



Strengthen preparedness against GLOFs, avalanches: MHA to J&K, Himalayan states

» 'Plug gaps in early-warning systems, improve community preparedness'

» Calls for proactive monitoring of glacial lakes, avalanche-prone zones

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Sep 03: The Ministry of Home Affairs has asked Jammu and Kashmir and other Himalayan States and Union Territories to strengthen monitoring and early-warning systems for glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and snow avalanches, with a focus on vulnerable areas and timely evacuation.

The directions, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) were issued during a review meeting chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, which was attended by senior officials from Jammu and Kashmir and other Himalayan states, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, were also present.



Representatives of central disaster management and scientific agencies also attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the preparedness of Himalayan regions to deal with GLOFs and avalanches, including the identification of vulnerable glacial lakes, avalanche-prone areas, possible flood flow paths and

locations requiring enhanced surveillance.

For Jammu and Kashmir, the directions assume significance as several high-altitude areas of the Union Territory remain vulnerable to avalanches and other mountain-related hazards, particularly during periods of heavy snowfall, rapid warming and extreme weather.

The MHA asked the authorities to ensure that warnings generated by scientific and technical agencies reach district administrations and communities without delay and are followed by appropriate action.

The Union Home Secretary called for a shift from a response-based approach to one centred on advance risk assessment, preventive mitigation and preparedness at the community level.

The states and UTs were also directed to review their existing disaster management and evacuation plans, identify shortcomings and take corrective measures before extreme events occur.

The meeting also took stock of GLOF mitigation projects sanctioned by the Centre in 2024 and called for [More on P6](#)

CM Omar calls for job-oriented skill training

Says J&K must prepare youth for jobs beyond govt sector

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday laid the foundation stone for developmental works at Kashmir Government Polytechnic, Srinagar, and e-inaugurated infrastructure upgrades worth 4.20 crore across Government Polytechnics in Kishtwar, Ramban, Kulgam and Kupwara.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister called for greater focus on skill development and vocational education, stressing that preparing youth for the future job market must go hand



in hand with formal education.

"We cannot give government jobs to everyone. If we have to prepare our children for the future, we have to give them

the skills to compete in the job market, whether in Jammu and Kashmir, elsewhere in the country or abroad," the Chief Minister said. [| More on P6](#)

CM reviews modifications in Jammu, Srinagar Master Plans

Calls for balance between urban growth, environmental protection

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday chaired the 91st Board of Directors meeting of Jammu Development Authority (JDA) and 85th Board of Directors meeting of Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), to discuss proposals regarding amendments to be made

in the Master Plans of Jammu and Srinagar. Chairman SDA Shabir Hussain Bhat and Chairman JDA Rupesh Kumar made separate presentations on the proposed plans. The discussions covered proposed amendments, public feedback, regulatory requirements and measures for planned and sustainable [| More on P6](#)

7 Autonomous Hill Councils created in Ladakh UT

Has term of erstwhile Kargil Hill Council ended?

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Sep 03: In a significant move, the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh on Wednesday established seven Autonomous Hill Development Councils for the Union Territory.

Close on the heels of the creation of five new districts in Ladakh, taking the total to seven, the LG constituted one Hill Development Council for each district.

According to a notification issued by the Administration of Ladakh, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Councils are as follows: Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh for the District of Leh; Hill

Development Council, Kargil for the district of Kargil; Hill Development Council, Sham for the district of Sham; Hill Development Council, Nubra for the district of Nubra; Hill Development Council, Changthang for the district of Changthang; Hill Development Council, Zaskar for the district of Zaskar; and Hill Development Council, Drass for the district of Drass.

While the term of the Hill Council in Leh ended on October 30, 2025, the Hill Council in Kargil still had more than two years left in its five-year tenure.

Sources in the administration of Ladakh told KNO that the term of the Hill Council Kargil has automatically ended, as the latest notification supersedes all previous

Bangladesh High Commissioner calls on CM Omar Abdullah



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India, M. Riaz Hamidullah

on Thursday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at the Civil Secretariat here.

The Chief Minister welcomed the High Commissioner

to Jammu and Kashmir and held discussions on areas of mutual interest, including horticulture, medical education and [| More on P6](#)

LG, CM greet people on Shri Krishna Janmashtami

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have extended heartiest greetings on the auspicious occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, which will be celebrated on Friday, September 04, 2026.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "On the joyous occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, I extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes to all. The life and teachings of Lord Krishna carry a universal message celebrating the ultimate victory of righteousness and virtue. His timeless wisdom to action guide us to fulfill our duties without attachment to the outcome. May Lord Shri Krishna guide us toward righteousness, and may



his divine blessings bring joy and prosperity to all."

In his message, the Chief Minister said the festival of Janmashtami symbolises the triumph of righteousness, truth and compassion over evil. He expressed hope that the occasion would strengthen the bonds of communal harmony, brotherhood and mutual respect among the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister prayed that the festival brings peace, prosperity and happiness to all, and strengthens [| More on P6](#)

BREIF NEWS

Centre-Ladakh talks
MHA calls sub-committee meet in Delhi on Sep 9
KNO Special Correspondent

The Ministry of Home Affairs has convened a meeting of the sub-committee on issues concerning the Union Territory of Ladakh on September 9 in New Delhi. In a post [| More on P6](#)

Vande Bharat to make experimental halt at Anantnag
Umair Gull Ganie

The Ministry of Railways has approved an experimental stoppage of the Jammu Tawi-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express at Anantnag railway station, officials said. In a communication issued by [| More on P6](#)

Gunshots heard in Budgam woods
Search ops on

Naveed UI Haq Ganaie

Gunshots were heard in the upper reaches of the forest area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on Thursday evening during a cordon-and-search operation, officials said. Official [| More on P6](#)

J&K to witness rain, thundershowers today: MeT

Srinagar records 32.5°C, Jammu 33.1°C

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Sep 03: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Thursday said that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places on Friday, with brief intense showers possible at some locations.

According to the latest weather forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the weather is expected to remain generally dry from September 5 to 12, though brief spells of rain or thundershowers may occur at isolated to scattered places,

particularly during the early morning and forenoon hours.

The MeT Centre has advised people to remain cautious on September 4, saying brief intense showers at localised places could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides.

Farmers, however, may continue harvesting and other agricultural operations, the weather office said.

Meanwhile, temperatures remained above normal at several places in the Union Territory on Thursday.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 32.5 degrees Celsius, which was 4.7 degrees above [| More on P6](#)

Interns' continued strike puts additional pressure on PG doctors at GMC Srinagar

Congress's Mir, PDP's Iltija join protesting interns at GMC Anantnag

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Sep 03: The protest by MBBS and BDS interns across Jammu and Kashmir over the long-pending demand for enhancement of monthly stipend from Rs 12,300 to Rs 30,000 entered the fourth day on Thursday.

The continued absence of interns from routine clinical duties has begun putting additional pressure on postgraduate doctors, particularly at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, where PG doctors are reportedly handling a substantially increased workload amid the ongoing protest.



With interns traditionally assisting in wards, emergency departments, OPDs and other clinical services, postgraduate doctors have had to shoulder

additional responsibilities.

Doctors told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the situation is particularly [| More on P6](#)

Falls from walnut trees: Experts call for safety nets, protective gear

Experts say traditional harvesting methods pose serious hazards, including death

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Sep 03: As the walnut harvesting season gets underway across Kashmir, falls from tall walnut trees are once again emerging as a serious occupational safety concern, with experts warning that the traditional methods can result in devastating injuries and even death.

The harvesting period, particularly during August and September, witnesses a rise in incidents involving people falling from walnut trees while attempting to knock down the fruit. Many of those injured are young and economically active

members of their families, making such accidents not only a health concern but also a serious social and economic burden for affected households.

Dr Iqbal Saleem, Professor at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the pattern of injuries seen during walnut harvesting was particularly concerning because falls can cause permanent disabilities.

"Once again, walnut harvesting is causing injuries to our people. The distressing factor is spinal cord injuries, which can turn a dynamic person into



a bedridden patient," he said, stressing the need for safety awareness and preventive

measures at the grassroots level. Experts said walnut harvesting is largely carried out using

traditional practices, with workers often climbing considerable heights and standing on branches while using long poles to bring down walnuts. The combination of height, unstable branches, inadequate footwear and the absence of protective equipment significantly increases the risk of accidents.

According to experts, falls from walnut trees can result in severe head and brain trauma, spinal cord injuries, chest and abdominal trauma, as well as fractures and other limb injuries. In serious cases, survivors may be left with permanent disabilities, requiring prolonged

medical care and rehabilitation.

They said many of these accidents could potentially be prevented by introducing safer and more scientific harvesting practices.

"Farmers need to be educated and encouraged to adopt safer methods. Tree stands or properly designed harvesting platforms at suitable heights, non-slip footwear, protective headgear and appropriate chest and abdominal protection can considerably reduce the risk," experts said.

They also suggested the use of safety nets beneath harvesting areas wherever feasible. Such nets, they said, [| More on P6](#)

Govt committed to accelerating development in rural areas: Javid Dar

Lays foundation stones of major development projects in Rafiabad



KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, SEPTEMBER 3: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar laid the foundation stones of several important development projects in Rafiabad, covering education, healthcare, public amenities and

recreational infrastructure.

The projects, as per an official statement, involving a cumulative sanctioned cost of Rs 3.29 crore, are aimed at strengthening essential infrastructure and ensuring improved facilities and services for the people at their doorsteps.

At Nowpora (Tujur Sharief), the Minister laid the foundation stone for the development of a Children's

Park, to be executed by PW(R&B) Division Sopore, at a sanctioned cost of Rs 80 lakh. The facility will provide children with a dedicated space for recreation and outdoor activities while adding to the public amenities available in the area.

At Bomai, Javid Dar laid the foundation stone for the construction of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Computer Laboratories besides an Additional Classroom Room (ACR) at Boys Secondary School Bomai under Samagra Shiksha. The project, to be executed by PW(R&B), has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs 1.44 crore.

The Minister also laid the foundation stone for construction of a Mini Super Bazar at Bomai Zaingeer, sanctioned at a cost of Rs 55 lakh. The facility is envisaged to strengthen local market infrastructure and facilitate convenient access to essential commodities for the residents.

In the health sector, the Minister laid the foundation stone for construction of a Sub-Centre at Goripora, Darapora, at a sanctioned cost of Rs 50 lakh. The health facility will enhance access to basic healthcare services and further strengthen the rural healthcare network in the area.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that strengthening grassroots infrastructure is central to the government's development agenda, with focused attention being given to ensuring that people in rural and underserved areas have access to quality public facilities in their vicinity.

Achal Sethi reviews NeVA preparedness ahead of Autumn Session of J&K Legislative Assembly

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 03: Commissioner Secretary, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Achal Sethi chaired a high-level meeting at the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly Complex, Srinagar, to review the preparedness for implementation of the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) ahead of the forthcoming Autumn Session.

Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Manoj Kumar Pandit, along with senior officers of the Legislative Assembly Secretariat, attended the meeting.

The meeting, as per an official

statement, focused on taking stock of the arrangements and preparedness required for the effective rollout and smooth functioning of the NeVA platform, which is aimed at facilitating digital and paperless legislative proceedings.

The Commissioner Secretary reviewed the progress achieved on various components of the initiative, including technical preparedness, digitisation and processing of legislative business, system integration and coordination among the concerned departments and stakeholders.

Achal Sethi stressed the importance of completing all requisite technological, administrative and

procedural arrangements well in advance of the commencement of the Autumn Session. He underscored that effective implementation of NeVA would enable seamless digital handling of legislative documents and business, reduce dependence on physical paperwork and facilitate efficient communication and coordination between the Legislative Assembly, legislators and government departments.

He called for close coordination among all stakeholders and directed the officers to ensure that all pending technical and procedural requirements are completed within the stipulated timelines.

CS Dulloo reviews quality, disposal of migrant property grievances across Kashmir

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 03: Chief Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir, Atal Dulloo chaired a meeting to comprehensively review the quality and disposal of grievances lodged by Kashmiri migrant property holders across all ten districts of the Kashmir Division under The Jammu and Kashmir Migrant Immovable Property (Preservation, Protection and Restraint on Distress Sales) Act, 1997.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Principal Secretary, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R), Chandraker Bharti; Secretary, Revenue; Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners; Relief Commissioner (Migrant), besides senior officers of other concerned departments.

The Chief Secretary directed the Divisional and District Administrations to ensure quality, thorough and time-bound disposal of every grievance, with particular emphasis on cases pending for long periods. He stressed that every complaint must be examined comprehensively and decided strictly on merit, ensuring satisfactory resolution for the concerned property owners.

Calling for greater use of technology in the management and protection of migrant properties, the Chief Secretary directed the remaining districts to expedite completion of geo-tagged inventories of migrant properties. He observed that comprehensive digital inventories would provide a reliable asset database and strengthen monitoring, protection and management of such properties.

During the meeting, the Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti, gave an overview of the statutory framework governing migrant properties and the various Government orders and circulars issued from time to time to safeguard the interests of migrant



property holders and bring greater clarity and efficiency in implementation of the Act.

A detailed presentation by the Relief Commissioner (Migrant) highlighted the progress achieved in strengthening the institutional, administrative and technological framework for protection of migrant properties and disposal of related grievances.

The review revealed significant field-level action for retrieval and protection of migrant land under the statutory powers vested with District Magistrates as legal custodians.

Between January and July 2026, 522 Kanals and 15.9 Marlas of migrant land were retrieved and secured under Superdari or handed over to the original owners. Adding that Bandipora emerged among the leading districts with retrieval of 146 Kanals and 7 Marlas, followed by Baramulla with 82 Kanals and 10 Marlas, Kulgam with 80 Kanals and 0.5 Marlas, Ganderbal with 53 Kanals

and Srinagar with 50 Kanals and 16.9 Marlas.

The meeting was informed that the Online Migrant Grievance Portal (RRCM) has so far registered 12,223 complaints, covering various categories of violations, including 5,341 encroachment cases, 2,874 trespassing cases and 442 cases relating to record tampering.

Of these, 10,038 cases have been closed by the District Magistrates, while 7,605 cases have received final approval through the RRCM mechanism. The administration has also instituted an independent Telephonic Quality Verification mechanism through the office of the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, to assess the quality of disposal of cases shown as closed.

Of the 4,918 applicants successfully contacted during the verification exercise, 4,605 expressed satisfaction with the disposal of their cases. The remaining grievances have been flagged for further administrative scrutiny and necessary remediation. The

Chief Secretary appreciated the quality-verification mechanism and stressed that disposal figures must be matched by actual, satisfactory and legally sustainable resolution on the ground.

The review also highlighted a series of institutional and technology-driven reforms introduced to improve transparency, monitoring and accountability. The districts of Baramulla, Ganderbal, Kulgam and Kupwara have completed geo-tagged digital inventories of migrant properties, providing a comprehensive technology-enabled mechanism for identification and monitoring of such assets.

The administration has further strengthened direct engagement with migrant property holders through grassroots outreach camps. Dedicated Additional Deputy Commissioners conducted extensive public outreach camps at Jammu during the first quarter of 2026, through which 1,878 complaints were received directly and 484 offline grievances were brought onto the unified digital platform.

The meeting was also apprised of the reforms introduced following implementation of a revised Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) from October 2025, resulting in complete migration of the process to the e-Office platform.

The streamlined mechanism has enabled disposal of 129 complex alienation cases in the last 11 months, as against 6,258 cases processed during the preceding 28 years, reflecting a significant improvement in the efficiency and responsiveness of the system. The Chief Secretary directed all concerned officers to maintain sustained focus on protection of migrant properties, expeditious disposal of grievances, strict adherence to statutory safeguards and continuous improvement in service delivery, while ensuring that the interests and lawful rights of migrant property holders remain fully protected.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE PULWAMA

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ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE FOR ENGAGEMENT OF GUEST FACULTY

Applications on prescribed format(format will be provided via Email/ offline) are invited from the desirous candidates for temporary engagement of Guest faculty in the following Trade/Subject for the academic session 2026/27. The applications duly completed in all respects shall reach this office by or before 11-09-2026 along with self-attested copies of the following certificates:

1. Date of Birth.
2. Domicile Certificate.
3. Academic/ Technical Qualification Certificate with Marks Sheets.
4. Experience Certificate in the relevant teaching field from Govt. recognized Institute/Organization/Department.
5. Character Certificate (in Original)

(The experience certificate must be supported by Salary statement/bank statement of the applicant from the Institute/Organization/Department last attended). Age: Minimum age 18 years Maximum 45 years as on (1st January of each calendar year).

The requisite qualification for the said positions is specified below:

S.No	Name of the Position	No. of Positions	Qualification Required
01	Guest faculty Mechanic Motor Vehicle	One	B.Voc/Degree in Automobile/Mechanical Engineering from AICTE/UGC recognized Engineering College/University with One year Experience in the relevant field. OR Three Years Diploma in Automobile/Mechanical Engineering from AICTE Recognized board of Technical Education or relevant Advanced Diploma (Vocational) from DGT with two years' experience in the relevant field OR NTC/NAC/STC passed in the Trade of Mechanic Motor Vehicle and CITS/NCIC passes in relevant trade with 03 Year Experience in the relevant field.

The calculation of the merit points shall be on Pro-rata basis as under:-

S.NO	Criteria	Maximum Points
A	Basic essential qualification as per DGT Norms (marks obtained in the prescribed qualifying examination/trade certificate)	70
B	Higher relevant qualification (e.g., Ph.D. M.E/M.Tech as relevant to the trade/discipline)	10
c	Professional/technical certification — NET/SET/GATE	5
D	Relevant full-time teaching/training/field experience in a J&K UT recognized technical or skill institution, post-qualification	5
E	Structured interaction/demonstration before the Selection Committee, assessed against a pre-declared rubric (subject knowledge, communication, practical/demonstration skill)	10
	TOTAL	100

Terms and conditions:

The Engagement of Guest faculty will be for the Academic session 2026-27 only on need basis. The assignment of the engagee shall be co-terminus with the academic session. It can also be terminated on account of non-performance by the engagee as per the guidelines or regular appointments/ transfers are made by the Department.

The undersigned reserves the right to reject incomplete/deficient application received after assigning proper reasons.

The criteria for Engagement of the candidate as Guest Faculty and remuneration shall be strictly as per Guidelines/directions/instructions issued from time to time in this regard.

The candidates engaged shall have to maintain proper discipline and punctuality and shall have to work to the entire satisfaction of the students as well as the HOI. Indiscipline, misconduct, moral turpitude or false documentation of any kind will entail disengagement.

Every selected candidate shall, before joining, execute an undertaking/affidavit, duly attested by a First-Class Judicial Magistrate, in the prescribed format, expressly stating therein that:(i) the candidate is fully aware about the nature of engagement being purely temporary in nature, session-specific and terminable in accordance with this Policy; (ii) the candidate shall not, at any time, claim regularization, permanent absorption, continuation on whatsoever grounds; and (iii) the candidate shall abide by the Code of Conduct as specified in extant Policy.

Mere submission of application or eligibility shall not entitle any candidate for his/her engagement, and the engagement shall be made only as per the Jammu and Kashmir Guest Faculty in it is Engagement Policy.

No: ITI/Pul/Estt./2026/ 315-17

Date: 03/09/2026

DIPK-5290/26
DATED: 03-09-2026

Superintendent
Industrial Training Institute Pulwama

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION PULWAMA.

Phone:-01933-295302

TENDER NOTICE

E-NIT No: Fresh. 118/EEP/RNB/of 2026-2027/6046-56 Dated: 03/09/2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on %age Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work :-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. Lacs.)	Cost of T/D (Rs.)	Earnest Money (In %age.)	Time of Completion in working Days	Class of Contract	Major Head of Accounts	Administrative Accord Approval No:	Call No:
1.	Construction Truss at HS Payar	10.90	600/-	2% of ADV. cost	45 working days	DEE/CEE/ BEE	MH: District Capex Budget Sec-ondary Education Sector 2026-27	AAA: 96-DDCP of 2026	Ist call

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	03 - 09-2026
2.	Bid downloading Start Date	03- 09-2026 from 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	03 - 09-2026 from 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	10 - 09-2026 upto 04:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	11 - 09-2026 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Div.Pulwama
6.	Submission of Performance Security(PS)	. Upload a Copy of Performance Security(PS)/ Tender Fee to be deposited in Account No:0470010200000099 IFSC: JAKA0LALANG) Account Name: Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank PW(R&B) Zone South

In light of Circular issued by Finance department Vide No:FD-code/290/2026 Dated 22.05.2026 and circular issued by worthy Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department South Kashmir Vide order No:CE/R&B/SK/WS/2095-2111 Dated: 05.06.2026 ,the following conditions are mentioned below:-

1.Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document/Tender Fee to be deposited in Cash in Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank Account Bearing No: 0470010200000099, IFSC: JAKA0LALANG).

2.All the bidders must deposit Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in Cash in Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank Account Bearing No: 0470010200000099, IFSC: JAKA0LALANG)

3. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value to be deposited in Cash in Pulwama MC Holding Account Executive Engineer R&B Pulwama Bearing Account no. 0054010200003470 ,IFSC: JAKA0GOLDEN), which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period..

The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

Head Draftsman

DIPK-5324/26
DATED: 03-09-2026

Technical Officer

Executive Engineer
R&B Division
Pulwama

CM Omar meets individuals, deputations



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday met several individuals and deputations at the Civil Secretariat here and discussed matters concerning governance, financial oversight and energy infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister met Sunilraj Somarajan, who recently assumed charge as Principal Accountant General (Audit), Jammu & Kashmir.

Discussions focused on institutional audit practices, financial oversight and measures to further strengthen transparency and accountability in governance.

The Chief Minister also received a delegation led by Dr. Anil Kumar Jain, Chairperson, Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB). The delegation included PNGRB Secretary A.K. Mishra, Director (Monitoring) Lt. Col. Abhishek Kumar and senior representatives of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL).

The meeting discussed measures to accelerate oil and gas infrastructure development in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly expansion of City Gas Distribution (CGD) net-works and promotion of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), besides creating a conducive ecosystem for growth of the natural gas sector.

FDA intensifies enforcement activities across J&K



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: The Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), Jammu & Kashmir, has intensified enforcement activities across the Union Territory, with special focus on compliance with prescribed labelling requirements for meat and meat products.

A team headed by the Deputy Commissioner Food Safety, Kashmir, inspected various establishments, including Hospital Canteen, Kupwara, which was found violating various provisions of the food safety regulations and had failed to declare the nature/type of meat being served to consumers. A show cause notice was issued to the concerned FBO, and the case has been filed before the Adjudicating Officer (Additional Deputy

Commissioner), Kupwara.

The premises of Ishfaq Ahmad Sheikh M/s Paak Foods situated at Regipora, Kupwara was also inspected, where violations pertaining to prescribed labelling requirements were found. A notice was issued to the concerned Food Business Operator (FBO), and a complaint will be filed before the competent court in accordance with law in terms of section 52 and 53 of the Act.

As the said products were manufactured at M/s Paak Foods, Wahdatpora, Budgam, the manufacturing premises was subsequently inspected by the concerned Food Safety authorities. On examination of the product labels, "Minced Kabab" was found to be misbranded and misleading, in contravention of the Food Safety and Standards

(Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020.

Accordingly, a complaint under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, has been filed before the Adjudicating Officer, Budgam, against Amjad Ali Bhat, Proprietor, M/s Paak Foods, Wahdatpora, Budgam, under Sections 52 and 53 of the Act.

Under Section 52, misbranding of food is punishable with a penalty which may extend to ₹3 lakh, while Section 53, relating to misleading advertisements, provides for a penalty which may extend to ₹10 lakh.

The Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, reiterated that misbranding, misleading labelling, misrepresentation of food articles and violations of prescribed food safety requirements will be dealt with in accordance with law. The field officers have been directed to maintain strict vigil and ensure prompt regulatory action against violations, with the objective of safeguarding consumer health and ensuring compliance with prescribed food safety standards across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

LG Saxena visits Hunderman village to boost border tourism

Raja Syed Rather

Leh, Sep 03: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday visited Kargil's historic Heritage Village of Hunderman, adjoining the Line of Control between India and Pakistan, to review ongoing initiatives to develop it as a prominent border and heritage tourism destination.

"Hunderman is not merely a border village; it is a living symbol of Ladakh's history, heritage and resilience. My vision is to make Hunderman, the first Indian village on the LoC, accessible to visitors from across the country and the world and develop it as a unique border and heritage tourism destination," the LG said.

The LG called said the



transformation of Hunderman into a heritage and border tourism destination should be community-centric. He called for ensuring that the benefits of increased tourism activities translate into livelihood opportunities

for locals, while preserving the village's unique heritage and character.

"Hunderman village's proximity to the Line of Control, coupled with its rich heritage and distinctive character, gives

it immense potential to emerge as a unique destination showcasing Ladakh's borderland history and culture," Saxena said.

During the visit, the Lieutenant Governor was briefed on the ongoing "Exploring LOC and Hunderman Village Experience" project that envisages a range of tourist-friendly facilities, including the LOC viewpoint, parking area, integrated amenity centre, information panels, walking promenade, landscaping, smart toilets, café, viewing facilities, safety lighting and CCTV, solar panels, flag and selfie point and EV charging facilities, among other amenities. He directed that the development works be completed by the end of October this

year.

Development of this border village is aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's larger vision of infusing self-sustainability and promoting inclusivity in the remote border areas.

The LG also interacted with villagers and listened to their grievances. He reviewed the solar lift irrigation system, aimed at improving water availability for agricultural activities through renewable energy.

Chairman/CEC, LAH-DC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun; Member of Parliament, Ladakh, Mohmad Haneeza Jan; local Councillor, and senior officials of the tourism department and the local administration were present during the visit—(KNO)

Massive Eid-e-Milad rally culminates at Dargah Hazratbal



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Sep 03: A massive Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) rally culminated at the revered Dargah Hazratbal in Srinagar on Thursday, as devotees from different parts of Kashmir converged at the shrine to commemorate the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with religious fervour and devotion.

The grand procession witnessed the participation of a large number of devotees, including religious scholars, students, youth, elders and children, who joined the rally from different areas of the Valley and proceeded towards Hazratbal.

As per details, separate processions were taken out from Nagbal in Ganderbal, Harwan in Srinagar and Soibagh in Budgam, besides other parts of the Valley, with the rallies converging at Dargah Hazratbal.

The programme was organised by the Muttahida Ulama Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat Jammu and Kashmir.

As the processions moved towards the Hazratbal shrine, devotees recited Durood-o-Azkar and Naats and raised religious slogans, creating a deeply spiritual atmosphere along the routes.

The procession culminated at Dargah Hazratbal, where devotees offered prayers and paid obeisance at the revered shrine, which houses the Holy Relic believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The gathering also featured addresses by religious scholars, who highlighted the life, teachings and message of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), particularly his teachings of peace, compassion, brotherhood, humanity and mutual respect.

The administration had made elaborate arrangements ahead of the observances in view of the large number of devotees expected at Hazratbal. The arrangements included drinking water, power supply, sanitation, healthcare, traffic management, parking, transportation, fire safety and security measures—(KNO)

BJP disempowered J&K, now protesting: Javid Dar

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Sep 03: National Conference (NC) leader and Cabinet Minister Javed Ahmed Dar on Thursday hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over its protests in Jammu and Kashmir, accusing the party of creating the challenges it was now raising against the government.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Rafiabab, Minister Dar questioned the BJP's position, saying the party had been ruling at the Centre for nearly a decade and had also been controlling the affairs of J&K through the Lieutenant Governor's administration.

"I fail to understand how the BJP is facing people with what face. They have been ruling the affairs for a decade, and here too through the LG," Dar said. He accused



the BJP of disempowering Jammu and Kashmir and said the move had made it difficult for the elected government to address issues facing the people.

"They disempowered J&K. If not so, things would have been better, and we could resolve the issues as well," he said. The minister said the National Conference-led

government had been making efforts to address the situation over the past couple of years, while accusing the BJP of creating hurdles for the present administration.

"It is BJP which is responsible for the same, which is putting challenges to the current local government," the minister said—(KNO)

Aijaz among 3 IAS officers posted to Arunachal

KNO

Srinagar, Sep 03: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has ordered the posting of three AGMUT-cadre IAS officers from Jammu & Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh with immediate effect. As per the order, Mohd Aijaz (AGMUT:2012), Harvinder Singh (AGMUT:2019) and Shishir Gupta (AGMUT:2020) have been posted to Arunachal Pradesh.

The order said the officers shall be relieved within 15 days from the date of its issuance.

It also says, the postings have been made with the approval of the competent authority and shall remain in force until further orders—(KNO)



Residents welcome Haijan Brenwar project Say it will boost tourism, employment

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Budgam, Sep 03: Residents and service providers of Brenwar and adjoining areas in Chadoora have welcomed the government's move to develop Haijan Brenwar as a tourism destination, saying they are witnessing infrastructure development at the picturesque meadow for the first time.

The government has tendered infrastructure works worth around Rs 68 lakh for Haijan Brenwar, aimed at improving basic facilities and promoting the offbeat destination on the tourism map of Jammu and Kashmir.

Residents and service providers expressed gratitude to the government for initiating the project, saying the development could attract more visitors to the area and create livelihood opportunities for local youth.

A local pony service provider, Ghulam Hassan, said, "We are thankful to the government. It is for the first time that we are witnessing such a step being taken



for the development of Haijan. We welcome the initiative and hope more facilities will be provided here." He urged visitors to keep the area clean and requested the government to install washrooms and dustbins at the destination so

that its natural beauty could be preserved.

"We request people who visit Haijan to keep the place neat and clean. The government should also add washrooms and dustbins here so that the natural beauty of this place is preserved," he said.

Yasir Choudhary, a resident of Brenwar, said the initiative would not only boost tourism but also create livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth in the area.

Ghulam Hassan, a shopkeeper, said the area has significant tourism potential and should be brought fully onto the tourism map.

"We want Haijan to come fully onto the tourism map. We are thankful to the Speaker of the Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, for the progress being witnessed in this area," he said.

The shopkeeper, however, urged the administration to improve road connectivity to the destination, saying macadamisation and repair of the road should be taken up on priority. Meanwhile, Speaker

Abdul Rahim Rather assured that bringing Haijan Brenwar on the tourism map of Jammu and Kashmir would remain a top priority.

Rather said the destination would be developed as part of the Greater Yousmarg tourism development project, with a focus on strengthening infrastructure while preserving its natural beauty and ecological character.

Haijan, located near Brenwar village in Budgam, is known for its expansive green meadows, pine and conifer trees, power project dam, flowing stream and tranquil surroundings. The area also attracts shepherds during the summer months and has emerged as a popular spot for nature lovers, outdoor enthusiasts and local visitors.

Residents said they hope the planned infrastructure development will give a significant boost to tourism in the area and generate employment opportunities for local youth while ensuring that the ecological character of Haijan is protected—(KNO)

IGP Kashmir reviews security, crime situation in Anantnag



KNO

Srinagar, Sep 03: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Zone Sujit Kumar-IPS on Thursday visited District Anantnag and chaired a security and crime review meeting at District Police Office (DPO) Anantnag.

According to a statement, the meeting was attended by DIG South Kashmir Range Javid Iqbal Matoo-IPS, SSP Anantnag Amod Ashok Nagpure-IPS, and other senior

officers of District Anantnag.

During the meeting, the IGP Kashmir reviewed the overall security situation and crime scenario in the district. He took a detailed assessment of security arrangements, crime prevention measures, investigation of cases and ongoing police operations.

The IGP emphasized strengthening the security grid, maintaining close coordination among field formations and ensuring

timely and effective action against criminal and anti-social elements. He also stressed upon enhancing preventive measures and maintaining heightened vigilance to ensure peace and security in the district.

The senior officers briefed the IGP Kashmir about the prevailing security and crime situation and the measures being undertaken to further strengthen policing and public safety—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: Discipline As A Path to Spiritual And Moral Excellence

Discipline is not merely a human virtue in Islam; it is a divine command and the very essence of faith. The Quran declares, “O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you” (4:59). This verse establishes discipline as a cornerstone of Islamic life—discipline in

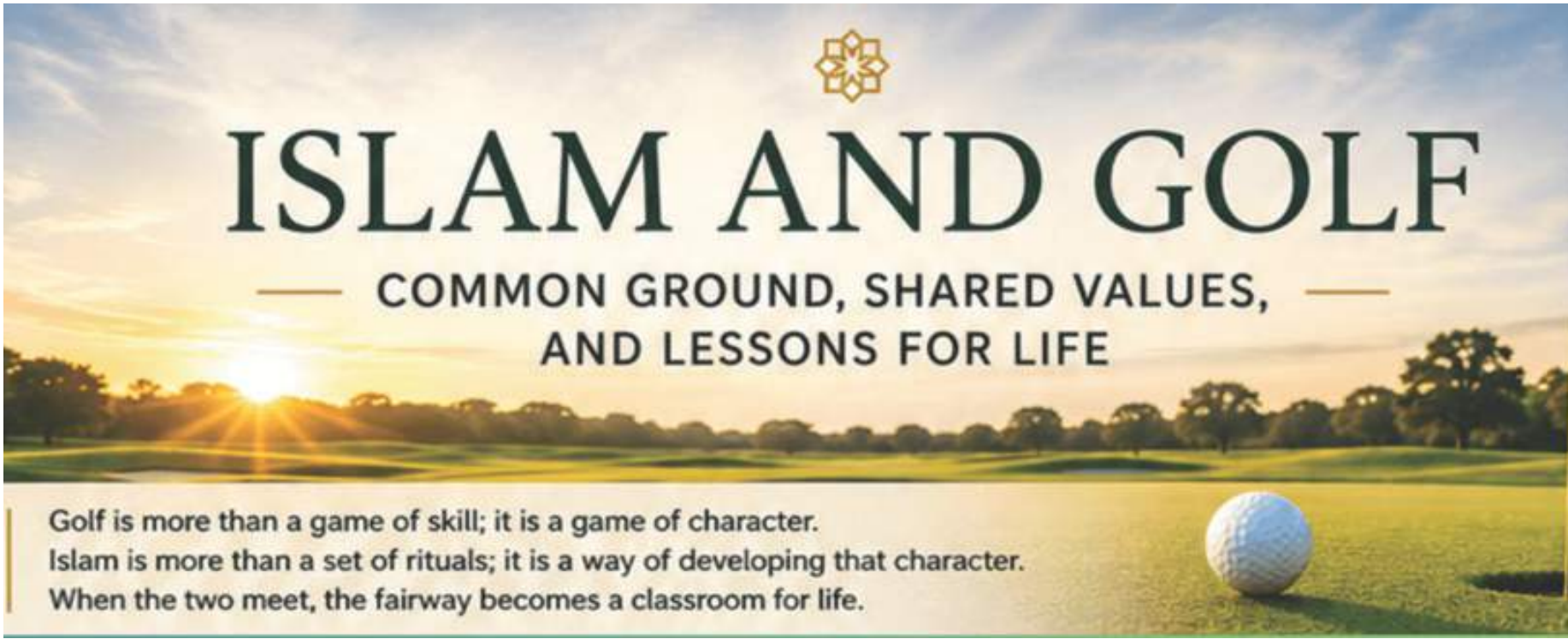
worship, in conduct, in society, and in our relationship with the Creator. The concept of discipline in Islam begins with the most fundamental act of faith: the five daily prayers. These prayers, performed at fixed times throughout the day and night, are a continuous exercise in self-discipline. They train the believer to

submit to a higher authority, to pause from worldly affairs, and to realign with divine purpose. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, “The first thing that will be judged among a person’s deeds on the Day of Judgment is the prayer.” This is a reminder that discipline in worship is not optional; it is the foundation of

accountability. Discipline also governs our moral conduct. The Prophet said, “The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.” This hadith redefines strength—not as physical power but as self-mastery. True discipline is the ability to restrain one’s

ego, to speak truth even when it is difficult, and to act with integrity even when no one is watching. In a world that increasingly celebrates impulse and instant gratification, Islamic discipline offers a counter-narrative. It teaches that freedom is not the absence of restraint but the presence of purpose. A disciplined believer is not

a slave to desires but a servant of the Most Merciful. The Quran reminds us, “And whoever fears Allah and is conscious of Him, He will make a way out for him” (65:2). Discipline, ultimately, is a form of trust in Allah—a recognition that His commands are not burdens but blessings, guiding us toward the best of all paths.



Islam And Golf: Common Ground, Shared Values, And Lessons For Life

Rushdi Siddiqui

At first glance, you might wonder what a comprehensive, deeply spiritual way of life like Islam has to do with a game played on manicured greens, often associated with business deals and weekend leisure. One is a divine guidance for the soul, and the other is a sport where you spend hours trying to put a very small ball into a very small hole. But if you look a little closer, beneath the surface of the fairway, a beautiful and surprising common ground begins to emerge.

Here are some of the shared lessons. A Brief Note on Golf in Islam I have played basketball, tennis, baseball, soccer/football, but there is something about golf that is profoundly different. It is not simply about hitting a ball; it is a profound game of intention, discipline, patience, and self-control. It asks you to manage not just the club in your hands, but the mind, the emotions, and the ego. And right there, on the tee box, is where, for me, golf begins to beautifully intersect with Islam.

Let us start with the basics, because Islam actually encourages physical activity, healthy recreation, and the care of our bodies. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gently reminded us that a strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, though there is good in both. Our bodies are an amanah, a sacred trust, and keeping them healthy is a form of worship.

Golf, like any sport, is generally permissible and can be a wonderful source of exercise, fresh air, and companionship. The key, as with everything in our faith, lies in the moderation of boundaries. We simply have to ensure that our time on the course doesn't lead us into gambling, expose us to environments that compromise our values, or cause us to neglect our salah and family obligations. Islam does not ask us to withdraw from the world; it asks us to live in it with purpose, balance, and a constant consciousness of Allah. I have found the quietness of golf and the course can actually become a sanctuary for reflection and gratitude, especially on days with few players, usually due to bad weather.

The Islamic approach to golf encourages physical health, fresh air, and companionship while treating the body as an amanah, or trust. However, it also sets boundaries by avoiding gambling and ensuring that time spent on the course does not neglect salah or family duties. The core principle is living in the world with purpose and balance, not withdrawing from it.

Playing & Prayers Now, I want to turn to something practical that weighs on the minds of many Muslims considering the game: what about prayer? A typical round of golf can stretch to four or five hours, often spanning the times for Dhuhr, Asr, and sometimes even Maghrib. The answer is simple, though it requires a bit of planning and execution. You stop, and you pray. Yes, even if you

are playing in a Western country, even if your playing partners are non-Muslims who have never seen someone pray on a golf course. Find a quiet spot near the clubhouse, use a clean patch of grass away from the fairway, or even pray in the golf cart if necessary, my preferred route.

I'd like to believe that most reasonable people, Muslim or otherwise, respect someone who is committed to their faith. In fact, it often opens a door for conversation, for explaining your practice with grace and confidence. This has happened more than a few times during my time on the 9 and 18 holes.

The five daily prayers are not negotiable; they are the anchor of our day. A golf game can be paused, rescheduled, or shortened. The prayer time cannot. This is where our commitment to Allah takes clear precedence over our commitment to the game, and living that truth openly, without apology but also without aggression, is itself a form of dawah. It shows that our faith is not a private hobby, but a living, breathing reality that shapes our choices, even on a sunny afternoon on the golf course.

When Dhuhr or Asr falls during a round, the practical solution is to pause at the turn, between holes 9 and 10, and find a quiet space near the clubhouse or in a secluded corner of the course. The principle is that prayer times are fixed while the game is flexible. If playing with non-Muslims, it is best to inform them beforehand by saying, "I'll need about 10 minutes to pray," as most will respect this, and it can be used as an opportunity for gentle dawah. Confidence in faith invites respect while secrecy invites confusion. If Maghrib falls at sunset and the round runs late, one may pray on the course if safe, or complete the round quickly and pray immediately after, ensuring not to delay prayer beyond its time for the sake of finishing a game. For wudu, or ablution, one can use the restroom facilities at the clubhouse or halfway house, and in a pinch, perform tayammum if water is genuinely unavailable, as purity is essential but Allah does not burden us beyond what we can bear.

The Muslim Golf Association: More Than a Golf Organisation

I recently learned about a Muslim association dedicated to golf. It's called MGA, Muslim Golf Association, and they are not just trying to get more Muslims to swing a club like Tiger or Rory or my favorite golfer Fred Couples; they are building bridges of belonging. They are creating spaces where a child can see their community on the course, where unhurried human interaction can flourish over a four-hour walk, and where Muslims can be authentically themselves while fully engaging in mainstream sporting culture. When Muslim golfers participate visibly and confidently, they gently challenge assumptions and show the world that faith is not an obstacle to excellence, but rather a foundation for it.

It becomes an intergenerational space where mentors guide beginners, and where

the course itself becomes a classroom for character.

This sense of belonging and purpose is exactly what makes the work of the Muslim Golf Association so deeply meaningful. For a long time, golf has been perceived as an exclusive world, and for a Muslim stepping onto the course for the first time, there is often a quiet, lingering question: Do I belong here? The answer, absolutely, is yes. Playing at world famous Torrey Pines Golf Course with my son a few years ago was validation.

Where Islam and Golf Meet When you really think about it, the parallels between the game and our faith are striking, especially when we look at the concept of niyyah, or intention. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, taught us that actions are but by intentions. Before you even take your first warm-up swing, you can ask yourself why you are there. Is it for exercise, for fellowship, or to clear your mind? By anchoring your intention in something pure, a simple round of golf transforms into an opportunity to practice patience, honesty, and good character. For me, the purpose changes the meaning of the activity.

Then comes the physical act of playing, which quickly becomes a masterclass in mastering the nafs, the self. Golf is a remarkably unforgiving game. You can hit the most beautiful drive of your life, furthest I ever hit was 310 yards down the middle of the fairway, only to turn a fade or draw into a slice or snap-hook as your second shot, often my achilles heel, into the water or parallel fairway, requiring a very loud 'FOUR!' The temptation is to react, to throw the club, to blame the wind, the trees, geese, yes alligators having played in Florida, or your playing partner.

But the better golfer learns to pause, breathe, and reset. This is taking time and patience, and, inshallah, I will get there! This is the very essence of Islamic self-restraint. Every few minutes, the course asks you if you can control your anger after a bad shot, or if you can control your ego after a great one. The real opponent is rarely the person in the other cart; it is your own self. This need for self-control ties beautifully into the focus and presence we strive for in our faith, much like the khushu we seek in our salah. Unlike a beginner, a good golfer develops a quiet pre-shot routine. They stand behind the ball, visualize the trajectory, take a deep breath, and commit to the swing. The goal is to eliminate mental noise and be entirely present in the moment.

If you are dwelling on the terrible shot you hit on the last hole, you will ruin the shot you are about to take now. It is a gentle reminder that constantly replaying the past or worrying about the future prevents us from properly inhabiting the present. We assess, we prepare, we commit, and then we accept the result. Put differently, man proposes, and God disposes!

The pre-shot routine involves assessing the lie and wind, which is about grounding

oneself in the present reality. Visualizing the shot is about setting a clear, focused intention. Taking a deep breath and committing is about eliminating mental noise and trusting the process. Accepting the result is about practicing tawakkul, or reliance on Allah, after the effort is made.

That acceptance requires immense sabr, or patience. A round of eighteen holes is a game of recovery. I will guarantee that you will hit bad shots, you will miss easy putts, a four or five footer, seemingly without any breaks, that breaks one inch left before the cup, and you will face unexpected disasters, like slow four-some play, walkers, ahead of you that ruins your rhythm, requiring you to revisit the patience reference.

But you cannot go back and replay the previous hole; you can only play the next one. Islam places sabr at the very center of the believer's character, teaching us that patience is not passive resignation, but the ability to remain steady while continuing to do what is right. The golfer who learns to say, "That happened, now what?" becomes mentally unbreakable, and the believer who applies this to life becomes spiritually resilient.

Perhaps the most profound intersection, however, is found in the game's tradition of honesty and self-accountability, or muhasabah. Golf is unique because the player is often the only one who knows if a ball moved slightly, or if a drop was taken incorrectly. You are expected to call a penalty on yourself. To some, the temptation to stay silent when no one is watching is human, but integrity begins precisely in those quiet moments. The Quran reminds us to fear Allah and let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow. Golf provides a practical, everyday exercise in this moral principle, teaching us that true character is what you do when nobody else is keeping score.

Through all of this, the game constantly teaches us moderation, humility, and gratitude. The course is blind, it has no interest in your wealth, your job title, or your education; a world class surgeon or tech-bro from silicon valley can shank with an eighth iron just as easily as a beginner, reminding us that competence in one area of life does not guarantee mastery in another. It keeps us humble.

And yet, it also opens our hearts to shukr, or gratitude. There is a natural gratitude in feeling the morning sun, hearing the birds, walking with a friend, and simply having the health and mobility to play the game. It reminds us to be thankful not just for the perfect shot, but for the very opportunity to be on the course.

What Can Muslims Learn from Golf and What Can Golfers Learn from Islam?

The beauty of this relationship is that it is a two-way street. We can learn to focus on the process rather than obsessing over the final score, to reset emotionally after a setback or two, and to treat their bodies with the care they deserve. At the same time, golfers can learn from Islam how to separate their effort from the outcome, placing

their ultimate trust in Allah, which is the very essence of tawakkul. Islam teaches us to compete fiercely but without losing our dignity, to pursue excellence, or ihsan, without falling into arrogance, and to use the networks we build on the course to serve our communities. Put differently, we can be hyper-competitive, yet understand that character shines during adversity.

For those that have played golf over time, ultimately strange, maddening, and a beautiful game. You can spend thousands of dollars on the latest high tech equipment and still blame a tree for your bad shot. But somewhere along the fairway, it teaches you the most important lesson of all: you are not entirely in control.

You can control your preparation, your attitude, your integrity, and your response, but you cannot control every bounce of the ball or every gust of wind. For a Muslim, this is a profound reminder of our place in the universe. We strive, we prepare, and we do our absolute best, but the outcome belongs to Allah.

Betterment! So, rather than just asking how we can get more Muslims to play golf, we should be asking how the game can help us become better Muslims, better neighbors, and better human beings. And conversely, how can our Islamic values help produce not just better scores, but better sportsmanship, deeper humility, and a stronger sense of community?

The answers lie somewhere between the clubhouse and the first tee. Because sometimes, the most important lesson of a round of golf has very little to do with the scorecard, and everything to do with who we become while playing the game.

Caveat: While this reflection explores the beautiful ethical and spiritual parallels between our faith and the game of golf, it is meant to inspire the heart rather than provide a specific fiqh ruling. For questions regarding particular circumstances or local contexts, it is always best to consult with a qualified scholar who understands your specific situation.

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Rushdi serves as Head of Strategy & Innovation at IslamiCity.org, where he helps shape and advance the organization's broader AI strategy, including the development of ChatLLM.ai and other AI-powered initiatives. He is also Co-Founder and Chairman of World Waqf Day, an initiative dedicated to highlighting the enduring social impact of philanthropy through the Islamic institution of waqf.

Courtesy: IslamiCity

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

CS reviews rollout of Water Transport, PM E-DRIVE initiatives in J&K

Procurement of 10 specially designed hybrid eco-vessels tendered

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 03: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Thursday, reviewed the status and implementation status for the introduction of inland water transport on the rivers Jhelum and Chenab, besides the rollout of electric mobility infrastructure under the Government of India's PM E-DRIVE scheme in J&K.

The meeting, as per an official statement, besides ACS, PWD was attended by Secretary, Transport; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; VC, LCMA; Representative from IWAJ and other concerned officers.

Reviewing the progress, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for time-bound completion of all enabling infrastructure, including terminals, access facilities, navigation arrangements and removal of obstructions in terms of utility shifting, so that water transport can be operationalised within the set deadline.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary was apprised of the progress being made for developing inland water transport facilities along identified



stretches of the River Jhelum (NW-49), River Chenab (NW-26) and River Ravi (NW-84).

On this occasion the Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa apprised the meeting that in River Jhelum, a 106-km cruise corridor from Sangam to Gund Prang has been identified for development. Land for 11 terminal locations has been identified at strategic points including Marham (Sangam), Pantha Chowk, Zero Bridge, Amira Kadal, Chattabal, Sumbal and Gund Prang, among others.

She further divulged that removal of local coffer dams is a key requirement for ensuring uninterrupted navigation along the Jhelum stretch. The Public Works Department (PWD) has been tasked with removal of

52 such structures, of which 18 have already been cleared.

On the Chenab, a 9-km stretch between Reasi and Akhnoor Fort has been identified for cruise-based water transport, while a 15-km stretch of the River Ravi at Sohar in Jammu is also being developed for the purpose.

The meeting was further informed that the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAJ) has awarded the tender for procurement of 10 specially designed hybrid eco-vessels, each having a passenger capacity of 20 persons. The vessels are scheduled for delivery by March 2027.

Later the Chief Secretary also reviewed the implementation of the PM E-DRIVE Scheme in J&K, under which

the administration is working towards establishing a robust charging ecosystem to support the transition to electric mobility.

The meeting was informed that 50 locations across Jammu and Kashmir have been identified and found technically feasible for installation of public EV charging stations.

These include 17 sites in Jammu, 5 in Kathua, 4 in Rajouri, 3 in Udhampur, 4 in Doda, 2 each in Ramban and Reasi, and 1 in Samba. Similarly in Kashmir Division, the identified sites include 4 in Srinagar, 3 in Baramulla and 1 each in Anantnag, Budgam, Ganderbal, Pulwama and Kupwara.

The Chief Secretary was also apprised of the proposal for

procurement of 200 electric buses under the Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model. The proposal has received in-principle approval at the Government of India level and is being taken forward for procurement through Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL).

The Chief Secretary directed all concerned departments and agencies to work in close coordination to ensure that the charging infrastructure, electrical connectivity, land requirements and other supporting facilities are put in place well ahead of the deployment of electric buses.

Emphasising the importance of integrating both initiatives with J&K's broader tourism, urban mobility and environmental sustainability goals, the Chief Secretary directed the concerned departments to maintain strict timelines and continuous monitoring at every stage.

He stressed that the initiatives should translate into visible, sustainable and people-centric transport solutions, with the water transport projects and electric mobility infrastructure being progressed in a coordinated manner towards the targeted implementation within the stipulated timeframe.

DAJ reviews progress of Agriculture schemes in Samba, Kathua



KT News Desk

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 3: Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta Thursday undertook an extensive tour of Samba and Kathua districts to review the implementation of departmental schemes and ongoing field-level activities.

At the outset of the tour, the Director, as per an official statement, chaired a review meeting at Samba with Chief Agriculture Officer, district-level officers, SMSS, SDAOs and DDOs to assess the physical and financial progress and expenditure under CSS, CAPEX, NABARD, HADP and JKICP. The CAO gave a detailed presentation on the progress of ongoing projects, achievements and expenditure incurred under different schemes.

Anil Gupta directed the officers to ensure timely and

judicious utilization of funds, achievement of physical targets within the stipulated timelines and strict adherence to approved guidelines and norms.

Later, the Director, along with Regional Level SMS Krishan Kant and field functionaries, visited different areas to review the ongoing Digital Crop Survey (DCS). He interacted with Agriculture Surveyors engaged in the exercise and observed the process at the field level.

Later, the Director chaired a review meeting at Kathua attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, district-level officers, SMSS, SDAOs and DDOs to assess the physical and financial progress achieved in the district. CAO Jatinder Kumar gave a detailed presentation on the ongoing activities, achievements and expenditure under various departmental schemes and projects.

AMRUT 2.0

DC Udhampur reviews progress of water supply schemes



KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 03: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa Thursday convened a meeting to review the progress of water supply schemes in Udhampur, Ramnagar and Chenani towns under AMRUT 2.0.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh and the functionaries from the stakeholder departments.

The DC inquired about the component wise progress including construction of filtration units, storage structures, electrical substations and civil works, besides procurement of

pumping equipment. He also assessed the overall physical and financial progress achieved under AMRUT 2.0 so far.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned executing agencies to mobilize adequate manpower and machinery to expedite the pace of work to achieve the stipulated targets within the prescribed timelines.

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department was directed to fix monthly targets and ensure their regular monitoring. The executing agencies were asked to strictly adhere to the prescribed guidelines and specifications of the schemes.

Functioning of Anganwadi Centres operating across Assar, Marmat Poshan projects reviewed

KT News Desk

DODA, SEPTEMBER 03: District Programme Officer (DPO) Mission Poshan, Akhter Hussain Qazi Thursday chaired a virtual introductory-cum-review meeting with Sector and Anganwadi Centre (AWC) Monitoring Officers and mentors associated with Assar and Marmat Poshan Projects.

The meeting was aimed at sensitizing key stakeholders to the guidelines of Mission Poshan 2.0 and reviewing the implementation of the schemes and services at adopted Anganwadi Centres across the two projects.

The virtual session was attended by Sub Divisional Magistrate Ashok Singh Kotwal; BDO Vrinder Kumar; Block Medical Officer Dr. Mohammad Ismail, Zonal Education Officer Idress Hashmi and CDPO Nissar Hussain, besides headmasters, masters and field functionaries.

During the meeting, the



DPO reviewed the status reports of adopted AWCs located in Assar, Bhatta, Jathi, Baggar and adjoining areas. Detailed discussions were held on the functioning of the centres, nutritional support, health monitoring and effective delivery of services under Mission Poshan 2.0.

Emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts for achieving the objectives of Mission Poshan 2.0, the DPO directed adopting officers and

mentors to regularly visit and assess their assigned AWCs, provide necessary guidance and work closely with field functionaries to identify and resolve operational gaps.

The chair further stressed strict adherence to programme guidelines, effective inter-departmental coordination and transparent service delivery to ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes reach eligible beneficiaries in a timely and effective manner.

VB-GRAM-G Act

Block Level Panch Sammelan held in Marwah

KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, SEPTEMBER 3: A Block Level Panch Sammelan was organized Thursday at BHQ Nowpachi-Marwah to sensitize former PRI representatives, BDC, DDC, Panchayat Secretaries, Gram Rozgar Sahayaks (GRSSs), field functionaries, and other stakeholders about the provisions, objectives and implementation framework of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-GRAM-G] Act, 2025.

The Panch Sammelan was organized under the supervision of Block Development Officer (BDO) Irshad Ahmed Waza with Master Trainer Yassir Rashid serving as the resource person.

Detailed deliberations were held on the transition from the erstwhile MGNREGA framework to the VB-GRAM-G framework, which came into force with effect from July 1, 2026. The participants were apprised of the enhanced statutory guarantee of 125 days of wage employment for eligible rural households along with the broader objective of promoting sustainable livelihoods, creation of durable rural assets and inclusive rural development.

The Master Trainer elaborated upon the major focus areas

under the new framework including water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood-related infrastructure, and works aimed at enhancing resilience against extreme weather events.

Emphasis was also laid on integrated and convergence-based planning, with the Gram Panchayat playing a central role in identifying local priorities and preparing development plans in consultation with the Gram Sabha.

The participants were further sensitized to the importance of Gram Sabha participation, transparency, digital monitoring, biometric authentication, GPS/mobile-based monitoring, social audit, proper record maintenance and timely processing of wage payments. The need for maintaining complete and accurate work records at every stage of implementation was also emphasized.

A detailed interactive session was held, wherein queries, doubts and concerns raised by the participants were answered and clarified by Yassir Rashid, Master Trainer. The participants were provided clarification regarding the implementation mechanism, employment provisions, planning process, responsibilities of stakeholders and other operational aspects of the new framework.

DC Rajouri reviews permanent restoration action plan

KT News Desk

RAJOURI, SEPTEMBER 03: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma Thursday chaired a meeting to review the Permanent Restoration Action Plan 2026-27 formulated for the reconstruction of infrastructure damaged in the recent flash floods in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) prepared by the concerned departments for permanent restoration of the damaged infrastructure. It was informed that the DPRs have been formulated and are ready for submission.

The DC directed the concerned departments to thoroughly scrutinize the DPRs

and address any deficiencies, if found, so that the proposals are complete in all respects. He further directed the officers to submit the updated DPRs at the earliest to facilitate timely processing and execution of permanent restoration works.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for close coordination among the stakeholder departments and stressed that the restoration proposals shall accurately reflect the ground requirements and ensure durable rehabilitation of the damaged infrastructure. The meeting was attended by ADDC Malik Zada Sheraz Ul Haq; CPO Maqsood Ahmed; SE Hydraulics Er. Sunil Kumar Bhat; Chief Education Officer Mohammad Hafiz, besides other officers.

RAMP: 25 aspiring entrepreneurs complete ESDP at GCW Parade



KT News Desk

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 3: The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) successfully conducted a one month Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESDP) here at Government College for Women Parade.

As many as 25 aspiring and potential entrepreneurs completed the course organized under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme. The Skill Development Cell and DYD of the College coordinated in organizing the course.

The four-week programme focused on developing entrepreneurial competencies and imparting practical knowledge on key aspects of enterprise creation and

management. The participants were trained in entrepreneurship and innovation, business idea identification, business planning, market survey, SWOT analysis, marketing, digital marketing and e-commerce, financial management, working capital management, preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), GST, insurance, intellectual property rights and other regulatory aspects.

The participants were also sensitised to the Government-sponsored schemes and institutional support mechanisms available for entrepreneurs. As part of the practical component, an industrial exposure visit to Birpur Industrial Estate was organised, providing participants with first-hand exposure to industrial operations and enterprise management.

Div Com calls for seamless coordination, ownership as Kashmir gears up for IFFJK

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: As Kashmir prepares to witness the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJ&K), the final contours of the mega event are taking shape, with administration putting in place a comprehensive and closely coordinated mechanism to ensure a seamless experience for filmmakers, delegates, guests and audiences.

In this backdrop, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg today chaired a high-level meeting at the Auditorium of the Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR), bringing together officers and stakeholders associated with the arrangements for the festival.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, Secretary Information, Director DIPR, SSP Srinagar, SSP Security, SSP Traffic, Heads of Departments, Nodal Officers, Liaison Officers and officials of the Information Department.

Setting the tone for the final phase of preparations, the Divisional Commissioner called for disciplined execution, close



coordination and a clear sense of ownership among all officers entrusted with responsibilities. He impressed upon the Nodal Officers and Liaison Officers to not only take ownership of their assigned duties but also clearly envisage the wider ambit of their responsibilities so that every component of the festival is

executed in a well-knit and coordinated manner.

Underscoring the importance of real-time coordination, the Divisional Commissioner directed the officers to maintain a continuous flow of information and ensure zero communication gaps among departments and field teams. He stressed

that timely sharing of information and prompt response to emerging requirements would be critical to the smooth conduct of the festival.

The meeting provided an extensive review of arrangements spanning from arrival and transportation to accommodation of guests, opening & closing ceremony, sightseeing guided tours of guests and participation at festival venues.

The Divisional Commissioner assessed preparations at the airport, the transport plan, accommodation arrangements for guests, guided tours, film screenings, floating cinema, parking facilities, beautification of parks and venues, establishment of help desks and selfie points, setting up of stalls and other allied arrangements.

During the meeting, the Director Information gave a detailed briefing to the Nodal Officers on their respective responsibilities, action points and operational requirements. The responsibilities encompass the entire movement and facilitation chain, beginning from Jammu Airport and extending to Srinagar Airport and the principal festival venues, including SKICC and

INOX.

The briefing was aimed at ensuring that every officer remains fully apprised of his or her role, the scope of intervention and the coordination required with other departments and field teams, thereby creating a unified operational framework for the festival.

The Nodal Officers, in turn, apprised the meeting of the preparations undertaken at their respective deployment sites and locations, highlighting the progress made and the arrangements being put in place for the successful conduct of the event.

With the festival entering its final preparatory phase, the meeting reinforced the administration's commitment to presenting a professionally coordinated and welcoming experience for visitors and participants.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, SSP Srinagar and other officers assured full cooperation and support from their respective departments, reaffirming their commitment to working in close coordination for the seamless and successful conduct of the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir.

Haijan Brenwar set to be on J&K tourism map: Speaker JKLA

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: A wave of jubilation has swept across the general populace of Budgam district, particularly among the youth and tourism stakeholders, following the initiation of infrastructure development works at Haijan Brenwar, a picturesque and peaceful offbeat destination in the Chadoora area of Budgam district.

People cutting across socio-political affiliations have expressed their gratitude to Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and MLA Chrar-i-Sharief Abdul Rahim Rather, for taking the initiative to develop tourism infrastructure at the scenic Haijan meadow. The infrastructure work, estimated at 68 lakh, has been officially tendered today.

The tourism stakeholders and local residents said that the issuance of the tender has once again demonstrated A.R. Rather's commitment and seriousness towards public welfare, development and promotion of tourism in the region. They expressed hope that the development of basic infrastructure would open new avenues of tourism and employment for local youth while placing Haijan Brenwar prominently on the tourism map of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the

development of Haijan Brenwar as a potential tourist resort, the Speaker said that his mission was to transform the entire Chrar-i-Sharief constituency into a model constituency of Jammu and Kashmir, with special emphasis on tourism promotion, infrastructure development and creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities for the local population. He said that the natural beauty and tranquil surroundings of Haijan provide immense potential for developing it as an attractive tourist destination while ensuring that its pristine character and ecological balance are preserved.

Located near Brenwar village in Budgam district, Haijan is approximately 36 kilometres from Srinagar. The scenic destination is surrounded by lush green meadows, expansive open fields and tall pine and coniferous trees, with a clear stream flowing through the valley, adding to its natural charm.

The local community and tourism stakeholders expressed hope that the planned infrastructure development would give a significant boost to Haijan's tourism potential, generate employment opportunities for local youth and contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the Chadoora and Budgam areas.

Protection of Dal Lake a shared responsibility: Minister Rana

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 03: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the prevailing pollution concerns in Dal Lake besides assessing measures being undertaken for its protection, conservation and restoration.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chairman, J&K Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA); Chief Engineer, PHE/I&FC Kashmir;

Chief Engineer, UEED Kashmir; Regional Director, J&K Pollution Control Committee, Kashmir and Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic Circle, Srinagar.

Emphasising that protection of Dal Lake is a shared responsibility of all concerned agencies as well as the public, the Minister directed the authorities to adopt a coordinated and sustained approach to control pollution and safeguard the ecological health of the lake. He stressed the need for both immediate interventions and long-term measures to address the

various sources of pollution.

"Dal Lake is an invaluable ecological, cultural and tourism asset of Kashmir. Its protection is a shared responsibility, and all concerned agencies must work together to control pollution and ensure its long-term conservation and restoration," Javed Rana said.

Dal Lake is one of Kashmir's most iconic water bodies and a major attraction for tourists visiting the Valley. It also has significant ecological importance, supporting aquatic biodiversity and fish species. The Minister underscored the need to preserve

the lake's natural ecosystem and ensure that increasing human activity does not adversely affect its ecological balance.

During the meeting, the officers briefed the Minister that sewage water is being properly treated through the existing arrangements before it flows into Dal Lake. They further informed that, under AMRUT, a 30 MLD sewage treatment plant is presently under construction and is expected to be completed within the next two years. The facility will further strengthen wastewater treatment and help reduce

pollution pressure on the lake.

The meeting also reviewed various short-term measures being undertaken by the authorities. These include regular removal of encroachments, daily collection and removal of waste, dewatering operations and convergence of aquatic weeds into bio-fertilisers.

The authorities also informed the Minister that proper enforcement measures are being carried out regularly to check activities contributing to pollution and degradation of Dal Lake.

Javed Rana directed the

concerned authorities to further strengthen pollution-control measures and ensure effective coordination among all agencies involved in the management of the lake. He called for regular monitoring of water quality and identification of pollution hotspots so that corrective measures could be taken promptly.

The Minister emphasised that the conservation of Dal Lake requires a multi-pronged approach, encompassing wastewater treatment, solid-waste management, removal of encroachments, dewatering,

pollution monitoring and strict enforcement. He also stressed the importance of sustained public awareness and participation, particularly among communities and stakeholders living around and dependent upon the lake, to make conservation efforts more effective and enduring.

He directed the concerned departments to remain closely engaged and ensure that both short-term measures and long-term interventions translate into tangible improvement in the ecological health of Dal Lake.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Strengthen preparedness

their expedited implementation. The MHA stressed the need for regular exchange of risk information between state departments, district administrations and scientific and technical institutions to improve preparedness.

The directions come amid growing concern over climate-linked hazards in the Himalayan region, where changing weather patterns and the rapid melting of glaciers can increase risks associated with unstable glacial lakes and snow avalanches.

The meeting concluded with an emphasis on strengthening early-warning, monitoring and response systems to reduce casualties and damage to infrastructure and property in vulnerable Himalayan areas. (KNO)

CM Omar calls

He emphasised that skill development programmes must be aligned with emerging market requirements and the employment opportunities being created in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, horticulture, manufacturing, construction, healthcare and technology. The Chief Minister called for regular review of courses and training programmes in ITIs and polytechnics so that outdated skills and equipment are replaced with training relevant to contemporary industry requirements.

He said the level of attention given to universities should also be extended to the skill-development network of ITIs and polytechnics, including improvement of infrastructure, training quality and modern equipment.

Highlighting the employment potential emerging from major projects in J&K, he said the skill-development ecosystem must be designed around the requirements of upcoming investments and industries.

The Chief Minister also said the government would work to strengthen the network of skill-development institutions over the next three years and improve their infrastructure and quality.

He further stressed the need to ensure greater employment opportunities for local youth in industries and projects coming to J&K, saying companies should be encouraged to employ trained local youth before looking outside the region for skilled manpower.

The Chief Minister said J&K's objective should not be merely to send labour outside but to prepare skilled professionals capable of securing better-paying employment and competing in international markets.

He also felicitated students who secured overseas placements, underscoring the Government's commitment to strengthening technical education and creating meaningful employment opportunities for J&K's youth.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Lal Chowk Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed, MLA Karnah Javed Ahmed Mirchal, Secretary Skill Development Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Director Skill Development Department Dr Owais Ahmed, Principal Kashmir Government

Polytechnic Srinagar Shafqat Ara, faculty members and students were present on the occasion.

CM reviews

urban development.

For Srinagar, the meeting discussed Town Planning Schemes, safeguards for Dal, Nigeen and other water bodies, alignment with J&K Unified Building Bye-Laws-2021, and reforms to simplify land-use zoning and building permissions.

The Revised Jammu Master Plan-2032 was also discussed for 15 planning zones, rationalisation of land-use categories, geo-referenced mapping and aligning major infrastructure projects in the plan document Environmental and heritage safeguards, including protection of the Tawi riverbed and watercourses, were also deliberated upon.

The Chief Minister stressed the need to balance planned urban growth, reforms for ease of doing business, addressing public concerns and ensuring environmental protection while finalising the proposed Master Plans.

The meetings were attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, ACS Finance Shailendra Kumar, ACS PWD Anil Kumar Singh, Commissioner Secretary Planning, Monitoring & Development Department Alice Vaz, Commissioner Secretary Housing & Urban Development Mandeep Kaur, Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir, Commissioner Secretary Law, Deputy Commissioners of Jammu and Srinagar, Commissioners of Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Jammu Municipal Corporation and other concerned officers.

Jammu-based officers attended the meeting through video conferencing.

7 Autonomous Hill

notifications regarding the constitution of Hill Development Councils in Ladakh.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act, 1997 (Act No. XXXI of 1997), as amended from time to time and in supersession of all previous notifications in this regard, the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh hereby constitutes the following Autonomous Hill Development Councils for the respective districts of the Union Territory of Ladakh for the purposes specified under the said Act..." reads the notification.

There was no official statement from the Ladakh administration regarding the remaining term of the Hill Council Kargil, whose tenure was scheduled to end in October 2028.

As per the notification, the seven Councils shall exercise such powers and perform such functions as are conferred or assigned to them under the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act, 1997.

It adds that elections to these Councils shall be held in due course, following the issuance of

a notification under Section 8 of the Act, which ensures that Hill Councils are regularly reconstituted through elections - either before the term expires or within six months if dissolved early.

The new Councils have been established at a time when the Apex Body Leh and the Kargil Democratic Alliance are engaged in talks with the Union Government over various political and constitutional issues. (KNO)

Bangladesh High

other potential areas of cooperation.

LG, CM greet

the spirit of unity and harmony in society.

Motorcyclist killed

Altaf Hussain Daded (28), a resident of Sangerwani, Pulwama.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and an investigation is underway. (KNO)

Interns' continued

challenging in busy departments where patient footfall remains high.

In some departments, doctors are attending to nearly 100 patients within 24 hours, adding to the pressure on PG residents who are already required to manage emergency calls, admissions, procedures and routine patient care.

The situation has raised concerns among patients and attendants, with the increased workload potentially contributing to longer waiting times and placing additional strain on doctors and other healthcare staff.

Meanwhile, interns continued demonstrations at various medical institutions across Jammu and Kashmir, including GMC Srinagar, GMC Baramulla, GMC Handwara, GMC Anantnag, GMC Jammu, GMC Udhampur, GMC Rajouri, GMC Doda and SKIMS Bemina.

They maintain that the existing stipend has remained virtually unchanged for several years despite inflation, increased living expenses and the demanding nature of internship duties.

"We are performing duties in emergency, wards and other clinical areas, including night and extended shifts. The stipend we receive is not proportionate to the responsibilities being handled by interns," a protesting intern at GMC Anantnag said.

Another intern said they were seeking a revision that would bring their remuneration closer to the amount being paid to interns in several other parts of the country.

The interns have demanded a clear and time-bound decision from the government, maintaining that the matter has remained pending despite repeated representations and assurances.

Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo had earlier acknowledged the demand, saying the proposal for enhancement of the stipend was under process and the file was before the Finance Department.

The interns, however, have insisted on a formal decision rather than verbal assurances.

In Anantnag, senior Congress leader and MLA

Dooru G.A. Mir joined the protesting MBBS and BDS interns at GMC Anantnag on Thursday and expressed solidarity with their demands. He called for timely intervention by the authorities to resolve the issues being raised by the interns.

PDP leader Iltija Mufti also joined the protesting interns at Anantnag and extended her support to their ongoing agitation.

The interns said their protest would continue until their demand for stipend enhancement and other pending issues are addressed. (KNO)

J&K to witness

normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 17.5 degrees Celsius, 2.3 degrees above normal.

Qazigund recorded a maximum of 31.2 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 15.2 degrees, while Pahalgam recorded 25.8 degrees and 12 degrees, respectively.

Kupwara recorded a maximum temperature of 32.5 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 16.1 degrees, while Kokernag recorded 29.2 degrees and 15.6 degrees, respectively.

Gulmarg, meanwhile, recorded a maximum of 21.2 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 10.4 degrees.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 33.1 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 22.7 degrees. Banihal recorded 29.5 degrees and 18.5 degrees, Batote 26.7 degrees and 19.3 degrees, Katra 30.2 degrees and 21.9 degrees, and Bhaderwah 29.6 degrees and 16.4 degrees, respectively.

No significant rainfall was recorded at the listed stations during the period ending Thursday evening, according to the MeT data. (KNO)

Falls from walnut

could cushion a fall and potentially prevent fatal or life-altering injuries.

Experts emphasised that walnut harvesting should increasingly be treated as an occupational activity requiring basic safety standards rather than being viewed as a routine seasonal task.

They said awareness campaigns involving horticulture officials, health workers, local communities and walnut growers could help educate workers about the dangers associated with climbing trees and encourage the use of protective equipment.

The issue assumes greater significance given the economic importance of walnuts to Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials said that around 2.66 lakh metric tonnes of walnuts are cultivated across 89,000 hectares in the Union Territory.

Walnuts account for nearly 98 per cent of the dry-fruit production in Kashmir, while Kashmiri walnuts are also an important export commodity, generating around Rs 120 crore annually through exports of both whole nuts and kernels, however, production is on decline, though high-density walnut plantation is picking up.

Experts said that while protecting the walnut

economy remains important, the safety of the people involved in harvesting must receive equal attention.

They stressed that a combination of training, safer harvesting techniques, protective gear, safety nets and locally suitable harvesting equipment could substantially reduce seasonal casualties and ensure that a livelihood activity does not turn into a life-threatening occupation. (KNO)

MHA calls

on X, Chief Secretary Ladakh Ashish Kundra, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), confirmed the development, stating: "The Ministry of Home Affairs has fixed an official meeting of the sub-committee on 9th September in Delhi. This is part of the ongoing dialogue for deepening democratic processes in Ladakh."

The sub-committee constituted in 2024 comprises officials from MHA, Ladakh administration and representatives of Apex Body Leh and Kargil Democratic Alliance- the two bodies seeking constitutional safeguards for the region, which was part of Jammu & Kashmir till October 30, 2019. (KNO)

Vande Bharat to

the Railway Board, a copy of which was accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Board said the stoppage will be provided for Jammu Tawi-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express, at Anantnag.

The Railway Board has directed that the stoppage be introduced from an "early convenient date", subject to requisite security clearance. The Board has also directed the concerned authorities to closely monitor ticket sales at Anantnag station to assess the performance of the stoppage.

"Give wide publicity, ensure compliance and confirm," the communication states.

The move is expected to improve rail connectivity for residents of Anantnag and adjoining areas and benefit tourists, traders, students and other passengers travelling between Jammu and Kashmir.

The stoppage will initially be experimental, with passenger response and ticket sales to be monitored before a decision is taken on its continuation.

Railway sources told KNO that the stoppage is likely to become operational by the end of September. The exact date of commencement, along with the arrival and departure timings at Anantnag, is yet to be notified. (KNO)

Gunshots heard in

sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that based on specific inputs, a cordon-and-search operation was launched by a joint team of police and Army in the upper reaches of the district.

They said that during the searches, some gunshots were heard, following which the cordon was further tightened around the area.

The search operation was underway in the area when last reports came in. (KNO)

India's economic growth source of confidence, new opportunities for world: PM Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: India and Belgium on Thursday agreed to significantly expand their cooperation in trade, defence, critical minerals, clean energy and technologies following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's wide-ranging talks with his Belgian counterpart Bart De Wever.

In his media statement, Modi highlighted India recording a 7.8 per cent growth rate in the last quarter and said the country's economic rise was a source of confidence and new opportunities for the world.

The Belgian prime minister described the conclusion of the India-European Union free trade pact as a major milestone, and said New Delhi and Brussels are building a relationship that is broad and



more strategic than ever before.

"Today, the world is passing through a phase of great upheaval. In many parts of the world, situations of conflict persist. Food, fuel or supply chains-uncertainty is affecting every sector," Modi said.

"Even in this challenging environment, India's economy has maintained its momentum. In the last

quarter, we have recorded a growth of 7.8 percent," he said.

The prime minister said India's growth story is becoming "a source of confidence and new opportunities for the world."

Modi once again pitched for resolving the conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia through dialogue and diplomacy. "India and Belgium, both believe in the

rule of law, dialogue, and diplomacy. Be it Ukraine or West Asia, we support all efforts for the early end of conflicts and for peace," he said.

The prime minister said India and Belgium are committed to eradicate every form of terrorism.

Modi also listed priorities of the two countries to expand cooperation in areas of high technologies and clean energy.

"A clean energy future and reliable supply chain are our shared priorities. An MoU signed today on renewable energy will give new momentum to our sustainability cooperation," he said. "In critical minerals, we have decided to increase cooperation in processing and recycling. In semiconductors, Belgium's expertise and India's scale are complementary to each other," he added.

Appointment due to blessings of Lord Ram, says first CEO of Ram temple trust



PTI

Ayodhya (UP), Sep 3: Retired Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra arrived in Ayodhya on Thursday to take over his new assignment as the first CEO of the Ram temple trust, saying he was fortunate to have been given vital responsibilities twice – once to serve the nation and now to serve Lord Ram and his devotees.

Air Marshal Mishra (retd), who headed the Western Air Command during Operation Sindoor, was on Wednesday appointed the first CEO of the Shri Ram

Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust that oversees the management and operations of the Ram temple.

Speaking to reporters soon after his arrival here, Mishra said he would first take charge and understand the organisation before outlining his plans.

"I have reached Ayodhya for the first time after being given this new responsibility. Let me go, take over and understand everything. All the planning will be told to you after that," the 62-year-old Mishra said.

Expressing gratitude to the selection committee and the Trust, he said he

considered his appointment a result of the blessings of Lord Ram.

"My heart is full of gratitude, and I consider myself the most fortunate person today to have been given vital responsibilities twice in my life – once for national service and now for the organisation and administration of Shri Ram's temple and for Shri Ram's devotees," he said.

Mishra retired as head of the Western Air Command on April 30, 2026. His selection came after a process in which 5,585 applications were received and was finalised from a shortlist of three candidates. The Air Force veteran asserted that he was familiar with developments in the region as he belonged to Uttar Pradesh's Deoria district and frequently travelled to Gorakhpur and Varanasi.

"I am from this state and keep travelling to Deoria, Gorakhpur and Varanasi. Kashi is progressing, our state and our country are also progressing, and Ayodhya too is progressing in the same way," Mishra said.

The appointment of a CEO is part of a wider administrative overhaul by the Trust following the controversy over alleged embezzlement of temple donations, which led to the arrest of eight people and the resignation of Champat Rai as general secretary.

SC flags highway encroachments

Asks NHAI why CCTV can't be installed at toll plazas



PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: The Supreme Court on Thursday flagged the issue of encroachment and stationary vehicles on highways and asked the National Highways Authority of India why it cannot install a camera surveillance system and monitoring rooms across toll plazas to deal with it.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, which was hearing a suo motu case related to an accident in Rajasthan's Phalodi area that claimed 15 lives, said that encroachment and stationary vehicles on highways were the two major issues.

The counsel appearing for the NHAI said they have issued circulars for regular inspection and patrolling to check unauthorised parking on the highways. "Why

can't you think of having a camera surveillance system? You can have monitoring rooms at all toll plazas," the bench said.

Senior advocate ANS Nadkarni, who is assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in the matter, said one of the major issues was illegal parking of vehicles on highways, which leads to road accidents.

The bench noted that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Tamil Nadu government have not yet filed their compliance affidavits in the matter.

It granted two weeks to both the ministries to file their affidavits.

The bench posted the matter for October 6 and directed the Tamil Nadu government to file an affidavit before the next

date of hearing.

In November last year, the top court took suo motu cognisance of the November 2 road accident in Phalodi in which a tempo traveller rammmed into a stationary trailer truck.

The incident occurred near Matoda village on the Bharat Mala Highway when the tempo traveller was going from Bikaner's Kalyat temple to Jodhpur.

On April 13, the top court issued a slew of interim directions, including that no heavy or commercial vehicle shall park or stop on any national highway carriageway or paved shoulder except at a designated bay, lay-bye or wayside amenity.

It had also prohibited construction/operation of any new 'dhaba', eatery, or commercial structure within the right of way of any national highway.

The top court directed the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways/NHAI to identify accident blackspots and critical areas and publish a comprehensive list of accident blackspots on national highways.

"It is seen that national highways constitute approximately 2 per cent of India's total road length but account for nearly 30 per cent of all road fatalities. A road, particularly a high-speed expressway, must not become a corridor of peril due to administrative lethargy or infrastructural gaps," it had said.

Amit Shah inaugurates 400-bed hospital tower in Delhi's Saket



PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday inaugurated a new 400-bed hospital tower in Saket, a major expansion aimed at strengthening access to advanced healthcare services in the national capital.

The new tower at Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital, Saket, will take the facility's total bed capacity to around 1,200, making it the largest private hospital in Delhi by bed capacity, according to the hospital.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta attended the inauguration as the guest of honour. Delhi Health and Family Welfare, Transport and Information Technology Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh and South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri were also present.

The expansion will strengthen the hospital's

tertiary and quaternary healthcare capabilities across more than 22 specialities and cater to the growing demand for specialised treatment in Delhi-NCR and beyond.

The new facility is equipped with advanced medical technologies, including the Da Vinci Xi surgical robot and Mako Total Knee Replacement Robot, to support precision-driven and minimally invasive procedures.

"This state-of-the-art new facility brings together cutting-edge technology, world-class infrastructure and exceptional Indian clinical talent to deliver advanced, high-quality patient care to people from India and across the globe," Max Healthcare Institute Ltd Chairman and Managing Director Abhay Soi said. He said the facility would contribute to strengthening the healthcare ecosystem in the country and support the broader vision of building a developed India.

Man poses as IAS officer, skips paying bill after party at 5-star hotel; arrested

PTI

Indore, Sep 3: Police have arrested a 28-year-old man who posed as an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer in Madhya Pradesh's Indore and left a five-star hotel without paying the bill for a party hosted by him, officials said on Thursday. The imposter had also put a fake nameplate with the 'District Collector' designation at his house, they said.

The accused has been identified as Himanshu Panchal, a resident of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Assistant Commissioner of Police Parag Saini said.

Panchal recently hosted a party for 16 persons at a five-star hotel in Indore. At the time of settling the bill, he flaunted authority by claiming to be an IAS officer and walked out of the hotel. Panchal told the hotel staff that his personal assistant (PA) would clear the bill after two hours, Saini said.

Following a complaint, police reached Panchal's rented house in the Lasudia police station area and found a fake nameplate outside the house bearing the name "IAS Raj Soni" and the designation "District Collector", he said.

During questioning, Panchal failed to produce any document to establish that he was an IAS officer, the official said.

The accused was arrested on Wednesday and booked under Section 204 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which deals with personating a public servant, Saini said. Panchal already has a cheating case registered against him in Gujarat, and a detailed investigation is underway, he added.

Anyone, not just parents, can pay Rs 1L surety for students contesting DUSU polls: Delhi HC

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: The Delhi High Court on Thursday said that not just parents but anyone who is in a position to pay Rs 1 lakh, as per a Delhi University requirement, can stand as surety for candidates contesting the upcoming DUSU elections.

The court passed the order while dealing with a petition filed by AISA activists Ananya Raturi and Akshat Shikhar against an affidavit prescribed by the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) election committee, which says the candidates must obtain their parents' or guardians' consent to their candidature, along with a Rs 1 lakh surety from them.

Justice Jasmeet Singh said, "The condition is fair and reasonable except that the bond need not only be given by the parents and can be given by anyone, including a guardian who is in a position to pay Rs 1 lakh and stand as a surety."

"Don't let your parents give it (surety), but anyone who has the financial means can pay," the court said. It also observed that during the elections, the situation is chaotic and the condition of the walls at every college is pitiable.

According to the plea, the affidavit requires the parent or guardian sponsoring the student's education to stand as surety for the payment of Rs 1 lakh in case of violations of election-related guidelines by the candidates or their supporters.

The candidates are required to provide bank account details of themselves and their parents or guardians as part of the undertaking.

The university authorities, however, said the

move had been in place for the 2025 elections as well, and no changes have been made this year.

The counsel for DU said the impugned condition has only been put in place to prevent any damage to property, including walls of the colleges, which after every election are left in a state of disarray.

He said the purpose of furnishing the bond by parents is only to ensure that some solvent person is in a position to pay the amount in case the candidate is found violating the terms of the undertaking.

The DUSU elections are scheduled to be held on September 18, with results expected on September 19.

The All India Students' Association (AISA) has alleged that the requirement undermines the autonomy of adult students and could prevent the students, particularly women and those who are financially independent of their families, from contesting the polls.

"Students who come to the university are autonomous adults who, if they so choose, can contest for office without the need for any consent from any authority whatsoever," the left-wing student organisation said in a statement.

It also alleged that the requirement could disproportionately affect women students whose political participation may be restricted by their families. The students' body criticised the Rs 1 lakh indemnity requirement, claiming that such conditions were making the DUSU elections increasingly inaccessible to students without financial or political backing.

Executing suggestions on implementation of CBSE's three-language policy: Centre to SC



PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Thursday that it was working on its suggestions on implementation of the CBSE's policy mandating the study of three languages, including two native Indian languages, for Class 9 students.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati told a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joydalya Bagchi and V

Mohana that CBSE is in the process of working out various modalities and sought time.

The top court took note of the submission and deferred the matter by a week.

Observing that children should not come under pressure, the top court on August 20 stressed the need to find a solution to issues arising out of the CBSE's three-language policy for Class 9 students.

It observed that while there was nothing wrong in introducing the

policy, the only concern of the petitioners was the manner in which it was being introduced.

"You may revisit some of these problems. There is no doubt that sooner or later, it has to be introduced; there is nothing wrong with that. But how it is to be streamlined so that whatever impediments or blockades are coming up, you may find a solution to those," the bench had said.

One aspect to be considered was how to build adequate human

resource infrastructure for the language options available, it had said.

On May 27, the top court agreed to examine a plea challenging the policy and issued notices to the Centre, the CBSE and the NCERT seeking their responses.

According to a circular issued by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the study of three languages, including at least two native Indian languages, has been made compulsory for Class 9 students beginning July 1.

The move is part of the CBSE's alignment of its scheme of studies with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023.

According to the circular issued on May 15, students opting for a foreign language may do so only as the third language after studying two native Indian languages, or as an additional fourth language.

"With effect from July 1, 2026, for Class 9, the study of three languages (R1, R2, R3) shall be compulsory, with at least two languages being native Indian languages," the circular said.

The board said till the dedicated R3 textbooks are available, Class 9 students shall use Class 6 R3 textbooks (2026-27 edition) of the chosen language.

Iran war escalation raises concern over civilian death toll



REUTERS

Cairo/Washington, Sep 3: The sudden recent escalation of the Iran war has cast renewed attention on its civilian toll after Iran reported 18 dead in the last US assault, including four killed and dozens wounded at a wedding. Iran's health minister said 18 people were killed and 108 wounded in Tuesday night's US strikes across Iran. The Iranian Red Crescent said four people were killed and 67 wounded at a wedding ceremony near the coast of the Strait of Hormuz. The return of combat operations has alarmed countries throughout the region, as Iran launched missile and drone attacks against what it said were US assets in Bahrain,

Republican electoral losses, and White House officials will consider ramping up military action after the vote on November 3, four people familiar with the discussions said. Iran, for its part, has remained defiant, despite suffering heavy military and economic losses. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply alarmed by reports of civilian casualties, including a strike that reportedly hit a wedding ceremony in Iran," and called for an immediate cessation of military action, his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said. "The Secretary-General condemns all attacks against civilians. He recalls that all parties must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution," Dujarric said. The deaths would be in addition to the 3,636 people documented as killed in Iran as of April 7, including 1,701 civilians, according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), an independent Iranian rights group. The US has reported 18 military personnel killed and more than 750 wounded. "We are aware of reports, which originated from Iranian state media. The US military never targets civilians, unlike the IRGC," US Navy Captain Tim Hawkins, a spokesperson for the US military's Central Command, said in an email.

Israel says prepared to 'respond with great force' if Iran attacks

AFF

Jerusalem, Sep 3: Israel's defense minister said on Wednesday his country was prepared to respond "with great force" if attacked by Iran, after Iranian forces targeted US military positions across the region. Israel Katz said Israeli forces were prepared for a possible attack over the Jewish high holiday season, which begins in mid-September. "For now, they are striking throughout the region except us," he told a conference hosted by Israeli news site Ynet and newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth. "But there is a possibility that they will attack us. We are prepared for that defensively." If Iran did attack, Israel would "respond with great force, independently of anyone else", Katz said, adding that "our planes are ready to take off". Israel launched the Middle East war alongside the United States in late February, but has stayed on the sidelines militarily since President Donald Trump sealed a ceasefire deal in April – even after that truce later fell apart. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said that would likely remain the case, while echoing Katz's remarks in an interview with the broadcaster France 24 that aired on Wednesday. "If we will be attacked by Iran, we will surely respond heavily, but I'm not sure that Iran will do that mistake," he said.

Nepal calls Bhotekoshi floods 'Himalayan Tsunami', thanks int'l community for support



PTI

Kathmandu, Sep 3: Nepal Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal on Thursday called the massive floods that caused widespread devastation in the country a "Himalayan Tsunami" and thanked neighbouring countries and the international community for their support and solidarity during this difficult period. Khanal's comments came days after an interview with a private television channel, in which he identified China, the US, and India as the world's three largest greenhouse gas emitters and said they have a "historical responsibility to compensate vulnerable nations like Nepal". Khanal said that the industrialised countries, which are responsible for carbon emissions, need to compensate a country like Nepal, which has a negligible contribution to carbon emissions. Prime Minister Balendra Shah on Wednesday also said the disaster's link to climate change must be strongly raised with the international community. While

briefing the international diplomats based in Kathmandu about the devastation caused by the Bhotekoshi River floods on Thursday, Khanal said, "I want to call the disaster the Himalayan Tsunami as we have not experienced such a massive disaster in our recent memory." Expressing gratitude to neighbour countries, friendly nations and the international community for their support and solidarity, Khanal said that "Nepal will continue close cooperation and collaboration with the international community in this regard." Ambassadors of different countries, chiefs and representatives of diplomatic missions, and representatives of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, the United Nations and other international organisations were present at the briefing. Khanal also informed the diplomats about the search and rescue operations being carried out by the government as well as the condition of the foreign nationals in the wake of the disaster.

Death toll rises to 1,252

PTI

Kathmandu, Sep 3: The death toll due to the devastating flash floods in Nepal rose to 1,252 on Thursday as more bodies were recovered from the affected areas while thousands remain missing after more than a week of the disaster, police said. According to the data released by Nepal Police, 355 bodies were recovered from Chitawan district, 218 from Nawalparasi East, 208 from Nawalparasi West, including 18 recovered from India and handed over to Nawalparasi West, and 177 from Nuwakot. Similarly, 127 bodies were recovered from Rasuwa district, 69 from Gorkha, 60 from Dhading and 38 from Tahanu. The joint rescue teams led by the Nepal Army have continued their search and rescue efforts on the ninth day on Thursday, with the number of missing people estimated at 4,875. The flash floods, triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal, leaving a trail of destruction and thousands of people missing.

Indoor shooting range inaugurated in Leh to boost sport in Ladakh

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: An all-year-round indoor shooting range has been inaugurated in Leh to provide greater access to the sport and help identify talent in the Union Territory of Ladakh. The insulated facility, equipped for air rifle and air pistol shooting, has been established by the Ladakh Shooting Association (LSA) in collaboration with the Ladakh Police at the newly built Sports Complex of the police.

Jadeja's adaptability, Pandya's composure fuel Kartik Yadav's all-format ambitions

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 3: Young spinner Kartik Yadav may have played only three Ranji Trophy matches so far, but he is already looking to emulate Ravindra Jadeja's adaptability and Hardik Pandya's composure under pressure to become an all-format cricketer. The 19-year-old from Uttar Pradesh claimed a five-wicket haul on

his Ranji Trophy debut against Tamil Nadu last year. Though he went wicketless in the matches that followed, Yadav said the experience of playing at the senior level proved to be an important learning curve. "Debuting at this age is a dream for everyone. You are debuting at such a young age, contributing to the team and doing well.



Indian hockey teams set for double title defence as Junior Asia Cup begins in China



PTI

Moqi (China), Sep 3: The Indian under-21 men's hockey team will eye a record-extending sixth title, while the women will chase a hat-trick of trophies when the defending champions in both categories begin their AHF Junior Asia Cup campaigns here on Friday. The women's team, which lifted the Asia Cup trophy in the last two editions, will be led by mid-fielder Khaideem Shileima Chanu this time. The team has undergone a structured training programme under coach Tim White, who assumed charge earlier this year. As part of their preparations, an extended squad undertook an exposure tour of the United Kingdom, where they played matches against Scotland Senior Women, USA U-21, England U-21 and Belgium U-21. India, placed in the Elite Pool, will begin their

campaign against South Korea on September 5. The team will then face Malaysia on September 6, before taking on Japan on September 8 and hosts China on September 9. "Our first game is against South Korea on Saturday, so we are preparing for that. The team has acclimatized well. The weather is a bit cooler (in Moqi), but conditions are good and we are really looking forward to Match 1," said White in a press release issued by Hockey India. "In terms of our expectations, we prepared well in Bengaluru over a number of months, including a tour of the UK and some games against a combined team. "We feel our game is in good order and we are well prepared to play against the best teams in Asia. We are looking forward to seeing how our game plan is going to stand up against the best teams. I am sure the girls will do India proud." Men's team targets record-extending sixth

Trophy The men's team will also enter the competition with the distinction of having won the continental title five times, including the last three editions. Defender Anmol Ekka will captain the side, while newly appointed coach Frederic Soyeze will look to begin his tenure with a title win. The squad has undergone extensive preparation, including an exposure tour of Belgium, where the team competed against strong international U-21 opposition from Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. The team also played a series of friendly games at home against the Malaysian U-21 side in Bengaluru, followed by a three-match series against hosts China in Dalian. "Our progression has been quite good. The last (friendly) game against China (an 8-2 win for India) was very positive," said coach Soyeze. "It gave our confidence a huge boost heading into the tournament. We spent one week in Dalian, getting used to the conditions in China, before arriving in Moqi ahead of our opening match against Indonesia on Saturday. "Our main expectation from this tournament is to keep progressing and become more confident and consistent, maintain solid defensive structure and raise our level of performance with every match," Soyeze added.

REUTERS

Caracas, Sep 3: US Energy Secretary Chris Wright on Wednesday dismissed claims that Washington was "stealing Venezuelan oil" after the South American nation granted its northern neighbor access to a huge chunk of its natural resources. Wright, who traveled to Venezuela to oversee the signing of a series of energy deals worth billions of dollars, sought to dispel criticism in comments made to AFP and other outlets at Caracas airport. The United States is due to take majority control of more than 65 billion barrels – almost 20 percent – of oil in Venezuela, which holds the largest proven reserves in the world. Caracas has projected earnings of \$209 billion over 25 years from the accord. "I've seen those headlines. 'We're stealing Venezuelan oil.' Of course, that's not true at all," Wright said, adding that "the oil in Venezuela is indeed owned by the people of Venezuela." "Private companies are bringing the money to produce the oil, but the benefits, the royalties and the taxes all go to the government of Venezuela and the people of Venezuela," he said. "All we're doing is taking an idle, underground asset that isn't doing anything for Venezuelan people and



bringing the money, the technology to develop it." Wright also stressed the importance of fixing Venezuela's electricity sector, with much of the country enduring hours-long power cuts on a daily basis. The oil sector also needed electricity to function, he added. "You need them both," he said, voicing optimism given the "existing (electricity) infrastructure" in Venezuela that he believes can be put to use again under a five-year plan. US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that oil from the deal with Venezuela will be used to replenish the Strategic

Petroleum Reserve, adding that the "topping out" process will begin shortly. Trump has described the pact announced Friday as "the biggest oil deal in world history." But it's not that easy and Wright hinted as much on Wednesday while visiting Venezuela. "We'll swap you a barrel of heavy crude for a barrel of light or medium United States crude," Wright said during an interview on CNBC, calling oil markets fluid. Refilling the emergency stash is crucial to the Trump administration's energy dominance agenda after Washington recently began releasing millions of

barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve as part of a global effort to calm markets during the war with Iran. The major release – up to 172 million barrels from the United States – and low levels of inventory now have raised concerns about cavern damage, and how quickly the US can respond in a supply crisis. With the reserve now at a 44-year low and Washington set to gain access to billions of barrels of Venezuelan crude, one solution would be to pump those barrels back into the stash. But stark quality differences between

Venezuelan crude and the current specification for SPR crude make that idea unlikely, traders and analysts said. Instead, the US government may swap Venezuela's dense, high-sulfur crude for light- or medium-density American oil to fill the reserves, Wright said on Wednesday, a move that would help it circumvent quality challenges and replenish the key supplies. The US SPR is the world's largest emergency oil stockpile, and the crude is held in a series of underground caverns on the Texas and Louisiana coasts.