THURSDAY
19 November 2026

Volume: 17
Issue No: 223
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

KULGAM ENCOUNTER

LeT commander Lateef Bhat killed after taking shelter inside mosque

Carried Rs 15 lakh reward; involved in 7 UAPA cases; security forces ensured no damage to mosque; Northern Army Commander visits South Kashmir, commends troops for success

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Kulgam, Nov 18: Wanted Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Mohammad Lateef Bhat, identified by security agencies as the last known active local terrorist in Kashmir, was killed in an encounter with security forces in the Zangalpora area of Devsar in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday.

A top police officer while sharing the details with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Lateef Bhat was killed in a gunfight this morning."

He said, "The encounter broke out after a joint team of security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation in the area following specific intelligence inputs developed by J&K Police about the presence of terrorists. During the operation, Bhat took shelter inside a



mosque, following which security forces exercised maximum restraint to ensure that the religious structure suffered no damage."

The Official said, "Multiple attempts were made to persuade the trapped terrorist to surrender. SSP Kulgam Anayat Ali Chowdhary, along with the Commanding Officer of 9 Rashtriya Rifles, also spoke to him through a video call and urged him to lay down his arms. However, Bhat refused to surrender and continued to remain inside the mosque."

Talking to reporters SSP Chowdhary said security forces were following the laid-down standard operating procedures and were making every possible effort to conclude the operation while minimising damage to the mosque.

He said the trapped terrorist opened fire on security forces triggering an exchange of fire. The operation took time due to the sensitive location and the restraint being exercised by the forces.

The SSP had said that the area was properly cordoned off and that security forces had sufficient time to handle the situation carefully.

The religious structure remained intact, with no damage reported. Following the exchange of fire, the body of the slain terrorist, along with a weapon, was recovered from the encounter | More on P6

J&K will soon be terror-free, only handful of foreign terrorists remain: LG Sinha

Says shops of conflict entrepreneurs closed | Pays tributes to JKP brave hearts | Calls terrorism greatest threat to peace, progress

Yogesh

Jammu, Nov 18: Asserting that Jammu Kashmir will soon be terror-free, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that only a handful of foreign terrorists remain and they will also be dealt with.

Addressing the Passing-Out Parade of Probationary Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs), Probationary Sub-Inspectors, and Assistant Directors of the Forest Protection Force at SKPA, Udhampur, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Only a handful of foreign terrorists remain; Jammu Kashmir will soon be terror-free. For decades, an environment was created in which shops, schools, and businesses remained closed for half the year."

He said, "The conflict entrepreneurs present in Jammu Kashmir were engaged in the business of terrorism and separatism. But, under the guidance of the PM Modi, the nation delivered a strong blow and the shops of conflict entrepreneurs were shut down."

Paying heartfelt tribute to the brave hearts of the Jammu Kashmir Police, Rashpal Kumar and Babi Chand, the Lieutenant Governor said that



their courage, dedication, and supreme sacrifice would remain a source of inspiration for generations.

The Lieutenant Governor assured their families that the nation stands firmly with them and reiterated the commitment to ensuring their welfare, dignity, and security.

"The home of a martyr is the greatest temple and pilgrimage site for me. I want to assure their families that, in this difficult hour, they are not alone. The entire nation stands with them. It is true that no compensation can make up for an invaluable life. However, it is our responsibility to ensure that the families of these brave sons of the nation lead a respectable and dignified life.

"It will be ensured that they receive all the necessary assistance, so that the future of their children and coming generations | More on P6

LeT's last known active local terrorist killed: Amit Shah

Says nation salutes brave jawans of JKP, Army, CRPF, intelligence agencies



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday praised the security forces for neutralising Lashkar-e-Taiba's last known active local terrorist in Kashmir.

In a post on X, the Union Home Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), wrote: "With the coordinated efforts of JKP, Indian Army, CRPF and intelligence agencies, Lashkar's last known active local terrorist in the valley, | More on P6

Local terror recruitment near zero in J&K: DGP

Says under PM, HM, LG, anti-terrorism campaign to dismantle entire ecosystem

Yogesh

Udhampur, Nov 18: Asserting that the last active local terrorist in Kashmir was neutralised in an encounter in south Kashmir's Kulgam district, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Wednesday said that recruitment of local youth into terrorist organisations in Jammu and Kashmir has come down to almost zero over the past two years.

Addressing a gathering at the Sher-i-Kashmir Police Academy (SKPA), Udhampur, the DGP, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said only two local youths had joined the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) during the past two years, and both have been eliminated in separate operations.

"Only two local youths joined terrorist ranks in the last two years. One was killed two days ago and the last remaining active local terrorist, Mohammad Latif Bhat, was neutralised today in Kulgam. This brings local recruitment to almost zero," he said.

Referring to the Kulgam encounter, DGP Prabhat said the operation reflected the sustained efforts of security forces to track down terrorists and dismantle their networks. Mohammad Latif Bhat, a Lashkar-e-Taiba commander, was allegedly involved in the November 11 attack on a CRPF party in the Nowpora Akhran area of Kulgam, in which three personnel were injured. Earlier, another local terrorist, Umar Nisar, was killed in an encounter in the district.

The DGP said Jammu and Kashmir has | More on P6

Give us clarity on statehood restoration, don't humiliate us repeatedly, Omar to Centre

» Says repeated assurances of 'appropriate time' have lost meaning

» 'Govt continued to discharge responsibilities despite limitations'



Yogesh

Mendhar (Poonch), Nov 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday questioned the Centre over the continued delay in restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, alleging that repeated assurances of doing so at an "appropriate time" had lost meaning.

Addressing a public rally in Mendhar area of Poonch district, Abdullah, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), challenged the BJP-led Central government to clarify whether it intended to withhold statehood until the BJP secured its own Chief Minister in Jammu and Kashmir.

"If it is your wish not to restore statehood until the BJP has its own Chief Minister in Jammu and Kashmir, then say it openly. Tell the people clearly so that | More on P6

'Mughal Road to have all-weather connectivity with tunnel; work soon'

Yogesh

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday dedicated 13 development projects worth Rs 92.84 crore to the people of Mendhar in Poonch district, while announcing that work on the proposed Mughal Road tunnel would commence soon to ensure all-weather connectivity between the Pir Panjal region and Kashmir. Addressing a public gathering after inaugurating and laying foundation stones for various development works, Omar, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the proposed tunnel | More on P6

Dr. Sajjan Singh Yadav takes over as Chief Secy

Becomes 33rd officer to hold J&K's top bureaucratic position | 1995-batch IAS officer served at key positions in States, UTs, Central Govt

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Nov 18: Dr. Sajjan Singh Yadav, a 1995-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre, on Tuesday assumed charge as the Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir, becoming the 33rd officer to hold the top bureaucratic position.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr. Yadav today took charge as Chief Secretary at the Civil Secretariat. His appointment was approved by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs last month, though his joining was deferred as the Delhi Government sought his continuation as Chief Executive Officer of the Delhi Jal Board during the festive season.

With his appointment, Dr Yadav joins a distinguished list of civil servants who have



served as Chief Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir. M.K. Kidwai was the first Chief Secretary, serving from 1949 to 1954, while R.K. Takkar remains the only officer to have held the post in two separate tenures.

A seasoned administrator, Dr. Yadav brings extensive experience in governance and public administration. During his career, he has | More on P6

Dry spell may lower water levels across J&K

'Jhelum, tributaries may witness gradual fall; smaller streams face risk of drying up'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Nov 18: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness an extended spell of dry weather over the next 10 to 15 days, raising concerns over declining water levels in the Jhelum and its tributaries, independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif said on Wednesday.

Arif, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said current weather indications suggest that largely dry conditions may prevail across the Union Territory until December 5, which could gradually reduce water levels in rivers, streams and other natural water bodies.

He said the Jhelum and several of its tributaries were likely to witness a gradual fall in water levels, while smaller streams and water channels, already flowing at considerably | More on P6

Amit Shah to inaugurate 2-day 'Anti-Terror Conference' in New Delhi today

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Nov 18: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate a two-day 'Anti-Terror Conference' in New Delhi on Thursday.

In a statement sent to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a PIB spokesman said that the conference organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy of zero tolerance against terrorism will focus on the theme of "Cross-Border Terrorism" and provide a platform for collective deliberations among security agencies, investigators and experts on emerging threats to national security.

The conference will place particular emphasis on strengthening coordination and synergy among all stakeholders through a "Whole of Government" approach to effectively tackle terrorism and its evolving challenges, the statement said.

Various important issues, including obtaining evidence from foreign jurisdictions, the application of digital forensics and data analytics in counter-terrorism investigations, and effective management of trials, will be discussed during the two-day event, it said, adding, that the sessions will also deliberate on countering radicalisation, espionage and emerging hybrid threats that pose challenges to national security.

The conference is expected to facilitate the exchange of experiences among law enforcement agencies (LEAs), enabling them to share best practices in handling counter-terrorism cases and draw lessons from previous investigations, the | More on P6

Winter vacations in schools depend on weather, heating facilities: Edu Min

Assures justice in FA examination row

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Nov 18: Minister for Education and Jal Shakti Shamima Firdous Wednesday said that the government will announce winter vacation for schools in accordance to weather conditions and availability of heating facilities.

The minister further assured that no genuine candidate would face injustice in the ongoing FA examination row in Jammu, while calling for stringent action against those involved in the supply of rotten meat.

Addressing reporters on the sidelines of her visit to the Khanqah-e-Moula shrine in Srinagar, Firdous, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said every student would be treated fairly and justice would be



ensured. "Every student involved will be treated fairly and justice will be ensured for all of them," she said.

On the recovery of rotten meat, the Minister termed the incident serious and called for strict legal action against those involved in its transportation and supply.

"Those involved should face strict action and the PSA should also be invoked wherever warranted," she said.

About the complaints of non-availability of government textbooks, Firdous said books had been made available to schools from November 15, adding that senior officers had been directed to ensure students faced no inconvenience.

She said consultations had also been held with officials of the Children's Hospital before the decision on school timings was taken.

On winter vacations, she said the government would announce the holidays without delay whenever weather conditions warranted, while also taking into account the lack of adequate heating arrangements in several schools.

Addressing concerns over the prolonged dry spell and drinking water shortages, Firdous said a meeting had been convened to review the condition of water sources across Jammu and Kashmir.

"We would focus on reviving traditional water sources, including Harwan and springs in Kokernag. Around 300 springs had | More on P6

NIA Court rejects bail plea of accused in narco-terror case: SIA

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Nov 18: The NIA Court in Srinagar has rejected the bail application of Basharat Ali Poswal, an accused in a narco-terror conspiracy case being investigated by the State Investigation Agency (SIA) Kashmir.

According to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a spokesperson said Poswal, son of Muhammad Siddiq Poswal, a resident of Tad, Karnah, Kupwara, presently residing in Bemina, Srinagar, is facing prosecution in FIR No. 19/2022 registered at Police Station CI-SIA Kashmir under various sections of the NDPS Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The accused faces charges under Sections 8-A, 27-B and 29 of the NDPS Act, Sections 13, 18, 39 and 40 of the UAPA, and Sections 120-B, 121, 121-A | More on P6

Haj-2027

First Phase of orientation programme scheduled for November 23, 25 in Anantnag

KT News Desk



ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 18: The District Administration Anantnag has scheduled the first phase of the orientation and training programme for selected pilgrims of Haj-1448 (H) 2027 on November 23 and 25, 2026, at the Auditorium Hall of Government Women's Degree College, Anantnag.

According to a notice issued by the Additional District Magistrate Anantnag, the training sessions will commence at 10:30 AM on both days.

The Haj Pilgrims, as per an official statement, belonging to Anantnag, Sallar, Pahalgam, Larnoo, Kokernag and Srigufwara areas have been asked to attend the training programme on 23rd of November 2026, while the Haj pilgrims from Shangus, Shahabad Bala, Qazigund, Dooru, Mattan and Bijbehara areas will attend the session on 25th of November 2026.

The programme is being organised in pursuance of the directions received from the J&K Haj Committee to familiarise the selected pilgrims with Manasik-e-Haj (rituals of Haj), besides providing necessary guidance regarding travel arrangements, logistics and other important aspects of the pilgrimage.

All selected Haj pilgrims have been requested to attend the orientation programme strictly as per the notified schedule.

DC Shopian presides over public outreach programme at Sedow

KT News Desk



SHOPIAN, NOVEMBER 18: As part of the government's sustained efforts to strengthen grassroots-level governance and ensure effective public grievance redressal, a comprehensive Public Outreach Programme was Wednesday organized at GHS, Sedow in Shopian.

The public interaction programme was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep Singh.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner along with SSP inspected stalls installed by various line departments showcasing their achievements, developmental initiatives, flagship schemes and ongoing activities.

The DC, as per an official statement, took keen interest in the exhibits and interacted with the departmental representatives to gain insights into the progress made under various government sponsored schemes and programmes.

He appreciated the efforts of the departments in highlighting their accomplishments, public welfare initiatives and service delivery mechanism, emphasizing the importance of ensuring greater public awareness about government schemes and facilitating their effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The programme witnessed an overwhelming response, with a large number of people from Sedow and adjoining areas participating to project various demands and issues of public importance concerning their respective localities.

On the occasion, SSP Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Choudhary, ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, PO, Mohammed Imran CPO, Mudasir Ahmed, ACR, Shakoor Ahmed Dar, GM, DIC, Shurjil Naik, along with other district and sectoral officers were present.

The local residents and delegations highlighted several pressing developmental requirements and basic amenities pertaining to their areas, which includes, construction and macadamization of roads, upgradation of High Schools and hospitals, completion of Shah Khul, provision of portable drinking water supply in Gujjar Basti and other uncovered areas, uninterrupted power supply, installation of new transformers and the optimal functioning of lift irrigation schemes,inspection of pesticide shops, addressing Forest Rights Act (FRA) issues, availability of adequate doctors in Primary Health Centres (PHCs), cleanliness drives for Veshu Nallah and local ponds, door-to-door waste collection, availability of firewood, deployment of snow cutters in anticipation of heavy snowfall and development of dedicated playing fields for local youth,

The Deputy Commissioner gave a patient hearing to the public deputations and individuals, taking meticulous stock of all issues raised during the extensive interaction.

While addressing the gathering, the DC assured the residents that all genuine demands and grievances would be examined on priority and addressed in a time-bound manner. He issued on-spot directions to the concerned district and sectoral officers to take immediate follow-up action on issues pertaining to their respective departments, emphasizing the need for prompt responses and visible ground-level action.

Emphasizing the significance of the initiative, the DC stated that such public outreach programmes provide an indispensable platform for direct communication between the administration and the citizenry. He noted that these interactions enable authorities to better understand grassroots needs, identify critical gaps in public service delivery, and ensure the transparent and effective redressal of public grievances.

The programme strongly mirrors the District Administration Shopian's unwavering commitment towards participatory governance, a responsive administration and ensuring that developmental benefits and essential public services reach the last mile.

Weekly Block Diwas at Tangdar

SDM Karnah reviews public issues, calls for timely action

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, NOVEMBER 18: In pursuance of the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Abhishek Sharma, a weekly Block Diwas programme was organised Wednesday at Dak Bungalow Tangdar under the supervision of Sub-Divisional Magistrate Karnah, Firdous Ahmed Qadri, with the objective of providing an effective platform for public interaction and ensuring timely redressal of public grievances.

The programme, as per an official statement, was attended by Tehsildar Karnah Mohd Amin Bhat, BDO Karnah, Mudasar Sikander and other concerned Officer were present.

During the programme, local residents and senior citizens projected various public grievances, developmental demands and issues concerning their respective areas before the officers of the concerned departments. The departmental representatives listened to the issues and provided necessary feedback regarding the steps being taken for their resolution.

SDM Karnah, stressed upon the officers to maintain close coordination, ensure accountability and take prompt action on the genuine grievances raised by the public. He reiterated that such public outreach programmes are instrumental in bridging the gap between the administration and the people and ensuring responsive governance at the grassroots level.

Tehsildar Karnah, also interacted with the participants and emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts among departments for the effective resolution of public issues.

The programme witnessed active participation from Lambardars, Chowkidars and senior citizens, reflecting the importance of public participation in strengthening grassroots-level governance.

DLSA Kathua organises Legal Aid Clinic at Panchayat Ghar Flote

KT News Desk

KATHUA, NOVEMBER 18: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kathua Wednesday organised a Legal Aid Clinic here at Panchayat Ghar, Flote under the guidance of its Chairman

The outreach facility aims at extending free legal services and facilitating effective implementation of the NALSA schemes at the grassroots level. The Legal Aid Clinic was formally inaugurated by the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Uvarshi Raina in the presence of the Block Development Officer (BDO), Barnoti, Akhil Bhau, Former Sarpanch Panchayat Halqa Flote Davinder Kumar and a large number of local residents and villagers. In her inaugural address, the Secretary DLSA highlighted the significance of Legal Aid Clinics in providing accessible legal assistance to the general public, particularly women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable sections of society. The villagers were sensitised about their legal rights, the availability of free legal services and the important role played by Legal Services Authorities in ensuring access to justice for all.

Special emphasis was laid on the identification of eligible beneficiaries under various schemes launched by NALSA and other welfare schemes of the Government, so that the intended benefits reach the deserving persons at the grassroots level. The participants were also encouraged to approach the Legal Aid Clinic for free legal advice, assistance and guidance regarding their legal issues and entitlement to welfare benefits.

Financial Awareness, Government Schemes Sensitisation programme held at RSETI Bandipora

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, NOVEMBER 18: A Financial Awareness and Government-Sponsored schemes Sensitisation programme was jointly organised today at RSETI Bandipora by the RBI, NABARD and Lead Bank Office, Bandipora.

The programme was attended by Assistant General Manager (AGM), RBI, Anoop Kumar Sharma; District Development Manager (DDM) NABARD, Rouf Ahmad Zargar; Lead District Manager (LDM) Bandipora Liyaqat Maqbool; representatives of various banks, RSETI, FLCC, and the Mission YUVA Financial Expert and BHD Lead, Bandipora.

During the programme, participants were sensitised about various government-sponsored schemes, institutional credit facilities, eligibility criteria, credit appraisal procedures and financial modalities. Emphasis was laid on strengthening inter-institutional coordination, expediting application processing, addressing credit-related bottlenecks and ensuring timely institutional credit to eligible beneficiaries. A detailed presentation was also delivered by the Mission YUVA Financial Expert, explaining the complete case-sponsorship mechanism under Mission YUVA, including the various stages through which an application passes before reaching the concerned bank for consideration.

The process, from initial mobilisation and applicant registration to scrutiny, verification, assessment, preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR), processing at designated levels and final sponsorship to banks, was explained in detail. Participants were also apprised of the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders at each stage, with emphasis on proper documentation, financial viability, timely disposal of applications and effective coordination between Mission YUVA functionaries and banking institutions.

DC Pulwama conducts surprise inspection of PHC Lajura

KT News Desk



PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 18: Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, K.K. Sidha, Wednesday conducted a surprise inspection of the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Lajura to take stock of the functioning of the healthcare facility and assess the availability of essential medical services being provided to the public.

The DC was accompanied by ADC Awantipora, Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, during the inspection.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner checked the attendance of doctors and other staff members and reviewed their availability and punctuality. He also took stock of the overall functioning of the health centre and interacted with the medical staff to assess the facilities and services available for patients.

The DC also interacted with patients and attendants to obtain firsthand feedback regarding the quality of healthcare services, availability of medical staff and difficulties, if any, being faced by them. He emphasised the importance of ensuring timely medical attention, proper patient care and responsive healthcare services, particularly in rural and far-flung areas.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the winter preparedness of the health facility. He took stock of the arrangements in place to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services during adverse weather conditions and stressed the need for adequate preparedness to address any eventuality and ensure that patients do not face inconvenience during the winter season.

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T)JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.

GROUND WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN,NOWSHARA SRINAGAR.

E-mail:- hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in
Tel./FaxNo:-0194-2411285

EXTENSION NOTICE 7TH.

Subject: 1. Construction of 125 mm dia Machine Drilled hand Pump well near house of Nazir Ahmad Sheikh and others at Sheikhpora Tulail in district Bandipora.

Reference: This office e-NIT No. 53/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No:

JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/6911-22, dated: 12-08-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_321465_1.

Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. The bid documents was scheduled to be submitted till 16-11-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM are extended as per the details given below: -

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	26-11-2026 Up-to 02:00 PM
2.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	27-11-2026 02:00 PM

NOTE:

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

Sd/=
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./18245-60
Dated: 16-11-2026.

DIPK-7806/26
DATED: 18-11-2026

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.

GROUND WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR

BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN, NOWSHARA SRINAGAR.

E- mail: - hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in Tel./ Fax No:- 0194-2411285

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailed e– NIT No: - 80/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27.

For and on behalf of Government of UT - J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Machine Drilled Hand pump wells" as per details given below The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

Table-I

S. No	S. No of AA	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money (EMD)	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion	Major Head / Programme	Technical Sanction	Tender Call
1	02	Construction of Tube well at Oxford Colony Goigam in District Baramulla). District Baramulla.	Rs. 2.59	Rs. 7,800/-	Rs.100/-	10 Days	(CDF of MLA Gulmarg) for the Year 2026-27.	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF/80 of 11/ 2026, Dt: 16-11-2026	1st
2	01	Construction of 125 mm dia Hand operated Machine Drilled Hand Pump operated at Arapal Pethpora Goigam in District Baramulla).	Rs. 2.53	Rs. 7,600/-	Rs.100/-	10 Days	(CDF of MLA Gulmarg) for the Year 2026-27.	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF/81 of 11/ 2026, Dt: 16-11-2026	1st

Position of Funds: - Available.

➢ Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Baramulla Vide Order No: 373-DDC OF 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCB/CDS/MLA-Gulmarg/2025-26/13274-78, Dated: 28-10-2026.

The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website:
https://www.jktenders.gov.in
From 17.11.2026 (10:00 AM) to 05.12.2026 (11:00 AM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website:
https://www.jktenders.gov.in
As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

Table-II

1.	Publishing Date	17-11-2026 (10:00 A.M)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids	17-11-2026 (10:00 A.M) upto 05-12-2026 (11:00 A.M).
3.	Period of Submission of bids	17-11-2026 (10:00 A.M) upto 05-12-2026 (11:00 A.M).
4.	Date of opening of Tender.	07-12-2026 (11:00 A.M)
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer , Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011	
6.	Cost of Tender Document : To be deposited online (If available) or Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/ deposited to Account Head 0215 or in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply) Note: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of of DD /TR/ the hard copies shall have be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT (if needed)	
7.	Bid Validity Period: 180 Days	
8.	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www. Jktenders.gov.in	

No instrument—such as an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Treasury Receipt, or Challan-generated prior to the publication of the tender document will be accepted. Any bid submitted contrary to this requirement is liable for summary rejection. In the event the tender is retendered due to government exigencies or otherwise, an instrument shall be considered valid only if generated after the date of the initial tender publication,

The cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 07-12-2026 (11:00 AM) If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

Sd/=
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/18281-94.
Dated: - 16-11-2026.

DIPK-7796/26
DATED: 18-11-2026

The rescue that turned panic into praise in South Kashmir

Security forces rescue 25 girls from seminary in Kulgam

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Kulgam, Nov 18: As gunshots rang out near a mosque in South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday, 25 girls and two teachers were caught inside an adjoining seminary. For Hafiz Mohammd Ayoub Bhat, the visually impaired founder of the institution, the safe evacuation of the children by security forces brought immense relief, turning a moment of fear into one of gratitude.

Bhat, a resident of Zangalpora village said that he was not present at the madrasa when the encounter broke out, but was relieved that all the students and teachers were rescued before security forces launched the final attack on Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Mohammad Lateef Bhat. "I am grateful that all the girls and teachers were brought to safety from encounter sight," he said.



The 25 girls and two teachers were inside the Darul Uloom adjoining the mosque where the LeT commander was hiding when the exchange of fire began.

According to officials, an Army officer from 9 Rashtriya Rifles, along with another soldier, volunteered to enter the seminary amid heavy firing and evacuate all 27 civilians to safety.

The children were gripped by fear as gunshots echoed around them. One of the girls recalled how they feared they might not survive the ordeal.

For Bhat, the incident was particularly emotional given the journey that led him to establish the institution. Having lost his eyesight at the age of eight, he memorised the entire Holy Quran and dedicated his life to religious education.

He then subsequently established Darsgah Abdullah Ibni Maqtoob (RA), an Islamic educational centre in Zangalpora, where students receive religious education.

"Almighty Allah chose me for this noble cause and that is why I lost my eyesight early in life," he says.

Meanwhile, the safe evacuation of the children ensured that the operation could proceed without civilians remaining trapped inside the seminary. Security forces later concluded the operation with the killing of LeT commander Mohammad Lateef Bhat—(KNO)

LG Sinha Inaugurates Shubhra Ranjan IAS Study's Jammu Centre



KT News Desk

Jammu, Nov 18: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday inaugurated the Shubhra Ranjan IAS Study's Centre in Jammu.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his congratulations and best wishes to the Centre's Director, Ms. Anshu Sharma, and her dedicated team. He commended their efforts in empowering the youth of Jammu Kashmir to realize their civil services aspirations.

The establishment of the Shubhra Ranjan IAS Study's Jammu Centre is expected to provide students with access to structured academic guidance, expert mentorship, comprehensive study material, regular assessments and a competitive learning environment for preparation of the UPSC Civil Services and other competitive examinations.

Ch. Vikram Randhawa, Member of Legislative Assembly from Bahu; Shri Vikas Kundal, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Shri Tejinder Singh, IGP, Jammu; Shri Shridhar Patil, DIG JSK Range; Shri Minga Sherpa, Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, academicians, and senior officials attended the inaugural ceremony.

Shantmanu attends meeting with President at Rashtrapati Bhavan



KT News Desk

New Delhi, Nov 18: The President of India had invited all State Election Commissioners of States and Union Territories last week.

About eighteen State Election Commissioners, including Jammu and Kashmir State Election Commissioner Shantmanu, attended the meeting with President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

During the meeting, the State Election Commissioners briefed the President on the major challenges faced in conducting Panchayat and Urban Local Body (ULB) elections and how the Commissions are ensuring free and fair elections through active use of IT solutions for delimitation of constituencies, electoral roll management, manpower management and real-time dissemination of information during counting and results.

The meeting, held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, is significant from the perspective of India's democratic system and the importance of electoral institutions. These Commissions play a crucial role, ranging from conducting elections for Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies to maintaining public trust in democratic institutions.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

FOOD SAFETY ROW

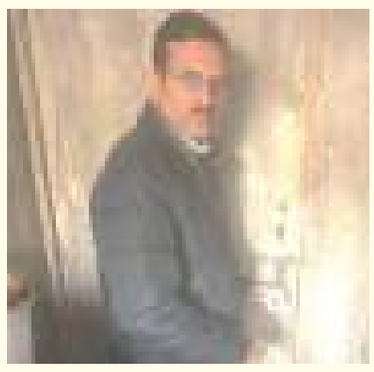
FDA continues food safety enforcement, 69 inspections conducted

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Nov 18: Continuing its enforcement drive to ensure effective implementation of food safety regulations and strict compliance with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), Jammu & Kashmir conducted 79 inspections across all the districts and nine food samples were lifted for analysis to ascertain their compliance with the prescribed food safety and quality standards.

As part of the enforcement action, an establishment engaged in the preparation and sale of Momos at Nageen, Srinagar, was sealed for violations of prescribed food safety requirements. Further, the storage area of M/s Hattrick, Rajbagh, Srinagar, was also sealed for failure to maintain the prescribed storage conditions and requisite sanitary and hygienic standards.

Furthermore, 13 cases were recommended for initiation of proceedings under Section 56 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, for violations relating to prescribed sanitary and hygienic requirements. Such contraventions attract a penalty which may extend up to ₹1 lakh under the provision.



Consumers have been urged to remain vigilant and report any instance of the sale or distribution of unsafe or adulterated food through the official email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in.

FDA seals Hattrick storage area in Rajbagh

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Nov 18: A day after the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIK) held a press conference at Hattrick restaurant in Rajbagh and warned of shutting restaurants and cafes over the rotten meat controversy, the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) on Wednesday sealed the establishment's storage area over alleged violations of prescribed hygiene and storage standards.

The FDA also sealed a momo preparation and sale unit at Nigeen, Srinagar and recommended 13 cases for proceedings under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. According to details available, the storage area of M/s Hattrick, Rajbagh, was sealed for failure to maintain prescribed storage conditions and requisite sanitary and hygienic standards.

The action comes a day after CCIK president Tariq Ghani, while addressing a press conference at Hattrick, demanded that those involved in the rotten meat case be identified and action taken against them within seven days, warning that restaurants and cafes would otherwise face a shutdown.

The FDA said inspections were conducted across the districts as part of its continuing enforcement drive to ensure compliance with food safety regulations.—KNO

Daughter-in-law arrested in murder of 70-year-old Pulwama woman

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Nov 18: In a significant breakthrough in the murder case of a 70-year-old woman in Parigam village of south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police have arrested her daughter-in-law for her involvement in the killing, officials said on Wednesday.

The arrested woman has been identified as Bilkees Akhter, wife of Javid Ahmad and daughter-in-law of the deceased, Jana Begum, a resident of Parigam Jagir.

Her arrest comes a week after police apprehended the main accused, Imran Ahmad Mir, son of Bashir Ahmad Mir, from the same village on November 11, during the course of the investigation into the brutal killing.

According to police, the case came to light on October 19, when Jana Begum was found murdered inside her residence. Following the incident, Police Station

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Properties worth Rs 100 Cr of drug peddlers attached: DC Labroo

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 18: Stating that action against the drug trade was continuing, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Akshay Labroo on Wednesday said that authorities have attached properties worth over Rs 100 crore belonging to drug peddlers and suspended the driving licences of more than 100 people involved in narcotics related activities in Srinagar.

Talking to reporters during a joint public outreach programme organised by the civil and police administration at Radpora in Downtown Srinagar, DC Labroo said the crackdown includes registration of FIRs, arrests, detentions and attachment of properties under relevant legal provisions.

He said the action is being pursued under the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, adding that the administration was also examining other measures to curb drug-related activities.

Explaining the purpose of the joint outreach initiative, the DC said the programme was organised following directions from the Lieutenant Governor to bring the civil and police administration together at the Deputy Commissioner and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) levels to address public grievances.

He said the administration decided to begin the initiative from Downtown Srinagar, where representatives from different localities of Shehr-e-Khaas participated and openly raised issues concerning their areas.

Labroo assured residents that the administration would follow up on the grievances rather than merely hear them during the programme.

He said issues that could be resolved immediately would be taken up without delay, while those requiring planning and financial assistance would be prepared in consultation with residents and referred to the government.

He added that matters requiring further deliberations would also be taken up and the process for their resolution initiated.

The DC said both the civil administration and Srinagar Police would pursue the issues falling within their respective jurisdictions. He said the initiative is aimed at improving coordination between the two departments and ensuring that public grievances translated into administrative action—(KNO)

Three IAS officers shifted to J&K

KNO

Srinagar, Nov 18: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday ordered the transfer and posting of three Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers of the AG-MUT cadre from Delhi to Jammu and Kashmir with im-mediate effect.

According to an official order, the transfers have been made with the approval of the competent authority and will remain in force until further orders.

The officers posted to Jammu and Kashmir include Dilraj Kaur (AGMUT: 2000 batch), Nikhil Kumar (AGMUT: 2002 batch) and Ashok Kumar (AGMUT: 2006 batch).

The order has been communicated to the concerned offic-ers through the Chief Secretary of Delhi, with copies for-warded to the Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir and other concerned Union Territory administrations. The postings will take effect immediately, the order stated—(KNO)

7–8 FIRs registered, several arrested in Srinagar: SSP

Rehan Qayoom Mir



Srinagar, Nov 18: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Dr G V Sandeep Chakravarthy on Wednesday said that Police have registered seven to eight FIRs and arrested several people over the illegal trade of rotten meat in the past year.

Addressing a joint public outreach programme organised by the civil and police administration at Radpora in Khanyar, the SSP Srinagar said police have received fresh inputs about the illegal trade and were working to prevent its recurrence.

He said police had registered seven to eight FIRs and arrested several people during the past year, adding that those involved would face trial and the cases would be taken to their logical conclusion.

"Some criminal elements have started again. We have received the inputs. Definitely, we are working on it. We will follow them and prevent this crime," he said, warning of strict legal action against those involved.

Chakravarthy said the objective of the public outreach programme is to understand people's grievances, identify unresolved issues and find solutions through better coordination between the civil administration and police.

He said residents had appreciated police efforts against drugs and crime, while some issues remained unresolved. The administration had taken note of the grievances raised during the interaction and would make efforts to address them, he assured.

Calling for collective efforts, the SSP said the police, civil administration, media fraternity and residents needed to work together to resolve public issues and improve policing.

On civic issues in

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.

Kashmir Thunder

EDIT | 04
THURSDAY | 19.11.2026

EDITORIAL

Hospitals Cannot Run On Pending Claims

Six hundred and one crore rupees. That is the amount of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT claims still awaiting settlement in Jammu and Kashmir — Rs 376.67 crore owed to public hospitals and Rs 224.71 crore to private ones. Behind these numbers are doctors, nurses, technicians and support staff who treated patients in good faith, believing the scheme would pay for the care they provided. They are still waiting. This is not a small accounting delay. It is a failure that repeats itself. Every few months, figures emerge showing crores pending under the scheme. Hospitals raise the issue. Officials promise settlement. And then the cycle begins again. Public hospitals, already short of funds and staff, are forced to carry this burden. Private hospitals, many of them small nursing homes serving ordinary families, begin to hesitate before accepting PM-JAY patients at all. And who suffers most? The poor patient who was promised cashless treatment up to Rs 5 lakh, and who may now be turned away, or asked to pay from his own pocket. The data placed before the Assembly's Estimates Committee shows that of Rs 1,158 crore in claims submitted between April 2025 and November 2026, only Rs 406 crore have been paid. Claims worth Rs 106 crore have been rejected, and deductions of Rs 44 crore made. Some rejection is necessary — fraud must be checked, and the State Anti-Fraud Unit and Claims Review Committee have a role to play. But rejection cannot become a routine way of delaying payment. Nor can the legitimate dues of hospitals remain stuck indefinitely while files move from one desk to another. The Health Department must publish a clear timeline for clearing these arrears. Payments should be released in phases, with priority to smaller hospitals and those serving rural areas. The reasons for rejection must be communicated transparently, and hospitals given a fair chance to appeal. A health insurance scheme is only as strong as the trust it commands. If hospitals stop trusting it, the scheme will exist on paper alone. The government must act now — and not wait for the next set of figures to embarrass it.

From 2.82 GW To 175 GW: India's Solar Leap

A decade ago, solar occupied only a small place in India's electricity mix. Today it forms the largest share of the country's renewable capacity, and India has surpassed the United States in annual additions. Policy, manufacturing and citizen participation have driven a 62-fold expansion—and the transformation is still accelerating.

Press Information Bureau

India's solar energy sector has expanded significantly over the past decade, emerging as a key driver of the country's energy transition. Growth in installed capacity, domestic manufacturing and distributed solar adoption reflects the sector's expanding reach. Policy support, infrastructure development and citizen participation are accelerating this transformation. Solar power is strengthening energy security, supporting economic development and advancing climate action. These developments formed part of the broader discussions at the Bharat Renewable Energy Summit & Expo (BRESE) 2026, held in New Delhi from 2–5 November.

India's Solar Rise

A decade ago, solar power occupied only a small place in India's electricity mix. Today, it forms the largest share of the country's renewable energy capacity. From an installed capacity of 2.82 GW in 2014, the sector has expanded approximately 62 fold, reaching ~175 GW till 31 October 2026.

This transformation is driven by policy support, infrastructure development, manufacturing expansion, and citizen participation. Initiatives such as solar parks, rooftop systems, and solarised agricultural pumps are accelerating deployment across the country. India's expanding renewable energy sector was in focus at the Bharat Renewable Energy Summit & Expo (BRESE) 2026. The event brought together global stakeholders to advance cooperation, investment and innovation in clean energy.

The Bharat Renewable Energy Summit & Expo (BRESE) 2026 was organised from 2–5 November at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Held under the theme 'Invest. Innovate. Inspire.', it brought together participants from over 130 countries, including policymakers, industry leaders, investors and researchers. Co-located with the 9th International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly and the 4th International Conference on Green Hydrogen, the Summit hosted high-level discussions and ministerial meetings. It also facilitated business engagements and featured an exhibition involving over 400 organisations. 13 states participated as Partner States, showcasing their renewable energy potential and investment opportunities. The Summit also recognised winners of the Bharat Renewable Energy Hackathon 2026, featuring solutions to ten real-world renewable energy challenges.

India's solar momentum has translated into measurable outcomes. The country has added 37 GW of solar capacity in 2025, surpassing the United States in annual additions. India has also emerged as the world's second-largest solar growth market, underlining its growing role in the global clean energy transition.

A Decade of Solar Expansion

A strong policy framework laid the foundation for India's solar expansion. Key initiatives included the National Solar Mission (2010), the Solar Parks Scheme, the Green Energy Corridor Programme, and competitive bidding. Together, they accelerated large-scale solar deployment.

Solar Capacity Across India

Solar deployment spans diverse geographies and climatic zones. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra account for a significant share of installed capacity. Large solar projects contribute 133 GW (including solar component of hybrid projects) of installed capacity. Some of the large solar projects include the Bhadla Solar Park (Rajasthan), Pavagada Solar Park (Karnataka), Ananthapuramu & Kurnool Solar Parks (Andhra Pradesh), and Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Park (Madhya Pradesh). Rooftop solar systems connected to the electricity grid contribute another 34.97 GW. The remaining capacity comes from off-grid solar systems. Hybrid projects combine solar power with battery storage or other power sources, while Off-grid systems provide electricity in areas not connected to the grid.

Record Growth in Recent Years

India has recorded significant additions to solar and non-fossil fuel capacity in recent years, reflecting its expanding clean energy transition.

India added 44.61 GW of solar capacity in the last FY 2025-26, nearly double the 23.83 GW added in FY 2024–25. In the current FY 2026-27, already 24.29 GW of solar capacity, following the same pace as of previous FY. Solar module manufacturing capacity increased from 2.3 GW in 2014 to about 172 GW as of 31 March 2026. It further increased to 192 GW by June 2026. Total non-fossil fuel capacity reached 308.03 GW as of 30 September 2026, including 299.25 GW of renewable energy capacity and 8.78 GW of nuclear power capacity. Highest-ever annual addition of non-fossil fuel capacity recorded at 55.29 GW in FY 2025-26. On 29 July 2025, renewable energy sources met 51.5% of India's electricity demand, the highest monthly share recorded so far.

Policy Architecture Behind the Solar Expansion

A stable policy framework, competitive bidding mechanisms, and long-term targets have helped create a conducive environment for large-scale solar deployment. A set of mutually reinforcing measures has supported India's solar expansion. These can be broadly grouped into five pillars:

Creating Vision: Climate Commitments and Long-Term Targets

At COP26 in Glasgow, India announced the Panchamrit goals, which include 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2070. These commitments were reflected in India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. Complementing these efforts, Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) promotes sustainable consumption and encourages citizens to adopt environmentally conscious practices.

Creating Demand: National Missions and Renewable Purchase Obligations

Strong and sustained demand has been central to India's solar growth. The National Solar Mission established long-term capacity targets and provided an early impetus to solar deployment. Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs) require electricity distribution companies and other obligated entities to procure a specified share of their electricity from renewable sources. RPOs provide long-term market certainty for developers and investors while encouraging greater renewable energy adoption. The RPO trajectory has been notified through 2029–30, with the target for 2026–27, set at 35.95 per cent.

Demand has also expanded beyond utilities and large developers. PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana is encouraging households to adopt rooftop solar systems. Meanwhile, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) is supporting the adoption of solar pumps and feeder solarisation in the agriculture sector. Together, these initiatives are expanding the market for solar energy and strengthening participation across consumers, farmers, businesses, and power utilities.

Lowering Costs: Competitive Bidding and Tariff Discovery

One of the most significant developments in solar sector has been the decline in power tariffs over the past decade. This was driven by bidding through the e-Reverse Auction mechanism, where developers compete to supply electricity at the lowest tariff. Procurement agencies such as the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) have played a key role in scaling this transparent tariff discovery mechanism. As more developers participated, the tariffs declined from around Rs 18 per unit in 2010 to a record-low of Rs 1.99 per unit. This was achieved by the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd (GUVNL) in 2020. This made solar power more affordable and accelerated its adoption across India. The decline in tariffs has made solar power increasingly affordable. As a result, India has emerged as one of the world's lowest-cost solar power markets. In 2025, the Levelised Cost of Electricity (LCOE) from utility-scale solar PV stood at USD 35 per MWh, well below the global average of USD 44 per MWh.

Enabling Infrastructure

The government launched the Solar Parks Scheme to provide developers with ready access to land and supporting infrastructure. The scheme was initially launched with a target of 20 GW and later expanded to 40 GW in 2017. As of October 2026, 56 solar parks with a combined sanctioned capacity of 39,461 MW have been approved across the country.

Solar parks have emerged as important hubs for utility-scale renewable energy generation across multiple states. Andhra Pradesh has 5 parks with a sanctioned capacity of 4,200 MW; Bihar has 1 park of 150 MW; Chhattisgarh has 1 park of 100 MW; Gujarat has 7 parks totalling 12,150 MW; Jharkhand has 2 parks of 562 MW; one inter-state floating solar park spanning Jharkhand and West Bengal has a capacity of 310 MW; Karnataka has 1 park of 2,000 MW; Kerala has 3 parks of 255 MW; Madhya Pradesh has 9 parks totalling 4,208 MW; Maharashtra has 4 parks of 1,000 MW; Mizoram has 1 park of 20 MW; Odisha has 1 park of 40 MW; Rajasthan has 11 parks totalling 10,726 MW; and Uttar Pradesh has 8 parks of 3,740 MW. This makes a total of 54 parks with a sanctioned capacity of 39,461 MW, including one inter-state floating solar park spanning Jharkhand and West Bengal.

The scheme has enabled the development of some of India's most prominent solar parks.

Bhadla Solar Park: From Desert Landscape to Clean Energy Hub

Located in Rajasthan's arid Bhadla region, the park has transformed vast stretches of barren land into one of the world's largest solar power complexes. Development began in 2015 under the Solar Parks Scheme and was completed in phases by 2020. Spread across nearly 5,700 hectares (56 sq. km.), the park has an installed capacity of 2,245 MW. The region's high solar irradiation, low rainfall, and sparse vegetation make it well-suited for large-scale solar generation.

Beyond its scale, Bhadla showcases the solar park model in action. Common infrastructure, including land preparation and transmission facilities, enabled rapid project development and attracted significant private investment. Competitive bidding at the park also contributed to some of India's lowest solar tariffs, helping make solar energy more affordable.

Supporting the Solar Parks Scheme, the Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Programme aims to facilitate the transfer of power from RE-rich areas to demand centres across the country. The initiative strengthens transmission networks and supports the seamless integration of renewable energy into the electricity grid. As of February 2026, the programme had enabled the evacuation of 24,567.8 MW of renewable energy through strengthened transmission networks. Green Energy Corridor projects across ten states are planned to support the evacuation of around 44 GW of renewable energy. These projects will also strengthen the integration of renewable energy into the national grid.

Floating Solar and Energy Storage

The Government approved the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY) on 31 July 2026. The scheme aims to support 5,000 MW of Floating Solar Photovoltaic (FSPV) projects with co-located Energy Storage Systems (ESS). The ESS with a minimum storage capacity of two hours (10,000 MWh) will further help states manage peak demand. By utilising existing reservoirs and industrial ponds, the scheme will reduce pressure on scarce land resources. It will also improve grid reliability through integrated energy storage. With an outlay of Rs 5,070 crore, the scheme will be implemented from FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31.

The scheme is based on an assessment by the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE). The assessment estimates a floating solar potential of about 102.18 GWp across India's reservoirs and suitable inland water bodies. The scheme is expected to reduce around 10 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions annually. It will generate 16,000–17,000 full-time equivalent jobs. It will also promote domestic manufacturing of floatation systems, PV cells, modules and energy storage systems. All States and Union Territories will be eligible to benefit through this scheme. The initiative will increase India's floating solar capacity by 5,000 MW, from the current level of around 800 MW.

Supporting Manufacturing

The Government has introduced measures to strengthen domestic solar manufacturing and reduce import dependence.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for High-Efficiency Solar PV Modules

Launched in 2021 with an initial outlay of Rs 4,500 crore, the PLI Scheme for High-Efficiency Solar PV Modules was expanded in 2022 with an additional Rs 19,500 crore. The scheme promotes domestic manufacturing, reduces import dependence, and encourages value addition across the solar value chain. By October 2024, the scheme had attracted investments of around Rs 35,000 crore. It had also generated direct employment for about 10,000 people.

Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM)

Introduced in 2019, ALMM is a quality assurance framework for solar PV modules and cells. It ensures that solar equipment used in eligible projects meet specified quality and performance standards. Only manufacturers and models included in the approved lists are eligible for specified government-supported and competitively bid solar projects. The framework also promotes domestic manufacturing by encouraging the use of approved products.

Together, the PLI Scheme and ALMM have strengthened India's domestic solar manufacturing ecosystem. They have supported greater self-reliance while enabling rapid expansion of solar deployment. The framework also provides greater confidence to consumers and project developers by ensuring the use of approved solar equipment.

Taking Solar to Every Household and Farm

India's solar transition extends beyond large-scale power plants. Through dedicated schemes for households and farmers, solar is improving energy access, reducing electricity costs, and creating new livelihood opportunities.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

Launched on 13 February 2024 with an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore, PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana brings rooftop solar benefits directly to households nationwide. It is the world's largest domestic rooftop solar programme. Eligible households receive subsidies for rooftop solar installations, while collateral-free loans facilitate adoption. The scheme is implemented through a dedicated national portal, enabling seamless registration, installation, and subsidy disbursement.

Key Achievements

About 65 lakh households were solarised as of November 2026. Rs 28,024 crore disbursed as Central Financial Assistance till July 2026. Over 21 lakh households received zero electricity bills as of November 2026. The scheme enables households to generate their own electricity. It reduces electricity bills and promotes rooftop solar adoption. PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana has also received international support, with the World Bank approving financing to help scale up residential rooftop solar adoption in India.

From High Electricity Bills to Solar Savings

On learning about the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, Sudhanshu Dubey, a resident of Jawar Colony in Gwalior, opted for rooftop solar. The installation and subsidy process were completed smoothly, and the subsidy amount was credited directly to his bank account. For more than a year now, the benefits have been visible every month. Earlier, his household electricity bill often exceeded Rs 10,000; today, it is almost negligible. The rooftop solar system continues to generate power reliably, helping the family meet its electricity needs while reducing monthly expenses. For Sudhanshu, the scheme has turned sunlight into savings. His experience reflects how PM Surya Ghar is enabling households across the country to adopt clean energy and gain greater control over their electricity costs.

Pradhan Mantri-Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM)

Launched in 2019, the PM-KUSUM seeks to expand the use of solar energy in agriculture. The scheme supports the installation of decentralised solar power plants, standalone solar agriculture pumps, and the solarisation of grid-connected agricultural pumps. It aims to provide reliable daytime power for irrigation, reduce dependence on diesel, and enhance income opportunities for farmers. PM-KUSUM enables farmers to harness solar energy both for irrigation and power generation. Under the scheme, farmers install solar pumps for irrigation and sell surplus electricity to distribution companies, where eligible. The scheme is focused on adding around 34,800 MW of solar capacity by 2026-27, with Central financial support of Rs 34,422 crore.

Key Achievements (As of 30.09.2026)

Nearly 11.91 lakh off-grid solar pumps installed for agricultural use. More than 17.18 lakh agricultural pumps are covered through feeder-level solarisation. Around 2,426 MW of decentralised solar power capacity commissioned on farmers' land. Over 21.77 lakh farmers benefited across the country, as of 31 December 2025. Both schemes have emerged as an important pillar of India's distributed solar energy landscape.

In FY 2025–26, distributed solar solutions contributed 16.3 GW, or 36%, of the 44.61 GW of solar capacity added during the year. Of this, 7.6 GW came from PM-KUSUM and 8.7 GW from rooftop solar.

India's Growing Leadership in Global Solar Cooperation

India's leadership in solar energy extends beyond its borders. The country is strengthening international cooperation, technology exchange, and capacity building.

International Solar Alliance (ISA): Co-founded by India and France at COP21 in Paris in 2015, the ISA has emerged as a key platform for global solar cooperation. The Alliance brings together countries including the Maldives, Greece, Germany, Italy, Bhutan, Luxembourg, and Argentina to accelerate solar deployment, share knowledge and technology. The ISA has evolved into an important platform for cooperation among member countries.

One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG): Proposed by India in 2018, OSOWOG is a vision for an interconnected global renewable energy network. To advance this vision, India and the United Kingdom launched the Green Grids Initiative–One Sun One World One Grid (GGI–OSOWOG) at COP26 in 2021. The initiative is supported by Australia, France, the United States, and the International Solar Alliance. It promotes cross-border RE trade through interconnected electricity grids, strengthening energy security and accelerating the clean energy transition.

Through the ISA and other partnerships, India has strengthened renewable energy cooperation across the Global South. During its G20 Presidency, India also helped build consensus on tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030.

The Road Ahead

India's achievements in the solar market reflect sustained policy support, expanding manufacturing, strengthened infrastructure, and growing public participation. As India progresses towards its Panchamrit commitments and net-zero target by 2070, solar power will remain a key pillar. It will continue to drive the clean energy transition.

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

Owner & Editor, Printer, Publisher: **Nasir Azam Khan**, Published From **Srinagar,** Printed at **K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industries Estate, Rangreth**,
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Sagar calls for time-bound upgradation of Grid Stations

Reviews power infrastructure in Sopore, Baramulla

KT News Desk



BARAMULLA, NOVEMBER 18: Minister for Revenue, Power Development Department (PDD), Law Justice and Parliamentary affairs, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR) and Election, Ali Mohammad Sagar, Wednesday undertook an extensive tour of Amargarh, Sopore and Delina to review the status of power infrastructure, ongoing upgradation works and electricity-related grievances being faced by the people of North Kashmir.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, inspected the Amargarh and Delina Grid Stations and reviewed the functioning of the existing transmission and distribution network, besides taking stock of various long-pending issues affecting reliable and uninterrupted power supply in Sopore, Baramulla, Rafiabad and adjoining areas.

The Minister was accompanied by MLA Irshad Rasool Kar, MLA Javaid Hassan Beigh, MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar and former President MC Sopore Masrat Kar, besides senior officers of the Power Development Department, KPDCL, public representatives and prominent citizens.

At Amargarh Grid Station, which has an installed capacity of 195 MVA (132/33 KV) and caters to Sopore, Baramulla, Rafiabad, Watrigam, Watlab and SIDCO Industrial Estate, the Minister reviewed the existing capacity and stressed the need for its augmentation and modernisation in view of the growing electricity demand across the region. He observed that strengthening this important feeding station was essential for ensuring reliable power supply to domestic, commercial and industrial consumers.

At Delina Grid Station, having 480 MVA (220/132 KV) and 100 MVA (132/33 KV) installations, the Minister reviewed its strategic importance for the entire North Kashmir power network. He was informed that the station feeds six downstream grid stations at the 132 KV level, besides directly catering to Delina, Wagoora and Pattan at the 33 KV level.

Taking serious note of the delay in the proposed upgradation of the station, the Minister directed the concerned officers to expedite the approval and execution of the revised Detailed Project Report (DPR), which has reportedly been submitted but remained pending for the last two to three years. He stressed that unnecessary delays in vital infrastructure projects would not be tolerated and called for focused efforts to strengthen the power transmission network.

The Minister also took stock of the condition of the distribution infrastructure and public grievances relating to damaged and outdated electric poles, unsafe wiring and frequent power interruptions. He directed the concerned officers to undertake a comprehensive assessment of areas requiring replacement and relocation of poles, particularly in Khankhai Mohalla and other affected localities.

He observed that electric wires passing through trees and residential structures not only affect the reliability of power supply but also pose serious safety concerns. The Minister stressed that poles situated in paddy fields and those obstructing residential and agricultural activities should be relocated wherever technically feasible.

An important aspect of the visit was the assurance extended by the MLAs that they would contribute from their respective Constituency Development Funds wherever the department faces financial constraints, particularly for installation of new electric poles and other essential power infrastructure. The Minister appreciated this constructive initiative and said that coordinated efforts between elected representatives and the concerned departments would go a long way in addressing public grievances and improving electricity services.

The Minister also reviewed the prolonged delay in the construction and operationalisation of the Dalina workshop. Taking note of the pending issues despite the reported completion of the R&B building and release of funds, he directed the concerned authorities to convene a coordination meeting with the R&B Department and resolve all bottlenecks. He stressed that the workshop should be made fully functional with the required machinery, equipment and manpower.

The issue of inadequate availability of cranes, electrical panels and other maintenance equipment also came up for discussion. The Minister directed the department to ensure timely procurement and availability of essential machinery so that repair, cabling, shifting and restoration works are not unnecessarily delayed.

Expressing concern over the reported disparity in electricity consumption and payment of dues by certain government departments and establishments, the Minister called for strict monitoring of departmental power consumption and timely recovery of outstanding electricity bills. He observed that accountability in the payment of electricity dues was equally important and that ordinary consumers should not be made to bear the consequences of institutional inefficiencies.

The Minister further stressed the need for equitable power distribution in Tarzoo, Panzipora and adjoining areas, directing the officers to rationalise the distribution network and examine alternative feeding arrangements, including the Soura source, wherever technically feasible. He called for improved load management and minimum possible curtailment, particularly during peak demand.

Sagar also emphasised better interdepartmental coordination, directing the concerned authorities to convene a joint meeting of Irrigation and PHE departments to resolve pending bills and related issues. Coordination with R&B was also stressed for expediting pending works and ensuring proper utilisation and booking of released funds. The issues concerning Zainageer Block were also flagged for focused attention.

DC Samba convenes Block Diwas at Birpur-Bari Brahmana



KT News Desk

SAMBA, NOVEMBER 18: Deputy Commissioner Samba Dr. Rupesh Kumar Wednesday conducted a Block Diwas here at Panchayat Ghar Birpur Block Bari Brahmana to review developmental issues and take stock of public grievances in the area.

A large number of residents, public representatives attended the programme in presence of officers from government departments. The locals projected several demands and highlighted issues related to road connectivity, drinking water supply, power, healthcare, education and other civic amenities.

People, as per an official statement, demanded augmentation of water supply, rationalization of Electricity and completion of PMGSY and PWD road projects in the area. They also demanded up-gradation of Parmandal to Choti Kashi road, alternate motor for drinking water, space for parking, up-gradation of Playground, construction of Passenger Shed, Community hall and E-bus Services.

The Deputy Commissioner gave a patient hearing to the grievances and demands raised by the public. He issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned departments for prompt redressal of the same. He instructed PMGSY authorities to ensure proper maintenance and clearance of roads and install night reflectors at vulnerable and accident-prone locations.

The DC reviewed the progress of ongoing development projects being executed by PWD and PMGSY. He directed the concerned officers to secure all requisite approvals and expedite the execution of works.

Stressing the importance of timely completion, the DC asked the agencies to make the roads motorable at the earliest for public convenience. He further directed the Medical Officer to facilitate the basic facilities at Hospital to strengthen healthcare services in the area.

Emphasizing responsive governance and efficient service delivery, he directed the departments to work in close coordination to ensure timely resolution of public issues and effective implementation of developmental programmes at the grassroots level.

Director Agriculture Jammu inaugurates first harvest of Shiitake Mushrooms

KT News Desk



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 18: Director Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Jammu Anil Gupta Wednesday inaugurated the first harvest of Shiitake mushrooms (Lentinula edodes) at the Shiitake Development Laboratory of the Spawn Production Office, Krishi Bhawan, Talab Tillo, marking a significant step towards promoting specialised mushroom cultivation and agricultural diversification in the Union Territory.

The Director, as per an official statement, highlighted the immense potential of Shiitake mushroom cultivation as a high-value agricultural enterprise, emphasising its prospects for employment generation, rural entrepreneurship and startup development, particularly among small and marginal farmers, rural youth, women and Self-Help Groups. He observed that the introduction of specialised mushroom varieties would further diversify the existing mushroom cultivation activities in Jammu and Kashmir and provide farmers with additional income-generating opportunities.

The Department's Spawn Production Laboratory plays a key role in producing and supplying quality mushroom spawn to farmers across Jammu Division. The Department is also focusing on strengthening the laboratory to ensure timely availability of spawn and meet the requirements of growers and district agriculture offices.

Special emphasis is being laid on Shiitake and Cordyceps as specialised avenues for diversification.

The programme was attended by Joint Director Agriculture (Extension), Suresh Kumar Khajuria; SMS (RL), Krishan Kant; Spawn Production Officer, Ashu Kakoria; Mushroom Development Officer, Arun Gupta; besides other senior officers and staff of the Spawn Production and Mushroom Development Offices. The initiative is expected to open new avenues for sustainable mushroom production, value addition and rural employment while strengthening the Department's efforts towards enhancing farmers' income and promoting agricultural entrepreneurship.

District-Level mock exercise on flood water rescue held at Uttri- Kathua

KT News Desk



KATHUA, NOVEMBER 18: The District Administration Kathua, in coordination with the 13th Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and other stakeholder departments, Wednesday conducted a District-Level Mock Exercise on Flood Water Rescue here at village pond Uttri .

The exercise was organised with the objective of strengthening disaster preparedness, assessing the response capabilities of various departments and enhancing inter-agency coordination to ensure an effective and timely response during flood-like situations and other emergencies.

During the exercise, NDRF and SDRF teams demonstrated various rescue and emergency response techniques, including water rescue operations, procedures for evacuation, response to different emergency scenarios and fire control drills. The demonstrations highlighted the importance of preparedness, coordination and prompt action in minimising the loss of life and property during disasters.

Assistant Commandant, 13th Battalion NDRF and DySP SDRF Kathua were present on the occasion. Officials and personnel from the concerned departments also participated in the exercise.

The mock exercise provided an opportunity to assess the readiness of the district's disaster response mechanism and familiarise participating teams with their respective roles and responsibilities during emergency situations.

Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma stated that similar mock exercises will be conducted in other parts of the district to ensure that all stakeholders remain operationally prepared, well-coordinated and equipped to effectively respond to any eventuality.

Sakeena Itoo participates in National Social Justice Summit in New Delhi

Highlights challenges faced by students in remote areas of J&K

KT News Desk



NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 18: Minister for Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo Wednesday highlighted the geographical, infrastructural and administrative challenges faced by students residing in remote and far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir while speaking at the two-day Departmental Summit, 'Samaveshi Niti Sankalp', organised by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan here Wednesday.

The summit, as per an official statement, being held on November 18 and 19, aims to strengthen Centre-State coordination and cooperation for effective implementation of social justice and empowerment initiatives in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

During the thematic session on 'One Nation, One Scholarship Portal – Accessible Scholarships, Empowered Students', the Minister drew attention to the difficulties confronting students in remote and hilly areas of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly Basholi, Kishtwar, Reasi, Doda, Tanghdhar, Machil, Keran, Gurez, Uri and other areas where limited digital connectivity and challenging geographical conditions often impede access to various educational and welfare schemes.

She emphasised that while digital platforms have immense potential to simplify the delivery of scholarships and other benefits, their implementation must take into account the ground realities of geographically challenging regions to ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left out.

"Jammu and Kashmir has several remote and hilly areas where students continue to face difficulties in accessing online services due to poor internet connectivity and other geographical constraints. These challenges need to be adequately addressed while designing and implementing a unified scholarship portal so that the benefits of such initiatives reach every eligible student, irrespective of their location", the Minister said.

Highlighting the procedural difficulties faced by students, Sakeena Itoo observed that delays in the issuance of income and caste certificates often affect the timely submission and verification of scholarship applications, thereby depriving deserving students of benefits within the stipulated timelines.

She stressed the need for better coordination among the concerned departments and district administrations to ensure timely issuance of requisite documents and smooth processing of scholarship applications.

"Access to education and financial assistance should not be determined by a student's geographical location or administrative hurdles. We must put in place a responsive and time-bound mechanism to ensure that deserving students, particularly those belonging to economically weaker and disadvantaged sections, receive their entitled benefits without unnecessary delays," she added.

The Minister also underscored the need for focused interventions for girl students belonging to remote and difficult terrains, observing that ensuring their access to scholarships and educational support is essential for promoting gender equality, educational inclusion and social empowerment.

Informing the summit about the initiatives being undertaken by Jammu and Kashmir, Sakeena Itoo highlighted that the Social Welfare Department in Jammu and Kashmir would issue a comprehensive verification calendar well in advance of 2027 to streamline the verification process, facilitate timely processing of applications and ensure the efficient delivery of benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

She said that advance scheduling and improved interdepartmental coordination would help minimise delays and make the scholarship delivery mechanism more transparent, accessible and beneficiary-friendly.

The Minister's intervention highlighted the specific requirements of Jammu and Kashmir and stressed that policy formulation and digital reforms must remain sensitive to the needs of people living in remote, border and hilly areas.

The summit witnessed participation of senior ministers, representatives and administrative secretaries from various States and Union Territories, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, providing a national platform for deliberations on strengthening social welfare delivery mechanisms, scholarship reforms and inclusive development.

The summit is expected to culminate in the formulation of actionable strategies and sharing of best practices among States and Union Territories for strengthening social justice initiatives.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LeT commander Lateef Bhat

site. Officials subsequently identified him as Mohammad Lateef Bhat, resident of Khrewan village in Kulgam district.

According to officials, Bhat was affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its offshoot, The Resistance Front (TRF). He was wanted in seven cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and carried a reward of Rs 15 lakh on his head. He had joined terrorist ranks in 2025.

Officials said his alleged involvement included the Lal Chowk attack in Anantnag, the Kelam attack in Kulgam and the November 11 attack on a CRPF checkpoint at Akhran near Mir Bazar, in which three CRPF personnel were injured.

Investigators had also linked him to the July 22 killing of Special Operations Group head constable Ashiq Hussain in Anantnag and the July 31 shooting of two non-local workers at a brick kiln in Kilam village of Kulgam.

His killing comes amid intensified search operations launched after the attack on the CRPF checkpoint at Akhran. On November 16, an encounter took place in the Laroo area of Kulgam, during which one terrorist, identified as Umar Nisar Dar, was killed and a weapon was recovered. A search operation was subsequently intensified to track Bhat, who had managed to evade the security cordon.

Security forces later re-established contact with the remaining terrorist, leading to Wednesday's operation in Zangalpora, where he was eventually killed.

With Bhat's killing, security agencies have described the operation as the elimination of the last known active local terrorist in south Kashmir.

J&K will soon

remains secure and bright. Every citizen of the country bows in salutations to the courage, dedication, and supreme sacrifice of these brave sons," the Lieutenant Governor said.

CONGRATULATES OFFICERS

Congratulating the 74 officers who successfully completed their training, the Lieutenant Governor said the dedicated young officers have chosen the path of national service.

He noted that their achievement marked a proud moment not only for their families but also for the Union Territory, adding a new chapter to its distinguished history of public service and courage.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that policing and environmental protection are noble responsibilities requiring sacrifice, commitment, and a deep sense of duty.

LG Sinha highlighted the exemplary record of the Jammu Kashmir Police in confronting terrorism, maintaining public order in challenging circumstances, and safeguarding citizens through decades of dedicated service and sacrifice.

The Lieutenant Governor urged the officers to wear the uniform with pride and responsibility, remembering the sacrifices made by those who came before them.

TERRORISM REMAINS GREATEST THREAT TO PEACE, PROGRESS

Stressing that terrorism remains the greatest threat to peace and progress, the Lieutenant Governor expressed confidence that continued efforts would further strengthen security and stability in Jammu Kashmir.

Highlighting emerging security challenges, the Lieutenant Governor called for a modern policing approach equipped to address cyber threats, digital radicalisation, drone-based threats, narco-terrorism, and other forms of asymmetric warfare.

The Lieutenant Governor underscored the importance of technological proficiency, forensic capabilities, intelligence gathering, and inter-agency coordination in meeting contemporary security challenges.

"Today's security threat may also come through a mobile screen, not just a gun. If we fight today's challenges with yesterday's methods, we will fall behind. I want every jawan and every officer to be proficient not only in counter-terrorism but also in digital tools, forensic science, cyber forensics, digital evidence, and monitoring technology," he said.

TRUST BETWEEN CITIZENS AND POLICE FUNDAMENTAL TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Lieutenant Governor also emphasized the significance of community engagement and effective beat policing, noting that trust between citizens and the police is fundamental to good governance. The officers were urged to serve with sensitivity, professionalism, and integrity. He said that sustaining public confidence must remain a key priority and improved law and order has contributed significantly to investment, tourism, entrepreneurship, and infrastructure development in Jammu Kashmir.

"Over the past 6 years, the stakeholders of peace in Jammu Kashmir have grown. Every citizen of Jammu Kashmir is committed to a safe home, good education, employment, business opportunities, and a bright future for their children. Now, you must be not only the guardian of their security but also the guardian of their trust," he said.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor took the ceremonial Salute and inspected the parade. He also felicitated the officers who had excelled during their training.

An oath was administered to the young officers for performing their duties with dedication and honesty.

Pawan Kumar Gupta, Balwant Singh Mankotia, and RS Pathania - Members of Legislative Assembly; Dr. Sajjan Singh Yadav, Chief Secretary; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Chandraker Bharti, Additional Chief Secretary Home Department; Sarvesh Rai, Director, J&K Forest Protection Force; Dr. Mohammad Haseeb Mughal, Director, SKPA Udhampur, senior officials of Police, Security Forces and civil administration and family members of the passing out Officers were present. (KNO)

LeT's last known

Lateef Bhat, was neutralised in an operation in Kulgam in the early morning hours today."

"One of his terrorist associates, Umar Nisar, was also neutralised in Kulgam, the day before. The entire operation was marked by a very high level of synergy," Shah said, adding, "The nation salutes the brave Jawans of JKP, Army and CRPF and intelligence agencies."

Pertinently, the security forces shot dead Lateef Bhat, who was wanted for the November 11 attack on a CRPF post, in an encounter in South Kashmir's Kulgam district this morning.

The terrorist, according to the officials had taken shelter inside a mosque in Zangalpora village in the Devsar area and refused to heed repeated appeals by senior officers of the Army and police to surrender.

According to the officials, Bhat and his aide Umar Nisar Dar were involved in the November 11 attack that left three CRPF personnel injured at Akhran Kulgam in South Kashmir.

While Dar was killed in a gunfight in the Laru bypass area of Kulgam on Monday, Bhat had managed to give the security forces the slip.

According to the details available with KNO from at least 18 encounters in 2022 to the killing of Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Lateef Bhat in Kulgam on Wednesday, the district has witnessed a series of major counter-terror operations over the past five years.

Data reveals that Kulgam witnessed at least 18 encounters in 2022, in which 23 terrorists were killed, followed by major operations in subsequent years targeting LeT, Hizbul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammad networks. The district also saw attacks on civilians and security personnel.

A look at some of the major encounters and security-related incidents in the district over the years:

YEAR 2026: Lateef Bhat, Umar Nisar killed; attacks on workers and CRPF

November 18: LeT commander Lateef Bhat was killed in an encounter at Zangalpora in the Devsar area. The operation came two days after his aide Umar Nisar Dar was killed near Laroo, from where Bhat had managed to escape.

November 16: Umar Nisar Dar was killed in an encounter near Laroo. Bhat escaped the cordon, prompting security forces to intensify the search for him.

November 11: Terrorists opened fire on a CRPF checkpoint at Akhran in the Nowpora area, injuring three personnel. Police later released CCTV footage showing the suspected attackers conducting reconnaissance at several locations in Kulgam ahead of the attack.

July 31: Two migrant workers from Chhattisgarh were shot at a brick kiln in Kilam village. Both later succumbed to their injuries. Police suspected Bhat's involvement in the attack.

YEAR 2025: The prolonged Akhal operation and Guddar encounter

September 8–9: Two terrorists, including one Pakistani national and two Army personnel were killed during an encounter in the Guddar forest area. The deceased soldiers were identified as Subedar Perbhat Gaur and Lance Naik Narender Sindhu. An Army Major was also injured during the gunfight.

August 1–12: A prolonged operation in the Akhal forest area resulted in the killing of a local terrorist and two Army personnel, identified as Lance Naik Pritpal Singh and Sepoy Harminder Singh. At least ten other security personnel were injured. The operation was called off after 12 days.

YEAR 2024: Three killed in Redwani, twin encounters claim 6 terrorists

December 19: Five terrorists, including Hizbul Mujahideen commander Farooq Ahmad Bhat alias Nali, were killed in an encounter in Kadder village. Two Army personnel were injured.

July 6–8: Simultaneous encounters in Modergam and Chinigam resulted in the killing of six terrorists and two Army personnel.

May 6–8: Three terrorists, including LeT/TRF commander Basit Dar, were killed during a prolonged encounter in Redwani Payeen. The third terrorist was identified as Momin.

YEAR 2023: Major operations in Samnoo, Kujjar and Halan

November 16–17: Five Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were killed during a prolonged encounter in Samnoo village.

October 4: Two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, Basit Amin Bhat and Saqib Ahmad Lone, were killed in an encounter in Kujjar.

August 4: Three Army personnel were killed during an encounter in the Halan forest area. The terrorists managed to escape.

YEAR 2022: At least 18 encounters, 23 terrorists killed

Kulgam witnessed at least 18 encounters during 2022, in which 23 terrorists were killed.

September 26: Jaish-e-Mohammad commander Abu Hurrairah was killed in an encounter at Batpora.

June 29: Two LeT terrorists, identified as Yasir Wani and Raees Manzoor, were killed in an encounter at Nowpora village in the Mir Bazar area.

June 27: Two LeT terrorists, Zubair Ahmad Mir and Idrees Ahmad Dar, were killed in an encounter in Kulgam.

June 19: Two terrorists, identified as Haris Sharief of Srinagar and Zakir Padder of Kulgam, were killed in an encounter at Gujjarpora in the Damhal Hanjipora area. Police said Sharief was affiliated with LeT and Padder with Jaish-e-Mohammad.

June 15–16: Two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists were killed in an encounter in the Mishipora area. Police said one of them was involved in the killing of schoolteacher Rajni Bala.

June 11: A Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist was killed in an encounter at Khandipora.

June 2: Vijay Kumar, a bank manager from Rajasthan, was shot dead inside the Ellaquai Dehati Bank branch at Areh village.

May 31: Rajni Bala, a schoolteacher from Jammu, was shot dead outside Government High School in Gopalpora.

May 8: Two terrorists, including Pakistani LeT operative Haider and local terrorist Shahbaz Shah, were killed in an encounter at Cheyan Devsar.

January 12: A Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist and police personnel Rohit Chhib were killed in an encounter at Pariwan. Three Army personnel and two civilians were also injured.

January 9–10: Two Al-Badr terrorists were killed in an encounter at Hasanpora.

January 4: Two terrorists were killed in an encounter at Okay. (KNO)

Local terror recruitment

been confronting Pakistan-sponsored terrorism for the past 35 years, during which terrorist organisations have repeatedly attempted to disturb peace and create instability. However, he said, the security scenario has witnessed significant improvement due to sustained counter-terrorism operations and a comprehensive strategy involving all security agencies.

Highlighting the approach being pursued under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, DGP Prabhat said the campaign against terrorism was aimed at dismantling its entire ecosystem rather than restricting operations to encounters and the elimination of armed terrorists.

"The fight against terrorism is not limited to encounters or neutralising terrorists. We have to dismantle the entire ecosystem that sustains terrorism, including its financial structure, support networks, logistics and recruitment mechanisms," he said.

Emphasising the economic dimension of counter-terrorism operations, the DGP said security agencies were systematically targeting the financial channels and resources that enable terrorist organisations to sustain their activities. He said those providing financial assistance, logistical support and other forms of assistance to terrorists were also under the scanner.

Sharing details of action taken under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Prabhat said 240 people were arrested in 2025, while 210 arrests had been made so far in 2026.

He further said that properties linked to terrorism were being identified and attached to deprive terrorist organisations and their associates of financial resources. A total of 155 properties were attached in 2025, while action had been taken against another 122 properties so far in 2026, taking the cumulative figure to 277 over the past two years.

The DGP said these measures were intended to disrupt the financial foundations of terrorist organisations and prevent them from rebuilding their networks or facilitating further terrorist activities.

Stressing the need to sustain the gains achieved against terrorism, he said preventing local recruitment remained a critical component of the police strategy. The focus, he said, was on identifying those attempting to radicalise and influence vulnerable youth, tracing recruitment networks and taking action against handlers and local facilitators.

He also underscored the importance of intelligence-based operations and close coordination among security agencies, saying sustained efforts were necessary to ensure that terrorist networks did not get an opportunity to reorganise or regenerate their support structures.

Paying tribute to security personnel who laid down their lives in the fight against terrorism, Prabhat said 1,623 personnel had made the supreme sacrifice in Jammu and Kashmir while safeguarding peace and security.

He said their sacrifices remained a source of inspiration for the police and other security forces and strengthened their resolve to continue working towards lasting peace and security in the Union Territory.

The DGP reiterated that counter-terrorism operations would continue with a comprehensive approach, focusing on armed terrorists as well as their financial backers, local facilitators, logistical networks and recruitment channels to ensure that the ecosystem sustaining terrorism was dismantled. (KNO)

Give us clarity on

they are not kept under any illusion, and we are not humiliated repeatedly," Abdullah said.

The Chief Minister said more than two years had passed since his government assumed office, but the Centre had yet to fulfil its commitment to restore statehood after the completion of delimitation and Assembly elections.

"Even after waiting for two years and one month, we have been compelled to ask: Where has our State gone? Why is the restoration of statehood being delayed?" he asked.

Questioning the Centre's repeated reference to an "appropriate time", Abdullah said there was no clarity on the criteria being used to determine when Jammu and Kashmir would regain its statehood.

"What is the yardstick you have to measure this? What kind of scale will you use to decide that the time has finally come to restore our statehood?" he said.

Referring to security incidents, including the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025 and incidents in Kulgam, Reasi and Kishtwar, the CM said the elected government was being made accountable for matters beyond its administrative control.

"We have no control over the police or law and order, yet we are told that because of the Pahalgam attack, perhaps statehood cannot be restored now. An incident takes place in Kulgam, and the same justification is given. An attack takes place in Reasi or Kishtwar, and again the same argument is put forward," he said.

"How can you hold us responsible for matters over which we have no control? We have fulfilled our responsibilities in the areas entrusted to us. Why should the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer for the failures of others? What kind of justice is this?" Omar asked.

Abdullah challenged the Centre to assess his government's performance on development, infrastructure, healthcare, education and governance rather than linking the restoration of statehood to law and order.

"Either your intentions are not right, or you are not being sincere. If you do not want to restore statehood until the BJP gets its own Chief Minister, then have the courage to say so," he said.

The Chief Minister also alleged that the continuation of the Union Territory arrangement was undermining the status of elected representatives and weakening the authority of the elected government.

Pointing to differences in protocol and administrative standing, he said the Chief Secretaries and Chief Justices enjoyed comparable status, while Chief Ministers, ministers and legislators of Union Territories were placed below their counterparts in states.

"You do not want to weaken the Chief Secretary or undermine the Chief Justice. You want to weaken the people's elected government and humiliate their elected representatives," he said.

Recalling assurances given by the Centre before the Supreme Court during the proceedings concerning Article 370, CM Omar said statehood had been promised after delimitation, Assembly elections and the formation of an elected government.

He said his government had passed a resolution seeking restoration of statehood in its very first Cabinet meeting and that he had personally submitted the resolution to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Chief Minister added that he had repeatedly reminded the Prime Minister of the commitment during his visits to Jammu and Kashmir, including occasions such as the inauguration of the Sonamarg Tunnel and the Katra railway project. He said he had also raised the matter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi.

Despite the limitations of the Union Territory framework, Abdullah said his government had continued to discharge its responsibilities and had not used its restricted powers as an excuse for shortcomings.

"We are not cowards who get frightened by difficult situations or use them as an excuse for our inability to deliver," he said. (KNO)

'Mughal Road to

would fulfil the long-standing dream of former Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah of ensuring year-round connectivity between the two regions.

"The Mughal Road was the dream of Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. Very soon, work on the Mughal Road tunnel will commence and in the coming years, the road will remain open throughout the year, ensuring all-weather connectivity between the two regions," he said.

The 13 projects, comprising eight inaugurations and five foundation stone-laying ceremonies, cover road connectivity, power infrastructure, flood protection, education and drinking water supply.

Among the major projects, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for a 50 MVA, 132/33 KV Grid Sub-Station at Mendhar, being executed by JKPT CL at an estimated cost of Rs 49.40 crore.

He also laid the foundation stone for flood protection works at vulnerable locations between Gursai and Mankote on both banks of Mendhari Nallah at an estimated cost of Rs 12.13 crore.

In the road connectivity sector, Omar inaugurated six road projects covering a combined length of 16.30 kilometres, completed at a cumulative cost of over Rs 20.19 crore.

These include Jaranwali Gali to Dhara Wali Gali via CFC Rehmatpur, Main Babu More to Battangiya via Mohalla Khatana Ghai Kallar, SK Main Road to Thallan Kalaban, Main Road SK to Dharan Faizabad, Adar to Charoon Gali via High School Gorisian, and Gurah Nima Chughan to Hudian Gali (Phase-I).

He also inaugurated a double-storey (5+5) building, including a toilet complex, at Government Model Girls Higher Secondary School, Mendhar, constructed at a cost of Rs 1.59 crore, besides a water supply scheme covering Dheri, Hundi, Dhakki and Narman villages of Behra under the Jal Jeevan Mission, completed at a cost of Rs 3.67 crore.

The Chief Minister further laid the foundation stone for a 1.50-kilometre road connecting Dharana Mohalla Naka to Mohalla Muqadama High School, Upper Dharana, at a cost of Rs 1 crore.

In the education sector, he laid the foundation stones for a Model School for the Educationally Backward Block at Pathanateer, costing Rs 3.72 crore, and a teacher and staff hostel for a school under the DAJGUA scheme, at an estimated cost of Rs 1.13 crore.

On the occasion, Omar also flagged off J&K SRTC bus services on three new routes and two water tankers to improve public transport and drinking water availability in Mendhar.

Highlighting the Government's initiatives, the Chief Minister said it had started providing six free LPG cylinders annually to the poorest households as part of its commitment to provide 12 cylinders. He also referred to progress towards providing 200 units of free electricity through solar energy.

He said free travel in government buses had been introduced for women, particularly benefiting students commuting to schools and colleges. The Government had also enhanced social security benefits, including old-age and widow pensions, besides increasing marriage assistance for economically weaker families.

On employment and reservation, Omar said the Government had taken up recruitment-related commitments and constituted a Cabinet Sub-Committee to examine reservation-related issues and address concerns.

He also referred to the change in the school examination calendar from March to November-December, saying the decision was taken after the formation of his Government to address concerns raised by students and parents.

On the restoration of the Darbar Move, the Chief Minister said the Government had fulfilled its commitment to revive the historic practice, which he described as important for retaining Jammu's significance and strengthening its administrative and economic activity.

Reiterating his Government's commitment to the restoration of statehood, Omar said he had consistently reminded the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister of the assurance made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, both during their visits to the Union Territory and in meetings in Delhi.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Ministers Javed Ahmed Rana and Altaf Ahmed Wani, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Surankote Choudhary Mohammad Akram, Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Sharma, district and sectoral officers and other public representatives were present on the occasion. (KNO)

Dr. Sajjan Singh Yadav

served in Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Delhi, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu, besides holding several important assignments with the Central Government.

He has served as Deputy Commissioner of East Kameng and Tawang districts in Arunachal Pradesh as well as South Delhi. During his tenure with the Centre, he worked in key ministries, including Finance, Health and Family Welfare, Women and Child Development, Heavy Industries, and Corporate Affairs, spending a significant part of his career in the Finance Ministry. He also possesses a strong academic background. He holds an MBA from the University of Delhi, a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Minnesota, and a doctorate in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Besides his administrative responsibilities, he is an author and has written two books, India's Vaccine Growth Story: From Cowpox to Vaccine Maitri and Scaling Mount UPSC: 7 IAS Officers' Journeys. (KNO)

NIA Court rejects bail

and 201 of the IPC.

The SIA said it filed detailed objections opposing the bail application, arguing against the accused's release in view of the gravity of the allegations, nature of the offences and statutory restrictions governing bail under the UAPA and NDPS Act.

It said charges against all accused in the case were framed on July 15, 2026, and the matter is now listed for recording prosecution evidence.

The court rejected Poswal's bail plea after hearing both sides and considering the prosecution's objections and submissions, the statement said. The SIA said it remains committed to pursuing cases involving alleged links between narcotics trafficking and activities threatening the security of the country. (KNO)

Winter vacations in schools

been identified across the region, including nearly 90 important sources, for revival to improve water availability," she said.

On government schools functioning from rented buildings, she acknowledged that land availability, particularly in densely populated Srinagar, remained a major challenge.

"There is no shortage of funds; the real problem is the availability of land," she said, adding that possibilities of identifying suitable land in Srinagar and adjoining areas were being explored.

Reacting to criticism by Peoples Conference president and MLA Sajad Gani Lone over a recent communication she had sent to MLAs, the Minister said criticism should be accepted positively as it provides an opportunity to learn and improve.

She said those who did not appreciate the style of her communication were free to express their views, adding that criticism could also be constructive. (KNO)

Amit Shah to

statement added.

It said the deliberations will also provide an opportunity for security agencies and investigative experts to discuss emerging trends, strengthen institutional coordination and explore effective strategies for addressing cross-border terrorist activities.

The annual conference forms part of the broader efforts to enhance India's counter-terrorism capabilities by bringing together various stakeholders involved in national security and law enforcement.

Held annually, the conference has steadily grown into a significant gathering of operational forces, agencies working in the field of counter-terrorism, and experts from the technical, legal and forensic domains. It offers the agencies / forces, an opportunity to collectively examine matters that have bearing on national security and the threats arising from terrorism, the statement added.

The conference sessions will address a range of subjects, including, obtaining evidence from foreign jurisdictions, the application of digital forensics and data analysis in counter-terrorism investigations, and the effective management of trials. Sessions will also cover countering radicalisation, and emerging hybrid threats to national security. Further sessions will examine the tools, techniques and case experiences involved in disrupting terror financing networks, as well as the development of future-ready counter-terrorism strategies and the strengthening of institutional capacities to meet emerging national security challenges, the statement said This year, the conference will also host a capacity-building training programme for State police personnel and practising professionals. The programme has been designed to equip participants in several areas. These include applying the new criminal laws in terror investigations, using digital evidence in prosecution, and trial strategy and management. The programme will also cover special provisions relating to the investigation of terror cases, common challenges posed by the defence, the protection of witnesses, and the initiatives taken by the Government to improve prosecution, it said. Over the two days, the deliberations will enable law enforcement agencies to share their experiences, highlight good practices in handling counter-terrorism matters, and draw upon lessons learnt from terror investigations, it added. The conference will be attended by senior police officers of States and Union Territories, officers of Central agencies and departments dealing with counter-terrorism, and experts from allied fields including law, forensics and technology, the statement said. (KNO)

Dry spell may

low levels, could face a greater risk of drying up if the precipitation deficit continues.

Although the expected dry spell may not trigger an immediate water crisis, Arif cautioned that its extension beyond the anticipated period could worsen the situation, particularly in areas dependent on springs, streams and other local water sources. He said a prolonged absence of rainfall and snowfall could also affect hydropower generation, as reduced river discharge would impact the natural inflows required for power projects. Arif said the administration and concerned departments should assess vulnerable areas and take precautionary measures to ensure an uninterrupted drinking water supply, instead of waiting for water levels to reach critical levels. He also called for regular monitoring of river and stream discharge and advance contingency planning for areas that could face shortages. Urging people to use water judiciously, he said avoiding unnecessary wastage would be important during the extended dry period.

"There is no immediate reason for panic, but preparedness is necessary. If the dry spell continues well into December, the gradual decline in water levels could become a more serious concern," Arif said. He said advance assessment and timely intervention by the authorities could help minimise the impact of any potential water shortage. (KNO)

India's defence production, exports growing at unprecedented pace: Rajnath Singh

PTI

Tokyo, Nov 18: India's defence sector is moving beyond self-reliance to strengthen its global standing, with defence production and exports expanding at an unprecedented pace, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Japan on Wednesday.

Addressing members of the Indian community in Tokyo, Singh said the growing capabilities of the Army, Navy and Air Force, coupled with indigenous defence manufacturing, were taking India's defence strength to new heights.

Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar are on a two-day visit to Japan for the fourth India-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministers' Dialogue, also known as the 2+2 dialogue, which will review the full spectrum of bilateral defence and strategic cooperation.

"Today, India is exporting defence products on a large scale, while the country's defence production is growing at an unprecedented pace," Singh said during his address.

Singh stated that domestic defence production has crossed a record Rs 1.80 lakh crore, up from Rs 48,000 crore a decade ago.

He added that defence exports have risen from Rs 600 crore to an all-time high of Rs 38,000 crore, reflecting India's growing indigenous capabilities and expanding footprint in the global defence market.

"India's defence sector is moving beyond self-reliance to strengthen its



global standing," Singh added. Singh also said the Indian economy had maintained its growth momentum despite global challenges and the crisis in West Asia.

"With a growth rate of around 7.8 per cent, India is firmly establishing itself among the world's fastest-growing major economies. This reflects India's economic strength and sustained growth," he said.

Singh was accorded a Guard of Honour upon his arrival at Japan's Ministry of Defence, where his counterpart Koizumi hosted him, the Indian Embassy in Tokyo said.

Singh and Koizumi also visited the Funakoshi area in Yokosuka and inspected the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force's (JMSDF) JS Natori, a Mogami-class multi-mission stealth frigate, the Japanese Ministry of Defence said in a post on X.

The inspection of "the equipment and operational status of this state-of-the-art, multifunctional destroyer escort provided a significant opportunity to advance concrete maritime security cooperation and further deepen the trust between the two ministers," it said.

"We will further strengthen our cooperation to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region," it added. "Our growing maritime cooperation reflects the deep trust and shared commitment of India and Japan toward ensuring a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, Singh wrote on X, sharing photographs of him touring the warship.

While travelling to the JMSDF naval base at Yokosuka, Singh said his Japanese counterpart was "playing the perfect host". The Indian Embassy in Japan said Ambassador Nagma Mallick welcomed Singh and Jaishankar on their arrival in Tokyo on Wednesday.

The two ministers are scheduled to hold discussions with their Japanese counterparts, Defence Minister Koizumi and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.

Jaishankar will also participate in the India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue.

Singh's bilateral meeting with Koizumi is their third this year, following engagements in India in August and the Philippines in October. Discussions are expected to cover defence equipment and technology cooperation, maritime security, joint military exercises and defence industrial partnerships.

Ahead of the visit, Singh said India and Japan shared a common vision for a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific, anchored in mutual trust and democratic values.

He said he would explore opportunities to deepen cooperation in technology, maritime security and regional stability. The visit comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his two-day visit to Manila, which included a Quad summit with his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi and the leaders of the US and Australia.

India and Japan have expanded defence ties through regular high-level exchanges, joint military exercises, and agreements that facilitate logistical support between their armed forces.

PM Modi to inaugurate FICCI annual convention today, focus on 'Bharat 2047'



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the annual general meeting and annual convention of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on Thursday, and address industry leaders and policymakers at an event centred on India's long-term economic ambitions under the theme 'Bharat 2047'.

The convention, scheduled to begin at around 11 am at Bharat Mandapam here, will bring together more than 2,500 delegates, including corporate leaders, chief executives, ambassadors, diplomats and policymakers, according to an official statement issued by the Press Information Bureau on Wednesday.

The event assumes added significance as FICCI enters its centenary year in 2026-27, marking 100 years since its establishment on April 7, 1927.

Founded during the pre-Independence period, when Indian businesses had limited representation in economic policymaking, FICCI has been associated with the country's economic development and its increasing integration with the global economy since Independence.

The industry body currently represents more than 2.5 lakh companies across the public, private and multinational sectors, both directly and through over 300 affiliated regional and state-level industry associations.

FICCI also has partnership agreements with 250 national business associations across more than 100 countries, providing it with an international network for business and industry engagement.

The 'Bharat 2047' theme comes against the backdrop of India's ambition to become a developed economy by the centenary of its Independence. The convention is expected to provide a platform for discussions on the country's economic priorities and the role of industry in achieving its long-term development goals.

India, US to soon conclude negotiations on trade pact: Commerce Secy

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 18: Negotiations between India and the US on the proposed trade deal are expected to conclude soon, but the pact will be signed only after the US finalises its tariff architecture, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Wednesday.

In a FICCI event, he said the framework and contours of the deal have been finalised and announced in February.

The legal text of the agreement has also been negotiated and it is now in the final stages and will be concluded soon, he said.

"But the challenge that you need to appreciate is that the deal was announced in the background of restrictive tariffs which were existing at that point in time. Those tariffs have been struck down by the US Supreme Court. Now a new tariff architecture is being created by the United States.

"Till that tariff architecture is in place, the country won't be able to sign the deal per se because those are in that background of a



tariff architecture which provides different kinds of comparative advantages to different countries," Agrawal said.

He added that until the tariff architecture in the US formalises, signing of the deal is something that "I think" will take some time, but concluding the negotiations and having everything ready will be something that the two countries are striving to achieve as soon as possible.He also said that certain Section 301 investigations are already underway in the US against India. India is awaiting the outcomes of those investigations.

"Once they come out, because every country would like to have the deal which gives them certainty around all these investigations.... You can't have a deal till you have got uncertainty around multiple investigations," he said.

Agrawal added that the actual deal will be signed and operationalised once these investigations are over and have reached a maturity.

SC dismisses plea against animal killing during religious ceremonies



PTI

New Delhi, Nov 18: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea seeking a ban on the killing of animals during religious ceremonies, including animal sacrifice in temples.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath, R Mahadevan and Aparesh Kumar Singh dismissed the plea after hearing the petitioner's arguments.

The petition filed by advocate Shruti Bisht sought directions to amend provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, which exempts the killing of animals as part of religious rituals/practices.

The bench also refused to allow any intervention in the plea and said that they can file separate petitions.

The plea sought directions to authorities to prevent animals from being killed during religious ceremonies.

The top court had earlier sought a response from the Union Ministry of Animal Husbandry.

The petitioner had argued that the practice of animal sacrifice, despite having declined initially, was continuing in several parts of India.

It referred to practices in the Himalayan region, northeastern India, parts of Odisha and West Bengal, Maharashtra and southern India and contended that the killing of animals in the name of religion violated their right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Gold drops Rs 2,800; silver plunges Rs 5,000

PTI

New Delhi, Nov 18: Gold prices declined for the seventh straight session on Wednesday, shedding Rs 2,800 to Rs 1,35,800 per 10 grams in the national capital amid sustained selling in global markets. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 1,38,600 per 10 grams on Tuesday, according to local traders.

Silver prices also remained under pressure, declining Rs 5,000 to Rs 1,64,500 per kg from the previous close of Rs 1,69,500.

"Domestic precious metals prices extended their decline on Wednesday, falling to their lowest level since December last year as a sharp sell-off in international markets weighed on sentiment," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities, HDFC Securities.

He said weakness in US equity markets further intensified selling, triggering margin-related liquidations across precious metals.

Prince William visits Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, meets Saif, Kareena

PTI

Mumbai, Nov 18: Britain's Prince William got a glimpse of Indian cinema's song, dance and warm hospitality on Wednesday during a visit to filmmaker Karan Johar's Dharma Productions in Mumbai.

Johar told him about Indian cinema's growing global reach and the many languages in which the country makes films, "breakthrough" movies such as "RRR", while also urging the prince to watch his family drama "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham".

The heir to the British throne spent nearly 45 minutes at the production house in Andheri, where Johar, actors Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan, and CEO Apoorva Mehta welcomed him. A troupe of dancers in traditional attire performed to popular tracks such as 'Say Shava Shava' and Bole Chudiyan' from "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham", while its title track played in the background.

Guests were served a spread of delicacies, and a wall adorned with trophies formed the



backdrop.

Johar is best known for films such as "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai", "My Name Is Khan" and "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani".

Prince William and Princess Catherine are on a three-day visit to India.

During his interaction with the Prince of Wales, Johar spoke about the international market for Indian films, particularly in the Middle East.

"The Middle East is a huge market for certain films and movie stars. When a tentpole Indian or Hindi film releases, you have all the major chains like Cineworld, ODEON and Vue regularly screening our films," Johar said.

The filmmaker also described Telugu movie "RRR" as a breakthrough for Indian films on the international stage.

"We told him our cinema is not Bollywood. It is Indian cinema. We represent so many languages....languages that have made such a mark. We told him about S S Rajamouli's 'RRR' which has broken records, we told him about 'Bahubali'," Johar told reporters after the visit.

"Films in Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil...so many cinemas are coming out of India. We talk about Bollywood, but (we are) are so much more than Bollywood. We are Indian cinema and we are proud to represent so many languages," the filmmaker said.

"Today, cinema has evolved. We don't have as many lip-sync songs as we did in our earlier films. A lot of our content is based in the heartland of India, and audiences relate to Indian stories," Johar further said.

Saif and Kareena, who frequently visit London for holidays, told the prince about their fondness for the city.

Johar said the discussions with the prince also covered cricket, as the sport is popular in both countries.

He asked the prince to watch "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham" and mentioned that the movie was shot extensively in the UK. Clippings of the movie were played during the interaction, and it was a very emotional moment for him as the film completes 25 years next month, the filmmaker told reporters.

Stock markets snap two-day rally

Sensex drops 500 pts amid profit booking, US Fed rate hike fears

PTI

Mumbai, Nov 18: Snapping the two-day rally, benchmark equity index Sensex declined by 500 points due to profit-taking in consumer durables, metal and banking shares amid rate hike fears and a bearish trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 500.38 points, or 0.61 per cent, to settle at 82,031.81. During the day, it tumbled 751.72 points, or 0.91 per cent, to 81,780.47.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 159.45 points, or 0.63 per cent, to end at 25,227.95.

From the Sensex pack, Titan lost 4.82 per cent, Tata Consultancy Services 2.49 per cent, Bajaj Finance 2.45 per cent, Eternal 2.45 per cent, InterGlobe Aviation 1.97 per cent and Infosys 1.86 per cent.

State Bank of India, ITC, UltraTech Cement and Power Grid were among the winners.

"Hawkish remarks from Federal Reserve officials ahead of the US FOMC minutes have bolstered expectations of



further Fed rate hikes. The resulting strength in the greenback exerted pressure on non-yielding assets such as gold and weighed on global commodity prices.

"Domestic yields rose in tandem, triggering profit booking near recent highs as elevated yields weighed on equity valuations, while softer crude and foreign inflows continued to support the rupee's resilience," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. The BSE Sensex has jumped nearly 11 per cent so far this month till November 17, and the NSE Nifty climbed over 10 per cent.

Benchmark indices extended the rally for the second straight day on Tuesday. The Sensex rallied 427.40 points, or 0.52 per cent, to settle at 82,532.19 in the previous trade. The Nifty climbed 96.30 points, or 0.38 per cent, to end at 25,387.40.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 1.26 per cent to USD 91.97 per barrel.

Iran widens Gulf attacks, targets US base in Kuwait and sites in Bahrain

AP



Cairo, Nov 18 : Iran widened its attacks on its Gulf neighbours Wednesday, firing on a US air base in Kuwait and several times at Bahrain in what appeared to be retaliation for American strikes the day before.

After about two months without such attacks, Iran has repeatedly targeted US facilities in Bahrain in recent days. The small Persian Gulf island kingdom hosts the US Navy's 5th Fleet.

The early morning attacks came after a US fighter jet struck a Revolutionary Guard missile launch site Tuesday on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz. The US strike was in retaliation for an Iranian strike on an American radar installation in Bahrain earlier Tuesday.

Iran said its recent attacks – including those on other US facilities in Bahrain on Sunday and Friday – were in response to US drone surveillance operations and an attack on Iranian communications towers.

The US military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the latest attacks.

Blockade puts pressure on Tehran

With its economy suffering under a US naval blockade and US military escorts helping restore the passage of oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, experts say the recent attacks suggest Tehran may be growing weary of the status quo.

"Even if neither side intends to enter a broader confrontation, the accumulation of military incidents across multiple fronts increases the risk of miscalculation and escalation beyond what either side originally intended," Hamidreza Azizi, senior Iran analyst at the International Crisis Group think tank, wrote in an analysis posted to X following the initial reports of the attack on Kuwait.

US President Donald Trump has sent mixed messages on his next steps, saying new strikes are highly unlikely, but also sending a third aircraft carrier and thousands more troops to the Middle East.

Though US military protection has helped restore oil shipments from the Gulf roughly to prewar levels, Iran has continued to attack tankers as they attempt to transit the Strait of Hormuz.

United Arab Emirates state-owned oil company ADNOC said Wednesday that one of its tanker crew members was missing after an attack in the strait the day before, while 11 others were injured and were receiving medical care.

Danny Citrinowicz, a researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies and a former Iran specialist in Israel's military and intelligence services, described an "increasingly clear" pattern of attacks by Iran on shipping and US facilities in the Gulf region.

"Iran appears to be pursuing a strategy of deliberate, calibrated escalation," he wrote in an analysis on X. "The objective is not necessarily to trigger an all-out war, but to steadily increase the military, economic, and political costs of maintaining the blockade."

Xi gives Trump grand welcome at Shenzhen airport with rare hug

PTI



Beijing/Shenzhen, Nov 18 : US President Donald Trump arrived in China's high-tech city of Shenzhen to a grand welcome on Wednesday, with President Xi Jinping receiving him at the airport with a hug, a rare display of physical affection by the top Chinese leader.

In a reciprocal gesture to Trump's airport reception for him during his September visit to Washington, Xi personally welcomed the US president on the tarmac, marking the first such welcome by a Chinese leader since the founder of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, greeted Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev nearly seven decades ago.

Trump arrived in Shenzhen from Manila to take part in the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, which began on Wednesday, and an unprecedented trilateral meeting with Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday.

In sharp contrast to Trump's high-profile reception, Putin was received earlier by Xi's close associate and powerful Standing Committee member of the ruling Communist Party Cai Qi, which Chinese officials said was also a rare gesture as the senior-most party leaders don't receive state guests at the airport.

Xi and Trump spent about 20 minutes exchanging pleasantries and watching the formations of Chinese J-10C fighter jets to welcome the US leader.

Besides attending the gala dinner for the leaders of the 21 APEC summit on Wednesday, Trump, Xi and Putin will hold the trilateral meeting, the first-ever by leaders of the top three countries, to discuss a host of issues, including the Ukraine conflict, the Iran war as well as artificial intelligence and nuclear arms reduction.

Trump, Xi and Putin were seen having light-hearted banter at the dinner.

Work on the text of a statement to follow the trilateral meeting is proceeding intensively, Kremlin senior adviser Yuri Ushakov said, according to Russia's official TASS news agency.

Ushakov said the three leaders will discuss a wide range of issues, taking into account the global conflicts.

He also said they will discuss how major powers can build relationships and improve the global situation.

TASS also quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that Putin has been invited to the G20 Summit in Miami next month, and the topic may be raised in his conversation with Trump at the APEC meeting.

Ahead of the meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media on Monday that the three presidents will have an in-depth exchange of views on safeguarding world peace and enabling strategic stability in major-country relations.

"The summit is of ground-breaking significance", Mao said.

Saudi-backed forces launch major attack on Houthis in Yemen

AP

Dubai, Nov 18 : Iran's targeting of its Gulf Arab neighbours picked up on Wednesday with attacks on Bahrain and on a Kuwaiti base used by US forces, in an apparent retaliation for American fire a day earlier. In Yemen, Iran-backed Houthis also fired two cruise missiles at Riyadh, following a major attack by the Saudi-backed coalition on the rebel group's missile and drone capabilities. Meanwhile, a state-run oil giant in the United Arab Emirates said one of its vessels was attacked while transiting the Strait of Hormuz. Here is the latest news from the Middle East on Wednesday. Read our full coverage here. Saudi-backed forces launch major attack on Houthis

The Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iranian-backed Houthis said Wednesday it launched a major air attack across the rebel-held territories in Yemen, which the Houthis said killed at least 17 people.

Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, the coalition spokesman, said the strikes launched Tuesday targeted Houthi tunnels to mountain warehouses that store ballistic missiles, and workshops to assemble and store drones.

India eye record fourth Asian Champions Trophy title

PTI



Bhopal, Nov 18 : Riding on a landmark season highlighted by an Asian Games gold medal and a fifth-place finish at World Cup, defending champions India will look to cap the year on a high when the Women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament gets underway here on Thursday.

The hosts, who begin their campaign against Malaysia on Thursday, will be chasing a record fourth title in the six-team tournament, having won the previous two editions in Ranchi and Rajgir.

India are currently the joint most successful team in the competition alongside South Korea, with three titles each, and will have an opportunity to move ahead of the Koreans with another triumph on home soil.

Under chief coach Sjoerd Marijne, the Indian team comes into the tournament on the back of an impressive run of results, having qualified for the World Cup through the qualifiers in Hyderabad, won the FIH Women's Nations Cup in Auckland to earn promotion to the Pro League, and finished fifth at the World Cup in Belgium, their best performance in the competition since 1974.

The team's biggest achievement, however, came at the Asian Games in Japan last month, where it ended a 44-year wait for gold in women's hockey at the continental showpiece.

India will be keen to carry that momentum into the tournament, which will be played at the newly-built International Sports Complex in Nathu Barkheda, marking Madhya Pradesh's first international hockey tournament.

The hosts have already sounded a warning to their rivals with a 4-1 victory over Japan in a practice match.

Marijne, meanwhile, is keen to use the competition to build greater depth in the squad by experimenting with players in different positions.

"We want the players to be able to play in different positions. It's to create more depth in the squad and become helpful if a player gets injured, especially in a tournament like the Olympics," he said.

Bancroft says entire Australian team knew about 2018 ball-tampering scandal

PTI



Melbourne, Nov 18 : In revelations that could throw Australian cricket into disarray, Cameron Bancroft, one of the central figures in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal in South Africa, has asserted that the entire team knew about the conspiracy but he ended up taking "the bullet" for everyone.

Bancroft, Steve Smith and David Warner were banned by Cricket Australia for their role in the 'Sandpaper Gate'.

Post the ban, Warner played five more years of Test cricket before retiring in 2024 and Smith is still a part of the Australian Test side.

But Bancroft's Test career ended in 2019 after playing two more Tests against England at Birmingham and the Lord's.

The can of worms was opened after former batter Usman Khawaja asserted in his recently-launched book that they "all knew" about what was going on at that time. Warner backed Khawaja's version and so did 12th man Chad Sayers.

Bancroft, who was accused of carrying the sandpaper to the ground, also supported Khawaja after current captain Pat Cummins called the claims in the former batter's book as "utter nonsense".

"For eight years, I shared the burden of this story for the whole team. This was a burden which was heavier than my capacity and I took the bullet for everybody, and it was my choice," said Bancroft in a column published on 'Cricinfo'.

Sports Ministry forms committee to develop framework for professional leagues in India

PTI



New Delhi, Nov 18 : The Sports Ministry on Wednesday formed a 14-member committee to formulate a framework for developing "professionally managed, and financially sustainable" leagues in India with BCCI CEO and IPL COO Hemang Amin among the prominent members of the panel.

The committee, which also includes IOA CEO Raghuram Iyer, has been mandated to assess existing ecosystem "constraints", and identify priority sports. It would be required to recommend measures to attract corporate capital, franchise ownership, sponsorships, broadcasting and digital rights, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) financing.

Empowered to consult National Sports Federations, existing league officials, investors, and sports technology firms, the committee has been given eight weeks to submit its final recommendations to the Ministry.

"While several sports leagues in the country have achieved varying levels of success, many disciplines with strong sporting and social potential face commercial viability hurdles during their initial stages," the ministry said in a statement.

"Accordingly, the Committee will assess the present sports league ecosystem to identify the major issues and constraints affecting the establishment and sustainability of leagues...," it added.

"...(the committee) will identify priority sports and categories, particularly Olympic sports, women's sports, youth sports, indigenous sports, and emerging sports, to recommend suitable operational models tailored to their sporting and commercial potential."

The panel also includes top Sports Ministry officials Kunal, Joint Secretary (Governance), who will be its convener, and Vineel Krishna, Joint Secretary (Khelo India) along with representatives from major broadcasters like JioStar, Sony Network, Doordarshan, and Zee Network.

The panel's formation is a major step towards Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's stated goal of creating a robust league system in India. Currently, the leagues that have managed to capture the attention of the fans include IPL at the very top followed by franchise-based leagues in badminton, kabaddi, hockey and wrestling among others. However, almost all of them have battled financial issues with the hockey league facing the prospect of a shutdown within two years of its revival.

The Ministry said a league ecosystem would not just help talent but would also bring in private investment and generate employment across sports management, broadcasting, technology, and events.

"...the Committee will examine mechanisms for structured Government facilitation alongside active participation from the private sector, sports organisations, State Governments, local bodies, and communities.

"This includes evaluating targeted interventions such as Viability Gap Funding (a one-time government grant to infrastructure projects), direct and indirect financial assistance, and concessional access to Government sports infrastructure," the Ministry stated.

Additionally, the committee will propose strategies to integrate leagues with schools, colleges, universities, and local clubs to "foster grassroots participation".

