



UHQ MEETING

Continue operations to neutralize terror ecosystem remnants: LG Sinha

Directs security forces top brass to target, dismantle networks trying to misguide, radicalize people; choke terror funding



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 27: Directing security forces top brass to aggressively target and dismantle networks trying to misguide and radicalize the people, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that operations must continue to neutralize remnants of the terrorist ecosystem.

Chairing a Unified Headquarters (UHQ) meeting at Lok Bhavan here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “A foolproof counter-strategy must be implemented to completely choke off logistical and financial support for terrorists and we must step up measures to disrupt and counter infiltration.”

He said, “Operations must continue to neutralize the remnants of the terrorist ecosystem. We should aggressively target and dismantle the networks trying to misguide and radicalize the people.”

The meeting was attended by GOC-in-C, Northern Command Lt Gen Pratik Sharma; Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo; DGP Nalin Prabhat; GOC Chinara Lt Gen Balbir Singh; GOC, White Knight Corps, Lt Gen Mohit Seth; Special DG Coordination PHQ S.J.M. Gillani; Air Vice Marshal Anand Sondhi AOC, J&K and Ladakh; Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department J&K Chandraker Bharti; ADGP CID M.K. Sinha, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor Govind Jaiswal, senior officials of

Armed Forces, CAPFs, J&K Police, Intelligence Agencies and civil administration.

The Lieutenant Governor while reviewing J&K's security scenario stated that real-time collaboration is vital to realizing our security objectives. “Security forces and J&K Police need to build public trust by ensuring voices of people are heard and their grievances are resolved,” he said.

LG Sinha also reviewed the operational preparedness of police and security agencies during the winter, and emphasized the need for maintaining vigilance to counter emerging threats.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated Army, CAPF, J&K Police and Intelligence agencies for the peaceful conduct of Amarnath Yatra 2026. (KNO)

Dry weather likely across J&K till Nov 6: MeT

Shopian coldest at minus 0.5 Degrees

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 27: Shopian recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Kashmir at minus 0.5 degrees Celsius as night temperatures dropped across the Valley, while the Meteorological Centre Srinagar forecast largely dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir till November 6.

According to the MeT department, most parts of Kashmir, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), are likely to witness dry weather on Wednesday. A brief spell of light rain or snowfall over higher reaches is possible at scattered places towards the evening of October 29.

Generally dry weather is expected from October 30 to November 6, with partly cloudy conditions at times and a possibility of brief light rain or snowfall over isolated higher reaches. No significant weather activity is expected during the period.

The department has advised farmers | [More on P6](#)

NC leaders welcome cabinet expansion, Cong says fulfil promises, restore statehood

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 27: National Conference (NC) leaders on Tuesday welcomed the expansion of the Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet, while Congress leaders said the government should focus on fulfilling its promises to the people and restoring statehood.

NC chief spokesperson and Zaidal Bhatti Tanvir Sadiq congratulated Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the newly inducted ministers, wishing them success in serving the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

“Congratulations to HCM Omar Abdullah Sahab and all the members of the new Cabinet. Wishing you all the very best as you take on the responsibility of serving the people of Jammu and Kashmir. May your tenure be guided by commitment, compassion and meaningful work towards a more prosperous and empowered J&K. Best wishes,” Sadiq wrote in a post on X.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, who retained his position in the Cabinet, said the expansion would strengthen governance and ensure more effective delivery of services to the people.

He said the promised expansion and reshuffle had taken place and criticised the BJP for targeting the government, questioning its silence over alleged attacks on Kashmiris outside Jammu and Kashmir.

Choudhary urged the BJP to focus on public issues rather than maligning the youth.

Meanwhile, NC leader Salman Sagar said some legislators were unhappy over the Cabinet expansion, but added that the leadership had its own compulsions.

“Some MLAs were angry... leadership has its own compulsions,” Sagar said.

Congress leaders, however, reiterated that fulfilling the promises made to the people and | [More on P6](#)

Cabinet expansion-cum-reshuffle

4 MLAs sworn in, council of ministers' strength rises to 9



Satish Sharma dropped

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 27: The much-awaited cabinet expansion-cum-reshuffle of the National Conference-led government was carried out on Tuesday with four party MLAs being

sworn in as ministers.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office and secrecy to NC legislators Ali Muhammad Sagar, Mir Saifullah, Shamima Firdous and Altaf Ahmad Wani (Kaloo) at a function held at Lok Bhavan here.

As per | [More on P6](#)

Every MLA aspires to be minister, but UT poses challenges: CM's Advisor

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Oct 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani on Tuesday acknowledged



resentment and disappointment among National Conference (NC) legislators following the cabinet expansion, saying every MLA aspires to become a minister, but Jammu and | [More on P6](#)

MLA Larmi breaks down over cabinet snub

Says ‘my heart is broken’, reaffirms loyalty to party

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 27: Senior National Conference MLA Abdul Majeed Larmi became emotional after being left out of the Cabinet, saying he was disappointed by the decision but remained loyal to the party.

Speaking to reporters after the swearing-in ceremony of newly inducted ministers, Larmi, according to the news | [More on P6](#)

Mubarak Gul's supporters protest cabinet snub, question NC leadership



5-time MLA says Dr Farooq assured him something else

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 27: Drama and disappointment surrounded the ruling National Conference on Tuesday as party

workers protested at its headquarters here in support of senior party leader Mubarak Ahmad Gul following his exclusion from the Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet.

The workers gave the party leadership two days to address their demand for Gul's induction as | [More on P6](#)

‘Will wipe their tears’: LoP Sharma offers support to dismayed NC MLAs

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 27: Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma on Tuesday said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah should address the disappointment of legislators who were left out of the Cabinet, adding that he would stand by them in their difficult moment.



Congratulating the | [More on P6](#)

Won't join cabinet until J&K regains statehood: Congress

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 27: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra on Tuesday said his party would not join the Omar Abdullah-led government,



reiterating that its stand on the issue had | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar visits newly inducted Cabinet colleagues

Congratulates ministers

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday visited the office chambers of newly inducted Cabinet



colleagues at the Civil Secretariat here to congratulate | [More on P6](#)

BRICS forum condemns Pahalgam attack, calls for global action against terrorism

Parliamentary leaders bat for UN reforms, international cooperation against terrorism

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Oct 27: Calling for comprehensive reforms of the United Nations, including its Security Council, the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum on Tuesday univocally condemned the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir that left 26 people dead.

In a joint declaration adopted at the conclusion of the two-day forum in New Delhi, the parliamentary representatives, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) condemned what they described as a Pakistan-backed terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025, and called for concrete international action against all terrorists and

entities designated by the United Nations.

The declaration described terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable. It rejected double standards in combating the threat and called for the early finalisation and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism under the UN framework.

The representatives also stressed that counter-terrorism efforts must comply with international law and respect human rights.

On global governance, the forum called for reforms to make the United Nations and its Security Council more representative, democratic, equitable and effective, arguing that international institutions should



better reflect the interests and voices of the Global South.

The declaration reaffirmed

the importance of multilateral cooperation in maintaining international peace, protecting

human rights and resolving disputes, while identifying the Global South as an important

driver of change in global governance.

On the situation in the Middle East, the parliamentary leaders expressed deep concern over escalating tensions in West Asia and called for restraint, protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and avoidance of actions that could further aggravate the situation.

They reiterated support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. The declaration also reaffirmed the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent, sovereign state.

The forum condemned violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on

civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian personnel, and underlined the need for accountability.

The declaration also criticised unilateral coercive measures that it said were contrary to international law, noting their potential adverse effects on human rights, healthcare, food security and the right to development.

On climate change and sustainable development, the representatives called for stronger implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, including greater efforts towards climate mitigation and adaptation.

The declaration said developed countries should provide developing | [More on P6](#)

DC Ganderbal reviews Srinagar Ring Road Phase-II, IIA



KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal, Tuesday chaired a meeting at her office chambers to review issues related to the development of Srinagar Ring Road Phase-II, covering the Sarai Danglerpora Manigam stretch via Sumbal, and Phase-IIA, covering the Manigam Pandach stretch.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed the issues affecting the execution of the projects and stressed the need for close coordination among all concerned departments and executing agencies to ensure timely resolution of bottlenecks and smooth progress of the works.

The DC directed the concerned departments to identify and promptly resolve issues relating to land acquisition, utility shifting, road infrastructure and other departmental clearances that may impede the execution of the projects. She emphasised that all pending matters must be taken up on priority through

coordinated efforts and regular follow-up.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of ensuring timely shifting of utilities falling within the project alignment and directed the concerned Power Development Department, Jal Shakti, telecommunications and other utility agencies to extend the requisite cooperation to facilitate uninterrupted execution of the works.

The concerned Revenue authorities were directed to coordinate with the executing agencies and address pending land acquisition related issues in accordance with the prescribed procedures. The DC also emphasised the need for regular field-level coordination among the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Police, Traffic Police and other stakeholder departments to address site specific issues and facilitate smooth implementation of the projects.

Stressing the importance of public safety and traffic management during the execution of the projects, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned agencies to ensure

appropriate traffic regulation, minimise inconvenience to commuters and take necessary safety measures at vulnerable locations and construction stretches.

The DC further directed all concerned officers to maintain close coordination, submit updated status reports on pending issues and ensure time-bound action on matters requiring interdepartmental intervention. She underscored that the timely completion of these important road infrastructure projects requires accountability, continuous monitoring and proactive resolution of bottlenecks.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Superintending Engineers of R&B, KPDC and Hydraulics, Project Director NHAI, concerned Executive Engineers of R&B, KPDC, STD, Projects, Irrigation and Flood Control, PHE, PDD, Generation Division PDC, TLMD Bemina and PDC (NGHEP), Tehsildar Ganderbal, Deputy Superintendent of Police Traffic Ganderbal, Sub Divisional Engineer BSNL and other concerned officers.

Vigilance Awareness Week 2026

Inaugural function held at mini-Secretariat Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, OCTOBER 27: The inaugural function of Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 was held Tuesday at the Conference Hall, Mini-Secretariat, Kulgam, in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, under the theme "Probity for Prosperity." The week is being observed from October 26 to November 01, 2026, with a focus on promoting integrity, transparency and accountability in public life.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced with the singing of the National Song, followed by the National Anthem. Subsequently, Deputy

Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, administered the Integrity Pledge, which was repeated by the participants. The pledge reaffirmed their commitment to honesty, transparency, accountability, adherence to the rule of law and collective efforts to combat corruption. DC Kulgam, while addressing the gathering, underscored the importance of honesty and integrity in both personal and professional life. Referring to the famous observation of Chanakya on the difficulty of preventing a person handling public money from misappropriating even a small amount, he emphasised the need for strong ethical values and effective accountability mechanisms in public offices.

DC Kulgam reviews drug control measures at NCORD meeting



KT News Desk

KULGAM, OCTOBER 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Tuesday chaired the 50th meeting of the District Level Committee under the Narcotics Coordination Centre (NCORD) mechanism at the Mini Secretariat, Kulgam, to review measures aimed at combating drug abuse, strengthening enforcement and improving de-addiction and rehabilitation facilities in the district.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, reviewed the enforcement activities of the Drug Control Organisation, the functioning of de-addiction and treatment facilities, awareness initiatives and the role of various departments in addressing the menace of substance abuse.

The meeting was informed that 410 inspections have been conducted during the current year by the drug control authorities of the district. The department also lifted 70 statutory drug samples for quality testing and received 57 test reports. Besides, 20 courier operator inspections were conducted, while 37 medical shops were reported for violations relating to the maintenance of sale and purchase records of prescription drugs. The department also reported court-imposed fines amounting to 20,000, seizure of 32,346 units of drugs and sealing of five shops, as per the action-taken report presented during the meeting. The DC stressed the

need for regular inspections, strict monitoring of pharmacies and timely action against violations. The meeting was apprised of the procedure for suspension and cancellation of drug licences, including recording on-the-spot findings, reporting violations to the competent authority and issuance of show-cause notices to the concerned licensees before further action under the applicable rules.

The DC emphasised that all concerned departments must ensure timely reporting of violations, proper follow-up and strict enforcement of the prescribed norms. He called for close coordination among the enforcement agencies to curb the sale and misuse of drugs and ensure accountability at every level.

Emphasising community participation, the DC observed that regular awareness meetings should be held at the panchayat level with the involvement of Panchayat Secretaries and other concerned functionaries through Panchayat Samitis and youth clubs. He stressed the need to sensitise youth and the general public about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage collective efforts to prevent substance abuse at the grassroots level.

The meeting also reviewed the functioning of drug de-addiction facilities in the district. The DC stressed the importance of effective treatment, counselling, rehabilitation and regular follow-up to support recovery and prevent relapse.

Thunder



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PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Bilal Ahmad Malla, R/o Tehlipora Harran, Tulmulla, Ganderbal, hereby notify that my minor child's name has been incorrectly recorded as "Azaan Ibni Bilal" in the Aadhaar Card bearing No. 3158 3754 9491.

The correct name is "Basit Bilal Malla", as recorded in the Birth Certificate.

This notice is issued for correction of my child's name in the Aadhaar record. Anyone having any objection may submit the same to the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

Bilal Ahmad Malla
Father of Basit Bilal Malla
R/o Tehlipora Harran, Tulmulla, Ganderbal

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on electricity Bill Bearing consumer Id NO 0205020000999. from GH HASSAN SHAH TO NAZIR AHMAD SHAH

If anybody having any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the office of the Subdivision MANIGAM GANDERBAL PDD GANDERBAL. within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. after that no objection will be entertained. Name : NAZIR AHMAD SHAH S/O GHULAM HASSAN SHAH R/O QASBA LAR GANDERBAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

NASEEMA AKHTER
W/O: MUKHTAR AHMAD KHATANA
R/O: URPASH GANDERBAL
Account number. 0174040800015105

DC Ganderbal reviews District Capex Budget 2026-27



KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal, Tuesday chaired a meeting at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Ganderbal, to review the physical and financial progress of works under the District Capex Budget 2026-27, including the Regular Component, DDC, BDC, PRI, ABPD, APDP, CDF and Tribal Plan (UT Capex/DA-JGUA).

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed the status of ongoing works and expenditure incurred under various components and assessed the progress achieved against the approved targets. She stressed the need for close monitoring of all developmental works to ensure timely execution, quality

outcomes and effective utilisation of allocated funds.

The DC directed all concerned departments and executing agencies to expedite the pace of work and ensure that all approved projects are completed within the stipulated timelines. She emphasised that delays in execution must be identified and addressed promptly through effective coordination, regular field inspections and continuous monitoring.

Stressing financial discipline and accountability, the Deputy Commissioner directed the departments to ensure transparent, timely and proper utilisation of funds in accordance with the prescribed guidelines and financial regulations. She instructed the officers to maintain updated records of expenditure, ensure timely submission of

utilisation-related information and avoid unnecessary accumulation of unspent funds.

The DC further stressed that expenditure must correspond with actual physical progress on the ground and that the quality of works should not be compromised. The concerned executing agencies were directed to conduct regular inspections, monitor the pace of implementation and ensure adherence to approved specifications and established standards.

Emphasising the importance of public-oriented development, the Deputy Commissioner called upon all departments to prioritise works that directly benefit the general public and strengthen essential infrastructure. She underscored the need for coordinated efforts among the executing agencies to

resolve bottlenecks, facilitate timely completion of projects and ensure that the intended benefits of developmental schemes reach the people.

The DC also directed the concerned officers to submit updated physical and financial progress reports within the prescribed timelines, highlighting achievements, pending works, expenditure status and issues requiring intervention. She stressed that accountability must be maintained at every stage of implementation and that regular reviews should be undertaken to ensure adherence to the approved targets.

The meeting was attended by the Superintending Engineers of R&B, KPDC and Jal Shakti circles; Assistant Commissioner Development; Assistant Commissioner Panchayats along with Block Development Officers; Regional Officer/Deputy CEO JAKE-DA Kashmir; Chief Medical Officer; Chief Education Officer; concerned Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti, Irrigation and Flood Control, R&B, KPDC, REW, R&B Electric Division Srinagar and Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar; Assistant Director Handloom; District Youth Services and Sports Officer; Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Ganderbal; and other concerned officers and officials.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PW (R&B) DIVISION ZAINPORA NOTICE INVITING TENDER

SINGLE COVER SYSTEM (Up to Rs. 2.50 Crores)

NIT No: 58/ZNP/RnB/e-Tendering/2026-27
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In double cover system) are invited on Percentage basis, from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

Dated: 27-10-2026

S. No	Name of Work	Major Head of Account	Advertised cost (in Lacs) Inclusive of GST	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Time of Completion	Cost of T/ Doc(Rs.)	Technical Sanction No. & Date
1	Macadamization of Children Bagh-I-Noor din road.	5054	19.24	38480/-	BEE/CEE	04 Days	800/-	Assured

Position of funds:- Committed
Project Authority: PW(R&B) Department Kashmir.

AAA no. Date: Assured.

The Payment shall be made strictly as per the release of funds by the Competent authority.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	27-10-2026
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 27-10-2026, 06:00 P.M to 02-11-2026, 06:00 P.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	27-10-2026 From 06.00 P.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	02-11-2026 up to 06:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	03-11-2026 at 01.00 P.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Division Zainapora.

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. Bids must be accompanied by a Bankers pay receipt of Tender fee (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in the Centralized Designated Pooling Bank Account No. 0470010200000999 as the cost of the tender document. Note: - The Date of Bankers pay receipt of Tender fee and EMD must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date. Any deviation shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.

1.1 Participation in the tender shall be subject to the bidder depositing the prescribed Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Fee exclusively through the online payment gateway linked to the Centralized Designated Pooling Bank Account No. 0470010200000999, established for e-tendering purposes. This requirement is in pursuance of the instructions contained in Finance Department Circular No. FD-Code/290/2026 dated 22.05.2026 and endorsed by the Chief Engineer, PW(R&B) Department, South Kashmir, vide Endorsement No. CE/R&B/SK/WS/2095-2111 dated 05.06.2026, as amended from time to time. Accordingly, submission of EMD in the form of Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR), Term Deposit Receipt (TDR), Call Deposit Receipt (CDR), Bank Guarantee (BG), or any other offline/physical instrument shall not be accepted and such bids shall be treated as non-responsive. The bidder shall ensure that the requisite EMD and Tender Fee are successfully remitted through the prescribed online mode on or before the bid submission deadline. Any bid not accompanied by proof of successful online payment of the prescribed EMD and Tender Fee within the stipulated time shall be liable to rejection at the technical evaluation stage without any further notice.

1.2 The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @5% of allotted cost in cash to the designated authority/Account which shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period(DLP) beyond 60 days.

1.3 The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on website 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 website in the office of the Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Division Zainapora (Tender receiving authority).

No: R&B/ZNP/DIV/NIT/4806-15
Dt: 27-10-2026

Sd/-

Sd/-

CC

DM

DIPK-7089/26
DATED: 27-10-2026

Sd/-
(Er. Shabir Ahmad Tak)
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Zainpora

Vigilance Awareness Week

CS administers integrity pledge to officials



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Tuesday administered the Integrity Pledge to Administrative Secretaries, officers and officials at the Civil Secretariat, marking the observance of Vigilance Awareness Week 2026, being observed from October 26 to November 1 under the theme 'Probity for Prosperity'.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary led the officers and officials in reaffirming their commitment to uphold the highest standards of integrity, honesty, transparency and professional ethics in the

discharge of their official duties.

The pledge underscored the need for collective efforts by the Government, citizens and private institutions to combat corruption, which remains a major impediment to the country's economic, social and political progress.

It also called upon public servants to remain vigilant and ensure that their conduct reflects the principles of probity, accountability and public service.

Addressing the gathering, Dulloo emphasized that integrity and transparency must form the cornerstone of public administration. He stressed

the need for all departments to strengthen accountability mechanisms, ensure transparent service delivery and accord priority to the timely disposal of public grievances.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the Government's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach towards corruption and called upon the Administrative Secretaries and departmental heads to proactively review pending vigilance matters and take appropriate action in accordance with established rules and procedures.

He further urged officers and officials to discharge their responsibilities with honesty and impartiality, uphold the rule of law and ensure that public interest remains paramount in every administrative decision.

The observance of Vigilance Awareness Week aims to promote ethical conduct, strengthen public confidence in institutions and encourage collective responsibility in preventing corruption.

Similar pledge-taking ceremonies and awareness activities are being organized across the Union Territory, including at divisional and district headquarters, public sector undertakings and educational institutions, to reinforce the message of integrity and promote a culture of transparency and accountability in public life.

IGP traffic reviews preparations for Darbar Move

Assesses road safety measures, traffic enforcement



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 27: IGP Traffic, M. Suleman Choudhary, on Tuesday chaired a meeting with all Traffic Unit SSSP and DySSP besides DIGP Traffic Range Kashmir to review the existing traffic management arrangements, identify congestion points and accident-prone locations, assess enforcement measures and review preparedness for the upcoming Darbar Move.

The meeting was attended in-person by

Haseeb-Ur-Rehman, DIGP Traffic Range Jammu; Mohammad Rashid Bhat, Staff Officer to IGP Traffic J&K; Liaqat Ali, SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir and Bisma Qazi, SSP traffic City Srinagar alongwith DySSP Traffic City Srinagar. Besides, K M Priyanka, SSP Traffic NHW Raman; Master Popsy, SSP traffic Rural Jammu; Amit Bhasin, SSP Traffic City Jammu along with DySSP Traffic NHW, City Jammu, Rural Jammu attended the meeting through video conferencing.

The meeting also deliberated upon measures to prevent road accidents, ease traffic congestion and strengthen enforcement across Jammu and Kashmir.

IGP Traffic J&K directed SSP Traffic City Jammu and DySSP Traffic City Jammu to formulate and implement a comprehensive traffic management plan for the upcoming Darbar Move, keeping in view the anticipated winter migration from the Valley, Doda and Kishtwar, alongwith the expected

increase in vehicular movement from November till end of February. Special attention shall be given to congestion-prone areas, including Sidhra, Bathindia adjoining areas, Green Belt Park, Jammu Railway Station, Railway Chowk, Narwal, Qasim Nagar, Canal Road, Bagh-e-Bahu, Sattari, Janipur, etc.

SSP Traffic NHW Ramban was directed to ensure smooth and uninterrupted movement of the Darbar Move convoy, with special focus on the single-lane stretch from Nachlana to Hingni and the Dewal and Mom Passi stretches. She was further directed to maintain close coordination with DIGP Traffic Range Kashmir, SSP Traffic Rural Kashmir and SSP Traffic City Jammu to facilitate the safe and smooth passage of the Darbar Move Convoy.

Emphasising road safety, IGP Traffic directed all officers to take proactive measures to reduce road accidents. Special enforcement drives shall be launched against stunt biking, underage driving, overloading, rash driving, drunk & drive. Strict legal actions shall be initiated against such violators.

Women entrepreneurs from 17 states exhibit at SARAS Mela

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 27: The SARAS Mela underway in Srinagar is bringing together women entrepreneurs from 17 states, providing a platform for rural women to showcase and market their products while promoting cultural and economic exchange.

Speaking on the sidelines of the mela at Polo Ground Park, Srinagar, Mission Director of the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM), UMEED, Dr Shubhra Sharma said the event reflects the diversity of the country and aims to present a glimpse of "Mini India" to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The fourth edition of the SARAS Mela, being held from October 25 to November 3, features around 80 stalls, including nearly half from various districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sharma said the primary objective of the mela is to provide women associated with self-help groups (SHGs) a marketing platform to display and sell their products, helping strengthen their livelihoods and economic independence.

She said the event also enables women entrepreneurs to interact with participants from other states, exchange ideas and learn about new products and business opportunities.

Officials said the mela offers visitors an opportunity to explore a wide range of products made by rural women from Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country.

The SARAS Mela is aimed at expanding market access for SHG members and empowering rural women through entrepreneurship and income-generation opportunities—(KNO)

Vehicular movement restricted on Zojila

Axis from Oct 28 to 30

Raja Syed Rather

Drass, Oct 27: District Police Drass on Tuesday issued a public advisory announcing restrictions on vehicular movement along the Zojila Axis from October 28 to 30 due to scheduled maintenance work and blasting operations.

According to the advisory, all types of vehicles will be restricted from travelling on the Zojila Axis between 4 PM and 8 AM the following day during the specified period.

Police have advised motorists and travellers not to proceed towards the Zojila Axis during the restricted hours to avoid inconvenience and ensure public safety.

The advisory further urged commuters to cooperate with the authorities for the smooth execution of maintenance and blasting operations.

Police said the restrictions are necessary to ensure the safety of travellers and facilitate the smooth conduct of work on the strategically important route—(KNO)

Sopore bypass bridge repairs underway

Reopening expected by Nov 1

Waris Fayaz

Sopore, Oct 27: Repair work on the vital Sopore bypass bridge is underway, with the key link expected to reopen by November 1. Its closure, however, continues to strain the town's road network, causing traffic congestion and inconvenience to commuters and transporters.

The bridge, which connects Kupwara with Srinagar and serves as an important route to Asia's second-largest fruit mandi, has remained closed since October 22 for repairs. According to details available, the closure has diverted traffic through Sopore town, leading to frequent bottlenecks on major roads.

Authorities have put traffic management measures in place, including barricades, diversions, advisories and the

deployment of Traffic Police, civil police and Municipal Council personnel.

Officials are regulating vehicular movement at key junctions to ease congestion.

Meanwhile, the repair work came under scrutiny after a video allegedly showing the use of substandard material on the bridge surfaced on social media. Following the incident, the administration ordered the immediate replacement of the material. The work is being closely monitored, with Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, the Senior Superintendent of Police and other officials conducting regular inspections to review progress and assess traffic management arrangements.

Commuters have been advised to follow designated diversion routes and cooperate with traffic personnel during the repair period—(KNO)

Police apprehend 6 drug peddlers in Anantnag

KNO

Srinagar, Oct 27: Continuing its sustained crackdown against drug trafficking and substance abuse, Jammu and Kashmir Police in Anantnag apprehended six drug peddlers at different locations across the district and recovered contraband substances from their possession. Cases have been registered under relevant provisions of law, and investigations have been initiated.

In a statement, a police spokesperson said that a police party from Police Station Bijbehara, during patrolling at Gadhanjipora, apprehended Bilal Ahmad Bader, son of Gh. Rasool Bader, resident of Housing Colony, Gadhanjipora, Bijbehara. During his search, approximately 5.1 grams of ganja-like substance were recovered. Accordingly,

FIR No. 325/2026 under Sections 8/20 of the NDPS Act has been registered, and investigation has been taken up. In another action, a police party from Police Station Anantnag apprehended Ab Aziz Hajam, son of Bashir Ahmad Hajam, resident of Nazuk Mohalla, near Ganziwarda Bridge, Anantnag. Approximately 114 grams of charas-powder-like substance were recovered from his possession. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway.

Meanwhile, a police party from Police Post Janglatmandi, during patrolling at T-Point Ashajipora, apprehended Zahid Ahmad Sheikh, son of Bashir Ahmad Sheikh, resident of Sherpora. During his search, approximately 5.1 grams of charas-like substance were recovered. Accordingly, a case has been registered, and

investigation has been initiated. In a similar action, a police party from Police Post Sangam apprehended Satendra Kumar, son of Harichandra Ram, resident of Bhawal, Bihar. Approximately 6.20 grams of charas-like substance were recovered from his possession. Cognizance has been taken, and further investigation has been initiated.

Moreover, a naka party from Police Station Srigufwara, during naka checking at Poshkreeri, Srigufwara, apprehended Reyaz Ahmad Dar, son of Bashir Ahmed Dar, resident of Gur, Bijbehara. During his search, approximately 10 grams of charas-like substance were recovered from his possession. Cognizance under the relevant provisions of law has been taken. In another

Continued on
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GMCs staff to resume protest from Nov 16

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Oct 27: Employees of five new Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) in Jammu and Kashmir have announced that they will resume their protest from November 16 if their long-pending demand for the finalisation of Service Recruitment Rules (SRRs) for non-gazetted employees is not addressed.

The Coordination Committee representing non-gazetted employees of GMCs Rajouri, Doda, Kathua, Baramulla and Anantnag in a press conference in Jammu, said the protest, which had been deferred earlier following assurances from the authorities, would be resumed in view of the failure to finalise the rules despite nearly seven years of waiting.

The committee expressed serious concern over the prolonged delay, stating that employees had been awaiting a clearly defined service structure, regular Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) proceedings and fair opportunities for career advancement since 2019.

It said successive assurances by the authorities had failed to translate into a concrete decision, leaving the professional future of hundreds of employees uncertain.

The committee said employees had repeatedly been assured that the rules would be finalised by September 30, 2026. The deadline, it said, was communicated through different official channels, including the Information and Public Relations Department, the former Commissioner Secretary of the Health and Medical Education (H&ME) Department, the Health Minister and the Chief Minister, who had reportedly indicated that the matter was at the final stage.

However, the deadline passed without the rules being notified, prompting renewed resentment among employees.

The committee questioned why the rules had remained pending despite changes in the department's administrative leadership over the years, adding that repeated changes



in the senior officers' positions could not justify the prolonged delay.

It said six IAS officers had reportedly held charge as Secretary or the corresponding senior administrative head of the H&ME Department since 2019, but the issue continued to remain unresolved.

Promotional avenues affected
The employees also highlighted what they described as a disparity in career progression between gazetted and non-gazetted staff.

According to the committee, gazetted employees have received three rounds of promotions or promotional advancements since 2019, while non-gazetted employees of the five new medical colleges continue to face stagnation in the absence of finalised service rules and a clearly defined promotional framework.

It said the uncertainty could affect employees' seniority, eligibility for higher posts and financial benefits associated with career progression.

The committee urged the government to

examine whether the prolonged delay had resulted in any avoidable losses to employees and to consider appropriate corrective measures in accordance with the applicable rules.

Recruitment process also a concern
The committee further expressed concern over the possible impact of the delay on permanent recruitment in the medical colleges.

"According to information available to employees, the first recruitment advertisement by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) for non-gazetted posts in the five new GMCs was issued in 2019, with no subsequent recruitment advertisement for these posts since then," it said.

The committee also flagged reported difficulties in advertising permanent non-gazetted posts at GMC Handwara and GMC Udhampur in the absence of the requisite service rules.

The government, it said, must clarify the status of the rules, identify the issues holding up their finalisation and announce

a definite timeline for resolving the matter.

The delay was not merely an administrative issue but one that affected the career prospects of serving employees as well as recruitment opportunities for job aspirants, the committee said.

Accountability for delay
The Coordination Committee called for a comprehensive review of the process since 2019 to establish where the delay occurred and whether any negligence or unjustified inaction had contributed to the prolonged penalty.

"Accountability should be examined at all relevant levels, including officials involved in drafting and processing the rules, authorities responsible for administrative and legal vetting, successive senior officers of the H&ME Department and the leadership responsible for overseeing the process," it said.

The committee urged the government to move beyond assurances and take concrete steps to notify the rules, initiate due DPC proceedings and examine the admissibility of consequential benefits for affected employees.

The government must also explain why the September 30 deadline was missed and provide clarity on the status of the rules for all affected medical colleges, it added.

The committee emphasised that the issue concerns not only the dignity and professional future of serving employees but also the recruitment needs and effective functioning of public healthcare institutions.

It said the decision to resume the protest from November 16 had been taken after repeated assurances failed to produce the desired outcome.

The committee reiterated that employees and job aspirants in Jammu and Kashmir deserved a clear decision, a firm timeline and fair opportunities for career progression rather than continued uncertainty.

Continued on
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EDITORIAL

Umrah pilgrims deserve to come home with dignity

There is something deeply unsettling about being stuck in a foreign land when you have gone there only to pray. The Kashmiri Umrah pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia did not go for business or pleasure. They went for a spiritual journey. Now, because of

flight cancellations, they are waiting, spending money they had not budgeted for, worrying about medicines, about elderly parents, about how long this will go on. So, the phone call by MP Chowdry Mohammad Ramzan to External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar is welcome. He did

the right thing by taking up the matter directly, and also by speaking to the Consul General of India in Jeddah. This is what elected representatives are for – to raise the voice of ordinary people when they are helpless. The concerns he raised are real. Additional expenses on hotels,

food and medicines are pressing hard on families who saved for years to perform Umrah. Some are old. Some are unwell. The uncertainty is worse than the expense, because no one knows when they will come home. It is good that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has already said the

government is coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs, and that the JKAHUC has opened a helpline. But coordination must now turn into action. Special flights need to be arranged. Financial help must reach those who cannot pay more. And basic facilities must be ensured

until they return. This is not a political issue. It is a humanitarian one. A stranded pilgrim is a family in distress. The Centre and the UT government must work together, and work fast. These people went to pray. They deserve to come home with dignity, and without further burden.

Breast Cancer In Kashmir: Understanding A Growing Health Challenge

The increase in breast cancer is likely due to a combination of biological, lifestyle, reproductive, social and health-system factors. Changing reproductive patterns—late marriage, delayed first pregnancy, fewer children, reduced breastfeeding and early menarche—can increase lifetime exposure to estrogen, while rising obesity, sedentary lifestyles, tobacco and alcohol exposure, and genetic susceptibility also play a role. Low awareness, stigma, and Kashmir's rural and mountainous terrain, with specialist cancer services concentrated in Srinagar, further contribute to delayed consultation and diagnosis.

Kashmir needs a coordinated response: community awareness in Kashmiri, Urdu and Gojri; school and workplace education; training of ASHA workers and primary-care staff; mobile mammography with reliable referral; a population-based cancer registry; and psycho-social support for patients and families. All diagnostic and treatment facilities are available in Kashmir, leaving no need for patients to move outside the valley. Breast cancer is serious, but it is not silent or untreatable—every woman should know her breasts, report changes without delay, and encourage the women around her to do the same.

Dr Shabnam Bashir

Breast cancer is the abnormal, uncontrolled growth of cells in the breast, usually beginning in the milk ducts or lobules. It is the most common cancer among women worldwide and, in India, has overtaken cervical cancer as the leading cancer affecting women. While the disease can be life-threatening, it is also highly treatable when detected early; the central challenge in Kashmir is not merely rising case numbers, but late presentation, low screening uptake, and delayed access to specialist care.

Global burden

Globally, an estimated 2.4 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2024, and about 694,000 diagnosed died from the disease. Breast cancer accounted for 11.8% of all new cancer cases and 7.1% of all cancer deaths worldwide, making it the second most commonly diagnosed cancer overall and the most common cancer among women.

Breast cancer is now the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women in 164 of 186 countries and the leading cause of cancer death among women in 122 countries. The burden is unequal: in very high-human-development countries, about 1 in 12 women may be diagnosed in her lifetime, while in low-human-development countries about 1 in 27 women may be diagnosed- but 1 in 48 may die from it, reflecting major gaps in early detection and treatment.

Breast Cancer in India

India faces a particularly concerning pattern. Breast cancer is the leading cancer among Indian women, accounting for roughly 13.5% of all new cancer cases and about 10% of cancer-related deaths. National estimates place the age-standardised incidence at about 32 per 100,000 women and mortality at about 15.1 per 100,000 women.

Recent estimates suggest about 238,000 new breast cancer cases and more than 102,000 deaths among Indian women in 2024. Unlike many high-income countries, where incidence is high but mortality has fallen due to organized screening and early treatment, India continues to see a high proportion of women diagnosed at advanced stages.

The Situation in Kashmir

Kashmir has seen a clear rise in breast cancer cases over the past two decades. Hospital-based data from the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) reported 1,611 breast cancer cases between 2000 and 2012, representing 16.38% of 9,575 registered cancers. Earlier studies have also described breast cancer as the second most common malignancy among Kashmiri women, with an estimated incidence of about 12.6 per 100,000 women.

The available Kashmir data are mostly hospital-based rather than population-based, so exact current incidence and mortality figures for the valley remain uncertain. Nevertheless, published reviews consistently report that breast cancer is among the leading cancers in Kashmir, that cases are increasingly seen in younger and premenopausal women, and that a large share presents at advanced stages.



A major concern is delayed diagnosis. Studies from tertiary centres in Kashmir report that roughly 70-73% of patients present with stage III disease, while only about 27% present at stage II. This late-stage pattern sharply reduces treatment options and survival compared with cancers detected when they are small and localized.

Why cases are increasing in Kashmir

The increase in breast cancer in Kashmir is likely due to a combination of biological, lifestyle, reproductive, social, and health-system factors. No single cause explains the trend, but several risks are increasingly relevant.

1. Changing reproductive patterns: Late marriage, delayed first pregnancy, fewer children, reduced breastfeeding, and early menarche can increase lifetime exposure to estrogen. Kashmiri studies have identified early menarche and late first childbirth as important risk factors.

2. Rising obesity and sedentary lifestyles: Increased intake of processed and energy-dense foods, reduced physical activity, and obesity- particularly after menopause- raise breast cancer risk.

3. Tobacco and alcohol exposure: Tobacco use and harmful alcohol consumption are recognized risk factors, although alcohol-related risk may vary by population and patterns of use.

4. Genetic and familial susceptibility: Research from Kashmir has reported familial, early-onset, and male breast cancer, and has suggested that BRCA1 and TP53 mutations may be more relevant in this ethnic population. A family history of breast or ovarian cancer should prompt specialist genetic counselling.

5. Low awareness and stigma: Many women do not recognize early symptoms or feel hesitant to discuss breast changes. Studies in Jammu and Kashmir report low awareness of symptoms, risk factors, and screening, especially among women over 40.

6. Geographic and access barriers: Kashmir's rural and mountainous terrain, concentration of specialist cancer services in Srinagar, travel costs, and limited organized screening contribute to delayed consultation and diagnosis.

7. Improved detection and registration:

Part of the apparent rise may also reflect greater health-seeking, better diagnostic facilities, and improved hospital reporting. However, this does not explain the consistent reports of advanced-stage disease.

Warning signs and symptoms:

The most common early sign is a painless lump or thickening in the breast or armpit. A lump does not hurt in many cases, so absence of pain should never be reassuring. Seek medical assessment promptly for:

1. A new lump in the breast or underarm.
2. Change in breast size, shape, or contour.
3. Skin dimpling, puckering, redness, or an "orange peel" appearance.
4. Nipple retraction, inversion, scaling, or ulceration.
5. Blood-stained or clear nipple discharge.
6. Persistent breast pain localized to one area, particularly a lump.
7. A sore or wound on the breast that does not heal.
8. Swelling in the armpit or around the collarbone.

Most breast lumps are not cancer, but every new or persistent change deserves clinical evaluation. Early cancers are more likely to be cured when treated before spread to lymph nodes or distant organs. Who is at higher risk?

Some risk factors cannot be changed, while others can be reduced through daily choices and medical care.

Non-modifiable risks include being female, increasing age- especially after 40- a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancer, inherited BRCA1, BRCA2 or PALB2 mutations, early menarche, late menopause, dense breast tissue, and previous chest radiation.

Modifiable risks include overweight and obesity, physical inactivity, harmful alcohol use, tobacco exposure, prolonged use of combined postmenopausal hormone therapy, and delayed childbearing. Notably, about 80% of breast cancers occur in women with no specific risk factor other than female sex and age, which is why awareness and early detection matter for everyone.

Prevention and lifestyle modification
Breast cancer cannot always be prevented, but risk can be meaningfully reduced.

Maintain a healthy weight; avoid abdominal and postmenopausal weight gain.

Be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week, combining brisk walking, cycling, or household activity with muscle-strengthening exercise.

Eat a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, and fibre; limit ultra-processed foods, sugary drinks, and excess red or processed meat.

Avoid tobacco in all forms and limit or avoid alcohol.

Breastfeed if possible; exclusive and continued breastfeeding has a protective effect.

Discuss family planning and hormone therapy with a clinician; avoid unnecessary long-term combined hormone replacement therapy after menopause.

Know your normal breast appearance and report changes early.

Women with a strong family history should ask about genetic counselling, risk assessment, and tailored surveillance.

Early detection- What women in Kashmir should do

Early detection has two parts: recognizing symptoms and seeking timely diagnosis, and screening asymptomatic women. WHO recommends breast awareness and prompt clinical assessment for abnormal findings, with organized mammography screening generally targeted at women aged 50-69 where health systems can support it.

For Kashmir, a practical approach should include:

- Monthly breast self-awareness, preferably after menstruation or on a fixed monthly date after menopause.
- Annual clinical breast examination for women from age 30-40, particularly those with risk factors.
- Mammography from age 40-45 for average-risk women where available, and earlier, individualized screening for high-risk women.
- Immediate medical consultation for any suspicious lump, nipple discharge, or skin change.
- Strong referral systems so that women screened in mobile or peripheral camps

receive timely biopsy and treatment. Mobile mammography initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir have shown feasibility, but follow-up remains a major weakness.

Diagnosis and treatment in Kashmir

Diagnosis typically begins with clinical examination, followed by imaging- usually mammography and/or breast ultrasound- and a tissue biopsy. Pathology and hormone-receptor testing determine whether the tumour is estrogen-receptor positive, progesterone-receptor positive, HER2-positive, or triple-negative; this directly guides treatment.

Once the diagnosis is confirmed then the disease stage needs to be ascertained which is done with CECT chest and whole abdomen, Bone scan (T99 MDP bone scan) or single stop PET-CT based on the need from case to case. MRI breast has limited role in specific cases where the breast is very dense, or multi centricity is suspected or strong family history of cancers or previously operated breast is present, etc.

Treatment is multidisciplinary and may include:

- Surgery: Lumpectomy or breast-conserving surgery for suitable early tumours, or mastectomy when required. Sentinel lymph-node biopsy is preferred where appropriate because it causes fewer complications than full axillary dissection.
- Radiation therapy: Used after breast-conserving surgery and often after mastectomy in higher-risk disease to lower recurrence risk.
- Chemotherapy: Given before surgery to shrink larger tumours or after surgery to reduce recurrence risk; it is especially important for triple-negative and some node-positive cancers.
- Hormone therapy: Tamoxifen or aromatase inhibitors for hormone-receptor-positive cancers, usually taken for several years.
- Targeted therapy: Drugs such as trastuzumab for HER2-positive disease, commonly combined with chemotherapy.
- Rehabilitation and psycho-oncology: Lymphoedema care, physiotherapy, nutrition, counselling, and support for anxiety, depression, and stigma-related distress.

All these diagnostic and treatment facilities are available in Kashmir leaving no need for our patients to move outside Kashmir for any treatment related to Breast Cancer.

The way forward

Kashmir needs a coordinated response: community awareness in Kashmiri, Urdu and Gojri; school and workplace education; training of ASHA workers and primary-care staff; mobile mammography with reliable referral; a population-based cancer registry; and psycho-social support for patients and families. The goal should be simple: no women should delay care because of fear, stigma, distance, or lack of information.

Breast cancer is serious, but it is not silent or untreatable disease. A lump noticed today and examined this week can make the difference between a curable early cancer and an advanced illness. Every woman in Kashmir should know her breasts, report changes without delay, and encourage the women around her to do the same.

The writer is Director Surgical Oncology, Breast & Colorectal Cancers, New City Hospital, Tengpora Bypass, Srinagar

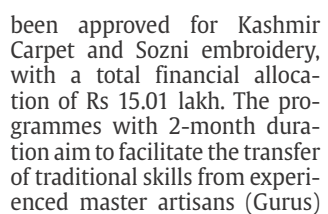
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Owner & Editor-In-Chief of Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a leading news agency in Jammu & Kashmir. Website: www.kashmirnewsobserver.com, Mail: info@kashmirnewsobserver.com

Programmes intended to rebuild a working pipeline of trained hands in 2 crafts

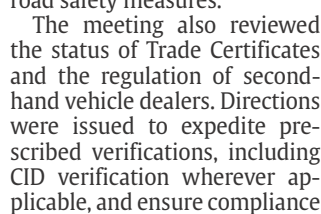
As per an official statement, a spokesman of the Department stated that the office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) considered the department's proposal for distribution of improved tool-kits and skill-based training to promote traditional crafts. "Two Guru Shishya Hastship Prashikshan Programmes have



These programmes are intended not only to upgrade existing skills but also to rebuild a working pipeline of trained

Through these programmes, the Directorate endeavours to preserve the region's rich cultural legacy while creating opportunities for continued growth and development of the handicrafts and handloom sector in Kashmir.

Emphasising the critical importance of road safety, the Transport Commissioner stressed the need for concerted and sustained efforts to reduce road accidents and prevent the loss of precious human lives. He directed all field officers to intensify enforcement against traffic violations, particularly overload-ing, overspeeding, wrong-side driving and other unsafe practices, with special focus on National Highways and accident-prone stretches. He underscored the importance of strict compliance with road safety regulations, enhanced field-level vigilance and coordinated efforts to promote



Concluding the meeting, Mahajan directed all RTOs and ARTOs to ensure effective implementation of the decisions taken, monitor progress regularly and furnish updated status reports wherever required. He reiterated that efficient service delivery, regulatory compliance, effective enforcement and road safety must remain the Department's foremost priorities, with the ultimate objective of preventing road accidents and safeguarding human lives.

The meeting, as per an official statement, underscored the importance of strengthening

The meeting concluded with an emphasis on concerted efforts by all concerned departments to strengthen irrigation infrastructure and support the farming community through improved water availability in rainfed areas of Kashmir Division.

Held as part of the nationwide Viksit Bharat Yuva Samvaad initiative, the programme provided a platform for young people to exchange ideas, strengthen their

A key highlight of the event was an interactive dialogue involving students, the District Youth Officer (DYO) and the Youth Icon. Participants raised questions and shared their views on youth participation in governance, civic responsibility and the importance of first-time voters in strengthening democratic processes.

Through initiatives like Yuva Samvaad, MY Bharat aims to bring young citizens closer to democratic institutions and encourage them to contribute actively to the nation's development. The initiative places youth at the centre of nation-building, inspiring them to turn their ideas, aspirations and sense of responsibility into meaningful contributions towards Viksit Bharat@2047.

Packaged drinking water is a high-risk food category identified by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

Meanwhile, consumers are being requested to report any suspected unsafe or adulterated food product through email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in

At the outset, District Treasury Officer, Kupwara, Mohammad Shafi Wani, briefed the chair on the district's treasury profile and the composition and functioning of treasuries across the district. He highlighted the importance of coordination among the Treasury Department, DDOs and other concerned

Regarding pension-related grievances, the Principal Accountant General stressed the need for a pensioner-friendly approach and called upon the concerned Treasury and Accounts Officers to provide proper guidance and assistance to pensioners in completing the requisite

A separate session was organised for pensioners and family pensioners, providing them an opportunity to present their grievances directly before the concerned officers. Various issues raised by the pensioners were examined, and several grievances were redressed on the spot.

A representative of JKTPPO elaborated on the organisation's

Maqbool Shah, Senior Consultant GeM, briefly explained about working of GeM Portal, documents required for

Further, more than 160 Artisans, Exporters and FPOs of Ganderbal district attended the workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation and actively engaged in discussions and showed

The programme concluded with an emphasis on encouraging more enterprises from Ganderbal to adopt digital commerce and leverage platforms such as ONDC and GeM to strengthen their online presence and explore sustainable business growth.

AI models threaten fashion industry jobs as brands seek rights to digital replicas

REUTERS

London, Oct 27: AI-generated fashion models present a tantalizing opportunity for brands: the ability to create lifelike images for their retail websites while cutting costs by 90 per cent or more compared to photo shoots with human models.

For the modeling industry, the technology poses an existential threat because of scant regulation governing the ownership or use of digital twins. Fashion models face the risk of unpaid replication of their image – or replacement by entirely synthetic models.

To understand how AI is upending the economics of fashion modeling, Reuters interviewed 15 model-agency directors and reviewed more than a dozen confidential photo-shoot contracts in which brands including Diesel, Calvin Klein and L’Oreal detailed proposed terms for AI-created alterations and future use of the images.

The companies’ contract requests included the right to swap a model’s face with another using AI; the creation of a digital clone with no additional compensation to the model; and the right to use images of a model’s body to train AI. The terms in the unsigned contracts also

included broad legal language that could effectively give a brand leeway to use AI however it wanted.

While some companies are looking to repurpose or modify images of existing models, others are using fully AI-generated models, not based on existing humans.

As AI use expands, modeling agencies are seeing bookings decline, photo studios are closing and models are facing the loss of a chunk of their livelihoods: photo shoots by fast-fashion retailers constantly adding new collections to their websites.

“Within a year, even the next six months, there’s going to be less jobs for models, especially our bread and butter, which is e-commerce,” said Adot Gak, a model based in London who has been on the cover of Harper’s Bazaar and appeared in campaigns by brands including Balmain and H&M. “If we don’t speak up about this, in the next two years the whole industry will just be bots.”

While some fast-fashion players like Spain’s Mango have already rolled out AI-generated models at scale, high-end brands are moving more cautiously. Moncler experimented early with an AI-generated campaign in 2023, and Gucci caused

controversy in fashion circles when it posted images generated by AI on Instagram this year.

Moncler said it does not currently use AI-generated models, either on its website or in its campaigns. Gucci did not respond to requests for comment.

“The scariest part is that now people cannot differentiate between a real model and an AI model,” said Gak.

Face swaps and ‘digital twins’ AI allows retailers to endlessly rework and redeploy a model’s image wearing different outfits at a fraction of the cost of new shoots.

“Some brands ask to modify faces, bodies, skin, age or expressions after shoots using AI. Others are asking about creating ‘digital twins’ of models that they can reuse later without needing another production,” said Patrick Staal, owner of modeling agency Uniko Models in Barcelona.

In a photo-shoot casting sheet, Italian brand Diesel asked models to agree to “alteration or reconstruction of facial features and body proportions,” along with “swapping of faces among the participating models,” and “superimposition of the Participant’s face onto another person’s body.”

Diesel’s parent company OTB

told Reuters the model release was drafted for a specific campaign and isn’t representative of its typical agreements. It said it doesn’t systematically modify models with AI.

Reale Actives – the skincare brand launched this year by social-media personality Alix Earle – uses the tagline, “Reale you is perfect you.”

But in a contract seen by Reuters, the brand asked for rights to create AI-generated replicas of models and to “own” and use these fakes for a year without further compensation.

Reale Actives said in a statement that it uses real models and hasn’t replicated any model using AI. It said the contract language came from a partner production company, which it declined to name.

Models training their machine replacements?

In some cases, models are helping to train their replacements: some contracts’ fine print includes language allowing the use of their images to train AI tools.

A Calvin Klein draft contract seen by Reuters asked the model to accept, for no extra pay, that the brand “may use reasonably unrecognizable images of Model (no identifying features such as Model’s face, scars, tattoos or

otherwise) to train and fine tune AI tools for learning general model attributes.”

A Calvin Klein spokesperson said in a statement: “Like many others, we are testing and learning in this fast-moving space,” adding that the brand’s AI use is guided by regulation, industry standards and respect for models’ rights.

In many cases, contracts include wording such as “including” or “not limited to,” which lawyers commonly use to claim rights that aren’t spelled out.

Melanie Howard, partner and chair of luxury brands at law firm Loeb & Loeb in Los Angeles, represents both brands and talent in contract negotiations and said such sweeping language “is dangerous in its ambiguity” and makes it difficult for models to challenge any unsanctioned use of their images.

In a photo-shoot contract seen by Reuters, France’s L’Oreal asked for “the right to use artificial intelligence (AI) technologies... including for the purpose of modifying, enhancing, or adapting the appearance of cosmetic products, packaging, or shades, as well as for retouching purposes.”

Without addressing that contract language, L’Oreal said it uses standard AI tools in post-production and editing that

don’t affect the model’s image.

“We are saving so much money” Some firms are openly embracing AI to replace models and save money.

Europe’s biggest online-fashion retailer, Zalando, has rapidly adopted AI-generated imagery for marketing content – and shut both its photo studios in Berlin last year. Fast-fashion retailer About You, which Zalando acquired in July last year, also closed its studio. Overall, Zalando cut more than 340 jobs, though the company said it retained some of those employees in other roles.

Now, About You is launching its Scayle Studios business, which creates digital imagery for other retailers using AI-generated models and promises a more than 90 per cent production-cost reduction. Scayle has 130 brand clients and has generated 190,000 outfits in the last month, according to a company spokesperson.

“We are saving so much money,” said Julian Jansen, vice president of marketing at About You. “You’ve always had this super fast world of e-commerce, and this super slow traditional world of photo shoots, it didn’t fit together in any way – and now with AI, it’s a completely different scale.”

Little regulation

Regulations globally haven’t kept pace with the threat to models’ livelihoods, but the New York State Fashion Workers Act is one exception. The law has made it illegal since June 2025 for brands to create or modify replicas of models without their explicit consent.

“The misuse of models’ images is not new, but with AI that problem is accelerated tenfold,” said Sara Ziff, founder and executive director of the New York-based nonprofit Model Alliance, which backed the legislation.

Ziff, herself a model for years, pushes for similar laws in other states and federally.

The British Fashion Model Agents Association has drawn up an AI code of practice, including that AI can only be used with the consent of a model, who would own any digital twin. But BFMA head John Horner said that without binding regulation in Britain or Europe, models still risk being taken advantage of by less scrupulous agents.

“A lot of young talents don’t fully understand the long-term consequences yet,” said Staal, the Barcelona-based model agency director. “Signing away AI rights at 20 years old could still affect someone ten years later.”

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

NC leaders welcome

restoring statehood should remain the government’s priority.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hamid Karra said the party would not join the Cabinet until statehood was restored. He reiterated the party’s stand following talks with the NC, which had approached Congress with an offer of a ministerial berth.

Congress MLA Irfan Hafiz Lone said the government should concentrate on fulfilling its commitments rather than on who had been inducted into the Council of Ministers and who had been left disappointed.

Speaking after the swearing-in ceremony, Lone said it was natural for legislators to aspire to serve people as ministers, but everyone could not be accommodated in the Cabinet.

“It is obvious that they expect to serve people in this capacity as well, but everyone cannot become a minister. Who is in the ministry and who is hurt is not important; what is important is that the promises made to people are fulfilled,” he said.

The Congress leader expressed hope that the government would deliver on its commitments and address people’s genuine grievances, including issues concerning daily wagers, employment, ration and free electricity.

He said people had high expectations from the government and hoped their concerns would be addressed.

Lone also said issues such as vote chori, paper leaks, curtailment of freedom of speech and restoration of statehood were collective challenges that needed to be fought.

The Cabinet expansion took place on Tuesday, with several ministers taking oath in the presence of the Chief Minister and other political leaders. (KNO)

Dry weather likely

to continue harvesting and other agricultural operations.

Among the minimum temperatures recorded in Kashmir, Shopian was the coldest at minus 0.5°C, followed by Pahalgam and Pulwama at 0.4°C each. Srinagar recorded 2.3°C, Kupwara 2.2°C and Qazigund 2.5°C. Gulmarg settled at 1.4°C.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a minimum temperature of 14.6°C, while Banihal registered 4.8°C, Bhadarwah 4.3°C and Rajouri 7.2°C.

In Ladakh, Kargil recorded a minimum temperature of 1.6°C, while Nubra Valley registered 1.2°C. (KNO)

4 MLAs sworn in,

seniority, Sagar was the first to take oath, followed by Saifullah, Shamima and Altaf.

Sagar took oath in Urdu, while Saifullah, Shamima and Altaf took oath in English.

The ceremony was attended by CM Omar Abdullah, Legislative Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather, NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, ministers Sakina Masood Itoo, Javed Ahmed Rana and Javid Ahmad Dar, Member of Parliament Shammi Oberoi, Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma, JKPCC president Tariq Hameed Karra, CPI(M) MLA M Y Tarigami and PDP MLAs Mir Muhammad Fayaz, Aga Muntazir Mehdi and Rafiq Naik.

With this expansion, the strength of the Omar Abdullah-led council of ministers has risen to nine– the maximum permissible under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which caps the council’s strength at 10 percent of the total membership of the Legislative Assembly.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has not kept any berth vacant for ally Congress. At the time

of government formation, one berth was kept vacant for the party. The Chief Minister had approached the Congress high command in August to know whether it wanted to join the ministry, but there was no response.

Of the ministers who took oath on October 16, 2024, only Satish Sharma has been dropped, while Surinder Choudhary, Sakina Itoo, Javid Dar and Javed Rana have been retained.

All five ministers had submitted their resignations to the Chief Minister on Monday. Only the resignation of Satish Sharma was accepted. (KNO)

Mubarak Gul’s supporters

a minister.

The supporters raised slogans at Nawa-i-Subh Complex, questioning the party high command’s decision to leave out the six-time MLA from the Cabinet despite inducting four other legislators into the Omar Abdullah-led government.

According to the news agency–Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the workers expressed anger over Gul’s exclusion, with many saying they would seek his resignation from the party post if the leadership failed to address their concerns.

“Aga Ruhullah’s decision is right, and we will also seek Mubarak Gul’s resignation,” a party worker said during the protest, reflecting the growing discontent over the Cabinet decision.

The workers said Gul’s political experience and long association with the party deserved recognition.

One supporter said Omar Abdullah was not as old as Gul’s political experience.

‘Farooq Abdullah has assured me’: Gul

Later in the evening, Gul urged the workers to give him some time, saying discussions with the party leadership were underway.

Addressing the workers, he was seen in a video saying that he had spoken individually to National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah and received a special assurance from him. The MLA added that he would share the details with the supporters at an appropriate time.

“I have spoken to Farooq Sahib one-to-one. He has given me a special assurance. When the document comes, I will share it with you,” he said.

The supporters, meanwhile, remained firm in their demand, saying they would give the National Conference leadership two days to respond. Emotional scenes and sloganeering continued as workers voiced their disappointment over Gul being denied a ministerial berth. Party appoints Gul general secretary

Earlier in the day, following the Cabinet expansion, the National Conference leadership appointed Mubarak Gul as the party’s general secretary, succeeding Ali Mohammad Sagar, who was inducted into the Council of Ministers.

In a special gesture, Dr Abdullah formally seated Gul in the general secretary’s chair at the party headquarters. Photographs shared by the party showed Gul being welcomed and felicitated with garlands by party leaders and workers.

Later, a meeting of party leaders and functionaries was held under Dr Farooq Abdullah’s chairmanship to discuss organisational matters, the political situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the party’s future course.

Addressing the gathering, the NC chief reiterated the party’s commitment to democracy, people’s rights, the restoration of Articles 370 and 35A, full statehood and the protection of Jammu and Kashmir’s distinct cultural identity. He expressed confidence that the newly inducted ministers would work for public welfare and development across sectors.

Gul took the leadership for entrusting him with the responsibility of general

secretary and said he would work to strengthen the organisation.

However, the appointment failed to quell the anger among some of his supporters, who continued to insist that the veteran leader deserved a place in the Cabinet.

‘Dropped then, dropped today too’

Earlier in the day, four legislators, Ali Mohammad Sagar, Shamima Firdous, Mir Saifullah and Altaf Ahmad Kaloo, were sworn in as ministers at Lok Bhawan in Srinagar, with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administering the oath of office and secrecy.

Gul had expressed disappointment over his continued exclusion, telling reporters that he had attended nearly 30 oath-taking ceremonies without being inducted as a minister. “I have attended 30 oath-taking ceremonies till now. Every time I was dropped, and today as well, I am being dropped,” he said.

Gul has represented Eidgah in the Legislative Assembly six times—in 1983, 1996, 2002, 2008, 2014 and 2024. (KNO)

‘Will wipe their

newly inducted ministers, Sharma, according to the news agency–Kashmir News Observer (KNO), urged them to focus on public issues and work for the welfare of the people rather than get caught up in political disputes.

Speaking to reporters after the swearing-in ceremony, Sharma said the ministers should concentrate on fulfilling their responsibilities towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to legislators who failed to secure a berth in the Council of Ministers, Sharma said their concerns could not be ignored.

“I will wipe their tears, but it is Omar Sahib’s responsibility to wipe those tears. We will also wipe them,” he said.

Asked about reports of differences within the ruling National Conference and speculation over the government’s stability following the Cabinet expansion, Sharma urged people not to rush to conclusions.

“Have patience, don’t be in a hurry,” he said.

The Cabinet expansion saw four National Conference legislators, Ali Mohammad Sagar, Shamima Firdous, Mir Saifullah and Altaf Ahmad Kaloo, inducted into the Omar Abdullah-led government.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office and secrecy at Raj Bhawan in Srinagar. (KNO)

MLA Larimi breaks

agency–Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said he believed he deserved a place in the Omar Abdullah-led government and was deeply hurt by his exclusion.

“My heart is broken. I was deserving,” Larimi said, adding that while he accepted the decision, it had caused him considerable pain.

The Anantnag West legislator claimed he had remained on the list of probable ministers until Monday evening and had even been informed about a possible portfolio.

Despite his disappointment, Larimi reiterated his commitment to the National Conference.

“I am a soldier of the party. I can go anywhere for the party,” he said.

Larimi said the reaction of his supporters had affected him deeply, claiming that several workers broke down after learning he had not been inducted into the Cabinet.

Meanwhile, supporters staged a protest in Anantnag, raising slogans against the party leadership and expressing anger over his exclusion from the Cabinet.

A video circulating on social media showed supporters raising slogans against the party’s decision and calling for a review of the move.

Larimi has been associated with the National Conference for decades. He won the 2014 Assembly election and returned to the

Assembly in 2024 from Anantnag West, defeating PDP candidate Abdul Gaffar Sofi by 10,435 votes. (KNO)

Every MLA aspires

Kashmir’s Union Territory status poses its own challenges.

Talking to media persons here, Wani, as reported by the news agency–Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said it was natural for legislators to harbour ministerial ambitions, but accommodating everyone in the cabinet was not possible.

“It’s obvious, as everybody has an ambition to become a minister, but we are facing challenges as we are in a Union Territory and have enough MLAs,” Wani said.

Acknowledging the possibility of resentment among party legislators who were not inducted into the cabinet, he said they had every right to feel disappointed.

“There may be resentment or disappointment, and they have the right to be angry because they are the family,” he said.

The CM’s Advisor added that people in every constituency naturally wanted their elected representative to become a minister, but fulfilling everyone’s aspirations was difficult. “It is not possible,” he said.

On senior NC leader Mubarak Gul, Wani said party president Dr Farooq Abdullah had appointed him as the party’s general secretary, adding that Gul would now work in that capacity. (KNO)

Won’t join cabinet

been clear for the past two years.

“Today was the Cabinet expansion, and those who were chosen took oath,” Karra said while speaking to reporters, as per the news agency–Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said the party’s stand was clear that it would not join the Cabinet in Jammu and Kashmir.

“We have been saying for two years that we won’t join the Cabinet. There is no need to repeatedly explain why Congress is not joining the Cabinet,” he said.

The Congress has chosen to stay out of the Omar Abdullah-led Cabinet over the delay in restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Karra said the party would not accept any ministerial position as long as Jammu and Kashmir remained a Union Territory. (KNO)

CM Omar visits

them on assuming office and extend his best wishes for their tenure.

The Chief Minister personally visited the office chambers of all the newly inducted ministers and congratulated Ali Mohammad Sagar, Saifullah Mir, Shamim Firdous and Altaf Ahmed Wani, expressing confidence that they would discharge their responsibilities with dedication and contribute to effective governance and the overall development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Emphasising the importance of collective efforts, Omar Abdullah underscored the role of the ministers in advancing the government’s developmental agenda and ensuring public welfare. He expressed hope that their experience and commitment would further strengthen the government’s efforts to fulfil the aspirations of the people.

The newly inducted ministers thanked the Chief Minister for his visit and encouraging words, reaffirming their commitment to working collectively under his leadership to deliver on the promises made to the public.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Ministers Sakina Itoo and Javid Ahmed Dar, his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Director Estates Kashmir Mohammad Ashraf

Hakak, and other senior officers and officials.

Earlier in the day, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office to the newly inducted ministers at Lok Bhawan.

BRICS forum condemns

nations with adequate and predictable financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building support to help them adapt to climate change.

The forum also underlined the need to ensure that artificial intelligence and information and communication technologies are used in an open, safe, secure and equitable manner, with due regard to data privacy and national sovereignty.

It encouraged BRICS countries to share digital tools and best practices for parliamentary research, public outreach and citizen feedback, while welcoming proposals for a repository of digital public infrastructure and pilot projects among member countries.

The meeting brought together parliamentary representatives from Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates under the theme “Fostering Parliaments for People-Centric Development”.

The delegates welcomed India’s BRICS chairship for 2026 under the theme “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability” and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation across political, security, economic, financial and cultural fields.

They also called for greater inter-parliamentary engagement through international bodies, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and took note of Russia’s proposal to consider establishing a BRICS Plus geopolitical group within the organisation.

The forum concluded by thanking India’s Parliament and people for hosting the meeting and said the next edition would be held in 2027 under China’s incoming BRICS chairship. (KNO)

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'Modi won't go anywhere': BJP, Cong trade barbs over Kharge's 'baap' remarks

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 27: The BJP and the Congress traded barbs on social media on Tuesday over Mallikarjun Kharge's controversial remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with both parties sharing videos, graphics and AI-generated content to target each other.

Kharge triggered a row when he said "Modi ka baap bhi jayega" in response to an audience member's comment that "the prime minister will not go anywhere" during an event in Patna on Sunday.

The Congress chief was speaking at a programme to celebrate the 139th birth anniversary of Bihar's first chief minister, Shrikrishna Singh.

"Bro, Modi won't go anywhere," the BJP said on X and Instagram, while some state units of Congress doubled down on Kharge's remarks, saying it's anybody's guess who the party president referred to as 'baap'.

In a series of posts, the BJP said, "Those who hurl abuses will get tired, but the people's trust will not waver! Modi kahi nahi jaayega."

Using the hashtag #ModiKahiNahiJayega, the party said in another post, "Anti-national elements are bound to feel the heat! He has made a place in people's hearts and is not going anywhere."

The BJP also posted a two-part graphic captioned "Modi Kahin



Nahi Jaayega, Broooo" addressed to Congress, Rahul Gandhi and Kharge. It said Modi had been "voted in as PM for the third time" and "has our votes, broooo. Something your master will never have".

In another message, the BJP said, "The opposition's abuses, PM Modi's development... the lotus of 'Viksit Bharat' continues to bloom!"

The party also shared videos of protests held across the country on Monday against Kharge's remarks, with BJP leaders and workers demanding an apology from the Congress president and Rahul Gandhi.

The BJP also posted a reel targeting Gandhi and the Congress over their allegations against electoral institutions following election defeats.

In the video, the party accused the Congress of accepting the democratic process when it wins elections but blaming electronic voting machines (EVMs), the Election Commission and the Special Intensive

Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls when it loses.

Referring to elections from 1977 to 2014, 2019 and the 2022 Gujarat polls, the BJP said the Congress had continued to lose elections even when SIR was not a controversy.

"Blaming institutions and changing excuses will not change the truth," the party said in the post, using the hashtag #SaveDemocracyRemoveAnarchy.

The BJP also shared a video featuring Kharge's controversial "baap" remark alongside a clip of Modi speaking in Parliament about how Congress and other Opposition parties want to grab the power without winning elections.

The Congress, too, launched a social media attack on the BJP through graphics and AI-generated content.

The Maharashtra Congress responded with its own posts on X. One cartoon showing industrialist Gautam Adani and US President Donald Trump, with a picture of

Kharge, carried the Marathi caption "Who was Khargeji talking about? Definitely mention it in the comments."

In another post, the party shared a cartoon of Modi dancing while Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu applaud, with the text "Modi Israel Kyu Jayega?". The image carried an "AI-generated" label.

The Congress, in its official handle, also shared a video of Gandhi in which he accused Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar of being involved in "vote chori" in India.

Gandhi said they were afraid of the people and would eventually be caught, adding that the party had placed evidence before everyone and that they can't flee anywhere.

In another social media post, the Congress shared a clip of party president Mallikarjun Kharge accusing the governments in West Bengal, Haryana, Bihar and Maharashtra of theft. Kharge said the party would hold those responsible accountable, expose them and send them to jail.

On November 1, the INDIA bloc will carry out a 'Dilli Chalo march' to Ramlila Maidan, which it touted as its "biggest", against "vote chori".

The rally is part of a series of opposition protests against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and the CEC's "poll irregularities."

'Act of betrayal': Rijiju asks Congress to apologise for allegedly circulating 'fake AI video' on China



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 27: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday accused the Congress of openly supporting the "enemy's malicious propaganda" against the country and alleged that the circulation of a "fake AI video" on China by it was an "act of betrayal" and equivalent to the "heinous acts of the enemies".

Rijiju, an MP from Arunachal Pradesh, also demanded an apology from the Congress for allegedly circulating the "fake AI video" in which a senior Army officer purportedly claimed that China has taken control of some areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

He called the posting of the video on 'X' allegedly by a Congress leader from Bihar an "act of betrayal".

The Union minister also alleged that the opposition Congress is running a cheap campaign on behalf of India's enemies.

"Congress Party must apologize to the nation for spreading fake AI video to tarnish the image of Indian Army. This is an act of betrayal and is equivalent to the heinous acts of our enemies. The Congress Party is running a cheap campaign on behalf of India's enemies," Rijiju said in a post

on 'X' on Monday.

On Tuesday, the minister said in a post, "Does the Congress have the audacity to openly support the enemy's malicious propaganda against the country, and then not even apologize to the nation?"

'Indian Army Fact Check' handle on 'X' also dismissed the video as "fabricated".

It said that a "digitally altered video" is being circulated with "fabricated remarks" attributed to Lt Gen Girish Kalia, claiming that China has taken control of Asaphila, Longjou and Taksing Circle in Arunachal Pradesh and that the Indian Army has been denied essential supplies.

"The misleading video attempts to portray fabricated statements as a leaked admission by a senior Indian Army officer," the Indian Army Fact Check handle said.

"The video uses #SyntheticGeneratedInformation to falsely attribute remarks to Lt Gen Girish Kalia. The original footage relates to a press briefing delivered by then GOC 28 Infantry Division, Maj Gen Girish Kalia, in Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir, on 27 October 2023... He made no such statements about Chinese control over Arunachal Pradesh or denial of supplies to the Indian Army," it said.

Qatar says Iran needs to show good intentions for mediation efforts to succeed



REUTERS

Dubai, Oct 27: Iran needs to show good intentions for mediation efforts to succeed, mediator Qatar said on Tuesday, after a delegation from the Gulf Arab country visited Tehran earlier this week in an effort to de-escalate regional tensions in coordination with the United States.

A spokesperson for the Qatari Foreign Ministry told a press briefing that Iran should stop threats against Arab Gulf states and open the Strait of Hormuz to show good intentions.

Qatar, along with Pakistan, has been mediating between Washington and Tehran in an effort to end the US-Israeli war on Iran that has disrupted global shipping and oil supplies, and spilled over across other parts of the Middle East.

Top officials from Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan also met Iranian officials in Tehran on Monday in an effort to de-escalate the conflict, as Yemen's Houthis launched new attacks on Saudi Arabia, and Egypt approved defense support for the Kingdom. Tensions between Washington and Tehran have sharpened recently, with President Donald Trump saying on Friday the US may strike Iran again. Iranian security officials told Reuters Tehran had drawn up detailed plans to attack Gulf undersea cables if the US and Israel attack again.

Foreign national can be granted bail under UAPA if his entry to India is legal: SC



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 27: The Supreme Court on Tuesday held that there is no bar under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to grant bail to a foreign national if the initial entry of the accused into India is legal and authorised.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M Pancholi upheld the Madras High Court order setting aside the trial court order cancelling bail of a Sri Lankan national in a terror case.

The bench noted that despite the stringent threshold for granting bail to a foreign national under Section 43D (7) of UAPA, the prosecution had failed to establish that the initial entry of the accused into India was illegal.

The bench said that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has failed to place any material on record to prima facie establish the entry as unauthorised or illegal and the allegations in subsequent FIR records that respondent Mohamad Rifas alias Mohamed Rigbas had entered India through a valid visa and

it was subsequent to the expiry of his visa that his stay became illegal; as such, necessary proceedings under the Foreigners Act have been initiated.

"In the light of aforesaid discussion, we are of the considered view that present appeal is devoid of merit and hence stands dismissed. Consequently, the impugned order dated December 12, 2023 passed by the Madras High Court in criminal appeal... stands affirmed," it ordered.

Rifas was arrested on the allegation of hatching a conspiracy to bring disharmony amongst the religious communities and against the government.

The bench noted that according to Section 43D(7) of the UAPA, the prosecution needs to establish three ingredients against the grant of bail to a foreign national – first, the person needs to be an accused of an offence punishable under the UAPA; second, such person must not be an Indian citizen; and third, he must have entered India unauthorised or illegally.

It noted that the second and third conditions are

conjunctive and to be read together because the word 'and' is employed between them, making the satisfaction of both conditions mandatory to deny the relief of bail to a foreign national.

It said that merely proving an accused to be a foreign national would not be sufficient to deny him bail; rather, it needs to be also proved that the initial entry of that foreign accused was illegal or unauthorised to make the provision denying bail applicable.

The NIA alleged that the accused was a Sri Lankan national who had entered India in 2009 and overstayed his visa.

It further alleged that he had obtained Indian identity documents, including a voter ID card, Aadhaar card and ration card and even got married.

The trial court had initially granted him default bail in July 2018 after the investigating agency failed to file the chargesheet within the prescribed statutory period.

Subsequently, the Centre sought cancellation of the bail before the trial court on the ground that the accused had suppressed his Sri Lankan nationality. The trial court cancelled his bail.

However, the Madras High Court set aside that trial court's order in December 2023, prompting the Centre to approach the top court.

The top court said that bail can be granted to foreign nationals under UAPA "except in very exceptional circumstances and reasons to be recorded in writing" occurring in the latter part of sub-section 43D(7).

Trump admin attempting to prosecute former FBI Director James Comey again

AP

Washington, Oct 27: The Trump administration is attempting to prosecute James Comey for what it calls a decade-old leak of classified information, an effort the former FBI director's lawyers immediately dismissed as invalid and outside the legal time limit for when the Justice Department can file a criminal indictment.

The allegations from the Justice Department were revealed Monday in newly unsealed court documents that shed light on a closed-door fight that represents a clear escalation in the administration's targeting of Comey, a longtime critic and foe of President Donald Trump who has faced two other criminal cases since the Republican returned to the White House last year. The effort to prosecute Comey is also part of a series of politically charged investigative actions the department has undertaken in the run-up to next week's midterm elections.

"Well, they're back – again," Comey said in a video statement released after the documents dropped. "It would almost be funny if it weren't such an appalling abuse of the Department of Justice – one that we cannot become numb to. Nothing's changed with me; I'm still innocent, I'm still not afraid of these people – and I still believe in an independent federal judiciary." The Justice Department, for its part, said it had filed what's known as a "criminal information" to extend the 10-year statute of limitations for bringing a case.

"Filing a criminal information to toll the statute of limitations is a widely recognized practice in federal court and has been approved by multiple Circuit Courts of Appeals. This is an ongoing criminal investigation, and we will not comment further," a department spokesperson said.

A criminal information is typically filed with a defendant's consent accompanying a plea deal, but Comey's lawyers made clear that they intend to fight the charges as invalid and barred by the statute of limitations. "For the third time in little more than one year, the Department of Justice has attempted to charge Mr. Comey with a federal crime. Mr. Comey steadfastly maintains his innocence," his attorney, Patrick Fitzgerald, said in a statement.

No intention to increase ethanol blending in fuel beyond 20 pc: Puri

PTI

Panaji, Oct 27: Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hard- eep Singh Puri on Tuesday said the Centre has no immediate plan to increase the ethanol blending in petrol beyond the current 20 per cent.

During an interaction at the inauguration of the 29th Energy Technology and Innovation Meet in South Goa, Puri also claimed that misinformation was being spread about biofuels.

Misinformation about E20 (20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol) was a "contrived narrative," he said.

"In so far biofuels are concerned, yes, the 20 per cent (of ethanol blending) was the target, and there is no desire, just now, to increase by more than 20 per cent," he said to a question on discussions around E20 fuel, adding that misinformation was being spread about the issue.

The government has been promoting ethanol-blended petrol as part of its strategy to reduce dependence on imported crude oil, one of the biggest contributors to its current account deficit. The country has already rolled out E20 fuel, containing 20 per cent ethanol and 80 per cent petrol.

The three-day meet themed on 'Accelerating Energy Innovation From Research to Commercialisation' was inaugurated in South Goa's Betul village. The event is organised by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Puri said he saw a social media post which claimed that vehicles had stopped and were facing breakdowns, implying that the government stopped selling the blended fuel.

He said (compliant) vehicles are meant for E20 blended fuel. "There was some problem with the older vehicles which were manufactured before 2003," he pointed out.

The Union minister said the introduction of E20 petrol helped the Union government save Rs 1,60,000 crore, of which Rs 1,40,000 crore was given back to farmers.

"The farmers have become Urjadata (giver of energy) from Annadata (giver of food)," he commented.

Asked about problems reported by the E20 fuel users, Puri said, "I think there was a problem with the transportation of the blended fuel. The tankers which were used for transportation were also used for other things."

"As far as the engine damage story is concerned, someone had made the claim and the particular automobile manufacturer has filed a case against him," he said.

The minister said the misinformation about the E20 (fuel) was a "contrived narrative".

"Six crore vehicles go to the dispensing stations every day. If engine damage was caused, you could have seen the vehicles all over the place," he added.

Notably, the Road Transport Ministry on Monday notified changes to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989, allowing flex-fuel vehicles that can run on up to E100 (nearly pure ethanol).

E100 fuel allows vehicles to run on nearly pure ethanol. Flex-fuel vehicles are designed to run on higher ethanol blends such as E85 (85 per cent ethanol, 15 per cent petrol) and E100 (near 100 per cent ethanol), unlike conventional petrol vehicles currently approved for lower ethanol concentrations.

Major automakers, including Toyota Motor Corporation, Tata Motors, and Hyundai Motor Company, are also developing flex-fuel vehicles for the Indian market as policymakers push to reduce the country's fossil fuel import bill.

'Shared civilisational heritage,' says Iran Embassy as its MPs visit Taj Mahal



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 27: Members of Iran's Parliament, who were in India to participate in the BRICS Parliamentary Forum 2026, visited the iconic Taj Mahal in Uttar Pradesh, the Iranian Embassy here said on Tuesday. The Iranian delegation was headed by Ahmad Naderi, Member of the Presidium of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran.

Sharing photos of their visit to the Mughal-era mausoleum on X, the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi said, "Members of Iran's Parliament visited the iconic Taj Mahal, a timeless masterpiece reflecting the rich artistic heritage of India and the centuries-old cultural dialogue between Iran and India."

From Persian-inspired gardens and calligraphy to India's remarkable craftsmanship and architectural traditions, the Taj Mahal stands as a symbol of how civilisations enrich one another, the X post said.

"As Iranian poet Sohrab Sepehri beautifully evoked in 'The Traveler', the Taj Mahal reflected in the Yamuna becomes a moment where art, life, and eternity meet. A shared civilisational heritage, connecting our peoples across generations," it added.

The 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum was held in Delhi on October 26 and 27.

THE NEW CABINET

A pictorial look at key moments, from swearing-in ceremony to interactions, as the Omar Abdullah-led government expands its Council of Ministers in Jammu and Kashmir

Photos: Jahangir Shah

