WEDNESDAY
18 November 2026

Volume: **17**
Issue No: **222**
Pages: **08**
Price: ₹**2**

Kashmir Thunder

SCAN TO VISIT

This newspaper is the sister concern of news agency **Kashmir News Observer (KNO)**

www.kashmirthunder.in | epaper.kashmirthunder.in | twitter.com / kashmirthunder | facebook.com/kashmirthundernews | Regd. No. JKENG/2010/39938

Companies in J&K must prioritise hiring local youth: CM Omar

'Train them, don't cite manpower shortage'; says UT status no excuse for govt to avoid responsibilities, announces projects worth over Rs 30 crore



Yogesh

Jammu, Nov 17: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday warned companies setting up units in Jammu and Kashmir against citing a shortage of trained manpower as an excuse to hire people from outside, asserting that local youth must be given priority in recruitment and adequate opportunities to prove their capabilities.

He said companies could be given six months to a year to train local youngsters before employing them, maintaining that Jammu and Kashmir had no shortage of talent and had sufficient training facilities, academies, colleges and universities.

Addressing a public gathering in Kathua during his developmental outreach across Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts, the Chief Minister said the government would not tolerate excuses for overlooking local youth in recruitment.

"We will not tolerate the excuse that trained local youngsters are not available. We can give you six months or a year to train our youth. We have academies, training facilities, colleges and universities," Omar said, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

"Our youngsters are only waiting for opportunities. The moment they get a chance, they leave their mark. | More on P6

J&K Industrial Policy to be unveiled soon: Omar

'Focus on attracting new investments, protecting existing industries'

KT News Desk

Samba, Nov 17: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday announced that his government will bring Industrial Policy soon in Jammu and Kashmir, reaffirming its commitment to revitalising the industrial sector and strengthening home-grown industries in the region.

He added that three new policies on mining, industry, and logistics and warehousing are in the offing before the Budget Session 2027-28,

Addressing the Bari Brahmana Industry Association (BBIA) Industry Conclave 2026 at Bari Brahmana, the Chief Minister emphasised that the Government's industrial policy must focus not only on attracting new investments but also on protecting, supporting and sustaining existing industries.

"Welcome the new, but protect the existing industries. There is no use of a policy which is only for new industry," he said, assuring industrial stakeholders that the Government would work towards creating a sustainable and supportive ecosystem for local industry.

The Chief Minister stressed that industrial incentives must be realistic and linked to the long-term viability of businesses rather than perpetuating dependence on subsidies. He observed that industries which bring raw material from outside and take | More on P6

Sgr records season's first sub-zero night

Mercury drops to -0.1°C



Kashmir villagers prepare traditional charcoal (*Tchini*) from orchard waste to fuel *Kangris* during harsh winter months. Photo by: Shah Jehangir

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Nov 17: Srinagar recorded its first sub-zero night of the ongoing winter season on Tuesday, with the minimum temperature settling at minus 0.1 degrees Celsius, while the mercury dropped below the freezing point at several other places across Kashmir.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the tourist resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam recorded minimum temperatures of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius and minus 3.8 degrees Celsius, respectively, marking some of the lowest readings across Jammu and Kashmir.

Director of the Meteorological Department Mukhtar Ahmed said Srinagar recorded minus 0.1 degrees Celsius during the night, the lowest minimum temperature registered in the city so far this season.

This was also the first occasion this season when the night temperature in Srinagar fell below the freezing point, indicating a further intensification of cold conditions across the Valley.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a minimum temperature of 11 degrees Celsius, while Katra registered 10.6 degrees, Batote 6.9 degrees, Banihal 9.8 degrees and Bhaderwah 1.1 degrees Celsius.

According | More on P6

Every district, rural area deserves equal attention: CM

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday inaugurated and laid foundation stones for eight development projects worth Rs 30.72 crore across Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts, highlighting the Government's focus on equitable development, rural infrastructure and public amenities. In Jammu, Abdullah laid the foundation stone for strengthening the Central Artificial Breeding Station at

Migratory birds start landing in Kashmir, Census soon



Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Nov 17: Marking the beginning of the winter migration season in Kashmir, birds from different countries have started arriving in the Valley.

An official of the Wildlife Department told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) migratory birds have started reaching at several wetlands, including Hokersar, Wular, Shallabugh, Hygam and Mirgund. "Their numbers are expected to swell in the coming weeks," he said, adding, ""The department will conduct a census soon to assess the arrival and population of migratory birds in different wetlands of Kashmir. The exercise will help determine the number of species visiting the Valley and monitor their distribution across various habitats."

It's in place to mention here that the annual arrival of migratory birds marks the beginning of the winter migration season in the Valley, as thousands of birds travel from colder regions, including Siberia, Central Asia, China and parts of Europe, to spend the winter in Kashmir's relatively milder climatic conditions.

Another official said the wetlands of Kashmir provide important | More on P6

Health min directs strict action against food safety violators

KT News Desk



Jammu, Nov 17: Minister for Health and Medical Education and Social Welfare Sakeena Itoo on Tuesday chaired a virtual meeting of senior officers of the Health and Food Safety department to review the prevailing food safety situation in Jammu and Kashmir and assess the measures being undertaken to ensure the availability of safe, hygienic and quality food products to the public.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Health and Medical Education, Saugat Biswas; Commissioner Food and Drug Administration, Khalid Jehangir; Assistant Commissioners Food Safety, Food Safety Officers and other concerned officers of the department.

During the meeting, the Minister took stock of the enforcement mechanism, ongoing inspection drives, sampling of food products, action against defaulters and the overall preparedness of the department to effectively deal with violations of food safety standards.

Emphasising that public health cannot be compromised under any circumstances, Sakeena Itoo directed the concerned officers to intensify inspections across markets, FBOs, food establishments, manufacturing units, restaurants, bakeries, eateries and other food business premises. She called for sustained and result-oriented enforcement, particularly against those found indulging in the sale, storage or distribution of unsafe, adulterated, substandard or expired food products.

The Minister categorically stressed that merely cancelling the licences of violators would not be sufficient and directed the department to initiate stringent legal and penal action against offenders under the relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act and other legal provisions. She called for identifying habitual offenders and ensuring that violations are dealt with firmly to create a strong deterrent against practices that endanger public health.

"Food safety is directly linked with the health and well-being of every citizen. There can be absolutely no compromise on the quality and safety of food being made available to the people. Those playing with public health must face strict consequences", the Minister maintained.

She further directed the officers to strengthen field-level surveillance and ensure that inspection and sampling activities are conducted regularly, rather than | More on P6

J&K moving towards normalcy, but challenges remain, says SDG CRPF

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 17: Special Director General (SDG), CRPF, J&K Zone, Sandeep Khirwar, on Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir has made progress towards normalcy, but a few challenges still remain.

Interacting with the officers at Srinagar Sector headquarters SDG Khirwar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), stressed on the importance of leadership, coordination, discipline and collective efforts in ensuring peace, security and stability in the Valley.

During SDG Khirwar's visit to the headquarters, Inspector General, Srinagar Sector, Pawan Kumar Sharma, gave a detailed presentation on the organisational structure, roles, responsibilities and operational mandate, besides its strategic objectives and operational priorities in the Kashmir Valley.

The Special Director General CRPF interacted with officers and discussed the Sector's functioning and operational preparedness.

The interaction, as per KNO, was followed by discussions on various aspects of the Sector's functioning and preparedness.

A day earlier, Khirwar had said that Jammu and Kashmir had made significant progress towards normalcy, but security challenges remained and would have to be addressed through coordinated efforts of security agencies, the administration and the people.

Pertinently, on Monday on the sidelines of a CRPF cricket tournament, Khirwar had told KNO, that security agencies have gathered vital leads in connection | More on P6

Technology can transform healthcare, improve early cancer detection: Sakeena Itoo

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Nov 17: Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakeena Itoo on Tuesday said emerging technologies have the potential to bring significant improvements in healthcare delivery, strengthen administrative accountability and facilitate early detection of serious diseases, including cancer.

Speaking to media persons on the sidelines of a national conference at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora, the minister, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said technology has made remarkable progress and simplified various aspects of governance, with facilities such as e-filing enabling officials to complete their work more efficiently.

She said the growing use of technology in the health sector would make healthcare services more accessible, efficient and responsive to people's needs.

"Technology is becoming increasingly meaningful and helpful in the health department. It can help us identify what kind of treatment or assistance a particular patient requires. It can also facilitate ambulance services and improve coordination in emergency situations," she said.

Itoo said the government was hopeful that technological interventions would also strengthen the early identification of cancer cases, allowing patients to receive timely diagnosis and treatment.

Expressing optimism about the potential of such interventions, she said the objective was to identify cancer at an initial stage and work towards eliminating the disease burden in the coming years.

She said technology-driven systems would also bring greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of the department.

Meanwhile, reacting to the killing of a person in Kishtwar, the minister strongly condemned the incident, saying such acts should not have taken place.

However, she also expressed concern over the language allegedly used by BJP MLA Shagun Parihar against the Muslim community, asking her to tender an apology.

"The Kishtwar killing is condemnable and should not have happened. But the kind of language used by BJP MLA Shagun Parihar against Muslims is also unacceptable. She should apologise to the Muslim community," Itoo said.

Itoo said people in Jammu and Kashmir have traditionally lived together in communal harmony and no individual or political leader should be allowed to disturb the peaceful coexistence among communities.

Itoo also urged the BJP leadership to keep its legislators and other leaders under control and ensure accountability for their public statements.

She said maintaining communal harmony | More on P6

'Rs 601 cr Ayushman Bharat claims pending in J&K'

Public hospitals await Rs 376.67 cr, private hospitals Rs 224.71 cr

Jahangeer Ganaie



Srinagar, Nov 17: Claims worth Rs 601.38 crore under the Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT scheme are pending for settlement in Jammu & Kashmir, official data submitted to the Estimates Committee of the J&K Assembly has revealed.

According to details accessed by news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), public hospitals account for the major share of pending claims at Rs 376.67 crore, while claims worth Rs 224.71 crore submitted by private hospitals are also awaiting settlement.

The data shows that the pending amount includes Rs 217.01 crore for the original current policy period from April 17, 2025 to April 16, 2026, and Rs 384.37 crore for the extended policy period from April 17, 2026 to November 08, 2026.

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT provides free cashless health insurance cover of up to Rs 5 lakh per family annually to all residents of Jammu & Kashmir at empanelled government and private hospitals across the country.

The figures placed before the Assembly panel reveal that empanelled hospitals have submitted 6.20 lakh claims amounting to Rs 1158.12 crore under the scheme from April 17, 2025 to November 08, 2026 .

Of these, claims worth Rs 755.69 crore were submitted by public hospitals and Rs 402.43 crore by private hospitals.

The data | More on P6

DC Shopian presides over PM Vishwakarma Awareness Programme



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 17: An Awareness-cum-Capacity Building Programme under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, presided over by Depuy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep Singh, was organised Tuesday in collaboration with the MSME Development & Facilitation Office and the District Administration, Shopian, with the District Industries Centre, Shopian coordinating the programme. Speaking on the occasion, the DC, as per an official statement, exhorted upon strengthening the capabilities of traditional artisans and crafts people and facilitating their access to modern tools, digital platforms and institutional support.

The DC directed for adopting digital technologies, improving product packaging and branding and using e-commerce platforms to enhance the market reach and competitiveness of traditional products.

During the programme, speakers sensitised the participants about the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications for artisans, product packaging, QR Code generation, Udyam Registration, e-commerce onboarding and credit facilitation through Loan Melas.

They said that it is an opportunity to understand the various support mechanisms available under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme and interact with the concerned officials regarding registration, credit facilitation and other components of the scheme.

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme, launched by the Government of India, aims to provide comprehensive support to traditional artisans and craftspeople through skill development, toolkit support, credit facilitation, digital enablement, branding and market linkage.

Joint Director, MSME, GM, DIC, Shopian, AD, MSME, DFO, Jammu / Srinagar, LDM, Shopian, officials from concerned departments and agencies, besides Vishwakarma beneficiaries participated in the awareness programme.

DC Srinagar visits Mir Behri Dal, reviews developmental initiatives

Dedicates Ambulance to Medical Block Hazratbal

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Tuesday visited the interior localities of Mir Behri Dal to take stock of developmental initiatives and assess public service delivery in the area.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, also dedicated an ambulance to Medical Block Hazratbal to strengthen healthcare facilities and improve access to medical services for residents of the interior areas of Mir Behri Dal.

The DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, BMO Hazratbal, Dr. Ab Majeed, Executive Engineer R&B Arif Hazari, Executive Engineer KPDCL, Syed Abrar , Executive Engineer KPDCL, Nissar Ahmad, Secretary LCMA, Muneer Ahmad, District Health Officer, Dr. Rubeena, and other senior officers.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with local residents and took feedback regarding their day-to-day concerns, particularly those related to healthcare and other essential civic amenities. He stressed the importance of ensuring effective implementation of developmental initiatives and strengthening public service delivery, especially in interior and relatively inaccessible areas of the district.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner formally handed over the ambulance to the Block Medical Office, Hazratbal, for the benefit of the local population, particularly residents of the interior and relatively inaccessible areas of Mir Behri Dal.

The DC underlined that the ambulance is expected to strengthen emergency healthcare services and facilitate timely transportation of patients to nearby healthcare facilities.



Director Sericulture reviews physical, financial progress



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Director Sericulture J&K, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Directorate of Sericulture Development Department, J&K, Tulsi Bagh, Srinagar, to assess the physical and financial progress of various departmental schemes and programmes and review the overall performance of the department.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, detailed deliberations were held on the physical and financial achievements made during the financial year 2026–27 under CAPEX and HADP, besides examining proposals for the financial year 2027–28.

The meeting also reviewed the utilisation certificates (UCs), beneficiary lists and details of funds released and utilised under Silk Samagra-I and Silk Samagra-II for the financial years 2021–22, 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025–26. The Director took stock of the status of silkworm rearing and cocoon production achievements during 2026–27, along with the progress of silkworm seed production and the proposed plan for 2027–28.

The Director stressed the importance of timely submission of updated progress reports, utilisation certificates and requisite documentation by the concerned officers to ensure effective monitoring, proper utilisation of funds and timely implementation of departmental programmes.

The concerned officers were directed to maintain close coordination and ensure that all targets and deliverables are achieved within the stipulated timelines.

DC Anantnag chairs meeting on Title & Cadastral Verification of major limestone mining blocks

Directs constitution of special teams for demarcation of forest, revenue boundaries

KT News Desk



ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive meeting to review and discuss issues pertaining to land title verification and cadastral verification of identified major mineral limestone mining blocks in the district. During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on various issues concerning land ownership records, cadastral details and demarcation of boundaries of the identified mining blocks, with particular emphasis on resolving pending issues to facilitate the timely completion of the verification process.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, directed the concerned departments to constitute special teams comprising relevant departmental officers and technical experts for undertaking the demarcation and verification of forest and revenue boundaries.

He stressed the need for close interdepartmental coordination to ensure accuracy in land records, resolve jurisdictional issues and expedite the verification process for the remaining mining blocks. It was informed during the meeting that a total of 13 major mineral limestone blocks had been taken up for discussion, out of which six blocks have already been approved, while the remaining seven blocks are yet to be cleared following completion of the requisite verification and other formalities.

The DC emphasised that all concerned departments must work in a coordinated manner and accord priority to the pending cases so that the process is completed within the stipulated timeline. He further stressed that proper verification of land titles and clear demarcation of forest and revenue boundaries are essential to ensure transparency and avoid any future disputes.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. Muzamil Ahmad Beigh, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), District Mineral Officer (DMO), Tehsildars of Mattan, Kokernag and Larnoo, Naib Tehsildar Doru and other concerned officers.

SWD Srinagar organizes community awareness programmes

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Social Welfare Department (SWD), Srinagar, through SANKALP-HEW Srinagar, organized a Community Awareness Programme at Saida Kadal to sensitize the local community about various Social Security Schemes and welfare initiatives of the Government.

During the programme, participants, as per an official statement, were apprised of various financial assistance schemes, including Marriage Assistance Scheme, Prosthetic Aid and other welfare measures aimed at supporting eligible and deserving beneficiaries. Detailed information regarding eligibility criteria, application procedures and the benefits available under these schemes was shared to facilitate greater awareness and accessibility.

In another programme organized in collaboration with Mission POSHAN at Ashai Bagh, awareness was imparted regarding various educational and empowerment initiatives, including Scholarships, Sponsorship Schemes, Skill Development Courses and other opportunities available for children, adolescent girls and women.

Dir Agri Kashmir reviews performance of sector heads, divisional officers

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Tuesday chaired a review meeting at Directorate of Agriculture Lalmandi to assess the physical and financial progress achieved by all the Sectoral heads and divisional officers under HADP, CSS, CAPEX, NABARD and Revex.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Agriculture Inputs Kashmir, Joint Director Agriculture Extension, Joint Director Engineering, Floriculture development officer, Soil survey officer, Seed production Officer, Plant Pathologist, Seed Analyst, Agriculture chemist, Deputy Director Trainings and other officers of the department.

The director, as per an official statement, undertook a detailed assessment of sector wise expenditure achievements, financial progress and the implementation status of various schemes. He also reviewed the pace of execution of approved activities under each component of various schemes, and the progress achieved against the targets set for the current financial year.

Director Agriculture called for simplifying the procedure for procurement of different seeds from registered seed village growers and instructed the concerned officers to ensure timely processing of bills, to facilitate the seed village growers. The Director called for minimising intervention of chemicals in agriculture fields and promoting natural farming and Agriculture Chemist Kashmir was instructed to take necessary measures in this regard. Shah directed Deputy Director Trainings FTEC Ganderbal to prepare a comprehensive Detailed Project report for establishment of training college for farmers, with all the modern technological facilities and infrastructure.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) MECHANICAL DIVISION (NORTH) SOPORE

E-TENDER

NIT No: PHE/MDNS/NIT/E-33 of 2026-27

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, sealed e-tenders in two covers are invited from experienced, reputed and registered firms/ genuine manufacturer/authorized distributors/ dealers/ workshop holders / SSI Unit holders for the following work:

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of tender document	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Earnest money	Time of completion	Programme Head	Position of funds	Technical Sanction No.	AAA No. and Date
1	Recapitalization of various VT, Horizontal, Submersible Pumping Units, Motors, Motor Bearings, Voltage Stabilizers and other allied Electrical and Mechanical items, lighting for various Water Supply Schemes of Bandipora under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 400.00	Rs 6.988	02% of the estimated cost	45 Days	M and E Plan Capex	50% Available	28 of 11/2026	SE/PHE/ MCN/ Works/ 13 of 11/2026, Dated: 12-11-2026
2	Recapitalization of various Electrical items of Sub-Station viz. link Set, Pin Insulator, Disc Insulator, Termination Kits, AB Cable, V Cross, Top Bracket, Lighting Arrestor, MCCB, Thimbles, Electric Energy Meters, ACSR etc. for various WSS of Bandipora under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 400.00	Rs 7.000					29 of 11/2026	
3	Providing, installation, testing and commissioning of 8000 GPH, 100 M Head Submersible pumping unit with one number NRV at WSS Edipora Bomai under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 50.00	Rs 1.200					30 of 11/2026	
4	Providing and fitting of Horizontal Pumping Unit at Stage 2nd, including Fabrication of Suction and delivery line and Providing and Fitting of Control Valves at WSS Bohripora Hamdanabad under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 200.00	Rs 3.500					31 of 11/2026	
5	Providing fitting of 630KVA, 4 Pole MCCB and COS in outside Panel for connecting new Units at Stage 2nd at WSS Zaingeer under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 200.00	Rs 3.000					32 of 11/2026	
6	Providing, installation, testing and commissioning of Submersible pumping unit with allied works at WSS Bomai Khas under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 50.00	Rs 1.000					33 of 11/2026	
7	Providing and fitting of 04 Cusec Horizontal Pump with 80 M Head at Stage 1st B at WSS Zaingeer under M and E Plan Capex	Rs 200.00	Rs 3.500					34 of 11/2026	

The tenders consisting of qualifying/eligibility criteria, technical specifications, general and commercial terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website https://jktenders.gov.in from 17-11-2026 (10:00 am).

The bids shall be submitted in electronic format on the website https://jktenders.gov.in from 17-11-2026 (10:00 am) to 07-12-2026 (6:55 pm).

Prequalification bids shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Division (North) Sopore on 08-12-2026 at 12:30 pm after which the financial bids of qualifying bidders shall be opened. In case offices happen to be closed due to holiday, or any other reason, on the schedule date of opening, the bids will be opened on the next working day.

The complete bidding shall be online.

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 180 days from the date of opening of bids.

No. PHE/MDNS/DB/5043-48
Dated: 16-11-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Division (North)
Sopore

DIPK-7745/26
DATED: 17-11-2026

25% EWS quota in J&K Pvt schools Soon: Edu Min

KT News Desk



Srinagar, Nov 17: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir is set to implement the provision of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, providing for 25 per cent reservation of entry-level seats in private schools for children belonging to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and disadvantaged groups.

The landmark initiative is aimed at promoting inclusive education, ensuring equitable access to quality schooling and extending greater educational opportunities to chil-dren from underprivileged backgrounds.

This was announced by Minister for Education and Jal Shakti, Shamim Firdous, during a detailed review meet-ing held with senior officers of the School Education De-partment, representatives of private school associations, parents' associations and members of civil society.

The Minister informed the meeting that the rules govern-ing the implementation of Section 12(1)(c) are in the final stage of notification and will be issued shortly. Under this provision, 25 per cent of the prescribed entry-level seats in private schools will be reserved for eligible children be-longing to EWS and disadvantaged groups. The Govern-ment will reimburse schools for admissible expenditure incurred on their free and compulsory education in ac-cordance with the applicable rules and procedures.

The initiative is expected to strengthen social inclusion in education and enable children from economically weaker and disadvantaged backgrounds to access educational opportunities in private schools alongside the existing public education system.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, School Education, R. N. Sharma; Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE), Sheikh Ghulam Hassan; Director, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), and Director, School Ed-ucation Jammu, Naseem Javaid Chowdhary; Director, Samagra Shiksha, Bhawani Rakhwal; and Director, School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani, besides other officers and stakeholder representatives.

Emphasising the need for collective efforts to improve educational standards across Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister said that the education system is evolving to de-liver better learning outcomes and holistic development for students. She stressed that all stakeholders must work together to ensure quality education, protect the interests of parents and create a learning environment that encour-ages curiosity, creativity and independent thinking among children.

The issue of textbooks prescribed by private schools was discussed in detail. Following deliberations, it was decid-ed that private schools affiliated with JKBOSE shall follow its curriculum and prescribe JKBOSE textbooks contain-ing content aligned with the NCERT syllabus. Schools were directed to ensure that prescribed books are con-sistent with the applicable academic framework.

The Minister stressed that students must not be burdened with unnecessary additional or supplementary books, re-iterating that the principles of the National Education Pol-icy (NEP) 2020 call for a balanced, flexible and child-centred approach to learning.

Shameem Firdous underlined that education should not become an excessive financial burden on parents or sub-ject students to undue academic pressure. Private schools were accordingly advised to exercise utmost caution while prescribing additional books and learning materials. "Where supplementary educational resources are consid-ered necessary, schools may facilitate access through li-braries, book banks, e-books and other digital learning re-sources rather than compelling parents to purchase mul-tiple additional books," she added.

The Minister also took note of complaints regarding the alleged sale of books at exorbitant prices and stressed that such concerns must be addressed seriously. She made it clear that unnecessary and excessive prescription of books would not be tolerated and that the focus must remain on meaningful learning and the overall development of students.

The meeting also deliberated on issues concerning school uniforms, notebooks, writing materials and other educa-tional supplies.

Shamim Firdous emphasised that procurement of these items must not be restricted to specific vendors or shops located within school premises. Parents must have the freedom to purchase uniforms, books, notebooks and writing materials from vendors of their choice, without being subjected to unnecessary restrictions or financial pressure.

Reaffirming the Government's commitment to improve the education ecosystem, the Minister stressed that edu-cational institutions must prioritise students' academic progress, creativity, critical thinking and all-round devel-opment rather than placing undue emphasis on textbooks and supplementary material.

Srinagar records 493 fire incidents till Oct

Electrical faults behind over 90% incidents

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 17: Srinagar district has recorded 493 fire incidents till October this year, fewer than the corre-sponding period last year, with electrical faults account-ing for more than 90 per cent of fire incidents, Deputy Di-rector, Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) Kashmir, Aqib Husain Mir, said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Mir said the department had issued a detailed winter safety advisory as the use of heating appliances increases during the cold months, urging people to take precautions to prevent fire accidents and loss of life and property.

He said unsafe handling of heating appliances, electrical faults and poor maintenance of equipment were among the major causes of fire incidents.

The Deputy Director advised people to purchase only standard, ISI-marked heating appliances from authorised dealers and get old equipment inspected and serviced by qualified technicians before using it during winter.

He urged households to get electrical wiring checked, re-place damaged or outdated wires and avoid overloading sockets and extension boards. He recommended installing suitable safety devices, including MCBs and RCCBs/ELCBs, with the help of qualified electricians.

On the use of LPG bukharis, Mir stressed the need for proper ventilation, warning that their improper use could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, which can cause seri-ous health complications and even prove fatal. He also advised people to switch off LPG bukharis before going to sleep.

Regarding kangris, he urged residents to keep them away from curtains, bedding, clothes and other inflammable materials and avoid leaving them unattended.

The department also cautioned against placing electric blankets on wet surfaces or using them alongside hot wa-ter bottles, warning that electrical leakage could trigger short circuits and cause burn injuries. People were ad-vised to switch off electric blankets before sleeping.

The officer further advised households against storing dry grass, fodder, charcoal and other combustible materi-als in residential attics or close to houses, as these could accelerate the spread of fire.

As a precautionary measure, the department recom-mended keeping at least one standard 5–6 kg dry chemi-cal powder (DCP) fire extinguisher at home and ensuring that family members know how to operate it.

Mir urged motorists to give way to fire tenders during emergencies and avoid illegal parking that could obstruct their movement.

The Deputy Director said the department's control rooms remained in coordination with police and traffic authori-ties to facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles. He urged people to immediately dial 101 in case of a fire emergency or contact their nearest fire station for assis-tance. If 101 is unavailable, people can also dial 112—(KNO)

Education Minister promises justice in Kupwara schoolgirl death

Announces new school building to be named after Gaziya Parvaiz

Waris Fayaz



Kupwara, Nov 17: Education Minister Shamim Firdous on Tuesday assured justice to the family of Class 3 stu-dent Gaziya Parvaiz, who died after a boundary wall col-lapsed at her government school in Drugmulla area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on November 14, say-ing action would be taken against all officials found re-sponsible for the tragedy.

During her visit to the bereaved family, the minister said the Head of Institution (HoI) was suspended soon after the incident, while the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) would also face action for failing to bring the matter to the government's notice.

"The ZEO too had a responsibility to inform and bring the matter to the notice of the government, but he did not. He too is responsible, and action will be taken against him. Anyone else found responsible will also be taken to task," she said. Firdous said inquiry committees had been constituted and their reports were expected within two to three days. The government would examine both reports before de-ciding on further action, she added.

"Justice will be done," the minister assured.

She further announced that a new school building would be constructed and named after Gaziya Parvaiz.

Responding to a query on the safety of educational insti-tutions, the minister said unsafe school buildings across Jammu and Kashmir would be identified and recon-structed on priority to prevent the recurrence of such in-cidents.

On compensation, she said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had announced Rs 2 lakh from his relief fund, while the district administration had provided Rs 1 lakh. The Edu-cation Department would provide an additional Rs 5 lakh to the bereaved family, taking the total compensation to Rs 8 lakh.

Gaziya Parvaiz died on November 14 after a boundary wall collapsed at her government school in Drugmulla, Kupwara district—(KNO)

Dy CM snubs MLA Kangan, avoids handshake at Jammu event



Yogesh

Jammu, Nov 17: A video circulating on social media appears to show MLA Kangan, Mian Mehar Ali, being snubbed by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, who seemingly avoided a handshake with him during a function organized by a media group in Jammu on Mon-day evening.

In the video, Choudhary can be seen entering the venue and greeting several dignitaries, including Chief Minis-ter's Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani and Minister for Con-sumer Affairs Javid Rana, who were seated in the front row.

As the Deputy Chief Minister moved ahead to greet other legislators, MLAs Nazir Gurezi and Mian Mehar Ali stood up from their seats to welcome him. Choudhary is seen shaking hands with Gurezi, while Mehar Ali simul-taneously extends his hand towards the Deputy Chief Minister, apparently expecting a handshake. However, Choudhary appears to move ahead without shaking hands with him.

The apparent snub comes at a time when a section of Na-tional Conference

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Black-necked crane population in Ladakh reaches 108, rises 25%



Raja Syed Rather

Leh, Nov 17: Population of the endangered Black-necked Crane, the State Bird of Ladakh, has witnessed a significant increase, reaching 108 in 2026 against 87 rec-orded in 2025, marking a rise of nearly 25 per cent.

The 2026 breeding-season checklist recorded 86 adult Black-necked Cranes and 22 juveniles, compared to 70 adults and 17 juveniles in 2025.

Among the surveyed breeding sites, Chushul recorded the highest abundance with 16 birds, followed by Tso-kar and Kargyam with 15 each, and Korzok with 14. To-gether, these four sites accounted for 60 birds, nearly 56 per cent of the total count recorded across the Changthang Range.

This encouraging milestone follows a steady rise in rec-orded adult numbers between 2021 and 2025, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 12.9 per cent in the birds' count.

The 2026 survey further recorded 22 juveniles, up from 17 juveniles in 2025, indicating continued breeding ac-tivity across the region. Notably, the number of hatch-lings has risen significantly from 9 in 2021, followed by just 7 in 2022.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the dedicated contribution of the Environment Protection Force (EPF), particularly the ex-servicemen inducted into the Force, for their efforts to protect the nesting sites, eggs and hatchlings of the Black-necked Crane from the serious threat posed by free-ranging dogs. The Force plays an important role in strengthening on-ground conservation efforts and protecting the fragile habitats of Ladakh's wildlife. LG Saxena also commended local communities, particu-larly the youth, for their active participation in conser-vation initiatives and for becoming partners in protect-ing Ladakh's ecological heritage. He also expressed con-fidence that the number of black-necked cranes would continue to grow further in the coming years.

"This is a monumental milestone for Ladakh and a mat-ter of immense pride for all of us. The Black-necked Crane is not merely our State Bird; it is a cherished symbol of Ladakh's unique ecological heritage. The en-couraging rise in its recorded numbers reinforces our resolve to protect this magnificent species and its natural habitat.

The Ladakh Environment Protection Force particularly helped protect nests, eggs and hatchlings from the seri-ous threat posed by free-ranging dogs. Protecting our wildlife and fragile ecosystems is a shared responsibil-ity, and we must ensure that this natural heritage is preserved for generations to come.

Earlier this year, the UT Administration organised the first-ever Black-necked Crane Festival this

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

GMC's employees continue protest over pending service rules

Jahangeer Ganaie



Srinagar, Nov 17: Non-gazetted employees of five newly established Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) in Jammu and Kashmir continued their protest on Tuesday, demanding immediate finalisation and notification of the long-pending Service Recruitment Rules (SRRs), which have remained unresolved since 2019.

The protests were held at GMCs Rajouri, Doda, Kathua, Baramulla and Anantnag, with employees alleging that nearly seven years of representations, meetings and repeated assurances from successive authorities had failed to yield any concrete outcome.

The Coordination Committee representing the employees said they had earlier suspended their agitation following an assurance that the rules would be finalised by September 30, 2026. However, with the deadline passing without notification, they resumed their protest on November 16.

The employees said the absence of approved SRRs had left hundreds of non-gazetted staff without a defined service structure, affecting seniority, promotional avenues and regular Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) proceedings. Seven years, six administrative heads, no resolution

The committee said around six IAS officers had served as Secretary or held the corresponding senior administrative position in the Health and Medical Education Department since 2019, but the issue remained unresolved despite repeated interventions.

It questioned why a matter directly affecting hundreds of employees had not been settled despite multiple meetings and assurances.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

A Fair Warning On The Road

For too long, traffic rules in Kashmir have been treated as suggestions. A red light is jumped, a helmet is left at home, a challan is received and then forgotten. The consequences are visible on our roads every day — in accidents, in injuries, in families destroyed. The Traffic Police's decision to blacklist around 60,000 vehicles with five or more pending challans is therefore not a harsh step. It is a long-overdue one. What makes this action meaningful is that it comes with technology that cannot be argued with. The Intelligent Traffic Management System, with its smart cameras, is detecting red-light jumping, driving without seatbelts and riding without helmets even when no traffic officer is standing at the crossing. A camera does not take bribes. It does not look away. It records what it sees, and the record stays. But technology alone will not change behaviour. The blacklisting of 60,000 vehicles is a warning, and the public must take it seriously. If you have five or more pending challans against your vehicle, clear them now. Do not wait for your vehicle to be seized, your documents to be held, or your daily routine to be disrupted. Settling a challan is cheaper than losing a vehicle and easier than an argument at a checkpoint. The DIG's openness to suggestions on the auto-rickshaw covering directive is welcome. Genuine concerns about implementation should be raised through proper channels and will be heard. But the safety of women and children, and the fight against drug peddling, cannot wait. Road safety is not a battle between citizens and the police. It is a shared duty. Every helmet worn and every challan paid makes the road a little safer for someone's father, mother or child. Let us cooperate. Clear the challans. Follow the rules. A little discipline today can save a life tomorrow.

Where Innovation Meets Affordability

Cancer treatment has advanced remarkably, but its cost has often decided who gets to hope. By capping trade margins on 137 anti-cancer medicines at 30 per cent, the government has cut the prices of over 1,000 drugs by 20–70 per cent. Affordable treatment is not charity—it is the difference between beginning the fight and surrendering before it starts. India's cancer drugs are among the most sophisticated in the world—and, until now, among the most expensive. The 30 per cent trade margin cap on over 1,000 medicines seeks a delicate balance: rewarding research while refusing to let profit dictate survival. Affordable cancer care is the measure of a just health system.



Anupriya Patel

Advances in medical science have significantly expanded the possibilities for treating several serious diseases, including cancer. Highly effective modern approaches, such as new medicines, targeted therapies and immunotherapy, have brought renewed hope in the treatment of many types of cancer. However, the impact of cancer is not limited to a patient's health alone. It also affects the emotional, social and financial well-being of the patient's family. It is equally true that the prolonged course of treatment, frequent hospital visits and high cost of medicines present numerous challenges. These difficulties can sometimes cause patients and their families to lose hope even before they have had the opportunity to begin the fight against the disease.

Patients to receive direct relief

Several factors are responsible for the high cost of cancer medicines. On the one hand, substantial investments are required for the research, development and manufacture of these medicines, particularly biological drugs and newer treatment options. On the other hand, unfair practices such as excessive trade margins across the supply chain also contribute to making cancer medicines expensive. Together, these factors can place a considerable financial burden on patients and their families, making access to essential treatment difficult.

In this context, the Government of India, in the public interest, has rationalised the trade margins of 137 identified non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines through the Trade Margin Rationalisation (TMR) initiative. The measure covers not only medicines available in the domestic market but also those available globally. Under this initiative, the maximum trade margin on these medicines has been fixed at 30 per cent. This step ensures that both existing and future cancer medicines are covered within the 30 per cent trade margin limit. As a result, the maximum retail prices (MRPs) of more than 1,000 cancer medicines have been reduced by between 20 and 70 per cent. The actual reduction in prices may, however, vary across individual medicines and brands.

It is expected that this measure will not only make cancer treatment more affordable but also give patients greater confidence to begin treatment in time. Many patients who had so far hesitated to take the first step towards cancer treatment because of its high cost can now have greater assurance that treatment will be financially more accessible. Making medicines more affordable is an important step towards ensuring that the cost of treatment does not prevent patients from seeking timely medical care.

Key reasons behind the high cost of cancer medicines

Some modern medicines used in cancer treatment, particularly biological drugs and immunotherapies, are more expensive than conventional chemical medicines. This is largely due to the complex processes involved in their development and manufacture. While ordinary chemical medicines are produced through controlled chemical processes, biological medicines are developed with the help of living cells and biological systems. Their manufacture requires highly advanced laboratories, specialised production facilities, complex technologies and stringent quality standards. These requirements make the production process considerably more demanding and have a direct bearing on the final cost of the medicines.

In addition, extensive research and large-scale clinical trials are required to establish the safety and effectiveness of these medicines. These processes are often more complex and time-consuming than those involved in the development of conventional medicines. All these aspects contribute to the overall cost of cancer drugs. Therefore, while making efforts to bring down the prices of cancer medicines, it is equally important to understand the need to encourage the development of new medical technologies and treatment options, while ensuring that their benefits reach patients. The objective must be to strike a balance between supporting medical innovation and making the resulting treatments affordable and accessible to those who need them.

To make these expensive cancer medicines more accessible to patients, more hospitals will need to become part of the Tata Memorial Hospital's Cancer Grid. Through this network, discussions and negotiations are helping secure price concessions and make newer treatment options more affordable for patients. In addition, these medicines can be made available to patients at lower costs through bulk procurement under government purchasing systems such as the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS). Such collective procurement mechanisms can help improve access to newer medicines while reducing the financial burden on individual patients.

Check revised prices on the NPPA website and 'Pharma Sahi Daam'

It is equally important to ensure that the reduction in medicine prices translates into actual benefits for patients and is clearly reflected in their hospital bills. Both government and private hospitals must ensure that patients are charged according to the revised prices. The revised prices have come into effect from 9 November 2026. Patients can check the applicable prices through the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) website and the 'Pharma Sahi Daam' mobile application. Since a substantial proportion of anti-cancer medicines is supplied directly to hospitals and medical institutions, these institutions must ensure that patients receive the medicines at the reduced prices from the stipulated date. The revised prices should also be prominently displayed at hospitals and pharmacies so that patients and their families can easily access the relevant information and verify the prices being charged. The government is monitoring the effective implementation of this arrangement at the hospital and pharmacy levels through State Drug Controllers and manufacturers. The situation is also being monitored through complaints and feedback received on the 'Pharma Sahi Daam' application. These measures are intended to ensure that the entire benefit of the price reductions reaches patients and that the revised prices are implemented effectively across the supply chain. It is essential that the intended relief is not limited to a reduction announced on paper but is reflected in the actual cost borne by patients when they purchase their medicines or receive treatment at hospitals.

Cancer is a long and difficult battle for both the patient and the patient's family. For doctors and hospitals, every patient who wins the fight against cancer represents another milestone in their efforts and a testament to the importance of accessible medical care. Imposing a trade margin cap on all categories of cancer medicines will make cancer treatment more affordable and accessible. Through the collective efforts of hospitals, pharmacies and non-governmental organisations, we can move closer to ensuring affordable cancer care for patients and their families. Ultimately, the true measure of any health policy lies in ensuring that advances and innovations in medical science continue, while their benefits reach every patient in need. Financial difficulties must not become an obstacle to treatment or deprive anyone of the opportunity to access the medical care they require.

The writer is the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare and the Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers

The Joy Of Reading

Why college students should read more

Deborah J. Cohan

As a college professor for over 30 years, I have worked with countless students who either claim they hate reading or report that they've never finished an entire book. To succeed in college, it's important to read what's assigned. It's also important to read for pleasure. Why? Because, simply put, it makes you more interesting.

With students nearing the end of the semester and hopefully thinking about how they can improve their habits and skills for the new semester, it is worth thinking about the role of reading. With the holiday break almost upon us, it's the perfect time to practice and to embark on a potentially interesting book.

People who read have a greater sense of fluency of ideas and perspectives that they can bring to bear on conversations, and they possess stronger vocabularies. These qualities give people an edge both socially and professionally. Referencing something you read and learned that resonates with you or naturally relates to a conversation during a job interview, for example, helps position you as someone with insight and depth.

The other thing to remember is that the habit of reading often translates to greater agility with writing. When you have more exposure to a variety of ways that ideas are expressed, you're able to gather more information to craft what you want to say.



College is a great time to discover exactly what it is that you like to read. This is especially true if you're coming to college with little interest in reading. This lack of interest is often due to not having had much say in what you got to read in high school. So, now's the time to think about what you gravitate to most. What do you find most moving and compelling? Maybe it's fiction, nonfiction, creative nonfiction, or poetry. Whatever it is, reading is a passport for the experience of world-traveling, which is a gift you can give yourself.

If your parents read to you when you were a child, they may have shown you the value and joy of reading. I've started directly asking my students if a parent or guardian read to or with them, what their favorite book was as a child, and what their favorite is now. What's most sad for me is when students aren't able to name a single book and instead tell me they "never read," "never had a parent read to me," "hate reading," or "never finished a book."

But even if the value of reading was not instilled in you growing up, it's not too late to develop a habit of reading for pleasure. Find something that potentially interests you, put your phone away where it's not even visible, grab a fun drink or snack, and curl up in a cozy space and read. Try just 15 minutes at first. If you like it, keep going. If you find yourself restless or sleepy, try to push through a bit longer, and if that doesn't work then go do something else and make a commitment to yourself to return to the book the next day. Typically, those in the regular practice of reading and enjoying it generally find it easier to be alone and enjoy solitude.

In summary, when college students work to strengthen their reading muscle, both in terms of reading for classes and for pleasure, they encounter the following benefits:

Becoming more intriguing people
Building their vocabulary
Becoming better writers
Opening up new vistas on the world
Becoming more comfortable conversing about a range of subjects
Feeling more at ease by themselves

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Owner & Editor, Printer, Publisher: **Nasir Azam Khan**, Published From **Srinagar,** Printed at **K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industries Estate, Rangreth**,
RNI NO:-**JKENG-2010/39938**, Email:- **Kashmirthunder123@gmail.com**, Website: **Kashmirthunder.com**, Mobile: **9906797575, 9419006285**
Owner & Editor-In-Chief of Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a leading news agency in Jammu & Kashmir. Website: www.kashmirnewsobserver.com, Mail: info@kashmirnewsobserver.com

JK Migrant deputation, several other delegations call on Sagar

Minister assures redressal of public grievances



KT News Desk

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 17: Reiterating the government's commitment to addressing public concerns through direct engagement and responsive governance, Minister for Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation, Power Development Department, Department of law, justice and parliamentary affairs, Election department , Ali Mohammad Sagar, Tuesday met a deputation of JK migrants and several other delegations representing different areas and sections of society across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the interaction, the delegations, as per an official statement, apprised the Minister of various issues concerning public welfare, developmental requirements and other matters requiring government intervention. The JK migrant delegation specifically highlighted issues related to the welfare, rehabilitation and socio-economic concerns of migrant families.

Several other delegations from different areas also called on the Minister and projected issues pertaining to their respective localities, seeking his intervention for their early resolution.

Giving a patient hearing to the representatives, Sagar took note of the issues raised and assured them that their genuine concerns would be taken up with the concerned departments and authorities for appropriate and timely action. The Minister emphasised the importance of maintaining accessible platforms for citizens to voice their concerns, stating that effective grievance redressal remains a key priority of the government.

He observed that regular interaction with people enables the government to better understand ground realities and address public issues in a focused and time-bound manner.

Sagar reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring transparent, responsive and people-oriented governance, with particular emphasis on resolving genuine public grievances and improving the delivery of essential services.

Yasha Mudgal reviews PACS computerisation, CAPEX expenditure

KT News Desk



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 17: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Civil Secretariat to assess the functioning of the Cooperative Department, progress under Centrally Sponsored Schemes, implementation of infrastructure projects and financial performance across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Registrar Cooperative Societies (RCS), J&K; Additional Registrars, Joint Registrars (Audit, Special, and Banking & Finance); all Deputy Registrars; Managing Directors/Chief Executive Officers of Cooperative Banks and other senior officers of the Administrative Department.

The Registrar Cooperative Societies, made a detailed presentation on the physical and financial progress of major departmental initiatives. These included computerization of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), business diversification, National Cooperative Database, e-governance initiatives, grain storage infrastructure and CAPEX expenditure.

Reviewing PACS computerization, the meeting was informed that 537 PACS have been computerized under Phase-I and are operational on the e-PACS platform while 171 additional PACS have been identified under Phase-II. The Detailed Project Report for the second phase has been prepared and the requisite fund requisition submitted.

The Commissioner Secretary directed the RCS to ensure that all Phase-I PACS undertake end-to-end digital transactions through the e-PACS platform with regular monitoring of their functionality and timely resolution of technical issues. She directed the concerned officers to expedite hardware procurement and complete Phase-II computerization within the stipulated timeframe.

Reviewing the business diversification, Yasha Mudgal was informed that 535 PACS are functioning as Common Service Centres (CSCs), 174 have been upgraded as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samriddhi Kendras (PMKSKs), with 307 PACS holding fertilizer licences while 45 PACS are operational as Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendras (PMJAKs) against the UT-level target of 100.

Emphasizing the need to transform PACS into financially sustainable Multipurpose PACS (M-PACS), the Commissioner Secretary stressed that these institutions must move beyond traditional credit activities and emerge as vibrant rural service delivery centres. She directed all Deputy Registrars to prepare district-wise action plans and achieve the pending targets for establishment of PMKSKs and PMJAKs within two months. She also stressed that existing CSCs, PMKSKs and PMJAKs must expand their services and commercial activities to generate sustainable revenue and improve their financial viability.

The progress of projects under the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan was also reviewed. The meeting was informed that two godowns, each having a capacity of 2,500 MT, are under execution at Turkpora, Handwara, Kupwara, at a cost of 500 lakh with 70% physical progress and at Mirhama, Kulgam, at a cost of 563 lakh with 65% progress, under SASCI. The 1,000 MT pilot grain storage project at Rajbagh, Kathua, being executed through NBCC, has achieved 80% physical progress. Newly recommended sites identified by FCI in Rajouri and Reasi districts were also discussed.

Highlighting the importance of grain storage infrastructure in strengthening rural supply chains and reducing post-harvest losses, Yasha Mudgal directed the concerned officers and executing agencies to accelerate construction, undertake regular inspections and resolve implementation-related bottlenecks. She categorically directed that all ongoing projects must be completed by the end of March 2027 while ensuring adherence to prescribed quality standards and timely utilization of funds.

The Commissioner Secretary also reviewed the National Cooperative Database (NCD), wherein 95% of cooperative societies, comprising 8,455 societies, have been re-verified for their functional status while 821 societies have been geo-tagged. She directed the concerned officers to complete the remaining verification and geo-tagging exercise on priority and ensure accuracy and regular updating of the database for effective planning and monitoring.

Regarding computerization of the Registrar Cooperative Societies Office, the meeting was informed that the hardware component has been completed and the implementing agency, finalized through NICSI, has commenced development of the e-RCS Portal.

The Commissioner Secretary directed the RCS and the implementing agency to expedite its development, establish clear implementation milestones and ensure its timely operationalization to improve transparency, efficiency and departmental service delivery.

Yasha Mudgal also reviewed the CAPEX Budget 2026–27, assessing the physical and financial progress of departmental works. She directed all concerned officers to expedite the pending administrative approvals, tendering and other procedural formalities, identify works witnessing slow progress and take immediate corrective measures to achieve the prescribed targets within the current financial year. She emphasized optimal utilization of allocated funds and made it clear that avoidable delays in execution would not be acceptable.

The performance of Cooperative Banks was also reviewed with emphasis on strengthening their financial health through improved loan recovery, prudent financial management, enhanced credit delivery and expansion of banking services, particularly in rural and underserved areas. She directed the Managing Directors/Chief Executive Officers to improve operational efficiency and strengthen institutional monitoring mechanisms.

The Commissioner Secretary emphasized the need for greater accountability, inter-departmental coordination and continuous monitoring of flagship initiatives to strengthen the cooperative movement in Jammu and Kashmir. She directed the Registrar Cooperative Societies to establish a district-wise monitoring mechanism with clearly assigned officer responsibilities and regular progress reports detailing achievements, bottlenecks and corrective measures. She instructed the Deputy Registrars and field functionaries to ensure close coordination, regular inspections and strict adherence to timelines.

JDI Kashmir, employees expresses condolences over demise of father of field publicity assistant

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Joint Director Information, Kashmir, Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari, along with officers and officials of the Joint Directorate of Information (JDI), Kashmir, Tuesday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of the father of Sajad Mohammad Bhat, Field Publicity Assistant, JDI Kashmir.

In this regard, Joint Director Information Kashmir, Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari, along with Deputy Director Information Headquarters Kashmir, Deputy Director Public Relations Kashmir and other officers and officials of the Department, visited the bereaved family to offer their heartfelt condolences and express solidarity with them in this hour of grief.

The officers, as per an official statement, conveyed their deepest sympathies to the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul. They

DC Shopian reviews grievance redressal mechanism



Interacts with grievance complainants telephonically

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Charandeep Singh, Tuesday telephonically interacted with people who had submitted their grievances through various public grievance redressal mechanisms and sought direct feedback on the promptness and effectiveness of grievance resolution.

During the telephonic interactions, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, enquired about the status of the grievances, the response received from the concerned departments and the time taken for their resolution. He also sought feedback from the complainants regarding the overall grievance redressal mechanism and the accessibility of the concerned offices.

The DC stressed the importance of maintaining a responsive and citizen-centric grievance redressal system, ensuring that public concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.

He directed the concerned officers to closely monitor grievances received through various platforms and ensure their timely disposal, while keeping the complainants informed about the action taken.

The initiative is aimed at further strengthening the feedback mechanism and ensuring greater accountability, responsiveness and transparency in public service delivery.

Civil Society delegation calls on DC Shopian

Appreciates proactive efforts of district administration



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 17: A delegation of Civil Society Shopian Tuesday called on Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Charandeep Singh, and held an interaction with him on various matters concerning the development and welfare of the district.

During the interaction, members of the civil society, as per an official statement, appreciated the dedication, commitment and proactive efforts of the Deputy Commissioner and the district administration towards the overall development of Shopian.

They acknowledged the initiatives undertaken by the administration for strengthening public service delivery, improving basic infrastructure, addressing public grievances and promoting developmental activities across the district.

The delegation also appreciated the administration's continued efforts towards ensuring responsive governance and addressing issues of public importance.

The Deputy Commissioner thanked the members of the civil society for their appreciation and constructive engagement. He reiterated that the district administration remains committed to the holistic development of Shopian and urged all stakeholders to extend their cooperation in achieving the district's developmental goals.

He also emphasized the importance of collective participation, public cooperation and coordination between the administration and civil society for effective governance and inclusive development.

ENROLMENT DRIVE

Over 150 students enrolled in Government Schools in Handwara



KT News Desk

HANDWARA, NOVEMBER 17: Education Zone Handwara organised a massive enrolment drive across two clusters, witnessing an encouraging public response, with more than 150 students enrolled in government schools.

The programme, as per an ofifical statement, was graced by Joint Director, (JD), North, Hakeem Tanveer, as the Chief Guest, while Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javeed Naseem Masoodi, attended as the Guest of Honour. Zonal Education Officer (ZEO), Handwara, was also present on the occasion.

The enrolment drive aimed to encourage parents to enrol their children in government educational institutions and familiarise them with the facilities, opportunities and educational support available in government schools. The initiative also focused on highlighting the importance of education and ensuring that every child has access to quality education.

The enrolment of more than 150 students across the two clusters marks a significant achievement for Education Zone Handwara. The enthusiastic response reflects growing public participation in efforts to strengthen government education and expand educational opportunities for children.

The presence of senior officials from the Education Department and the Sub-Divisional Administration underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in promoting school enrolment, improving the quality of education and strengthening public confidence in government educational institutions.

The initiative reaffirms the Education Department's commitment to promoting inclusive education, improving enrolment and ensuring that every child gets the opportunity to learn and grow in a supportive educational environment.

Education Zone Handwara reiterated its commitment to further strengthening the public education system and continuing efforts to motivate parents to choose government schools for their children's education.

Mission Vatsalya Bandipora conducts special drive against child begging

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, NOVEMBER 17: Mission Vatsalya (Child Protection Services), Bandipora, conducted a special drive against child begging in the main town and identified hotspots of Bandipora.

During the drive, as per an official statement, two minor children engaged in begging were identified and rescued by the team. The children were provided with all essential basic needs, and subsequently, their family was traced.



The parents were counselled regarding the adverse effects of child begging and made aware that engaging children in begging is a violation of the law and their rights. They were advised not to involve their children in such activities and to ensure their proper care, protection, and education.

After completing all necessary formalities under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, both children were safely handed over to their parents.

Mission Vatsalya Bandipora remains committed to safeguarding the rights, safety and well-being of children and preventing child exploitation in the district.

FDA intensifies enforcement drive against meat establishments

95 inspections conducted, 5 registrations suspended

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: The Food and Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K, has intensified its enforcement drive against establishments engaged in the processing, storage and sale of meat and meat products across all districts to ensure strict compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and the regulations framed there under.

During the enforcement drive, as per an official statement, 95 inspections were conducted, while registrations of five Food Business Operators (FBOs) were suspended for processing food under insanitary and unhygienic conditions. Besides, five food samples were lifted for laboratory analysis, and expired food items worth approximately Rs 8,300 were destroyed.

The FDA reiterated that enforcement activities would continue and stringent action would be taken against Food Business Operators found violating the prescribed food safety, sanitary and hygienic standards.

PAYAAM – Craft & Design Bazaar concludes three-day showcase at Jhelum waterfront

NIFT Srinagar brings artisans, designers, students, creative community together

KT News Desk



Srinagar, Nov 17: The Jhelum Waterfront came alive with three days of creativity, craftsmanship and dialogue as PAYAAM – The Craft & Design Bazaar, organised by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Srinagar, concluded its three-day showcase on Tuesday.

Bringing together artisans, designers, students and the wider creative community, Payaam emerged as a vibrant platform for celebrating Kashmir's rich craft heritage while exploring new possibilities through design, innovation and collaboration.

The three-day event featured curated design showcases, craft exhibitions, live demonstrations, interactive sessions, roundtable discussions and meaningful exchanges between students and master artisans. It witnessed the participation of several schools and colleges and attracted distinguished members of civil society, artists, academicians, journalists, entrepreneurs, cultural organisations and other stakeholders from across the region.

Through Payaam, NIFT Srinagar reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening Kashmir's craft and design ecosystem. The event sought to create meaningful connections between traditional knowledge and contemporary design practices, positioning artisans not merely as custodians of heritage but as active participants in the evolving creative economy.

Addressing the occasion, the Director, NIFT Srinagar, expressed the hope that NIFT's expertise and institutional resources would contribute positively to the region's craft and design landscape. She emphasised that NIFT, through its multidisciplinary approach to world-class design education, research and innovation across Fashion Communication, Textile Design, Lifestyle Accessories and Fashion Design, has the potential to contribute to diverse sectors and emerging opportunities.

A distinctive feature of Payaam was its thoughtfully conceptualised event environment, curated and executed by Arshad Mushtaq, CIC, NIFT Srinagar, and his team. Designed around the theme of Earth and Soil, the exhibition space reflected a conscious design philosophy rooted in sustainability, nature and cultural identity. Guests were felicitated with plant saplings, turning a simple gesture of hospitality into a statement of environmental responsibility. The overall spatial design and presentation reflected NIFT's commitment to quality, thoughtful aesthetics and professional event design.

No region should face discrimination: Minister Wani

Reviews RDD schemes, stresses accountability, transparency, field-level monitoring

KT News Desk

Jammu, Nov 17: Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment, and Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj, Altaf Ahmad Wani (Kaloo) on Tuesday emphasised the need for equitable development across Jammu and Kashmir, stating that, in accordance with the directions of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, no area or region should face any form of discrimination and every region must receive its rightful share of development.

He directed the officers of the Rural Development Department to ensure that these directions are implemented in letter and spirit.

The Minister was chairing an exclusive review meeting of the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to assess the implementation and progress of various departmental schemes and programmes.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) & Panchayati Raj, Ramesh Kumar; Secretary in RDD, Rachna Sharma; Managing Director, JKRLM, Shubra Sharma; Chief Operating Officer, Himayat, Rifat Kohli; Director, Rural Development, Kashmir, Riyaz Ahmad Wani; Director, Rural Development, Jammu, Shehnaz Akhtar; CEO, IWMP, Rajnish Sharma; Director, Panchayati Raj, Pankaj Raj Katoch; Director Finance, Umar Khan; Joint Director Planning, Munish Datta; Additional Secretary, Wasim Raja; Superintending Engineers of Jammu and Kashmir; Deputy Directors, SBM-G; Deputy Secretary; Under Secretaries and other senior officers.

Secretary, RDD, briefed the Minister on the overall functioning of the Department, implementation status of centrally sponsored and UT-sector schemes, financial and physical progress and key interventions being undertaken to strengthen rural infrastructure, employment generation, sanitation, livelihoods and Panchayati Raj institutions.

Reviewing the implementation of VB-G-RAM-G, the Minister stressed the need to rationalise the agricultural pause period in view of the distinct climatic and geographical conditions of Jammu and Kashmir. He observed that prolonged winters and heavy snowfall make execution of works difficult in Kashmir and the higher reaches of Jammu, particularly the Pir Panjal and Chenab regions.

He directed the department to review the pause-period arrangements and ensure that the working season is utilised optimally, with maximum public participation and employment generation.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Companies in J&K

Companies will have to employ our youngsters. Only when local youth are working in these companies will I consider that justice has been done to us," he added.

The Chief Minister said youngsters from Jammu and Kashmir had demonstrated their capabilities in different fields and were serving in various regiments and across different parts of the country.

Referring to sports achievements, he said football and hockey had traditionally received greater attention, but local youngsters had also shown their potential in running, rowing and other disciplines.

He also referred to Jammu and Kashmir's Ranji Trophy triumph and stressed the need to provide better facilities and opportunities to local sporting talent.

UT status no excuse for government

On the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's Union Territory status, CM Abdullah said the people had not become a UT by choice and that resolving the issue was not within the control of the elected government.

Responding to remarks by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on the UT status, he acknowledged the challenges associated with the present administrative arrangement but said it could not become an excuse for the government to avoid its responsibilities.

"It is a UT, and no one can deny that. We did not become a Union Territory by choice. Had it been in our hands, this situation would never have arisen. Unfortunately, resolving this issue is also not within our control. The Central Government is responsible for making us a UT and putting us in this difficult situation. Working under these circumstances is not easy," he said.

Omar said his government had contested the elections knowing fully well that Jammu and Kashmir was a Union Territory and that the road ahead would not be easy.

"I am not someone who makes excuses based on the prevailing circumstances. Before contesting the elections, we knew that we were a Union Territory. We knew the road ahead would not be easy, yet we chose to enter the fray. If we now claim that we cannot work because of the UT status, we would only be deceiving ourselves. That would not be true either," he said.

International-standard cricket stadium in Kashmir

The Chief Minister also referred to the proposed international-standard cricket stadium in Kashmir, expressing satisfaction over the resolution of the long-pending land-related issue that had held up the project.

He said the resolution of the issue would pave the way for the project and help strengthen sports infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, besides creating more opportunities for local players.

Omar also highlighted Kathua's importance as a gateway to Jammu and Kashmir, saying the district played an important role in the movement of goods, tourists and pilgrims entering the Union Territory.

He stressed the need to improve urban infrastructure and public facilities in the district, adding that its importance as an entry point made its development significant.

No district to be neglected

The Chief Minister said development should not be restricted to areas represented by legislators from the ruling parties, asserting that his government represented the entire population of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said people had elected representatives from different political parties, but development and public welfare remained the government's responsibility across all constituencies.

The CM said the government did not belong only to those who had voted for the National Conference or Congress but to every resident of the Union Territory.

He said people across districts expected better governance, resolution of public grievances and visible development, adding that the government was committed to ensuring balanced development irrespective of political affiliations.

Six projects for Kathua, irrigation push in Samba

Earlier, as part of his developmental outreach, the Chief Minister laid foundation stones for six major development projects in Kathua district, including four bridges aimed at improving intra-city connectivity and a drinking water supply scheme for Lakhanpur.

He assured people that additional development works proposed by the local MLA would also be taken up in phases.

In Samba district, Omar laid the foundation stone for the Command Area Development project at Gagwal, which will provide irrigation facilities to around 400 hectares of agricultural land spread across seven villages.

The project, being implemented with support from the Central Government, aims to reduce farmers' dependence on rainfall and improve agricultural productivity and income.

Omar said unpredictable weather conditions remained a challenge for farmers and stressed the need to strengthen irrigation facilities.

He assured that the project would be completed within the stipulated timeframe and that contractors would be held accountable not only for completing the work but also for monitoring the infrastructure for a few years after its commissioning.

In Jammu district, the Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone for strengthening the Central Artificial Breeding Station at Hakkal at an estimated cost of Rs 11.83 crore.

The development initiatives formed part of projects worth over Rs 30 crore being inaugurated and launched across Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts on Tuesday. Abdullah said his government was committed to strengthening infrastructure across sectors, improving basic facilities and ensuring that development benefits reached people across all regions of Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Every district, rural area

Hakkal. The Rs 11.83-crore project, under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission, aims to improve livestock genetics and productivity, strengthen dairy farming and support farmers' livelihoods.

In Samba's Patyari Cluster, Block Ghagwal, he launched a Rs 9.82-crore Pressurised Piped Irrigation Network project. Abdullah said reliable irrigation would help farmers plan sowing, reduce reliance on rainfall and improve agricultural productivity and incomes.

In Kathua, the Chief Minister inaugurated and launched six projects valued at about Rs 9.07 crore. These include a Rs 4.03-crore augmentation of the Lakhanpur Water Supply Scheme; three bridges over the Ravi Canal, costing between Rs 69 lakh and Rs 74 lakh each; a Rs 43.52-lakh culvert over the Kathua Canal; and the first phase of widening the Chagran-Nagri Road, costing Rs 2.47 crore.

Addressing a public gathering in Kathua, Abdullah said development must reach every district and community, regardless of political affiliation or geography. He said the Government would continue delivering despite the challenges of governing Jammu and Kashmir as a Union Territory, and stressed that roads, bridges, hospitals and educational institutions across remote and urban areas deserved equal attention.

He also outlined plans for a new industrial policy to increase employment for local youth. Industries receiving land, subsidised electricity or other Government incentives would be expected to create local jobs. The Government, he said, would support training through ITIs, polytechnics, colleges and universities.

"Our youth do not lack talent; they lack opportunities," Abdullah said, citing their achievements in the Armed Forces, sports and other fields.

Calling Kathua a key gateway for trade, transport and tourism, Abdullah said improved infrastructure and civic amenities were important because the district shapes many visitors' first impressions of Jammu and Kashmir. He thanked local MLA Dr Bharat Bhushan for pursuing development priorities and acknowledged Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh's contribution to the district.

The Chief Minister also announced that the land requirement for a proposed international-standard cricket stadium in Kathua had been addressed. He said the facility could support local players, provide opportunities for young talent and enable the district to host major matches.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Agriculture Production Minister Javid Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, elected representatives and senior officials attended events during the tour.

J&K Industrial

finished products out of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be sustained indefinitely through government support.

"We should frame policies for industries whose raw material or markets are better placed here. We can handhold them and take them to a stage where the industry becomes sustainable. But how can I justify an industry that will need perpetual handholding?" he asked.

Acknowledging the concerns and difficulties expressed by industry representatives, Omar Abdullah called for a focused and structured engagement between the Government and industrial associations to identify practical solutions.

He directed the Industries and Finance Ministers to constitute a small working group comprising representatives of industrial associations to hold intensive discussions and identify concrete, realistic and implementable interventions beyond the proposed policy framework.

The working group, he said, should submit its recommendations to the task force, outlining a phased roadmap with clearly identified interventions and timelines.

"The wearer knows where the shoe pinches. We, who sit in the Secretariat, often frame policies in isolation, but their impact is felt by you. Therefore, policies must be shaped according to your needs. We should not indulge in theoretical exercises," he said.

The Chief Minister underlined the need to extend appropriate price and purchase preference to locally manufactured products, on the lines of practices adopted by several other states, to strengthen local industry and promote indigenous manufacturing.

He said there could be no objection to products being sourced from outside when they were not manufactured locally, but Jammu and Kashmir's own industries deserved preference when comparable products of similar quality and price were available locally.

Referring to the contribution of existing industrial units, the Chief Minister said many entrepreneurs had continued their operations despite challenges, reflecting their commitment to Jammu and Kashmir.

He observed that local industrialists had a deep-rooted connection with the land and its people, and the Government must recognise and respect that commitment rather than take it for granted.

"Outsiders may come and go, but we cannot run away from ourselves. If we have to take care of someone, we have to take care of you," he said, assuring the industrial fraternity that the Government would make every possible effort to improve the industrial landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

On power-related concerns, Omar Abdullah said that although electricity rates had increased compared to two to three years ago, they remained lower than those in neighbouring states. He also pointed out that the Government continued to extend power subsidies to support industry.

Emphasising the need for a practical approach to addressing the sector's challenges, he said the Government was conscious of its limited financial resources and would work with industry representatives to identify interventions that were both affordable and capable of ensuring the sector's long-term sustainability.

"I want the despair that I have seen in this room to be removed, at least by 60 to 70 per cent. For that, we should sit together and identify five, six or ten concrete points and prepare a roadmap," he said.

The Chief Minister assured the industrial fraternity that the Government would not shy away from fulfilling its commitments and would extend all possible support to implement the agreed interventions.

The conclave opened with an interactive session during which several industry stakeholders shared their suggestions and feedback on the prevailing industrial scenario, highlighting key challenges and proposing measures to improve the business environment in the region.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister felicitated ten industrialists in recognition of their contribution to the industrial landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Minister for Finance Javid Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Gurwinder Singh Oberoi, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq and MLA Channapora Mushtaq Guru were present on the occasion.

Director Industries, Jammu, Arun Manhas, other senior officers, President BBIA Tarun Singla, office-bearers of BBIA and representatives of the industrial sector also attended the conclave.

Sgr records season's

to the latest forecast issued by the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, generally dry weather is expected across Jammu and Kashmir between November 17 and 21, although partly cloudy conditions are likely towards November 20 and 21.

The weather is likely to remain generally dry from November 22 to 27 as well, with no significant precipitation indicated during the forecast period.

The Meteorological Department has, however, predicted a further gradual fall in minimum temperatures across Jammu and Kashmir until November 19.

A slight improvement in night temperatures by 1-2 degrees Celsius is expected thereafter, the department said.

The continued fall in night temperatures is being attributed to prevailing dry weather conditions, with clear skies during the night allowing temperatures to drop across several parts of the region. (KNO)

J&K moving towards

with the November 11 attack on CRPF personnel in Kulgam and that those responsible would be brought to justice. (KNO)

Health min directs

being confined to occasional enforcement drives.

"Cancellation of licences alone cannot be the final action against those who deliberately violate food safety norms. We need to ensure accountability through strict legal action, prosecution wherever warranted and effective follow-up so that offenders do not repeat such practices", she said.

The Minister also called for enhanced coordination between enforcement teams and other concerned agencies to ensure prompt detection of violations and timely action. She stressed the need for strengthening laboratory testing, expediting reports of collected samples and ensuring that unsafe food products are immediately removed from circulation in accordance with the law.

Highlighting the importance of public awareness, she asked the department to undertake focused awareness campaigns to educate consumers, traders and food business operators about food safety standards, hygienic practices and their respective responsibilities.

"Protecting consumers is our foremost responsibility. People, particularly children and vulnerable sections, must have access to safe and wholesome food. The department must remain vigilant, responsive and proactive, and ensure that every complaint regarding food quality is taken seriously," she said.

The Minister directed the officers to establish a robust monitoring mechanism, ensure accountability at every level and submit regular updates on enforcement activities and action taken against violators.

Taking note of recent confiscation of rotten meat at Budgam Railway station, the Minister appreciated the concerned agencies for timely action and called upon the officers for stringent action against the persons involved.

Reiterating the Government's commitment towards safeguarding public health, Sakeena Itoo said that the Food Safety department must act with urgency and firmness to ensure that food safety regulations are implemented in letter and spirit across Jammu and Kashmir.

Migratory birds

winter habitats for several species of migratory birds, which travel thousands of kilometres during their seasonal migration. "Among the species commonly recorded in the Valley during winter are mallards, pintails, teals, coots, greylag geese, pochards, gadwalls, wigeons, shovellers and tufted ducks," he added.

The wetlands of Hokersar, Wular, Shallabugh, Hygam and Mirgund serve as important feeding and resting grounds for these birds during their stay in Kashmir.

Officials said the migratory birds also use different water bodies across the Valley for feeding, with many of them moving between wetlands during the day and night.

The department has undertaken management measures in several wetland reserves to maintain suitable habitats for the visiting species. These include maintaining water levels, improving water channels and creating pools to facilitate feeding and movement.

However, officials said poaching remained a concern, particularly in water bodies and habitats that fall outside adequately protected wetland areas.

The Wildlife Department deploys field staff and watchers to monitor vulnerable areas and prevent illegal hunting of migratory birds, they said.

The annual migration of birds to Kashmir is also considered an important indicator of the ecological significance of the Valley's wetlands, which provide breeding, feeding and resting habitats for several resident and migratory species.

Officials said the upcoming census would provide a clearer picture of the seasonal arrival of birds and help the department assess the condition of their habitats. (KNO)

'Rs 601 cr Ayushman

further shows that claims amounting to Rs 406.30 crore have been paid so far, including Rs 242.07 crore to public hospitals and Rs 164.23

The data also lays bare that claims worth Rs 106.11 crore have been rejected, including Rs 98.51 crore submitted by public hospitals and Rs 7.60 crore by private hospitals.

The records also show that deductions amounting to Rs 44.33 crore were made during claim processing, including Rs 38.44 crore for public hospitals and Rs 5.89 crore for private hospitals.

In its submission to the committee, the Health & Medical Education Department said the State Health Agency (SHA) has established a dedicated State Anti-Fraud Unit (SAFU) to detect and investigate cases of fraud, illegal out-of-pocket expenditure and denial of cashless treatment to eligible beneficiaries by empanelled hospitals.

"Claims submitted by hospitals are examined by medical officers. The Claims Review Committee conducts audit of hospital claims to identify suspicious cases, overbilling and other irregularities," the Department stated. (KNO)

Technology can

and mutual respect was the collective responsibility of all political parties and their representatives.

Earlier, the minister attended the inaugural session of a two-day national conference at IUST, Awantipora, titled "Emerging Technologies for Governance and Development Planning in Jammu & Kashmir: Policy and Implementation."

She also inaugurated the newly constructed faculty residential quarters at the university.

The conference, being held on November 17 and 18, is organised by the Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis (CGG&PA), IUST, in collaboration with the Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad, and the Information Technology Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

IUST Vice-Chancellor Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion. (KNO)

Nations willing to come together in advancing mediation for dispute resolution: CJI



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 17: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Tuesday said that despite belonging to different legal traditions, nations are willing to come together in advancing mediation as a shared common platform for dispute resolution.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 7th International Summer School on Mediation, the CJI said we must resist the temptation to confine mediation to a few familiar categories as its potential is much wider. "Nations, despite belonging to different legal traditions, are willing to come together in advancing mediation as a shared common platform for dispute resolution," the CJI said. He also emphasised community mediation and said the judiciary has an important role to play in this.

"Community mediation is one most natural form of India's long-standing tradition of resolving disagreements through dialogue... Mediation is not only an alternative to litigation but also an essential part of how we imagine justice in a modern society," he said.

Community mediation is a voluntary, non-adversarial and confidential process where trained community members help local parties resolve disputes through dialogue, consensus and mutual understanding.

Justice Abha Patel, who is a Supreme Court judge in Zambia, also spoke on the occasion.

Amazon plans USD 7 bn renewable energy investment in India by 2030

Unveils 4 projects of 934 MW



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 17: Amazon on Tuesday announced plans to invest USD 7 billion (about Rs 65,393 crore) in renewable energy projects in India by 2030, in addition to the USD 4 billion already contracted, as it unveiled four new wind and solar projects with a combined capacity of 934 megawatts.

The company said the investment makes it one of India's leading corporate purchasers of carbon-free energy.

The four initiatives consist of a 234 MW wind farm in Karnataka—marking Amazon's largest contracted wind project in Asia to date—alongside a 200 MW hybrid solar-and-wind facility in the southern state, a 300 MW solar installation in Madhya Pradesh, and a 200 MW solar project in Rajasthan.

Secured through power purchase agreements (PPAs), the projects are part of Amazon's USD 4 billion investment in renewable energy projects already contracted in India, the company said.

Amazon stated that once operational, its Indian renewable portfolio will exceed 2 GW, enough to meet the annual power demands of more than 3.5 million households in the country.

The company's portfolio in India comprises a total of 57 projects, including 14 utility-scale wind and solar projects that add carbon-free energy to the grid and 43 on-site solar installations across its facilities.

The investments will also contribute to a new global goal announced by the company to reduce the carbon intensity of the electricity powering its operations by 65 per cent by 2030. Every unit of electricity the company consumes will be associated with 65 per cent fewer carbon emissions against a 2019 baseline, it said.

The company described the target as a milestone towards its goal of achieving net-zero carbon across operations by 2040.

Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Education, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution, Pralhad Joshi, welcomed the investment.

"Such investments play an important role in advancing India's clean energy ambitions, strengthening energy security and supporting sustainable economic growth. They also demonstrate the growing confidence of global companies in India's renewable energy sector and its potential to attract long-term investment, create economic opportunities and accelerate the country's energy transition," he said.

Kara Hurst, Chief Sustainability Officer at Amazon, said the company aims to help meet India's growing electricity demand and contribute to the country's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

Modi proposes free e-visas for ASEAN tourists, maritime cooperation plan, nuclear energy exchanges

PTI



Manila, Nov 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed a series of initiatives to strengthen India-ASEAN ties, including free e-visas for tourists from ASEAN countries, a long-term maritime cooperation plan, nuclear energy technical exchanges and collaboration in critical minerals.

The proposals were outlined in a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement following the 23rd ASEAN-India Summit in Manila on Tuesday.

Among the key proposals is a long-term ASEAN-India Maritime Cooperation Plan covering connectivity, scientific research, disaster management, Coast Guard cooperation, maritime domain awareness and seafarers' security.

Modi also proposed a joint cyber forensics training programme to build capacity in the region and ASEAN-India technical exchanges in nuclear energy. Other proposals include an ASEAN-India Space Hackathon and cooperation in mining and critical minerals.

To strengthen people-to-people and youth engagement, the prime minister suggested an ASEAN-India Youth Connect initiative involving a youth summit, young parliamentarian exchanges and start-up hackathons.

Start-up hackathons are events where entrepreneurs, developers and innovators work in teams over a limited period to develop and present solutions, business ideas or prototypes for specific challenges. The prime minister also proposed enhancing scholarships for students from ASEAN countries at Nalanda University.

Modi further suggested setting up an ASEAN-India Creative Partnership Pavilion at the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2027.

Another proposal was to provide free electronic visas to tourists from ASEAN countries.

The proposals are aimed at expanding India-ASEAN engagement across maritime cooperation, technology, energy, education, youth exchanges and tourism. "PM reaffirmed India's steadfast support for ASEAN unity and centrality and highlighted the shared vision of a peaceful, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific," the MEA said in a post on X. "PM and ASEAN Leaders reviewed the progress of the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation across multiple domains."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional intergovernmental bloc that promotes economic growth, political stability, security, and cultural cooperation among its member countries in Southeast Asia.

Founded in 1967, ASEAN has 11 members -- Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. India and several other countries, including the US, China, Japan and Australia, are its dialogue partners.

India's relationship with ASEAN countries is at the heart of its Act East Policy.

The ASEAN-India dialogue relations began with the establishment of a sectoral partnership in 1992 and were elevated to a full dialogue partnership in December 1995 and summit-level partnership in 2002. The relationship was elevated to a strategic partnership in 2012 and a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022.

The Philippines is hosting the annual ASEAN summit and related meetings in Manila in its capacity as the current chair of the grouping.

Naidu meets FM, seeks immediate aid for cyclone-hit AP



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 17: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and sought immediate financial assistance for the state, which has suffered extensive damage across sectors, including agriculture, in two consecutive cyclones.

Briefing the Union minister on the impact of cyclones Arnav and Murasu, Naidu said preliminary estimates put the combined losses at more than Rs 7,000 crore. He also detailed the precautionary measures taken by the state government ahead of the cyclones, and the relief and restoration work undertaken since.

The chief minister said crops that were ready for harvest were submerged in floodwaters, leading to heavy losses for farmers.

He pointed out that despite the impact of El Nino, the state had ensured irrigation water supply to several areas through the Pattiseema project.

Coastal infrastructure also suffered extensive damage, with the power distribution network among the worst-hit sectors, an official statement said.

Citing the losses and the state's financial constraints, Naidu urged the Centre to release immediate assistance.

He said central teams had already visited the state to assess the damage and were expected to submit their reports at the earliest. Immediate help, he said, would provide much-needed relief and speed up recovery.

Gold price sinks to Rs 1.38 lakh/10gm

Silver plunges to one-year low

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 17: Gold prices fell for the sixth straight session, declining by Rs 1,400 to Rs 1.38 lakh per 10 grams, and silver crashed 5 per cent to hit a one-year low of Rs 1.69 lakh per kg in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global sentiment and a stronger rupee.

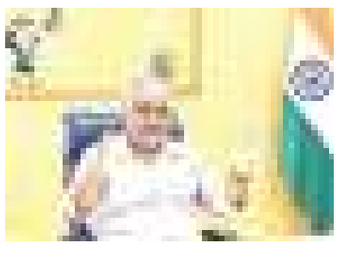
The rate of the yellow metal with 99.9 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 1,400 to Rs 1,38,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Monday's close of Rs 1.40 lakh per 10 grams, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The metal has shed Rs 8,300, or nearly 6 per cent, since November 9.

Silver also bore the brunt of the sell-off, tumbling Rs 9,500, or 5.3 per cent, to Rs 1,69,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes), its lowest level in a year. It had closed at Rs 1.79 lakh per kg in the preceding session.

Env protection, dev must advance together: Union Min at COP31

PTI



New Delhi, Nov 17: India believes that environmental protection and development must advance together, with climate resilience centred on people, livelihoods and ecosystems, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Tuesday during an event at COP31 being held in Turkiye's Antalya.

The minister also highlighted India's experience in coastal resilience and cited the Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI), which advances mangrove conservation and restoration while supporting coastal livelihoods.

Yadav made these comments at an event on 'India-SIDS (Small Island Developing States) Partnership for Resilient Coasts and Oceans: Sharing Knowledge, Technology and Solutions'.

During his address, the minister identified four priority areas for enhanced India-SIDS cooperation, the first one being coastal risk assessment, shoreline monitoring and early warning systems.

Second, ecosystem-based approaches covering mangrove conservation, coral reef and seagrass protection, wetland restoration and sustainable management of coastal and marine resources; and third, technology partnerships for island context, focused on solar-powered solutions, decentralised renewable energy, water security and climate-resilient infrastructure.

The fourth highlighted the need for institutional partnerships and capacity-building to support joint project preparation and country-led pilot initiatives.

"Cooperation must be guided by the priorities and national circumstances of individual countries, with solutions adapted to their geography, ecosystems and institutional capacities," Yadav said.

Kashmir Thunder



IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STALLS

Notice

I have changed my Name from (OLD Name) RUKHSANA. SABIR To (New Name) RAKHSHANDA in future I will be Known as New Name RAKHSHANDA If any body have any objection he/she may contact passport office Baramulla within 7 day's after 7 day's no objection will be accepted

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Abdul Rashid Baba, S/o Gh. Rasool Baba, hereby notify the general public that my Qualification Certificate (Second-ary School Examination Certificate) issued by the Jammu & Kashmir State Board of School Education, bearing Serial No. 466435 and Roll No. P 806415, pertaining to the February–June 1994 session, has been lost/misplaced. The Date of Birth recorded therein is 16-11-1975.

Despite my best efforts, I have been unable to trace the said certificate. Now, I intend to obtain a duplicate certificate from the concerned authority. If anybody has any objection, he/she may file the same before the concerned authori-ty within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Sd/-
ABDUL RASHID BABA
S/o Gh. Rasool Baba

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for DEE Class Card under name ABDUL RASHID KHANDAY S/O ABDUL SAMAD KHANDAY R/O SHAL-LABAGH Ganderbal. If anybody having any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the office of superintendent Engineer R&B Ganderbal/ Bandipora. within a period of 3days from the date of publication of this no-tice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

NAME. ABDUL RASHID KHANDAY
S/o ABDUL SAMAD KHANDAY
R/o shallabagh GANDERBAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of general public that my name enlisted in my bank account is SHAHID RASHID BABA. However my actual name as per my Aadhaar card is SHAHID RASHID. Now i intend to rectify my name in my bank rec-ords. In this regard if anybody having any objection may file the same before the Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd CHUN-DIA GANDERBAL within a period of 3 days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name .SHAHID RASHID
S/O: ABDUL RASHID BABA
R/O: CHUNDIA GANDERBAL
Account number. 0289040100005813

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for DEE Class Card under name ABDUL RASHID BHAT S/O GHULAM NABI BHAT R/O SARICH CHODRIA BAGH Ganderbal. If anybody having any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the office of superintendent Engineer R&B Ganderbal/ Bandipora. within a period of 3days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

NAME ABDUL RASHID BHAT
S/o GHULAM NABI BHAT
R/o SARICH CHODRIA BAGH GANDERBAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for DEE Class Card under name BASHARAT AHMAD BABA S/O NAZIR AHMAD BABA R/O BADHRA Ganderbal. If anybody having any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the office of superintendent Engineer R&B Ganderbal/ Bandipora. within a period of 3days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

NAME.BASHARAT AHMAD BABA
S/o NAZIR AHMAD BABA
R/o BADHRA KUND GANDERBAL

Ukraine strikes major Russian bridge as aerial attacks escalate

AP

Moscow, Nov 17 : A Ukrainian drone and missile attack prepared over several weeks struck a vital Russian rail and road bridge to the occupied Crimean Peninsula, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday, in a stunning blow after nearly five years of war.

Zelenskyy portrayed the "unprecedented" operation on the Kerch Bridge as a masterstroke, as Ukrainian forces gradually wore down Russian air defences before bombarding the prized target with missiles and drones overnight.

He didn't detail the damage, but unconfirmed media reports said that a span of the bridge collapsed in the attack, in what would be an embarrassing setback for Moscow.

The Russian-installed governor of Crimea, Sergei Aksyonov, said that traffic across the bridge has been halted and urged people "to refrain from trips in the direction of the bridge." He didn't mention any damage.

The Kerch Bridge is a crucial link in moving military and civilian supplies from Russia to Crimea and to support troops on the front line. The construction of the bridge, a potent symbol of Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsula in 2014, was inflammatory for Ukrainians.

Moscow's forces, meanwhile, fired ballistic missiles and drones at Kyiv, hitting two of the Ukrainian capital's main bridges and killing at least two people.

A recent escalation in aerial attacks came as Russia and Ukraine await a date for the next round of US-mediated talks aimed at ending the war that began with Moscow's full-scale invasion of its neighbour on Feb. 24, 2022.

US President Donald Trump says he plans to talk about the war in Ukraine during his highly anticipated meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in China this week.

Missiles delivered the final blow in the 7-stage operation

The Kerch Bridge attack was the culmination of weeks of preparatory strikes over seven stages



of the operation, Zelenskyy said on social media.

Ukrainian forces knocked out defence systems, radars, electronic warfare equipment and other designated targets before launching Monday night's final attack, he said.

Domestically developed long-range drones struck the bridge's road section during the night while Ukraine's Neptune missiles and other drones aimed at the rail section, he said. Flamingo precision-guided missiles delivered the final blow, he said.

Russia's Investigative Committee said that the bridge was attacked by drones on both days and sustained damage. It didn't elaborate on the extent of the damage.

Zelenskyy noted that Russia has battered Ukrainian infrastructure, especially the power grid, every day.

"We have repeatedly offered Russia steps toward de-escalation – and every proposal has been met with loud rejection," he said.

Russian air defences downed 1,441 drones during a second straight night of major Ukrainian attacks, Russia's Defence Ministry said Tuesday.

On Monday, Russia said that it downed 1,336 Ukrainian drones in the highest number of interceptions it had reported so far during the war.

Ukraine also attacks industrial areas deep inside Russia

Elsewhere, authorities in Bashkortostan, a Russian region in the south of Russia's Ural Mountains, said that defences repelled a "massive" drone attack on industrial zones of the cities of Ufa and Salavat. All plants there worked as usual, and no critical damage has been inflicted on them, officials said.

Independent news outlet Astra, however, reported a huge fire at the Gazprom Neftekhim Salavat oil refining and petrochemical complex, located nearly 1,300 kilometres (800 miles) east of the Ukrainian border. The complex has been attacked a number of times before.

Trump arrives in Philippines to begin Asia trip with economic deals and talks with allies



AP

Manila, Nov 17 : President Donald Trump arrived in the Philippines on Tuesday, where he met with regional partners, sought to formalise a trade deal and get a break from a series of setbacks at home, ranging from a major disruption to the US aviation industry to a scandal that has shaken the global AI industry.

Manila, the Philippine capital, is Trump's first stop on a three-day trip that will later take him to China for historic three-way nuclear talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and, according to Trump, potentially for a meeting with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un.

The visit marks Trump's first travel abroad since his party suffered deep losses in midterm elections. The White House and stock market alike have been rattled by the departure of Jensen Huang from Nvidia last week after admitting to an affair with an alleged Chinese government agent. Beijing has said it was not involved.

But Trump could not escape all the controversies still swirling in the US. Reporters asked him about the recent service outages involving Microsoft, the Federal Aviation Administration and online banking with JPMorgan Chase. The president played down the problems that caused mass flight cancellations and disrupted workdays.

"It's life," Trump said. "When you're big and powerful and you have all the money, things like that happen. It's fine."

The president was also asked about a CNN report that Iran was putting together plans to attack Washington with a dirty bomb or chemical weapons.

"Well, if there is, they will pay a price the likes of which no country has ever paid before," Trump said, adding, "I hope it's not. But we take it very seriously because they happen to be crazy."

Trump to be feted at the annual ASEAN summit

CRPF Cup: 8 matches played in Srinagar on day two; BRCC Lasjan, Samar XI Chadoora register big wins



KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Nov 17 : On the second day of the fourth edition of CRPF Cup 2026 eight league matches were played across four venues in Srinagar on Monday.

The matches were played in two sessions at SK Ground, Kashmir University Ground and SP College Ground, with several teams registering convincing victories.

In the morning session, BRCC Lasjan defeated Al-Ummah Cricket Club Ganderbal by 10 wickets after bowling them out for 35 runs. Lasjan chased down the target in just 4.1 overs without losing a wicket. Meeran Yousuf was named Player of the Match.

Royal Tigers Ganderbal registered an eight-run win over Flying Rangers Anchar, Srinagar, in a closely contested encounter. After posting 199/8, they restricted their opponents to 191 runs. Sofi Inayat was named Player of the Match.

Thunder Strikers Zewan defeated University of Kashmir by seven wickets, chasing down a target of 103, while Muraad 7th Street Cricket Club beat City Hunks Ganderbal by 32 runs.

In the afternoon session, North Star XI defeated R R R Labertal, Budgam, by 76 runs, while Shiv Warriors Budgam secured an eight-run victory over Batwara Sports Club.

Crescent XI Rangil Ganderbal defeated Handjan Hurricanes by 39 runs, while Samar XI Chadoora registered the biggest victory of the day, beating Pamposh Riders Cricket Club by 85 runs.

The CRPF said the tournament provides a platform for local cricketing talent, particularly young and emerging players, to showcase their abilities while promoting sportsmanship and discipline.—(KNO)

43rd Junior National Tennikoit Championship begins in Jammu

KT News Desk

Jammu, Nov 17: The 43rd Junior National Tennikoit Championship got underway at Green Field Ground, Jammu, bringing together young talent from across the country. Organised in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council, the five-day national tournament will continue till November 21, featuring intense competition and sporting camaraderie.

The tournament opened to an enthusiastic gathering of athletes, coaches, officials and sports lovers.

Shakti K Pathak (IPS), Director, Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), inaugurated the event and encouraged the young competitors. Monish Kumar (JKAS), Sports Officer, J&K Sports Council, and Bashir Ahmed Bakshi, DSO (J), also graced the occasion. Held under the supervision and guidance of Tazayun Mukhtar Kawos (JKAS), Secretary, J&K Sports Council, the event highlights the Union Territory's growing capacity to host premier national-level championships.

The Tennikoit Federation of India and the J&K



Tennikoit Association expressed their gratitude to the Sports Council for providing logistical support and infrastructure for the smooth conduct of the tournament. Beyond the pursuit of national titles, the championship serves as a platform for cultural exchange, fostering bonds of friendship and sportsmanship among youth from different parts of the country.

World markets mostly fall as AI stocks remain under pressure

AP

Hong Kong, Nov 17 : Asian shares mostly declined Tuesday, following more drops for stocks in the artificial intelligence industry on Wall Street ahead of Nvidia's earnings results.

US futures edged lower, and oil prices fell.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX fell 0.8 per cent to 26,387.92. The CAC 40 in Paris declined 0.5 per cent to 8,307.83. Britain's FTSE 100 slid 0.7 per cent to 10,805.92.

Britain will release October's inflation data on Wednesday, which offers insight into whether the Bank of England will raise interest rates further. The country's inflation rate last month rose to its highest level in nearly a year.

The future for the S&P 500 fell 0.2 per cent and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.4 per cent.

In Asia, South Korea's Kospi declined 2.6 per cent to 4,968.48, to its lowest level in six months. Memory chipmaker Samsung Electronics fell 3.1 per cent, and SK Hynix dropped 1.8 per cent. The benchmark in Seoul closed below 5,000 points for the first time since February this year.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 1.3 per cent to 58,860.43. Shares of OpenAI investor SoftBank Group tumbled 3.9 per cent, plummeting more than 33 per cent in a month. Testing equipment maker Advantest slumped 4.4 per cent.

Dhoni's IPL playing career ends as he becomes CSK mentor



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 17 : Talismanic former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni's playing career in the IPL ended on Tuesday after he was appointed the mentor of his franchise Chennai Super Kings with team owner Rupa Gurunath revealing that he expressed his desire to retire during a call to decide retained players for the upcoming season.

The writing was on the wall for the 45-year-old whose participation as a player had reduced over the years due to recurring injuries. He was not fit to play a single game in the 2026 edition.

The statement issued by CSK did not have any comment from the superstar wicketkeeper-batter, who announced retirement from international cricket in 2020 through an Instagram post.

"There is no CSK without MS Dhoni. For nearly two decades, we have walked and grown alongside each other, through triumphs, setbacks and everything in between," CSK owner N Srinivasan said in the franchise statement.

"MS will continue to be a part of the CSK family as a mentor. His experience and expertise are invaluable to us, especially during this phase of transition. With many youngsters in the squad, his guidance will help shape the next generation of CSK," added Rupa Gurunath, Srinivasan's daughter and co-owner of the team.

There is speculation that Dhoni's iconic number 7 jersey could be retired by the franchise as a tribute to him.

"We will take a call on that in due time. Naturally everyone is expecting that (jersey will be retired)," CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan told PTI.

The World Cup-winning captain led CSK to five IPL titles, was their second-highest scorer with 5,314 runs, and most-capped player with 272 appearances.

Dhoni also played for Rising Pune Supergiants for a couple of seasons when CSK were banned from the IPL following the 2013 spot-fixing scandal. The episode led to a life ban on the team's then CEO Gurunath Meiyappan for being involved in illegal betting.

Dhoni was succeeded by Ruturaj Gaikwad as the captain of the franchise in 2024.

Conveyed decision via video call on Saturday

In a video posted by the franchise, Rupa revealed that Dhoni dropped the retirement bombshell when they were discussing player retention plans ahead of the auction next month.

"When I met him a few months ago, he told me that he wasn't sure if he would be able to play in this upcoming season. We were on a call on Saturday discussing our team releases," said Rupa.

"We had gone through a lot of cricket discussions. We were thinking about strategy for the next season, who we should think of picking. A lot of discussions went on and at the end of the call, Kasi (CEO) was just reading the list of releases and very quietly MS said, 'maybe you should add my name in'.

