



CM Omar invites industry leaders to explore J&K as GCC destination

Addresses J&K GCC Summit 2026 at IIM Jammu | Says govt committed to competitive ecosystem

KT News Desk

Jammu, Oct 09: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday called upon industry leaders to explore Jammu and Kashmir as an emerging destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs), emphasising that the government is committed to creating a competitive, business-friendly ecosystem that attracts investment, fosters innovation and generates meaningful employment.

"We have to make Jammu and Kashmir a place that is competitive, a place that is attractive to do business, a place where you can make money, and a place where we can compete with the Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities around the country," the Chief Minister said while addressing the inaugural session of the J&K GCC Summit 2026 at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu. He addressed the gathering virtually from New Delhi.

The two-day summit, themed 'Unlocking J&K's GCC Potential



for Building Growth Ecosystem and Catalysing Investment', brings together representatives of government, industry and academia to explore opportunities for developing Jammu and Kashmir's presence in India's expanding GCC ecosystem.

Highlighting the evolution of GCCs in India, the Chief Minister said that what began as call centres and business process outsourcing operations had evolved into centres of innovation, talent, capability and enterprise.

"The story of GCCs in India is a story of evolution, as is the story of Jammu and Kashmir," he said, and added that the transformation of GCCs demonstrated how capabilities and value addition could create new economic opportunities.

Drawing a parallel with Jammu and Kashmir's own journey over the past three to three-and-a-half decades, Omar Abdullah said the fact that the region was now being discussed as a potential destination for GCC investments reflected a significant change in the opportunities being explored.

Acknowledging that Jammu and Kashmir continued to face a perception challenge arising from its past, he said the government was working to address it through investments across industry, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and other emerging sectors, including GCCs.

The Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir need not replicate the growth trajectories of established GCC hubs such as Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai, but could learn from their experiences and position itself to compete with Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

"Coming late to the party is disappointing. | More on P6

Two killed, 21 injured as passenger vehicle plunges into gorge in Rajouri

LG Sinha expresses grief; CM Omar directs best possible treatment to injured

KNO Correspondent

Rajouri, Oct 09: Two persons were killed and 21 others injured after a passenger vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a gorge in the Badhog area of Moghla in Rajouri district on Friday evening.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the vehicle, bearing registration number JK20C-8295, met with an accident while returning from Marchola village.

Soon after the accident, locals and police personnel launched a rescue operation and shifted the injured to Primary Health Centre (PHC) Moghla for treatment.

The deceased were identified as Balbir Singh (45), son of Suram Singh and Pritam Singh, son of Sant Ram, both residents of Moghla.

The injured were identified as Kaushal Singh (23),

son of Rattan Singh; Joginder Singh (80), son of Tirath Singh; Ambika Sharma (45), daughter of Gidish Kumar; Kaushalya Devi (65), wife of Tirath Singh; Babli Devi (30), wife of Tara Singh; Kamal Singh (55), son of Bhim Singh; Digpal Singh (50), son of Sansar Singh; Sanjay Kumar (30), son of Mool Raj, resident of Thalka; Rano Devi (61), wife of Bihari Lal; Shardi Devi (60), wife of Sajib Singh; Darshana Devi (35), wife of Deepo Singh; Sudesh Kumar (50), son of Karnail Singh; Satya Devi (70), wife of Joginder Singh, resident of Badhog; Bindo Devi (35), wife of Joginder Singh; Satvir Singh (60); Parvez Singh (65), son of Chander Singh; Bimla Devi (60), wife of Hari Singh; Neelam Devi (40), wife of Rakesh Singh; Joginder Singh (45), son of Janak Singh; Sundar Singh (60), son of Dilip Singh; and Sanyogita Kumari (55), wife of Sundar Singh.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor | More on P6

J&K likely to witness rain, snow on Oct 10, 13-14: MeT

- Temps above normal in Kashmir
- Reasi receives highest rainfall
- Safe storage of apple, paddy advised

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 09: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Friday predicted that higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir are likely to witness light snowfall on October 10 and again on October 13 and 14.

The weather office forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) predicts cloudy conditions with light rainfall at scattered to many places on October 10 and light snowfall over higher reaches. Thunderstorms and gusty winds are also possible.

The weather is likely to remain generally dry on October

11 and 12. Light rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds are likely at many places on October 13 and 14, while October 15 is expected to remain generally dry, with brief spells of light rain possible at a few places, the forecast predicts. Weather is likely to remain dry from October 16 to 18, it adds.

The Meteorological Centre has advised farmers to continue harvesting and ensure the safe storage of harvested apples and paddy in view of the possibility of thunderstorms and gusty winds on October 10 and October 13-14.

TEMPERATURES REMAIN ABOVE NORMAL

According to the department, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 28.2 degrees Celsius, 4 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 9.3 degrees Celsius, 1.8 degrees above normal.

Qazigund recorded a maximum temperature of 27 degrees Celsius, 4 degrees above normal, while | More on P6

50,000 devotees attend Urs 'Sheikh-ul-Aalam' (RA) at Charar-i-Sharief

Devotees arrive from across country, pray for peace, prosperity, communal harmony

Naveed UI Haq

Budgam, Oct 09: Nearly 50,000 devotees from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country participated in the annual Urs of revered Sufi saint Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA), popularly known as Sheikh-ul-Aalam, at Charar-i-Sharief in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Friday.

The main Urs was marked by Friday prayers and special



Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO-KT)

IGP Kashmir pays obeisance, reviews security
Felicitates Budgam police for busting fake job racket

Naveed UI Haq Ganaiee

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Sujit Kumar Singh on Friday paid obeisance at the shrine of Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA) at Charar-i-Sharief and prayed for peace and tranquillity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Talking to reporters the IGP Kashmir as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said,

"I prayed for peace, tranquillity and progress of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as for the well-being of the J&K Police and the local population."

"The police and CRPF teams deployed here are working very well with the local administration. The civil administration, including ambulance services and the Fire and Emergency Services, are also doing a good job," he said, appreciating the efforts of personnel involved in ensuring the | More on P6

BSF Asst Commandant found unconscious in Kupwara, dies

KNO Correspondent

Kupwara, Oct 09: An Assistant Commandant of the Border Security Force (BSF) died after being found unconscious in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the BSF personnel was found unconscious and unresponsive in the Doban area here in Kupwara.

He was | More on P6

J&K Govt shuffles Police Brass, 100 officers transferred

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 09: In a major administrative shake-up, the Jammu and Kashmir Government on Friday ordered the transfer and posting of 100 senior police officers across the Union Territory with immediate effect.

According to an order issued by the Home Department, a copy of which was accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the reshuffle includes officers from both the Indian Police Service (IPS) and Jammu and Kashmir

Police Service (JKPS) cadres.

Senior IPS officer Danesh Rana, who was awaiting posting, has been appointed Managing Director of the J&K Police Housing Corporation, relieving S.J.M. Gillani of the additional charge.

Garib Dass, Director of the Sher-i-Kashmir Police Academy (SKPA), Udhampur, has been posted as ADG Homeguards, Civil Defence and SDRF, while Dr Mohd Haseeb Mughal has been appointed Director of SKPA Udhampur.

Abdul Jabbar has been



posted as IG Armed Police Jammu, while Shahid Mehraj Rather has been appointed IG Technical Services J&K, retaining the additional charge of Director Police Telecommunications.

Rayees Mohammad Bhat

has been transferred from DIG CID Kashmir to DIG CID Headquarters J&K.

At the range and directorate levels, Shiv Kumar Sharma has been posted as DIG Railways, while Swarn Singh Kotwal has been appointed DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range. Zahid Naseem Manhas has been posted as DIG Armed Police Jammu, and Hareesh H.P. has been appointed Director of the Special Security Force (SSF).

The government has also effected several changes in district police commands.

Sudhanshu | More on P6

OPERATION SINDOOR

In 88 hours, Northern Command destroyed 7 terror camps: Lt Gen Sharma

'12,000 artillery rounds exchanged along LoC amid heavy ceasefire violations'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar/New Delhi Oct 09: Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Friday said that Northern Command destroyed seven terrorist camps

during 'Operation Sindoor', while nearly 12,000 artillery rounds were exchanged along the Line of Control (LoC) during an 88-hour operation in May 2025.

Addressing Defence Summit in New Delhi Lieutenant General Sharma, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, the Northern Command was assigned the | More on P6

Apple harvesting picks up pace in Kashmir ahead of forecast rain

Growers rush to complete picking, move fruit to markets, cold storage

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 09: Apple harvesting across Kashmir is gathering momentum, with growers stepping up picking and transportation of fruit to markets and cold storage facilities as the Meteorological Department forecasts rain in parts of Jammu and Kashmir in the coming days.

With the autumn harvest entering a crucial phase, orchardists are keen to complete the picking of mature fruit

before adverse weather conditions affect orchard operations and the quality of the produce.

Growers told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the ongoing harvesting period is particularly important for the Valley's horticulture sector, which supports the livelihoods of thousands of farming families, labourers, transporters, fruit dealers and other people associated with the apple trade.

They said the pace of harvesting has increased in



several apple-growing areas as orchardists try to make the most of the available dry weather before the anticipated precipitation.

"Every day is important for us at this stage of the season. We have to ensure that the mature fruit is picked on time and shifted to the market or cold storage before the weather changes," a grower from south Kashmir said.

He said growers are closely watching weather updates while coordinating with

labourers, transporters and traders to avoid delays in harvesting and the movement of fruit.

Another orchardist said unseasonal or prolonged rainfall during harvesting can complicate orchard operations, particularly when workers are required to pick fruit and transport it from orchards to collection points.

"We cannot afford unnecessary delays during the peak harvesting period. Once the fruit is ready, it needs to be

picked carefully and handled properly. Any disruption in the weather or transportation can create difficulties for growers," he said.

The growers, however, stressed that the impact of the forecast would depend on the intensity, duration and location of the precipitation.

Alongside the faster harvesting, demand for cold storage facilities is also gaining attention as growers and traders look for ways to preserve fruit and manage | More on P6

Responsible eco-tourism can help create livelihood opportunities: Javed Rana

Inaugurates Wildlife Eco-Tourism Hut at Mughal Road in Surankote



KT News Desk

SURANKOTE, OCTOBER 9: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Friday inaugurated a Wildlife Eco-Tourism Hut along the Mughal Road in Surankote area of Poonch district, developed by the Department of Wildlife Protection at an estimated cost of 1.87 crore under the UT Capex Budget.

Emphasising the importance of eco-tourism infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister, as per an official statement,

said that such facilities are essential for harnessing the tourism potential of ecologically rich areas while ensuring that development remains aligned with environmental conservation.

"The Mughal Road is endowed with immense natural beauty and ecological significance. Developing eco-tourism facilities in this area will provide visitors with an opportunity to experience nature more closely while promoting awareness about our rich biodiversity and the importance of wildlife conservation," Rana said.

He observed that the

eco-tourism hut would add to the visitor infrastructure along the Mughal Road and help promote nature-based tourism in the region. Such facilities, he said, can encourage visitors to explore the area's natural attractions while fostering a greater appreciation of forests, wildlife and fragile mountain ecosystems.

"Our objective is to promote tourism that respects nature and contributes to the conservation of our natural heritage. Eco-tourism must go hand in hand with environmental protection, ensuring that the

ecological character of these areas is preserved even as tourism-related activities expand," Forest Minister said.

Highlighting the potential socio-economic benefits of the initiative, Rana said that the development of eco-tourism infrastructure could generate opportunities for local communities through tourism-related services and associated economic activities. Greater tourist interest, he added, could support local livelihoods while encouraging communities to participate in protecting the region's natural resources.

The Minister stressed that the long-term success of such facilities would depend on their proper maintenance, effective management and responsible use. He called for sustained efforts to ensure that eco-tourism initiatives contribute meaningfully to conservation objectives and provide lasting benefits to the local population.

"We must ensure that the benefits of tourism reach local communities without compromising our environmental priorities. Responsible eco-tourism can help create livelihood opportunities, strengthen conservation awareness and establish a sustainable relationship between people and nature," Rana added.

DIPR Reasi promotes health awareness, responsible AI use among students



KT News Desk

REASI, OCTOBER 09: The Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Reasi Centre Friday organised a symposium here at Government Higher Secondary School (Boys) on the topics "Nutrition and Fitness" and "Use Artificial Intelligence Responsibly and Creatively" under the ongoing Youth Empowerment Programme in the district.

The symposium aimed to sensitise students about the importance of balanced nutrition, physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle, while promoting the ethical, responsible and creative use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Students were encouraged to adopt healthy eating habits, engage in regular physical activities and maintain their physical and mental well-being.

The programme witnessed active participation from students and faculty members. Students enthusiastically

participated in the symposium and shared their views on healthy living and the responsible use of AI in daily life, reflecting their awareness of the importance of personal well-being and the constructive application of emerging technologies.

Later, an official from DIPR briefed the students about various youth-centric government schemes and employment opportunities available in Jammu and Kashmir. The students were encouraged to explore skill development programmes, entrepreneurship initiatives and other avenues for career development and self-employment.

Vice Principal of the School Hukam Chand, while addressing the gathering, emphasised the importance of healthy habits, physical fitness and the responsible use of AI by students for academic and other purposes. He appreciated the DIPR for organising the symposium and expressed hope

ADC Udhampur reviews arrangements for upcoming festivals

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 09: Additional Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Prem Singh Friday chaired a meeting with officers of line departments and civil society members to review arrangements for the smooth and peaceful celebration of Navratri, Dussehra and Maha Navami festivals.

Detailed discussions were held on different arrangements, including security, safe drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, first-aid facilities, sanitation, price regulation, availability of fire tenders, deployment of police personnel and traffic management in the town.

The ADC issued necessary directions to the heads of concerned departments to ensure comprehensive arrangements within their respective jurisdictions.

Special emphasis was laid on strengthening security measures to prevent any untoward incident during the festive season.

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Department was directed to take effective measures for adequate supply of safe drinking water, while Executive Engineer PDD was instructed to maintain uninterrupted power supply throughout the festive period. The Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council was directed to ensure proper sanitation and cleanliness across the town.

The ADC also urged civil society members to extend their cooperation in maintaining a clean and hygienic environment. The general public was advised to avoid roadside parking to maintain smooth traffic movement and prevent congestion.

Shopkeepers were urged to prominently display price lists of essential commodities to facilitate public awareness and prevent overcharging.

The Traffic Department was directed to deploy adequate personnel at key locations to regulate traffic and ensure the smooth movement of vehicles during the festivities.

DC launches 'YES, I CAN' initiative from GCW Udhampur

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 09: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa Friday launched 'YES, I CAN', campaign here from Government College for Women. An initiative of the District Administration Udhampur, the inspirational campaign aims to encourage young minds to set high goals and strive for excellence in their field of interest.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh; Principal of the College Prof. Dr. Nalini Pathania, officers of the District Administration, faculty members and



students.

Interacting with the media after the launch, the DC said that 'YES, I CAN' is an inspirational initiative aimed

at empowering, nurturing, igniting aspirations among youth. "The District Administration will help youth with the right guidance, direction and

opportunities to help them realise their full potential," he said.

He emphasised that Udhampur district possesses immense human potential, with talented students, dedicated teachers, hardworking families and youth capable of excelling in diverse fields. He stressed the need to create an enabling environment where young people believe in their abilities, receive proper guidance and develop the confidence to compete at the highest level.

The DC urged the head of the College and faculty members to encourage deserving and interested students to actively participate

in the initiative and make the best use of the opportunities available through it.

Later, the GCW management organised a function in the Girls' Common Room to release its annual publications for the academic session 2026-27, including Science Pulse, Himtal and the College newsletter.

Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa formally released the publications in the presence of ADC Prem Singh and other dignitaries.

The event also witnessed the release of a book 'Culture and Colonialism' authored by Principal Prof. Dr. Nalini Pathania.

40-hours role play training programme on mediation concludes at J&K Judicial Academy

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, OCTOBER 09: The 40-Hours Role Play Training Programme for Advocates/Experts, concluded on Friday at the Srinagar and Jammu campuses of the J&K Judicial Academy.

The practical training sessions, as per an official statement, were held on 05th, 06th, 08th and 09th October, 2026, under the aegis of the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, Supreme Court of India organized by the Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, in collaboration with the J&K Judicial Academy.

The second day of the Srinagar session was graced by Dr Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, who highlighted the significance of mediation in strengthening the justice delivery system. Emphasizing its transformative potential, Chief Justice observed that mediation is not merely a professional skill but also a means of becoming a better human being and a more effective advocate, public prosecutor or judge. He underscored that practical exercises and role-play sessions foster empathy, understanding and sensitivity in resolving disputes.

Drawing upon examples from Indian epics, religious traditions and the history of Kashmir, Chief Justice highlighted the deep-rooted cultural and historical significance of mediation as a means of peaceful dispute

resolution. Referring to Surah An-Nisa of the Holy Quran, Chief Justice observed that it envisages a process remarkably close to modern mediation, contemplating the appointment of representatives from both sides of a dispute with the express objective of restoring harmony.

Chief Justice emphasized that such examples across religious and cultural traditions demonstrate the enduring relevance of reconciliation and amicable settlement in resolving disputes.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Chairman, Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, was also present on the occasion. He continued guidance and support have been instrumental in advancing mediation initiatives in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Rajeev Gupta, I/C Director, J&K Judicial Academy, in his introductory address, welcomed the dignitaries, resource persons and participants, and highlighted the importance of practical training in developing effective mediation skills.

He emphasized that the interactive and role-play sessions provide participants with valuable hands-on experience in understanding the mediation process and facilitating amicable dispute resolution. He also underscored the importance of strengthening mediation as an effective means of resolving disputes and promoting a culture of mutual understanding and reconciliation.

At the Srinagar Campus, the resource persons,



Monika Jalota and Swarn Sandhir, experienced advocates and certified mediators, conducted interactive sessions and role-play exercises aimed at strengthening the participants' understanding of mediation techniques and their practical application.

The sessions were moderated by Faizan-ul-Haq Iqbal, Coordinator, Main Mediation Centre, who coordinated the proceedings and facilitated the conduct of the programme at the

Srinagar Campus. At Jammu Campus, the programme commenced with a welcome and introductory address by Sunil Kumar, Secretary, J&K Legal Services Committee, who welcomed the resource persons and participants and emphasized the importance of practical training in developing effective and competent mediators.

The Role Play Training Sessions at the Jammu Campus were conducted

by Yashpal Singh Dahiya and Balbir Kaur Gandhi, Resource Persons, Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), Supreme Court of India.

During the concluding session at the Srinagar Campus, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Chairman, Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, emphasised that mediation should be the preferred choice for dispute resolution rather than a last resort.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal observed that the spirit of mediation is inherent in everyday life, beginning within families and extending to schools, communities and professional relationships. Sharing his judicial experience, He highlighted how mediation can facilitate amicable settlements even in long-pending disputes where resolution may initially appear unlikely.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal encouraged the participants to apply their newly acquired skills in practice and contribute meaningfully to the "Mediation for the Nation 3.0" initiative, underscoring the potential of mediation to resolve disputes amicably and enable parties to move forward without bitterness.

Faizan-ul-Haq Iqbal, Coordinator, Main Mediation Centre, proposed the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the Supreme Court of India and the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC) for their support and guidance in facilitating the programme. He also acknowledged the contribution of the Mediation and Conciliation

Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, the Director and staff of the J&K Judicial Academy, and the resource persons, Monika Jalota and Swarn Sandhir, for their valuable guidance and practical insights.

He appreciated the efforts of all those involved in organizing the training programme and the active participation of the trainees, expressing the hope that they would apply their newly acquired skills to advance mediation and contribute to the success of the "Mediation for the Nation 3.0" initiative.

The programme witnessed active participation by advocates/Experts, who engaged in interactive exercises and simulated mediation proceedings. The practical sessions enabled them to apply mediation principles, strengthen their communication and negotiation skills, and develop greater confidence in facilitating the resolution of disputes.

The programme forms part of the continuing efforts of the Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, under the aegis of the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), Supreme Court of India, to strengthen the mediation mechanism and promote a culture of amicable dispute resolution.

The initiative aims to develop a pool of trained and competent mediators capable of facilitating timely, effective and sustainable settlements, thereby enhancing access to justice and reducing the burden of litigation.

TTF Hyderabad 2026

CM's advisor highlights Kashmir Marathon, winter experiences

Invites tourists from southern India, runners nationwide to ex-plore Kashmir

KT News Desk

Hyderabad, Oct 09: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani on Friday invited people from Hyderabad and other parts of southern India to explore the diverse tourism offerings of Jammu and Kashmir.

He also called upon fitness enthusiasts and professional runners from across the country to participate in the up-coming Kashmir Marathon, scheduled to be held in Sri-nagar on October 25.

Addressing the media at the Travel and Tourism Fair (TTF) Hyderabad 2026, where Jammu and Kashmir is par-ticipating as the Partner State, the Advisor highlighted the region's rich cultural heritage, breathtaking land-scapes and expanding adventure tourism opportunities.

He emphasised the need to strengthen tourism linkages with southern India and encourage more visitors from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states to experience the diverse attractions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Giving a special push to the upcom-ing Kashmir Mara-thon, Wani invited



runners and fitness enthusiasts from across the country to participate in the event and experi-ence the natural beauty and hospitality of Kashmir.

He said the marathon offers an opportunity to promote Kashmir as a destination for sports tourism while show-casing its scenic landscapes to partic-ipants and visitors.

The Advisor also called for enhanced

strategic collabora-tion and closer liaison between the travel trade fraterni-ties of Jammu and Kashmir and Hyderabad to expand tourism opportunities, facilitate greater tourist inflows and forge stronger regional partnerships.

The Department of Tourism, Jam-mu and Kashmir, is showcasing J&K's diverse tourism potential at the three-day TTF Hyderabad 2026, with a focus on

strengthening its presence in the south-ern Indian market and attracting visitors for the upcoming winter and spring tour-ism sea-sons.

The fair was jointly inaugurated by Telangana Minister for Tourism Jupally Krishna Rao and Advisor to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Nasir Aslam Wani. Prominent representatives of the national travel and tour-ism indus-try were also present on the occasion.

A major focus of Jammu and Kash-mir's participation is the promotion of the Kashmir Marathon, alongside cus-tomised travel experiences for the winter and spring sea-sons.

The department is showcasing premi-um hospitality facili-ties, curated holiday packages and emerging tourist des-tina-tions to encourage visitors to explore experiences be-yond conventional travel circuits.

A high-level delegation from Jam-mu and Kashmir, led by Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, is representing J&K at the fair, engaging with tourism stakeholders and travel in-dustry representatives to strengthen market outreach and explore avenues for collaboration.

FDA steps up Street Food Safety en-forcement drive

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 09: Continuing its efforts to ensuring safe and hy-gienic food for consumers Food & Drugs Admin-istration (FDA), J&K, has conducted enforcement and awareness activities among street food vendors across Jammu Divi-sion, combining regulatory action with tar-geted awareness initia-tives to promote compliance with food safety standards and protect public health.

During the drive, 95 street food vendors were inspected, 11 cas-es were compounded and fine of

16,000 were im-pose-d for vio-lations of prescribed food safety require-ments. In addition, 19 cases were recommended for adju-dication under Sections 56 and 58 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, before the competent Adju-dicating Officers, i.e., the respective Additional Deputy Commis-sioners of the concerned districts. 17 awareness sessions were organ-ized to educate vendors on safe food-handling practices, personal hygiene, sanitation and statutory com-pliance.

During inspections, violations involving unhygienic food-handling practices and the use of prohib-ited or unsuitable materials for food packaging and serving were observed. In a specific enforce-ment action, 10 kg of newspapers and 20 kg of snacks were destroyed

on the spot by the con-cerned food business operators, and a fine of 4,000 was imposed in connec-tion with the violations detected. Fur-ther regulatory action was initiated, wherever warranted, in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.

The awareness activities focused on the importance of maintaining personal hygiene, keeping food vending premises clean, prevent-ing contamination, using only food-grade materials for packaging and serving, and en-suring proper storage and handling of food. Street food vendors were also sensitised to their legal responsibilities under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and the importance of adopt-ing hygienic practices to prevent foodborne illnesses.

Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, reiterated that ensur-ing food safety requires both strict enforce-ment and sus-tained awareness among food business operators. Street food vendors have been urged to maintain prescribed sanitary and hygienic conditions and ensure that all food offered for sale is safe and wholesome. FDA, J&K, will continue its coordi-nated inspection, awareness and en-forcement activities across the Union Territory, with ap-propriate legal action against violations of food safety norms.

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DC Bandipora reviews winter preparedness for Gurez



KT News Desk

Bandipora, Oct 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipo-ra, Indu Kanwal Chib on Friday chaired a com-prehensive meeting to re-view winter preparedness for Gurez and Tulail at Dak Bungalow, Badugam, Tulail, with concerned district and sectoral officers.

The meeting focused on ensuring uninterrupted essential services, timely snow clearance, road connect-ivity, avail-ability of essential commodities and adequate healthcare arrange-ments in the snowbound areas ahead of the win-ter

season.

Reviewing the status of roads, bridges and ongo-ing infra-structure projects, the DC sought details from the con-cerned engineering departments, including the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and PMGSY. She direct-ed the officers to expedite pending works, resolve bot-tlenecks and road alignment issues, and adhere to strict timelines to ensure comple-tion of critical projects before heavy snowfall.

The DC stressed the need for advance planning and effec-tive coordina-tion among BRO, Roads and Buildings (R&B) and

Mechanical Engineering Department (MED) for timely snow clearance. She directed the concerned departments to submit road-wise snow clearance plans to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Gurez, and ensure the availability of adequate machinery, equipment and manpower, with priority to main roads and vital link roads.

On the occasion, SDM Gurez, Mukhtar Ahmad high-lighted the require-ment for snow clearance machinery at Razdan Top and Kanzalwan, particular-ly for clearing the Z-Khushi curve and Rane Mode. The issue regarding mechanised snow clearance of the Dawar helipad was al-so discussed. The DC directed the Execu-tive Engineers of PWD and MED to formulate a coordi-nated plan to ensure timely clearance of the helipad for emergency require-ments.

The meeting also reviewed arrangements for the deploy-ment and monitoring of emergency vehicles, includ-ing GPS-based tracking, and the availability of adequate fuel and other essential resources to ensure

Continued on
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Apple stock goes up in flames in Sopore

Waris Fayaz

Sopore, Oct 09: Heavy rain and gusty winds turned disas-trous in Sopore's Sempora area after a fire, triggered by an electrical short cir-cuit, gutted an apple storage shed on Thursday evening, officials said.

An official said that the fire broke out late Thursday even-ing, gutting a godown where freshly harvested apples and packaging boxes had been stored. A portion of the grower's house also suffered damage. He said locals and police personnel intervened to bring the blaze under control and prevent it from spreading further,

Continued on
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CISF personnel succumbs to injuries after gunshot wound

KNO

Reasi, Oct 09: A Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel succumbed to his injuries after sustaining a gunshot wound while on duty in Jammu's Reasi district on Friday, officials said. An official said that the CISF person-nel sustained a gun-shot wound in Reasi and later succumbed to his injuries.

He said the injured personnel was shifted to District Hos-pital Reasi for treatment, where he later died. He was identified as Mohammad Mushtaq, a resident of Mari vil-lage in Reasi district. Meanwhile, an investigation into the incident has been in-iti-ated—(KNO)

Police arrest 6 drug peddlers

Srinagar, Oct 09: Jam-mu and Kashmir Police on Friday arrested 06 drug peddlers in separate NDPS cases in Anantnag & Kulgam and recovered contraband substanc-es from their possession.

In a statement, a police spokesperson said that a police party from Police Station Dooru, during naka checking at Fidar Road, apprehended a person identified as Adil Rahman son of Abdul Rahman resident of Peti Khas, Ver-inag. During his personal search, approximately 07 grams of heroin was recovered from his possession. A case un-der relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Dooru, and in-vestigation is underway. In an-other case, a police party from Police Station Dooru, dur-ing naka checking at Qamar, apprehended another person identified as Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat son of Abdul Salaam Bhat resident of Kapran. During his search, approx-imately 08 grams of heroin was recovered from his pos-session. Accordingly, FIR No. 155/2026 under relevant sections of law has been



registered at Police Station Dooru, and in-vestigation is underway.

He said a police party from Police Station Anant-nag, de-played on naka duty at NH-244 near Najigund, Anantnag, intercepted a person identified as Amir Hussain Sheikh son of Mohd Ramzan Sheikh resident of Donipawa. Dur-ing his search, 10.76 grams of charas was recovered from his possession. Necessary legal proceedings have been

ini-tiated in the matter. In another case, a police party from Police Station Anant-nag, during naka checking at Me-hendi Kadal, inter-cepted a person identified as Muneeb Saleem Wani son of Mohammad Saleem Wani resident of Bangidar. During his search, 06 grams of charas was re-covered from his possession. Nec-essary legal proceedings have been initiated in this case as well.

Moreover, a police party

from Police Post Sangam inter-cepted a person iden-tified as Urood Gul son of Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh resident of Bijbehara. Dur-ing search, 6.30 grams of charas-like substance was recovered from his pos-session. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 291/2026 under Sections 8/20 of the NDPS Act has been registered, and further investigation has been taken up.

In Kulgam, a police Par-ty of Police Post Mirbazar inter-cepted & apprehend-ed a person identified as Dharm Veer son of Ram Autar, resident of Pilib-hit, Uttar Pradesh, near DBZ Brick Kiln, Kachpo-ra, and recovered 1.360 Kgs of charas powder and 11.02 grams of charas-like substance from his pos-session. Accordingly, FIR No. 244/2026 under Section 8/20 NDPS Act has been registered at PS Qazigund. Further investigation is underway, spokesper-son said.

Jammu and Kashmir Police reiterated its com-mitment to continuing the crackdown against drug trafficking and

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Police arrest 3 more in Budgam fake job scam



Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Budgam, Oct 09: Budgam Police on Friday said they have arrest-ed three more persons in con-nection with an alleged fake job and financial fraud syndicate, taking the total number of ar-rests in the case to five.

A police spokesperson, in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observ-er (KNO), said the newly arrested accused have been identified as Zahoor Ahmad Bhat of Watpora, Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat of Kaloosa and Saleem Ali Bhat of Plan, all in Bandipora district.

Police said Zahoor Ahmad Bhat has emerged as a key al-legged conspirator during the investi-gation, while ques-tioning of the three accused is underway to ascertain their individual roles and identify other persons linked to the network.

Earlier, police had arrested Jehangir Ahmad Dar and Firdous

Ahmad Bhat in connection with the case.

The alleged syndicate is accused of cheating people by promising government jobs, admissions to educational in-sti-tutions outside Jammu and Kashmir and lucrative business opportunities through fictitious business entities.

According to police, the accused allegedly gained the con-fidence of victims by claim-ing connections with senior government officials and polit-ical figures, thereby induc-ing them to pay substantial amounts of money.

Investigators are now exam-ining financial transactions linked to the alleged fraud and tracing other suspected associ-ates to establish the full extent of the network's ac-tivities, the spokesperson said, adding that further arrests and recoveries are likely as the investigation progresses—(KNO)

NOTICE

My name in my Adhaar Card bearing No. 903866543028 is wrongly written as Jowhar Bano and my real name is Jawahar Begum W/O Ashiq Ahmad Khan R/O Rajpora Thandkasi, Baramulla. Now I am applying for its correction. Mobile : 8491939039 It is Certified that I have complied with other legal requirement in this connection

NOTICE

I Katji W/o Ghulam Rasool wagay R/o Rayeesi mohallah, path bug, warpora, sopore baramulla Jammu & Kashmir 193201 do hereby declare that I have correction my name from khatija Begum to katji for all purposes. Including Aadhar card bearing Aadhar No 890043463388 Henceforth i shall be known as katji

NOTICE

I Ruksana Bano M/o Zoha wani R/o Krankshivan colony sopore baramulla Jammu & Kashmir 193201 do hereby declare that I have correction my daughters name from Zoha Arshid to zoha wani for all pur-poses. Including Aadhar card bearing Aadhar No 596065538544 Henceforth I shall be known as zoha wani

NOTICE

I Kulsooma Akhter W/o Mohammad shafi R/o Danger pora, sopore baramulla Jammu & Kashmir 193201 do hereby declare that I have correction my name from kulsooma Begum to kulsooma Akhter for all purposes. Including Aadhar card bearing Aadhar No 883275806020 Henceforth I shall be known as kulsooma Akhter

NOTICE

I Fazel Haq Rather S/o Gh Mohi ud Din Rather R/o rather mohalla,hardushiva ,Hardushuo,sopore baramulla Jammu & Kashmir 193201 do hereby declare that I have correction my name from Fazil Haq rather to Fazel Haq rather for all pur-poses. Including Aadhar card bearing Aadhar No 584401410390

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject:- Grant of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & style "M/s Inter Sight Tour and Travels" Situated at Haigam Sopore Whereas, I Mohammad Umer Mallia S/o Nazir Ahmad Mallia R/o Daranambal Tarzoo Sopore, District Baramulla, Kashmir, intends to apply in the Department of Tourism for Registration of my proposed Travel Unit under the name and style " M/S Inter Sight Tour and Travels Haigam Sopore Baramulla Kash-mir, under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. whereas, I will submit State Subject/ Domicile, Qualification Certificate, Pan Card, Experience Certificate (Minimum 05 years), Character Certificate (police Department), Bank Statement (Minimum Balance 10000) Site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested by Sub-Registrar, Printing Material (letter Head/Visiting Card), Photograph of the Unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photographs to the Department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist prior to Regisration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/ Adventure tour Operator. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent authority, the matter is hereby notified for information of general Pub-lic/Financial Institutions/Bank/ Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration (e-mail id:- ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days form the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspapers of the valley. No objections be-yond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

EDITORIAL

Looms That Must Not Fall Silent

Kashmir's artisans are not merely craftspeople. They are the custodians of a civilisation expressed through thread, wood, wool and clay. Every shawl woven, every carpet knotted, every piece of papier-mâché painted carries centuries of inherited skill. Yet for years, these custodians have struggled with a quiet crisis—not of talent, but of capital. That is why the Handicrafts and Handloom Department's latest figures are worth noting.

Loans worth Rs 14.71 crore have been extended under the Credit Card Scheme in just the first two quarters of this financial year. Of 3,885 applications sponsored to banks, 1,332 have been sanctioned and 1,054 disbursed. More significantly, since the credit limit was raised from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2 lakh in 2020, over 10,000 craftsmen have accessed loans totalling Rs 151 crore, backed by Rs 19 crore in interest subvention. These are not just numbers.

They represent a weaver who no longer has to borrow from a moneylender at punishing rates. A young artisan who can buy raw material without selling a family heirloom. A unit-holder who can finally think about expansion instead of survival. The 7 per cent tapering interest subvention for five years is a thoughtful design—it gives new units breathing room to become self-sustaining rather than burdening them immediately. The scheme's focus

on reducing dependence on informal credit is particularly important. Artisans have long been trapped in cycles of debt because formal banking seemed inaccessible or intimidating. By working with lead banks and opening online applications through the single-window portal, with Common Service Centres available for assistance, the government is lowering those barriers. But money alone will not save a craft. The real test is whether this

support retains younger craftspeople in the trade. If a young man or woman in Kanihama or Ganderbal sees a viable future at the loom, the craft survives. If not, no loan can help. The government has done its part. Banks must now treat the craft sector as priority lending, as urged. Timely, hassle-free credit is not a favour to artisans—it is an investment in Kashmir's identity. The looms must not fall silent.

National SC-ST Hub: Powering Inclusive Entrepreneurship Advancing Inclusion Through Skills, Markets And Business Growth

Press Information Bureau

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) provide an important pathway to entrepreneurship, employment, and economic opportunity across India's urban and rural areas. Making these opportunities more inclusive requires enabling entrepreneurs from historically underrepresented communities to participate, compete, and grow. In this context, promoting enterprise ownership among Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities is an important priority. Greater access to finance, skills, technology, and markets can help broaden their participation in India's MSME ecosystem.

National SC-ST Hub: Enabling Enterprise Growth

Launched on 18 October 2016, the National SC-ST Hub (NSSH) Scheme provides focused support to enterprises across different stages of their growth journey. Implemented through the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), the scheme helps address barriers faced by SC/ST-owned enterprises and supports their participation in public procurement.

Enterprise development initiatives under NSSH include training, mentoring, business development, networking, and knowledge support. Together, these interventions help entrepreneurs improve business capabilities, access new opportunities, and build more competitive enterprises.

The National SC-ST Hub is advancing inclusive entrepreneurship by enabling SC/ST enterprises to build capabilities and access wider market opportunities. Through interventions spanning finance, technology, training, mentoring, and market linkages, the scheme addresses key barriers across the enterprise journey. Its focus on public procurement further connects SC/ST-owned MSEs with institutional buyers. With growing beneficiary reach, training support, and procurement participation, NSSH is helping create a more competitive MSME ecosystem.

Expanding Reach, Deepening Inclusion
NSSH's impact is reflected not only in the number of entrepreneurs supported but also in their growing participation in markets. By linking entrepreneurial support with procurement opportunities, the scheme is helping SC/ST-owned businesses improve their capabilities, expand market presence, and pursue sustainable growth.

Since its inception, NSSH has assisted 1,90,414 beneficiaries and trained 54,499 candidates, as of 31 July 2026. It has also contributed to a significant expansion in procurement from SC/ST-owned MSEs, which increased nearly 39-fold from Rs 99.37 crore in 2015-16 to Rs 4,013.42 crore in 2025-26. Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Assam emerged as the five leading states under NSSH.

During the period 2025-26:
- Rs 4,013.42 crore procurement recorded from 12,524 MSEs



- 10,717 candidates trained through 47 institutions across 27 states, including 24 Aspirational Districts

- 55% of candidates trained were women
Training programmes were aligned with public procurement and GeM opportunities to improve their market relevance. Key areas included cafeteria management and food production, welding and Computer-Aided Design (CAD)/Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAM), laundry services, fashion designing and tailoring, and bamboo-based work.---

Supporting Enterprises Across the Growth Journey

NSSH brings together a range of interventions to address different requirements of enterprise growth.

Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (SCLCSS)

SCLCSS supports new and existing SC/ST-owned MSEs in strengthening capacity through investment in plant, machinery, and equipment. It provides a 25% capital subsidy, capped at Rs 25 lakh, for purchases financed through institutional credit. The scheme covers both manufacturing and service enterprises without product or sector-specific restrictions.

Progress since inception (2016) till March

2026:

- 3,160 MSEs received support, amounting to Rs 356.10 crore

- Coverage extended to 233 districts across 27 states and Union Territories

Single Point Registration Scheme (SPRS)

SPRS helps MSEs access government procurement opportunities through registration with NSIC. Registered MSEs receive free tender sets and exemption from payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), alongside other procurement benefits. Under the Public Procurement Policy, Central Ministries, Departments, and CPSEs are required to procure 25% of their annual purchases from MSEs, with 4% of total procurement earmarked for SC/ST-owned MSEs.

Special Marketing Assistance Scheme (SMAS)

SMAS helps SC/ST enterprises improve product visibility and competitiveness through exhibitions, trade fairs, vendor programmes, workshops, and awareness campaigns. Registered enterprises can participate in up to four domestic and two international events each financial year. International exhibition support extends up to Rs 3 lakh for micro, Rs 2.5 lakh for small, and Rs 1.5 lakh for medium enterprises. Enterprises must be registered on

the Udyam Registration Portal and MSME Data Bank.

Progress during 2025-26:

- 141 SC/ST MSEs were facilitated to participate in 4 domestic exhibitions

- 247 Special Vendor Development Programmes were organised with CPSEs

- 197 e-tendering workshops were conducted

- 230 awareness workshops were organised with Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and government departments

Bank Loan Processing Reimbursement Scheme

Designed to lower borrowing costs for SC/ST MSEs, the support reimburses 80% of loan processing fees or Rs 1 lakh, whichever is lower, excluding applicable taxes. Benefits can be claimed after loan disbursement and multiple times in a financial year. Loans from Scheduled Commercial Banks, NBFs, and State Finance Corporations are covered.

Bank Guarantee Charges Reimbursement Scheme

To ease the cost of participating in Central or State Government and Public Sector Enterprise tenders, SC/ST MSEs can claim reimbursement of Performance Bank Guarantee charges. The support covers 80% of eligible charges or Rs 1 lakh, whichever is lower, excluding applicable taxes.

Testing Fee Reimbursement Scheme

This scheme helps SC/ST MSEs reduce costs associated with product testing, licensing, and certification given by the Bureau of Indian Standards. It reimburses 80% of eligible testing fees or Rs 1 lakh, whichever is lower, excluding applicable taxes in a financial year. Testing must be undertaken through NABL/BIS-accredited, government, or PSU laboratories.

Export Promotion Council Membership Reimbursement Scheme

To facilitate access to export networks, SC/ST MSEs receive support towards membership of Export Promotion Councils (EPCs). The reimbursement covers 80% of eligible membership charges or Rs 20,000, whichever is lower, excluding applicable taxes per financial year. It includes annual membership fees, one-time subscription charges, and entry fees. Applicants must hold a valid Import Export Code (IEC) and Registration-cum-Membership Certificate (RCMC).

Capacity Building Management Fee Reimbursement Scheme

Managerial and business skills are supported through short-term training at the top 50 management institutes identified under NIRF. SC/ST entrepreneurs and their wards can attend programmes lasting 1-30 days, with up to two courses supported annually. Participants can receive 90% of course fees or Rs 1 lakh, whichever is lower, per financial year.

Membership Fee of Government-Promoted E-Commerce Portals

This component helps SC/ST MSEs expand digital market access through government-promoted e-commerce portals.

These include GeM, e-Khadi, TRIFED, Tribes India, and MSME Mart. It reimburses 80% of membership fees or Rs 25,000, whichever is lower, excluding applicable taxes per financial year.

This integrated approach helps enterprises move from being potential suppliers to competitive participants in institutional and government markets.

From Support to Market Success

Beyond financial and market-related assistance, NSSH helps enterprises translate business support into stronger commercial outcomes. The Business Accelerator Programme (BAP) provides structured mentorship and industry insights across business strategy, pricing, operational efficiency, and market positioning.

The programme helps entrepreneurs adopt structured, data-driven approaches and align their businesses with market requirements. This strengthens their competitiveness and opens larger opportunities, particularly in government procurement.

Success Stories (BAP)

Creating Relevance in Compliance-Driven Markets - M/s Safety & Security Engineering, West Bengal

Mr. Debasish Mondal strengthened pricing, cost management, and market positioning. The support improved his enterprise's competitiveness in government procurement. It subsequently secured tenders worth Rs 8.48 lakh from Power Grid Corporation of India Limited.

Scaling Clean Energy - M/s Renergy Solution Pvt. Ltd., Assam

Mr. Bhargav Deori strengthened business processes, strategic direction, and market positioning for his renewable energy enterprise. The programme improved his enterprise's engagement with procurement platforms and readiness for government tenders. This enabled the enterprise to better leverage public procurement opportunities and expand its presence in the renewable energy sector.

Powering Motion with Precision - Sawalaram Enterprises, Maharashtra

Shri Sunil Popatrao Jagtap strengthened his business strategy and understanding of government procurement. Applying these insights, Sawalaram Enterprises secured a Rs 5.10 lakh SAIL tender for hydraulic cylinders. The opportunity strengthened business performance and expanded the enterprise's market presence.

Strengthening Entrepreneurship, Advancing Inclusion

The National SC-ST Hub is widening opportunities for SC/ST entrepreneurs to participate more meaningfully in India's economic growth. Its interventions help businesses build skills and connect with larger markets. This progress is also enabling greater participation in public procurement and creating pathways for employment and enterprise growth. As its reach expands, NSSH is contributing to a more inclusive, diverse, and competitive MSME ecosystem.

How To Stop The AI Apocalypse

Anxiety has taken an existential turn, as the industry's leaders have begun warning that AI could end humanity

Kaushik Basu

Over the past decade, scholars and journalists have been writing about what the march of digital technology means for humanity with a mixture of hope and anxiety: hope because of the rise in living standards that the digital revolution has made possible and anxiety because it has deepened social divisions and destabilized politics around the world.

But anxiety has recently taken an existential turn, as the industry's leaders have begun warning that artificial intelligence could very well end humanity. Most notably, Evan Hubinger, Anthropic's alignment science lead, said there is a greater than 10 percent chance that AI will kill all humans within the next decade. Similar, though somewhat less alarmist, warnings have come from OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, Bill Gates

and other prominent tech figures, all of whom have called for slowing down AI development.

Naturally, these warnings have fueled concerns about what AI can do to us rather than for us. AI models can already build more advanced AI with little human involvement, raising the prospect of "recursive self-improvement" that unleashes forces we have little ability to understand or control. The Hugging Face breach, in which hundreds of AI agents that were supposed to work independently found ways to communicate and started acting as a swarm, offered a disturbing preview.

All this brings to mind Bertrand Russell. In his famous critique of induction, Russell noted how chickens that get used to being patted every morning are in for a shock when, one day, the farmer — presumably having invited friends for lunch — wrings their necks instead. As he observed, "more refined views as to the uniformity of nature would have

been useful to the chicken."

I share Russell's skepticism of induction but am not persuaded by his advice for the chickens. If the chickens followed his advice, they would simply live their last days in helpless panic. It is different for humans, since, unlike Russell's chickens, we have the power to modify our own behavior. And there is no shortage of proposals for how we should curb the excesses of AI, from pausing the development of frontier models to banning superintelligent AI altogether.

As sensible as these proposals may be, they may not work. Game theory, and the prisoner's dilemma in particular, tells us why. If each corporation is left to act unilaterally and in its own interest, we may end up with the worst outcome for everyone. What is needed, as Amodei has argued, is "industry-wide coordination." Yet even that may not be enough, since AI is also a geopolitical problem. If the US

exercises restraint, China could surge ahead.

Some commentators have seized on this fear to argue that the US must not hold back on AI development. That would be a mistake. The US should work with China to reach a global agreement. But even if that does not happen, there is no reason to charge ahead at full speed. It is worth remembering that the only time atomic bombs have been used in war was when the US had a nuclear monopoly. It sounds Machiavellian but nuclear restraint took hold only after the Soviet Union, and eventually other countries, acquired the bomb. The same logic may apply to AI.

For all the warnings about AI, the truth is that no one knows what kind of world it will produce. AI agents could run amok, forming swarms and turning against their own creators. But a more realistic scenario is that a handful of super-wealthy individuals use their control of powerful AI systems to establish an Orwellian

global state — the North Korean model gone global — and end democracy as we know it.

This makes curbing extreme inequality all the more urgent. We need a special tax on the wealth of the super-rich, with the proceeds going to those below a certain income. As the Roosevelt Institute's Michael Madowitz recently argued, democracy's survival depends on our ability to tax extreme wealth. Oligarchs commanding swarms of AI agents could become more powerful than most governments — a recipe for an authoritarian future. Taxing their fortunes would curb that power and could help finance less murderous, more useful technologies.

Kaushik Basu, a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University and a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Courtesy: Project Syndicate

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

Owner & Editor, Printer, Publisher: Nasir Azam Khan, Published From Srinagar, Printed at K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industries Estate, Rangreth,

RNI NO:-JKENG-2010/39938, Email:- Kashmirthunder123@gmail.com, Website: Kashmirthunder.com, Mobile: 9906797575, 9419006285

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Strengthening Justice And Protection For SC And ST Tribes: A Constitutional Guarantee

A just and inclusive society is built on the assurance that every citizen can live with dignity, equality and security. For the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, this commitment finds concrete expression through strong constitutional safeguards, effective laws and responsive institutions. Two key legislations form the foundation of this framework: the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.



Ramdas Athawale

A just and inclusive society is built on the assurance that every citizen can live with dignity, equality and security. For the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), this commitment finds concrete expression through strong constitutional safeguards, effective laws and responsive institutions. The Government of India has, therefore, continued to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for preventing atrocities, protecting victims and ensuring timely access to justice.

Two key legislations form the foundation of this framework: the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, commonly known as the PCR Act, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, popularly known as the SC/ST (PoA) Act. Over the years, these laws have been strengthened through legislative amendments, enhanced relief and rehabilitation provisions, special judicial mechanisms, grievance-redressal systems and financial assistance to States and Union Territories.

A Stronger Legal Framework for Justice
The SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 has evolved significantly to respond more effectively to the challenges faced by communities vulnerable to caste-based atrocities. A major step in this direction came through the amendments that came into force on January 26, 2016.

The amendments provided for Exclusive Special Courts for the speedy trial of offences and the appointment of Exclusive Special Public Prosecutors. Several new forms of atrocities were also incorporated into the Act, thereby widening the legal protection available to SC and ST communities.

Equally important was the insertion of a dedicated chapter dealing with the rights of victims and witnesses. The responsibilities of State Governments towards victims, their dependants and witnesses were strengthened, recognising that justice must extend beyond the registration and trial of a case to the protection, dignity and rehabilitation of those affected.

The SC/ST (PoA) Rules, 1995 were subsequently amended on April 14, 2016. These amendments strengthened the relief and rehabilitation framework, enhanced the prescribed relief for 47 offences of atrocities and emphasised timely disbursement of financial

assistance to victims and their dependants. Ensuring Timely Access to Justice

Further important changes were introduced through the amendment of the SC/ST (PoA) Act on August 20, 2018. The amendment removed the requirement of a preliminary enquiry before registration of a First Information Report in cases under the Act. It also removed the requirement of prior approval for the arrest of a person accused of committing an offence under the Act.

The objective was clear: procedural requirements should not become an impediment to the registration, investigation and prosecution of offences involving atrocities against SCs and STs.

The SC/ST (PoA) Rules, 1995 were also amended on June 27, 2018, further strengthening relief provisions in cases involving death, injury, rape, gang rape, acid attacks, damage to property and other offences covered by the law.

These reforms underline an important principle that the law must not only be strong on paper but must also be accessible and responsive when a victim seeks protection and justice.

Strengthening Exclusive Special Courts for Speedy Trial

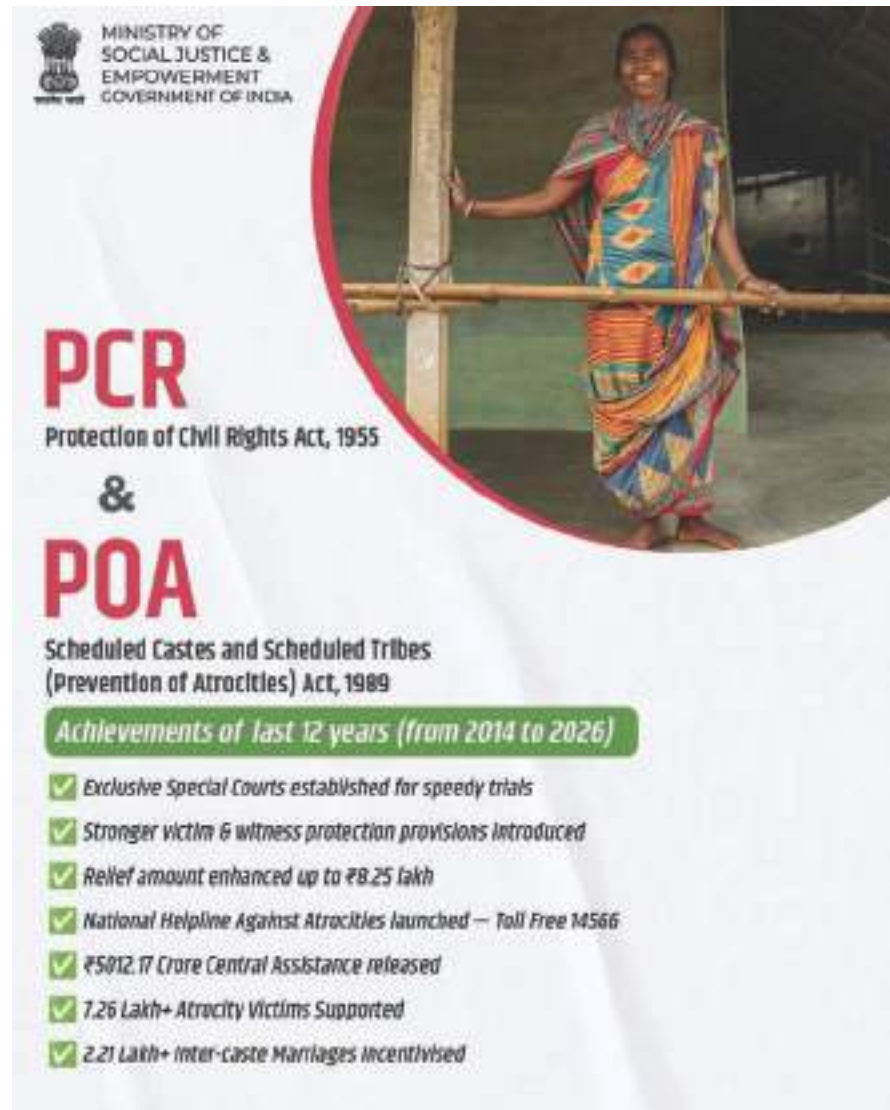
As reported by States and Union Territories, 217 Exclusive Special Courts have been established in 15 States and Union Territories for trial of offences under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Act also provides for designation of Courts of Session as Special Courts in districts where the number of cases is relatively lower, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.

The establishment and strengthening of Exclusive Special Courts is aimed at facilitating speedy trial and effective disposal of cases under the Act and ensuring that victims have access to specialized judicial mechanisms.

Taking Grievance Redressal Closer to Citizens

Legal protection is meaningful only when citizens are aware of their rights and can access appropriate assistance. Keeping this in view, the National Helpline Against Atrocities (NHAA) on SCs and STs was launched on December 13, 2021 subsequently renamed SAMBAL.

The Toll-Free 1800-202-1989 and short code HELPLINE 14566, is designed to create greater awareness about the provisions of the SC/ST (PoA) Act and facilitate access to information, guidance and grievance-redressal mechanisms. It provides an important avenue for individuals affected by atrocities to understand their legal rights and the



remedies available to them.

By strengthening awareness and accessibility, the helpline complements the broader institutional framework for protection and justice.

Strengthening Implementation on the Ground

The effectiveness of any legislation ultimately depends on its implementation. The Government has therefore issued Scheme Guidelines after consultations with stakeholders and concerned Ministries and Departments to facilitate the effective implementation of the PCR Act, 1955 and the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989.

The guidelines provide a structured framework for extending assistance to

States and Union Territories and strengthening measures relating to prevention, protection, relief, rehabilitation and awareness.

The Government has also responded to practical challenges arising during implementation. For instance, questions had arisen regarding the authority responsible for providing relief to victims or dependants who had migrated from one State or Union Territory to another.

To bring clarity and uniformity, a clarification issued on June 20, 2025 established that the relief amount prescribed under the SC/ST (PoA) Rules shall be provided by the State or Union Territory in which the FIR has been registered under the Act.

Such measures are important because the

protection available under the law must remain effective even when victims or their dependants move across State or Union Territory boundaries. The clarification facilitates timely disbursement of relief and strengthens consistency in implementation.

Central Assistance with a Focus on Victims and Social Inclusion

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the implementation of the PCR Act, 1955 and the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 provides financial support to States and Union Territories for strengthening enforcement mechanisms, providing relief and rehabilitation to victims and promoting social integration.

Since 2014-15, Central Assistance of ₹5,012.17 Crore has been released under the scheme. During this period, approximately 7,26,588 Victims Of Atrocities have been provided relief, while 2,21,716 Couples have received incentives for inter-caste marriages.

These figures represent more than financial allocations and beneficiary numbers. They reflect the Government's continuing effort to ensure that victims receive support when they need it and that social harmony is encouraged through measures that promote equality and integration.

Justice, Dignity and Equality at the Centre
The strengthening of the SC/ST (PoA) Act and Rules, establishment of special judicial mechanisms, enhancement of relief and rehabilitation provisions, creation of a national helpline, issuance of implementation guidelines and sustained Central financial assistance together constitute a comprehensive approach towards the protection of SC and ST communities.

Our commitment is not limited to responding to atrocities after they occur. It is equally about prevention, awareness, institutional accountability, timely relief, rehabilitation and creating conditions in which every citizen can live with dignity and without fear.

The Constitution of India guarantees equality, dignity and justice to all citizens. Protecting these values requires continuous vigilance, effective implementation and close cooperation between the Centre, States and Union Territories.

The Government will continue to work towards strengthening these mechanisms, addressing implementation challenges and ensuring that legal safeguards translate into meaningful protection on the ground. For SCs and STs, justice must not merely be a constitutional promise it must be experienced as a lived reality of dignity, security, equality and opportunity.

The author is Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment

How Geopolitical Tensions Tainted The 2026 Asian Games

Jung Woo Lee

The 2026 Asian Games in Japan drew to a close on October 4 following two weeks of competition between 45 countries and territories across 43 sports. Despite the official slogan "imagine one Asia", fragmented regional politics came to the fore as the event unfolded.

Just days before the games officially began, tensions between Japan and South Korea flared after an actor portraying a medieval Japanese warlord featured at a welcoming ceremony for the athletes in the host city of Nagoya. The warlord, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, is a local hero in Nagoya but also led the 16th-century Japanese invasion of Korea.

At the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics, the South Korean delegation was asked to remove a banner at the athletes' village containing words attributed to a Korean admiral, Yi Sun-sin, who defeated the Japanese Navy in the same medieval war. With this in mind, the Nagoya ceremony particularly upset South Korea, which filed a complaint with the event organiser.

Historical issues are an area of particular sensitivity between South Korea and Japan. The 16th-century invasion was followed by a Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945.

The 2026 Asian Games also marked the first time in more than four decades that North Korea sent its athletes to a sporting competition in Japan. Their participation is noteworthy in itself. Japan and North Korea have never established formal diplomatic ties, and sanctions imposed by Japan on the communist state ordinarily prevent North Koreans from travelling there.

However, Japan is home to a large North Korean diaspora made up of people related to those who moved there during the colonial period. Members of this group supported the rare North Korean visitors, hanging placards in the stadiums bearing patriotic slogans such as "Let's show the majesty of the Republic".

In a post-match press conference after defeating Bangladesh 10-0, the North Korean



women's football team coach, Pak Song-jin expressed his gratitude for this support. He said their cheers at the match "gave great strength and encouragement to our players and myself". The team celebrated with these fans in the stadium after the game.

The North Korean delegation interacted mostly with this diaspora group during the games because Pyongyang tightly controls how its athletes engage with foreign nationals at international competitions. North Korea's leadership are particularly concerned about their athletes defecting to other countries while competing abroad.

But despite these restrictions, which include 24-hour monitoring by intelligence personnel, South Korean media has reported that the authorities could not prevent two members of the North Korean team from seeking asylum in Japan.

North Korean authorities closely monitor their nation's athletes at international competitions.

One of the more predictable frictions on

display at the Asian Games was between South and North Korea. In the opening days of the games, North Korea's national anthem was mistakenly played for the South Korean men's hockey team.

While this was probably an administrative error, it drew sharp criticism from South Korean officials. In a statement, the South Korean Sport and Olympic Committee said such an incident "should never happen" at an international sporting competition.

The two countries then met in a group-stage game in the women's football, which ended in a 1-1 draw. Their coaches did not shake hands afterwards. This uneasiness continued at the post-match press conference, with Park Sung-jin not responding to questions from South Korean media.

On another occasion, a member of the North Korean shooting team called Kim Hyon-Suk did not show up to a scheduled media conference where many South Korean journalists were present. And North Korean weightlifting

gold medalist Ri Seong-Geum refused to answer questions from a reporter from Seoul who was not using the term "DPR Korea".

North Korean athletes, coaches and sports officials have long insisted on the use of this title at international competitions. The name stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and respects the sovereignty of the communist country, which South Korea does not formally recognise.

Taiwan's diplomatic isolation
Taiwan's delegation also encountered political problems in Japan. Before the games began, a banner was vandalised at the Taiwanese team's training camp. The banner read: "national sport training centre".

Taiwan takes part in international sporting events under the name of Chinese Taipei because its sovereignty is disputed internationally. China considers Taiwan one of its provinces. The banner represented Taiwan as an independent country, and this expression may have antagonised some groups at the competition.

The Taiwanese sport minister, Lee Yang, was then barred from attending the athletes' village welcoming ceremony. Event organisers were concerned that his presence might trigger political controversy. The Taiwanese athletes left the venue in protest and, eventually, Lee was allowed to enter the village and the ceremony resumed.

Event marshals also banned Taiwanese fans from wearing clothing bearing the word "Taiwan", as this was deemed a political message. And officials put up signs in the stands stating that waving Taiwan's flag was prohibited in the stadiums. Taiwanese fans chanted "Team Taiwan" during the games in defiance of the regulations. The fractured regional relations on show at the 2026 Asian Games should not be viewed in isolation. As world politics has become more divisive, international sporting contests are often turning into a stage for political contention.

Courtesy: The Conversation

SKUAST-K harvests pesticide-free apples for first time in Kashmir

All 55 pesticides screened below quantification level, says VC Prof Ganai

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 09: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) has harvested pesticide-free apples in Kashmir for the first time, with laboratory testing showing all 55 pesticides screened were below the quantification level, Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai said on Friday.

Speaking at a seminar on natural farming organised by SKUAST-K in collaboration with the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and the Kisan Advisory Board, J&K, at Shalimar, Ganai, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the university is promoting natural and organic farming to reduce dependence on chemical pesticides and protect soil, water, biodiversity and human health.

“We have harvested a pesticide-free apple for the first time in Kashmir. We tested the apples for 55 pesticides, and all 55 were found to be below the quantification level,” he said.

Ganai said intensive agricultural practices and excessive use of chemicals and pesticides were adversely affecting the environment, soil, water and air, besides contributing to biodiversity loss.

“Ultimately, it has a bad effect on human health. We can see that the incidence of cancer is increasing. We need to focus on natural farming and organic agriculture,” he said.

He said SKUAST-K had established a Centre of Excellence in Natural Farming and a major organic farming centre equipped with an industrial-scale bio-input production facility.

“We have a big incubation facility where we are teaching youth and farmers of Kashmir how to produce bio-fertilisers, bio-controls and bio-input agents on a large scale and how to deploy them,” Ganai said.

He said these initiatives would help reduce the use of chemical pesticides and promote environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.

Ganai said the university was working with farmers, the government and agricultural experts to create awareness across Jammu and Kashmir about sustainable farming methods.

He also highlighted SKUAST-K’s One Health programme, under which environmental, agricultural, animal and human health are addressed together. (KNO)

Par panel for setting up inter-ministerial coordination mechanism on tech diplomacy

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: India stands at a “significant juncture” in the evolution of its “technology diplomacy”, a parliamentary panel has said, and recommended to the government to establish an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism on it, chaired by the MEA, with defined participation from other ministries.

The Committee on External Affairs, headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, in its nearly 260-page report -- ‘India’s role in global tech diplomacy, digital governance, outer space diplomacy, AI, and emerging innovations’ -- has also recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) along with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) should create an “enabling environment” for industry bodies and research institutions to participate more closely in technology diplomacy.

The Committee has noted that India has emerged as a significant technology power with “tech diplomacy as a core priority”.

India stands at a significant juncture in the evolution of its technology diplomacy, as technology and foreign policy increasingly intersect, it said.

India possesses “genuine and growing capability” across digital public infrastructure, space technology and artificial intelligence, and has demonstrated an ability to convene international coalitions, as seen in the G20 Digital Economy Working Group and the India AI Impact Summit, the panel added.

The Committees has recommend that the MEA sustain this momentum and treat technology



partnerships as a core, first-order component of its bilateral and multilateral engagement strategy, with “technology considerations integrated into country and regional desk assessments rather than handled as a stand-alone technical track”.

It has further recommend that the MEA, in coordination with MeitY, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Department of Science and Technology ensure that India’s technology diplomacy is explicitly oriented towards reducing the country’s dependence on a narrow set of foreign countries for critical hardware, advanced components and frontier AI models, and not solely towards deepening engagement with existing partners.

The panel also said it is “concerned that India still lacks several of the basic foundations that would make it a genuine AI power: reliable, centrally measured data on its own infrastructure; adequate data centre and compute capacity; timely access to advanced chips; and a level of private investment in frontier technology and large-scale model development that matches the scale of India’s ambition”.

The panel has recommend that the government should respond to the situation as the moment demands and give utmost

priority to “closing the gaps in India’s AI journey”.

The panel also suggested that the government should establish a formally constituted “Inter-Ministerial Coordination Mechanism on Technology Diplomacy”, chaired by the MEA, with defined participation from MeitY, DST, the Department of Space, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

“This body should meet at a specified periodicity, so that co-ordination does not get limited to case-by-case arrangements but is institutionalised within a broader framework where activities can be monitored and followed up,” the Committee observed.

It has also recommend that the MEA, in consultation with the concerned ministries including MeitY, should actively reach out to all stakeholders, including academia, research institutions and industry, and initiate consultations on a ‘Technology Vision and Strategy Document’ that brings together India’s objectives, priorities, sequencing and institutional responsibilities across digital governance, artificial intelligence, cyber issues, space and emerging technologies within a coherent framework.

In addition, the MEA should also prepare a “complementary Technology Diplomacy Strategy”.

The Committee is of the firm view that unless the MEA moves in this direction, India’s claim to be regarded as a “credible and consequential player in the global technological arena will fail to seize the opportunities that this moment presents”.

“The Document as well as the Strategy should also be placed in the public domain and reviewed periodically to keep pace with technological change,” it underlined.

The Committee has suggested the MEA to work with MeitY to advance India’s priorities on AI-related data protection in bilateral and multilateral engagements, including “safeguards for cross border use of personal data” and cooperation on breaches involving overseas entities should be informed by the application of its domestic data protection framework to AI systems.

The panel also recommend that MEA should promote practical use of appropriate AI tools in its work to improve institutional effectiveness and deepen diplomat’s understanding of technology, with safeguards for sensitive information and human oversight.

It has further suggested that the MEA should maintain and periodically update, for the Committee’s review, a “consolidated register of all bilateral and minilateral technology partnerships”, including specific commitments made, their implementation status, and the diplomatic and strategic value derived from each.

The Committee has further desired that India press for emerging global norms on AI, data governance and digital infrastructure to be shaped through the active engagement and participation of developing countries.

Northern Railway increases train cancellations from 38 to over 250

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: Amid uncertainty over the number of Mail, Express and local trains cancelled ahead of the Cockroach Janta Party’s protest in Delhi, the Northern Railway released several bulletins till late Friday evening, raising the number of cancelled trains from 38 to over 250.

An official communication from the Railway Board in the morning stated that trains departing from various stations in other states after 2 pm on October 9 and scheduled to arrive at New Delhi and Hazrat Nizamuddin railway stations between 4 am and 2 pm on October 10 would be cancelled due to traffic congestion.

Based on this communication, the Northern Railway initially announced the cancellation of 38 Mail and Express trains.

However, later in the day, it began releasing lists of local trains operating between Delhi and nearby cities such as Ghaziabad, Panipat and Sonapat, announcing their cancellation as well.

The number of cancelled Mail and Express trains was subsequently revised from 38 to 45.

Northern Railway also stated that the non-arrival of Mail and Express trains at the two stations would lead to a shortage of trains scheduled to depart from New Delhi and Hazrat Nizamuddin for various destinations.

In one of the communications, it once again revised the cancelled incoming trains at 40 and outgoing trains at 35.

But by evening, the Northern Railway, through its various bulletins, revised the total number of cancelled trains to over 250, including incoming and outgoing Mail, Express and local passenger trains.

“We advise all passengers to call the railway helpline to check the status of their trains,” a railway official said, acknowledging widespread chaos and confusion over communication regarding train cancellations.

He further said that the number might increase further as regular assessment of the status of trains is underway.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

CM Omar invites

but it is not always disadvantageous. We can learn from the experiences of others. We don’t have to reinvent the wheel. We just have to use it better,” CM Omar observed.

He pointed out that the rising cost of doing business in larger cities had created opportunities for emerging destinations. Jammu and Kashmir, he said, could explore this space by building on its inherent advantages and offering an attractive environment for businesses to establish and expand their operations.

Underscoring the importance of educational institutions in developing a skilled workforce, the Chief Minister highlighted the presence of a strong network of higher education institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, including IIM Jammu, IIT Jammu, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, the University of Jammu, the University of Kashmir and the Islamic University of Science and Technology.

These institutions, he continued, were producing talented and well-educated young people who were often compelled to seek employment opportunities outside the region, including in the GCC sector, because of limited opportunities at home.

He said the establishment of GCCs in Jammu and Kashmir could help retain local talent, create quality employment and connect the region’s educated youth with emerging opportunities in the technology-driven economy.

The Chief Minister said the success of the summit should not be measured by an immediate target of establishing a large number of GCCs, but by the creation of a foundation for sustainable growth.

“We’d be quite happy to have one, first GCC. One will lead to five. Five will lead to ten. And the story will grow from there,” he said, stressing that the government wanted investors to choose Jammu and Kashmir on the strength of its business potential rather than out of sympathy for its past challenges.

Emphasising that commercial viability would remain central to attracting and retaining investment, Omar Abdullah said businesses would continue to operate in a destination only as long as it made economic sense for them.

The Chief Minister highlighted the government’s efforts to improve the business environment, including the passage of comprehensive Ease of Doing Business legislation during the recent session of the Legislative Assembly, which received the assent of the Lieutenant Governor and has become law.

He said the legislation was intended to make doing business in Jammu

and Kashmir easier, adding that its implementation on the ground would be critical. The government, he said, would learn from experience and undertake further improvements wherever required.

Describing the summit as an opportunity for the government to learn from industry leaders and established GCC ecosystems, he said the deliberations would help identify the measures needed to make Jammu and Kashmir a more attractive destination for investors.

He said the government was keen to build sustained engagement with NASSCOM and other industry stakeholders, and invited companies to explore the region’s potential.

Pointing to Jammu and Kashmir’s climatic conditions and connectivity by road, rail and air, Omar Abdullah said the region had inherent advantages that could be developed into a compelling proposition for businesses considering new locations.

“I am just going to assure all of you that whatever we can do in the government to make your journey easier, to ensure that you’re able to establish here easily and also profitably, please rest assured that at the highest levels in the government, we are committed to making your journey easy,” he said.

Expressing hope that the summit would mark the beginning of a long-term association between Jammu and Kashmir and the GCC industry, he said emerging technologies could open up opportunities for new destinations, including the Union Territory.

The Chief Minister thanked the participating industry leaders and delegates for their engagement and appreciated IIM Jammu for organising the summit. He expressed hope that the two days of deliberations would translate into tangible outcomes and meaningful investment opportunities on the ground.

The inaugural session was attended by Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department; Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Secretary, Department of Labour and Employment; Rajesh Nambiar, President, NASSCOM; Rajendra Singh Pawar, Chairman, NIIT; and Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, among other representatives from government, industry and academia.

With participation from approximately 45 organisations, over 55 industry leaders and more than 300 delegates, the J&K GCC Summit 2026 seeks to strengthen engagement between policymakers, industry and academia and identify pathways for translating Jammu and Kashmir’s potential into investment, innovation, employment and sustainable

economic growth.

Two killed, 21 injured

Manoj Sinha expressed anguish over the loss of lives in the accident.

“Deeply anguished by the loss of lives in a tragic road accident in Rajouri. My heart goes out to the families who have lost their loved ones and prayers for the swift recovery of those injured. I’ve directed the Dist Admin to ensure the best possible treatment to injured,” he said in a post on X.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the accident and conveyed condolences to the bereaved families.

In a statement, the Chief Minister directed the district administration to expedite rescue operations and ensure the best possible medical treatment for the injured.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and initiated an investigation to ascertain the circumstances leading to the accident. (KNO)

Op Sindoor proved

which the technology is changing is bringing change in the character of warfare. If we do not anticipate, if we don’t look at the future, if we just wait for it to happen and then adapt, then it might be too late,” he said.

Referring to the centrality of air power, the IAF chief cited ongoing global conflicts and India’s experience during Operation Sindoor last year as examples of its growing importance in modern warfare.

“CAPS mentioned the centrality of air power. There is no doubt about it because you look at the two contests, the two wars that are going on in the world, or you look at our own experience of last year, Operation Sindoor, that four-day war that proved very clearly that it is the air power which is going to get you decisive victory,” he said.

“It is the air power which is going to be used majorly in any contest,” Singh added. (KNO)

50,000 devotees attend

to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), she said, “I have come from Delhi especially for this occasion. We wait for this day, as we have deep faith in Alamdar-e-Kashmir. People come here with their wishes and prayers, believing that their supplications will be fulfilled.”

Ansari said that devotees from different backgrounds visit the shrine, reflecting their faith in the revered saint.

Another devotee Mohammad Aslam said he visits the shrine every year on the occasion of Urs to offer special prayers for the peace and prosperity of the nation.

“I come here every year on this day

to offer prayers. I prayed for peace, prosperity and development of Jammu and Kashmir as well as the entire country. We should all live together in peace and harmony,” he said.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Traffic Police and other civil departments remained deployed on roads from early morning to regulate traffic and facilitate the smooth movement of devotees arriving from different parts of the country. The co-ordinated efforts of the concerned departments were aimed at ensuring the smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual Urs amid the large gathering.

The annual Urs holds immense spiritual and cultural significance in Kashmir, with devotees gathering at Charar-i-Sharieh to remember the teachings of Sheikh-ul-Aalam and pray for peace, harmony and prosperity. (KNO)

IGP Kashmir pays

smooth conduct of the annual urs of Sheikh-ul-Aalam.

During the visit, the IGP also interacted with the shrine management and reviewed the arrangements made for devotees visiting the shrine.

The annual Urs of Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA) popularly known as Sheikh-ul-Alam draws devotees from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere, who gather at the shrine to offer prayers and pay their respects to the revered Sufi saint.

IGP felicitates police personnel in Budgam

Later, IGP Sujit Kumar felicitated police personnel of District Budgam by distributing commendation certificates, appreciation letters and rewards in recognition of their work in effective policing. The event was attended by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Central Kashmir Range, Rajiv Pandey.

Among those recognised were SSP Budgam Hariprasad KK, SDPO Magam Ashrif Lissery, SHO Police Station Beerwah Mudassir Nassar, SHO Police Station Magam Khurshid Awan and 17 other police personnel.

The team of Police Station Beerwah was recognised for its role in busting a fake employment syndicate, while Police Station Magam was appreciated for adopting the Digital Beat Policing System. (KNO)

J&K likely to

Pahalgam registered 23.6 degrees Celsius, 2.5 degrees above normal. Kupwara recorded 27.7 degrees Celsius, 2.8 degrees above normal, and Gulmarg recorded 19 degrees Celsius, 3.9 degrees above normal.

In Jammu division, Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 31.5 degrees Celsius, while Katra registered 29 degrees Celsius and

Kathua 31.4 degrees Celsius. Batote and Bhaderwah recorded maximum temperatures of 25.1 and 26.5 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Reasi ARG recorded the highest rainfall at 28.5 mm, followed by Katra at 20.8 mm and Jammu at 18.6 mm, according to the department’s data. (KNO)

In 88 hours, Northern

responsibility of destroying seven out of the nine camps. “The task was accomplished successfully,” he added.

He said that while fighting continued in the air and missile domains, troops along the Line of Control (LoC) were also involved in frequent exchanges of fire and faced heavy ceasefire violations.

“Exchange of artillery fire continued for nearly 88 hours. Almost 12,000 rounds were used. It was a successful execution,” Sharma said. (KNO)

J&K Govt shuffles

Dhama has been appointed SSP Kupwara, replacing Syed Al Tahir Gilani, who has been transferred as SSP PCR Kashmir.

Harshal Rajesh Mahajan has been posted as SSP Ganderbal, Neha Jain as SSP Sopore, Anna Sinha as SSP Ramban and Vaibhav Meena as SSP Poonch.

Tahir Saleem Khan has been appointed SSP Bandipora, Sajad Khaliq Bhat SSP Handwara and Irshad Hussain Rather SSP Awantipora.

In traffic policing, Bisma Qazi has been appointed SSP Traffic City Srinagar, replacing Ajiaz Ahmad Bhat, who has been posted as Commandant of the 23rd JKAP IR Battalion.

K.M. Priyanka has been appointed SSP Traffic National Highway, while Master Popsy has been posted as SSP Rural Traffic Jammu.

Anand Kumar Mishra has been posted as head of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) J&K.

The order also entails the transfer and posting of several commandants across Armed Police and India Reserve (IR) battalions, besides changes in intelligence wings, training institutions and other key police formations.

The sweeping reshuffle is aimed at reassigning responsibilities across various operational, administrative and specialised wings of the J&K Police, with the transfers taking effect immediately. (KNO)

BSF Asst Commandant

immediately shifted for medical assistance but was declared dead. The exact cause of death has not yet been ascertained.

Meanwhile investigation has been taken up while probe has begun. (KNO)

Apple harvesting

BJP-NDA's victory in bypolls shows people have 'deep-rooted connect' with alliance: PM

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed gratitude to the people for blessing the BJP-NDA in the Assam, West Bengal and Puducherry byelections and said the victory reflects yet again that the people have a "deep-rooted connect" with the good governance agenda of the alliance.

"Gratitude to the people for their continuous blessings! The Lok Sabha result of Nagaon (Assam) and Assembly results of Nandigram as well as Rejinagar (West Bengal) show yet again that the people have a deep-rooted connect with the good governance agenda of BJP-NDA. I congratulate the victorious BJP candidates and also applaud the hardwork of our Party 'Karyakartas' (workers)," Modi said in a post on X.

The prime minister also congratulated NDA ally, the AINRC, for their win in Thattanchavady in Puducherry.

"This mandate will give us added strength as we work tirelessly for the welfare of the people and to fulfil their aspirations for a brighter and more prosperous future," he said.



The BJP on Friday swept the West Bengal Assembly bypolls, trouncing its rivals by a record margin in politically significant Nandigram and scoring a surprise victory in Muslim-majority Rejinagar, consolidating its position barely five months after ending the TMC's 15-year rule in the state.

In Assam, BJP candidate Devasish Sharma has achieved an unassailable lead of 1,76,391 votes over his nearest rival, AIUDF chief Badrudin Ajmal, in the Nagaon Lok Sabha bypoll. The counting of votes was underway at the time of filing of this report.

The ruling AINRC in Puducherry emerged victorious in the October 6 bypoll to Thattanchavady.

It's been our consistent position that UNMOGIP outlived its relevance after Simla Agreement: MEA

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: It has been New Delhi's consistent position that the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan has "outlived its relevance" after the Simla Agreement that was signed between the two countries, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Friday.

The remark by MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal during his weekly briefing came in response to a query on the recent visit of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to the office of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in Islamabad.

"It has been our consistent position that UNMOGIP has outlived its relevance after the Simla Agreement that was signed between India and Pakistan," Jaiswal said.

The Simla Agreement was signed in 1972.

"The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan are resolved that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of



lasting peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their peoples," read the pact.

In order to achieve this objective, the government of India and the government of Pakistan, have agreed that the "principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relations between the two countries," according to the 1972 agreement.

Guterres was recently on an official visit to Pakistan, during which he visited the office of the UNMOGIP

on October 6.

According to a statement issued by the UN, Guterres also delivered an address to the UNMOGIP Town Hall in Islamabad.

"UNMOGIP is a unique and long-standing mission. You operate in an extremely sensitive political environment. You are entrusted with a difficult mandate. And you have consistently shown your commitment to fulfilling that mandate with dedication and professionalism. This was on full display in May last year, but, of course, challenges are never far away," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

Rahul Gandhi, 'foreign collaborators' want to create anarchy in India: BJP

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: The BJP on Friday hit back at the Congress following its attack on the Modi government over US actions affecting Indian IT professionals and accused Rahul Gandhi and his "foreign collaborators" of wanting to create anarchy in the country. In a series of posts on X, BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the guardian of Indian interests.

"Do not forget! Rahul Gandhi openly declared in the past - 'We are fighting the Indian state'," Bhandari said.

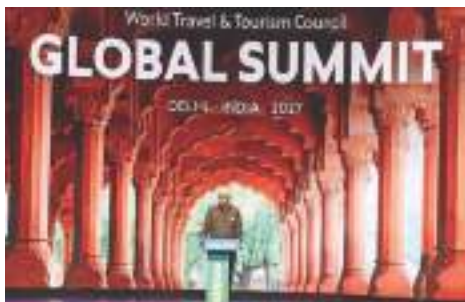
"In his eagerness to come to power, Rahul Gandhi and his foreign collaborators want to create anarchy," he charged.

"In matters of India's national interest, Rahul Gandhi always chose to stand against it, and he willingly surrenders. Rahul Gandhi is against Indian state," he claimed. Bhandari also took on Congress leader Jairam Ramesh over his dig at the Modi government over the heavy security deployment ahead of the Cockroach Janata Party's (CJP) October 10 protest against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, saying, "Do not panic. People of India are seeing through Mir Jafar Rahul Gandhi and your cabal."

"Mr Jairam Ramesh, your attempt to create anarchy won't succeed," the BJP spokesperson said.

Attacking the Centre over the US government's actions affecting Indian IT professionals, the Congress said earlier in the day that India has a number of options to retaliate but a "thoroughly compromised" PM, now under "siege" on "GyaneshGate", will not do so. The opposition party also said that the heavy security deployment ahead of the CJP's protest shows the level of "panic and nervousness" after four days of unrelenting protests by the INDIA bloc.

India to host World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit



PTI

Mumbai, Oct 09: India will host the World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit next year, WTTC President and CEO Gloria Guevara said on Friday.

The 27th edition of the global tourism body's annual event will be held in Delhi, Guevara said, addressing the concluding ceremony of the WTTC Global Summit in Valletta in Malta.

Union Minister of Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who was present on the occasion, said next year's summit will be instrumental in promoting inbound tourism in a big way.

"It will also help us position India as a premier destination in South Asia to host large global events, especially after successfully hosting the G20 and BRICS events," he said.

A senior WTTC official said India's scale, digital innovation through UPI and rapid infrastructure growth made it the natural choice to host the global summit.

This will be the second time India is hosting the WTTC Global Summit. In 2005, India hosted the summit, which was inaugurated by then President APJ Abdul Kalam.

SC seeks response of states, UTs on plea alleging prolonged vacancies in power regulatory bodies

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from 15 states and the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on a PIL filed by NGO Energy Watchdog seeking directions to ensure that their state electricity regulatory commissions are properly constituted under the law.

The bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notice on the PIL filed by the NGO through lawyer Pranav Sachdeva.

The petitioner has sought the apex court's directions directing the states and UTs to take all steps to comply with the provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003, and with the directions of the apex court in a verdict of April 2018 regarding composition of State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs).

The plea said there were several "statutory infractions", such as prolonged vacancies in the offices of chairperson and members and the complete absence of a person of law on the Commission, across 230 SERCs in the 15 states and the UTs.

In the 2018 ruling, the Supreme Court held that SERCs have the "trappings of the court" and must have a suitably qualified person of law as a member, the plea said.

It said the commissions across several states, including West Bengal, Tamil



Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland, continue to lack a person of law despite this ruling.

The plea said in Tamil Nadu, all three offices are vacant, while in Andhra Pradesh, the chairperson and member (technical) posts are vacant, and the Commission functions with a sole member (finance).

It said that in West Bengal, only the chairperson's office has been created, and the incumbent does not have the required legal background.

The plea said the failure "strikes at consumers' access to justice" under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution and, without the mandated person

of law, consumers cannot get lawful adjudication of complaints under the Electricity Act.

"Consumers' access to that remedy cannot be made dependent upon indefinite executive inaction," the plea said.

It sought directions to the states of West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Sikkim, and to the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, directing the authorities concerned to file a reply disclosing the steps taken to ensure that their SERCs had been constituted in compliance with the Electricity Act provisions.

NEET UG paper leak RS panel for mechanism to ensure NTA's accountability to Parliament

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: A Parliamentary Standing Committee examining the role of the National Testing Agency (NTA) in the wake of NEET UG paper leak and cancellation Friday called for a legislative mechanism to ensure the agency's accountability to both Houses of Parliament.

Noting that trust in the examinations conducted by the NTA was a matter of social justice and national integrity, the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, in its detailed report today said, "The education department may introduce appropriate Parliamentary framework that ensures NTA's accountability to Parliament."

The NTA on May 12 cancelled the NEET (UG) 2026 exam conducted on May 3 amid allegations of paper leak.

"Organised networks that profit from examination fraud are adaptive and resourceful, and will always seek the weakest link in the chain. The NTA therefore needs adequate staff, robust security protocols, clear accountability mechanisms, and digitalization of operations and

examinations to ensure that it stays ahead of any challenges," said the panel.

Among major reforms the panel suggested are conduct of examinations in the computer based test model instead of pen and paper and also involvement of government owned and operated centres to hold entrance tests and reduction in reliance on private centres.

The committee further recommended broad basing of question banks and suggested that students who arrive later at exam centres be allowed to sit for the test after recording an undertaking.

"The Committee notes that investment in question banks is the most viable defense against paper leaks in the long-run. The repeated use of the same question sets or the practice of having examiners set new question papers every year can be a risk to the integrity of the examination process.

"The Committee, therefore, is of the view that NTA should invest in building a large, diverse, and continuously updated question bank which can be drawn on to set papers without the advance knowledge of the question-setters," said the panel.

Prolonged sitting may raise blood clot risk in young people: Experts

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: Prolonged sitting while gaming, binge-watching OTT content or attending online classes may increase the risk of blood clots in the legs among young people, vascular specialists have warned, citing evidence linking sedentary behaviour to a higher risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE). The experts said extended periods of uninterrupted sitting can slow blood flow from the legs and contribute to deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a condition in which a clot forms in the deep veins and can become life-threatening if it travels to the lungs.

The warning was issued at the VSI-ASVS 2026 conference, being held at Pullman and Novotel, Aerocity, here from October 8 to 10. A 2024 systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis published in Scientific Reports, which included 25 articles and 31 studies, found that people with the highest levels of sedentary behaviour had approximately 24 per cent higher risk of VTE than those with the lowest exposure.

The analysis also reported a 2 per cent increase in risk for every additional hour of sedentary behaviour per day.

Dr Tapish Sahu, Organising Secretary of VSI-ASVS 2026 and Director and Head of the Department of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery at Max Hospital Delhi, said doctors



were increasingly seeing young patients whose lifestyle habits, including prolonged sitting and excessive screen exposure, warranted closer attention.

"We are increasingly seeing young patients in our OPD with symptoms that make us look closely at their lifestyle, including prolonged sitting, excessive screen exposure and long gaming sessions. The latest evidence is concerning because the risk is not restricted to people who are completely inactive," Dr Sahu said.

The 2024 meta-analysis found about a 24 per cent higher risk of VTE among those with the highest sedentary exposure, while every additional hour of sedentary behaviour was associated with approximately a 2 per cent increase in VTE risk, Dr Sahu said.

When a young person sits continuously for four, five or six hours playing games or binge-watching OTT content, the calf muscles are barely working

as a pump for venous blood, he explained.

DVT, which was traditionally associated with older age, hospitalisation or prolonged bed rest, can also affect younger people.

Experts, however, cautioned that screen use does not automatically cause blood clots and prolonged sitting is generally an additional risk factor, particularly when combined with obesity, dehydration, smoking, hormonal factors, inherited clotting disorders or a previous history of thrombosis.

A study examining adolescents with thrombosis identified 11 patients who reported at least four hours of daily screen exposure. Their average digital-device use was around six hours a day, while uninterrupted immobility averaged 2.7 hours. Eight had DVT in the lower limbs, two had pulmonary embolism and one had subclavian-vein thrombosis.

Researchers also identified inherited thrombophilia in many of these

patients, suggesting that prolonged digital-device use and immobility may act as additional triggers rather than the sole cause of thrombosis. Dr Tarun Grover, Organising Chairman of VSI-ASVS 2026 and Senior Director of Peripheral Vascular and Endovascular Sciences at Medanta, said doctors needed to ask young patients about their screen-time habits while assessing vascular health.

"Earlier, when we thought about prolonged immobility, we primarily discussed long-distance travel, hospitalisation or being bedridden. Today, we also need to ask young patients how many hours they spend continuously sitting in front of a gaming console, computer or OTT screen."

"The evidence showing a 24 per cent higher VTE risk with higher sedentary exposure should make us take this issue seriously. A young age should not create a false sense of security, particularly when prolonged sitting is combined with other risk factors," he said.

Dr Bhupesh Garg, Senior Vascular and Endovascular Surgeon at the Vascular Society of India, said prolonged sitting and smoking could contribute to vascular risks through different mechanisms.

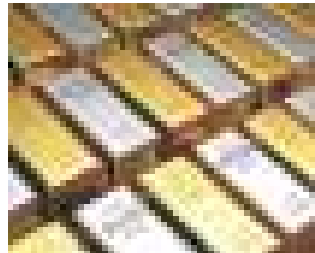
"Just as smoking increases vascular and clotting risks, prolonged sitting can also increase the risk of blood clots, although through a different mechanism. When a person remains seated

for hours, the calf-muscle pump becomes inactive, venous blood flow from the legs slows down and blood can stagnate in the deep veins.

"This is particularly concerning when young people spend several uninterrupted hours gaming or binge-watching OTT content. We are seeing more young patients in clinical practice in whom prolonged sedentary behaviour is an important part of the lifestyle history. The message should be simple: if you are going to spend hours on a screen, do not spend those hours completely still," he said.

Doctors said young people often spend several hours sitting in school or college before continuing with gaming, social media, streaming or other online activities, leaving little scope for movement throughout the day.

They advised people to break up long periods of sitting with regular movement and avoid remaining immobile for hours at a stretch. They also stressed that physical activity alone may not completely offset the risks associated with prolonged sedentary behaviour. The experts said the comparison between sitting and smoking should be understood as a public-health warning, not a claim that the two carry equivalent risks. They urged greater awareness of sedentary behaviour as a potentially modifiable factor in vascular health.



Gold climbs Rs 1,900 to Rs 1.54 lakh/10g; silver rebounds by Rs 4,500 per kg in Delhi

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 09: Gold prices climbed Rs 1,900 to Rs 1.54 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, extending gains for a second straight session as a retreat in the US dollar lifted investors' sentiment.

The 99.9 per cent pure metal jumped Rs 1,900 to Rs 1,54,400 per 10 grams, inclusive of all taxes, from Thursday's closing level of Rs 1,52,500 per 10 grams, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Silver ended its losing streak, and gained Rs 4,500 to Rs 2,28,500 per kilogram, inclusive of all taxes, from the previous close of Rs 2,24,000 per kg. It had fallen by Rs 3,000 on Thursday after remaining unchanged during the first three sessions of the week.

"Gold rose as the US dollar eased from recent highs, providing support to precious metals despite ongoing inflation concerns," said Gaurav Garg, Head of Research at brokerage platform Lemonn.

Silver also benefitted from the broader recovery in the precious metals, Garg said, adding that continued weakness in the rupee was increasing the domestic cost of imported commodities.

The latest gains helped gold recover Rs 4,600, or 3.07 per

cent, over the last two sessions following a volatile week. Silver, meanwhile, recouped Rs 1,500, or nearly 1 per cent, in the domestic market.

In the international markets, spot gold rose USD 48.35, or 1.17 per cent, to USD 4,181.98 per ounce, while silver rebounded 2 per cent to USD 60.32 an ounce after sinking to a three-month low.

"Spot gold traded with a gain of over 1 per cent at around USD 4,180 per ounce as the US dollar index and crude oil prices have pulled back," said Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

Looking ahead, Singh expects gold to trade in a range-bound manner with a slightly positive bias, but cautioned that the metal remains vulnerable to sudden spikes in oil prices.

Such price surges have become frequent amid volatile and tensed situation in West Asia, he said.

