



POLICE COMMEMORATION DAY

Terrorism curbed in J&K, peace taking roots in Kashmir: Amit Shah

Hails J&K Police, security forces for breaking back bone of terrorism in Valley

Says Kashmir, Northeast, Naxal-hit areas witnessing peace, development

Pays tribute to police personnel who laid down their lives in line of duty

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 21: Hailing the role of Jammu and Kashmir Police and other security forces in curbing terrorism in the Valley, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that Kashmir, the Northeast and Left-Wing Extremism-affected areas are now witnessing peace and development.

Addressing a ceremony on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day at the National Police Memorial here, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said significant success has been achieved in curbing terrorism in Kashmir, while security forces have made major contributions towards restoring peace in regions that faced prolonged internal security challenges.

He said the three major hotspots of internal security challenges, Kashmir, the Northeast and areas affected by Left-Wing Extremism,



were now on the path of peace and development.

The Union Home Minister also paid tributes to police personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty and said their sacrifices have laid the foundation for the country's progress and security.

"Police personnel constitute both the first and the last line of defence for internal security," he said, praising their role in maintaining law and

order, securing borders and ensuring the smooth conduct of democratic processes.

2026 WAS SIGNIFICANT YEAR FOR INDIAN POLICE

The Home Minister said 2026 was a significant year for the Indian police, claiming that the country had achieved freedom from Naxalism on March 31 after decades of violence.

He said more than 3,600 security personnel and nearly 13,700 civilians lost their lives due to Naxalism between 1981 and March 2026.

Paying homage to the personnel who made the supreme sacrifice, Shah said the nation remained indebted to their families for their contribution to the country's security.

Recalling the history of Police Commemoration Day, he said October 21 is observed every year in memory of 10 CRPF personnel who were killed while resisting an attack by Chinese troops in the Hot Springs region of Ladakh in 1959.

NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL HONOURS SACRIFICES OF POLICE PERSONNEL

He said the National Police Memorial, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, honoured the sacrifices of police personnel across the country and had become a place of reverence for citizens.

HM Shah | More on P6

Days of terrorist supporters over: LG Sinha

Says won't rest until this land freed from separatist, terrorist elements

Reaffirms support to families of Police Martyrs, assures them all possible help

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that days of terrorist supporters are over and even if they attempt to hide in 'Pataal' (underground) they will be searched and punished under the law.

Paying solemn tributes to police personnel who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day, LG Sinha according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in his message said, "Our goal is to identify and root out



terrorism and every element associated with it in Jammu Kashmir. Today, we must resolve that we will not rest until this land is freed from separatist and terrorist elements."

Remembering the courage, dedication and patriotism of the brave martyrs, the Lieutenant Governor said that their service and sacrifice remain an enduring source of inspiration for Jammu Kashmir and the nation.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed gratitude to all police | More on P6

Police's sacrifice will remain etched in nation's memory: PM



KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid tribute to police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty, saying their courage, dedication and sacrifice would forever remain etched in the nation's memory.

In a post on X on Police Commemoration Day, the Prime Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), expressed gratitude to police personnel for serving the country with commitment, often under challenging circumstances.

He said the | More on P6

J&K Police will always stand by families of fallen heroes: DGP

» Listens to grievances of NOKs of martyrs at Zewan, assures justice

» 1,621 fallen heroes remembered, 7 martyrs of 2025–26 honoured

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 21: Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Wednesday assured the kith and kin of Police martyrs that J&K Police will always stand by families of fallen heroes who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

According to the details available with the news



agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) families of fallen police personnel

remembered their loved ones on Police Commemoration Day as | More on P6

JKP holds wreath-laying, blood donation camps to honour martyrs

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 21: The Jammu & Kashmir Police on Wednesday paid tribute to its personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty, as Police Commemoration Day was observed across the Kashmir Valley through

wreath-laying ceremonies, blood donation camps, sports activities and interactions with families of martyrs.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the observances were held across all districts, where senior police officers, civil administration officials, Army and CRPF

personnel and family members of the fallen personnel gathered to honour their sacrifice.

The ceremonies featured floral tributes at martyrs' memorials, two minutes of silence and the reading of the roll of honour of police personnel who attained martyrdom | More on P6

Basohli should join India's cultural capitals: LG Sinha

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Oct 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has congratulated the organisers of the fourth Basohli Utsav, saying the government aims to develop the town as a centre for art and literature.

In a message marking the festival's conclusion, Sinha praised the people of Basohli for helping the event grow and said the town's traditions, imagination and creativity could help establish it among India's cultural capitals.

"Our objective is very clear: Basohli should secure its place among the cultural capitals of the country, with literature and art taking root here," he said. He envisioned Basohli becoming a centre where artists, writers and scholars from across the world could meet and exchange ideas, while noting that more

work remains to realise that ambition.

Referring to the legacy of the Basohli school of painting, the Lieutenant Governor said art preserves a civilisation's memories and connects generations through shared heritage. He expressed confidence that the town's cultural revival would inspire young people to create an enduring artistic legacy.

Sinha also highlighted the growing recognition and support for artists and artisans under the Prime Minister's vision of "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi". He urged officials to help eligible artisans access training, credit, modern tools, design assistance and market connections through the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

Encouraging young people to combine traditional knowledge with innovation, he said digital platforms | More on P6

CM Omar reviews winter preparedness, stresses coordinated snow clearance

Directs strict adherence to power curbs | Calls for prior intimation about unscheduled cuts

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to review winter preparedness across Jammu and Kashmir, directing all concerned departments and agencies to ensure coordinated, timely and effective arrangements to minimise public inconvenience during the winter months.

Emphasising the need for close interdepartmental coordination, the Chief Minister called for a well-coordinated mechanism for snow clearance, particularly on roads maintained by different departments and agencies. He stressed that clear responsibilities and coordination between R&B, Mechanical, SMC, ULBs, PMGSY and other



departments was essential to ensure the timely restoration of road connectivity during inclement weather and snowfall.

The Chief Minister directed that a nodal officers be designated to coordinate snow clearance operations among the different road-maintaining agencies, ensuring that the work is carried out in a

synchronised manner and that no road is left unattended due to a lack of coordination.

He underscored the importance of advance planning, timely deployment of men and machinery, and effective monitoring of snow clearance operations, particularly in areas vulnerable to heavy snowfall and prolonged disruption

of road connectivity. Reviewing the power supply scenario, the Chief Minister directed the Power Development Department and the distribution companies to ensure strict adherence to the notified power curtailment schedules.

He observed that while technical faults and other exigencies could occasionally necessitate power interruptions beyond scheduled curtailments, consumers must be kept informed about such disruptions in advance wherever possible. He stressed that timely communication was essential to reduce public inconvenience and enable consumers to plan accordingly.

The Chief Minister directed that any deviation from the notified schedule | More on P6

J&K govt raises medical interns' stipend to Rs 25,000

AIMSA calls off strike, says focus on hike for PG residents

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 21: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday approved a substantial increase in the monthly stipend of MBBS and BDS interns, including Foreign Medical Graduates (FMGs), raising it from Rs 12,300 to Rs 25,000, following days of protests and an indefinite strike by medical interns across the Union Territory.

The Health and Medical Education Department issued a formal order sanctioning the enhancement, bringing an end to the uncertainty



surrounding the long-pending demand.

According to the order, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer

(KNO), the revised stipend will be applicable with effect from October 1, 2026.

The increase of Rs 12,700 per month | More on P6

Juvenile justice system crumbles

JJBs partially defunct, CWCs completely dysfunctional

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 21: In a blow to juvenile rights in Jammu & Kashmir, the Juvenile Justice Boards have become partially defunct and the Child Welfare Committees fully dysfunctional following the completion of the term of their members.

An official order issued by the Mission Director, Mission Vatsalya (formerly ICPS), states that the tenure of most Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) expired on April 15, 2026.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), subsequently, the Social Welfare Department granted a six-month extension to the existing chairpersons/members of the CWCs and members of the JJBs. The extension expired on October 13, 2026.

JJBs cannot pass final orders. The JJB comprises a Principal Magistrate, appointed by the High Court, and two members appointed by the Social Welfare Department.

With the tenure of both members ending on 13 October 13, the Board has been left with only the Principal Magistrate. Under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, at least two members, including the Principal Magistrate, must be present at the time of final disposal of a case or while passing an order to transfer a juvenile's case involving heinous offences such as murder or rape to the Children's Court for trial as an adult.

It means that JJBs in J&K are restrained from passing final orders or issuing transfer orders (sending heinous offence cases of children above 16 to the Children's | More on P6

KNO
IMPACT

J&K Govt to take up APEDA refund demand with Centre

Contractor blacklisted

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 21: Reacting to the story carried by news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) regarding the Centre's demand for a refund of Rs 4.16 crore for failing to build a pre-harvest management project for apple growers, the Jammu & Kashmir Government on Wednesday said that the matter will be formally taken up with the Government of India.

In an official statement, the Jammu & Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (JKHPMC) said the issue must be viewed in the context of the

proposed revival of the project. "In terms of Clause 18 of the project MoU dated July 15, 2005, the matter will be placed before the Centre for a considered view in light of the revival plan and the commitment to complete the facility using J&K Government resources," the statement reads.

The project, conceived in 2005 with APEDA assistance, could not be completed despite repeated extensions, largely due to frequent site and design changes and default by the executing contractor.

"Action was taken against the contractor, including blacklisting and initiation of legal proceedings," it said.

Recognising the importance of the facility for apple growers

in Shopian and adjoining areas, JKHPMC has undertaken a fresh technical assessment and prepared a revival plan with modern post-harvest infrastructure. The plan envisages a grading, packing, and waxing line of 5 metric tonnes per hour capacity, along with a Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facility of about 2,000 metric tonnes. Existing infrastructure will be utilised wherever feasible.

The project is proposed to be completed with an investment of around 20 crore from the UT Government's CAPEX budget, to be projected in the ensuing financial year. Once operational, the facility will enable scientific storage, improve | More on P6

J&K proposes enumeration of vulnerable households for targeted welfare interventions



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has proposed a household-level enumeration of vulnerable families to identify multidimensional deprivations and improve the targeting of welfare schemes. The proposal was discussed at a meeting chaired by Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to Chief Minister.

The review highlighted a significant decline in multidimensional poverty in Jammu & Kashmir. The poverty headcount ratio decreased from 12.56% in 2015-16 to 4.80% in 2019-21, while the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) score fell from 0.055 to 0.020. The national poverty headcount ratio declined from 24.8%

to 14.96% during the same period.

The proposed enumeration, as per an official statement, will initially cover Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and old-age pension beneficiaries under NSAP and ISSS. Other households will remain outside its scope at this stage.

The exercise aims to identify household-specific deprivations, assess access to welfare schemes and essential services, and determine gaps requiring targeted interventions. The proposed survey will assess deprivation across the three MPI dimensions—health, education and living standards—while gathering additional information on factors such as nutrition, healthcare, drinking water, electricity and connectivity. The methodology, beneficiary lists,

manpower requirements, digital data collection arrangements and financial estimates will be finalised before the enumeration begins, subject to the requisite approvals and availability of resources.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary ; Commissioner Secretaries of the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Housing & Urban Development, Health & Medical Education, and School Education Departments; and the Secretaries of the PD&MD, Information Technology and Social Welfare Departments.

The proposed exercise is expected to strengthen evidence-based planning, improve inter-departmental coordination and facilitate more focused welfare delivery to vulnerable households.

DC Kulgam chairs meeting on winter preparedness

Reviews departmental readiness



KT News Desk

KULGAM, OCTOBER 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Wednesday chaired a preparatory meeting regarding winter preparedness at the Mini-Secretariat Kulgam to review the arrangements being put in place by various departments ahead of the upcoming winter season.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed the preparedness of different departments and stressed the need for coordinated efforts to ensure uninterrupted essential services and timely response to any eventuality during the winter months.

He emphasized the need for adequate arrangements for snow clearance, road connectivity, power and water supply, healthcare facilities, availability of essential commodities and other public services. The concerned departments were directed to ensure adequate manpower, machinery and essential supplies to meet any exigency during the winter season.

The DC directed the constitution of tehsil-level committees to monitor snow clearance operations and certify, from time to time, the extent of areas cleared of snow to ensure effective monitoring and timely restoration of road connectivity.

He also directed the concerned departments to give special focus to far-flung and snow-bound areas for immediate rescue and rehabilitation mesites especially for expectant mothers, ailing person's and others requiring timely medical care, ensuring their safe stay and access to healthcare facilities during adverse weather conditions.

The DC stressed inter-departmental coordination among the frontline departments and directed all officers to remain prepared to address public grievances and ensure minimum inconvenience to the people during the winter months.

The meeting was attended by the ADDC, Altaf Ahmad Khan; ADC, Vikar Ahmad Giri; ACR Kulgam, Reyaz Ahmad Shah; CPO Kulgam, Malik Suhail; SDM Noorabad, Bashir Ul Hassan; ADC Kulgam, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar; other officers from various line departments, Executive Engineers and other concerned district and sectoral officers and officials.

DC Budgam stresses seamless winter preparedness



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Jatin Kishore, Wednesday chaired a meeting at the Conference Hall to review winter preparedness across the district and assess the readiness of various departments to tackle snowfall and weather-related exigencies.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, directed the advance stocking of ration and other essential commodities in all snow-bound areas and stressed effective inter-departmental coordination to minimise public inconvenience during the winter months.

The DC directed Municipal Committees to deploy adequate vehicles and machinery in priority areas, particularly near hospitals, on roads and at other essential locations.

The Mechanical Engineering Department was asked to keep trucks, snow cutters, tractors and other machinery ready, ensuring timely repairs and thorough testing.

Stressing the timely floating of stage contracts, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the R&B and PMGSY departments to distribute machinery across designated routes to ensure prompt snow clearance. He instructed the Additional Deputy Commissioner to devise a robust winter action plan and ensure that the contact details of drivers and information regarding the mobilisation of other resources remain readily available.

The Power Development Department was directed to maintain buffer stocks of transformers and transformer oil for the prompt restoration

of electricity. The Jal Shakti Department was asked to ensure adequate stocks of pipes and uninterrupted water supply.

Reviewing health-care preparedness, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for adequate backup arrangements at hospitals, the availability of 4x4 ambulances and heating facilities, besides sufficient staff and medicines at all healthcare facilities.

He instructed the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department to maintain adequate stocks of essential commodities and LPG and ensure their availability in snow-bound areas.

Fire and Emergency Services was asked to ensure sufficient fuel stocks and operational readiness, while Civil Defence and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) were directed to strengthen emergency response training and disaster mitigation preparedness.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to operationalise the Snow Control Room from November 1 to ensure a timely response to public grievances and emergencies. He also called for effective traffic management measures and the issuance of advisories against roadside parking to facilitate snow clearance.

The meeting was attended by the Joint Director (JD) Planning, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers from the R&B, Hydraulic, PMGSY, KPDCI and Mechanical Engineering departments, CMO, DySP Civil Defence, Assistant Director (AD) Fire and Emergency Services, Assistant Director (AD) FCS&CA, and Executive Officers of all Municipal Committees.

1000 artisans, weavers get capsule training in branding, packaging by Handicrafts Dept, NIFT

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: In a bid to raise awareness regarding branding and packaging of high-value hand-made products that hold sway in niche markets, the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir successfully concluded a series of 10 Capacity Building Programmes under RAMP, a flagship programme of the Ministry of MSME.

The programmes, as per an official statement, were held at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Srinagar, benefiting more than 1000 artisans, weavers, cooperative societies and Self Help Groups.

In a press statement issued here Wednesday, a spokesman of the Department stated that the workshops were designed to inculcate the significance of proper branding, packaging and GI labelling of their high-end products so that they become market-ready. "Our focus revolves around promotion of GI crafts, ODOPs and other distinctive traditional crafts. The artisans and

weavers represented a wide range of heritage crafts including Sozni, Crewel and Ari Staple embroidery, Walnut Wood Carving, Papier Mâché, Pashmina and Tweed/Pattoo Weaving," he said.

The spokesman further added that NIFT faculty members and domain experts led the interactive and practical sessions covering product identity, brand development, visual presentation and customised packaging. "The participants were also sensitised about the role of packaging in protecting products, facilitating transportation and effectively communicating product attributes and value to consumers," he added.

The programmes underscored that branding and packaging are not merely promotional tools but integral components of product development, market positioning and enterprise growth. By blending Kashmir's rich traditional craftsmanship and cultural identity with benchmark techniques, the initiative aims to improve visibility and marketability of the Kashmir's famed craft products, he added.

JKSET/LASET 2026 examination rescheduled to 1:30 PM on October 25

KT News Desk

Srinagar, OCTOBER 21: The JKSET/LASET 2026 examination, to be conducted by the University of Kashmir (KU) this year, has been rescheduled to 1:30 PM on October 25 across Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

As per the revised schedule notification issued by the Member Secretary JKSET agency under No. F(Timing/JKSET/LASET-26), dated: 21.10.2026 candidates have been asked to report to their respective examination centres at 12 noon. The interval between the two papers has also been reduced from 20 minutes to 15 minutes.

All other examination instructions, as per a statement, will remain unchanged. Candidates are advised to take note of the revised timings and make necessary arrangements accordingly.

District Treasury Bandipora begins 4-day training on JKIFMS e-Bill framework

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 21: District Treasury Bandipora Wednesday inaugurated a four-day training programme on the implementation of e-Bill and e-Sanction modules under the JKIFMS project of NIC J&K, on the directions of the J&K Accounts and Treasuries Organisation, Finance Department.

The programme was inaugurated by Chief Education Officer (CEO) Bandipora, Rafeeq Ahmad Mir, in the presence of District Treasury Officer (DTO) Bandipora, Imtiyaz Ahmad, and Accounts Officer, DC Office Bandipora, Mohamed Akber.

The first-day session, as per an official statement, was attended by over 50 Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) and Dealing Assistants (DAs) of the Education Department, including Principals, Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) and Headmasters.

During the training, the DTO and officials of District Treasury Bandipora provided hands-on guidance on the technical aspects of the e-Bill system, with particular emphasis on three-tier authentication and e-signing mechanisms. An interactive question-and-answer session was also held to address participants' queries and clarify technical issues.

The training aims to facilitate the effective implementation of the e-Bill and e-Sanction modules and strengthen digital financial processes under JKIFMS. The project also encompasses e-Receipt, e-Payments and e-Accounting frameworks.

The DTO expressed gratitude to the District Administration Bandipora for its continued support and cooperation and appreciated the CEO Bandipora for his active participation in organising the programme. Participants also appreciated the arrangements and acknowledged the initiative of the Accounts and Treasuries Organisation in facilitating the training.

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NOTICE

I Nahida Begum W/o Riyaz Ahmad parimoo R/o DOABGAH, achha bal, Sopore Baramula Jammu & Kashmir 193201 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Nafeesa Begum to Nahida Begum for all purposes. Including Aadhar card bearing Aadhar No 305720574653
Henceforth, I shall be known as Nahida Begum

NOTICE

I Azan khurshid s/o Khurshid Ahmad Dar R/o Noor Bagh, Near Red door restaurant ,Green town by pass Sopore Baramula Jammu & Kashmir 193201 do hereby declare that I have correction my name from Mo-hammad Azan Dar to Azan Khurshid for all purposes. Including Aadhar card bearing Aadhar No 351350511248
Henceforth, I shall be known as Azan Khurshid

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
(R&B) DIVISION RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.

Lal Mandi, Near L.D. Hospital Srinagar- 190008.

0194-2310283

SNOW STAGE NOTICE INVITING TENDER

E-NIT No. 100/R&B/RAJ of 2026-27 issued under Endorsement No. 9136-45 Dated: 19.10.2026.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S.No.	Name of the stage	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	S.C.S-1 (RJB S.D) (ANNEXURE "A")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
2.	S.C.S-2 (RJB S.D) (ANNEXURE "A")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
3.	S.C.S-3 (RJB S.D) (ANNEXURE "A")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
4.	S.C.S-4 (RJB S.D) (ANNEXURE "A")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
5.	S.C.S-5 (RMB S.D) (ANNEXURE "B")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
6.	S.C.S-6 (RMB S.D) (ANNEXURE "B")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
7.	S.C.S-7 (RMB S.D) (ANNEXURE "B")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE
8.	S.C.S-8 (RMB S.D) (ANNEXURE "B")	200/-	2000/-	3054-SNOW	CEE &DEE

Position of AAA: Approved. (Non Plan).
Position of funds Demanded/Committed.

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19.10.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	20.10.2026 from 11.00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	21.10.2026 from 10.00 AM
4	Bid Submission End Date	30.10.2026 upto 4.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	31.10.2026 at 11.30 AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh, Srinagar

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh, Srinagar (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh, Srinagar (tender inviting authority).

2. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security in the form of CDR/FDR/TDR pledged to the tender receiving authority i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh, Srinagar (The date of Earnest money should be between Date of Start of bid and bid submission End date).

1. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/ FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar.

2. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh (tender receiving authority).

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

All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

No. 9136-45
Dated: 19.10.2026
DIPK-6950/26
DATED: 21-10-2026
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar
(NM)

CS reviews PM Ekta Malls progress in Srinagar, Jammu

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday reviewed the status of the proposed PM Unity (Ekta) Malls at Jammu and Srinagar in a meeting convened to assess the progress of the projects being under-taken by the Department of Industries & Commerce through Public Works Department here.

The meeting besides the ACS, PWD and Commissioner Secretary, I&C; Secretary, Planning was attended by the HoDs of the Industries & Commerce Department and senior officers of the other concerned departments.

The Chief Secretary observed that the PM Ekta Malls would serve as integrated platforms for showcasing the rich handicrafts, handlooms, indigenous products and cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir alongside those of other States and Union Territories.

He underscored the significance of the initiative in strengthening market linkages for local artisans,



crafts-people, entrepreneurs and producers, while creating new avenues for tourism promotion, enterprise development and sustainable livelihoods. He further emphasised that these commercial hubs would provide greater visibility and market

access to products under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative and those bearing Geographical Indication (GI) tags, connecting local producers with wider domestic and international markets and opening up new opportunities for

growth and economic empowerment

While giving out the details the Commissioner Secretary, I&C, Vikramjit Singh highlighted that the Ekta Mall at Jammu is proposed to be constructed over 24 kanals at the Rail Head Complex. Designed with two basement levels, a ground floor and three upper floors, the facility will have approximately 2.14 lakh square feet of floor space.

Adding he gave out that the project has received administrative approval of ₹125 crore and its proposed facilities include retail outlets, workspaces, public cultural facilities, a craft museum/art gallery, exhibition and trade facilitation spaces, a food court and family amenities. Similarly, the meeting was apprised that the Srinagar Ekta Mall is proposed at Kashmir Haat Complex on Jehangir Chowk-Batmaloo Road, over an area of 15 kanals. The six-level facility, comprising one basement, a ground floor and four upper floors, will have a total floor area of approximately 1.81 lakh square feet.

Its planned facilities

include retail shops, a craft museum, an exhibition hall, trade facilitation spaces, an auditorium, an indoor amphitheatre, a food court, dining facilities and guest accommodation approved at a cost of ₹130 crore.

It was also divulged that the contract committee had considered both projects on October 19, 2026, and that the Letters of Award were expected by the third week of November 2026. The projects are proposed to be operated and maintained through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode, with a private partner to be selected through competitive bidding. The Government will retain policy and strategic oversight of the initiative.

Once developed, the two Ekta Malls are envisaged to provide a common platform for commerce, culture and tourism, while creating opportunities for local producers to enhance the visibility and market reach of their products and strengthening J&K's integration with the country's wider retail and cultural ecosystem.

Div Com reviews alignment of Srinagar key projects

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, An-shul Garg on Wednesday chaired a meeting of officers to review the change in proposed realignments of Srinagar Ring Road Phase-III (Lasjan-Pandach) and the Parimpo-ra-Dalgate Flyover.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC); Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; SSP Traffic; Vice Chairman, Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA); Project Director, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI); and officers from the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department, Ir-rigation and Flood Control Department, Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), and other concerned departments.

During the review of Srinagar Ring Road Phase-III (Lasjan-Pandach), the Divisional Commissioner directed NHAI officials to compile comprehensive details of structures and departmental utilities falling within the proposed alignments



including religious structures to access impediments & challenges and cost expenditure.

He further directed the concerned authorities to explore modifications to the alignment to ensure that the road does not encroach upon the city's major water body.

Reviewing the proposed alignment of the Parimpo-ra-Dalgate Flyover, the Divisional Commissioner directed the R&B

Department to explore an alternative alignments from Qamarwari to Nalamar and onward to Karanagar. He emphasized the need to ensure connectivity to key facilities, including SMHS Hospital, while minimizing traffic disruptions during the execution of the project. The concerned departments were directed to examine the proposed alignments in coordination with one another, keeping public convenience and essential infrastructure.

JKBOSE bars supervisory staff from carrying phones during exams

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Oct 21: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) on Wednesday banned supervisory staff from using mobile phones during examination hours in the ongoing board examinations.

JKBOSE Secretary in a circular impressed upon all centre superintendents not to permit their supervisory staff to keep mobile phones along with them during the examination hours.

"They will deposit the cell phones with the centre superintendents, who will be personally responsible for implementation of the circular instruction," it reads. The board however said that the centre superintendents are exempted.



"They can keep mobile phones for effective communication and to remain in constant touch with Divisional or Sub Branch offices of JKBOSE, besides, their own departmental hierarchical set up."

Furthermore, the board said that no candidate shall be allowed to move out of the examination centre till at least half-time of the

examination period is over.

On Tuesday, JKBOSE constituted a three-member committee to investigate the reported outage of the Mathe-matics question paper of annual regular exams of 10th standard shortly after the commencement in one of the Mahore centres.

Pertinently, the annual regular examination for 12th standard commences

today and will culminate on November-21 and the board exams for 11th standard will commence from October-29 till November-30.

Earlier on October-19, nearly 97,000 students appeared for the Class 10th exams.

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. JKBOSE has said that nearly 97,500 students have been enrolled for the exams that includes 72,232 from Kashmir and 25,268 from winter zones of Jammu division.

The board had also informed that at least 2,70,000 students have registered to appear in board exams of 10th, 11th and 12th standard—(KNO)

Withdraws 20% minimum marks rule for re-evaluation

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 21: JKBOSE has removed the 20 percent minimum marks condition for re-evaluation. Candidates of Classes 10, 11, and 12 can now apply for answer script reviews irrespective of their scores in the concerned sub-ject.

In an notification, JKBOSE Director Academics Dr Par-veen Singh said, "In partial modification, it is notified for information of all the stakeholders that the condition 're-evaluation shall be permissible only in such papers in which the candidate has secured 20% or more marks as-signed to the concerned subject is withdrawn.'"

"As such, the candidates, desirous to re-evaluate their answer scripts in the 10th, 11th, 12th, Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) and Jammu & Kashmir State Open School (JK SOS, 10 and 12) henceforth can apply irrespective of the marks secured in the concerned subjects within the prescribed procedure, timeline and fee," reads the notification.

It also said that the other terms and conditions governing the re-evaluation as notified from time to time shall remain unchanged. The notification shall have prospective effect—(KNO)

SEC announces Panchayat Polls in Ladakh

Raja Syed Rather

Leh, Oct 21: The State Election Commission of Ladakh on Wednesday announced that elections to all Panchayat Halqas in the Union Territory will be held on November 21.

According to the schedule issued by State Election Commissioner Sudhanshu Pandey, the notification for the elections will be issued jointly by the UT administration and the State Election Commission on October 26.

As per the schedule, the last date for filing nominations is November 2, while scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on November 3. Candidates can withdraw their nominations till November 5.

The Commission said voting will take place on November 21, and the election process will be completed by November 30.

It added that the Model Code of Conduct for candidates and political parties has come into force with immediate effect and will remain applicable throughout the election process.

The Commission has directed all concerned to strictly adhere to the Model Code of Conduct and



subsequent instructions issued in connection with the elections.

The last general elections to Panchayat Halqas in Ladakh were held in November 2018.

Meanwhile, the administration of the Union Territory has ordered the dissolution and de constitution of the erstwhile Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil, with immediate effect, citing the reorganisation of the administrative framework of the Union Territory and the creation of new districts.

The order cites the resignation of the Chief Executive Councillor, three Executive Councillors, and six other Councillors of the erstwhile LAHDC Kargil on October 20, 2026, as well as the reorganisation of the territorial boundaries of the erstwhile

Kargil District following the creation of new districts, including Drass, Zaskar, and Sankoo.

As per the order, the erstwhile LAHDC Kargil stands dissolved and de constituted with immediate effect. The Chief Executive Councillor, Executive Councillors, and all elected or nominated members of the erstwhile Council shall cease to hold office and exercise powers as members of the said Council.

The order further provides that all powers, duties, and functions hitherto vested in or exercised by the erstwhile LAHDC Kargil shall be vested in and administered by the Deputy Commissioner/Chief Executive Officer, Kargil, on an interim basis.

The administration of the UT has also notified the number of elected constituencies for the constitution of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils across all eight districts.

According to the notification, Leh district will have 22 seats, Kargil 21, Sankoo 13, Changthang 10, Nubra, Sham, and Zaskar nine seats each, and Drass seven seats, bringing the total to 100 elected constituencies across Ladakh—(KNO)

IGP Jammu vows offensive against terror, narco networks

Yogesh

Jammu, Oct 21: Jammu Zone Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tejinder Singh on Wednesday said the police would intensify operations against the remaining terrorists, their support networks, narco-terrorism and drug trafficking while further strengthening the security grid across Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing reporters on Police Commemoration Day, Singh said security arrangements along the International Border, the Line of Control (LoC) and the hinterland would be reinforced to maintain peace and stability in the Union Territory.

"In the coming days, our efforts will focus on targeting the terror ecosystem and neutralising the remaining terror-ists," he said.

The IGP said recruitment into terrorist ranks had declined over the past two years but stressed that the police would continue pursuing militants



and dismantling networks facilitating their activities.

He said the force's focus would remain on the broader terror ecosystem, including individuals involved in activities that threaten internal security.

Highlighting the need for a strong security architecture, Singh said the police would continue to strengthen surveillance,

intelligence gathering and preventive policing.

Referring to the anti-drug campaign, he said action against narcotics networks would be intensified, with continued attachment of properties and recovery of assets linked to drug trafficking.

"Those involved in the drug trade, particularly heroin coming from Pakistan, are no

less dangerous than terrorists," Singh said, urging people to share information about drug peddlers and suspicious activities.

He said the police were also closely monitoring gangster networks and organised criminal groups and would continue taking action against those involved in criminal activities.

On drone-related activity along the border, Singh said the police, in coordination with the Border Security Force (BSF), had created an additional security layer several kilometres inside border areas to counter cross-border consignments dropped using drones.

He advised people to remain vigilant and immediately report suspicious calls, drone-linked movements or any activities that could pose a security threat.

Earlier, Singh led Police Commemoration Day tributes in Jammu and laid a wreath at the Police Martyrs' Memorial, paying

Continued on
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Kashmiris have realised terrorism, violence bring no development: Ram Lal

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 21: The people of Kashmir have understood that terror and violence do not bring peace or development, Akhil Bharatiya Sampark Pramukh and RSS leader Ram Lal said on Wednesday, urging people to continue on the path of peace and communal harmony.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function in Srinagar, Ram Lal said Kashmir's longstanding tradition of coexistence had been affected by terrorism and violence, but expressed satisfaction that people are recognising their consequences. "The culture of Kashmir is very ancient. Everyone used to live together in Kashmir. There is an old tradition of Sanatani saints and an old tradition of Sufi saints," he said.

"All the people of Kashmir should follow this path and show the way to India,"

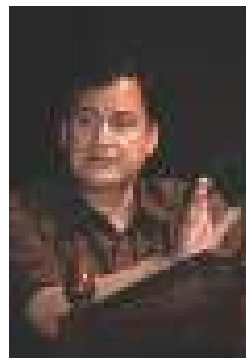
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Rivals trying to cast NC as failure: Javed Dar

Waris Fayaz

Baramulla, Oct 21: Jammu and Kashmir minister Javed Dar on Wednesday alleged that certain forces were trying to portray the National Conference (NC) as a failure to strengthen a rival political camp in the Union Territory.

Addressing a gathering in Rafiabab, Dar said the NC's primary objective was to protect Jammu and Kashmir's identity and safeguard the rights of its people, asserting that the party's mission extended beyond routine governance issues.



"Electricity and water are common issues, and every government works on them. But the cause of the National Conference is bigger," he said.

Dar said the party

had faced several challenges since 2019 and had consistently resisted what he described as attempts to undermine Jammu and Kashmir's identity.

Referring to the 2014 Assembly elections, he alleged that a political strategy set in motion at the time continued through the 2024 elections, with the National Conference as its primary target. He claimed several forces had come together against the NC during the 2024 polls but failed to defeat its political agenda as

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EDITORIAL

A Timely Boost For Our ITIs

For years, the word ITI has carried a small sadness in Kashmir. Parents spoke of it as a last resort. Students joined because there was no other option. The workshops were old, the machines older, and the training often had little connection with what industry actually wanted. So the news

that the Centre has approved Rs 475.41 crore under the PM-SETU scheme for ten Government ITIs in Jammu and Kashmir is genuinely welcome. The money is not small. The Jammu cluster gets Rs 240 crore and the Srinagar cluster Rs 235.41 crore. Each cluster will have one hub and four spoke

institutes. ITI Jammu will lead R.S. Pura, Nowshera, Samba and Kathua. ITI Srinagar will guide Ganderbal, Kangan, Budgam and Charar-i-Sharief. This cluster model is wise, because one strong institute can lift the surrounding ones instead of each struggling alone. But money alone does not

fix things. What matters is how it is spent. Workshops need modern machines. Trainers need proper training themselves. Courses must match what the market needs — not what looked good ten years ago. If a student learns a trade and still cannot find work, then the whole purpose is lost. So, the focus

on industry partnership with private firms is encouraging. It must be real partnership, not just signatures on paper. The Chief Minister has thanked the Prime Minister and the Union Minister, and rightly so. But the real thanks will come when a young boy from Kangan or a girl from Charar-i-Sharief finishes

her course and gets a decent job near her home. That is the test. Let this money reach the workshop floor. Let the machines arrive. Let the trainers be trained. And let our youth walk out of these ITIs with confidence and skill. If that happens, this Rs 475 crore will be the best money spent in a long time.

A Grey Silence

The survival of a language ultimately depends on the community that speaks it. India has long acknowledged its linguistic diversity. But preserving this diversity will require sustained State support.

Rohan Qurashi

According to the World Economic Forum, India ranks fourth after Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and Nigeria in terms of linguistic diversity. In the 2011 Census, India had recorded over 19,500 languages and dialects.

However, India is experiencing a major linguistic crisis. Estimates suggest that India has lost over 250 languages in the last six decades, while UNESCO identifies 197 Indian languages as endangered, their status ranging from “vulnerable” to “critically endangered”. Linguists have warned that if this threat of linguistic genocide continues, then nearly 400 Indian languages, constituting more than half of the country’s lesser-spoken languages, may disappear within the next 50 years.

The Majhi language of Sikkim became extinct in 2016 with the death of its last known speaker. The Saimar of Tripura had only four speakers in 2012, down from 25 just three years earlier. Toda in Tamil Nadu, Birhor in Jharkhand, Aiton in Assam, Nihali in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, and Raji in Uttarakhand are among the many indigenous endangered languages.

The role of the State in keeping a language alive can be best understood through the experience of Dogri in Jammu and Kashmir. While Kashmiri has enjoyed greater institutional support in the Valley, including its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule in the Constitution and compulsory teaching in schools up to Class VIII, Dogri, despite being widely spoken in Jammu, was added to the Eighth Schedule only in 2003, but faces institutional neglect. According to a recent survey, the number of people able



to read and write in Dogri has declined significantly. Dogri’s fate demonstrates that while constitutional recognition provides legitimacy, languages remain alive when governments give them sustained space in classrooms and everyday life.

The digital domain, while being blamed

for accelerating the dominance of English and contributing to linguistic imperialism, also holds considerable potential for fostering ethno-linguistic resilience. Among the most promising tools in this regard is Artificial Intelligence.

In India, AI-driven initiatives are

beginning to create new digital spaces for languages that have historically received limited technological support. Initiatives like Adi Vaani, Bhashini and AI4Bharat are developing tools for translation, speech recognition and access across Indian languages. Most notably, SraVaani, an AI model

trained on 65 Indian languages and dialects, including over 40 regional languages, seeks to address a longstanding gap in speech technology. By extending speech technologies to underserved and non-scheduled languages, such initiatives can make these languages more visible in the digital sphere. Similarly, Google’s Endangered Languages Project and community-driven AI voice recordings in northeastern India demonstrate technology’s dual role in documenting and revitalising languages on the brink of disappearance.

The survival of a language, however, ultimately depends on the community that speaks it. The Asur community, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group with a population of approximately 24,000, lives primarily in Jharkhand. Its language, Asuri, is classified by UNESCO as “definitely endangered”, lacks institutional support and digital presence, and finds no place in school curricula. Yet, under the leadership of the tribal activist, Vandana Tete, community members have launched the Asur Akhra Mobile Radio. The initiative plays pre-recorded capsules featuring music, traditional stories and local news in Asuri at weekly haats around Netarhat. By bringing the language into public and digital spaces, the initiative has helped raise awareness about Asuri language and culture.

India has long acknowledged its linguistic diversity. But preserving this diversity will require sustained State support, meaningful use of technology and, above all, communities willing to embrace their languages with pride.

The writer is a cultural researcher and writer. Courtesy: The Telegraph India

Digital Natives Are Buying Electric Cars As If They Were Smartphones

Svetoslav Georgiev

Until recently, buying a car meant obsessing over horsepower, transmission types and brand heritage. But step into the market today and the showroom floor looks entirely different.

With the aggressive expansion of electric vehicle production and the entry of smartphone giants like Xiaomi and Huawei into the car market, vehicles are rapidly transforming into rolling computers.

This shift raises a fundamental question for the modern market: are younger consumers beginning to evaluate cars the exact same way they evaluate smartphones?

To understand the buying behaviour of young consumers, we must first recognise that the car industry is undergoing a profound digital transformation. Traditional factors like brand prestige and mechanical engineering, while still relevant, are steadily losing ground to software capabilities and digital integration.

Tech-focused manufacturers are prioritising software-driven car systems, leaving legacy car makers struggling to adapt. For millennials, this technological pivot is not just an added bonus; it is becoming a baseline expectation.

Market-specific factors like electric vehicle pricing and availability in regions like China may accelerate this trend, but the underlying data reflects a broader, cross-national generational shift among digital natives (someone who grew up around digital technology, such as smartphones) are revealing this shift in China, North America and Europe.

A generational perspective
When technologically minded consumers encounter an electric vehicle, they do not necessarily see a mechanical machine with a motor; they see a hardware platform waiting for an operating system.

Consequently, this mindset shifts how



they judge the vehicle’s core anatomy. When this demographic evaluates electric vehicles, they base their decisions heavily on “product technological development” (how well the in-car technology works, for instance) and “charging infrastructure” alongside financial incentives.

This directly mirrors how a consumer evaluates a smartphone’s operational speed, battery longevity, and software updates rather than traditional, outdated car metrics.

This paradigm shift also rewrites how cars are bought and experienced. Long before a consumer ever sits in a driver’s seat, the purchasing journey has fundamentally changed. Younger consumers demonstrate a strong inclination toward online platforms and social media as their primary shopping channels, relying heavily on digital interactions and visually rich experiences.

Rather than turning to traditional dealership visits or print brochures, they depend on user-generated content, peer opinions, online reviews and digital advertising to inform their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, recent studies show that this target group’s evaluation criteria continue

to mirror the metrics they apply to mobile technology.

Mirroring digital lives

When car shopping, research shows that gen Z consumers seek out technologically advanced and highly personalised experiences, showing a specific interest in the entertainment capabilities and software ecosystems of modern vehicles. This indicates they are evaluating the digital and entertainment experience inside the car, much like they would evaluate the apps of a new phone.

The intense brand loyalty traditionally reserved for Apple or android phones has seamlessly transferred to the car market. Seamless ecosystem integration via systems like Apple CarPlay or Android Auto is treated as a mandatory requirement. If a car fails to mirror a driver’s digital life instantly, it fails the test.

Younger consumers scrutinise a vehicle’s multimedia and infotainment systems with the same hardware expectations they apply to smartphones. If a touchscreen exhibits input lag, clunky user interfaces, or poor user experiences, it severely damages their perception of the entire vehicle.

Unlike older generations who harbour a

habitual attachment to driving, younger cohorts base their transport choices on metrics such as travel time, cost efficiency and service reliability. They evaluate transport options rationally rather than emotionally.

Younger demographics increasingly prioritise shared mobility programmes, such as Uber and Grab, over private vehicle ownership. They expect personal settings and digital profiles to sync instantly upon entering any vehicle. This allows them to listen to their latest music playlists or read messages on their smartphone. This mirrors the multi-device continuity they experience when using, for example, tablets and smartphones.

Just as smartphone consumers agonise over app permissions and data tracking, tech-savvy millennials, as well as gen Zs, view connected cars through a lens of data security. Trust in the way vehicle technology and data is handled have become a primary psychological barrier to adoption.

However, a fundamental disconnect explains a striking corporate blind spot identified in recent market research: while 80% of automotive executives believe they are delivering an exceptional digital customer

experience, only 8% of customers actually agree. Traditional manufacturers are failing the software test because they still think like mechanics, not app developers.

Brain overload

Treating a car like a smartphone, however, raises a potential problem related to the physical reality of driving. While younger consumers demand the deep customisation and flexibility of touchscreens, replacing physical controls with digital submenus creates massive cognitive overload.

Forcing drivers to navigate complex digital layers to adjust basic climate or safety settings diverts visual attention and increases the risks of an accident. One study argues that reaction times using screens while driving are worse than being drunk or under the influence of drugs.

This has sparked an inevitable regulatory and design backlash. Safety organisations and designers are pushing back against pure “touchscreen-isation”, noting that a car is ultimately a high-speed vehicle, not a handset.

Even major car manufacturers, such as Volkswagen and Mazda, have publicly admitted that eliminating physical buttons was a misstep, leading to a hybrid design mandate where tactile controls for core functions must coexist with digital entertainment.

Ultimately, younger consumers are evaluating cars through a smartphone-tinted lens. Yet, the future of the car market will not belong to the brands that simply build iPhones on wheels.

The winners will be the manufacturers that successfully balance the digital native’s craving for software-driven connectivity with the uncompromising, safety-first reality of car design.

The writer is Associate Professor, School of Intelligent Finance and Business, Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. Courtesy: The Conversation UK

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Ladakh Makes Judicial History

Country's highest-altitude High Court Bench begins regular hearings at Leh

Chief Justice Dr Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Justice Sanjay Parihar preside over historic first regular division bench

KT News Desk

LEH, OCTOBER 21: A historic chapter in the Indian judicial history unfolded on Wednesday when Chief Justice of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Dr Pushpendra Singh Bhati and Justice Sanjay Parihar presided over the first regular division bench at Leh.

The newly established Ladakh Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh located at a breath-taking height of over 11,500 feet above sea level, began regular hearing of the cases from Wednesday.

The day, as per an official statement, began with the hearing by the Division Bench in which the Chief Justice heard the matters through virtual mode while Justice Sanjay Parihar was present physically at the Ladakh Bench. After the conclusion of the hearing of five listed Division Bench matters, Justice Sanjay Parihar sat singly and dealt with as many as 60 matters listed before the single bench. Wednesday's proceedings made use of technology to facilitate a sort of hybrid hearing with the



Chief Justice hearing through Virtual Mode and Justice Sanjay Parihar doing physical hearing.

Justice Parihar said that the identification of the 65 cases that were listed Wednesday reflects the initial effort to organise and facilitate the hearing of matters concerning litigants from Ladakh. He added that the successful commencement of regular judicial hearings Wednesday by the Chief Justice in such a high-altitude location is a landmark achievement in the country's judicial infrastructure and commitment to ensuring that geographical barriers do not become obstacles to justice.

The establishment of the

Ladakh Bench is a significant step in strengthening the reach of constitutional institutions to remote and geographically challenging regions of the country.

Earlier, litigants from Leh, Kargil and other far-flung areas of Ladakh would undertake lengthy journeys to Srinagar or Jammu for proceedings before the High Court. The commencement of hearings here is also encouraging for the legal fraternity of Ladakh including advocates.

It may be mentioned that Ladakh Bench of J&K High court was formally inaugurated by the Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant on October 18, 2026, at Melongthang, Leh.

Sakeena Itoo leads J&K delegation at ITB Asia 2026

Invites global travel stakeholders to explore tourism potential of J&K

KT News Desk

SINGAPORE, OCTOBER 21: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo led a high-level delegation of Jammu and Kashmir at ITB Asia 2026 in Singapore to showcase J&K's diverse tourism potential and invite global travel stakeholders to explore the region's rich tourism offerings.

The Minister, as per an official statement, is accompanied by Director Tourism, Jammu Dr. Vikas Gupta; Special Secretary Tourism J&K, Suraj Parkash Rukwal; and Director Finance, Rashim Deepika.

The Minister also jointly inaugurated the India Pavilion at ITB Asia 2026 alongside Minister for Tourism Goa, Rohan Khaunte; Minister for Tourism, Odhisa, Pravat Parida and Indian High Commissioner to Singapore, Dr. Shilpak Ambule, providing an important platform to promote Jammu and Kashmir as a premier destination for domestic and international tourists.

During the opening day of the grand international travel trade event, the Minister and the delegation held a series of business-to-business (B2B) interactions and strategic meetings with international tour operators, travel trade associations, government representatives and other key stakeholders from the global tourism industry.

The interactions focused on highlighting the diverse tourism experiences offered by Jammu and Kashmir, including its renowned leisure and pilgrimage destinations, adventure tourism



circuits, winter sports, offbeat destinations and rich cultural and heritage attractions. The delegation also encouraged international travel operators and tourism partners to explore opportunities for collaboration and include Jammu and Kashmir in their travel packages and destination portfolios.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sakeena Itoo said that Jammu and Kashmir offers an exceptional blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, spiritual destinations and adventure experiences, making it an attractive destination for travellers with diverse interests.

"Jammu and Kashmir has immense tourism potential, and our endeavour is to showcase its diversity to the world. From its breathtaking landscapes and vibrant cultural traditions to pilgrimage, tourism, adventure activities and winter sports, the Union Territory offers unique experiences for visitors throughout the year", the

Minister said.

She further stated that international tourism platforms such as ITB Asia provide valuable opportunities to connect with global stakeholders, strengthen partnerships and expand the reach of Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector.

"Our participation at ITB Asia reflects J&K Government's commitment to promoting Jammu and Kashmir on the international tourism map. We invite tour operators, travel agencies, investors and tourism professionals from across the world to explore the opportunities available in Jammu and Kashmir and partner with us in promoting its tourism potential", she added.

The Minister also emphasised the importance of strengthening tourism partnerships, improving destination visibility and encouraging sustainable tourism practices to ensure that the benefits of tourism reach local communities and contribute to economic growth and

employment generation.

On the occasion, the J&K delegation also highlighted the opportunities available for collaboration across various tourism segments and underscored the importance of developing customised travel experiences to cater to the evolving preferences of international visitors.

Pertinently, the engagements at ITB Asia 2026 are aimed at fostering long-term partnerships with global travel companies, facilitating greater tourism exchanges and positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a preferred destination for leisure, adventure, pilgrimage and cultural tourism.

The participation of the Jammu and Kashmir delegation at the international event is expected to further strengthen the Union Territory's tourism outreach and create new avenues for collaboration with stakeholders in the global travel and hospitality industry.

Police Martyrs remembered on Police Commemoration Day at Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, OCTOBER 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kulgam, Anayat Ali Chowdhary, and other senior police and CAPFs officers Wednesday paid rich tributes to police personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty, on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day at District Police Lines (DPL) Kulgam.

The occasion was marked by a solemn commemoration parade and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Martyrs' Monument, honouring the supreme sacrifices of police personnel who laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

The DC acknowledged the martyr's courage, dedication and unwavering commitment to safeguarding the lives and security of the people, stating that their sacrifices would always be remembered with pride and gratitude. He emphasised that the martyrs' dedication to duty and service to the nation would continue to inspire future generations. He also underscored the importance of standing by the families of the martyrs, recognising their immense sacrifices and ensuring that they receive due respect, care and support from the administration.



During the ceremony, SSP Kulgam remembered the valour and sacrifices of the martyred personnel and reiterated the commitment of Jammu and Kashmir Police to uphold peace, security and public service.

The SSP also interacted with the Next of Kin (NoKs) of the martyrs, listened to their grievances and assured them of all possible assistance and support from the police department. Gifts were also presented to the bereaved families as a token of respect and solidarity.

On the occasion, Kulgam Police, in collaboration with District Hospital Kulgam, organised a blood donation camp, reflecting the spirit of public service and the commitment to saving precious lives.

JKHPMC clarifies position on Chowdrigund Pack House Project

Reports on APEDA refund demand do not present complete picture, revival plan for pack house project in Shopian already made

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: In response to media reports regarding APEDA's demand for the refund of funds released for the Integrated Pack House and Cold Chamber Storage Project at Chowdrigund, Shopian, the Jammu and Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (JKHPMC) has clarified that the matter needs to be viewed in the context of the proposed revival of the project.

The project, as per an official statement, conceived in 2005 with assistance from the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), could not be completed despite repeated extensions, primarily due to the frequent site and project design changes and default of the executing contractor. Action was taken against the contractor, including blacklisting and legal proceedings.

Recognising the importance of the facility for apple growers in Shopian and adjoining areas.

JKHPMC has undertaken a fresh technical assessment and prepared a revival plan to complete the project with modern post-harvest infrastructure. Since the technology envisaged



at the time of the project's conception has become outdated, the proposed plan incorporates facilities suited to current industry requirements. Given this fact, the revival plan had become inevitable.

The revival plan envisages a modern grading, packing and waxing line with a capacity of 5 metric tonnes per hour, along with a Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facility of approximately 2,000 metric tonnes. The existing infrastructure of the original project will be utilised wherever technically feasible.

The project is proposed to be completed with an investment of around 20 crore from UT Government CAPEX for which the demand will be projected in budgetary estimates in the ensuing financial year.

Once operational, the facility

will enable scientific storage, improve post-harvest handling, reduce losses and allow growers to market their produce beyond the peak harvesting season. This is expected to improve market realisation for growers and strengthen the horticulture sector in Shopian, one of the major apple-producing districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The project will also become a source for local employment.

Regarding APEDA's demand for a refund of the assistance released for the original project, the matter will be taken up with the Government of India in terms clause 18 of the project MOU dated: 15th July 2005, for a considered view in light of the proposed revival and the commitment to complete the facility using J&K Government resources.

Preparations for Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas celebrations reviewed in Kupwara



KT News Desk

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 21: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kupwara, Ghulam Rasool Wednesday chaired a meeting of the concerned officers to review the preparations for the celebration of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas (JGD) 2026, scheduled to be observed from November 1 to November 15 across the district.

During the meeting, the ADDC, as per an official statement, emphasized the importance of celebrating Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas with active participation from all concerned departments and stakeholders to highlight the rich cultural heritage, traditions, achievements and invaluable contributions of tribal communities to the nation. He directed the officers to work in close coordination and ensure the timely completion of all preparatory arrangements for the successful conduct of the celebrations.

The ADDC stressed the need to organize meaningful and inclusive activities, particularly in educational institutions, hostels and residential institutions, to create awareness among students and the general public about the legacy of Bhagwan Birsa Munda and other tribal freedom fighters who played a significant role in India's freedom struggle.

As part of the proposed celebrations, the meeting discussed the organization of floral tribute ceremonies in honour of Bhagwan Birsa Munda and other tribal freedom fighters. It was also emphasized that age-appropriate training sessions and workshops be

conducted to promote awareness about tribal art, dance, music, handicrafts, customs and cultural traditions, while highlighting the significant contributions of tribal communities to Indian society.

The ADDC further called for recognizing and honouring distinguished tribal achievers, including outstanding tribal scholars and other accomplished personalities, whose achievements serve as an inspiration for younger generations.

Emphasis was also laid on encouraging students to participate in community outreach initiatives involving tribal communities. These activities will include Swachhata drives, plantation campaigns, the Each One, Teach One initiative, and encouraging enrolment in NSS, NCC, MyBharat and other community-oriented programmes. The initiatives are aimed at fostering social responsibility, civic engagement and a spirit of volunteerism among students.

The ADDC directed the concerned departments to ensure adequate logistical support, effective coordination and proper arrangements for the smooth conduct of all scheduled activities. He underscored the need for a coordinated approach among departments to ensure that the celebrations are conducted in an organized and impactful manner, reaching the maximum number of beneficiaries.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Kupwara; Chief Medical Officer (CMO); Chief Horticulture Officer (CHO); Lead District Manager (LDM); and other concerned officers and officials.

DLSA Budgam conducts door-to-door legal awareness programmes

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 21: In furtherance of its commitment to promoting access to justice and strengthening legal awareness at the grassroots level, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, under the aegis of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority Srinagar organised a series of door-to-door legal awareness and community outreach activities across various villages and blocks of District Budgam during October 2026, as per the scheduled roster of activities.

The programmes, as per an official statement, were conducted by Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) at different locations, including Beerwah, Budgam, Charar Sharief, Khansahib, Narbal, Chadoora and other areas of the district. The primary objective of these initiatives was



to sensitise local residents particularly women, children, senior citizens and economically weaker and disadvantaged sections of society about their legal rights, the availability of free legal aid and the role of Legal Services Institutions in ensuring equal access to justice.

During these outreach activities, residents were informed about various schemes and initiatives of the National Legal

Services Authority (NALSA), including JAGRITI and DAWN, along with relevant government welfare schemes, such as old-age pension, Ladli Beti, marriage assistance and other social welfare benefits. Awareness was also imparted regarding the Wildlife Conflict Compensation Scheme, 2025, wherever relevant and the eligibility criteria and procedures for applying for such benefits.

Special emphasis was laid on

the legal rights of women and children, the protection of senior citizens and the importance of eradicating social evils such as dowry. In this connection, an awareness programme on the theme "Say No to Dowry" was organised at the Legal Literacy Club of Boys Higher Secondary School, Budgam, under the NALSA JAGRITI initiative. The programme highlighted the adverse social consequences of the dowry system, its legal implications and the need to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Students were encouraged to act as ambassadors of social change by spreading awareness within their families and communities.

The outreach programmes also provided an opportunity for direct interaction with residents to understand their concerns and guide them towards appropriate legal remedies and assistance. Issues relating to

land records, old-age pension, domicile certificates and other civil matters were brought to the attention of the concerned PLVs during these interactions. Residents were guided, wherever necessary, regarding the appropriate procedures for seeking assistance through Legal Services Institutions and the relevant government departments.

The PLVs also disseminated information regarding the availability of free legal aid services, the functioning of Legal Aid Clinics, mediation facilities and the procedure for approaching the District Legal Services Authority and other Legal Services Institutions. Members of the public were further sensitised about the NALSA toll-free legal aid helpline number 15100, through which eligible persons can seek information and assistance regarding legal aid services.

Poland PM begins three-day India visit, to hold talks with Modi today

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk arrived here on Wednesday, kickingstart his three-day visit during which he will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and seek to deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries. This is Tusk's second visit to India in his capacity as Poland's Prime Minister. The first was during his earlier tenure in 2010. "A warm welcome to Prime Minister Donald Tusk of Poland on his arrival in New Delhi. He was received at the airport by (Minister of State Dr Raj Bhushan Choudhary). The visit will provide fresh impetus

to the India-Poland Strategic Partnership and further deepen our longstanding ties," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X. Tusk will meet Modi on October 22, when both leaders will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, which was elevated to a Strategic Partnership during Modi's visit to Poland in August 2024, the MEA had said earlier. According to an advisory shared by the MEA on Wednesday, the Polish Prime Minister is scheduled to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday morning, following which he will

visit Raighat and lay a wreath at Mahatma Gandhi's memorial. Tusk will then proceed to Hyderabad House, where he will hold talks with Modi, and both leaders will issue press statements. The two leaders will also exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest. The visit would serve to deepen the India-European Union strategic partnership, the MEA said on October 19. The Polish Prime Minister, who is visiting India on the invitation of Modi, will be accompanied by Andrzej Domanski, Minister of Finance and Economy, and a large business delegation, a ministry

statement had said. On Thursday evening, Tusk is scheduled to travel to Bengaluru, where he has scheduled meetings with the Karnataka Governor and Chief Minister. "The visit will provide an opportunity to further strengthen the India-Poland Strategic Partnership and advance cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including trade and investment, defence, emerging technologies, renewable energy, education, culture and people-to-people ties," the MEA had said. Tusk had visited New Delhi in 2017 for the India-EU Summit in his capacity as president of the European Council.

J&K Handicapped Association protests in Srinagar, seeks fulfilment of demands

Demands Disability Commissioner, hike in monthly pension, reservation for persons with disabilities

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 21: The Jammu and Kashmir Handicapped Association on Wednesday staged a peaceful protest at Press Enclave in Srinagar, urging the government to address the long-pending demands and issues faced by persons with disabilities.

Addressing press, Association State President Abdul Rashid Bhat, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the protest was aimed at drawing the government's attention towards the

difficulties faced by the community and seeking concrete measures for their welfare. Bhat called for the appointment of a Disability Commissioner in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the post was essential for effectively addressing grievances and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities. He also demanded an increase in the monthly disability pension to rupees 20,000–30,000, besides adequate reservation for persons with disabilities in education, employment and other sectors.

Two killed as kite string entangles motorcycle wheel

KNO Correspondent

Samba, Oct 21: Two youths were killed after their motorcycle hit a road barricade when a kite string got entangled in its wheel on the National Highway at Sarore in Samba district on Wednesday evening, officials said. An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the motorcycle, bearing registration number JK21M 9002, was travelling from Bari Brahmana towards Samba when the kite string got entangled in its wheel, causing the motorcycle to hit a road barricade and leaving both riders injured.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Terrorism curbed

also called upon police force across the country to intensify efforts against drug abuse and trafficking, saying the Union Home Ministry had set a target of freeing the country from the drug menace by December 31, 2029. He urged all police forces to implement the roadmap for a 'Nasha Mukht Bharat' prepared under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, warning that drug abuse threatened the future of young people and could also provide financial support to organisations with anti-national intentions. **FLAGS OFF MOTORCYCLE RALLY** On the occasion, HM Shah flagged off a nationwide motorcycle rally carrying the message 'Fight Against Drugs'. Around 90 riders from various states and Union Territories, including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, as well as personnel from central armed police forces and other security organisations, are participating in the rally. The riders will travel to Ekta Nagar in Gujarat to participate in the Ekta Parade-2026, according to the Union Home Ministry. HM Shah also praised the role of the Central Armed Police Forces in conducting elections, managing security during public events and safeguarding the country's borders.

He said security personnel had ensured that the recently concluded West Bengal Assembly elections were conducted without a single fatality, describing it as a significant achievement in maintaining electoral security. The Home Minister said police personnel continued to discharge their duties during festivals and other occasions, often remaining away from their families to ensure public safety and internal security. The ceremony was attended by senior officials, including Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Intelligence Bureau Director Mahesh Dixit, Indo-Tibetan Border Police Director General Shatruijeet Kapoor and heads of other central armed police forces—(KNO)

Days of terrorist

martyrs and conveyed deep respect and sympathy to their families. The Lieutenant Governor conveyed his prayers and best wishes for the health and well-being of the families of the brave personnel. He also emphasized that while no recognition can compensate for the loss suffered by families, it is the responsibility of the nation to honour their sacrifice through meaningful support and care. "I have always said that no honour or assistance can compensate a family for the pain of losing a loved one. Yet, it is the nation's duty to honour their sacrifice not merely in words, but also through its conduct and responsibilities. I assure the entire Jammu Kashmir Police family that every possible effort will continue to be made to ensure a dignified life, welfare, and necessary support for the families of the martyrs," he said. The Lieutenant Governor acknowledged the contributions of the Jammu Kashmir Police force, describing its history as one marked by courage, discipline and an unwavering commitment to duty. He noted that from maintaining law and order and combating terrorism to assisting citizens during emergencies and natural disasters, the Jammu Kashmir Police force has rendered distinguished service under challenging circumstances. "Thousands of personnel of the Jammu Kashmir Police force have laid down their lives in the fight against terrorism. I believe Jammu Kashmir Police's courage is not confined to the borders of the Union Territory but it is a source of inspiration for the entire police system of the country. The nation will never forget the contribution of immortal martyrs, who dedicated everything to the honour, dignity and glory of the Tricolour," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also observed that the police uniform symbolises service, responsibility and sacrifice. He stated that the true measure of policing lies in ensuring public safety, delivering justice to citizens and standing by society in times of need and crisis. "In the 79 years since Independence, India has faced numerous challenges. The Jammu Kashmir Police, the Indian Army, and the Central Armed Police Forces have protected the nation's security and integrity in difficult circumstances. Today, India is moving resolutely towards its goal of becoming a developed nation. In this journey, peace, stability, and progress in Jammu Kashmir are of special importance, and the major responsibility of ensuring them rests on the shoulders of the Police, army and CAPFs," he said. The Lieutenant Governor reaffirmed

the Government of India's commitment to strengthening peace and progress in Jammu Kashmir and called upon citizens to uphold unity, communal harmony and mutual trust, while remaining vigilant against forces seeking to disrupt peace and stability. **WON'T REST UNTIL THIS LAND IS FREED FROM SEPARATIST AND TERRORIST ELEMENTS** "Our goal is to identify and root out terrorism and every element associated with it in Jammu Kashmir. Today, we must resolve that we will not rest until this land is freed from separatist and terrorist elements. I warn those elements within Jammu Kashmir who support terrorism that your days are over. Even if you attempt to hide in Pataal, we will find you and ensure that you are punished under the law," he said. The Lieutenant Governor also stressed the need for continued efforts to protect women, children and vulnerable sections of society, strengthen measures against drug trafficking and firmly combat narco-terrorism and its support networks.

"The prevention of crimes against women and children, the protection of vulnerable sections and ensuring timely justice for victims must be among our highest priorities. It is necessary to continuously review the systems for monitoring and controlling such crimes and to make them more effective. Similarly, the commitment to a drug-free Jammu Kashmir must be our collective resolve. I commend all the officers and personnel of the Jammu Kashmir Police, the Indian Army, and the Central Armed Police Forces for their spirit of service, courage, and sense of duty. I wish success in every one of their missions, safety in their lives and a bright future for them," the Lieutenant Governor said. (KNO) **Police's sacrifice**

police played a vital role in maintaining law and order, combating crime, responding to emergencies and ensuring public safety. PM Modi also paid homage to personnel who lost their lives while discharging their duties. "Their courage, unwavering dedication and supreme sacrifice will forever remain etched in our nation's memory," he said. (KNO) **J&K Police will**

DGP Prabhat met them at the Armed Police Complex, Zewan, Srinagar, listened to their grievances and assured them that no injustice would be done to them. The interaction brought the pain and concerns of bereaved families into focus, with the DGP Prabhat reaffirming the department's responsibility to stand by those whose loved ones laid down their lives in the line of duty. The DGP Prabhat, accompanied by senior officers, paid homage to the martyrs. The observance also included a blood donation camp, where the DGP and senior officers donated blood. The officers also listened to the grievances of the martyrs' families and assured them of all possible support.

The occasion served as a reminder that while the sacrifice of a police-personnel is remembered by the force and the nation, their families continue to live with an irreplaceable personal loss. The J&K Police paid special tribute to six personnel who laid down their lives between September 01, 2025 and August 30, 2026. They were Inspector Asrar ul Haq, Head Constable Ashaq Hussain, Selection Grade Constable Aijaz Afzal, Selection Grade Constable Mohammad Amin, Constable Amjid Ali and Constable Arshid Ahmad and Constable Javid Mansoor. The force also remembered its 1,621 fallen heroes, reiterating that their courage, dedication and sacrifice would never be forgotten. "Heroes Never Die!" the J&K Police said in its commemorative message.

Pertinently, Police Commemoration Day is observed every year on October 21 in memory of police personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. The date marks the sacrifice of ten policemen martyred in an ambush by Chinese troops at Hot Springs, Ladakh, on October 21, 1959. The day honours police martyrs across the country and recognises their contribution to public safety and national security. The J&K Police, which traces its service to 1873, renewed its tribute to the fallen heroes and reiterated the importance of supporting their families. "Your sacrifice will never be forgotten," the police said in its message to the martyrs. (KNO) **Juvenile justice**

Court for trial as adults). Likewise, the CWCs -comprising a Chairperson and four members, all appointed by the Government on the recommendations of a selection-cum-oversight committee -have

also become defunct with the completion of the term of their members, including the Chairperson. With Child Welfare Committees defunct, the entire child protection mechanism for vulnerable children in J&K has collapsed. In their absence, there is no authority to declare a child "in need of care and protection." Without this declaration, children cannot be admitted to child care institutions, foster care, or adoption. In a post on X, former Minister and MLA Handwara Sajad Lone criticised the government over the failure to constitute new CWCs and JJBS, alleging that the lapse has created uncertainty over the institutional protection available to children in distress and those in conflict with the law. Lone said the roll-out of the ICPS initiative had established an institutional mechanism to deal with children requiring care and protection, as well as juveniles in conflict with the law. He noted that Jammu and Kashmir had witnessed a high incidence of minors being taken into police custody and argued that the introduction of ICPS marked a significant step towards establishing a child-friendly justice system.

Referring to the Mission Vatsalya communication dated 13 October, Lone said the document itself acknowledged that the tenure extension had expired and the new CWCs and JJBs had not been constituted. He added that the six-month extension was intended to provide time for fresh appointments and questioned why the government had failed to complete the process within the stipulated period. "The order itself admits new CWCs/JJBs 'are yet to be constituted'. The discretion is exhausted. The default is totally by the government. No space for scapegoating," he said. Lone alleged that the absence of duly constituted committees and boards could affect the handling of cases involving vulnerable children, particularly those requiring immediate intervention or legal protection. (KNO)

CM Omar reviews

on account of technical or other unavoidable reasons must be communicated promptly to consumers through appropriate channels. He emphasised that people should not be left uncertain about the duration or reasons for power interruptions. He further made it clear that field staff must strictly implement the approved power curtailment schedules and should not be allowed to impose additional or unscheduled power cuts at their own discretion. Any changes to the notified schedules, he said, must be authorised at the appropriate level, with the prescribed arrangements for informing consumers followed in letter and spirit.

Stressing the need for accountability, the Chief Minister called for effective monitoring of power supply arrangements and directed the department to ensure that the notified schedules are implemented uniformly across the areas concerned. During the meeting, detailed presentations were made by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg and Divisional Commissioner Jammu Vikas Kundal on the winter preparedness plans drawn up by their respective divisions. The presentations covered arrangements for snow clearance, stocking of ration, LPG and other essential commodities in snowbound areas, preparedness for maintaining electricity and drinking water supplies, and the availability of healthcare services during periods of heavy snowfall. Particular emphasis was laid on ensuring adequate medical facilities and emergency response mechanisms in areas that frequently remain cut off during winter. The arrangements included the availability of 4x4 ambulances, helicopter services wherever required and tracking of maternity cases in vulnerable who may need emergency medical assistance during prolonged periods of snowfall.

The Chief Minister stressed the importance of identifying vulnerable populations in advance and putting in place appropriate arrangements to ensure that no patient is left without access to emergency medical care because of adverse weather conditions. Areas including Gurez, Machhil and Karnah, besides parts of Poonch, Rajouri, Udhampur and Kathua, were among the regions for which specific preparedness measures were reviewed in view of their vulnerability to heavy snowfall and disruption of connectivity. The Chief Minister emphasised that the availability of essential commodities, healthcare services, electricity and drinking water

must be ensured through advance planning, particularly in remote and snowbound areas where the movement of people and supplies can become difficult during winter. He called upon all departments to maintain close coordination with the district administrations and ensure that contingency arrangements are in place to respond promptly to weather-related emergencies. He also stressed the need for effective communication between field formations and district authorities so that emerging challenges can be addressed without delay. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary; Ministers Javed Rana and Satish Sharma; Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani; Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo; Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department, Ashwini Kumar; Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta; Administrative Secretaries of various departments; all Deputy Commissioners; Director Information J&K, senior police officers; Managing Directors of the Jammu and Kashmir DISCOMs; Heads of Departments and other concerned officers. Officers stationed outside Srinagar attended the meeting through video conferencing.

J&K Govt to t

post-harvest handling, reduce losses, and allow growers to market produce beyond the peak harvesting season. This is expected to enhance market realisation, strengthen the horticulture sector in Shopian, and generate local employment. JKHPMC reiterated its commitment to reviving the stalled project, upgrading infrastructure in line with present-day requirements, and ensuring that the facility delivers its intended benefits to apple growers. (KNO)

Basohli should

and e-commerce could help promote Basohli's heritage to wider audiences. He commended this year's focus on "Shakti Parampara" and called on stakeholders to preserve and take pride in India's cultural heritage while working towards a developed nation. "As we conclude the Basohli Utsav, let us resolve to honour our artists and artisans and teach the new generation to take pride in its heritage," Sinha said. "When the world speaks of Basohli, it should speak not only of its glorious past, but also of a present filled with confidence."

J&K govt raises

more than doubles the existing remuneration of interns and is expected to provide financial relief to hundreds of medical graduates undergoing compulsory rotating internships at Government Medical Colleges and other designated healthcare institutions across Jammu and Kashmir. Following the government's decision, the All India Medical Students' Association (AIMSA) announced the withdrawal of the ongoing strike, saying the formal issuance of the order had fulfilled the principal demand that prompted the agitation. However, the association said it would now shift its focus towards the demand for a stipend hike for postgraduate resident doctors pursuing MD, MS, MDS and DNB courses in Jammu and Kashmir. The stipend enhancement comes after a prolonged campaign by MBBS and BDS interns, who had been pressing the government to revise their monthly remuneration in view of their clinical responsibilities, working hours and financial challenges. The demand gained momentum after the government provided a written assurance regarding the proposed hike. However, the interns alleged that the promised timeframe had expired without the issuance of a formal order, prompting widespread resentment among the medical fraternity. The issuance of the order on Wednesday has now provided a breakthrough, with the enhanced stipend of Rs 25,000 becoming applicable from October 1, 2026. Following the decision, AIMSA announced that MBBS and BDS interns across Jammu and Kashmir would call off their strike, saying the decision followed the formal issuance of the government order, which addressed the principal demand behind the protests. AIMSA expressed gratitude to the government, administrative officials, political representatives and other supporters who backed the interns during their campaign, maintaining that the outcome demonstrated the importance of collective efforts and sustained engagement with the authorities. While welcoming the decision on internship stipends, AIMSA said its next priority would

be the de-mand for an enhancement in the monthly stipend of postgraduate resident doctors pursuing MD, MS, MDS and DNB courses in Jammu and Kashmir. The association said it would now take up the concerns of postgraduate medical residents, who form an essential part of the healthcare workforce and contribute to patient care while undergoing specialised medical training. J&K in-tern doctors also expressed gratitude to political representatives from both ruling and opposition parties, bureaucrats and other individuals who supported their demand, acknowledging the support extended by leaders including Aga Ruhullah, Waheed Para, Sajid Yousuf Shah, Nasir Sogami, Altaf Bukhari and Sunil Sharma, among others. Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, President of AIMSA J&K, said the achievement belonged to all medical interns who remained united and continued to raise their voices for the fulfilment of their demand. He also acknowledged the contribution of AIMSA representatives who played an important role in mobilising interns, coordinating the agitation and pursuing the matter with the concerned authorities. (KNO) **JKP holds**

while serving the nation. Gifts were distributed among the next of kin (NoKs) of martyrs, while interactive sessions were held to address their concerns and reaffirm the department's commitment to their welfare. In Anantnag, the ceremony at District Police Lines (DPL) was attended by DIG South Kashmir Range Javed Iqbal Matoo, SSP Anantnag Amod Ashok Nagpure, Deputy Commissioner Bilal Mohi-ud-Din and officers of the police, Army, CRPF and civil administration, besides martyrs' families. A blood donation camp was also organised. In Kulgam, Deputy Commissioner Shahzad Alam and SSP Anayat Ali Chowdhary, along with senior security officers, police personnel and martyrs' families, paid floral tributes at the Martyrs' Monument at DPL Kulgam. At Awantipora, SSP Irshad H. Rather led the tributes in the presence of police and CRPF officers, civil administration officials, members of civil society, retired police personnel and family members of martyrs. In Shopian, SSP Mushtaq Ahmad Choudhary, along with senior Army and CRPF officers, district police personnel and martyrs' families, paid homage at the Martyrs' Monument at DPL Shopian. In Pulwama, Deputy Commissioner K.K. Sidha and SSP Sahil Sarangal led the ceremony by laying a wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial. A Police Martyrs' Memorial Volleyball Tournament was also inaugurated to promote sportsmanship and constructive engagement among youth.

In Ganderbal, SSP Harshal Rajesh Mahajan chaired the ceremony at Qamariya Stadium, where senior police officers, civil administration officials and family members of martyrs paid floral tributes. In Budgam, the observance was held at District Police Lines under the supervision of SSP Hariprasad K.K. with Deputy Commissioner Jatin Kishore also present. In Baramulla, the ceremony at DPL was attended by the DIG North Kashmir Range, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, SSP Baramulla, senior Army and Central Armed Police Forces officers, and families of police martyrs. In Bandipora, Deputy Commissioner Indu Kanwal Chib attended the main ceremony at DPL Bandipora along with SSP Tahir Saleem, the Commandant of 45 Battalion CRPF and other senior officers. Families of the martyrs also participated in the observance. In Kupwara, SSP Sudhanshu Dhama interacted with the next of kin of police martyrs during the ceremony at DPL Kupwara and reaffirmed the department's commitment to their welfare and dignity. A volleyball tournament was inaugurated and a plantation drive launched. In Handwara, SSP Sajjad Khaliq Bhat led the tributes at DPL Handwara and assured martyrs' families of all possible assistance. A blood donation camp was organised in collaboration with Government Medical College Handwara. In Sopore, SSP Neha Jain laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial in the presence of senior Army and CRPF officers, police personnel, civil society members and martyrs' families. The families were felicitated, and a volleyball tournament was organised at DPL Sopore. Police Commemoration Day is observed annually on October 21 in memory of 10 CRPF personnel martyred in an ambush by heavily armed Chinese troops at Hot Springs in Ladakh on October 21, 1959. The day honours police personnel who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. (KNO)

‘Higher inflation, price pressure spillover led to RBI hiking rate’

PTI

Mumbai, Oct 21: Rising inflation and signs of price pressures spilling over into a range of goods weighed on the RBI's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which unanimously voted to hike the repo rate by 25 basis points this month, according to the minutes of the panel's meeting released on Wednesday.

At the three-day meeting, where the MPC decided to raise the benchmark lending rate for the first time in nearly four years, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said it was appropriate to shift the monetary stance to calibrated tightening.

"...essentially signalling that rate cuts are off the table in the near term and policy action ahead can only be a rate hike or a pause, depending on the evolving circumstances and the outlook," he said.

The Reserve Bank of India raised the benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to 5.50 per cent on October 7 after the three-day MPC meeting. Along with the governor, the other five MPC members voted for raising the repo rate.

Malhotra noted that there are increasing signs of generalisation of inflation as 37 per cent of the commodities in the CPI basket had inflation above 4 per cent in August – it was merely 20 per cent in March, the minutes said.

"The duration and extent of the rate hiking cycle would be contingent on the actual growth and inflation developments and outlook, especially that of underlying inflation, the broadening of price pressures, second round effects of the supply shock, and the impact of demand impulses," he said.

MPC member and RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta said inflation is mostly driven by external supply-side shocks, with little sign of it becoming entrenched or affecting inflation expectations.

She said that during the post-pandemic inflation-targeting period, whenever inflation has reached or breached the lower or upper tolerance limits, the RBI has taken appropriate policy action.

"This has helped retain the credibility of the framework and has kept inflation expectations aligned to the target. Thus, rather than waiting any longer, in view of rising inflation and resilient growth, I favour raising the policy repo rate by 25 bps in this policy," said Gupta, in charge of monetary policy.

MPC member and RBI Executive Director Indranil Bhattacharyya observed that the inflation outlook



merits greater attention, given supply-side pressures from crude and food prices are unlikely to relent quickly, the minutes said.

With demand holding strong and in the wake of strong growth in monetary and credit aggregates, the interplay of both supply and demand factors could ratchet up inflation pressures significantly in the period ahead, he said.

"Therefore, I feel it is better to set aside the 'cautiousness bias' and act in a pre-emptive manner at this juncture rather than wait and watch," Bhattacharyya said.

The MPC consists of three members from the RBI and an equal number of external members appointed by the government.

The external members are: Nagesh Kumar (Director and Chief Executive, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi), Saugata Bhattacharya (Economist), and Ram Singh (Director, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi).

The three external members also voted for a 25 bps hike in the repo rate.

At the MPC meeting, Kumar said the inflationary outlook, on the other hand, remains challenging due to a combination of factors, including the deficient monsoon, rising crude oil prices, precious metals prices remaining at elevated levels, and exchange rate depreciation, leading to a revision of the forecast for headline inflation for 2026-27 by 20 basis points.

"While inflation is driven largely by supply-side factors and does not show any signs of overheating of the economy nor of generalisation, it is important to manage inflationary expectations," he said.

Bhattacharyya said data increasingly suggest that price pressures

are becoming entrenched in the economy. Input prices, recorded in Wholesale Price Indices, have been printing close to 9 per cent year-on-year.

"While 'underlying inflation' has thus far remained more subdued, and might implicitly be a signal of some residual demand weakness, trends in CPI inflation components indicate that a presumed slack relative to the potential output – if a slack at all even exists at present – appears to be closing," he said.

According to the minutes, Singh said that to realign the inflation trajectory towards the target, a calibrated increase in the repo rate is needed from a real repo rate perspective.

"The duration and magnitude of the rate hike required to meet these objectives would depend on the emerging growth-inflation outlook. The MPC will have to remain vigilant about the pace of inflation generalisation to respond in a timely and effective way," he added.

The MPC also decided to shift to a calibrated tightening stance.

However, two members, Kumar and Singh, were of the view that the stance be retained at neutral.

The MPC noted that the global context on account of geopolitical developments remains challenging. Nonetheless, the Indian economy has been strong. The economic momentum remains broad-based. The economy is expected to remain resilient. Consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation rose sharply to 5.54 per cent in September on the back of high onion and other food prices, remaining just within the RBI's tolerance band. The government has mandated the RBI to keep inflation at 4 per cent, with a 2 per cent margin on either side.

Core sectors' growth hits new-series high of 7.9 pc in Sep

Led by iron ore, electricity

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: Driven by strong performance in the iron ore, electricity, and cement segments, production in key infrastructure industries rose 7.9 per cent in September, the fastest pace in the new series.

According to the official data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Wednesday, the core sector expanded by 3.1 per cent in September last year and 5.9 per cent in August 2026.

Among segments, iron ore output rose by 18.4 per cent, electricity by 11.4 per cent, coal by 10.7 per cent, and refinery products by 10.3 per cent. Cement production rose 9.8 per cent and steel by 4.9 per cent in September compared with the same period last year.

However, fertilisers (-11.7 per cent), natural gas (-4.6 per cent), and crude oil (-1.4 per cent) output fell during the month under review, the ministry said in the statement.

The cumulative growth rate of core sectors during April-September 2026 was 5.1 per cent compared to 2.5 per cent in the corresponding period of the previous year, it added.

The new series was started in June. The base year has been shifted to 2022– 23 and expanded from eight to nine sectors by adding iron ore.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA Ltd, said the uptick was broad-based, with seven of the nine sectors, barring electricity and cement, recording an improvement in their performance in September 2026 vis-a-vis August.

Coal and iron ore output witnessed a meaningful pickup in their year-on-year growth rates in September 2026 compared to August 2026; while this was aided by a low base, the sequential uptick in coal was quite strong, amid low stocks at power plants, she said.

"ICRA now forecasts full-year electricity growth at 8.5 per cent, exceeding our baseline forecast for GDP growth for this fiscal year (7.1 per cent)," she said, adding that trends in finished steel consumption suggest that construction activity likely remained healthy in the month. Notwithstanding the uptick in core output expansion, "ICRA expects the IIP growth to ease somewhat to 6-7 per cent in September from 8 per cent in August 2026, with an elevated base weighing on the non-core segment growth in the month."

Gold, silver fall as rupee appreciation, elevated crude prices weigh on bullion

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: Gold and silver prices declined in the national capital on Wednesday as appreciation in the rupee, elevated crude oil prices and weak global trends dampened the sentiment of investors.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity dropped Rs 1,300 to Rs 1,49,000 per 10 grams (inclu-sive of all taxes), according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold had closed at Rs 1,50,300 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Silver entered into a sliding path after remaining steady for two consecutive sessions, falling Rs 1,600 to Rs 2,13,400 per kilogram. The white metal had settled at Rs 2,15,000 per kg on Monday.

"Gold traded weak on Wednesday, as rupee appreciation continued to add pressure on do-mestic prices," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities.

The overall trend remains weak amid a stronger rupee and concerns over elevated crude oil prices feeding inflationary pressures, he added. The rupee surged 48 paise to close at 94.43 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, supported by the RBI's intervention to contain dollar demand.

Ashish Rajodiya, Head of Commodities, PL Capital, said silver also traded lower in the do-mestic market. Early hopes of an Iran peace deal pulled oil prices down and

briefly supported precious metals.

However, those gains faded as crude recovered amid reports that Iran said there was little reason to expect diplomatic progress with the United States.

In global markets, spot gold was traded flat at USD 4,127.68 per ounce, while silver fell 0.48 per cent to USD 57.72 per ounce.

"Spot gold is trading flat near USD 4,126 per ounce, while silver retreated to USD 57.10 per ounce after touching USD 58.60 in the previous session," said Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research at brokerage platform Kotak Neo.

Elevated oil prices continue to compli-



cate the monetary policy outlook, although weakness in the US dollar and Treasury yields has limited the downside in precious metals, she added.

"With no major US economic data scheduled, movements in the bond market and develop-ments in crude oil prices are likely to guide trading over the next few sessions. Attention will then shift to the Federal Reserve's October policy meeting next week," Chainwala said.

Defence Ministry signs ₹770 cr BEL contract for Army radars

PTI



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: The government on Wednesday signed a contract worth nearly Rs 770 crore with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to procure improved low-level light-weight radars for the Army, the defence ministry said, underlining that the procurement is a significant step towards indigenisation of air defence platforms.

The radar system has the capability of detecting and tracking

fighter-size targets and mini or micro drones, and it has an additional capability of prioritising aerial targets. This will enable the Indian Army to successfully counter the threat of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS), it said. The contract was signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh in Delhi.

The ministry signed a contract with BEL to procure Improved Low Level Light Weight Radar (LLLR-I) at a cost of approximately Rs

770 crore on Wednesday, it said in a statement.

Aligning with the government's vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, the procurement is a significant step towards indigenisation of air defence platforms with a boost to India's defence manufacturing ecosystem, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and building a resilient, self-reliant and globally competitive defence industry, it said.

Amit Shah to launch sewer projects in Delhi today



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will launch sewer projects worth Rs 8,941 crore in Delhi on October 22, according to a statement issued on Wednesday.

The projects, including a new sewage treatment plant (STP), several decentralised sewage treatment plants (DSTPs), and new sewer lines, will be launched from the Najafgarh area.

"Twenty-nine new DSTPs and sewage pumping stations in outer Delhi will cover 358 unauthorised colonies and 113 villages, benefiting 36.29 lakh residents. Another project involving the laying of 1,034 km of new sewer network will also be launched," Water Minister Parvesh Verma said.

Among the major projects is a new sewage treatment plant with a capacity of 124 million gallons per day (MGD) at Okhla. This will be the biggest STP in the national capital, constructed jointly by Centre and Delhi government.

Eight existing STPs will be upgraded, increasing their combined capacity from 78.2 MGD to 140.8 MGD, benefiting around 78.5 lakh people, Verma said. According to officials, once all these works are complete – to be executed over the next two to two-and-a-half years –, no untreated wastewater from Delhi will flow into the drains and, through them, into the Yamuna.

The Delhi government had earlier announced plans to set up around 29 DSTPs through the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to bridge existing gaps in sewage treatment.

Where large STPs cannot be constructed due to space constraints, the DJB plans to install DSTPs to ensure localised wastewater treatment.

Jio IPO fully subscribed in 100 minutes, draws Rs 69,800 crore in bids

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: Jio Platforms Ltd's Rs 30,213-crore initial public offering was fully subscribed within 100 minutes of opening on Wednesday, making it the fastest-subscribed mega IPO in India, with investors placing bids worth about Rs 69,800 crore for 62.36 crore shares by 5 pm, according to exchange data.

The issue, which is set to become India's largest-ever IPO, was subscribed 3.16 times the 19.75 crore shares on offer, with institutional investors leading demand. The offering will remain open until October 23.

Taken together with the commitments by anchor investors earlier this week, the IPO has attracted about Rs 77,892 crore.

The total demand till now comes to Rs 3.20 lakh crore after considering bids made in the anchor round and public subscription.

On the opening day of the IPO, qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) bid for 46.15 crore shares against 4.90 crore shares reserved for them, representing 9.42 times subscription, according to the latest cumulative demand data.

Non-institutional investors bid for 6.13 crore shares, or 1.68 times their allocated portion.

Retail individual investors bid for 6.18 crore shares against 8.50 crore shares reserved for the cate-gory, translating into a subscription of 0.73 times.

This marks the highest retail demand for any IPO on day 1 in India's capital market history.

The employee portion was subscribed 1.37 times, while the shareholder reservation portion at-tracted bids for 1.46 times its allocated portion.

It took just 100 minutes for shares on offer to be lapped up by investors when the IPO opened for subscription on Wednesday, stock exchange data showed. The early pace sets Jio apart from other large Indian offerings.

Bajaj Housing Finance's IPO was fully subscribed by 2 pm on its opening day, and LG Electronics In-dia's offering reached full subscription by the end of day 1 in 2025.

Data on social media claiming drop in train punctuality misleading: Rly ministry

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 21: The Ministry of Railways on Wednesday dismissed data circulating on social media suggesting a decline in train punctuality as "misleading" and said the perfor-mance has improved significantly over the past eight years.

Officials said that despite high demand, Indian Railways has also made significant improve-ments in passenger safety and comfort.

This has been achieved through improved monitoring, timetable rationalisation, better maintenance and infrastructure upgrades, they said.

"If we look at the punctuality data, it has improved from 69.2 per cent in 2018-19 to 77.43 per cent in 2025-26 and 77.11 per cent in 2026-27 (so far)," a senior ministry official said.

Quick Read

Satish Sharma witnesses grand Dangal in R.S. Pura, announces support for traditional sports



KT News Desk

R.S. Pura, Oct 21: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FS&CA), Information Technology (IT), Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today attended the traditional Dangal organised by the Dangal Committee, R.S. Pura, at Bana Singh Stadium, here, on the eve of Dussehra, witnessing an impressive display of strength, skill and sporting spirit.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of wrestlers from different regions and attracted a large gathering of sports enthusiasts and local residents. More than 100 bouts were held during the Dangal, reflecting the enduring popularity of traditional wrestling and its deep cultural roots in Jammu and Kashmir.

Shera Gujjar of Haryana emerged as the winner of the main bout, while Bhupinder Ajnala of Punjab secured the runner-up position. The winner was awarded a cash prize of ₹1 lakh, while the runner-up received ₹80,000. A first maali carrying a prize of ₹1.80 lakh was also among the major attractions of the event. Overall, cash prizes exceeding ₹6 lakh were distributed among the participating wrestlers, recognising their talent, dedication and sporting excellence.

Addressing the gathering, Satish Sharma appreciated the Dangal Committee, R.S. Pura, for preserving and promoting the rich tradition of wrestling and providing a platform for wrestlers to showcase their abilities. He observed that traditional sports are an integral part of Jammu and Kashmir's cultural heritage and play an important role in nurturing discipline, physical fitness, courage and sportsmanship among young people.

World shares are mostly higher after US stocks rally on strong earnings

AP

New York, Oct 21: World shares were mostly higher on Wednesday following a broad rally on Wall Street.

Germany's DAX rose 0.5 per cent to 25,423.64, and the CAC 40 in Paris added 0.5 per cent to 7,880.90. Britain's FTSE 100 edged 0.1 per cent higher, to 10,743.65.

US futures were mixed, with the contract for the S&P 500 up 0.1 per cent, while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 0.1 per cent.

In Asian trading, the Kospi in Seoul gained 3.3 per cent to 5,735.66.

South Korean AI company Elice, whose 32 per cent drop Tuesday in its first day of trading spooked markets, rebounded on Wednesday, hitting the upward limit of 29.9 per cent.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 rose 0.9 per cent to 64,621.24 after Japan reported that its exports jumped 16.7 per cent in September from a year earlier, on strong sales of autos and computer-related components. Imports surged 18.9 per cent, largely thanks to higher prices for oil due to the Iran war, nearly doubling Japan's trade deficit for the same month a year earlier.

Macron rejects claims blaming Muslim migrants for French riots as 'stupid'



AP

Paris, Oct 21: French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday blamed "foreign leaders," including those "on the other side of the Atlantic," for trying to exploit France's tense social climate for their own political agenda.

Protests over soaring living costs have led to widespread rioting and looting. US President Donald Trump has used the violence to rally his political supporters, making unsubstantiated claims that Muslim migrants are responsible for the unrest.

Trump has urged Macron to "close your borders and take control before it is too late!"

Macron responded by saying there "has been foreign manipulation of information in the aftermath" of the looting in

Paris and other French cities last weekend.

"And that has led to comments that are as unacceptable as they are stupid, from many people, including foreign leaders," he said.

Asked by a reporter if he was referring to Trump, Macron replied: "Among others."

Macron added: "We've seen AI-generated images depicting scenes that never actually happened in France. We've had people claiming that we were invaded by hordes of migrants and Islamists, which is completely false."

Macron did not specify which AI-generated images he was referring to, nor how he knew the content was false.

Macron and Trump once enjoyed a good relationship but Trump regularly mocks the

French president in his public speeches.

"The fact is, all the people who are speaking ill of our country right now are people who don't love our country," Macron said. "So those people really bother me."

"When I see leaders who are in the middle of election campaigns, whether in the region or on the other side of the Atlantic — who sometimes naively repeat AI-generated content or spread narratives that certain circles are clearly trying to promote about what happened in France — they're using our country for their own political campaigns," said Macron. "And we don't need that."

Macron was speaking in Qatar at the end of a tour of key energy suppliers in the Gulf, where he secured an additional 1,00,000 tonnes of diesel per month from the United Arab Emirates, with a further 1,00,000 tonnes to be confirmed in Bahrain.

Macron's office said he traveled to the Middle East to find solutions to the energy crisis and rising energy prices, and to secure supplies of oil, gas, diesel and jet fuel.

The Elysee said nearly 295,000 additional tonnes of diesel per month could be secured, including volumes from Saudi Arabia, equivalent to more than 10 per cent of France's monthly diesel consumption.

CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates Annual Sports Day at Doon School Srinagar



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the Annual Sports Day of Doon School Srinagar, celebrating the sporting spirit, talent and achievements of students.

The Chief Minister formally declared the event open by releasing balloons, marking the commencement of the day's activities. The event featured an impressive march past by schoolchildren, martial arts demonstrations, cultural performances and races for both boys and girls, showcasing the students' athletic abilities, discipline and enthusiasm.

The Chief Minister also presented awards to meritorious

students and school houses for their achievements and participation. He appreciated the students for their performances and encouraged them to pursue sports alongside academics, emphasising the importance of discipline, teamwork and a healthy competitive spirit.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Sonawari Hilal Akbar Lone, MLA Khan Sahib Saifuddin Bhat, Director School Education Kashmir Naseem Ahmed Wani, Chairman Doon School Srinagar Showket Hussain Khan, the school Principal and other concerned persons were present on the occasion.

Mumbai crush Himachal Pradesh by an innings and 97 runs in Ranji Trophy



PTI

Bilaspur, Oct 21: Mumbai crushed Himachal Pradesh by an innings and 97 runs to record a second consecutive bonus-point victory in their Elite Group D of the Ranji Trophy here on Wednesday.

After posting a massive 528 for eight declared, which was bolstered by Sarfaraz Khan's 154 and Akash Anand's 117, Mumbai bowled out the hosts Himachal Pradesh for 291 in their second innings.

Himachal Pradesh were earlier shot out for a mere 140 in the first innings, in reply to which Mumbai had posted the big total in their only innings while taking a lead of 388 runs.

Right-arm fast bowler Mohit Avasthi was the pick among the bowlers for Mumbai, returning 5/44 while Tushar Deshpande and Shams Mulani claimed two wickets apiece. Pacer Sylvester D'Souza took one wicket.

Skipper Pukhraj Mann (50) and Vaibhav Kalta (63) provided some resistance on the final day when Himachal Pradesh resumed at 144 for three.

Div Com Kashmir directs joint recce ahead of 3rd edition of Kashmir Marathon



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, has stressed the need for a joint Recce of the inaugural venue and marathon route to identify and address gaps in preparations for the successful conduct of the 3rd Edition of the Kashmir Marathon.

Chairing a meeting to review the arrangements, the Divisional Commissioner called for close coordination among all concerned departments to ensure that the necessary facilities and logistical arrangements are put in place well in advance of the event.

Garg directed the Roads and Buildings (R&B)

Department to fill potholes along the marathon route and ensure proper leveling of the road surface. The Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department was instructed to repair leaking water pipelines.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) was directed to deploy an adequate number of mobile toilet vehicles at the inaugural venue and ensure the availability of sweeper buses to ferry participants who face issues during Marathon.

Emphasising the need for smooth movement of participants and the general public, the Divisional Commissioner called for a comprehensive traffic management plan

and directed the concerned authorities to publish the marathon route plan in advance for public information.

To enhance the visual appeal of the event, the Floriculture Department was asked to decorate the stage, while the SMC was directed to beautify the road medians along the route.

The Divisional Commissioner also stressed the importance of comprehensive security arrangements and directed that participants arrive at the venue by 4 PM on the day of the event.

During the meeting, Garg further reviewed arrangements for healthcare facilities, volunteer training, installation of stalls, drinking water availability and uninterrupted electricity supply at the venue.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner, SMC; Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar; SSP Traffic; Director Tourism; representatives of the Police Department; officers of the J&K Sports Council; and officials from the Information, PHE, R&B and other concerned departments.

Africa CDC calls Ebola crisis summit as Nigeria records first case

AP

Lagos(Nigeria), Oct 21: African health ministers have been invited to an "extraordinary virtual meeting" to discuss the spread of Ebola after Nigeria reported its first case.

Dr Jean Kaseya, director general of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, said the October 28 meeting would "strengthen our collective response."

On Tuesday, Nigeria reported its first case, linked to a traveller from Uganda who arrived in the country earlier this month. Uganda, which declared itself Ebola-free in July after recording 20 cases, has denied claims that Nigeria's first case originated there. Nigerian authorities said they were tracing 44 contacts.

Nigeria and Kenya, which has recorded nine cases, are the latest countries to report cases linked to travellers who passed through Uganda.

The latest outbreak was first detected in Congo in May after spreading undetected for months, according to the World Health Organization. It has since infected more than 9,500 people and killed nearly half of them, making it the fastest-spreading Ebola outbreak in history.

"Ebola is now affecting three regions of Africa. The situation demands urgent action and political leadership at the highest level," Kaseya said in a post on X.

The WHO said on Wednesday that it had advised "all countries in the region to sustain a high level of readiness as the DRC outbreak continues to evolve."

Ravi wins silver, Nandal bags second bronze at Asian Para Games

PTI

Nagoya, Oct 21: Indian swimmer Ravi Budgina won a silver medal in the men's 100m backstroke S13 event, while Himanshu Nandal clinched his second bronze and Rohit Kumar added another third-place finish at the Asian Para Games here Wednesday.

Ravi clocked 1:10.10 seconds to finish second in a four-swimmer field. Uzbekistan's Egor Bolotov won gold in an Asian record time of 58.43 seconds, while Chinese Taipei's Feng-Yuan Yeh took bronze in 1:12.05.

The S13 is for athletes with the least severe visual impairment among eligible competitors.

It is his second silver medal of the current edition, having finished second in the men's 100m freestyle S13 event on Monday.

The 18-year-old Budgina, who



hails from Andhra Pradesh, had won three gold and three silver medals at the 2025 Asian Youth Para Games in Dubai.

Nandal wins bronze in one event and misses in another

Nandal, the 22-year-old from

Rohtak, Haryana, clocked 1:20.72 seconds to finish third in the men's 100m breaststroke S11 event.

China's Yang Bozun won gold in a Games record time of 1:12.69, while Japan's Keiichi Kimura took

silver in 1:12.72.

The S11 classification is for swimmers with severe visual impairment, including those with very low visual acuity or no light perception.

Nandal had opened his medal account on Tuesday, clocking 5:10.91 to finish third in a four-swimmer field in the men's 400m freestyle S11 event.

However, he missed out on a medal in the men's 200m individual medley SM11 event, finishing fourth with a time of 2:39.63.

Bronze for Rohit
Rohit secured bronze in the men's 100m breaststroke SB4 event with a time of 1:57.25, finishing behind Malaysia's Muhammad Zulkafli Bin, who won gold in a Games record 1:41.33, and Kazakhstan's Ali Turganbekov, who took silver in 1:44.26.

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MOVIES Schedule

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DRISHYAM: THE CONCLUSION (HINDI) (UA 16+) 12:00 PM 03:00 PM 06:00 PM	PRAHAAR: THE UNTOLD STORY OF UJJWAL NIKAM (HINDI) (UA 16+) 01:35 PM 07:30 PM
NAYYI NAVELLI (HINDI) (UA 16+) 12:30 PM 03:30 PM 06:30 PM	STREET FIGHTER (HINDI) (UA 16+) 11:05 AM 04:30 PM

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