah keep you blessed, you have become a healer of hearts," she said, tears streaming down her face.

Among many more stories of pain was Mohammad Ashraf Lone, from south Kashmir's Anantnag, who spoke of his brother's killing in 1999.

"From then until 2025, no one ever understood our pain. No one asked about us, and

we were never treated with dignity. Today, LG Sahab has restored that dignity. For the first time, we feel that we, too, belong to this country," he said, his voice breaking midway.

Masrat Nelofar, another lady from Baramulla, who lost her husband in a terror attack while he was running a rehabilitation centre, said she spent years knocking on doors for help.

"We went from one office to another, but no one was there to listen. Our files just kept moving from one table to the next. When we met LG Sahab, he said, 'Don't worry, we will take action.' Today, that promise has been fulfilled," she said, clutching her appointment letter tightly.

Meanwhile, inside the hall, sobs broke out quietly. Mothers wept; some fathers held their children close, others stared blankly among the audience rows. A few young men tried to hide their tears, but the pain was too raw to contain—(KNO)

## Army tightens winter vigil along LoC in Jammu



KNO

Srinagar, Dec 13: The Indian Army has intensified patrols in the higher reaches of the Jammu region to prevent infiltration and maintain constant vigil over sensitive areas along the Line of Control (LoC) even as there has been absence of heavy snowfall.

Officials said that the Army has strengthened its presence along high ridges, dense forests, and mountain passes — regions that usually become inaccessible after heavy snowfall.

"The lack of snow this season could potentially be exploited by terrorists attempting to infiltrate these

areas. In districts like Rajouri and Poonch, there are several mountain caves where infiltrators often hide after crossing the border," they said. According to officials, this is part of the Army's winter security plan. During the cold season, fog, mist, and reduced civilian movement can create favourable conditions for terrorist activity," they said.

They said that as weather office has forecast snowfall in the coming days, the Army is monitoring key routes and traditional infiltration corridors to ensure that no terrorist group is able to set up hideouts.

"Patrolling has been stepped up in dense forests

and regions around the Line of Control. Soldiers equipped with snow gear and modern surveillance tools are conducting round-the-clock patrols," they said.

The officials said the Army has already stocked up on essential winter supplies and enhanced surveillance through drones and sensors. "Joint operations are being carried out in coordination with the Jammu and Kashmir Police".

They added that the effort is being made to ensure there is no loophole in security during winter and that terrorists do not get any opportunity to infiltrate into the higher mountain regions—(KNO)

## J&K offers every adventure experience: CM's Advisor

WARIS FAYAZ

Gulmarg, Dec 13: Advisor to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Nasir Aslam Wani on Saturday said that Jammu and Kashmir has established itself as the adventure tourism capital of the country, offering limitless opportunities across skiing, mountaineering, trekking, rafting and other sports.

Speaking at an event in Gulmarg, Wani said that the government remains committed to promoting adventure tourism by expanding infrastructure and supporting stakeholders across the sector.

"Be it skiing, high-altitude trekking, river rafting, cycling or marathons, Jammu and Kashmir offers every adventure experience a traveler could seek," he



said. Highlighting the government's sustained focus on the tourism sector, Wani said several projects worth Rs 17 crore were inaugurated earlier at Gulmarg, showcasing the administration's drive to strengthen tourist infrastructure. "Tourism is a priority sector for this government. Our effort is to expand its economic footprint so that local communities benefit directly through livelihood

opportunities and enhanced infrastructure," he said.

He added that the ultimate goal was to restore Jammu and Kashmir's leading position in India's tourism map and ensure that the benefits of tourism reach the people at the grassroots level.

"We are confident that with consistent efforts over the next two to three years, we'll achieve our objective," Wani assured—(KNO)

## J&K gets Rs 350 Cr for SC, ST components: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Dec 13: Over the past three financial years, the Centre has allocated more than Rs 350 crore to Jammu and Kashmir under the National Health Mission (NHM), reveals the data tabled in Lok Sabha. These funds were specifically designated for the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) components of the mission.

During the year 2022–23, J&K received Rs 41.69 crore for SC and Rs 14.45 crore for ST population. The allocation significantly increased in 2023–24, with Rs 114.88 crore (SC) and Rs 47.78 crore (ST). For the ongoing

2024–25 fiscal, Rs 100.96 crore (SC) and Rs 49.08 crore (ST) have been released.

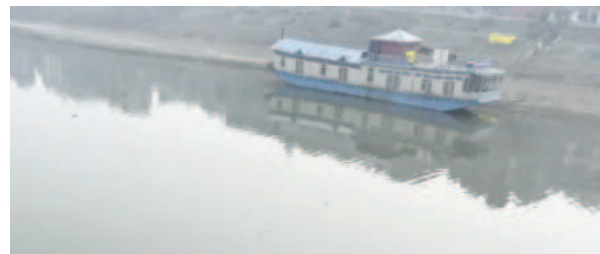
Officials said these funds support Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, ambulance services, ASHA workers, free diagnostics, free drugs, maternal-child health programmes, and immunisation services under NHM.

The Ministry also highlighted J&K's inclusion in national-level tribal health interventions such as the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission and PM-JANMAN, to improve healthcare in remote tribal belts like Rajouri and Kupwara.

—Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in

## Kashmir's dry spell deepens

Sangam, Pampore, Lidder, Rambiyara gauges record negative flow



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 13: The prolonged dry spell in Kashmir has pushed several major water bodies to critically low levels, with key gauges at Sangam, Pampore, Lidder and Rambiyara recording negative flow readings.

Chief Engineer, I&FC Kashmir, Showkat Hussain said the continued absence of significant rainfall since October has drastically reduced the discharge in the Jhelum and its tributaries. "At several points, including Sangam, Pampore, Lidder and Rambiyara, water levels have dipped below the zero mark, a sign of how severely the prolonged dry spell has impacted our river systems."

He said, they are hopefully of wet spell and the situation will change and a relief will come over.

As per updated data of Flood Control (I&FC) Department of December 13, the situation across major gauges stands as below as zero at multiple places.

River Jhelum: Sangam (21°/25') = -0.62 ft; Pampore

(4.5/5.0) = -1.33 m; Munshi Bagh (18°/21') = 3.64 ft; Asham (14.0°/16.5') = 1.00 ft and Wullar Lake (1578.00) = 1573.72 m.

About tributaries the data says: Vishow Nallah at Khudwani (7.75/8.50) = 2.33 m; Rambiyara Nallah at Wachi (5.4/5.7) = -0.38 m; Lidder Nallah at Batkoot (1.5/1.65) = -0.65 m; Doodhganga Nallah at Barzulla (3.65/3.8) = 0.80 m and Sindh Nallah at Doderhama (3.65/3.9) = -0.02 m.

While a few gauges such as Munshi Bagh, Asham, Vishow and Doodhganga remain marginally above zero, all are showing significantly reduced discharge levels compared to the seasonal average.

The Chief Engineer also said that the department is continuously regulating flow at the Chattabal Weir to maintain a minimum downstream discharge. "If the dry weather persists, it could have implications for both irrigation and drinking water supply. However, we are hopeful that the upcoming wet spell will help restore the water balance," he added—(KNO)

## Sgr airport conducts winter preparedness drill amid snowfall forecast

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Dec 13: To ensure seamless flight operations during the upcoming winter and fog season, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Saturday conducted a comprehensive dry run and preparedness exercise at Srinagar International Airport to assess operational readiness under adverse weather conditions.

The exercise, held at 11:00 AM in the morning, involved joint participation from AAI departments, Airline Airport Managers (APMs), CISF, Ground Handling Agencies (GHAs), the Medical Inspection Unit and other key stakeholders.

The function focused on verifying infrastructure readiness, manpower efficiency and coordination mechanisms during fog, snow, and low-visibility operations.

The exercise tested the airport's terminal facilities, heating systems,

illumination, washroom maintenance and passenger comfort arrangements. The functionality of emergency response systems, CISF crowd management and inter-agency coordination protocols were also reviewed. Special stress was laid on real-time communication between ATC, airlines, apron control and terminal operations to ensure smooth handling of potential flight delays, diversions and cancellations.

The departments also assessed airside and landside coordination, checking the availability of winter equipment and manpower for snow clearance and passenger movement during disruptions.

Officials said that the dry run was successfully conducted, reaffirming the airport's preparedness for winter, fog, and snow operations. "All

stakeholders have been directed to maintain a state of heightened readiness throughout the season," an official said, adding that observations from the exercise have been shared with respective agencies for rectification and follow-up.



Notably, periodic reviews and continuous monitoring, the AAI said, will continue to ensure sustained operational efficiency and passenger comfort during the challenging weather ahead—(KNO)

## Inactive lifestyle major reason of constipation: Doctors

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Dec 13: Doctors have cautioned that a low-fibre diet coupled with a sedentary lifestyle is a leading cause of constipation, a common yet often neglected digestive disorder that can significantly affect daily life if left untreated.

Medical experts explained that constipation is generally characterised by infrequent bowel movements—typically fewer than three per week—along with hard or dry stools, excessive straining, or a persistent feeling of incomplete evacuation. While occasional constipation is considered normal, chronic or long-term constipation can lead to serious health complications.

Dr Gulzar Ahmad Wani, a general physician at DHSK, said dietary habits play a crucial role in bowel health. "Constipation often results from inadequate fibre

intake, insufficient water consumption and excessive reliance on processed or refined foods. Fibre adds bulk to stool and helps it pass smoothly through the intestines," he said. He added that lifestyle-related factors such as prolonged sitting, lack of physical activity, ignoring the natural urge to defecate, and high stress levels further slow down bowel movement. "Modern lifestyles, especially desk-bound jobs and irregular eating habits, have made constipation increasingly common across all age groups," he said.

Apart from lifestyle and dietary causes, several medical conditions can also contribute to constipation. These include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), hypothyroidism, diabetes, neurological disorders, intestinal blockages and the presence of scar tissue in the digestive tract. Hormonal

changes during pregnancy and natural ageing—due to slower metabolism and weakened bowel muscles—also increase the risk.

Doctors also pointed out that certain medications are known to cause or worsen constipation. These include strong painkillers, particularly opioid-based drugs, antidepressants, iron supplements and antacids containing calcium or aluminium.

Highlighting the potential complications, Dr Khurshed Ahmad Sheikh warned that untreated chronic constipation can lead to haemorrhoids, anal fissures, faecal impaction, rectal prolapse and even psychological distress. "Persistent straining puts excessive pressure on the rectal area, increasing the risk of painful and sometimes debilitating conditions," he said.

To prevent constipation,

doctors strongly advise adopting a healthy lifestyle and dietary practices. These include increasing the intake of fibre-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, drinking at least six to eight glasses of water daily, and engaging in regular physical activity like walking or light exercise.

"Maintaining a fixed routine for bowel movements and responding promptly to the urge to defecate also helps regulate bowel function," doctors added.

They further advised people to seek immediate medical consultation if they experience severe pain during bowel movements, blood in stools, sudden unexplained changes in bowel habits, or constipation persisting for more than three weeks, as these may indicate underlying medical conditions requiring timely intervention—(KNO)



# Roaring Revival: The Return Of The Cheetah

## Press Information Bureau

In the golden hues of a September dawn in 2022, eight majestic cheetahs from the Namibian savannas touched down on Indian soil, their paws marking the first steps of a species long absent from the subcontinent. This historic moment, presided over by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, heralded Project Cheetah, the world's first inter-continental translocation of a large carnivore. Fast-forward to November 2025: Mukhi, the first cheetah cub born on Indian soil, has herself become a mother to five healthy cubs, symbolizing not just biological resurgence but a profound testament to human stewardship over nature's delicate balance. Launched on September 17, 2022, under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and spearheaded by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Project Cheetah embodies India's unwavering commitment to biodiversity restoration. Drawing from the 2013 Action Plan and Supreme Court directives, it seeks to reintroduce the Asiatic cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*, declared extinct in India in 1952) as a flagship species, fostering ecosystem health across vast landscapes.

As of December 2025, Kuno supports a population of 30 cheetahs. With a further eight cheetahs arriving in India from Botswana, the project continues to stand as a beacon of hope, earning international recognition for its scientific rigour and diplomatic finesse.

What began as a conservation experiment has grown into a statement of ecological optimism and national commitment: a chance to restore a broken ecological link, honour our natural heritage, and lead a global effort in large-carnivore rewilding.

## Historical Context: From Extinction To Renaissance

The cheetah's tale in India is woven into the fabric of ancient lore, with the animal being a favoured hunting companion. The Asiatic cheetah, once roaming from the Arabian Peninsula to the Indian subcontinent, vanished from independent India, leaving a void in the grassland-savanna biome. Historically, the Asiatic cheetah ranged widely across India, from Punjab in the north to Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu, and from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west to Bengal in the east, occupying diverse open habitats, including scrub forests, dry grasslands, savannas, and other arid to semi-arid landscapes.

The final confirmed sighting of wild cheetahs in India occurred in 1947, when three animals were shot in the Sal (*Shorea robusta*) forests of Koriya district in present-day Chhattisgarh. Five years later, in 1952, the species was officially declared extinct in India, marking the end of its native presence on the subcontinent.

India's native Asiatic cheetah vanished due to a combination of excessive hunting, poaching, and the use of cheetahs for coursing. Large-scale habitat loss from agriculture,

decline of prey, climate pressures, and the species' low reproductive rate and narrow genetic base further accelerated their extinction.

Endorsed by an expert committee, Kuno NP was selected as the optimal reintroduction site after the relocation of 24 villages (1,545 families), creating nearly 6,258 hectares, post- incentivized voluntary relocation, of inviolate grassland for the cheetahs.

By 2022, fortified by Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)-aligned strategies for species recovery, India transformed this plan into action. The project's ethos resonates with UN Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land), positioning India as a leader in reversing biodiversity loss through transboundary conservation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal vision and sustained intervention have been the driving force behind Project Cheetah, transforming a decades-old dream into a living reality. From directing the formulation of the 2022 Action Plan and pushing for the world's first inter-continental cheetah translocation, to personally releasing the first eight Namibian cheetahs into Kuno National Park on 17 September 2022, he has remained deeply invested at every stage. He facilitated high-level MoUs with Namibia (July 2022) and South Africa (January 2023), engaged the nation by inviting citizens through Mann Ki Baat to name the cheetahs, and consistently highlighted milestones such as the birth of the first Indian cubs in 2023 and the historic second-generation litter litter in November 2025. As of December 2025, India has a total of 30 cheetahs - 12 adults, 9 sub-adults, and 9 cubs - comprising 11 founder stock and 19 India-born cheetahs.

By linking the project to Mission LiFE and India's G20 "One Earth, One Family, One Future" ethos, PM Modi has elevated Project Cheetah into a global symbol of science-driven, community-inclusive rewilding, personally overseeing its progress and ensuring that the roar of the cheetah, silent in India for over seven decades, echoes once again across its ancient grasslands.

Date	Event And Milestone
17 Sep 2022	First batch of 8 African cheetahs (5 females, 3 males) flown from Namibia to India, released into quarantine enclosures in Kuno National Park (KNP), Madhya Pradesh.
Feb 2023	Second batch: 12 cheetahs flown from South Africa under MoU between India and South Africa.
2023 (first 6 months)	First births on Indian soil: cubs born to imported cheetahs, first cheetah births in India in over 70 years.
2024 onwards	

Phase-wise releases from acclimatization bomas into open wilderness begin; soft-release protocols followed internationally.

## 2024-25

Expansion of the programme plans to bring new cheetahs (e.g. from Botswana), and to extend to additional habitats beyond Kuno. In November 2025, Botswana gifted eight cheetahs to India.

## Objectives And Strategic Framework

Project Cheetah's mandate is multifaceted with establishment of a viable metapopulation of 60-70 cheetahs across 17,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the Kuno-Gandhi Sagar landscape, and restore open forests and grasslands, along with mitigating climate impacts via enhanced carbon sinks. Under Project Cheetah, the cheetah has been designated as a flagship/umbrella species. The official plan aims to use its reintroduction to restore neglected grassland and semi-arid ecosystems, thereby benefiting prey species and other grassland-dependent biodiversity.

## Phased implementation ensures ecological prudence through:

Founder stock introduction into Kuno National park's 748 km<sup>2</sup> core area, expanding to 3,200 km<sup>2</sup> landscape. About 12-14 wild cheetahs of reproductive age, genetically diverse, disease-free, predator-wary, capable hunters, and socially compatible, sourced from South Africa, Namibia, or other African countries as founder stock for the first five years, with additional imports as needed.

Metapopulation linkage with Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary (368 km<sup>2</sup> sanctuary, 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> potential habitat) located about 300 km from Kuno. The long-term goal is to establish a metapopulation of 60-70 Cheetahs in the Kuno-Gandhisagar landscape after ensuring restorative measures, prey availability and ensuring scientific management.

Self-sustaining growth: If a net annual growth rate of about 5% is maintained, accounting for natural mortality, births, and periodic supplementation, the released population is expected to reach its carrying capacity in roughly 15 years.

Budgetary support underscores resolve: INR 39 crore (USD 5 million) for Phase 1, integrated into the Centrally Sponsored Scheme-Project Tiger, with additional allocations for prey translocation and infrastructure. Monitoring adheres to IUCN Guidelines (2013) employing GPS collars, camera traps and distance sampling (734-816 km transects for monitoring prey & habitat).

## Milestones And Achievements: A Data-Driven Triumph

Project Cheetah's ledger brims with quantifiable successes, blending innovation with resilience. By February 2023, 20 cheetahs (8 from Namibia: 5 females, 3 males; 12 from South Africa: 5 females, 7 males)

were translocated via Indian Air Force C-17 Globemasters, a logistical marvel spanning more than 7900 kms without morbidity.

Early breeding is one of the strongest biological signals that a species has adjusted well to its new environment. The successful reproduction of cheetahs in Kuno so soon after their translocation indicates that the landscape is meeting their essential ecological needs, adequate prey, suitable habitat, and low stress levels. This early reproductive success is a powerful marker of habitat suitability and ecological stability, affirming that the reintroduction strategy is working as intended. It suggests that Kuno is not just supporting cheetahs in the short term but has the potential to sustain a healthy, viable population over the long run.

## Litters include:

Jwala (Namibian female): 8 cubs across two litters (March 2023 - First born litter in India and January 2024)

Aasha (Namibian): 3 cubs (January 2024)  
Gamini (South African): 6 cubs (March 2024)

Nirva (Namibian female): 2 cubs in her first litter, 6th litter in India (November 2024); 5 cubs in her second litter, 8th litter in India (April 2025)

Veera (Namibian female): 2 cubs in her first litter, 7th litter in India (February 2025)

Mukhi (Indian-born): 5 cubs (November 2025), a genetic milestone for second-generation viability

Female Aasha ranges across 121 km<sup>2</sup>, while her three sub-adult male cubs use a much larger 1,508 km<sup>2</sup> area. The male coalition Agni-Vayu holds a home range of 1,819 km<sup>2</sup>. Female Gamini and her four sub-adult cubs occupy an extensive 6,160 km<sup>2</sup> range, and female Jwala with her four sub-adult cubs uses a home range of 3,139 km<sup>2</sup>.

## Community And Livelihood Empowerment: Partners In Preservation

At Project Cheetah's heart lies inclusive conservation. Over 450 "Cheetah Mitras" in 80 villages serve as vigilant ambassadors, conducting 150 awareness sammelans and 16 Anubhuti camps for 2,200 students.

Employment surges: 80 locals as cheetah trackers, 200 as "Surksha Sramik" for patrols, and local youth trained as safari guides.

Eco-development: roads, check dams, sanitation, spans 100+ villages in the Cheetah zone, fostering coexistence. This model, echoed in UNEP-CBD frameworks exemplifies community-led biodiversity gains.

## INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION: A SYMPHONY OF SHARED STEWARDSHIP

### International Big Cat Alliance

India has elevated its global conservation leadership through the establishment of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), a flagship initiative of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, dedicated to safeguarding

the future of the world's seven big cat species, including the cheetah. Headquartered in India with 150 crore budgetary support for five years till 2027-28, it was formally launched by the Prime Minister on 9 April 2023 during the commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger. Designed to strengthen transnational cooperation, shared research, capacity building and technology transfer among range countries, the Alliance positions India as a global hub for big cat conservation and collaborative ecological stewardship. By embedding Project Cheetah within this broader international framework, India underscores its commitment to collaborative ecological stewardship and presents a unified global strategy for species revival, demonstrating how threatened predators can be restored through science-led, transnational partnerships.

Project Cheetah stands as a landmark in global wildlife diplomacy, built on deep, formalised cooperation between India and African range countries. Under the inter-governmental MoU between India and South Africa (signed January 2023), both nations committed to a long-term partnership in cheetah translocation, custodianship, training, and technology transfer, an arrangement reviewed every five years to ensure continuity and relevance. This followed India's historic first-ever intercontinental wild-to-wild cheetah translocation from Namibia in 2022, making Project Cheetah the world's first large carnivore reintroduction across continents. Expert teams from Namibia and South Africa jointly carried out capture, quarantine, airlift, and release operations, while Indian wildlife managers received extensive hands-on training in carnivore handling, monitoring, radio-collaring, and post-release management. Sourcing cheetahs from genetically diverse southern African populations further strengthens India's founding population and aligns with global conservation responsibility. India has also documented Project Cheetah as a model for rewilding and species recovery across its national submissions to global biodiversity forums, reinforcing the initiative's multilateral character. This collaborative framework, anchored in formal agreements, joint field operations, and iterative training exchangepositions Project Cheetah not merely as India's conservation endeavour but as a global restoration mission that exemplifies how threatened species can be revived through science-led, transnational cooperation.

## Conclusion: An Invitation To Global Acclaim

Project Cheetah is more than reintroduction; it is India's ode to ecological harmony, where science, diplomacy, and community converge to heal a fractured wild. With cheetahs thriving in India, it invites the world to celebrate this renaissance, a model for CBD nations, where extinct echoes roar anew. Let this story inspire: In India's grasslands, hope sprints eternal.

# Donald Trump Is Unaffordable

There is every reason to think that US President Donald Trump will not have solved his affordability problem by the time voters head to the polls for next year's midterm elections. After all, his entire economic agenda seems designed to make things worse.

## Desmond Lachman

Heading into next year's US midterm elections, President Donald Trump seems to have an affordability problem. Not only has he singularly failed to deliver on his promise to bring down prices and reduce mortgage rates, but his massive tax cuts, high import tariffs, purge of immigrants, and relentless pressure on the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates have made living in the US even more unaffordable.

No matter what Trump claims, the truth is that consumer prices are meaningfully higher today than they were when he took office in January, and the average 30-year mortgage rate remains above 6% - a level that has kept housing unaffordable, especially for first-time homebuyers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual rate of consumer price inflation as of September was 3%, or practically unchanged from when Trump started his second term. Thus, the consumer price level is around 3% higher than it was a year ago. No wonder US consumers - including one-third of Trump's own voters - are expressing deep disappointment with Trump's failure to deliver on his promise of lower prices and more affordable housing.



Looking ahead, there is every reason to think that Trump will not turn things around and mollify frustrated voters by next November. After all, he is pursuing a combination of fiscal, trade, immigration, and monetary policies that is fundamentally at odds with containing inflation.

Consider his fiscal policy. The One Big Beautiful Bill that Trump signed this summer cut taxes on a large scale and increased the budget deficit to stimulate

aggregate demand. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the resulting stimulus should push US GDP up by 0.9 percentage points next year, putting the budget deficit on track to remain above 6.5% of GDP for the foreseeable future. Such stimulus should be sufficient to keep unemployment low and the economy growing at a reasonable pace next year. But it also reduces the likelihood of a deceleration in the pace of inflation from slackening demand or higher

unemployment.

Voters are also unlikely to see much relief on the supply side, Trump has hiked import tariffs to around 17% - their highest level since 1936. According to the Yale Budget Lab, these additional levies on imports can be expected to increase consumer prices by around 1.3 percentage points in the short run. To date, it is widely estimated that companies have passed along only around half of the tariff increases to consumers; but consumers will be saddled with the remainder of the cost in due time. Trump's efforts to deport all undocumented immigrants - and to discourage legal immigration, too - will further add to price pressures, especially in the construction and agriculture sectors.

Yet another reason for concern is Trump's pressuring of the Fed to cut interest rates sharply while inflation remains above the 2% target, and despite his own budget policies stimulating aggregate demand. Trump will soon name a loyalist to replace Fed Chair Jerome Powell when his term ends this coming May, and he has already been making every effort to stack the Federal Reserve Board with monetary-policy doves.

But Trump seems to be overlooking the fact that the federal funds rate is not

as economically relevant as the ten-year US Treasury rate, which determines the market rates for mortgages, car loans, and other key forms of borrowing. If investors come to believe that the Fed is not serious about hitting its inflation target, they will demand higher returns on their Treasury bond holdings, and that, in turn, will put upward pressure on mortgage rates. Investors might also put pressure on the dollar if they come to believe that the US is trying to inflate away its debt burden.

James Carville, President Bill Clinton's political adviser, famously made the phrase, "It's the economy, stupid," the mantra of the 1992 election campaign. Looking ahead to next year's midterm elections, the economic issue of affordability will be at the top of voters' minds. Barring an abrupt economic-policy U-turn, the Republicans face dim prospects, and they have only themselves to blame.

Desmond Lachman, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is a former deputy director of the International Monetary Fund's Policy Development and Review Department and a former chief emerging-market economic strategist at Salomon Smith Barney.

Source: Project Syndicate



# Rana reviews power, irrigation & hydropower projects in Pir Panjal region

KT News Desk

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Saturday chaired a meeting at the Civil Secretariat to review the status of power distribution and transmission infrastructure besides irrigation works and hydropower projects in the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Managing Director JKPDCI, Rahul Yadav; Chief Engineer I&FC, Manoj Gupta; Chief Engineer Transmission JPDCL, Habib Choudhary; Chief Engineer, Distribution JPDCL, K K Thappa; CE Planning and Procurement, JPDCL, Vijay Kumar Balmotra; Chief Engineer Projects, Vikas Anand and other senior officers.

The Minister emphasised the need to further strengthen the electricity infrastructure and ensure a reliable and uninterrupted power supply to the region, particularly in remote and border areas. He underlined that robust power infrastructure is essential for economic growth, public welfare and improved service delivery.

During the review, the Minister held detailed discussions on the condition and expansion of distribution lines, substations and transmission corridors. He also assessed the progress of works being



executed under various Central and UT-sponsored schemes. Issues related to right-of-way, erection of electric poles and clearance delays were discussed. The Minister was informed that coordination between the Power Development Department (PDD) and allied departments is under-way to resolve these bottlenecks.

Directing the concerned officers to expedite the resolution of all pending issues, Rana stressed strict adherence to prescribed timelines. He cautioned that delays in infrastructure projects adversely impact the public service delivery, especially in sensitive and remote areas such as Mendhar. He also underscored the importance of regular monitoring and prompt redressal of public grievances to enhance the consumer satisfaction.

The Minister specifically reviewed progress on the Siot-Rajouri Receiving Station,

terming it a major power infrastructure project for Rajouri district. He noted that the project is vital for high-voltage power transmission and meeting the growing electricity demand of the region.

Reviewing the Parnai Hydropower Project, Rana reiterated the Jammu and Kashmir government's focus on hydropower development and energy self-sufficiency, particularly in Poonch district. He directed the executing agency to ensure timely completion of the project, highlighting that it would significantly enhance the energy security, promote economic growth, improve living standards and support equitable development in the region.

Managing Director, JKPDCI, Rahul Yadav, informed the meeting that work on the project is progressing steadily and is expected to be completed by December 2027.

Taking serious notice of the prolonged delay in the Anas Irrigation Canal project, the Minister instructed the concerned departments to explore all feasible options for initiating work at the earliest. He emphasized that the project has the potential to deliver substantial benefits to local communities and ensure sustainable water security.

He further directed the Irrigation & Flood Control Department and JKPDCI to re-visit the project parameters and work out a viable and resource-efficient solution. Once completed, the project is expected to improve the power availability, support local economic activities and enhance overall service delivery in the region.

The Minister also conducted a comprehensive review of implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in Poonch and Rajouri districts. He assessed both

physical and financial progress, as well as the quality of work being executed under the scheme, describing RDSS as a critical initiative aimed at transforming the power distribution sector. He urged the officers to identify the existing challenges and adopt a proactive approach to ensure successful implementation.

It was informed during the meeting that physical progress under RDSS stands at 58 percent in Rajouri and 19 percent in Poonch. The officials assured the Minister that all the pending works would be completed within the stipulated timelines.

Reviewing the progress on DAJGUA programme for rural electrification, Rana directed the local officials to accelerate project execution to bridge infrastructure gaps in tribal villages. He emphasized that priority must be accorded to unelectrified and underserved areas, with active monitoring to ensure that basic services effectively reach tribal communities.

The Minister stated that strengthening power infrastructure in areas such as Mendhar is crucial for boosting economic activity, improving public welfare and ensuring overall regional development. He assured that all necessary support would be extended by the government to ensure timely completion of projects and uninterrupted power supply to the people of Poonch and Rajouri.

## DC Budgam inspects progress of 125-bedded new district Hospital, 100-bedded CCU



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 13: Deputy Commissioner(DC) Budgam, Dr Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat Saturday conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing works of the 125-bedded New District Hospital and the 100-bedded Critical Care Unit (CCU) at Reshipora, Budgam, to assess the pace and quality of construction.

During the inspection, the DC, as per an official statement was apprised that substantial progress has been achieved on the 125-bedded hospital project. Structural works up to the fourth floor including columns and slabs stand completed, while mummy level column and beam work has also been completed. Brickwork upto third floors has been completed, and AAC block masonry up to the third floor is complete, with work on the fourth floor is currently in progress.

The DC was apprised that the structural steel truss work has been completed up to approximately 90 percent, while plumbing works are presently underway. The progress on 100-bedded critical care unit is also progressing speedily.

The DC stressed the need for maintaining momentum and directed the executing agencies to further expedite the remaining works, while strictly adhering to prescribed quality standards and timelines. He emphasized that timely completion of these projects is vital for strengthening healthcare delivery in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that these projects are aimed at significantly augmenting the district's healthcare infrastructure and reflect the Government's firm commitment to providing accessible and quality medical services to the people of Budgam. He added that the district administration is working in a focused and coordinated manner to ensure that this prestigious project is completed at the earliest for its timely dedication to the public.

The DC was accompanied by SE R&B circle Budgam, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, MS budgam ,Executive Engineer R&B Budgam, Assistant Executive Engineers and other concerned officers, who briefed the DC on the current status and future milestones of the works.

## DC Budgam reviews Pending Land Acquisition, PNC cases

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 13: A review meeting regarding the disposal of pending Land Acquisition cases and matters placed before the Private Negotiation Committee (PNC) was held Saturday under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat.

The meeting, as per an official statement was convened to review land acquisition cases pertaining to Collector Land Acquisition Budgam and Chadoora, related to PMGSY and R&B sector road projects. All cases were examined in detail and approved as placed, covering a total of 131 land owners, including 41 land owners in Budgam, 30 land owners in Chadoora under PMGSY, and 60 cases under R&B.

During the meeting, the DC observed that timely disposal of land acquisition and PNC cases is critical for accelerating infrastructure development and for ensuring that land owners receive their legitimate



compensation without delay.

He emphasized that all proceedings must be conducted in a transparent, fair and lawful manner, strictly adhering to statutory provisions.

The DC further stressed the need for effective coordination among revenue authorities and executing agencies to ensure that procedural delays are minimized and developmental works are completed within stipulated timelines. Directions were also issued for prompt release of compensation and regular monitoring of approved cases.

The DC instructed concerned officers for submission of periodic progress reports and ensuring that no approved land acquisition case remains pending at any stage.

# Over 91,000 cases settled in 4th National Lok Adalat across J&K

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 13: Reaffirming the commitment to provide quick, affordable, and amicable resolution of disputes, the Last National Lok Adalat of the year 2025 was successfully organised Saturday across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir under the patronage of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority) and the dynamic mentorship of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, as well as under the able guidance of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Chairperson, High Court Legal Services Committee.

The initiative, as per an official statement, aimed to promote amicable settlements in cases including MACT, matrimonial disputes, cheque bounce cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, money recovery, commercial disputes, and compoundable



criminal cases.

To ensure the maximum resolution of disputes, pre-Lok Adalat sittings and pre-counseling sessions were conducted well in advance, providing the parties with ample opportunity to engage in dialogue and reach a consensus for a permanent resolution. Additionally, webinars and virtual meetings were organized to sensitize stakeholders, officers of Legal Services Institutions, LADCs, Panel Lawyers, PLVs, and others involved in the promotion of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR). These sessions emphasized the significance of Lok Adalats and encouraged parties to take full advantage of

the opportunity.

As per the information received from various Legal Services Institutions working in different districts of UT of J&K, out of total 1,05,784 cases taken up by 186 Benches in the day long National Lok Adalat across the UT of J&K,91,750 cases were amicably settled and disposed off involving an amount of Rs. 76,65,59,134 as compensation/settlement amount in cases like Motor Accident Claims, civil, criminal, labour disputes, Electricity and Water Bills, Land Acquisition, Family matters, cheque dishonor and Bank Recovery etc.

Special efforts were made to enhance participation, streamline pre-litigation settlements, and encourage litigants to opt for out-of-court resolutions.

The J&K Legal Services Authority will continue to strengthen the ADR mechanism, ensuring that justice reaches the doorstep of every individual, particularly the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society.

## 4th National Lok Adalat 2025 held in Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 13: In a significant stride towards delivering timely and amicable justice, , District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in collaboration with the District Judiciary Srinagar successfully organised the 4th National Lok Adalat 2025 at the District Court Complex Mominabad, Srinagar, and at the Court of the Additional Special Mobile Magistrate/JMIC Panthachowk.

The Lok Adalat, as per an official statement issued on Saturday was held under the guidance of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority) and overall supervision of Haq Nawaz Zargar Principal District & Sessions Judge ( Chairman, DLSA) Srinagar, and ShaziaTabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority.

The Lok Adalat was inaugurated by the Principal District & Sessions Judge Srinagar, in presence of judicial officers, members of the bar, court staff and DLSA Staff.

During an interaction with the media, Adnan Sayeed, Spl. Judge Anti-corruption CBI Cases, Srinagar, emphasized that the National Lok Adalat provides an effective



and economical platform for dispute resolution. He stated that it ensures a win-win situation where both parties get their concerns heard and settled amicably.

To facilitate the amicable settlement of cases, 13 benches were constituted, in which overall 62451 cases were taken up for settlement out of which 61767 cases were amicably settled and Rs. 86838275 was awarded as settlement amount.

The First Bench was presided over by Adnan Sayeed, Spl Judge Anti Corruption CBI Cases Sgr and Fayaz Ahmad Qureshi, Presiding Officer, MACT, Court Srinagar in which 102 cases were taken out of which 50 cases were amicably settled and Rs. 31773953 was awarded as settlement amount.

The 2nd Bench was presided over by Kusoom Pandita, Additional District Judge, Bank Cases and by Anjum

Ara, Ist Additional District & Sessions Judge Srinagar. The 3rd Bench was presided over by Farooq Ahmad Bhat, Additional District & Sessions Judge Srinagar and Tabasum, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar.

Likewise, the 4th Bench was presided over by Ms. Renu Dogra, Principal Judge Family Court) Srinagar and Preet Simran Kour, 4th Addl. Distt. & Sessions Judge Srinagar and 5th Bench was presided over by Naushad Ahmad Khan, 2nd Additional District & Sessions Judge Srinagar and Fida Hussain Nayek, Municipal Magistrate, Srinagar. The 6th Bench was presided over by Massarat Jabeen, PT& E Magistrate and Shayesta Nazir, City Munsiff) l Srinagar, the 7th Bench was presided over by Raja Arshid, Principal Magistrate JJB Srinagar and Vikas Bhardwaj, 2nd Additional Munsiff Srinagar, the 8th

Bench was presided over by Shabir Ahmad Malik, Spl. Mobile Magistrate Traffic and Mufti Nahida, Addl. Special Mobile Magistrate Traffic Srinagar, the 9th Bench was presided over by Mohammad Ishtiyak Alam Baba , Forest Magistrate Srinagar and Kamiya Singh Andotra, Spl. Mobile Magistrate/Railway Magistrate Srinagar , the 10th Bench was presided over by Nazia Hassan, 4th Addl. Munsiff Srinagar and Zirgham Hamid, Ist Add. Munsiff/JMIC Srinagar, the 11th Bench was presided over by Mainaz Qadir, Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate/ JMIC Panthachowk Srinagar and Adv. Baba Sajad, the 12th Bench was presided over by Dr. Farah Deebea, Officiating President District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Srinagar and Shabnum Munshi, Member District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Srinagar and the 13th Bench was presided over by Varun Kumar, 3rd Additional Munsiff/JMIC, Srinagar and Adv. Mir Naveed Gul, Panel Lawyer DLSA Srinagar.

The Chairman DLSA Srinagar distributed compensation cheques to the tune of Rs. 2,50,000 among the survivors of violence sanctioned by J&K Legal Services Authority.

### Dr Farooq, Omar Abdullah express grief over demise of Shivraj Patil

KT News Desk

Srinagar, 13 Dec: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President, Dr Farooq Abdullah, and Vice President and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of former Union Minister, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha and senior Congress leader Shivraj Patil.

In his condolence message, Dr Farooq Abdullah said, "Shivraj Patil ji was a seasoned statesman and a committed public servant who made significant contributions to the nation during his long political career. His demise is a great loss to the country and to the democratic ethos he always stood for. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and colleagues."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as per a statement issued on Saturday, also expressed his condolences, saying, "I am deeply saddened by the passing away of Shivraj Patil ji . He was a respected leader known for his integrity, wisdom, and dedication to public life. His contributions as a Union Minister and his role in strengthening democratic institutions will be remembered. My thoughts and prayers are with his bereaved family during this difficult time."

The duo prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

## AYUSH, DTO Anantnag organise awareness camp on Tuberculosis



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, DECEMBER 13: Aimed to spread awareness about tuberculosis and promote holistic healthcare approaches, the Department of AYUSH in collaboration with the District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO), Anantnag organised a one day awareness camp on Saturday at PHC Mattan.

The programme, as per an official statement was attended by the District AYUSH Officer, District Tuberculosis Officer, BMO Mattan,

doctors, health workers and TB patients.

During the camp, patients were educated about disease management, treatment adherence, and the role of AYUSH therapies in supporting recovery. Nutritional kits and medicines were also distributed among them for their treatment and overall well-being.

The initiative highlighted the joint efforts of the Department of AYUSH and the Health Department in strengthening TB care and community awareness and was widely appreciated by TB patients.

## National Handicrafts Week 2025 HSC Baramulla distributes toolkits to embroidery artisans in Kupwara

KT News Desk

Kupwara, Dec 13: As part of the ongoing celebrations of National Handicrafts Week2025, the Handicrafts Service Centre (HSC), Baramulla, under the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, organised a Toolkit Distribution Programme for embroidery artisans in Kupwara district on 11th December.

The programme, as per a PIB statement issued on Saturday was aimed at empowering local artisans by providing essential toolkits to enhance their skills, improve productivity, and support sustainable livelihoods, while simultaneously preserving the region's rich and age-old tradition of embroidery.

Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Director, HSC Baramulla, Dr. Waseem Hussain emphasised the significance of such initiatives and stated that the distribution of

toolkits is a vital step towards strengthening the capacity of artisans and enabling them to produce high-quality handicrafts in an increasingly competitive market. He added that National Handicrafts Week offers an important platform to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of artisans and to reaffirm the government's commitment to safeguarding and promoting traditional crafts.

Following the toolkit distribution, a road show was organised to create awareness about the importance of handicrafts and the various welfare schemes and initiatives undertaken for the benefit of artisans. The road show drew considerable public attention and highlighted the role of handicrafts in cultural preservation as well as local economic development.

Officials from the Handicrafts Department, representatives of HSC Baramulla, and a large number of local artisans were present during the programme.



### Justice, jobs, dignity

provided job letters on Friday evening. More than 200 family members have been provided government jobs this year," he said.

While highlighting the deep and lasting scars left by terror and violence, LG Sinha said, "Terrorism not only claimed innocent lives but also shattered families, pushing them into decades of silence, stigma and poverty. Behind every brutal killing by terrorists lies a story of a home that never recovered, of children who grew up without parents."

The Lieutenant Governor expressed concern that for a long time, the pain and trauma of these families were ignored.

He said, "Real victims of terrorism and true martyrs were often hounded by elements within the terror ecosystem. On one hand, Over Ground Workers (OGWs) were appointed to government jobs, while on the other, the Next of Kins of terror victims were left to fend for themselves."

LG Sinha emphasized that for generations, the system failed these victims by not giving their cases the priority they deserved. "We are now empowering the voices of victims and ensuring that they receive their rightful dues and entitlements. At the same time, we are committed to delivering swift and fair justice to the perpetrators," he asserted.

Stressing that the fight against terrorism is a collective responsibility, the Lieutenant Governor said society as a whole must unite against this menace. "We must pledge to fight terrorism with determination and patience, and foil the designs of our adversaries," he said.

Reiterating the administration's firm stance, LG Sinha declared that Jammu and Kashmir's policy on terrorism is unequivocal. "There is zero tolerance for terrorism in all its forms. Every available resource and means will be used to make J&K terrorism-free. Those who provide sanctuary, safe haven or any kind of support to terrorists will have to pay a very heavy price," he warned.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that after the abrogation of Article 370, the terror victim families have found new courage and self-confidence, and now they are speaking out against the terror ecosystem without fear.

"For generations, the system had failed these victims by not giving their cases the priority they deserved. We are empowering victim's voices and ensuring they get their dues and rights they deserve. We are also committed for swift and fair justice to perpetrators," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that continuing the fight against terrorism is a task which the society as a whole has to undertake. We must pledge to fight against the scourge with determination, patience and foil the efforts of our adversary, he said.

"For a long time, the system ignored the pain and trauma of these families. Real victims of terrorism and true martyrs were hounded by elements within the terror ecosystem. On one hand the OGWs were appointed in government jobs, on the other, NoKs of terror victims were left to fend for themselves.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, our policy on terrorism is unequivocal- Zero tolerance to terrorism in all its forms. "Every available resource and means will be used to make J&K terrorism-free and those who are giving sanctuary, safe-haven or any other support to terrorists will have to pay a very heavy price," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Recalling his interaction with victims, Sinha said he met several families who lost their loved ones to terrorism and were left to struggle in silence for years. "One of them told me his mother had to beg to raise him after their home was destroyed. Many children grew up without parents, yet no one came forward to help them," he said.

### TERRORISTS' FUNERALS WERE GLORIFIED, REAL VICTIMS WERE FORGOTTEN

The LG said the administration has also decided that properties belonging to the victims and their families, which were taken away during the years of terrorism, will be returned to the rightful owners. "We are ensuring that no deserving family is left behind. Even cases where FIRs were not filed will be examined and justice delivered," he said.

LG Sinha described how, for decades, those truly affected by terrorism were ignored while "those linked with the terror ecosystem" took undue advantage. "There was a time when innocent civilians were being killed, but the terror ecosystem was thriving. Those affected by terrorism were left to suffer in silence, while sympathisers of terrorism enjoyed privileges," he said.

He called it a "painful paradox" that terrorists' funerals were once glorified, while the real victims were forgotten. "We will not allow this injustice to continue. Those who glorify terrorism today will face strict action," he said.

The LG said that over the past five years, several government employees with direct or indirect links to terrorism have been terminated, adding that the process of cleansing institutions from the influence of the terror ecosystem will continue. "Each individual responsible for spreading false narratives and aiding terrorism will be identified and punished," he said.

### RIYAZ AHMAD MIR LEFT HOME NEVER TO RETURN

On 03-05-1999, Pakistan backed terrorists killed Riyaz Ahmad Mir son of Mohammad Ismail Mir R/O Monghall, Anantnag.

For his family, the news was not just a piece of official information; it was the shattering of their entire world. Riyaz Ahmad had left home as usual, with ordinary hopes for the day, never to return. The manner of his death – through torture – left the family with a lifelong wound, not only of grief but of unanswered questions and a sense of deep injustice.

The deceased was survived by his wife and a minor daughter, Pakeeza Riyaz. Soon after his death, his wife, unable to cope with the emotional and financial burden, remarried. Little Pakeeza, still too young to understand what had befallen her, was taken in and raised by her grandparents. They tried their best to provide her with love and stability, but the absence of her father cast a long shadow over her childhood.

The family, which had depended entirely on Riyaz Ahmad's earnings, suddenly found itself in dire financial straits. The old parents, already in the evening of their lives, had to step into the role of both caregivers and breadwinners for a young child, struggling to meet even basic needs. Dreams of a secure future for Pakeeza were replaced by daily worries about survival. After 26 years, the family has received justice and dignity.

### FAYAZ AHMAD GANIE SHOT DEAD OUTSIDE HIS HOME

On 04-02-2000, terrorists forcibly entered the home of a modest family at Nussu Badragund, Qazigund, and kidnapped two persons: Dilawar Ganie son of Khazir Ganie and his son, Fayaz Ahmad Ganie son of Dilawar Ganie.

Shortly thereafter, both were mercilessly killed outside their own home. The brutal incident sent shockwaves throughout the locality, creating a climate of terror and helplessness among the general public.

The two deceased were not just names in a police file

– they were a grandfather and father to the applicant, Rozy Jan. In a single day, she lost the two pillars of her life, two generations of support and guidance. The family home, which once echoed with inter-generational warmth, suddenly turned into a place marked by silence, grief, and fear.

This double tragedy was not only an emotional devastation but also a financial catastrophe. Both Dilawar and Fayaz were the primary earning members of the family. Their sudden and violent demise left the household without any source of stable income. The family was pushed into immediate financial crisis, struggling to afford basic necessities and forced to confront an uncertain future without the security that the deceased had worked tirelessly to provide. Fozy has received and sense of closure after 25 years.

### ABDUL REHMAN LONE KILLED INSIDE HIS HOME

On 05-05-1999, the brother of the deceased informed Police Station Kokernag that some terrorists had forcibly entered their residential house and killed his brother, namely Abdul Rehman Lone, who was working as an SPO in the J&K Police Department. The crime was carried out inside the family home, turning a place of safety into the scene of an unimaginable tragedy.

Abdul Rehman had joined the Police Department out of a strong sense of duty and a desire to serve the nation. He was known among colleagues and locals as a sincere, disciplined, and courageous officer. On the fateful day, when confronted by the enemies of peace, he resisted bravely, upholding the very oath he had taken, even at the cost of his life. His courage and sacrifice are matters that will be remembered and respected for generations to come.

The deceased was survived by his old aged parents and one brother (Mohammad Asharaf Lone ). He was the only bread earner of the family. His untimely death plunged the family into deep shock and grief. Beyond the emotional devastation, the financial impact was severe: his younger brother, who had dreams of continuing his education, was compelled to abandon his studies and work as a labourer simply to keep the family afloat.

Thus, the family not only lost a beloved son and brother, but also their sole economic support and their hopes for upward mobility through education. Their suffering is a combination of emotional trauma, financial hardship, and the painful knowledge that their loss came while the deceased was in the line of duty, standing firmly on the side of law and order. Justice and dignity delivered to the families after long wait of 26 years.

### SPO IRSHAD AHMAD SOFI'S FAMILY GETS JUSTICE

On 26-09-1999, terrorists entered the residential house of Mohammad Ramzan Sofi and fired upon his son, Irshad Ahmad Sofi, causing injuries to him and his brother, Feroz Ahmad Sofi, as well. Both were immediately shifted to hospital, but despite medical intervention, Irshad Ahmad succumbed to his injuries. The deceased was serving as an SPO in the J&K Police Department.

Irshad had participated in multiple counter-terrorism operations and played an active role in eliminating terrorists from the valley. He was widely regarded as a dedicated and courageous policeman who carried out his duties with exceptional commitment. His colleagues saw in him a true role model, embodying the values of bravery, selflessness, and unwavering service to the nation.

The attack inside his own home was not just an assault on one individual but an attempt to terrorize an entire family and community. For his aged mother, siblings, and wife, the memory of that night remains etched in their minds—the sudden gunfire, the rush to the hospital, and the unbearable moment when they were told he had not survived.

As far as the family strength of the deceased is concerned, he left behind an old age mother, a wife, two brothers, and one sister. Subsequently, his wife remarried after his death. Being the eldest among his siblings, Irshad had been the primary support for the family, guiding and helping them in every possible way to make ends meet. With his passing, the family lost not only its main earner but also its emotional anchor. The family was delivered justice today and his brother was handed over the appointment letter.

### SON OF BSF BRAVEHEART GETS A JOB

Ishthiyaq Ahmad, the son of BSF braveheart Altaf Hussain, who was martyred in an encounter with terrorists nearly 19 years ago, also secured a government job, bringing support to a family that has endured great hardship since his father's supreme sacrifice.

### SEARCH FOR JUSTICE ENDS AFTER 30 YEARS

Thirty years ago, Abdul Aziz Dar, a resident of Srinagar, was murdered by terrorists. Today marked the end of his family's prolonged search for justice.

### 156 FAMILY MEMBERS OF TERROR VICTIMS PROVIDED SELF-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

According to the officials, 156 family members of terror victims have been provided self-employment opportunities under various schemes, including Mission Yuva, Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) and Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP). Furthermore, 17 encroachments have been removed from the properties belonging to terror victim families.

36 terror victim families have been identified for house reconstruction. More families will be identified and included as the process continues. The reconstruction work for the houses of the families whose homes were destroyed due to Pakistani shelling in Uri and Karnah will commence in April.

Others who were present on the occasion included special DG Coordination PHQ, S.J.M. Gillani; Principal Secretary Home, Chandraker Bharti; Commissioner Secretary, GAD M Raju; Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg; IGP Kashmir, VK Birdi; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo; Chairman, Save Youth Save Future Foundation, Wajahat Farooq Bhat and other members of the Foundation, senior officials, members of various social organisations and family members of victims of terrorism. (KNO)

### ‘Only LG Sahab

months old. Since then, only my grandmother and I have been together. She became my mother, my father, my everything," she said, her words soft but laden with emotion.

She recounted that her grandmother was the sole breadwinner, surviving on a small pension after her husband passed away years ago. "There were days when we didn't even have enough money for food or clothes," Pakiza said. "But my grandmother never let me feel alone. She hid her pain, worked tirelessly, and made sure I could go to school. Every time I fell, she lifted me. Every time I lost hope, she gave me courage."

For years, the duo went from one office to another – filing applications, meeting officials, and waiting for someone to listen. "We went to the Secretariat, the DC office, countless times," she said. "No one did anything for us. No one even looked at us properly. Only LG Sinha understood our pain."

Her voice broke as she remembered her grandmother. "Today, this letter is not just for me; it's for my grandmother. She has suffered enough. LG Sinha gave us respect, recognition, and the peace we waited 25 years for,"

she added.

Earlier inside the hall, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha described the initiative as "a tribute to the courage and resilience of families who faced the worst of terror but never lost faith". (KNO)

### ‘He’s gone forever

me now. We are happy today because LG Sahab understood our pain," he said.

The father also urged those who received government appointments during the ceremony to serve sincerely. "We must all work honestly and that is the true tribute to our martyrs," he said. "It is our duty to honor the trust reposed on us by LG Sahab."

His words, spoken softly inside the auditorium minutes after the event, echoed what many families inside had felt but could not fully express, that behind every appointment letter lies a story of sacrifice, a family torn apart and a pain that time cannot erase. (KNO)

### Military actions like

Divedi congratulated the cadets on completing their training and said the profession of arms demands commitment, discipline and readiness to serve the nation under all circumstances.

He said officers must lead from the front and act as role models for their troops, particularly in situations marked by uncertainty and operational pressure.

The Army Chief said leadership in future conflicts would be tested by ambiguous threats and rapidly changing operational landscapes.

He said officers would be required to take decisions without complete information while maintaining ethical conduct and operational effectiveness.

He also acknowledged the role of instructors and staff at the Indian Military Academy in shaping officers equipped for modern military challenges. He thanked the parents of the cadets for their trust and contribution to the nation's defence.

The parade also reflected India's growing defence engagement with friendly countries, with foreign cadets commissioning alongside Indian officers. The Army Chief said bonds forged during training contribute to long-term military cooperation and shared security interests.

The ceremony concluded with the traditional 'Antim Pag', marking the transition of cadets into commissioned officers of the Indian Army.

Among the awards presented, Academy Cadet Adjutant Nishkal Divedi received the Sword of Honour and the Gold Medal for standing first in the overall order of merit. The Chief of the Army Staff Banner for overall excellence was awarded to Imphal Company.

The Indian Military Academy said the passing out parade reaffirmed its role in producing officers prepared to serve in a security environment shaped by evolving threats and complex operations such as Operation Sindoor. (KNO)

### ‘Proof my father’s

a soft, halting voice, while speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). "I didn't even know what was happening around me. I didn't know what a father's love felt like. I grew up hearing stories about him, how he was brave, kind and respected by everyone. But I never saw him. Not once."

For Anwar, childhood meant watching others go to school with their fathers, while he walked with his mother, clutching her hand tightly. "When you grow up without a father, the world treats you differently," he said. "You learn to hide your pain, to smile even when it hurts. We had no one; only my mother's courage kept us alive."

His family survived on a small pension, stretching every rupee, every day. "Sometimes, we didn't even have enough for books or clothes," Anwar recalled. "But my mother never let us give up. She used to say, 'Your father's blood runs in your veins, you must live with pride, not pity.'"

On Saturday, after more than two decades, Syed Anwar received an appointment letter under the special employment package for families of terror victims, a moment he called "a new beginning after years of darkness."

"I'm thankful to LG Sahab for everything," he said, holding the letter close to his chest. "It is not just a job. It's respect. It's dignity. It's proof that my father's sacrifice was not forgotten. This is for my mother, for every night she cried alone, for every morning she went to work just to keep us alive."

Pausing, he added softly, "Today, I feel my father is watching from somewhere above. Maybe now, he can finally rest in peace." (KNO)

### CM Omar calls for

normalcy has not been established yet."

Pertinently, after April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, the government ordered closure of many tourist destinations across J&K. A few of the closed spots were reopened in a phased manner.

On the impact of changing weather patterns, the Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing significant climatic shifts with reduced precipitation and a 90% decline in rainfall over the past one and a half months. "It's not just Gulmarg—weather patterns are changing everywhere. We must adapt by conserving water, building check dams, harvesting rainwater, and controlling pollution. The government and residents alike have a responsibility to respond to these changes," he stated.

Emphasising the need for technological interventions, the CM advocated adoption of artificial snow-making systems, as practised in several European ski destinations. He suggested storing rainwater and deploying snow machines when temperatures fall below zero, at least on select slopes, particularly those serviced by newly installed drag lifts. Omar also proposed the installation of floodlights on certain ski slopes, on the lines of Japan, to extend skiing hours into the evening and maximise tourist activity during short winter days.

Such measures, he said, would not only enhance visitor experience but also significantly boost the livelihoods of local ski guides, instructors, equipment rental services and other stakeholders dependent on winter tourism. "The investment in drag-lifts alone would not yield dividends unless complemented by assured snow cover and extended operational hours," he said.

Asked about inadequate facilities faced by tourists, CM Omar said a new policy is being formulated to address these shortfalls in hotel and allied services. He assured improvement in the quality of amenities offered to visitors across famous destinations.

CM Omar reiterated that the true measure of success in tourism lies not merely in attracting visitors once, but in inspiring them to return repeatedly. He called for a responsible, visitor-friendly approach that ensures memorable experiences and sustained goodwill.

Replying to a query about power scenario in Kashmir, CM Omar said, "People have to disclose their loads honestly. Transformers are burning in non-metred areas due to over loading."

He said, "Load shedding is taking place as per the schedule and the government is trying its best to maintain a balance between demand and supply."

### GOVT COMMITTED TO REVIVING KASHMIR'S ADVENTURE TOURISM

Earlier, CM Omar while speaking at a curtain-raiser function organised by the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India reiterated that the government is committed to reviving Kashmir's adventure tourism potential and ensuring that destinations like Gulmarg regain their past glory as premier skiing hubs.

"It is impossible to talk about adventure tourism in India without mentioning Kashmir, which has immense potential for activities such as mountaineering, trekking, rafting, and skiing," the Chief Minister said.

He said Gulmarg had been offering skiing opportunities when very few other destinations did, but expressed concern over the region's declining prominence in adventure sports.

"There was a time when we had snow here for months, but now even Gulmarg faces dry spells. We must introduce technological interventions such as artificial snow generation, as is done in Europe," he said, urging officials and stakeholders to explore such measures to sustain skiing and attract tourists throughout the year.

The Chief Minister said efforts are underway to ensure smooth skiing experiences, including improving ski drag facilities and other related infrastructure in the first phase of development. "We should enhance employment opportunities for local stakeholders and make skiing accessible even during the summer months," he added.

Abdullah also referred to a tourism revival project worth hundreds of crores aimed at strengthening the sector and restoring confidence among tour operators and allied businesses.

He stressed the need for collective efforts from the government, private players, and the local community to keep tourism vibrant across all seasons.

Reiterating his recent remarks made in Pahalgam, the CM emphasised the importance of hospitality in sustaining tourism. "We must ensure that our tourists return with happiness and fond memories—that will be our true success," he said.

Expressing optimism despite current challenges, he said, "People may be disappointed today, but the smiles will return, tourism will bounce back, and everything will be fine."

CM Abdullah reiterated the need to review the consistent closure of major spots like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Doodhpatri. "While the government claims normalcy, keeping half of our prime destinations closed sends a negative and confusing message," he remarked.

Responding to questions on power infrastructure and winter preparedness, Omar said that unscheduled power cuts and maintenance during peak season often result from overloading and unexpected faults rather than poor planning.

He assured that the administration is working to strengthen the system and meet the increasing power demand during winter.

On the impact of changing weather patterns, the Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing significant climatic shifts with reduced precipitation and a 90% decline in rainfall over the past one and a half months. "It's not just Gulmarg—weather patterns are changing everywhere. We must adapt by conserving water, building check dams, harvesting rainwater, and controlling pollution. The government and residents alike have a responsibility to respond to these changes," he stated. (KNO)

### Oath vs Constitution:

of administering their oath.

On October 16, 2020, the Union Government amended the Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act-1989 to provide for setting up of District Development Councils.

The law was amended through an executive order by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) invoking the powers vested with it under Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act-2019.

Each DDC comprises 14 elected members. With J&K having 20 districts, the total strength of elected DDC members is 280.

In the first -ever DDC election held in November-December 2020, the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) won 110 seats, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 75 seats. (KNO)

### Accessible, affordable

sector in J&K is being guided by the vision of 'Health for All'. He called upon the healthcare fraternity to play a proactive role in building an inclusive, resilient and people-centric healthcare system that ensures equitable access to quality services for every citizen.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that the reforms in healthcare and medical education are not only improving health outcomes but also creating new opportunities for youth, strengthening public trust in institutions, and laying a strong foundation for a healthier and more prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.

"With bold and systemic reforms between 2020 to 2024, we have made quality healthcare education more accessible," he said.

Guided by the vision of 'Health for All', the Lieutenant Governor called upon the healthcare fraternity to ensure inclusive, resilient, and people-centric healthcare.

"We must enrich the healthcare sector through knowledge, innovation, and research. A multidisciplinary approach that goes beyond treating illness should be adopted to address the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also lauded the transformation of SKIMS in the last 4-5 years and its significant contribution to public health and medical education. He observed that over 1,100 long-pending promotions were executed and around 1,300 paramedical and ministerial posts were revived and referred, including 120 faculty positions. Clearance given to over 1,800 DPC promotions and additional 367 Non-Gazetted and 159 Gazetted posts were referred to recruiting agencies. SKIMS is also planning to set up Future-Centres of Excellence in transplant services, emergency & trauma care, neurosciences, cardiac sciences, renal medicine, and pulmonary diseases, endocrine and metabolic disorders.

The Lieutenant Governor inaugurated various projects for SKIMS including commissioning of Emergency S.M.A.R.T Lab; ICU-VII, Heavy Duty Lift and a new Firefighting System.

Foundation stones were laid by the Lieutenant Governor for several projects for SKIMS. These projects include Centre for One Health, 3 MLD sewage treatment plant, Multi-level Car Parking, Attendant Inn- Phase II and Shopping Complex for Hostels. New digital initiatives at SKIMS were also launched on the occasion.

The Lieutenant Governor called for adopting a multi-faceted approach leveraging cutting-edge technology to develop new healthcare models and enhance accessibility.

He also sets Five Goals for Healthcare Transformation. "Data-driven care should be our first goal for personalized treatment and precision medicine.

The second goal is to implement a robust system for auditing patient treatment and outcomes.

Third, to ensure 100% digital records for better treatment and foster a sense of empowerment for patients.

The fourth goal is to develop a decentralized healthcare system that enables doctors in remote villages to provide timely treatment, specifically tailored to patient needs.

Fifth, the medical community must collaborate to

promote preventive health and wellness in society", the Lieutenant Governor said.

Prof. Mohammad Ashraf Ganie, Director SKIMS; Prof. Vivek Lal, Director, PGIMER Chandigarh; Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, Vice Chancellor Central University of Kashmir; Shri Anshul Garg, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; VK Birdi, IGP Kashmir; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, senior officials, medical professionals, Heads of Departments, faculty, students and staff of SKIMS attended the valedictory ceremony. (KNO)

### Fog, sub-zero

department said there is a possibility of light rain or snowfall at scattered places across the Valley during December 20 and 21, coinciding with the onset of Chillai Kalan, a 40-day winter period beginning December 21, when temperatures typically drop and snowfall chances increase.

The Met department also said shallow to moderate fog is likely to persist at many places in the Valley over the coming days, which may affect visibility during early morning and late evening hours.

So far, the Valley has not witnessed any major wet spell this winter. Officials said prevailing dry conditions have coincided with an increase in seasonal ailments such as cough and common cold.

Meanwhile, sub-zero temperatures were recorded across several parts of the Kashmir Valley on Saturday, while dense fog in many areas reduced visibility and disrupted early morning traffic movement.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 7.6 degrees Celsius, slightly below the seasonal average. Qazigund recorded 9.2 degrees Celsius and Pahalgam 9 degrees.

Kupwara recorded a maximum of 8 degrees Celsius, Kokernag 10.2 degrees, and Gulmarg 7.2 degrees.

In the Jammu region, Katra recorded a maximum temperature of 20 degrees Celsius, Jammu city 19.4 degrees, and Banihal 17.2 degrees. Batote and Baderwah recorded 14.9 degrees and 15.2 degrees, respectively.

In Ladakh, Leh recorded a maximum temperature of 5.4 degrees Celsius, Kargil 5.1 degrees, and Nubra Valley 4.9 degrees.

### SRINAGAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CONDUCTS WINTER PREPAREDNESS DRILL

Against the backdrop of fog and winter weather conditions, Srinagar International Airport conducted a winter preparedness dry run to assess readiness for fog, low visibility, and snowfall-related operations.

The exercise was led by the Airports Authority of India in coordination with airline airport managers, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), ground handling agencies, the medical inspection unit, and other stakeholders.

Officials said the dry run focused on operational preparedness, inter-agency coordination, and passenger handling during adverse weather conditions that frequently disrupt flight operations in the Valley during winter.

Terminal facilities were inspected to assess passenger comfort during cold weather. Authorities reviewed heating systems, lighting, waiting areas, lounges, drinking water points, washrooms, seating arrangements, and laptop charging stations.

Manpower deployment and cleaning arrangements were also reviewed to manage winter traffic.

Standard operating procedures related to fog and low visibility were examined. Coordination between air traffic control, airlines, apron control, and terminal operations was tested during the exercise.

Passenger facilitation during flight delays, diversions, and cancellations formed part of the review.

Security arrangements were also assessed. CISF reviewed crowd management plans in case of congestion caused by weather-related disruptions. Emergency response systems, surveillance infrastructure, access routes, and access control points were checked.

Airside and landside coordination was reviewed to ensure continuity of operations during snowfall and fog.

Authorities assessed the availability of equipment and trained personnel for winter operations. (KNO)

### Srinagar suffers

—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) on Saturday.

Arif while highlighting the growing public health risk posed by the city's deteriorating air quality said, "Current pollution levels in Srinagar mean residents are unknowingly inhaling air comparable to cigarette smoke."

"On an average day with present pollution levels, breathing Srinagar's air for 24 hours is roughly equal to smoking three to four cigarettes," he said.

He explained that this exposure adds up quickly. "That means nearly 25 cigarettes in a week and more than 100 cigarettes in a month, even for someone who has never smoked," he said, calling the situation alarming.

Air quality data shows that fine particulate pollution, which can enter deep into the lungs, has remained consistently high in the city.

Srinagar's average Air Quality Index (AQI) has stayed in the 'poor' category, while pollution levels spiked further over the past 24 hours, with AQI touching 180 and fine dust concentrations rising sharply.

Arif clarified that the estimate is based on globally accepted scientific comparisons used to explain pollution exposure in simple terms.

"This does not mean people are literally smoking cigarettes, but the damage to the lungs and heart can be similar when pollution levels remain high," he said.

He cautioned that even short periods of severe pollution can have long-lasting health effects.

"High-pollution days leave an impact that cleaner days cannot completely undo. Repeated exposure increases the risk of breathing problems, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses," Arif said.

"Repeated exposure to polluted air can damage the lungs and strain the heart, even among non-smokers," said Dr Irfan Ahmad, a senior physician at a government hospital in Srinagar. "People should avoid outdoor exercise during poor air quality, use masks when stepping out, and keep indoor spaces as clean and ventilated as possible. Those with asthma, heart disease, or allergies must be especially cautious and seek medical advice if symptoms worsen."

Meanwhile, residents said air pollution in Srinagar has been worsening with each passing day. "On most days, the surrounding mountains are barely visible from my neighbourhood. The air feels heavy, and by evening there is irritation in the eyes and throat," said a resident of Rajbagh.

Another resident, a fruit vendor in Lal Chowk, said the problem was no longer limited to peak winter. "Earlier this happened only during the coldest weeks, but now the haze lingers for days. We often limit outdoor work because breathing becomes uncomfortable," he said.

Notably, temperatures dipped below freezing across many parts of the Kashmir Valley on Saturday, with dense fog persisting in several areas, affecting visibility and disrupting early morning traffic movement. (KNO)

### Major crackdown

comes after Lt Governor Manoj Sinha reiterated government's commitment to dismantle the terror ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier today, the LG vowed to end terror ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir and warned that sympathisers and supporters of terrorism will face the harshest punishment. (KNO)



# TMC, BJP, Cong slam organisers for chaos at Messi event, CPI(M) calls it 'black day' for Bengal

PTI

Kolkata, Dec 13: Both ruling Trinamool Congress and opposition BJP lashed out at the organisers of an event featuring Lionel Messi in Salt Lake stadium on Saturday, which ended in chaos as irate spectators went on a vandalisation spree for not having a proper view of the football icon.

Demanding action against the organisers, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said in a statement that the "overzealousness" of the organisers and people close to them to crowd Messi and take selfies with him prevented the spectators from the gallery, who shelled out hefty amounts for the event, from having a proper view of the football star, and it infuriated them.

"Why should no action be taken against the organisers for this mess? Why was there no proper planning? Why did chaos break out? It forced Messi to leave the stadium and the chief minister of West Bengal could not attend and accord him a warm welcome on behalf of the people of the state," the TMC state general secretary said.

Describing the incident as a big let-down for the sport-lovers of the state, Ghosh said that in 2011, when Messi came to the stadium for the first time, the event was so well-organised.

"I remember there was a match and Messi took the corner kick 50 metres from my press gallery seat.



Everything went off so smoothly and Kolkata held its head high then," he said.

BJP state president and Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya alleged that "some fraudsters, in their greed to mint money, created this situation".

Stating that the entire responsibility for this mess lies with the state government, he alleged that TMC leaders indulged "greedy organisers, who were busy with self publicity, depriving people, who bought tickets, to have a proper view of the football icon".

Bhattacharya said that the incident tarnished the image of the state.

Union minister and senior BJP leader Sukanta Majumdar slammed the TMC and the state administration

for the chaos.

Leader of the Opposition in the state assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, launched a scathing attack on the state government, alleging that ministers and leaders "clung to Messi like leeches", while football fans who paid thousands of rupees were left watching him on the giant screen for barely a few minutes.

In a post on X, Adhikari accused Sports Minister Arup Biswas, Fire Minister Sujit Basu and the organisers of turning the event into a "money-making exercise".

He also demanded a 100 per cent refund for gallery ticket-holders, arrest of those responsible, and sought Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's resignation for "discrediting West Bengal before the world".

The Congress also attacked the TMC government, with West Bengal state president Subhankar Sarkar describing the episode as "terrible mismanagement and a mockery of law and order".

He alleged that in the name of Messi, tickets were sold at exorbitant prices to innocent fans, while the footballer was surrounded only by TMC leaders and members of their families.

"Crores of public money were spent so that TMC leaders could get photographs clicked with Messi. This is a new-age scam after Sarada and Narada," Sarkar alleged, demanding personal accountability of the organiser, and police and sports ministers and the local MLA.

Congress spokesperson Suman Roy Chaudhuri echoed similar sentiments, demanding the arrest of the sports minister and questioning the role of the police administration.

He alleged that the episode exposed the "commercial face" of the government and called for legal action over the mess.

CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty termed the mismanagement a "black day" for West Bengal, blaming the TMC government for failure of law and order.

Drawing a contrast with the visits of football legend Diego Maradona during the Left Front regime, Chakraborty alleged that the government was more focused on making money in Messi's name than ensuring spectators' safety and experience.

## Bill to set up single higher education regulator likely to be tabled in Parl next week



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 13: A Bill which seeks to set up a single regulator for institutions of higher education is required to facilitate universities and other higher educational institutes become independent and self-governing, officials said.

The Bill is likely to be introduced in Parliament next week after it got the Union Cabinet's nod on Friday.

The proposed legislation, which was earlier christened the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill, has now been named Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill.

Why India's New Right To Disconnect Bill Could Transform Work Culture, Protect Millions From Burnout

A single higher education regulator, which was proposed in the new National Education Policy (NEP), looks to replace the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

"The Bill proposes to set up a

Higher Education Commission of India to facilitate universities and other higher educational institutes become independent and self-governing institutions and to promote excellence through a robust and transparent system of accreditation and autonomy. It is likely to be introduced (in Parliament) in the coming week," an official said.

While the UGC presently oversees non-technical higher education in the country, the AICTE oversees technical education, while the NCTE is the regulatory body for teachers' education.

The Commission is proposed to be set up as a single higher education regulator, but medical and law colleges will not be brought under its ambit.

It is proposed to have three major roles -- regulation, accreditation and setting professional standards, officials said.

Funding, which is seen as the fourth vertical, is not proposed to be under the regulator so far. The autonomy for funding is proposed to be with the administrative ministry, they said.

## Over 3,000 drug samples declared not of standard quality in 2024-25: Nadda



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 13: Of the 1.16 lakh drug samples tested in 2024-25, 3,104 were declared not of standard quality while 245 were found to be spurious or adulterated, Union Health Minister J P Nadda told the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Responding to a question, Nadda also informed that of the 1.06 lakh samples tested in 2023-24, 2,988 were not of standard quality and 282 were found to be spurious or adulterated.

In 2022-23, 96,173 samples were tested, of which 3,053 were not of standard quality, and 424 were spurious, the health minister said.

The Food Safety Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) and its regional

offices, through the state and UT food safety departments, carry out regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection, and random sampling of food to ensure compliance with the quality and safety standards established under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSS), 2006, and the rules and regulations made thereunder, he said.

As a part of quality monitoring and in order to assess the regulatory compliance of drug manufacturing premises in the country, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), in collaboration with the state regulators, initiated risk-based inspections of drug manufacturing and testing firms in December 2022, Nadda said.

Firms have been identified based

on risk criteria such as the number of drugs declared as not of standard quality, complaints, criticality of the products, etc.

The CDSCO, along with the SDCs, conducted risk-based inspections of more than 960 premises since December 2022, and based on the findings, more than 860 actions, including issuance of show-cause notices, warning letters, stop production order and cancellation of licences, have been taken by the states and UTs as per the provisions of the Drugs Rules, 1945.

The list of drugs of various companies, which are declared not of standard quality/spurious/adulterated by the Central drug testing laboratories, is uploaded on the website of CDSCO along with the heading 'Drug Alert' under with actions initiated as per the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and rules thereunder, Nadda told Lok Sabha.

To strengthen the drug regulatory system in the country, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has implemented a centrally-sponsored scheme - Strengthening of States' Drug Regulatory System (SSDRS) - Nadda stated.

The scheme envisages upgrading the existing state laboratories, state drug control offices, and setting up new drug testing laboratories.

Under the scheme, funds totalling Rs 756 crore have been released to the states and UTs as part of the Central share, 17 new drug testing labs have been constructed,

## Shah likens Naxalism to cobra snake that 'spread its hood in way of dev'

PTI

Raipur, Dec 13: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday likened Naxalism to a "cobra snake" that spread its hood in the way of development, and said the armed left-wing movement did not benefit anyone - neither those who took up arms nor the security personnel.

Reiterating the Narendra Modi government's resolve to end Naxalism by March 31, 2026, he said the Centre has decided to transform the Naxal-hit Bastar division in Chhattisgarh, comprising seven districts, into the most developed tribal region in the country over the next five years.

Addressing the closing ceremony of Bastar Olympic 2025 sport event at Indira Priyadarshini Stadium in Jagdalpur, the headquarter of state's Bastar district, Shah appealed to those associated with the outlawed CPI (Maoist) to lay down arms and join the mainstream of society, asserting that only peace can pave the way for development.

The government has decided to end "red terror" across the country before March 31, 2026, and the goal is now within reach, the Union minister said.

"I came here to participate in Bastar Olympic 2024, again in 2025, and I promise I will



come in 2026 as well. When I arrive for the Bastar Olympic in 2026, Naxalism will have been wiped out from Chhattisgarh and the entire country," he said.

Our aim is not just to end Naxalism but to ensure that once it ends, a new era of development begins here, he said.

Shah said the seven districts of the Bastar division - Kanker, Kondagaon, Bastar, Sukma, Bijapur, Narayanpur and Dantewada - will be developed into the country's most advanced tribal districts by December 2030.

The BJP governments at the Centre and in the state are committed to ensuring housing, electricity, toilets, tap water, LPG connections, five kg of free foodgrains and free medical treatment up to Rs 5 lakh for every household in these districts, he said.

The Bastar division will be the most developed tribal

region in the country, Shah said, adding that every village will be connected by roads, have electricity, banking facilities within a five-km radius and a strong network of primary and community health centres.

In Chhattisgarh, units for processing forest produce will be set up on a cooperative basis. All seven districts of Bastar will become the highest milk-producing districts among all tribal districts, increasing their income through dairy farming, he said.

He also said that the government will establish new industries, higher education facilities, the best sports complex of the country, and a state-of-the-art hospital in Bastar.

A special scheme will also be launched here to address malnutrition. A very attractive rehabilitation scheme for those who have surrendered

and those who have been injured in Maoist violence will be introduced, he added.

"Naxalism had spread its hood like a cobra snake, acting as an obstacle to the development of this region. With its end, a new chapter of development will begin and it will progress under leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai," he said.

"Naxalism will be eliminated by March 31, 2026, but I want to appeal to those still associated with it to lay down arms and join the mainstream for the welfare of their family and society."

"Naxalism benefits no one - not those who take up weapons, not tribals and not security personnel. Only peace can pave the way for development," he said, urging the "misguided youth" to take advantage of the rehabilitation policy and lead a dignified life.

Highlighting the changing face of Bastar, Shah said the region has now become synonymous with the future rather than fear as school bells now ring where gunfire once echoed, and roads, railways and highways are being built where development was once a distant dream.

Slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' have replaced slogans of 'Lal Salaam', marking a major transformation, he added.

## 'Avg age of school-going children picking up drugs, smoking habit in 10 Indian cities around 13 yrs'

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 13: School-going children are picking up drug and smoking habits and engaging in consumption of alcohol, with the average age of introduction to such harmful substances found to be around 13 years, suggesting a need for earlier interventions as early as primary school, a multi-city survey by AIIMS-Delhi said.

The findings also showed substance use increased in higher grades, with grade XI/XII students two times more likely to report use of substances when compared with grade VIII students. This emphasised the importance of continued prevention and intervention through middle and high school.

The study led by Dr Anju Dhawan of AIIMS's National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, published in the National Medical Journal of

India this month, looks at adolescent substance use across diverse regions.

The survey included 5,920 students from classes 8, 9, 11 and 12 in urban government, private and rural schools across 10 cities - Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Delhi, Dibrugarh, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jammu, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Ranchi. The data were collected between May 2018 and June 2019.

The average age of initiation for any substance was 12.9 (2.8) years. It was lowest for inhalants (11.3 years) followed by heroin (12.3 years) and opioid pharmaceuticals (without prescription; 12.5 years).

Overall, 15.1 per cent of participants reported lifetime use, 10.3 per cent reported past year use, and 7.2 per cent reported use in the past month of any substance, the study found.

The most common substances used in



the past year, after tobacco (4 per cent) and alcohol (3.8 per cent), were opioids (2.8 per cent), followed by cannabis (2 per cent) and

inhalants (1.9 per cent). Use of non-prescribed pharmaceutical opioids was most common among opioid users (90.2 per cent).

On being asked, 'Do you think this substance is easily available for a person of your age' separately for each substance category, nearly half the students (46.3 per cent) endorsed that tobacco products and more than one-third of the students (36.5 per cent) agreed that a person of their age can easily procure alcohol products.

Similarly, for Bhang (21.9 per cent), ganja/charas (16.1 per cent), inhalants (15.2 per cent), sedatives (13.7 per cent), opium and heroin (10 per cent each), the students endorsed that these can be easily procured.

About 95 per cent of the children, irrespective of their grade, agreed with the statement that 'drug use is harmful'.

The rates of substance use (any) among

boys were significantly higher than those of girls for substance use (ever), use in the past year and use in the past 30 days. Compared to grade VIII students, grade IX students were more likely, and grade XI/XII students were twice as likely to have used any substance (ever).

The likelihood of past-year use of any substance was also higher for grade IX students and for grade XI/XII students as compared to grade VIII students.

About 40 per cent of students mentioned that they had a family member who used tobacco or alcohol each. The use of cannabis (any product) and opioid (any product) by a family member was reported by 8.2 per cent and 3.9 per cent of students, respectively, while the use of other substances, such as inhalants/sedatives by family was 2-3 per cent, the study found.



## B'desh interim govt orders security clampdown as fresh unrest grips country

PTI

Dhaka, Dec 13: Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus-led interim government on Saturday ordered a nationwide security clampdown as fresh unrest gripped Bangladesh following the shooting of a youth leader of a right-wing cultural group who was also a candidate in the February 12 general elections.

"The government is going to start the second phase of Operation Devil Hunt to help ensure public safety and combat the growing threat of illegal arms," Home Affairs adviser Lt Gen (rtd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury told a press conference.

The announcement came after three assailants shot Inquilab Mancha leader Sharif Osmann Hadi on Friday, as he initiated his election campaign at central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area -- from where he stood as an independent candidate.

According to doctors, his condition is very critical. Adviser



Chowdhury announced a reward of Taka 50 lakh (USD 40,985.81) for information leading to the arrest of one of the suspects who shot Hadi, while police issued his picture, identifying him as Faisal Karim Masud.

The interim government first launched the Operation Devil hunt in February this year, following

protests over an attack on the private house of a former minister in the northern suburb of the capital.

The clampdown targeted alleged "henchmen" and supporters of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's now disbanded Awami League. The Inquilab Mancha was on the forefront of a campaign to disband the Awami League.

## UK's House of Lords commemorates Dadabhai Naoroji's 200th birth anniversary

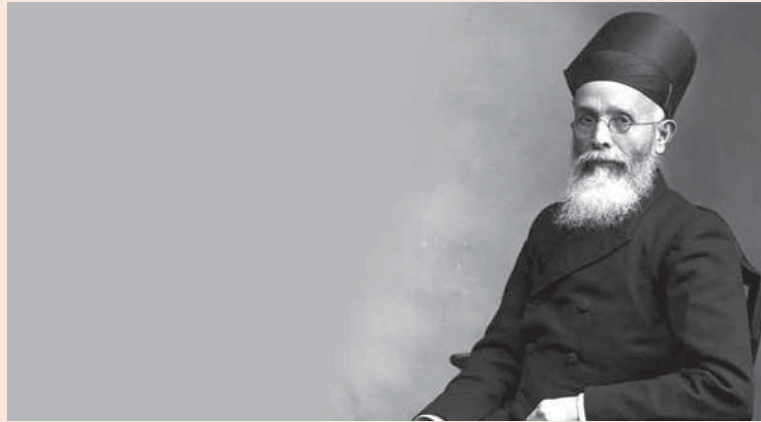
PTI

London, Dec 13: The House of Lords in London played host to a special reception in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji, the nationalist leader who became the first Indian to win a popular election to the British Parliament during the colonial era.

Known as the "grand old man of India", Naoroji was born in September 1825 to a Parsi family in Mumbai and first travelled to England in 1855 for business reasons before going on to become an influential figure in its political landscape.

Lord Karan Bilimoria, a fellow Parsi parliamentarian, hosted Friday's reception in honour of the life and legacy of the polymath who straddled multiple roles of a Zoroastrian priest, businessman, academic and politician.

"In many ways, I have followed in the footsteps of Dadabhai Naoroji, who came initially for business to the UK," said Bilimoria, founder of Cobra Beer. "He was also an academic as a professor at Elphinstone



College and, of course, he was a politician -- the first Indian, first ethnic minority ever to be elected to this Parliament," he noted.

Bilimoria revealed that the bicentenary commemoration was initially planned for September, to coincide with the month of Dadabhai Naoroji's birth 200 years ago, but had to be postponed due to strike action.

"But we were adamant in making sure that this event would take place during the year of his 200th birth

anniversary, and here we are," he added. The Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, reflected upon the legacy of Dadabhai Naoroji and the impact of the Parsi community in the political and social life of India and the UK. "The Parsi community has the distinction of perhaps being one of the smallest communities in India, but having produced a disproportionate number of generals, air marshals and admirals, including chiefs of the three services," shared Doraiswami.

## Britain's King Charles reveals 'good news' in cancer fight, urges early screenings



PTI

London, Dec 13: Britain's King Charles III has shared an important "milestone" in his battle against cancer that will see his weekly treatment schedule scaled back and used the "good news" to urge people to take up screenings to ensure early diagnosis of the disease.

The 77-year-old monarch issued a rare health-related video message on Friday evening to coincide with a 'Stand Up To Cancer' joint campaign by the Cancer Research UK charity and Channel 4 television.

It marks nearly two years since Buckingham Palace had revealed that Charles would undergo treatment for an unidentified form of cancer.

"I am able to share with you the good news that thanks to early diagnosis,

effective intervention and adherence to 'doctors' orders', my own schedule of cancer treatment can be reduced in the New Year," said Charles, the pre-recorded message.

"This milestone is both a personal blessing and a testimony to the remarkable advances that have been made in cancer care in recent years; testimony that I hope may give encouragement to the 50 per cent of us who will be diagnosed with the illness at some point in our lives," he said.

He promoted a new national "Screening Checker" online tool, which allows the British public to check whether they are eligible for breast, bowel or cervical cancer screening through the National Health Service (NHS).

"Throughout my own cancer journey, I have been profoundly moved by what I can only call the 'community of care' that surrounds every cancer patient -- the specialists, the nurses, researchers and volunteers who work tirelessly to save and improve lives," said Charles.

## AIFF expresses concerns after Messi event in Kolkata descends into chaos



PTI

New Delhi, Dec 13: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Saturday expressed concerns after the much-anticipated Lionel Messi event in Kolkata was marred by chaos due to poor crowd management and security lapses.

About 50,000 spectators, many of whom had paid Rs 4,000 to Rs 12,000 -- and in some cases up to Rs 20,000 in the black

market -- watched helplessly as a swarm of politicians, VVIPs, security personnel, and assorted hangers more interested in selfies than crowd control surrounded Messi, leaving the fans at the Salt Lake Stadium angry.

"The All India Football Federation is deeply concerned by the events that transpired at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, where thousands of fans gathered to witness world

football stars Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, and Rodrigo de Paul.

"This was a private event organised by a PR agency. The AIFF was not involved in the organisation, planning, or execution of this event in any capacity," the AIFF said in a statement.

Within minutes of his arrival at the venue, Messi was surrounded by a bevy of politicians, police officers, VVIPs and their aides, forming a human blockade that ensured the paying public saw everything except the footballer.

The AIFF said it was not involved in the organisation, planning, or execution of the event in any capacity. "This was a private event organised by a PR agency. Furthermore, the details of the event were neither communicated to the AIFF, nor was any clearance sought from the federation," the AIFF said.

"We urge all attendees to extend their full cooperation with the relevant authorities and to maintain order. The safety and security of all individuals involved must remain the paramount priority," the apex body said in the statement.

## Israel issues evacuation warning for Lebanon village ahead of strike



REUTERS

Cairo, Dec 13: Israel issued an evacuation warning for a village in southern Lebanon on Saturday ahead of what it said was a planned strike against infrastructure of the Hezbollah militant group.

A military spokesperson said the Israeli military would attack the site in the village of Yanouh in southern Lebanon. It would be the second such attack within days, after Israel hit what it described as Hezbollah infrastructure in several areas in southern Lebanon on Tuesday.

Israel and Lebanon have both sent civilian envoys to a military committee monitoring their ceasefire, a step toward meeting a months-old US demand that they broaden talks in line with President Donald Trump's Middle East peace agenda.

Israel and Lebanon agreed to a US-brokered ceasefire in 2024, ending more than a year of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah that had culminated in Israeli strikes that severely weakened the Iran-backed militant group. Since then, the sides have traded accusations over violations.

## 3rd T20I: Three-match 'audition' starts for Shubman Gill to find his game back

PTI

New Delhi, Dec 13: The countdown to save his place in the playing XI begins for a beleaguered Shubman Gill, who is likely to get three matches against South Africa to prove his worth before the Indian team management switches to a 'Plan B' ahead of the T20 World Cup, starting in six weeks.

As India gear up to play the third T20I against the Proteas on Sunday in sub-10-degree temperatures in the lap of the ice-clad Dhauladhar range, things are suddenly heating up in the Indian dressing room, with the prolonged poor form of skipper Suryakumar Yadav coming under the scanner. Worse, his deputy Shubman Gill, who was pushed into the XI at the expense of a settled Sanju Samson, is not inspiring much confidence.

The South African pace attack featuring Anrich Nortje, Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi, Ottiel Baartman and Lutho Sipamla -- has shown how to bowl on Indian tracks, and the HPCA Stadium strip, offering extra bounce and some movement off the surface, will certainly keep them interested.

Among all T20 sides, South Africa, in terms of personnel, appears to have the requisite balance to win the trophy in the Indian sub-continent this time. Quinton de Kock's return, along with the likes of Aiden Markram, Dewald Brevis, Donovan Ferreira, David Miller and all-rounder Jansen, gives their batting an intimidating look. With only



eight games, starting from the third T20I, left before the start of the T20 World Cup title defence, India's under-fire head coach Gautam Gambhir won't be able to afford, two out-of-form top-order batters in the starting line-up.

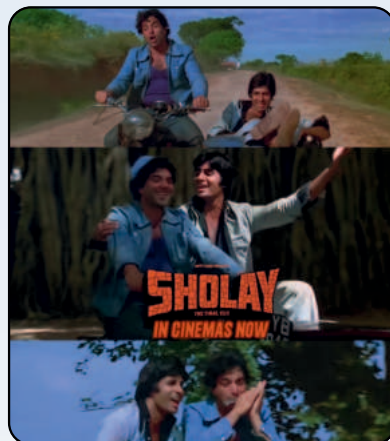
Being the skipper of the side, Surya will certainly have immunity going into the T20 World Cup despite being completely out of form for the past one year but same can't be said about Gill, who wasn't the original choice as an opener. Gill's entry into the T20 set-up was a classic case of trying to fix something that ain't broken and things haven't looked good so far.

In this backdrop, Gill would need to bat out of his skin to prove that Ajit Agarkar-led committee wasn't wrong in throwing Samson under the bus for one bad series against

England. The stylish Indian Test and ODI skipper will have to find his T20 game and at least score in two of the three matches if he doesn't want Samson to get his rightful place back or for that matter, find Yashasvi Jaiswal, with a fabulous T20I strike-rate of 165, enter the fray during New Zealand series.

Lack of clarity While head coach Gambhir is too proud a person to admit but sending Axar Patel as a one drop batter during the second T20I was a "tactical brain fade" from the team's think-tank.

The kind misstep that was taken with Axar's promotion is unlikely to be repeated in the third game where skipper is expected to go back to No.3 where he has got a lot of success in his first few years at the international level.



SHOLAY: THE FINAL CUT (U)  
HINDI - 02:45 PM



KIS KISKO PYAAR KAROON 2 (U/A16+)  
HINDI - 10:00 AM



DHURANDHAR (A)  
HINDI ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 02:00 PM  
HINDI - 10:45 AM, 12:55 PM, 05:05 PM  
HINDI ATMOS - 06:00 PM



TERE ISHK MEIN (U/A 16+)  
HINDI - 10:40 AM, 06:45 PM

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