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SCAN TO VISIT

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LG Sinha sets six-month deadline for 'DYD' rollout in J&K universities

Chairs J&K Higher Education Council meet | Calls for varsities to share credits, labs, resources

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 04: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday set a six-month deadline to roll out the 'Design Your Degree' (DYD) program in universities of the Union Territory (UT).

The Lieutenant Governor according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) passed the directions in a high-level meeting of Jammu Kashmir Higher Education Council (JKHEC), at Lok Bhavan.

The JKHEC met under the leadership of LG Sinha to chart a forward-looking roadmap for higher education.

During the meeting, discussions focused on advancing academic excellence, fostering a culture of research and innovation, and strategically aligning institutions to meet future challenges and leverage emerging opportunities.

The key agendas of the meeting include sharing of academic credit and resources and recasting UG and PG programs in the light of Design Your Degree and National Education Policy 2020.

In the meeting further the modalities to set up a Task Force for integrating AI, Machine Learning, Deep Learning and Data science into UG and PG programs were also discussed.

To drive academic reform, the LG set a six-month deadline for universities in Jammu Kashmir to roll out the 'Design Your Degree' program.

Emphasizing a spirit of collaboration, LG Sinha urged institutions to share academic credits, research laboratories, and resources. "Transforming higher education in Jammu Kashmir into a comprehensive, holistic, and visionary system is a shared responsibility."

LG Sinha said that the time has now come to translate Higher Education Council initiatives into tangible achievements, while ensuring that every student benefits from outcome-oriented asset utilization.

Stressing the need for stronger intra-university collaboration, the Lieutenant Governor noted that successful implementation relies on deep-rooted institutional reform and a solid long-term strategy.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized the integration of artificial intelligence and modern technology into learning programs, stressing the need to pioneer frontier technologies.

He also highlighted that these programs must incorporate local languages and cultures. Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman, JKHEC called for policy directives to align undergraduate and postgraduate | More on P6

Two charred to death as fire guts 80 shelters in Bemina

Mother mourns 16-year-old son – the only earning member; CM Omar announces Rs 2 lakh ex-gratia for kin; 20 families affected

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 04: A mother's desperate plea for help, a father's recollection of his son's last phone call and families left with nothing but the clothes they managed to escape in captured the tragedy after a fire gutted nearly 80 temporary shelters in Durbal area of Bemina in Srinagar, killing two people, including a 16-year-old boy.

The blaze broke out during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, leaving several families homeless, destroying their belongings and claiming the lives of two Delhi natives who were working as scrap collectors in the area.

One of the bereaved mothers, whose 16-year-old son died in the fire, said she received the heartbreaking news around 3 am. "I got the news at 3 in the night that my son was burnt," she said, breaking down, while speaking with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). She has appealed to the government for assistance.

Another family member said the boy had come to visit his relatives in the area just two days before the incident and had spoken to his father over the phone shortly before the tragedy.

"He called me in the middle of the night and said, 'I have come here, but I don't like it here. I will come to Kupwara in the morning.' That was the last thing he said to me," his father Mohammad Rehmet Islam said.

He said the family received news of the tragedy around 2 am, when the entire area had already been engulfed in flames.

The bereaved | More on P6

JP Nadda to visit AIIMS Awantipora today

OPD services likely soon

Jahangeer Ganaie



Awantipora, Nov 04: Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda will visit the under-construction All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Awantipora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday to review the project's progress and preparedness for the start of healthcare services.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Nadda will assess infrastructure, ongoing construction work and preparations for the phased rollout of services at the institute.

The visit is significant as the much-awaited project has missed multiple completion deadlines, with residents across Kashmir awaiting its operationalisation.

The Outpatient Department (OPD) is expected to become functional later this month, subject to the completion of pending works and operational formalities. | More on P6

J&K Govt replaces 2000 KAS probation rules, makes 7 papers mandatory

- 50% qualifying marks prescribed in each paper
- JKPSC to conduct examination twice annually
- Three regular attempts, 1 mercy chance

Raja Syed Rather



Srinagar, Nov 04: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has introduced a major revision in the probation and departmental examination framework for newly recruited Junior Scale officers of the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS), replacing the existing two-decade-old rules and making all seven examination papers compulsory.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the General Administration Department (GAD), through Notification S.O. 278, has notified the Jammu and Kashmir Combined Competitive | More on P6

Winter sets in, temps dip across Kashmir, fog likely to intensify

MeT forecasts brief rain, snowfall over higher reaches today; another wet spell likely on Nov 10–11

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Nov 04: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to receive light rainfall at isolated places and snowfall over higher reaches on Thursday, while temperatures are expected to dip further and morning fog may become more frequent across the region.

Director Meteorological Department Mukhtar Ahmad told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that another weather system is expected to affect Jammu and Kashmir on November 10 and 11, bringing the possibility of light rain in parts of both divisions and snowfall over higher-altitude areas.

Ahmad said weather conditions are likely to remain largely dry across the region after the November 5 spell until November 9.

He said isolated thunderstorms cannot be ruled out during November 10 and 11, although no significant weather activity is expected under the current forecast.

Meanwhile, minimum temperatures continued to remain low across | More on P6

J&K Tourism Dept takes region's natural treasures to London

Director says 'our presence matters', eyes bigger foreign tourist footfall

Waris Fayaz



Srinagar, Nov 04: Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department is showcasing the region's natural treasures and diverse tourism potential at the World Travel Market (WTM) London 2026, aiming to attract a larger number of foreign visitors and strengthen its presence in the international tourism market.

Speaking exclusively to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad said showcasing the region's tourism potential at international platforms is essential to attract visitors from foreign countries.

"We are exhibiting the potential of Jammu | More on P6

Speaker must be satisfied MP's resignation is voluntary: Former LG Secy General

By-poll to be held within 6 months after seat falls vacant

KNO Special Correspondent



Srinagar, Nov 04: Former Lok Sabha Secretary General P.D.T. Achary on Wednesday said the Speaker is required to satisfy himself that a Member of Parliament's resignation is voluntary before accepting it.

Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Achary said that if an MP personally hands over his resignation letter to the Speaker, the latter can accept it without conducting any inquiry.

"If a Member of Parliament goes to the Speaker and submits his resignation in person, the Speaker | More on P6

Discontent persists in NC over cabinet reshuffle

Legislators meet for 3rd time; meeting with NC top brass likely tomorrow

Umer Maqbool

Srinagar, Nov 04: National Conference legislators, upset over the recent cabinet reshuffle-cum-expansion, held their third meeting in Srinagar on Wednesday to deliberate on their future course of action, sources disclosed.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that ten NC legislators met at the government accommodation of MLA Nazir Ahmad Gurezi at Tulsi Bagh here on Wednesday afternoon.

The meeting was attended by 10 MLAs from the Kashmir Valley.

"The MLAs from the Jammu region could not participate in the meeting due to their engagements in their respective constituencies," sources said, adding that a few legislators from the Valley were also unable to attend because of prior commitments.

According to | More on P6

JKBOSE to distribute free textbooks for KG to Class 8 by mid-Nov

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Nov 04: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) on Wednesday said it will start distributing free textbooks for classes KG to 8th by mid-November.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), JKBOSE Chairman, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh said, "We will start distributing free textbooks among students by mid-November."He said that the Board has not received a consignment of revised textbooks of classes 3rd and 6th.

"The textbooks of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th classes have been revised as per the NEP-2020. As of now, we have received revised textbooks of only classes 1st and 2nd and the consignment of free textbooks of classes 3rd and 6th is supposed to arrive by November-12," he said.

JKBOSE Chairman further said that the free textbooks of other classes are available with the Board. "Therefore, we have decided to distribute the free textbooks when all the titles are available with us."

"The 80 percent of syllabi of revised textbooks have been framed by the NCERT and 20 percent by JKBOSE. The revision has been mostly done in science and social science subjects," he said.

Pertinently, the educational institutions across Kashmir Valley begin academic session 2026–27 from November-02 for KG to | More on P6

Srinagar generates 525 tonnes of waste daily, processes only 184.5: SMC tells NGT

Over 10.19 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste remain at Achan; Rs 361-crore integrated facility proposed

Srinagar, Nov 04: Srinagar produces nearly 525 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste daily, but existing infrastructure can process only 184.5 tonnes, leaving a daily shortfall of around 340.5 tonnes, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) told the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The disclosure was made in a status report submitted before the tribunal in Original Application No. 543 of 2024, titled Raja Muzaffar Bhat versus Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, detailing the progress made in managing legacy waste at Achan landfill and plans to strengthen the city's waste-processing infrastructure.

According to the SMC report, accessed by the news agency – Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Achan landfill had accumulated approximately 11 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste. Of this, nearly 80,750 metric tonnes have so far been treated through bio-mining and remediation, while around 10.19 lakh metric tonnes remain to be processed.

The corporation said the remediation process involves excavation, mechanical screening and segregation of waste into different categories for recovery and disposal.

Combustible waste recovered during the | More on P6

Pulwama youth secures AIR 107 in CDS after four years, two setbacks

Says lack of awareness keeps Kashmiri youth away from defence career opportunities

Jahangeer Ganaie



Pulwama, Nov 04: After more than four years of sustained preparation, two unsuccessful attempts and a demanding physical transformation, 22-year-old Mohammad Owais Bhat from Dangerpora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district has secured All India Rank 107 in the Combined Defence Services (CDS) examination.

Owais, who secured the rank in his third attempt, said he drew inspiration from decorated Army officer Brigadier S S Shekhawat, whose achievements and dedication to the armed forces motivated him to pursue a military career.

Speaking to the news agency – Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Bhat said qualifying the examination in his third attempt made the achievement particularly special, as he had experienced two setbacks during his preparation. Recalling those difficult years, he said he had often imagined securing an All India Rank during moments when success appeared distant.

"After four-and-a-half years of struggle and two unsuccessful attempts, | More on P6

Div Com Kashmir reviews progress of Jhelum Water Transport Project

KT News Desk



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 04: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress made in resolving various issues and bottlenecks affecting the progress of water transport facilities along River Jhelum.

The meeting was convened to assess the status of issues faced by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) project and to ensure coordinated efforts among the concerned departments for facilitating the smooth execution and timely advancement of the Jhelum Water Transport Project.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar and Bandipora, Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Kashmir, representatives of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), and officers from the Public Health Engineering (PHE), Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC), Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED) and other concerned departments. During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the progress on several critical issues requiring inter-departmental coordination and timely intervention.

The matters discussed included road widening and removal of trees at Gund Parang, disposal of treated wastewater, and installation of electricity connections and provision of water supply at eight identified locations to facilitate the development of essential infrastructure for water transport operations.

He also reviewed the status of shifting electrical utilities at Maharaj Gunj and Pantha Chowk, emphasising the need for expediting the process to avoid any further delays in the execution of project-related works.

The meeting further deliberated on the development and improvement of approach roads at Sumbal and Sangam, removal of barricading at Amira Kadal, and shifting of houseboats wherever required to facilitate the smooth movement and operation of water transport facilities along the river.

Other important issues reviewed during the meeting included renovation of the Chattabal Navigational Lock, besides relocation of stone-chiselling units and dress vendors operating at Pantha Chowk to ensure that these activities do not impede the progress of the project.

Taking stock of the progress achieved so far, the Divisional Commissioner issued a series of directions to the concerned departments, asking them to take necessary measures and resolve the pending issues on priority.

He stressed the importance of close coordination among all stakeholder departments and called for a result-oriented approach to address the identified bottlenecks within the shortest possible time.

The Divisional Commissioner underscored that the Jhelum Water Transport Project is being closely monitored by the Government of India and, therefore, all concerned departments must demonstrate urgency and ommitment in completing the requisite preparatory works.

He impressed upon the officers to accelerate the pace of work, expedite the shifting of utilities and ensure timely resolution of all pending issues so that the project can move forward without unnecessary delays.

DC Srinagar inspects progress of new State-of-the-Art School for Specially Abled with hearing & speaking challenges at Abhinandan Home

KT News Desk



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 04: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Wednesday visited Abhinandan Home, Solina, inspected the progress of ongoing construction of a new State of the Art School Building complex at the institution, aimed to strengthen educational infrastructure and allied facilities for Kashmir's oldest institution catering specially abled children, particularly those with hearing and speech impairments.

The first-of-its-kind facility in the entire Kashmir Division being developed at an estimated cost of Rs 9.90 crore by R&B Department under the Social Welfare Department is envisaged to provide modern infrastructure and enhanced educational prospects, skill development avenues and employment opportunities for children with special needs, besides creating a more conducive, inclusive and accessible learning environment.

On the occasion, the DC, as per an official statement, reviewed the progress of the ongoing construction works and took stock of various components of the project being undertaken for the welfare and educational advancement of enrolled specially-abled students.

The DC was informed that over 60 percent of the construction work has been completed on the project comprising modern classrooms, Principal's Office, Staff Room, Indoor Games Court, Gymnasium, Medical Room, Therapy Room, Washroom Blocks, Computer Lab, Library, Dormitory and Dining Hall, among other essential facilities.

Expressing satisfaction over the pace of progress, the Deputy Commissioner directed the R&B Engineers to further expedite the pace of work and ensure timely completion of the project by March 2027, while maintaining strict adherence to prescribed quality standards, so that the students and staff of Abhinandan Home can benefit from the upgraded infrastructure at the earliest.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner also handed over a dedicated special school bus for the students of Abhinandan Home to facilitate their transportation and ensure safe, comfortable and convenient commuting for children with special needs.

While interacting with the Students and Staff of Abhinandan Home, the DC assured them of continued support and assistance from the District Administration towards the overall development, welfare and educational empowerment of the children.

The DC also reiterated the District Administration's commitment to exploring avenues for expanding educational opportunities for specially-abled students, including access to higher education, introduction of vocational training and skill development programmes and offering trade diploma courses through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), with a view to strengthening the educational and skill development framework and creating better avenues for self-reliance and employment for children with special needs.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, IAS Probationer, Aakash Garg, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Chief Education Officer, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Ghulam Mohi Ud Din, District Social Welfare Officer, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, Executive Engineer R&B Khalid Mehmood, Executive Engineer Water Works, Aijaz Rafiq, Executive Engineer KPDCl, Tehsildar South, Sajad Rasool Shah, Coordinator Abhinandan Home, Nilofar Sultan, Principal, Mudasir Ahmad and other concerned.

DC Pulwama inaugurates district-level National Youth Festival at GDC Boys Pulwama



KT News Desk

PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 04: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, Wednesday inaugurated the District-Level National Youth Festival under the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBYLD) at Government Degree College (Boys), Pulwama.

The festival, as per an official statement, was organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, Pulwama, with the objective of providing a platform to young talent and encouraging their active participation in nation-building. The festival witnessed enthusiastic participation of boys and girls in the age group of 15 to 29 years from across the district, who showcased their artistic abilities, creativity and cultural expressions through various competitions.

A series of competitions were organised in different disciplines, including Folk Song, Folk Dance, Painting and Poetry. Participants displayed remarkable artistic talent, creativity and enthusiasm, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and vibrant spirit of the district. Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the Department of Youth Services and Sports for organizing the festival in a well-coordinated and systematic manner. He also appreciated the impressive performances of the young participants and encouraged them to make optimum use of such platforms to nurture their skills, enhance their confidence and excel in their respective fields.

He emphasised the importance of providing meaningful opportunities to youth to identify, develop and showcase their potential. He also assured full support and encouragement to deserving and promising young talent, urging participants to remain dedicated and strive for excellence.

The festival continued throughout the day, with participants competing in various categories. To ensure its smooth, fair and transparent conduct, different committees were constituted, while a panel of experts evaluated the performances and identified the most deserving participants for the next level of competition.

The selected participants will represent District Pulwama in their respective categories at the upcoming Inter-District Youth Festival. The event provided an effective platform for promoting youth engagement, artistic expression and cultural preservation, while fostering creativity, confidence and leadership among young people in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat.

BBBP Camp

DC Anantnag calls for promoting education, empowerment

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 04: District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), Anantnag, Wednesday organised a Career Counselling-cum-Distribution Camp under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative at Government Degree College (GDC), Uttersoo, Shangus, in collaboration with the college.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, presided the programme as the Chief Guest.

Addressing on the occasion, the DC, as per an official statement, emphasised the importance of girls' education, empowerment and equal opportunities. He encouraged students to pursue their academic goals with dedication, make informed career choices and take advantage of available opportunities to shape a bright future.

The DC added that girls are excelling and securing top positions in every field through their talent, hard work and determination. He also stressed the need to create awareness about various government welfare initiatives aimed at supporting and empowering girls.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner distributed study material among girl students to facilitate their preparation for various competitive examinations.

Additional District Development Commissioner Anantnag, Principal of the College, District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) and college staff members were present on the occasion.

OFFICE OF THE BLOCK MEDICAL OFFICER LARNOO

E-mail:-bpm. larnoo@jk.gov.in
No:- BMO/ Acctts/L/26-27/ 367- 68. Dated:-29-10-2026

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed **tenders are invited from reputed, eligible, and registered service providers/firms for the repairment** and timely maintenance of gas heaters for the upcoming winter season for the health institutions of Medical Block Larnoo. The repairment of any gas heater must be strictly **completed within 02 (two) days positively from the date of handover. The delivery and withdrawal of all gas heaters shall be executed directly from/to the Office of the Block Medical Officer, Larnoo.**

The interested parties/firms are requested to deposit a CDR of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One Thousand Only) pledged to the BLOCK MEDICAL OFFICER LARNOO, payable at J&K Bank Kokernag.

The parties should submit their tenders to the office of the undersigned within 07 (seven) working days from the date of publication of this notice. The tenders will be opened in the office of the Block Medical Officer, Larnoo, in the presence of the tenderers (or their authorized representatives) on the very next working day, who may wish to be present.

Block Medical Officer
Larnoo.

DIPK-7356/26 DATED: 04-11-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

Name .AABROO MUZAFAR
D/O: MUZAFAR AHMAD SHAH
R/O: BABA WAYIL GANDERBAL
Account number. 017404150002844

NOTICE

This is to inform the concerned authorities and the **general public that the Bank NOC pertaining to the** fol-lowing vehicle has been lost:

- Vehicle No.: JK01AH.9461
- **NOC No.: 4007942-74**
- **Name: Siraj-Ud-Din Qamie**
- **S/o: Abdul Ahad Qamie**
- **R/o: Sehpara, Qamdan**

The original Bank NOC has been misplaced/lost. The undersigned hereby requests the concerned bank/ authority to kindly issue a duplicate/new Bank NOC in respect of the above-mentioned ve-hicle.

Anyone finding the original NOC is requested to kind-ly inform the concerned person or authority.

Siraj-Ud-Din Qamie

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION TANGMARG

EE/R&B/TMG/No. 7206 - 08 DATE:- 04-11-2026

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: Repairs & Renovation of Shik Mandir and Swami Ram Ashram Dharamshala at Phalgam Kunzer.
Reference: NIT No. 98/EE/R&B/ of 2026-27 dated 22/10/2026.

In partial modification of the above mentioned Notice Inviting Tender (NIT), the provisions contained in SBD Clause 4.4(a):- Pre-Qualification Criteria, Clause 1.1 & 2, regarding the experience of similar nature of works and substantial completion of work, shall stand substituted as under:

Existing Experience Clause (to be substituted):

"Having satisfactorily completed or substantially completed, at least one contract of similar nature of work of any Govt./Semi Govt. department during the last five years (Similar nature of work of at least 20% of the value of proposed contract during the last five years. (Certificate to this effect to be issued by an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent.) No Escalation factor is allowed for similar nature of work. The work may have been executed by the Applicant as prime contractor or as a member of joint venture. In case a project has been executed by a joint venture, weight-age towards experience of the project would be given to each joint venture partner in proportion to their participation in the joint venture."

Revised Experience Clause (to be read as under):

"Successfully completed or substantially completed similar works during the last seven years ending last day of month previous to the one in which applications are invited should be either of the following:

1.1 Three similar completed works costing not less than the amount equal to 40 (forty) percent of the estimated cost;
OR
1.2 Two similar completed works costing not less than the amount equal to 50 (fifty) percent of the estimated cost;
OR
1.3 One similar completed work costing not less than the amount equal to 80 (eighty) percent of the estimated cost."

Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION TANGMARG

Email:- xenrbtangmarg@gmail.com EE/R&B/TMG/No. 7206-08 DATE: 04-11-2026

Existing Substantial completion Clause (to be substituted):

The applicant should also have achieved the minimum annual production value of the key Construction activities (e.g. dredging, piling, or earth works etc) stipulated. The similarity of work shall be pre-defined based on the physical size, complexity methods/technology and / or work characteristics, and scope of works. Substantial completions shall be based on 80 (eighty) percent (value wise) or more works completed under the contract. 4 However, in case of Road/Bridge works under MoRTH, NABARD and State Sector, the guidelines as circulated by MoRTH shall apply as in case of Road/Bridge works under PMGSY; the guidelines as circulated by PMGSY shall apply.

Revised Substantial completion Clause (to be read as under):

"The applicant should also have achieved the minimum annual production value of the key Construction activities (e.g. dredging, piling, or earth works etc) stipulated. The similarity of work shall be pre-defined based on the physical size, complexity methods/technology and / or work characteristics, and scope of works. Substantial completions shall be based on 80 (eighty) percent (value wise) or more works completed under the contract. 4 However, in case of Road/Bridge works under MoRTH, NABARD and State Sector, the guidelines as circulated by MoRTH shall apply as in case of Road/Bridge works under PMGSY; the guidelines as circulated by PMGSY shall apply."

All other terms and conditions of the original NIT/SBD shall remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer R&B Division, Tangmarg

DIPK-7358/26 DATED: 04-11-2026

NC links Ruhullah's exit with BJP

Claims 'Operation Lotus' successful



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar: A day after Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi announced his exit from the National Conference, the party on Wednesday launched a scathing counterattack, with MLA Salman Ali Sagar claiming that BJP has succeeded in its "Operation Lotus" by pushing the Srinagar MP out of the party.

Questioning Ruhullah's decision to walk away instead of resolving differences within the organisation, Salman, said the NC's strength did not depend on any individual, as Banihal MLA Sajad Shaheen also accused the MP of betraying the party and the electorate that had elected him.

Addressing a joint press conference at Nawai Subah, party headquarters, the duo said Ruhullah had every democratic right to question the party leadership, express disagreement and take independent decisions, but should have raised his grievances through the party's internal forums.

MLA Salman Sagar said the National Conference is a democratic organisation where every member had the right to speak and raise questions. He termed the language used by Ruhullah against the party leadership unfortunate, saying political differences should be expressed within the bounds of dignity and decorum.

"I feel the BJP has succeeded in its Operation Lotus, particularly in pushing Aga Ruhullah Sahib out of the National Conference," he said.

MLA Salman said the BJP had been attempting to weaken the National Conference for years and the latest developments had served its political interests in Kashmir.

Referring to BJP's earlier political gains in Jammu, he cited the exits of former NC leaders, including late Devender Singh Rana and Surjit Singh Salathia, saying the BJP had now succeeded in getting Ruhullah out of the party as well.

He said the developments needed to be viewed in the wider political context of attempts to weaken the National Conference and its political influence in Jammu and Kashmir.

NC'S STRENGTH RESTS ON ITS COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Questioning Ruhullah's engagement with the party, Salman said the MP had not regularly visited the party headquarters or made sufficient efforts to reach out to party legislators and other stakeholders. He also asked how many times Ruhullah had personally approached MLAs to discuss his grievances or mobilise them on issues concerning the party and the people.

Salman said differences could have been resolved through dialogue, adding that the party leadership had expected him to engage with its elected representatives rather than take such a major decision.

Rejecting suggestions that Ruhullah's departure reflected any weakness within the NC, Salman said the party's strength rested on its collective leadership, political ideology and the mandate given by the people, rather than any individual.

He said people have voted the National Conference to power to protect their political identity, representation and rights, and not because of any one leader. Referring to Articles 370 and 35A, Salman said the NC's core political agenda remained unchanged and could not be judged through the developments involving an individual leader.

He said the party had consistently shared its position on restoration of special status and statehood, adding that its political commitment had been reflected in the resolutions passed by the government and the Assembly.

On the reservation issue, Salman said the National Conference had acknowledged concerns over the existing reservation policy and had included corrective measures in its election manifesto.

He said a Cabinet sub-committee had examined the matter

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

BJP misled Ruhullah, trying to weaken NC: Dy CM



Yogesh

Jammu, Nov 04: Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Wednesday accused the BJP of trying to weaken the National Conference (NC), alleging that the party had misled Srinagar MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi.

Reacting to Ruhullah's resignation from the NC, Choudhary said the party had consistently maintained that the BJP was attempting to create divisions within it.

Referring to reported remarks by senior BJP leader Ram Madhav after Ruhullah's programme, Choudhary said Madhav had claimed that people attending the event were sent by the BJP.

"If Ram Madhav himself is saying that his people attended Aga Sahib's programme, then why are you questioning us? BJP should clarify its position," Choudhary told reporters.

Describing Ruhullah as a decent and honourable person, the Deputy Chief Minister alleged that the BJP had misled him and sought an explanation for Madhav's remarks.

Choudhary also accused the BJP of creating

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Jammu, Nov 04: Rahul Sahai, Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Jammu Chapter, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on the third day of the Darbar Move to Jammu for the six-month winter period. Sahai presented an idol of Shri Panchmukhi Hanuman ji, revered as a symbol of strength, wisdom and divine protection, as a mark of reverence, conveying wishes for continued strength and fulfilment in public service.

The meeting covered key trade and industry matters concerning Jammu, including the impact of geopolitical developments on supply chains, input costs and business sentiment.

Sahai also briefed the Lieutenant Governor on ICC's activities and initiatives to strengthen industry engagement and promote entrepreneurship in the region.

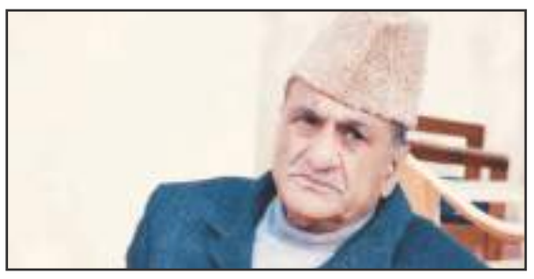
Extending advance Diwali and festive greetings, Sahai wished the Lieutenant Governor and his family happiness, peace and prosperity.

In the meantime, Rajan Kapoor, President, Shri Amarnathji Yatra Bhandara Organisation

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

CM Omar condoles demise of Ghulam Qadir Pardesi

Expresses condolences to party colleague Ahsan Pardesi



KT News Desk

Jammu, Nov 04: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday expressed heartfelt condolences to MLA Lal Chowk Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed Pardesi on the demise of his father, Ghulam Qadir Pardesi, a respected former Member of the Legislative Council and senior leader.

The Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Ghulam Qadir Pardesi, remembering his contributions as a former legislator and his distinguished service as a bureaucrat.

The Chief Minister prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and the highest place in Jannat, while seeking strength and patience for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

Sopore MBBS student found dead in Bangladesh

Family seeks repatriation



KNO

Sopore: A medical student from Dangerpora area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district was found dead in Bangladesh, leaving his family in shock.

The family said that Adnan had travelled to Bangladesh around 15 days ago alongwith his mother and was scheduled to appear in his first examination of the final semester.

The family said they lost contact with him two days ago and were subsequently informed that he was missing. "We were informed on Tuesday evening that our beloved family member had been found dead near a water body," a family member said.

The deceased was identified as Adnan Ahmed Rather, son of Mohammad Altaf Rather, who was pursuing MBBS in Bangladesh and was in the final semester of his course.

The family appealed to the Government of India to intervene, coordinate with the authorities in Bangladesh and ensure that Adnan's mortal remains are brought back home at the earliest—(KNO)

Two Army men killed in Namika La Pass road accident

KNO Correspondent

Leh, Nov 04: Two Indian Army personnel were killed after a military vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge near Namika La Pass on National Highway-1 in Ladakh, officials said on Wednesday.

An official said that the accident took place near Namika La Pass, where the Army vehicle lost control and fell into a deep gorge.

He said both personnel onboard the vehicle died on the spot, while their identities are yet to be ascertained.

The official said further details regarding the circumstances leading to the accident are awaited and that an investigation is underway—(KNO)

HC introduces structured training framework for newly inducted Civil Judges

Raja Syed Rather



Srinagar, Nov 04: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has introduced a structured framework for the field training of newly inducted Civil Judges (Junior Division), making practical courtroom exposure, supervised judicial drafting and regular performance assessment key components of their induction programme.

According to the details available, the guidelines, approved by the High Court, prescribe a comprehensive training mechanism aimed at developing the judicial, procedural and analytical skills required by trainee judges before they take up independent judicial responsibilities.

As per the order, each trainee will be attached to a designated court and placed under the supervision of the judicial officer holding its additional charge, who will function as the mentor judge and monitor the trainee's progress throughout the field training period.

Trainees will be required to remain stationed at their assigned places during the training period and cannot leave without prior approval from the competent authority.

The High Court has clarified that trainees will not automatically acquire judicial or administrative powers by virtue of their placement. They may exercise the powers of a Judicial Magistrate First Class only to the extent specifically delegated by the High Court and subject to prescribed conditions.

The regular judicial and administrative responsibilities of the concerned court will continue to remain with the officer holding additional charge.

During court proceedings, trainees will observe and participate in judicial work under the direct supervision of their mentor judges. Their assignments will include studying case proceedings, analysing evidence, preparing witness statements wherever required and drafting orders on procedural and interlocutory matters.

On days when their mentor judges are not scheduled to hold court, trainees will undertake case-preparation exercises involving matters listed for subsequent hearings.

In civil cases, they will examine pleadings and documents and prepare draft issues, depending on the stage of proceedings. In criminal matters, they will study police reports, complaints, witness statements and other relevant records and prepare draft charges wherever required.

The training programme also includes preparation of draft interim orders and final judgments in both civil and criminal cases. Trainees will be expected to analyse facts, identify legal issues, assess evidence, examine relevant statutory provisions and precedents and develop reasoned judicial conclusions.

They may also be assigned to prepare draft questions for accused persons under Section 313 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, or the corresponding provision under Section 351 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, as applicable.

All drafts prepared by trainees will be submitted to their mentor judges for scrutiny, guidance and necessary corrections. Mentors may ask trainees to revise or rewrite their drafts to address shortcomings and improve their judicial writing.

Importantly, the High Court has clarified that drafts prepared during training will remain academic and practical exercises and will not have the status of judicial orders or judgments. They cannot be issued, pronounced or incorporated into court records as judicial determinations.

The mentor judges will conduct continuous assessments of trainees, examining their understanding of case facts, identification of legal issues, application of laws and precedents, appreciation of evidence, clarity of reasoning and overall approach towards judicial proceedings.

They will also ensure that trainees receive adequate exposure to different categories of civil and criminal cases and various stages of judicial proceedings.

The guidelines further require mentor judges to maintain detailed records of each trainee's performance, progress, strengths and areas requiring improvement. Evaluated draft judgments and assessment reports will be preserved for submission to the Jammu and Kashmir Judicial Academy whenever required.

Principal District and Sessions Judges have been entrusted with ensuring the effective implementation of the framework in their respective districts, including arrangements for court sittings, supervision and practical training.

The trainees will also be required to maintain strict confidentiality of judicial records and proceedings and adhere to the standards of discipline, conduct and professional responsibility expected of judicial officers.

The Judicial Academy may seek progress reports, performance assessments, draft judgments and other training material through the concerned district judges at any stage.

The High Court said the framework is intended to ensure structured, continuous and result-oriented exposure to the judicial decision-making process in civil and criminal matters.

The order was issued by the Registrar General of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh—(KNO)

Srinagar–Katra special trains for Nov 5-6



KNO

Srinagar, Nov 04: To accommodate the additional rush of passengers during the festival season, Northern Railway will operate unreserved special trains between Srinagar and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on November 5 and 6.

According to an official railway communication, train number 04690 will depart from Srinagar at 11:45 am and reach Anantnag at 12:57 pm before proceeding towards Banihal.

The train will depart from Banihal at 1:32 pm and reach Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra at 3:30 pm.

In the return direction, train number 04689 will depart from Katra at 4:00 pm and reach Banihal at 6:25 pm. It will depart from Banihal at 6:27 pm, reach Anantnag at 7:00 pm and arrive in Srinagar at 7:45 pm.

The special service will cover a distance of 188.7 kilometres and comprise one DPC-2 and six TC coaches, the communication said—(KNO)

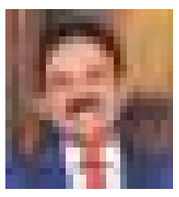
EDITORIAL

Critical Care, Critical Gaps

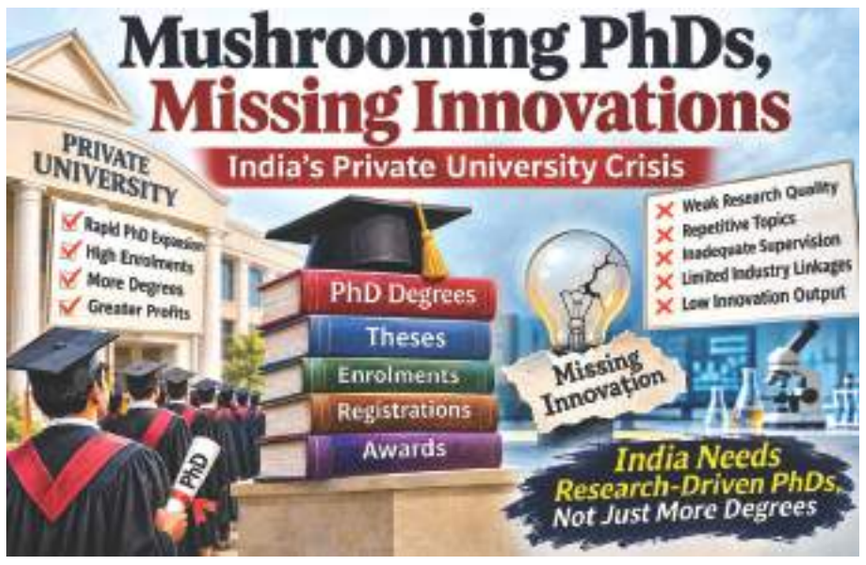
The Intensive Care Unit is the last line of defence in a hospital. When a patient is critical — after a road accident, a heart attack, a stroke or a complicated delivery — everything depends on whether that patient can be put on a ventilator in time, whether there is a trained intensivist on duty, and whether the monitors and oxygen supply are working. In a good ICU, lives are saved. In a poor one, they are lost. So, the Jammu and Kashmir Government's decision to set up a high-level committee, following Supreme Court directions, to strengthen ICU services across the Union Territory is a welcome and serious step. What is notable is that the committee has not been asked to merely report. It has been asked to prepare a consolidated, institution-wise action plan within fifteen days — identifying gaps, remedies, funding and timelines. The scope is sensible. The committee will assess Level-I, Level-II and Level-III ICUs, look at shortages of specialists, nurses and equipment, examine infection control and patient safety, and study the condition of ICUs in remote and hilly areas, where the real burden lies. Tele-ICU, referral linkages and real-time information on ICU bed availability are practical ideas, because many deaths happen not because a bed exists somewhere, but because no one knows where it is. The inclusion of private hospitals and the search for CSR and NGO funding show a realistic approach. Public money is limited. Partnerships can help. But everything depends on follow-through. Reports are easy to write; beds, ventilators and trained staff are harder to deliver. The government must publish progress, not just plans. Still, the direction is right. An ICU is not a luxury. It is the difference between a family that waits anxiously outside a ward and one that is told to take the body home. This committee, if it works honestly, can make that difference.

Mushrooming PhDs, Missing Innovations

India must move from PhD expansion to research excellence. Without innovation, the mushrooming of doctoral degrees risks becoming an expansion of credentials rather than an advancement of knowledge.



Prof. R.K. Uppal



India's higher education system is witnessing an unprecedented expansion of doctoral programmes, particularly in private universities. PhD degrees, once regarded as the highest symbol of intellectual achievement, are increasingly becoming a subject of concern. The critical question is no longer how many doctoral scholars India produces, but how much knowledge, innovation, and social transformation these scholars contribute. The mushrooming of PhD programmes without corresponding improvements in research quality threatens the credibility of Indian academia.

Private universities have played an important role in expanding access to higher education. They have invested in infrastructure, introduced new academic programmes, and created opportunities for research scholars. However, the rapid growth of doctoral enrolments also raises serious questions about institutional preparedness, research supervision, academic integrity, and the actual contribution of doctoral research. Expansion without quality is not progress; it is an invitation to academic mediocrity.

A PhD is not merely an academic qualification. It represents the ability to identify a meaningful research problem, develop original ideas, apply rigorous methodologies, and contribute new knowledge to society. Unfortunately, in some institutions, the doctoral process risks becoming a mechanical exercise involving admission, registration, coursework, thesis submission, and the award of a degree. When the emphasis shifts from intellectual discovery to procedural completion, the very purpose of doctoral education is undermined.

The central concern is the growing disconnect between the number of PhDs produced and the innovations generated. India needs researchers who develop new technologies, improve agricultural productivity, strengthen financial institutions, address healthcare challenges, and provide solutions to pressing social and economic problems. Yet, research that remains confined to university libraries, with little practical application or academic influence, cannot adequately serve the country's developmental aspirations.

Another serious concern is the quality of research supervision. A doctoral supervisor is expected to act as a mentor, intellectual guide, and guardian of academic integrity. However, excessive supervisory workloads, inadequate research infrastructure, and weak institutional monitoring can compromise the quality of doctoral training. In some cases, the relationship between supervisor and scholar may become excessively hierarchical, limiting independent thinking and intellectual creativity.

The problem is not exclusive to private universities. Public institutions also face challenges related to research quality, funding, supervision, and accountability. Nevertheless, private universities must demonstrate that their doctoral programmes are driven by academic excellence rather than institutional expansion or the commercial value of higher education. The credibility of a university depends not on the number of PhD scholars it enrols but on the quality of its research outcomes.

The proliferation of repetitive research topics is another major challenge. Numerous doctoral theses address similar problems using conventional methodologies, with limited originality or meaningful theoretical advancement. Research scholars may spend years examining familiar issues without producing fresh insights. A doctoral thesis that merely reproduces existing knowledge, changes the geographical setting, or applies an established model to another dataset cannot automatically be considered a significant contribution.

The growing availability of artificial intelligence and digital research tools has further complicated the situation. While these technologies can improve research efficiency, they may also encourage superficial scholarship when used without intellectual discipline. Automated literature reviews, mechanically generated research proposals, and poorly verified data analysis can weaken the foundations of doctoral research. Universities must ensure that technology strengthens critical thinking rather than replacing it.

India's research ecosystem must move beyond a degree-oriented model towards an innovation-oriented framework. Doctoral programmes should be evaluated on their ability to produce original knowledge, patents, prototypes, policy recommendations, high-quality publications, and solutions to real-world problems. Not every PhD must produce a patent or commercial product, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. However, every doctoral thesis must demonstrate originality, methodological rigour, and a defensible contribution to knowledge.

The government, University Grants Commission, and other regulatory authorities must strengthen the monitoring of doctoral programmes. Universities should be required to demonstrate adequate research infrastructure, qualified supervisors, transparent admission procedures, and effective mechanisms for assessing research quality. Independent academic audits should examine not only the number of PhDs awarded but also the originality, relevance, and impact of doctoral research.

Private universities must also establish a culture of research accountability. Doctoral admissions should be aligned with supervisory capacity and available research resources. Research scholars should receive meaningful academic mentoring, access to laboratories and libraries, opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, and exposure to national and international research networks. Universities must encourage scholars to pursue difficult questions rather than merely complete predetermined research projects.

Industry–academia collaboration can provide an important pathway towards productive research. Universities should identify research problems emerging from manufacturing, banking, agriculture, healthcare, education, and emerging technologies. Such collaboration can make doctoral research more relevant to India's economic and social development. At the same time, fundamental research must remain protected because innovation often emerges from curiosity-driven scientific investigation.

India's ambition to become a developed nation by 2047 cannot be achieved through the multiplication of academic degrees alone. The country needs researchers capable of questioning established assumptions, developing original ideas, and translating knowledge into meaningful outcomes. Private universities have a significant responsibility in this national mission.

The time has come to reconsider the meaning and purpose of a PhD. A doctoral degree must represent intellectual independence, academic integrity, and genuine research achievement. The challenge before Indian higher education is not to produce more PhDs at any cost, but to produce better researchers who can contribute to knowledge, innovation, and national development.

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.

Stock Up On Essentials And 'Be Ready' Because Adversity Is Coming

In the current climate of escalating wars, discord and disconnection, and the apparent collapse of the rules-based international order, anything is possible

Mohamed Chebaro

The UK government this week launched a new "Be Ready" campaign advising the public to stock up on at least three days' worth of supplies in case of severe weather, cyberattacks or, God forbid, a major incident or war.

The two-page document called on people to ensure they have water, non-perishable food, a torch and batteries, and a radio, preferably of the wind-up variety that does not require electricity, so that they can stay connected in case the digital realm was unavailable. Of course, the campaign also advises having a first aid kit on hand, as well as a passport or other form of identification.

The defense secretary, Wes Streeting, said as he unveiled the campaign that it marked the start of a three-year drive to boost levels of preparedness among the general public. It forms part of the official response to the threat of incidents such as floods, wildfires or cybercrimes that could disrupt public services.

Streeting previously called for a "whole-of-society approach" to boost national resilience, urging people to be alert but not alarmed. He later told the British people that the UK must also be ready for war within 1,000 days, as adversaries were preparing to attack Britain by 2030.

The public reaction to his calls, and the apocalyptic warnings accompanying them, was rather tame, with occasional examples of ridicule and banter. But generally, the traditional British wartime motto of "Stay calm and carry on" reigned supreme, and the public understood that nowadays we could all be living on borrowed time.

In the current climate of escalating wars, discord and disconnection, and the apparent collapse of the rules-based international order, anything is possible. But would a few cans of food, bottles of water and a wind-up radio really help us survive a catastrophe? I am not so sure.

If we take Streeting's words at face value, one firstly wonders how serious the nature of the threat actually is, and secondly about the readiness of the UK and its people to fight back if required. Is three years enough time to mobilize, and where will the state find the money and industrial capacity to bring its armed forces and national resilience up to par?

The British Armed Forces are depleted, we are told, after decades of cuts and austerity measures. The resilience of the nation, should it be faced with modern, untested and untried types of hybrid threats from states or terror groups, has diminished to pre-Second World War levels, according to experts.

The third, and most important, question, therefore, is whether people in the UK would be likely to answer any call to mobilize and fight at all.

The "Be Ready" campaign is clearly simply calling for people to exercise some common sense. To my mind, however, more lasting changes at a state level and in wider society are required if such warnings are to even scratch the surface of efforts to ensure the country is more resilient and better prepared for any challenges.

In the 1980s, at the height of the Cold War, the British government launched a national "Protect and Survive" campaign that offered guidance on steps people should take to increase the chances of surviving a nuclear attack. The general response among the public was one of skepticism and disbelief; few people started digging shelters in their back yards. This was despite the fact that major, life-threatening calamities were not foreign to that generation; memories of the Second World War were still fresh in many people's minds, compared with today.

Looking back at what has been happening in the past few years, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, I will never be one to interpret calls for readiness as mere posturing or empty apocalyptic rhetoric.

In this era of rapid technological transition, climate change, hybrid state- and non-state-authored aggression, and the withering of restraints, societies, especially those in the Western Hemisphere, have been under concerted psychological warfare that aims to break social cohesion and the system that maintains it.

The "Be Ready" campaign is an important opening shot in efforts to address this. The warning from ministers and generals that the armed forces need to be modernized is also important, despite colossal constraints in the amount of money, materials and labor that is available to do so.

The issue here is not just the need for the public to stock up and be prepared. There are questions about state institutions and whether or not they will play their part, too. Recent reports have identified dozens of exposures that have undermined the resilience of the nation. At the outbreak of the pandemic, for example, the country lacked adequate supplies of protective gear and ventilators, as well as available hospital beds.

Today, Britain would find it challenging to arm, feed, heat or heal itself in an emergency. "Import" is the name of the game in meeting demand, from food-supply chains that are increasingly vulnerable, to supplies of iron, steel, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas that are at the mercy of complex geopolitical events, intensive competition, and market and international forces.

Even "special relationships," like the long-cherished one between the UK and the US, can no longer be relied upon in this age of tariffs, protectionism and a "me first" mentality. As globalization deconstructs, supply chains are under increasing stress and Britain does not have stockpiles of food like some other nations, such as Germany and Poland.

Only 25 percent of the generic drugs the UK needs are produced in the country. In the event of a catastrophe, London would have to rely on goodwill and humanitarian aid from countries such as China, from which Britain sources 90 percent its penicillin and a large portion of its antibiotics.

Despite the green transition and renewable energy, Britain remains a net importer of all types of fuel, and the country's energy mix is the costliest in Europe.

The list goes on and would get much longer if we consider digital connectivity, artificial intelligence, missile shields, or enough working planes and frigates to protect UK territory, let alone project, even mildly, the nation's former power.

Personally, I have a natural, built-in inclination to stock up, always; as a child who grew up during Lebanon's civil war, a little bag close to the door was a mainstay in my mind, always packed and ready to go with paper IDs, a torch, transistor radio, water and nonperishable food sufficient for days and nights in a shelter.

Britain, like the rest of Europe, must now grapple with how best to shift public perceptions and encourage people to take the "Be Ready" campaign seriously. Even more challenging, the government needs to find the money to build lasting resilience. Resilience in capitalist societies comes at a price.

This latest government pronouncement shows that British authorities are waking up to extant threats and are not in denial about them. The questions that remain are whether they are ready to foot the bill for preparedness and transformation, and are capable of fighting back and eliminating the threats rather than simply tallying them.

Mohamed Chebaro is a British-Lebanese journalist with more than 25 years of experience covering war, terrorism, defense, current affairs and diplomacy. Courtesy: Arab News

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

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Div Com, IGP Jammu review Diwali preparations

KT News Desk



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 04: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Vikas Kundal, along with Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone Tejinder Singh, chaired a meeting to review the arrangements made by district administrations and concerned departments for the smooth and peaceful celebration of the forthcoming festival of Diwali.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, threadbare discussions were held on various aspects of the festive arrangements, with a focus on the availability of essential civil supplies, security arrangements, traffic management, connectivity and civic amenities to facilitate the public.

Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police sought detailed feedback from district administrations and Heads of Departments regarding the preparedness and arrangements being put in place for the festival.

Divisional Commissioner directed all officers to ensure visible presence of the administration on the ground and maintain close coordination among departments for prompt redressal of public issues.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department was directed to ensure the availability of fire tenders at designated locations, particularly near firecracker sale points, to deal with any emergency situation.

The Legal Metrology Department was directed to conduct regular checks in shops while ensuring that shopkeepers are not unnecessarily harassed.

Emphasising food safety during the festive season, the Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned department to maintain strict vigil against the sale of adulterated and substandard food items, reiterating zero tolerance towards fake and unsafe food products.

He stressed that all departments must work in close coordination and ensure that necessary arrangements are in place well in advance so that people can celebrate Diwali in a safe, peaceful and hassle-free atmosphere.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation; Deputy Commissioners of all districts of Jammu Division; Director General, Rural Sanitation; Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration; Director, FCS & CA; Directors of Floriculture, Tourism and Urban Local Bodies; Director, Rural Development Department; SSP Security, Jammu and other concerned officers.

Arrangements reviewed for JKSSB Accounts Assistant exam in Jammu

KT News Desk



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 04: District Magistrate Jammu, Minga Sherpa Wednesday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for the conduct of the JKSSB OMR-based examination for the recruitment of Accounts Assistants in the Finance Department.

The exam, as per an official statement, being conducted by JKSSB, is scheduled to be held on November 15 at 1 pm. A total of 33,577 candidates are expected to appear at 84 centres set up in the district.

The meeting was attended by ADM Ansuya Jamwal; RTO Jasmeet Singh; Assistant Commissioner Nazool Vinay Kumar and JKSSB members besides concerned district officers.

The DM reviewed the department-wise action plans and issued important directions on the spot. He also gave general instructions on security, power supply, traffic management and physical inspection of examination centres.

He directed to set up control rooms at all examination centres and clearly labelled for easy identification. He also stressed timely installation of CCTV cameras at the centres.

The deployment of invigilators and magistrates was reviewed. Centre Superintendents, Deputy Centre Superintendents and invigilation staff were directed to visit their respective centres a day before the examination.

The meeting also reviewed availability of emergency medical services, amenities such as toilets and drinking water, provision of videography and biometric verification by JKSSB and the safe and secure delivery of examination material.

Madan Mantoo passes away, DIPR condoles demise

KT News Desk



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 04: The Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) has condoled the demise of its former Deputy Director-Public Relations, Madan Lal Mantoo, popularly known as Madan Mantoo, who breathed his last here last night after suffering a massive cardiac arrest.

Originally hailing from Baramulla, Madan Mantoo, by dint of hardwork, served the Department in various capacities, including Press Officer to Chief Minister, Deputy Director-PR, Director PR-Raj Bhawan and other positions. Even after retirement he continued his passion for writing.

A condolence meeting, in this regard, was convened on Wednesday in which Director Information, Mamta Yadav and other senior officers and officials of the Department paid rich tributes to him. They prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

Paying glowing tributes, the officers, as per an official statement, recalled the contribution of late Mantoo as an intelligent officer endowed with high professional acumen who discharged every assignment with highest degree of professional acumen. Colleagues and subordinates, equally, were fond of his capabilities and exceptional aptitude for work, the participants recalled.

The meeting observed that late Mantoo has left an indelible mark in the domain of skilled writing and public relations. A two minutes silence was observed on the occasion as a mark of respect to the departed officer.

Beyond his official assignments, late Mantoo was regarded as an affable colleague to his peers and an inspiring mentor to his subordinates. A keen observer and a prolific writer, he remained deeply in touch with his colleagues and friends spread across Jammu and Kashmir till his death.

Presently contributing to a reputed English daily, his editorial acumen and creative writings had a stupendous and lasting impact on the society.

Former colleagues and officers with whom he had worked have also condoled the demise of Madan Mantoo and prayed for his departed soul and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family.

KU-IDEA begins national conference on ODL, online education

KT News Desk



Srinagar, Nov 4: The Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with the Indian Distance Education Association (IDEA), began a two-day national conference on 'Re-imagining ODL and Online Education Across Disciplines and Pedagogies: Challenges and Prospects' at the Main Campus on Wednesday.

The conference, as per a KU statement, aims to discuss the changing nature of open and distance learning (ODL) and online education, with a focus on new teaching methods, digital technologies, student engagement and access to quality education. It also seeks to bring together academicians, researchers and education professionals to exchange ideas on addressing the challenges and exploring new possibilities in the field.

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her message, said that NEP 2020 places strong emphasis on flexible, inclusive and technology-enabled learning.

"We should align ODL and online education with the vision of NEP 2020 by promoting multidisciplinary learning, digital innovation and equitable access to quality higher education," she said.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Dean Academic Affairs KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, said that distance and online education have expanded access to higher education, and stressed on the need to maintain academic quality while adapting to changing technologies and learner needs.

"The future of online education depends on making learning accessible, flexible and academically meaningful," he said.

Secretary General IDEA, Dr. L.V.K. Reddy, said that distance learning has an important role in making higher education more inclusive. He highlighted the need for institutions to strengthen their digital infrastructure, improve course delivery and adopt learner-centred approaches.

Prof. Mushtaq Patel, faculty member at CDOE, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad, delivered the keynote address. Providing a historical overview of distance education, he spoke about its evolution from traditional correspondence-based learning to technology-enabled online platforms. He said that the changing educational landscape calls for new pedagogical approaches while retaining the core principles of flexibility and accessibility.

Dean, School of Open Learning KU, Prof. Tariq Ahmad Chisti, emphasised the need to continuously review teaching practices and course content to make distance and online education more relevant to contemporary requirements.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Director CDOE KU, Prof. Mohd Altaf Ahanger, said that the conference would provide an opportunity to examine the current challenges in ODL and online education and discuss ways to improve its reach and effectiveness.

The two-day conference features technical sessions, panel discussions and academic presentations on different aspects of open and online education, including emerging technologies, teaching practices, quality assurance and student support.

DC Udhampur holds public outreach programme at Kulwanta



KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, NOVEMBER 04: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Ananth Dwivedi Wednesday conducted an extensive tour of the remote Kulwanta Block and convened a public outreach programme to take stock of local issues and listen to the grievances and developmental aspirations of the people.

The programme, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh, district officers, former PRI representatives and a large number of people from the adjoining Panchayats of the Block.

During the interaction, former PRI members and locals projected several demands and issues concerning their respective areas.

They demanded adequate staff in government schools, augmentation of drinking water, land compensation, better mobile connectivity, bus service for students, repair of dilapidated roads, reviving nonfunctional Anganwadi Centres, establishment of a Veterinary Centre at Chigla Balota, construction of Panchayat Ghar, upgradation of local High School to Higher Secondary School and uninterrupted power supply, among other issues.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said that the primary objective of such outreach programmes is to obtain firsthand feedback on grassroots-level issues and strengthen the public service delivery mechanism. He emphasised that these interactions enable the District Administration to better understand the genuine concerns of the people and ensure responsive, transparent and people-centric governance.

Accounts Assistant (F) Test: 18 Exam Centres set up for 5496 candidates in Poonch

DC directs for foolproof security, smooth conduct of examination

KT News Desk

POONCH, NOVEMBER 04: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma Wednesday chaired a meeting to review and finalize arrangements for the smooth and transparent conduct of the OMR-based objective-type written test for the recruitment of Accounts Assistant (Finance). The exam is being conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB).

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Meena; Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Muhammad Sayeed; SDMs, CMO, Chief Education Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Treasury Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, District Information Officer, Tehsildars, Executive Engineers, besides heads of the educational institutions.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner informed the meeting that the examination will be held on November 15, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, at 18 examination centres across the district, where a total of 5,496 candidates are expected to appear.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and ensure that all requisite arrangements are completed well in advance. He directed for uninterrupted power and water supply during the examination. Special emphasis was laid on foolproof security, proper seating plans, timely deployment of staff and secure transportation of examination material from the strong room to the designated examination centres.

The Deputy Commissioner also stressed strict enforcement of examination guidelines and directed that mobile phones, digital watches and other electronic gadgets shall not be permitted inside the examination halls.

The invigilators and examination staff were directed to report at their respective centres well in advance and discharge their duties with utmost responsibility, vigilance and impartiality.

DDC Pulwama chairs Public Outreach-cum-Grievance Redressal Camp at Eidgah Shar Pampore

KT News Desk



PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 04: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Pulwama, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, Wednesday chaired a Public Outreach-cum-Grievance Redressal Camp at Eidgah Shar, Block Pampore, to address public grievances and assess developmental requirements of the area.

Prior to the programme, the DDC, as per an official statement, inspected departmental stalls set up by various departments, including Agriculture, Forest, Industries, Food and Civil Supplies, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Revenue, Urban Local Bodies, Education, ICDS, Jal Shakti and Horticulture. He interacted with the officers and reviewed the schemes, services and public welfare initiatives being provided to the people. A plantation drive was also organised, during which the DDC planted saplings.

During the interaction, the Chairman Auqaf Committee, local representatives and residents projected various developmental and public service-related issues concerning Eidgah Shar and adjoining areas. They highlighted the area's historical, religious and cultural significance and sought improved road connectivity, restoration of irrigation infrastructure, installation of borewells for saffron cultivation, restoration of traditional water springs and establishment of a saffron seed centre at Pampore.

Other demands included augmentation of healthcare facilities, availability of doctors and an ambulance, establishment of a Patwari Khana and veterinary centre, improvement of the local playground, construction of public conveniences at Eidgah Shar and better garbage collection and disposal facilities.

The representatives also raised concerns regarding human-wildlife conflict, particularly the intrusion of wild animals and monkeys into residential areas, crop damage caused by unattended horses, and damage to agricultural fields during the June 2026 hailstorm. They sought early disbursement of eligible compensation. The need to create employment opportunities for local youth in nearby industrial establishments and AIIMS Awantipora was also highlighted.

Responding to the grievances, the DDC sought detailed response from the concerned officers regarding the concerns and grievance to ensure on-spot redressal and assured the public that all issues would be taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate action. He acknowledged the historical and religious importance of Eidgah Shar and thanked the residents for their participation.

While directing the Public Works Department to address road-related issues, the DDC instructed officers to undertake immediate patchwork on damaged roads before snowfall and expedite macadamisation of internal and link roads.

Regarding human-wildlife conflict, the DDC directed the Forest Department to assess the affected areas and submit a comprehensive report proposing measures to prevent wild animals from entering residential localities.

On healthcare facilities, he directed the Chief Medical Officer to ensure the availability of doctors at the local health facility and instructed the Block Medical Officer to prepare and publicise a duty roster. The CMO was also directed to make necessary arrangements for an ambulance.

On the occasion, the DDC announced the launch of the district-level SSS Campaign – Skill Development, Self-Employment, Sports and Studies, with Eidgah Shar as its starting point in the District. He said the initiative would focus on four key areas, extending opportunities and institutional support to people across the district. "Under the campaign, individuals in the age group of 18–59 years would be facilitated in accessing skill development opportunities and pursuing lawful self-employment activities. Awareness and facilitation camps would also be organised to connect unemployed youth with government schemes, financial assistance and entrepreneurship opportunities", he further added.

Regarding garbage management, the DDC directed the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat to address the shortage of garbage collection vehicles and instructed officers to identify suitable dumping sites away from water bodies, religious places and educational institutions.

Taking note of pending hailstorm compensation cases, he directed the Assistant Commissioner Revenue to convene a dedicated meeting to examine the cases and facilitate the release of eligible relief as per norms.

To promote local employment, the DDC said eligible unemployed youth would be encouraged to register under relevant employment facilitation initiatives, including the SSS Campaign, to facilitate their cases with nearby industries and AIIMS Awantipora. The Tourism Department was directed to facilitate registration of eligible homestay units and explore tourism-based livelihood opportunities, besides identifying suitable walking trails leading to religious shrines.

On land settlement and ownership-related grievances, the DDC directed the Revenue Department to organise special camps, particularly on Saturdays, to examine and resolve individual cases as per records and rules. The Tehsildar was also directed to examine saffron land classification through drone mapping and verify the actual status of land. Further, the concerned officers were asked to expedite NOCs for roads sanctioned under PMGSY and take up pending link-road works.

Kashmir Thunder

TCI MAX names Owais Yaqoob brand ambassador, celebrates bond built on trust and resilience

KT News Service

Srinagar, Nov 4: TCI MAX on Wednesday announced Owais Yaqoob, a professional mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter, who has represented the country in international competitions in professional MMA, as its brand ambassador, bringing together two names it says embody resilience, perseverance, and the ability to withstand challenging conditions.

The announcement was made at a function held at Four Points by Sheraton in Srinagar, where Yaqoob spoke about his association with the organisation, recalling the support it extended to him during the early stages of his journey.

"TCI MAX stood by me when I had nothing. Its support was not limited to Kashmir; the organisation stood with me outside as well, at a time when I was still finding my feet. I may achieve many things in life, but I will never forget those who believed in me when there was little to believe in," said Yaqoob.

He said the association was built on trust and gratitude, adding that the support he received had left a lasting impression on him.



Addressing the gathering, TCI MAX Marketing Manager Nisar Ahmad Bhat said resilience was best measured not in favourable circumstances but when faced with adversity.

"The true strength of a person, just like the strength of cement, is revealed when the conditions are at their toughest. Challenges do not define us; the ability to stand firm through them does," Bhat said.

Drawing a parallel between Yaqoob's journey and the company's product, he said both represented the ability to endure difficult circumstances.

"Owais Yaqoob and TCI MAX 53 Grade Winter Shield Cement share a common quality – the ability to withstand difficult conditions. Just as he has demonstrated determination through the challenges of his journey, TCI MAX 53 Grade Winter Shield Cement is designed to stand strong against harsh winters and demanding conditions," he said.

Bhat said the association reflected the company's belief in recognising individuals whose journeys resonate with its commitment to strength and reliability.

The partnership brings together a personal story of perseverance and a product positioned around durability, with TCI MAX seeking to underline its message that true strength is not merely about standing tall in favourable conditions, but remaining steadfast when circumstances turn difficult.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG Sinha sets

curricula with the 'Design Your Degree' framework.

Vice Chancellors and members of the Council shared their inputs for advancing the DYD program and NEP 2020 interventions.

The Council also reviewed the progress of ongoing Higher Education initiatives, Engineering Kitchens and Entrepreneurship programmes, and Budgetary outlay and Reform of the Fund Allocation Mechanism.

The meeting was attended by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Minister for School and Higher Education Department Shamim Firdous, Vice Chairman of J&K Higher Education Council, Prof. Dinesh Singh, Acting Chief Secretary Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Govind Jaiswal, Commissioner Secretary Higher Education Department Ram Niwas Sharma, Vice Chancellors of J&K universities and Director IIT, IIM Jammu, Director NIT Srinagar and other members. (KNO)

Two charred to

mother said the deceased was the only earning member of the family, while another woman survivor recounted how she managed to escape with her children but could not save any belongings.

"We had money, jewellery and everything, but it was all burnt. We could not take even a single thing out. We somehow managed to escape with the children," she said, adding that the family had lost its clothes, household belongings and savings.

"We are sitting on the roadside. We don't know where to go. We are asking the government for help," she said.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the loss of two lives and announced an ex-gratia relief of Rs 2 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased.

The CM conveyed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and directed the concerned authorities to ensure immediate relief and all necessary assistance to those affected, stressing the need for prompt intervention to address their urgent requirements.

An official said that the fire broke out around 12:23 am and rapidly spread through the cluster of temporary shelters, mostly made of tarpaulin and wood, engulfing nearly 80 structures.

An empty poultry farm and a tipper were also damaged in the blaze, while a residential house was among the properties affected.

Fire tenders from JVC and Rawalpora fire stations, along with additional reinforcements from Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) Headquarters at Batamaloo, were rushed to the spot to douse the flames.

"By the time the Fire and Emergency Services were informed, the entire area was already engulfed in flames," an official said, adding that two bodies were recovered from the debris after the fire was brought under control.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Noor Alam (27), son of Abdul Wahab, a native of Delhi presently residing at Durbal, and Al Ameen (16), son of Mohammad Rafi, also a native of Delhi and presently residing in Kupwara.

Both were working as scrap collectors in the area, officials said.

Recounting the terrifying moments, another survivor, Mohammad Ramin, said he woke up suddenly to find the fire spreading through the area.

"I suddenly woke up and saw the fire. I don't know how it started," he said.

Ramin said the affected people had not received government relief at the time of his interview. He expressed gratitude to local residents who came forward to help them.

"Our Kashmiri brothers fed us breakfast this morning," he said.

Meanwhile, an official speaking on behalf of the district administration said around 20 families, 30 temporary structures and one residential house were affected in the incident.

He said police, Fire and Emergency Services and revenue officials immediately reached the spot, while the damage assessment was almost complete. The Deputy Commissioner had assured immediate relief, and cases were being processed for assistance under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

"Arrangements are being made for food, tents and blankets. We are doing all the necessary arrangements today," the official said.

Regarding the cause of the fire, he said police had taken cognisance of the incident and an investigation was underway to ascertain how the blaze started.

The bodies of the deceased were handed over to police after completion of FSL proceedings, officials said. (KNO)

Winter sets in,

several parts of Kashmir, with Kupwara and Gulmarg recording sub-zero temperatures on Wednesday.

According to the India Meteorological Department's evening bulletin, Kupwara recorded a minimum temperature of 1.8 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg settled at 1.6 degrees Celsius. Both stations recorded temperatures 0.1 degrees below their respective seasonal averages.

Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 4.1 degrees Celsius, 1.1 degrees above normal, while Qazigund registered 3.4 degrees Celsius and Pahalgam 3.1 degrees Celsius.

Kokernag recorded a low of 6 degrees Celsius, while Jammu city registered a minimum temperature of 15.1 degrees Celsius.

On the maximum temperature front, Kupwara was the warmest among the reported Kashmir stations at 23.8 degrees Celsius, followed by Srinagar and Qazigund, both recording 22 degrees Celsius.

Ahmad said winter has almost set in across the region, with shallow fog is being witnessed over plains during morning hours. He cautioned that foggy conditions and reduced visibility could become more frequent as temperatures continue to fall.

He advised farmers to make use of the prevailing dry weather for harvesting, threshing, fresh sowing and other agricultural activities.

The MeT director also urged commuters to follow traffic advisories, particularly while travelling through higher reaches and vulnerable stretches of roads. (KNO)

Discontent persists

sources, the group enjoys the support of 20 to 24 legislators, with 18 of them having attended a meeting at the residence of MLA Qaiser Jamsheed Lone on Friday.

Sources said there is a possibility that the group will meet the NC top brass in Srinagar on Friday.

"There is a possibility that the group will meet the party leadership on Friday morning. From the NC, party president Dr Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, or both may participate in the meeting," they said. (KNO)

J&K Govt replaces

Services (Probation and Examination) Rules, 2026, superseding the rules introduced in 2000.

Under the revised framework, probationers will have to qualify all seven papers, each carrying 100 marks, with a minimum of 50 per cent marks required separately in every paper.

The new arrangement removes the earlier provision allowing candidates to choose between optional papers. Under the previous system, probationers were required to clear five compulsory papers and one optional paper selected from two available choices.

Another significant change concerns the qualifying criteria. While the earlier rules left the determination of qualifying marks to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) after evaluation, the revised framework has fixed the minimum passing requirement at 50% in each paper.

As per the notification, directly recruited officers will remain on probation for two years and will be required to appear in the departmental examination towards the completion of their training.

The JKPSC will conduct the examination twice a year, as far as practicable, at such places and times as may be determined by the Commission.

The revised rules also establish a direct link between departmental examination results, annual increments and confirmation of service.

A probationer will be entitled to the first annual increment after completing one year of probation, while the second increment will remain withheld until satisfactory completion of probation and qualification of the prescribed examination.

The rules further provide for withholding of annual increments where a probationer fails to perform assigned duties satisfactorily, does not adequately utilise the training opportunities or fails to clear the examination.

Successful qualification of the departmental examination has also been prescribed as a condition for confirmation in service. However, the Government retains the power to grant exemption in exceptional cases, provided good and sufficient reasons are recorded in writing.

On the number of opportunities, the revised framework retains three regular chances and one mercy chance for qualifying the examination. The Government may also allow probationers to avail of opportunities missed due to circumstances beyond their control.

Applications for the examination will have to be submitted through the concerned Administrative Department, while the JKPSC will separately notify the examination procedure.

The new rules also permit candidates to consult Bare Acts, Rules, Regulations and Manuals during the written examination. However, such reference material must contain only relevant legal provisions and cannot include annotations.

The prescribed syllabus comprises seven papers covering administration, governance, Jammu and Kashmir's socio-economic profile, service regulations, revenue laws, development policies, social welfare and the legal framework governing the Union Territory.

Paper-I covers, Management and Public Administration, including organisational behaviour, human resource management, leadership, communication, emerging technologies and administrative accountability.

Paper-II focuses on Jammu and Kashmir's geographical, demographic, economic and social profile, including agriculture, horticulture, tourism, culture, languages, ecology, environment and infrastructure.

Paper-III deals with Service Rules and Office Procedure, covering civil service regulations, conduct and leave rules, public service delivery, grievance redressal, e-Office, e-HRMS, financial procedures, artificial intelligence, cyber security and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

Paper-IV covers Revenue Laws and Land Administration, including property and registration laws, land revenue, agrarian reforms, migrant immovable property, land acquisition and modernisation of revenue records.

Paper-V focuses on Government Schemes and Policies for Development, Employment and Industrial Growth, while Paper-VI covers Social Welfare, Human Rights and Community Protection Laws and Schemes, including reservation, women's rights, child protection, social security, health and forest rights.

Paper-VII deals with the Legal and Regulatory Framework for Governance and Public Order in Jammu and Kashmir, including constitutional provisions, the J&K Reorganisation Act, criminal laws, taxation, public safety and statutory authorities.

The notification further provides exemption to probationers covered under the new rules from passing other departmental examinations prescribed for their respective feeder services.

The rules have been issued under the proviso to Article 309 of the Constitution of India and have come into force with immediate effect. (KNO)

JP Nadda to

Officials said efforts are underway to expedite the remaining infrastructure, install medical equipment and secure mandatory clearances required for the commencement of patient services.

An October-end target for launching OPD services could not be met due to pending works and procedural requirements.

At a review meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Kuldeep Krishan Sidha on October 16, officials said the overall physical progress of the project had reached around 81 per cent, while financial progress stood at over 72 per cent.

Hospital Block-I has been completed, while Hospital Block-II is nearly complete.

The administration has directed executing agencies to resolve pending issues and ensure that ready facilities are made operational without further delay. During a visit to the institute on October 23, the Deputy Commissioner also stressed that departments ready for operations should be opened in phases instead of waiting for the entire campus to be completed.

Officials said electricity and water connections are in place, while heating systems, lift safety clearances, mandatory no-objection certificates and other operational requirements are being addressed on priority.

AIIMS Awantipora is being developed as a 750-bed tertiary care hospital comprising 57 buildings, with facilities for specialised treatment, medical education, research and advanced diagnostic services.

While the first phase is nearing operationalisation, several academic, administrative, residential and hospital facilities remain under development.

Officials said four buildings under Phase II are targeted for completion by the end of November 2026, while major Phase III works, including Hospital Blocks 3 and 5, are scheduled for completion by June 2027. (KNO)

Speaker must be

can accept it and does not need to conduct any inquiry," Achary said.

However, he said that when a resignation is received through post or any other indirect means, the Speaker must satisfy himself that it was not submitted under pressure or coercion.

"If the Speaker finds that the resignation has been made under pressure, he cannot accept it," Achary said.

Replying to a question on the timeline for holding a by-election in the event of a vacancy in the Lok Sabha, the former Lok Sabha Secretary General said a by-election must be conducted within six months from the date the seat falls vacant, as mandated under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

"The by-poll has to be held within six months of the vacancy occurring," he said.

Under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, a bye-election to fill a vacancy in Parliament or a State Legislature must ordinarily be held within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy.

However, the provision does not apply if the remaining term of the House is less than one year. The term of the current 18th Lok Sabha is scheduled to continue until June 2029, unless dissolved earlier.

The Act also exempts vacancies from the six-month time limit if the Election Commission, in consultation with the Central Government, certifies that it is difficult to hold the by-election within the stipulated period.

If the resignation is accepted with effect from November 03, 2026, the by-election would ordinarily have to be held by May 02, 2027. (KNO)

J&K Tourism Dept

and Kashmir. It is necessary to showcase the treasures and natural beauty of the region. Unless we exhibit our potential, how can we expect tourism from foreign countries?" he said.

He said Kashmir has unique potential to offer diverse tourism experiences, including adventure and winter tourism, besides its natural attractions.

"We have enough breathing space for different types of activities which are generally not found together under one umbrella. Kashmir and Jammu regions have unique potential, including religious tourism," he said.

Sajjad said the participation was aimed at making the international tourism community aware of Jammu and Kashmir's diverse offerings, adding that global visibility was important for boosting tourist arrivals.

"It has been impressed upon them that there is a place called Jammu and Kashmir which needs to be explored. This is absolutely going to boost tourism, as our presence matters," he said.

He said foreign tourist arrivals in Kashmir have continued despite the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, expressing hope that participation in international tourism events would further increase the number of overseas visitors.

Pertinently, the Indian Pavilion at the event was inaugurated by Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in the presence of Advisor to the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad.

Several tourism stakeholders from the region are also participating in the event, providing an opportunity to engage with international tour operators, travel professionals and industry representatives, while exploring avenues for collaboration and expanding the region's presence in the global tourism market.

World Travel Market London is a major global marketplace for travel professionals to explore destinations, discover business opportunities and establish partnerships in the international tourism industry. (KNO)

Pulwama youth

this was my third attempt. I have flashbacks of the time when I was at my lowest, when I used to dream of securing an All India Rank. By the grace of Almighty, I have achieved AIR 107, and the feeling is wonderful," he said.

Bhat said he extensively used Artificial Intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI-based platforms, to understand examination trends, analyse question patterns and streamline his studies. He subscribed to a paid AI service for 399 and used the examination syllabus as a reference to generate targeted preparation material and identify recurring patterns. According to him, analysing previous question formats with the assistance of AI helped him anticipate the nature of approximately 20 to 40 questions.

He advised aspirants to begin preparation by thoroughly understanding the prescribed syllabus rather than studying without a clear direction. "Without understanding the syllabus, preparation can feel like an endless ocean. Once you divide it into specific topics and adopt a targeted approach, the task becomes much more manageable," he said.

Owais also encouraged candidates to make effective use of online lectures, YouTube resources and emerging AI technologies instead of depending entirely on expensive coaching institutes, adding that quality preparation does not necessarily require spending lakhs of rupees if one remains disciplined and follows a well-planned strategy.

He said lack of awareness about available opportunities and recruitment procedures remains a major challenge. He observed that many youngsters are unfamiliar with the different examinations conducted for recruitment into the armed forces and often lack clarity about the distinction between various security and defence organisations.

"Many youngsters do not even clearly understand the difference between the CRPF and the Army. The UPSC conducts several examinations for defence services apart from the Civil Services Examination for IAS and IPS. Unfortunately, awareness about these opportunities among children and youth in Kashmir remains limited," he said.

Bhat said he himself came to know about the CDS examination through a relative, which eventually opened the door to his ambition of joining the armed forces. He urged young people to explore defence career opportunities and acquire proper information about eligibility criteria, examination pattern and selection procedure.

On physical fitness, he said it was another major challenge during his preparation. He disclosed that he had gained more than 20 kilograms while concentrating on written examination preparation and subsequently had to work intensively to regain his fitness. "I worked extremely hard and managed to lose around 20 kilograms within two months ahead of the physical tests," he said.

"Parents always play the greatest role. Without their willingness, financial assistance, moral encouragement and ethical support, achieving this would have been impossible," he said.

With AIR 107, Bhat has moved closer to fulfilling his ambition of becoming an Army officer. Owais is scheduled to join the Indian Military Academy in January for approximately one-and-a-half years of training before being commissioned into the Army. (KNO)

Srinagar generates

process is being converted into Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) for use by cement industries. Recyclable materials are being separated for recovery, while inert waste is stored at designated locations and suitable soil-like material is being utilised for landscaping.

The SMC informed the tribunal that its present waste-processing infrastructure comprises a 100-tonne-per-day Material Recovery Facility and an 84.5-tonne-per-day window composting facility, with a combined capacity of 184.5 tonnes daily.

To overcome the substantial gap between waste generation and processing capacity, the corporation has proposed an 800-tonne-per-day Integrated Solid Waste Management Facility at Achan at an estimated cost of Rs 361 crore.

The Detailed Project Report for the proposed project has been vetted by the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Srinagar, while administrative approval has been obtained and the tendering process initiated, the report stated.

The proposed facility is expected to address the unprocessed portion of daily municipal waste and provide additional capacity to meet future requirements.

Regarding environmental safeguards at Achan, the corporation said the Effluent Treatment Plant has been made operational and leachate management measures have been incorporated into the bio-mining process.

Other mitigation measures include the development of a green buffer, plantation drives, regular water sprinkling and steps to control foul odour around the landfill.

The SMC further reported that around 3,200 trees had been planted, while more than 10,000 litres of herbal anti-odour solution had been procured and utilised as part of the mitigation measures.

Meanwhile, a 125-tonne-per-day construction and demolition waste processing facility is also being developed at Achan. Its physical progress has reached approximately 95 per cent, with October 15, 2026, set as the target date for completion.

The status report was submitted in compliance with the NGT's July 24, 2026, directions, asking the SMC Commissioner to furnish details of legacy waste cleared since September 2025, its treatment and utilisation, daily fresh waste generation, processing capacity and the existing gap in waste management. (KNO)

JKBOSE to distribute

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.

Earlier, JKBOSE had said that the free textbooks among students will be distributed to various educational zones in the first week of November.

Former Education Minister, Sakeena Itoo in this regard had directed the officials to ensure timely completion of preparation of textbooks, syllabus and other needs.

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

The closure 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)

Major overhaul in Agnipath scheme: Govt grants 2-year extension

Opens pathway to permanent recruitment

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 04: In a major overhaul of the Agnipath scheme, the government on Wednesday announced that Agniveers set to exit the military at the end of their four-year tenure will be given an additional two-year extension period and subsequently offered permanent recruitment, subject to meeting specific eligibility criteria and individual consent.

The decision was announced by Chief of Defence Staff Gen N S Raja Subramani, shortly after the Union Cabinet approved the changes in the military recruitment scheme as recommended by the three services.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the move is part of "long-term structural reforms" of the defence forces aimed at creating "a younger, fitter, technologically equipped and future-ready military". Under the Agnipath scheme rolled out in June, 2022, soldiers were recruited for a four-year term, with a provision to retaining only 25 per cent of them in regular services. The changes in the scheme were brought in just over three weeks before around 18,000 Agniveers were to exit the armed forces.

"Today is a very significant day for the Indian defence forces and for Agniveers. The Cabinet has created a pathway for all Agniveers to be absorbed into the defence forces," the Chief of Defence Staff said, addressing a press conference alongside Information



and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. At present, over 300,000 soldiers recruited under the Agnipath scheme are operating in the military.

"As per existing provisions, 25 per cent of Agniveers are enrolled into the regular forces based on merit, while the remaining 75 per cent exit as disciplined and motivated youth," Gen Subramani said.

"Under the new changes, this 75 per cent will be offered an additional engagement period of two years. Following the completion of this extended period, those who meet the selection criteria and wish to continue will be enrolled into the Armed Forces," he said.

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) described the government's decision as the opening of a "pathway" for all Agniveers, ensuring almost all of them are going to be absorbed into the defence forces.

"Today is a very significant day for the Indian defence forces and for our Agniveers," he said.

Gen Subramani also asserted that the Agnipath scheme will continue and that the 25 per cent Agniveers to be recruited as regular soldiers at the end of the four-year period will be ahead in seniority as against those getting the two-year additional engagement period and their subsequent absorption.

"The Agnipath scheme will not be discontinued. It will continue. Secondly, this second engagement period of two years gives those Agniveers who have not been selected in the first four years a chance to serve longer," he said.

In June 2022, the government rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services.

The scheme provides for recruiting youths between the age bracket of 17-and-half years and 21 for four years.

Several opposition parties including the Congress had targeted the government over the scheme wondering what will happen to 75 per cent of the Agniveers after their four-year tenure ends as only 25 per cent of the total recruits will be retained for 15 years.

Various central government agencies and departments had already announced plans to recruit former Agniveers.

When asked about the schemes announced by various central ministries and state governments for Agniveers exiting after their four-year tenure, Gen Subramani said those provisions would no longer be required.

Defence Minister Singh described the two-year extension period as the "Second Tour of Duty" for Agniveers and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the decision.

"This would also provide enrollment of all willing Agniveers as regular soldiers after the tenure of 4/6 years, who meet the selection criteria," he said.

"This decision is continuation of long-term structural reforms of our defence forces, aimed at creating a younger, fitter, technologically equipped and future-ready military. It is not merely a recruitment policy; it is a way forward to prepare India's military for the changing character of warfare," he said on social media.

PM says Cabinet approved scheme to cut dependence on other countries for processing critical minerals

PTI



New Delhi, Nov 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the Union Cabinet has approved the Capex Support Scheme with an outlay of Rs 2,814 crore to boost domestic critical mineral processing and reduce India's dependence on foreign supply chains.

"Do you feel India should depend on other countries for processing the critical minerals that power our future? I certainly don't!" Modi asked in a post on X.

The Prime Minister said Lithium, nickel, and cobalt are essential for EVs, batteries, electronics and defence, yet India remains heavily dependent on imports of refined materials.

"To address this, the Cabinet has approved a scheme to change this," he said. Modi said the key highlights of the scheme are new critical mineral processing plants, capital subsidy to boost investment, greater domestic value addition and stronger supply chains.

"The principle is clear...India must have capabilities to build technologies of the future," he said.

Processing of critical minerals remains geographically concentrated in a few global locations, an official statement said.

This exposes supply chains to geopolitical disruptions, price volatility, and potential supply restrictions, posing severe threats to supply chain resilience and economic security, it said.

This has implications for national security, economic sovereignty, and the timely achievement of decarbonisation targets, the statement said.

Delhi Police files FIR against Prashant Bhushan over fake Russian foreign minister

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 4: Delhi Police has registered an FIR against senior Supreme Court lawyer Prashant Bhushan for sharing a digitally manipulated video of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that purportedly contained remarks hostile to India, officials said.

The case was registered at the Special Cell Police Station following cyber patrolling on November 3, when police noticed a social media post by the handle @ thequotesnews, claiming that a purported doctored video of the foreign minister had been shared from Bhushan's X handle.

The video allegedly carried misleading and inflammatory content, with the potential to spread rumours, defame individuals and disturb public order, police said.

The FIR was filed under sections 336 (4) (forgery), 353 (1) (c) (statements conducing to public mischief), 356 (defamation) and 340 (2) (forged document used as genuine) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with 66 C (punishment for identity theft) of the Information Technology Act at Special Cell Police Station.

The development comes after the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) fact-checked the digitally manipulated video falsely attributed to the Russian foreign minister.

The fabricated clip purportedly showed him making remarks critical of India over its internal affairs and oil purchases.

Police are investigating the matter and examining the content and its circulation on social media.

Maritime future of Indo-Pacific cannot be shaped by any single country: Rajnath



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 4: Supply chain diversification and greater regional cooperation are key to stronger maritime interdependence among like-minded nations amid a strained security environment, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday.

In an address at the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue, Singh, without naming any country, said certain "actors" and "nations" are seeking to exploit the criticality of oceans for narrow unilateral gains as he called for building resilience to combat challenges in the maritime domain.

Describing oceans as bridges rather than barriers among nations, he highlighted their role in sustaining livelihoods and facilitating the exchange of goods, knowledge and culture.

The defence minister said that the maritime future of the Indo-Pacific cannot be shaped by any single country acting alone, in remarks that came amid growing global concerns over China's military muscle flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.

"The global maritime security environment is strained by deliberate trade disruptions. We see blatant challenges to the freedom of navigation and the weaponisation of narrow maritime passages," he said.

"This growing instability in the maritime domain casts a long shadow over the broader international order," he added.

Singh asserted that the answer to the vulnerabilities of an interconnected world lies in building resilience, emphasising that globalisation cannot be abandoned in response to every disruption, nor should maritime spaces that have enabled human progress be closed.

He stressed that the objective must be to make interdependence more secure.

Highlighting the evolving nature of maritime security, the defence minister said challenges could arise not only from conventional military activities but also from non-traditional threats such as piracy, trafficking, illegal fishing, cyber-attacks and natural disasters.

He underscored the need for maritime security to evolve with the changing maritime domain.

"Artificial intelligence is changing the way data is processed, while autonomous systems are expanding the possibilities of surveillance & operations."

"New sensors are improving our ability to observe the oceans. Advances in materials, biotechnology and data analytics are opening new avenues for research and application," he said.

Singh said these developments have enormous implications for maritime security and economic activity.

"But technology, by itself, is not the answer. The more important question is how we use technology to address real challenges," he said. Singh also underlined that technology must not become another source of inequality among nations as the Indo-Pacific includes countries with different levels of technological and economic capability.

"Some possess advanced research infrastructure. Others are still developing the institutional and human resources required to participate fully in this transformation. If technological progress benefits only a limited number of countries, we will not achieve the collective resilience that our region requires," he said.

The defence minister called for promoting cooperation in research, education, innovation and capacity building, stating that a stronger scientific capability in one country can contribute to the security and prosperity of the entire region.

Terming it particularly important for smaller maritime nations and developing countries, he said the most useful technology is not necessarily the most expensive or sophisticated; it is the one that solves a real problem.

Laws that penalise having more than two children lost relevance, says SC

PTI



New Delhi, Nov 4: The Supreme Court on Wednesday said laws that penalise having more than two children have lost their relevance as the fear of overpopulation has crumbled due to demographic changes in the past few decades.

Observing that India's total fertility rate (TFR) has fallen from 3.0 to 1.9 since 2003, the apex court said laws aimed at limiting population growth have now lost their significance.

The top court delivered its verdict on a plea filed by Mangala Bhimrao Ingle, whose election as 'sarpanch' of Kakoda gram panchayat was set aside on the ground that she was disqualified from contesting the polls as she had more than two children and it was in violation of Section 14(1)(j-1) of the Maharashtra Village Panchayats Act, 1959.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe referred to a July 2003 verdict of the apex court which, after examining the vires of the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, had upheld the disqualification of persons with more than two living children from running or holding panchayat positions.

Noting that the right to make reproductive decisions is an integral facet of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21, the top court referred the matter to a larger bench for reconsideration of the ratio laid down in Javed versus State of Haryana (2003 verdict).

"We are of the strong opinion that laws that penalise having more than two children have lost their relevance. The foundation of such laws, i.e. the fear of overpopulation, has crumbled due to demographic changes in the past few decades," the bench said.

It said a TFR of 2.1, known as the replacement rate, would allow one generation to completely replace itself.

"So, even though India's population is not yet declining, the TFR falling below the replacement rate will soon result in a demographic transition towards an older population with a declining share of the working-age population," the top court said.

"If we fail to take note of such demographic changes, India will face serious consequences. Adapting to change is important for achieving justice, as failure to adapt produces injustice and is, in a sense, an abuse of power," it said.

The apex court said equally concerning was the reasoning employed in the 2003 verdict to justify a "manifestly arbitrary act".

"Allowing such laws to stand excludes an entire class of citizens from political representation on grounds bearing little rational connection to their capacity to hold public office," it said.

The bench said it also compels an unconscionable choice between bearing children and democratic participation, impinging on the right to reproductive autonomy under Article 21.

It said population statistics about the country predict noticeable changes.

"It would be dangerously complacent to ignore the consequences of India's changing population growth rate merely because it already has a large population -- the stakes are too high," it said.

The bench said the need of the hour is to have policies in tune with the present realities.

"We need to guard against potentially irreversible decline in fertility and respond to the changing demographic realities," it said.

The bench said it seems that years of population control measures, coupled with development efforts by the State, have borne fruit faster than what one could have expected.

"Very soon, we may face an ageing population in which a disproportionately large share of people are beyond the working age. Learnings from across the world warn us of the detrimental effects of this increase in the ageing population," it said.

The bench said the rolling effect of a decelerating population growth is very hard to reverse.

It said when the apex court had decided the case in 2003, it had referred to China as a successful instance of stringent population control.

The bench noted that China abandoned its one-child policy in 2015 and moved towards providing incentives for having two children, acknowledging the need to improve its population structure, augment labour supply and respond to an ageing population.

It said the policy was liberalised yet again in 2021 to permit three children, accompanied by the removal of earlier disincentives and introduction of affirmative measures intended to encourage childbirth, including support for childcare, education, maternity protection and family welfare.

"The Chinese experience therefore demonstrates the danger inherent in treating fertility reduction as a policy achievement capable of being calibrated at will," the bench said.

It said beyond China, there have been other nations that are now bearing the weight of a declining and ageing population.

"It is high time we recall Javed. We cannot ride into the future on a horse that is dead. It is not the strongest of the species that survives nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change," the bench said.

It said the pursuit of population control cannot, by itself, justify coercive interference with A married couple's decision to bear children.

The top court directed the registry to place its verdict before the Chief Justice of India to constitute an appropriate bench.

It noted that while issuing notice on the plea earlier, it had stayed the August last year judgment of the Bombay High Court in the matter and permitted the appellant to continue in her elected position as 'sarpanch'.

"The interim order shall continue until disposal of the civil appeal," it said.

Special cleanliness campaign

Over Rs 965 cr earned through scrap disposal during: Centre

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 4: Over Rs 965 crore has been earned through scrap disposal during the recently concluded special cleanliness campaign, the Centre said on Wednesday.

During the special campaign 6, 276.8 lakh sq feet of space was freed as against 233.75 lakh square feet in the last campaign, it said.

In a series of social media posts, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) said the implementation phase of the campaign (October 2-31) has been successfully completed with remarkable collective efforts and active collaboration from various ministries and departments of the government of India, making it "the biggest special campaign so far".

A revenue of Rs 265.23 crore has been earned through disposal of waste in the special campaign 6, the DARPG said in a post on X.

It is the "highest revenue earned from disposal of waste" during the past six campaigns, the post said, adding that "as the information comes, the figures continue to rise".

During the last special campaign, Rs 833.92 crore was earned.

"Together, we are building cleaner workspaces, efficient governance and a greener future!" the DARPG said.

In the special campaign 6, 19,85,338 (19.85 lakh) "cleanliness campaign sites" were covered, which is the highest in six campaigns, as against 11,59,783 (11.59 lakh) such sites in the last year's campaign, another post said.

Centre proposes immediate suspension of licences for substandard drugs

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 4: The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has proposed amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945, to allow the immediate suspension of manufacturing licences for medicines found to be Not of Standard Quality (NSQ) on specified critical parameters. Representational image/File

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has proposed amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945, to allow the immediate suspension of manufacturing licences for medicines found to be Not of Standard Quality (NSQ) on specified critical parameters. The move aims to prevent substandard drugs from remaining in circulation and protect patient safety.

Under the proposed amendments, the Central Licensing Approving Authority or the concerned State Licensing Authority can immediately suspend the manufacturing licence of a drug upon receiving a Government Analyst's report declaring it NSQ on parameters such as assay, dissolution, related substances, impurities or sterility.

This can create a time gap between a drug being declared substandard and regulatory action, during which the medicine may continue to remain in circulation, potentially posing risks to patients and making recalls more difficult.

Iran allows ships from India, 3 other countries to transit Strait of Hormuz

PTI



Dubai, Nov 4 : Iran has exempted commercial ships from four countries, including India and China, from transit restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz, a top Iranian official has said, amid continued attacks on vessels attempting to cross the strategic waterway.

Amir Hayat Moghadam, Deputy Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, made the announcement in an interview with the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) on Tuesday.

"We have currently exempted four countries - India, China, Iraq and Qatar - from transit restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz. Ships from these countries pass freely, and the Americans do not intercept them either," he was quoted as saying by the semi-official news agency.

Moqaddam said the exemptions were based on specific considerations and mutual interests.

He said that facilitating the passage of Indian ships was intended to allow imports of medicines from India, while the exemption for Chinese vessels was intended to secure Beijing's political support.

The Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, handles roughly 20 per cent of global energy supplies in normal times.

Shipping through the waterway has been severely disrupted since February 28, when the US and Israel launched joint attacks on Iran, triggering retaliatory strikes.

Iran moved to shut the waterway soon after the US-Israeli bombing began, and Washington responded weeks later with a naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran, which has imposed strict restrictions on traffic, allows only a few vessels to pass through the waterway while others undergo screening and, in some cases, pay transit fees.

At least 15 Indian seafarers have been killed in attacks on ships in the region since the conflict began in February.

In the latest incident, an Indian sailor was killed in an attack on the commercial vessel MSV Al Jusufi near Limah in Oman on Monday evening.

India, which has been consistently calling for finding a solution to the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, has termed the continuing incidents of attacks on commercial shipping in the region as "deeply concerning".

India has said that the targeting of commercial shipping and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the international waterways, in keeping with international law, must be restored at the earliest.

PM to interact with Indian Asian Para Games contingent today



KT News Desk

New Delhi,Nov 4 :Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with the Indian contingent that participated in the Asian Para Games 2026 at around 4:30 PM today at Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, New Delhi. He will also address the gathering on the occasion.

India registered its best-ever performance at the Asian Para Games held this year in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. A total of 97 Indian para-athletes won 114 medals, comprising 30 gold, 35 silver and 49 bronze medals.

The programme will be attended by the athletes, coaches, officials from the Paralympic Committee of India and the Indian Olympic Association, representatives of National Sports Federations, and officials from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

EU signals fresh hope for Serbia's membership, says more countries may join soon

AP



Brussels, Nov 4 : The European Union on Wednesday offered fresh hope for Serbia's membership talks if the election-winning student movement there forms a government willing to strengthen democracy as the bloc signalled that more countries are set to join in coming years.

In its annual enlargement report, the European Commission said that Montenegro is on track to become the EU's 28th member in 2028, and that Albania and Moldova could join the following year. Ukraine is unlikely to meet the conditions for joining before the end of the decade.

"The significant progress achieved by some candidates over the last year allows us to turn the promise of enlargement into reality," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "Step by step, we are building a more complete, stronger Union."

Under populist president Aleksandar Vucic, who was defeated in the election last month, Serbia opened some new policy chapters in its talks to join the world's biggest trading bloc. It was technically making progress but democratic standards deteriorated. In April, the commission warned that Serbia could lose access to around 1.5 billion euros ($1.7 billion) in funds if it failed to halt the backsliding.

The hero's funeral in Belgrade in September for Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander who died while serving a life sentence for war crimes, also angered EU leaders after they had warned against any public homage.

But the election of a diverse student-led opposition movement that spent two years protesting Vucic's government could provide an opening for a reset with the most influential of the Western Balkan countries in line at Europe's door.

"Now Serbia has the chance for a fresh start," Enlargement Commissioner Marta Kos told EU lawmakers as she debriefed them on the report.

Serbia could progress rapidly under a government with strong political will but membership currently looks years away.

In a new addition, the commission has laid out a "roadmap" for each country wanting to join. The last to sign up was Croatia, 13 years ago. The EU's expansion ground to a halt as members worried that the bloc was become too unwieldy to function properly. The prospect of membership has been a powerful driver of reform, notably in the volatile Western Balkans which were riven by wars in the 1990s and where ethnic tensions still run high. Six countries from the region want to join.

Rahane praises Gill's growing confidence and maturity as captain

PTI

Mumbai, Nov 4 : Shubman Gill's confidence with the bat and his growing maturity as captain have impressed former India skipper Ajinkya Rahane, who believes the young leader is improving with every series.

Entrusted with leadership responsibilities early in his career as part of India's long-term transition, Gill has continued to score heavily while leading the side. His batting form has shown no signs of slowing down under the added responsibility, and he has also risen to the top of the ODI batting rankings.

"Shubman's performance, batting-wise, has been brilliant. His records tell you a story. What I like most about him, the way he plays, is his confidence," Rahane said on his YouTube channel.

The confidence, according to Rahane, is evident in the way Gill carries himself on the field, his attitude and the intent with which he approaches the game. Acknowledging that batting form can fluctuate, the 38-year-old felt Gill's recent run-scoring had further strengthened his self-belief.

"The way he walks onto the field, his attitude, that intent, is very important. Form can fluctuate. You score runs one day, you might not the next, but Shubman obviously has that confidence, and he has been scoring runs of late," Rahane said.

Ranji Trophy: Qamran, Shubham hit centuries as J&K take 106-run lead against Puducherry

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 04 : Centuries from openers Qamran Iqbal and Shubham Khajuria powered Jammu and Kashmir to a 106-run first-innings lead against Puducherry on the third day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A encounter at Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar on Wednesday.

As per the details collected by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), J&K reached 491 for five in 130 overs at stumps, taking a 106-run lead over Puducherry's first-innings total of 385.

Qamran and Shubham laid the foundation for the commanding position with a magnificent 344-run opening partnership, putting the hosts firmly in control of the contest.

Qamran scored 160 runs off 292 deliveries, while Shubham struck 190 off 330 balls. The duo dominated the Puducherry bowling attack with a composed batting display.

After the departure of both openers, Paras Dogra was dismissed for seven, while Abdul Samad contributed 37 runs and Sahil Lotra added 30.

Kawalpreet Singh remained unbeaten on 53, while Rydham Sharma was batting on two when stumps were drawn.

For Puducherry, Sagar Udeshi claimed two wickets, while Ankit Sharma, Sagar Trivedi and Gaurav Yadav picked up one wicket each.

Earlier, Puducherry posted 385 runs in their first innings, with Sunil Kumar emerging as the standout bowler for J&K, claiming six wickets for 98 runs.

The four-day encounter will enter its final day on Thursday, with J&K holding a 106-run first-innings advantage—(KNO)

Churchill Brothers host unbeaten NorthEast United

PTI



Margao, Nov 4 (PTI) Churchill Brothers will look to arrest their slide when they host unbeaten NorthEast United FC in their Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Thursday.

The hosts have suffered back-to-back defeats after opening their campaign with a 2-1 win over Mumbai City FC, while NorthEast have collected eight points from four matches and will look to maintain their unbeaten run.

Brothers, newcomers to the top flight league, have conceded seven goals in their last two outings, going down 0-4 to East Bengal and 2-3 to Punjab FC. Their attacking efforts, however, have offered some encouragement, with Sebastián Gutierrez scoring three goals in as many appearances.

Head coach Dimitris Dimitriou admitted that individual mistakes had cost his side dearly and called for a more disciplined performance against NorthEast.

"I hope we are able to make less mistakes in the next game, and we give the happiness and the smiles back to our fans and our management," Dimitriou said.

The Churchill coach is aware of the challenge posed by the visitors, describing NorthEast as "a very good opponent, and a very hard team".

NorthEast, meanwhile, have made a strong start to the season and are currently second in the standings. They were denied a fourth win when Bengaluru FC scored a 93rd-minute equaliser to force a 1-1 draw in their previous match.

Juan Benali's side have combined attacking threat with defensive discipline, scoring six goals while conceding just twice in four matches.

Police Football Team clinch Titans Gold Cup title as DC Anantnag urges youth to stay away from drugs

KT News Desk



Anantnag, Nov 04: The final match of the Titans Gold Cup Edition-2 was played today at the Sports Stadium, Anantnag, between Jammu and Kashmir Police Football Team and Siddiqui FC Anantnag amid great enthusiasm and sporting fervour.

A total of 35 leading football teams participated in the tournament, making it an exciting sporting event marked by enthusiastic participation and competitive performances.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, witnessed the final match and later felicitated the winning and runners-up team by presenting the trophy.

Awards among the players, in recognition of their outstanding performances were also distributed.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised that sports play a vital role in the overall development of personality by promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, discipline, teamwork and a spirit of healthy competition.

He urged the youth to actively engage in sports and other physical activities to maintain a healthy lifestyle and channel their energy towards constructive pursuits.

The Deputy Commissioner also highlighted various measures taken under the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan and Nasha Mukt Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan across District and stated that a slew of initiatives have been rolled out across the district to combat the drug menace and generate awareness among the masses, particularly the youth.

He further added that IPD services at the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) are now fully functional, strengthening addiction treatment and rehabilitation facilities in the district.

However, he made it clear that a strict approach is adopted against those involved in drug peddling, with no leniency towards drug traffickers.

The Deputy Commissioner also appreciated all stakeholders for successfully organising the tournament.

Iran says US midterm results reflect voters' rejection of Trump's war

AP



Riyadh, Nov 3 : Iranians on Wednesday struck a defiant tone, celebrating US voters' rebuke of President Donald Trump in the midterm elections while many in the Middle East waited to see how the results could affect the Iran war.

Concerns about the war, particularly frustration over rising prices for fuel and other goods in the US, helped Democrats win control of both chambers of Congress in Tuesday's vote, a sharp setback for Trump and his Republican Party.

Iran's supreme leader said those who think partisan changes in the United States can change its hostility toward the Islamic Republic are "gravely mistaken."

In a letter shared on his social media account, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who hasn't been seen publicly since the war began in late February, said: "If there are still those who harbour even a slight hope for a change in behaviour or partisan and factional shifts within the system of domination, or who imagine that by giving concessions to America they can dissuade it from hostility toward the Iranian nation, they are gravely mistaken."

The broader region has been on edge for weeks over the prospect of the US resuming full-scale military operations against Iran for the first time in almost two months. Talks aimed at preventing renewed fighting are continuing, while other US allies in the region urge Washington against resuming a war that began more than eight months ago and has rattled the global economy and devastated Iran.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly pushed for more strikes, while Trump has alternated between threatening major strikes and pushing for a deal.

Iran's chief negotiator and parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, wrote Wednesday on X that "Americans said NO TO WAR, and we endorse this message."

Despite ceasefire agreements and repeated diplomatic efforts, military confrontations have continued in southern Iran and around the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in a social media post that Americans had sent a clear message and warned Washington against ignoring it. If the US continues to ignore reality, the spokesperson said, "the consequences of this grave miscalculation will extend far beyond what you have already witnessed."

Iran marks anniversary of 1979 seizure of US Embassy

Thousands marched through Tehran on Wednesday to commemorate the anniversary of the 1979 takeover of the US Embassy and celebrate the US election results.

Demonstrators burned American and Israeli flags and chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." They displayed effigies of Trump and Netanyahu alongside caricatures of the two leaders.

"Trump has gone too far in everything and that's one reason for his defeat in the election," said Hananeh Jahed, a demonstrator.

"They've seen the consequences of the war back home, from skyrocketing gas and food prices to all the devastating effects the war has had on their own country. And whether the Democrats win or the Republicans win, our hostility toward America will never come to an end."

Nearly three decades ago, Iranian students stormed the US Embassy on Nov. 4, 1979, taking American diplomats and other citizens hostage. Fifty-two Americans were held for 444 days before being released.

The crisis helped cement the rupture between the two countries, which have had no formal diplomatic relations for years.

The United States and Israel launched the war against Iran on Feb. 28, killing the country's longtime supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and triggering a conflict that has disrupted global energy markets and shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Addressing the demonstrators Wednesday, Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani claimed the United States and Israel has suffered a massive defeat.

Iran's influential hard-line judiciary chief, Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejehi, said on social media that "Trump failed both in war and in politics. We will certainly impose even more defeats upon him."

Iranian targets hit ahead of the midterms

The US elections came just a day after what appeared to be a limited strike on Iranian targets in the crucial Strait of Hormuz waterway, which renewed questions about what might come next.

Iranian state media reported explosions Monday on Qeshm and Hengam islands and near the southern port city of Bandar Abbas. Iranian authorities have not publicly identified the specific sites struck or disclosed the extent of the damage.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of the world's oil supply passed before the war, has also witnessed repeated incidents involving commercial shipping. Iran has severely restricted shipping through the strait while the United States has maintained a naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Back-channel negotiations continue

Back-channel negotiations have continued as Israel and some Middle Eastern allies lobby Trump.

US Vice President JD Vance said Monday, before news of the strikes in the Strait of Hormuz emerged, that he and Trump "both feel pretty good about the prospects for potentially coming to a negotiated settlement."

Before the latest strikes, the Trump administration's last known attacks on Iran were in early September. Thousands of US troops remain in waters off Iran to maintain a naval blockade aimed at preventing tankers carrying Iranian oil from reaching the global market. Another aircraft carrier and thousands of additional troops are on their way to the Middle East.