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SCAN TO VISIT

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Massive fire damages shops, godowns in Jammu Warehouse market

Losses estimated to run into crores | Traders shut market over alleged delay in firefighting response | LG Sinha, CM Omar order immediate relief for victims | F&ES rejects delay allegations, says CCTV, logbooks confirm timings

Yogesh

Jammu, Nov 09: A massive fire that broke out at the historic Warehouse Nehru Market near Bikram Chowk in Jammu on Diwali night gutted several shops and godowns, destroying huge stocks of foodgrains, edible oil, ghee and other commodities and causing losses estimated to run into several crores of rupees.

The blaze, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), erupted around 8.30 pm on Sunday in Block-C of the wholesale market and rapidly spread through adjoining establishments. Shops and godowns numbered 48 to 54 were among the worst affected.

The fire was reportedly fuelled by large quantities



of edible oil, ghee and other combustible materials stored in the premises. While a spark from Diwali fireworks is suspected to have triggered the incident, the exact cause is yet to be officially established.

In protest against what they termed a delayed and inadequate response by the Fire and Emergency Services Department, traders across the Warehouse market and Bikram Chowk observed a complete shutdown on Monday.

Warehouse Traders Association president Deepak Gupta alleged that the delay in deploying fire tenders allowed the blaze to spread to neighbouring shops and godowns. He claimed only two fire tenders reached the spot nearly 90 minutes after the fire broke out despite the nearest fire station being just a few minutes away. He demanded accountability and action against officials if negligence was found.

Fire and Emergency Services officials, however, rejected the allegations, asserting that the distress call was attended to promptly. They said two fire tenders from the nearest station were dispatched immediately and additional vehicles from other stations were mobilised as the operation expanded.

The department said the emergency call was received at 9:18 PM and Smart City CCTV footage from Asian Hotel Crossing showed fire tenders passing through the junction by 9:38 PM, with three more tenders reaching within the next 10 minutes.

It said official logbooks and electronic monitoring records also confirmed the response timings.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the incident and directed officials to ensure immediate relief and assistance to affected traders. In a post on X, he said he had reviewed the situation and instructed officials to extend all necessary support.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed sympathy | More on P6

Dr Jitendra calls for proper SOP during festive seasons

Says F&ES must not only extinguish fires but prevent them

Yogesh

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Monday said the massive fire at a warehouse in Jammu, which broke out on Diwali, has exposed the need for a proper Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) during festive seasons, particularly | More on P6

LoP Sharma forms committee to assess losses

Seeks time-bound relief for affected traders

Leader of Opposition in the J&K Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma, on Monday visited the fire-hit Warehouse Complex near Nehru Market in Jammu, where a massive fire broke out on Sunday evening, completely damaging more than 15 shops. In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Sunil Sharma said that in consultation with BJP J&K | More on P6

Uttarakhand is both 'Devbhoomi' & 'Veerbhoomi': LG Sinha

J&K Lok Bhavan celebrates State's Foundation Day



KT News Desk

Jammu, Nov 09: Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan on Monday celebrated 26th Foundation Day of Uttarakhand. Speaking on the occasion, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Uttarakhand. He said that the day celebrates the rich cultural, spiritual and civilisational heritage of the State.

Paying homage to the former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Lieutenant Governor recalled his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment that led to the creation of Uttarakhand. He noted that Vajpayee understood the long-standing aspirations of the people of the hill region and transformed them into reality.

Describing Uttarakhand as "Devbhoomi", the Lieutenant Governor said that the State embodies India's spiritual consciousness through the grandeur of the Himalayas, the sacred flow of the Ganga and the rich traditions of faith and devotion. Referring to the revered shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri, he said the pilgrimage of faith represents India's cultural continuity and civilisational values.

"In the caves of the Himalayas, our | More on P6

Govt to audit private schools violating fee, other norms: Edu Min

Says no shortage of free textbooks in J&K

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Nov 09: Amid growing complaints of financial exploitation by private institutions, Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister, Shamima Firdous Monday said that private schools cannot burden parents with unnecessary charges and the government will ensure audit and proper accountability against those violating fee and other norms.

Speaking to the reporters here in Srinagar, the Minister, Shamima, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "We started supplying textbooks to the educational zones of Srinagar district today and the concerned officials in those zones will ensure distribution of free textbooks at earliest."

"There is no shortage of textbooks, in fact we have started distributing the free textbooks at the very appropriate time in comparison to the previous years," she said.

About the miscellaneous charges by some private schools, the minister said, "There will be a proper audit and accountability will be enforced against those violating the government norms. We won't allow any private school to impose an unnecessary burden on parents."

Pertinently, the educational institutions across Kashmir Valley begin academic session 2026–27 from November-02 for KG to Class-10 students.

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

The schools were expected to begin | More on P6

MeT predicts widespread rain, snowfall in J&K on Nov 12-13

Day temps likely to fall by 6-8 C; precipitation may disrupt traffic movement

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Nov 09: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar has predicted that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness fresh spells of rain and snowfall from November 10 onwards as a relatively intense Western Disturbance is expected to bring widespread precipitation across the Union Territory on November 12 and 13.

The latest forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) revealed that the weather system is likely to bring light to moderate rain in the plains and snowfall over higher reaches, accompanied by thunderstorms and gusty winds at some places. "Day temperatures are expected to fall by 6-8 degrees Celsius during the period," the forecast added.



Director of the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said an initial Western Disturbance would approach Jammu and Kashmir on November 10, bringing a possibility of light snowfall over isolated mountainous areas, particularly in North and Central Kashmir.

He said another Western Disturbance of moderate intensity is expected to affect the region around November 12, with the possibility of widespread snowfall across the higher reaches of North, Central and South Kashmir, as well as the Pir Panjal and Chenab Valley regions.

Some higher-altitude areas could receive moderate snowfall, while thunderstorms and gusty winds are also possible during the period, Ahmad said.

SNOWFALL COULD DISRUPT TRAFFIC | More on P6

Salman Sagar top contender for NC ticket for Sgr parl by-election

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Nov 09: The ruling National Conference (NC) is seriously considering fielding senior party leader Salman Sagar as its candidate for the by-election to the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, sources disclosed.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the party leadership is considering nominating Salman, who is currently serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from the Hazratbal constituency, as its candidate for the Srinagar parliamentary seat.

"A final decision is yet to be taken, but Sagar has emerged as the frontrunner for the prestigious parliamentary seat," the sources said.

Known for his organisational skills, Salman enjoys significant support in parts of Srinagar. His family has a long-standing association with National Conference.



Salman, a former Mayor of Srinagar, won the 2024 Assembly election from the Hazratbal segment by defeating PDP's Asiea Naqash by a margin of 10295 votes. While Salman secured 18890 votes, Asiea polled 8595 votes.

The by-election to the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat has been necessitated by the resignation of Aga Ruhullah Mehdi on November 3, 2026.

The by-poll for the constituency will be held before May 2, 2027, as the Representation of the People | More on P6

JKBOSE may declare classes 10, 11, 12 results by Jan 10

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Nov 09: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) on Monday said that it aims to declare results of annual regular exams of 10th, 11th and 12th by the second week of January.

Speaking to the reporters, JKBOSE Chairman, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Our exams are going very smoothly and in the coming two weeks we are going to culminate the exams. We hope that by the January-10, we will try to declare the results of all the classes."

About the distribution of textbooks, the Board Chairman said that, "The process of distributing free textbooks to educational zones will be completed in 8-10 days. We distribute the free textbooks to Zonal Education Offices and after that it is the job of the Directorate | More on P6

Alarm bells ring: Apple orchard residue burning adds to Kashmir's pollution woes

» Experts call for sustainable alternatives to open burning

» Smoke from fallen leaves, pruned branches pose health risks

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Nov 09: The burning of fallen leaves, dried branches and other orchard residue following the conclusion of the apple harvesting season has sent alarm bells ringing over deteriorating air quality across Kashmir.

Environmentalists and agricultural experts whom the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) spoke to warned about possible impact of the air pollution on public health and soil fertility. They called for sustainable alternatives to open burning.

According to the details available with KNO orchardists across the Valley are engaged in post-harvest



activities, smoke rising from orchards has become a common sight in several rural areas, particularly in the apple-producing districts of Kashmir.

The practice, which has been followed for generations, is largely associated with the collection of charcoal from dried branches and twigs for use in Kangris, the traditional firepots that remain an important source of warmth for households during the harsh winter months.

However, experts cautioned that burning agricultural residue in the open releases fine particulate matter and harmful gases, contribute to air pollution at a time when falling temperatures and stagnant atmospheric conditions make it difficult for pollutants to disperse.

The smoke can particularly affect people suffering from asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and other respiratory ailments, while children, elderly people and those with cardiovascular conditions are considered more vulnerable to prolonged exposure.

Residents in several areas said smoke from nearby orchards often spreads towards residential localities during evenings, causing discomfort to people with existing respiratory problems.

Sameer Ahmad, a resident of south Kashmir, said his father suffers from a pulmonary illness and experiences breathing difficulties whenever smoke from nearby orchards spreads across the area.

"When smoke covers the surroundings in the evening, it becomes difficult for him to breathe comfortably. People suffering from respiratory diseases are particularly affected," he said.

Apart from | More on P6

Man dies after falling from height in B'la



KNO Correspondent

Baramulla, Nov 09: A 32-year-old man died after falling from a height in the Kunzer area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday evening, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the man sustained critical head injuries after falling from a height of around 20 feet at Wusan, Kunzer.

He was taken to Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Magam and later referred to JVC Hospital, Srinagar, for advanced treatment, where he succumbed to his injuries.

The deceased | More on P6

DC Shopian convenes revenue review

Enforces zero-tolerance against encroachments

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 09: In a major push toward transparent governance and robust public service delivery, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep Singh, chaired a comprehensive revenue meeting at the Mini-Secretariat, Shopian Monday.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on evaluating the functioning of the Revenue Department, tightening administrative accountability and accelerating key field-level initiatives across the district.

Taking a firm stance against land grabbing, the DC issued clear instructions to Tehsildars to initiate immediate, aggressive anti-encroachment drives targeting Khacharie and State land.

Emphasizing a strict zero-tolerance policy, the Deputy Commissioner directed that illegal encroachments be handled with utmost seriousness to guarantee the prompt retrieval of all occupied state and Kahcharie land.

The meeting also featured a thorough operational review of field personnel, including Lumberdars and Chowkidars. Directing these officials to execute their duties with unyielding dedication, the Deputy Commissioner ordered the immediate submission of comprehensive work verification and performance reports to ensure absolute accountability at the grassroots level.

Prioritizing public relief, the DC closely examined pending migrant grievances. He stressed the necessity for speedy, high-quality and priority disposal of all such cases to ensure fair and timely justice for affected individuals.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed all revenue officers to maintain seamless inter-departmental coordination, uphold complete transparency in land records management and treat the resolution of public grievances as a top administrative priority.

Among others the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, ACR, Shakoor Ahmed Dar, SDM, Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed, Tehsildars, Naib-Tehsildars, Girdawars, Partwaris, Numberdars and Chowkidars.

Physical, financial progress of development works reviewed in Anantnag

DC instructs officers to expedite Works, ensure optimum utilization of Working Season

KT News Desk



ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Monday chaired a meeting to review the physical and financial progress of ongoing development works being executed across the district.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, a detailed sector-wise review was conducted regarding the status of various ongoing works, expenditure incurred, targets achieved and bottlenecks, if any, affecting the pace of execution.

The Deputy Commissioner took stock of the progress of works being implemented by different departments and executing agencies and directed the concerned officers to closely monitor the pace and quality of works on the ground.

He instructed all concerned to expedite the execution of ongoing works and ensure that the available working season is utilised to the maximum for completing works within the stipulated timelines.

The DC stressed the need for effective inter-departmental coordination, timely resolution of bottlenecks and regular field inspections to ensure that projects are executed as

DC Ganderbal chairs review meeting for upcoming JKSSB Examination

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, NOVEMBER 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal, Monday chaired a review meeting in the Conference Hall of the Mini Secretariat Complex, Ganderbal, to ensure the smooth, transparent, and successful conduct of the upcoming JKSSB OMR-based written examination for the post of Accounts Assistant (Finance Department), scheduled for November 15, 2026.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the ADC Ganderbal, Dr. Syed Faheem A. Bihaqi, representatives from the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB), Centre Superintendents, Observers, and appointed Magistrates.

DC Shopian inaugurates JK Bank branch at Mini Secretariat Complex



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep singh Monday inaugurated newly established JK bank branch at the Mini Secretariat Complex, Shopian.

Present on the occasion were Zonal Head, Pulwama, J&K Bank, Masood Ahmad Lanker, senior bank officials, representatives of the district administration, local stakeholders and prominent citizens.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the vital role of accessible, efficient and customer-oriented banking services in promoting economic development, strengthening financial inclusion and facilitating institutional credit.

He added that the establishment of the branch would significantly enhance banking convenience for government departments, employees, business establishments and the general public.

Zonal Head, Pulwama, reiterated the Bank's commitment to expanding its banking network and delivering efficient, accessible and technology-driven financial services. As per an official statement, he highlighted the Bank's ongoing efforts towards strengthening customer services, promoting financial inclusion and extending the benefits of various government-sponsored schemes to eligible beneficiaries.

The facility is expected to provide a significant boost to banking accessibility in the Mini Secretariat Complex and surrounding areas, while supporting the broader objectives of financial inclusion and economic empowerment.

2-day training programme organised on cost-effective, eco-friendly construction technologies

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 09: A two-day training programme-cum-workshop on Cost-Effective, Eco-Friendly and Innovative Construction Technologies and Materials was organised at Building Centre Srinagar, functioning under the Housing and Urban Development Department.The programme witnessed the participation of around 50 final-year Civil Engineering students from various technical institutions, providing them an opportunity to bridge the gap between academic learning and practical applications in the construction sector.

The primary objective, as per an official statement, of the training programme was to disseminate information about various low-cost, sustainable and innovative construction techniques developed by Building Centre Srinagar, while familiarising the participants with their practical applications and benefits.

During the workshop, demonstrations were conducted on low-cost housing technologies and alternative construction materials. The participants were also introduced to modular construction practices, standardisation techniques, and the development of testing and quality-control facilities to ensure the durability and reliability of construction materials.

Emphasis was laid on technology transfer and promoting the adoption of cost-effective and eco-friendly construction practices by taking innovations from the laboratory to the field, thereby encouraging future engineering professionals and construction stakeholders to adopt sustainable building solutions. On the occasion, Project Manager, Building Centre Srinagar, Masroor Ahmad Shah, briefed the participants about the various benefits, structural viability and practical applications of cost-effective and eco-friendly construction materials.

Jan Jatiya Gaurav Diwas

Mega Gram Sabha held at Block Kanjiullar Shopian



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 09: On the eve of Jan Jatiya Gaurav Diwas, celebrated on the birth anniversary of Shri Birsa Munda Ji, a Mega Gram Sabha was organized by the Tribal Affairs Department, District Shopian in collaboration with District Administration Shopian.

The Gram Sabha, as per an official statement, was held for awareness and disposal of claims of ST community including AKs/ASKs / Dajgua and others under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

Program Officer ICDS Shopian, Mohammad Imran Khan, who is also Nodal Officer for Tribal Department District Shopian, Block Development Officer Kanjiullar, Tariq Ahmad Padder, besides officials from Tribal Department and other line departments were also present on the occasion.

During the programme, detailed awareness was given regarding the highlights of the Forest Rights Act, including individual and community rights, procedure for filing claims, role of Gram Sabha and Forest Rights Committees, and the benefits accruing to the tribal community under the Act. Claims of the ST community were also taken up for disposal.

On the occasion, the locals projected several demands including check Shamshipora, establishment of a library, macadamization of link road, macadamization of main road from Jamia Masjid to house of Ab Rahim Sheikh, and provision of drinking water reservoir for the tribal community.

The people also demanded establishment of a Primary Health Centre for the said area and construction of bund of Nallah.

The officers gave a patient hearing to the demands and assured that all genuine demands would be taken up with the concerned departments for early redressal.

DC Anantnag reviews progress under SVAMITVA, AgriStack, Farmer ID Generation



It was informed that 245 villages have completed the final data compilation, while approximately 9270 property cards have been generated, of which 7184 have been distributed among the beneficiaries. The status of pending maps under Map 1.0 and Map 2.0 was also reviewed, with emphasis on expediting the completion of the remaining work.

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Monday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress achieved under various flagship digital initiatives, including SVAMITVA, AgriStack and Farmer ID generation in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed the progress under the SVAMITVA scheme and took stock of the status of data compilation, generation and distribution of property cards.

It was informed that 245 villages have completed the final data compilation, while approximately 9270 property cards have been generated, of which 7184 have been distributed among the beneficiaries. The status of pending maps under Map 1.0 and Map 2.0 was also reviewed, with emphasis on expediting the completion of the remaining work.

The DC also reviewed the progress of AgriStack implementation and Farmer ID generation across the district.

Chair was informed that 335 out of 394 villages have been made active under the initiative, while the process of Farmer ID generation is currently underway.

The officers also apprised the Deputy Commissioner of the progress achieved in data compilation, verification and registration of eligible farmers.

The Deputy Commissioner impressed the need to accelerate the pace of Farmer ID generation and directed the concerned officers to ensure time-bound completion of the remaining work.

He emphasised strengthening coordination among the concerned departments and field functionaries, addressing operational bottlenecks and ensuring comprehensive coverage of all eligible farmers under the initiative.

He further directed the officers to maintain accuracy and transparency in data compilation, verification and updation of records so that eligible beneficiaries are not left out and the intended benefits of various government schemes reach them effectively.

Emphasising the importance of these digital initiatives in improving governance, transparency and service delivery, the Deputy Commissioner called for concerted efforts from all concerned departments to achieve the prescribed targets within the stipulated timelines.

A detailed review of PM-KISAN-related farmer registration and Aadhaar-linked data was also undertaken.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES, KASHMIR

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Subject: 3rd Tentative Seniority List of Sup. X-Ray Technician Division Cadre Kashmir.

NOTIFICATION

Whereas, First Tentative Seniority List of Sup. X-Ray Technicians (Divisional Cadre Kashmir) working under the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir has been prepared on the basis of available service records maintained in this Directorate and information furnished by the subordinate offices and circulated for information of all the concerned.

Whereas, representations regarding 1st Tentative Seniority List of Sup. X-Ray Technicians received from various officials have been examined and requisite corrections wherever found justified have been incorporated at the appropriate places and accordingly the 2nd Tentative Seniority List of Sup. X-Ray Technicians (Divisional Cadre Kashmir), was circulated for the information of all concerned and for inviting objections, if any within the stipulated period.

Whereas, representations regarding 2nd Tentative Seniority List of Sup. X-Ray Technicians received from various officials have been examined and requisite corrections wherever found justified have been incorporated at the appropriate places.

Accordingly, the 3rd tentative Seniority List of Sup. X-Ray Technicians (Divisional Cadre Kashmir), annexed to this notification as Annexure-A, is hereby circulated for information of all the concerned and for inviting objections, if any. Further all the concerned Sup. X-Ray Technicians are advised to carefully verify their particulars.

In case of any discrepancy, the concerned official may submit a representation duly supported with documentary evidence through proper channel to this Directorate within a period of five (05) days from the date of issuance of this notification.

No objection received after the stipulated period shall be entertained and no claim shall be considered without supporting documentary proof.

The date(s) of birth and category status of the officials recorded in the Seniority list shall not be treated as authentic for all purposes and shall remain subject to further verification

with reference to the service records/Matriculation certificates issued by the competent authorities concerned.

No: DHSK/ NG/Est-4th/E-791.5296/6062-95

DATED: 07-11-2026

Sd/-
Director Health Services Kashmir

DIPK-7506/26 DATED: 09-11-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB)

Muthi Akhnoor Road, Jammu/Zamzam Complex Rambagh Srinagar.

www.jkssb.nic.in

NOTIFICATION

Subject: Result/Scoresheet of Written Examination for the post of Health Educator, Health and Medical Education Department held on 01.11.2026 - regarding.

Whereas, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) conducted the OMR based Written Examination for the post of Health Educator, Health and Medical Education Department, advertised vide Notification No. 07 of 2025, under Item No. 137, on 01.11.2026; and

Whereas, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB), vide Notice No. JKSSB-COEOEXAM(UT)/03/2026-03 (7909564) dated: 01.11.2026, issued Provisional Answer Key in respect of the written Examination/Test; and

Whereas, the Revised/Final Answer Key in respect of written examination held for the said post has been notified vide No. JKSSB-COEOEXAM(UT)/03/2026-03 (7909564) dated 06.11.2026.

Now, therefore, in view of the above, the Result/Score-sheet, based on the performance of candidates who appeared in the Written Examination/Test for the post of Health Educator, Health and Medical Education Department is hereby notified as Annexure "A".

It is further notified that:

i. Mere figuring in the result/score sheet shall not entitle a candidate to be called for document verification or figure in the select list and that he/she has to fulfil other eligibility conditions, as laid down and decision of the Board in this regard shall be final.

ii. Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) will call candidates falling in the consideration zone, based on the merit obtained by them for Document Verification. The schedule for Document Verificatio shall be notified separately.

(Reyaz Ahmad Malik) JKAS
Controller of Examinations
J&K Services Selection Board

No: JKSSB-COEOEXAM(UT)/03/2026-03(7909564) Dated: 06.11.2026

DIPK-7502/26 DATED: 09-11-2026

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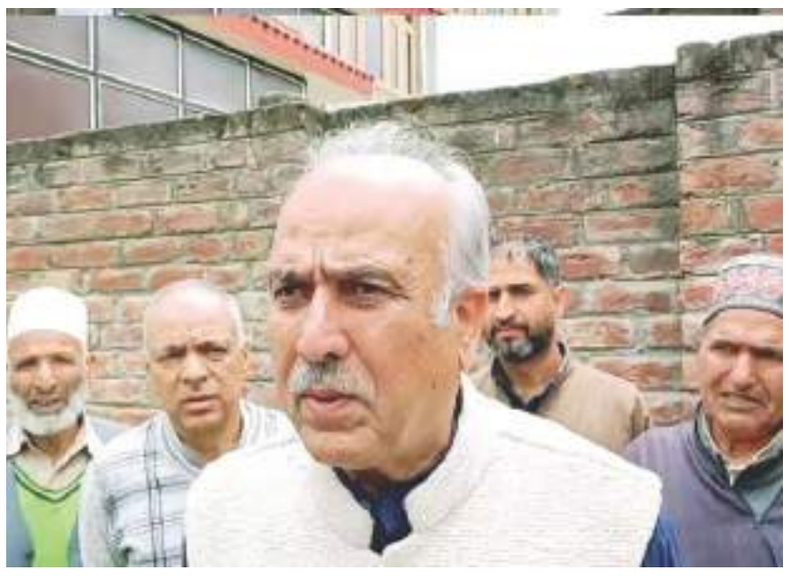
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NEWS | 03

TUESDAY | 10.11.2026

Hasnain Masoodi questions 'Jashn-e-Saffron' amid falling saffron production

Jahangeer Ganaie



Srinagar, Nov 09: National Conference (NC) MLA from Pampore, Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi, on Monday questioned the purpose of organising celebrations like 'Jashn-e-Saffron' when the production of Kashmir's prized saffron continues to decline sharply, calling for a comprehensive and result-oriented revival plan to rescue the sector.

Masoodi said that celebrating saffron without addressing the serious challenges confronting growers would serve little purpose, particularly when production has fallen to alarming levels.

The MLA said he had thought of associating himself with the event, but after considering the ground realities, felt that doing so would amount to "self-deception".

"What is the fun of celebrating Jashn-e-Saffron when saffron production is continuously declining? Instead of celebrations, the need of the hour is to take result-oriented measures and formulate a comprehensive revival plan for the sector," he said.

Masoodi said he had repeatedly raised concerns over the declining production of saffron and maintained that the situation had reached a critical stage.

"I have been consistently raising my voice over the need for saffron revival. Last year, production was barely around five per cent of the normal level, and the situation remains almost the same this year," he said.

The MLA said the government must first undertake a comprehensive review to identify the reasons behind the continued decline and assess why earlier interventions had failed to deliver the desired results.

He said isolated interventions and cosmetic measures at different places would not help revive the sector unless a coordinated and comprehensive strategy was put in place.

"There is a need to review why saffron production has declined to such an extent and why the existing measures have failed to produce results. We need a comprehensive plan for its revival. Doing cosmetic things at one place and something else at another will not help. The entire sector needs a well-planned and result-oriented intervention," he said.

Masoodi further disclosed that he had also taken up the issue with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, urging him to formulate a comprehensive revival plan to address the concerns of saffron growers and restore the sector's productivity.

"The revival of saffron cultivation requires sustained government attention, proper planning and concrete interventions rather than symbolic celebrations," he said.

On Sunday, Minister for Agriculture Production Javid Ahmad Dar inaugurated the Mega Khet Bachao Abhiyan-cum-Kissan Mela at the India International Kashmir Saffron Trade Centre (IIKSTC), Pampore.

The event witnessed the participation of two PDP MLAs from Pulwama, while the two NC MLAs from the district remained absent.

KNO tried to contact NC MLA from Rajpora, Ghulam Mohiuddin Mir, for his comments on the issue, but he was unavailable—(KNO)

No house will be demolished: Altaf Kaloo assures forest dwellers

Umaisar Gul Ganie



Ramban, Nov 09: Asserting that the government would not allow any further encroachment of forest land, Forest Minister Altaf Kaloo on Monday assured the forest dwellers that no existing house would be demolished in any area.

Talking to reporters here, Kaloo said the Forest Department is committed to ensuring that no one's house would be demolished and that fresh encroachments would not be permitted. "This is a commitment from my department," he said.

On the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), the Minister said the matter was being discussed with the department and that the file had already been taken up. "We are discussing the Forest Rights Act. I have already spoken to my department. We will get it done. We have kept the file of the Forest Rights Act ready," he said. He said he had taken up issues concerning the Forest Department, including pending annuities and the process of obtaining necessary clearances for road-related works.

Regarding the road development review, Kaloo said he had not yet reviewed the department's progress as he had assumed charge only a few days ago.

He said he would review the functioning of various departments and categories, including GRS, CIC operators, TATA operators, AEMs, assistant panchayat officers and DBCs, after completing the initial review. "There are a lot of issues, no doubt about it. But let me review the department. After that, I will get back to you on this question," he said—(KNO)

Adnan's mortal remains arrive in Delhi

Body to reach Srinagar today



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Nov 09: The mortal remains of Kashmiri MBBS student Adnan Altaf Rathar reached New Delhi on Monday evening, days after his death in Bangladesh and are scheduled to be flown to Srinagar City by the first morning flight on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Kashmiri students in Bangladesh offered funeral prayers in absentia for their fellow student ahead of the repatriation of his mortal remains.

Adnan, a resident of Sopore in North Kashmir's Baramulla district, was pursuing MBBS in Bangladesh where he died on November 4.

His death left his family and fellow Kashmiri students in shock, following which student organizations and the Jammu and Kashmir administration took up the issue of facilitating the repatriation of his mortal remains with the Centre.

The Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) on Monday said the mortal remains were brought to New Delhi aboard an Air India flight, which landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport this evening.

The association said it was coordinating with the Chief Minister's Advisor regarding the onward transportation of the mortal remains from Delhi to Srinagar. It added that an ambulance and other necessary arrangements had been made at Srinagar Airport to take the body to the family's native place in Sopore.

Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, President of the Federation of Indian Medical Associations (FIMAA), confirmed to KNO that the mortal remains have landed in Delhi and were being kept at Jammu and Kashmir House.

Pertinently, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had earlier directed the Jammu and Kashmir Resident Commissioner in New Delhi to make arrangements to receive the mortal remains and facilitate their return to Srinagar—(KNO)

Srinagar auto drivers seek review of Opaque-cover ban

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 09: The All Kashmir Auto-Rickshaw Drivers Association on Monday urged Srinagar Traffic Police to reconsider its decision directing auto-rickshaw operators to remove opaque black coverings and replace them with transparent sheets, saying the move would impose an additional financial burden on drivers ahead of winter.

Fayaz Ahmed Kumar, president of the All Kashmir Auto-Rickshaw Drivers Association, said auto-rickshaw drivers had been serving people across Kashmir for decades and had always been available whenever their services were needed.

He urged the traffic authorities to reconsider the directive and rethink the proposed arrangement. Kumar said he failed to understand the sudden concerns over the coverings, questioning why the issue is being raised after the vehicles had operated in the same manner for years.

"Our autos have been plying in Kashmir for decades. If there were no such concerns all these years, why is this issue being raised now?" he said.

The association leader said auto-rickshaws are the primary source of livelihood for many drivers and questioned why they would engage in activities that could jeopardise their own earnings.

"These autos are our livelihood. Why would we misuse them and put our own earnings at risk? We do not deny that some people may be involved in wrong activities, but punishing everyone for the actions of a few is not justified," he said.

Kumar said drivers are being asked to remove the existing coverings and install transparent sheets at a time when winter had already set in, adding that the replacement would cost them around Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000.

"Who will bear this additional expense? Drivers are already struggling, particularly after the introduction of e-rickshaws, which has affected the business of petrol-run auto-rickshaws. Imposing another financial burden on them is unfair," he said.

Kumar said auto-rickshaw operators followed the prescribed rules and regulations and questioned the need for such restrictions now, despite the vehicles having operated with the same arrangements for years.

The association's appeal comes days after Srinagar Traffic Police directed auto-rickshaw operators to remove opaque black coverings and replace them with transparent plastic sheets, citing concerns and the possibility of these vehicles being misused for drug transportation and other criminal activities.

SSP Traffic City Srinagar Bisma Qazi said that opaque coverings obstruct

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Man held with pistol, magazine, two live rounds

KNO

Jammu, Nov 09: Police have apprehended a man and recovered a pistol, a magazine and two live rounds from his possession in the Bishnah area of Jammu district during the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, officials said.

An official said that a police team intercepted a man near Bishnah during the intervening night of Sunday and Monday.

He said that during a search of the man, police recovered a pistol along with its magazine and two live rounds, following which he was taken into custody.

Meanwhile, FIR No. 208/2026 under relevant sections has been registered and further investigation has been initiated—(KNO)

Two killed, several injured in Banihal road accident

KNO

Banihal, Nov 09: Two persons were killed while several others were injured after a Swift car rammed into a culvert wall along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) near Banihal on Monday, officials said.

An official said that two people died while several others were injured after a Swift car hit a culvert wall near Shabanbass along the highway.

He said the injured were shifted to Banihal Hospital for treatment, while their identities are being ascertained.

Meanwhile, cognizance of the incident has been taken and an investigation has been initiated—(KNO)

NC stands firm on Art 370, statehood, J&K flag: Mir Saifullah



Waris Fayaz

Kupwara, Nov 09: Minister for Planning, Development and Monitoring, Culture, Youth Services and Sports, Mir Saifullah, on Monday reiterated the National Conference's commitment to the restoration of Article 370, statehood and the Jammu and Kashmir flag.

Speaking to reporters in Kupwara, Saifullah as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that Article 370, statehood and the J&K flag were brought by the National Conference, asserting that the party would continue its efforts to restore these.

He said the National Conference would continue its struggle until these demands were fulfilled, adding that the party remained committed to safeguarding the rights and identity of Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

Police hold mock drills on counter-insurgency, law & order

KNO

Kupwara, Nov 09: Kupwara Police on Monday conducted mock drills on counter-insurgency and law & order preparedness and Response at District Police Lines Kupwara.

In a statement, a police spokesman said that during the exercises, participating police contingents demonstrated their preparedness and executed assigned duties in accordance with various simulated situations.

The drills focused on several key aspects, including quick mobilisation of personnel, effective communication, tactical response, crowd-control measures, rescue and evacuation arrangements, and maintenance of law and order during emergency situations, the spokesman said, adding that the exercises also provided an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of existing response mechanisms, evaluate coordination among participating personnel and identify areas requiring further improvement.

The mock drills reaffirmed the commitment of District Police Kupwara towards maintaining a high level of operational preparedness, strengthening coordination and ensuring a prompt and effective response to any eventuality or security emergency, he said—(KNO)

ED attaches Rs 10.63 Cr assets in JK Bank loan fraud case

KNO



Srinagar, Nov 09: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it had provisionally attached 11 immovable properties worth Rs 10.63 crore in Srinagar and Bandipora districts in connection with the alleged misuse of the Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

In a statement, a spokesperson said the ED's Srinagar Zonal Office had attached the properties under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

He said the Provisional Attachment Order was issued in respect of 11 assets comprising land and buildings in Srinagar and Bandipora districts, which are allegedly in the possession of suppliers-cum-brokers, bank officials of J&K Bank and other persons involved in the alleged misuse of the PMEGP scheme.

"ED investigation was initiated on the basis of two FIRs registered by ACB and CBI, Srinagar, alleging misappropriation of PMEGP scheme loan amounts through criminal conspiracy between PMEGP borrowers, bank officials of Sumbal Branch and Gamud Gadhkhud Branch of J&K Bank and other unknown persons, who allegedly cheated the bank and misappropriated bank funds, causing wrongful loss to the bank and corresponding wrongful gain to themselves."

The spokesperson said the investigation revealed that PMEGP loans were availed by projecting dummy borrowers, using fake invoices of non-existent firms/companies and in criminal conspiracy with bank officials, including those of Sumbal and Gamud Gadhkhud branches of J&K Bank, and private persons-cum-brokers. The CBI and ACB had also registered separate FIRs in the matter in June 2026.

He said a survey conducted at the Sumbal and Gamud Gadhkhud branches of J&K Bank under Section 16 of the PMLA revealed 270 term

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Man dies at home in Doda

KNO

Doda, Nov 09: A man died at his residence in the Kashtigarh area of Doda district, officials said on Monday.

An official said that the man was found unconscious at his home in Kashtigarh Doda.

He was shifted to Government Medical College (GMC) Doda, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. Medico-legal formalities are underway to ascertain the cause of death.

The deceased was later identified as Gandeep Singh, a resident of Kotli Banzal in Kashtigarh.

Cognizance of the incident has been taken and a probe has been initiated—(KNO)

Body recovered from orchard in Kulgam

KNO

Kulgam, Nov 09: The body of a local resident was recovered from an orchard in Kulgam district on Monday, officials said. An official said that the body was spotted by locals in an orchard, following which they informed the police. He said police reached the spot, took the body into custody and later shifted it to a hospital for medico-legal formalities. The deceased was identified as Umar Amin Padder, son of Muhammad Amin Padder, a resident of Okey area of Kulgam.

Meanwhile, the exact cause of death has not been ascertained yet and an investigation has been initiated—(KNO)

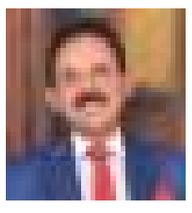
EDITORIAL

Opening The Doors, With Some Rules

The notification of the Jammu and Kashmir Private Universities Rules, 2026 is a big step. The Chief Minister is right to call it a milestone. For many years, students from Kashmir who wanted a certain kind of higher education had to leave the Valley. They went to Delhi, Chandigarh, Pune or abroad. Their families paid for travel, stay and fees. Many bright students did not come back. If good institutions can now open campuses here, that picture can change. What is good about these Rules is that they are not just an open invitation to private investors. There are conditions attached. A minimum 25 per cent reservation for J&K domiciles, in admissions as well as in teaching and non-teaching posts, makes sure that local youth get a fair share. The provision for preliminary scrutiny within 30 days brings some speed and clarity to the approval process. And there is a proper regulatory mechanism to keep an eye on admissions, fee structures and academic standards. The penalties are also important. If a university takes irregular admissions, collects excess fees, gives invalid degrees, keeps weak faculty or has poor infrastructure, it will face action. This tells institutions that students are not customers to be cheated. The subjects allowed are wide — Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Medicine, Law, Business Studies and Liberal Arts. This will give students more choices and create jobs in teaching and research close to home. Good institutions can also bring scholars, encourage research and improve the overall academic atmosphere of the region. But the real test will be in how the rules are used. Approvals must not become a formality. Fees must stay within reach of ordinary families. And the quality promised on paper must be seen in classrooms. If done honestly, this policy can change higher education in Jammu and Kashmir for the better. If done carelessly, it will only create expensive degree shops. The government must choose the first path.

Private Universities: High Targets, Low Salaries And Endless Pressure On Professors

The article argues that private universities must stop exploiting professors through high admission targets, low salaries, excessive administrative duties and continuous management pressure. It calls for fair remuneration, reasonable workloads, academic freedom and professional dignity for faculty members.



Prof. R.K. Uppal

The rapid expansion of private universities in India has created new opportunities for higher education, but it has also raised serious concerns about the working conditions, professional dignity and academic freedom of professors. While private universities frequently promote quality education, modern infrastructure, research excellence and professional development, the reality experienced by many faculty members is increasingly challenging. Professors who should devote their time to teaching, research, innovation and student mentoring are being burdened with multiple administrative and non-academic responsibilities. High admission targets, low salaries, excessive workloads and continuous management pressure have become major concerns in sections of the private higher education sector.

One of the most disturbing developments is the transformation of professors into multi-purpose employees. Apart from teaching their subjects, faculty members are expected to prepare compliance reports, maintain accreditation documentation, collect institutional data, update departmental records, organise seminars, coordinate events and complete numerous administrative assignments. Regulatory compliance and accreditation are essential for institutional development, but these responsibilities should be distributed appropriately between academic and administrative departments. When professors spend a substantial part of their working hours preparing files and reports, their capacity to conduct research, publish papers and improve teaching quality is seriously affected.

The situation becomes particularly difficult when high targets are combined with inadequate salaries. Faculty members possessing Ph.D. degrees, research experience and considerable teaching expertise are sometimes expected to perform numerous responsibilities without receiving appropriate financial compensation. Their workload may extend beyond regular working hours, while additional assignments are often treated as routine obligations rather than responsibilities deserving recognition or remuneration. This creates an imbalance between professional expectations and financial rewards. Institutions demanding high productivity must also demonstrate fairness in salary structures and employment conditions.

Another important concern is the increasing corporate approach towards university management. In some institutions, financial performance, enrolment figures and management targets appear to receive greater importance than academic development. Professors may face continuous pressure from management to achieve numerical targets, complete administrative assignments and fulfil institutional expectations. Such practices can create insecurity, frustration and professional dissatisfaction. When faculty members hesitate to express genuine concerns because of contractual uncertainty or fear of adverse consequences, academic freedom and institutional transparency suffer.

The excessive workload also has serious consequences for research and innovation. India aspires to become a global knowledge economy, but meaningful research requires time, intellectual freedom, institutional support and adequate funding. Professors occupied with admission campaigns, compliance documentation, event management and administrative assignments cannot devote sufficient attention to scholarly activities. Research publications, patents, consultancy projects, funded research and interdisciplinary collaborations require sustained academic engagement. If teachers are continuously diverted towards non-academic work, universities may find it difficult to develop a genuine research culture.

The students are also indirect victims of this system. Quality education depends upon meaningful classroom interaction, individual mentoring, practical exposure and continuous academic improvement. Professors who are overloaded with administrative responsibilities may have limited time for personal interaction with students, innovative teaching methods and career guidance. Consequently, the quality of the educational experience may deteriorate. A university cannot achieve academic excellence merely by increasing admissions or preparing impressive institutional reports. Its real achievement lies in developing knowledgeable, skilled and responsible graduates.

Private universities must urgently reconsider their faculty management policies. There is a need for transparent salary structures, reasonable workloads, clearly defined job responsibilities, adequate administrative staff and realistic admission expectations. Faculty evaluation should give priority to teaching quality, research, publications, innovation, student development and institutional contribution. Professors should not be treated as permanent admission agents or administrative assistants. Their qualifications, experience and intellectual contributions deserve appropriate recognition.

Regulatory authorities, particularly the University Grants Commission and other relevant agencies, should pay greater attention to faculty welfare and working conditions. Monitoring should not remain restricted to infrastructure, enrolment and institutional compliance. Salary practices, contractual arrangements, workload distribution, faculty security and academic freedom also deserve serious examination. Private universities must recognise that qualified and motivated teachers are their most valuable institutional resource.

Higher education is not simply a commercial activity; it is a mission of knowledge creation, social development and nation-building. Private universities have an important responsibility in developing India's human capital, but this responsibility cannot be fulfilled by placing unlimited pressure on professors. High targets cannot justify low salaries, and institutional growth cannot be built upon faculty exploitation. Professors deserve fair remuneration, professional dignity, academic freedom and a supportive working environment. The future of higher education depends not merely on how many students universities admit, but on how effectively they educate, inspire and prepare them for life. A university that exploits its teachers ultimately weakens its own academic foundation.

India's Chemicals And Petrochemicals Sector: A Foundation For Industrial Growth

Press Information Bureau

India's chemicals and petrochemicals industry is expanding its manufacturing base, investment potential and international engagement. Dedicated industrial parks and integrated infrastructure aim to improve production capacity and attract investment. Research funding, specialised institutions and skill development are building expertise for advanced applications. Quality standards and workplace safety measures reinforce responsible industrial practices. Together, these efforts position the sector to pursue greater value addition, technological capability and a stronger role in global chemical markets.

An Industry of Strategic Importance

India's chemicals and petrochemicals industry is an important pillar of manufacturing, agriculture and industrial development. Its products serve diverse sectors, including pharmaceuticals, textiles, construction, automobiles, electronics and consumer goods. India is the sixth-largest producer of chemicals in the world and the fourth-largest in Asia. The sector is currently valued at around USD 220 billion. It is projected to reach USD 300 billion by 2030 and USD 1 trillion by 2040.

India also holds prominent positions in specialised chemical segments. It is the second-largest manufacturer and exporter of dyes and 3rd largest exporter of agrochemicals globally. There are approximately 13,000 large-scale units and 4.45 lakh micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the sector. Several initiatives are advancing chemical manufacturing, research and industrial infrastructure. These include dedicated chemical parks, funding opportunities and measures promoting quality and investment. Together, these efforts seek to strengthen India's participation in global value chains.

India Chem 2026: Connecting Industry, Investment and Global Markets

The 14th India Chem 2026 was organised from 22 to 24 October 2026 in Mumbai. The three-day event sought to attract investment and promote sustainable growth in the chemicals and petrochemicals sector. Its theme, "Advantage Bharat: An Emerging Global Chemicals Hub," highlighted India's industrial capabilities and opportunities for international collaboration. With a footfall exceeding 5,000 visitors, the event brought together industry leaders and businesses through country forums, the CEO Forum and sector-specific roundtables. The exhibition showcased technologies, equipment and investment opportunities, while the inaugural India Chem Youth Innovation Challenge encouraged students to develop practical, research-based solutions.

Strengthening Manufacturing Capacity and Industrial Infrastructure

Strengthening domestic manufacturing requires investment, industrial infrastructure and an enabling policy environment. India permits 100% FDI through the automatic route for most chemical sectors. Under the Automatic Route, investment by a person resident outside India does not require prior approval from the government. FDI inflows reached 1,04,895 crore during 2014–2026, more than double the 45,240 crore recorded during 2004–2014.

The production of major chemicals and petrochemicals increased from 45,638 thousand metric tonnes (MT) in 2015–16 to 58,617 thousand MT in 2024–25. This momentum complements initiatives to expand industrial capacity, develop specialised manufacturing hubs and enhance infrastructure across the sector.

Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Regions

The concept of Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Regions (PCPIRs) is to promote the sector in an integrated manner. PCPIR is a specifically delineated investment region having an area of about 250 sq. km with around 40% of the area earmarked for processing activities. PCPIRs follow a cluster-based approach with common infrastructure, basic utilities and support services. These include roads, rail networks, ports, Common Effluent Treatment Plants, sewage disposal plants, water supply and steam generation units. This infrastructure provides a competitive environment conducive to setting up businesses.

India has three operational PCPIRs: Dahej in Gujarat, Visakhapatnam–Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh, and Paradeep in Odisha.

Together, these regions have attracted 3.4 lakh crore in investment.

They have generated 3.7 lakh jobs and facilitated the establishment of over 2,200 chemical manufacturing units.

This shared industrial ecosystem provides a foundation for further investment and value addition.

BHAVYA Rasayan: Dedicated Chemical Parks

The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana Rasayan (BHAVYA Rasayan) Scheme, approved in July 2026, aims to establish three dedicated chemical parks. Each park will cover at least 8 square kilometres (2,000 acres) of land. The Centre will provide grants of up to 1,000 crore per park, subject to a minimum contribution of 500 crore by the concerned State Government. The scheme has a total financial outlay of 3,030 crore. Of this, 3,000 crore is allocated for common infrastructure and basic utilities, while 30 crore covers administrative expenditure. It will run for five years, from FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31.

The parks will provide plug-and-play infrastructure for the chemical industry, helping improve resource utilisation and reduce logistics costs. It will also foster sustainable industrial development through an environment-friendly ecosystem. This includes centralised facilities such as Common Effluent Treatment Plants, Storage and Disposal Facilities, and hazardous waste management infrastructure. The scheme is expected to attract investment, expand domestic production capacity and strengthen global competitiveness.

Plastic Parks: Strengthening Downstream Processing

The Scheme for Setting up of Plastic Parks supports India's downstream plastic processing industry. It focuses on increasing polymer (a petrochemical) absorption capacity and value addition in the domestic downstream plastic processing industry. Plastic Parks are industrial zones dedicated to plastic-related businesses and industries. Their objective is to consolidate and synergise the capacities of the plastic processing industry. This promotes investment, production and exports while generating employment. Under the scheme, the government provides grant funding up to 50% of the project cost, subject to a ceiling of Rs.40 crore per project. The remaining project cost is funded by the State Government or its agencies, beneficiary industries, etc.

The parks also encourage environmentally sustainable growth through waste management and recycling initiatives. This makes them an important part of India's efforts to manage plastic waste and strengthen the chemical industry. Ten Plastic Parks have been approved across India, of which 4 have achieved 100% infrastructure completion, including 3 completed during 2025–26.

Research, Innovation and Skill Development

As chemical applications expand across industries, the need for specialised knowledge and technical expertise continues to grow. Several initiatives are advancing these efforts through sector-specific research, specialised technical education and industry-oriented skill development.

Chemical Promotion and Development Scheme

The Chemical Promotion and Development Scheme (CPDS) facilitates the growth of the chemicals and petrochemicals industry through knowledge creation, dissemination and research promotion. It supports studies, surveys, databases and promotional materials to generate sector-specific knowledge. The scheme also incentivises research and innovation by recognising outstanding contributions to these sectors. It provides Grants-in-Aid (General) to organisations, industry associations and other entities for workshops, seminars, studies and related activities.

Since 2016, HIL (India) Limited, a public sector undertaking, has conducted farmer training programmes under CPDS.

The Institute of Pesticide Formulation Technology (IPFT) also began conducting these programmes from 2022–23. They promote the safe and judicious use of pesticides and encourage Integrated Pest Management practices.These practices aim to minimise pesticide residues in food grains, edible oils, fruits and vegetables. As of August 2026, more than 250 programmes have benefited over 1 lakh farmers across the country.

Research, Development and Innovation Scheme

Launched in November 2025, the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme has a corpus of 1 lakh crore to catalyse private-sector investment in research and innovation. It provides long-term financing and refinancing on favourable terms for transformative projects. The scheme aims to accelerate advanced technology adoption, strengthen industrial competitiveness and promote self-reliance in critical and emerging technology areas.

Effective 8 October 2026, Advanced Chemicals, Petrochemicals and Material Technologies became an additional technology area eligible for funding under the scheme. This inclusion will strengthen sectoral research and innovation and facilitate the development of indigenous technologies for advanced industrial applications.

CIPET: Technical Education, Skills and Industry Support

The Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET) is a centrally funded technical higher education institution. It undertakes Skill Development, Technology Support, Academic and Research (STAR) activities to advance India's petrochemical and allied industries. CIPET has expanded through several centres and laboratories. These include the Centre for Skilling and Technical Support (CSTS), Plastic Waste Management Centre (PWMC) and School of Advance Research in Petrochemicals (SARP). Other facilities include the Advance Research School for Technology and Product Simulation (ARSTPS) and Advance Polymer Design and Development Research Laboratory (APDDRL).

CIPET's network now comprises 51 centres, including 19 established since 2014. Three of these centres are dedicated to plastic waste management.

The institute has trained nearly 6.72 lakh skilled professionals, including over 5.21 lakh during 2014–24. It also completed 8.53 lakh Technology Support Service assignments during the same period.

Centres of Excellence

Centres of Excellence have been established to advance existing technologies, strengthen research and promote the development of new applications. 18 centres have filed 85 patents, published over 600 research papers and developed 105 new technologies and products. These achievements demonstrate the role of research institutions in building indigenous capabilities and supporting industrial innovation.

Quality, Safety and Responsible Chemical Use

Quality standards and workplace safety are essential to responsible growth in the chemicals and petrochemicals sector. Regulatory measures help ensure product quality, while targeted training equips industrial workers to handle hazardous chemicals safely.

Quality Control Orders

To protect consumers, promote quality manufacturing and curb substandard imports, Quality Control Orders (QCOs) have been issued. As of August 2026, 37 QCOs are in force, making specified chemical and petrochemical standards mandatory. These orders require domestic manufacturers and importers to comply with the quality parameters prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

Workplace Safety and Hazardous Chemical Management

A nationwide training programme has been launched under the Viksit Bharat@2047 Action Plan for the workforce of Major Accident Hazardous (MAH) Units. It focuses on the "Safe Handling of Hazardous Chemicals at the Workplace and Reducing Risk Associated with Hazardous Chemicals". The programme is designed to cover all 2,393 MAH units over 5 years. Each training programme covers 100 participants from 50 MAH units, with two employees attending from each unit.

As of August 2026, 21 training programmes have been conducted nationwide. These programmes have been attended by 1,376 industrial units and have trained 2,441 personnel. The initiative seeks to strengthen workplace preparedness and improve awareness of hazardous chemical management.

Towards an Integrated and Competitive Industry

India's chemicals and petrochemicals industry spans a wide range of manufacturing activities, industrial applications and downstream products. Its development involves expanding production capacity, establishing specialised industrial facilities and creating an enabling environment for investment. Alongside manufacturing, research initiatives and technical institutions contribute to knowledge development, technology advancement and workforce training. Quality standards and hazardous chemical management address product compliance and workplace safety. India Chem 2026 connected these domestic developments with international participation, industry engagement and opportunities for collaboration. Together, these areas reflect the breadth of efforts shaping the sector's industrial development and global engagement.

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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JAMMU WARE HOUSE **FIRE INCIDENT**

Deputy CM visits fire hit Bikram Chowk, assesses damage, assures prompt relief measures



KT News Desk

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 9: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary Monday visited the fire-affected area of Bikram Chowk, here, to assess the damage caused by the devastating fire incident and assured prompt relief measures for the affected people.

He expressed solidarity with the affected shopkeepers and traders.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, interacted with the affected traders and shopkeepers, listened to their concerns and took stock of the losses suffered by them due to the incident. He expressed deep concern over the destruction caused by the fire and conveyed his sympathies to all those whose businesses and livelihoods have been affected.

Surinder Choudhary assured prompt assistance and appropriate relief measures for the affected traders. He stressed that the concerns of those who have suffered losses would be addressed on priority and all necessary support will be extended to help them overcome this difficult situation. He also underscored the importance of strengthening emergency response mechanisms to ensure timely intervention during such unfortunate incidents.

Advocate Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC); Rakesh Singh Raka, Vice President, Central Zone Jammu, JKNC and Vijay Lochan, Chairman, SC Cell, JKNC also accompanied the Deputy CM.

Javed Rana interacts with affected shopkeepers, assures all possible assistance

KT News Desk

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 9: Minister for Tribal Affairs, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and Transport, Javed Ahmed Rana, Monday visited Warehouse Nehru Market at Bikram Chowk, Jammu, to assess the damage caused by the devastating fire that engulfed several shops in the historic commercial hub late Sunday night.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, conducted an on-ground assessment of the affected establishments and interacted with shop owners, traders and representatives of the Warehouse Association to understand the extent of losses, hear their grievances and discuss measures for their timely redressal.

Expressing deep concern over the incident, Rana sympathised with the affected traders and their families, assuring them of the Government's full support and all possible assistance. He stressed that the genuine concerns of those who have suffered losses must be addressed promptly and that no affected trader should be left without due consideration.

The Minister directed the concerned authorities to ensure close coordination among all departments for a comprehensive assessment of the losses and to facilitate necessary relief and rehabilitation measures.

Highlighting the commercial importance of Warehouse Nehru Market, Rana said that the market is one of Jammu's prominent and historic wholesale trading centres, dealing in foodgrains, edible oils and other essential commodities. He observed that the fire has not only caused substantial property losses but has also severely affected the livelihoods of traders, employees and families dependent on the market.

The Minister further stressed the need to strengthen fire safety infrastructure, preparedness and emergency response mechanisms in densely populated commercial areas to prevent such incidents and minimise potential losses in the future.

Rana also said that all circumstances and factors leading to the outbreak and spread of the fire would be thoroughly investigated and called to identify measures to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies.

Reaffirming the Omar Abdullah led Government's commitment to stand firmly with the affected business community, the Minister assured that every possible effort would be made to facilitate their early recovery and restoration of normal business activities.

Speaker expresses solidarity with fire-hit traders

Seeks immediate ex-gratia relief for affected traders

KT News Desk

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 09: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, has expressed deep concern over the devastating fire incident at the historic Warehouse–Nehru Market near Bikram Chowk, Jammu, which gutted dozens of business establishments on Sunday night, causing extensive damage to property and huge financial losses to traders.

Describing the incident as deeply unfortunate, the Speaker, as per an official statement, extended his heartfelt sympathies to the affected traders and business owners, whose shops and livelihoods have suffered heavily in the blaze. He said that the Warehouse–Nehru Market, one of Jammu's oldest and most prominent wholesale trading hubs, has been serving traders, retailers and consumers since the 1950s and holds significant economic importance for the city.

The Speaker lauded the timely efforts of the Fire and Emergency Services Department, police and local administration in containing the massive blaze and preventing further damage to life and property. He appreciated the dedication and prompt response of the personnel who worked under challenging circumstances to bring the situation under control.

Expressing concern over the huge losses, reportedly running into crores of rupees, Rather urged the administration to undertake an immediate assessment of the damages and provide adequate ex-gratia relief to the affected traders at the earliest to help them overcome the financial distress caused by the tragedy.

The Speaker also stressed the need for appropriate measures to support the affected business community in restoring their livelihoods and resuming commercial activities at the earliest.

Javid Dar assures JK NOPRUF delegation of examining teachers' service issues

KT News Desk



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 9: A delegation of the Jammu and Kashmir National Old Pension Restoration United Front (JK NOPRUF) led by its General Secretary, Sakoon Manir Monday called on Minister for Agriculture Production, Finance, Mining and Cooperative Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar and apprised him of a range of long-pending service related issues concerning the teachers and employees across Jammu and Kashmir.

The delegation, as per an official statement, submitted a detailed memorandum seeking Minister's intervention for addressing the issues pertaining to pensionary benefits, career progression, transfer policy and other matters affecting the teaching fraternity.

During the interaction, the delegation sought extension of benefits of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) to eligible Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teachers whose recruitment advertisements were issued on or before December 24, 2009, including those engaged subsequently, in accordance with Government Order No. 305-F of 2026.

The delegation highlighted the need for convening regular Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) meetings to clear the long-pending promotion cases of eligible teachers to the post of Masters. They also urged for formulating a separate, transparent and comprehensive transfer policy for ReT teachers.

Other major issues brought to the Minister's attention included formulation of a suitable transfer policy for Reserved Category and PM Package employees serving in Kashmir, acceptance and onward submission of OPS-related cases of all eligible employees to the Finance Department and expeditious disposal of pending intra-district transfer cases of Reserved Category and PM Package employees.

The representatives emphasised that these issues have a direct bearing on the professional security, career advancement, pensionary entitlements and overall welfare of teachers and other employees, warranting their timely consideration and resolution.

Sagar reviews winter power preparedness in Srinagar

Zainkote Grid Station to be augmented at a cost of Rs. 89.46 Crore

KT News Desk



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 9: Minister for Power Development Department (PDD), Revenue, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR) and Elections, Ali Mohammad Sagar, Monday visited Zainkote and Bemina to review the power supply scenario, assess winter preparedness and inspect key power infrastructure in Srinagar.

The Minister, as per an official statement, was accompanied by MLA Hazratbal, Salman Sagar, Managing Director JKPTCL, Managing Director KPDCL, Chief Engineers, Executive Engineers and other senior officers of the Power Development Department.

During the visit, the Minister reviewed the functioning of the existing power infrastructure and stressed the need for ensuring reliable, uninterrupted and quality power supply, particularly during the winter months when electricity demand witnesses a significant increase.

At Zainkote Grid Station, the Minister was informed about the proposed major augmentation of its capacity from the existing 450 MVA to 780 MVA at an estimated cost of Rs. 89.46 crore. The project is aimed at strengthening the transmission network and meeting the growing electricity requirements of Srinagar and its adjoining areas, including Shari-Khas.

The augmentation will also strengthen power supply to the 132/33 kV Grid Station at Waganpora and GIS Khanyar. It was informed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been approved and the tendering process is scheduled to be initiated by November 10, 2026.

The Minister also inspected the 132/33 kV, 200 MVA Grid Station at Bemina, which caters to several densely populated areas of Srinagar, including Bemina, Qamarwari, Karanagar, Fatehkadal, Barbar Shah, PC Depot, JVC and adjoining localities through its associated receiving stations.

He directed the officers to ensure timely completion of all ongoing and proposed works, remove operational bottlenecks and maintain close coordination to minimise power disruptions during the winter season.

The Minister also visited the Overview Data Centre at Bemina and took stock of its functioning and related infrastructure.

Emphasising the importance of strengthening the power transmission and distribution network in view of Srinagar's expanding urban landscape and rising electricity demand, Sagar called for a proactive and coordinated approach to winter preparedness. He directed the concerned officers to remain responsive to public grievances and ensure prompt resolution of power-related issues.

DLSA Shopian celebrates Legal Services Day 2026

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 09: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Shopian, Monday celebrated Legal Services Day 2026 with a grand function at the Court Complex, Shopian.

The event started with the reading of Natinal Song and National Anthem and NALSA theme song. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from all Judicial Officers, advocates, Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs), and a large number of litigants from across the district.

The programme, as per an official statement, was presided over by Mehmood Ahmad Chowdary, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman DLSA), Shopian, who graced the occasion as the chief guest.

Addressing the gathering, Chowdary highlighted the significant achievements of DLSA Shopian over the past year, particularly in the areas of legal aid, awareness campaigns, and the resolution of disputes through Lok Adalats and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. He reiterated the Authority's commitment to ensuring that justice reaches every section of society, especially the marginalized and underprivileged.

The Chairman also praised the dedicated work of the Legal Aid Defence Counsel in the district, commending their commitment to providing competent legal representation to undertrial prisoners and indigent litigants. He acknowledged their role in safeguarding the rights of the accused and ensuring that no person is denied justice due to poverty or lack of legal knowledge.

In his address, the Chairman made an earnest appeal to all participants, including litigants and advocates, to refer their cases to the DLSA for amicable settlement. He emphasized that mediation and conciliation not only reduce the burden on the courts but also provide parties with faster, cost-effective, and mutually satisfactory outcomes.

"The DLSA is not just a forum for legal aid; it is a bridge to justice. I urge every citizen to come forward and utilize our services for the peaceful resolution of their disputes," Chowdary said.

On the occasion Chief Judicial Magistrate, Rayaz Ahmad Chowdary and Principal

DLSA Budgam, TLSCs organise week-long legal awareness activities

KT News Desk



BUDGAM, NOVEMBER 09: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, in collaboration with all the Tehsil Legal Services Committees (TLSCs) of the district, organised a series of comprehensive legal awareness and outreach programmes across District Budgam during Legal Services Week 2026.

The week-long campaign, as per an official statement, was aimed at spreading awareness about the availability of free and competent legal aid, fundamental and statutory legal rights, access to justice and various welfare-oriented schemes launched by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

As part of the week-long observance, an extensive door-to-door awareness drive was also conducted through Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) deputed at various Legal Aid Clinics, Legal Literacy Clubs and other institutions across the district. The PLVs reached out to people at the grassroots level, particularly in rural and far-flung areas and sensitised them about their legal rights, the availability of free legal assistance and the role of Legal Services Institutions in ensuring that justice remains accessible to all irrespective of their social or economic background.

The week-long observance culminated in the celebration of Legal Services Day Monday, at the District Headquarter as well as at the headquarters of all Tehsil Legal Services Committees across District Budgam.

The occasion marked the successful conclusion of a series of awareness and outreach initiatives undertaken throughout the district to promote the objectives of the Legal Services Authorities Act and strengthen the delivery of legal aid services at the grassroots level.

On the occasion the programme held at ADR Centre DLSA BUdgam, resource persons including Advocate Mohammad Iqbal Wani, Aamir Hamid, Mehreen Zaffar and Advocate Feroz Ahmad Khan, addressed the gatherings and highlighted the significance of Legal Services Day, the objectives of the legal services movement and the vital role played by Legal Services Authorities in ensuring equal access to justice.

They further elaborated on the various provisions relating to free legal aid, the functioning of Legal Services Institutions and the different schemes and initiatives introduced by NALSA for the benefit of marginalised and weaker sections of society.

The resource persons emphasised that access to justice is a fundamental component of a just and equitable society and that lack of awareness, financial constraints or social barriers should never prevent any individual from seeking legal remedies. They also stressed the need to further strengthen legal awareness at the grassroots level and encouraged members of the public to approach DLSA Budgam and the concerned TLSCs for availing themselves of free legal services and assistance in appropriate cases.

Throughout the week, DLSA Budgam, in close coordination with the Tehsil Legal Services Committees at Magam, Chadoora, Charar-i-Sharief and Beerwah organised a range of awareness programmes, interactive sessions and outreach activities at different locations across the district. Special Legal Aid Desks were also established in the premises of all Subordinate Courts to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding legal aid services, guide litigants and members of the public and provide necessary assistance to eligible persons seeking legal support.

The awareness programmes primarily focused on the availability and benefits of free legal aid, various NALSA schemes, legal rights and entitlements of citizens, access to justice, the functioning of Legal Aid Clinics and the importance of Legal Literacy Clubs in promoting legal awareness among students and the general public. Special emphasis was laid on reaching out to rural and remote areas through door-to-door campaigns, public interactions and awareness sessions so that the benefits of legal services could reach the most deserving sections of society.

The initiatives also highlighted the important role of Panel Lawyers and Para Legal Volunteers in bridging the gap between legal institutions and the general public. Through their continued efforts, the participants were sensitised about the procedure for seeking free legal aid, the importance of timely legal assistance and the various avenues available for resolving disputes through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

The concluding programmes witnessed active participation from Panel Lawyers, DLSA staff members, Para Legal Volunteers, representatives of various institutions and members of the general public.

The participants appreciated the efforts made by DLSA Budgam and the concerned TLSCs in taking legal awareness initiatives to the doorsteps of the people and promoting a culture of legal awareness and accessibility.

All the activities organised across the district, were conducted under the guidance of Om Parkash Bhagat, Chairman, DLSA Budgam, and Tabasum Qadir Parray, Secretary, DLSA Budgam.

Kashmir Thunder

60 fire incidents across Jammu province in 24 hours; 35 in Jammu district alone: F&ES

Says fire services respond with extensive deployment of resources

KT News Desk



Jammu, Nov 09: Fire and Emergency Services, Jammu and Kashmir responded to an exceptionally high number of fire incidents during the last 24 hours, with 60 incidents reported across Jammu Province, including 35 in Jammu district alone.

Particularly, 16 fire incidents were reported in Jammu district within a span of approximately five hours, from 07:00 PM onwards on 08 November 2026, including multiple major fire emergencies at different locations. These incidents required simultaneous deployment of firefighting resources and extensive mobilization of departmental manpower and equipment, placing considerable demands on the Department's operational capacity during the Diwali festive period.

In view of Diwali, Fire and Emergency Services had made advance deployment of fire tenders at strategic locations across Jammu district, including Gole Market, Gandhi Nagar and Gangyal, to ensure prompt response to any emergency. Besides these deployments, regular Fire Stations also remained operational and responded to the reported incidents.

At 8:37 PM, a fire was reported in a five-storeyed residential-cum-commercial building at Pahari Mohalla. Four fire tenders from Gandhi Nagar Fire Station and two from City Fire Station were immediately mobilised. The tenders from City Fire Station reached the site at 8:44 PM. Additional resources were subsequently deployed, taking the total number of fire tenders engaged at the site to seven. The fire was brought under control in approximately 45 minutes, followed by cooling operations.

Another major fire was reported at a warehouse-cum-shopping premises at 9:18 PM. The premises contained grocery and ration items, including cooking oil and ghee. A total of 18 fire tenders from different Fire Stations and strategically deployed locations were mobilised. The fire tenders stationed at Gole Market, Gandhi Nagar and Gangyal were also pressed into service. CCTV footage from the Smart City camera installed at Asian Hotel Crossing shows fire tenders proceeding towards the site at 9:38 PM.

Additional three fire tenders reached the site within approximately ten minutes thereafter.

The fire was brought under control within approximately one and a half hours, after which cooling operations were undertaken to ensure that there was no further spread or recurrence. Approximately seven shops sustained fire damage, while a large number of adjoining shops were saved. The operation was carried out with the assistance of Police, SDRF and the District Administration.

At 10:28 PM, another fire incident was reported at Garden Estate, involving a marriage tent. Four fire tenders from the nearest available locations were immediately mobilised and reached the site within approximately seven to eight minutes. An additional fire tender from Bari Brahmana Fire Station was also dispatched as reinforcement. The fire was brought under control in approximately half an hour, followed by cooling operations.

Sakeena Itoo calls for quality healthcare, better patient care

Conducts surprise inspection of GMC Anantnag; interacts with patients, attendants

KT News Desk

Anantnag, Nov 09: Minister for Health and Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo on Monday evening conducted surprise inspection of Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag to take first-hand stock of healthcare facilities, patient-care arrangements and the overall functioning of the institution.

During the inspection, the Minister visited various sections and departments of the hospital and took detailed feedback from doctors, paramedical staff and other officials regarding the availability of medical facilities, diagnostic services, essential medicines and the delivery of healthcare services.

She also interacted with patients and their attendants to ascertain the quality of treatment being provided to them and listened to their concerns and grievances.

Emphasising that patient welfare must remain the foremost priority of every healthcare institution, Sakeena Itoo said that hospitals are meant to serve people with compassion, dedication and a strong sense of responsibility.

"Healthcare is not merely about infrastructure and medical equipment, it is equally about the quality of care, compassion and dignity with which patients are treated", the Minister said.

She stressed upon the hospital administration to ensure that all available facilities are optimally utilised and that no patient is made to suffer due to avoidable administrative delays or lack of coordination.

The Minister also underscored the importance of maintaining high standards of cleanliness and sanitation across hospital premises, ensuring uninterrupted availability of essential medicines and strengthening emergency response mechanisms.

"Public healthcare institutions carry a huge responsibility towards society. There can be no compromise on patient care, hygiene, punctuality and accountability. Every doctor, paramedic and employee must perform their duties with utmost sincerity and dedication", she maintained.

The Minister directed the hospital administration to remain responsive to the needs of patients and their attendants and ensure that grievances brought to their notice are addressed promptly.

Reiterating the Government's commitment to strengthening the healthcare delivery system across Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister said that special attention is being accorded to upgrading medical infrastructure, improving institutional capacities and enhancing the quality of healthcare services, particularly in public medical institutions serving far-flung and rural areas.

"The objective is to make our public hospitals more accessible, efficient and patient-friendly. We will continue to review their functioning and take necessary measures to improve service delivery. The people must experience tangible improvements in the healthcare facilities available to them", she added.

The Minister reiterated that accountability, transparency and dedication would remain the guiding principles for improving the public healthcare system and directed the hospital administration to work towards ensuring better healthcare outcomes for the people.

India gets quota of 1.75 lakh pilgrims under Saudi Arabia's Haj 2027 agreement

PTI

Dubai, Nov 09: India and Saudi Arabia on Monday signed the bilateral Haj agreement for 2027, under which 1,75,025 Indians will be allowed to undertake the annual pilgrimage, the Indian Consulate in Jeddah said.

Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who is on an official visit to Saudi Arabia, held a bilateral meeting with Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al Rabiah before signing the agreement in Jeddah.

"The Ministers reviewed the ongoing preparations for Haj-2027, discussed measures to strengthen bilateral coordination and logistical support, and reaffirmed their shared commitment to a safe, smooth and comfortable pilgrimage for Indian Haj pilgrims," the consulate said in a statement.

Haj, an annual Islamic pilgrimage to the city of Mecca, is required once in a lifetime for all physically and financially capable adult Muslims. It takes place during the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar and consists of a series of mandatory rituals performed over five to six days.

Saudi Arabia sets annual Haj quotas for countries to regulate the number of pilgrims visiting Mecca, as space and facilities at the holy sites are limited. The quotas are generally allocated based on each country's Muslim population, with the Saudi authorities determining the number in consultation with the respective governments. India's Haj quota has increased over the years, from 1,36,020 in 2014 to 1,75,025 for 2025, according to the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The quota has remained unchanged this year and next year. Rijiju, accompanied by Joint Secretary (Haj) Mohammad Afzal, is on a visit to Saudi Arabia from November 6 to 9.

On Sunday, Rijiju attended the inaugural ceremony of the sixth Hajj Conference and Exhibition in Jeddah and participated in the ministerial conference chaired by Al Rabiah.

He conveyed India's appreciation for the Saudi leadership's continued commitment to pilgrims' welfare and reaffirmed New Delhi's commitment to close bilateral cooperation for Haj 2027, the consulate said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Massive fire damage

with the affected traders and directed the district administration to provide immediate relief. He ordered a comprehensive assessment of the losses and appropriate measures to assist affected businesses.

Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Dr Jitendra Singh said he was deeply shocked by the incident and expressed concern over allegations of a delayed firefighting response. He urged authorities to address the matter on priority.

Former Chief Minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, who visited the site, described the losses as enormous and called for a coordinated relief and rehabilitation package from both the Jammu and Kashmir Government and the Centre.

She noted that many traders operate with borrowed funds or life savings and that insurance coverage, where available, may not be sufficient to offset such extensive losses.

She also raised concerns over the alleged delay in the arrival of fire tenders and the adequacy of firefighting equipment, urging the government to provide financial assistance to help traders restart their businesses.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Jammu MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma and other political leaders visited the market and interacted with affected traders.

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee demanded an inquiry into the alleged lapses in the firefighting response and sought an adequate relief package for those affected.

The party also called for a review of emergency preparedness during festivals such as Diwali, when the risk of fire incidents is higher. (KNO)

LoP Sharma forms

President Sat Sharma, he had constituted a six-member committee to assess the losses suffered by traders at both Nehru Market and Shiv Market and prepare a comprehensive list of affected traders.

The committee will be headed by MLA Sham Lal Sharma (Jammu North) and comprise Dr Narinder Singh, MLAs Yudhvir Sethi, Vikram Randhawa and Arvind Gupta, and BJP General Secretary Baldev Singh Billowria.

The committee will subsequently take up the matter with the Government to ensure time-bound relief and rehabilitation. It will also pursue the demand for allowing MLAs to utilise their Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to extend assistance to the affected traders.

During the visit, Sunil Sharma met the affected traders, many of whom suffered losses worth crores of rupees within minutes. He expressed solidarity with the victims and assured them that the Bharatiya Janata Party stands firmly with every family affected by the tragedy.

He said, "In barely two weeks, Jammu has witnessed two devastating market fires: first at Shiv Market near the Railway Station and now at Nehru Market. These are not just shops; they represent the livelihoods of hundreds of families. Traders cannot be sent home with mere words of sympathy. They need relief on the ground and a concrete plan to ensure that such incidents do not happen again."

Sunil Sharma demanded adequate and time-bound compensation for the affected traders of both markets, over and above the routine relief norms, keeping in view the extent of losses suffered by them.

He also called for the deployment of additional fire tenders in the Warehouse area, including compact fire tenders and quick response vehicles capable of entering narrow market lanes, to ensure their availability near Jammu's crowded commercial areas.

Emphasising the need for long-term preventive measures, he urged the Government to identify and allot a separate, isolated site for warehouses and the storage of inflammable goods, away from crowded markets and residential areas.

Referring to the earlier fire incident at Shiv Market, Sunil Sharma said, "After the Shiv Market fire, the NC Government promised 'all possible assistance', but no relief amount or timeline has been made public so far. The Omar Government must now move from assurances to action."

Sunil Sharma reiterated that the affected traders deserve immediate relief, fair compensation and proper rehabilitation, and stressed that the Government must take concrete and time-bound steps to address their concerns and strengthen fire safety arrangements across Jammu's commercial establishments.

He was accompanied during the visit by Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma, former J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina, MLAs Arvind Gupta, Yudhvir Sethi and Vikram Randhawa, and BJP State General Secretary Baldev Singh Billowria. (KNO)

Dr Jitendra calls

at sensitive locations where fireworks and firecrackers are likely to be used. He directed that Fire and Emergency Services teams remain on standby for immediate response.

Speaking to reporters here, Singh, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), expressed grief over the incident, saying it was fortunate that no loss of human life was reported. He said the incident was particularly unfortunate as it occurred on the day of Diwali, and noted that workers often stay inside the shops but had probably gone home to celebrate the festival with their families, preventing a potentially bigger tragedy.

The Union Minister said the administration reached the spot during the night and remained there until 6:00 am. However, he acknowledged complaints regarding the response of the Fire and Emergency Services, saying the matter had been taken up with the concerned authorities.

Singh said that several inflammable materials, including cotton, acid, oil and dry brooms, were stored in the affected shops, which contributed to the rapid spread of the fire. "The Fire and Emergency Services authorities should hold discussions with warehouse representatives, including President Deepak Gupta, to establish safety guidelines and precautions for storing such materials," he said.

"The responsibility of the Fire and Emergency Services Department is not limited to extinguishing fires; it also includes preventing them and creating awareness about fire safety," he added, assuring full cooperation in implementing preventive measures.

On the financial losses suffered by traders, the minister said commercial properties are not covered under the existing SDRF norms. Dr Singh said he would request the UT government to examine the matter under special consideration and explore possibilities of providing financial assistance or compensation to the affected traders. (KNO)

Uttarakhand is both

sages and seers kindled the light of knowledge. On its peaks, the tradition of austerity flourished, and in its valleys flowed the streams of devotion, compassion, and humanity. The Ganga and Yamuna flowing from Gangotri and Yamunotri, Badrinath dedicated to Lord Vishnu, and Kedarnath, the sacred abode of Lord Shiva, all are invaluable symbols of our faith, our cultural continuity, and our civilisational identity," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that the Ganga is not merely a river but a symbol of India's cultural heritage, spiritual traditions and life-giving values. He urged the younger generation to recognise the importance of preserving the purity and uninterrupted flow of the Ganga, describing it as both an environmental and moral responsibility.

Highlighting Uttarakhand's inclusive spiritual heritage, the Lieutenant Governor said Hemkund Sahib, Gurudwara Meetha Reetha Sahib and the Mindrolling Monastery are symbols of harmony, coexistence and mutual respect among diverse faiths. He observed that the State's fairs and festivals reflect the vibrancy of its cultural life and folk traditions.

"The proclamation of our ancient Vedic tradition is 'Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti', truth is one and the wise describe it in many ways. I believe that this diversity of Uttarakhand tells us that India's strength lies in the coexistence, mutual respect, and harmony of its diverse faiths. This is the distinctive character of our cultural heritage," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also lauded Uttarakhand's contribution to literature, art, music and national service. Describing the State as both "Devbhoomi" and "Veerbhoomi", he expressed gratitude to the armed forces, veterans and families of brave soldiers from the region who have served the nation with distinction.

"In the field of painting, the Garhwal style, which developed in the seventeenth century, and the contribution of its great artists are invaluable chapters of our artistic heritage. In the world of music, Uttarakhand's folk songs are extremely popular both in India and abroad. It is our responsibility to make these traditions part of the creativity, innovation, and life of the new generation," he said.

Commending the developmental progress achieved under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted historic transformation in connectivity, education, healthcare, digital infrastructure and local economic activities such as homestays, organic farming, handicrafts, tourism and start-ups.

"Just as the Ganga and Yamuna, emerging from the soil of Uttarakhand, connect many regions and nourish India's public life, in the same way the cultural consciousness of "Devbhoomi" binds the entire nation in a thread of emotional unity," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Salman Sagar top

Act, 1951, mandates that a casual vacancy in the Lok Sabha or a State Legislature shall be filled within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy. (KNO)

MeT predicts

He cautioned that fresh snowfall could disrupt traffic on important mountain passes and hilly roads, including Zojila, Sadhna Pass, Razdan Pass, Mughal Road and Sinthan Top.

Travellers, tourists, transporters and the general public have been advised to plan their journeys accordingly, check road and highway conditions before setting out and follow traffic advisories issued by the authorities.

The MeT Centre has also advised farmers to suspend harvesting activities during November 12 and 13 and ensure safe storage of crops that have already been harvested.

The Director MeT said temperatures could witness a significant decline following the precipitation, with daytime temperatures remaining around 5-8 degrees below normal during the subsequent period.

Meanwhile, weather conditions remained dry across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, with the Meteorological Centre recording no rainfall during the preceding 24 hours.

According to the department's station-wise data, Shopian recorded a minimum temperature of minus 0.7 degrees Celsius, while Pulwama recorded minus 0.1 degrees Celsius. Srinagar recorded a minimum of 1 degree Celsius at the automatic weather station in the city.

The department has advised people, particularly those travelling through higher reaches, to exercise caution in view of the possibility of fresh snowfall and slippery road conditions. (KNO)

Govt to audit private

regular classes, issue textbooks and prepare a new curriculum in the first week of November.

Earlier, the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education had earlier said that the free textbooks among students will be distributed to various educational zones in the first week of November.

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

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

Man dies after

was identified as Adil Ahmad Rather (32), son of Ghulam Nabi Rather, a resident of Chadoora in Budgam district.

Cognizance of the incident has been taken and an investigation has been initiated. (KNO)

Alarm bells ring:

its impact on air quality, agricultural experts have also expressed concern over the damage caused to soil health by the burning of orchard residue.

An agricultural scientist associated with Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) said open burning destroys beneficial microorganisms present in the soil and releases pollutants into the atmosphere.

He said orchard waste could instead be managed through environmentally friendly practices, which would help improve soil fertility while reducing pollution.

One of the suggested alternatives is composting fallen leaves and converting them into organic manure. Experts have also recommended introducing sheep grazing in orchards, explaining that animals feed on fallen leaves while their droppings enrich the soil with organic matter.

The scientist said the practice could be particularly useful in orchards where pruning is undertaken at an appropriate height, allowing sheep to move freely beneath the trees.

It is pertinent to mention here that in 2017, Tassaduq Mufti, the then coordinator of the Chief Minister's Grievance Cell, had called for an immediate ban on biomass burning in orchards. Subsequently, SKUAST-K and the Horticulture Department issued advisories encouraging growers to adopt scientific methods for managing agricultural residue.

Despite repeated concerns and recommendations, the practice remains prevalent, largely because orchard waste also serves as a source of fuel for rural households.

For many families, particularly in areas witnessing frequent electricity cuts during winter, Kangris remain an affordable and dependable heating arrangement.

Nawaaz Ahmad a resident of Aripal Tral in Pulwama, said unreliable electricity supply makes it difficult for households to completely depend on electric heating appliances.

"Electricity supply remains uncertain during winter. For many families, Kangris are the most dependable means of keeping warm, and charcoal is needed for them," he said.

Experts believe that discouraging open burning without providing practical alternatives may not bring the desired results, as the practice is closely linked to traditional heating requirements and rural household needs.

They have stressed the need for coordinated efforts by the Horticulture Department, agricultural institutions and environmental authorities to educate farmers about the consequences of open burning and facilitate the adoption of alternative methods.

They said farmers should be encouraged to convert orchard residue into compost and organic manure, while awareness campaigns should highlight the long-term benefits of maintaining orchard hygiene through scientific waste management.

Experts also emphasised that sustainable disposal of agricultural residue would not only help reduce seasonal pollution but also improve soil health and productivity.

They said a comprehensive approach involving farmers, government departments and agricultural scientists was necessary to address the problem, particularly as Kashmir enters the winter season, when air pollution can have more pronounced consequences for public health. (KNO)

JKBOSE may declare

of School Education to provide it to the eligible students."

He said, "There are 8,20,000 students from classes 1st to 8th including 3,31,000 students of Kashmir division who are eligible for these free textbooks. This is the first time in years that we have started the work of book distribution along with the session

"We have issued a distribution schedule to the zonal officers and have directed them to keep an eye on the schedule," he said.

Pertinently, JKBOSE has informed that at least 2,70,000 students were registered to appear in board exams of 10th, 11th and 12th standard.

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

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

Kashmir Thunder

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There's deemed suspension if public servant is kept in judicial custody for over 48 hours: SC

PTI



New Delhi, Nov 09: If a public servant is arrested and kept in judicial custody for more than 48 hours, there is a deemed suspension, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manmohan made the observation while restoring the bail granted to Vishwajeet Singh, the administrator of Sadar Hospital at Samastipur in Bihar.

Singh was accused of demanding a bribe of Rs 4,000 for clearing a contractual worker's pending wages of Rs 36,421.

The top court set aside a Patna High Court order cancelling his bail nearly a year after it was granted. The bench said that although the amount of bribe demanded was not a relevant consideration for deciding a bail plea, the high court could have made that observation without cancelling the bail.

While restoring the bail, the apex court also flagged a "disturbing feature" concerning the accused's service status and subsequent posting.

"However, there is one disturbing feature which we should not ignore. It appears that upon arrest, the appellant accused was in judicial custody for almost a period of 15 days.

"Once a public servant is arrested and remains in judicial custody for more than 48 hours, there is a deemed suspension. Being a public servant, he could be said to have been placed under deemed suspension. No specific order is required to be passed in this regard," Justice Pardiwala said in the order dated November 6. The bench noted the information that Singh was placed under suspension but later, the suspension order came to be revoked.

"And, shockingly, he has been once again posted in the very same hospital and that too on the very same post. This aspect shall be looked into by the state at the earliest... We expect the state to do the needful in the matter in accordance with law," the bench said.

Singh challenged a July 1, 2026, order of the Patna High Court, which allowed a plea filed by the complainant and directed that the accused be taken into custody after cancelling the regular bail granted to him by the sessions court.

According to the case records, an FIR was registered at the Vigilance police station in 2025 under Section 7(b) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

The accused was serving as the administrator at the government-run Sadar Hospital in Samastipur when he allegedly demanded Rs 4,000 as illegal gratification for clearing the complainant's outstanding wages amounting to Rs 36,421.

Following his arrest, the accused was granted bail by the sessions court.

The complainant subsequently challenged the bail order before the high court, which set it aside.

The top court took note of the fact that the high court had interfered with the bail order almost a year after the accused was released.

It observed that the tenor of the high court's order indicated that the sessions court's reference to the bribe amount being paltry had weighed with it while deciding to cancel the bail.

"Ordinarily, in cases of this type, having regard to the maximum punishment that the trial court would impose, ultimately, if the accused is held to be guilty, bail is to be granted," the bench said.

It added that bail may be declined in cases involving criminal antecedents or where the facts are particularly grave, it added.

Rs 628.49 cr generated through scrap disposal: Railways

'Over 14 acres of space freed up'

PTI



New Delhi, Nov 09: Indian Railways generated Rs 628.49 crore through scrap disposal, exceeding the target of Rs 600 crore and also facilitated the freeing up of more than 14 acres of space under this process, the ministry said on Monday.

"Indian Railways successfully concluded Special Campaign 6 from October 2 to October 31, 2026 across Zonal Railways, Divisions, Production Units, Public Sector Undertakings and other railway establishments," a press note from the Railway Ministry said.

"The campaign recorded significant achievements in cleanliness, scrap disposal, e-waste management, space management, record management and timely disposal of pending matters," it added.

According to the ministry, as part of the campaign, over 1 lakh cleanliness drives were conducted across railway stations, offices, workshops and other railway establishments.

The ministry placed special emphasis on "Effective Collection, Segregation and Disposal of E-waste", the focus area of this year's campaign. In a significant step towards responsible waste management, more than 1.50 lakh units of e-waste were disposed of, generating revenue of Rs 10.43 crore, officials said.

Besides, Indian Railways undertook various activities, including a comprehensive review of old physical and electronic files, disposal of public grievances and appeals, Parliamentary assurances, VIP references and other pending matters and achieved significant achievements.

Indian Railways also organised Rail Jan Samvad to facilitate direct interaction between senior railway officials and rail users as part of Special Campaign 6.

"A nationwide Rail Jan Samvad programme was conducted simultaneously at 5,884 railway stations on 22nd October 2026, providing passengers an opportunity to share their feedback and suggestions directly with railway officials," the Ministry said.

Revised MRPs of 1,364 anti-cancer formulations come into effect

Consumers to save Rs 3,540 cr/year

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 09: Revised Maximum Retail Prices (MRPs) of 1,364 anti-cancer formulations have come into effect from Monday, a move projected to save consumers an estimated Rs 3,540.38 crore annually, according to an official release.

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), functioning under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, capped trade margins on the MRP of 137 anti-cancer drugs based on recommendations submitted on October 17, 2026, by an Expert Committee constituted by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. According to the ministry, 85 pharmaceutical companies have reported revised MRPs for 1,364 anti-cancer formulations across 121 drugs as of November 8, 2026.

Price reductions of over 50 per cent have been reported for 679 brands, with the highest price cut recorded at 96.45 per cent, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers: Department of Pharmaceuticals said in the release.

The ministry stated that no chemist or hospital pharmacy is permitted to charge more than the revised MRP.

Consumers can verify medicine rates via the revised MRP printed on packs, the 'Pharma Sahi Daam' mobile application, or the official NPPA website (nppa.gov.in), it said.

Consumers can lodge complaints against instances of overcharging or other pricing-related issues through the Pharma Jan Samadhan portal or contact the NPPA helpline at 1800-111-255, the release added.

NCP leaders rubbish merger buzz

PTI

Mumbai, Nov 09: A senior Nationalist Congress Party leader and former Maharashtra minister on Monday said there is no truth in the buzz over the merger of the two factions of the Sharad Pawar-founded party, which split in July 2023.

"There is no merger. We are not going to respond to rumours," the leader, who did not wish to be named, told PTI.

The merger buzz gained strength last week after several leaders of the Sunetra Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, including Praful Patel and Parth Pawar, met Sharad Pawar, who was recently hospitalised for a chest infection.

While Parth Pawar met the Opposition stalwart at his 'Silver Oak' residence in south Mumbai on Saturday and Sunday, the meeting between Patel and the NCP (SP) chief took place last week at Breach Candy hospital.

A viral video showed Sharad Pawar and Patel discussing a possible meeting after November 10. Amid such speculation, NCP state president Sunil Tatkare claimed the merger of the two factions would have taken place in February this year had Ajit Pawar been alive.

On Sunday, Patel told reporters that he met Sharad Pawar to inquire about his health and not to hold political discussions.

Patel also clarified on the "meeting after November 10" video.

Patel said Sharad Pawar was aware he would be in Gondia on November 8-9 for Diwali. "So I said I will be in Mumbai from November 10 and will visit him again to check on his health," Patel informed.

The veteran politician was initially admitted to Pune's Ruby Hall Clinic on November 2 and discharged on November 4. He was then admitted to Breach Candy hospital in south Mumbai, from where he was discharged on Saturday morning.

Meanwhile, NCP spokesperson Umesh Patil on Monday hit back at Shiv Sena leader and minister Sanjay Shirsat over his remarks on the merger.

"Why are you so concerned about our merger? You too have two Shiv Sena factions. Why don't you accept the option of merger?" Patil said, rebuking Shirsat.

Who would become the party president if the Shiv Sena factions led by Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde merged, and which faction's district and taluka-level leaders would be retained, Patil further asked.

Patil said it was inappropriate for Shirsat to comment on the NCP merger when there was no similar discussion about the merger of the two Shiv Sena factions. The Bal Thackeray-founded party split in June 2022.

"One should first sort out matters in one's own house before looking into the affairs of other parties," Patil added.

Patil also said political leaders meeting the NCP (SP) supremo must wish him a speedy recovery instead of making political statements.

Shirsat on Sunday said a merger between the NCP and NCP (SP) appeared to be in its final stages and that the roles of various leaders would soon become clear. He referred to the meeting between Parth Pawar and Sharad Pawar and said political developments were unfolding.

Delhi records most polluted Diwali in five years

Air quality 'very poor' the day after

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 09: Delhi recorded its most polluted Diwali in five years with average Air Quality Index at 376 and the morning after was only marginally better at 371 recorded at 10 am on Monday when a blanket of smog and fog blanketed the city.

The overall AQI stood at 371 at 10 am on Monday, also the highest for a post-Diwali day since 2021.

Of the 51 monitoring stations that recorded data, 14 were in the 'severe' category, four in the 'poor' category and the remaining 33 in the 'very poor' category. Delhi Technological University (DTU) recorded the worst reading of 439. Earlier in the morning, the overall AQI stood at 370 at 8 am.

According to CPCB data, the Diwali-day AQI of 376 was the highest recorded on the day of the festival since 2021, when it was recorded at 382.

It is worth noting that Diwali falls on different days in October or November every year. It was on November 8 this year, on October 20 in 2025, October 31 in 2024, November 12 in 2023, October 24 in 2022 and November 4 in 2021.

The average AQI on Diwali stood at 345 in 2025, 328 in 2024, 218 in 2023 and 312 in 2022, compared with 382 in 2021 and 376 this year.

The pollution levels remained high on the day after the festival as well. The full-day average AQI on the day after Diwali was 351 in 2025, 338 in 2024, 360 in 2023, 302 in 2022 and 462 in 2021.

The city woke up to a thick layer of smog and fog on Monday, with visibility dropping sharply at both of Delhi's major weather stations during the early morning hours.

At Safdarjung, visibility dropped to 50 metres at 6.30 am, placing it in the dense fog category, compared with 700 metres a day earlier. At Palam, visibility stood at 400 metres, indicating moderate fog, against 800 metres on Sunday.

At 8.30 am, visibility improved to 100 metres at Safdarjung and 600 metres at Palam. It subsequently improved to 500 metres and 900 metres, respectively, by 9 am, with both stations reporting shallow fog, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.



At Safdarjung, shallow fog was observed between 10.30 pm and 2.30 am before dense fog set in from 2.30 am to 9 am, lasting six hours and 30 minutes. Shallow fog was reported again from 9 am. At Palam, shallow fog was recorded between midnight and 5 am, followed by moderate fog from 5 am to 8.30 am, lasting three hours and 30 minutes. Shallow fog was subsequently reported from 8.30 am.

"It is smog along with fog," IMD officials said.

The officials attributed the drop in AQI from last night and the hazy conditions to dry weather and calm winds. Winds remained calm over Safdarjung and Palam during the previous evening, they said.

Meanwhile, Swiss air quality monitoring platform IQAir placed Delhi's air quality in the 'very unhealthy' category on Monday morning, recording an AQI of 245 at 8.30 am.

According to IQAir, the concentration of PM2.5 stood at 170 micrograms per cubic metre, around 34 times the World Health Organisation's annual guideline value.

IQAir's dashboard also showed a prominent air quality alert for Delhi, with data from 32 monitoring stations provided by 12 contributors.

Meanwhile, real-time readings on AQI.in showed that Delhi's AQI had climbed to 2,283 after Diwali. Six other Indian cities also recorded AQI levels above 1,000 at 9 pm on Sunday, according to the platform.

On Monday morning, AQI.in recorded Delhi's air quality at 637, classifying it as 'hazardous'.

Several areas, including Bawana, Burari, Jahangirpuri, Sonia Vihar, Punjabi Bagh, Okhla and Rohini, continued to record severe air quality on Monday, with pollution levels remaining high since Sunday night.

Despite restrictions on firecracker bursting, several parts of Delhi continued to witness fireworks on Sunday evening, with reports emerging from areas including Pitampura, Burari, Mayur Vihar and parts of Lutyens' Delhi.

The District Magistrate (East), in an order, had permitted the bursting of green firecrackers only on November 7 and 8, between 6 am and 7 am and 8 pm and 10 pm.

However, residents reported that firecrackers continued to be burst beyond the permitted evening window. In outer Delhi's Pitampura and Burari, Mayur Vihar, the intensity of fireworks was particularly high.

The DM's order also prohibited the bursting of firecrackers within 300 metres of hospitals, nursing homes, health centres, old-age homes, educational institutions and other notified silence zones.

Only CSIR-NEERI-certified green firecrackers were permitted for sale, exclusively at locations designated by the Delhi Police in coordination with the district administration, which had also announced joint patrolling and enforcement teams to check unauthorised sale and use of prohibited firecrackers.

According to the Air Quality Early Warning System (EWS), Delhi's air quality is likely to remain in the severe category over the subsequent few days.

A ventilation index below 6,000 square metres per second, coupled with an average wind speed of less than 10 kilometres per hour, is unfavourable for the effective dispersion of pollutants, according to the EWS.

Unfavourable meteorological conditions, vehicular emissions, Diwali celebrations and the ongoing peak stubble-burning season in neighbouring states are among the factors expected to contribute to the deterioration.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), an AQI between 0 and 50 is classified as good, 51 and 100 as satisfactory, 101 and 200 as moderate, 201 and 300 as poor, 301 and 400 as very poor, and 401 and 500 as severe.

Indian Navy to hold passing out parade of largest Agniveer batch at INS Chilka on Nov 13

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 09: The Indian Navy will hold the passing out parade of the ninth batch of its Agniveers at INS Chilka on November 13, making it the largest batch to pass out from the premier naval training establishment, officials said on Monday.

Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan will be the chief guest and reviewing officer at the parade.

"INS Chilka, the premier ab initio training establishment, will conduct the passing out parade of the ninth batch of Agniveers of the Indian Navy and Naviks of the Indian Coast Guard on November 13," the defence ministry said in a statement.

The parade will mark the successful completion of 16 weeks of ab initio training of more than 3,300 trainees, making it the largest batch to pass out from INS Chilka, it said.

It will also mark the culmination of an intensive training programme designed to transform young recruits into disciplined, physically agile, mentally resilient and professionally competent sea warriors, the officials said.

The training curriculum integrates academics, physical conditioning, swimming, outdoor activities and camp, and parade training, providing a holistic foundation for the trainees' professional journey. Equal emphasis is laid on character building, leadership, discipline, camaraderie and teamwork, while instilling the core naval values of duty, honour and courage, the statement said.

The passing out parade will be a moment of pride and accomplishment for the trainees, as their families witness the culmination of training journey and beginning of a new career, it said.

Naval veterans and distinguished guests will also be present on the occasion.

The valedictory function will be presided over by Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command.

Awards will be presented to meritorious trainees, the champion division and best instructor in recognition of their exemplary performance and contribution to training, the statement said.

In a separate statement, the defence ministry said INS Surat reached Muscat, Oman, on Sunday to participate in the 15th edition of the bilateral maritime exercise Naseem Al Bahr (Sea Breeze), followed by a coordinated patrol (CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of Oman. The exercise will comprise professional activities during the harbour and sea phases, including cross-deck visits, operational interactions and sporting events.

It is in consonance with the government's vision of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) and provides an opportunity to build upon the momentum generated during the 13th Joint Military Cooperation Committee meeting held in November 2025, the ministry said.

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Quick Read

Japan to supply coastal radar, drones to Philippines under USD 27 million deal



AP

Tokyo, Nov 9 : Japan said it will provide a coastal surveillance radar system and unmanned aircraft to the Philippines under a security deal signed Monday, as the two defense partners face growing tensions with China.

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Katsuro Kitagawa and Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro signed the 4.3 billion yen (USD 27 million) deal at a ceremony in Manila, Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The radar system will go to the Philippine Navy and the uncrewed aerial vehicles to the Philippine Air Force. The equipment is intended to strengthen maritime security and surveillance in the strategically important country, which sits near key sea lanes, the ministry said.

The deal marks the first transfer of finished Japanese-made defence equipment through Japan's Official Security Assistance programme. Established in 2023 as a military counterpart to its official development assistance programme, OSA aims to help developing nations address challenges posed by China's growing influence.

Japan has been accelerating its military and arms industry buildup. It lifted a ban on lethal weapons exports earlier this year and has agreed with the Philippines to begin talks on a deal that would allow Tokyo to provide used destroyers to Manila's navy.

Separately on Monday, the leaders of Japan and Vietnam held talks in Tokyo and pledged to deepen cooperation in defence, energy and economic security amid China's growing regional influence. At a news conference with Vietnamese President To Lam, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said Japan would accelerate its planned security assistance to Vietnam to support the country's role in international peacekeeping. The two leaders also agreed to maintain and strengthen a rules-based, "free and open" Indo-Pacific.

They signed several cooperation agreements covering areas including nuclear energy, gas-fired power generation, semiconductors and artificial intelligence, Takaichi said.

China and the Philippines have overlapping claims in the South China Sea. Tensions have led to clashes between sailors and collisions between warships in recent years. Vietnam also has overlapping territorial claims with China in the South China Sea.

China has also stepped up military activity near Japan's coasts, while Chinese coast guard ships maintain a constant presence in and around Japanese-controlled, uninhabited islands in the East China Sea that Beijing also claims its ownership.

14 killed in China high-rise building fire



PTI

Beijing, Nov 9 :Fourteen people died while 60 others were evacuated after a fire broke out in a high-rise building in Taiyuan, the capital of China's northern Shanxi Province, local officials said on Monday.

The fire broke out at 4:59 p.m. on Sunday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Firefighters used high-altitude firefighting equipment to spray water on the fire-hit area near the top of the building in the city's Yingze District to prevent the flames from reigniting, while smoke continued to billow from some floors, state-run Global Times reported.

Flashlights could be seen moving behind the windows of the burned floors as rescue personnel searched for people inside. Signboards of several training institutions were visible on the building's exterior, the report said.

According to locals, the building housed several training institutions and was adjacent to a hotel.

The property's owners and personnel in charge of the property management company have been placed under control measures.

Taiyuan city has mobilised medical resources across the province and municipality to treat the injured.

G7 talks in Paris focus on unresolved global crises, US approach draws scrutiny

AP



Paris, Nov 9 : Foreign ministers from the Group of Seven industrialised democracies began two days of talks in Paris on Monday as they grapple with multiple unresolved global crises amid questions about how US President Donald Trump will approach foreign policy after his Republican Party's heavy losses in the midterm elections.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is likely to face questions about whether the administration will shift its positions on the Russia-Ukraine war, the Iran conflict, energy security and artificial intelligence. Those issues will dominate discussions among top diplomats from the US, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan on Monday and Tuesday.

It is Rubio's first overseas trip since last week's midterm elections that dealt Republicans severe losses and cost them control of Congress, partly because of deeply unpopular policies such as the Iran war. The talks also come amid major protests across Europe, including in the French capital.

US politics likely to surface at allies' meeting

Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand, whose country has faced withering criticism and insults from Trump, said it remains an open question as to how Washington will proceed.

"In terms of the US and its approach I will say that the president has executive powers," she told reporters in Paris. "The House and the Senate have changed leadership so it's very much a question of what the approach will be."

Yet there has been little sign that the Democrats' gains will affect Trump's strategy, and his first major personnel decision has installed Stephen Miller, a hard-line supporter who has advocated extreme positions on both domestic and foreign policy, as chief of staff.

America's top diplomat is seen by many as presenting a gentler side to Trump's often brusque approach to both friends and foes, but there has been speculation -- that he has denied -- that he might choose to leave the administration early to prepare for a 2028 presidential run.

Wars in Iran and Ukraine will be major topics

Trump has floated the idea of a partnership with Europe to bring Russia's war in Ukraine to an end. The president's envoys, Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner, are set to meet both Ukrainian and Russian officials in the United Arab Emirates starting Tuesday to discuss potential compromises.

Rubio said postwar security guarantees for Ukraine and the rest of Europe have been a top concern for allies.

"There's been some advances made in what that architecture could look like post-conflict," Rubio said. "Nothing's been finalised yet, and maybe some progress can be made in Abu Dhabi."

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul, who met separately with Rubio on Monday, said he welcomed the Abu Dhabi talks but stressed that Europe must be part of any resolution.

Anand also said the Abu Dhabi discussions could yield results.

"I want to underline the importance of the talks," she said. "It has been some months since the parties have met ... and I would like to underscore the importance of this discussion in Abu Dhabi," she said, adding that it would be critical to get "specific aspects" of a peace proposal clarified.

At the same time, Qatari and other mediators have proposed an interim solution to end the deadlock over the conflict with Iran that has sent fuel prices soaring amid instability in key shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea.

Rubio said the sides are not on "the verge of a breakthrough," while reiterating that Trump prefers a diplomatic solution. But he noted of diplomacy that "right now, it hasn't been very productive because the Iranian demands are simply not just unacceptable but, in some cases, outrageous and ridiculous and really not realistic."

He said he expects allies to have a lot of questions about the conflict and next steps.

Uncertainty about consensus, even among allies

France has invited Brazil, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Ukraine to participate in some discussions. Its other priorities include Africa, China, Cuba and Haiti. The French Foreign Ministry said there will be a meeting on artificial intelligence and a separate session on support for Ukraine.

Shortly after arriving in Paris on Monday, Rubio posted on X that one of his priorities would be "pushing for real accountability at the UN" The comment suggested the administration would maintain its demands for reform at the United Nations. It has already withdrawn from several UN and other multilateral bodies.

Trump and his administration have unsettled America's G7 partners over issues including support for Ukraine and NATO and opposition to the International Criminal Court. All G7 members except Japan, which has a separate treaty alliance with the US, belong to NATO.

The administration is pushing to dismantle the ICC, an international war crimes court to which all G7 members except the US belong. It has imposed severe sanctions on the court and several of its employees, saying the ICC is trying to investigate Americans.

China rejects spy plot claims involving Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang as smear campaign

AP



Bangkok, Nov 9 :China denied on Monday it engaged in an attempt to ensnare Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, saying the spying allegations were unsubstantiated and a smear campaign against Beijing.

Huang has acknowledged he had been intimate with a business executive, issuing an apology to his wife and to the company in an open letter posted on Nvidia's website. He did not name the woman.

Nvidia announced Sunday it was conducting an independent investigation into reports that Huang was the "target of a foreign intelligence effort."

The New York Times reported that US intelligence determined that the woman was gathering information for Beijing.

"I support the investigation and will cooperate fully. I love our country and our company. I am committed to protecting NVIDIA and supporting America's national security," Huang said in his letter.

In a routine news briefing Monday, a Chinese spokesperson rejected claims it used the woman as a spy.

"The so-called Chinese spy allegation is unsubstantiated. It is nothing but smears against China," Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Monday.

Beijing earlier had dismissed The New York Times report saying Huang had developed a close relationship with a Chinese citizen named Alice Huang, who ran a company that last year faced claims it was illicitly shipping advanced Nvidia computer chips into China.

Nvidia shares dropped roughly 5 per cent in pre-market trading early Monday.

The New York Times said Alice Huang was a former executive of a Singapore-based data centre company called Megaspeed International, whose website prominently touts its partnership with Nvidia.

Many offices in Singapore were closed on Monday for a holiday. Megaspeed and the Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

Nvidia is one of the world's most valuable publicly traded companies, alongside Apple and Microsoft. Its sales of computer chips to China have at times been targeted by US regulators seeking to limit Beijing's access to such technology.

"The key questions are whether he was aware of any espionage activities and whether any confidential or strategically sensitive information was compromised," said George Chen, a partner and chair of digital practice at The Asia Group, a Washington-based consultancy.

"Those questions require evidence rather than speculation," he added in a text message to reporters.

Huang has lobbied Washington to loosen limits on sales of Nvidia chips to China in recent years, winning US President Donald Trump's approval for selling its H200 chips this year. It's unclear if Beijing would allow Chinese companies to buy those chips in large quantities. Nvidia said in a regulatory filing in August that it has sold only a small amount to China as such sales are restricted by the Chinese government.

Chinese media have largely focused on Huang admitting to the affair and state media outlets have mainly echoed the official government line. Some have said the New York Times report was aimed at destabilising US-China relations.

"Whenever China-US relations begin to improve, there are often those firing shots from the shadows," the state-owned Global Times said.

CRPF Cup T20 Challenge-4 to begin Nov 16, 16 teams to compete across three Srinagar venues

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 09 : Cricket fever is set to grip Srinagar as 16 teams gear up to compete in the six-day CRPF Cup Edition-4 T20 Challenge, scheduled to begin on November 16 across three venues in the city.

Matches will be played at three venues in Srinagar, with sixteen teams competing for the coveted title.

The submission of team registration forms ended today. The participating teams will be selected through a draw of lots, with the names of all registered teams included to ensure transparency and provide everyone with a fair chance of participation.

The six-day tournament is expected to provide a platform to local cricketers to showcase their talent and compete in the T20 format. The three venues selected for the tournament are Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium, University of Kashmir and SP College Srinagar.

Notably, the CRPF Cup has emerged as a sporting event in Kashmir, with the previous three editions witnessing participation from teams across the Valley. The last edition, held in November 2025, featured 16 teams and followed a league-cum-knockout format. The detailed match schedule and fixtures for the fourth edition are awaited—(KNO)

Suryakumar Yadav named Mumbai captain for Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy

PTI



Mumbai, Nov 9 : Former India captain Suryakumar Yadav was on Monday named Mumbai skipper for the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy which begins on November 14.

Mumbai are placed in Elite Group D along with Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Hyderabad, Odisha, Uttarakhand, and Vidarbha. Suryakumar, who was not picked in the first four rounds of the Ranji Trophy, was in line for Mumbai captaincy in white-ball tournaments in case if Shreyas Iyer was not available.

"India T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav will lead the Mumbai side, bringing his vast international experience, leadership and explosive batting prowess to the team," the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) said in a statement.

The squad also features India all-rounder Shivam Dube and Shardul Thakur, who returns to competitive cricket after missing the first leg of Ranji Trophy due to a hand injury.

"We have a good mix of experienced players and exciting young talent, and I am confident that the team will come together, play with intensity and give its best in every match. Our aim is to go all the way and bring the trophy home," he added.

Nabi, Gurnoor and Arshdeep to assist India's Test preparations against NZ: Kotak

PTI



Hamilton, Nov 9 : The white-ball pace trio of Auqib Nabi, Gurnoor Brar, and Arshdeep Singh will stay back to help the Indian Test squad prepare for the crucial World Test Championship series against New Zealand starting on November 19, assistant coach Sitanshu Kotak said on Monday.

The three are currently a part of the squad that is engaged in a five-ODI series against the Black Caps. The third game of the assignment will be held here on Tuesday.

"I think three bowlers are going to stay back anyway. Gurnoor, maybe Nabi, and I think Arsh is also staying back," Kotak said in a pre-match press conference on Monday.

The former Saurashtra batter also said that the Test specialists will start their preparations from November 11 with skipper Shubman Gill, senior opener KL Rahul, left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, and pacer Anshul Kamboj leaving for Wellington after the third ODI game here on Tuesday.

"All in all, I think the preparation has been very good. On top of that, the Test players will go for a camp from the 11th, where we will get five or six sessions. Fingers crossed, we should be ready for the Test series as well."

The coaching team will also split with head coach Gautam Gambhir staying back for the fourth and fifth ODIs scheduled on November 13 and 15 at Mount Maunganui in Tauranga.

"As far as I understand, Gautam will obviously have to be here because of the upcoming World Cup. So, he will stay here. Probably, Sairaj (Bahutule) will also stay here," Kotak said.

"Morne (Morkel) and some other members of the staff will go to Wellington. These are the current plans, but as I said, the final decision is up to Gautam. So, things can change.

"We will just try to ensure that the players get the required workload, fitness and practice. They should get enough preparation, depending on the conditions available to us," he added.

Seaming tracks good for Test preparation

Kotak agreed with New Zealand batting coach Luke Ronchi that challenging tracks at Eden Park in Auckland and Hnry Stadium in Wellington helped both batters and bowlers prepare better for the Test matches.

"In hindsight, it is a good thing because similar conditions can occur in Test matches. Only the ball will be red. The intent and mindset will be different in one-day cricket, but the conditions give us an idea of what to expect," Kotak said.

He also indicated that around 12-14mm of grass is expected to be kept at the Basin Reserve, something that is par for course in this part of the woods.

"The wickets here have thicker grass, around 12-14 mm, and the conditions provide a good indication of what we might encounter in Test cricket. Even though the Test wickets may have more grass, there isn't much green on these wickets. But they are still good conditions to play in, and they are challenging."

India A game helped bowling unit

Kotak also believes that the three unofficial Tests between India A and New Zealand A helped the Test specialists in understanding the tracks and what can be expected during the five-day games.

Yashasvi Jaiswal, Devdutt Padikkal, Sai Sudharsan, Akash Deep, Jasprit Bumrah, and Prasidh Krishna are some of the Test regulars who have taken part in the A series.

"A lot of India A-related matches have also involved our red-ball players. That is a big advantage for the batters as well as the bowlers.

"The bowlers get an idea of where to bowl, what lengths to target, how much to hit the deck and how much assistance they can expect from the surface."