



Two decades of delay

Centre seeks Rs 4.16 cr refund from J&K govt over failed apple pack-house project

» Grant released in 2005, last deadline extended in 2022 » Project never took off despite repeated extensions

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 19: In a major embarrassment for the Jammu & Kashmir Government, the Government of India has sought Rs 4.12 crore from it after successive regimes in the erstwhile state failed to execute a dream project for apple growers. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), which functions under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, had released Rs 1.42 crore way back in 2005 to the J&K Government for setting up modern infrastructure for grading, packing, and storage of apples. Despite repeated extensions of deadlines over nearly two decades,



the project never took off, forcing the Centre to demand a refund of the funds along with 10 percent annual interest.

Documents in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal that APEDA had awarded

the project to the Jammu & Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (JKHPMC) for development of an integrated pack-house. The total cost of the project was estimated at Rs 3.88 crore, and APEDA released Rs 1.42 crore to JKHPMC on September 28, 2005.

According to the documents, the project has failed to take off to date, despite APEDA accommodating the constraints cited by JKHPMC by extending the deadline several times, the last being in June 2022. "Due to prolonged delays, cost escalation, and obsolescence of the technology required in the pack-house as compared to existing pack-house | [More on P6](#)

OIC has no locus standi to comment on India's internal affairs: MEA

Says Pak using platform to push its agenda | 'J&K, Ladakh integral parts of India'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 19: Accusing Pakistan of using Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to advance its political agenda and divert international attention from its own internal issues, India on Monday rejected references to Jammu and Kashmir in resolutions adopted at an OIC meeting.

In a statement sent to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) described the references to India as "malicious, biased, and false" and expressed disappointment over the OIC's decision to include them in resolutions adopted at the Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting in Baghdad over the weekend.

The ministry alleged that Pakistan had orchestrated the references and accused the OIC of allowing itself to be used to promote Islamabad's agenda.

Reiterating India's position on Jammu and Kashmir and



Ladakh, the MEA said the OIC has no authority to comment on matters it considers India's internal affairs.

It maintained that the two Union Territories (J&K and Ladakh) were integral parts of India and said political statements would not alter that position.

The MEA also cited infrastructure development, tourism and improved connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370,

claiming that these had brought benefits to the region's people.

In contrast, it accused Pakistan of using violence and repression against civilian protesters in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), alleging that scores of people, including women and children, had been killed.

The MEA further alleged that restrictions on media coverage had failed to conceal what it described as serious human rights violations | [More on P6](#)

Nearly 97,000 appear in Class 10 JKBOSE exams

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 19: With the commencement of annual regular Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) exams, nearly 97,000 students appeared for the Class 10th exams on Monday.

The officials said that the exam was held in 1,003 centres across Kashmir and a few districts of winter-zone areas of Jammu division.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), JKBOSE has said that nearly 97,000 students have been enrolled for the exams that includes 72,232 from Kashmir and 25,268 from winter zones of Jammu division.

Pertinently, JKBOSE has informed that at least 2,70,000

students have registered to appear in board exams of 10th, 11th and 12th standard.

JKBOSE Chairman, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh had said that 2,70,000 students have been enrolled for exams in all three classes. "There are 10 districts of the Kashmir region and six districts of winter zone areas of Jammu division," he said.

He also said that the Board has setup 2402 exam centres for all the three classes. "We have appointed the staff including superintendents, deputy superintendents and supervisors. So, that kind of process has already been completed."

The Board chairman further said that "All the arrangements that we had to make were completed before the scheduled time." | [More on P6](#)

Cabinet expansion to take place after LG Sinha's return: Dr Farooq

Says CM seeks action, compensation over attack on J&K-bound bus in Haryana

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Budgam, Oct 19: National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Monday said the expansion of the Jammu and Kashmir Council of Ministers would take place after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha returns to the Valley.

Talking to reporters here in Central Kashmir, Dr Farooq, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "The cabinet



expansion will take place soon after the Lieutenant Governor returns."

On the expected resignation of Srinagar MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi on November 3, Dr Farooq Abdullah said, "If Ruhullah wants to resign, he is free to do so. It makes no difference."

Regarding the attack on Kashmir bound bus in Haryana, he said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has also called for strict action to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and sought compensation for the damage caused in the attack. "Certain miscreants were attempting to disturb peace and create turmoil in the country and the matter required immediate attention from the authorities," he said.

Dr Farooq also said CM Omar has urged the Central Government to take cognisance of the incident, warning that the situation could "deteriorate" if such incidents were not addressed promptly. (KNO)

LG, CM extend greetings on Vijayadashmi, Maha Navami

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 19: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have extended greetings and best wishes to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of Vijayadashmi and on the occasion of Maha Navami.

The Lieutenant Governor said Vijayadashmi—celebrated in different parts of the country as Dussehra and Durga Puja—symbolises the triumph of good over evil, truth over untruth and dharma over adharma. He said the life of Maryada Purushottam Bhagwan Shri Ram exemplifies these timeless virtues and inspires people to lead a virtuous life. He wished that the festivals bring peace,



happiness and prosperity to all.

The Chief Minister said Maha Navami and Dussehra embody the enduring values of truth, righteousness and the triumph of good over evil. He expressed hope that the occasions would bring peace, prosperity and happiness, and strengthen communal harmony and brotherhood in Jammu and Kashmir.

Omar Abdullah called on people to draw inspiration from the festivals | [More on P6](#)

Sgr airport withdraws 8 am–5 pm flight restrictions

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 19: Srinagar International Airport has withdrawn restrictions limiting operations to 8 am to 5 pm, paving the way for flights beyond 5 pm, subject to operational requirements, ahead of the winter schedule beginning October 25.

An official at Srinagar International Airport told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the restrictions on airport operational hours have been withdrawn, allowing flight operations to be planned as per the applicable schedule and operational requirements.

The official said airlines are in the process of filing slots for late-evening flights to and from Srinagar, which are expected to enhance air | [More on P6](#)

3rd Kashmir Marathon: 73 foreigners among 1,807 runners participating

513 domestic, 1,221 local participants

1,416 opt for half marathon, 391 for full

Event to be held every year: Director Tourism

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Oct 19: With over 1,800 runners, including 73 foreigners, registered for the October 25 event, the Kashmir Marathon is gearing up for its third edition, even as international participation faces challenges from travel advisories and the prevailing situation in the Middle East.

According to registration details obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), 513 domestic runners and 1,221 local participants have signed up for the marathon. Of the total registrations, 1,416 runners have opted for the 21-kilometre



half marathon, while 391 will compete in the 42-kilometre full marathon.

The registrations include

1,614 male and 193 female participants.

Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar | [More on P6](#)

'Cyber slavery' adds dangerous new dimension to human trafficking: DIG Crime

Says bogus overseas consultancies lure job seekers into exploitation; victims rescued from Thailand, Myanmar as police intensify crackdown

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 19: Fraudulent overseas job offers are increasingly being used to lure vulnerable people into human trafficking networks, with victims allegedly routed through multiple countries, stripped of legal protections and forced into exploitative situations, DIG Crime Branch Abdul Qayoom said on Monday.

Expressing deep concern over the growing menace, Qayoom, speaking to reporters here on the sidelines of a function, said human trafficking is taking dangerous new dimensions, including "cyber



slavery", as fraudulent placement agencies and criminal syndicates exploit job seekers under the guise of lucrative employment opportunities abroad.

The DIG, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said bogus recruitment | [More on P6](#)

LoP Sharma thanks PM Modi for Rs 475.41 cr for 10 J&K ITIs

KT News Desk

Jammu, Oct 19: Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma on Monday

thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship after the Centre approved investment plans worth rupees 475.41 crore for upgrading 10 Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO),



Strengthen peripheral hospitals to reduce trauma deaths, doctors urge

Say timely intervention during 'golden hour' often determines survival; call for trained staff, efficient referral systems to reduce preventable deaths

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 19: Strengthening emergency medical services and upgrading trauma care facilities at district and sub-district hospitals across Jammu and Kashmir could significantly reduce preventable deaths and disabilities, medical experts have said, stressing that timely intervention during the first hour after an accident often determines whether an injured person survives or succumbs to injuries.

Doctors said that while advanced treatment facilities are available at major tertiary care



hospitals, many critically injured patients from rural and remote areas lose valuable time

travelling long distances before receiving definitive medical attention. They stressed that

equipping peripheral hospitals with essential emergency facilities, trained personnel and life-saving equipment could improve survival rates and prevent complications.

Medical experts said the concept of the "golden hour" highlights the importance of providing prompt medical care to trauma victims, particularly those suffering from severe bleeding, head injuries, chest trauma and other life-threatening conditions.

"The first hour after a serious accident is extremely critical. In many cases, the difference between life and death depends

on how quickly the patient receives appropriate medical attention. Immediate intervention can stabilise the patient and significantly improve the chances of survival," Dr Shabir, a senior surgeon posted in south Kashmir, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said patients injured in road accidents and other traumatic incidents often have to be transported to tertiary care institutions, including SKIMS and SMHS Hospital in Srinagar, even when some of their immediate medical needs could be addressed at nearby hospitals. The absence | [More on P6](#)

Kishtwar Police crack SPO murder case

Two accused arrested

KT News Desk

Kishtwar, Oct 19: Kishtwar Police have solved the murder case of a missing Special Police Officer (SPO), whose body was recovered from a pit in the Trigam forest area and arrested two accused, officials said on Monday.

According to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a police spokesperson said the SPO, Bashir Ahmed, was reported missing along with

his service weapon from the Trigam police picket on October 15, following which a search operation involving multiple teams was launched.

"On October 16, during the search operation, police recovered the SPO's weapon and subsequently his body from a pit in a nallah where it had been buried in the Seran Wani area of Trigam forest," the spokesperson said.

Following the recovery, a case under Section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered at Police Station Kishtwar. | [More on P6](#)

Vay Vandana Scheme

DC Srinagar visits UPHC Lal Bazar

Presides over registration camp for senior citizens for additional Rs 5 lakh health coverage



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Monday visited the Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) Lal Bazar and presided over an awareness cum registration camp for senior citizens aged 70 years and above under the Vay Vandana Scheme. The programme on Ayushman Vay Vandana scheme was a part of District Administration's outreach efforts to ensure maximum coverage of eligible senior citizens aged 70 years and above under the scheme providing additional health support of Rs 5 Lakh over and above the existing cover aimed to strengthen senior citizen

health security.

The DC was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, IAS Probationer, Aakash Garg, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad, Tehsildar Eidgah, mohamamd Iqbal Zargar, ZMO Zadibal, Dr Rubeena Aziz, ZMO SR Gunj, Dr Shafqat Medical Superintendent Government Gousia Hospital, Dr Zahida Gul and other District Officers.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner led an Awareness-cum-Registration Camp on Ayushman Vay Vandana scheme of Government organized by Zonal Medical Officer, Zadibal which witnessed enthusiastic participation from elderly residents from Lal

Bazar, Mandibal, Nowshahra, Botshah Mohalla,, Baghwanpora and other adjoining areas. The participants were sensitised about the benefits and advantages of the scheme and the process for registration.

Addressing the gathering, the DC highlighted the significance of the Ayushman Vay Vandana Card and urged all eligible senior citizens aged 70 years and above to enrol under the scheme. He said the initiative aims to strengthen healthcare security for the elderly by providing health coverage of Rs 5 lakh and reducing the financial burden of medical treatment, thereby ensuring greater access to healthcare and promoting dignity, well-being and a better quality of life in their later years.

During the programme, the DC handed over Vay Vandhana cards to the eligible beneficiaries of Medical Zone Zadibal, reiterating District Administration's commitment to reach out to all eligible beneficiaries and encourage citizens to take advantage of the registration facilities being provided.

Later, the DC inspected various sections of the UPHC Lal Bazar and reviewed the healthcare facilities and services being provided to patients visiting the centre. He took stock of the functioning of the health facility and the arrangements in place to ensure the delivery of quality healthcare services to the public.

DC Shopian visits Pir Ki Gali to assess winter preparedness, tourist facilities

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, OCTOBER 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep Singh, Monday visited Pir Ki Gali to take first-hand stock of the available facilities and assess winter preparedness.

The DC was accompanied by ADDC Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, ADC Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, CEO, Dubjan-Pir Ki Gali Development Authority, Rouf Rehman, Tehsildar Shopian, Executive Engineers (Xens), DIO and officers of the concerned departments.

During the visit, the DC assessed the existing facilities and stressed the need to improve basic amenities and infrastructure to ensure a better experience for tourists and visitors. He also reviewed the status of ongoing works and directed the concerned departments to ensure their timely completion. The DC also paid obeisance at Ziyarat Shareef at Pir Ki Gali and directed the concerned authorities to ensure the provision of water

facilities at the shrine.

He directed the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to ensure proper filling of potholes along the road to improve road conditions and facilitate smooth and safe movement of visitors and timely Snow clearance of the Mughal road.



The DC also reviewed measures required to upgrade existing facilities, strengthen infrastructure and further promote the tourism potential of these destinations. Emphasising the importance of advance planning and interdepartmental coordination, the DC directed the concerned officers to ensure that all necessary arrangements are put in place well in advance to meet winter challenges.

The officers briefed DC on the ground situation and the preparedness measures being undertaken in their respective areas. He directed them to remain vigilant

and ensure the timely availability and deployment of men, machinery and other essential resources required for snow clearance, road maintenance and emergency response.

DC Kupwara reaches out to border populace at Keran Vibrant Village

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 19: In an extensive outreach initiative to deliver governance at the doorsteps of border residents, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Abhishek Sharma, Monday presided over a Mega Grievance Redressal Camp and conducted a comprehensive tour of the border Vibrant Village, Keran.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a first-hand assessment of various ongoing developmental works across the sector, emphasizing quality control and strict adherence to project completion timelines.

The grievance redressal camp witnessed large-scale public participation, including local ex-PRI members, village elders, and youth, who projected diverse issues and developmental demands concerning essential sectors such as power, healthcare, tourism, agriculture, and mobile connectivity.

The DC gave a patient hearing to the issues raised and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned executing agencies and departments for prompt redressal.

Highlighting the holistic development of border areas under the Vibrant Villages Programme, the DC assured the public of saturated delivery of basic amenities and targeted economic empowerment.

Addressing connectivity challenges, he assured that telecommunication services in the sector will soon be significantly



augmented, with all major operators actively being onboarded to resolve network bottlenecks.

Taking serious cognizance of power supply demands, the DC directed Executive Engineer, KPDCI to fast-track ongoing electrification projects and ensure immediate grid connectivity to two local villages facing power supply issues.

To preserve the fragile ecology while catering to the growing tourist influx, the DC called for concerted community and administrative efforts to make Keran completely plastic-free. He directed Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) to formulate an integrated sanitation action plan, establish a Single-Use Plastic (SUP) checkpoint, and expedite the completion and proper maintenance of Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs).

To tap the area's scenic potential sustainably, Chief Executive Officer, Lolab Bangus Drangyari Development Authority (LBDDA) was instructed to draft a comprehensive infrastructure upgradation roadmap tailored for eco-tourism.

Furthermore, the Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) and Horticulture Development Officer (HDO) were strictly instructed to implement targeted interventions for agricultural expansion and aggressively promote the cultivation of high-value secondary crops, notably strawberry farming, to boost local farm incomes.

On the healthcare front, the DC directed the health department to organize regular medical camps and strictly instructed that all doctors and paramedical staff deputed to the area must attend to their duties religiously to ensure uninterrupted medical services to the public.

During the tour, the Deputy Commissioner also visited the iconic Rooh-e-Hind Flag site in Keran. Paying tribute to the national symbol, he expressed deep gratitude and appreciation to the Indian Army for their steadfast dedication, and continuous support to civil administration and border communities in fostering peace, security, and development in the region.

DC Budgam reviews facilities at Railway Station Budgam

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Jatin Kishore, Monday chaired a meeting to review the availability of essential facilities, security arrangements and ongoing developmental works at Railway Station Budgam.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the availability of essential services, particularly adequate water supply, and took stock of facilities for in-house employees. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely completion of ongoing water supply schemes and explore a change in the existing water supply source to ensure reliable supply to the railway station. He also instructed the concerned departments to expedite the installation of streetlights, complete pending fencing works, ensure adequate accommodation facilities for SSB and RPF personnel, and remove encroachments, wherever identified. Emphasising inter-departmental coordination, the Deputy Commissioner directed the officers to ensure the timely and quality completion of all ongoing works and the prompt resolution of issues.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Area Manager, Northern Railways, Srinagar; ASP Budgam; Joint Director Planning; Superintending Engineers of R&B Circle and Hydraulic, Budgam; Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE and KPDCI, Budgam; Tehsildar Budgam; Executive Officer, Municipal Council Budgam; Deputy Commandant, 163 Battalion SSB; and Assistant Divisional Engineer, Northern Railways, Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of general public that my name enlisted in my bank account is RAJA BANO . However my actual name as per my Aadhaar card is . Now i intend to rectify my name in my bank records. In this regard RAJA . if anybody having any objection may file the same before the Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd NUNNAR GANDERBAL within a period of 3 days. After that no objection shall be entertained.NAME RAJA

W /O: BASHIR AHMAD BHAT
R/O: BABOSIpora GANDERBAL
Account number. 0174040100011759

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change FATHER name in my driving license bearing No: JK162011006953 M YOUSUF MIR TO MOHAMMAD YOUSUF MIR (as per aadhar card). If anybody having any objection in this regard he/ she may file the same before the concerned authority within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection shall be entertained. NAME . ADIL YOUSUF MIR S/O MOHAMMAD YOUSUF MIR R/O KIGPORA KANGAN GANDERBAL

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PULWAMA

Ground Floor Mini Secretariat DC Office Complex Washbugh Pulwama 192301

Fax: 01983-241306 | Email: dpulik@nic.in | Contact No. 01983-241243
Website: Pulwama.gov.in

Subject: Revocation/Suspension of permission for the operation of M/s Fatima Filling Station at Village Lethpora Pampore Pulwama in compliance to the order dated 30/09/2026 passed in WPC No. 2376/2025 by the Hon'ble High Court of J&K and Ladakh at Srinagar in case titled Zahida Mushtaq v/s UT of J&K and Others - Order regarding.

ORDER

WHEREAS, a Speaking Order was passed by this office vide Order No.DCP/Estt/SM/1611-22 dated 10/12/2025, whereby the operation of the M/s Fatima Filling Station owned/managed by the Proprietor namely Zahida Mushtaq was permitted to continue. The basis of the aforementioned permission was explicitly predicated upon the interim directions granted by the Hon'ble High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh in WP(C) No. 2376/2025 supra; WHEREAS, the initial judicial baseline and underlying order forming the foundational basis of the Speaking Order dated 10/12/2025 is deemed to have been set aside with the passage of order dated 30/09/2026 by the Hon'ble High Court. It has further been established that the operation of the said Speaking Order to the extent that it permitted the functioning of the Filling Station owing to the interim order passed in WP(C) No. 2376/2025 has been formalized as kept in abeyance vide order dated 30/09/2026, following the setting aside of the aforementioned interim judicial protections; WHEREAS, in keeping with the principles of natural justice, the Proprietor of the retail outlet was explicitly called upon by the undersigned to explain her stance, show cause for continuing operations and produce all the requisite statutory clearances, including No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from the concerned departments.

WHEREAS, despite being given sufficient time and legal opportunity, the Proprietor neither produced all the requisite NOCs or valid legal documentation, nor could she put forth any cogent, plausible, or legally sustainable reasoning to justify the valid operation of the retail outlet;

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the above-stated facts, the setting aside of the foundational judicial orders by the Hon'ble High Court, and the concurrent failure of the Proprietor to establish statutory compliance or produce essential NOCs, it is expedient to implement the order dated 30/09/2026 passed by the Hon'ble High Court and in compliance thereto, it is hereby ordered that:

1. The operation of the Fatima Petrol Pump situated at Lethpora is hereby directed to be stopped/suspended with immediate effect.

2. The Tehsildar concerned, along with the Area Enforcement Authorities including Assistant Director FCS&CA Pulwama, Assistant Director, Fire & Emergency Services, and SHO Awantipora shall ensure immediate compliance with this order and action taken report to this office. The said authorities shall ensure that the underground storage tanks of the Petrol Pump is emptied before its closure. The same shall be done at an earliest so that the order asked by Hon'ble High Court is implemented in letter and spirit before scheduled date of hearing.

However, the order passed shall be subject to further directives of the Hon'ble High court of J&K and Ladakh at Srinagar, if any.

Deputy Commissioner
Pulwama

No: DCP/LEGAL/26-27/346-52
Dated: 16/10/2026

DIPK-6909/26
DATED: 19-10-2026

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, (JAL SHAKTI) PHE, MECHANICAL RURAL DIVISION, SGR.

Gist of E-Tender.

E-N.I.T. No: - PHE/MRD/TS/ 39 of 10/2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, E-tenders are invited in two cover system from approved and eligible Contractors having GST registration/registered with J&K Govt., Railway and other State/Central Government Organizations for the following work: -

Sr.	Nature of Work	Location	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender Doc.	Time of Completion	Programme
1	2	3	4		5	6	7
A	SITC of FASD starter at WSS Ompora, Budgam	Watipora	6.60	13200/-	500/=	25 days	UT Capex

Administrative Approval: Accorded
Technical Sanction: Granted
Critical Dates/Information;

1.	Publishing Date	16-10-2026 (5:00 PM)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids	16-10-2026 (5:00 PM) to 27-10-2026 (11:00 A.M)
3.	Period of Submission of bids	16-10-2026 (5:00 PM) to 27-10-2026 (11:00 A.M)
4.	Date of opening of Tender/Timing	27-10-2026 at (12:00 P.M)
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer , (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar	
6.	Document Cost : Non-Refundable in the shape of Treasury Challan/receipt shall be deposited to Account Head0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar (The firm shall specify the e-NIT No. & name of work for which applied)	
7.	Bid Validity Period: 180 Days	
8.	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www.jktenders.gov.in	
09	Earnest Money Deposit in the shape of CDR/FDR/ bank guarantee from any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank pledged to the Executive Engineer Jal shakti PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar. In case the e-NIT is cancelled, the EMD submitted for this e-NIT shall remain valid and will be considered for fresh e-NIT. Note:- The Date of cost of tender document fee and Earnest money must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date. Any deviation shall render the bidder as non-responsive.	

No: -PHE/MRD/TS/2441-45
DT: - 16/10/2026

DIPK-6910/26
DATED: 19-10-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Rural

SMC Commissioner chairs winter preparedness meet

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 19: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Basharat Qayoom on Monday chaired a review meeting at the SMC Central Office, Karan Nagar, to assess the Corporation's preparedness for snow clearance and dewatering operations ahead of the winter season.

The meeting was attended by Joint Commissioner, R&E, Joint Commissioner, Works, Joint Commissioner, Superintending Engineer, City Drainage Circle, and other officers of the Corporation.

The Commissioner reviewed a comprehensive deployment plan for manpower and machinery across all municipal wards to ensure timely and efficient snow clearance. He directed the concerned officers to prioritise key public routes, particularly those connecting hospitals, ration depots, shrines, and government institutions, to ensure uninterrupted accessibility during snowfall.

Highlighting SMC's operational capabilities, the Commissioner reviewed the availability of snow clearance machinery, advanced



dewatering systems, and mobility support to facilitate a swift and effective response to winter-related challenges.

Emphasising the importance of seamless inter-departmental coordination, the Commissioner directed the Snow Monitoring Committee and the 24x7 Control Room to remain fully operational

and responsive. He stressed that public grievances must be addressed promptly and that immediate action should be taken on reports concerning snow accumulation, blocked roads, and other winter-related disruptions.

Reviewing dewatering preparedness, the Commissioner directed that all permanent

dewatering stations be maintained in optimal working condition. He further stressed the need for the timely deployment of high-capacity mobile pumps in vulnerable and low-lying areas to mitigate waterlogging during rainfall, snowmelt, and adverse weather conditions.

The Commissioner also underscored the importance of advance planning, field-level monitoring, accountability, and effective coordination among all concerned wings to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of essential civic services throughout the winter season.

Dr. Basharat underscored the Corporation's focus on operational readiness, rapid-response capability, and uninterrupted civic service delivery, directing all concerned officers to ensure end-to-end preparedness, real-time field coordination, and swift mobilisation of resources. He emphasised that every municipal ward must be equipped to respond effectively to snow-related disruptions and waterlogging, ensuring safer mobility, accessible essential services, and minimal public inconvenience throughout the winter season.

Missing Kokernag labourer found dead in Punjab

Family alleges murder

Jahangeer Ganaie

Anantnag, Oct 19: Grief and anger gripped Darpura village of Hallpora in South Kashmir's Kokernag area on Monday after the body of a 28-year-old labourer, Aijaz Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Majeed Dar, who had been missing for weeks, was brought home from Punjab.

Soon after the body arrived family members of Dar and locals staged a protest and demanded a thorough investigation into his death.

The family members, accompanied by locals raised slogans seeking justice for the deceased. Overwhelmed with grief, the relatives were seen wailing and beating their chests as they demanded that the circumstances surrounding his death be investigated and those responsible be brought to justice.

The deceased had left his native village in search of work, hoping to earn a livelihood for his family.

As per his relatives, he had initially travelled to Srinagar before moving to Ludhiana in Punjab for employment.

A family member told KNO that Dar remained in contact with his family for about a week after leaving for work, but his phone subsequently

became unreachable, leaving them worried about his whereabouts.

"We were in regular contact with him for nearly a week. After that, his phone was switched off, and we could not establish contact with him despite our efforts. We became increasingly worried as we had no information about where he was or what had happened to him," the family member said.

The relatives said they had been hoping for his safe return and had made efforts to ascertain his whereabouts after losing contact with him. However, the news of his death left the family devastated, raising several questions about the circumstances in which he died.

"He had left home to earn a living, but we never imagined that he would never return alive. We want to know what happened to him and how he died. Our family deserves answers, and the truth must come out," another relative said.

The family members alleged that Dar had been murdered and urged the police to investigate the case thoroughly rather than leave any aspect unexplored.

"We are demanding a proper and impartial investigation into his death. If he was killed, those responsible must be identified and arrested without delay.

We do not want the case to be closed without establishing the truth. We want justice for Aijaz and demand that the police examine every possible angle," a family member said.

They also appealed to the higher authorities to intervene and ensure that the investigation was conducted in a transparent manner, expressing apprehension over the circumstances that led to the young labourer's death.

Family members and locals had staged a protest in Hallpora on October 17, seeking urgent intervention and efforts to trace Dar after he went missing.

On Monday, after the body arrived, the protesters gathered outside Police Station Kokernag and reiterated their demand for justice, calling for the identification and arrest of those responsible for his death.

A police officer told KNO that a missing report regarding Aijaz Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Majeed Dar, a resident of Darpura, Hallpora, Gadool in Kokernag, had been lodged on September 26, 2026.

The officer said police have assured the protesting family members and locals that the matter would be investigated fairly and that all necessary steps would be taken to establish the facts—(KNO)

Medical interns hold candlelight marches over delay in stipend hike



Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 19: MBBS and BDS interns across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday evening held candlelight marches at Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) and SKIMS Medical College Hospital, Bemina, demanding the long-pending enhancement of their stipends. The interns expressed resentment over what they described as repeated assurances without any concrete action, alleging that the government had failed to honour its written commitment despite the lapse of the stipulated timeframe.

An AIMSA representative said that interns' representatives met the Director General, Finance (Budget), and the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Health and Medical Education Minister

at the Civil Secretariat on Monday to discuss the issue.

However, the meeting failed to provide clarity on when the stipend enhancement order would be issued, the representative said.

According to the interns, they were assured in writing that the stipend hike would be implemented within a month, but nearly two months have passed without any formal order.

"We were assured in writing that the stipend hike would be implemented within a month. Nearly two months have passed, but there has been no concrete progress. Every time we approach the authorities, we are given the same assurances, while the actual order remains elusive," the representative said. The interns said the delay had left them

frustrated and raised questions about the government's commitment to resolving the issue. They also alleged that warnings had been issued to those pursuing the demand and expressed displeasure over what they termed discourteous treatment by officials.

AIMSA president Dr Mohammad Momin Khan said interns could not be expected to wait indefinitely after receiving a written assurance from the authorities. He said the demand was not for fresh assurances but for implementation of the commitment already made.

The interns also flagged what they described as contradictory statements regarding the status of the file, saying the absence of a formal government order continued to fuel uncertainty.

Meanwhile, deliberations are underway among interns on their future course of action. They said the candlelight marches were part of a peaceful effort to draw attention to the issue and seek a time-bound resolution.

The interns reiterated their demand for the government to honour its written assurance and issue the stipend enhancement order without further delay, warning that continued inaction could force them to intensify their peaceful agitation—(KNO)

Hands behind Kashmir's towering Dussehra effigies

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 19: With Dussehra just a day away, the final touches are being given to towering effigies of Ravana, Meghnad and Kumbhakaran at Srinagar's Sher-e-Kashmir ground, where four artisans are working against the clock to bring the figures to life for Tuesday's celebrations.

Among them are Pardeep, 27 and Karan, 28, from Uttar Pradesh, alongside Mohammad Rafiq, 30, from Qazigund and Sartaj Ahmad Koka, 32, from Baramulla. Under the supervision of two Kashmiris, the team is assembling the figures piece by piece, joining their arms, legs and other components to complete the structures.

The team said preparations were being finalised for Tuesday's Dussehra celebrations and the traditional 'Ravana Dahan' at SK Stadium in Srinagar.

Sartaj Ahmad said preparations begin weeks before the festival. "The cut-outs come from outside Kashmir, with the materials brought from Uttar Pradesh, prepared in Jammu and transported to Srinagar for final assembly."

Karan, the artisans from Uttar Pradesh said their work is a craft shaped by years of



experience. "We have been making effigies for around a decade, including at the Sher-e-Kashmir ground in Srinagar, where the work has continued for the past six years. We have been visiting every year, especially for this work," he said.

Pardeep, another workers told KNO that this year's Ravana effigy stands around 20 feet tall, with grass and firecrackers placed inside the structures as part of the preparations for the traditional Dussehra spectacle.

"Once the materials reach the ground in Srinagar, we start assembling the figures, which takes around two days. The effigies are erected and made ready on the morning

of the festival," said Karan, the artisan from Uttar Pradesh.

Notably, the artisans, busy with the final touches, said their task is to ensure that all three figures were ready before the celebrations began. "All three towering effigies of Ravana, Meghnad and Kumbhakaran will be assembled and ready by tomorrow morning," they said.

It is worth mentioning, that Dussehra, which marks the victory of good over evil, is traditionally celebrated with the burning of Ravana's effigy, symbolising the defeat of evil. Across India, the festival brings communities together through local celebrations and age-old customs—(KNO)

Man killed, four injured in Poonch landslide

KNO

Poonch, Oct 19: A man was killed and four others injured after a landslide struck a road construction site in the Sawajian area of Jammu's Poonch district on Monday, officials said.

An official said that the incident occurred at Agan Pathri village in Sawajian when the man was engaged in a road construction project.

He said the man was struck by a stone and died on the spot, while four others sustained injuries.

The deceased was identified as Mohd Bashir (45), son of Ali Mohd, a resident of Danna Gagri-an in Sawajian.

Meanwhile, cognisance of the incident has been taken and an investigation is underway—(KNO)

Pedestrian struck to death in Kupwara

KNO

Kupwara, Oct 19: A 55-year-old pedestrian died after being hit by a Tata Mobile vehicle in the Kralgund area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Monday morning, officials said.

An official said that the accident occurred when a Tata Mobile vehicle bearing registration number JK09-6657 hit the man in the Budbugh, Ashpora area of Kralgund, Kupwara.

He was shifted to Government Medical College (GMC), Handwara, where doctors declared him brought dead. The deceased was identified as Riyaz Ahmad, a resident of Budbugh, Ashpora, Kralgund.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognisance of the incident—(KNO)

Motorcyclist killed in Kupwara

KNO

Kupwara, Oct 19: A 25-year-old motorcyclist died after his motorcycle collided with a car in the Lolab area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Monday, officials said.

An official said that the accident occurred at Frastop, Potushai, Kupwara, when the motorcyclist rider collided with a Swift car.

He said the rider was shifted to Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Kupwara for treatment, where he later succumbed to his injuries. The deceased has been identified as Aijaz Ahmad Khan (25), son of Dilawar Khan, a resident of Potushai, Lolab.

Meanwhile, cognisance of the incident has been taken and an investigation is ongoing—(KNO)

Police arrest 5 drug peddlers

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 19: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday arrested 05 drug peddlers in Awantipora & Anantnag and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

In a statement, a police spokesperson said that in Awantipora, a police party of Police Post Toll Plaza during naka checking at K. Koot Crossing intercepted a suspicious person. During his search, approximately 67 grams of a charas like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Jabbar son of Sabir, resident of Mohalla Gayaspur Bisalpur Pilibhit Uttar Pradesh. He has been arrested and accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 242/2026 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Awantipora and investigation has been initiated.

Similarly, in Anantnag, a naka party of Police Station Aishmuqam, during naka checking at Brad Bridge, intercepted a suspected person travelling from Hapatnar towards Salia. Upon search, 274 grams of charas were recovered from his possession. The accused was identified as Manzoor Ahmad Mir, son of Wali Mohd Mir,



resident of Awanpora. Accordingly, FIR No. 91/2026 under Sections 8/20 of the NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Aishmuqam, and further

investigation is underway.

Meanwhile, a naka party of Police Station Aishmuqam, during naka checking at Budreshan, intercepted a

Vehicle (Maruti Suzuki Vitara Brezza) bearing registration No. JK03G/5052, proceeding from Hassannoor towards Aishmuqam. During the search of the vehicle, approximately 9 grams of charas were recovered. The occupants were identified as Arif Ahmad Bhat, son of Mohd. Maqbool Bhat, and Ishan Ahmad Raina, son of Mohd. Ibrahim Raina, both residents of Laripora, Pahalgam. Accordingly, FIR No. 92/2026 under Sections 8/20 and 29 of the NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Aishmuqam, and further investigation has been taken up.

Moreover, a police party from Police Station Achabal, during night area domination, apprehended a drug peddler, Mudasir Ahmad Bhat, son of Ali Mohamad Bhat, resident of Nunwani Thajiwara, near Iron Bridge, Nunwani. Approximately 14 grams of a charas were recovered from his possession. Accordingly, FIR No. 112/2026 under Sections 8/20 of the NDPS Act was registered, and the accused was arrested. Further investigation is underway, spokesperson said. J&K Police urged general public to cooperate with the police and share any information regarding drug peddling or related activities for timely action—(KNO)

Man killed in Bijbehara road accident



KNO

Anantnag, Oct 19: A paediatrician was killed after a tractor skidded off the road in the Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Monday, officials said.

An official said that the tractor skidded off the road near Sheetipora Herpora in Bijbehara and fell into a roadside area, leaving a man injured. He was evacuated to SDH Bijbehara for treatment, where doctors declared him brought dead. The man was later identified as Nazir Ahmad (30), a resident of Vail Nagbal, Hapatnar.

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

Policing That Walks The Beat

The police station has always been the first door a common man knocks on when in trouble. If that door is dusty, slow or rude, the whole system feels distant. So, when the IGP Kashmir tells every police station to adopt SMART Policing and Digital Beat Policing, it

is not just another circular. It is an attempt to change the culture of the thana itself. The five words — Strict and Sensitive, Modern and Mobile, Alert and Accountable, Reliable and Responsive, Techno-savvy and Trained — sound good on paper. But the Kashmir police chief has said the

right thing: this should not stay in files. It must show in the behaviour of the constable at the counter, in how a complaint is written, in how fast someone responds to a call. What is more welcome is the push for Digital Beat Policing. For years, beat officers have been on paper only. Now if

they actually visit their areas, talk to people, keep digital records and remain answerable, the police will stop being strangers to the neighbourhood. Public outreach, quick service, community participation — these are simple words but very hard to practise daily. The focus on hospitals,

essential services and the last person in the last mile is also sensible. Kashmir has seen enough of fear and distance between the uniform and the citizen. Trust does not come from big announcements. It comes when a woman can walk into a police station at night and be heard with dignity. Of

course, much will depend on supervision. If officers are not monitored, this will become one more slogan. But the intention is honest and the direction is right. A police station that listens is a police station that protects. Let us hope this becomes real on the ground.

Connecting Kashmir: Building The Infrastructure For Growth

Press Information Bureau

Jammu and Kashmir's challenging terrain is steadily yielding to a new era of connectivity. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link has connected the valley to India's rail network. Its centerpiece, the Chenab Bridge, stands as the world's highest railway arch bridge. Expanded Vande Bharat services are improving passenger mobility. New freight terminals are carrying Kashmiri apples, saffron and handicrafts to national markets, opening opportunities for farmers and businesses. On land, the Sonamarg and Zojila tunnels promise year-round passage into Ladakh. In the air, Srinagar's expanding airport is complemented by nascent hubs at Udhampur and Kishtwar. Together, these advances are drawing Kashmir's produce, trade and tourism firmly into the national mainstream.

A Region Reconnected
Jammu and Kashmir's mountainous terrain has long made connectivity a major infrastructure challenge. Over the years, this has been steadily changing, with a wave of infrastructure investment reshaping how the region connects with the rest of the country. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is a major part of this expansion. It is one of the most challenging railway line projects undertaken in the country post-independence. Today it stands as one of India's engineering marvels, linking the Kashmir Valley to the rest of the country by rail.

The USBRL project has also been accompanied by sustained expansion of roads, tunnels and airport infrastructure. The network now includes new train services such as the Vande Bharat Express. It also includes major road corridors and tunnels. Airport capacity is being expanded at Srinagar, with regional airports planned under UDAN, increasing passenger movement. Multimodal cargo terminals and enhanced freight services support goods movement across the region. These developments have progressively expanded all-weather connectivity infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir.

Railways: Connecting Kashmir to the National Rail Network
Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) National Project
The USBRL project was inaugurated in June 2025, improving connectivity infrastructure in the Himalayan region. Built at a cost of 43,780 crore, the USBRL project covers the districts of Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban, Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, Budgam and Baramulla of Jammu and Kashmir.

The project stretches 272 kilometres through the rugged Himalayas; it includes 36 tunnels that span 119 kilometres and 943 bridges. Designed to overcome the region's challenging terrain, it connects remote areas with the national rail network. It is opening new opportunities for mobility, trade and tourism. As part of the USBRL project, over 215 km (including a tunnel and 320 bridges) of roads have been constructed, which are useful for communities. Additionally, the USBRL project is fully electrified both in tunnels and in open stretches.

The USBRL project has made substantial socio-economic contributions to the region, with employment generation being a significant aspect of its impact. The project has generated more than 5 crore man-days of employment.

Vande Bharat Express
The Vande Bharat Express in Jammu and Kashmir first began



operations in June 2025, between Katra and Srinagar. To further enhance railway connectivity, the Srinagar-Katra Vande Bharat Express service was extended to Jammu Tawi Railway Station in April 2026.

The distance from Jammu to Srinagar is now covered in less than five hours. The trains have been augmented from 8 to 20 coaches. They are specially designed to operate in extreme weather conditions. The trains are equipped with advanced operating systems and electronics suited for high-altitude conditions.

Supporting this route is a snow removal train that moves ahead to clear the tracks, ensuring year-round services. Seismic dampers have also been installed to absorb tremors, offering a safer and smoother journey in this high-risk zone.

Engineering Marvels under the USBRL Project

The USBRL project includes several major engineering achievements, including the Chenab Rail Bridge, Anji Khad Bridge and Tunnel T50.

Chenab Rail Bridge
Under the USBRL project, the world's highest railway arch bridge has been built over the Chenab River in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. The Chenab bridge, inaugurated in June 2025, is 1,315 m long. It has an arch span of 467 metres and rises 359 metres above the riverbed, making it higher than the Eiffel Tower. The bridge is designed to withstand strong seismic and wind forces. With Vande Bharat services running over the bridge, connectivity has significantly improved between Jammu and Kashmir.

Anji Khad Bridge
The Anji Khad bridge is India's first cable-stayed railway bridge built above the Anji River gorge, a tributary of the Chenab River. The Anji Khad bridge is part of the USBRL project and was inaugurated in June 2025.

The bridge is located in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is supported by a single 193-metre-high tower shaped like an inverted 'Y', with cables supporting the bridge. The main bridge has a total length of 473.25 metres, designed for the region's challenging terrain and seismic conditions.

Tunnel T50
Tunnel T50, inaugurated in 2024, is a 12.77-km rail tunnel linking Khari and Sumber in Jammu and

Kashmir. It is India's longest transportation tunnel, built under the USBRL project. The tunnel provides a vital rail link between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India.

The New Austrian Tunnelling Method has been used to construct the tunnel through the challenging Himalayan geology. The tunnel engineering overcame the challenges of high-water ingress, landslides, shear zones, and jointed volcanic rocks. The tunnel features a main tube paired with a parallel escape tunnel, linked every 375 metres for safety. CCTV cameras are placed every 50 metres, which help monitor from a central control room.

Supporting Railway Infrastructure

Railway connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir is being strengthened through increased investment in supporting infrastructure and network development. The annual average budget of railways for Jammu and Kashmir has increased from 1,044 crore in 2009-14 to 1,086 crore in 2026-27.

Electrification
Indian Railways has pursued railway electrification in mission mode, with about 99.6% of the Broad Gauge (BG) network now electrified. In Jammu and Kashmir, the entire existing BG network is electrified. All new-line and multi-tracking projects are being sanctioned and built with electrification from the outset.

Station Redevelopment
Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, 1,340 stations have been identified for redevelopment across Indian Railways. Among them, four stations are in Jammu and Kashmir. The stations are Budgam, Jammu Tawi, Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan (Udhampur) and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station.

Other Regional Railway Initiatives
To strengthen railway connectivity in border areas and areas of strategic significance in Jammu and Kashmir, several projects are in the pipeline. These include

A third line between Jalandhar Cantt. and Jammu Tawi (216 km).

An additional line between Jammu and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra (78 km).

A new railway line between Jammu/Reasi and Poonch (190 km).

Roads: Strengthening Surface Connectivity

Roads as a complement to Rail
In Jammu and Kashmir, road infrastructure is expanding alongside railway infrastructure. Roads

remain essential for last-mile access to places outside the railway network. In August 2026, foundation stones were laid for 110 road projects covering 598.455 km under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)-IV. Costing more than 1,500 crore, the projects are expected to benefit 46,972 people across the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda-Kishtwar region. The projects also include the use of waste plastics in several road packages, supporting more sustainable road construction.

Tunnel construction has also become a key component of development in the Himalayan region to ensure all-weather connectivity, improve road safety, and enhance strategic mobility.

Sonamarg (Z-Morh) Tunnel

The Sonamarg tunnel project, also known as the Z-Morh, inaugurated in January 2025, is a 6.4 km bi-directional tunnel with a parallel escape tunnel of length 6.4 km and an approach road of length 5.5km. Constructed at a cost of over 2,700 crore, the tunnel sits at an altitude of 2634 meters above sea level. The tunnel provides all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Sonamarg enroute to Leh. It bypasses parts of the road hit by major avalanches and landslides. It promotes tourism by transforming Sonamarg into a year-round destination, boosting winter tourism, adventure sports and local livelihoods. Along with the Zojila Tunnel, it will cut the NH-1 section of this project from 13 km to 11.98 km.

Zojila Tunnel

The Zojila Tunnel is a 13.153-kilometre-long bi-directional tunnel being constructed between Baltal and Minamarg on National Highway-1 by NHIDCL. Elevated at 2,900-3,310 metres, the 6,808-crore project will provide all-weather year-round road connectivity between Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. With construction beginning in October 2020, the main tunnel achieved breakthrough in June 2026.

The tunnel will be equipped with modern ventilation systems, automatic fire detection and suppression systems, CCTV surveillance, a Variable Message Sign (VMS) system, SCADA system, and other advanced safety and traffic management systems. The project also includes two twin tube uni-directional Nilgari tunnels of total length 4.8 km, eight cut-and-cover sections with a total length of 2.350

km, four bridges with a total length of 810 m, 40 culverts, snow galleries, catch dams, deflector dams, air-blast walls, and other avalanche protection structures along the approach road of length 16.964 km.

Upon completion, the project is expected to reduce the travel time between Sonamarg and Minamarg from approximately two hours to around 30 minutes. The project will also reduce the risks of accidents and disruptions associated with the treacherous Zojila Pass, which remains vulnerable to heavy snowfall and avalanches during the winter months. The tunnel will boost tourism, trade, and access to remote and border areas. Year-round connectivity will strengthen defence logistics and strategic preparedness. It will also create employment opportunities, support economic growth, and improve livelihoods and quality of life for local communities.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel (earlier known as Chenani-Nashri Tunnel)

The 9 km tunnel, opened in 2017, is India's longest operating highway tunnel and Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel. It connects Udhampur to Ramban in Jammu and Kashmir. Built at a cost of 2500 crore, it reduces travel distance by 31 km and cuts the travel time by two hours, saving fuel costs.

Expanding the Highway Network

Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway: The expressway is a 667-km greenfield highway connecting Delhi with Amritsar and Katra. It is designed to provide a faster road link, reduce congestion on NH-44, and improve access to major destinations, including the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine. In July 2026, key sections of the expressway were inaugurated, marking a major step towards improving connectivity between Delhi and Katra. The completed sections are expected to reduce travel time between Delhi and Katra from about 14 hours to nearly six hours. The corridor will also strengthen connectivity for pilgrims and facilitate industrial and logistics activity along the route.

Rafiabad-Kupwara Road (NH-701): The foundation stone for the widening and strengthening of the Rafiabad-Kupwara section of NH-701 was laid in June 2025 to strengthen last-mile connectivity, particularly in border areas. The project forms part of the Rafiabad-Kupwara-Chowkibal-Tangdhar-Chamkot corridor under Project Beacon.Shopian Bypass (NH-444): Sanctioned in March 2024 at a cost of 224.44 crore, the 8.925-km Shopian bypass had its foundation stone laid in June 2025. The bypass will improve connectivity between Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam and facilitate faster transportation of agricultural produce.

Airports: Expanding Air Connectivity

Expansion of Srinagar International Airport

A 1,677 crore expansion of the Civil Enclave at Srinagar International Airport was approved in February 2026. The project is operated by the Airports Authority of India within Budgam Airbase of the Indian Air Force (IAF). It will strengthen aviation connectivity in the Kashmir Valley.

Spread over 73.18 acres, the development includes a new 71,500 square metre terminal building. The terminal will handle up to 2,900 passengers during peak hours and 10 million passengers annually. The airport will also have 15 aircraft parking bays, including space for one widebody aircraft. Its existing 3,658-metre runway will continue to be operated by the Indian Air

Force. A new multi-level parking facility will also provide space for 1,000 cars. The project also includes barracks for security personnel.

The new terminal will combine modern airport facilities with elements of Kashmir's traditional architecture, including local woodwork and craftsmanship. Sustainability is a core part of the project. It includes water harvesting, greater use of natural light, and locally sourced eco-friendly materials. The project is targeted to achieve a 5-star Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) for sustainable building practices.

Extending Regional Air Connectivity

The Government is focusing on improving regional connectivity and providing affordable and secure travel options to residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

Udhampur and Kishtwar reflect how regional aviation can extend access to areas beyond the region's major urban centres. The two airports are planned under the UDAN scheme to extend regional air connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir. Greater airport capacity is expected to support tourism, create employment, encourage investment and strengthen Srinagar's role as an economic destination.

From Connectivity to Economic Integration

Multimodal Logistics

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, launched in October 2021, brought railways, roads, ports, waterways, airports and logistics infrastructure onto a single, Geographic Information System (GIS) based planning platform. It spans 44 Central Ministries and 36 States and UTs. Building on this framework, the Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal (GCT) policy, launched in December 2021, encourages the development of modern, rail-linked cargo terminals through private investment.

So far, 142 Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals have been commissioned in the country. In 2024, a Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal (GCT) was commissioned in Samba in Jammu and Kashmir and is now fully operational. In addition, In-Principle Approvals have been granted for the development of GCTs at 310 more locations, including three at Kathua, Anantnag and Jammu districts in Jammu and Kashmir.

The GCT policy has benefited key sectors such as cement, steel, power, mining, agriculture, logistics and manufacturing. It has enabled modern multimodal cargo terminals with warehousing, silos, cold storage and other value-added logistics facilities. This has increased the competitiveness of local industries and farmers while generating employment and promoting regional economic development.

From Access to Opportunities

A region once defined by seasonal isolation is emerging as a connected part of India's economic geography. Rail, road and air projects are no longer separate initiatives; together, they now function as one integrated network. This convergence is reshaping daily life for residents, farmers, traders and tourism operators alike. The expansion is increasing the access of farmers and local businesses to markets beyond the region. Signature Kashmir products, including apples, dry fruits, pashmina shawls and handicrafts, are being sold at larger markets, promoting economic diversity. At the same time, improved connectivity is strengthening the region's strategic position, including border security and disaster response.

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

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Javed Rana reviews concerns of land-sinking victims

Holds public outreach programme at Sunjwan-Barmini

KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 19: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Monday held a public outreach programme in the Sunjwan-Barmini area of Jammu district to listen to public grievances and assess the difficulties faced by the residents, particularly families affected by the land-sinking incident.

Accompanied by senior JKNC leaders Abdul Gani Teli, Vijay Lochan, Shamma Akhter and others, the Minister, as per an official statement, interacted with the affected families, heard their concerns and reviewed the challenges they continue to face following the incident.

The land-sinking incident in the Sunjwan area in August 2026 reportedly damaged 15 houses and displaced dozens of families, forcing them to relocate to safer places. The incident severely affected the lives of the residents, making continued administrative support and access to essential services imperative.

During the interaction, the affected families raised issues concerning basic amenities, drinking water supply,



land-related matters and the assistance required at their temporary places of settlement.

Taking cognisance of their concerns, Rana reviewed matters pertaining to the Forest Department, particularly those relating to land. He assured the families that their genuine grievances would be examined and addressed through the appropriate authorities.

The Minister also took serious note of complaints regarding the irregular supply of drinking water. He directed the concerned officers to ensure an adequate, regular and

uninterrupted supply of potable water to the residents, with focus on families displaced by the land-sinking incident.

Emphasising the importance of essential services and basic amenities, he instructed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and take prompt action to resolve the issues highlighted during the programme. He stressed that families living in temporary settlements must not be left to face avoidable hardships due to gaps in service delivery.

Rana directed the officers to maintain regular coordination,

prioritise the issues raised by residents and ensure timely intervention wherever required. He underscored the need for continued engagement with the public to assess ground-level challenges and facilitate effective solutions.

The public outreach programme was attended by the DFO Social Forestry, officers from Soil Conservation and Urban Forestry, DFO Jammu, Chief Engineer PHE, Chief Engineer Irrigation, the concerned Executive Engineer and other officials from the relevant departments.

MD NHM visits SKIMS Medical College Bemina

Reviews MCH healthcare services, infrastructure

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 19: Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), J&K, Athar Aamir UI Shafi, Monday conducted an extensive visit to SKIMS Medical College & Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar, to review healthcare delivery systems and ongoing developmental infrastructure projects.

A comprehensive review meeting was convened with hospital administration and the discussions centered primarily on strengthening Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services and fast-tracking upcoming Critical Care Block (CCB) being built under the Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM).

The meeting, as per an official statement, evaluated current maternal & child health indicators, discussing targeted measures to further elevate the standard, safety, and accessibility of clinical care for expecting mothers. Detailed evaluations were conducted on pediatric healthcare services, with a specific focus on the operational performance and clinical outcomes of the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU).

The Mission Director meticulously reviewed the physical and financial progress of the



upcoming Critical Care Block (CCB) being built under the Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM). Strict emphasis was placed on adhering to established timelines for its timely completion.

Following the meeting, the MD toured key critical care units, including the Labour Room, Maternity Ward, Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) and Critical Care Block.

During his rounds, he inspected the ground-level execution of healthcare delivery, evaluated hygiene and infrastructural standards, and directly interacted with frontline medical staff as well as patients. He strongly emphasized the vital importance of maintaining

uncompromising standards of clinical quality, optimum institutional cleanliness, and empathetic, respectful maternity care for all beneficiaries.

The hospital administration assured the Mission Director of their unwavering commitment to translating these directives into actionable service improvements, ensuring optimal utilization of NHM resources for the benefit of the general public.

Mission Director was accompanied by Principal SKIMS Medical College Bemina, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Bemina; Head of Departments, Divisional Nodal Officer NHM, Kashmir; Programme Managers from NHM J&K and other officers of the department.

Div Com Jammu flags off Jammu-Basohli Bike Ride

KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 19: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Vikas Kundal, Monday flagged off the Jammu-Basohli Bike Ride from Tawi River Front, Jammu, as part of Basohli Utsav-2026, aimed at promoting the region's rich cultural heritage, scenic beauty and tourism potential while spreading the message of a drug-free society.

Speaking on the occasion, Vikas Kundal, as per an official statement, said that around 30 bikers are participating in the ride from Jammu, with more riders expected to join the convoy en route. The participants are also carrying the national flag, reflecting their spirit of patriotism and commitment to the nation.

He said that Basohli Utsav provides a platform to showcase the region's vibrant cultural traditions, artistic legacy and rich heritage. He added that the bike ride would further strengthen efforts to highlight Basohli as an attractive tourism destination.

Emphasising the vital role of youth in nation-building, the

Divisional Commissioner appreciated the initiative for promoting a positive and healthy outlook among young people. He urged the youth to stay away from drugs and other social evils and channel their energy towards constructive activities, sports and nation-building.

The Div Com further observed that such initiatives would give an impetus to tourism in Jammu and Basohli by showcasing the region's picturesque landscapes, natural beauty and cultural attractions. He said that these activities could encourage more tourists to explore the region and contribute to the growth of local tourism and the economy.

The Jammu-Basohli Bike Ride is among the activities being organised as part of Basohli Utsav-2026, scheduled from October 19 to 21, to celebrate the region's distinctive cultural identity and promote its tourism potential among a wider audience.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Anusya Jamwal, along with other officers and officials, was present on the occasion.

KVK Bandipora-1 strengthens farmer capacity for Commercial Makhana production in Kashmir

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 19: As part of its continued efforts to promote emerging aquatic crops and diversify agricultural livelihoods in Kashmir, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Bandipora-1, SKUAST-Kashmir, organised the fourth farmer training programme on Makhana cultivation under the Central Sector Scheme on Development of Makhana, in collaboration with the Department of Rakhs and Farms, Kashmir.

The training, as per an official statement, brought farmers and farm women into direct interaction with agricultural experts, focusing on the practical aspects of Makhana production and its prospects as an alternative income-generating enterprise.

Head, KVK Bandipora-1, Dr. Tariq Sultan, explained



the cultivation requirements, production techniques, crop management, harvesting methods and possibilities for processing and value addition.

Assistant Director, Department of Rakhs and Farms, Kashmir, Feroz Ahmad Shapoo outlined departmental initiatives aimed at expanding Makhana cultivation in the region.

Addressing the participants, Scientists from KVK Bandipora-1, discussed the nutritional and commercial importance of Makhana. They highlighted the increasing relevance of this nutrient-rich food crop and encouraged farmers to explore

its cultivation as a means of diversifying farm activities and tapping emerging market opportunities.

A key component of the programme was the field visit to the aquatic crop demonstration and experimental plots at the KVK farm. Participants observed ongoing trials of Makhana, lotus and water chestnut and interacted with scientists regarding their cultivation requirements, crop establishment and adaptability to the local environment.

The training concluded with an emphasis on translating scientific knowledge into field-level adoption and enterprise development.

KU, IMHANS begin international workshop on digital wellbeing, neurodiversity inclusion across Asia- Africa

KT News Desk

Srinagar, October 19: The Department of Psychology, University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, began a week-long international workshop on 'Digital Wellbeing and Inclusion for Neurodiversity' at the Main Campus.

The workshop, as per a statement, is being organised under the European Commission-sponsored project Digital Transformation for Neurodiversity Inclusion in Africa and Asia (AAN-DI). It aims to strengthen international research collaboration and explore how digital technologies can improve wellbeing and promote social and educational inclusion for neurodivergent individuals across Asia and Africa.

The programme brings together researchers, experts and participants from Kenya, Finland, Ethiopia and India, along with project consortium partners, the Department of School Education, J&K, and IMHANS J&K.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan highlighted the importance of inclusive education, mental health awareness



and the responsible use of technology in addressing the needs of neurodivergent individuals. She said, "universities have an important role in promoting research and collaboration to make digital spaces more accessible and supportive."

She added that the University is exploring opportunities to establish further collaborations with national and international organisations, to strengthen research in neurodiversity and related areas. Such partnerships, she said, would provide KU researchers and academicians with greater opportunities for academic exchange, exposure to global research practices and the utilisation of their expertise to address emerging

challenges and develop inclusive solutions.

Prof. Hazel Miseda, Vice-Chancellor, Great Lakes University of Kisumu, emphasised the role of universities in promoting digital wellbeing and neurodiversity through inclusive education, research and institutional collaboration.

Dean, School of Education & Behavioural Sciences, KU, Prof. Tousee Rizvi, spoke about the importance of creating supportive environments in educational institutions and society.

neurodiversity.

Prof. Showkat Ahmad Shah, Project Principal Investigator, KU, and organising secretary of the workshop, provided an overview of the programme and its objectives. Prof. Susannah Otieno Leppänen, Principal Investigator, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, presented an overview of the AAN-DI project.

Earlier, in her welcome address, Head, Department of Psychology, KU, Prof. Humera Shafi, highlighted the importance of the workshop in advancing research and awareness around neurodiversity.

The week-long workshop will feature technical sessions on various areas such as baseline survey tools for the assessment of neurodiversity, the biological understanding of neurodiversity, and the use of artificial intelligence for detecting neurodevelopmental issues. It will also include a sensitisation programme for teachers from the Department of School Education J&K, blended mobility research presentations by participants from Kenya, Finland, Ethiopia and India and a visit to IMHANS J&K.

The event proceedings were conducted by Dr. Asma Nabi, faculty, Department of Psychology KU, who also proposed the vote of thanks.

Autumn Silk Cocoon auction market commences in Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 19: The Autumn Silk Cocoon Auction Market for Kashmir Division commenced Monday at the Sericulture Complex, Srinagar, marking an important occasion for the sericulture sector and providing a platform for cocoon growers to market their produce in a transparent and competitive environment.

The market was inaugurated by Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, Director Sericulture J&K in presence of departmental officers, cocoon growers from various districts of Kashmir Division and buyers from within and outside the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Autumn Silk Cocoon Auction Market reflects the department's continued commitment towards strengthening the marketing infrastructure for silk cocoons, facilitating better linkages between cocoon growers and buyers and promoting a more organized and remunerative marketing system for the sericulture community. The participation of buyers from within and outside the Union Territory is expected to encourage healthy competition, enhance market access for local cocoon growers and contribute towards improving returns from silkworm rearing.

The auction market, as per an

official statement, also provides an important opportunity for growers to bring their produce to an organized marketplace, interact directly with buyers and benefit from a transparent auction-based mechanism. The initiative forms part of the department's broader efforts to strengthen the entire sericulture value chain, from silkworm seed production and cocoon rearing to marketing and silk production, thereby, supporting rural livelihoods and creating sustainable economic opportunities for farmers associated with the sector.

Later, Director Sericulture J&K, visited the Central Organization for Training in Sericulture (COTS) Mirgund to review the progress of Late Autumn Rearing 2026 and assess the functioning and progress of the newly established Silkworm Crop Improvement Laboratory.

During the visit, the Director took stock of the ongoing rearing activities and reviewed the research and technological interventions being undertaken to improve silkworm productivity, strengthen breeding programmes and enhance the overall performance of the sericulture sector in the Union Territory.

The visit also included a review of the construction and operationalisation of modern laboratory facilities established to strengthen research and crop improvement

activities. The newly established Silkworm Crop Improvement Laboratory is intended to support scientific experimentation, breeding-related studies, evaluation of silkworm genetic material, and technology-driven interventions aimed at improving the quality and productivity of silkworm crops.

The Director emphasized the importance of translating scientific research and technological advancements into practical benefits for silkworm rearers and the wider sericulture community. He stressed the need for sustained efforts in research, germplasm conservation, breeding and the adoption of improved rearing technologies to enhance productivity, improve cocoon quality, and strengthen the competitiveness of Jammu and Kashmir's sericulture sector.

The inauguration of the Autumn Silk Cocoon Auction Market at Srinagar, coupled with the review of ongoing rearing activities and research initiatives at COTS Mirgund, reflects the department's integrated approach towards strengthening both the marketing and technological dimensions of sericulture. Through improved market access, scientific crop improvement, modern laboratory infrastructure, and sustained institutional interventions, the Sericulture

Crime Branch J&K holds UT-level anti-human trafficking conference in Srinagar

Focus on victim-centric investigations, rehabilitation, inter-agency coordination, ‘cyber slavery’

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 19: Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir on Monday organised a Union Territory-level conference on anti-human trafficking at Tagore Hall, Srinagar, to strengthen inter-agency coordination and promote a victim-centric approach to investigation, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration.

In a statement issued here, Crime Branch J&K said the conference was organised on the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Police Headquarters, J&K.

The conference was inaugurated by IGP Crime J&K Sarah Rizvi, IPS, while CEO JK4C Sheikh Junaid Mehmood, IPS, attended as the guest of honour. It witnessed participation from the judiciary, Social Welfare Department, Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs), police, paramilitary forces, NGOs and students from Women's College, MA Road, Women's College, Nawakadal and Police Public School, Bemina.

In her keynote address, IGP Sarah Rizvi stressed the need for a coordinated and

victim-centric response to human trafficking, stressing that interventions must go beyond rescuing victims and registering cases to ensure their safety, dignity, access to justice, rehabilitation and reintegration.

She also highlighted emerging challenges, including cyber-enabled exploitation and cyber slavery and called for stronger institutional capacity to tackle evolving forms of trafficking.

The technical sessions covered the legal framework and emerging trends in human trafficking, missing-person cases, judicial intervention, victim identification and rehabilitation, and technology-enabled exploitation.

Dr Aneeda Jan, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Kashmir, spoke on the legal framework, emerging trends and challenges in human trafficking. Dr Savita Nayar, Professor at the University of Jammu, discussed standard operating procedures for missing persons and the role of criminal law and judicial intervention in trafficking cases.

Dr Farooq Ahmad Khan, Programme Manager, Integrated Child Protection

Scheme (ICPS), Social Welfare Department, highlighted the importance of victim identification, coordinated rescue, psychosocial support, rehabilitation and safe reintegration.

SSP JK4C Kamal Pal Singh Malhotra, IPS, addressed the emerging challenge of cyber slavery, highlighting the role of digital platforms and technology-enabled exploitation in trafficking-related offences and the need for stronger cyber investigation and inter-agency cooperation.

The conference provided a platform for police officers, judicial representatives, government departments, civil society organisations and students to exchange experiences and discuss practical measures to strengthen the prevention, detection and investigation of human trafficking cases.

Crime Branch J&K reiterated its commitment to strengthening institutional capacity, improving coordination and adopting technology-enabled investigations while ensuring a humane, victim-centric approach to combating human trafficking and protecting victims' rights. (KNO)

MLA Nazir Gurezi chairs Estimates Committee meet

Reviews power scenario, calls for timely completion of RDSS projects

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 19: MLA Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi) on Monday chaired a meeting of the Committee on Estimates at Legislative Assembly here to review the power scenario in Jammu and Kashmir with emphasis on timely completion of RDSS projects.

The meeting was attended by Legislators Javid Hassan Baig, Mushtaq Guroo, Irshad Rasool Kar, Sajad Shaheen and Mian Mehar Ali. Secretary Assembly Manoj Kumar Pandit and officials of the Assembly Secretariat were also present on the occasion.

The officers of Power Development Department gave a detailed presentation on physical and financial progress under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), PMDP and other flagship schemes, including budget utilization, grid augmentation and power procurement.

The Chairman said that smart metering will streamline the billing, improve collection efficiency and provide relief to the consumers. He also reviewed renewable



energy initiatives under PM-KUSUM, rooftop solar and electrification of unconnected border hamlets. He sought a clear timeline for achieving 100 per cent grid connectivity and ensuring stable off-grid supply where grid extension is not feasible.

Meanwhile, the Members raised public concerns over high AT&C losses, slow progress on smart metering, unscheduled power cuts, billing disputes and slow replacement of bare conductors with Aerial Bunched Cables.

In view of the approaching winter, the Chairman stressed the need for robust winter preparedness, including adequate reserves of Distribution Transformers and deployment of quick response teams for

snow-bound and far-flung areas to avoid prolonged outages.

The Committee directed the Department to submit within a fortnight circle-wise AT&C loss data, complaint resolution figures, outstanding liabilities to CPSUs/IPPs and updated status of hydro projects along with cost escalation and revised timelines.

Ashwani Kumar, ACS PDD, Babila Rakwal, Commissioner Secretary Science and Technology Department, Rahul Yadav, MD JKSPDC, G.P. Singh, MD JPDCL, Mahmood A Shah, MD KPDCL, M.S. Malik, DG Budget, and other senior officers of the JKPTCL, JKPC, JAKEDA, NHPC, KPDCL and JPDCL were present in the meeting.

Secy Tourism reviews Jammu Tawi Golf Course dev, operations

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Oct 19: Secretary, Tourism, Avni Lavasa on Monday visited Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Sidhra here, to review its existing infrastructure, ongoing developmental works, operational requirements and future growth prospects.

During the visit, a comprehensive presentation was made outlining the origin and evolution of Jammu Tawi Golf

Course, its scenic setting, existing infrastructure and facilities, financial requirements, annual budgetary provisions, CAPEX requirements and future development plans. The presentation also highlighted the golf course's significance as a recreational and sporting destination, as well as its potential to contribute to tourism promotion in Jammu and Kashmir.

The presentation was

followed by detailed deliberations between Avni Lavasa and Secretary, Jammu Tawi Golf Course, on matters requiring immediate intervention, longstanding issues awaiting resolution, and key requirements for the effective functioning and sustainable development of the facility. Discussions also focused on future priorities and measures to strengthen the golf course's infrastructure and



enhance its overall potential.

Secretary Tourism also inspected ongoing developmental works, including the swimming pool project and the open terrace project. She toured the golf course to assess its existing infrastructure, facilities and overall setting.

During the review, Avni Lavasa emphasized the need to further harness Jammu Tawi Golf Course's tourism potential by strengthening its facilities

and visitor experience, promoting it as a destination for golf and recreation, and aligning its development with the broader tourism objectives of Jammu and Kashmir.

She directed that the identified developmental requirements and ongoing projects be pursued in a coordinated manner, with due focus on improving the course's appeal to visitors and supporting its sustainable growth.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Centre seeks Rs 4.16 cr

technology for apples, it was decided to cancel the MoU dated 15/07/2005 signed with JKHPMC and IPA dated 22/07/2005," the documents state.

Citing GFR 2017 Rule 231, the documents mention that 10 percent per annum interest is applicable on the released amount of Rs 1.42 crore, which works out to Rs 4.16 crore. "Therefore, a sum of Rs 41621680 is to be refunded by JKHPMC to APEDA," the documents add.

The records further show that the J&K Government did not respond to repeated missives from the Centre over it. "Reminders were sent vide letters dated 11/09/2023 from the APEDA Chairman's office and 31/01/2024 from the Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, which were not responded to, indicating that JKHPMC is not able to execute the project," the documents read.

The disclosure raises serious questions over the Government's claims about creating post-harvest infrastructure for Kashmir's apple industry. (KNO)

OIC has no locus

in the region.

According to the ministry, the outstanding issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir were Pakistan's withdrawal from territories under its occupation and an end to its alleged support for cross-border terrorism.

India also criticised other references in the OIC resolutions, including those concerning Islamophobia, describing them as attempts to divert attention from Pakistan's record on minority rights, sectarian violence, governance and political instability.

The ministry questioned the credibility of the OIC, saying its repeated endorsement of what India termed anti-India narratives raised concerns about the organisation's integrity.

The OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held its meeting in Baghdad on Saturday and Sunday, during which resolutions included references to India and Jammu and Kashmir.

India has consistently opposed the OIC's statements on Jammu and Kashmir, maintaining that the issue falls within its domestic jurisdiction. Pakistan, meanwhile, has continued to raise the issue at international forums. (KNO)

Nearly 97,000

He said, "The students in 11th and 12th have already had experience. But the students who are coming in 10th exams, I would like to request them not to worry. This is a normal exam. There is no need to worry. The papers are also normal."

Sheikh said that the question papers are very normal and in accordance with the benchmark

of competencies set up in National Education Policy 2020. (KNO)

LG, CM extend

and reaffirm their commitment to mutual respect, unity and peaceful coexistence.

Sgr airport withdraws

connectivity and provide greater flexibility to passengers during the winter season.

The Winter Schedule 2026 will come into effect on October 25. The schedule is expected to facilitate the planning of flight operations beyond the previously restricted hours, subject to the approved schedule and operational requirements.

The airport had been operating within the 8 am to 5 pm window amid runway maintenance work. In July, authorities withdrew a proposal for full runway closure on Mondays and Tuesdays, allowing flights to continue on all days, while restricted operational hours and night-time runway maintenance remained in place.

The extension of operational hours is expected to provide airlines with greater flexibility in scheduling flights, including late-evening services, as the airport transitions to its winter schedule. (KNO)

3rd Kashmir Marathon

Sajjad said the department aims to establish the marathon as a regular annual event and develop it into a recognised brand for Kashmir.

"The Kashmir Marathon will be a brand of the Tourism Department and a regular feature every year," he said.

Sajjad said the marathon's inclusion in the calendar of the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) would help establish it as a consistent annual event and strengthen Kashmir's position as a destination for sporting events.

The director said a separate prize category had been introduced for Jammu and Kashmir domiciles to encourage local participation, promote fitness and provide local runners greater opportunities to showcase their talent.

He said international marathons were often dominated by African runners, particularly Kenyans, adding that the initiative aimed to bring local athletes into the spotlight and encourage more people to take up running.

Sajjad said travel advisories issued by some European countries and the United States, along with the prevailing situation in the Middle East, had affected the turnout of foreign runners.

The marathon features two race categories, a 42-kilometre full marathon and a 21-kilometre half marathon. The routes are designed to showcase Kashmir's natural beauty and cultural heritage, with runners passing through

scenic stretches featuring Dal Lake, Chinar trees and Mughal gardens.

The Tourism Department is seeking to use the event to promote sports tourism and attract runners from across India and abroad, while building Kashmir's profile as a destination for major sporting events.

The director, replying to a query on arrangements, said an inter-departmental committee and a core group were coordinating preparations with the Divisional Commissioner's monitoring, while police, security forces and administrative agencies were working together to ensure smooth conduct.

"A dedicated team has also been assigned to assist runners with accommodation and logistics," he added. (KNO)

'Cyber slavery' adds

firms and consultancies attract people with promises of high-paying overseas jobs but may subsequently confiscate their passports, force them into illegal activities or leave them stranded in foreign countries under distressing conditions.

"In some cases, victims promised jobs in Dubai are allegedly diverted through multiple transit countries, including Thailand, to restrict their movement and deprive them of legal protection," he said.

Qayoom further said several victims had been rescued and repatriated from countries, including Thailand and Myanmar. "Tackling such cases remains complex, as some victims hesitate to come forward or cooperate with investigations, making prosecution difficult," he said.

The DIG said investigations have revealed that trafficking networks also source victims from different states outside the region. "Local police networks, investigative units and district-level anti-human trafficking cells are co-ordinating efforts to address complaints, track down suspects and dismantle the criminal syndicates," he said.

Stressing the importance of public awareness, he urged people to thoroughly verify overseas employment offers and recruitment agencies before making payments or travelling abroad. (KNO)

LoP Sharma thanks

LoP Sharma said the approval under the PM-SETU scheme would strengthen vocational training infrastructure and create better employment opportunities for youth in the Union Territory.

He said the approved plan includes rupees 240 crore for the Jammu cluster, with ITI Jammu as the hub institute and ITIs at R.S. Pura, Nowshera, Samba and Kathua as linked institutes. The Srinagar cluster will receive rupees 235.41 crore, with ITI Srinagar as the hub

institute and ITIs at Ganderbal, Kangan, Budgam and Charar-i-Sharief as linked institutes.

LoP Sharma said the proposed upgradation would focus on modern workshops, advanced machinery, improved instructor training and industry-aligned courses to equip young people with skills relevant to the evolving job market.

He also said the number of ITIs in J&K had increased from 35 in 2014 to 56 at present, while their seating capacity had risen from around 3,800 to over 12,400.

He thanked Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for his support towards strengthening skill development and vocational education in the Union Territory.

The LoP further urged the Omar Abdullah-led government to ensure the timely release of the UT's matching share, wherever applicable, and complete the required administrative formalities without delay.

He said timely implementation was essential to ensure that the approved investment translated into modern training facilities, industry-ready skills and sustainable employment opportunities for the youth. (KNO)

Kishtwar Police

The spokesperson said two suspects, Bashir Ahmed Dar, son of Abdul Aziz Dar, and Nazir Ahmed Dar, son of Bashir Ahmed Dar, both residents of Seran Wani, Trigam, were identified during the investigation and arrested.

Their questioning revealed the conspiracy and motive behind the SPO's murder, while the weapon of offence and the deceased's concealed belongings were recovered on the disclosure of the accused, he said. Further investigation into the case is underway, the statement said. (KNO)

Strengthen peripheral

of adequately equipped emergency units at the peripheral level can result in delays in stabilising critically injured patients, increasing the risk of complications during transportation, he added.

"An injured person does not necessarily need to reach a major hospital before receiving life-saving treatment. The immediate priorities are to secure the airway, ensure adequate breathing, control severe bleeding and stabilise suspected fractures. If these interventions are available at the nearest district or sub-district hospital, the patient's condition can be stabilised before referral to a higher centre," he said.

Dr Shabir said peripheral hospitals should have essential emergency equipment, trained medical and paramedical staff, oxygen support, blood transfusion facilities where feasible, and arrangements for emergency surgical intervention according to their designated level of care.

Another health expert, Dr Rouf Ahmad Wani,

Dy CM extends greetings on Maha Navami, Dussehra

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 19: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary has extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasions of Maha Navami and Dussehra.

In his message, the Deputy CM said that these sacred festivals symbolise the victory of good over evil, truth over falsehood and righteousness over injustice. He expressed hope that the occasions would bring peace, prosperity, happiness and well-being to every household across Jammu and Kashmir.

Surinder Choudhary said that the spirit of Maha Navami and Dussehra inspires people to uphold the values of truth, compassion, unity and mutual respect. He emphasised the importance of strengthening communal harmony, brotherhood and peaceful coexistence among all sections of society.

The Deputy CM wished the people a joyous and blessed festive season, expressing hope that the celebration would further strengthen the bonds of unity and contribute towards lasting peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

India-New Zealand trade pact effective from today; 100 pc goods to enter at zero duty

PTI

New Delhi: India's free trade agreement with New Zealand will come into force on October 20, allowing 100 per cent of Indian goods, including leather, footwear, apparel and textiles to enter the country at zero import duty in the island country.

The agreement, which will come into force at 12:01 am on October 20 in India, will also open a 1.4-billion Indian market for New Zealand goods.

Besides, it will expand opportunities for services, professionals, students and agricultural cooperation and facilitates foreign direct investments of USD 20 billion over the next 15 years from New Zealand to India.

Announcing the move, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the pact aims to increase bilateral trade in goods and services from about USD 2.4 billion to around New Zealand dollar 7 billion or about Rs 35,000 crore, by 2030.

Flagging off heavy earthmoving and construction equipment maker JCB India's small excavator, which will be exported to New Zealand under the trade pact, Goyal said the company exports 25 per cent of its total production to different countries from India.

"I am giving them a target to increase it to 50 per cent. New Zealand is now the 140th export destination for them," he said.

GAINS FOR INDIA

New Zealand is giving 100 per cent duty-free market access from

Tuesday itself. It covers all tariff lines or product categories and 100 per cent of India's current exports to New Zealand.

This is the first FTA for India where it receives full duty-free access across all tariff lines from entering into force.

Elimination of import duty would remove the existing tariff disadvantage of pre-FTA rates of up to 10 per cent faced by Indian exporters in the New Zealand market.

The major sectors that would be benefited include fruits and vegetables; coffee, tea, cocoa and spices; cereals; processed foods; textiles and clothing; leather and footwear; pharmaceuticals; engineering goods; marine products; plastics and rubber.

INDIA PROTECTED SENSITIVE SECTORS

India's exclusion list primarily includes products considered sensitive from a domestic perspective.

The major categories are dairy products (milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese); animal products (other than sheep meat); vegetable products such as onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds; sugar and artificial honey; animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils.

The list also includes arms and ammunition; gems and jewellery (Precious metals and finished jewellery products); copper and copper articles (cathodes, cartridges, rods, bars, coils); and aluminium and aluminium articles (ingots, billets, wire, rods, bars). INDIA'S GAINS IN SERVICES



New Zealand has agreed to open up 118 services sectors or sub-sectors to Indian service providers, offering them better access to its market under the FTA. These include IT, professional services, telecommunications, construction, education, financial services, and tourism.

Indian companies and professionals may now find it easier to provide services in New Zealand.

Under the FTA, New Zealand has agreed to allow certain Indian professionals and business people to work or visit the country for specific periods.

Employees transferred within the same company can stay for up to three years, while business visitors and workers installing or servicing equipment can stay for up to 90 days in a 12-month period. Contractual service providers and independent professionals can stay for up to 12 months.

The FTA creates a new temporary employment entry visa

pathway for skilled Indians, with a quota of 5,000 visas at any time for stays of up to three years. It covers IT, engineering, construction, education, healthcare, and Indian occupations such as yoga instructors, chefs, music teachers, and Ayush practitioners.

In addition, the agreement has established an agriculture productivity partnership to strengthen cooperation in agriculture, with dedicated action plans for kiwifruit, apples and honey aimed at improving productivity, and quality in India.

GAINS FOR NEW ZEALAND

India is giving tariff concessions on 70 per cent of its tariff lines, covering about 95 per cent of the current bilateral trade value. The remaining 29.97 per cent of the lines have been kept in the exclusion list.

India is giving duty based quota for apples, kiwifruit, manuka honey and albumins, along with minimum import price (MIP) provisions and other safeguard

measures.

This approach ensures calibrated imports while protecting the interests of domestic farmers.

Speaking at the event, New Zealand Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay said the agreement would create opportunities for exporters across key sectors.

"Once fully implemented, 95 per cent of New Zealand's current exports to India will benefit from tariff elimination or substantial tariff reductions, creating new opportunities across many of our key export sectors," he said.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said the challenge was to turn the agreement's provisions into tangible gains.

"The job is now to see how we are able to take this FTA and translate this opportunity into actual benefits for our people," he said.

The pact also provides for customs clearance within 48 hours for cargo and 24 hours for express and perishable consignments. Digital certification and self-certification of rules of origin for eligible status holders are intended to reduce procedural delays and compliance costs.

Bilateral trade declined about 11 per cent to USD 1.15 billion in 2025-26 from USD 1.3 billion in the previous fiscal year. India's exports stood at USD 566.51 million, while imports were USD 589.1 million, resulting in a meagre trade deficit of USD 22.59 million for India.

Use earphones or face fines, jail: Rly zones to educate passengers on mobile phone nuisance



PTI

New Delhi: Railway zones will spread awareness among passengers through public-address systems, urging them to avoid playing loud music or videos on mobile phones on trains and railway premises as violations can attract fines or even imprisonment.

In a circular dated October 6, the Southern Railway has asked its divisions to educate passengers that playing music or videos on the speaker mode or engaging in loud conversations on railway premises or on trains may invite action, including a penalty of up to Rs 1,000 and/or imprisonment for up to six months.

The Northern and Western Railway zones have also decided to initiate action to prevent the widespread misuse of mobile phones on trains.

"It is a right move by the Southern Railway zone. It is high time that passengers were asked to discipline themselves and use headphones while listening to music or watching videos," a senior Northern Railway official said.

"Passengers should be made aware that the necessary amendments have been made to the law to penalise or prosecute those who use mobile phones in a manner that causes inconvenience to other passengers," he added.

Officials said several complaints were lodged through the railways' grievance redressal and assistance system -- Rail Madad -- by passengers who complained about fellow travellers playing loud music through speakers in air-conditioned coaches, causing nuisance and inconvenience to others.

"Further, in recent times, with the advent of widespread mobile internet access, playing videos and other content through speaker mode has become highly prevalent in public spaces. In the present scenario, there is an urgent need to put in place arrangements to ensure that travelling passengers are not inconvenienced," the Southern Railway circular said.

A senior Western Railway official said following recent amendments to railway laws, mobile phone-related nuisance can now be dealt with firmly, without leniency.

"The Railway Board had issued directives to all zones in 2012 to urge passengers, through public-address systems or stickers displayed in coaches, to refrain from mobile phone use that adversely affects the comfort of fellow passengers. In the absence of a specific statutory provision, it was difficult to enforce mobile manners then. Now, we can do so more assertively with legal backing," he said.

However, some passenger bodies have raised concerns on the effective implementation of the law.

"We welcome the decision and urge the railways to enforce it firmly. Merely issuing circulars will serve no purpose. Does the railways have the manpower to enforce it?" asked Bhasant Kumar Shukla, a Nagpur-based railway passenger association representative.

"There is a huge shortage of both Railway Protection Force personnel and train ticket examiners, due to which several complaints, including those related to unauthorised entry into coaches, berth encroachment, cleanliness and water problems, go unattended," he added.

Amit Shah to pay homage to police personnel killed in 1959 Ladakh ambush



PTI

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will pay homage to police personnel killed in the 1959 Ladakh ambush at the National Police Memorial on Wednesday, an official statement said on Monday.

Shah will preside over the Police Commemoration Day event, which will include a joint parade of Central Armed Police Forces and Delhi Police.

The minister will address the gathering and conclude the annual program observed in remembrance of 10 police personnel killed in an ambush by heavily armed Chinese troops at Hot Springs in Ladakh on October 21, 1959, by laying a wreath at the altar dedicated to them, it said.

Shah will also flag off a motorcycle rally themed "Fight Against Drugs" involving about

90 police riders from several states and union territories, central armed police forces and other central police organisations.

"Fight Against Drugs" is part of a nationwide initiative in which riders from across India will travel to Ekta Nagar in Gujarat to participate in the Ekta Parade on October 31, it said.

The riders from Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi, Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Border Security Force, Sashastra Seema Bal, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and National Security Guard, along with the Railway Protection Force, National Disaster Response Force and National Investigation Agency will participate in the rally.

Scammers using deepfake videos of PM, CMs in social media political ads to dupe people: I4C

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 19: Fraudsters are using deepfake videos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Finance Minister Nirmal Sitharaman and chief ministers in deceptive Facebook and Instagram political ads to dupe people with fake schemes and offers, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) warned on Monday.

The National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (NCTAU) has observed a rise in financial fraud through advertisements that impersonate public and political figures to promote purported government schemes promising financial assistance to the needy, it said.

"These advertisements impersonate well known public and political figures, including the prime minister of India, the finance minister, chief ministers of states, to promote fake government welfare schemes and promise financial assistance," the warning said.

Ads, mainly on Meta Platforms featuring manipulated and deepfake videos, ostensibly



show the public figures announcing and promoting a welfare scheme allegedly intended to provide financial assistance to the needy, the I4C, under the Union Home Ministry, said.

"The advertisements containing phone numbers either offer financial assistance under a purported welfare scheme or cashback/rewards through scratch-card or spin-and-win offers. Many of the websites fall under the category of political advertisements," it said.

According to the advisory, victims are directed to phone numbers, WhatsApp chats or fraudulent websites to claim the promised benefits.

They are then coerced into making repeated payments under the pretext of taxes, processing fees, registration charges, verification fees or other administrative

expenses.

The fraud results in multiple payments and substantial cumulative financial losses, the agency said.

In several cases, victims receive calls from international numbers, predominantly those beginning with Pakistan's country code, +92, it said.

Callers claim that the victims have been randomly selected to receive the promised funds, the advisory said.

In other cases, victims are redirected to websites featuring scratch-card or spin-and-win offers and are tricked into approving UPI collect requests from fraudulent merchants, it said. Some victims are directed to payment apps and induced to enter their UPI PIN under the pretext of receiving the prize money, the warning said.

The transaction

instead debits money from their accounts and transfers it to the fraudsters.

The NCTAU has advised people to verify welfare schemes on the official websites of the government departments concerned before acting on social media advertisements.

People should verify the purpose and recipient of any fee or payment requested in connection with a welfare benefit and confirm the identity of anyone claiming to represent a government department through official channels. In case of doubt, they should visit the concerned office in person.

The agency has also cautioned people against sharing Aadhaar, PAN, bank details, one-time passwords or UPI PINs with unknown persons. Videos and voice recordings featuring public officials should be treated with caution, and their claims verified through official sources.

Before approving a UPI collect request or entering a UPI PIN, users should check the transaction details carefully. A UPI PIN authorises payments; it is not required to receive money, the advisory said.

Indian-origin students, academicians condemn anti-EC protests

'Spare India from anarchy'

PTI

New Delhi: More than 400 Indian-origin students, researchers and alumni from universities across 27 countries have condemned opposition protests against the Election Commission of India, describing them as an attempt to undermine public confidence in constitutional institutions and delegitimise democratic processes.

In a joint statement titled "Spare India from Anarchy", the signatories criticised the use of what they called "anarchic street protests" to challenge democratic processes and warned against subverting constitutional democracy in the name of

defending it.

The statement comes amid protests by opposition parties against the Election Commission, with opposition leaders questioning the integrity of electoral processes and raising allegations of irregularities in elections. "An unconscionable and devious plan of sowing seeds of doubt in Indian democracy has been hatched by weaponising sub judice matters, which is then amplified on the streets by leaning on anarchist forces, which have historically and philosophically never believed in constitutional form of governance. All in the name of saving democracy," the statement said.

"We remain amazed at the

irony of all. But more importantly, as informed people who have stakes in the future of this country and travel the world identifying as 'Indians,' we are deeply anguished at this state of affairs," it added. The signatories said that Indian democracy has repeatedly demonstrated its resilience, with constitutional institutions flourishing under a system of adequate checks and balances.

"In the seven decades since independence, Indian democracy has proved its resilience repeatedly. Institutions have flourished, checks and balances have functioned admirably, and peaceful transition of power has remained an enduring hallmark," the statement said.

Gold climbs Rs 400 to Rs 1.5 lakh per 10 gm as festive buying elevates demand

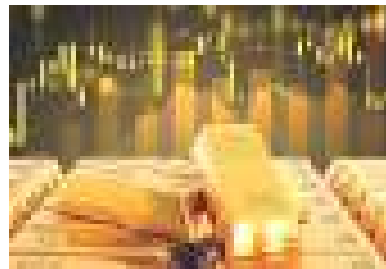
PTI

New Delhi, Oct 19: Gold prices climbed Rs 400 to Rs 1.5 lakh per 10 grams in Delhi on Monday as improving festive demand and firm global trends lent support to the precious metal ahead of Dussehra.

The 99.9 per cent pure metal gained Rs 400 to Rs 1,50,300 per 10 grams, inclusive of all taxes, from Friday's closing level of Rs 1,49,900 per 10 grams, according to local traders.

Silver, however, remained steady for the second straight session at Rs 2.15 lakh per kilogram.

"Gold prices moved higher in the domestic market on Monday, supported by a positive trend in overseas markets and improving retail demand as the



festive season begins," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities.

He said physical demand had improved, with gold trading at a premium last week for the first time in more than three months as lower prices encouraged jewellery purchases.

"Retail demand is expected to strengthen further ahead of Diwali, India's biggest festival, supporting the domestic gold market," he added.

Bullion markets will remain closed on Tuesday on account of Dussehra.

Vikas Gupta, smallcase manager and CEO of Omniscience Capital, said the festive and wedding seasons typically drive gold prices higher, though the likelihood of US Federal Reserve rate hikes could keep global rates under pressure.

"Domestic gold prices are likely to see a small festive season surge but remain stable post that," Gupta said.

In the global market, spot gold was traded marginally at USD 4,175.57 per ounce, while silver rose over 1 per cent to USD 57.63 per ounce.

Quick Read

Zelenskyy says Ukraine received no advance warning as Russia strikes power grid again

AP

Kyiv, Oct 19 : Russia launched new attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure using ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday, adding that Kyiv again received no early warning of the attack from partner countries that previously shared that intelligence.

Zelenskyy is grappling with recent Washington moves benefiting Russian President Vladimir Putin, including waiving US sanctions on Moscow and signing a deal to import diesel from Moscow.

In parallel, limits on Kyiv's use of the military-grade version of US company SpaceX's satellite internet service have choked Ukrainian drone operations, according to Zelenskyy. Also, a severe shortage of American-made Patriot air defence systems has made Ukraine more vulnerable.

Western intelligence sharing has helped Ukraine counter Russia's devastating ballistic missiles and hold back Moscow's invasion, which began more than 4½ years ago.

US President Donald Trump says Washington hasn't stopped providing intelligence to Kyiv. Secretary of State Marco Rubio repeated that position Monday, saying he had no information about the previous night's Russian attack.

Russian barrage on power grid kills a 21-year-old woman

The Russian nighttime barrage damaged more than 10 energy infrastructure facilities across Ukraine, depriving more than half a million people of electricity, heat and running water, Zelenskyy said on social media.

Houthi attack on southern Yemen military camp kills at least 53 fighters



AP

Cairo, Oct 19: Iranian-backed Houthi rebels struck a military camp for government forces in southern Yemen on Monday, killing at least 53 soldiers, provincial authorities in Shabwa said Monday, making it one of the deadliest attacks in the recent surge in fighting.

The rebels fired three ballistic missiles on the al-Alam military camp in the southern province of Shabwa in an attack that also wounded 200 recruits, the Shabwa provincial government said.

The Iran-backed rebels have acknowledged targeting the camp in Shabwa.

US missions across West Asia issue security alert amid threat of Iran-backed attacks



PTI

Jerusalem, Oct 19: US missions across West Asia have issued a security alert advising American nationals to "exercise heightened vigilance," citing Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and the potential for Iran and its allies to launch attacks against US interests. The advisory was issued on Sunday by US missions in 12 countries across West Asia, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman, Iran, Qatar, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Israel.

"Be aware of potential flight cancellations, airspace closures, and travel disruptions," the advisory said, adding that "the hostilities have the potential to escalate rapidly beyond that immediate area."

"Iran and groups supportive of Iran may target other US interests overseas or at locations associated with the United States

and Americans throughout the world, including US businesses and other institutions," it said.

The advisory came amid heightened security concerns in the region following drone and missile attacks by Yemen's Houthis on Saudi Arabia, including a deadly strike on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport on October 10 that killed 13 people, including an Indian national.

The US views the Houthis as a key Iranian-backed armed group within Tehran's regional network, with Iran providing weapons, funding and training, although the rebels retain considerable operational autonomy.

US citizens travelling to or from West Asia were told to monitor information about airport and airline operations and develop contingency plans in advance.

In view of the prevailing situation, the US embassy in Jerusalem

also issued a list of "actions to be taken" and possible emergency assistance available.

Fighting in Yemen has sharply escalated in October following the collapse of a multi-year informal cease-fire, with the Houthis launching major cross-border drone and missile strikes deep into Saudi Arabia.

Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and forced the internationally recognised government to relocate to Aden.

Saudi Arabia led a military coalition into Yemen in March 2015 to support the government and push back against the Houthis, triggering years of fighting and airstrikes.

A UN-brokered truce in 2022 brought a period of relative calm, followed by Saudi-Houthi talks aimed at securing a lasting settlement. However, the ceasefire was never formalised into a comprehensive peace agreement.

The renewed Houthi escalation against Saudi Arabia adds a new regional dimension to the ongoing US-Iran conflict, threatening to widen hostilities beyond the immediate confrontation between Washington and Tehran.

The conflict between the US and Iran, which started in February, remains locked in a military and diplomatic stalemate following the collapse of a June agreement. Iran continues to restrict shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, while the US maintains its naval port blockade on Tehran.

France PM urges localised curfews in cities to curb rioting, looting

AP

Paris, Oct 19: French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu says he has instructed prefects, the government's regional representatives, to impose "very limited" and "localised" curfews to prevent more rioting and looting, following weekend violence that targeted city halls, other public buildings and thousands of businesses across the country.

Speaking after an emergency meeting with top government officials, Lecornu said "on Saturday, despite scenes of severe violence and extensive property damage, no one was killed, and that is a miracle" as he defended the work of police officers faced with violent groups of people.

Lecornu said details of the areas to be placed under curfew will be provided later Monday.

Instructions come as Interior Minister Laurent Nunez offered his resignation Sunday, but President Emmanuel Macron refused it "given the need for continued command of law enforcement in the current context," Macron's office said in a statement Monday.

He instructed Nunez "to take all necessary steps to ensure full transparency about the failures in planning and intelligence-gathering that led to the violence," the statement said.

Macron also asked for the introduction of "new policing tactics on the ground as quickly

as possible" to put an end to violent events.

On Sunday evening, groups set fires to trash bins, bicycles and other objects in the streets and looted businesses in Paris, Lyon, Marseille and other cities. That followed major violence during nationwide protests Saturday against rising living costs and poor conditions in schools. At least 2,400 people were arrested across the country.

Authorities estimated Monday that at least 3,000 businesses were damaged or looted in several cities in the weekend violence.

In Marseille, the prefect banned any protest or other gathering from noon to 8 p.m. Monday.

"I submitted my resignation because I am responsible for everything that is happening," Nunez said on France Inter radio. "Now, the real issue is ensuring that this doesn't happen again. ... We obviously need to be better at anticipating the kind of mobilisation that is unfolding."

Nunez blamed violence on "hordes of troublemakers and looters" and "far-left activists," and said police strategy needs to be adapted "in the face of extremely mobile groups." Authorities said groups of hundreds of people sought confrontations with police and targeted public buildings, including city halls and other public offices.

DC Ganderbal felicitates winners as 70th National School Games 2026 conclude



KT News Desk

Ganderbal, Oct 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal, today attended the culmination ceremony of the 70th National School Games 2026 at Physical College Gadoora, Ganderbal, where she interacted with participating players and congratulated the winners for their outstanding performances.

During the event, the DC congratulated the winning teams and players for their dedication, discipline and sporting spirit. She also encouraged the runners up to remain motivated, continue working hard and view every competition as an opportunity to learn, improve and achieve greater success.

Emphasising the importance of sports in a student's life, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted that participation in games promotes physical fitness, mental well-being, discipline, teamwork and

leadership. She observed that sports also instil values of perseverance, mutual respect and resilience, which are essential for success in all walks of life.

The DC appreciated the Department of Youth Services and Sports for its efforts in organising the event and ensuring the smooth conduct of the sporting competitions. She underscored the importance of providing young athletes with opportunities to showcase their talent and encouraged students to actively participate in sports alongside their academic pursuits. The event celebrated the talent and sporting achievements of young participants while promoting sportsmanship, healthy competition and the spirit of excellence among students.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Joint Director Sports, District Officer Youth Services and Sports, and other concerned officers and officials.

Advisor to CM felicitates new Kashmir Golf Club panel, stresses upgrade and youth promotion

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 19: Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani today felicitated the newly elected members of the Executive Committee of Kashmir Golf Club (KGC), following the conclusion of elections held during the club's 26th Annual General Meeting at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

Chief Minister, president of the Club, had nominated Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani to preside over the Annual General Meeting of the Kashmir Golf Club.

Former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah, MLA Gulmarg Pirzada Farooq Shah, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo who is the chairman of the Executive Committee and other club members were present on the occasion.

Congratulating the newly elected members, the Advisor described Kashmir Golf Club as a prestigious institution with a distinguished place in the history of golf in the country. He noted that the elections, held after a gap of 14 years, marked an important step towards strengthening the club's administration and restoring its facilities. Nasir Aslam expressed hope that the newly



elected executive body would work collectively to address the club's shortcomings and ensure its effective functioning. He said the government remained accessible and committed to supporting the upgradation of the historic institution. Emphasising the need to promote golf among younger generations, the Advisor called for establishing a golf academy at the club to provide children with structured training

and opportunities to develop their skills. He observed that golf offered considerable scope for competitive participation and professional growth.

The Advisor also announced that funds amounting to 2 crore have been earmarked for rebuilding the clubhouse. He expressed hope that the work would be started immediately, adding that other requirements of the club would also be addressed.

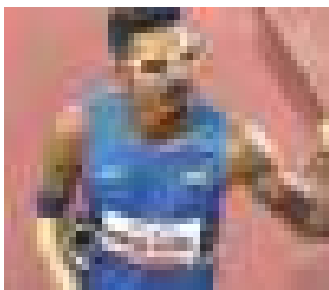
India wins 6 medals, including 3 gold, on Day 1 of para-athletics competitions

PTI

Nagoya, Oct 19 :India's para track and field athletes scooped six medals, including three gold, in a top-notch performance with long jumper Nishad Kumar, javelin thrower Rinku and visually impaired middle distance runner Soumya winning their respective events in the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games here on Monday.

The Indians won three gold, two silver and one bronze, second only to hosts Japan who won eight medals (3 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze) on the opening day of athletics competitions at the Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium.

Nishad opened India's athletics gold account, topping the men's long jump T47 event with a dominating performance. The



27-year-old, who had won a gold in the high jump T47 event in the previous Asian Para Games in China, produced an effort of 7.11m in both his third and fifth attempts to win the gold on the opening day of para-athletics competition. Remarkably, it was his first competitive outing in long jump. The two-time Paralympic silver-medallist will also compete in his pet event, high jump T47, in

the ongoing Games.

Omadbek Khasanov of Uzbekistan and Mohammadu Safran of Sri Lanka took the silver and bronze with efforts of 6.99m and 6.55m respectively.

T47 classification is for athletes with upper limb impairments.

Nishad's right arm was severed by a grass-cutting machine at his family farm in Himachal Pradesh's Amb when he was merely six.

Soumya clinched a gold medal in the women's 1500m T12/T13 event in her debut Asian Para Games while compatriot Radha Venkatesh clinched a silver in the same event. Soumya clocked 5 minutes and 12.39 seconds to win the gold while Radha ran 5:30.90 to take the silver in a 1-2 finish for India.

Soumya, who had won gold in the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in New Delhi earlier in the

year, ran with her guide Kumar Bharath while Radha was guided by Govind Solanki as the T12/T13 event is meant for athletes with visual impairment.

Mana Sasaki of Japan was third with a time of 5 minutes 12.15 seconds, which was better than those of both Soumya and Radha. But the final standings were decided on the basis of a combined T12/T13 points system, under which Sasaki ended at third behind Soumya and Radha.

Two events with near identical classification criteria can be clubbed into one if there are not enough competitors in a single event. T11 to T13 events are for athletes with visual impairment. T11 is for athletes with total or near-total blindness while T13 is the least severe visual impairment. T12 athletes have visual impairment in between the two.

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BLOCKBUSTER TUESDAY

SHOW TIMINGS 20 OCTOBER 2026 TUESDAY

Movie	Time
DRISHYAM: THE CONCLUSION	12:30 PM, 03:00 PM, 06:30 PM
PRAHAAR: THE UNTOLD STORY OF UJJWAL NIKAM	01:25 PM, 07:00 PM
NAYVI NAVELLI	12:30 PM, 06:30 PM
STREET FIGHTER	10:00 AM, 04:30 PM

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