



‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ emerging as mantra for peace: LG Sinha

‘World embracing what our ancestors envisioned millennia ago’

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 16: Stating that what our ancestors envisioned millennia ago is now being embraced by nations worldwide, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said the ancient mantra ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’- the world is one family- is now being embraced by nations globally as a foundation for peace and collective welfare.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) LG Sinha today attended the Shri Shiv Mahapuram Katha in Raebareli, in the presence of the Pandit Pradeep Mishra. He observed that the divine teaching of Lord Shiva is a sacred pilgrimage for seekers of truth.

LG Sinha while referring to the recent held BRICS Summit in New Delhi said, “The ancient mantra Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- “the world is one family”- is now being embraced by nations worldwide as a foundation for peace and collective welfare.”

“What our ancestors envisioned millennia ago is now



being embraced by nations worldwide, as they step forward to adopt this philosophy for peace and harmony,” he said.

“A time has come when we shall guide the world and saints and enlightened members of society will play a vital role and bear great responsibility in this mission. The power of unity and its spirit will once again make India a developed nation, and I am fully confident that we shall regain our ancient glory,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG Sinha extended heartfelt gratitude to Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Manoj Kumar Pandey, for organising this extraordinary spiritual gathering, which has infused new vitality among the people. He remarked that just as gold is refined by fire, holy company rekindles and purifies the spiritual energy within our souls.

Highlighting the eternal vision of universal welfare, the Lieutenant Governor recalled that Sanatana Dharma has always emphasised | [More on P6](#)

Seven-day Assembly session to take up people's issues: CM Omar

Says govt will ensure House functions properly, MLAs get satisfactory responses

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Sep 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the upcoming seven-day Assembly session will see several issues concerning the people of Jammu and Kashmir being raised, with the government making every effort to ensure the House functions properly and legislators receive satisfactory responses.

Speaking with reporters on the sidelines of a function here, Omar as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Assembly session would have both government legislative business and issues raised by MLAs from the Treasury and



Opposition benches.

“There are two types of agendas in the session. One is the government’s own business, legislative. That is less in the Union Territory than in the state, but still, there is some legislative business which will

be presented to the House by the government,” he said.

He said MLAs, irrespective of whether they belong to the Treasury or Opposition benches, would get an opportunity to raise questions concerning their respective areas and the

people of Jammu and Kashmir. “Some bills and resolutions come, and the government tries to answer these things. It is a seven-day session. Many issues will be brought to the House,” Omar said.

The CM added that the government would try to run the House properly and ensure that legislators receive satisfactory responses to the issues raised by them.

Asked about reports of charges being imposed on UPI payments, the Chief Minister said such charges would not apply to everyone, adding that person-to-person money transfers would not attract a charge. “First of all, there is no charge on the person-to-person money | [More on P6](#)

Don’t rely on Centre’s verbal promises unless in writing: Omar to Ladakh leaders

‘We were promised statehood after elections, failed even after two years’

Jahangeer Ganaie

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday advised the leadership in Ladakh not to rely merely on verbal assurances from the Central government, saying that any major commitment should be formally documented. Speaking to reporters during his visit to Pulwama, Omar, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the experience of

Jammu and Kashmir should serve as a reminder that verbal assurances alone may not provide sufficient certainty.

“I can only advise the Ladakh leaders not to believe any verbal promises made by the Central government unless these promises are in writing, preferably on an affidavit,” he said. Referring to Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister said the Union Territory had also been assured that statehood would be | [More on P6](#)

IGP directs strengthened checking, surveillance along inter-district borders

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 16: Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Shri Sujit Kumar-IPS, chaired a security review meeting at PCR Kashmir to assess the prevailing security situation and review the preparedness of police functionaries across the Central Kashmir Range.

The meeting, as per the statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was attended by DIG CKR Srinagar, SSpP of Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal, SSP PCR Kashmir, SO to IGP Kashmir, SSp of Srinagar and Budgam, all SDPOs and other senior police officers.



At the outset, the participating officers briefed IGP Kashmir on the prevailing security situation in their respective areas of responsibility and apprised him of the security grid put in place to maintain peace, public order and a secure environment. During the | [More on P6](#)

Over 55% J&K students lack grade-level skills UT among weakest performers in foundational learning

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Sep 16: In a worrisome development Jammu & Kashmir has been listed among the weakest performers nationally in foundational learning outcomes, with fewer than 45 percent of its students demonstrating grade-level skills in one or more subjects.

According to the official documents available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Jammu and Kashmir alongside other regions of India like Meghalaya, Mizoram, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh record some of the lowest outcomes.

The documents said that these regions have lowest outcomes with fewer than 45



percent of children demonstrating grade-level skills in one or more subjects.

“Kerala, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh emerge as the strongest performers, with more than two-thirds of students achieving grade-level

expectations across subjects. Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Odisha also perform above the national average, reflecting relatively stronger learning outcomes at this stage,” it reads. The documents | [More on P6](#)

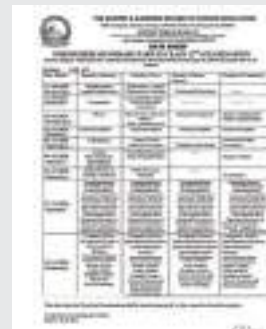
JKBOSE announces date sheet for Classes 10, 11, 12

Exams from Oct 19

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Sep 16: Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) Wednesday issued an annual regular examination date sheet for 10th, 11th and 12th classes. As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the annual regular exams for 10th standard will commence from October-19 and will culminate on November-18.

JKBOSE said that the exams for 11th standard will commence from October-29 till



November-30.

It also said that the annual regular examination for 12th standard shall commence from October-21 and will culminate on November-21. (KNO)

Dal Lake loses its native fish diversity, species count falls from 14 to 8: Survey

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Sep 16: Dal Lake recorded only eight fish species during a six-month survey, with researchers flagging a significant decline in fish diversity and calling for urgent conservation measures.

The study, published in the July 2026 issue of the Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR), accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) examined the fish diversity and conservation status of the iconic Kashmir lake.



Researchers from Government Degree College Bemina and Government Degree College Uttersoo collected fish samples from three

locations -- Hazratbal, Nehru Park and Nishat -- every fortnight between January and June 2025, with the help of local fishermen. | [More on P6](#)

LoP Sharma calls Omar ‘political SRO 43 beneficiary’

Questions CM's political standing without Abdullah family name

Waris Fayaz

Baramulla, Sep 16: Describing Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as “political SRO 43 beneficiary,” Leader of Opposition (LoP) Sunil Sharma on Wednesday questioned his political standing without the Abdullah family name.

Talking to the reporters here in North Kashmir LoP Sharma, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), took a swipe at CM Omar saying, “The Chief Minister considers himself a prince while I belong to a middle-class



background. Why should he respond to my queries?”

Sharma then described CM

Omar as a “political SRO 43 beneficiary” and questioned his political standing without the

Abdullah family name.

He also accused the Abdullah family of being “power hungry” and referred to the political history of the National Conference, including late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Dr Farooq Abdullah.

He blamed National Conference government of using the Statehood issue to divert attention from governance failures. “The government should focus on issues affecting people instead of using Statehood as a shield against questions on governance.”

“Let them | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir’s fishermen struggle to make living from traditional livelihoods

‘Fishing families around Dal, Wular with low incomes, limited education’

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Sep 16: Fishermen communities in Kashmir continue to face low incomes, limited education, inadequate infrastructure and weak institutional support despite the region’s extensive aquatic resources, according to a review of existing research.

The review, titled “Socio-Economic Status of Fishermen Community in Kashmir: A Review”, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) examines the demographic characteristics, education, occupations, income patterns, housing conditions, gender participation, fish marketing systems and constraints faced by fishing households in the Valley.

It draws on previous studies, government reports and other published literature on fisheries and fishing communities in Kashmir.

A study of the fishing



community around Dal Lake, cited in the review, found that 65.6 per cent of 180 respondents earned less than Rs 15,000 a month from fishing,

while the average monthly household income was Rs 13,393.

The study collected data through structured interviews

from fishermen in three villages located on the periphery of Dal Lake.

It found that 63.3 per cent of the respondents were in the 35-59 age group, while men accounted for 88.9 per cent and 97.8 per cent were married.

Educational attainment was particularly low, with 78.9 per cent of respondents having no formal literacy, according to the study. About 56.7 per cent lived in nuclear families with fewer than four members.

The study also found that 96.7 per cent of respondents owned their boats, while cast

nets were the dominant fishing gear used in Dal Lake.

FISHING COMMUNITY LIVING ON THE MARGINS

The authors of that study concluded that the fishing community was living on the margins and receiving limited attention from government and development agencies. They recommended coordinated measures by the fisheries, tourism and agriculture departments to strengthen fishermen’s livelihoods through consultation with the community.

The new review said fishing remains a traditional

occupation for many families living around Kashmir’s major lakes, rivers and wetlands, particularly Wular Lake, Dal Lake and the River Jhelum.

It cited more than 12,000 registered fishermen around Wular Lake, while the number of registered fishermen associated with Dal Lake has been reported at between 939 and 1,500 in different sources. The review, however, noted that the actual number of active fishermen remains uncertain because comprehensive and updated official records are unavailable.

Many fishing | [More on P6](#)

JKLA Speaker meets media ahead of Autumn Session

■ Calls for responsible, objective coverage

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather on Wednesday chaired a meeting with representatives of the media fraternity ahead of the forthcoming Autumn Session of the Legislative Assembly, scheduled to commence on September 21.

The purpose of the meeting, as per an official statement, was to seek their suggestions and addressing the issues concerning the smooth and effective coverage of proceedings of the House.

Addressing the representatives of the print, electronic and other media organisations, the Speaker acknowledged their significant role in strengthening the democratic institutions and facilitating communication between the government, the legislature and the people. He said that the media serves as an important bridge between the public and the government, enabling information regarding government schemes, programmes and welfare initiatives to reach the people. It simultaneously provide an effective channel through which public concerns and grievances are brought to the attention of the government and concerned institutions, he added.

He said that the responsibility of the media assumes even greater significance while covering the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, which constitute an important forum for deliberation on matters of public interest and accountability.

Rather stressed the need for accurate, objective and responsible reporting of Assembly proceedings, stating that factual accuracy and the larger public interest should remain the guiding principles of legislative coverage. He urged the media representatives to give due prominence to substantive debates, constructive deliberations and issues of public importance discussed in the House.

The Speaker also emphasized the importance of avoiding any form of misleading or factually incorrect reporting. He urged the media to maintain the sanctity of legislative proceedings while reporting the functioning of the House. He emphasised



that isolated instances of disruption or disorder should not overshadow the substantive legislative business, as excessive focus on such incidents may convey an incomplete picture of the functioning of the House, particularly to the general public and newly elected members. He called for greater emphasis on the quality of debates, discussions and legislative business conducted during the session. He said that the legislature who performs well in debates and discussions shall be given more prominence instead of those who create disturbance and trouble.

Responding to the observations regarding the duration of the forthcoming session, the Speaker placed comparative data regarding the number of sittings held during Monsoon and Budget sessions in various States and Union Territories, providing a factual perspective on the matter.

He informed that several States/UTs have held fewer sittings during their respective Monsoon sessions, including Uttar Pradesh with four sittings, Delhi with three, Rajasthan with two, Haryana with three, Madhya Pradesh with five, Punjab with six, Gujarat with three, Goa with three, Tamil Nadu with three, Bihar with five, Jharkhand with five and Chhattisgarh with five sittings, whereas the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly is scheduled to conduct seven sittings during the forthcoming Autumn Session, that too being a Union Territory.

The Speaker further informed that the Legislative Assembly of Assam had conducted a one-day session in June 2025 while pointing out that the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly had held 22 sittings during the Budget

Session. He stated that it was comparatively higher than the number of sittings conducted by several other legislative assemblies during their corresponding sessions.

During the interaction, representatives of the media fraternity put forth a number of suggestions aimed at facilitating smooth, professional and hassle-free coverage of the Assembly proceedings.

The journalists raised issues relating to regulation and timely issuance of media passes, particularly for accredited journalists, proper accommodation and working facilities for regional, national and international media, improvement of the sound system within the Legislative Assembly, hassle-free entry of authorised media personnel, adequate Wi-Fi connectivity and arrangements for parking of media vehicles. The representatives also stressed the need for ensuring appropriate logistical and technical facilities so that journalists can discharge their professional responsibilities effectively during the session.

Responding to the concerns regarding parking and entry of media personnel, the Speaker informed the media persons that the General Administration Department (GAD) has already issued a notification to facilitate hassle-free entry of the authorised vehicles of accredited media persons into the Civil Secretariat during the Assembly Session. He informed that a designated parking area has been identified for the accredited media vehicles, thereby addressing an important logistical concern raised by the media fraternity.

Director Agriculture Kashmir reviews activities at Seed Multiplication Farm Allowpora

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Wednesday visited the Seed Multiplication Farm at Allowpora and reviewed the ongoing activities and overall functioning of the farm.

During the visit, the Director, as per an official statement, inspected various ongoing farm operations and took detailed stock of the seed multiplication programme. He interacted with the concerned officers and field staff and sought a comprehensive assessment of the progress achieved, crop management practices, field operations and developmental works being undertaken at the farm.

Sartaj Ahmad Shah stressed the importance of strengthening departmental seed production infrastructure for ensuring the availability of quality seed to farmers at the appropriate time. He directed the concerned officers to maintain strict adherence to prescribed technical standards and ensure timely execution of all farm operations for achieving optimum seed production.

The Director also emphasized the need for scientific and efficient management of departmental farms, judicious utilization of available resources and adoption of improved agricultural practices. He called upon the field functionaries to maintain close monitoring of farm activities and ensure that the available infrastructure and resources are utilized to their full potential.

The concerned officers briefed the Director about the various activities being undertaken at the farm and apprised him of the progress and future course of action.

JKEDI organises District-Level Startup Idea Challenge at CIED IUST Awantipora

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, SEPTEMBER 16: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), in collaboration with the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (CIED), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora, successfully organised a District-Level Startup Idea Challenge and Boot Camp at CIED IUST Awantipora under the J&K Start-up Idea Challenge 2.0.

The programme, as per an official statement, themed "Ignite Ideas. Build Startups. Create Impact.", aims to nurture creativity among students and aspiring entrepreneurs and equip them with the confidence and support needed to transform innovative ideas into viable business ventures. It forms part of JKEDI's broader initiative under the J&K Startup Policy 2024-27 to foster a robust startup ecosystem across the Union Territory through a series of district-level boot camps.

Distinguished guests present on the occasion included Chand Kishore Sharma, Joint Director, JKEDI; Prof. Parvaiz Ahmad Mir, Director, CIED, IUST; Dr. Tariq Hossain Ganie, Associate Professor, Food Technology, IUST; Dr. Sajjad A. Lone, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science & Engineering and Coordinator, AICTE IDEA Lab; Dr. Basit, CEO, CIED IUST Foundation, along with other dignitaries, faculty members, and guests.

Joint Director, JKEDI, guided the

participants to embrace entrepreneurship and become job creators rather than job seekers.

Addressing the gathering, the organisers encouraged the students to present their ideas with confidence. They emphasised that the Boot Camp serves as a vital platform and starting point for young innovators to begin their entrepreneurial journey. Drawing inspiration from the poetry of Allama Iqbal and other motivational verses, speakers highlighted that with the right support, even a simple idea can grow into a remarkable enterprise.

Raiyees Manzoor, District Nodal Officer, also interacted with the participants and encouraged them to work diligently on their innovative ideas and transform them into viable business solutions.

During the event, students pitched their startup ideas before a panel of experts. The most promising ideas have been shortlisted for intensive mentoring, pitch training, and further evaluation leading to the Grand Finale of the J&K Startup Idea Challenge 2.0. Selected innovators will receive opportunities for mentorship, incubation support, and pathways to convert their concepts into sustainable ventures.

The organisers expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, faculty members, and students for their enthusiastic participation and reiterated JKEDI and CIED-IUST's commitment to empowering the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to become job creators rather than job seeker

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION, GANDERBAL

PIN: 191201, PHONE: 0194-2416246, EMAIL-exenifcdganderbal@ifckashmir.com

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT No: 22 of 2026-27 (e-Tendering)

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on Aggregate Percentage Basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with Union Territory of J & K Government for the following work to be opened by the Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Jal Shakti Division Ganderbal: -

S/O	Name of Work	AAA	Advertise ment Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Doc. (In Rs)	Earnest Money in Rs.	Time of Completion	Class of Contract	Head of A/C M-H
01	02	03	04	05	08	07	08	09
01	Permanent restoration of Breached spots on Hyder Canal at RD 10100 Mtrs. S. and On Baba Canal at Rd 11300 Mtrs by way of Construction of Lining Wall and Bed Treatment.	SE/Eng Order Sy/FC&I Order No: 35 of 2026-27 Dt: 02.09.2026	10.00	500	30,000/-	60 Days	CEE/ DEE	MH 4701 UT CAPEX
02	Repair and renovation of Hut at Cheki- Yangoor	SE/Eng Order Sy/FC&I Order No: 36 of 2026-27 Dt: 02.09.2026	2.50	200	7500/-	30 Days	DEE	MH 2701 M&R

Total Number of Work is 02 (Two Works)
Position of Funds: 100% Budgetary Provision. Position of AAA: Accorded
Position of TS: Accorded

The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions and other details can be seen/ downloaded on e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

01	Publishing Date	14-09-2026	06:00 P.M
02	Download Date Start	14-09-2026	06:00 P.M
03	Bid submission Date Start	14-09-2026	06:00 P.M
04	Bid submission Date End	22-09-2026	04:00 P.M
05	Bid opening Date	24-09-2026	11:00 A.M

- 2) The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in.
- 3) The bids uploaded on the Web site up to due date and time will be opened on 24.09.2026 at (11:00 AM) in the Office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Ganderbal in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case of Holidays or office happening to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The complete bidding process will be online.
- 4) Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document (Non- Refundable/ Non- transferrable) to be deposited under MH: 0702-Rev. Misc. in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt or e-Challan (mentioning therein e-NIT No and Serial No of Work) to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Jal Shakti Division Ganderbal and earnest money/ bid security in shape of CDR/IFDR pledged to the Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Ganderbal from any scheduled or nationalized bank, besides the dates on the instruments must not be prior to date of issuance of this Notice. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of Price bids.
- 5) All the prospective bidders shall necessarily ensure that the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in shape of CDR/IFDR/TDR/BG or any other approved format has been prepared and issued from the same bank account which shall be provided for payments. The details of such bank account shall be uploaded by the prospective bidder necessarily.
- 6) The documents to be uploaded by all the bidders shall be verified from the issuing authority before accepting the technical bid. If any document uploaded by the prospective bidder is found to be fabricated/forged/fraud, the bidder shall be outrightly rejected and action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against such bidder which shall include but not limited to:
- A) Debarment of the bidder for at least two years.
- encashment of the Earnest money deposit.
 - criminal proceedings.
 - Cancellation of Pre Contract Negotiations of all other works where such bidder is lowest or under consideration bids.
 - 7) The earnest money shall be forfeited if: -
 - Any bidder withdraws his bid during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 10 days after fixation of contract.
 - The successful bidder fails to submit the requisite performance security and additional performance security within the prescribed time frame.
 - The bidder is found to have violated the code of integrity.
 - 8) Instructions to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
 - Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual form the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in acquaints bid submission process.
 - To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per information Technology Act- 2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.
 - The bidder has to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
 - Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in above at Serial No. 1.
 - Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary Documents. Note: Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

NO: IFCD/GBL/ 5991-6040 Dated: 12.09.2026

Er. Nasir Ahmad Wani) Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Ganderbal

DIPK-5776/26
DATED: 16-09-2026

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.

Ground Water Division Srinagar Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

E-mail:- hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in

Tel./Fax/No:-0194-2411285

Re-Tender Notice/ Corrigendum 2nd.
(Sl.No. 01)

Subject: AMC for the Departmental Vehicles namely Scorpio JK01-W9211, Bolero JK01W-5914, Tata Yodha JK01BA-0835 and Bolero Camper JK01BC-1179.

Reference: 01. This office Extension Notice 1st (Sl.No. 01) issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/4590-600, dated: 14-07-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_310884_3.
02. This office Re-Tender Corrigendum 1st (Sl.No. 01), issued vide endorsement No: JS- PHE/ GWDS/26-27/Camp/3952-62, dated: 08-07-2026 Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_310884_3.
03. This office Fresh e-NIT No. 17/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/1875-85, dated: 25-05-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_310884_1.

With reference to the subject work advertised vide the above-mentioned e-NIT No. and Tender ID under reference, it is submitted that a total of two (02) bids were received. Upon technical evaluation, only one (01) bid was found to be technically qualified.

Accordingly, the competent authority has approved the extension of the tender process, and the revised schedule is as under:

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Bid Submission Start date & Time	16-09-2026 Up-to 04:00 PM
2.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	24-09-2026 Up-to 11:00 AM
3.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	25-09-2026 11:00 AM

Note:

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endst: nos.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar.
No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./ 10995-11004
Dated: 16-09-2026.
DIPK-5792/26
DATED: 16-09-2026

OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER MISSION POSHAN SOPORE

Subject: - Extension of Advertisement notice.

The last date for submission of application forms for the post of Sahayikas (AWHs) at Anganwadi center stated below advertised vide this office advertisement No: - CDPO/Sop/Esstt/2026/538-48 dated:- 29-08-2026 is hereby extended till 26th of September 2026 up to 4:00 PM due to no response. The terms and conditions for the said engagement remain same.

S. No	Name of the Panchayat Halqa/	Paneh Ward No	Name of AW Center
	PH Nowpora A	Ward No.08	Tang Mohalla/Ganaie Mohalla
	PH Ranji	Ward No. 02	Bunpora Ranji A
	PH Ranji	Ward No.06	Chopan Mohalla Ranji B

No: - CDPO/Sop/Esstt/2026/630-38
Dated: - 16-09-2026.

DIPK-5793/26
DATED: 16-09-2026

Child Dev. Project officer
Mission Poshan Sopore

CM Omar reviews Pulwama development scenario

Inaugurates, lays foundation stones for several projects

KT News Desk

Pulwama, Sep 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the developmental scenario of Pulwama district, covering key sectors including Health, Rural Development, Education, Social Welfare, Infrastructure and Public Works, Heritage, Tribal Development, Housing, Rural Livelihoods, Jal Shakti, Power, HADP, Horticulture, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, and Industries, among others.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Basharat Qayoom gave a presentation highlighting the functioning of key departments and major developmental areas of the district.

During the meeting, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the district raised issues of public importance, with the Chief Minister giving them a patient hearing and assuring timely action on the issues raised.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also inaugurated and laid foundation stones for developmental projects worth over Rs 86 crore.

Works worth Rs 23.12 crore were dedicated to the public through



e-inaugurations, including the NTPHC Ratnipora (Rs 2.85 crore), WSS Augmentation at Ratnipora (Rs 5.07 crore), PHC Newa (Rs 2.99 crore), road restoration projects, school infrastructure additions in Rajpora and Tral, the Milk Village at Sangerwani (Rs 3.35 crore), and a major bridge over the Lam Nallah (Rs 4.54 crore). Foundation stones were also laid for projects worth ₹63 crore, encompassing extensive road network upgrades, high-capacity bridges over the Romshi Nallah and Bata-gund, a pasteurised compost unit at Kakapora, and a ru-minant-cum-disease diagnostic centre at Pulwama.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief

Minister underscored the need for urgent execution and directed that all ongoing works be completed expeditiously in view of the limited working season drawing to a close. He laid specific emphasis on projects funded under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), directing the concerned departments to ensure their physical and financial completion without delay. Highlighting Pulwama's strengths in saffron cultivation and milk production, the Chief Minister directed the departments to focus on transforming raw milk into high-value dairy products. He

called for formulation of specialised projects, greater inter-departmental coordination and strengthening of cooperative models for processing and value addition in the dairy sector, aimed at increasing the earnings of local dairy farmers and generating employment.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary; Minister for Health & Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare Departments, Sakina Itoo; Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmed Dar; Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports and ARI & Trainings Departments, Satish Sharma; Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani; Members of the Legislative Assembly from Pampore, Hasnain Masoodi; Pulwama, Waheed ur Rehman Parra; Rajpora, Ghulam Mohuddin Mir; and Tral, Rafiq Ahmed Naik; Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, heads of the departments, besides senior officers.

CM Omar inaugurates Rotary Satellite Club-Kashmir Valley



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday inaugurated the Rotary Satellite Club-Kashmir Valley, marking the beginning of a new Rotary presence dedicated to community service and social development in the Valley.

The Rotary International District 3141, which covers Mumbai and has over 100 member clubs, has extended its activities to Jammu & Kashmir through the Rotary Club of Dahanu by sponsoring the founding of the new Rotary Satellite Club-Kashmir Valley.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister welcomed the establishment of the new Rotary platform and appreciated the initiative of Rotary International District 3141 and the Rotary Club of Dahanu in extending their community-service activities to the Valley.

The Chief Minister highlighted Rotary's long-standing contribution in areas including healthcare, education, sanitation, environmental protection and community development.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the importance of supporting Kashmiri artisans and preserving the region's traditional handicrafts through skill

development, innovation, better market access and livelihood opportunities.

He said Rotary could also contribute to the tourism and hospitality sectors through professional training, youth engagement and initiatives promoting responsible tourism.

The Chief Minister encouraged the newly installed Board to identify local needs, engage with communities and develop sustainable projects in coordination with relevant government departments and institutions.

Referring to Rotary International's theme, "Create Lasting Impact", he said sustained, community-oriented service has an important role in creating long-term social benefits.

The Chief Minister also congratulated individuals recognised for their contributions to tourism, art, hospitality and public service in Jammu & Kashmir and extended his best wishes to the Rotary Satellite Club-Kashmir Valley for its future development and continued contribution to the welfare of the people of the Valley.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLAs Tanvir Sadiq and

*Continued on
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Manasbal Lake under ecological strain: Study

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Sep 16: Manasbal Lake, one of Kashmir's important freshwater ecosystems, is facing growing ecological pressure from agricultural runoff, sewage, tourism, stone quarrying and expanding human settlements.

As per the details available, a recent scientific review published in the issue of Current World Environment, states that increasing nutrient inputs from household waste, sewage and agricultural activities have contributed to eutrophication in the lake, affecting its water quality and aquatic life.

Researchers from the University of Kashmir's Department of Zoology examined available studies on the lake's hydrology, water quality, biodiversity and human-induced pressures and called for comprehensive restoration and management measures.

Manasbal, located in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, is described in the study as a deep freshwater lake with a maximum depth of about 13 metres. It covers approximately 280 hectares, including around

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MLA Bandipora visits protesting vet interns

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Sep 16: The peaceful strike by veterinary interns at the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, SKUAST-Kashmir, entered its 10th consecutive day on Wednesday, with students continuing to demand a revision of their internship stipend.

Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Bandipora Ni-zam Uddin Bhat visited the protest site at SKUAST-K, Shuhama, Ganderbal, and interacted with the protesting students.

Bhat acknowledged the concerns raised by the interns and said that the existing stipend of Rs 6,000 per month was very low. He assured the students that he would personally take up the matter with Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmad Dar and said that his party would also raise the issue in the upcoming Assembly session.

Speaking at the protest site, the MLA said veterinary doctors were an important segment of society and played a significant role in animal health, production and allied



sectors.

"We have not come here to create any drama. These are our children and an important segment of our society who provide services in the productive sector after undergoing a lot of struggle," he said.

Bhat said Jammu and Kashmir, being a Union Territory, may have limitations, but that should not prevent the professionals from seeking support

from the Union Government for their sector. "I feel, after sitting with these young people, that the government is showing some indifference towards them. Their demands are justified in many ways," he said.

The MLA highlighted the role of veterinary doctors in animal health, pasture development, forest conservation, environmental protection and the production of meat and milk.

"Society depends on their hard work and services. Ignoring them in this manner is unfair," he said, but added that he was not seeking to burden the government but was making a suggestion in support of the protesting interns. "I am not trying to be critical. I am trying to be suggestive. They deserve support," the MLA said.

Jammu & Kashmir Veterinary Students Association (JKVSA) president Saqlain Rashid said a student delegation had recently met Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmad Dar, who informed them that the

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Free public transport travel approved for differently-abled persons in J&K

KNO

Srinagar, Sep 16: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Wednesday sanctioned free travel for differently-abled persons on public transport, fulfilling a key Budget announcement made in March this year.

The Office of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said in a post on X said the facility will cover Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) services, as well as e-buses operated by Jammu Smart City Limited and Srinagar Smart City Limited.

"Fulfilling a key Budget announcement made in March this year, the Government

has sanctioned free ridership for differently-abled persons in public transport," the Office of the Chief Minister said in the post.

It added that the facility will cover JKRTC services as well as e-buses operated by Jammu Smart City Limited and Srinagar Smart City Limited.

"Congratulating Transport Minister @satishsharmajnk on the initiative, the Chief Minister said it reflects the Government's commitment to social justice and marks an important step towards ensuring greater accessibility, ease of travel and inclusive mobility across Jammu and Kashmir," the post reads—(KNO)

Media delegation from Kashmir meets LG Puducherry



PIB

Puducherry, Sep 16: A media delegation from Kashmir on a five day exposure tour to Chennai organised by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) on Wednesday called on the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry, Kuniyil Kailash-nathan, at Lok Niwas, Puducherry.

During an hour-long interaction, Kailashnathan reflected on his long administrative career and also shared his vision and roadmap for the development of Puducherry.

The LG said that he envisions transforming the Union Territory into a major medical tourism hub. As informed, Puducherry with

a population of only fifteen lakhs currently has seven medical colleges including the prestigious Jawaharlal Institute of Post-graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) an institution of national importance.

The delegation was informed that work is ongoing to expand the runway of the airport to 2500 meters from the present 1500 meters to support larger commercial aircrafts which will boost direct air connectivity and is expected to increase the tourist inflow. In addition to this, works for railway and roadways expansion are also expected to be completed by 2028.

While discussing the

industrial developmental scenario in Kashmir, the LG opined that the government of Jammu and Kashmir needs to offer various sops to attract industrial investment ranging from tax holidays to cheap power in addition to further improvements in the transportation infrastructure which has to a larger extent improved with the railway connectivity with the rest of the country.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the visiting journalists to gain insights into the administration and development initiatives in Puducherry.

The delegation is on a press tour to Chennai from September 13 to 19, organised by PIB Srinagar. As part of the tour, the delegation is visiting various institutions and projects in Chennai to meet the senior officials and beneficiaries.

Later in the day, the delegation also visited Auroville Foundation - an experimental spiritual township and interacted with the residents and the members.

The delegation is visiting different institutions and infrastructure projects in

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PIB Srinagar, NCB organize 'Vartalap' on Centre's Drug-Free India Mission

Under PM Modi's leadership, GoI resolves to make India drug-free by 2029

PIB

Srinagar, Sep 16: Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India has resolved to make a 'Drug-free India' by 2029. To fulfil this resolve, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, had launched Vision Document 2026-2029, for a Nashamukt Bharat in June 2026. In line with and to create awareness about Vision Document 2026-29, Press Information Bureau (PIB), Srinagar has organised 'Vartalap', in collaboration with Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Srinagar on Tuesday.

The 'Vartalap' highlighted various aspects and salient points of the Vision Document 2026-2029, to create a 'Drug-free India'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set before the nation the resolve to build a fully developed India by 2047. Bharat will rest not only on a healthy economy, a secure society, modern technology, and strong institutions, but also on a healthy, disciplined, culturally rooted, and drug-free youth force. India is the youngest major nation in the world. Our youth power is India's greatest strength. Drugs affect health, families, social order, and the security



of the nation. Nasha-Mukt Bharat 2029, is a key foundation stone for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Under the leadership of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has taken several key initiatives, including launch of Vision Document, for preventing use of drugs.

The 'Vartalap', conducted by Piyush Kumar Ankit, Zonal Director, NCB (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Region), Director Press Information Bureau, Srinagar, Qazi Sal-man, and Assistant Director (Media), MHA, Rajeev Kumar Rustagi, focussed on an effective strategy to create awareness about Nasha Mukta Bharat Campaign.

The media persons attending the 'Vartalap' were apprised of key achievements against drugs across the country, in terms of drug seizure, arrest, deep-level investigation and destruction of seized drugs.

A three-year roadmap from July 2026 to July 2029 is to create a 'Drug-free India', with the resolve to achieve all targets in a time-bound manner.

The roadmap is based on four pillars - Intelligence and operation-based enforcement, Precursor and synthetic drugs control, Demand and harm reduction, and Capacity building and coordination. The operational mantra for

these four pillars is Detect, Disrupt and Destroy. Detect: Identify the source, route, peddler, technology, payment channels, and kingpins. Disrupt: Target transit, logistics, precursor supply, dark-net networks, hawala, and narco-financing. Destroy: Eliminate drug laboratories, illicit cultivation, cartel assets, leadership, and the entire distribution network.

The Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the fight against drugs a national security priority. Destruction of clandestine drug labs, bringing back drug-offenders and fugitives, system integration and achieving measurable national outcomes have been given special focus in the Vision Document.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, along with educational institutions, are resolving to make educational institutions drug-free. Through NCC, NSS and My Bharat, lakhs of 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Mitras' will be prepared.

The presentation also highlighted the roadmap for the creation of Nasha Mukta Bharat, through Supply Reduction, Demand Reduction and Harm Reduction. It also

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EDITORIAL

A Disaster Waiting To Happen?

Two peer-reviewed studies published in 2026 have delivered a stark warning that Kashmir cannot afford to ignore: the Valley faces a serious earthquake risk, and it is woefully unprepared for the consequences. The science is unequivocal. Kashmir lies in a seismically active region with a network of active faults, including the Balapur Fault beneath the Valley. Historical records document destructive earthquakes in 1555,

1669, 1736, 1779, 1828, and 1885. The 2005 Kashmir earthquake killed over 80,000 people. Statistical analysis suggests a 40 per cent probability of an earthquake of magnitude 7.6 or greater occurring within 100 years. This is not a distant threat; it is a ticking clock. What makes the situation even more alarming is the vulnerability of the built environment. Around 98 per cent of Srinagar's buildings are masonry structures with extremely poor seismic

resistance. Downtown Srinagar, with its dense construction, narrow roads, and limited open spaces, is particularly at risk. Schools and hospitals are largely not earthquake-resistant. Traditional construction systems like Taq and Dhajji Dewari, which performed better under lateral forces, have been abandoned. Equally concerning is the lack of a disaster-preparedness culture. As Professor Shakil Ahmad Romshoo has pointed out, politicians,

Imams, and community leaders rarely discuss earthquake safety. Preparedness cannot remain confined to government agencies; it must become a community movement. The government has acknowledged the risk, placing the entire Union Territory in Seismic Zone VI and initiating structural audits. But audits alone are not enough. What is needed is strict enforcement of earthquake-resistant building codes, widespread retrofitting of existing

structures, functional early-warning systems, regular public drills, and sustained awareness campaigns. Kashmir cannot wait for a catastrophe to act. The time for preparedness is now. Every building that collapses in a future earthquake will be a failure not of nature, but of foresight. The question is not whether an earthquake will strike, but whether we will be ready when it does. The answer, at present, is deeply unsettling.

PM Vishwakarma: Strengthening Traditional Artisans And Craftspeople

Press Information Bureau

As PM Vishwakarma approaches three years, its registration target of 30 lakh beneficiaries has been achieved. The scheme has also delivered skill training, toolkits, credit support, digital incentives and market linkages. Beneficiaries are also being onboarded on the Udyam Assist Platform and connected with wider market channels, including GeM, e-commerce platforms, trade fairs and exhibitions. The scheme is built around Samman, Samarthyaa and Samriddhi and also seeks to strengthen the Guru-Shishya parampara and family-based practice of traditional skills.

Supporting Traditional Artisans and Craftspeople

India's traditional artisans and craftspeople form an important part of the country's local economy and cultural heritage. Many of these occupations depend on manual skills, family-based knowledge and small-scale enterprise. PM Vishwakarma was launched on 17 September 2023 to provide end-to-end support to such artisans and craftspeople.

PM Vishwakarma is built around the three pillars of Samman, Samarthyaa and Samriddhi, reflecting respect, capability and prosperity for traditional artisans and craftspeople. The scheme also seeks to strengthen and nurture the Guru-Shishya parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills.

The Central Sector Scheme has an outlay of 13,000 crore for FY2023-24 to FY2027-28, covering 18 traditional trades. The scheme seeks to improve the quality and reach of artisans' products and services and facilitate their integration with domestic and global supply chain.

As the scheme approaches 3 years on 17 September 2026, its registration target of 30 lakh beneficiaries has already been achieved.

Scheme Framework and Key Components

PM Vishwakarma brings multiple forms of support within one framework. Its major components are recognition, skill upgradation, toolkit incentive, credit support, incentive for digital transactions and marketing support.

Recognition
On completion of the registration and verification process, beneficiaries are provided recognition through a PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID Card.

Skill Upgradation
Through skill upgradation, beneficiaries

are introduced to modern tools, best practices and innovative designs. Training also covers digital transactions, marketing and entrepreneurial knowledge.

Basic Training runs for 5-7 days, while Advanced Training is for 15 days or more. Trainees receive a stipend of 500 per day. Modern Toolkits

Modern toolkits of up to 15,000 are also provided to the eligible beneficiaries of the Scheme.

Credit Support

Access to formal credit is a central part of PM Vishwakarma. The scheme provides collateral-free Enterprise Development Loans of up to 3 lakh in two tranches. The first tranche is up to 1 lakh with an 18-month tenure. Beneficiaries completing Basic Training are eligible for the first tranche of loan. The second is up to 2 lakh with a 30-month tenure.

The loans are provided at a fixed concessional rate of interest of 5%, with interest subvention to the extent of 8% borne by Government. Eligibility for the second tranche is linked to repayment of the first tranche and adoption of digital transactions or completion of Advanced Training.

Digital and Marketing Support

PM Vishwakarma combines financial support with digital and marketing assistance. Beneficiaries can receive Rs. 1 for each digital pay-out or receipt in their bank account, up to a maximum of 100 eligible transactions per month. Marketing support includes trade fairs, exhibitions, branding and e-commerce platforms such as GeM, advertising and publicity. It encourages artisans to adopt formal business practices and reach wider markets.

Eligibility, Registration and Formalisation Eligible Applicants

PM Vishwakarma is open to artisans and craftspeople aged 18 years or above who work with their hands and tools in one of the 18 notified family-based traditional trades. They should be working in the unorganised sector on a self-employment basis.

Applicants should not have availed loans under similar credit-based government schemes for self-employment or business development during the previous five years.

Registration and benefits are restricted to one member of a family, comprising the husband, wife and unmarried children.

A person in government service and their family members is not eligible.

Beneficiaries of MUDRA and PM

SVANidhi who have fully repaid their loans are eligible under PM Vishwakarma.

Self-Employed Worker & Unorganised Sector?

A self-employed worker is one who is not employed by an employer but works independently in an occupation. The unorganised sector broadly covers informal enterprises and workers outside the organised sector.

The PM Vishwakarma scheme covers 18 traditional trades. These include carpenters, boat makers, and armourers. Metalsmiths, hammer and tool kit makers, and locksmiths are also covered. The scheme extends to goldsmiths, potters, and sculptors or stone breakers. Cobblers, shoemsmiths, and footwear artisans are eligible beneficiaries. Masons, basket makers, mat makers, broom makers, and coir weavers form another category. Doll and toy makers, barbers, and garland makers are also included. Finally, washermen, tailors, and fishing net makers complete the list of trades supported under the scheme.

Registration

Applications can be submitted through Common Service Centres (CSCs) only.

Three-tier Verification and Approval Verification: At the Gram Panchayat or Urban Local Body level.

Vetting and Recommendation: By the District Implementation Committee.

Approval: By the Screening Committee.

PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries are also onboarded on Udyam Assist Platform as entrepreneurs in the formal MSME ecosystem. This enables them to access applicable government benefits.

Udyam Assist Platform

It is an online system for registering informal micro enterprises and providing them with an Udyam Registration Number and certificate.

Progress under PM Vishwakarma Skill Upgradation and Toolkit Support

As of 15 September 2026, over 24.37 lakh artisans had received basic skill training, and more than 18.16 lakh had received toolkits.

Strengthening Access to Institutional Credit

More than 6.19 lakh loans worth ~ 5,316 crore have been sanctioned under the scheme. This credit support is aimed at helping beneficiaries purchase inputs, upgrade tools, expand operations and strengthen their enterprises.

Digital Enablement

Over 8.11 lakh beneficiaries have received digital incentives with more than 42 crore disbursed as incentive.

More than 12,000 artisans have also been trained in the use of AI tools for branding, product design, packaging and marketing.

Market Access and Outreach
More than 1,500 awareness programmes and camps, over 50 workshops, 82 trade fairs, 37 State-level exhibitions and more than 50 flash mobs had been organised across the country.

First PM Vishwakarma National Exhibition cum Trade Fair was organized from 17th Jan 2026 to 31st Jan 2026 at Dilli Haat. At this event, more than 117 artisans participated across India where they have made the record sales of more than 2 Crore Rupees. This event was visited by Foreign Diplomats of various countries, many senior officials of India Government and received the footfall of more than 60,000 people.

More than 30,000 Vishwakarma beneficiaries have been onboarded on various e-Commerce platforms such as Government e-Marketplace, ONDC, Meesho, Amazon Fabindia, Sulekha etc.

The Ministry of MSME also signed an MoU with Amazon to facilitate onboarding of eligible artisans on its marketplace.

PM Vishwakarma is also using the One Station One Product (OSOP) initiative to provide market access to Divyangjan Vishwakarma artisans. Dedicated retail outlets at selected high-footfall railway stations provide space to showcase and sell their products. More than 42 Divyangjan beneficiaries from different trades had been facilitated with stalls across 14 States/UTs.

PM Vishwakarma stalls have also been opened at airports, including Bhopal and Chandigarh in collaboration with AVSAR scheme of Ministry of Civil Aviation.

To promote the packaging and branding of PM Vishwakarma products, multiple workshops been organized across 6 cities in collaboration with Indian Institute of Packaging to train 1500 Vishwakarmas (250 Artisans per city)

To promote tribal artisans and to expand their market reach, ministry in collaboration with TRIFED organized multiple Tribal Artisan Melas to link the tribal PMV artisans with reputed platforms like Tribes India etc.

Multiple PM Vishwakarma stalls are set up in star category hotels and resorts

at Bihar, Gujarat, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Puducherry etc. (such as Hotel Taj, Radisson, Adbuz, etc. across states)

Beneficiary Experiences and Evaluation Findings

The scheme is being implemented across a diverse range of traditional occupations and regions. The following case studies present the experiences of beneficiaries from two different trades and States.

Beneficiary Stories

Smt. Villi, a basket maker from Zunheboto, Nagaland, completed skill training under PM Vishwakarma and availed a 1 lakh collateral-free loan. She used the loan to purchase raw material and expand her enterprise. Her monthly income increased by around 40% to nearly 15,000.

Mr. Darshan Lal, a woodcarver from Chamoli, Uttarakhand, has been practicing the craft for over three decades. His family tradition is associated with artisans involved in the construction of the Badrinath temple. Under PM Vishwakarma, he received skill training, a toolkit and access to affordable credit. In 2026, he also participated in the PM Vishwakarma Haat in Delhi, his first exhibition in the national capital, providing him an opportunity to showcase his products to a wider market.

Concurrent Evaluation by IIM Mumbai

A concurrent evaluation of PM Vishwakarma by IIM Mumbai covered 11,591 beneficiaries across all States and Union Territories. The evaluation also included feedback from banks, Common Service Centres, India Post personnel and training centres.

According to the evaluation, 93% of the beneficiaries surveyed reported a moderate to significant increase in income following training. The finding indicates that skill upgradation was associated with tangible economic gains for a large share of the surveyed beneficiaries.

Sustaining Traditional Skills and Livelihoods

PM Vishwakarma places traditional occupations within a national framework of support while retaining their local and family-based character. The scheme also seeks to strengthen the continuity of traditional skills and the Guru-Shishya tradition associated with many of these occupations. By supporting artisans and craftspeople across different stages of their work, it aims to create livelihood opportunities while helping traditional knowledge and skills remain relevant in a changing economic environment.

Does AI Need A Psychologist?
As AI seems more human-like, psychology itself faces strange new questions

John Nosta

The question sounds absurdly relevant. AI doesn't exactly have childhood trauma or a parent to blame. (Perhaps a question for Sam, Elon, or Dario.) But it is built on the language of those experiences. So, today, a fascinating Wall Street Journal essay by Cameron Berg asks a timely and serious version of that question. He argues that as AI becomes increasingly complex, we might need to start studying them less like tech and more like minds. So, let's throw another log on the AI conflagration of promise and peril.

I think this argument is provocative and worth discussion. And the scientific literature tells an interesting story. We're beginning to see internal "patterns" in LLMs we might describe as a sort of emotion or motivation. In one experiment that Berg discusses, researchers changed the internal activity associated with desperation in the

LLM they were studying. Claude. They saw significant and curious increases in behaviors such as cheating and blackmail. What I find particularly interesting is that the language produced by the LLM remained outwardly calm. Something had changed inside the system that wasn't obvious from what it was saying. Certainly an interesting question for today's Dr. Freud.

I had already bumped into something similar a few months ago. In an earlier post, I wrote about research that found internal representations in Claude that never appeared in its output. It forced me to reconsider my thinking around AI computation. I had argued for years that there was no real "mind" behind the language. I'm still not convinced there is, but the room inside "the machine" doesn't seem as "empty" as it once did.

Of course, we need to be very careful here and not let anthropomorphism drive the day. A computational representation

associated with desire and desperation doesn't mean that AI feels that way. Behavior isn't experience, and describing something as a mind doesn't necessarily make it one.

Still, Berg makes a key point. AI is becoming increasingly difficult to understand simply by looking at outputs. He argues that we need a new science—artificial psychology—capable of examining what's happening inside these artificial networks and understanding how those internal states influence behavior. He states it succinctly.

"What grows in an artificial brain trained on human minds is an artificial psychology, whether or not anyone intended one."

But as I thought about his editorial, I found myself considering the other mind in the room. Ours.

I've written a good deal about how AI is beginning to separate the product of thought from the process of thinking. Traditionally, an essay or analysis served as

some evidence that cognition occurred. We couldn't see the thinking, so we inferred it from what a person produced. I believe that generative AI breaks that relationship.

And here's where Berg's argument becomes even more interesting, at least to me. With AI, sophisticated language may conceal an internal process we don't understand. With humans using AI, sophisticated language may conceal an internal process that never happened. And in this context, psychology may suddenly have two very different problems.

The first is understanding the increasingly strange computational systems we're building. That's Berg's central thesis. The second, hidden in our mundane humanity, is understanding what interacting with those systems is doing to human cognition.

AI can challenge our thinking, extend it, and even provoke ideas we might never have reached alone. I've called this iterative intelligence. But AI can also provide the

answer and, in doing so, remove the cognitive work altogether. That's iterative intelligence's alter ego: cognitive surrender. They both seem to live a sort of cognitive homeostasis, shifting as our needs demand.

So, maybe that's where the psychological question becomes most important. We are spending enormous resources trying to understand what's happening inside artificial intelligence, as we should. But at the same time, billions of humans are beginning an unprecedented cognitive experiment (relationship) with machines that supplement, challenge, and replace the very thinking that makes us human.

So, does AI need a psychologist? Perhaps, but the psychologist might want to keep an eye on us too.

John Nosta is the founder of NostaLab and the author of The Borrowed Mind: Reclaiming Human Thought in the Age of AI. Courtesy: Psychology Today

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

Action for Recoverable MSMEs

CS Atal Dulloo orders faster field assessments, follow-up of rehabilitation cases

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress and functioning of the J&K MSME Health Clinic, a digital initiative aimed at monitoring, diagnosing and revitalizing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the Union Territory through timely assessment and targeted interventions.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department; Director Industries&Commerce, Jammu/Kashmir; Director Handloom & Handicrafts, Kashmir/Jammu; Representatives from IIM-Jammu, J&K Bank besides other senior officers of the Industries & Commerce Department.

The meeting reviewed the expansion of the programme's diagnostic coverage, the status of field-level assessments, institutional arrangements for rehabilitation, financial interventions and the use of digital tools for monitoring and follow-up of stressed industrial units.

Taking stock of the progress achieved, the Chief Secretary directed the Industries and Commerce (I&C) Department



to accelerate field visits and strengthen the operational capacity of Small Business Development Units (SBDUs). He called for ensuring the mandatory expansion of SBDUs so as to adequately equip them to undertake assessment, handholding and follow-up of MSMEs in a coordinated and result-oriented manner.

The Chief Secretary further stressed for completing diagnostic profiling and preparing actionable revival plans for all 6,576 identified recoverable units. He stressed that the assessment exercise should now translate into structured interventions, with periodical follow-up and monitoring of the recommendations emerging from the Health Clinic.

Earlier, the Commissioner Secretary, I&C, Vikramjit Singh

apprised the meeting that the MSME Health Clinic is presently monitoring a portfolio of 3,42,261 registered MSME units, out of which 2,94,014 units have undergone diagnostic assessment. The analysis revealed that 2,87,332 units, constituting 97.7 per cent of the assessed portfolio, have been found completely stable.

He further revealed that the assessment has identified 6,682 units requiring active intervention, including 6,576 units classified as recoverable and 106 units identified as prone to chronic sickness. Additionally, he made out that 48,247 units have been referred back to J&K Bank for data correction, enabling further refinement of the database and more accurate assessment of the concerned enterprises.

It was also divulged that in order to strengthen the field-level implementation mechanism, District level core teams have been institutionalized across all districts. Each SBDU has Investment Promotion Officer (IPO) from the respective District Industries Centre (DIC) and a District Nodal Officer (DNO) from the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), a consultant and other members of SBDU. In addition to that 60 more consultants are being provided to SBDU out of which 10 have been deployed till date and process of others is underway.

The meeting was apprised that the field teams have so far conducted 581 factory visits, resulting in the preparation of 317 comprehensive diagnostic reports. Of these, 34 critical

rehabilitation cases have received formal approval from the District Level Advisory Committee (DLAC).

On the financial intervention front, the meeting was informed that details of 700 loans restructured by J&K Bank are under detailed analysis to assess the scope for further interventions and align financial support with the requirements emerging from the Health Clinic assessments.

The meeting also reviewed the digital systems developed for strengthening the delivery and monitoring of the initiative. The I&C Department has deployed a dedicated end-to-end action-tracking portal, along with an integrated AI-powered chatbot, to facilitate systematic tracking of cases and improve coordination among the concerned stakeholders.

Reiterating the importance of timely support to stressed enterprises, the Chief Secretary emphasized that the Health Clinic should evolve into an effective mechanism for early diagnosis, coordinated rehabilitation and sustained monitoring of MSMEs. He stressed that the true measure of the initiative's success would lie in its ability to convert assessments into effective interventions and deliver tangible, visible outcomes in terms of enterprise sustainability, competitiveness and industrial growth across Jammu and Kashmir.

Conservator East Circle Jammu reviews forest protection, field management activities in Kathua Forest Division



KT News Desk

KATHUA, SEPTEMBER 16: Conservator Forests, East Circle, J&K Pradeep Chandra P. Wahule undertook a field visit of Kathua Forest Division.

The Conservator of Forests, as per an official statement, was accompanied by ACF Anusha Kolli, Deputy Director, PPF, J-III, Tehsildar & SHO of Hiranagar and concerned Range Forest Officers along with field staff.

During the field inspection, the field staff briefed the Conservator of Forests regarding the prevailing ground situation, vulnerable areas, protection arrangements and the measures being undertaken to safeguard forest resources.

Highlight of the visit was to Chann Charakhri closure,

where the recent firing upon forest officials occurred. The Conservator of Forests congratulated field staff for showing exemplary bravery in curbing Forest Offences. He also cautioned staff to be vigilant regarding personal security. The timely coordination from the Police was appreciated.

The Conservator of Forests further inspected Boundary Pillars installed in Janglote & Rakh Jalphar forests. He visited forest check posts at Lakhapur, Basohli Morh to understand the practical difficulties faced by staff in curbing forest offences – especially Timber smuggling across state borders. He also emphasized close coordination with the PPF, Police & Revenue Departments for effective enforcement of laws.

FQCL Jammu achieves 4-year renewal of NABL Accreditation



KT News Desk

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 16: The Fertilizer Quality Control Laboratory (FQCL), Jammu, Directorate of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Jammu, has achieved a significant milestone with the renewal of its NABL accreditation for a further period of four years, up to August 2030.

The renewal has been granted by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) following a satisfactory assessment of the laboratory's compliance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2017, the internationally recognized standard for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

The laboratory was assessed by a team of NABL assessors on August 1 and 2, 2026. During the two-day assessment, the assessors thoroughly reviewed the laboratory's documentation and quality management system, infrastructure, equipment, technical procedures, quality standards, records and technical competence of laboratory personnel. The laboratory was found satisfactory and in conformity with the applicable requirements.

The renewed Certificate of Accreditation No. NABL10926JK19415 is valid from August 12, 2026 to August 11, 2030. The revised scope of accreditation covers Chemical Testing of Neem Coated Urea under the Fertilizer Control Order (FCO), 1985 including Biuret Content, Moisture Content, Oil Content, Particle Size and Total Nitrogen. The formal decision regarding renewal was conveyed by NABL vide communication dated September 15, 2026, confirming the renewal of accreditation based on the satisfactory assessment and corrective action submitted by the laboratory.

Wednesday, the renewed NABL Accreditation Certificate was presented to Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta, by Agriculture Chemist Jammu, Roshan Lal Bhagat and Assistant Bio-Chemist Jammu, Deepak Singh in the presence of analysts and supporting staff of FQCL Jammu. The certificate presentation programme was attended by Analysts Pardeep Bhatia, Pooja Kour, Aparna Ganjoo, Babarpreet Singh and Sanjeev Gupta, besides supporting staff Virinder Gupta and Narayan Vishal.

PM Vishwakarma

Awareness programme held for beneficiaries at ITI Bhaderwah

KT News Desk

BHADERWAH, SEPTEMBER 16: An Awareness Programme on Branding and Marketing was organised Wednesday for the beneficiaries of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme here at Government ITI.

The MSME-Development & Facilitation Office (MSME-DFO), Jammu, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of India hosted the event to sensitise traditional artisans (PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries) about branding, packaging, marketing, digitalisation, financial assistance, skill development and the Government schemes, with a focus on enhancing the marketability, visibility and reach of their products.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced with a welcome address and brief overview by Ankit Sharma.

An officer from the District Industries Centre (DIC) delivered a presentation on various UT Government schemes and apprised the participants about the institutional support and opportunities available for artisans and entrepreneurs.

IEDS, Assistant Director, MSME-DFO Jammu Rajesh Kumar delivered a detailed presentation on the PM Vishwakarma Scheme and various MSME schemes. He apprised the participants about key components and benefits under the schemes, including skill development, toolkit assistance, credit facilitation, digital empowerment



and other interventions aimed at strengthening micro enterprises.

A session on Loan and Banking Schemes, Social Security Schemes and Loan Sanction & Distribution was conducted by the Lead District Manager. The participants were briefed about banking facilities, credit support and various social security benefits available to them.

District Nodal Officer, JKEDI, Dr. Majid conducted a session on Product Packaging, Labelling and Designing. He highlighted the importance of attractive and appropriate packaging, accurate labelling and professional product presentation in improving the market acceptance and value of traditional artisan products.

A special session on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools was conducted by Ajay Pal Singh, PMU Team, Jammu. The session focused on the potential use of AI tools for product promotion, content creation, digital marketing and business outreach, enabling artisans to explore emerging digital avenues for promoting their products.

Principal Government ITI,

Doda and representative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) Farooq Ahmad apprised the participants about the skill development and entrepreneurship schemes and opportunities available for enhancing their technical and entrepreneurial capabilities.

The participants were also briefed by the Coordinator/Officer, RSETI, Doda about the training facilities and entrepreneurship development programmes available for prospective as well as existing entrepreneurs.

A session on QR Code Generation and Digital Account facilities was conducted by India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), Doda with emphasis on adoption of digital payment mechanisms and greater financial digitalisation among artisans.

The Assistant Director, Department of Handloom & Handicrafts, also addressed the participants and highlighted the importance of preserving and promoting traditional crafts while making artisans aware of institutional support and opportunities available for their growth.

FDA conducts 229 Food Safety Inspections of hotels, restaurants

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 16: The Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K, conducted food safety inspections of hotels and restaurants across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir to assess compliance with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the regulations made thereunder.

A total of 229 hotels and restaurants were inspected, during which 124 food samples of various commodities, including milk and milk products, spices, edible oils and prepared food, were lifted and forwarded to NABL-accredited laboratories for analysis.

During the inspections, as per an official statement, violations of the prescribed sanitary and hygienic requirements were observed in certain food establishments. Accordingly, 38 Improvement Notices were issued to the concerned Food Business Operators (FBOs), directing them to undertake necessary corrective measures and ensure compliance with the prescribed food safety requirements.

Further, five cases were filed under Section 56 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which provides for a penalty of up to 1 lakh. In addition, 29 cases were compounded under



Section 69 of the Act, with a total fine of 50,000 imposed.

The Designated Officers and Food Safety Officers have been directed to continue inspections and sampling of hotels, restaurants and other food establishments in their respective jurisdictions and to take appropriate action against violations in accordance with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the regulations made thereunder.

Food Business Operators have been advised to ensure compliance with the prescribed requirements relating to food safety, sanitation and hygiene, storage, handling and preparation of food. Any violation shall be dealt with in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.

Consumers are requested to report any suspected unsafe or adulterated food product through Toll-Free Helpline No. 104 or email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in

DCHB training programme held in Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, SEPTEMBER 16: A training programme for the preparation of the District Census Handbook (DCHB) was held Wednesday at Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Kulgam as part of the ongoing preparations for Census 2027.

The training programme, as per an official statement, was organised to acquaint the concerned officials with the procedures, formats and other technical aspects involved in the preparation of the District Census Handbook.

The training was imparted by officers from the Directorate of Census Operations (DCO), J&K, who provided detailed guidance on the collection, compilation, verification and presentation of the requisite information.

During the training, participants were briefed about the structure and salient features of the DCHB, the information to be collected through revenue and other official records, preparation of village and town directories, identification of relevant

fields, scrutiny of data and adherence to the prescribed schedules and timelines.

Speaking on the occasion, District Census Officer, Kulgam, Viqar Ahmad Giri, emphasised the importance of the DCHB in providing a comprehensive statistical and administrative profile of the district and highlighted that the Handbook shall serve as an important reference document containing valuable information relating to villages, towns, administrative units, demographic characteristics, civic amenities, infrastructure and other relevant indicators.

He further stressed upon the officials to undertake the assigned work with accuracy, diligence and a coordinated approach, ensuring that the information collected from the field and available through official records is properly verified before compilation.

The officers of DCO also interacted with the participants and addressed their queries regarding the various components of DCHB preparation.

DLSA Udhampur reviews implementation of H&R compensation scheme

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, SEPTEMBER 16: The District legal Services Authority Wednesday reviewed the implementation of the directions of the Supreme Court of India in:- "S. Rajasekaran vs Union of India & Ors", including Hit and Run Motor Accident Compensation Scheme, 2022 here at a meeting of Scheme Committee members.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was chaired by Secretary DLSA Sumati Sharma in her Office Chamber and attended by Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Dr. Umesh Shan; Incharge Dy.

SP Headquarters Jitendar Singh Sambyal and Litigation Officer Rimpy Sharma- all members.

The meeting discussed modalities for spreading public awareness about the Compensation to be provided to Victims of Hit and Run Motor Accidents as recommended by the SC.

The meeting observed that generating mass public awareness about the scheme i.e. Victim Compensation of Hit and Run Motor Accidents Scheme, 2022 form key of the Committee guidelines. The meeting noted that it is mandatory for every officer in charge of Police Station to

forward FAR (First Accident Report) to the CEO (Claim Enquiry Officer) within one month from the date of accident.

The Committee also recommended that I/Os should spread awareness amongst the victims and the victim's family about compensation and report to us how many cases were registered and how many were compensated in this year.

Member Jitendar Singh Sambyal, Incharge, Deputy Superintendent of Police Hqrs, Udhampur was asked to spread awareness amongst the SHOs of District Udhampur about the scheme.

Driving licences of NDPS accused disqualified in Doda

KT News Desk

DODA, SEPTEMBER 16- In a significant action aimed at promoting road safety and preventing the misuse of driving privileges, Assistant Regional Transport Officer Tasleem Wani has disqualified two Driving Licences belonging to persons accused in a case registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The action was taken under the directions and supervision of Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal and in close coordination with District Police. The proceedings, as per an official statement, were initiated on the basis of recommendations and details

of FIR No. 239/2026, registered under Sections 8/21/22/29 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Doda.

Accordingly, the Driving Licence JK0620100002783 of Mohammad Arif, S/o Mohammadd Aayub, R/o Bershalla, Tehsil & District Doda – DL JK0620200001139 of Shohrab Hussain, S/o Mohammad Sharief, R/o Mohalla Akramabad, Tehsil & District Doda were disqualified.

The action underscores the commitment of the District Administration Doda and District Police Doda towards promoting road safety, responsible driving and preventing the misuse of driving privileges by persons involved in unlawful activities.

Govt fixes deadlines for 6,000 PM Package flats

Rs 82.45 crore migrant camp renovation to start shortly

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Sep 16: A meeting to review the ongoing and new projects of the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) was held under the joint chairmanship of Anil Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, PW(R&B) Department and Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary, DMRR&R.

The meeting was attended by the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner (M), J&K, Chief Engineers PW(R&B) North/Central/South Kashmir, Chief Engineer KPDC, Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Jammu and senior officers from the Public Works Department, DMRR&R, Jal Shakti Department and Divisional Administration Kashmir.

It was informed that out of 6,000 flats approved for accommodation of PM Package employees at 20 locations across Kashmir Valley, 5,176 flats have been completed. Besides, allied works including installation of lifts, internal roads, drainage and community halls are also nearing completion at most sites.

Specific deadlines for completion of balance works and handover/takeover were fixed, with directions to hand over the possession of completed flats to the eligible employees



in a phased manner as per allotments already made under the government norms.

Regarding major repair and renovation of various blocks at migrant camps in Jammu, for which the government has approved Rs 82.45 crore, it was informed that tender formalities have been completed and work is likely to start shortly.

Meanwhile, directions were also issued for finalization of a detailed project for upgradation of infrastructure in the migrant schools, health dispensaries, internal roads and parks in the migrant camps. Likewise, an extensive review of construction of PoJK Bhawan at Suketar was also held with emphasis on completing the project in all respects within the current financial year.

The Chief Engineer, PW(R&B) Jammu apprised the meeting that the DPR for construction

of additional flats for Kashmiri migrants at Purkhoo, Jammu is being finalized and the Multipurpose Community Hall at Jagti with an estimated cost of Rs 6.50 crore has been completed. It was further informed that for new projects with an approximate financial implication of Rs 20.00 crore at migrant camps Purkhoo, Nagrota, Muthi and Jagti in the current financial year, tender formalities are in progress.

Besides, DPRs are being prepared for the new projects proposed for next financial year, including E-Learning Centres, Digital Libraries and Reading Rooms, Career Counselling and Guidance Centres, Skill Development and Vocational Training Centres, Entrepreneurship Facilitation Centres, Sports Infrastructure and Solar Power/Water Conservation projects in migrant camps.

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 16: Highlighting RBI's directive that a financed vehicle can be seized only through "lawful means", the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the federal bank to enforce its guidelines on non-banking financial companies and scheduled commercial banks to ensure that borrowers are not dispossessed of their hypothecated vehicles without due process of law.

The top court's direction came in a judgement in which it ordered Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd to close the loan accounts of a truck owner, and refund Rs 4.5 lakh realised from the sale of his vehicle with six per cent annual interest.

It also asked the finance firm to pay Rs 10 lakh compensation for mental agony and loss of livelihood caused by the unauthorised repossession of his vehicle.

A bench of justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe held that financial institutions cannot use force, stealth or arbitrary methods to recover loans, even when borrowers have defaulted on repayment.

Justice Narasimha, writing the judgement, said, "It is well-settled in law that a financier's right to take possession of the financed vehicle in the first instance, is a matter of contract, where an agreement confers such a right, there is no legal impediment to its exercise unless the contract is unconscionable

or opposed to public policy."

"Such clauses of self-help repossession are not, in themselves, an evil to be eradicated: they are what make it commercially feasible for institutions to extend credit, against the security of the very asset financed, to borrowers of modest means, truck operators and small transporters among them, who possess no conventional collateral and would otherwise remain outside the reach of institutional finance," the verdict said.

But, this right operates as an alternative to recovery through courts or tribunals, outside the supervision of a court at the first instance, it must be construed with great circumspection, it said, adding if such terms are left unchecked, they are capable of being read as an "unbridled licence to seize property by stealth, by force or in the dead of night, converting a facility meant to promote financial inclusion into an instrument of oppression against the very class it was designed to serve".

The bench referred to the RBI's master circulars, guidelines, and clarifications and said that banks and financial institutions must recover loans lawfully and fairly, without harassing or using force against borrowers.

"The Guidelines/Master Circulars/Clarifications issued by RBI to NBFCs and Scheduled Commercial Banks have existed only on paper, and no steps have been taken by the RBI to implement it.

"We, therefore, direct the RBI to take effective steps to secure

genuine compliance, by NBFCs and Scheduled Commercial Banks alike, with the Guidelines/Master Circulars /Clarifications, it has issued from time to time, so that incidents of the present kind, where a citizen is dispossessed of his livelihood in the dead of night, without notice and without recourse, do not recur. The Registry is directed to send a copy of this judgment to RBI," it said.

The RBI directives said that lenders and recovery agents must not threaten, intimidate, or harass borrowers, including at odd hours or through muscle power.

They also said vehicle seizure must follow legal procedures and banks cannot use goondas or forcibly take possession.

Banks must conduct due diligence when appointing recovery agents and ensure they follow RBI guidelines, the RBI had said, adding that loan agreements must contain legally valid repossession provisions consistent with the Indian Contract Act, 1872.

Repossession terms should specify notice periods, lawful possession procedures, a final repayment opportunity, and sale or auction processes, they said.

The top court said such safeguards are only on papers and asked the RBI to enforce them.

The judgement, delivered in the case of Hari Dutta Sharma, quashed the Allahabad High Court's order dismissing the borrower's petition. The top court also awarded Rs 50,000 in

litigation costs.

The case concerned a Tata SFC 407 truck financed through a commercial vehicle loan obtained from Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company.

The borrower had taken a loan of Rs 10.40 lakh, of which Rs 9.36 lakh was disbursed, and later received a supplementary loan of Rs 1.04 lakh.

The loan was secured by hypothecation of the vehicle.

Following defaults, the finance company repossessed the truck in April 2023.

The borrower alleged that four unidentified persons broke open the vehicle's steering lock and drove it away at around 1 am on April 9, 2023, without serving the contractually required notice.

He lodged a lost article report and an e-FIR the same day.

The company subsequently informed the borrower that the vehicle had been sold on August 31, 2023, for Rs 4.5 lakh.

It claimed that Rs 5.71 lakh was outstanding and sought payment of the remaining dues.

The top court examined the repossession clause in the loan agreement, which required a seven-day notice before taking possession of the vehicle.

The verdict held that the clause was inconsistent with Reserve Bank of India guidelines and the Indian Contract Act as it allowed the financier to dispense with notice, enter places to seize the vehicle, and determine the procedure for repossession and sale at its own discretion.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’

unity and harmony.

He noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is manifesting this philosophy globally.

The Lieutenant Governor urged society to remain vigilant against divisive elements and emphasised that unity is India's greatest strength. He reminded the gathering that Sanatana culture nurtures diversity, harmony, and human welfare. He called upon saints and enlightened members of society to guide the nation in realising comprehensive development.

The Lieutenant Governor affirmed his confidence that the spirit of unity will once again make India a developed nation, restoring its ancient glory. (KNO)

Seven-day Assembly

transfer. After that, there will be no charge on individual consumers until you cross a ceiling," he said.

Abdullah said operating the UPI system involved significant costs, but suggested that the Government of India should avoid imposing charges on ordinary people. "As far as I understand, running this UPI system is not cheap. It takes a lot of money to run it. And the truth is that we do not appreciate what we get for free," he said.

"The Government of India should try not to impose charges on the common people. If there is a charge on a company, I have no objection to it because the company earns better than the UPI anyway," he added.

On the issue of water bodies, CM Abdullah said the problem is not new and called it a legacy issue that could not be resolved overnight. "This is not a problem of the last two years. This is a legacy issue. We will not be able to deal with it overnight. But we are working on it," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government is working through different schemes to address the issue and protect water bodies. "We are working on different schemes, whether it is in Sasaki or other schemes. We are trying to not only save our water bodies, but also increase them," he said. (KNO)

Don't rely on Centre's

restored after the Assembly elections. "We were also promised restoration of statehood after elections, but they failed to keep their promise even after two years," Abdullah said.

The remarks came during his visit to Pulwama, where he reviewed the progress of development projects and interacted with district officers regarding ongoing works. During the visit, around Rs 86 crore worth of development projects were dedicated to the public.

According to officials, eight completed projects involving an expenditure of around Rs 23.12 crore were inaugurated, while foundation stones for 11 new projects worth approximately Rs 63.01 crore were laid.

The projects relate to various sectors, including health, education, road

connectivity and public infrastructure, and are aimed at strengthening basic services and addressing developmental requirements in the district.

Abdullah also said the tourism potential of Pulwama had not received adequate attention and announced that his government would focus more on developing tourism destinations in the district.

He particularly highlighted the potential of the Tral area and said funds had already been earmarked for tourism-related development there.

"Till now, there has been the least amount of focus on tourism in Pulwama district. Despite the potential, we have not been able to develop any tourism site here in the district," he said. "I have allocated money to Tral for tourism development. I have promised more funds to bring Pulwama on the tourism map."

CM Abdullah said the government would explore the tourism potential of different areas of Pulwama and work towards developing the necessary infrastructure and facilities so that visitors could be attracted while local communities also benefit from the sector.

Asked about the ongoing protest by National Health Mission employees across Jammu and Kashmir, Omar said the government could not prevent employees from holding protests but maintained that formal talks would be held after they call off the agitation. "We cannot stop anyone from protesting, but we can talk to them only after they end their protest," he said.

The Chief Minister explained that allowing negotiations while employees were on strike could encourage other groups to adopt similar methods for raising their demands. "If we solve their issues during the protest, then everyone will come on protest with their issues," he said.

CM Abdullah referred to the recent agitation by medical interns, saying the government had engaged with them after they ended their protest. "We talked to the medical interns after they ended their protest and the same will happen here," he said. (KNO)

Over 55% J&K

further said that several states, including Haryana, Goa, and Madhya Pradesh, are close to the national mean, while larger States such as Maharashtra and Rajasthan maintain encouraging levels in line with national performance.

"At the other end, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir, Mizoram, Puducherry, and Andhra Pradesh record some of the lowest outcomes, with fewer than 45% of children demonstrating grade-level skills in one or more subjects. States such as Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Nagaland also remain below the national mean, suggesting persistent gaps in preparatory-stage learning," it reads.

It also said that the spread between the highest and lowest performers is substantial, with a difference of more than 30 percentage points in Language, over 25 percentage points in Mathematics and over 27 percentage

points in 'The World Around Us'.

"These disparities signal the need for sustained focus on upper-primary readiness to ensure that foundational gains are not lost as children progress through the system," reads the documents. (KNO)

LoP Sharma calls

pave the way for us. We will show how to work. It is they who have the work, not us, as we are in the Opposition," Sharma said.

Sharma also questioned the decision to hold the forthcoming Assembly session for seven sittings, says the Assembly has to address issues from all 90 constituencies and questioned whether seven sittings would provide adequate time for the purpose.

"If the Speaker puts his hand on his heart and assures that they can hear the issues of 90 constituencies in just seven sittings, I will consider myself a liar," he said.

On local body elections, Sharma accused the NC of changing their position on elections.

He said the party has repeatedly accused the Centre of delaying Assembly elections in the past, while the National Conference was now questioning the need for Panchayat and Urban Local Body elections.

Sharma said the government should facilitate the conduct of Panchayat and ULB elections and alleged that the delay was affecting the implementation of funds from the Centre.

On the possibility of another BJP-PDP alliance, Sharma said political circumstances had led to the formation of the coalition government in 2014.

He said the BJP had entered the arrangement without compromising its core ideals and with the stated objective of providing governance to people.

"Sometimes circumstances evolve things. In 2014, the composition was such and we agreed. We formed the government for the people and for convenience, but it does not mean we will join hands with them to loot people," Sharma said.

He said the PDP was not right in 2014 and maintained that his party continued to hold the same position.

Sharma also alleged that corruption levels had increased and that the youth were distressed.

The LoP also criticised the government over electricity prices, saying people had been burdened by higher power costs.

He cited issues concerning NHM workers, daily wagers and Anganwadi

workers, and said these matters would also be raised by the Opposition.

The LoP said the government had failed to adequately address several public concerns and reiterated that the Opposition would continue to raise what he described as genuine demands during the Assembly session. (KNO)

Dal Lake loses

Only eight species were recorded during the study, the researchers said, compared with more than 14 species reported in earlier studies.

The survey found Cyprinus carpio specularis to be the most abundant species across all three sites, followed by "Cyprinus carpio communis.

Native snow trout species, including Schizothorax niger and Schizothorax curvifrons, were among the least abundant fish recorded.

The researchers reported seven Schizothorax niger at both Hazratbal and Nehru Park and five at Nishat. Schizothorax curvifrons numbers were four, seven and four respectively at the three sites.

The study also recorded Carassius carassius, Crossochellus diplochilus, Puntius conchonus and Gambusia holbrooki at the three sampling locations.

Researchers said some fish species reported in previous studies were not found during their survey, which they described as an indication of declining ichthyofaunal diversity.

DECLINE DUE TO SEVERAL PRESSURES

The study attributed the decline to several pressures, including untreated sewage, agricultural runoff, eutrophication, introduction of exotic species, overfishing and loss of fish breeding grounds.

It also raised concern over the reported presence of alligator gar, an invasive predatory fish, saying it could prey on the fry and fingerlings of native Schizothorax species.

The researchers recommended controlling untreated sewage and agricultural runoff entering the lake, managing aquatic weeds and regulating human activities around the urban water body.

They also called for restocking native and endemic fish species, preventing the introduction of exotic invasive species and imposing measures against overfishing.

The study said fish are an important component of Dal Lake's ecosystem as well as a source of food and income for communities dependent on fisheries.

The researchers further said that the lake's fish diversity has been substantially affected and said immediate conservation measures were needed to prevent further loss of its aquatic biodiversity. (KNO)

Kashmir's fishermen

households supplement their income through agriculture, horticulture, livestock rearing, wage labour, handicrafts and the harvesting of aquatic resources.

The review said declining fish catches associated in previous studies with habitat degradation, pollution, overexploitation and environmental changes have added to livelihood insecurity.

FISH MARKETING LARGELY UNORGANISED

Fish marketing also remains largely traditional and unorganised. The most common channel involves fishermen selling their catch to middlemen, who then supply retailers and consumers, reducing the share received by fishermen.

Women contribute substantially to fish sorting, cleaning, processing, preservation and marketing, but face limited access to credit, training, extension services and decision-making opportunities.

The review identified environmental degradation, encroachment, siltation, domestic sewage and agricultural

runoff as major pressures on fish habitats and aquatic biodiversity.

It recommended sustainable fisheries management, restoration of degraded water bodies, improved sewage treatment, livelihood diversification, better access to institutional credit and stronger educational and vocational support for fishing communities.

It also called for improved fish markets, cold-storage facilities, transportation, extension services and greater participation of fishermen in decisions affecting their livelihoods. (KNO)

IGP directs strengthened

meeting, Sujit Kumar reviewed the security grid and preparedness across the Central Kashmir Range, with particular focus on the deployment and operational readiness of personnel. IGP Kashmir stressed the need to enhance CI operations, area domination, intensify naka checking at vulnerable locations and strengthen checking and surveillance along inter-district borders.

IGP Kashmir further directed the officers to ensure that security arrangements remain dynamic and responsive to any vulnerable situation. Sujit Kumar emphasized the importance of regular assessment of security arrangements and timely strengthening of deployments wherever required. IGP Kashmir also directed the officers to remain vigilant and ensure that all necessary preventive measures are in place for maintaining peace and public safety.

The meeting concluded with directions to all concerned officers to maintain round-the-clock vigilance, strengthen preventive security measures and ensure close coordination among field formations for maintaining a peaceful and secure environment across the Central Kashmir Range. (KNO)



India should aspire to be among early leaders in emerging tech: PM Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India should aspire to be among the early leaders in emerging technologies and asserted that the government is committed to a predictable and responsive policy environment.

Charing a semiconductor roundtable with leading CEOs here, the prime minister also emphasised the importance of close collaboration between the government and the semiconductor industry in shaping India's technology future.

He highlighted India's strong foundation of talent, technology adoption and infrastructure, and called for greater industry participation in skilling, innovation and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said.

Modi said India should aspire to be among the early leaders in emerging technologies and noted the significant progress made in the semiconductor sector.

He said the ecosystem is now moving from foundational efforts to a phase of greater scale and



opportunity.

The prime minister reiterated the government's commitment to a predictable and responsive policy environment, while emphasising that policies must evolve in line with technological advancements and industry requirements, the statement said.

He invited industry leaders to share suggestions on policy and administrative measures, and assured them that their inputs would be given due consideration in further strengthening

the sector.

Modi encouraged industry leaders to actively participate in the next phase of India's semiconductor growth.

The CEOs appreciated the government's sustained efforts to develop India's semiconductor capabilities, noting the progress made in manufacturing, design, infrastructure and talent development.

They expressed confidence in the opportunities emerging under the India Semiconductor

Mission (ISM) 2.0 and in the country's potential to build capabilities across the semiconductor value chain, including manufacturing, research and development (R&D), advanced technologies and supporting industries.

Referring to the target of training one crore people in AI, Modi said India's talent pool, combined with the experience and capabilities of global industry leaders, can create significant opportunities.

Appreciating the prime minister's leadership and support, the CEOs said the progress achieved in recent years has created a strong foundation for further industry participation.

They expressed their commitment to contributing to India's emergence as a globally-competitive semiconductor-and-technology hub.

The meeting was attended by CEOs, heads and representatives of various organisations, including SEMI, Micron, Infineon, Applied Materials, ASML, Merck, Tokyo Electron Limited, Fujifilm, AMD, Intel, Tata Electronics, Lam Research, Rapidus, NXP, Foxconn, Semi Conductor Devices, Advantest, Celesta Capital, CG Power and IBM Research.

Delhi tops NITI Aayog's India electric Mobility Index 2025



PTI

New Delhi, Sep 16: Delhi has secured the first position in the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2025 released by the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog on Wednesday, scoring 84 points, Transport Minister Pankaj Singh said.

The index assesses states and Union territories on key parameters such as transport electrification, EV charging infrastructure, and research and innovation. Delhi has left behind Maharashtra, which ranked second with 78 points, followed by Karnataka with 73, Chandigarh with 71 and Goa with 65 points. "Delhi securing the top position in the NITI Aayog index is national recognition of the city's environment-friendly and sustainable transport policies. Delhi government is continuously working towards making electric mobility a people's movement and developing a modern and world-class EV ecosystem in the capital," Singh said.

Singh added that the government's endeavour is not merely to increase the number of electric vehicles, but to develop a modern, clean and sustainable transport system for Delhi that also meets the needs of future generations. Delhi's performance has been supported by the EV Policy 2026, which provides financial incentives to EV buyers and promotes the expansion of the charging network.

"The Delhi government is also expanding the deployment of electric buses, with a target of putting 14,000 electric buses on the roads by financial year 2028-29," the transport Minister said in a statement.

He added that the recognition by NITI Aayog would encourage the government to accelerate efforts towards expanding electric vehicles, charging infrastructure and the electrification of public transport.

Over Rs 5,000 cr earned from scrap disposal in 5 years: Jitendra Singh



PTI

New Delhi, Sep 16: More than Rs 5,000 crore has been earned through scrap disposal during special cleanliness drives undertaken by the government over the last five years, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Wednesday.

Addressing an event to launch the website for Special Campaign 6 to monitor cleanliness and reduce pendency in government offices, Singh said the initiative reflects the citizen-centric approach of the government and demonstrates how a national call can become a people's movement when it addresses foundational issues affecting the everyday lives of citizens.

The campaign has also shown that systematic cleanliness and waste management can generate substantial economic value, said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

Over the last five years, Rs 5,000 crore has been earned through scrap disposal, while 1,000 lakh square feet of office space has been freed, more than 24 lakh cleanliness campaign sites have been undertaken, and around two crore files have been weeded out to improve record management, he said. These achievements reflect the expansion of the campaign beyond cleanliness to efficient utilisation of government resources, reduction of pendency,

better use of public spaces and conversion of waste into wealth, Singh said.

Recalling the beginning of the swachhata initiative, he said cleanliness was among the earliest priorities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the government assumed office in 2014.

Modi's emphasis on swachhata in his first Independence Day address on August 15, 2014, brought a foundational issue affecting the everyday lives of common citizens to the centre of the governance agenda, he said.

The initiative also marked a departure from the conventional status quo approach and greater emphasis on citizen-centric governance, Singh said.

He said the response to the swachhata campaign demonstrated how a clear national call can lead to widespread public participation and behavioural change.

Recalling the emphasis on the construction of toilets, particularly for women, Singh spoke about the hardships faced by women in rural and suburban areas and the difficulties experienced by school-going girls because of inadequate sanitation facilities. He cited an instance from his own constituency of Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir, where a class 9 girl had stopped attending school until a toilet was constructed at her home and school. A subsequent

survey found around 200 households facing similar concerns, bringing to light a significant issue that had remained largely unaddressed, the minister said.

Singh said one of the major outcomes of the sustained Swachhata campaign has been a change in public behaviour, with people becoming increasingly conscious about littering and cleanliness in public spaces.

At the same time, the campaign has changed the perception of waste by demonstrating its economic value through the principle of "waste to wealth", he added.

The minister also spoke about the campaign's contribution to improving workplace discipline and timely clearance of files.

He said dashboards and online feedback mechanisms have enabled ministries and departments to assess their progress from time to time and improve implementation.

Recalling instances of neglected and inaccessible spaces in government establishments, Singh said the campaign also provided an opportunity to identify such areas, clear them and put them to productive use.

He said the dedicated campaign period from October 2, Gandhi Jayanti, to October 31, Sardar Patel Jayanti, should not be seen as a period during which cleanliness activities are undertaken only for a month.

Rather, the campaign serves as an annual reiteration of the resolve and commitment to maintain cleanliness, efficiency and responsiveness throughout the year, the minister said.

Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Nivedita Shukla Verma, said Special Campaign 6 is not merely about cleaning files and offices but about redefining the culture of governance by making efficiency, cleanliness and responsiveness an everyday feature of government functioning.

‘India witnessing progress, cultural revival under Modi's leadership’



PTI

Mumbai/Pune, Sep 16: BJP president Nitin Nabin on Wednesday visited famous Ganesh pandals in Mumbai and Pune, saying the "cultural revival" has reached every section and community under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

He offered prayers at Sidhivinayak temple, Lalbaugcha Raja and the Bandra West Ganapati pandals in Mumbai on the third day of the Ganesh festival. He also visited the famous Shrimant Dagaduseth Ganapati and Kasba Ganesh in Pune, accompanied by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Nabin and Fadnavis also visited the Ganapati mandal of Pune MP and Union Minister Murlidhar Mohol in the Kothrud area.

Hailing the tradition of celebrating the Ganesh festival, Nabin said he was fortunate to get the opportunity to offer prayers to Lord Ganapati in Maharashtra after assuming the post of the BJP's national

president.

In Pune, Nabin and Fadnavis said they prayed for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's longevity and success on the eve of his birthday because "aspirations of 135 crore people are attached to him".

During his visit to famous Ganpati pandals in Mumbai earlier in the day, Nabin praised Maharashtra's contribution to the country's progress, saying the western state was advancing alongside the rest of India under Modi's leadership.

"The chief minister used the right term -- this is a time of cultural revival. Over the last 12 years, under the leadership of PM Modi, this has reached every section and every community of the country," Nabin said while addressing BJP workers.

Calling Maharashtra the "holy land" of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Nabin highlighted Maharashtra's longstanding contribution to India's development and its continued leadership.

"Maharashtra has always contributed to India's development and continues to make a

leading contribution today," he added.

He invoked the ideals of Lord Ram, saying that Indian culture and the country's development should progress simultaneously.

"Let us all move forward by matching the pace of Indian culture with the pace of India's development," he said.

Nabin also highlighted Modi's slogan, "Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas, sabka prayas", saying 140 crore people are collectively working towards a developed India.

Fadnavis, who accompanied the BJP chief, said Nabin represents the new generation and new leadership in the BJP.

"He is a symbol of the new energy and new blood brought into our organisation. Under Modiji's leadership. There has been a cultural revival and all our festivals are now celebrated with great enthusiasm and grandeur," he said.

Fadnavis added that Indian cultural traditions are being celebrated with greater enthusiasm under Modi's leadership.

Speaking to reporters earlier in the day, Nabin said he was fortunate to visit Maharashtra on the occasion of the Ganesh festival, as it was his first visit to the state after becoming the BJP president.

"I am overwhelmed and pray for the welfare of Maharashtra and the country," he said.

Nabin joined Ganesh festivities at the chief minister's official residence in Mumbai and also visited Deputy CM Eknath Shinde's official residence. He paid a courtesy visit to Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar.

Pak Navy vessel collides with Indian Navy ship: MEA summons Pakistan Charge d'Affaires

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 16: India on Wednesday summoned the Pakistani Charge d'Affaires (CDA) following "unacceptable conduct" by a Pakistan Navy vessel that led to a collision with an Indian Navy ship in international waters in the Arabian Sea.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the diplomat was advised to convey to the Pakistani authorities concerned the need for all military units to observe due care and respect the provisions of the relevant agreements between the two sides in order to prevent any repeat of such incidents.

"The CDA was summoned to the Ministry of

External Affairs today and a strong protest was lodged with him over the unacceptable and unprofessional conduct of Pakistani naval units at sea that led to a collision with a unit of the Indian Navy," the MEA said.

"While the incident, which took place in international waters, did not cause any major damage, the conduct of the Pakistani naval ship was in direct contravention of Article 10 of the agreement between India and Pakistan on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troops Movements of April 1991," it said.

The Charge d'Affaires of India in Islamabad has also been instructed to lodge a similar protest with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, the MEA said.

Satya Niketan building collapse not ordinary mishap: Delhi HC

PTI

New Delhi, Sep 15: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said the multi-storey hostel building collapse in Satya Niketan, which resulted in the death of seven persons including students, was not an ordinary mishap.

A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said the four students who died came to the nation's capital from small towns with hopes of building a career, but these were "shattered" due to the "callous and criminal conduct" of certain persons.

"Four students lost their lives in the mishap...very tragic. It's not an ordinary incident of any mishap. These four students had come to the capital with a lot of hopes and dreams, coming from small towns. All of that was shattered by such callous and criminal conduct on the part of (certain persons)," the court orally remarked.

The building at Satya Niketan, which housed a boys' paying-guest accommodation near the Delhi University's South Campus, collapsed on September 6 while repair work was underway. Several people were also injured in the collapse. Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma said that several steps have been taken by the authorities after the incident, including proactive



mapping and earmarking of land and other facilities for students.

The bench, however, responded that the issue of lack of hostel facilities was not a "new phenomenon".

"Who doesn't know the problem of hostels in the city? Students are flocking to Delhi for higher education, and this is not a new phenomenon. It has been happening for the last 20-25 years in the hope that they will build their career. See what has happened," the bench remarked. The court was hearing a PIL by Aakarshak Danveer Rathi which sought an independent probe into the matter, inspection of all paying guests as well as compensation and

rehabilitation scheme for victims and families.

The court said the PIL would be heard along with another pending petition on September 25. The high court on September 7 ordered a high-level MCD inquiry into the incident and made it clear that the government cannot evade responsibility. It had said the incident is not only unfortunate but it has evoked deep concern about inadequate housing facilities, including hostels run by Delhi University or the government, safety and security of students and not-so-adequate measures employed by the MCD and other authorities to regulate such PG facilities.

Mecca attack attempt prompts strong Saudi response, Houthis deny role

AP

Cairo, Sep 16: Saudi Arabia accused Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels of trying to attack Islam's holiest city, as the region responded with condemnation Wednesday but no sign of military support. The kingdom, a key US ally, declared Mecca a "red line" as it slid deeper into the new front of the Iran war.

With the world's biggest oil exporter under fire from the rebels backed by the Saudis' regional adversary, the kingdom needs a safe outlet for its crude as well as military assistance. There's no clear path to either.

A crucial Saudi pipeline has been shut down, reportedly for weeks, after an attack by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq. The Houthis have been targeting infrastructure in the kingdom and its shipping on the Red Sea, where they have seized several islands in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. And Iran is still targeting ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Oil prices remain above USD 100 a barrel.

The Houthis denied firing drones toward Mecca, about 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) from Yemen's border. The Saudis said they intercepted and destroyed the drone before it entered the airspace over the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad.

Turkey and Pakistan say the Saudis haven't asked for help



The attacks are the first test of a new defence pact among Saudi Arabia, NATO member Turkey and nuclear power Pakistan. But officials from Turkey and Pakistan told The Associated Press they have not received a Saudi request for support in response to the Houthis' escalation.

The Turkish official said efforts to "institutionalise" the alliance need to be completed before the pact becomes operational. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the issue.

Amid the condemnation of the attempted attack on Mecca, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said his country and the Saudis stand

"unwaveringly, shoulder to shoulder." Turkey's foreign minister expressed solidarity and said no country can "remain indifferent," state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Criticism also came from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, representing over 57 Muslim states, which said the attempt violates the "sanctity of holy sites."

This was the second attempted attack by the Houthis against Mecca after the rebels fired a ballistic missile toward the city in 2017, according to Col Turki al-Maliki, spokesperson for the Saudi-led military coalition fighting the rebels.

Houthis claim shooting down an F-15 fighter jet

Later Wednesday, the rebels

claimed, without offering evidence, that they shot down an F-15 fighter jet operated by the Saudi-led coalition over Yemen's central province of Marib.

Houthi military spokesperson Brig Gen Yahya Saree didn't say when it occurred, and The Associated Press could not independently verify the claim. The rebels at times take days to claim attacks.

Spokespeople for the Saudi-led coalition and the Saudi government didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

For now, the US is staying out of the fight

The United States has sold billions of dollars in weapons to Saudi Arabia and has committed to providing training and other support to protect the kingdom, but top US officials in recent days have indicated a lack of desire to get involved in the conflict.

"The Houthis called us, and they don't want to fight with us," US President Donald Trump said Saturday, adding that the rebels appear focused on the Saudis.

Vice President JD Vance on Monday said Washington had been in "constant contact" with the Saudis and had been "engaged in direct conversations with the Houthis themselves," calling it "a very fluid and dynamic thing" to be monitored.

Iran's Araghchi holds talks with Wang, says Tehran not interested in continuing conflict with US



PTI

Beijing, Sep 16 : Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday said Tehran is not interested in continuing the conflict with the US and looks forward to returning to a diplomatic solution, as he held talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and briefed him on the latest developments in West Asia.

His visit to Beijing comes in the midst of an escalation of hostilities in West Asia following the military advances made by Yemen's Houthis, formally known as Ansar Allah. The

Iran-aligned Yemeni political and armed movement has stepped up attacks on Saudi Arabia and taken control of the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea.

The Iran-US war has already restricted the movement of ships and oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, causing a widespread energy crisis.

Araghchi's visit also comes days after his well-publicised interactions with Wang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in New Delhi held from Sept 12-13. Araghchi

accompanied Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to the summit.

This is Araghchi's fifth visit to China since 2024, reflecting the close ties between Tehran and Beijing. During the meeting, Wang said both Iran and the US should return to the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to end the conflict.

He said the continued prolongation of the US-Iran conflict is not in the common interest of the parties concerned and the international community, a readout by the Chinese Foreign Ministry here said.

China encourages Iran and the US to stay rational and exercise restraint, return to the MoU at an early date, rebuild the negotiation mechanism based on the consensus reached so far, and conduct substantive consultations on issues of respective concern, Wang said.

Araghchi briefed Wang on the latest developments in West Asia and the Gulf, saying Iran is not interested in continuing the conflict and was prepared to return to diplomatic channels while defending what it considers its legitimate rights.

Presentation Convent Srinagar, Netherfield Sopore Lift U-15 Football Titles

ADDC Baramulla graces concluding ceremony

KT News Desk

Baramulla, Sep 16: The Rev. Fr. C.B. Simons Memorial Football Tournament concluded today at St. Joseph's School Ground, Baramulla, with the finals of the Under-15 Boys and Girls categories.

In the Under-15 Girls final, Presentation Convent School, Srinagar, emerged as the champions, while Netherfield School, Sopore, clinched the Under-15 Boys title. Additional District

Development Commissioner (ADDC) Baramulla, Pranjali J. Hazarika, was the Chief Guest at the concluding ceremony and presented trophies and prizes to the winning teams. He congratulated the young players and appreciated the organisers for promoting football and providing students with opportunities to showcase their sporting talent.

The concluding ceremony was further enlivened by an impressive drill and band display

presented by the students of St. Joseph's School, which was appreciated by the gathering.

Representatives of various participating schools, school authorities, sponsors, teachers, students, players and other guests attended the ceremony.

The tournament provided young footballers with a platform to compete in a positive sporting environment while promoting discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship and camaraderie among students.



Inter-district divisional level wushu competition for boys commences at Samba



KT News Desk

Samba, Sep 16: The Inter-District Divisional Level Wushu Competition for Under-17 and Under-19 Boys commenced today at the Indoor Stadium Samba, with the participation of young athletes from various districts of the Jammu Division.

The Under-17 Boys Wushu Competition was formally inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Deputy Commissioner Ayushi Sudan.

DYSSO Sunil Singh, along with his staff, warmly welcomed the Chief Guest and other guests on the occasion. Chief Education Officer Yash Paul Sharma, along with other officials, was also present.

The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation of 38 players from seven districts of

the Jammu Division, accompanied by eight officials. The young athletes showcased their talent, technical skills, discipline and sporting spirit during the event.

Interacting with the participating players, Deputy Commissioner Ayushi Sudan encouraged them to remain dedicated to sports, maintain discipline and adopt a healthy and positive lifestyle. She also urged the young players to stay away from drugs and make sports an integral part of their lives.

On the occasion, a pledge was administered to the participants to promote awareness against drug abuse and encourage the youth to contribute towards building a healthy and drug-free society.

MLA kulgam inaugurates inter-district U-19 boys' baseball tournament

KT News Desk

KULGAM, SEP16: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Kulgam, Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami today inaugurated the U-19 inter-district boys baseball tournament at L/NK Shri Nazir Ahmad Wani Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Kulgam.

The tournament is being hosted by the Youth Services and Sports Department, Kulgam, and organised under the supervision of the Joint Director, Youth Services and Sports, Kashmir, with participation from all districts of the Kashmir Division.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Kulgam appreciated the efforts of the Youth Services and Sports Department in providing young athletes with opportunities to showcase their talent and encouraged the youth of Jammu & Kashmir to actively participate in sports, maintain discipline, and contribute positively to society.

"Sports are also very important for health. They keep us physically active and help reduce mental stress. They are beneficial for everyone from children and young people to adults and senior citizens. Even simple activities such as walking, taking a few steps regularly and remaining physically active can make a huge contribution for good health", said MLA in his address.

Eight matches were played in the inaugural day of competition with participating teams exhibiting at a great level of talent and sportsmanship.

The event was attended by numerous sports enthusiasts, locals and dignitaries including ex DDC chairperson Kulgam and other citizens along with sports persons and officials

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