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Gulmarg Wears Winter Crown As Season's First Major Snowfall Blankets Mountains Across Valley

Tourists Rush, Hotels Fill Up as Kashmir's Ski Paradise Turns Pure White

■ ABU HASNAIN
■ HT SPL CORRESPONDENT

BARAMULLA, NOV 5: The famed ski resort of Gulmarg has turned into a spell-binding snow paradise after receiving the season's first major snowfall on Tuesday, marking the formal onset of winter in the Kashmir Valley and triggering a fresh wave of tourist arrivals.

The overnight snowfall draped the rolling meadows, pine forests and slopes of Gulmarg in a thick white blanket, transforming the popular hill station into a picture-postcard landscape. Visitors and locals woke up to snow-laden trees glistening in the morning light, frost-covered rooftops and the Agharwat peaks shining brilliantly under the winter sun.

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Operation Sindoor Put on Pause, Not Over: Rajnath Singh

Defence Minister Reiterated That India Crushed Pahalgam Attackers, Taught Terrorists a Lesson

■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, NOV 4: Sending a blunt warning to Pakistan and its terror networks, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday declared that those behind the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack had been eliminated "both in Kashmir and across the border", and any fresh attempt to target India would be met with an



even more forceful response. Addressing a rally in Bihar's Jamui district, Singh said 'Operation Sindoor', launched after the Pahalgam killings, had demolished the terror infrastructure involved in the attack not only in the Valley but also in Pakistan where the conspiracy was rooted.

"The operation is not over. It is only paused. If terrorists

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Railways mulling direct Jammu to Srinagar train service

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 05: The Northern Rail-

ways has fast-tracked operational and redevelopment works in the Jammu division to enable a direct train service between Jammu and Srinagar — a move that will mark a big milestone in J&K's railway connectivity.

A senior railway official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the trains, which currently operate from

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CM Visits Home of Late Journalist Tariq Bhat, Offers Condolences

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 05: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday visited the residence of senior journalist and Bureau Chief of The Week magazine, Tariq Ahmad Bhat, to offer condolences



to the bereaved family.

The Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow over Bhat's untimely demise, recalling his invaluable contribution to journalism in Jammu and

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Kashmir, The Land Of Knowledge and Wisdom, Is The Crown Of India: Arif Mohammad Khan

■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, NOV 5: Describing Kashmir as a timeless seat of learning and spiritual heritage, Governor of Bihar, Arif Mohammad Khan on Wednesday said the region is not merely a geographical jewel but the intellectual crown of India.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Khan said Kashmir holds a special place



in his heart. "This is not a ceremonial statement. I genuinely mean it when I say Kashmir is the crown of our country," he remarked.

He recalled an ancient academic tradition followed in Sanskrit institutions where students, before receiving their degrees, symbolically take a few steps toward Kashmir in reverence. "It is a gesture of respect to this land of wisdom and knowledge," he said, underlining

Kashmir's inseparable role in India's civilisational history.

Khan's remarks, rich in emotional and cultural depth, drew attention for projecting Kashmir not just as a scenic paradise, but as an enduring symbol of India's pursuit of enlightenment.

Commenting on the first phase of the Bihar assembly elections, Khan said all arrangements have been completed

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People of J&K Are the Heartbeat of Peace: LG Manoj Sinha

Enormous Sacrifices Have Transformed J&K Into a Peaceful, Progressive and Prosperous Region

■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, NOV 05: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that enormous sacrifices over the past five years have



transformed Jammu & Kashmir into a peaceful, progressive and prosperous region, where every citizen now has the opportunity to live with dignity.

Delivering the keynote address at the two-day International Symposium on "Peace, People and Possibilities in Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory" organised by Vishwagram, the Lt Governor said a "new vision of a rising Jammu Kashmir" is taking shape, one

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Chrysanthemum Garden in Srinagar Attracts Large Number of Visitors

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 5: Visitors are thronging the newly established Chrysanthemum Garden in Srinagar, which has quickly become the centre of attraction this autumn, drawing hundreds of locals and tourists every day. The vibrant garden, spread over more than 100 kanals of land, is located near the Botanical Garden, offering panoramic views of the Dal Lake with the Zabarwan Range in the backdrop.

Named Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood, the garden is being

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Mamdani's Victory Clarion Call For Collective Progress: Farooq Abdullah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 5: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday congratulated Zohran Mamdani on his resounding victory in the New York City mayoral election.

In a statement issued by the National Conference, Abdullah praised Mamdani's campaign

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Postal Ballot Voting begins for 27-AC Budgam Bye-Elections

Enthusiastic Employees Participate to Strengthen Democratic Process

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, NOV 5: The process of postal ballot voting begins for 27-AC Budgam at BDO office Budgam, marking an important step in ensuring that all eligible voters, especially employees in essential services who may not be able to attend polling stations on election day for 27-AC budgam, have the opportunity to exercise their democratic rights.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Election Officer (DEO) Budgam Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat underscored the commitment to ensuring a free and fair voting process for all eligible voters.

The DEO said, the postal voting ballot facility at BDO office budgam is well-organized, providing a streamlined process for employees to cast their votes and to strengthen democracy.

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Home Voting begins in 27-AC Budgam for Elderly, PWD Electors

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, NOV 5: With the 27-Assembly Constituency Budgam set to go for Bye-Elections on November 11, the Home Voting

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52 Lakh Pensioners Use Face ID For Life Proof: Dr Jitendra

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, NOV 5: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today formally launched the Nationwide Digital Life Certificate (DLC) Campaign 4.0, marking a significant



nificant step in the government's ongoing drive to simplify life certification for pensioners.

The month-long DLC campaign 4.0, which began on November 1 and will continue till November 30, has already seen over 55 lakh Digital Life Certificates generated within the first four days, against the month-long target of two crore.

Referring to the achievements of the

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Tourism Dept Showcases J&K's Culture, Cuisines And Countryside At 'Bharat Parv' In Gujarat

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

AHMEDABAD, NOV 5: Jammu and Kashmir's rich tourism potential, vibrant art, craft, and authentic cuisines were showcased at a national-level festival organised in Gujarat's Narmada district to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

J&K Tourism is participating in the ongoing 'Bharat Parv' at Ekta Nagar in Narmada district where the Union Territory has set up a pavilion to highlight its



traditional culture, cuisines and adventure offerings, among other features, said a Jammu and Kashmir administration release on Wednesday.

The festival has been organised as part of the nationwide celebrations of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Patel, independent India's first home minister.

'Bharat Parv' has been organised under the aegis of the Union tourism ministry

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JU School of Biotechnology, JKSTIC host One-Day Workshop on “Startups and Skill Development: Translational Research from Lab to Market”

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 05: The School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu, in collaboration with the JK Science Technology & Innovation Council (JKSTIC), on Wednesday successfully organized a one-day workshop on “Startups and Skill Development: Translational Research from Lab to Market” here, University Campus.

The event brought together scientists, academicians, entrepreneurs to encourage research scholars and students to leverage their scientific research and knowledge into viable startup ventures and market-ready innovations.

The workshop was convened by Director School of Biotechnology, Prof. Sanjana Kaul and Additional Director JKSTIC, Mush-taq Ahmad Bhat.

Assistant Director JKSTIC Shruti Khanna and Associate Professor School of Biotechnology University of Jammu Dr Ritu Mahajan acted as organising secretaries.

The event was inaugurated by Dean Academic Affairs, University of Jammu Prof. J. P. Singh Joorel, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

In his address, Prof. Joorel highlighted the need to integrate

research outcomes with the entrepreneurship initiatives to boost innovation-driven growth in the region. He underscored the importance of workshop and stated that the three key pillars of academic and scientific growth are teaching, research and the extension of research through its transformation into field applications. He emphasized that the true value of research is realized when ideas are translated into tangible outcomes.

The Guest of Honour, Dean Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Jammu Prof. Yash pal Sharma, delivered an insightful address, encouraging students and researchers to think beyond publications and patents, focusing instead on the real-world applications of their work and pursuing a visionary, goal-oriented career path.

Prof. Sharma highlighted that India's true strength lies in research across diverse domains such as agriculture, medical sciences and others, noting that the nation currently ranks fourth globally in terms of economy and with persistence and collaboration across disciplines, is poised to reach the third position soon. Prof. Sharma also noted that the government has been supporting the startups, contributing significantly to the



bioeconomy and promoting translational research and concluded by emphasizing that success in these endeavours requires trusted leadership and personal discipline.

Earlier, Prof. Sanjana Kaul, Director School of Biotechnology and Convenor of the workshop, welcomed the dignitaries and the participants. She reaffirmed the vision of Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor of the University and thanked him for encouraging conduct of such events in the Campus.

The technical Sessions featured talks by two eminent in-

ited speakers: In the first technical session Dr. Saurabh Saran, Senior Principal Scientist, Fermentation and Microbial Biotechnology Division, Head, IIIM-Technology Business Incubator and OSD Industrial Biotech Parks (UT of J&K) delivered an insightful lecture on “Development of an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to Support Agri-based Startups in J&K,” highlighting successful stories of lab-to-market transition and the pivotal role of incubators, such as BioNEST, in nurturing biotechnology startups. He discussed the key challenges faced by startups, includ-

ing the lack of innovation and entrepreneurship, limited investment opportunities, and issues related to the ease of doing business.

Dr. Saran also emphasized the advantages offered by government initiatives. He also highlighted the facilities available at C.S.I.R. IIIM, Jammu for fostering startup culture. The session was chaired by Prof. B. K Bajaj, School of Biotechnology.

The second session followed into an immersive and interactive session by Dr. Khalid Masoodi, Associate Professor/

Senior Scientist, Division of Plant Biotechnology, SKUAST-Kashmir, Director Kashmir BioTech Pvt. Ltd, SKIIE, SKUAST Kashmir and also a distinguished alumnus of the School of Biotechnology, JU who shared his entrepreneurial journey and insights into building research-driven biotech enterprises. He spoke about his startup Kashmir BioTech Pvt. Ltd established in September 2022 under the Government of India's Make in India and Self-Reliant India initiatives.

The company's flagship product, Magic Food Taxo, is a patented functional food supplement containing an anticancer molecule derived from an underutilized edible plant native to Kashmir. Clinically proven to alleviate prostate cancer, benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH) and lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS), it works by targeting the Androgen Receptor and has shown tumor reduction and improved survival in preclinical models. Other notable products of his venture include Iron Revive Herb (a natural iron supplement), ZincMag Natural (for uric acid management), and Isabgol Psyllium Husk Powder (a fiber supplement).

The workshop concluded with an engaging interaction

session where participants discussed challenges and opportunities in translational research and startup ventures followed by a Wrap-up Session by Dr. Nisha Kapoor, Senior Assistant Professor, School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu. The rapporteurs of the technical sessions included Dr. Yashpal Khajuria, Dr. Ankit Mahajan and Dr. Sheetal Ambardar, Assistant professors in the School, who presented gist of the technical sessions of the workshop.

The workshop was attended by faculty members from various Life Science departments of the University. Prof. Seema Langer, Prof. Namrata Sharma, Prof. Pankaj Kumar, Dr. Sikander Pal Chaudhary, Dr. Parvinder Kumar, Dr. Amit Gupta, Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Dr. Ripu Daman, Dr. Chinmoy Maharana, Dr. Skarma and Mr. Peerzada Shoaib Hamid from JKSTIC.

The event received enthusiastic participation from students, research scholars, and faculty members, reflecting the growing interest in entrepreneurship and innovation within the academic community. Dr. Mehak Gupta conducted the proceedings of the entire event.

Yudhvir Singh Charak earns India A call-up for Rising Stars Asia Cup

■ HT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 5 : In a moment of pride for Jammu and Kashmir cricket, Yudhvir Singh Charak, an emerging fast bowler and dynamic lower-order batsman, has been named in the India A squad for the upcoming Rising Stars Asia Cup, set to take place in Doha, Qatar, from November 14 to 23 at the West End International Cricket Stadium. The Senior Selection Committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the squad, acknowledging Yudhvir's stellar domestic performances and his growing stature as a reliable all-rounder.

Renowned for his sharp pace, disciplined line and length, and his ability to deliver crucial runs down the order, Yudhvir has steadily carved a niche for himself in India's competitive cricketing landscape.

Congratulating him on the achievement, Brig Anil Gupta, Member Administration of the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), expressed immense pride in Yudhvir's selection. “Well done, Yudhvir. Grab this opportunity and showcase your talent. Your selection is an honour not only for you but for the entire cricketing fraternity of Jammu and Kashmir. We are confident that you will make both the region and the country proud,” Brig Gupta remarked. Officials of the JKCA lauded Yudhvir's inclusion as a testament to the association's ongoing mission to nurture and elevate cricketing talent from the Union Territory. They emphasized that his journey from the local grounds of Jammu to the national stage exemplifies the fruits of dedication, discipline, and perseverance. His success, they noted, will undoubtedly serve as a source of inspiration for aspiring cricketers across Jammu and Kashmir to pursue their dreams with renewed passion and purpose. As India A gears up to face some of Asia's most promising young teams, fans across the region are rallying behind Yudhvir Singh Charak, hoping that his skills and determination will shine bright at the continental tournament and bring glory to both the nation and his home Union Territory.

India A placed in Group B alongside Oman, UAE and Pakistan A, will play its first league match against UAE on November 14, second against Pakistan A on November 16 and third against Oman on November 18 at West End International Cricket Stadium, Doha.

The team: Priyansh Arya, Vaibhav Suryanshi, Nehal Wadhera, Naman Dhir (V Captain), Suryansh Shedje, Jitesh Sharma (Captain, WK), Ramandeep Singh, Harsh Dubey, Ashutosh Sharma, Yash Thakur, Gurjapneet Singh, Vijay Kumar Vyshak, Yudhvir Singh Charak, Abhishek Porel, Suyash Sharma.

556th Parkash Purab of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji celebrated with great devotion at Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Poonch DC & SSP Poonch extends greetings to Sikh community

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

POONCH, NOVEMBER 5: The 556th Parkash Purab of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was celebrated with great enthusiasm and religious fervour across Poonch district.

The main function was held at Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Poonch, under the supervision of Shrimaan Mahant Manjeet Singh Ji of Dera Santpura Nangali Sahib. Mahant Sahib Ji extended heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the devotees and urged them to wake up early in the morning, remember the Almighty and lead a life guided by the principles of truth, compassion and humility as taught by Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

The celebrations began with the completion of Shri Akhand Path Sahib, followed by soulful

Gurbani Kirtan rendered by renowned Ragi Jathas including Bhai Balwinder Singh Ladi (Hazuri Ragi Sachkhand Shri Darbar Sahib), Bhai Jitanpal Singh from Kashmir, Bhai Harcharan Singh, Bhai Ranjeet Singh (UP), Bhai Rasmeet Singh, Bhai Bupinder Singh, Bhai Sartaj Singh, Bhai Manjeet Singh Bali and others. Prominent preachers, including Dr. Harsimranjeet Singh (Professor University of Jammu), specially visited Poonch besides Bhai Ravinder Singh and others, delivered enlightening Gurbani Vichaar and shared insights from the life and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism, who was born on April 15, 1469, at Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib, Pakistan).

The event witnessed the presence of Deputy Commissioner



Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma, SSP Poonch, Shafket Hussain Bhat, ASP Mohan Lal, DySP HQ Neeraj Sharma, and other officers from civil and police administration. They also extended heartfelt greetings to the Sikh community on the auspicious occasion of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Parkash Purab.

President of DGPC, S. Narinder Singh, addressed the Sangat and highlighted the divine teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, emphasizing peace, equality and humanity.

The proceedings of the programme and Gurbani Vichaar were conducted by the General Secretary, DGPC. S. Harcharan Singh.

The ceremony concluded with the Hukamnama recited by Shrimaan Mahant Manjeet Singh Ji.

Guru Purab celebrated with great devotion in Kupwara DC extends greetings to Sikh community

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KUPWARA NOVEMBER 5: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, accompanied by SSP Handwara, Sahil Sarangal and ACR Kupwara, visited Gurudwara Maidan-e-Chogal, Handwara on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purab, the Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner and SSP interacted with the local Sikh community, offering prayers and extended warm wishes to the devotees.



Rahul Gandhi's remarks divisive, irresponsible: Raman Suri

■ HT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 5 : JAMMU, November 5: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) executive member Raman Suri has strongly criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his recent comments alleging caste dominance within national institutions, including the Indian Army. Suri termed the remarks irresponsible, divisive, and detrimental to national unity. He said the Indian Army has always upheld merit, equality and national integrity, and any attempt to portray it through the prism of caste was misleading and harmful.

“The Indian Army has no place for caste, creed or region. Questioning its character for political mileage is unacceptable and demoralising to those who safeguard our borders,” he said. He questioned the basis of Rahul Gandhi's claim regarding caste representation in the armed forces and said such statements damage public trust and fuel social discord. Raman Suri said that while Rahul Gandhi speaks repeatedly about representation, he should first disclose caste representation within the Congress party and its organisational structure, especially given Congress' past opposition to reservations during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure.

He recalled that during Congress governments, including Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, there was strong opposition to OBC reservation. He added that while the BJP stands for inclusive growth and social justice, the Congress continues to play politics over people's emotions and identities. “If Rahul Gandhi is truly committed to social justice, why does he not start by ensuring fair representation in his own party?” Suri asked. He further stated that India needs development, education, empowerment and equal opportunity, not constant attempts to divide society along caste lines.

Suri also criticised the J&K Congress committee for “toeing the same divisive line and encouraging politics that lowers public discourse and threatens social harmony.” He urged political parties to prioritise unity, progress and constructive politics.

DDC Chairman and MLAs Inaugurate New FORCE Motors Authorised Workshop at Bhagtha Near Katra

■ HT NEWS DESK

KATRA, NOVEMBER 5 : In a significant development for the automobile sector of the region, DDC Chairman Reasi, Sh. Saraf Singh Nag, along with Hon'ble MLAs of AC 57 & 58, Sh. Baldev Raj Sharma and Sh. Kuldeep Raj Dubey, inaugurated the Authorised Workshop of FORCE Motors at Bhagtha near Katra.

The newly established facility offers comprehensive services, including vehicle repair, sale of genuine spare parts, and

maintenance for the entire range of Force brand vehicles. The workshop will cater to customers from both Reasi and Udhampur districts, providing them quality services at their doorstep – a much-needed relief for those who earlier had to travel to Jammu for such facilities.

Speaking on the occasion, DDC Chairman Sh. Saraf Singh Nag commended Force Motors for its pivotal role in strengthening India's healthcare and transport sectors. He highlighted that the



majority of the country's ambulance fleet comprises Force vehicles, known for their durability

and performance. He further added that nearly 90% of passenger vehicles operating in the nation's tourism sector are manufactured by Force Motors, which demonstrates the company's commitment to quality and reliability.

The Entrepreneur and Proprietor of the new workshop, Mr. Ranjeet Singh, expressed his deep gratitude to the dignitaries, company officials, and local administration for their continuous support in setting up the venture. He said that the workshop will

not only provide efficient after-sales service to Force vehicle owners but also open avenues for local employment and skill development.

The event was attended by Sarpanches Mangal Singh (Katra), Krishna Singh, and Ranbir Thakur, along with senior officials of Force Motors – Mr. Joshi (Business Head), Mr. Sandeep Rana, and Mr. Rajinder. A large number of locals and media representatives were also present, marking the event as a proud moment for the people of Reasi and adjoining areas.



Devyani Rana will win with record margin in Nagrota: Bali Bhagat

Slams Omar Abdullah for misleading people over Statehood Issue

HT NEWS DESK

NAGROTA, NOVEMBER 5 : Senior BJP leader and former Minister Bali Bhagat, while addressing an election campaign rally at Malpur area of Nagrota Assembly Constituency, expressed strong confidence that BJP candidate Devyani Rana will win with a record margin.

He said the people of Nagrota have made up their minds to reject the candidates of "bagoda" (runaway) parties that only misled them with hollow promises.

"This time, voters are standing firmly with development and decisive leadership. Devyani Rana represents the youth, women empowerment, and progress that Nagrota truly deserves," Bhagat stated.

Bali Bhagat strongly criticized former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah,

accusing him of misleading the people of Jammu and Kashmir by repeatedly citing the restoration of statehood as an excuse for inaction.

Bali Bhagat said that the argument of "no work until statehood is restored" cannot be accepted, as the government currently holds all necessary powers to carry out welfare and development activities.

He asserted that instead of making excuses, leaders should focus on utilizing their authority to work for the welfare and progress of the people.

"This excuse will not work. Even without statehood, the administration has all powers in hand. I want to say clearly — stop misleading people and start using your authority for their welfare," Bhagat stated.

He further emphasized that the people of Jammu and Kashmir expect responsible leadership that focuses



on development, employment generation, and improvement in basic amenities rather than political rhetoric.

Bhagat said that continuous blame games and emotional appeals serve no purpose when urgent attention is needed toward the region's real issues.

The senior BJP leader reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is fully committed to ensuring peace, progress, and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

He urged opposition parties to rise above politics and contribute constructively to the ongoing development efforts in the Union Territory.

"Time has come to prioritize people's needs over political narratives. Jammu and Kashmir is moving forward, and every leader must play a positive role in shaping its future," Bhagat added.

Highlighting BJP's commitment to inclusive growth, he added that the party's development-oriented policies under Prime Minister Narendra Modi have transformed every sector.

Bhagat urged people to ensure Devyani Rana's resounding victory to further strengthen the mission of peace, prosperity, and progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion those who joined the party included Suneet Singh (Retd. SI, JKP), Karan Singh (Retd. Police Official), Partap Singh (Revenue Official), and Jail Lal.

Prominent leaders present on the occasion were Senior BJP leader Sukh Dev Singh Jamwal, senior leader Pawan Sharma, Retd. Capt. Tilak Raj, Manohar Lal (Ex-Panch), Rashpal Bhagat, Ravi Kumar, Jaspal Tinku, and several other party workers and supporters.

Vinay Gupta Intensifies Door-to-Door Campaign in Panchayat Dansaal, Nagrota Constituency

HT NEWS DESK

NAGROTA, NOVEMBER 5 : To accelerate the fervent display of grassroots mobilization ahead of the crucial Nagrota Assembly by-election, BJP senior leader and BJP Prabhari Akhnoor District Vinay Gupta conducted an intensive door-to-door campaign in Panchayat Dansaal, a key rural pocket within the Nagrota Constituency. Leading a team of dedicated party workers and local volunteers, Gupta's spirited outreach aimed to bolster the candidacy of Sushri Devyani Rana, the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) official nominee and the beloved daughter of the late Nagrota MLA, Devender Singh Rana. This campaign underscores the BJP's unwavering commitment to carrying forward the legacy of development and inclusive governance that defined Devender Singh Rana's tenure,



while resonating with the aspirations of the constituency's residents.

The door-to-door initiative, which unfolded under clear November skies, saw Gupta and his entourage visiting numerous households across Dansaal's winding lanes and verdant farmlands. Accompanied by local Sarpanches, Panches, and BJP booth-level agents, the campaign focused on

direct interactions with families, farmers, women self-help groups, and youth collectives. Vinay Gupta, known for his affable demeanor and deep-rooted connection to the region's socio-political fabric, emphasized the transformative vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, highlighting how it has ushered in an era of peace, prosperity, and

empowerment in Jammu & Kashmir. He stated that "Devyani Rana is not just a candidate; she is the embodiment of continuity and renewal. Her father, Devender Singh Rana, was a visionary leader who bridged the gap between policy and people. Today, we are knocking on every door to ensure his dreams of a self-reliant Nagrota become a reality," Gupta articulated during one such interaction at the home of a local farmer, where he pledged enhanced irrigation facilities and agricultural subsidies under BJP's pro-farmer schemes.

In Dansaal, a panchayat characterized by its agricultural vibrancy and close-knit communities, Gupta highlighted specific BJP achievements tailored to local needs: the construction of all-weather roads connecting remote hamlets, the establishment of solar-powered streetlights to combat rural darkness, and

skill-training programs that have empowered over hundreds local youth with employable expertise in sectors like horticulture and tourism. He added that "The Modi government's mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' is not a slogan—it's a lived reality in Nagrota. Under Devyani Rana's leadership, we will accelerate this momentum, ensuring every household benefits from equitable growth," he asserted while distributing campaign literature and BJP memorabilia to enthusiastic supporters.

As the by-election draws nearer, the BJP's campaign machinery is in overdrive, with Vinay Gupta's door-to-door blitz in Dansaal serving as a microcosm of the party's groundswell. Her emergence also aligns with the BJP's push for women's leadership, reflecting the party's broader national agenda of Nari Shakti.

Hopes return for tourism revival as snow blankets Sonamarg

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, NOV 05: The picturesque tourist destination of Sonamarg witnessed a fresh snowfall last evening, covering its meadows and upper reaches in a pristine white blanket, thereby reviving hopes for a strong winter tourism season in the Valley.

Officials from the Meteorological (MeT) department had predicted light snowfall over higher reaches of Kashmir, with more spells expected in coming days.

Local tourism stakeholders said the early snowfall is a positive sign for the tourism industry, which had seen a slow phase in recent months.

Waseem Ahmad, a local tourism associate, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), "This is November's first snowfall and we are very excited. It's a much-needed boost for tourism. We hope this early snowfall brings back tourists and sets the season on the right track."

Bilal Ahmad, a travel operator from Ganderbal, said inquiries have already begun. "Since the snowfall started, we've been getting calls from tourists who want to visit Sonamarg. People have seen snow pictures on social media and now they want to experience it," he said.

Locals dependent on tourism also expressed joy. Gh Hassan, a pony owner, said, "Snow means work for us. Tourists come here for the snow and our livelihood improves. We are hopeful this winter will be better."

Irshad, who runs a tea stall near the market, told KNO, "Tourists love Kehwa in winter. This snowfall gives new hope after a slow summer season."

The snowfall comes at a crucial time when tourism players are working to restore confidence among travelers after the Pahalgam incident earlier this year, which had raised concerns among the visitors and affected travel sentiment. "This fresh snowfall is nature's way of saying Kashmir is ready to welcome tourists again," a local hotelier said.

Tourists, who were enjoying themselves in Sonamarg, expressed delight at witnessing the snowfall.

Ravi Sharma, a visitor from Delhi, said, "We came here for a peaceful holiday, and snowfall made it magical. Kashmir's beauty is unmatched."

Another tourist Rubani from Delhi while talking with KNO, said, "We felt a little worried because of the reports from Pahalgam, but the experience here has been safe and beautiful. The snowfall has made our trip unforgettable."

Tourism players believe the timely snowfall will draw more travelers in coming weeks. "When snow falls early, life returns to this place, from hotels to ponywalas to tea shops, everyone benefits," said Shah Adil, a shopkeeper in Sonamarg—(KNO)

Kakapora farmers struggle as flood-destroyed paddy remains unharvested, uncompensated

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 05: Scores of farmers in the Kakapora belt of south Kashmir's Pulwama district are yet to harvest their paddy crop this season – not because they don't want to, but because the entire yield was destroyed in the September floods and is now lying rotten in water-logged fields.

Farmers told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that almost two months have passed since the floods, yet large portions of agricultural land in Kakapora are still submerged.

"We haven't even been able to step into our fields. The paddy has turned black and rotten. There is no point in cutting it now as it is totally useless," said Abdul Rashid, a farmer from Kakapora.

Farmers said they were hoping that the government would announce a "realistic" compensation package to help them recover from the heavy losses. However, many alleged that the relief being given is extremely inadequate.

"Some of our neighbours have received just around Rs 800 per kanal. What will we do with that? This amount cannot even cover our fertiliser cost, let alone labour and other expenses," said another farmer, Shabir Ahmad.

He added that the paddy crop takes months of labour, irrigation, and inputs — and now everything has gone to waste.

Most of the affected farmers said they have not received even a single rupee so far. "We spent thousands of rupees on seed, pesticides and labour. The entire harvest is gone... If the government really wants to save farmers from collapse, it must revise the compensation and release it at the earliest," said Ghulam Nabi, another farmer.

Farmers said they depend on the income from the crop to sustain their households for several months, and inadequate compensation will leave families financially broken.

They appealed to the government to conduct a fresh assessment of losses and ensure that compensation is meaningful. "Compensation should at least match the expenses of a full paddy cycle. Anything less is like adding salt to our wounds," they said.

Farmers in Kakapora urged the district administration to personally visit the affected sites so that the ground reality can be understood "with eyes, not through papers."

They have sought the attention of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Agriculture Minister Javed Ahmad Dar in this regard—(KNO)

Army Organised a Motivational Lecture By Gallantry Awardee at Lam, Rajouri

HT NEWS DESK

RAJOURI, NOVEMBER 5 :The Indian Army organised a Motivational Lecture by Nk Chaudary Ram, SM, a gallantry awardee, at Government High School, Lam on 04 Nov 2025. The initiative aimed to inspire and empower the youth and local populace through real-life stories of courage, resilience and leadership.

During the session, Nk Chaudary Ram, SM shared his personal experiences of bravery and sacrifice, highlighting the indomitable spirit and valour of the Indian Army during various operations.

His words deeply motivated the students and youth to serve the nation by joining the Armed Forces and contributing as responsible citizens. He also encouraged everyone to hoist the National Flag at their homes as a symbol of uni-



ty and patriotism. The lecture created an atmosphere of pride and national spirit, leaving a lasting impression on all attendees. The event was attended by 22 students and 2 teachers from the school and

was greatly appreciated by all. Such interactions with war heroes play a crucial role in nurturing patriotism and motivating the younger generation to contribute to the nation's security and development.

'Mufti family caused more harm than Sheikh family': Altaf Bukhari

Says PDP will never come to power again, urges people to choose leadership beyond family politics

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, NOV 05: Apni Party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Wednesday accused the Mufti family of "causing more harm" than the Sheikh family in Jammu and Kashmir. He appealed to people to choose their leader beyond these families.

Addressing a gathering here, Bukhari, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), targeted the former chief minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti. "She (Mehbooba) has lost the power and is in search of it. She will never get the power again until the party gets new leadership," he said. "This (Mufti) family has

caused more harm than the Sheikh family here."

He asked, "Are we supposed to remain dependent on families. The people must think beyond these parties." Bukhari said his son and family are not associated with politics. "I am a common man like you," he said.

Reacting to the slogans by the PDP candidate without naming him during the speech, the Apni Party chief said it is shameful that the person calling himself a religious leader has linked the pious 'Kalima' with "something which even non-Muslim can't do".

Meanwhile, in a statement, Bukhari welcomed the government's decision to begin the process of converting the Ra-

jbagh footbridge over the River Jhelum (near the Silk Factory) into a motorable bridge.

He said that the earlier decision to alter the nature of the project was "foolish, short-sighted, and ill-advised", which reflected a lack of understanding of administrative priorities and public interest on the part of the then chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti.

"It should be investigated why this project, conceived as a motorable bridge, was later altered and converted into merely a footbridge, despite expert opinion favouring its construction as a motorable bridge, although a substantial amount of Rs 12 crore had already been spent to initiate the project in that form," the former

minister said. "It should be investigated who benefited from altering this project."

Bukhari said the bridge was originally conceived as a motorable structure to help decongest traffic in and around the city centre.

"I vividly recall how, as the concerned minister and MLA representing the area, I had convinced the then Chief Minister, Mufti (Sayeed) Sahib, to approve its construction for that very purpose.

The foundation work was accordingly undertaken with that objective," he said. "Sadly, that vision was derailed. His daughter, Mehbooba Mufti, during her tenure as chief minister, unfortunately altered the nature of the project, con-

verting it into a mere footbridge just to favour some of her acquaintances."

"Displaying her Nadirshahi behaviour, she (Mehbooba) unilaterally decided to downgrade the project, leaving the public disheartened and the area's traffic woes unresolved," the statement said.

Welcoming the present government's decision, the Apni Party president said, "I sincerely appreciate the present government's decision to rectify that misstep and restore the bridge to its original purpose — a fully functional motorable link. This long-awaited development will not only ease traffic congestion but will also fulfil a long-cherished aspiration of the people."—(KNO)



HT EDITORIAL

New life needs to be infused in RTI Act in J&K

Jammu & Kashmir had the distinction of having a strong Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2009 and the same was being viewed as a revolutionary step in the process where-in an ordinary person can seek information from any government department. Since the central RTI was implemented in 2005 the civil society activists of Jammu & Kashmir along with other important stakeholders including advocates came forward and improved upon the Central RTI Act of 2005.

The loopholes and the shortcomings in the central RTI Act were thoroughly studied by the concerned stakeholders following which the all important RTI Act of Jammu & Kashmir came into existence in 2009. Civil society activists, advocates and other important people across the country acknowledged that the Jammu & Kashmir RTI Act is much more powerful than the central RTI Act. The significant feature of the Jammu & Kashmir RTI Act was that the second appellate authority was directed to dispose of a matter within a period of 120 days once the officer is approached by an RTI applicant.

As there is no such provision in the central RTI Act the success of the RTI Act in Jammu & Kashmir is more visible as compared to the other states and union territories of the country. For the 10 years or so the RTI Act was a success in the state of Jammu & Kashmir but the scenario changed in 2019. The Article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019 and the state of Jammu & Kashmir was downgraded into two union territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Following this Jammu & Kashmir came under the direct control of the Home Ministry and all the central acts were extended to the present union territory. As a result of this the Jammu & Kashmir RTI Act of 2009 got replaced by the Central RTI Act of 2005. Once this became the reality the RTI Act became weak in the union territory and the officers started to dictate the terms to the information seekers. As on date most of the officers give a damn to the RTI applications.

The information seekers are disturbed over the present trend and they want the officers to be made accountable as was being done prior to August 5, 2019. The RTI Act needs to be given a fillip in Jammu & Kashmir so that the RTI applicants are relieved and able to get the information as desired by them through their receptive applications.

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Between Mountains and Nation: Ladakh's Demand for Sixth Schedule, Statehood



Yawer Hamid

Ladakh, the serene "land of monks" has once again found itself at the crossroads of political aspiration and national strategy. The recent upsurge in demands for inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and the call for full statehood reflect the region's enduring desire for self-governance, cultural preservation, and control over its resources. Yet, these aspirations are intertwined with India's security concerns, given Ladakh's sensitive geopolitical position bordering both China and Pakistan. Ladakh's political journey traces back to 1834 when General Zorawar Singh annexed it to the Dogra-ruled Jammu under the Sikh Empire. Following the First Anglo-Sikh War, the region came under British suzerainty, and later under the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Over time, Ladakh became a hub for traders, missionaries, and explorers, but its political representation remained limited. After India's independence in 1947, the region experienced major military confrontations—the 1947–48 war, the 1962 Sino-Indian War, and the 1999 Kargil conflict cementing its status as a strategically vital yet

heavily militarized frontier. Political reforms in the 1990s, including the creation of autonomous hill councils in Leh and Kargil, brought limited self-rule. However, the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019, which granted Ladakh Union Territory status without a legislative assembly, reignited long-standing discontent. The absence of an elected body, coupled with bureaucratic control by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, has intensified feelings of marginalization. With over 97% of its population belonging to Scheduled Tribes, Ladakh's leaders and civil society groups are demanding inclusion under the Sixth Schedule a constitutional provision that safeguards tribal regions through autonomous District and Regional Councils, currently in force in select northeastern states. The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) have jointly sought constitutional safeguards, a Public Service Commission, enhanced representation in Parliament and ultimately full statehood to ensure legislative empowerment.

Supporters argue that such measures would protect Ladakh's fragile cultural identity, provide

employment opportunities and promote participatory governance. Yet, critics caution that Ladakh's small population, dependence on central funds, and proximity to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) pose challenges to full-fledged statehood. Concerns also persist over potential factionalism between the Buddhist-majority Leh and Muslim-majority Kargil regions. In response, the central government established a High-Powered Committee in 2024 to deliberate on these issues and extend certain administrative and employment safeguards. Still, delays and uncertainty continue to fuel frustration among the youth and local leadership.

Ultimately, the Ladakh question is not merely about political status; it is about balancing identity, governance and national security. Achieving this balance demands a democratic framework that empowers Ladakh's people without weakening India's strategic integrity. The road ahead lies in fostering dialogue, ensuring accountability, and building an inclusive model of development that respects both the mountains and the nation.

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Smile - The Voice Of Pain



MOOL RAJ

In today's world, where pain hides behind every screen, where faces are busy but hearts are empty, where health is collapsing under stress and minds are drowning in anxiety, the power of a simple smile has almost been forgotten. We scroll endlessly through images of laughter, but within ourselves, we have forgotten how to genuinely smile.

A smile seems like a small gesture, but in truth, it is a silent prayer of hope, a light in the darkness, and a shield against despair. It costs nothing, yet it carries the power to heal, connect, and transform lives.

When you smile, you don't just move your lips—you move your soul toward gratitude and peace. You tell the world that despite pain, you still believe in goodness. You silently whisper that your heart still hopes.

Look around in today's generation—people are rushing, competing, comparing, and breaking under invisible pressure. Mental health has become one of the world's deepest wounds, yet it often hides behind artificial smiles on social media. We live in times where success is measured in likes, beauty in filters, and happiness in possessions.

Amidst this chaos, a real smile—born out of faith, kindness, or contentment—has become rare, like a drop of water in the desert. Yet that drop is powerful enough to bring life back to dry hearts.

When we smile sincerely, our brain releases endorphins and serotonin, the natural mood-lifters that calm our nervous system, lower stress, and even strengthen the immune system. Science proves what our souls already know—that smiling heals, and it brings a touch of light even to the darkest corners of the heart.

Our health today is collapsing not just because of diseases, but because of sadness and exhaustion. People suffer from hypertension, insomnia, and anxiety not only due to lifestyle choices but also because of the emotional storms they silently fight every day.

A smile, though small, becomes a medicine that doesn't come in pills. It reminds the body to breathe, to relax, and to live. Even during illness, smiling helps the body recover faster by boosting immunity and reducing pain through the release of natural painkillers. A patient who smiles is not in denial of pain—they are showing faith that healing is still possible.

Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) beautifully said, "Your smile for your brother is a charity." What a timeless wisdom! In just one sentence, he taught that spreading happiness through a smile is one of the simplest yet most rewarding acts of kindness. In a world filled with sorrow, this

is an act of worship too—a reminder that even in hardship, we are commanded to spread peace and positivity.

But why have we forgotten to smile? Because we have filled our lives with noise. We wake up checking phones, not faces. We chase money, not meaning. We attend gatherings, but not hearts. Depression, anxiety, loneliness—all are spreading like wildfires because we have disconnected from simplicity, nature, and real human warmth. A smile is the bridge that reconnects us. It opens doors without keys. It creates friendship between strangers and brings peace to broken families. When you smile at someone who is hurt, you give them courage to try again. When you smile through your tears, you remind yourself that the storm will pass. Even when the world is cruel, smiling keeps you human—it shows you haven't given up on love.

Every day we meet people who carry invisible pain. The shopkeeper who hides worry about his debts, the teacher who smiles through exhaustion, the mother who sacrifices silently, the student who hides anxiety behind laughter—all are fighting their own unseen battles.

And yet, one genuine smile from someone can make their day easier. The power of a smile lies not in its brightness but in its sincerity. A fake smile can deceive, but a real one heals. It doesn't need words, it doesn't demand return—it just gives, and giving is what makes life beautiful. Sometimes, even looking into a mirror and smiling at yourself can remind you that you still have value, that you still matter. It is self-compassion in its simplest form.

The world today is full of reasons to frown—wars, injustice, heartbreaks, diseases, and endless tragedies fill our screens daily. But smiling in such a world is not ignorance—it is resistance. It is saying, "I still have hope." It is an act of courage to stay kind in a time of cruelty.

Smiling doesn't mean denying pain; it means rising above it. It is like a flower that grows between stones—it knows hardship but still chooses beauty. And the one who keeps smiling amidst suffering is the one who truly understands life's meaning. In Islam, patience (sabr) and gratitude (shukr) are the twin foundations of faith, and both are reflected in a smile. When you smile in pain, you are practicing sabr; when you smile in comfort, you are practicing shukr. Both bring you closer to peace with Allah and yourself.

The health of our hearts depends not only on what we eat or how we exercise, but on what we feel. A heart full of anger, envy, and grief becomes sick even in a healthy body. A smile purifies that heart. It softens the ego and reminds us of humility. It creates connection and makes us less judgmental.

Scientists say smiling lowers blood pressure and reduces the stress hormone cortisol, while increasing feelings of trust and empathy. Spiritually, smiling is an expression of mercy—it mirrors divine compassion. It is as if each smile says, "I choose peace over bitterness."

Sadly, today's youth are losing that natural joy. They scroll for hours, comparing lives, chasing beauty standards, trapped in endless cycles of stress, caffeine, and sleepless nights. They have forgotten

the peace of sitting under the sky, of walking barefoot on grass, of laughing without reason.

Technology has connected devices but disconnected souls. A simple smile, shared face to face, can do more than a thousand emojis online. It reminds us that we are still human, that emotions are real and hearts are alive. Even in classrooms, workplaces, or hospitals, a warm smile can change the entire environment. It brings energy, reduces tension, and builds trust faster than any spoken word.

Sometimes we think smiling is only for happy people, but that's not true. The strongest smiles often come from those who have cried the most. They know the depth of pain, so they choose to spread light instead of darkness.

When we meet people like that, we feel peace around them because their smiles carry sincerity, empathy, and resilience. Smiling, therefore, becomes not just an expression, but a philosophy—a way of facing life. It says, "I will not let the world take away my ability to love." It is faith in action, hope in form, and beauty in silence.

We should make it a habit to smile every day—not because everything is perfect, but because we are blessed enough to still breathe, still try, still believe. A smile doesn't mean ignoring pain; it means acknowledging that there is still something worth living for.

When you smile at a stranger, you might stop them from giving up on life that day. When you smile at your parents, you give them comfort that their love has not gone unnoticed. When you smile at a child, you plant confidence in their heart. Every smile creates ripples of goodness that travel far beyond what we can see.

Life is already hard. People are already tired. So, be someone who adds light. Smile when others complain, smile when things fall apart, smile when you don't feel strong—because that smile might be the very thing that keeps you standing. Happiness is not the absence of problems but the strength to face them with peace in the heart.

A smile is that strength turned visible. It doesn't erase the storm but makes it easier to endure. Remember, even Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) faced immense trials, yet he smiled often, spreading calmness and love wherever he went. That is the beauty of a believer's smile—it is not just emotion; it is worship, patience, and faith combined.

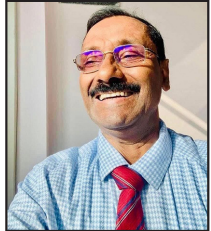
So, no matter how heavy your heart feels today, smile. Smile for yourself, for your loved ones, for the world that has forgotten gentleness. Smile because it confuses those who expect you to break. Smile because it brings healing to your body and peace to your mind.

Smile because Allah loves those who remain hopeful. Life may not be perfect, but your smile can make it beautiful again. Truly, a smile is not a small curve—it is a bridge between despair and hope, a light that can melt even the coldest hearts. It is a language of love that needs no words, and in a generation drowning in noise, it is the quietest yet loudest message of faith, courage, and humanity.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND
FREELANCE WRITER

John Keats Did Not Need Opium For Creative Stimulation

Scholars debate whether opium directly shaped the content or merely the mood of Romantic poetry. However, its presence is undeniable in both male and female poets' works, often serving as a metaphor for the sublime, the mysterious, and the emotionally intense.



Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

A genius like Keats need not depend on opium for creative stimulation. Medical background: Keats trained as a physician and apothecary, giving him access to and knowledge of opium's effects. It was widely used in the early 19th century for pain relief and sedation. He was suffering from severe tuberculosis and he was spitting blood . The

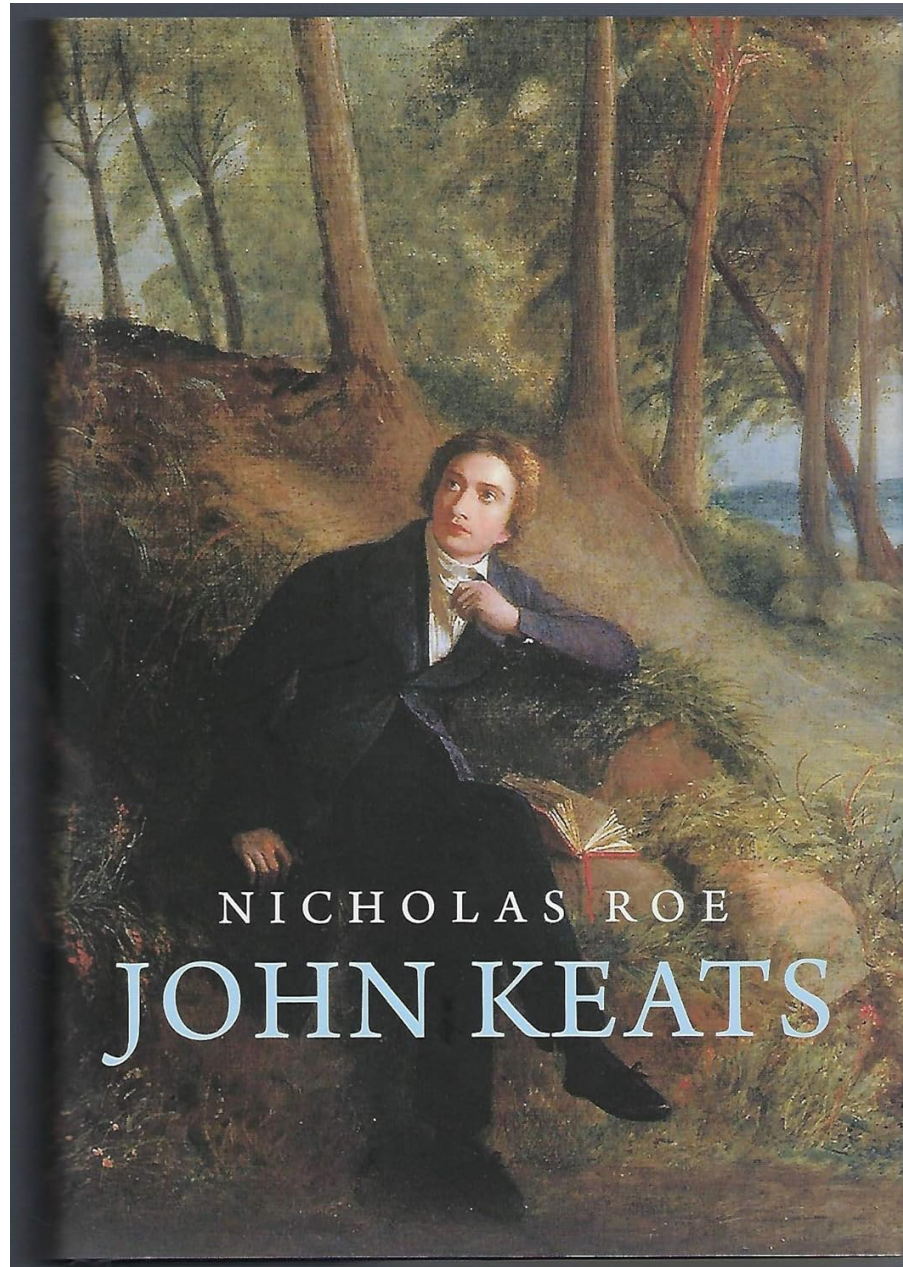
pain was severe. To alleviate the pain of his ailment he might have taken opium and that argument seems to be stronger than what is argued by Professor Rowe. His poetry often features dreamlike, hallucinatory, and indolent moods—traits associated with his theory of imagination which later Professor Bhabatosh Chatterjee established by discussing the theory of 'negative capability' as expressed in his letters. The letters of Keats reveal his personal strength of mind and his vivacious temperament in spite of his tuberculosis. His brother died of consumption and he knowing of his own certain death did not stop creating his marvelous literary world. Roe's controversial claim did not take this into consideration. Prior to his biography, most scholars believed Keats only experimented briefly with opium or used it medically

Opium imagery in early 19th British Romantic poetry often symbolized escape, altered consciousness, and sublime vision—blurring the line between dream and reality. It was both a literal substance and a metaphor for transcendence. During the Romantic era, opium was not only widely used medicinally but also became a poetic device that shaped the aesthetic and emotional tone of many works. Opium was linked to visions, reveries, and mystical landscapes. Poets used it to evoke surreal, otherworldly settings. It symbolized relief from emotional or physical pain, often tied to melancholy or existential longing. Opium was seen as a gateway to heightened imagination and poetic insight. Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' is famously associated with an opium-induced dream. The "pleasure dome" and "sunless sea" reflect the drug's hallucinatory power. Thomas De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (1821), influenced the Romantic aesthetic of sublime intoxication and psychological depth. Maria Logan: In her poem "To Opium," writes: "Did not thy magic pow'r supply, / A mild, tho' transient ray; / As meteors in a northern sky, / Shed artificial day." This celebrates opium's brief but powerful illumination of the mind. Female Romantic poets like Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Dorothy Wordsworth used opium for its "tranquilising power," often reflecting its calming effects in their verse.

Scholars debate whether opium directly shaped the content or merely the mood of Romantic poetry. However, its presence is undeniable in both male and female poets' works, often serving as a metaphor for the sublime, the mysterious, and the emotionally intense. Coleridge struggled with addiction for much of his life, which affected his health and relationships. George Crabbe less widely known for opium use, but literary criticism has suggested that he might have used it medicinally and creatively. The basic question is why Opium was so common among poets. Opium was that time widely prescribed for pain, insomnia, and digestive issues. Many believed it to be a creative stimulation and enhanced imagination and dreamlike states.

From the point of view of cultural context, it can be said that the Romantic movement prized emotion, introspection, and altered consciousness—all of which opium seemed to amplify. John Keats uses opium imagery in his poetry to evoke a state of drowsy, indolent, and dreamlike sensory experience, often in contrast to the active or common-sense world. This is most evident in "Ode on Indolence," where he describes an "age so shelter'd from annoy, / That I may never know how change the moons, / Or hear the voice of busy common-sense" and longs for "evenings steep'd in honied indolence". The imagery of opium functions as a metaphor for a desired state of peaceful escape and sensory richness, though it also carries an ironic undertone of unrealized creative potential, as the visions induced are difficult to grasp once sober. Keats's poems use opium-like imagery to depict a state of "honied indolence" and escape from reality, as seen in "Ode on Indolence". The state of being is contrasted with the "voice of busy common-sense" and the "annoy" of the real world, presenting opium as a means of blissful, if temporary, escape. The imagery is linked to the creative process, as opium can enhance and crystallize semi-conscious processes, but it is also ironic because the visions can be hard to recall or record once sober.

The Darkside cannot be ignored. While opium inspired ethereal imagery and philosophical depth, it also led to mental and physical decline, creative stagnation, and personal turmoil. Coleridge's addiction, for example, led to estrangement from friends like Wordsworth and impacted his productivity. Yes, there is scholarly evidence suggesting that John Keats consumed opium, possibly habitually, though the extent remains debated. In his poem 'Ode To A Nightingale' he at first suggested the drinking of wine 'charioted by Bacchus and his pards' as a means for escaping the tragedies of real life. But later he abandoned that way of escape. He preferred the 'Wings of Poesy



to leave this world of sorrow and sickness. The claim that John Keats was an opium addict was notably advanced by Professor Nicholas Roe in his 2012 biography John Keats: A New Life. Roe, a respected scholar and chair of the Keats Foundation, argued that Keats used opium not just medicinally—as was common in his time—but when he suggested that he used opium also to stimulate his poetic imagination and manage emotional and physical suffering, the doubts persist in the reader of Keats's poem. This landmark biography of Keats explodes entrenched conceptions of him as a delicate, overly sensitive, tragic figure. Instead, Nicholas Rowe reveals the real flesh-and-blood poet: a passionate man driven by ambition but prey to doubt, suspicion, and jealousy; sure of his vocation while bitterly resentful of the obstacles that blighted his career; devoured by sexual desire and frustration; and in thrall to alcohol and opium. Roe cites letters and diary entries suggesting Keats may have taken laudanum (a tincture of opium) to cope with grief, illness, and creative pressure. Roe is the first biographer to provide a full and fresh account of Keats's childhood in the City of London and how it shaped the would-be poet. The mysterious early death of Keats's father, his mother's too-swift remarriage, living in the shadow of the notorious madhouse Bedlam—all these affected Keats far more than has been previously understood. He also notes Keats's "indolent" moods and references to "keeping up his spirits" during composition. Scholars have traced opium-related imagery in works like Endymion and The Eve of St. Agnes.

But the detached persona of the poet is important and it justifies his theory of 'negative capability'. Nicholas Roe's book is an entirely new portrait of Keats, rich with insights into the torments of his life and the imaginative sources of his works. Through unparalleled original research, Roe arrives at a fascinating reassessment of Keats's entire life, from his early years at Keats's Livery Stables through his harrowing battle with tuberculosis and death at age 25. Zeroing in on crucial turning points, Roe finds in the locations of Keats's poems new keys to the nature of his imaginative quest. The author also sheds light on Keats's doomed passion for Fanny Brawne, his circle of brilliant

friends, hitherto unknown city relatives, and much more.

A genius like Keats need not depend on opium for creative stimulation. Medical background: Keats trained as a physician and apothecary, giving him access to and knowledge of opium's effects. It was widely used in the early 19th century for pain relief and sedation. He was suffering from severe tuberculosis and he was spitting blood. The pain was severe. To alleviate the pain of his ailment he might have taken opium and that argument seems to be stronger than what is argued by Professor Rowe. His poetry often features dreamlike, hallucinatory, and indolent moods—traits associated with his theory of imagination which later Professor Bhabatosh Chatterjee established by discussing the theory of 'negative capability' as expressed in his letters. The letters of Keats reveal his personal strength of mind and his vivacious temperament in spite of his tuberculosis. His brother died of consumption and he knowing of his own certain death did not stop creating his marvelous literary world. Roe's controversial claim did not take this into consideration. Prior to his biography, most scholars believed Keats only experimented briefly with opium or used it medicinally. There is no direct documentation of addiction or regular use. The argument relies on circumstantial evidence, literary analysis, and interpretation of personal writings. He believed the imagination was the most direct way to truth, allowing a creative mind to perceive realities beyond the rational world. He saw it as a way to experience beauty and find meaning in life, even when contemplating mortality. Keats's work often portrays the imagination as a form of escape from the painful realities of the world, such as suffering and death. However, this escape is often temporary, and the speaker is ultimately pulled back to reality. His concept of 'Negative Capability' is closely linked to his view of imagination. It is the ability to be "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". For Keats, the imagination embraces these ambiguities instead of trying to resolve them, allowing for a richer and more profound experience. Keats believed an artist should live a "life

of sensations rather than of thoughts," using this rich sensory experience as the fuel for imagination and poetry. He saw the imagination as an ecstatic power that could lift the poet beyond the limits of the physical world. However, this flight can be both a source of joy and a potential source of delusion. Opium addiction cannot justify this greatness of Keats.

If Keats did use opium to enhance his poetic vision, it places him to some extent alongside other Romantic figures like Coleridge and De Quincey, whose works were shaped by altered states.

The Beat Generation was a literary and cultural movement that used poetry as a form of rebellion against the conformity and materialism of post-WWII America, with key poets like Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder rejecting traditional forms for spontaneous free verse. Drug use and experimentation played a significant and intentional role in the Beat Generation. movement and its poetry. Beat writers like Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Jack Kerouac used various substances, including alcohol, marijuana, Benzedrine, morphine, peyote, and LSD, believing these drugs could induce "heightened sensory awareness," enhance creativity, and offer a path to spiritual and artistic freedom. The Beats were not merely recreational drug users; they often considered drug use an experimental method for exploring the human condition and expanding consciousness. They believed these experiences could: Drug use was seen as a way to break from the perceived constraints of mainstream society and traditional literary forms, allowing for more authentic and uncensored expression. Following the French symbolist poets (like Rimbaud and Baudelaire), the Beats pursued "sensory derangement" as a means of perceiving truth that transcended conventional morality and logic. In a sense the early nineteenth century British poets also rebelled against institutions and existing moral values following Rousseau's 'Return to Nature' philosophy. Experiences under the influence of drugs often informed the "spontaneous prose" style advocated by Kerouac, which mirrored the improvisational nature of jazz music. The idea was to put down thoughts and feelings without revision, capturing the immediacy of individual experience. The raw, often dark, experiences associated with drug use, addiction, and the surrounding counterculture provided rich subject matter for their works. Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl' opens with the famous lines: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix." William S. Burroughs's 'Naked Lunch' is structured as a series of disjointed vignettes and hallucinations drawing directly from his personal experiences with heroin and other opiate addictions. Nicholas Roe might have suggested such things happening in the life of Romantic poets including Keats. However, Keats's legacy remains rooted in his lyrical mastery and philosophical depth, regardless of chemical influence. The wings of poesy won over the chariot driven by Bacchus and his pards. Keats viewed imagination as a powerful force that could access a deeper truth, famously comparing it to "Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth". For Keats, it was the capacity to exist in a state of uncertainty and ambiguity, allowing him to explore the tension between reality and ideal beauty, and between joy and sorrow. This is most evident in poems where the imagination attempts an escape from the world's suffering, only to return to reality, illustrating the struggle between the ideal and the real. Thus theoretically and biographically, it cannot be concluded that Keats used opium for creative stimulation.

International Tagore Awardee Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee, President of Kolkata Indian American Society is a former Affiliate Faculty Virginia Commonwealth University & Poet cum Columnist. Email profatanbhattacharjee@gmail.com

Dr Tasaduk inducted into prestigious UK Faculty of Public Health

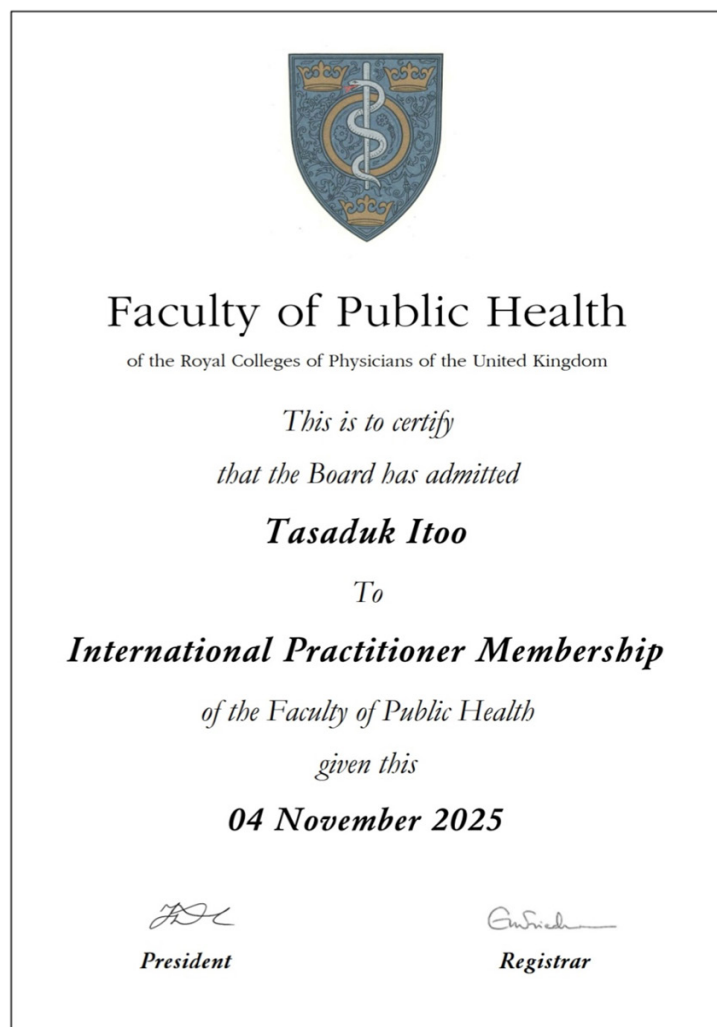
■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom has admitted Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo to International Practitioner Membership (IPFPH), a prestigious recognition awarded to distinguished public health professionals across the globe.

FPH, the leading professional body for public health specialists in the United Kingdom, grants International Practitioner Membership to accomplished global health professionals demonstrating excellence in public health practice, leadership, and advocacy. Dr. Itoo's admission highlights his significant contributions to public health practice, medical education, and community health advancement.

The honor further strengthens his international standing in the public health community and reinforces his dedication to advancing healthcare outcomes and promoting public health excellence.

Dr Itoo, a distinguished doctor, public health advocate, medical educator and writer -- is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH), UK and a Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium). He is also a member of leading global medical organizations including the American College of Physicians (USA), Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI) and Endocrine Society (USA).



Sub-District Hospital Tral – The Need of the Hour!



■ MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI

When the residents of Tral and the nearby villages travel through the valleys of Pulwama to Srinagar to get treated, there is always a question lingering in all the residents' minds: why is not south Kashmir ready with a fully functional hospital to serve its people? The Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Tral, conceived as a ray of hope for over 116 villages and half a million residents, now exists as an example of system failure writ large. Overcrowded wards, outdated equipment, and insufficient staff present a tale of unfulfilled promises—one that the residents of Tral must endure each day.

Though officially recognized as a Community Health Centre (CHC), SDH Tral is working far below its requirements in order to deliver healthcare to its populace. The hospital boasts a scarce 13 doctors, a frightfully small number to serve over a hundred villages. Specialist doctors are virtually non-existent, paramedical staff are insufficient, and emergency services are stretched to the bare minimum. Long delays are experienced by patients, while children, mothers, and the elderly are vulnerable to avoidable threats with sufficient resources. Life-saving services like maternal and child health are underdevelopment, exposing hundreds of women and children to unnecessary risk annually.

Infrastructure problems compound the crisis. De facto narrow access roads, chaotic parking, and the missing bridge across Vutl Ara nullah drastically impede emergency care. Even mere necessities such as X-ray units, routine vaccine supplies—barring anti-rabies vaccines—and a functional J&K Bank ATM are spotty at best. Patients and families have a daily struggle, not only of responding to health emergencies but also the transport and economic woes of accessing distant hospitals.

Loopholes in diagnosis and treatment are the most unsettling. Unavailability of MRI and CT scan machines, a well-equipped lab, and a blood bank forces patients to travel long distances to Srinagar for required tests. These forced trips, undertaken in duress, become economically and emotionally taxing for families and cause delays in essential medical interventions. Emergency cases, from accidents to heart attacks, are vulnerable to worsening just because local facilities do not have the resources to treat them.

Funds have been allocated for infrastructure and personnel upgradation, but progress is still sluggish. Bureaucratic inertia, inefficiencies, and gaps in implementation keep development at a standstill, reflecting systemic failures in administration of healthcare. Meanwhile, the citizens of Tral wait—not for indul-



gence, but for their right to quality and accessible healthcare.

It is now imperative for the Jammu and Kashmir Government, particularly the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the Health & Medical Education Department, the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir, and the District Administration Pulwama, to take immediate and result-oriented action. The people of Tral earnestly appeal for the upgradation of SDH Tral to a full-fledged Sub-District Hospital with adequate specialist doctors, 24x7 emergency and diagnostic services, and strengthened maternal and child healthcare facilities. The completion of the bridge over Vutl Ara nullah and improvement of approach roads must be prioritized to ensure timely emergency access. Additionally, there is a pressing need to establish MRI and CT scan units, a functional blood bank, and a permanent team of paramedical and technical staff. These are not luxuries—they are the fundamental rights of citizens who have long been deprived of equitable healthcare.

The needs of Tral's population are clearly spelt out and justified: forthwith appointment of able doctors and experts, enhancement of paramedical personnel, functional diagnostic laboratories, fully serviced emergency facilities, uninterrupted stocks of vaccines, functional blood banks, and functioning of the bridge across Vutl Ara nullah. These

measures are not an option; they are lifelines that hold the promise to save countless lives.

Imagine a Tral where patients no longer swarm distant hospitals, emergencies receive immediate treatment, and mothers, children, and elderly are treated locally. Imagine SDH Tral as a refuge of relief, and not frustration—a place where health is given priority, and not postponed. The dream of a functional hospital providing care to the people of south Kashmir is not unattainable; it is an imperative that needs to be addressed immediately.

Until the firm action is taken, pain will continue. Each delay contributes to preventable pain, unwarranted referrals, and lives put at risk. The people of Tral have waited long enough. SDH Tral needs to be transformed from a deserted building to what it was originally meant to be: a home of care, a pillar of health, and a mirror of hope for the district.

For Tral residents, this is not a matter of convenience or numbers—it's a matter of survival, dignity, and the ability to obtain healthcare. Action is needed now.

The author is a passionate writer, social activist, and medical student from Kuchmulla Tral, is also a B.Sc. Nursing student at Ramzaan College of Nursing & Paramedical Sciences, Galander Pampore, Email: wania6817@gmail.com

Safeguard the doctors; My tribute to you doctor who laid his life in the line of duty



■ RAQIF MAKHDOOMI

"Ye nimoyn doctor'as Nish, ye chu sakh bamar" the line we all say when we see our loved ones suffering a disease. Some are life threatening, while some are just mild. "Doctor soub Me gassie jaldi pahan Farq gassan, mee chu sakh azab". The line that we utter with hope and trust. In today's time doctors are playing a very important role. With rising health issues, especially the rise in cancer the role of doctors have become very important. We saw how doctors worked day and night when COVID-19 was at peak. They weren't able to go home just because the threat of transmitting the COVID to their families after working in hospitals. Many doctors lost their lives during COVID but they are unknown. Unlike other professions where people who lay their lives in the line of duty they are remembered for centuries. That unfortunately doesn't happen with the doctors who lay their lives while saving others. People walk into hospital with the hope of seeing themselves or their loved ones healthy again. People running here and there in hospital shows the hope and trust they have in the doctors. "Doctor soub, me chu kunie shur ye bachavun" the line that comes out of the broken heart of a mother and father, when their only son meets an accident. The scenes in the hospital are heart breaking but they tell us how much trust do we have in Doctors. Despite we know that they can only try and have nothing in their control. But still we look at them with all the hope and trust.

The real display of emotions is seen when a pregnant woman is taken inside the operation theatre. And the families members keep waiting outside to hear good news. Their first trust is Allah and then the team of doctors inside the operation theatre. The father of the woman is the most worried person at that time. But when he gets to know a well known doctor is performing the operation. He gets relaxed knowing an experienced doctor is going to deal with the process. A human being will be dealing with another human being but still the trust makes things easy. That's what doctors are, a human being we believe can do expected and sometimes even magic.

Doctors play an important role in any situation. Be it war, disaster, epidemic, law and order situation or another situation. But till now doctors haven't got the due credit. Which is not only matter of concern but heart breaking.

The crimes against doctors are becoming a norm. West Bengal rape of doctor shook the whole humanity. What was done after that? Nothing protests happened and things were forgotten and then everything came to normal.

In Kashmir doctors became an easy target. Each day the videos in which doctors were assaulted used to trend on social media. The heart breaking thing wasn't the video but the replies to the video. People used to endorse the violence against the doctors. A video went viral in which a doctor was assaulted by an

attende because his patient died and he accused the doctor of negligence.

The people were heard saying that they were asking from their seniors on phone. People should know they are the junior doctors who have been placed on duty during the night. That's something they have no control on. We are just stressing the already stressed person. Multiple videos from multiple hospitals went viral in which doctors were seen getting assaulted. And some people openly endorsing the violence.

I in a X space (formally Twitter) we're people were endorsing the violence. Asked them a simple question. Will you slap a Tehsildar because he's dealing your work? Will you slap SHO because he's not doing his duty? Will you slap a traffic police person because he has issued you a challan? Will you slap a Judge because your case is getting delayed? Will you slap an advocate? Everyone fell silent because they knew he has asked a genuine question. They replied and said "you all know if we even speak to any of them rudely, we will end up in lock up. That's why none of you can dare doing so. But doctors are becoming an easy target because they have no protection".

A doctor in the space politely said "Our rules allow us to not to see a patient/s who's attendee misbehaves. Conditions being the patient isn't a serious case. But we never refuse to see a any patient".

Becoming a doctor isn't an easy job. Cracking NEET and then getting the stream you want to get into isn't an easy job. As soon as the course begins free time becomes a luxury. They sometimes have to be in lab or sometimes in the hospitals as interns. It takes immense of hard work to actual become a doctor. Which most of the people don't know and don't recognize.

A young doctor Dr. Tariq ul Islam, an intern at SKIMS lost his life while he was on duty. His death has shocked his friends who used to work with him. The dreams of his parents are now shattered. Becoming a doctor isn't just hectic but costly. His parents must have invested the best on their son, not knowing that we'll have to bury him young and with the dreams. His death has triggered angry and debate on working hours of doctors. He Had been suffering from flu for the past several days, reportedly continued to attend his duties despite illness.

Doctors believe he may have succumbed to viral pericarditis. His sudden death has left colleagues and the wider medical community in shock, prompting conversations about the pressures and workload young doctors face during their internship.

The demand for reducing the working hours of interns and senior residents is increasing. Social media users have expressed angry and regret over the incident.

Dr. Tariq's friends on social media describe him as living person and a person with good health. His martyrdom should serve as an eye opener to people that how doctors serve people even without caring about their own wellbeing. Dr. Tariq wasn't allowed a leave even though he was not doing well.

Let's hope things for interns, senior residents and doctors in general get better.

I pay my homage to Dr. Tariq ul islam for his tremendous service, where he laid his precious and valuable life. Rest in peace doctor.

WOMAN ALLEGEDLY CHEATS GOLD-SMITHS AND COPPER DEALERS OF LAKHS

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 5: A shocking case of fraud has surfaced in Srinagar, where a woman has allegedly cheated several gold and copper dealers of valuables worth lakhs of rupees through deception and fake cheques.

Gold Smiths during a press conference in Srinagar said that, at least three jewellers, Shah-e-Hamdan Ornaments at Lal Bazar, Maqdooni Zevraat near Nawa Kadal, and Zarger

Jewellers at Soura, have fallen victim to the same fraudster over the past few months. The alleged incidents took place between late July and late August this year, involving losses amounting to more than Rs 17 lakh in total.

Documents and photographs obtained by Kashmir News Trust reveal that the accused, posing as a customer, would visit jewellery shops claiming she wished to show ornaments to her family before confirming the purchase. After



gaining the shopkeepers' trust, she would take the ornaments and promise to return shortly, only to switch off her phone and disappear.

In one case, Shah-e-Hamdan Ornaments at Lal Bazar reported a loss of ornaments worth around Rs 5 lakh on August 21. The shop's owner filed an FIR the next day at Lal Bazar Police Station. In another incident, Maqdooni Zevraat near Kani Mazar, Nawa Kadal, suffered a similar fraud on August 8, with losses of

approximately Rs 5 lakh. The complainant submitted a report to Police Post Bagiyas.

Zarger Jewellers at Soura reported being duped of ornaments worth Rs 7 lakh on July 29. The owner, after approaching Soura Police Station, said the police had promised action and were verifying details.

All three victims provided photographs, video footage, and fake Bank cheques allegedly linked to a person identified as Ajaz Ahmad

Khan, described in documents as a "history-sheeter and gang member." The cheques were reportedly used by the accused woman to convince shopkeepers of her authenticity before fleeing with the goods.

Police have initiated investigations into the matter, with FIR already registered. Victims have appealed to authorities to intensify efforts to apprehend the accused and recover their stolen ornaments. [KNT]

HC dismisses petitions seeking regularization of 802 daily wagers in Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 5: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has dismissed two clubbed petitions filed by 802 daily-rated workers from Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district seeking regularization of their services under SRO 520 of 2017, observing that the claimants were not shown to have been engaged before the government's ban on fresh appointments imposed in 2015.

The judgment, delivered by Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, came in WP(C) No. 1415/2023 and WP(C) No. 411/2024, titled Nazir Ahmad Bhat and others versus Union Territory of J&K and others. The petitioners had sought directions for inclusion of their names in official records for regularization, claiming long years of service as daily wagers in the Power Development Department's Sub-Transmission Division (STD) Ganderbal.

The government counsel, however, submitted that the workers' credentials were prepared after the recruitment ban, and hence their names were not forwarded for consideration. The administration produced an inquiry report of a committee headed by the Superintending Engineer, O&M Circle Ganderbal, which found that 128 persons, including the petitioners, did not exist on the official muster rolls and that their records had been manipulated post-ban.

The Court noted that the inquiry findings were never challenged by the petitioners and ruled that no legal or fundamental rights had been violated. "The respondents cannot be faulted or said to have infringed any rights of the petitioners," Justice Wani observed while dismissing the petitions.

The private respondents in the case, who were already regularized, were represented by Advocate Tasaduq Hussain Reshi, while Government Advocate Faheem Shah appeared for the administration.

The Court upheld the government's position that only those casual, need-based, and daily-rated workers engaged before the 2015 ban qualify for consideration under SRO 520. It concluded that the petitioners were not similarly placed with the 472 workers whose names had been duly verified and approved for regularization. [KNT]

Citizens call police a pillar of safety and law; say without them, there would be chaos

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, NOV 5: A Srinagar family has publicly expressed gratitude towards the Jammu and Kashmir Police for their fair and humane handling of a recent road accident dispute, calling the force a "shield of justice" that protects the weak and upholds law and order.

The incident occurred when the family's car accidentally hit another vehicle in Srinagar. According to family members, a group of influential individuals from the other vehicle demanded that they pay for the damages on the spot. "We were forced and intimidated to pay the full amount even before any assessment could be made," one of the family members told the news agency Kashmir News Trust.

However, when both parties reached the nearby police station, officers intervened and fairly assessed the quantum of loss. After careful evaluation, the police determined that the family had been overcharged and directed the other party to return half of the amount. "The police handled the situation with calm, patience, and impartiality. They didn't favour anyone and ensured that both sides were treated fairly," the family said. The family added that this experience completely changed their perception of the police. "We realised that police are not just enforcers of law but protectors of people's dignity and rights. Without the police, there would be only lawlessness and fear. We are genuinely thankful for their professionalism and kindness," they said.

They further clarified that their statement was not intended to appease or praise the police for publicity, but to highlight the importance of law enforcement in maintaining social harmony. "We are not naming the location or police station intentionally, as this is not about individuals, it's about the institution that protects us all," a family member said. "Such fair interventions strengthen public trust in the force and reinforce the belief that the Jammu and Kashmir Police remain dedicated to justice, discipline, and community service." [KNT]

Hyundai Venue 2025 Unveiled at Arise Hyundai Handwara Showroom

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, NOV 05: Arise Hyundai Handwara, one of North Kashmir's leading Hyundai dealerships, proudly unveiled the all-new Hyundai Venue 2025 a fully connected and feature-packed SUV at a grand launch event held at its Handwara showroom on Tuesday. The event witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of automobile enthusiasts, customers, and dignitaries who came together to celebrate the launch of Hyundai's latest compact SUV. The new Venue blends advanced technology, superior comfort, and enhanced safety features, wrapped in a bold and modern design. The Hyundai Venue 2025 arrives with a refreshed muscular stance and several premium upgrades that redefine the compact SUV experience in India. The model features a dark chrome grille, twin-horn LED DRLs, quad-beam LED headlamps, and a full-width rear light bar, giving it an imposing road presence. Inside, it boasts a high-tech dual 12.3-inch curved panoramic display powered by NVIDIA's cNC system, ventilated front seats, ambient lighting, and a 4-way powered driver seat all designed for next-level driving comfort. In terms of



safety, the new Venue introduces Level-2 ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance System) featuring 16 intelligent functions such as forward collision avoidance, lane-keeping assist, and smart cruise control. The SUV also comes equipped with six airbags, elec-

tronic stability control, and a robust high-strength steel body, ensuring top-notch passenger protection. Powertrain options include a 1.2-litre petrol, 1.0-litre turbo petrol, and 1.5-litre diesel engine, available in both manual and automatic

variants. For added flexibility, Hyundai is also offering multiple seating configurations, including a 6-seater version, catering to the diverse lifestyle needs of modern families. The event was graced by several prominent guests, including

Advance Manager J&K Bank Handwara Tahit Hussain, SDPO Handwara Fasil Hussain, SHO Handwara Vilayat Hussain, Chowki Officer Langate Rayees Ahmad, and Ab Rashid Malik, General Secretary of the Traders Federation Handwara.

Also present were Imran Rashid (GM North), Parvaiz Ahmad (Sales Head Handwara), Mushtaq Ahmad Dar (Marketing Manager), Hilal Ahmad Dar (Team Leader), and Ulfat Hameed (Showroom Consultant) along with other members of the Arise Hyundai Handwara Sales and Marketing Team.

Speaking at the event, the management of Arise Hyundai Handwara reiterated their dedication to bringing Hyundai's latest innovations to the people of North Kashmir. They expressed pride in offering world-class vehicles that combine design excellence, performance, and cutting-edge technology. The launch of the Hyundai Venue 2025 marks yet another milestone for Hyundai in the Valley, setting new benchmarks in connectivity, comfort, and safety for compact SUV enthusiasts. For immediate info, let's call on Mobile Numbers ,9541281359 6005272882.

BRABU VC Prof. D.C. Rai's Policy Blueprint to Transform Assam's Dairy Landscape



■ HT NEWS DESK

MUZAFFARPUR/GUWAHATI, NOV 05: B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University Vice-Chancellor and a pre-eminent authority in dairy technology from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Prof. Dinesh Chandra Rai, has unveiled a strategic, technology-driven framework designed to metamorphose Assam's dairy sector into a high-value export nexus. Addressing a crucial two-day conclave convened by the Rajbhawan in Guwahati, Prof. Rai presided over the session on 'Dairy Technology, Processing, and Start-ups,' imploring stakeholders to transcend traditional focus on mere raw milk production in favor of cultivating high-margin, value-added products and promoting strategic entrepreneurship.

The essence of the Vice-Chancellor's strategy is anchored on dual pillars: product excellence and swift diversification. VC Prof. Rai articu-

lated that the foremost imperative is to guarantee the production of clean milk, which "indubitably necessitates the fortification of modern cooling and quality testing infrastructure at the cooperative level throughout the state.

Prof. Rai highlighting Assam's substantial geographical advantage said that its proximity to milk-deficient neighbouring states, as well as countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar. VC Prof. Rai stated that this advantageous positioning "renders the state an optimal launchpad for the export of dairy products, unlocking immense economic potential."

In addition to the technical discussions, Prof. Rai shared his cultural reflections from the state. Prof. Rai expressed "immense pleasure and inspiration from his interaction with the Honourable Governor, Shri Lakshman Acharya Ji, commending his humble and affable demeanour. He also notably recognized the instru-

mental role played by the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) and former VC, Prof. Bechan Lal, in the successful orchestration of the dairy conference, remarking that "the discussions among experts herald significant advancements for the sector."

Reflecting on his sojourn in Guwahati, Prof. Rai conveyed his feeling and said that he is blessed to have the opportunity to visit the Maa Kamakhya Devi Temple during the conference, "perceiving it as a momentous spiritual and cultural milestone.

Following his notable representation, the academic community and alumni association from BRABU extended their heartfelt congratulations to Prof. Rai for successfully elevating the university's profile on the national stage. Among those commending him were Proctor Prof. B.S. Rai, LS College Principal Prof. Kanupriya, Prof. Rajeev Kumar, Prof. T.K. Dey, Dr. Shartendu Shekhar, and Dr. Navin Kumar, among others.

Public Notice

It is hereby informed that my name has been incorrectly mentioned in my Driving Licence No. JK0120230001885 as ZIA UL MOHI UD DIN S/o GH MOHI UD DIN WAGAY. The correct name as per my Aadhaar Card is Zia Ul Mohudin Wagay, S/o Gh Mohudin Wagay, resident of Maloora, Parimpora, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, 1900171 am applying for correction of the same in the concerned records. Any objection in this regard may be communicated to the concerned authority within seven days of publication of this notice.

Public Notice

My Name and D.O.B has been wrongly written on my Adhaar Card Bearing Adhaar No:- 7576-1860-0027 as Fatima Tariq D.O.B 08-06-2007 while My Actual Name is Fatima Jan D.O.B 14-06-2008. Now I want to correct it.

If any body having any objection in this regard he /she can approach His/Her Objection with Concerned authority within a period of 7 days after that no objection will be Entertained.

**Name: Fatima Jan
D/o: Tariq Ahmad Dar
D.O.B: 14-06-2008**

Public Notice

It is for information of general public that i am Ulfat jan ,D/o Ali mohd dar, R/o Pathan mohalla Hanjiwera, have changed my name from Ulfata bano to Ulfat jan .The public notice is issued with the intrest that if anybody has any objection same may be brought to Jammu and Kashmir bank branch singpora pattan within period of 7 days of issuance of this notice after which no objection will be accepted.

**Ulfat Jan
D/o Ali Mohd Dar**

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that a Duplicate 8th Class Pass Certificate is being issued in favour of Ghulam Hassan Khan, S/o Abdul Gaffar Khan, R/o Nawakadal, Srinagar, who had passed his 8th class examination from Government Middle School, Gurgadi Mohallah, Srinagar.

The original certificate has been reported lost / misplaced, and hence the duplicate is being issued accordingly.

Objections, if any, may be conveyed to the undersigned within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice.

**Headmaster
Govt. Middle School, Gurgadi Mohallah, Srinagar**

Rana reviews progress of developmental works, Water Supply Schemes in Rajouri

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

RAJOURI, NOVEMBER 05: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana chaired a comprehensive review meeting in Rajouri today to assess the progress of ongoing developmental works and status of water supply schemes in the district.

During the meeting, the Minister laid special emphasis on expediting the water supply schemes being executed under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Capex budget and NABARD funding.

He directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely completion of these projects so that every household can be provided with functional tap water connections under the Har Ghar Jal initiative.

The Minister underscored the importance of accelerating the pace of all developmental works



to enhance expenditure efficiency and prevent any lapse of funds. He called upon the officers to adopt a proactive and coordinated

approach to achieve tangible progress on the ground within stipulated timelines.

In the context of environmental

governance, the Minister issued firm instructions for strict enforcement against illegal muck dumping and emphasized that all stone

crushers must operate strictly in accordance with prescribed environmental standards and parameters.

He reiterated the Omar Abdullah Government's commitment to ensuring sustainable development that aligns with environmental safeguards.

The Minister appreciated the efforts of district administration and field departments in implementing flagship initiatives and urged them to maintain sustained momentum to deliver timely and quality outcomes that directly benefit the people of Rajouri.

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma; Chief Engineer Jal Shakti, Hanif Choudhary; ADDC, SE PWD, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti, PWD, ACD, ACP, Conservator of Forests and Divisional Officer, Pollution Control Board, other senior officers of district administration attended the meeting.

SKUAST-K organizes training Programme on 'Promotion and Cultivation of Bamboo in Kashmir'

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

GANDERBAL, NOVEMBER 5: The Division of Forest Products and Utilization, Faculty of Forestry, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), today organized a one-day training programme on "Promotion and Cultivation of Bamboo in Kashmir."

The programme aimed to create awareness among farmers about the economic and ecological potential of bamboo cultivation in the region.

The event was graced by Member of Parliament, Mian Altaf Ahmad, as the Chief Guest.

In his address, the Member of Parliament appreciated the efforts of the Faculty of Forestry, SKUAST-K, for their continuous contribution towards the upliftment of tribal and rural communities through innovative forestry initiatives. "Bamboo can be a game-changer for the economy of hill farmers. Such programmes bring scientific knowledge to the grassroots level," he remarked.

Dean, Faculty of Forestry, Prof. Arshid Hussain Mughal, highlighted the importance of bamboo as a fast-growing, sustainable resource that supports livelihoods and environmental conservation. He emphasized the university's commitment to promoting green and income-generating forestry practices across Jammu and Kashmir.

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Ganderbal, Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, lauded SKUAST-K's outreach initiatives and said that bamboo cultivation aligns with the government's vision for sustainable rural development and employment generation.

Head, Division of Forest Products and Utilization, Prof. Parvez Ahmad Sofi, presented the overview of the training programme and discussed various aspects of bamboo propagation, management, and utilization.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Ganderbal, Iqbal Rasool Dar, highlighted the ecological importance of bamboo in soil conservation and biodiversity enhancement. He stressed that bamboo can play a significant role in combating land degradation in Kashmir's hilly terrains.

On the occasion, a book titled "Commercial Medicinal Plants of Kashmir Himalayas" authored by Dr. Tahir Mushtaq and Dr. P. A. Sofi, HoD (FPU) was released by the Member of Parliament along with other dignitaries.

The event also witnessed the distribution of agricultural tool kits among 50 progressive farmers, an initiative aimed at supporting their participation in bamboo cultivation and related forestry enterprises.

Kashmir Rejects 30 Years of Bloodshed and Misrule by NC, PDP, and Congress — Chooses Modi's Path of Peace and Prosperity: MP Gulam Ali Khatana

■ HT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, NOVEMBER 5 : In a massive election rally organised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at Budgam Bus Stand, Rajya Sabha MP and BJP Senior Leader Gulam Ali Khatana campaigned for BJP candidate Mohsin Aga ahead of the Budgam by-election, urging the people to support the party's vision of peace, progress, and inclusive development. The rally witnessed a huge turnout of BJP workers, youth, and local residents from across Budgam district.



Addressing the gathering, Khatana said that the people of Kashmir have finally rejected the thirty years of bloodshed, deceit, and misrule by the National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and Congress, and have embraced the vision of peace, prosperity, and development under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "For over three decades, NC, PDP, and Congress kept Kashmir bleeding for their political benefits. They divided people, destroyed the youth's future, and stopped progress. Today, the people of Kashmir have awakened. They want peace, jobs, and development, not bullets and slogans," he said.

While speaking at the rally in Budgam, Khatana said that the National Conference is nothing more than a family-run party where opportunities are confined to a few individuals. "Due to this family interference, the marginalised sections of society never get a fair chance — only family members benefit. NC, PDP, and Congress are all family-based parties that have monopolised power and opportunities. For seventy years, these parties discriminated against the people of Budgam. Only the BJP can bring real development and justice to them," he said, drawing loud applause from the crowd.

Khatana further criticised the National Conference leadership for betraying the trust of Budgam's people. "After the Assembly elections, Omar Abdullah resigned from the Budgam Assembly constituency and left the people to their fate. The same party that asked for people's votes abandoned them soon after victory. This shows how little they care about the welfare of ordinary citizens," he said. He added that people had given their mandate to NC for their betterment, but instead of serving them, the party misled and manipulated the public while doing no real work for their progress.

Highlighting the BJP's commitment to empowering youth and ensuring inclusive development, Khatana said that the young generation of Kashmir represents the future and must be supported through education, entrepreneurship, and employment. He appealed to the people of Budgam to support BJP candidate Mohsin Aga in the upcoming by-election and strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Modi. "This election is not about power; it is about peace and progress. Let us end the politics of deceit and embrace a prosperous, united, and developed Kashmir," he said as the crowd echoed chants of "Hindustan Zindabad."

Vote for Divyani; Vote for vikas- Pathania

■ HT NEWS DESK

UDHAMPUR, NOVEMBER 5 : While canvassing for BJP candidate Divyani Rana at Kattal, Batal, Surinsar, Chilla, Barga, Sagoon, and various other habitations of Nagrota Mr Ranbir Singh Pathania MLA Udhampur East called for massive mandate and support in favour flower fresh, BJP candidate, who is a winning combination of youth and legacy. He was carrying out a massive Door to Door campaign in Manwal market.

During the campaign, Mr. Pathania highlighted the leadership qualities of Ms. Divyani Rana, describing her as a young, educated and visionary leader who brings energy and commitment to public service. He stated that her dynamic approach and dedication mark her as a capable representative with a strong development-oriented outlook.

He noted that certain individuals and groups were attempting to create



confusion, but expressed confidence that the political narrative must remain focused on development, stability and progressive governance.

Mr. Pathania reiterated that the Bharatiya Janata Party is committed to the growth and prosperity of Jammu & Kashmir, rooted in the principles of nationalism, transparency and equitable progress. He stressed the need to move beyond dynastic politics and support leadership that prioritizes

governance and development over personal interests.

He also underlined the importance of strengthening democratic processes and continuing the momentum of development initiatives across the region.

Mr. Pathania was accompanied by Bodh Raj (Sarpanch), Kulbhushan (Sarpanch), Kuldeep Singh and several other local leaders and party workers during the campaign.

Army Organises Free Medical Camp for Civilians at Phulungu & Basantgarh

■ HT NEWS DESK

UDHAMPUR, NOVEMBER 5 : The Indian Army organised a free medical camp at Phulungu village, Dudu Basantgarh, reaffirming its commitment to the welfare and well-being of local communities in remote areas.

The initiative aimed to provide accessible healthcare to villagers who have limited medical facilities. During the camp, a team of Indian Army Medical Officers and healthcare staff conducted essential

health check-ups, distributed free medicines and provided consultations on general health, hygiene and preventive care.

The event received an enthusiastic response from residents, who expressed heartfelt gratitude for the Indian Army's efforts. This initiative highlights the Indian Army's enduring dedication to promoting public health, strengthening civil-military relations and improving the quality of life in far-flung regions of Jammu & Kashmir.

Army Empowers Youth in Kalal Village, Rajouri Through

■ HT NEWS DESK

RAJOURI, NOVEMBER 5 : The Indian Army has launched a creativity-building initiative in Kalal village, Rajouri by distributing hand cameras to the local population.

The effort aims to equip residents with the tools to explore photography and express their unique perspectives. Alongside the distribution, the Indian Army conducted an interactive workshop to teach the fundamentals of photography including framing, lighting and capturing meaningful moments thereby fostering

both skill development and artistic expression.

The event evoked enthusiasm and joy among the villagers of Kalal, inspiring them to portray their village's beauty and spirit on a broader platform. This initiative reflects the Indian Army's continued commitment to community engagement and youth empowerment, focusing on nurturing talent and creativity beyond conventional education. The Indian Army remains steadfast in its mission to inspire and support young minds across Rajouri's villages, shaping the storytellers of tomorrow.

2nd J&K Masters Games Begin at M.A. Stadium Jammu

Over 400 master athletes participate in five-day multi-sport event

■ HT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 5 : A spirit of sportsmanship and vitality filled the air at M.A. Stadium Jammu today as the 2nd Jammu & Kashmir Masters Games were officially inaugurated by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jammu Samba Kathua Range, Sh. Shiv Kumar Sharma (IPS). The grand sporting event, organized by the Jammu & Kashmir Masters Games Association (JKMGA) affiliated with the Super Masters Games and Sports Federation (India) celebrates the joy of lifelong fitness and athletic excellence.

The inaugural ceremony witnessed an impressive march past and oath ceremony, showcasing the vibrant energy of more than 400 master players and 70 officials from across the Union Territory. The gathering included several former national and international players who have returned to the field to inspire the next generation.

The event was graced by Guest of Honour Sh. Ranjit Singh Sambyal, IPS, Principal Police Technical Training Institute Samba, and



Capt. Murti Gupta, ex-Army Officer, President J&K Lawn Tennis Association, and Editor-in-Chief of Greater Jammu.

Spanning five days, the Masters Games will feature a diverse range of sports disciplines including athletics, handball, kho-kho, table tennis, powerlifting, weightlifting, yoga, roller hockey, pickleball,

kabaddi, tinnikot, lawn tennis, badminton, basketball, chess, football, hockey, swimming, rope skipping, and tennis ball cricket.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest DIG Shiv Kumar Sharma lauded the participants for their enthusiasm and commitment, emphasizing that the Masters Games not only encourage healthy

competition but also promote a balanced, active, and positive lifestyle among citizens of all ages. He noted that such initiatives play a vital role in fostering discipline, fitness, and camaraderie across communities.

Sh. Ranjit Singh Chib, former SSP, international handball player, and President of JKMGAs, high-

lighted the associations mission to promote sports among individuals aged 30 and above. He emphasized that age is no barrier to excellence, as master athletes continue to inspire society through their dedication and perseverance. These games are a celebration of lifelong fitness and a testament to the power of sport in uniting people, he said, reaffirming JKMGAs commitment to strengthening the culture of fitness and wellness across Jammu & Kashmir.

The event proceedings were conducted gracefully by Mamta Bajaj, Vice President of JKMGAs, whose enthusiasm and energy kept the audience engaged. A heartfelt vote of thanks was delivered by Ashok Sharma, Executive Member of JKMGAs.

Prominent dignitaries present on the occasion included Secretary General Neete Kaur, Treasurer Romesh Sharma, Vinay Saraf, Som Raj Gupta, Kuljeet Singh, Sanjay Puri, Prabal Sharma, Rameshwar Singh Manhas, Rakesh Singh Salathia, and several other distinguished members of the sports fraternity.

Zohran Mamdani Scripts History, Becoming First South Asian And Muslim To Be Elected NYC Mayor

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW YORK, NOV 5: Zohran Mamdani scripted history on Election Day as he emerged victorious in the closely-watched battle for New York City Mayor, becoming the first South Asian and Muslim to be elected to sit at the helm of the largest city in the US.

Mamdani, 34, had been the front-runner in the NYC Mayoral election for months and on Tuesday defeated Republican nominee Curtis Sliwa and political heavyweight former New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, who ran as an independent candidate and received US President Donald Trump's endorsement only on the eve of the election.

Mamdani had upset Cuomo in the Democratic primary race for New York City mayor and was declared victorious in June this year.

"Zohran Mamdani is running for Mayor to lower the cost of living for working class New Yorkers," his campaign had said

as the young politician continued to garner support among the youth and working-class New Yorkers, who have been reeling under the burden of high costs and job insecurities amid a tough economic and political climate in the country.

With Mamdani's win, New York City and the US entered a new political and ideological era with the democratic socialist now at the helm of the citadel of capitalism.

Indian-descent Mamdani is the son of renowned filmmaker Mira Nair and Columbia University professor Mahmood Mamdani.

He was born and raised in Kampala, Uganda and moved to New York City with his family when he was 7. Mamdani became a naturalised US citizen only recently in 2018.

Mamdani attended the Bronx High School of Science and received a Bachelor's Degree in Africana Studies from Bowdoin College.

In high school, he co-founded his school's first ever cricket

team, which went on to participate in the Public School Athletic League's inaugural cricket season, his campaign profile said.

He worked as a foreclosure prevention housing counsellor, helping low-income homeowners of colour across Queens fight off eviction and stay in their homes, according to his official profile.

His work led him to run for office and he was first elected to the New York State Assembly in 2020 and represented the 36th Assembly District and its neighbourhoods of Astoria, Ditmars-Steinway and Astoria Heights.

"After having spent every day negotiating with banks that valued profits over people, he came face-to-face with the reality that this housing crisis – one which predated this pandemic – was not natural to our lives, but instead a choice.

"A choice that was the consequence of decades of pro-corporate policies enacted across our country as well as



our state. Yet, like with any choice, we always have the opportunity to change and Zohran is excited to be a part of that," his profile said.

"Zohran is proud to be the first South Asian man to serve in the NYS Assembly as well as the first Ugandan and only the third Muslim to ever be a member of the body. For too long, communities such as these have been left out of our state's politics and priorities. Zohran will seek to amplify the voices of the preferably unheard across both

the district and the state for as long as he remains in office," it added.

Mamdani has promised to "lower costs and make life easier" for New Yorkers as the city gets "too expensive".

Mamdani has vowed that as Mayor, he will immediately freeze the rent for all stabilised tenants, and use every available resource to build the housing New Yorkers need and bring down the rent.

Promising fast, fare-free buses, his campaign said that

as Mayor, he'll permanently eliminate the fare on every city bus – and make them faster by rapidly building priority lanes, expanding bus queue jump signals, and dedicated loading zones to keep double parkers out of the way.

Mamdani would also implement free childcare for every New Yorker aged 6 weeks to 5 years, ensuring high quality programming for all families.

With food prices out of control, his campaign also promised that as Mayor, he will create a network of city-owned grocery stores focused on keeping prices low, not making a profit.

Mamdani has a plan to bring down the cost-of-living through city-owned grocery stores, universal childcare, and other bold proposals, and he knows exactly how to pay for it, too, the campaign said.

During his campaign, Mamdani has faced questions and scepticism about his relative inexperience as a lawmaker and whether he is fit to run a city

that has a budget of more than USD 100 billion.

"I believe that I am the best qualified for this position because of a recognition of the greatest challenge that the city faces, and that challenge is affordability," Mamdani had told the New York Times.

His campaign has touted his fight for the working class in and outside the legislature, including his hunger strike alongside taxi drivers to achieve more than USD 450 million in debt relief, winning over USD 100 million in the state budget for increased subway service and a successful fare-free bus pilot, and organising New Yorkers to defeat a proposed dirty power plan.

"The cost of living is crushing working people but Zohran believes that government can lower costs and make life easier in our city – he'll use every tool available to bring down the rent, create world class public transit, and make it easier to raise a family," his campaign has promised. (Agencies)

AAP alleges bus service collapse in Delhi, points to removal of Cluster Buses

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, NOV 5: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) today alleged a complete collapse of Delhi's bus system, claiming that commuters are facing severe hardships due to a drastic shortage of buses.

AAP's Delhi State President Saurabh Bharadwaj conducted visits to several bus stops in city, stating that he found passengers waiting for hours.

Bharadwaj alleged that the crisis began after the BJP-led government removed cluster buses from the roads in April. He reported that at the Mandi House bus stop, commuters told him they now wait for up to an hour for a bus, a situation they claim has worsened over the last two months.



The AAP leader asserted that the shortage is most acute on routes to East Delhi. He claimed that buses to areas like Laxmi Nagar and Anand Vihar have become scarce and that specific routes have been discontinued.

According to him, when buses finally arrive, they are often too overcrowded to board, leading to immense passenger frustration, especially during peak evening hours.

Later at the Chirag Delhi bus stop, Bharadwaj alleged that passengers on routes 419 and 423, which connect South Delhi to Old Delhi, are facing waits of an hour or more. He described these routes as critical lifelines for daily commuters.

The AAP has questioned the government's rationale for the service disruption. Bharadwaj stated that while depot renovation has been cited as a reason, the party alleged that the government's approach has been poorly planned, causing maximum public inconvenience.

The party contended that the removal of cluster buses has disproportionately harmed residents of East Delhi and those travelling to major hospitals. UNI

India, Belgium reaffirm commitment to advancing fair, mutually beneficial India-EU FTA

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, NOV 5: India and Belgium held the third round of Foreign Office Consultations in Brussels today during which they reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a balanced, fair and mutually beneficial India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The talks were co-chaired by Sibi George, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs of India, and Theodora Gentzis, President of the Board, Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

This meeting follows the successful visit of Princess Astrid of Belgium leading an Economic Delegation to India in March 2025. Regular high-level political visits and interactions including the visit of Belgian Deputy Prime Min-

ister/Foreign Minister to India and the External Affairs Minister to Belgium have provided guidance and renewed momentum to bilateral relations, a statement said.

During the Consultations, the two delegations reviewed the full spectrum of India-Belgium relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the bilateral partnership. Key areas discussed included trade and investment cooperation, technology, science and innovation, defence and security, renewable energy, education and people to people relations. Both sides also discussed the importance of deepening India-European union (EU) ties, following the historic visit of the EU College of Commissioners to India in February this year and the communication on the new



India-EU Strategic Agenda.

They reaffirmed their joint commitment to advancing a comprehensive, balanced, fair and

mutually beneficial India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Further, the Consultations covered cooperation in multilat-

eral fora and institutional dialogue mechanisms. The two sides also exchanged perspectives on regional and global issues of importance.

The Foreign Office Consultations reaffirmed both sides shared commitment to further deepen their bilateral relationship in a multidimensional manner – political, economic, investment, technology, defence, and people-to-people spheres.

The meeting in Brussels comes as India and the EU are pushing ahead with their negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Senior EU negotiators are currently in New Delhi (November 3-7) for high-level consultations to resolve key outstanding issues, with the aim to finalise a deal by the end of 2025. UNI

Rahul Gandhi escalates vote fraud allegations in Haryana, ECI denies claims, questions Congress's vigilance

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, NOV 5: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi intensified his accusations of large-scale voter fraud in Haryana on Wednesday, alleging that nearly 25 lakh votes were stolen in the recent Assembly elections.

Speaking at a press conference, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha charged that the Election Commission of India was complicit in undermining the democratic process by ignoring widespread irregularities in the electoral rolls.

"The exit polls showed Congress winning, but the final results tell a different story," Gandhi stated emphatically. "In postal ballots, Congress was leading, but the official outcomes do not reflect that. I bring you this with 101 percent truth."

Gandhi detailed alarming irregularities, including a woman's photograph appearing on 22 different voter ID cards and an individual being registered with 500 voters at one address.

He described this as a "centralized



operation" and referred to it as the "Brazil model" of vote manipulation. He also claimed that one in eight voter IDs in Haryana is fake, with over 1.24 lakh counterfeit photos found. Additionally, discrepancies in voter names and ages across lists raised further concerns about the integrity of the rolls.

Criticizing the ECI, Gandhi accused it of refusing to use software capable of detecting duplicate voters. "We asked the ECI to run the software to

identify voters with the same name and address, but they refused. The reason is clear—they are aiding the BJP," he alleged.

Gandhi also condemned the classification of voters under "house number zero" as homeless, stating that ground verification revealed many were actual residents, calling the Chief Election Commissioner's statement "deliberate misinformation." He cited a BJP leader from Palwal with 66 voters registered at his residence as evidence of systematic manipulation.

This controversy follows Gandhi's previous criticism of the ECI over voter list deletions in Karnataka's Mahadevanapura Assembly seat, where he accused the Commission of shielding those undermining democracy—a charge the ECI dismissed as baseless.

Moreover, as the debate intensifies, demands for transparency and accountability in India's electoral processes grow louder, highlighting the critical need to ensure the integrity of democracy and public trust. UNI

PM Modi honors 'Bihar Kokila' Sharda Sinha on first death anniversary

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, NOV 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today paid a tribute to the late folk singing legend, Sharda Sinha, affectionately known as the 'Bihar Kokila,' on her first death anniversary. The Prime Minister acknowledged her immense contribution to the promotion of Bihar's rich art and cultural heritage.

In a post on his official X handle, PM Modi stated, "On the first death anniversary of Bihar Kokila Sharda Sinha ji, heartfelt tribute to her."

He further emphasized her lasting impact, adding, "She gave a new identity to Bihar's art and culture through folk songs, for which she will always be remembered. Her melodious songs associated with the great festival Chhath will forever remain etched in the hearts of the people."

A renowned folk singer, Sharda Sinha was celebrated for her soulful renditions of traditional Bihari folk songs, particularly those central to the auspicious Chhath Puja festival. Her timeless music resonated with audiences across generations, earning her the beloved title 'Bihar Kokila.' UNI

Rijiju rejects Rahul Gandhi's vote theft claims, accuses Congress of political diversion

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI NOV 5: union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju today strongly dismissed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegations of large-scale vote theft in Haryana, accusing him of making baseless claims to divert attention from the party's struggles in Bihar and mislead young voters.

Speaking at a press briefing,

Rijiju said, "Rahul Gandhi held a press conference not to focus on the Bihar polls, but to hide his failures by raising the Haryana issue. This clearly shows Congress has nothing substantial left in Bihar, so they resort to distractions." He urged Gandhi to concentrate on serious matters rather than spreading unfounded accusations.

Rijiju ridiculed Gandhi's recurring warnings of an impending "hydrogen bomb"

of electoral fraud, remarking, "Rahul Gandhi says the bomb is going to explode, but it never does." He also pointed to internal turmoil within Haryana Congress, citing senior leaders who admitted to organizational weaknesses and infighting. "When their own leaders confess to losing due to their own conflicts, and Rahul Gandhi blames the Election Commission, who will believe him?" he questioned.



The minister further criticized Gandhi's frequent overseas trips during critical election periods, suggesting the Congress leader imports foreign narratives to create "baseless stories" and waste public time. "Politicians should address real issues, not indulge in futile distractions," Rijiju added.

Earlier in the day, Gandhi alleged a massive voter fraud scheme in Haryana involving nearly 25 lakh fake votes, dupli-

cate entries, and manipulated electoral rolls. He accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of misleading the public about the classification of homeless voters and exposed cases of bogus voter IDs.

Rijiju labeled these allegations "misguided and irresponsible," defending the BJP's commitment to democratic values and fair elections. He also accused Congress of shielding Gandhi and deflecting blame

onto Electronic Voting Machines, stating, "Their so-called 'hydrogen bomb' allegations have never detonated."

As the political temperature rises ahead of key state assembly polls, Rijiju's robust defense aims to assure voters of the government's dedication to electoral integrity, while highlighting the deepening polarization within India's political landscape, especially among the influential youth vote. UNI



Knee Surgery Rules R Ashwin Out Of BBL 2025-26

■ ESPNCRICINFO

CHENNAI: Ashwin said he was "gutted" to miss the opportunity, which would have made him the first capped India player to play in the BBL, while Thunder said they were "working closely with him on a revised schedule of activity" that could include appearances at games in a non-playing capacity.

The offspinner released a letter on Instagram to Thunder fans explaining that he had hurt his knee while training in Chennai and had undergone a procedure, which meant he would be unavailable to play for them this BBL season, which runs from December 14 until January 25.

Ashwin's retirement from the IPL earlier this year made it possible for him to play in overseas leagues, but the deal with Thunder, who he had committed the entire BBL season to once he went unsold in the ILT20 auction, was the only one that had been confirmed.

"I'm gutted to miss BBL15," Ashwin was quoted as saying in a Thunder state-

ment. "My focus now is recovery and coming back stronger. I'm grateful to the Thunder family and the fans for the warmth they've already shown me. Trent [Copeland, Thunder general manager] and the entire management made me feel part of the club from our very first conversation.

"If rehab and travel plans allow, I'd love to be around the group later in the season and meet the fans. Wishing both Thunder teams a big year."

It is a huge blow to Thunder and Copeland, who had gone above and beyond to lure Ashwin to Sydney.

"Everyone at Sydney Thunder was devastated to learn of Ash's knee injury that has ruled him out of BBL15, and we wish him well in his recovery," Copeland said. "From the moment we first spoke with Ash, his commitment to Thunder was clear. We are hopeful of welcoming him into our dugout for part of BBL15, introducing him to our fans at events and building a long-term relationship. While disappointing for the club, we have built two champion-

ship-contending squads and expect to continue the progress of recent seasons in WBBL11 and BBL15."

Ashwin's absence is also a major blow to the BBL. Cricket Australia CEO Todd Greenberg and head of the BBL Alistair Dobson had been in contact with Ashwin about playing in the BBL prior to him signing with Thunder.

The anticipation of having a capped Indian player of Ashwin's stature was enormous and there was particular excitement about him playing alongside David Warner at Thunder and bowling to a host of Australia's stars including Steven Smith and Glenn Maxwell, as well as a highly anticipated match-up with Pakistan's Babar Azam who is set to play for Sydney Sixers after Pakistan's national players were cleared to take part in the BBL.

Thunder now have the opportunity to sign an injury replacement player but they are already well stocked in the spin department with Chris Green, Tanveer Sangha, Pakistan's Shadab Khan and Tom Andrews already on the list.

Record World Cup tally takes Wolvaardt past Mandhana to No. 1 in ODI rankings

■ ESPNCRICINFO

MUMBAI: Laura Wolvaardt has crossed Smriti Mandhana to get to the No. 1 spot in the ICC's ODI batting rankings for women after her centuries in the semi-final and final of the World Cup in India.

Wolvaardt's 169 in the win against England in the semi-final, and then the 101 in a losing cause against India in the final, gave her an aggregate of 571 runs in the tournament, a record for World Cups, and that took her up to 814 ratings points, a career high for her, and three more than Mandhana's 811.

Mandhana was the No. 1 batter in the rankings throughout the World Cup, but was below her best in the knockouts, scoring 24 in the semi-final against Australia, and 45 in the final. She still finished second on the World Cup run-scorers' list.

Ellyse Perry, meanwhile, made a top-ten move to seventh with a knock of 77 in the semi-final against India, sharing the spot with Sophie Devine, who retired from ODI cricket after the tournament, where New Zealand failed to make the semi-finals.

Jemimah Rodrigues was the star of the semi-final against Australia, scoring a match-winning unbeaten 127, which pushed her up nine spots to



No. 10, while Phoebe Litchfield, Australia's top-scorer in the semi-final with 119, jumped 13 spots to 13th.

Marizanne Kapp, alongside Wolvaardt, was the hero for South Africa in the semi-final against England, with returns of 5 for 20 with the ball, and that took her up to second spot among bowlers, a jump of two places. That leaves Kapp only behind England's Sophie Ecclestone. Annabel Sutherland (sixth) and Kim Garth (seventh) also moved up a spot each inside the top ten, where their team-mate Alana King is at No. 3, pushed down by Kapp.

Deepti Sharma, the Player of the Tournament at the World Cup, had seven wickets and 82 runs across the knockouts, and moved up a spot up to fourth on the allrounders' rankings, crossing Sutherland in the process.

Arya and Suryavanshi in Jitesh-led India A squad at Rising Stars T20 Asia Cup

■ ESPNCRICINFO

RAIPUR: Jitesh Sharma has been named captain of the India A squad for the upcoming Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Rising Stars Asia Cup, earlier the Emerging Teams tournament, to be played in Doha from November 14 to 23. Naman Dhir has been appointed his deputy. The selectors have also included 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi in the squad, which explains his absence from the four-team Under-19 Challenger Trophy. Over the years, that tournament has been used as a key marker by the junior national selection panel to finalise their squad for next year's Under-19 World Cup - for which Suryavanshi appears to be a certainty.



The 15-members squad, picked by Ajit Agarkar and his senior men's selection panel, comprises some stellar IPL performers, most notably Punjab Kings and Delhi Premier League (DPL) star Priyansh Arya.

ACC Rising Stars tournament

schedule

Nov 14 - Oman vs Pak; Ind vs UAE

Nov 15 - Ban vs HK; Afg vs SL

Nov 16 - Oman vs UAE; Ind vs Pak

Nov 17 - HK vs SL; Afg vs Ban

Nov 18 - Pak vs UAE; Ind vs

Oman

Nov 19 - Afg vs HK; Ban vs SL

Nov 21 - Semi-finals: A1 vs B2; B1 vs A2

Nov 23 - Final

In his maiden IPL campaign in 2025, Arya struck 475 runs at a strike rate of 179.24 - the third-best in terms of runs for the franchise behind Shreyas Iyer and Prabhsimran Singh. Last week, Arya was handed a first-class debut by Delhi in the Ranji Trophy.

The other key state and IPL performers include Abhishek Porel, currently captaining Bengal in Abhimanyu Easwaran's absence, and Harsh Dubey, who has been a regular feature across various India A squads over the past few months. The fast bowlers include Gurjapneet Singh, Vyshak Vijay-

kumar, Yuvraj Singh and Yash Thakur - all of whom are part of BCCI's targeted pool of fast bowlers. Ramandeep Singh and Suryansh Shedge are the seam-bowling allrounders.

Pakistan A and Oman will kick off the tournament, with the showpiece India A vs Pakistan A match slotted for November 16. The teams are divided into two groups: Group A has Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka, while Group B has India, Oman, Pakistan and UAE.

This will be the first cricketing exchange between the men's teams of India and Pakistan since the senior Asia Cup in September, though the senior women's teams faced off at the ODI World Cup earlier this month.

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