



8TH J&K UT FOUNDATION DAY

Conflict Entrepreneurs Stand Exposed: LG Sinha

Extends greetings, best wishes to people, pays homage to Sardar Patel

Says 'zero-tolerance policy' crippled terror networks, restored normal life

Article 370 abrogation gave ordinary citizens freedom from fear

Want to see J&K as model of prosperity with world-class healthcare, education

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 31: Stating that conflict entrepreneurs who profited from separatism and terrorism stand exposed, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that the government did not buy peace but established it.

LG Sinha extended greetings and best wishes to the people of Jammu Kashmir on the occasion of 8th J&K UT Foundation Day and paid homage to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "Zero-tolerance



policy has crippled terror networks and has restored normal life across Jammu Kashmir."

The Lieutenant Governor said that terror, separatism

and stone-pelting have given way to democracy, development and public participation after Article 370 was removed.

"We did | [More on P6](#)

LG Sinha hits back at Farooq's Pak remarks

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 31: A week after National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah's remarks on Pakistan triggered a political storm, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday asked why some people speak about neighbouring country instead of highlighting India's achievements.

Addressing the 8th Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Foundation Day function here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in an apparent reference to the NC President said, "Instead of India, we are talking about a country where there is a line for flour. Instead of | [More on P6](#)

Art 370 abrogation integrated Kashmir with India: Amit Shah

» Sets Dec 31, 2029 deadline for drug-free India

» Says 'Nasha-Mukt Bharat' key to 'Viksit Bharat'



Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 31: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the abrogation of Article 370 had integrated Kashmir with the rest of the country, describing it as one of the major achievements of the Narendra Modi government.

Addressing a gathering ahead

of flagging off the 'Run for Unity' in New Delhi on the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, marking the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shah, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said several significant decisions had been taken during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure, | [More on P6](#)

LG joins Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Parade virtually from Lal Chowk

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 31: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha virtually joined the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Parade from Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Gujarat, at Lal Chowk, Srinagar.

The Lieutenant Governor posted on X: "Today, I virtually joined the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Parade from Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Gujarat. It was wonderful to see citizens at Lal Chowk in Srinagar enthusiastically watching the parade. Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri



Narendra Modi ji, the country is steadily fulfilling the dreams of Sardar | [More on P6](#)

JK Govt begins budget exercise for 2027-28

Discussions from Nov 16

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Oct 31: J&K Government has initiated the budget formulation process for 2027-28, with discussions on budget proposals scheduled to commence from November 16.

According to an itinerary issued by the department, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), budget discussions on the Revised Estimates (RE) for 2026-27 and Budget Estimates (BE) for 2027-28 will commence on November 16 and continue till December 2.

The Finance Department will hold detailed deliberations with 36 administrative

departments as part of the annual budget preparation exercise.

In directions issued to the departments, the Finance Department has asked them to furnish Action Taken Reports (ATRs) on budget announcements, wherever applicable, well before their scheduled discussion dates. They have also been asked to provide complete details relating to establishment budget and Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) requirements.

Besides, all departments have been directed to submit PowerPoint presentations in both hard

J&K's 8-year journey marked by progress: LG Sinha

Flags off 'Run for Unity', administers pledge at SKICC

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 31: Declaring that Jammu and Kashmir's eight-year journey as a Union Territory stands marked by development, peace and progress, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday flagged off the 'Run for Unity' at here and administered the 'Unity Pledge' to participants.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) participants reaffirmed their commitment to national unity, integrity and security, as the event marked Rashtriya Ekta Diwas on the



birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, LG Sinha said, "National Unity Day is being celebrated with enthusiasm across the country

and the occasion is also being observed across all districts of Jammu and Kashmir."

"Today is the eighth Foundation Day of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ashutosh Dixit takes over as new IAF chief

AP Singh retires after 42 years

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar/New Delhi, Oct 31: Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit on Saturday took over as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff, succeeding Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, who retired after 42 years of service in the Indian Air Force (IAF).

As per details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), AP Singh superannuated on October 31, bringing to a close a career during which he held several important operational and leadership assignments and contributed to the force's combat preparedness and modernisation.

An accomplished fighter pilot and Experimental Test Pilot, AP Singh served as Chief of the Air Staff during a period marked by a focus on operational readiness, particularly during 'Operation Sindoor,' in which the IAF demonstrated its operational capabilities.

During his tenure, Singh, as per details, stressed indigenisation, innovation and the adoption of emerging technologies to strengthen the IAF's operational capabilities. He maintained a strong focus on personnel, encouraging professionalism, accountability and initiative among air warriors.

Meanwhile, Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, was commissioned into the Fighter Stream of the IAF on December 6, 1986. | [More on P6](#)

New academic session starts Monday in Kashmir schools

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Oct 31: The educational institutions across Kashmir Valley are set to begin academic session 2026-27 from November-02 for KG to Class-10 students.

An official informed that the new academic session commenced after the schools completed annual assessments and declared results in line with the academic calendar.

The schools according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) are expected to begin regular classes, issue textbooks and prepare a new



curriculum in the first week of November.

The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education had

earlier said that the free textbooks among students will be distributed to various educational zones in the first week

of November.

Earlier, former Education Minister, Sakeena Itoo directed the officials to ensure timely completion of preparation of textbooks, syllabus and other needs.

Moreover, a stake-holders meeting was held to ensure the clarity on fee, availability of textbooks in schools and coordination between government and private educational institutions in Kashmir.

Pertinently, the concluded academic year witnessed a few disruptions, forcing the government to close schools across the Valley.

The closure | [More on P6](#)

NC MLAs' memorandum seeks cabinet reshuffle, intensifying struggle for statehood, Art 370

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 31: Legislators of the National Conference (NC), who are up in arms against the party leadership over Tuesday's cabinet reshuffle-cum-expansion, have prepared a memorandum listing a set of demands, including a cabinet reshuffle, intensified efforts for the restoration of statehood and Article 370, and the time-bound implementation of the party's 2024 election manifesto.

Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the memorandum was drafted during a meeting of 18 NC legislators at the residence of Lolab MLA Qaiser Jamsheed Lone on Friday afternoon.

According to sources, the legislators have called for the



time-bound implementation of the party's election manifesto and sought an intensified political struggle for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and Article 370.

The memorandum also seeks the removal of Adviser to

the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and ministers who have completed two years in office. Besides, the legislators have demanded a comprehensive restructuring of the Cabinet.

The demands come amid continuing | [More on P6](#)

Dry weather likely across J&K till Nov 9

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Oct 31: Night temperatures remained below normal at several places in Kashmir, with Shopian recording the lowest minimum temperature of 0.5 degrees Celsius, while the Meteorological Department has forecast largely dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir till November 9.

According to the forecast, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 3 degrees Celsius against the normal of 3.7 degrees Celsius, while Pahalgam registered 0.2 degrees Celsius against the normal of 1.4 degrees Celsius.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 2.1 degrees Celsius, against the normal of 2.3 degrees Celsius, while Qazigund and Kupwara recorded minimum



temperatures of 2.6 and 2.3 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Among other places, Bandipora recorded 3.5 degrees Celsius, Anantnag 3.2 degrees Celsius, Baramulla 4.8 degrees Celsius, Pulwama 1.4 degrees Celsius and Sonamarg 1.1 degrees Celsius.

Shopian recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 0.5 degrees Celsius among the Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) in the Valley.

In Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a minimum temperature of 15.8 degrees Celsius, while | [More on P6](#)

J&K Tourism bags 2 awards at IITM Mumbai for best adventure, best experiential tourism destination

KT News Desk

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 31: Jammu and Kashmir Tourism has added another feather to its cap by winning two prestigious honours at the India International Travel Mart (IITM) in Mumbai. The J&K was adjudged the Best Adventure Tourism Destination and Best Experiential Tourism Destination, recognising its growing popularity and immense potential as a premier destination for adventure, nature-based and experiential tourism in the country.

The awards, as per an official statement, were received by Waseem Raja, Joint Director, Tourism Kashmir, on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir.

The recognition reflects the increasing popularity of Jammu and Kashmir among domestic travellers and its growing reputation as a destination offering diverse adventure activities, immersive travel experiences and breathtaking natural landscapes.

IITM is a prominent tourism promotion event organised across various states of the country, bringing together tourism departments, travel operators and other industry stakeholders on a common platform. J&K Tourism participated in the event alongside several states, including Gujarat and Telangana,



as well as private tourism stakeholders.

The J&K Tourism pavilion attracted an overwhelming response from local tour operators, travel agents and tourism stakeholders from Maharashtra. Hundreds of visitors reportedly visited the pavilion during the two-day event, showing keen interest in the tourism potential and diverse travel experiences offered by Jammu and Kashmir.

The J&K Tourism delegation comprised Waseem Raja, Joint Director, Tourism Kashmir, and Vivek Puri, Chief Executive Officer, Surinsar-Mansar Development Authority. During the

two-day event, the delegation held detailed interactions and meetings with prominent tour operators and tourism stakeholders from Maharashtra to explore avenues for strengthening tourism promotion, expanding travel partnerships and attracting more visitors to Jammu and Kashmir.

The double recognition at IITM Mumbai is expected to further enhance Jammu and Kashmir's visibility in the national tourism market and strengthen its position as a preferred destination for adventure, nature-based and experiential tourism.

DC, DIG, SSP lead run on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas in Anantnag

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, OCTOBER 31: To commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, popularly known as the 'Iron Man of India', and mark Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day), the District Administration Anantnag Saturday organised a grand 'Run for Unity' rally, witnessed massive public participation and patriotic fervour.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced from Sports Stadium Anantnag and culminated at Government Degree College (GDC), Anantnag.

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, along with DIG, SKR, Javaid Iqbal Matoo and SSP Anantnag, Amod Ashok Nagpure led the Run for Unity, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers and officials of the civil and police administrations, besides students, youth and general public.

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag highlighted the significance of the occasion and

the invaluable contribution of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel towards strengthening the unity and integrity of the nation. He emphasised that national unity and integrity are the cornerstones of a strong, peaceful and progressive nation.

He further observed that India's strength lies in its unity in diversity and that every citizen has an important responsibility in safeguarding the sovereignty, integrity and democratic values of the nation.

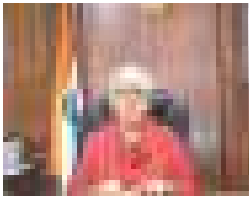
The Deputy Commissioner also highlighted the importance of engaging youth in constructive activities. He called upon the younger generation to become ambassadors of peace, harmony and brotherhood and contribute towards building an inclusive and progressive society.

On the occasion, participants also took the National Unity Pledge with commitment to preserve the unity, integrity and security of the nation and strengthening the bonds of brotherhood, mutual respect and communal harmony among all citizens.

DC Bandipora reviews facilities at District Hospital

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 31: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Saturday visited District Hospital Bandipora to assess on-going infrastructure



development aimed at improving the convenience of patients, attendants and hospital staff.

During the visit, the DC reviewed the establishment of a prefabricated cafeteria at District Hospital Bandipora, being developed at an allotted cost of 18.32 lakh. The cafeteria is envisaged to operate round the clock (24x7), with the objective of providing hygienic and quality food to doctors, patients, attendants and other hospital staff.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, stressed the importance of ensuring proper ventilation in the cafeteria and directed the concerned authorities to maintain a proper diet chart for children and post-caesarean women to facilitate access to appropriate and nutritious food.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need to ensure cleanliness, hygiene and proper management of facilities at the hospital, with a focus on providing a better experience for patients, attendants and healthcare professionals.

On the occasion, the DC directed the Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Bandipora, to install an LED display board in front of the hospital store to prominently display the availability of medicines and information regarding doctors, enabling patients and attendants to access relevant information conveniently.

DC Budgam administers Ekta Pledge

Participants reaffirm commitment to national unity, integrity on National Unity Day

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 31: The District Administration, Budgam, Saturday celebrated Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) with enthusiasm and patriotic fervour by organising a 'Run for Unity' rally to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whose vision and leadership played a pivotal role in the unification of India.

The rally, as per an official statement, was led by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Jatin Kishore, and witnessed enthusiastic participation by hundreds of people, including local residents, particularly youth, schoolchildren and people from various walks of life.

SSP Budgam, Hariprasad KK, Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Mehraj-ud-Din Shah, and other senior officers from the civil and police administrations also



participated in the rally, reflecting their collective commitment to promoting national unity, harmony and integrity.

The rally commenced from Karipora Bridge and culminated at Railway Station Budgam, with participants enthusiastically joining the initiative to uphold the spirit of Ekta and contribute towards building a united, peaceful and progressive

nation. On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner administered the Ekta Pledge, during which participants reaffirmed their commitment to preserving the unity, integrity and security of the nation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the overwhelming public participation, particularly the enthusiasm displayed by students and youth. He

said that Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is observed every year on October 31 to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whose vision, leadership and invaluable contribution to the unification of the country continue to inspire generations.

The DC emphasised that the occasion serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to strengthen national unity, integrity and social harmony. He urged people, particularly the younger generation, to uphold the values of mutual respect, brotherhood and togetherness and contribute meaningfully towards nation-building.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the District Administration's commitment to promoting the ideals of unity and integrity through active public participation and collective efforts.

MY Bharat Bandipora organises District-Level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 31: MY Bharat Bandipora, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, organised the District-Level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament at HKM Government Degree College, Bandipora, witnessing enthusiastic participation from over 125 students who registered for the event.

The programme, as per an official statement, was graced by Deputy Commissioner (DC), Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, as the Chief Guest.

The Deputy Commissioner, interacted with the students and appreciated the students' debate performances, emphasised research-based thinking, and highlighted the importance of book reading in shaping young minds. Recalling Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on National Unity Day, she stressed that differences of opinion should never divide people.

On the occasion, the DC encouraged students to participate in Nun Chai Talks, visit the Waqar Knowledge and Youth Empowerment Centre, and pursue careers based on their interests.

The DC felicitated the participating students and appreciated their enthusiasm, active participation and commitment to shaping a progressive and developed India.

The central theme of the Youth Parliament was "One Nation, One Election", which provided a platform for young minds to engage in meaningful deliberations on an important issue of national significance. Participants shared their perspectives, articulated arguments and engaged in healthy discussions, reflecting their awareness of India's democratic framework and governance processes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I am applying for the corection of my name in my driving license bearing Number JK0120090011080 from MASROOR UL SAMAD S/O ABDUL SAMAD SOFI TO MASRORUL SAMAD S/O AB SAMAD SOFI . Now I am applying for its correction, if anybody having any objection, he may contact concerned authority within the period of 7 days from the publication of this notice. after that no objection shall be entertained NAME .MASRORUL SAMAD S/o AB SAMAD SOFI R/o.SALOORA GANDERBAL

Sd/-

Gh. Mohi Ud Din Bhat
F/o Aayat Mohi Ud Din
R/o Zazna, Ganderbal

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified to the general public that the name of the father of my daughter, Aayat Mohi Ud Din, studying at Gousia Islamic Educational Institute, Batwina, Ganderbal, has been wrongly recorded in the school records as "Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Bhat" instead of the correct name "Gh. Mohi Ud Din Bhat." I intend to get the necessary correction made in the school records. Any person having any objection in this regard may submit the same to the concerned authority within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Sd/-

Gh. Mohi Ud Din Bhat
F/o Aayat Mohi Ud Din
R/o Zazna, Ganderbal

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Shammem Ahmad Dedar, D/o Gh. Rasool Dedar, R/o Shah Mohalla, Wayil Wooder, Ganderbal, hereby inform the general public that my bank account bearing No. 0081040800025272 in J&K Bank, Beham Branch, Ganderbal, contains an incorrect father's name, i.e., Baram Khan, which is actually my father-in-law's name. My correct name is Shammem Ahmad Dedar, S/o Gh. Rasool Dedar. I request the concerned bank authorities to kindly correct the same in their records as per my valid documents.

GOVT. OF UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

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

5TH Fresh E-NIT No.105 /R&B/RAJ of 2026-27 issued under Endorsement No: 9417-27 Dated: 27.10.2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited on Percentage (%age) basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with the J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways, and/or other State/Central Governments for the following works under UT SECTOR 2026-27.

S.No	Name of Work	Base Cost Excl. GST (₹ in Lacs)	TOTAL / Adv. Cost (Base Cost + GST) (₹ in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document	EMD	Time of Completion	Class of Contractor/ Agency
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Upgradation and Surface Correction at Canal road Parbagh Rawalpora.	12.34	14.56	₹600/-	₹29120/-	07 Days	BEE/CEE/DEE

Position of AA No.:	Accorded Vide No. SE-PWD(R&B)Sgr-South/AA/131 of 2026-2027 Dated: 24.08.2026.
Position of TS No.	Accorded
Position of Funds:	Budgeted / Committed.
Major Head:	UT Road Sector.

The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in on the dates listed below:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	27.10.2026.
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	28.10.2026 from 10:00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	28.10.2026 from 10:00 AM
4	Bid Submission End Date	03.11.2026 Up to 04:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	04.11.2026 at 11:30 A.M in office of the Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Rajbagh Srinagar.

- Bids must be accompanied with Cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan under M.H-0059 in favour of Executive Engineer, R&B Division Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender inviting Authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan & EMD should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer, R&B Division Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).
- At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload Earnest Money/Bid Security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG pledged to the Tender Receiving Authority, i.e. Executive Engineer, R&B Division, Rajbagh Srinagar. The Earnest Money/ Bid Security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after submission of Performance & Additional Performance Security (wherever Applicable) and Drawl of Agreement (FORM-25).
- *Abnormally Low Bid Price (ALB) :

As per the Circular instructions of Finance Deptt. Vide NO.FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated: 08.08.2025, which is reproduced as

- Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the Project Cost put to bid, the additional Performance Guarantee/ Security Percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.
- Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.
- The Additional Performance Security shall be treated as part of the Performance Security and shall be released after the DLP is over successfully.
- The successful bidder shall provide Performance Security @ 3% of the contract value alongwith the Additional Performance Security (wherever Applicable) in the shape of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG within 02 days after opening of Bids & declaration of lowest successful bidder / issuance of L.O.A (whichever is earlier) which shall be released after Successful Work Completion and DLP is satisfactorily over. The EMD @ 2% of successful bidder will be released only upon submission of the 3% Performance Security/ Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) & Addl. Performance Security (APS) (wherever applicable).
- The Successful Bidder shall also furnish the valid Group Insurance along with the Performance Security.
- The date and time of bid opening shall be notified on the Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and automatically communicated to bidders via an e-mail message sent to their e-mail address. Responsive Bids will be opened online on the same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer, (R&B) Rajbagh Division, Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).
- Bids for the work shall be valid for 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- Additional Conditions for Macadam Tender (For Non-HMPO)

In case the prospective bidders bidding for Macadam Work does not own or possess a Hot Mix Plant (HMP), such bidders shall be considered eligible, subject to the following conditions;

- Bidder shall mandatorily upload a duly executed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Hot Mix Plant Owner (HMPO), along with valid Registration Certificate of the Plant.
- In addition to the Prime Contractor, the HMPO shall independently upload the following documents:
 - Valid Enlistment Certificate / HMPO Registration Certificate.
 - GST Registration Certificate.
 - Latest GST Clearance in Form GSTR-3B.
 - Details of GST-linked Bank Account.
- The Bid Security (Earnest Money Deposit) amounting to 2% of the bid value shall be submitted jointly by the Prime Contractor and the HMPO, with each party contributing an equal share of 1%.
- The Performance Security, including any Additional Performance Security as may be applicable under the provisions of the NIT, shall be furnished jointly by the Prime Contractor and the HMPO, with each party bearing an equal proportion of 50%, and shall remain binding on both parties for due and faithful performance of the Contract.
- Both the Prime Contractor and the HMPO shall be jointly responsible for the quality of execution and strict adherence to all contractual obligations. All contractual liabilities, including but not limited to blacklisting, debarment, forfeiture of Performance Security, and other punitive actions, shall be concurrently enforceable against both parties in the event of failure to rectify any defects or damages arising during execution or within the Defect Liability Period (DLP).
- The HMPO shall enter into MoU with only one Prime Contractor. The "One HMPO – One Bidder" principle shall be strictly enforced. In the event that an HMPO is found to have executed MoUs with multiple Prime Contractors, all such bids shall be summarily declared as Non-Responsive and liable for rejection.
- These Conditions shall supersede the above conditions as laid down under Clause (1-47) as envisaged above, wherever the prospective bidders bidding for Macadam Work does not own or possess a Hot Mix Plant (HMP).

No: 9417-27

Dated: 27.10.2026.

DIPK-7259/26

DATED: 31-10-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Rajbagh Division
Srinagar (NM)

JKNC Rift Speculation

NC leaders deny rift, vow to address MLA's concerns

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Oct 31: Amid speculation over internal differences within the National Conference following the recent cabinet expansion in Jammu and Kashmir, party legislators Salman Sagar and Farooq Shah on Saturday dismissed reports of a possible split, asserting that the NC remains united and that any concerns among MLAs would be addressed by the leadership.

Speaking to reporters, Salman Sagar said that minor differences within a political party were natural and should not be portrayed as a crisis.

"We are one family, and minor issues do arise from time to time in a family. Once our leader arrives here in a day or two, he will personally take stock of the situation. Wherever he finds genuine grievances, he will address them, and wherever there are misunderstandings, he will guide the MLAs," Sagar said.

Describing NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah as a fatherly figure, Sagar said his decision would be final and expressed confidence that the party leadership would address the concerns of legislators.

Similarly, MLA Farooq Shah rejected reports of internal divisions, saying the National Conference was not merely a political organisation but a movement with strong public support.

"National Conference is not merely a political party; it is a movement. There are no differences within the party. When 18 to 20 MLAs sit together at a social function, discussions are bound to happen. Whatever was discussed was in the interest and betterment



of the party," Shah said.

Both legislators defended recent meetings among party MLAs, maintaining that such discussions were normal and should not be interpreted as signs of rebellion.

Sagar said that elected representatives had every right to discuss party matters, while Shah maintained that all legislators continued to respect the leadership.

"If our honourable MLAs have held discussions among themselves, there is nothing wrong with that. However, such meetings are sometimes projected in a manner that makes the situation appear worse than it actually is," Sagar said.

On the recent cabinet expansion and reported dissatisfaction among some legislators, both leaders said ministerial appointments were decisions taken by the leadership and should be respected.

Sagar said the cabinet's limited size made such decisions difficult, adding that the selection of ministers was ultimately Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's prerogative.

"These are normal human reactions. The current situation is different because the cabinet is very small. Ultimately, it is Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's prerogative to decide whom to include in his cabinet," he said.

Echoing similar views, Shah said that with eight ministerial slots apart from the Chief Minister and 41 party MLAs, it was not possible to accommodate everyone in the council of ministers.

He added that the collective priority of party legislators should remain addressing public grievances, fulfilling electoral promises and accelerating development across Jammu and Kashmir.

Sagar, meanwhile, described the legislators expressing grievances as pillars of the National Conference and asserted that they would remain with the party.

"These leaders are the foundation of the National Conference. They are not going anywhere," he said.

Taking a dig at opposition parties over reports of internal divisions, Sagar said those

celebrating a possible split in the NC should not be too optimistic.

"To those who are celebrating and thinking that the National Conference is breaking apart, I want to say: do not be too happy. Your happiness will last only 12 or 24 hours," he remarked.

On speculation surrounding senior NC leader and Member of Parliament Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Sagar said his departure from the party would be unfortunate.

"He is a senior leader and a religious leader. He understands what is right and wrong for him, but personally, I believe he should not take such a step," Sagar said.

Reaffirming the National Conference's political agenda, Sagar said the party remained committed to its struggle for the restoration of Article 370, Article 35A, statehood and the political rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"No political party can claim to be a greater defender of Article 370 than the National Conference. We protected it for as long as we were in power," he said.

He also criticised the BJP and PDP over their roles in the political developments surrounding the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

"Some people expect the BJP to restore Article 370, but they are ignoring the fact that the BJP itself removed it. Those who took it away are not going to restore it," Sagar said.

Both leaders maintained that strengthening the party, ensuring political stability and working for the welfare and development of Jammu and Kashmir would remain their collective priorities—(KNO)

No rebellion in NC: Showkat Mir

Says MLAs' meeting a friendly gathering

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Oct 31: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) Kashmir Provincial President Showkat Ahmad Mir on Saturday dismissed reports of rebellion and growing dissent within the party following the recent Cabinet expansion, asserting that the National Conference remains united and legislators are free to raise concerns before the leadership.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters in Srinagar, Mir said a recent meeting of party legislators was merely a friendly gathering ahead of the Darbar Move and had been unnecessarily portrayed as a revolt.

"One of our legislators invited colleagues to his residence for lunch and discussions on the prevailing situation. Some MLAs attended and exchanged views before deciding to nominate senior colleagues to convey their concerns to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. There was no rebellion," he said.

Mir dismissed varying claims on social media about the number of legislators who attended the meeting, saying the figures being circulated were speculative and there was "no truth" to reports of a revolt.



"Nobody spoke against the party organisation or the government," he said.

He said legislators had every right to discuss issues within the party and that any concerns would be addressed through internal mechanisms.

"The National Conference is a disciplined organisation, and whatever concerns exist will be resolved internally," he said.

On reports of dissatisfaction over the Cabinet expansion, Mir said differences of opinion were natural in a democratic organisation and should not be seen as a threat to party unity.

"Everyone has expectations, but that does not mean the family breaks apart. Our legislators remain important members of the National Conference," he said.

He also rejected reports that MLAs were planning to pass a resolution against party decisions, describing such claims as

speculation.

"There is no rift, no fighting and no dispute within the National Conference. Internal democracy allows everyone to express their views, but portraying such discussions as a revolt is completely wrong," he said.

Clarifying the controversy over the post of National Conference General Secretary, Mir said Ali Mohammad Sagar's continuation in the role was a temporary arrangement necessitated by local body elections in Kargil.

He said party president Farooq Abdullah had earlier nominated Mubarak Gul as General Secretary, but Gul sought time to consult party workers. With local body elections announced in Kargil, the party required an authorised signatory for Forms A and B, prompting the leadership to

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Javed Dar rejects 'secret meetings' claims Says NC leadership stands united

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Oct 31: National Conference (NC) leader and Minister Javed Ahmed Dar on Saturday dismissed reports of internal rifts within the party, saying differences of opinion are natural in a democratic organisation, but the entire party leadership and legislators remained united.

Speaking to reporters in Jammu, Dar said recent meetings of NC legislators had been wrongly portrayed as secret gatherings aimed at splitting the party.

"Before the cabinet expansion, some colleagues visited my residence for tea and discussions on party matters. However, reports later emerged claiming that a secret meeting was taking place. Similarly, a gathering at Nasir Sahib's residence was portrayed as an attempt to break the party. There is absolutely no truth in these claims," he said. The minister said he had personally spoken to several MLAs and senior party colleagues, adding that no such



move was underway.

"National Conference is a strong political organisation. All legislators and the entire leadership stand firmly with the party. Differences of opinion can exist in a large democratic party, but such matters are discussed with the leadership and resolved through consensus," he said.

Referring to MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi's announcement regarding his possible departure from the party on November 3, Dar said the Member Parliament appeared to have already made up his mind. "From day one, he has been criticising the National Conference leadership. If he wanted reconciliation, he

could have allowed space for dialogue. His repeated criticism indicates that he has decided to leave," Dar said. However, he maintained that several party colleagues remained in contact with Ruhullah and efforts were continuing to persuade him. "The party has made every possible effort. Many of our colleagues are still in touch with him, but when someone has already made up his mind, it becomes difficult to change that decision," he added.

The minister also clarified that a recent gathering at Qaiser Sahib's residence was merely a dinner meeting during which legislators discussed ways to strengthen the party.

On the cabinet expansion, Dar expressed optimism that the inclusion of more ministers would improve accessibility, coordination and public outreach.

"Earlier, there were five members, but now the number has increased to nine. This will help improve accessibility and enable us to serve people more effectively," he said—(KNO)

NC will collapse like house of cards: LoP Sharma

Says cabinet expansion fuelled resentment among overlooked MLAs

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Kishtwar, Oct 31: Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma on Saturday claimed that growing discontent within the ruling National Conference (NC) following the recent Cabinet expansion could deepen the party's internal crisis and threaten the stability of both the party and the government.

Speaking to reporters in Kishtwar, Sharma said he had anticipated resentment among MLAs who were not included in the Council of Ministers.

"On the day of the Cabinet expansion itself, I had said this was the beginning of the end. The National Conference will collapse like a house of cards," he said.



Sharma asserted that dissatisfaction within the party extended beyond ministerial berths and reflected growing opposition to what he

described as dynastic politics and family rule.

Referring to reports of a meeting between some disgruntled NC legislators, he said the developments suggested that efforts in that direction may already be underway.

"I believe some activities in that direction may have begun yesterday," he said, adding that neither the government nor the party would remain intact if the situation continued.

Sharma maintained that the Cabinet expansion had triggered resentment among some legislators left out of the ministerial lineup, which could further intensify internal challenges for the ruling party—(KNO)

Police ready to protect national unity, integrity: IGP Kashmir

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Oct 31: Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to protect national unity, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Sujit Kumar on Saturday said Jammu and Kashmir Police are ready to face challenges in safeguarding the integrity of the country.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations at historic Lal Chowk here, IGP Kumar said, "The Prime Minister has given us a task to save the unity and integrity of the country. We are ready to



face any challenges in the coming days."

Pertinently, Ekta Diwas parade, was telecast live from Kevadia, Gujarat. LG Sinha, top officers of J&K Police and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs),

youth and school-children witnessed the live celebrations. They also listened to the Prime Minister's address to the nation.

Referring to emerging challenges, the IGP described

cybercrime as one of the biggest challenges. "Alongside cybercrime, J&K Police are examining activities being carried out against the country from a new perspective," he added—(KNO)

MP Ruhullah sticks to Nov 3 exit plan

Questions NC's stand on Article 370

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Budgam, Oct 31: Dissenting National Conference MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi on Saturday reiterated that he would resign from the party as well as his Lok Sabha membership on November 3.

The NC MP said his decision is rooted in principles and the alleged failure of the NC leadership to honour electoral promises made to the people.

Speaking to reporters in Budgam, Ruhullah said his resignation announcement had been made earlier and would be implemented on November 3, the death anniversary of his father, Martyr Aga Syed Mehdi. "A public programme will be organised at Behisht-e-Zehra Park near the DC Office in Budgam," he said. Clarifying his position amid



speculation over possible attempts to destabilise the elected government, Ruhullah said he was neither in favour of horse-trading nor wanted to be associated with any such activity. "The National Conference government should be allowed to complete its five-year term, and governments should not be brought down through horse-trading," the MP said.

He said his disagreement with the party leadership was

based on promises made during the elections, particularly regarding the restoration of Article 370, constitutional rights, reservation issues and the release of prisoners. "There is no personal grievance over not getting any position or chair. My fight is based on principles and the promises made by the National Conference to the people during elections," he said.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

No impact on NC if Ruhullah leaves: Rana

Raja Syed Rather



Jammu, Oct 31: Jammu and Kashmir Minister Javed Ahmed Rana on Saturday said that if National Conference MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi decides to leave the party, he would do so alone and his departure would have no impact on the organisation.

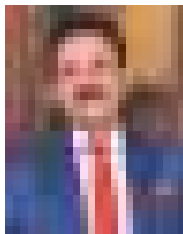
Speaking to reporters in Jammu, Rana dismissed reports of internal differences within the National Conference following the recent Cabinet expansion, asserting that the party remained united and strong.

"If Aga Sahib decides to leave, he will leave

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Reform On Paper, Crisis On Campus: India's Higher Education Challenge

India does not need higher education reforms merely on paper; it needs transformation in classrooms, laboratories, libraries and research institutions. The time has come to move from policy promises to institutional performance, from degree production to knowledge creation, and from educational expansion to genuine academic excellence.



Prof. Emeritus Dr. R.K. Uppal

India's higher education system stands at a critical crossroads. The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 generated considerable expectations of transforming the country's educational landscape through multidisciplinary learning, skill development, research innovation, academic flexibility and global competitiveness. It promised to make Indian universities centers of excellence and prepare young people for the emerging demands of the 21st century. However, despite these ambitious objectives, the ground realities of higher education continue to raise serious concerns. The gap between policy vision and institutional performance remains a major challenge.

The fundamental question is whether Indian higher education is moving towards meaningful transformation or merely witnessing policy announcements without corresponding institutional improvements.

One of the most serious challenges confronting higher education institutions is the shortage of qualified faculty members. Thousands of teaching positions remain vacant across universities and

colleges. Educational institutions cannot achieve academic excellence without adequate, qualified and motivated teachers. Faculty members are the backbone of any educational system, yet recruitment delays, contractual appointments, inadequate remuneration and increasing administrative responsibilities are affecting teaching quality. How can institutions deliver quality education when classrooms lack sufficient permanent teachers?

The situation becomes even more concerning when we examine the quality of research and innovation. India has witnessed an increase in PhD enrolments and doctoral degree production, but the expansion of research qualifications does not automatically translate into meaningful discoveries, technological advancement or intellectual contributions. In several institutions, research is increasingly evaluated through publications, citations and degrees rather than originality, social relevance and innovation. The country needs research scholars who can solve real-world problems, develop new technologies and contribute to national development rather than merely fulfil academic requirements.

Another major concern is the employability of graduates. Every year, universities produce a large number of degree holders, but a considerable section of graduates continues to struggle to secure suitable employment. The disconnect between academic curricula and industry requirements remains evident. Many students complete their undergraduate and postgraduate education without acquiring adequate communication skills, critical thinking, digital competence, problem-solving abilities and practical exposure. A degree should open doors to opportunities,

not become merely a certificate of academic attendance.

Although NEP 2020 emphasizes skill-based education, vocational training and multidisciplinary learning, implementation requires substantial investment, institutional preparedness and qualified human resources. Merely introducing new courses or modifying curricula cannot guarantee employability. Universities must establish meaningful industry partnerships, strengthen internships, promote entrepreneurship and ensure that students acquire practical competencies alongside theoretical knowledge.

The commercialization of higher education is another issue demanding urgent attention. Education is increasingly becoming expensive, particularly in institutions where financial considerations dominate academic Reform on Paper, Crisis on Campus: India's Higher Education Challengeorities. High tuition fees, additional charges and the growing dependence on self-financing programmes can restrict access for economically weaker sections. The purpose of higher education should be knowledge creation, intellectual development and social transformation, not simply revenue generation. Educational institutions must maintain a balance between financial sustainability and their fundamental academic responsibilities.

The digital transformation of education has created new opportunities, but it has also exposed inequalities. Students from rural and economically disadvantaged backgrounds often face difficulties accessing reliable internet connectivity, modern devices and quality digital learning resources. Digital education can become a powerful

instrument of inclusion only when the digital divide is effectively addressed.

The international competitiveness of Indian higher education also deserves serious consideration. India has enormous demographic potential, a large pool of talented young people and considerable intellectual resources. Yet, attracting international students, retaining outstanding researchers and developing globally recognized research institutions remain important challenges. Brain drain continues to raise questions about the research environment, professional opportunities and institutional support available to talented individuals within the country.

NEP 2020 provides an important framework for addressing many of these challenges. However, a policy document, irrespective of how ambitious its objectives may be, cannot transform the education system independently. Its success depends on effective implementation, adequate funding, institutional accountability, faculty development and sustained political and administrative commitment.

The government, regulatory authorities, universities and colleges must collectively accept responsibility for translating educational aspirations into measurable outcomes. Vacant faculty positions must be filled through transparent and timely recruitment. Research funding should encourage originality and innovation. Universities must strengthen their industry linkages, improve infrastructure and ensure that academic programmes remain relevant to changing employment requirements.

Equally important is the need to restore dignity, professional security and financial recognition to teachers and researchers. A country cannot aspire to become a global knowledge leader while its

intellectual workforce struggles with inadequate salaries, uncertain employment and limited research opportunities.

India's demographic dividend can become a demographic challenge if its young population receives degrees without the knowledge and skills required to participate meaningfully in economic development. Higher education must therefore move beyond enrolment figures, institutional expansion and degree production. Its real success should be measured through the quality of graduates, research contributions, innovation, employment outcomes and its impact on society.

Ultimately, the challenge before India is not merely to introduce another educational reform but to ensure that existing reforms produce visible results. NEP 2020 has outlined an ambitious vision, but the distance between that vision and institutional reality remains a matter of serious concern.

About the author

Dr. Rajinder Kumar Uppal is an academician, economist, author and researcher with 39 years of experience in higher education and research. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics and Management and a D.Litt. in Business Administration. He has authored 85 books, published 365 research papers, completed seven major research projects and guided 21 Ph.D. scholars. His work focuses on higher education, research quality, banking and finance, and institutional reform. He currently serves as Principal of Sardar Parkash Singh Badal College of Management and Technology, Gidderbaha, Punjab.

Author can be reached at uppalmlt@gmail.com

India's Social Security Coverage: Strengthening Worker Protection

Press Information Bureau

India's social security framework has expanded through wider EPFO coverage, digital reforms and welfare initiatives. EPFO provides provident fund savings, pension and insurance benefits to eligible members. The increase in the mandatory coverage wage ceiling from 15,000 to 25,000 is expected to bring over 51 lakh additional employees within its ambit. Digital initiatives aim to simplify registration, withdrawals and claim settlement. Beyond EPFO, initiatives such as e-Shram and schemes like PM-SYM and the Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana extend support to unorganised workers and vulnerable groups.

Social Security as a Pillar of Worker Protection
As economies evolve, employment patterns and sources of livelihood continue to change. The expansion of informal, gig and platform-based work, along with variations in income and employment continuity, makes social security increasingly important for workers and their families. Social security provides protection against income loss and other contingencies across different stages of life and strengthens financial security during retirement and periods of vulnerability.

India has significantly expanded the reach of social protection in recent years. Social protection coverage increased from 19 per cent in 2015 to 68.4 per cent in 2026, bringing more than one billion people within the social protection framework. For Indian workers, social security provides financial security beyond their working years. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) plays an important role by administering provident fund, pension and insurance schemes for eligible workers. It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment and one of the world's largest social security institutions.

Three Pillars of EPFO-led Social Security
EPFO's social security architecture includes provident fund savings, pension benefits and insurance protection.

Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 2026 (EPF): The new EPF 2026 introduced under the Social Security Code, 2020 replaced the erstwhile scheme. It enables members to build retirement savings through contributions and accrued interest, and permits partial withdrawals for specified purposes, including housing, higher education, marriage and medical treatment, subject to prescribed conditions.

Employees' Pension Scheme, 2026 (EPS): The new EPS 2026 under the Code replaced the erstwhile Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. It provides monthly pension benefits to eligible members on superannuation, retirement or disability, and also provides pension benefits to eligible dependents of deceased members, including spouses, children and other eligible family members.

Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 2026 (EDLI): The new EDLI 2026 replaced the erstwhile scheme and provides insurance protection

to eligible EPF members in the event of death while in service. It offers insurance benefits of up to 7 lakh, without requiring members to pay a separate insurance premium.

Expanding EPFO Coverage Across the Workforce
EPFO's contributing membership has increased significantly over the years. Contributing members rose from 3.49 crore in 2014-15 to approximately 7.98 crore as on 16 September 2026, an increase of approximately 4.49 crore contributing members over the period.

As of September 2026, 7.68 lakh establishments are contributing to EPFO, providing a broad institutional base for extending social security coverage to eligible workers.

Pension support has expanded alongside membership. EPFO paid pensions to 51.04 lakh pensioners during 2014-15. Till September 2026, around 82 lakh pensioners are receiving pension benefits, an increase of over 31 lakh pensioners. The scale of social security benefits has also grown substantially: 1.30 crore claims were settled during 2014-15, while in the last one-year period as of October 2026, EPFO settled 6.42 crore claims.

Strengthening EPFO through Digital and Service Reforms

EPFO is strengthening social security delivery through wider coverage, simplified claim settlement and digitalisation. Reforms also focus on improving compliance, reducing administrative procedures and facilitating access to provident fund and pension services.

Wage Ceiling Revision: The wage ceiling for mandatory EPFO coverage was last revised in September 2014, from 6,500 to 15,000 per month. In September 2026, a further increase to 25,000 per month was approved. The revision is expected to extend mandatory coverage to over 51 lakh additional employees, reflecting changes in wage levels and the expansion of formal employment over the intervening period.

Streamlining PF Withdrawals and Accelerating Claim Settlement: EPFO has consolidated 13 provisions governing partial withdrawals into three categories: Essential Needs, Housing Needs and Special Circumstances. Essential Needs cover expenses related to illness, education and marriage, simplifying the withdrawal framework and facilitating easier access to provident fund savings for eligible members.

EPFO has simplified these provisions by allowing up to 10 withdrawals for education and 5 for marriage; earlier, both purposes shared a combined limit of 3 partial withdrawals. The revised framework, introduced in October 2025, also permits eligible members to withdraw up to 75 per cent of their PF balance, including employee and employer contributions, subject to applicable conditions. The minimum service requirement has been standardised at 12 months.

EPFO increased the auto-settlement limit for eligible advance claims to 5 lakh, enabling faster processing of eligible withdrawals without manual intervention. It also removed the

requirement to upload cheque-leaf images or attested bank passbooks for eligible online claims, reducing paperwork and simplifying the claim process.

Strengthening Compliance and Ease of Doing Business

VISHWAS, 2026: The scheme facilitates one-time settlement of eligible disputes involving damages or penalties under the EPF and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, and the Code on Social Security, 2020. It reduces litigation and encourages voluntary compliance through a digital, time-bound process. The scheme covers cases involving challenged damage or penalty orders, pending or partial recovery, issued notices awaiting final orders, and cases where notices are yet to be issued. Eligible pre-14 June 2024 defaults attract reduced monthly damage rates of 0.25 per cent, 0.50 per cent or 1 per cent, depending on the delay period. Employers must pay applicable statutory interest and undertake not to pursue further appeals on settled disputes.

AMNESTY, 2026: This is a one-time scheme launched by EPFO to help establishments regularise their provident fund trusts. It covers trusts recognised under the Income Tax Act, 1961, but lacking formal exemption under the EPF and MP Act, 1952, or the Code on Social Security, 2020. The scheme is open until 28 December 2026. Eligible establishments can obtain exemption retrospectively, from the trust's establishment up to the prescribed cut-off date. The scheme also waives specified minimum employee strength and fund requirements. Eligible trusts must have deposited statutory contributions and credited interest to members' accounts at rates equal to or higher than the applicable EPF rate.

Simplifying Registration with Digital Access
Automatic Registration: Since February 2020, eligible public and private limited companies and One Person Companies can avail the facility of automatic EPFO registration through the Ministry of Corporate Affairs portal, operating through the SPICE+ and AGILE-PRO forms.

Self-Generation of Universal Account Numbers (UAN): Since November 2019, workers have been able to generate their UAN independently. In April 2025, EPFO introduced UAN generation and activation through Aadhaar-based Face Authentication Technology, available through the UMANG mobile application, enabling contactless and secure digital access. As of October 2026, 1.74 crore self-generated UANs have been reported. EPFO transactions on the UMANG application since January 2017 till 21 October are around 709 crore, reflecting the scale of digital access to EPFO services. The UAN is a unique, permanent number assigned to an EPFO member, linking provident fund accounts across different establishments and facilitating portability when members change jobs.

Simplified Aadhaar Seeding: Since August 2025, EPFO members have been able to seed or correct Aadhaar details through the UAN Member Portal.

Employers can approve requests directly when Aadhaar and UAN profile details match, while mismatched details can be referred online to the EPFO office for rectification.

Digital Transformation of EPFO Services
Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS): CPPS enables pension disbursement through any bank branch across India. Pensioners can receive their pensions without transferring Pension Payment Orders between offices when changing locations or bank branches, benefiting especially those who move to their hometown after retirement.

Doorstep Digital Life Certificate Services: EPFO has partnered with India Post Payments Bank to provide doorstep Digital Life Certificate services to EPS pensioners. EPFO bears the cost of 50 per cent certificate, making the service free for pensioners. The initiative particularly benefits elderly pensioners in rural and remote areas and supports timely pension continuity and faster initiation of family pensions.

Redesigned EPFO Website: On 1 November 2025, EPFO launched its redesigned website at epfo.gov.in. The mobile-responsive portal provides a unified interface for employees, employers and pensioners, with easier access to passbooks, claim forms, pension services, profile updates and scheme information. YouTube videos explain services such as checking PF balances, applying for advances, submitting pension applications, filing Electronic Challan-cum>Returns, registering establishments and activating UANs.

EPFO 3.0 – Core Banking-Based Transformation: EPFO 3.0 modernises services through industry-standard core banking capabilities. It integrates a core banking solution with cloud-native, API-first and microservices-based modules for account management, enterprise resource planning, compliance and customer services. Risk-validated claims are designed for automatic processing without manual intervention, potentially reducing settlement time from up to 20 days to under 3 days. Planned capabilities include instant withdrawals, multilingual self-service and seamless payroll-linked contributions. The framework is intended to support EPFO's services for over 30 crore members.

Beyond EPFO: India's Wider Social-Security Framework

India's social security framework extends beyond EPFO through multiple schemes and institutional mechanisms supporting vulnerable groups and workers across employment categories.

Pradhan Mantri Samajik Sahayata Yojana: The Yojana provides social assistance to eligible elderly persons, widows, persons with disabilities and bereaved families. It has been revised from the existing National Social Assistance Programme in October 2026 and will continue from 2026-27 to 2030-31. The disability pension scheme provides monthly assistance of 375 to beneficiaries aged below 80 years and 625 to those aged 80 years and above, with the benchmark disability

threshold reduced from 80 per cent to 40 per cent and the minimum age criterion removed. The old age pension scheme grants a monthly pension of 200 to persons aged 60-79 years and 500 to those aged 80 and above. The widow pension scheme offers a monthly pension of 300 to widows aged 40-79 years and 500 to those aged 80 and above. The family benefit scheme provides one-time financial assistance of 20,000 to eligible households upon the death of the primary breadwinner aged 18-59 years.

Code on Social Security, 2020: The Code consolidates nine existing central labour laws relating to social security into a unified legislative framework, providing for provident fund, pension, insurance, maternity benefits, gratuity and other forms of worker protection. Its provisions extend to organised and unorganised workers, including gig and platform workers. It provides for gratuity to eligible fixed-term employees on a proportionate basis after one year of service and recognises gig and platform workers within the social security framework, with schemes for their welfare supported by a social security fund. Women-centric provisions include maternity benefits of up to 26 weeks for eligible women, the option of work from home where the nature of work permits, and crèche facilities in establishments meeting prescribed conditions.

e-Shram: Launched in August 2021, e-Shram created India's first Aadhaar-seeded National Database of Unorganised Workers, with each registered worker receiving a UAN. The portal recorded 31.89 crore registrations as of August 2026. The e-Shram One-Stop Solution, launched in October 2024, integrates 15 social security and welfare schemes and connects workers with the National Career Service for jobs, Skill India Digital Hub for skilling and apprenticeship, and myScheme for identifying eligible government schemes.

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM): PM-SYM is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for eligible unorganised workers aged 18-40 years with monthly incomes of up to 15,000. It provides a minimum assured pension of 3,000 per month after attaining 60 years of age, subject to prescribed conditions. Monthly contributions range from 55 to 200, depending on the age of enrolment, with an equal contribution from the Central Government. The scheme supports old-age income security for workers in the unorganised sector, which contributes around 50 per cent of India's GDP.

Towards Universal Social Security
India's social security framework continues to expand through wider EPFO coverage, digital service delivery and reforms in labour welfare. Initiatives across provident fund, pensions, insurance and social assistance support workers across formal and informal employment. Simplified compliance and technology-enabled platforms are further strengthening access to benefits. Together, these measures contribute to a more inclusive and accessible social security system.

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

Higher Education Deptt felicitates Shamim Firdous on appointment as Education Minister

Expresses resolve to work collectively

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 31: Secretary in Higher Education Department, Shafqat Iqbal and Director Colleges, Professor Twinkle Suri, along with officers and officials of the Higher Education Department, Saturday felicitated Shamim Firdous on her appointment as Minister for Education.

On the occasion, the Secretary and Director Colleges, as per an official statement, extended their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the newly appointed Minister. They expressed confidence that her leadership and vision would provide fresh momentum to the growth, development and transformation of the education sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

Shafqat Iqbal reaffirmed the Department's commitment to work in close coordination with the Minister and implementing key educational initiatives aimed at strengthening the higher education ecosystem across the Union Territory.

Professor Twinkle Suri highlighted the importance of promoting academic excellence, institutional development, research and innovation, skill-oriented education, digital



transformation and, above all, student welfare.

She also emphasised the need to further the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, strengthen Government Degree Colleges, enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and expand meaningful educational and skill-development

opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

The officers and officials of the Higher Education Department conveyed their best wishes to the Minister. They expressed resolve to work collectively towards building a more vibrant, inclusive and progressive higher education system in the Union Territory.

Sakeena Itoo convenes public outreach camp at Nagnard, D.H. Pora



KT News Desk

KULGAM, OCTOBER 31: Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, Saturday convened a public outreach camp at Nagnard, D.H. Pora, Kulgam, to take stock of public issues and assess the developmental needs of the area.

The Minister, as per an official statement, accompanied by officers of various departments, listened to issues of public importance raised by community members including demands related to civic amenities and welfare.

Interacting with the people, Sakeena Itoo underscored the importance of unity and collective efforts in ensuring holistic development of the area. She assured that all their genuine demands would be addressed in a phased manner.

She said road connectivity

would be extended to far-flung areas and necessary steps would be taken to provide healthcare and education facilities through establishment of a dispensary, upgradation of the existing Middle School and improvement of mobile network connectivity.

The Minister directed the concerned departments to identify and address the highlighted issues on priority and ensure timely redressal of public grievances. She stressed that the benefits of government schemes and developmental initiatives must reach the deserving population.

On the occasion, the Minister distributed 106 solar lights among local residents.

The camp was attended by SDM Noorabad, CMO Kulgam, CAO Kulgam, CEO Kulgam, CHO Kulgam, Tehsildar D.H. Pora, XEN PWD (R&B) D.H. Pora, AD FCS&CA Kulgam and CDPO D.H. Pora.

DC Srinagar inaugurates Blood Donation Camp at DC Office Complex

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 31: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who is also Chairman of the District Red Cross Society, on Saturday inaugurated a Blood Donation Camp at the premises of DC Office Complex, with the objective of encouraging voluntary blood donation and creating greater awareness about its importance in saving precious human lives.

The camp, as per an official statement, was organised by the District Red Cross Society, Srinagar, in collaboration with SMHS Hospital, Government Medical College (GMC), Srinagar, aimed at promoting voluntary blood donation and strengthening humanitarian services in the District.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, IAS Probationer, Aakash Garg, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Accounts Officer, Mohammad Iqbal, Officials of DC Office and members of District Red Cross Society.

During the camp, around 60 participants, including Officials of the DC Office Srinagar, Red Cross volunteers and local residents,

voluntarily donated blood, reflecting a commendable spirit of social responsibility, compassion and community participation.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the enthusiasm and selfless spirit of the blood donors, stating that voluntary blood donation is one of the noblest forms of community service, as a single act of donation can help save precious human lives.

The DC underscored that such initiatives play a vital role in promoting public welfare, strengthening humanitarian assistance and fostering greater community participation. He emphasised the need to develop a culture of regular and voluntary blood donation, urging people, particularly the youth, to come forward and actively participate in such humanitarian initiatives.

The DC observed that blood donation is not merely a charitable activity but a collective social responsibility that reflects the values of humanity, solidarity and compassion.

He also appreciated the District Red Cross Society and SMHS Hospital, GMC Srinagar, for their collaborative efforts in organising the camp and facilitating this important humanitarian initiative.

NATIONAL UNITY DAY

Div Com Jammu leads plantation drive



KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 31: A plantation drive was organised at the office of the Divisional Commissioner Jammu on the eve of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas 2026, with the objective of promoting environmental conservation and reinforcing the spirit of national unity.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Vikas Kundal led the plantation drive along with other senior officers of the administration. The programme was organised by the Urban Forestry Division, Jammu.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Urban Forestry Division

Jammu, Ashwani Kumar along with field staff was also present during the plantation drive.

The programme, as per an official statement, was followed by the administration of the Unity Pledge in the Conference Hall of the Divisional Commissioner's office. The pledge was administered by the Divisional Commissioner, reaffirming the commitment to national unity, integrity and the spirit of togetherness.

The event underscored the significance of environmental conservation and collective responsibility in upholding the ideals of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas.

Special Run for Unity for specially abled people, members of 3rd gender community organised in Pulwama

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, OCTOBER 31: As part of the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas observance, the District Administration Pulwama Saturday organised a special Run for Unity for specially abled people and members of third-gender community.

Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha flagged off the rally from the DC Office Complex, Pulwama, in the presence of ADC Pulwama, Dr. S.M. Ashraf, DSWO Pulwama, Azhar Amin, DYSSO Pulwama and other senior officers.

The participants proceeded from the DC Office Complex to the District Social Welfare Office, Pulwama, carrying the message of national unity, equality and inclusion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, emphasised that specially abled people and members of third-gender community are an integral part of society and should have equal opportunities to participate in public life and contribute to the development of the district and the country.



He emphasised the need to empower specially abled people by providing them opportunities, adequate support and suitable platforms to participate actively in social and community activities. He said that greater participation would help them utilise their abilities, build confidence and lead lives with dignity and independence.

The Deputy Commissioner also emphasised the need for greater social acceptance and equal opportunities for third-gender persons. He stressed that they should be provided suitable platforms to participate in social, cultural and

community activities and encouraged to contribute to the development of society. He added that inclusion of all sections is essential for building a fair and progressive society.

The special run provided an opportunity for the participants to join the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas observance and conveyed the message that national unity and development are strengthened when every section of society is included.

The programme concluded at the District Social Welfare Office, Pulwama, with the participants and officers joining the observance of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas.

DC Jammu administers National Unity Pledge

KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 31: On the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Minga Sherpa Saturday administered the National Unity Pledge to the officers and staff here at the DC Office.

The pledge-taking ceremony was held in the Conference Hall of the DC Office to commemorate the 151st birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India and architect of national integration.

The officers and officials, as per an official statement, took the solemn pledge to dedicate themselves to preserving the unity, integrity and security of the nation and to spread the

message of oneness among fellow citizens, in the spirit of the unification achieved by Sardar Patel.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner paid rich tributes to Sardar Patel and called upon the officers and staff to imbibe his ideals of unity, dedication and selfless service in their day-to-day working.

The observance was part of the various activities organised across the district Saturday.

Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioners Ansuya Jamwal and Ishita Rathi, Chief Planning Officer Ajaypal Singh besides other officers and staff of the DC Office.

DIPR Jammu staff takes National Unity Pledge

KT News Desk

JAMMU, OCTOBER 31: To observe Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Jammu Saturday organised the National Unity Pledge Taking Ceremony here at the Directorate office premises. The Day coincides with the Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel- the Iron Man of India.

Deputy Director Information

(PR) Moksha Dogra administered the pledge to officers and officials, who resolved to dedicate themselves towards strengthening the spirit of harmony, brotherhood and national integration.

Deputy Director Ashu Kumari (HQ), Culture Officer Rajinder Kumar Digra, Field Publicity Officer Mohit Sharma, besides other officers and staff members of the department joined the pledge ceremony.

Thousands join Run for Unity in Kupwara

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 31: To commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, celebrated across the nation as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day), the District Administration Kupwara Saturday organised an energetic and grand 'Run for Unity'.

The marathon was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Abhishek Sharma alongside Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kupwara, Sudhanshu Dharma from the Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS) Kupwara Playground. Senior officers of the District Civil Administration, Police, and CRPF were also present on the occasion.

The run witnessed overwhelming and enthusiastic participation from a wide cross-section of society, including hundreds of students, district officers and officials, members of civil society, trader associations, youth, and the general public. Carrying the message of national integration, harmony, and solidarity,



the participants marched enthusiastically through the main routes of the town before culminating at District Police Lines (DPL) Kupwara.

At DPL Kupwara, the culminating ceremony featured a series of vibrant activities highlighting national unity and patriotic spirit. The event commenced with an insightful signature campaign, where participants penned their commitments to fostering harmony and integrity. This was followed by captivating cultural performances presented by school

students, depicting the rich cultural diversity and ethos of the nation.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner administered the solemn 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Pledge' to the participants, reaffirming collective commitment to preserve the sovereignty, unity, and security of the nation.

The event concluded with a felicitation ceremony wherein the Deputy Commissioner, SSP, and other dignitaries felicitated the winners of the run with mementos of appreciation.

DC, SSP Kathua lead celebrations marking

KT News Desk

KATHUA, OCTOBER 31: The District Administration Kathua, in collaboration with the District Police, Saturday organised a series of activities to mark Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, commemorating the 151st birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man of India. The celebrations featured a 'Run for Unity', floral tributes and administration of the National Unity Pledge, reaffirming the collective commitment towards national unity, integrity and solidarity.

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma and Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma flagged off the Run for Unity from District Police Lines (DPL). The run proceeded through Tangri Chowk before culminating back at the DPL.

A large number of students from government and private educational institutions, along with officers and officials of the Civil and Police Administration, participated enthusiastically in the event. Carrying the message

of unity and national integration, the participants highlighted the importance of collective responsibility in strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and harmony.

Later, floral tributes were paid to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in a brief ceremony at the DPL, honouring his invaluable contribution to the unification and integration of the country. The occasion served as a reminder of his visionary leadership and enduring legacy in nation-building.

The National Unity Pledge was also administered to officers and officials of the Civil and Police Administration, who reaffirmed their commitment to preserving the unity, integrity and security of the nation and upholding the spirit of national integration.

Addressing the participants, Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma highlighted the significance of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas and recalled the pivotal role played by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in bringing together the princely states and laying the foundation of a united India.

Samba admin observes Rashtriya Ekta Diwas with Unity pledge, plantation drive

KT NEWS DESK

SAMBA, OCTOBER 31: District Administration Samba Saturday observed Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) with a pledge-taking ceremony at the Conference Hall of the District Administrative Complex, Nandini Hills.

The Deputy Commissioner administered the National Unity Pledge to around 300 officers and officials, representing various departments.

The pledge was also administered simultaneously across all government offices in the district, reaffirming the collective commitment towards national unity, integrity and security.

Later, a plantation drive was organised in the park of

the District Administrative Complex, Nandini Hills. The officers and officials led by Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rupesh Kumar planted different tree saplings. The DC highlighted the significance of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas and emphasised the importance of upholding the ideals of unity, integrity and national solidarity as envisioned by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He also called upon officers and officials to work with dedication and collective responsibility towards strengthening the nation.

The observance aimed to promote the spirit of national integration, unity and collective responsibility among government functionaries and the public.

EOW Kashmir files chargesheet against two for duping job seekers of Rs 15 lakh

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 31: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K has filed a chargesheet against two persons for allegedly duping job seekers of over Rs 15 lakh on the pretext of providing overseas employment, officials said.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a spokesperson said the EOW Kashmir has filed a chargesheet in case FIR No. 32/2026 under Sections 420 and 120-B of the IPC and Sections 10/24 of the Emigration Act before the Court of PT&E, Srinagar, against Sajad Abdullah, son of Mohammad Abdullah Sheikh, resident of Hamdaniya Colony, Bemina, Srinagar, and Jahangir Ahmad Tanky, son of Hafizullah Tanky, resident of Sheshgari Mohalla, Khanyar, Srinagar.

He said the case was registered following complaints alleging that the accused, proprietors of M/s Al-Aqsa Global Services Pvt. Ltd., Moomin-Abad, Lane-04, Batamalo, Srinagar, lured people with promises of lucrative overseas employment in reputed foreign companies and collected advance payments

exceeding Rs 15 lakh.

The spokesperson said the promised jobs were not provided and cheques issued towards refunds were dishonoured due to insufficient funds. The investigation revealed that the consultancy was registered as an excursion agent for tour and travel services and not as a recruiting agent, and was operating without the requisite registration for overseas recruitment.

It was further established that both accused received lakhs of rupees in their respective personal bank accounts from complainants on the pretext of providing overseas employment but failed to fulfil their promises.

He said that despite sustained efforts, accused Jahangir Ahmad Tanky could not be traced and had been absconding since 2025.

The investigation was concluded as proved, and the chargesheet has been filed before the competent court for judicial determination. SSP EOW Kashmir advised job seekers to verify the credentials of recruitment agencies and avoid paying advance fees to unauthorised agencies. (KNO)

J&K Bank bags top CGTMSE award for highest guarantee coverage in J&K, Ladakh

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 31: Jammu and Kashmir Bank has received the top CGTMSE award for recording the highest number of guarantee coverage cases in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, recognising its efforts to expand collateral-free credit access for micro and small enterprises. In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Bank said the award was presented by the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) at the Member Lending Institutions (MLI) Felicitation Ceremony 2026 in Mumbai.

Divisional Head (Rest of India) Riaz Ahmed Wani received the award on behalf of the Bank, accompanied by Zonal Head (Mumbai) Irfan Kawoosa and Incharge GSGD (CHQ) Vikas Aithmia.

Welcoming the recognition, J&K Bank MD and CEO Amitava Chatterjee said the award acknowledged the Bank's efforts to widen access to enterprise



credit in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

He congratulated the staff, particularly those in operations, saying their efforts in processing proposals, securing guarantee coverage and supporting borrowers had contributed to the achievement.

Chatterjee said guarantee-backed lending was strategically important for strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region, particularly for viable enterprises whose promoters lacked collateral.

He said the Bank aimed to extend such support to more eligible entrepreneurs to encourage new enterprises, facilitate business expansion and generate employment across the region.

The MD and CEO added that the Bank would continue to strengthen awareness and delivery of guarantee-backed credit across its operational network to help more micro and small enterprises access finance to establish, sustain and expand their businesses.

Chairman DLSA Ganderbal reviews undertrial cases



KT News Desk

Ganderbal, Oct 31: The Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman District Legal Services Authority), Ganderbal, Abdul Nasir, conducted the 4th Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting on Saturday, with the objective of ensuring timely review and release of undertrial prisoners, thereby promoting their rights and access to justice.

The meeting was held in the office chamber of the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Ganderbal, and was attended by Shreya Singhal, District Magistrate, Ganderbal, Harshal Rajesh Mahajan, Sr. Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal, Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary DLSA, Ganderbal, Bharat Sharma, Sr. Superintendent Central Jail Srinagar, Shafat Ahmad, Public Prosecutor, Sessions Court, Ganderbal, Shafakat Murtaza, APP, Additional District & Sessions

Court Ganderbal, and Sajid Irfan, Deputy, LADC Ganderbal.

The UTRC convened to review the cases of two undertrial prisoners, shortlisted by the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal for consideration, under category-12 (Women).

Upon examination of the cases, the Committee observed that both women undertrial prisoners were facing charges involving heinous offences. Accordingly, after due consideration of the nature and gravity of the allegations, the UTRC Committee decided not to recommend their release at this stage.

The meeting underscores the commitment of the District Legal Services Authority, to uphold the principles of justice and ensure the rights of undertrial prisoners are safeguarded. The authority remains dedicated to promoting access to justice and protecting the rights of the marginalized and vulnerable sections of society.

ACB holds Youth Parliament at SKUAST-K, students debate two governance Bills

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 31: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu and Kashmir, on Saturday organised a Youth Parliament and vigilance awareness programme at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Srinagar, as part of Vigilance Awareness Week-2026 under the theme 'Probity for Prosperity'.

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

the programme witnessed participation of 968 students and faculty members from various colleges and universities, besides around 250 officers and officials from government departments and 70 ACB personnel.

The highlight of the programme was a Youth Parliament session in which 42 students, including 12 law interns, deliberated on the functioning of the Revenue Department and Urban Local Bodies and passed two proposed Bills by majority vote.

The Bills included the National Revenue Administration (Digital



Governance) and Revenue Plus Portal Bill-2026 and the Urban Local Bodies Building Compliance, Transparency and Accountability Bill-2026.

The ACB said the discussions involved parliamentary procedures, debates and constructive

scrutiny of public service delivery, with the objective of promoting transparency, accountability and citizen-centric governance.

The programme was attended by University of Kashmir Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan,

SKUAST-K Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganaie, Central University of Kashmir Vice-Chancellor Prof A Ravinder Nath, retired IGP Gh Hassan Bhat and ACB Director Shakti Kumar Pathak.

The statement said law college interns had also been deputed to various government departments across districts to study their functioning, identify shortcomings and suggest corrective measures for improving transparency and timely delivery of public services.

An interactive session through

the Kahoot mobile application was also organised to obtain feedback from participants on challenges in public service delivery and administrative functioning. Around 480 students, members of the public and officials participated in the exercise.

Speaking on the occasion, ACB Director Shakti Kumar Pathak stressed that transparency, principled decision-making and zero tolerance towards corruption were essential for strengthening public trust, good governance and inclusive development.

He said corruption might

benefit a few but caused significant losses to countless marginalised people, reaffirming the bureau's commitment to combating corruption.

The programme also featured an integrity pledge and awareness about anti-corruption reporting mechanisms through the ACB's official helpline and website.

Students and participants were presented certificates and mementos in recognition of their involvement, while awards were also presented to the best student speakers. (KNO)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Conflict Entrepreneurs

not buy peace, we established peace. Zero-tolerance policy crippled terror networks and restored normal life across Jammu Kashmir. Since 2020, more than 780 terrorists eliminated, local recruitment ended, stone-pelting erased. Now Jammu Kashmir is witnessing a historic security transformation.

Strong action against Narco-Terrorism continues. We have arrested thousands of drug smugglers and drug peddlers this year. Their illicit assets have been attached and drug-funded mansions were demolished. Conflict Entrepreneurs who profited from separatism and terrorism stand exposed. People of Jammu Kashmir have embraced peace, progress and national integration," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the citizens of Jammu Kashmir and acknowledged the contribution of farmers, teachers, scholars, writers, artists, artisans, traders, workers, security personnel, youth and women in building a prosperous and self-reliant Jammu Kashmir.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the occasion carried special significance as it coincided with the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, whose vision of national unity continues to inspire the country.

2019 STRENGTHENED SPIRIT OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

He said that the developments of 2019 marked an important chapter in the journey towards integration, equality and development. "Today is not merely a date; it is a milestone that changed the direction of history and strengthened the spirit of national integration, equality and inclusive development," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor noted that the changes witnessed in Jammu Kashmir since 2019 have expanded opportunities for citizens and strengthened the foundations of democracy. He highlighted that the implementation of grassroots democratic institutions and the conduct of Assembly elections have enhanced public participation and accountability.

ARTICLE 370 ABROGATION GAVE ORDINARY CITIZENS FREEDOM FROM FEAR

"Article 370 abrogation gave ordinary citizens freedom from fear and access to rights denied for decades. Jammu Kashmir has emerged as a model of peace, development and good governance," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Referring to the aspirations of the people, the Lieutenant Governor said that the future of Jammu Kashmir must be shaped by peace, equal opportunities and development.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that unity is sustained through justice and public trust. He called upon all institutions and citizens to work together for good governance, compassion and inclusive development.

"Public trust must be won not merely by promises, but by deeds. Justice and accountability are the strongest foundations of unity," he said.

Highlighting the importance of extending the benefits of development to all sections of society, the Lieutenant Governor observed that

the true measure of transformation lies in the lives of those who were deprived of opportunities for decades. He underlined the need to ensure that growth remains inclusive and reaches every household, village and community.

The Lieutenant Governor also spoke about the changing aspirations of the younger generation in Jammu Kashmir. He noted that children and youth are growing up in an environment focused on education, opportunity and progress, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to nation-building.

STABLE AND PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS EVERY SECTION OF SOCIETY

The Lieutenant Governor stressed the importance of peace for economic growth and social progress. He said that a stable and peaceful environment benefits every section of society, including farmers, entrepreneurs, traders, students and workers. He expressed satisfaction that the people of Jammu Kashmir are increasingly participating in developmental initiatives and contributing to the region's growth story.

The Lieutenant Governor also outlined key priorities for the coming years, including employment generation, youth empowerment, strengthening agriculture and allied sectors, healthcare, education, environmental sustainability, tourism development, women's empowerment and transparent governance.

He stressed the need to equip youth with skills relevant to the changing global economy and encouraged greater participation in entrepreneurship, innovation and sports. He also called for sustained efforts to strengthen agriculture through modern technologies, climate-resilient practices and value addition.

LG Sinha emphasized that access to quality health services is essential for building a healthy and prosperous society and urged continued efforts to ensure that no citizen is left behind.

The Lieutenant Governor also appealed to citizens to embrace harmony, respect diversity and actively participate in the development of Jammu Kashmir. He said that the safe and dignified return of displaced communities and the strengthening of social trust require collective commitment and cooperation.

The Lieutenant Governor also shared his vision for the brighter future of Jammu Kashmir. J&K SHOULD EMERGE AS MODEL OF PROSPERITY WITH MODERN ECONOMY

"My dream is that by 2047, Jammu Kashmir should emerge as a model of prosperity with a modern economy, world-class healthcare, excellent education and a vibrant cultural heritage."

Calling upon the people to work together for a brighter future, the Lieutenant Governor said, "Let us build a Jammu Kashmir where there is trust instead of fear, opportunity instead of scarcity, justice instead of injustice, and where every young person and every woman finds wings for their dreams."

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor administered the 'Unity Pledge' and flagged off the 'Run for Unity' to mark the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas'.

A Documentary film by the Information

Department on J&K's transformational journey was also screened.

Chairperson, J&K Waqf Board, Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; DGP, Nalin Prabhat; Additional Chief Secretary Home Department, Chandraker Bharti; Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Govind Jaiswal; IGP Kashmir, Sujit Singh; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg; senior officials of Police, Security Forces and Civil Administration; prominent citizens, heads of various educational institutions, members of civil society and youth in large number attended the J&K UT Foundation Day. (KNO)

LG Sinha hits

India, where the glory of India has been established on every international stage of the world, we are talking about a failed country," LG Sinha said.

He said that people, particularly in the Kashmir Valley, have recognised those whom he accused of wanting to push Jammu and Kashmir back towards terrorism and violence.

"There is no place in J&K for those whose survival depended on separatism and the conflict industry," he said, adding, "I am pleased that the ordinary people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially of the Kashmir Valley, have now recognised the faces of such people."

Pertinently, on October 24 Dr Farooq, while addressing an NC workers' convention in Baramulla, credited Pakistan's repeated efforts to raise the Kashmir issue at international forums with keeping it alive. "Our neighbour is constantly after them. He goes everywhere saying that the Kashmir issue has not been resolved. He is protecting us; otherwise, their intentions are not good," Dr Farooq had said.

He had also stated the people of Jammu and Kashmir have never denied their Indian identity and have repeatedly affirmed their accession to India. (KNO)

Art 370 abrogation

including the abrogation of Article 370, elimination of Naxalism and implementation of the One Nation, One Tax system.

"When we succeed in building a drug-free India, it will be the most significant achievement among all these initiatives for the country's youth and its future," he said.

Shah said December 31, 2029, as the target for making India completely drug-free, saying the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' begins with the creation of a 'Nasha-Mukt Bharat'.

He said India's linguistic, cultural, traditional and religious diversity is its strength and reflected the message of national unity associated with Sardar Patel.

Referring to the government's fight against Naxalism, Shah said India has moved beyond the shadow of Naxalism on March 31 this year and was now moving towards becoming a drug-free nation.

He said collective efforts are needed to protect the country's youth from drugs and build a stronger and more prosperous India. (KNO)

LG joins Rashtriya

Vallabhbhai Patel, and Jammu Kashmir continues to stand as a proud symbol of peace and prosperity."

DGP, IGP interact

and other participants to witness the national-level celebrations.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is observed every year on October 31 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whose contribution to India's unity and integration remains a defining part of the country's history. (KNO)

J&K's 8-year journey

The journey over the past eight years has been marked by development, peace and progress," he said.

Students, youth, officials and partakers from various institutions took part in the run, which commenced from SKICC and concluded at the Botanical Garden in Srinagar.

The Lieutenant Governor also extended his greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of the UT Foundation Day. Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is observed on October 31 every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his contribution to national integration. (KNO)]

JK Govt begins

and soft copies covering sanctioned and in-position staff strength, contractual employees, scheme-wise trends in revenue and capital expenditure, revenue receipts over the last five years, details of major projects, liabilities of ongoing projects and key features of the proposed budget. (KNO)

New academic session

was ordered amid protests and security restrictions following the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, with schools and colleges shut until March 7, 2026, during that episode.

Besides, low-intensity floods in parts of the Valley also affected normal classwork and other academic activities, forcing the government to order temporary closure of education institutions in Kashmir.

After brief disruptions, the academic activities were restored in all the educational institutions in the Valley. (KNO)

Dry weather likely

Katra registered 13.9 degrees Celsius, Kathua 14.5 degrees Celsius and Baderwah 5.4 degrees Celsius.

The weather remained largely dry across Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours, with Reasi recording the highest rainfall of 0.5 mm, the department said.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar said the weather would remain partly cloudy on November 1 and 2, with brief spells of rain likely at isolated places towards the evening.

The department said weather would remain

Modi calls Opposition 'Avrodh Paksh', raises questions over 'secret' meetings abroad

PTI

Ekta Nagar, Oct 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said anti-India forces had become active amid a global energy crisis and slammed the Opposition, saying it had turned into "Avrodh Paksh" (obstructive force) rather than "Virodh Paksh" (opposing group).

Addressing the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations at Ekta Nagar in Gujarat on the 151st birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Modi also warned against "dimagi Naxals", called for securing the country's borders and the need to move forward towards a "secular civil code".

Modi said the world was going through the "most difficult time" of the past several decades, with wars breaking out among several countries and economies grappling with difficulties.

"When the country was seeking solutions to external challenges, some forces within the country were also creating instability by spreading lies and rumours. But the countrymen stood shoulder to shoulder with the nation," he said.

Taking a swipe at the Opposition, Modi said, "It is our misfortune that at this time in the country, the Opposition has turned into an Avrodh Paksh rather than Virodh Paksh. In their frustration, these people are standing as obstacles in the way of the country's development. This is not opposition, this is obstruction," he said.



He further accused the Opposition of violating constitutional norms.

"These people are engaged in shredding the boundaries of the Constitution," said the PM.

In a veiled reference to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's foreign trips, he said, "Due to the frustration of more than a decade, these people have now come out in the open. Who is secretly meeting whom abroad? Whom are the anti-India forces supporting? Who is speaking the language of India's enemies? We will have to recognise all these patterns." He alleged that some forces were conspiring to divide the country and incite fights among citizens.

"These forces are constantly engaged in conspiracies of division in the country. Vicious cycles are being spun to divide

and instigate fights among the children of Mother India," he said.

Modi also urged people to unite against attempts to spread misinformation and tarnish India's image.

"Especially, the way social media is being used as a weapon, rumours are being spread, and attempts are being made to tarnish India's image, the countrymen will have to deal with them together," he said.

Referring to the fuel crisis triggered by global conflicts, the PM said resource shortages were worsening and global supply chains were facing disruptions.

"In many countries, even limits were imposed on the purchase of diesel and petrol. It was also being said about India that, given its huge population and lack of domestic petroleum production, it

would face the biggest crisis.

"Amid these very apprehensions, anti-India forces had also become active. But friends, this is India's capability that we did not let the blow of this global energy crisis fall upon our citizens," he said.

Modi said India's unity and solidarity would be its biggest strength in dealing with global challenges. "At such a time, India's unity, the unity of us Indians, is our huge strength. The country's unity guarantees the country's stability and success," he said.

On Naxalism, Modi said the country had fulfilled its resolve to eliminate the menace, but warned that the threat of "dimagi Naxals" remained.

"Today the back of Naxalism has been broken in the country. In 2015, Left-Wing Extremism had affected 126 districts in the country. By March 2026, there was not a single district in the country that was still affected by Naxalism," he said.

Areas that had suffered violence for decades are now becoming part of the development mainstream, with roads, mobile networks, schools and healthcare facilities expanding, he said.

"But the danger of 'dimagi Naxals' has not yet been eliminated from across the country. The country must always remain vigilant against these dimagi Naxals," Modi said.

The PM outlined what he described as India's next major goals.

"We have to completely

secure the borders of the country. We have to stop infiltration and the changes happening in demography. We also have to move forward towards a secular civil code," he said.

Taking a swipe at previous governments, Modi said, "Those who raised the slogan of eradicating poverty kept getting richer themselves."

Referring to a recent World Bank report, he said 50 crore Indians had been lifted out of poverty in the 10-12 years leading up to 2024.

"Earlier, 27 out of 100 people were in the grip of severe poverty. Today, this number has gradually reduced to less than three out of 100," he said, attributing the change to the government's focus on the welfare and empowerment of the poor.

The country is proceeding on the path shown by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, he said. "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" (One India, Best India) and 'Vikshit Bharat' are our two goals," Modi said.

Earlier in the day, Modi paid floral tributes to Sardar Patel at the Statue of Unity to mark his birth anniversary, which is observed as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas.

Later, he inaugurated 23 development projects worth Rs 307.83 crore to boost tourism and civic infrastructure. The PM also laid the foundation stones for eight development projects worth Rs 118.88 crore, taking the total outlay for the 31 projects to Rs 426.71 crore.

PM congratulates scientists, engineers at ISRO on successful launch of NVS-03



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated scientists and engineers at ISRO on the successful launch of GSLV-F18 carrying NVS-03 and said the mission marks an important step in strengthening NavIC, the country's indigenous satellite navigation system.

Modi also said that equipped with enhanced capabilities, NVS-03 will further India's pursuit of self-reliance in critical technologies and support navigation services that benefit the people.

"Congratulations to our scientists and engineers at ISRO on the successful launch of GSLV-F18 carrying NVS-03. This mission marks an important step in strengthening

NavIC, our indigenous satellite navigation system," he said in a post on X.

The prime minister said the dedication and ingenuity of India's space scientists continue to make the nation proud.

India's independent regional navigation satellite system NavIC was restored to its minimum operational configuration of four satellites on Friday as ISRO successfully launched its navigation satellite NVS-03, which was placed into the designated injection orbit by a GSLV rocket.

The second-generation navigation satellite NVS-03, with indigenous and procured atomic clock, has a wide array of applications, including civilian use like real-time tracking of trains, vehicles and shipping vessels.

Govt hikes wind fall tax on diesel, ATF shipments Cuts levy on petrol exports



PTI

New Delhi, Oct 31: The government on Saturday hiked windfall gains tax on export of diesel and ATF and slashed the levy to zero on petrol for the fortnight beginning October 31.

For ATF exports, the duty has been hiked marginally to Rs 11/litre, from Rs 10.5/litre for the fortnight.

The rate of special additional excise duty (SAED), along with road and infrastructure cess on export of diesel, will now be Rs 11.5 a litre, up from Rs 8.5 a litre.

Duty on petrol exports has been slashed to nil, from Rs 2.5 per litre, for the next fortnight.

The finance ministry in a notification said the duty changes will be effective from October 31.

The ministry also said there is no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

The windfall tax was levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the war in West Asia. It was also aimed at preventing exporters from taking undue advantage due to price differences as global crude oil prices had risen since the war began.

The windfall tax was intended to ensure domestic availability of petroleum products by disincentivising

Cyclone impact Flood situation improves in Odisha's Ganjam, Gajapati; 700 still stranded

PTI

Bhubaneswar, Oct 31: The flood situation in Odisha's Ganjam and Gajapati districts, hit by Cyclone Armb, gradually improved on Saturday with water receding from most affected areas and river levels showing a declining trend, even as Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi directed officials to intensify relief and restoration work.

Of the nine southern districts affected by the very severe cyclonic storm, Ganjam and Gajapati were the worst hit, with more than 1.5 lakh people affected in Ganjam and over 30,000 in Gajapati, prompting the administration to evacuate people and open relief camps.

Ganjam Collector V Keerthi Vasan said 56,051 people had been evacuated to 367 safe shelters, while cooked food was being distributed at 370 locations across the district.

Around 700 people remained stranded in waterlogged areas, he said, adding that aerial delivery of food to marooned villages had been completed using helicopters of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard.

Adequate food stocks were being maintained to meet requirements for the next 15 to 20 days, he said.

The number of marooned villages in Ganjam, which stood at 70 on Thursday, declined to 21 on Friday



and three on Saturday.

Vasan also said in view of the prevailing flood situation and water-logging, schools in the district will remain closed till November 3.

Transport Minister B B Jena said National Highway 16, connecting Kolkata and Chennai, had become operational following a decline in the water level of the Bahuda river.

Train services along the route had also returned to normal, he said.

Water Resources Department Secretary Shubha Sharma, who visited the gauge station on the Rushikulya river, said the water level was well below the danger mark and there was no immediate flood threat from the river.

More than 100 personnel from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), Odisha Police and Fire Services are engaged in relief and rescue operations in Ganjam and Gajapati districts, officials said.

During a review meeting, Majhi

directed officials to assess the situation and evaluate the damage caused by the cyclone.

He also asked them to make adequate preparations for any further cyclonic systems likely to affect the Andhra Pradesh coast on November 3.

The chief minister instructed all administrative departments to provide complete, official and accurate information to the media during disasters.

Majhi further directed officials to restore electricity, roads and other essential services in cyclone-affected areas on a war footing.

The Energy Department has prioritised the restoration of power supply to ensure that normal services are resumed at the earliest.

In a statement, TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Odisha government, said electricity supply had been restored to 17 lakh consumers across southern Odisha following the cyclone.

"About 96.32 per cent power restoration was achieved across eight districts. All 130 affected primary substations were restored. Districts like Malkangiri, Boudh and Rayagada have achieved 100 per cent consumer restoration, while in Ganjam the ratio was 93 per cent," the statement said.

United India is a strong India: VP on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas

PTI

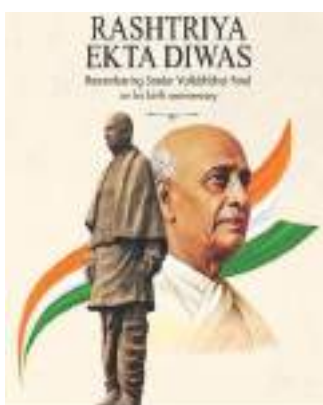
New Delhi, Oct 31: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Saturday urged young people to carry forward the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, asserting that a united nation would always be a strong nation.

Speaking at a 'Sardar Katha' event at his official residence to mark Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, Radhakrishnan said India's enduring strength lay in its unity despite its diverse languages, traditions and regional backgrounds. Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu was also present at the event.

Radhakrishnan hailed Patel's role in the political integration of more than 560 princely states into the Indian Union, citing the decisive actions taken for the liberation of Hyderabad state as a historic milestone.

He said Patel was not only the unifier of the nation but also an architect of the Indian Constitution and a visionary behind India's modern civil services, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS).

He also recalled how Patel moved from a Western lifestyle to one of traditional simplicity under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Recounting an anecdote about



Patel's cultural identity, Radhakrishnan said that when a senior British officer asked him about his cultural background, Patel famously replied, "My culture is agriculture."

Separately, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla paid tribute to Patel at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan and urged young people to uphold national unity and integrity and contribute to building a developed India.

Highlighting Patel's vision, determination and organisational skills as a lasting inspiration for nation-building, Birla commemorated his legacy along with ministers, MPs, other dignitaries and students from various schools and colleges, who also paid their respects.

ED arrests Azam Khan from Rampur jail in money laundering case

PTI

Lucknow/Rampur, Oct 31: The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday arrested Samajwadi Party (SP) leader and former minister Azam Khan from the Rampur jail in Uttar Pradesh in a money laundering case, just as he, along with his son Abdullah Azam Khan, came out on bail in an alleged PAN fraud case, officials said.

They added that the 78-year-old Azam Khan will be produced before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Ghaziabad on Sunday, where the agency will seek his remand for custodial interrogation.

Khan has been arrested in the money laundering case being investigated against him, officials said.

The politician spoke to reporters outside the Rampur district jail, where he has been lodged since November 2025.

"Kehne ko kya hai (there is nothing to say)...this is a punishment for being a Muslim...the mistake is that a Muslim made a University and school for students..." Khan said as he raised his hand in the air to greet his supporters.

The former Uttar Pradesh Cabinet minister and his son Abdullah Azam Khan obtained relief from the Allahabad High Court on Thursday after it suspended their sentence in the dual PAN cards case. Khan was initially detained by the officials of the ED Lucknow zone amid a heavy posse of central paramilitary and UP police personnel.

Khan's supporters were heard raising slogans in his favour.



The federal probe agency has booked Khan and others under the PMLA, taking cognisance of 58 UP police FIRs registered against him and his alleged associates.

On Wednesday, the ED said it has attached the land and building of Khan's Mohammad Ali Jauhar University in Rampur under the anti-money laundering law. These assets command a current market value of Rs 1,170 crore, it had said in a statement. The agency alleged that

government funds meant for public works were diverted for the construction of the private varsity, as it accused the SP leader of using his influence as the Cabinet minister for Urban Development and the Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam for these alleged irregularities.

The Rampur Development Authority (RDA) has ordered the demolition of 38 buildings on the University campus in July, following which the varsity filed an appeal.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav recently met Khan in jail and accused the BJP government of pursuing a political vendetta against his former cabinet colleague and alleged that false cases had been lodged against him.

The agency carried out raids in this case in August and also questioned Khan.

Delhi Police, lawyers agree on joint panel to resolve grievances

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 31: The Delhi Police and representatives of the legal fraternity have agreed to set up a joint coordination committee to address grievances and resolve issues between police personnel and advocates, an official statement said on Saturday.

The decision was taken at a meeting held on October 30, attended by senior Delhi Police officers, representatives of the Bar Council of Delhi, the Coordination Committee of All District Bar Associations and executive committee members of various district court bar associations.

The proposed committee will serve as an institutional platform for dialogue and consultation to facilitate timely resolution of disputes and prevent misunderstandings between the two sides, the statement said.



It was also decided that dedicated nodal officers would be appointed at the district level and at the Police Headquarters to ensure effective communication and expeditious redressal of issues.

The police will, as far as practicable, inform the concerned Bar Association in cases where an FIR is registered against a practising advocate.

The Bar Associations will provide updated directories, in both digital and physical formats, containing details of their office-bearers and members to the respective district deputy commissioners of police (DCPs).

During the meeting, both sides emphasised the need for police personnel and advocates to treat each other with dignity and mutual respect. Police officials would extend due professional courtesy to advocates at police stations, while lawyers would similarly respect police personnel within court premises, the statement said.

The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere, with participants discussing issues concerning both institutions. They reiterated their shared responsibility towards upholding the rule of law, protecting citizens' rights and ensuring the effective administration of justice.

The initiative aims to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation between the police and the legal fraternity and ensure the smooth functioning of the criminal justice system, it added.

Quick Read

UK opens new safe and legal route for refugees to settle in country



PTI

London, Oct 31 : The UK has announced new “safe and legal” routes for refugees, including Indians, seeking resettlement as part of efforts to curb illegal migration through unsafe routes such as small boats crossing the English Channel.

Home Office Minister for Border Security and Asylum Anna Turley told the House of Commons on Thursday that the new routes will initially operate from seven countries -- India, Bangladesh, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan and Uganda.

To be eligible, refugees will need to be outside their country of nationality and to have been present and registered with relevant authorities or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in one of these countries before October 1 this year.

“The first arrivals through these routes are expected in autumn 2027. The new routes will enable refugees to come to the UK and provide them with an opportunity for a better life,” Turley said.

“However, it is imperative that these routes are only used to support refugees with a genuine need for protection to resettle in the UK. This is why we will work in partnership with the UNHCR who will assess refugees through established processes.

“All refugees who are identified will be required to meet identity, security and eligibility requirements and have suitable sponsorship arrangements in place to be granted status,” she said.

The minister said the move is in keeping with the country’s “compassionate” outlook of living up to its international obligations and saving the lives of those fleeing war and persecution.

Part of the “safe and legal” options for refugees will be a new named community sponsorship, refugee work and refugee study routes to create pathways for them to come to the UK legally to build their lives in the community.

A sponsorship option will connect refugees with universities and employers that are ready to support them.

Para badminton coach Khanna hits back at detractors, denies writing controversial post

PTI

New Delhi, Oct 31 : Indian para badminton coach Gaurav Khanna has hit back at allegations that he deflated the players’ morale at the recent Asian Para Games with a social media post, saying that the charge is nothing but “a misleading public narrative” to discredit him for raising “documented irregularities” in selection issues.

He, however, claimed later that his social media account was hacked, meaning thereby that he did not write the now-deleted controversial post.

“A post appeared on my social media account on night of 22nd (October), around 9:00 (pm). It remained online for approximately three minutes before my team noticed it. My mobile phone and social media accounts had been compromised. I submitted reports to concerned authorities,” Khanna told PTI.

Khanna initially did not reveal that someone had published the controversial social media post without his permission, simply slamming his detractors.

The controversy centres on Khanna’s now-deleted social media post which had predicted that India would finish with fewer medals than it had won in 2022 edition of the Games. A day before the finals, he wrote India would win 16 medals, including two gold, six silver and eight bronze. India eventually won exactly 16 medals (three gold, five silver, eight bronze).

India had won 21 para badminton medals (4 gold, 4 silver, 13 bronze) in 2022 Asian Para Games. The players alleged that they felt severe pressure because of the post and sought an enquiry against Khanna from Sports Authority of India and Sports Ministry.

Khanna, who currently runs a badminton academy in Lucknow, said the accusations against him were levelled several days after the finals and were meant to distract the authorities after he raised the issue of selection-related discrepancies.

“I’m concerned that the public accusations, which began on 27 October, around one week after the briefly visible post were intended to divert attention from the documented irregularities I had raised with higher authorities after Asian Para Games concluded.

Iranian leader warns of retaliation as fears of war escalate, other Mideast news

AP

Dubai, Oct 31 :The Iranian leader threatened an immediate response to a potential attack as fears of renewed war mount. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei urged a stern military reaction to potential US and Israel strikes.

Meanwhile regional leaders called for calm Saturday.

Speaking at a security forum in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia’s Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs said the message from the region is that it wants a return to peace.

Here is the latest news from the Middle East on Saturday. Read our full coverage here. Iran’s supreme leader calls for regional military reaction to potential US, Israeli strikes

Iran’s Supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei urged a stern military reaction to potential US and Israeli strikes, state media said on Saturday.

The official IRNA news agency quoted Khamenei as saying that “any kind and level of threat” should face an immediate response. Khamenei made the comments during a meeting with the military. He said the forces should have combat readiness



to confront their enemies and called for the updating of the target bank for the US and Israel.

The remarks came as concerns rise about a possible return to a full-out war.

Mojtaba Khamenei became supreme leader after the US and Israel launched the war in February killing his father and other high-ranking officials.

Regional leaders call for calm amid fears of a new escalation between the US, Israel and Iran

On Saturday, Saudi Arabia’s vice minister of foreign affairs said the message from the region is that it wants a return to peace. Speaking at a security forum in Bahrain, Waleed Elkhereiji told the audience that efforts were being made

to prevent a military escalation and reach an agreement that ends the crisis with Iran. “If you look at ... the efforts that everybody is trying to do, the message is very clear. People in this part of the world want to bring peace back to the region,” he said. But he said no one can predict the outcome of the efforts.

Concerns are rising about a return to an all-out Iran war.

Speaking at the same event, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said an escalation in the region would be extremely destructive.

“We are very confident that ... the second round will be more dangerous, more destructive, and it will lead to nowhere,” he said.

Syria says border

security with Jordan is a shared responsibility

Syria’s Foreign Minister said Saturday that border security is a shared responsibility between his country and Jordan and that a high-level meeting is expected next month to discuss arrangements.

Speaking Saturday at the security forum in Bahrain, Assad al-Shibani said there are no “skirmishes” between the countries.

The announcement came after Jordanian strikes in Syria raised tensions between the neighbours.

Jordan said the strikes over Syria last week killed 20 militants from the extremist Islamic State group, but acknowledged that civilians had also been killed in the attacks. Syrian authorities reported seven people killed in the strikes, most of them women and children.

Separately, al-Shibani said Syria is in discussions to evaluate joining the Mecca Pact, the Saudi-led defense alliance that includes Turkey and Pakistan.

“Whether Syria joins or not, Syria thinks the region is in dire need of a structure that protects its security,” he said.

Civilians from Russian-occupied Oleshky reach Belarus en route to Ukraine



AP

Chernihiv Region(Ukraine), Oct 31 : Evacuees from Russian-occupied Oleshky in Ukraine arrived in Belarus on Saturday on their way back to Ukraine, part of a major rescue operation carried out under the most significant truce since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine 4½ years ago.

The ceasefire in Ukraine’s southern Kherson region, which the White House says was brokered with help from US first lady Melania Trump, began at 3 am Tuesday and is expected to continue through Sunday evening.

It was a rare joint Russia-Ukraine humanitarian effort, a brief respite in the grim war.

Civilians from Oleshky, on the Dnipro River, began the long journey out of the war-ravaged region in bus convoys on Friday. The estimated 2,000 remaining residents were offered the choice of travelling to Ukrainian- or Russian-held territory, or remaining in the city with replenished food and medical supplies.

Russia’s Ministry of Defence said those who chose to travel from Oleshky to Ukrainian-held territory were taken to the Russian city of Anapa and flown to the Belarusian city of Homel. They were accompanied by Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine’s commissioner for human rights, it said. “We will be home soon!” said a video post from Lubinets at Homel airport.

Four planes with the evacuees landed in Belarus and the passengers would be on Ukrainian territory “within hours,” said Ukrainian lawmaker Davyd Arakhania.

Daughters wait to see their fathers again

Relatives waited on Saturday at the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, along with aid tents, coffee stands and even provisions to feed the pets the evacuees were bringing with them. Volunteers from organizations, including the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders and the World Central Kitchen, were also there.

Liza Paliy, 19, who last saw her father over 2½ years ago when she, her mother and sister fled from the occupied territory while he stayed behind, was among those waiting.

“We thought at that time that it would be a month, two maximum, and we would return, but unfortunately, two years have already passed,” she said.

Daria Pavlyn also waited at the border in hopes of reuniting with her father, Mykhailo, whom she had not heard from in about a month.

He had planned to flee occupied territory with his family after a nearby strike killed two neighbours but stayed behind when arrangements to care for the family’s home and animals fell through.

“We realised that, well, there was no (other) way, and he walked us to the road and that was it — that was the last time” they saw him, Pavlyn said.

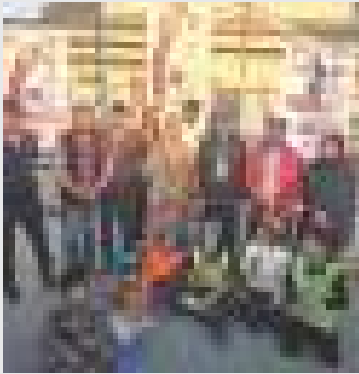
JKSC Secretary attends Srinagar Rollball Championship at Gindun Sports Complex, inspects gymnastics facilities

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 31: Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council, Tazayun Mukhtar, today visited Gindun Sports Complex, Rajbagh, Srinagar, where she attended a two-day District Srinagar Rollball Championship and inspected the ongoing development of the gymnastics centre. She also inspected other sports facilities during her visit.

The District Srinagar Rollball Championship witnessed the participation of around 100 athletes, providing them an opportunity to enhance their skills, interact with fellow players and gain valuable exposure through organised sporting activities.

During the visit, the Secretary J&K Sports Council interacted with the participating athletes and coaches, taking feedback on the camp and encouraging the players to pursue



sports with dedication and discipline.

The athletes also presented a demonstration of their skills through various sporting activities and matches, showcasing their talent and enthusiasm for the game.

The two-day camp concluded with a prize distribution ceremony, where the Secretary felicitated the

participants and appreciated their efforts and performances.

Later, Secretary J&K Sports Council visited the gymnastics hall at the complex, where she interacted with athletes and reviewed the facilities being developed for the promotion of gymnastics in Jammu and Kashmir.

The gymnastics centre is being established by the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council as a state-of-the-art facility, equipped with modern infrastructure and equipment to provide athletes with a conducive environment for training and skill development.

During the interaction, the Secretary emphasised the Council’s commitment to promoting gymnastics on a wider scale and creating opportunities for young athletes to excel at the national and international levels.

JKSC calls stakeholders’ meeting on JKFA executive committee elections

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Oct 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council has convened a consultative meeting with representatives of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and stakeholders of the Jammu and Kashmir Football Association (JKFA) on November 2 in Srinagar to deliberate on the proposed executive committee elections and ensure a transparent electoral process.

All esteemed stakeholders of the Jammu & Kashmir Football Association (JKFA) and affiliated units of JKFA are hereby informed that a high-level consultative meeting is scheduled to be held with the visiting representatives of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), on Monday, 2nd November 2026 at Time: 03:30 PM in Conference Hall, TRC Srinagar.

The deliberations shall focus on critical governance matters to ensure fair and robust electoral process, keeping the larger interest and long-term development of football in Jammu & Kashmir paramount, ensuring genuine district representation, eligibility of voting members, and formulating the clear procedure for transparent electoral execution under independent

supervision.

Your active participation, constructive insights and valuable suggestions are earnestly solicited in the collective interest to strengthen and foster the collective growth of football in Jammu & Kashmir.

All stakeholders are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the deliberation on scheduled date and time. The stakeholders who are unable to attend the meeting physically may participate through virtual mode. The meet-



ing link shall be shared separately. To obtain the link, kindly email on jkstatesportscouncil@gmail.com by or before 02.11.2026 (10:00 AM). image.jpeg

Venus Williams suffers doubles defeat at Guangzhou WTA event

AP

Guangzhou, Oct 31 : Venus Williams has lost in her first WTA Tour semifinal in eight years.

The 46-year-old Williams

and her Indonesian playing partner Janice Tjen lost to Polina Kuderemetova and Maria Timofeeva 6-4, 6-7 (8), 10-6 in the Guangzhou Open doubles semifinals on Saturday.

It marked Williams’ first

WTA Tour doubles semifinal appearance since the 2016 Rio Olympics and Wimbledon, and her first overall tour semifinal since 2018 at Indian Wells, California.

Show Timings

Sunday, 1st November



DRISHYAM: THE CONCLUSION (UA 16+)
HINDI - 11:30 AM, 02:30 PM, 05:30 PM



MIRZAPUR: THE MOVIE (A)
HINDI - 04:40 PM



UDA TEER (UA 16+)
HINDI ATOMS - 12:30 PM, 05:20 PM, 06:10 PM
HINDI - 1:00 AM, 01:50 PM

TICKETS AT: www.bookmyshow.com | www.inoxmovies.com
Paytm, Inox App, or Directly from the booking counter at the cinema.



INOX CINEMA
SHIVPORA SRINAGAR

Call 95416 13868
For assistance with tickets