

Srinagar
Thursday
October 22 | 2026
10 Jamad ul Awal 1448 AH
Issue No: 252
Volume: 16
Pages: 12
Price :Rs: 2/-

16TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
HEADLINES
TODAY
Voice To The Voiceless
www.dailyheadlinestoday.com



P:12
Iyer backs in-form openers as Sooryavanshi waits for chance

LG Sinha Vows to Root Out Terrorism, Pays Tribute to J&K Police Martyrs

Warns terror supporters of strict legal action; says sacrifices of security personnel will continue to inspire the nation

36,852 Police Personnel Laid Down Lives in Line of Duty, 154 Martyred in Past Year

Maresh Dixit, Director IB, Pays Tribute to Fallen Personnel on Police Commemoration Day, Lauds Their Valour and Commitment to National Security

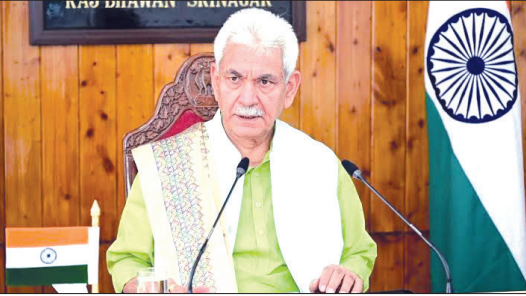
HT NEWS DESK / CNS

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21 : Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Maresh Dixit, on Tuesday said that 154 police personnel had sacrificed their lives in the line of duty over the past year, taking the total number of police martyrs across the country to 36,852. Paying tribute to the fallen personnel on Police Commemoration Day, Dixit lauded their exceptional

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HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday



paid solemn tribute to police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty on Police Commemoration Day, reaffirming the government's resolve to eliminate terrorism and its support networks from Jammu and Kashmir.

Remembering the courage, dedication and patriotism of the martyrs, the LG assured their families of continued support and

welfare measures, stressing that the nation must honour their sacrifices through meaningful action. He lauded the Jammu and Kashmir Police for its distinguished role in maintaining law and order, combating terrorism and assisting people during

>>> MORE ON P 02

IGP Kashmir Salutes Police Martyrs, Says Their Valour Will Remain a Guiding Light

Pays tribute to fallen heroes on Police Commemoration Day, honours their sacrifice and stands in solidarity with bereaved families

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Sujit Kumar, on Tuesday paid glowing tributes to police martyrs on Police Commemoration Day, lauding their courage, dedication and supreme sacrifices in the line of duty. In his message, the IGP said the Jammu and Kashmir Police would always remember and honour the brave personnel who laid down their lives to protect people and uphold peace. He said the martyrs

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Omar Orders Tight Winter Preparedness, Strict Power Schedule Enforcement Across J&K

CM directs coordinated snow clearance, advance notice of unscheduled power cuts and round-the-clock emergency healthcare in snowbound areas

HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, October 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday directed all

officers to coordinate snow clearance among the Roads and Buildings Department, Mechanical Engineering Department, Srinagar Municipal



departments and agencies to strengthen winter preparedness across Jammu and Kashmir, emphasising coordinated snow clearance, uninterrupted essential services and effective emergency response in vulnerable areas. Chairing a high-level meeting, the Chief Minister called for the appointment of nodal

Corporation, urban local bodies, PMGSY and other agencies, ensuring timely restoration of road connectivity during snowfall. Reviewing the electricity situation, he ordered strict implementation of notified power curtailment schedules and

>>> MORE ON P 02

J&K Plans Vulnerable Household Survey to Plug Welfare Gaps, Improve Targeted Assistance

Proposed enumeration to initially cover AAY families and old-age pension beneficiaries; multidimensional poverty indicators to guide interventions



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has proposed a household-level enumeration exercise to identify vulnerable families, assess multidimensional deprivation and improve the delivery of welfare schemes, with the initiative initially targeting Antyodaya Anna Yojana households and old-age pension beneficiaries. The proposal was discussed at a meeting chaired by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, where officials reviewed the region's progress in reducing multidimensional poverty.

According to the figures presented, Jammu and Kashmir's poverty headcount ratio declined from 12.56 per cent in 2015-16 to 4.80 per cent in 2019-21, while its Multidimensional Poverty Index score fell from 0.055 to 0.020. The proposed exercise will assess deprivation in health, education and living standards, alongside access to nutrition, healthcare, drinking water, electricity and connectivity. It will also identify gaps in existing welfare coverage and areas requiring targeted intervention. Officials will finalise the methodology

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BJP Launches Mission 2027 Push in UP, Amit Shah Likely to Attend Key Lucknow Meet

State executive committee to meet on October 30-31 to strengthen booth-level organisation and finalise election strategy

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 21: The Bharatiya Janata Party has stepped up preparations for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, with a two-day state executive committee meeting scheduled in Lucknow on October 30 and 31 to accelerate organisational mobilisation and formulate its election roadmap. According to sources, Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah is likely to visit Lucknow on October 30 and address party leaders, office-bearers and workers. The meeting is expected to focus on strengthening the party's organisational network down to the booth level, increasing grassroots engagement,



reviewing the political situation and assessing the performance of the state government. Party functionaries may be assigned specific targets and responsibilities to ensure that election preparations gain momentum well ahead of polling. Shah's anticipated participation is being viewed as a significant step in the party's Mission 2027 strategy, with discussions likely to cover the functioning of state- and district-level units and measures to improve coordination between the leadership and grassroots workers. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its

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Govt Earns ₹490 Crore from Scrap Disposal Under Swachhata Campaign 6.0: Jitendra Singh

DoPT initiates auction of obsolete IT equipment, electrical appliances and furniture through GeM portal

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 21: Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh on Wednesday highlighted the financial and environmental benefits of systematic scrap disposal while participating in an e-waste disposal drive at the Department of Personnel and Training under Special Swachhata Campaign 6.0. The minister said approximately 490 crore had been generated through scrap disposal during the campaign's first 15-17 days and expressed confidence that the figure would more than double by October 31. He said the government was using the Government e-Marketplace portal to bring greater transparency and efficiency to the disposal of obsolete



public assets. At DoPT, three auction notices issued on September 30 covered outdated IT equipment, electrical and electronic items, and office furniture, with a combined recommended reserve

price of around 9 lakh. The items include 152 desktops, 35 printers, scanners, photocopiers, UPS units, air conditioners, refrigerators, television sets, water

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Five-Year-Old Girl, Woman Killed as Bus Plunges Into Gorge in Udhampur; 16 Injured

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

UDHAMPUR, OCT 21: A five-year-old girl and a woman were killed and 16 other passengers injured

after a passenger bus skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge at Gulli Gala in the Latti-Basantgarh area of Udhampur district on Wednesday morning.

The bus, bearing registration number JK02AL-3477, was travelling from Pachouni to Ramnagar when the accident occurred at around 8 am on the Basantgarh-Ramnagar

road. According to reports, the driver lost control while negotiating a sharp curve, causing the vehicle to veer off the road and roll down into the gorge.

The five-year-old victim was identified as Takshika, daughter of Rakesh Kumar and a resident of Chatrari. The identity of the woman killed in the accident had not been

established in the reports available by the time of filing this story.

The impact left the bus badly mangled, while passengers sustained injuries of varying severity. Six of the injured were reported to be in critical condition and were referred for specialised treatment. The injured were initially

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HT BOTTOM NEWS

KPDCL Announces Scheduled Power Shutdowns Across Kashmir, Several Areas to Face Outages Until October 31

33 KV transmission lines to undergo maintenance on multiple dates; shutdowns also rescheduled at Zainakote, Pampore, Awantipora and Lassipora grid stations

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has announced a series of scheduled power shutdowns across several areas of the Kashmir Valley from October 22 to October 31, 2026, due to maintenance work on various 33 kV transmission lines and grid stations. The shutdowns will affect several localities in Ganderbal, Srinagar, Bandipora, Pulwama and Anantnag districts, with power supply scheduled to remain suspended for periods ranging from five to six hours on the specified dates.

According to the Chief Engineer,

Distribution, KPDCL, the shutdown of the 33 kV Alasteng-Nagbal line will affect Shuhama, Bakura, Darend, Fethapora, Gadoora, Tulbagh, Chundina, Saloora, Sherpathri and adjoining areas



from 9 am to 3 pm on October 31. The shutdown of the 33 kV Alasteng-Zakura line will affect Pandach.

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Kashmir Marathon Preparations Gather Pace, Div Com Orders Joint Inspection of Route

Departments directed to repair roads, ensure security and healthcare facilities, and finalise traffic arrangements ahead of the event

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg has directed officials to conduct a joint inspection of the inaugural venue and marathon route to identify shortcomings and ensure comprehensive preparations for the third edition of the Kashmir Marathon. Chairing a review meeting, Garg stressed the need for close coordination among departments to complete all logistical arrangements well before the event. The Roads and Buildings Department was directed to repair potholes and ensure proper levelling of the route, while the Public Health Engineering Department was asked to address leaking water pipelines. The Srinagar Municipal Corporation was instructed to deploy sufficient mobile toilet facilities, arrange

sweeper buses for participants requiring assistance and improve the appearance of road medians.



The Floriculture Department was tasked with decorating the inaugural stage, while authorities were directed to finalise a comprehensive traffic management plan and publicise the route in advance to minimise inconvenience to commuters. Garg

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Commissioner SMC inspects Achan Landfill Site

Reviews Waste Management Operations and Legacy Waste Bio-mining Project

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, today inspected the Achan landfill site and took stock of ongoing solid waste management operations, including the bio-remediation of legacy waste, functioning of the Leachate Treatment Plant, operations at the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste Processing Plant, and measures for fumigation and odour control management.

During the visit, the Commissioner reviewed the existing arrangements for waste handling, transportation, segregation and processing. He emphasised the need for better coordination among the concerned wings, efficient utilisation of available machinery and timely resolution of operational issues to ensure the smooth functioning of the facility and reduce the accumulation of unprocessed waste.

Dr. Basharat also inspected the bio-remediation project for legacy waste and reviewed the measures being undertaken for its scientific processing. He stressed the importance of ensuring the proper functioning and timely maintenance of machinery, streamlining waste transportation and strengthening processing arrangements to reduce the burden on the landfill.



Reviewing the functioning of the Leachate Treatment Plant and the C&D Waste Processing Plant, the Commissioner emphasised the need for their effective operation and proper management. He also reviewed the handling

of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) and stressed the importance of systematic storage and disposal arrangements, wherever required, to maintain orderly operations at the site.

Taking note of the need to maintain hygienic

conditions, the Commissioner directed the concerned officers to undertake fumigation and other appropriate measures to control odour emanating from the facility. He also stressed regular monitoring and the maintenance of cleanliness within and around the landfill site, in accordance with applicable solid waste management and environmental norms.

The inspection underscored the importance of coordinated efforts by the Corporation's sanitation, mechanical, transport, electrical and works wings in improving waste management operations. Effective legacy waste remediation, scientific processing and proper management of associated facilities remain essential to reducing pressure on the landfill, minimizing environmental risks and protecting public health.

SMC continues to focus on improving waste management operations through better coordination, efficient use of resources and environmentally responsible practices, with the aim of ensuring a cleaner and healthier Srinagar.

The Commissioner was accompanied by the Joint Commissioner, Works, SMC; Joint Commissioner, H&S, SMC; Solid Waste Management Officer and other officers of the Corporation.

Deputy Chief Minister chairs meeting to review construction of 50 bedded SDH Hazratbal building



SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today convened a meeting to review the ongoing construction of new 50 bedded building at Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Habak, Hazratbal, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar and senior officers, including the Chief Engineer, R&B Central, Superintending Engineer, Executive Engineer, Director Planning (R&B) Chief Town Planner and other officers.

Detailed deliberations were held on progress of the hospital building project, its implementation and coordination among the concerned departments. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the issues related to construction and the steps required for smooth execution of the project.

The hospital upgradation project, with a revised cost of 54.49 crore, envisages a modern four-storey facility with two basement levels and a capacity of 50 beds. The project, which had remained stalled for a considerable period, has recently resumed following the necessary relaxations approved by the Council of Ministers.

Emphasising the importance of strengthening the public healthcare infrastructure, the Deputy Chief Minister discussed the need for effective coordination among the concerned departments to facilitate the project's progress and ensure that the people of Hazratbal and adjoining areas benefit from improved healthcare facilities.

The meeting forms part of the government's efforts to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure and improve access to quality medical services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Power Shutdown by KPDCL

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL has informed that the Shutdown of 33 kV Alasteng Nagbal line will be observed due to which power supply to Shuhama, Bakura, Darend, Fethapora, Gadoora, Tulbagh, Chundina, Saloor, Sherpathri and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 31 October 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Alasteng Zakura line will be observed due to which power supply to Pandach, Pathan Colony, Gulabagh, Mir Mohalla, Umarhair, Nowbugh, Ahmad Nagar, 90 ft road, Khalmullah and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 pm on 25 October 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV Alasteng Power House line will be observed due to which power supply to Beehama, Arampora, Arch, Nunner, Manigam, Duderhama, Malshaibagh, Wail, Gutlibagh and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 02 pm on 27 & 29 October 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Kangan Wussan line will be observed due to which power supply to Wussan, Preng, Manigam, Haripora, Chattergul and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 27 & 29 October 2026.

Also, shutdown of 33 kV Kangan Kangan line will be observed due to which power supply to Mammur, Wangath, Kangan, Akhal, Baba Nagri and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 22 & 24 October 2026.

Div Com Kashmir reviews alignment of Srinagar Ring Road Phase-III, Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg on Wednesday chaired a meeting of officers to review the cahnge in proposed realignments of Srinagar Ring Road Phase-III (Lasjan-Pandach) and the Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC); Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; SSP Traffic; Vice Chairman, Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA); Project Director, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI); and officers from the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), and other concerned departments.

During the review of



Srinagar Ring Road Phase-III (Lasjan-Pandach), the Divisional Commissioner directed NHAI officials to compile comprehensive details of structures and departmental utilities falling within the proposed alignments including religious structures to access impediments & challenges and cost expenditure. He further directed the concerned authorities to explore modifications to the alignment to ensure that the road does

not encroach upon the city's major water body. Reviewing the proposed alignment of the Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover, the Divisional Commissioner directed the R&B Department to explore an alternative alignments from Qamarwari to Nalamar and onward to Karanagar. He emphasized the need to ensure connectivity to key facilities, including SMHS Hospital, while minimizing traffic disruptions during the execution of the project.

Panchayat Polls In Ladakh On Nov 21; Model Code Of Conduct Kicks In

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Oct 21 (KNS): The State Election Commission (SEC) of Ladakh on Wednesday announced that general elections to all Panchayat Halqas in the Union Territory will be held on November 21, 2026, asserting that the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has come into force with immediate effect.

Addressing a press conference here, State Election Commissioner Sudhanshu Pandey as per news agency Kashmir News Service (KNS) said the decision to hold fresh elections was necessitated as the last general elections to the Panchayat Halqas in Ladakh were held in November 2018, and new bodies are required to be constituted.

According to the election schedule issued by the Commission, the notification for the general elections will be issued by the Administrator and the SEC on Monday, October 26. The last date for filing nominations is November 2, while the scrutiny of papers will take place on November 3.

Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations by November 5. The polling

will be held on Saturday, November 21, and the entire election process is scheduled to be completed by November 30, 2026.

The SEC stated that Rule 7 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996 (as applicable to the UT of Ladakh) provides for calling upon the Panchayat Halqas to elect Sarpanches and Panches.

"Keeping in view the above, the State Election Commission, Ladakh, proposes to hold the next general elections to all Panchayat Halqas in the Union Territory of Ladakh as per the schedule reflected below," the official note read. Elaborating on the

stringent guidelines issued to ensure a level playing field, Commissioner Pandey as per KNS said the provisions of the MCC for the guidance of candidates and political parties will apply to these elections. The MCC mandates that no party or candidate shall indulge in any activity which may create or aggravate differences or mutual hatred, or cause friction between people belonging to different castes and communities. It strictly prohibits the use of places of worship for election propaganda and the use of public or private property for pasting posters without written permission.



JKHPMC clarifies position on Chowdrigund Pack House Project Reports on APEDA Refund Demand Do Not Present the Complete Picture; Revival Plan for Pack House Project in Shopian already made

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: In response to media reports regarding APEDA's demand for the refund of funds released for the Integrated Pack House and Cold Chamber Storage Project at Chowdrigund, Shopian, the Jammu and Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (JKHPMC) has clarified that the matter needs to be viewed in the context of the proposed revival of the project.

The project, conceived in 2005 with assistance from the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), could not be completed despite repeated extensions, primarily due to the frequent site and project design changes and default of the executing contractor. Action was taken against the contractor, including blacklisting and legal proceedings.

Recognising the importance of the facility for apple growers in Shopian and adjoining areas.

JKHPMC has undertaken a fresh technical assessment and prepared a



revival plan to complete the project with modern post-harvest infrastructure. Since the technology envisaged at the time of the project's conception has become outdated, the proposed plan incorporates facilities suited to current industry requirements. Given this fact, the revival plan had become inevitable.

The revival plan envisages a modern grading, packing and waxing line with

a capacity of 5 metric tonnes per hour, along with a Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facility of approximately 2,000 metric tonnes. The existing infrastructure of the original project will be utilised wherever technically feasible.

The project is proposed to be completed with an investment of around 20 crore from UT Government CAPEX for which the demand will be projected in budgetary

estimates in the ensuing financial year.

Once operational, the facility will enable scientific storage, improve post-harvest handling, reduce losses and allow growers to market their produce beyond the peak harvesting season. This is expected to improve market realisation for growers and strengthen the horticulture sector in Shopian, one of the major apple-producing districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The project will also become a source for local employment.

Regarding APEDA's demand for a refund of the assistance released for the original project, the matter will be taken up with the Government of India in terms clause 18 of the project MOU dated: 15th July 2005, for a considered view in light of the proposed revival and the commitment to complete the facility using J&K Government resources.

JKHPMC remains committed to reviving the stalled project, upgrading the infrastructure in line with present-day requirements and ensuring that the facility delivers its intended benefits to apple growers.

Six-Day Management Development Programme under RAMP concludes at Waqar Knowledge Centre Bandipora

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 21: The six-day Management Development Programme (MDP) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative, conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), concluded today at Waqar Knowledge Centre, Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

A total of 19 candidates successfully completed the programme. The participants are members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and are engaged in diverse business activities, including restaurants, handicrafts, manufacturing, agro-farming, free-range poultry and other enterprises.

The programme aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial and managerial capabilities of the participants, equipping them with knowledge of various funding avenues and sensitising them about activity-specific compliances and registration requirements. It also focused on facilitating the transition of their enterprises towards organised business sectors while enabling them to pursue expansion and diversification plans.



As part of the practical training component, participants were provided hands-on guidance on using digital platforms, including WhatsApp Business, Instagram Professional and Facebook, for business promotion. Each participant created her own business profiles using details of her products, merchandise and services to enhance their digital visibility and market outreach.

The course team also prepared preliminary business plans customised to the respective business activities of each participant. These plans are expected to help the trainees structure their growth and diversification proposals and present them to scheme-implementing agencies,

HT EDITORIAL

Winter Preparedness Must Deliver More Than Promises

Omar Abdullah's review meeting sets the direction; reliable electricity, strict accountability and effective implementation must now define Kashmir's winter response

Winter preparedness in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be judged by review meetings and official assurances alone. Its real test lies in whether people receive reliable electricity, uninterrupted drinking water, accessible healthcare and timely road clearance when temperatures plunge and snow-fall disrupts normal life. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's high-level review meeting on October 21 has outlined key priorities, but effective implementation remains the real challenge.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister reviewed arrangements for snow clearance, electricity and water supply, essential commodities and emergency healthcare. He stressed coordination among road-maintaining agencies, advance deployment of machinery and the designation of nodal officers to ensure timely action. His directions to follow notified power curtailment schedules strictly, communicate unscheduled outages and prevent unauthorised cuts are particularly significant as Kashmir prepares for another harsh winter.

Electricity remains one of the Valley's most pressing winter concerns. Prolonged outages affect households, students, businesses and essential services, adding to the hardships caused by freezing temperatures. While compliance with announced curtailment schedules is necessary, the government must also focus on reducing the duration and frequency of power cuts through adequate electricity procurement, timely maintenance and stronger distribution infrastructure.

The authorities must address technical and commercial losses, electricity theft and poor revenue recovery through targeted measures. Consumers who pay their bills regularly deserve fair treatment and dependable service. Unscheduled outages caused by genuine technical faults may be unavoidable, but timely communication, prompt restoration and accountability for unauthorised cuts must become standard practice.

The government must also ensure that tariff-related concerns are addressed through transparent billing and measurable improvements in service delivery. Asking consumers to bear higher costs without corresponding improvements in electricity supply risks further eroding public confidence.

Equally important is preparedness for heavy snowfall and prolonged isolation. Remote and vulnerable areas, including Gurez, Machhil and Karmah, require advance positioning of snow clearance machinery, adequate stocks of essential commodities and effective emergency medical arrangements. Similar attention must be given to vulnerable areas of Jammu division, where adverse weather can disrupt connectivity and access to essential services.

Road-maintaining agencies must work in close coordination to prevent delays arising from confusion over departmental responsibilities. Rural link roads and far-flung villages should not be neglected in favour of major highways and urban centres. Hospitals and health centres must remain prepared to handle emergencies, with adequate medicines, four-wheel-drive ambulances and helicopter services where necessary.

The administration should establish effective monitoring mechanisms, keep emergency control rooms and helpines operational, and ensure that public complaints receive timely attention. Field-level performance must be reviewed regularly so that shortcomings are identified and corrected before they turn into major crises.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's review meeting has established the priorities, but the success of the winter strategy will depend on how consistently these directions are implemented. Citizens must cooperate by conserving electricity, avoiding wastage and following official advisories, while the administration must fulfil its responsibilities with efficiency, fairness and sensitivity. Winter preparedness must be judged by performance, not promises. Reliable electricity, accessible roads, adequate essential supplies and timely healthcare are not seasonal favours but basic public responsibilities. As the cold intensifies, the government must ensure that its preparations translate into tangible relief and that no community is left to face the hardships of winter because of avoidable administrative failures.



Mohammad Hanief

E-commerce has moved far beyond being simply an alternative way of buying and selling goods. It has become one of the most influential forces shaping modern business, consumer behaviour and the digital economy. What was once considered a relatively new concept has now become an integral part of everyday life, changing the way people shop, businesses operate and markets function.

The rapid spread of smartphones, affordable internet connectivity, digital payments and social media has fundamentally transformed the commercial landscape. In India, this transformation is particularly visible. Online shopping is no longer confined to major metropolitan cities. Consumers in Tier-II, Tier-III and smaller towns are increasingly participating in the digital marketplace, while small businesses, artisans, retailers and service providers are finding new ways to reach customers beyond their traditional geographical boundaries. The growth of India's digital commerce ecosystem has been supported by a wider digital infrastructure. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), for instance, has become a central part of everyday transactions. According to government data, UPI accounted for 81 per cent of India's retail digital payment transactions by volume in 2024-25, demonstrating how deeply digital payments have become integrated into commercial activity.

This transformation has created enormous opportunities for businesses. An online enterprise can potentially reach customers across the country and, depending on its product and logistics capabilities, international markets as



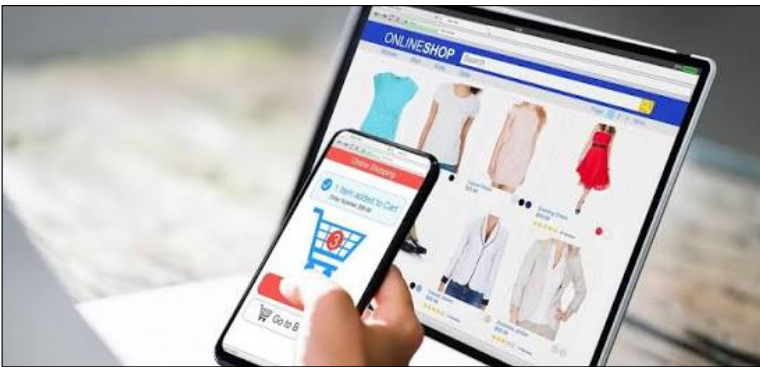
Dr. Vijay Garg

Wheat is one of the most important food crops in the world, providing a major share of the daily calories and nutrients consumed by billions of people. From chapatis in India to bread and pasta in other parts of the world, wheat is central to food security and human nutrition. However, rising atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂), a major driver of climate change, is creating a less visible challenge: the potential decline in the protein content and nutritional quality of wheat. This development raises important questions about the future of food security, particularly in countries where wheat is a dietary staple.

Carbon dioxide is essential for plant growth. During photosynthesis, plants absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere and use sunlight and water to produce carbohydrates. Under certain conditions, higher CO₂ concentrations can increase photosynthesis and improve plant growth. This phenomenon, often called the CO₂ fertilisation effect, may increase crop yields, especially when water and other growth requirements are adequate. Yet, more plant

well. Unlike a traditional shop that operates within a particular locality and fixed hours, an online business can remain accessible around

convenience and speed, particularly for groceries, household products and other frequently purchased items. India's quick-commerce



the clock. Customers can compare products, read reviews, make payments and place orders at their convenience.

For entrepreneurs, e-commerce can reduce some of the traditional barriers to entering the market. Digital marketing allows businesses to target specific groups of consumers, while social media provides relatively accessible channels for building a brand and communicating directly with customers. Data analytics can help businesses understand purchasing patterns and improve their products, pricing and marketing strategies.

India's e-commerce growth is increasingly being driven by consumers outside the largest cities. Industry estimates indicate that India's online shopper base reached nearly 290-300 million in 2025, with Tier-II and smaller cities accounting for a substantial share of new shoppers. This expansion is significant because it indicates that digital commerce is gradually becoming a nationwide phenomenon rather than an urban privilege.

Another major development is the emergence of quick commerce. Consumers are increasingly becoming accustomed to

segment has expanded rapidly, creating new opportunities for retailers, brands, logistics companies and technology providers. At the same time, it has intensified competition and placed greater pressure on businesses to improve supply chains, inventory management and delivery systems.

The expansion of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) represents another important development in India's digital marketplace. Unlike a conventional single-platform marketplace, ONDC is designed as an open network through which buyers and sellers can interact across participating platforms. The government has highlighted its potential to reduce customer-acquisition costs and broaden market access for small businesses and sellers.

This development is particularly relevant for India's small businesses and traditional enterprises. Digital commerce can help a local manufacturer, handicraft producer, farmer-producer organisation or artisan reach customers much further away than would be possible through a conventional shop. Recent government data also indicates increasing participation of MSMEs and service providers in digital commerce

networks.

For traditional businesses, however, the digital transition is not without difficulties. Many small retailers lack the technical knowledge, financial resources or digital infrastructure required to compete effectively online. Managing websites, online catalogues, digital advertising, customer service, logistics and returns can be challenging for a small enterprise. The growing complexity of digital markets means that simply establishing an online presence is no longer enough.

Competition is another major concern. As more businesses move online, consumers have a wider range of choices. Price competition can become intense, and businesses must increasingly compete on quality, delivery speed, customer experience, reliability and brand reputation. The pressure to offer discounts and rapid delivery can also affect profitability, particularly for smaller enterprises.

Consumer expectations have changed alongside the growth of e-commerce. Customers increasingly expect simple interfaces, quick responses, transparent pricing, reliable delivery and convenient return policies. Artificial intelligence is now adding another dimension to this transformation. AI-powered recommendation systems, customer-service chatbots, demand forecasting, fraud detection and personalised marketing are becoming increasingly relevant to online businesses. The opportunity is considerable, but businesses also need to ensure that the use of technology remains transparent and responsible.

The rapid adoption of digital commerce also brings serious concerns about privacy and cybersecurity. E-commerce transactions involve personal and financial information, including names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and payment-related data. A security breach can therefore cause financial losses and undermine consumer confidence. The original article rightly identifies privacy violations and cybersecurity as among the major challenges confronting online businesses.

Rising Carbon Dioxide and the Threat to Wheat Protein

growth does not necessarily mean better nutrition.

Scientific research has shown that elevated atmospheric CO₂ can reduce the concentration of protein and certain minerals in several important food crops, including wheat. Although the size of the effect varies with the wheat variety, growing conditions, soil fertility and other environmental factors, the overall concern is significant. A larger harvest may contain less protein per unit of grain, creating a nutritional challenge even when total production increases.

One explanation lies in the changing balance between carbohydrates and other nutrients. When plants absorb additional CO₂, they may accumulate more carbohydrates in their grains. If the accumulation of starch increases faster than the accumulation of nitrogen-containing compounds, the proportion of protein in the grain can decline. This is sometimes described as a dilution effect. It does not mean that carbon dioxide directly destroys protein; rather, changes in plant growth and nutrient allocation can alter the grain's nutritional composition.

Nitrogen plays a crucial role in the formation of plant proteins. Wheat absorbs nitrogen from the soil and uses it to produce amino acids and proteins needed for grain development. Under elevated CO₂, plants may not absorb or use nitrogen in the same proportion as they accumulate carbohydrates. The result can be a reduction in grain protein concentration. However, the response is not identical in every crop or environment, and soil nitrogen availability, temperature, water supply and

farming practices can influence the outcome.

The implications extend beyond agricultural statistics. Protein is essential for growth, tissue repair, immune function and the maintenance of muscles. Wheat provides an important portion of dietary protein in many populations, particularly where families have limited access to diverse foods such as pulses, dairy products, eggs, fish and meat. A modest decline in wheat protein may therefore have a greater impact on people whose diets already lack sufficient protein and other essential nutrients.

Children, pregnant women, older adults and economically disadvantaged households may be particularly vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies. In regions where wheat supplies a large share of daily food energy, declining grain quality could make it more difficult to meet nutritional needs without changing dietary habits or increasing access to other protein sources. The concern is not that wheat will suddenly become unsuitable for consumption, but that gradual changes in its nutritional composition could add to existing public-health challenges. India has a particular reason to take this issue seriously. Wheat is a staple food across large parts of the country, and millions of households depend on wheat-based foods for daily nourishment. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, water stress and other climate-related pressures already complicate agricultural production. If elevated CO₂ also reduces grain protein concentration, the country may face a dual challenge:

maintaining adequate yields while protecting the nutritional quality of its food supply.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the effects of rising CO₂ are complex. Higher CO₂ can sometimes improve crop growth or water-use efficiency, but these benefits may be weakened by heat stress, drought, nutrient limitations and extreme weather. Climate change does not affect every wheat-growing region in the same way. Therefore, scientists must evaluate both crop quantity and nutritional quality rather than assuming that higher yields automatically guarantee better food security.

Researchers and agricultural institutions can help address this challenge through the development of wheat varieties that maintain protein levels under elevated CO₂ and changing climatic conditions. Plant breeding should consider grain yield, protein concentration, essential amino acids, mineral content and resistance to heat and drought. Improved nitrogen management, soil health, balanced fertilisation and efficient irrigation can also support crop quality, although fertiliser use must be carefully managed to avoid environmental damage.

Agricultural research should be complemented by better nutrition policies. Promoting diverse diets that include pulses, lentils, milk and other nutritious foods can reduce excessive dependence on a single staple.

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No to drugs yes to happiness



Today, the whole world is fighting against the problem of drug addiction. Why are we not aware of this serious problem in our society? We know about the situation, but unfortunately, we often think only about ourselves. We have become selfish and irresponsible, and we do not pay enough attention to what is happening around us.

We must remember one thing: if our surroundings are not safe, we can never be completely safe. A peaceful and safe society is important for a good and successful life.

It is very unfortunate that many school-going children and young people are becoming involved in drugs, directly or indirectly. It is the responsibility of everyone to take care of our surroundings. Every child is important to us, and we must take these issues seriously.

Drug addiction can spread like a flood and destroy a society within a short time. Before this flood of drugs causes serious damage, we must take strong steps to protect our young generation.

According to biological science, human life passes through different stages. Adolescence is an important stage of life when many physical, emotional, and hormonal changes take place. During this period, the body and mind develop rapidly. Teenagers may sometimes become impatient, stubborn, rude, or rebellious. Some may also become involved in harmful activities

such as drug use or other unhealthy habits.

Therefore, teenagers need proper guidance, counselling, motivation, and support during this important period of their lives.

Our society has many talented and respected people who have done great things for the nation. We should use their experience and knowledge to guide our young generation. We should also make proper use of the facilities available to us.

The government and administration are making efforts to reduce crime and drug addiction among young people. However, it is unfortunate that we are still far from completely solving this problem. Government departments, schools, parents, teachers, and society must work together.

With the passage of time, we experience both positive and negative events in our society. Every event teaches us something. We should learn from these experiences and guide our young people towards positive activities.

One such positive activity is sports and physical exercise. Today, sports and fitness

activities are becoming popular throughout the country. I would like to encourage my friends, especially young people, to take part in sports and physical activities instead of harmful activities.

Benefits of Bodybuilding and Exercise

From my own experience, bodybuilding and regular exercise can be useful activities. They can help us stay physically active, fit, and confident.

Some important benefits are:

- Exercise can improve our overall health and fitness.
- It can strengthen our muscles and bones.
- It can help control extra body fat when combined with a balanced diet.
- Regular exercise can improve our physical appearance and confidence.
- Exercise can help us feel fresh, active, and relaxed.
- Physical activity can also support our mental well-being and reduce stress.

These points are based on my personal

experience. First of all, we should motivate ourselves and say:

"I want to stay fit, look good, remain healthy, and stay away from drugs."

I want to motivate my friends towards sports and physical activities so that they can remain fit, healthy, and active.

Today, gyms and fitness centres are available in many places. They have modern equipment and trained trainers. This gives us a good opportunity to exercise and improve our fitness.

After starting exercise, we should also follow a balanced and healthy diet. Diet plays an important role in bodybuilding and fitness. We should eat nutritious food and drink enough water.

Gyms can provide equipment, music, a clean environment, and guidance from trainers. We should always follow proper instructions from a qualified trainer to reduce the risk of muscle and bone injuries.

I suggest that young people take part in sports, exercise, and other healthy activities. These activities can keep us away from drugs and other harmful habits. I hope everyone will feel healthier, stronger, and more confident.

The government administration at the district level should also consider providing gym and sports facilities at the Panchayat level so that young people in rural areas can easily take part in physical activities.

Finally, I would like to say that we should focus on natural and balanced nutrition and avoid unnecessary supplements. Proper exercise, healthy food, discipline, and a positive attitude can help us build a healthy life.

Let us protect our young generation. Let us keep our surroundings safe. Let us choose sports, health, education, and a positive life instead of drugs.

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The battlefield's momentum from long distances



By M S Nazki

Training for tomorrow's battlefield | Technology, Precision, Combat Excellence. Artillery adds dignity to what otherwise would be a vulgar brawl.

- God fights on the side with the best artillery..... Napoleon Bonaparte
- Do not forget your dogs of war, your big guns, which are the most-to-be respected arguments of the rights of kings'-Frederick the Great
- The work for giants...to serve the guns well... "I do not have to tell you who won the war: You know, the artillery did..... Gen. George S. Patton
- Leave the artillery men alone; they are an obstinate lot..... Napoleon Bonaparte
- There is no job in the field artillery for the weak, the timid or the indecisive
- Artillerymen believe the world consists of two kinds of people: other artillerymen and targets
- Cannon to the right of them, cannon to the left of them, cannon in front of them, volley'ed and thundered..... The Charge of the Light Brigade!
- A battery of artillery is worth a thousand muskets. Gen. William T. Sherman
- Napoleonic-era commanders emphasized artillery's central role in breaking enemy formations and shaping battles.
- World War land I gave rise to many observer-and-doctrine quotes stressing artillery's destructive primacy and the logistical imperative of ammunition supply.
- Lt Gen Rajesh Pushkar, AVSM, VSM, #Army Commander, Southern Command, visited Nashik Military Station and reviewed initiatives focused on technology-enabled training, innovation and future battlefield readiness.
- At the Artillery Centre, Nashik Road, he reviewed training infrastructure, contemporary methodologies and operational preparedness, emphasising the need to maintain the highest standards in training #Agniveers while adapting to emerging technologies.
- The School Of Artillery, Devali, showcased its Centre of Expertise for UAS Training, encompassing specialised courses, loitering munitions, simulator laboratories and advanced drone technologies, alongside a range of contemporary combat-training capabilities.
- His visit to the Combat Army Aviation Training School (CAATS) included a review of helicopter and Remotely Piloted Aircraft training arenas, state-of-the-art infrastructure and initiatives aimed at enhancing combat effectiveness.
- Commending the dedication and professionalism of all ranks, the Army Commander underscored the importance of operational agility, technological proficiency and uncompromising training standards.
- Artillery refers to large-caliber military weapons designed



to hurl heavy projectiles far beyond the range of standard infantry small arms. Its history spans from ancient mechanical siege engines to modern digital rocket systems.

- Ancient and Medieval Origins (400 BC – 14th Century)
- Mechanical Siege Engines: Early artillery used tension, torsion, or counterweights. This included catapults, ballistae, and trebuchets used by ancient Greeks, Romans, and medieval armies to smash castle walls.
- Gunpowder Invention: Gunpowder was invented in China during the 12th and 13th centuries, initially used in fire lances and early metal-barreled eruptors.
- Introduction to Europe: Black powder arrived in Europe via trade and the Silk Road/Moors by the 1300s, leading to the creation of the first metal cannons.
- The Gunpowder and Renaissance Era (14th – 18th Century)
- Early Wrought-Iron Cannons: In the 14th century, large iron and bronze cannons emerged to fire heavy stone balls against fortifications, famously used during the Siege of Algeiras (1343–1344) and by figures like Frederick I of Brandenburg.
- Design Improvements: The addition of trunnions (side-lugs) made elevation easier, while wheeled carriages and limbers replaced clumsy wooden beds.
- Tactical Evolution: Leaders like Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and later Napoleon Bonaparte revolutionized field artillery by making guns lighter, more mobile, and massed together for decisive blows.
- The Industrial Revolution and Civil Wars (19th Century)
- Rifling and Breech-Loading: Mid-19th-century metallurgy introduced steel barrels, rifling (grooves inside the barrel for spin and accuracy), and breech-loading mechanisms.
- Mobile Field Batteries: During the American Civil War and the Mexican-American War, mobile bronze and iron smoothbores (such as the 12-pounder Napoleon and Parrot guns) dominated the battlefield.
- Recoil Systems: Late-century innovations—most notably the French 75 mm field gun in 1897—introduced hydropneumatic recoil systems that kept the gun steady, allowing rapid fire without re-aiming.
- World Wars and Modern Warfare (20th – 21st Century)
- Indirect Fire and Trench Warfare: In World War I, heavy howitzers and mortars replaced direct-fire guns, firing high-arching shells into trenches and using tactics like the "creeping barrage".
- Mechanization: Tractors, trucks, and self-propelled guns (like the WWIIM7 Priest) replaced horse-drawn limbers. Specialized anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns (such as the German 88mm) also evolved.
- Rockets and Precision Guidance: The late 20th and 21st centuries shifted toward multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS), GPS/laser-guided precision munitions, and digital target-acquisition networks.
- Artillery is considered a force to reckon with because of its unmatched ability to deliver devastating firepower, suppress enemy movements, and shift the battlefield's momentum from long distances. Often called the "King of Battle," artillery combines immense destructive capability with modern technology to remain the backbone of land combat.
- Here is why artillery dominates the modern battlefield, grouped by its core capabilities:
- Devastating Firepower & Destruction
- Massive Volume: Artillery can rain hundreds of high-explosive shells onto a target area within minutes.
- Extreme Range: Modern systems can strike targets tens of kilometers away, well before infantry or tanks can close the distance.
- Area Denial: It can completely obliterate defensive fortifications, supply depots, and troop concentrations, rendering an entire sector unusable for the enemy.
- Psychological & Tactical Suppression

- Shock and Awe: The relentless sound and impact of artillery fire shatter enemy morale and cause severe psychological distress.
- Pinning Down Troops: It forces enemy soldiers to seek cover, effectively freezing their movement and allowing friendly forces to maneuver safely.
- Blinding the Enemy: Smoke rounds can screen friendly movements, while illumination rounds expose enemy positions at night.
- High Precision & Technological Advances
- Smart Munitions: Modern artillery uses GPS and laser-guided shells (like the Excalibur) to hit specific targets—such as a single vehicle or bunker—with pinpoint accuracy.
- Drone Integration: Real-time aerial surveillance from drones allows artillery crews to adjust their aim instantly, making first-strike hits highly lethal.
- Counter-Battery Warfare: Advanced radar systems can track the trajectory of incoming enemy shells and calculate the exact location of the enemy guns within seconds to fire back.
- Unmatched Flexibility & Sustainability
- All-Weather Capability: Unlike air support, which can be grounded by heavy fog, storms, or anti-aircraft defenses, artillery operates 24/7 in almost any weather condition.
- Cost-Effectiveness: Firing artillery shells is significantly cheaper than deploying fighter jets or launching advanced cruise missiles for everyday battlefield strikes.
- In war the moral is to the physical as three is to one..... Napoleon Bonaparte (often cited to explain artillery's disproportionate effect on outcomes)!
- I know of no more effective moral agent than field artillery.
- The hand that wields artillery is the hand that writes history.
- Give me the artillery and I will give you the victory. —Attributed to Genghis Khan in paraphrase (captures the historic primacy of firepower; original attribution is apocryphal)
- Field artillery is the great equalizer on the battlefield: it makes terrain, mass, and courage subordinate to the effect of accurate, sustained fire." — Military analyst aphorism
- No commander can afford contempt for artillery; it sees farther, hits harder, and lasts longer than enthusiasm." —Contemporary staff officer maxim
- The soldier may make do with meagre rations and little sleep; the artilleryman must have ammunition. ... But before we start the second half here are some lines: -Gunners will always fight together, drink together, laugh together, and mourn together.!
- The harder the fighting and the longer the war, the more the infantry—and in fact all the arms—lean on the gunners. Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery
- There is no judge more equitable than a cannon. ... -A bit of history once again: -The earliest recorded use of artillery in India dates back to 1368 AD during the Battle of Adoni, where the Bahmani Sultanate under Mohammed Shah I deployed a train of artillery against the Vijayanagara Empire.
- Key Milestones in Early Indian Artillery
- Bahmani Sultanate (1368): Mohammed Shah I used early guns and cannons during the Deccan conflict with the Vijayanagara Empire.
- Bahmani vs. Vijayanagara / Adoni: Chronicled in historical texts like Tarikh-e-Farishi, marking the transition from traditional melee and bow warfare to gunpowder arms in the Deccan.
- Babur and the Mughal Empire (1526): While earlier uses existed in the Deccan, Mughal Emperor Babur is popularly credited with introducing systematic field artillery to northern India during the First Battle of Panipat in 1526 against Ibrahim Lodi.

He combined Ottoman matching tactics with mobile cannons to reshape warfare in the subcontinent.

- Portuguese Influence (Early 16th Century): The Portuguese introduced ship-mounted naval cannons (man-o-wars) in the Indian Ocean, prompting regional powers like the Zamorin of Calicut to adopt naval artillery.
- Babur's use of field artillery. Babur was the first in India to use field artillery effectively in battles. He employed advanced... -The Mughal Emperor Babur is popularly credited with introducing artillery to India, in the Battle of Panipat in 1526

Ancient Artillery

The history of ancient "artillery"—which refers to mechanical engine weapons like catapults, ballistae, and trebuchets rather than gunpowder—is filled with dramatic sieges where engineering completely changed the course of warfare.

Here are three of the greatest ancient artillery battles in history:

1. The Siege of Syracuse (214–212 BC): Archimedes vs. Rome
- During the Second Punic War, the Roman Republic attempted to storm the wealthy Sicilian city of Syracuse. They expected a quick victory, but they ran directly into the mathematical genius of Archimedes.
- The Artillery: Archimedes transformed the city's walls into an automated defense network. He engineered adjustable-range catapults and heavy ballistae that could fire massive stones and iron darts at both extreme distances and point-blank range through custom slit-holes in the walls.
- The Drama: As Roman quinqueremes (warships) approached, Archimedes unleashed his artillery, smashing the hulls of the ships. He also deployed the infamous "Claw of Archimedes"—crane-like beams that dropped iron grappling hooks, lifted Roman ships entirely out of the water, and flipped them upside down.
- The Outcome: The Roman commander, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, was forced to call off the direct assault, famously remarking that his men were fighting a "geometrical Briareus" (a mythical hundred-armed giant). The Romans had to settle for a grueling two-year blockade to finally take the city.
2. The Siege of Alesia (52 BC): Julius Caesar's Double Walls
- Julius Caesar faced his greatest challenge in Gaul when the chieftain Vercingetorix fortified his army inside the hilltop town of Alesia. Facing a massive relief army that outnumbered his own forces four to one, Caesar did the unthinkable: he built a wall around the city to keep the Gauls in, and a second wall around himself to keep the relief army out.
- The Artillery: To defend these extensive wooden fortifications, Caesar deployed hundreds of scorpions and ballistae (torsion-powered, giant crossbows) along the battlements and watchtowers.
- The Drama: During the climactic final assault, the Gauls launched a massive, coordinated attack on a weak point in Caesar's outer line. The Roman legions were heavily outnumbered and on the verge of breaking. Caesar ordered his artillery crews to maintain a relentless, rapid-fire bombardment of iron bolts and stones into the dense barbarian ranks, tearing them apart before they could breach the ramparts.
- The Outcome: The devastating firepower bought enough time for Caesar to personally lead a cavalry charge around the flank, crushing the Gallic relief army and forcing Vercingetorix to surrender.
- Nations with the biggest Artillery
- Search instead for Nations with biggest Artilleries
- AI Overview
- Russia, North Korea, and South Korea lead the world in total and self-propelled artillery strength. Top Nations by Total Artillery Inventory (2026 Estimates).

Rereading Women, Culture and Civilization Hidden in the Layers of History: Searching for the Historical Role of Indian Women in Rakhigarhi



- Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

Preface

History is not just an account of kings, wars, empires, and political changes. It is also the story of the lives, labors, beliefs, relationships, and cultural contributions of countless men and women who built civilizations. Yet, for a long time, the role of women has been relatively limited in popular history books. They have been presented sometimes as protectors of the family, sometimes as bearers of traditions, and sometimes as silent participants in power struggles, while not enough questions have been raised to understand their true contribution to the formation of society and culture. The archaeological site of Rakhigarhi, located in Hisar district of Haryana, offers an opportunity to reread this incomplete history.

Rakhigarhi is one of the largest known archaeological sites of the Harappan or Indus Valley Civilization. The planned settlement, drainage system, mud and baked brick structures, seals, beads, pottery, artifacts, cemeteries, and human remains discovered here shed light on various aspects of contemporary society. According to the Haryana Archaeological Department, evidence of cultural phases ranging from the Early Harappan to the Advanced Harappan period has been found here. The significance of these discoveries is not limited to understanding ancient town planning or economic life; they also address questions related to women's social existence, burial rites, jewelry, craft traditions, and cultural identity.

Viewing Rakhigarhi from a woman-centered perspective does not mean declaring that society there was necessarily matriarchal. Its real purpose is to recognize women as independent historical subjects in the study of civilization, and to attempt to understand their lives and contributions through archaeological evidence. Rakhigarhi: A Civilization's Memory Preserved in Soil

Rakhigarhi's identity has steadily expanded with modern archaeological research. Excavations here reveal that the Harappans lived in planned settlements. Residential structures, streets, drainage systems, craft products, and standardized weights and measures point to their technical proficiency and organized social life. Clay toys, beads, seals, metal objects, and various types of jewelry also reveal the artistic tastes and production skills of the time.

Among these remains, human burials hold special significance because they allow us to question the life and death rituals of those whose individual voices have not survived history. Pottery, jewelry, and other objects found in graves can help us understand the beliefs, social practices, and attitudes toward the dead of contemporary communities. However, it would be inappropriate to draw conclusions about the social structure of an entire society based on a single object or burial tradition.

The significance of Rakhigarhi lies in this broad perspective. Each archaeological site here opens the door to new questions rather than providing final answers about the past. These questions, which include topics such as the role of women, division of labor,

family structure, craft production, and social status, can help make history more inclusive.

Conch shell bangles and the historical presence of women

The discovery of shell bangles and other objects along with the human remains of a woman from the Rakhigarhi cemetery is particularly noteworthy. Archaeological accounts mention shell bangles, gold jewelry, and semi-precious stones found with some female skeletons. These discoveries provide important material for studying the use of jewelry and the cultural practices associated with it in contemporary society.

Whether bangles were merely decorative objects or were also associated with marital status, social identity, religious beliefs, or community traditions—this question demands research. Bangles



have many cultural meanings in modern Indian society, but those meanings cannot be applied to a society thousands of years old without additional evidence. Similarly, it would not be appropriate to draw direct conclusions about a woman's social status or rights from the presence of jewelry in a grave.

Yet these remains make one important point clear: ancient women were also part of the material culture of their time, and the objects associated with their lives are now forming the basis for the study of history. Their identities were not limited to those of a king's wife, a warrior's mother, or a character in a religious narrative. They were members of communities whose labor, family relationships, and cultural practices shaped civilization.

The aim of a woman-centered interpretation of history is not to interpret archaeological evidence as we see fit, but to seriously raise questions about it. The Rakhigarhi bangles inspire us to consider women's lives with greater sensitivity and scientific understanding in the interpretation of history.

Women, crafts and cultural life

The arts and crafts traditions of the Harappan civilization reveal its developed cultural consciousness. Bead-making, metalwork, pottery, seal design, and the variety of jewelry reveal the development of a wide range of skills in contemporary society. The extent of women's participation in these activities, the economic significance of their labor, and whether they were involved in craft production—these are questions that require archaeology, anthropology, and comparative studies to answer.

A historical fact needs to be clarified here. The famous bronze statuette from Mohenjo-daro, commonly known as the "Dancing Girl," is a celebrated example of the artistic achievements of the

Indus Valley Civilization. It would be inaccurate to attribute it to the statuette from Rakhigarhi. Similarly, a female statuette cannot be labeled a dancer, a goddess, or a woman from a specific social class solely on the basis of its appearance. Such interpretations require a comprehensive study of the statue's composition, archaeological context, and other evidence.

Yet the artistic traditions of the Harappan civilization challenge the notion that studying warfare and political power alone is sufficient to understand ancient societies. Art, craft, aesthetics, objects of daily use, and cultural symbols also shape a civilization's identity. Studying the potential role of women in these areas can illuminate aspects of history that have received relatively little attention in traditional accounts.

Genetic study of Rakhigarhi and new understanding of India's past

In 2019, a study published in the prestigious scientific journal Cell brought Rakhigarhi to the center of international scientific discussion. A team of researchers, including Vasant Shinde and his colleagues, attempted to obtain ancient DNA from Harappan human remains. After examining several samples, they succeeded in obtaining genetic information from the remains of a woman. The study found genetic affinities of this woman with populations belonging to ancient Iranian farming communities and with ancestry related to ancient hunter-gatherer communities of South Asia. No genetic component related to steppe pastoralists was detected in her genome.

To understand the significance of this finding, it is necessary to distinguish between scientific evidence and historical interpretation. The study shows that the steppe-related genetic component was not necessarily present in the populations of northwestern South Asia during the Mature Harappan period. This is an important contribution to understanding the genetic structure of ancient populations. However, a genetic study of a single individual cannot draw final conclusions about the population of the entire Harappan civilization, its language, religious beliefs, or overall cultural identity.

Similarly, this study does not, in itself, provide conclusive answers to all the historical debates concerning the Aryan invasion or Aryan migration. Genetic research, archaeology, linguistics, and literary sources address different questions. A combined study of all these evidences is essential to understand the process of arrival of various populations, their interactions, and cultural change in the Indian subcontinent.

Therefore, the Rakhigarhi DNA study should be viewed not as a confirmation of any single ideological conclusion but as important scientific evidence for understanding the ancient history of Indian populations. Its real achievement is that it has expanded our knowledge of the ancient human history of South Asia and opened new avenues for future research.

Connection between the Harappan and Vedic traditions

A significant question in Indian history is the relationship between the Harappan civilization and Vedic traditions. Ritual structures, fire pits, and other archaeological remains from various Harappan sites, including Rakhigarhi, have been interpreted in this context. Archaeological accounts from Rakhigarhi also mention structures such as fire altars or fire pits.

Dedicated to our Police Martyrs as a special Tribute



Sgt (Opr.) Bilal Ahmad

Oh! The brave hearted man
Today you are in deep asleep
Lonely lying in the room of grave
wrapped white clothes, without shoes

When you was fighting like a brave man
You was really a gentleman
You have performed your duty
You was always against enemy

You will be remembered ever been
Every moment of day and night
Let we have courage to fight
Make the future of society bright

You were an inspiration for others
They are in shock, dropping tears
In front of God, praying for you
With folded hands, eyes full of tears

Your little baby feels pain
Searches your shadow and cries
In a sweat voice for your gain
Dropping tears like it rain

Your near and dear ones
Gives him toys and shares joys
Needs your love once again
Feeling happy but in vain

May you have rest in paradise
It is our heartfelt essence
God may give your family patience
And Keep them happy & prosperous.

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Kishtwar hosts Job Fair-cum-Apprenticeship Mela Over 700 Job seekers participate, More than 120 shortlisted on-the-Spot

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 21: The District Employment & Counselling Centre (DECC) Kishtwar, under the aegis of the Directorate of Employment, Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday organised a Job Fair-cum-Apprenticeship Mela here at the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC).

Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma inaugurated the job fair organized in collaboration with the District Administration Kishtwar.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal;

Assistant Director Employment Amit Kumar; Assistant Director Handicrafts Pardeep Shan and other officers and officials were present on the occasion.

More than 40 reputed employers, including Royal Enfield, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Mahindra Jammu Motors, JK Vehicle Leases Suzuki, Kishtwar Eye Clinic and Wellness Centre, Pebbles and Petals and others participated, offering over 400 vacancies. More than 700 job seekers attended the event. After interviews and screening, as many as 120 candidates were shortlisted on the spot for further stages



of recruitment.

The Deputy Commissioner interacted with the participating employers and job seekers. He appreciated

the initiative taken by the District Employment and Counselling Centre to connect local youth with prospective employers. He encouraged

young people to enhance their professional skills, acquire industry-relevant qualifications and explore opportunities in private-sector employment, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship.

He highlighted the importance of apprenticeship programmes under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) in providing practical workplace experience and improving employability.

He further urged the youth to avail themselves of UT Government and Central Schemes supporting skill development, self-

employment (Mission YUVA) and entrepreneurship to achieve economic independence and contribute to the district's development.

The Assistant Director, Employment reiterated the department's commitment to employment facilitation through job fairs, career counselling, skill development, apprenticeship opportunities and stronger industry linkages. He thanked all stakeholders for their cooperation.

The AD Handicrafts briefed the participants on handicrafts schemes, artisan support and entrepreneurship opportunities.

ADC Reasi flags off group of 40 farmers on exposure visit

■ HT News Network

REASI, OCTOBER 21: A Farmers' Training-cum-Exposure Visit comprising 40 farmers from District Reasi was flagged off today by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sushil Kesar. The visit has been organised by the Horticulture Department Reasi under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) Scheme for the year 2026-27.

During the exposure visit, the participating farmers will visit Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), the Central Institute for Temperate Horticulture (CITH), Srinagar and the Indo-Italian Farm Ramban. The visit will provide farmers with first-hand exposure to modern horticultural practices, advanced cultivation techniques, improved production technologies and innovative interventions in the horticulture sector.

The primary objective of the programme was to enhance the technical knowledge and practical skills of farmers by familiarizing them with scientific farming methods, modern horticultural technologies and successful cultivation practices. The initiative is expected to encourage the adoption of improved techniques for enhancing productivity, improving the quality of horticultural produce and increasing farmers' income.

AC State Taxes (A&E) Jammu reviews performance of enforcement Wings

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 21: Additional Commissioner State Taxes (Administration & Enforcement) Jammu Dhananter Singh today chaired a review meeting to assess revenue realization, enforcement activities and GST compliance.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners and State Taxes Officers of the Enforcement Wings.

The Additional Commissioner reviewed the performance in respect of penalty realization, e-way bill verification, detection of discrepancies, interception of goods-carrying vehicles and officer-wise performance.

Emphasizing the need to enhance revenue collection and curb tax evasion, he directed the officers to intensify enforcement, ensure thorough verification of documents, take timely action against violations of the GST Act and strengthen monitoring and accountability.

He also stressed the importance of hosting taxpayer awareness programmes to promote voluntary compliance. He directed regular performance assessments to ensure effective supervision and measurable improvements in enforcement activities.

He also stressed on punctuality in offices and mandatory Biometric Attendance System for office staff. Further, he enjoined upon all Deputy Commissioners (Enforcement) to share a copy of deployment schedule of Enforcement Team with the office of Additional Commissioner State Taxes (Adm. & Enforcement) for better coordination in enforcement activities.

DHJ reviews Physical, Financial Progress under development schemes

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 21: Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed today chaired a review meeting here in the Conference Hall of the Directorate to assess the physical and financial achievements under various developmental schemes, including CAPEX, HADP, CSS and JKICP.

The Director stressed timely implementation of developmental projects, optimum utilisation of allocated funds and effective execution of the horticulture programme.

Director Gul Syed also called for closer monitoring of ongoing works, improving service delivery, faster orchard development, nursery production, infrastructure creation. He reviewed district-wise performance, besides seeking updates on implementation challenges.



The Director instructed the officers to submit regular progress reports and ensure transparency, accountability and quality in execution of the departmental programmes. He reiterated the department's commitment to strengthening the horticulture sector and

enhancing the income of fruit growers across Jammu Division.

Among those present were Joint Director Salil Gupta; Deputy Director (Central) Mukesh Sharma; all Chief Horticulture Officers of Jammu Division and others.

CIED-IUST Foundation in Association with NSRCEL, Bangalore Launches CIED Ignite Incubation and Entrepreneurship Programme.

■ HT News Network

AWANTIPORA, OCTOBER 21, 2026: CIED-IUST Foundation in association with NSRCEL Bangalore, inaugurated the CIED Ignite Incubation and Entrepreneurship Programme at the IUST Innovation Campus, with the aim of nurturing innovative ideas, fostering entrepreneurial thinking, and empowering aspiring entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into impactful ventures. The programme, themed "Igniting Ideas for a Brighter Tomorrow," seeks to provide aspiring entrepreneurs with an enabling platform to explore opportunities, strengthen their entrepreneurial capabilities, and develop innovative solutions to emerging challenges. The inaugural ceremony was inaugurated by Prof. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Dean Academic Affairs, IUST, in the presence of Prof. Parvez A. Mir, CEO, CIED-IUST Foundation, Mr.



Altaf Hussain Shalla, Principal, Government Polytechnic College, Pulwama, coordinators and esteemed members of the CIED-IUST Foundation, representatives from NSRCEL joining online, entrepreneurs, and a large gathering of students. The event highlighted the importance of innovation-driven entrepreneurship, incubation support, and institutional collaboration in building a vibrant startup ecosystem. The association with NSRCEL is expected to strengthen entrepreneurial learning and provide aspiring innovators with valuable opportunities for mentorship,

knowledge-sharing, and venture development. The participation of academic leaders, entrepreneurs, students, and representatives from the collaborating institutions reflected a shared commitment to advancing innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. Mr. Shameem Iqbal Nahvi presented the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the dignitaries, representatives of NSRCEL, participants, and all those who contributed to the successful launch of the programme. Through the launch of CIED Ignite, the CIED-IUST Foundation reaffirmed

District Admin Kupwara conducts extensive Field Inspections across Border Villages under Vibrant Villages Programme Phase-II

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 21: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, nominated senior Nodal Officers today commenced week-long, comprehensive field visits across designated Vibrant Villages of the tehsil Karnah.

The special inspection drive, scheduled from October 19 to October 24, aims at conducting on-ground midline surveys, reviewing infrastructure delivery, and evaluating ongoing developmental interventions. On the second consecutive day, SDM Karnah, Mohd Raiyaz visited Teetwal, Tehsildar Karnah, Mohd Amin Bhat inspected Gundi Gujran, and Chief Education Officer Kupwara, Manzoor Ahmad led the inspection team at Hajitra Karnah.

RBI's Rs 50k cr overnight VRR auction attracts nearly 2-fold bids

■ HT News Network/UNI

MUMBAI, Oct 21: The Reserve Bank of India's Rs 50,000 crore overnight Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction on Wednesday attracted bids nearly twice the notified amount.

The central bank received bids worth Rs 93,241 crore against the notified amount of Rs 50,000 crore and accepted bids worth Rs 50,007 crore, according to official data.

The bids were accepted at a cut-off and weighted average rate of 5.52 per cent.

Meanwhile, liquidity in the banking system is estimated to be in surplus of around Rs 48,303.95 crore as on October



20, according to the RBI data.

Systemic liquidity has come down significantly due to various measures conducted by the RBI, along with monthly outflows from the banking system on account of goods and services tax (GST).

Earlier this month, the central bank announced several measures on liquidity and foreign exchange, including an increase in the minimum daily maintenance requirements for

the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Open Market Operations (OMO) sales of government securities.

The RBI (Reserve Bank of India) announced an increase in the daily maintenance of CRR to 99 per cent from 90 per cent earlier.

The measures aimed to drain the large surplus liquidity in the banking system, which was built up following large inflows of FCNR(B) deposits.

As the surplus liquidity in the banking system gradually declines and moves towards a small deficit, it will help in transmission of the recent rate hike of 25 basis points by the RBI to deposit and lending rates.

Rupee rises 29 paise to 94.62 against US dollar in early trade

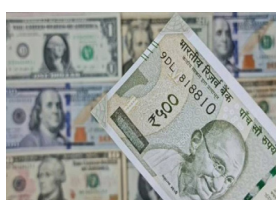
■ HT News Network/UNI

MUMBAI, Oct 21: The rupee appreciated 29 paise to 94.62 against the American currency in early trade on Wednesday, supported by positive sentiments in the domestic market and RBI intervention to curb US dollar demand.

Besides, the rupee got a boost from the foreign dollar inflows tied to the Jio IPO, which opened for public subscription on Wednesday, according to analysts.

However, elevated crude oil prices and a firm US dollar capped the gains.

At the interbank foreign



exchange market, the rupee opened stronger at 94.78, and then gained further ground to touch 94.62 against the American currency, registering a gain of 29 paise from its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee settled lower by 2 paise at 94.91 against the US dollar.

The forex market was closed on Tuesday on account of Dussehra.

"This strength is primarily

underpinned by foreign dollar inflows tied to the Jio IPO alongside support from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). To navigate dollar flows during the IPO allotment process, foreign investors are largely relying on sell/buy swaps-offloading dollars for rupees in the spot market while contracting to repurchase them within a short window, usually under a week," said Aamir Makda, Commodity & Currency Analyst, Commodity Technical Research at Choice Broking.

Despite these positive drivers, elevated oil prices remain a significant headwind for the domestic currency, he added.

Capex Plan of RDD Sector reviewed at Kupwara

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 21: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kupwara, Ghulam Rasool, today chaired a meeting of the concerned officers to review the progress and implementation of the Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) Plan of the Rural Development Department (RDD) across the district.

During the meeting, the ADCD conducted a detailed review of the status of ongoing works in all blocks of the district under various components, including PRI Grants, BDC Grants, DDC Grants, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Health Sector, Aspirational Block Development (ABD), SSS and UT Capex.

The meeting focused on assessing the physical and financial progress of works, reviewing the status

of ongoing projects and identifying issues, if any, affecting their timely execution. The officers concerned apprised the ADCD of the progress achieved under different schemes and the status of works being executed in their respective jurisdictions.

While reviewing the progress, the ADCD emphasized the need for expediting the execution of all ongoing works and ensuring their completion within the stipulated timeframe. He directed the concerned officers to adopt a coordinated and result-oriented approach, maintain close monitoring of works on the ground and ensure that all projects are executed efficiently in accordance with the prescribed guidelines and quality standards.

The ADCD stressed that timely implementation of the Capex Plan is essential for strengthening rural infrastructure and ensuring the effective delivery of public services. He called upon the officers to



work with dedication, zeal and a strong sense of responsibility to achieve the desired targets and ensure that the intended benefits of developmental works reach the people at the grassroots level.

The ADCD further underscored the importance of inter-departmental coordination, regular progress reviews and prompt resolution of bottlenecks to prevent delays in the execution of projects. The officers were directed to maintain close liaison with field functionaries and ensure that the progress of ongoing works is monitored regularly.

All officers were instructed to ensure the achievement of the desired physical and financial progress by 5th November 2026. It was emphasised that the progress of concerned officers/officials, particularly those with less than 75% physical and financial achievement by the end of October

2026, would be reviewed, and appropriate action may be considered wherever necessary.

The ADCD reiterated that all concerned departments and executing agencies must work in a coordinated manner to ensure the timely and quality completion of developmental works, with particular focus on improving basic amenities and strengthening rural infrastructure across Kupwara district.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Kupwara, Assistant Commissioner Panchayats, Executive Engineer, Rural Engineering Wing (REW), Block Development Officers (BDOs), Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs), Assistant Engineers (AEs), Junior Engineers (JEs) and other concerned officials.





The fitness test that predicts your risk of death

How quickly your heart rate returns to normal after exercise can reveal a surprising amount about your underlying health.

If your heart hammers in your chest when you walk up the stairs, or you need to gasp for air while jogging to catch a bus, it may be a sign that you are not in peak physical shape.

Yet what happens after you stop exercising can be just as revealing about the inner workings of your body. Enter the heart rate recovery (HRR) test. This is the difference between your pulse when your heart is pumping hard during exercise, and how fast it beats about a minute after you have finished.

Nieca Golderberg, a cardiologist at New York University Grossman School of Medicine, explains that HRR is a good indicator of your cardiovascular health. It can predict high blood pressure and cardiac events.

But your HRR is also so much more than that. A poor result can act as an early warning sign, helping to uncover hidden problems with the rest of the body. Crucially, that includes your overall risk of death.

Back in 1999, scientists from the Cleveland Clinic, Ohio, published some striking results. They had tested the HRRs of 2,400 adults, then followed them for six years. The team found that people with low heart rate recovery were around four times more likely to die during the study period.

Other teams around the world have since found similar results. HRR has emerged as a surprisingly strong predictor of death from any cause, whether there seems to be anything wrong with your heart or not. In young adults and the middle aged, HRR is even more closely linked to your risk of death than high blood pressure.

Here's a quick, simple way to calculate your HRR using materials you're already likely to have at home.

Finding your rate

It's important to consult your doctor before starting a new exercise regime. If you experience dizziness, chest pain or tightness, or shortness of breath that's out



of proportion to the exercise you're doing, stop immediately. This test is not suitable for people with pre-existing heart conditions without medical supervision.

The first step is to make sure you have a way of writing down your data and a timer (most phones have one). If you have a smartwatch or other wearable activity tracker, this will be useful.

Then you need to calculate your maximum heart rate. If you have a smartwatch or other wearable device, this will be able to tell you what yours is. If not, this is usually around 220 minus your age.

Next, it's time to do some exercise. This should be intense enough to raise your heart rate to between 70 and 85% of its maximum. It could include running, cycling, or rowing, depending on your level of fitness.

To calculate your HRR, measure your pulse immediately after you stop exercising, when it is still at its highest. The easiest way to do this is with a smart watch or a fitness tracker.

Alternatively, you can also hold a finger against your neck and count the beats for 10 seconds. Multiply this number by six for an approximate beats-per-minute.

Next, rest for one minute by sitting or lying down and re-check your pulse. Then

simply subtract the second number from the first. This is your HRR.

An HRR to aim for

You want your heart rate to drop back to normal quickly after you finish exercising. The more quickly it drops, the better. A good recovery rate would be one that goes down by at least 18 beats in the first minute.

The number can also vary between individuals and depends on factors such as age.

However, a HRR of fewer than 12 beats could put you at risk of health problems down the line.

An early warning

The link between HRR and a person's risk of death is thought to be down to the vagus nerve. This major nerve is a critical link between the brain and the rest of the body, relaying signals to and from the heart, liver, intestines and other organs. It controls whether you are in the more stressful fight-or-flight mode, or the more relaxed rest-and-digest state.

"We have these two systems that work on the heart, we've got a brake and we've got an accelerator," says Lindsay Bottoms, professor in exercise and health sciences at the University of Hertfordshire, UK.

When you exercise, the accelerator – also

known as the sympathetic nervous system – activates, causing the body to enter "fight or flight" mode. Your heart beats faster and your blood vessels dilate, allowing oxygen to be pumped to the muscles.

When you stop working out, your body needs to clear out all the metabolic "debris" created during exercise, such as lactic acid and other waste products. This process requires oxygen. "You have to get rid of that out of the muscles, so you still need increased blood flow, and you still need your heart rate to keep high," says Bottoms.

When this has been done the body applies the brakes and switches to parasympathetic mode. This is the brake, and it puts the body into the rest-and-digest state.

As you get fitter, your body gets better at switching between the accelerator and brakes. This is known as higher vagal tone, and it's known to be highly beneficial. It's linked to better mental health and cognitive functioning, as well as higher immune health and lower inflammation, among other things. That includes a lower risk of death.

Room for improvement

If you are concerned about your HRR then Golderberg recommends booking an appointment with a doctor who can do a full cardiac risk assessment.

The good news is that any problems identified are not set in stone. Research has found that you can improve your HRR with exercise programmes. This can reduce your risk of death back to a normal level.

Both Bottoms and Golderberg recommend regular cardiovascular exercise to make sure your cardiovascular system is in tiptop shape.

"If you want to improve your heart rate recovery, try moderate pace walking, cycling or, if you can, jogging, running or swimming," says Golderberg. Or you could even try dancing, she says.

Once your HRR improves, you'll really have something to dance about.

(BBC News)

What to eat for younger-looking skin

Plants, fats, and fermented foods can reduce wrinkles, boost collagen and improve the texture of our skin.

Skin is the largest organ in the body and must last us our lifetime. In addition to keeping us looking youthful, well-cared for skin also actively benefits our wider health.

But as the barrier between our bodies and the outside world, it takes a battering. Many environmental factors contribute to skin ageing, including air pollution, ozone and a changing climate, says Jean Krutmann, professor of dermatology at the Leibniz Research Institute for Environmental Medicine.

"For decades we thought ultraviolet radiation was the major driver of environmental-induced skin ageing. We know this is not correct," says Krutmann. "Other wavelengths within natural sunlight can contribute to ageing, for example, visible light and infrared radiation." Even an increase in temperature can contribute to the process, he says.

Then there's just time. As we age we gradually lose collagen, the protein that gives our skin its structure, which can result in wrinkles.

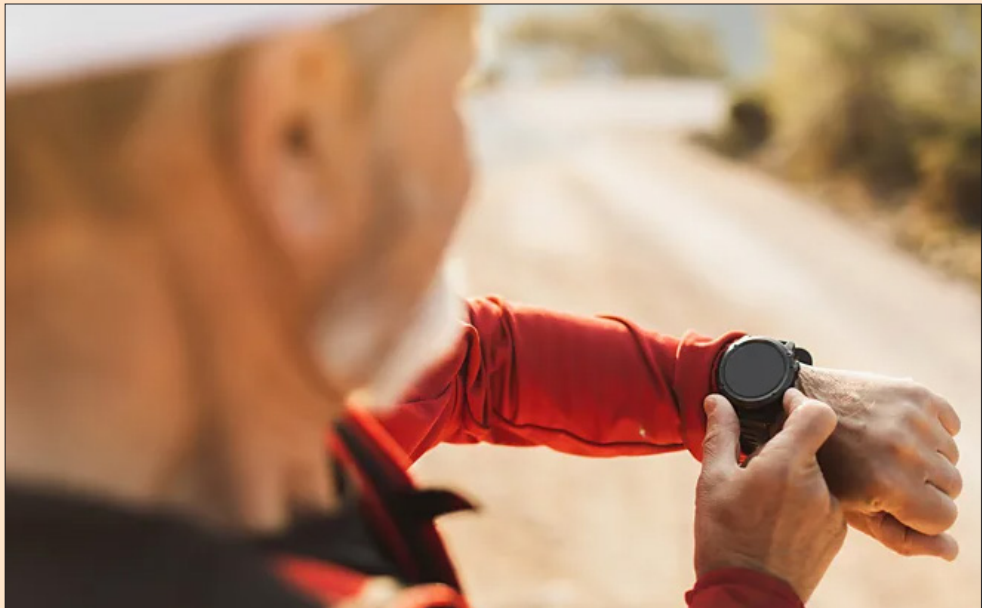
One overlooked factor that can help to keep your skin in better shape is what we eat. From healthy fats to gut-friendly fermented foods, here's a range to include in your diet.

1. Colourful fruits and vegetables

There is abundant research that a diet high in plant-based foods is important for keeping our skin healthy.

It helps to aim for colourful fruits and vegetables as they contain powerful antioxidants that help protect the skin from damage caused by pollution and sunlight. Carrots, peppers and tomatoes are rich in carotenoids, including lutein, lycopene, beta-carotene. "They are stored in the fat tissue and protect against UV rays," says Volker Böhm, a professor of food chemistry at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena.

While sunscreen remains important, Böhm says that people tend to apply it during prolonged outdoor exposure rather than every day. Regularly consuming carotenoid-rich foods provides "a continuous baseline UV protection factor of roughly two to three all year round,"



he says.

Adding a small amount of healthy fat like olive oil to tomatoes or carrots helps to make it easier for the body to absorb these antioxidants.

Beta-carotene can also be converted into vitamin A, which is important for skin-cell growth and protecting our skin from infection.

Carotenoids can help skin cells to produce hyaluronic acid. This molecule helps to maintain skin firmness and elasticity, and is found in many commercially available moisturisers and "anti-ageing" creams.

The same pigments may also help to boost collagen. In a small study, women who took a daily carotenoid supplement for ten months showed an improvement in collagen and elastin in their skin, suggesting it could help prevent collagen breakdown.

Finally, eating lots of colourful fruit and vegetables has been found to create a healthier looking skin "glow". To gain benefits, we have to eat these foods consistently, says Krutmann. "For whatever antioxidant you are eating, in

order to have protection against environmental effects it usually takes eight to 10 weeks before you have a measurable effect."

Mangoes have been found to keep our skin looking younger as we age.

Take a study of post-menopausal women, led by Vivien Fam at University of California Davis. Participants ate 85g (2.9oz) of mango four times per week over the course of 16 weeks. The researchers found that this reduced the size of existing wrinkles as well as the number of new ones.

More research is needed, but the researchers speculated that the beneficial effects could be down to carotenoids, as well as the antioxidants flavonoids and mangiferin.

Surprisingly, the study found that eating around 250g (8.8oz) of mango per day increased wrinkles. One of the co-authors of the research, Robert Hackman, a professor of nutrition also at University of California Davis, says it's unclear why this is the case, but it could be due to the high natural sugar content in mangoes.

"Our proposal is that sugar created some damage to the molecules in the skin," says Hackman. And while the study was small, follow-up research, which has not yet been published replicated the results, he says.

Mangoes and citrus fruits are also rich in vitamin C. This vitamin helps us produce collagen and also acts as an antioxidant, which can protect our skin from sun damage. Studies suggest that vitamin C may help improve skin hydration and reduce pigmentation. For this reason, vitamin C is widely used in skincare products and as a supplement, says Krutmann.

2. Healthy fats

I'm not usually a fan of almonds or walnuts but I've started chopping them up and adding them into salads, which I'm enjoying much more than expected. I'm doing so because eating plenty of nuts and seeds could benefit our skin.

A small randomised-controlled study found that those who snacked on almonds for 16 weeks had less visible wrinkles compared to those who ate a different

snack.

Vitamin E, which is abundant in nuts and seeds can also protect the skin from cell damage and ageing. A deficiency of this vitamin can affect skin health, including slower wound healing. Good sources include almonds, hazelnuts, pine nuts and many seed oils.

Nuts also contain omega-6 fatty acids, which can strengthen the skin's barrier to keep it more moist.

More like this:

• The curious ways your skin shapes your health

• Collagen supplements: The secret to perfect skin, or marketing hype?

• Getting your hands dirty boosts your health within weeks

Another type of healthy fat known to be good for our skin is omega-3s, found in oily fish and algae.

Fish high in omega-3s include salmon, sardines and mackerel and small studies suggest they could reduce the skin's sensitivity

to the sun and could therefore help protect us against damage from the Sun. Fatty fish help preserve existing collagen and reduce inflammation.

3. Foods that benefit our gut

When we eat a varied diet rich in fresh produce, nuts, and seeds, our gut microbes benefit – and so does our skin. That's because our gut health and skin are intricately connected. Researchers refer to this relationship as the "gut-skin axis".

When we eat a diverse array of plant-based foods, the microbes in our gut release compounds that have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. These affect our skin too, says Hackman.

A healthier gut microbiome can also improve skin conditions by supporting our immune system.

One way to achieve these benefits is to eat a wide range of plant-based foods. This includes fruits and vegetables, pulses, legumes, whole grains, herbs and spices. This can lower stress, improve sleep and protect us against skin conditions such as psoriasis. (Read more from the BBC about how easy it is to eat 30 different plants in a week).

Fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, or yoghurt, are also particularly beneficial for feeding our gut microbes. You may not look 30 in your 60s, but eating a healthy diet will help to give your skin the best chance of staying healthy for the years to come. Oh, and don't forget the sunscreen.

* Melissa Hogenboom is a senior health correspondent at the BBC. She is melissa_hogenboom on Instagram.

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(BBC News)



Game Swingers Baramulla Clinch 4-Day Arnimaal Girls Cricket Tournament 2026 Title

GULFAM BARJI

PATTAN/ OCTOBER:21 The 4-day Arnimaal Girls Cricket Tournament 2026, organised by Koshur Foundation Pattan under the patronage of Manzoor Ahmad Mir concluded successfully at Pattan Cricket Ground. The tournament, held from October 17 to 20, witnessed the participation of eight teams from different districts of Kashmir. In the final, Game Swingers Baramulla delivered an impressive performance to defeat Kashmir Knights Women's Cricket Club, Bandipora, by seven wickets and lift the tournament trophy. Asiya Majid was named Player of the Tournament in recognition of her outstanding performance. The participating teams included Srinagar Knights, Uri Chinar Women's Cricket Club, Budgam Strikers, Pulwama Strikers, Game Swingers Baramulla, Kashmir Knights Women's Cricket Club Bandipora, Youngsters Baramulla and Sopore Warriors. Koshur Foundation expressed gratitude to the J&K Sports Council for its support in organising the tournament, particularly acknowledging Showkat Ahmad, Manager, Sports Council Baramulla for his cooperation. The Foundation also thanked Javed Riyaz Bedar, MLA Pattan who attended the final as the chief guest and encouraged the



participating players. Syed Humayun Qaiser, senior cricketer and former Director of All India Radio, Srinagar; Mushtaque Ali Ahmad Khan Founder Director of KWFF and Javed Iqbal attended the event as guests of honour. The Foundation also appreciated the presence of Farhat Siddiqui, senior theatre, tv and radio artist; Mahfoozah Nabi, educationist and poet Mr Majid

SDPO Pattan and Mudassir Ahmad SHO Pattan for their encouragement and support. The organisers acknowledged the contributions of the Civil Society Forum Pattan, journalists, volunteers, umpires, scorers, commentators, the in-charge of Pattan Cricket Ground and other supporters. They also expressed gratitude to J&K Bank, Kashmir Movie Tones Srinagar

and the media organisations for their support and coverage. Speaking on the occasion, Manzoor Ahmad Mir, President of Koshur Foundation and patron of the tournament said that the successful completion of the event was the result of the collective efforts of participating teams, players, supporting institutions, media personnel, volunteers and the local community. He said the Foundation aims to provide better sporting opportunities to girls, promote their talent and nurture self-confidence, teamwork and leadership skills. Mir reiterated the Foundation's commitment to encouraging the younger generation, particularly girls, through sports and cultural activities.

He emphasised the importance of creating an environment where girls can demonstrate their abilities, develop their potential and pursue their aspirations. The Foundation reaffirmed its resolve to organise more such initiatives in the future to promote women's participation in sports and inspire young talent across Kashmir.

He'll be a challenge: Santner wary of Bhuvneshwar's new-ball threat

United News Of India

NEW DELHI, OCT 21 : New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner believes Bhuvneshwar Kumar's ability to swing the new ball could make the experienced Indian pacer a major threat in home conditions as the five-match T20I series gets underway in Christchurch on Thursday.

Bhuvneshwar has returned to India's T20I setup after nearly four years, earning a recall for the New Zealand series following consistent performances in the Indian Premier League over the past two seasons. He also featured in the rain-hit fifth T20I against the West Indies in Bengaluru, coming into the playing XI as a replacement for Mayank Yadav after initially joining the squad as

cover for Arshdeep Singh. Santner expects the 36-year-old to make the most of conditions that could offer assistance to seamers, particularly at the start of an innings.

"Bhuvi will love these conditions in New Zealand. If there's anything in the wicket, he'll



find something out of it. Even on some flat ones in India, still manages to nip the ball and swing the ball. So with the new ball out here especially, he'll be a challenge," Santner said on the eve of the series opener in Christchurch, as quoted by cricinfo.

The New Zealand skipper also pointed to the difficulty of bowling in India, where high-scoring matches have become increasingly common. "I mean in India it's pretty challenging as a bowler these days, like we've seen in the recent series against West Indies..

DPS Kathua Shines at 7th North India Karate Championship, Secures Second Runner Up Position

Yaseen Salaria

KATHUA 21-10-2026: Delhi Public School, Kathua, has brought immense pride and glory to the institution by securing the Second Runner Up position at the

The achievement marks another significant milestone in the school's journey towards excellence in sports and extracurricular activities, further strengthening its reputation as an institution



prestigious 7th North India Karate Championship 2026 to 2027, held at Pathankot. The championship witnessed participation from schools across Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, and other regions of North India.

Adding to this remarkable achievement, six talented students of DPS Kathua clinched gold medals in their respective categories, demonstrating exceptional martial arts skills, determination, discipline, and sporting excellence.

The proud gold medalists include Mivansh Sharma, Samridh Choudhary, Nyrash Singh, Parul Bhardwaj, Satvik Verma, and Avishta Andotra. Their outstanding performances reflected their rigorous preparation, unwavering dedication, and remarkable competitive spirit.

committed to the holistic development of young learners.

Chairperson and former MLA Mrs. Kanta Andotra extended her heartfelt congratulations to the young achievers and appreciated their exemplary performances. She emphasised the importance of sports in developing discipline, resilience, leadership, and confidence among students.

School Administrator Ms. Gauri Thakur expressed immense pride in the students' accomplishments and lauded their dedication and perseverance. She stated that such achievements reflect the institution's continuous efforts to provide students with opportunities to explore their potential and excel beyond the classroom.

97th All India MCC-Murugappa Gold Cup Hockey tourney begins tomorrow, final on Nov 1

United News Of India

CHENNAI, OCT 21 : Ten teams, including a junior team from Malaysia, will vie for honours in the 97th All India MCC-Murugappa Gold Cup Hockey Tournament to be held here from tomorrow to November 1, 2026.

The Malaysian team's participation marked its second consecutive appearance in the tournament to be held at Mayor Radhakrishnan astro-turf hockey stadium.

The ten teams were divided into two groups and the top two teams from each group would make it to the semifinals to be played on October 31. The final would be played on November one, with the winner taking home a purse of Rs seven lakh and the runner-up Rs five lakh, Arun Murugappan, Executive

Chairman, Tube Investments of India (part of Murugappa Group), Organising Secretary S.L. Rajiv Reddy and Madras Cricket Club (MCC) honorary secretary Niranjan Mudaliar, told reporters on Wednesday.

They said cash prizes of Rs. 50,000 for each semi-finalists, Rs. 10,000 and a high-end bicycle will be awarded to the Best Forward, Best Midfielder, Best Goalkeeper, Most Promising Player of the Tournament, and Man of the Match in the final.

Iyer backs in-form openers as Sooryavanshi waits for chance

United News Of India

NEW DELHI, OCT 21 : India captain Shreyas Iyer has made it clear that teenaged batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will have to be patient for a regular place in the T20I side, with the team unwilling to break up its in-form opening pair of Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson.

The 15-year-old has emerged as one of India's brightest batting prospects after his exploits in the IPL and age-group cricket, but Iyer said the current combination has earned the right to continue after delivering consistent performances.

"It's important that a talent like him (Sooryavanshi) should always be happy around the dressing room. He is very young; he has more years to get opportunities. It's not like he can walk in right now, because our openers are scoring consistently, and they have won the World Cup." I just keep telling him you will get the opportunity; if you be consistent about your

processes, you have to wait sometimes. We have got two fantastic openers; that's the conversation we have been having with Vaibhav,"



Iyer said ahead of Thursday's first T20I against New Zealand in Christchurch.

Sooryavanshi has already played eight T20Is, all of them overseas, but he is yet to make a home appearance for India. The recent series against the West Indies saw India stick with the same top order of Samson, Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan.

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