

Srinagar
Wednesday
October 21 | 2026
09 Jamad ul Awal 1448 AH
Issue No: 251
Volume: 16
Pages: 12
Price :Rs: 2/-

16TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
HEADLINES TODAY
Voice To The Voiceless



IAF Chief AP Singh Completes Final Flying Sortie with His First Instructor

Air Chief Marshal flies Kiran trainer in emotional reunion, bringing four-decade flying journey full circle

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, OCT 20: Indian Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Tuesday undertook his final flying sortie in an IAF aircraft, flying the HJT-16 Kiran Mk-1 trainer alongside his first flying instructor, Wing Commander V S Kochar (Retd). The 55-minute flight in aircraft bearing tail number U 707 marked a symbolic conclusion to Singh's flying journey, which began with his maiden sortie on January 28, 1984. The reunion with Kochar, who mentored him during his initial flying training, highlighted the enduring role of instructors in shaping generations of air warriors. The sortie brought together the beginning and

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Nuclear Power to Fuel India's AI-Driven Future : Jitendra Singh

India targets 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047 as rising demand from data centres underscores need for reliable electricity

HTNEWSDESK/AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, OCT 20: Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh has said nuclear energy will play an increasingly important role in meeting India's future electricity requirements, particularly as artificial intelligence and data centres drive demand for reliable, uninterrupted power. Speaking on the sidelines of the Bloomberg Economy Forum 2026, Singh said India aims to achieve 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047 and net-zero emissions by 2070, building on the peaceful nuclear programme envisioned by Dr Homi Bhabha. He described artificial intelligence as a tool with applications across sectors such as space, life sciences and



scientific research, while stressing the need for responsible use, appropriate regulation and human judgement. Singh also highlighted opportunities for private sector participation in technological development following the opening of critical

and sensitive sectors to non-government players.

Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh has said India's nuclear programme remains dedicated to peaceful purposes, with nuclear energy expected to play a growing role in

meeting the country's future electricity needs, including those of AI systems and data centres.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Bloomberg Economy Forum 2026, Singh said India's nuclear energy ambitions were rooted in the vision of Dr Homi Bhabha, the architect of the country's nuclear programme, and aligned with its long-term development and clean energy goals.

India aims to achieve 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047 and net-zero emissions by 2070. Singh said nuclear energy could complement other power sources by providing a reliable, continuous supply of electricity as demand rises. He linked the expansion of artificial intelligence

>>> MORE ON P 02

Amit Shah Orders Swift CBI Probe into Punjab Anti-Drug Activist's Murder

CBI team to reach Mansa on Wednesday as Home Minister meets bereaved families, promises justice

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, OCT 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured a CBI investigation into the murder of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota, with a central agency team scheduled to reach Punjab's Mansa district by noon on Wednesday to record statements and begin its probe. Shah, during his visit to Punjab, met the families of Jhota and other individuals whose deaths or alleged harassment have triggered concerns over drug trafficking and attacks on those opposing the menace. He accused the ruling Aam Aadmi Party government of failing to protect Punjab's youth and anti-drug campaigners, while reaffirming the Centre's commitment to ensuring justice. The developments come amid protests by farmer unions, civil

society groups and anti-drug activists, with allegations raised by some families still requiring independent investigation.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team would reach Punjab's Mansa district by noon on Wednesday to investigate the murder of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota, as he met bereaved families in the state and

>>> MORE ON P 02

Omar Abdullah Approves Major Stipend Hike for MBBS, BDS Interns

Monthly remuneration raised from Rs 12,300 to Rs 25,000; formal notification expected on October 21 following holiday delay



HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, OCT 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has approved an increase in the monthly stipend of MBBS and BDS interns in Jammu and Kashmir from Rs 12,300 to Rs 25,000, marking a hike of Rs 12,700, or approximately 103 per cent. The Health and Medical Education Department has been directed to issue the necessary orders immediately, with the formal notification expected on October 21. The decision comes amid sustained protests by medical and

dental interns, who had demanded an increase to Rs 30,000, citing rising living costs and the absence of a revision for nearly seven years. The revised stipend will amount to Rs 3 lakh annually, compared with Rs 1.47 lakh previously.

In a major development for medical and dental graduates undergoing compulsory internship in Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has approved the enhancement of their monthly stipend from Rs 12,300 to Rs 25,000,

>>> MORE ON P 02

Ladakh Amends Hill Council Rules, Opens Way for Councils in All Eight Districts

Revised regulation introduces flexible seat strength and provisions for women and unrepresented communities

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 20: Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday notified the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Amendment) Regulation, 2026, paving the way for the establishment of Hill Councils in all eight districts of the Union Territory, including the newly created Sankoo district. The regulation, which came into effect on October 19 following its promulgation by President Droupadi Murmu on October 16, replaces the earlier fixed strength of 26 seats in each council with a range of seven to 24 seats. It also provides for the nomination of four members representing women and unrepresented



communities, with the stated objective of strengthening grassroots democracy, widening public participation and improving local representation across Ladakh.

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday notified the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Amendment) Regulation, 2026, paving the way for the establishment of Hill Councils in all eight districts of the Union Territory, including the newly created Sankoo district. LG Saxena as per news agency Kashmir News Service (KNS) said the

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'Cyber Slavery' Emerges as Major Human Trafficking Threat in J&K

Crime Branch DIG warns against fraudulent overseas job offers, highlights cases of victims being forced into criminal activities

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 20: Jammu and Kashmir Crime Branch DIG Abdul Qayoom has warned that cyber slavery is emerging as a serious human trafficking challenge, with people lured abroad through fraudulent employment offers, deprived of their passports and forced into exploitative conditions, including criminal activities. Addressing a UT-level anti-human trafficking conference at Tagore Hall in Srinagar, he said several victims had been promised jobs in the Middle East but were instead taken to destinations such as Laos and Thailand. He highlighted rescue operations involving people stranded in Thailand and Burma and urged jobseekers to verify overseas employment offers before



travelling. The DIG called for greater public awareness, coordinated action by law enforcement agencies and civil society, and a stronger response to

trafficking networks targeting vulnerable individuals. Jammu and Kashmir Crime Branch DIG Abdul Qayoom on Tuesday said human trafficking has acquired a new and alarming dimension with people being lured abroad

>>> MORE ON P 02

J&K Announces Annual Darbar Move; Offices To Reopen In Jammu On November 2

Five-day-week offices to close in Srinagar on October 30, six-day-week offices on October 31; Rs 25,000 special TA for each move employee

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 20: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has ordered the Annual Darbar Move of offices from Srinagar to Jammu for the Winter Season 2026-27, with offices scheduled to reopen in Jammu on November 2. As per Government Order No. 1664-JK(GAD) of 2026,

offices observing a five-day week will close in Srinagar on October 30 after office hours, while those following a six-day week will close on October 31. The government has directed the JKRTC to arrange buses for employee transportation, with advance ticketing beginning October 27, while J&K Police will escort convoys and facilitate their passage

through the Banihal-Qazigund and Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee tunnels. Employees posted in moving offices will receive a uniform special Move TA of Rs 25,000, and October salaries will be drawn on October 29. A Winter Secretariat will also function at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar, with each department

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HT BOTTOM NEWS

Rain, Snow to Return to J&K on October 24 After Dry Spell

Thunderstorms and gusty winds likely from late October 23; MeT advises farmers to continue harvesting operations

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 20: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness another spell of rain and snowfall on October 24 after generally dry weather conditions prevail across the Union Territory until October 23, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar said on Tuesday. The forecast indicates generally cloudy skies, with light rain at scattered to many places and light snowfall over higher reaches on October 24, while thunderstorms and gusty winds may occur at a few places from late October 23 night until the forenoon of October 24. Dry weather is expected to return from October 25 and continue through October 31. The MeT department has advised farmers to continue harvesting and other agricultural operations in

view of the forecast. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 5.1 degrees Celsius, while Pahalgam and Gulmarg registered 0.6 and 1.4 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar



on Tuesday said Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness another spell of rain and snowfall on October 24, ending several days of dry weather across the Union Territory.

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Sajad Lone Slams NC Government Over Smart Meter Cable Charges

Alleges poor households are paying 4,000-5,000 for connections; says promise of 200 units of free electricity remains unfulfilled even after two years

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 20: Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference president and Handwara MLAsajad Lone on Tuesday criticised the elected government over its smart metering policy, alleging that poor households are being forced to pay between 4,000 and 5,000 for additional cables to obtain electricity connections. Lone claimed that the company installing smart meters provides only four metres of cable per household, with any additional requirement having to be borne by consumers. He said households needing longer cables because of their distance from electric poles face extra expenses and could be denied connections or disconnected from the grid if they fail to meet the requirements. Questioning the government's commitment to its

electoral promise of providing 200 units of free electricity, Lone alleged that not a single unit had been



provided free in the two years since the promise was made. Recalling the criticism of smart metering during the election campaign, he said consumers who had voted for the government were now being burdened with additional costs to secure electricity

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Chief Executive Officer, SSCL conducts Late-Night Inspection of Lal Chowk

Directs effective maintenance of Smart City Infrastructure

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 20: Reaffirming the focus on sustained maintenance of Smart City assets and improved public convenience, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), conducted a late-night inspection of Srinagar's Central Business District (CBD) on Monday, covering Ghanta Ghar, Sheikh Bagh Car Parking and mechanised car parking facility at Lal Chowk.

The inspection aimed to assess the condition of civic infrastructure and public amenities developed under the Smart City Mission, identify maintenance gaps and ensure prompt corrective action.

During the inspection, Dr. Basharat directed the concerned officers to address identified deficiencies on priority, initiate necessary repairs and restoration measures without delay, and ensure the timely completion of pending works, with particular emphasis on illumination, parking management and the functionality of public conveniences.

At Lal Chowk, the CEO directed regular maintenance and timely repair of streetlights,



illumination systems and façade lighting to maintain the area's visual appeal and ensure adequate illumination. At Sheikh Bagh, he instructed the concerned officers to restore



and maintain the community sanitary complex near the car parking facility and expedite the completion of the public convenience facility on the first floor, ensuring that both facilities

are made operational for public use.

He further directed the officers to examine the feasibility of an alternative access route at Sheikh Bagh Car Parking to streamline vehicular movement and ease congestion. At the mechanised car parking facility in Lal Chowk, the concerned officers were instructed to undertake necessary repairs and restore the high-mast lighting system to ensure adequate illumination.

Emphasising the need for sustained upkeep of Smart City assets, Dr. Basharat called for regular field inspections, preventive maintenance and swift resolution of operational deficiencies. He directed the concerned officers to closely monitor the progress of corrective works and ensure that all public facilities remain functional, accessible and properly maintained.

The inspection underscores SSCL's commitment to asset sustainability, reliable public services and citizen-centric urban management, ensuring that infrastructure developed under the Smart City Mission continues to serve the people of Srinagar efficiently and effectively.

DC Srinagar participates in Dussehra Celebrations, Bhandara at Kali Mata Mandir Magarmal Bagh

■ HT News Network



SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 20: On the occasion of Dussehra, celebrated with great reverence, which symbolizes the victory of good over evil, a devotional Bhandara celebrations were organised at Kali Mata Mandir Magarmal Bagh with all fervor and rituals.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo also paid a visit to the Mandir and participated in the Hawan and bhandara.

The event witnessed the presence of devotees from various parts of the district and paid their reverence at the temple.

The bhandara was also organized with devotees coming together at the temple to mark the festival. The gathering highlighted the importance of traditions and community participation in celebrating this auspicious occasion of Dusshera

Railways plans two warehouses in Kashmir to speed up farm produce transportation

■ HT News Network

Jammu, Oct 20 (KNS) : The Northern Railway has invited tenders for setting up warehouses near Anantnag and Pampore railway stations in Kashmir to improve storage facilities and facilitate the transportation of agricultural produce to major markets.

The two proposed facilities, along with a warehouse planned at Bari Brahmana near Jammu, are part of the Railways' efforts to strengthen freight infrastructure and improve the movement of farm produce, officials said on Tuesday. The Jammu railway division has invited private investors to develop and operate the warehouses under the Railways' Cargo Related Facility (CRF) policy. The projects will be offered on a lease for 25 years.

The facilities are expected to benefit apple growers and saffron traders by providing storage infrastructure close to railway stations, reducing loading and unloading costs and helping minimise post-harvest losses.

1,807 runners register for third Kashmir Marathon, 73 foreigners among participants

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Oct 20 : A total of 1,807 runners, including 73 foreign participants, have registered for the third edition of the Kashmir Marathon, scheduled to be held on October 25, officials said.

According to registration data accessed news agency Kashmir News Service (KNS), 1,221 participants are from Kashmir, while 513 are from other parts of the country. The event has attracted 1,614 male and 193 female runners.

Of the total participants, 1,416 will compete in the 21-km half marathon, while 391 have registered for the 42-km full marathon.

The marathon is being organised by the Tourism Department to showcase Kashmir's natural beauty and cultural heritage and promote the Valley as a destination for



sporting events. The routes will offer runners views of landmarks, including Dal Lake, Chinar trees and Mughal gardens.

Speaking to news agency KNS, Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad said the department intended to make the marathon an annual event and expand its international reach.

"The Kashmir Marathon will be a brand of the Tourism Department and a regular feature every year," Sajjad said.

He said the event's inclusion in the calendar of the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) would help establish it as a regular fixture and strengthen Kashmir's position on the international sporting map.

Sajjad said travel advisories issued by some European countries and the United States, along with the prevailing situation in the Middle East, had affected international participation in the event. (KNS)

Centre Approves Staggered Recruitment of 103 Posts for Government Medical College Leh

■ HT News Network

Leh, Oct 20, KNT: The Government of India has approved the recruitment of 103 posts for Government Medical College (GMC), Leh, in a staggered manner, paving the way for the institution to meet its staffing requirements ahead of its planned academic operations.

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has informed the Ladakh administration that recruitment against the 103 posts would be undertaken in phases, in accordance with the academic requirements of GMC Leh. The recruitment is to be carried out by the UT administration from the academic year 2027-28 onwards, as stated in the communication.

The ministry also conveyed that the Department of Expenditure had examined the proposal and that the posts could be filled on a regular basis under the approved Recruitment Rules.

Regarding infrastructure, the ministry said the interim arrangement should remain temporary and that, once the proposed infrastructure at Stipuk Pharka, Leh, is



completed, the same should be shifted to dedicated infrastructure.

The Ladakh administration has also been advised to fix reasonable timelines for making the proposed infrastructure ready to accommodate the interim arrangement and to inform the Department of Expenditure when the shift to the proposed infrastructure takes place. [KNT]

DC Kupwara chairs meeting to finalize Action Plan under Aspirational Block Programme for Keran

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 20: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Abhishek Sharma, today convened a meeting of district and sectoral officers to formulate a comprehensive Action Plan under the Aspirational Block Programme (ABP) for the border block of Keran.

During the meeting, threadbare deliberations were held on key developmental parameters, civic amenities, livelihood generation, and tourism infrastructure aimed at transforming Keran into a model block.

Addressing the officers, the DC emphasized that developmental interventions must cover every village within the block and be based on ground-level need analysis to deliver tangible, outcome-oriented results.

Focusing on the visual and ecological profile of the area, the DC instructed the line departments to renovate all government buildings across the block to create. He further directed officers to proactively institute scientific waste management systems to safeguard the local environment, alongside installing



proper street lighting, standardized signages, and ensuring regular maintenance and upkeep of existing public assets.

To tap the border region's scenic potential, the DC stressed the identification and development of additional tourist attractions and directed the Chief Executive Officer, Lolab-Bangus-Drangyari Development Authority (LBDDA), to collaborate with relevant departments to explore landscape development and aesthetic enhancement throughout the block. Concluding the meeting, the DC directed all participating departments to submit their sector-specific, need-based proposals without delay so that a consolidated, outcome-oriented Action Plan can be finalized for prompt execution.

The meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officer LBDDA Farooq Ahmad Baba, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Peerzada Mumtaz Ahmad, District Programme Officer (DPO) ICDS Aijaz Ahmad, Chief Planning Officer (CPO), along with senior officers and engineers from Education, Health, Public Works (PWD), National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), and Youth Services & Sports (YSS).

Repeat of previous winter's 'power crisis' looms over J&K

No Shutdown of 400kV lines to be facilitated during Dec-Mar period: NRPC

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Oct 20 (KNO): Jammu and Kashmir is staring at a repeat of last winter's 'power crisis', with demand expected to match or exceed last year's peak while hydro generation stays lean. Officials warn that unless action is taken now, the same conditions will return.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), The Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) said that "Last winter, demand in the J&K control area rose to around 3,200 MW as heating load picked up in the early morning and night hours." "Hydro generation was low and large amounts of MVAR were drawn from the Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) nodes, so bus voltages at several stations in the Kashmir valley stayed critically low," the Committee said.

It also said that the 400 kV buses fell to 347 kV and 220 kV buses to 178 kV, well below the Indian Electricity Grid Code (IEGC) limits of 380 kV and 198 kV.

NRPC said that low voltage in the valley comes back every winter. "It was discussed in several forums, including the recent TCC and NRPC meetings held at Srinagar."



The Committee further said that "Demand is expected to be similar or higher this winter, and hydro generation is likely to be lean again, so the same conditions are likely to return unless action is taken in advance." "NRPC in this regard urged J&KSLDC to present its winter preparedness plan to the forum. "The plan should cover the status of capacitor banks and other reactive compensation in the valley."

It also said that the plan should measures to reduce MVAR drawal from the ISTS and the expected hydro generation for the winter. "Powergrid may ensure that all maintenance work of SVC at New Wanpoh is carried out now on priority as it would be difficult to provide any shutdown for New Wanpoh SVC in the December-February period," the Committee said.



Aga Ruhullah Questions J&K Govt's Performance, Says People Disappointed Over Unfulfilled Promises

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Oct 20: National Conference MP from Srinagar, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, on Tuesday questioned the performance of the Jammu and Kashmir government, saying people were disappointed over the lack of progress on political promises, employment, reservation and other public concerns.

Speaking to reporters, Ruhullah said the government must explain what it had achieved in restoring constitutional rights and addressing the issues on which people had placed their trust in the elected leadership.

"Whether it is the political agenda, governance, electricity, employment, reservation, students, interns, prisoners or protection of jobs, on which parameter can we say that the government has done something that satisfies us?" he asked.

The Srinagar MP said people had expected the elected government to take a firm stand on the restoration of Article 370 and other constitutional guarantees, but were now being asked to limit their demands to statehood.

"We are told not to talk about constitutional guarantees or Article 370. We are told to follow the path given by Modi and talk about statehood. Now, even statehood is not being discussed," he said.

Responding to a question about a statement describing the abrogation of



Article 370 as a wrong decision, Ruhullah said merely acknowledging the decision as wrong was not enough.

"Everyone knows that the decision of August 5 was wrong. What are we doing to reverse that decision? What is the party doing? What is our government doing?" he asked. He said the issue required institutional, democratic and peaceful efforts rather than repeated statements.

"We do not want commentary. What is the government doing to reverse that decision? What is the party doing? We should ask these questions," he said.

Ruhullah also criticised the government's handling of student protests over reservation and the concerns raised by interns.

He said students had been assured that their grievances would be addressed within a month, but the deadline had

passed without a satisfactory resolution.

"Students are back on the streets. Interns are back on the streets. They were told their problems would be resolved within a month, but after a month they received the same humiliation," he alleged.

The MP said public disappointment was growing because people were dissatisfied with both the government's political approach and its performance on governance. "Unfortunately, the people of Kashmir are disappointed. They are disappointed with the political agenda and they are disappointed with governance," he said. Turning to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir since 2019, Ruhullah accused the BJP of creating a hostile atmosphere for Kashmiris both within the Union Territory and in other parts of the country.

He alleged that Kashmiris were increasingly being treated with suspicion and subjected to harassment.

"Instead of normalising Kashmir, it has been polarised. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been made suspects in their own land. The verification regime is an example of this," he said.

Referring to an incident in Karnal, Haryana, Ruhullah alleged that Kashmiris faced hostility outside Jammu and Kashmir as well.

He also raised concerns about prisoners from Jammu and Kashmir, claiming that many had remained in detention for years without trial.

"Kashmiris are being harassed inside and outside Kashmir. The developments since 2019 have not normalised the relationship. The responsibility for this hostility lies with the BJP," he alleged.

The MP further criticised the treatment of protesters in Delhi, drawing comparisons with restrictions imposed in Kashmir in previous years.

He referred to the detention of activists and internet restrictions, saying such measures reflected a wider challenge to democratic rights.

Ruhullah also called for accountability over allegations concerning the Election Commission, saying questions raised about the conduct of elections should be examined seriously.

He demanded the resignation of the election commissioner facing allegations and called for criminal proceedings if wrongdoing was established.

DC Kulgam attends Dussehra celebrations at K.P. Colony Vessu, extended greetings to residents

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, OCTOBER 20: Vijayadashami (Dussehra) was today celebrated with great enthusiasm and religious fervour at K.P. Colony, Vessu.

On the auspicious occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, visited the colony and took part in celebrations with the residents.

He also extended heartfelt greetings to the people. Besides, the DC also inspected the ongoing infrastructure development works and took stock of the progress being made. He also interacted with the residents and listened to their various issues and concerns.

The Deputy Commissioner assured the residents that their genuine concerns would be looked into by the concerned authorities.

As part of the Dussehra celebrations, a prize distribution ceremony was organised for children to encourage their participation and recognise their talent. The celebrations culminated with the traditional burning of



the effigy of Ravana by a large gathering of colony residents, symbolising the victory of good over evil.

Vessu Welfare Committee expressed its gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner for visiting the colony, reviewing the ongoing development works, and interacting with the residents.

The Committee also conveyed its warm greetings to all residents on Vijayadashami, emphasising the values of truth, righteousness, unity, brotherhood, and humanity.

LMD intensifies festival season enforcement across J&K; 60 improvement notices, 71 challans issued in October so far

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 20: The Legal Metrology Department Jammu and Kashmir under the supervision of Contoller Legal Metrology J&K Shiv Kumar Gupta has intensified enforcement activities across the Union Territory to safeguard consumer interests and ensure fair trade practices in markets and commercial establishments amid the ongoing festival season.

Enforcement teams have been conducting inspections across districts to check violations relating to short delivery, underweight commodities, use of unverified weights and measures and non-compliance with prescribed declarations on packaged commodities. The drive aims to ensure that consumers receive the correct quantity of goods, pay the legally permissible price and remain protected against misleading trade practices during the festive shopping period.

As part of the ongoing

enforcement drive, 60 Improvement Notices have been served and 71 challans have been booked in the month of October 2026 so far. The Department is implementing the Improvement Notice mechanism under the Jan Vishwas framework, wherever applicable, to provide an opportunity for rectification of identified violations within the prescribed period. Failure to comply with such notices within the stipulated time has resulted in further legal action, including the imposition of penalties in appropriate cases.

Alongside enforcement, the Department is regularly conducting consumer awareness camps and trader awareness programmes across the Union Territory to familiarise consumers and traders with the provisions of the applicable Legal Metrology legislation, the new enforcement framework and the Jan Vishwas Act. These initiatives aim to educate consumers about their rights and responsibilities while

guiding traders and commercial establishments on statutory requirements, compliance procedures and the Improvement Notice mechanism. The objective is to encourage voluntary compliance, prevent inadvertent violations and promote a culture of transparency and accountability in commercial transactions. Amid the ongoing festival season, the Department has also taken action in several cases involving short delivery of fuel, underweight commodities and failure to comply with Improvement Notices within the prescribed period. Penalties amounting to 3.50 lakh have been imposed in the cases highlighted so far across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Consumers have also been advised to remain vigilant while making purchases during the festival season. The department has urged consumers to carefully check the Maximum Retail Price (MRP), net quantity.

Health Department organises free medical camp at Aul- Ghat

■ HT News Network



DODA, OCTOBER 20: Reaffirming its commitment to extend quality healthcare services to rural communities, a free Medical Camp under MMU was organised at Village Aul in Medical Block Ghat.

The camp witnessed an encouraging response from the local population. More than 200 locals were examined and provided medical consultations for various ailments. Screening tests were also conducted to facilitate the early detection of health conditions and promote timely medical intervention.

As part of the ongoing efforts to strengthen preventive healthcare, TB screening and awareness activities were also carried out during the camp. The medical team sensitised the local population about tuberculosis, the importance of early diagnosis, timely treatment and the need to seek medical assistance in case of symptoms suggestive of TB.

In addition to clinical services, health awareness activities were conducted to promote the rational use of medicines and discourage drug misuse. The beneficiaries were also sensitised about the JK SEHAT App, highlighting its utility in accessing healthcare-related services and information.

The medical team comprised Dr. Hamid Parry, Dr. Touseef Aslam, Dr. Muneza Iqbal, Dr. Younis Saleem (MLHP) and Swami Raj from the MMU team. The team collectively contributed to the successful conduct of the camp through patient consultations, screening services and community health education. The camp was organised under the guidance of Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma and the supervision of Block Medical Officer Ghat Dr. Abdul Gafoor, with the objective of extending essential healthcare services to people at their doorstep.

DC Poonch reviews waste remediation Work; Over 12,000 MT of waste remediated

■ HT News Network

POONCH, OCTOBER 20: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma, accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, today visited the waste remediation site in Poonch to review the progress of ongoing solid waste management initiatives.

During the visit, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Khalil A. Bandy briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the progress achieved at the site, informing him that more than 12,000 metric tonnes (MT) of legacy waste have been remediated as part of the ongoing efforts to improve sanitation and environmental conditions in the town.

The CEO also apprised the officers of the measures being undertaken to strengthen solid waste management practices, with special emphasis on household-level waste



segregation to ensure the proper separation of wet and dry waste at the source. The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ongoing remediation work and stressed the importance of public participation in maintaining cleanliness and promoting sustainable waste management practices. He appealed to the people of Poonch to extend their full cooperation to the Municipal Council by segregating wet and dry waste at the household

level, avoiding littering and ensuring proper disposal of waste. He emphasized that effective waste management is a shared responsibility and that the active involvement of every household is essential for achieving a cleaner and healthier environment.

Household-level segregation also facilitates better waste processing, recycling and scientific disposal, thereby reducing the burden on waste management facilities.

Dussehra celebrated with great enthusiasm, religious fervour in Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 20: Like other parts of the country, Dussehra

was celebrated today with great enthusiasm and religious fervour here at the Sports Stadium late this evening.

A large number of people gathered at the Sports Stadium to witness the burning of the effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Meghnad, symbolising the triumph of good over evil and the victory of truth and righteousness.

The celebrations were attended by Member Legislative Assembly, Udhampur West Pawan Kumar Gupta, MLA Udhampur East Ranbir Singh



Pathania, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Ananth Dwivedi, Assistant

Commissioner Revenue, Dr Umesh

Shan and other officers, prominent

citizens and a large number of civil

society members.

The district administration had made elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth and safe conduct of the event. Adequate security measures, barricading, drinking water, uninterrupted power supply and medical facilities, including the deployment of ambulances, were put in place to facilitate the public and ensure a peaceful celebration.

Jal Jeevan Mission-J&K collaborates with JKAACL, Natrang to promote Water Conservation at Basohli Utsav 2026

Nukkad Natak highlights water conservation, community participation and sustainable water management

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, OCTOBER 20: Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Jammu and Kashmir, in collaboration with the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), organised a Nukkad Natak by Natrang, Jammu, at Basohli Utsav 2026 to promote water conservation, cleanliness and judicious use of water.

Organised under the Jal Utsav framework for continuous engagement and cultural connect with water, the initiative used live theatre to spread awareness and encourage collective responsibility towards protecting water resources.

Based on the devotional narrative of Mata Ki Kahani, the Nukkad Natak highlighted the contrast between the reverence accorded to water in Indian spiritual traditions and the challenges posed by pollution, wastage and unsustainable practices. The performance conveyed that preserving water resources requires responsible human action.

It emphasised that water-supply infrastructure alone cannot ensure long-term water security. Protection of natural springs and streams, conservation of catchment areas, rainwater harvesting, prevention of pollution and judicious water use are equally essential.



In line with the vision of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, the initiative highlighted community participation, local ownership of drinking-water systems and protection of water sources for future generations. It reiterated that water conservation is a shared responsibility of government departments, households, communities and individuals.

A digital screen installed at the festival venue is also showcasing JJM's efforts and achievements, along with messages on water conservation and sustainable water management.

Being celebrated from October 19 to 21, Basohli Utsav 2026 showcases the region's rich cultural heritage,

traditional art forms, tourism potential and local economy. The festival features Basohli miniature paintings, Ramleela, folk performances, traditional sports, local cuisine and Ravi Aarti, among other attractions.

The collaboration highlights the role of cultural platforms and traditional storytelling in promoting public awareness and reinforcing the message that access to safe drinking water must go hand in hand with protecting natural resources. In line with the vision of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, the initiative highlighted community participation, local ownership of drinking-water systems

and protection of water sources for future generations. It reiterated that water conservation is a shared responsibility of government departments, households, communities and individuals.

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The film's theatrical release brings an experimental Kashmiri-language production to cinema screens, with its creators seeking to engage audiences through a form that places greater emphasis on perception and interpretation than on a conventional linear storyline.

HT EDITORIAL

Save a Generation,
Defeat the Drug Menace

Amit Shah's Drug-Free India Vision Must Inspire Collective Action. Religious Leaders, Families, Police and Health Professionals Must Join Hands. The fight against drugs in Jammu and Kashmir demands more than arrests, seizures and occasional awareness campaigns. It requires a sustained social movement that prevents young people from falling into addiction, helps those already affected recover, and dismantles the networks that profit from their suffering.

The initiative of the Waqf Board Chairperson to involve religious preachers in counselling drug-affected youth is a welcome step. Religious institutions enjoy considerable community trust and can play an important role in changing attitudes, guiding families and encouraging youngsters to seek help. However, such efforts must be supported by professional counselling, medical treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has repeatedly stressed the need for coordinated action against narcotics, with the national vision of achieving a Drug-Free India by 2029. His emphasis on intelligence-based enforcement, demand reduction, institutional coordination and rehabilitation offers an important direction for Jammu and Kashmir. The challenge now is to translate this national resolve into effective action at the grassroots level.

Drug addiction is not merely a law-and-order issue; it is a serious public health and social challenge. Families often conceal the problem because of stigma, allowing addiction to worsen before professional assistance is sought. Society must replace humiliation with understanding and ensure that those struggling with dependency receive timely, appropriate treatment. Compassion towards affected individuals must never be confused with leniency towards drug traffickers.

Parents, teachers and community elders must remain alert to changes in behaviour and encourage early intervention. Schools and colleges should organise regular awareness programmes, provide access to confidential counselling and educate students about the physical, psychological and social consequences of substance abuse. Sports, cultural activities, vocational training and employment opportunities can also help young people find constructive alternatives and a stronger sense of purpose.

Religious preachers can reinforce these efforts through sermons, community gatherings and counselling initiatives. Their involvement, however, should complement professional healthcare rather than substitute for it. The Waqf Board's initiative would have greater impact if religious leaders were linked with trained counsellors, de-addiction centres and health authorities through an organised referral system.

At the same time, enforcement agencies must target the networks supplying narcotics, trace their financial channels and dismantle organised trafficking operations. Intelligence-sharing, coordinated investigations and public cooperation are essential to prevent drugs from reaching vulnerable communities. Those who exploit young lives for profit must face the full force of the law.

Jammu and Kashmir needs a unified campaign bringing together the administration, police, health and education departments, religious institutions, civil society and families. Success must be measured not merely by arrests and seizures, but by reduced substance abuse, improved access to treatment and the number of young people who return to healthy, productive lives.

The message is clear: defeat the drug trade with firm enforcement, prevent addiction through awareness, and restore lives through treatment and rehabilitation. Kashmir cannot afford to lose another generation to this menace. Saving its youth must become a shared responsibility—and collective action must begin before more promising lives are destroyed by addiction.

Kashmir Marathon

The Real Wealth of Life Lies in Good Health



By Aubaid Ahmad Akhoo

Mirza Qurban Ali Beig, who was a well-known Urdu poet in the 19th century, used the pen names Qurban and later Saalik. He appropriately conveyed the importance of good health in the famous couplet:

Tangdasti agar na ho Saliq,
Tandrusti hazaar ne'mat hai.

Even if poverty were not a problem, good health would still be one of the great blessings of life.

We have known since we were children these valuable words which stress the immense importance of good health. Our parents, grandparents and old aged relatives have always repeated the traditional saying that health is wealth, but in our younger years we generally didn't grasp the real meaning of it. In childhood one is in a state of innocence and usually does not realise the value of things until one has gained experience. Nevertheless, as we grow up and face the realities of life, we start to come to appreciate the wisdom contained in these simple words.

The true significance of good health is even more apparent when we consider our older family members who have to cope with the physical difficulties which are common in old age. The lessons we learn from their experiences show that wealth, property and all the material advantages cease to be very attractive when the body can no longer make use of them. A sound body allows us to work, to think, to learn, to serve our families and to

carry out our duties; but without it even the most basic tasks can become difficult. In fact, a healthy body is the best environment for a sound mind, and physical well-being should therefore be one of the greatest things for which

exercises suitable for your age or simply deciding to walk rather than staying seated for long periods. The key is not to put in extraordinary effort but rather to be consistent.

Doing physical activity every day helps to

towards physical activity.

It is a sad thing that more and more children now spend a large part of their free time in front of mobile phones, tablets, computers and television screens. In a great many homes, children's academic performance has come to be the only way of judging their progress. Motivated by real worries about their children's futures, parents often fill their children's timetable with schoolwork, tuition and coaching, leaving very little room for play, exercise or recreation.

It is certainly essential to have education, but it shouldn't happen at the expense of a child's general development. Children should be given the chance to run about, play, explore, interact with their peers and learn by means of experiences that go beyond what is in textbooks. Unstructured play and team sports can aid children in becoming more confident, improving their communication skills, learning to be patient, developing discipline, fostering cooperation and building resilience. They also offer valuable opportunities for children to learn how to cope with disappointment, respect the rules and work together towards common goals.

Children should have a well-balanced environment in which academic learning, recreation, family interaction and emotional support all complement each other.

About the Author

Aubaid Ahmad Akhoo is an educator, columnist, motivational speaker, and Associate Editor of Education Quill. He also offers modern home security solutions, including VDP and CCTV systems across Kashmir. Phone: 9205000010 / 9205000016 Email: akhoo.aubaid@gmail.com

The Indian Army has a rich legacy
of producing world-class sportspersons



By M S Nazki

Every strike brings me closer to the next home run. The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team. The miracle isn't that I finished. The miracle is that I had the courage to start

-The score never interested me, only the game.

-Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game. Since it is all about sports I will enter this one

-Sports are essential for the Indian Army because they build physical combat readiness, foster teamwork and leadership, and maintain mental resilience under high-pressure conditions

-Key Reasons Sports Matter in the Indian Army

• Physical Fitness and Stamina: Military service requires high levels of endurance, agility and strength. Regular games and physical regimes help soldiers handle harsh terrain,



heavy gear, and long deployments.

• Teamwork and Camaraderie: Team sports like football, volleyball, basketball, and hockey build trust, coordination, and shared reliance among personnel—traits that are vital during joint tactical operations.

• Leadership and Decision-Making: Sports test a soldier's ability to strategize, communicate, and stay calm under pressure, directly shaping effective officers and unit commanders.

• Mental Resilience and Stress Relief: Constant deployments in remote or border areas can be mentally taxing. Sports and adventure activities (such as mountaineering, skiing, and rafting) provide a healthy outlet to de-stress and boost morale.

• Operational Skills Integration: Adventure sports like rock climbing, white-water rafting, kayaking, and parachuting directly translate into tactical utility for specialized terrain navigation and combat roles.

• National Sporting Excellence: Through initiatives like the Mission Olympics Wing (established in 2001) and the Army Sports Institute (ASI) in Pune, the Army nurtures grass-roots athletic talent to represent and win medals for India at global stages like the Asian Games and the Olympics.

-A woman who created history for services!

-Neeru Dhanda (born 25 May 2000) is an Indian sport shooter who competes in trap

shooting. She won the women's trap individual and team gold medals at the 2025 Asian Shooting Championships.

-In 2026, she won the women's trap gold medal at the ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Lonato del Garda, becoming the first Indian woman to win a World Cup gold medal in the event. She also won two gold and a silver medal in 2026 Asian Games.

-Dhanda hails from Jind district, Haryana. Her family moved from Jind to Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, when she later took up shooting.

-She developed an interest in shooting after watching her maternal cousin Lakshay Sheoran win the silver medal in the men's trap event at the 2018 Asian Games. She initially practiced by shooting at tin cans with a family-owned double-barrel gun and later trained with Sheoran before joining the Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy after clearing its selection trials.

-Career
Dhanda competed at the 2022 ISSF World Championships in Osijek, Croatia, where she finished 29th in the women's trap event.

-In May 2025, Dhanda won the women's trap event at the Second Shotgun National Trials in New Delhi, defeating Aashima Ahlawat 40-39 in the final.

-She won the gold medal in the women's trap event at the 38th National Games. In August 2025, she won gold medals in the women's trap individual and team events at the 2025 Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

Dreams come true after sacrifices



Sahil Manzoor Bhatti

Education never simply means getting employment, handsome salaries, and all that comes with a job. Education simply means gaining control over everything within ourselves: our anger, arrogance, dishonesty, jealousy, and other weaknesses. True education develops our character and teaches us how to deal with life. How beautiful it is whenever I see educated people engaging in different livelihood activities. We know that in our country, almost everyone wants a government job. Yet, those who get into government service often start complaining: "What is so special about a government job?" I have a friend whose earnings are many times higher than mine. I also have a neighbour who earns in a few days what some people earn in an entire month.

My perspective regarding employment is quite clear. People who have zeal, enthusiasm, and a thirst to do something in any field rarely complain about what they have achieved or what they have lost. Different people have different stories when it comes to their choices of employment.

Some people may not be highly qualified, yet they have positive smiles on their faces and live their lives happily. On the other hand, some highly qualified people, such as engineers, teachers, doctors, and lecturers, complain that their earnings are insufficient, that they cannot afford a luxurious lifestyle, or that they



cannot live like princes.

How Can We Be Happy?

For me, earnings are not everything. I believe in satisfaction. The person who is satisfied with his or her qualifications, profession, and earnings is a successful person. No one can defeat such a person's dreams or easily make them unhappy.

Actually, it is our own mindset that often creates problems. We keep looking at what others are doing without knowing their background. Different people have different strengths and different financial circumstances, so it is not possible for everyone to sail in the same boat.

Some people can make something great from very small things, while others have bigger opportunities because of their family background, financial status, education, or other advantages. Yet, they sometimes fail to make good use of those opportunities. This raises an important question: why do some people have great opportunities but fail to use them to achieve their life goals?

Today, this thought came into my mind,

and I decided to write about it.

Literally, I have been enjoying delicious masala (a mixture of gram) and lawasa (a dandoori chapatti) for the last couple of decades, along with chutneys of different varieties, such as coriander, chilli powder, green chilli, curd, and pieces of salad.

One of the sellers from Parneva, Khanshab, Budgam, has been selling these items for a long time. I like his behaviour and the way he presents his masala and lawasa with delicious chutney. He keeps the chutney in copper utensils, which adds to the traditional charm. What attracts me most is his behaviour. Even when members of the community call him "Sir," he remains humble and gentle.

Today, I see similar food items being sold outside colleges, schools, sports stadiums, and other busy places.

Such efforts by our educated youth to earn a livelihood should be appreciated. The government should support them by providing financial assistance and suitable permanent spaces so that they can earn with dignity and with proper governmental support.

There are great minds in the government, and I hope such initiatives for employment and self-reliance among our youth will be appreciated and supported.

How Can We Generate Employment with Little Financial Support?

We can start a business from a footpath and gradually build it into a successful enterprise within a few years through honesty, hard work, and enthusiasm.

Anyone can become what he or she wants to become, but proper guidance and a great vision are necessary. Willingness plays a vital role and can uplift a person from any situation. There is no need to start a business with millions. When you start small, you remain calm because you have less fear of bankruptcy and fewer financial pressures.

Always try to learn from zero and then move higher. The higher you go, the calmer and wiser you should become.

Education
We should never claim that we are educated and then ask why we are unemployed.

For your kind consideration, an educated person should never give up simply because employment opportunities are limited. How is it possible that you spend 20 or 30 years learning how to tackle life's issues and deal with problems, but when it comes to employment, you give up?

Never blindly follow what others say. Come out of your comfort zone and try your best. Success does not come through discussions and lame excuses. It comes through hard work, patience, willingness, and perseverance.

Different people have different stories, different opportunities, and different journeys. What matters most is not how much we earn, but how meaningfully and honestly we live our lives.

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BOOK REVIEW

APOSTLE OF LIGHT: Rediscovering the Soul of Kashmir Through the Life of Sheikh-ul-Alam

Baba Ghulam Nabi Adfar's meticulously researched biography presents Hazrat Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) as a spiritual luminary, social reformer and architect of Kashmir's cultural harmony



By Dr Rafiq Masoodi

Some books inform, some educate, and a rare few transform the reader's understanding of history, spirituality and society. Apostle of Light: Complete Biography of Hazrat Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) by Baba Ghulam Nabi Adfar belongs to the latter category. More than a conventional biography, the book is an ambitious attempt to rediscover the spiritual, intellectual and social legacy of one of Kashmir's most revered saints, affectionately known as Nund Rishi and honoured as Alamdar-e-Kashmir.

The book emerges from more than a decade of research into Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and Kashmiri sources. Spanning 359 pages, 23 chapters and appendices, it seeks to illuminate what the author considers an inadequately explored dimension of Sheikh-ul-Alam's life: his role not merely as a mystic and ascetic, but also as a social reformer, moral philosopher and influential figure in Kashmir's cultural evolution.

Adfar's work is distinguished by the personal devotion that accompanies his scholarly inquiry. A native of Char-e-Sharif, he carries the emotional memory of the shrine town and the devastation it suffered in 1995. The experience of witnessing a cherished spiritual centre destroyed and subsequently rebuilt lends the book a deeply personal dimension. Written during his period of residence in Jalandhar, the biography reflects an enduring attachment to the land, traditions and spiritual inheritance of Kashmir.

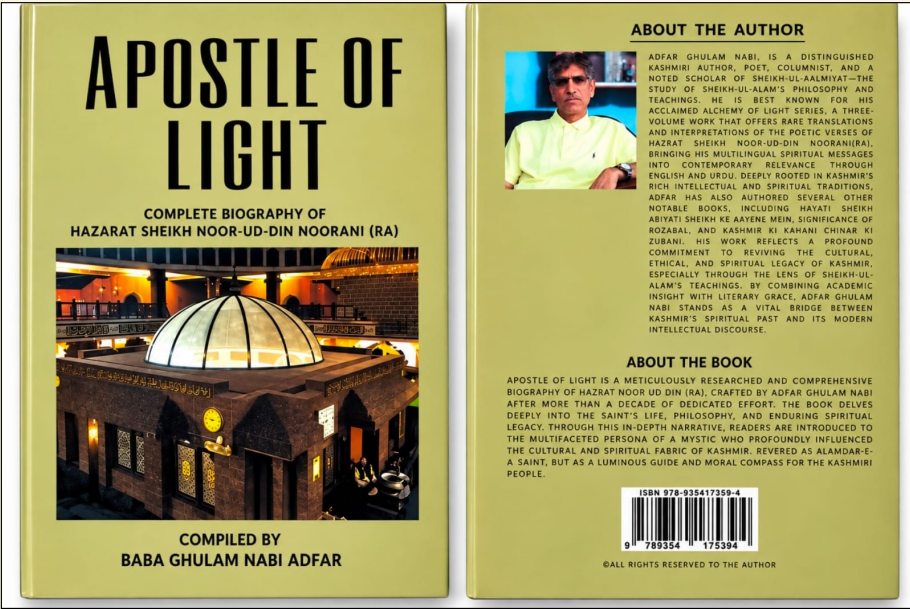
Yet the book's significance extends beyond personal remembrance. Its central concern is the recovery of a historical personality whose teachings continue to shape Kashmiri religious and cultural consciousness.

Returning to Kashmir's Spiritual Roots

One of the most thoughtful features of Apostle of Light is its decision to begin not with the saint's birth, but with the geographical, historical and mystical landscape of Kashmir. The opening chapters explore the Valley's natural environment, indigenous spiritual traditions and cultural evolution, establishing the setting in which Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani's teachings emerged.

This approach allows the reader to understand the saint as a product of Kashmir's own historical and spiritual soil. Adfar examines the continuity and transformation of the Rishi tradition, exploring the relationship between indigenous ascetic practices and the arrival and development of Islamic spirituality in the region.

The book consequently presents Nund Rishi as an important figure in the evolution of Kashmir's distinctive spiritual identity. Rather than treating cultural traditions as isolated or mutually exclusive, the author explores their points of contact and the shared ethical concerns that helped shape Kashmir's composite cultural ethos.



This historical perspective is particularly relevant in an age when identities are frequently reduced to rigid religious and political categories. Adfar's narrative invites readers to reconsider Kashmir's past through the values of coexistence, compassion and mutual respect.

Beyond the Ascetic: The Thinker and Reformer

The book's most compelling argument is that Sheikh-ul-Alam's historical importance cannot be fully understood if he is portrayed exclusively as a cave-dwelling ascetic absorbed in personal spiritual attainment.

Across its discussions of meditation, yogic culture, moral character, philosophical reflection and social conduct, the biography seeks to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the saint. Adfar presents spirituality not as withdrawal from society, but as a source of ethical responsibility and service to humanity.

This interpretation gives particular importance to the Rishi tradition as a social and moral movement. The author explores its associations with simplicity, self-discipline, compassion, ecological sensitivity and community welfare. The Rishi centres, in this understanding, represented more than places of spiritual retreat; they also embodied ideals of service, shared responsibility and human solidarity.

Adfar's emphasis on cultural harmony, social integration, political consciousness and institution-building offers a useful framework for examining the wider influence of Sheikh-ul-Alam's

teachings. His approach encourages readers to look beyond devotional reverence and consider the practical implications of the saint's moral philosophy.

The biography's treatment of Sheikh-ul-Alam's relationship with Lal Ded, the celebrated Kashmiri mystic, is another significant feature. Their spiritual worlds are examined in the context of Kashmir's broader contemplative traditions. The encounter between these two towering figures can be read as a meeting of spiritual sensibilities that transcended narrow social and religious boundaries.

Such interpretations require careful historical examination, but they open an important avenue for understanding the shared cultural vocabulary that developed in Kashmir over centuries.

The Power of Kashmiri: A Language of Spiritual Awakening

One of the enduring contributions of Sheikh-ul-Alam was his use of Kashmiri as a medium of spiritual instruction and moral reflection. His shruks, or mystical verses, communicated complex ideas through the language of ordinary people, making spiritual wisdom accessible beyond scholarly and religious circles.

Adfar gives considerable attention to this linguistic heritage, combining verses with translations and commentary. This method enables readers to appreciate not only the devotional content of the poetry but also its ethical, social and philosophical implications.

The celebrated verse, "Ann poshi teli yel wan poshi"—food will last only as long as forests survive—illustrates the continuing relevance of Sheikh-ul-Alam's thought. Its message connects

human survival with the preservation of nature, expressing an ecological awareness that resonates strongly with contemporary concerns about deforestation, environmental degradation and sustainable development.

Through such examples, the book demonstrates how the saint's poetry remains a living resource for public reflection. His verses speak of humility, compassion, restraint, social responsibility and the relationship between humanity and the natural world. The language of the shruks is therefore not merely a vehicle for religious expression. It is an important repository of Kashmiri cultural memory, moral imagination and literary achievement.

A Spiritual Bridge Between Traditions

The relationship between Sheikh-ul-Alam and Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA), along with the wider development of Islamic spirituality in Kashmir, receives attention in the biography. Adfar attempts to situate the Rishi tradition within this broader historical setting, highlighting the interaction between religious scholarship, local spiritual practices and the region's evolving cultural identity.

The resulting narrative underscores the importance of understanding Kashmir's spiritual history as a complex process of interaction and adaptation rather than as a simple account of competing traditions.

Sheikh-ul-Alam's legacy, as presented in the book, rests on the conviction that faith must be reflected in character, conduct and concern for others. Spiritual attainment is meaningful when it inspires moral discipline and contributes to the welfare of society.

This interpretation does not diminish the saint's mystical stature. Instead, it seeks to demonstrate that contemplation and social engagement can coexist, and that spiritual authority can be expressed through compassion and ethical leadership.

The book's emphasis on the Rishi movement as a force for cultural harmony is particularly valuable in contemporary Kashmir, where the preservation of shared heritage remains an important social responsibility.

Giving Voice to Women and Successive Generations

Another noteworthy aspect of Apostle of Light is its attention to the voices through which Sheikh-ul-Alam's memory was preserved. The inclusion of Shum Bi's elegy and the treatment of later poetic tributes broaden the narrative beyond the familiar conventions of saintly biography.

The section devoted to Shum Bi's lament is especially significant because women's voices and contributions are often underrepresented in historical accounts of spiritual movements. By incorporating this material, Adfar acknowledges the role of literary expression, mourning and collective remembrance in sustaining the memory of revered personalities.

The inclusion of Baba Dawood Khaki's marsiya and other poetic reflections further illustrates how successive generations interpreted and commemorated Sheikh-ul-Alam's life and teachings. These literary materials are not simply supplementary additions. They help demonstrate how the saint's influence travelled through poetry, oral tradition, devotional practice and the cultural imagination of Kashmiris.

The biography thus becomes not only an account of an

individual life, but also an exploration of how a society remembers its spiritual figures and continually renews their relevance.

Scholarly Strengths and Areas for Further Inquiry

The principal strength of Adfar's work lies in its attempt to bring together historical inquiry, literary interpretation and spiritual reflection. Its attention to Kashmiri verses, historical references and the broader cultural environment offers readers several perspectives from which to approach Sheikh-ul-Alam's legacy.

The author's insistence on looking beyond miracle-oriented narratives is also commendable. By foregrounding ethical teachings, social responsibility and intellectual depth, he encourages a more substantive engagement with the saint's life.

At the same time, the book's ambitious interpretations invite further academic discussion. Claims concerning the historical development of the Rishi order, its institutional character and the precise relationship between different spiritual traditions would benefit from continued comparative research and close examination of primary sources. Distinguishing documented historical evidence from devotional interpretation remains essential to strengthening the academic study of Kashmir's past.

The book's conceptual vocabulary, including cultural integration, political consciousness and institution-building, may also require patience from general readers. Nevertheless, these themes give the biography a contemporary relevance that extends beyond the immediate interests of devotees and specialists.

Apostle of Light is best approached as a serious work of historical and spiritual interpretation, one that opens questions for further inquiry while making an earnest contribution to the understanding of Kashmiri's religious and literary heritage.

Why the Book Matters Today

For students of Kashmir's history, researchers of Sufism, scholars of Kashmiri literature and younger readers seeking a deeper understanding of their cultural inheritance, this biography offers a valuable point of engagement.

Its central message is that Sheikh-ul-Alam's legacy cannot be confined to the past. His teachings on humility, human equality, compassion and the preservation of nature retain their relevance in a world confronted by social divisions, environmental crises and declining respect for shared values.

The saint's spiritual stature is inseparable from the ethical responsibilities his teachings place upon individuals and communities. To remember him meaningfully is not simply to visit a shrine or recite his verses; it is also to reflect upon the values those verses communicate and their implications for everyday life.

In this respect, Adfar's biography serves as an invitation to rediscover Sheikh-ul-Alam not as a distant historical figure, but as a continuing presence in Kashmir's moral and cultural imagination.

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When Tears Become Prayers

The Sacred Beauty of Tahajjud



By Bisma Ashraf

In the Silence of the Night,
a Weary Heart Finds Peace, a Troubled
Soul Discovers Hope, and Tears
Become a Language of Faith

In the stillness of the night, when the world falls asleep and the noise of everyday life fades into silence, there is a moment when the heart begins to speak in ways words cannot explain. For many believers, this is the time of Tahajjud—a voluntary prayer offered in the quiet hours of the night, when the soul seeks closeness to Allah and finds comfort in His remembrance.

Tahajjud is more than an act of worship. It is a deeply personal conversation between servant and the Creator, a moment of surrender in which the burdens of the heart can finally be laid bare. Away from the eyes of the world, a believer stands before Allah with humility, seeking forgiveness, expressing gratitude, sharing sorrows, and asking for mercy. Sometimes, words flow effortlessly. At other times, tears become the only language the heart can speak.

When the Heart Speaks Through Tears

There are moments in life when pain becomes too deep to express and emotions too heavy to carry. A person may smile throughout the day, fulfil responsibilities, and appear strong before others, while silently struggling with worries, disappointments, and unspoken grief. Yet, when the night grows quiet and the believer stands for Tahajjud, those hidden emotions often find an outlet.

Tears may fall because of regret over past mistakes, longing for something deeply cherished, gratitude for blessings, or hope for a better tomorrow. Sometimes, the heart cries without a clear reason, simply overwhelmed by the awareness of its dependence on Allah.

Such tears should not be mistaken for weakness. They may reflect humility, sincerity, and a heart moved by faith. In those private moments, there is no need to pretend, impress anyone, or hide behind a strong exterior. The believer comes as they are, carrying both their imperfections and their hopes.

A Refuge for the Weary Soul

The beauty of Tahajjud lies partly in its quiet intimacy. The darkness of the night offers a peaceful space for reflection, allowing the mind to slow down and the heart to turn away from worldly distractions. Problems that seemed unbearable during the day may begin to feel easier to face when placed before Allah in prayer.

This does not mean that every difficulty disappears immediately or that every prayer receives the answer one

expects. Rather, the spiritual comfort of Tahajjud lies in the reassurance that a believer is not alone in facing life's trials. Prayer can bring patience to a restless heart, clarity to a confused mind, and renewed strength to someone who feels emotionally exhausted.

Sometimes, the circumstances remain unchanged, but the person facing them discovers a new sense of courage. The burden may still be present, yet it no longer feels impossible to carry.

A Prayer of Repentance, Healing and Hope

For some believers, Tahajjud is an opportunity to seek forgiveness and return to the path of righteousness. For others, it becomes a moment of healing after loss, disappointment, or prolonged hardship. For many, it is a combination of both—a chance to acknowledge past mistakes while asking Allah for the strength to move forward.

When the forehead touches the ground in prostration, the heart may soften, and tears may come naturally. In that moment of humility, a person is reminded that human beings are imperfect, vulnerable, and constantly in need of divine guidance and mercy.



The beauty of this worship does not depend on how eloquently someone speaks or how intensely they cry. Sincerity is not measured by tears alone. A quiet prayer, a heartfelt supplication, or even a moment of silent remembrance can carry profound meaning when offered with genuine faith.

What matters most is the honesty with which a person turns towards Allah.

The Strength Hidden in a Soft Heart

Modern life often demands that people remain strong, productive, and composed, even when they are struggling internally. Social expectations can make it difficult to acknowledge sadness or seek emotional relief. Many people learn to conceal their pain, believing that vulnerability is something to be ashamed of.

Tahajjud offers a different perspective. It reminds believers that strength and vulnerability can exist together. A person can be courageous and still cry, hopeful and still feel afraid, faithful and still struggle with uncertainty.

A soft heart is not necessarily a fragile heart. It can be a heart capable of reflection, compassion, repentance, and gratitude. Turning to Allah in moments of weakness can

become a source of resilience, helping a person approach life's challenges with greater patience and a renewed sense of purpose.

The tears shed in private may never be witnessed by another human being, but the comfort found in sincere worship can influence how a person lives, responds to others, and faces difficulties beyond the prayer mat.

Finding Peace Beyond the Darkness

Perhaps one of the most beautiful aspects of Tahajjud is the hope it nurtures. Even in the darkest hours, a believer is reminded that despair need not have the final word. Regret can lead to repentance, sorrow can deepen compassion, and hardship can become an opportunity for reflection and spiritual growth.

The night does not solve every problem, nor does prayer remove the need for practical effort, wise decisions, or support from others. But it can help restore the inner strength required to take the next step.

A heart that enters prayer overwhelmed by sadness may emerge with a little more peace. A mind burdened by uncertainty may find the patience to wait. And a soul weighed down by regret may rediscover the courage to begin again.

These quiet transformations are not always dramatic. Sometimes, they are as simple as feeling lighter after crying, finding the strength to forgive, or waking up with renewed determination to face another day.

When No One Is Watching, Faith Finds Its Voice

The most meaningful moments of worship are often those that remain unseen. There is no audience in the stillness of the night, no applause for a sincere supplication, and no need to explain the tears that fall. There is simply a believer turning towards Allah with whatever the heart carries.

In that privacy, sorrow can be acknowledged without shame, gratitude can be expressed without hesitation, and hope can survive even when circumstances appear difficult. Every sincere prayer becomes an opportunity to renew one's relationship with the Creator and to remember that human struggles do not diminish the value of faith.

Ultimately, the essence of Tahajjud is not perfection, but presence; not the ability to find beautiful words, but the willingness to turn towards Allah with sincerity. It is not about appearing strong at every moment, but about finding strength through trust, patience, and prayer.

And perhaps, when the night makes the heart cry, those tears are not merely an expression of pain. They may also be a reminder of faith that remains alive, hope that refuses to disappear, and a soul that continues to seek the mercy of its Lord.

In the silence before dawn, when the world is still asleep, a broken heart may discover that it can still pray, still hope, and still begin again.

The Cryogens

And Their Impacts



SURINDERPAL SINGH

Human civilisation has always sought to understand and control the extremes of nature, from the intense heat of industrial furnaces to the freezing temperatures of the deepest reaches of space. Amongst the most fascinating scientific developments in this pursuit is cryogenics, the branch of science and technology concerned with producing, maintaining and studying extremely low temperatures. Although often associated with laboratories and sophisticated industrial equipment, cryogenics has become an important part of modern medicine, scientific research, food preservation, energy systems and space exploration. Its growing applications demonstrate how extreme cold, when scientifically controlled, can become a powerful instrument for human progress.

However, like every transformative technology, cryogenics also presents technical, environmental, economic and safety challenges. The real question is not merely how cold we can make our surroundings, but how responsibly we can use this extraordinary scientific capability.

Cryogenics refers to the scientific study and practical application of temperatures generally below approximately 120 kelvin, or -153°C. A cryogen is a substance used to produce or maintain extremely low temperatures. Common examples include liquid nitrogen, which boils at approximately -196°C under atmospheric pressure, and liquid helium, which boils at approximately -269°C.

These substances possess remarkable physical properties at extremely low temperatures. Gases can be liquefied, certain materials become superconducting, biological samples can be preserved for extended periods and the behaviour of matter can be investigated under conditions that are impossible to achieve at ordinary temperatures.

It is important to distinguish cryogenics from cryonics. Cryogenics is an established scientific and engineering discipline with numerous practical applications, whereas cryonics refers to the speculative practice of preserving legally deceased individuals at very low temperatures in the hope that future technology might restore them. The latter has not been demonstrated to enable the revival of a human being, one of the most significant contributions of cryogenic technology is in healthcare. Modern medicine depends heavily on the safe preservation of biological materials, including blood components, reproductive cells, embryos, stem cells and certain tissues. Cryopreservation can slow biological deterioration by reducing the molecular processes responsible for damage and decay.

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Over 4 lakh pilgrims visit Vaishno Devi Shrine During Shardiya Navratras

Daily footfall remains above 30,000; Oct 17 records highest single-day rush at 48,470

HT News Network

Jammu, Oct 20 (KNO): More than four lakh pilgrims visited the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in the Trikuta Hills

11, followed by 48,400 on October 12 and 46,558 on October 13. A total of 41,961 pilgrims visited on October 14, while 39,961 and 41,921 devotees undertook the

during the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, the nine-day-long Shat Chandi Maha Yagya, organised by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

uninterrupted water and power supply, improved sanitation and cleanliness. Special fasting meals were also made available at the Board's Bhojanalyas and Langars for devotees observing fasts during Navratras.

The pilgrimage infrastructure received a further boost with the New Vaishnavi Bhawan at Bhawan, inaugurated in May 2026 by Manoj Sinha, the J&K Lieutenant Governor and Chairman of SMVDSB. The facility has augmented accommodation capacity and enhanced amenities for pilgrims.

The festive atmosphere at the shrine was enriched by floral decorations and thematic installations at Bhawan, Atka and adjoining areas. Devotional performances by renowned artists, including Navdeep Wadali, Sudhir Vyas, Mannat Noor, Dilbagh Singh, Milind Gaba, Malini Awasthi, Kanhaiya Mittal and Arunita Kanjilal, among others, added to the spiritual fervour. Students of SMVD Gurukul also enthralled devotees with devotional presentations.

The heavy rush of pilgrims also brought increased activity to Katra, the base camp for the yatra, where devotees make arrangements for their onward journey to the holy cave shrine.

The large turnout during Shardiya Navratras once again highlighted the enduring religious significance of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, one of the country's most prominent pilgrimage destinations. The Shrine Board reaffirmed its commitment to preserving the sanctity and spiritual traditions of the shrine while providing safe, comfortable and enriching facilities to the growing number of devotees—(KNO)



of Jammu and Kashmir during the nine-day Shardiya Navratra festival, reflecting the deep faith and devotion of devotees who undertook the pilgrimage from different parts of the country.

According to official figures, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the shrine witnessed a steady influx of pilgrims throughout the festive period, with daily footfall remaining above 30,000. The pilgrimage recorded a significant surge on October 17, when 48,470 devotees paid obeisance, the highest single-day footfall during the reported period.

The yatra began on a strong note, with 47,563 pilgrims visiting the shrine on October

pilgrimage on October 15 and 16, respectively.

The rush continued over the next two days, with 47,669 pilgrims visiting the shrine on October 18. The footfall stood at 32,329 on October 19 and 30,552 on October 20, reflecting the sustained enthusiasm among devotees during the auspicious festival. The daily figures for October 11 to 20, as provided, add up to 4,25,384 pilgrims, although the period covers ten calendar dates.

The Shrine Board also reported that the cumulative footfall during the Navratras crossed four lakh, marking a substantial increase over approximately 1.78 lakh pilgrims who visited the Holy Shrine

(SMVDSB), concluded on Mahanavami with the Purnahuti ceremony amid the chanting of Vedic mantras. The rituals invoked divine blessings for universal peace, prosperity and the well-being of all.

Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer of SMVDSB, along with senior officers and staff of the Shrine Board and a large number of pilgrims, participated in the concluding ceremony. The Maha Yagya was performed by learned Pandits led by Padma Shri Prof Vishwamurti Shastri.

To facilitate the smooth and safe movement of pilgrims, the Shrine Board put in place elaborate arrangements along the yatra track and at Bhawan. Dedicated help desks were established at key locations to guide devotees, while measures were strengthened to ensure

Hundreds witness ‘Ravan Dahan’ in Srinagar as Dussehra celebrations culminate

Effigies of Ravan, Meghnath, Kumbhkaran set ablaze at Church Lane ground

HT News Network

Srinagar, Oct 20 (KNO): Hundreds of people gathered at the JKCA Practice Ground in Church Lane here on Tuesday evening to witness the traditional “Ravan Dahan” ceremony as Dussehra celebrations culminated with the burning of effigies of Ravana, Meghnath and Kumbhkaran, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.

The three towering effigies were engulfed in flames as firecrackers lit up the evening sky, drawing the attention of visitors gathered at the ground to mark the festival.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), visitors, including families and local residents, gathered at the venue to witness the ritual, which remains one of the central attractions of Dussehra celebrations.

Arjun, a visitor from Indra Nagar, Srinagar, said he had come to witness the Ravan Dahan and be part of the Dussehra celebrations.

Karan, another visitor from Shivpora, Srinagar, also attended the event, joining others who had gathered to witness the traditional ceremony.

Dussehra, also known as Vijayadashami,



commemorates Lord Rama's victory over Ravan and conveys the message of righteousness prevailing over evil. The burning of Ravana's effigy remains a key tradition associated with the festival, which is celebrated across India—(KNO) The Divisional Commissioner stressed that all departments must remain alert and ensure effective inter-departmental coordination to maintain uninterrupted essential services and minimise public inconvenience during the winter season.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners of all districts of Jammu Division; Chief Engineer, PHE; Chief Engineers of PWD Jammu, Pir Panjal, Chenab, PMGSY and SAMPARK; representatives of the Mechanical Engineering Department, JPDC and CAPD; Director Health Services, Jammu; Regional Officer, NHAI along with Project Directors of NHIDCL; Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu and other concerned officers in person and through virtual mode.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified that the applicant namely Ghulam Mohammed para Father of Fezhat Gul R/o Check kawoosa Tehsil NARBAL District BUDGAM applied for the issuance of BIRTH certificate of his daughter Fezhat Gul D/o Ghulam Mohammed Parra

The applicant intends to register the Date of birth of his daughter as school records 01 / 01 / 2011 If any one has objection in this regard, he can approach concerned Births and Death authorities within the period of seven days after the publication of said Notice . No objection will be entertained .

20 /10 /2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified to the general public that my name has been incorrectly recorded in my Aadhaar Card as Hashmat Shabir, whereas my actual and correct name is Haashim Shabir Malla.

The details are as follows:

- Incorrect Name in Aadhaar Card: Hashmat Shabir
- Correct Name: Haashim Shabir Malla
- Father's Name: Shabir Ahmad Malla
- Address: Pohrupeth, Langate, Handwara, District Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir – 193302
- Aadhaar Number: 347757878893

Any person having any objection or claim regarding the above-mentioned name correction is hereby requested to submit their objection within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no objection is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that there is no objection from any concerned person regarding the proposed name correction.

PUBLIC NOTICE

it is notified that the applicant namely Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh S/o Late Ghulam Qadir Sheikh R/o Check kawoosa Tehsil NARBAL District BUDGAM applied for the issuance of Death certificate of his father Ghulam Qadir Sheikh S/o Khazir Mohammed Sheikh

The applicant intends to register the Date certificate of his father as on records is 28 / 09 / 2026

If any one has objection in this regard, he can approach concerned Births and Death authorities within the period of seven days after the publication of said Notice . No objection will be entertained .

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, Zooni Begum, W/o Sonaullah Chopan, R/o Dandmoha, wish to state the following: The electricity connection bearing Consumer ID 0212040005897, installed at my residential premises, is currently registered in the name of my deceased Husband, Sonaullah Chopan, S/o Gh Mohd Chopan, R/o Dandmoha. I am the legal heir and am currently residing in the same premises. I now intend to transfer the electricity connection to my name.

If any person has an objection to this name transfer, they may file their objection at the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, JKPD, Sub Division Watergam, Wagoora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

No objections shall be entertained after the expiry of the said period.

Zooni Begum
W/o Sonaullah Chopan
R/o Dandmoha

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified to the general public that my son's Aadhaar Card bears the name Aatif Bashir Dar, whereas his actual name is Mohammad Aatif. Details are as follows:

- Name mentioned in Aadhaar Card: Aatif Bashir Dar
- Actual Name: Mohammad Aatif
- Father's Name: Bashir Ahmad Dar
- Address: Bungam, Langate, Handwara, District Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir – 193302
- Aadhaar Number: 548308721048

Any person having any objection, claim, or issue regarding the above-mentioned name may submit their objection within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice.

If no objection is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that there is no objection from any concerned person regarding the above-mentioned matter.

For any clarification or objection, please contact the undersigned at the number given below.

Contact No.: 9858357581
Bashir Ahmad Dar
Father of Mohammad Aatif
R/o Bungam, Langate, Handwara, District Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir – 193302

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name in my bank account 02560401000026799 is mentioned as Nasreena Dar but my name in my Adhaar and Pan is mentioned as Nasreena Feroz now I want to update my name as Nasreena Feroz in my account Also.If anybody has some objection in this regard he/she contact this branch within 7days.

Nasreena Feroz
Feroz Ahmad Dar

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified that the applicant namely Ghulam Mohammed para Father of Zeenat Gul R/o Check kawoosa Tehsil NARBAL District BUDGAM applied for the issuance of BIRTH certificate of his daughter Zeenat Gul D/o Ghulam Mohammed Parra

The applicant intends to register the Date of birth of his daughter as school records 01 / 01 / 2011 If any one has objection in this regard, he can approach concerned Births and Death authorities within the period of seven days after the publication of said Notice . No objection will be entertained .

20 /10 /2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, Nazir Ahmad Mir, S/o Mohammad Assadullah Mir, R/o Dundmoha, wish to state the following: The electricity connection bearing Consumer ID 0212040011976, installed at my residential premises, is currently registered in the name of my deceased Father, Mohd Assadullah Mir, S/o Abdul Samad Mir, R/o Dandmoha.

I am the legal heir and am currently residing in the same premises. I now intend to transfer the electricity connection to my name.

If any person has an objection to this name transfer, they may file their objection at the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, JKPD, Sub Division Watergam, Wagoora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

No objections shall be entertained after the expiry of the said period.

Nazir Ahmad Mir
S/o Mohammad Assadullah Mir
R/o Dandmoha

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Son's Date of Birth wrongly mentioned in School records as 10-03-2015 instead of 10-03 -2017 .Now I am applying for its correction if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact concerned authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

FAYAZ AHMAD MIR F/O FAARID FAYAZ MIR R/O WATERGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified that the applicant namely Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh S/o Late Ghulam Qadir Sheikh R/o Check kawoosa Tehsil NARBAL District BUDGAM applied for the issuance of Death certificate of his father Ghulam Qadir Sheikh S/o Khazir Mohammed Sheikh

The applicant intends to register the Date certificate of his father as on records is 28 / 09 / 2026

If any one has objection in this regard, he can approach concerned Births and Death authorities within the period of seven days after the publication of said Notice . No objection will be entertained .

20/10 /2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Son' name has been wrongly mentioned as ABDUL HADI S/O MOHAMMAD ALTAF TELI in his date of Birth certificate issued by SDH kreeri bearing Registration No .B- 202601004310000018 While his correct name is ABDUL MANNAN TELI which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his/her objection in the office of SDH /BMO office KREERI within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained Name....MOHAMMAD ALTAF TELI F/O ...ABDUL MANNAN TELI R/O ...SHEIKHPORA KREERI Tehsil...KREERI DISTT ...BARAMULLA

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Son' name has been wrongly mentioned as ABDUL HADI S/O MOHAMMAD ALTAF TELI in his date of Birth certificate issued by SDH kreeri bearing Registration No .B- 202601004310000018 While his correct name is ABDUL MANNAN TELI which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his/her objection in the office of SDH /BMO office KREERI within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained Name....MOHAMMAD ALTAF TELI F/O ...ABDUL MANNAN TELI R/O ...SHEIKHPORA KREERI Tehsil...KREERI DISTT ...BARAMULLA

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as ATEEQA BEGUM W/O GHULAM NABI BHAT on my Adhaar card bearing Adhaar No. .9798 3864 0065 while my correct name is ATIQA BEGUM W/O GHULAM NABI BHAT which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/ her objection in the office of concerned Adhaar authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained Name...ATIQA BEGUM W/O...GHULAM NABI BHAT R/O...BURZAWACHAN KREERI



Sitharaman flags capital outflows, easy investor exits as reasons behind Market decline

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Oct 19: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has flagged persistent foreign capital outflows and the ease with which investors can withdraw funds as key challenges for Indian equities. However, she maintained that India's underlying economic fundamentals remained sound despite the recent weakness in share prices. Sitharaman, in a media interview said, "Because of the ease of liquidity, ease of availability, people are even exiting easily."

She identified sustained capital outflows as one of the biggest risks facing the country in 2027. The markets have delivered zero returns in the

last two years.

Benchmark stock indexes have fallen nearly 12% since January due to trade-related uncertainty and geopolitical disruptions.

According to NSDL data, foreign portfolio investors have sold Indian equities worth more than \$33 billion so far this year.

India increasingly viewed as market left out of AI investment boom: Indian markets have been increasingly viewed as a market left out of the artificial intelligence investment boom. Countries like Taiwan and South Korea, home to major AI-related companies, have attracted substantial foreign investment. Start Investing



"The flight of capital toward AI and the US, which otherwise moves toward different countries for different sectoral investments, is a concern," she said.

She indicated that India could be relatively resilient to a broader market correction triggered by a potential

reversal in the AI boom, given its comparatively limited exposure to the rally in AI-related assets.

"India had yet to attract AI investments on the scale seen in other regions, potentially limiting the impact of any unwinding of AI-driven market gains. India was no

longer lagging in advanced technology and was actively building its semiconductor manufacturing capabilities," she added.

During her address, the Finance Minister called for a combination of public investment, stronger municipal finances, development finance and private capital to create financially sustainable cities capable of attracting investments. India increasingly viewed as market left out of AI investment boom: Indian markets have been increasingly viewed as a market left out of the artificial intelligence investment boom. Countries like Taiwan and South Korea, home to major AI-related

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"India had yet to attract AI investments on the scale seen in other regions, potentially limiting the impact of any unwinding of AI-driven market gains.

PepsiCo India expects steady festive snack sales driven by new launches

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Oct 20: PepsiCo India expects its food business to match last year's festive growth momentum



driven by new product rollouts and convenience-focused choices that match modern consumer habits, a top company official said on Tuesday.

The company is expanding its portfolio across snacks, 'better-for-you' products and premium offerings to cater to diverse consumer preferences during the festive season, said Saakshi Verma Menon, Chief Marketing Officer & Foods at PepsiCo India. "We expect PepsiCo Foods to deliver a growth trajectory similar to last year during the festive season, growing in line with the industry," Menon told PTL. The company has recently strengthened its ready-to-eat offerings on e-commerce platforms to make festive snacking more convenient.

PepsiCo's product strategy in the food business is aimed at addressing evolving Indian taste preferences and different consumption occasions, with its research and development teams working on new offerings for the market.

"Together with our much-loved core brands, these offerings allow us to cater to a wider spectrum of tastes and occasions, while continuing to bring smiles with festive snacking," Menon said.

Meanwhile, SLMG Beverages, India's largest bottler of Coca-Cola, said it is witnessing high double-digit growth during the ongoing festive season, with sales picking up since Navratri and strong orders for Diwali gift packs.

"We have already seen a spurt in our sales. And we are sitting with a lot of gift pack orders and all the packages which we have launched for Diwali," said its Joint Managing Director Paritosh Ladhani in an interview.

He expects demand to remain strong through the festive period, with November and December being important months for the beverage business as consumers celebrate Diwali, Christmas and New Year.

SLMG Beverages has also been navigating higher input costs, including sugar and packaging materials, but is adopting a wait-and-watch approach before taking further pricing decisions, Ladhani said in the interview.

The company said it is prioritising consumer affordability while seeking to offset commodity cost pressures through growth in sales volumes.

The FMCG sector is facing sustained margin pressure as rising input costs squeeze profitability.

Input-cost pressures intensified in the September quarter, reversing some of the moderation seen in the preceding quarter.

Companies absorbed part of the increase to protect demand during the festive season, even as higher costs of crude-linked derivatives, packaging materials, palm oil and sugar weighed on margins.

India-New Zealand free trade pact to come into effect from Oct 20

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Oct 20: A host of Indian goods from labour-



intensive sectors such as leather, footwear, apparel and textiles will attract zero import duty in New Zealand from October 20, when the India-New Zealand FTA comes into force, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday.

The agreement, which was

signed on April 27, provides duty-free access for 100 per cent of India's exports to New Zealand from Tuesday itself, he told reporters here.

equipment maker JCB India's small excavator, which will be exported to New Zealand under the trade pact, Goyal said the company exports 25 per cent of its total production to different countries from India.

"I am giving them a target to increase it to 50 per cent. New Zealand is now the 140th export destination for them," he said.

The pact also establishes an agricultural productivity partnership whereby New Zealand's technology will meet India's scale and growing demand.

He added that sensitive sectors like dairy, onions, chickpeas, peas, corn, almonds, artificial honey and sugar have been kept out of the trade deal.

The commerce ministry has notified the procedure for allocation of Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) under the trade agreement. Goods under TRQ includes apples, kiwi fruit, albumins and Manuka honey.

The pact, he said, also facilitates significant investments of USD 20 billion over the next 15 years from New Zealand to India.

He said that the pact would provide huge opportunities to Indian exporters.

Flagging off heavy earthmoving and construction

'Very close' to finalising trade deal with India: Rubio

■ HT News Network/UNI

WASHINGTON, Oct 20 : The US is "very close" to finalising a trade deal with India, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday, suggesting that the waiver from tariffs for buying Russian oil was linked to the decision.

"We're trying to finalise the trade deal with India right now. We're very close to doing that. So that's one of the things we take into consideration when the President makes a decision about national security waivers and things of that nature," Rubio told reporters in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Rubio is set to travel to India and meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in Mumbai to discuss issues ranging from energy, trade, defence, critical and emerging technologies and other key areas of bilateral cooperation.

Rubio appeared to acknowledge the reasons for



India to continue buying oil from Russia, an issue that has been the focus of talks between him and Jaishankar since the US passed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act in September. "You also can't unravel the economy of other countries because of one central issue. So that's the complex part of having to balance all of this," Rubio said. He said every country has a complex set of factors that they have to take into account, such as geography, and for some countries it's very difficult to acquire energy from alternative sources.

"That's not an excuse, but all of that has to be balanced when you make foreign policy. The foreign policy of the US,

of course, takes into account what's happening with the war between Russia and Ukraine, but it is not solely dominated by that," Rubio said.

"It has to take into account a variety of other factors, including our bilateral relationships with other countries and what they realistically are capable of being able to do in terms of their own energy supplies," he said.

Jaishankar is understood to have conveyed to Rubio that oil refineries in India were configured largely for handling medium sour crude, which is supplied by Middle East countries and Russia.

He also told Rubio that Venezuela supplies heavier-grade crude and the US has light-grade crude, which would require blending before being used by refineries in India.

With oil supplies from Middle East countries hit due to the Iran war, India has to depend on Russian crude to keep its economy running.

DRI seizes 13 kg of foreign-origin gold worth Rs 19.4 crore

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Oct 20 : The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has busted a gold smuggling syndicate operating through Ahmedabad and Surat airports, seizing gold worth around Rs 19.41 crore and arresting three persons.

The operation, conducted over 42 hours from October 16, exposed dealings involving 13.017 kg of foreign-origin gold, which was allegedly smuggled into the country, illegally melted in Vadodara and supplied to a jewellery shop in Ahmedabad for cash sales, the finance ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The DRI, under the Ministry of Finance, seized around 890 grams of gold and recovered evidence relating to 6.41 kg of illegally melted gold.

Searches at the jewellery outlet also led to the recovery of undocumented foreign-origin gold bars and records of transactions involving around 5.8 kg of smuggled gold.

PhonePe evolves its stock broking platform into PhonePe Invest, launches portfolio optimiser

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Oct 20: Digital payments and fintech major PhonePe on Monday announced the evolution of its investing and trading platform Share. Market to PhonePe Invest, bringing it under the PhonePe brand.

The transition from Share. Market to PhonePe Invest, brings research-backed wealth management into PhonePe's unified financial ecosystem, alongside payments, lending and insurance.

It also enables the wealth offering to reach a broader



audience, making investing more accessible to PhonePe's large and diverse user base, according to the company.

As part of this evolution, PhonePe Invest pairs its stocks, IPO, mutual fund, and F&O offerings with its newly launched Portfolio Optimiser -- a holistic proprietary portfolio intelligence tool that enables users to build,

review and optimise their portfolios in one unified experience.

"Moving beyond investment execution, Portfolio Optimiser supports every stage of the investor journey -- guiding beginners with intuitive tools while empowering seasoned users with deep, actionable insights on their portfolios," according to a release.

Elaborating on Portfolio Optimiser's capabilities of 'build', 'review' and 'optimise', it said the new portfolio intelligence tool helps new investors start their investing journey with clarity and confidence and 'build'.

Nepal bans import, sales of Indian biscuit Priyagold

■ HT News Network/UNI

KATHMANDU, Oct 20 : Nepalese authorities have banned import, sales and distribution of Priyagold biscuits manufactured by Surya Food and Agro Ltd in India.

Issuing a notice on Monday, the Food Technology and Quality Control Department of Nepal imposed restrictions on import, sales, and distribution of Priya Gold biscuits manufactured by India's Surya Food and Agro Ltd, describing the product as sub-standard.

India's food regulator FSSAI has initiated legal proceedings for prosecution against Surya Food & Agro for using cattle



feed bran in manufacturing of Priyagold biscuits and for other serious violations.

While conducting an inspection of Surya Food and Agro, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) observed serious food

safety and hygiene deficiencies, the authority said.

The FTQCD banned the import and sale of Priyagold biscuits on the basis of the notice published by FSSAI, which has also suspended the licence of Surya Food and Agro.

Gujarat Deputy CM holds investment talks with Japanese industrialists in Osaka

■ HT News Network/UNI

AHMEDABAD, Oct 20 : Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi held a roundtable meeting with Japanese industrialists and investors in Osaka on Monday and conducted 11 one-on-one meetings to explore investment opportunities in various sectors. Start Investing

The meetings were part of the state's outreach for the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, to be held in January next year, aiming to strengthen economic ties between Gujarat and Japan and attract fresh investments to the state, according to an official release.

Addressing the roundtable,

Sanghavi described Japan as the "Land of the Rising Sun" and Gujarat as the "land of rising opportunities", highlighting the longstanding ties between India and Japan, based on mutual trust, respect and shared values.

He said Gujarat, which accounts for five per cent of India's population, contributes more than eight per cent to the country's GDP and 18 per cent of its industrial output.

Nearly one-third of India's exports originate from Gujarat, while its ports handle 40 per cent of the country's total cargo, he said.

Sanghavi also said 65 per cent of Gujarat's energy comes from renewable sources, according to the

release.

"Gujarat stands for speed, scale, and stability," he said, adding that the state offers transparent policies, quick decision-making and access to the Indian market.

Referring to existing Japanese investments and collaborations in Gujarat, Sanghavi cited Suzuki, the bullet train project, and Japanese industrial parks as examples of the growing partnership between the two sides.

He said Gujarat is emerging as a hub for futuristic sectors, including semiconductors, green energy, electric vehicles and electronics, and called on Japanese companies to explore investment opportunities in the state.



While Japan has advanced technology, Gujarat offers skilled talent, creating scope for collaboration and global competitiveness, he said.

"Come, see, invest, and achieve growth with us," Sanghavi said, inviting Japanese investors to participate in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit. Buy Maps

The roundtable was attended by representatives of Japanese companies, including Daiki Aluminium Industry Co. Ltd., Nakanishi Metal Works Co. Ltd. and Panasonic Energy, as well as Susumu Saito, secretary general of the Kansai Japan-India Association.

Yoshikazu Noda, mayor of Higashiosaka, and Ryosuke Takashima,

mayor of Ashiya City, were also present, along with other business leaders and representatives of the Japanese government, the release said.

In a post on X, Sanghavi said he also held separate meetings with NTN Bearings India Pvt. Ltd. and Kishida Chemicals in Osaka to explore investment opportunities and strengthen industrial partnerships ahead of the summit.

The state government said the meetings were aimed at attracting large-scale investments and establishing new industrial partnerships between Gujarat and Japan.



CMYK

Mohammed Shami says he remains at peak of his fitness and committed to his India comeback goal

Press Trust Of India

NEWDELHI, OCT 20: Veteran India pacer Mohammed Shami feels he is still at the peak of his fitness and the desire for a national comeback remains strong despite not being included in the recently announced squad for the tour of New Zealand.



While Shami remains on the fringes, his 36-year-old contemporary Bhuvneshwar Kumar has made a comeback to the Indian team after a gap of nearly four years. With questions being raised over India's bowling, especially in the shorter formats, the calls for Shami's return, who last played for India in March 2025, too have grown louder.

Speaking to reporters after Bengal's win over

Services in the Ranji Trophy here, the 36-year-old said he still enjoys playing domestic cricket and there is no reason why he should give up on his goal of making India comeback. "Hope should always be there (for India comeback). In any profession, in any sport, you should have a goal. Everyone has a goal. Today we are playing for Ranji Trophy and playing for the title. There

conditions.

Asked on not being part of the all-format New Zealand tour, Shami said he can only control the controllables.

"It's not a matter of disappointment. I played the whole domestic season last year as well. I played all the matches. My motive is the same. I should play as much as I can. I should be prepared for all the upcoming series and tournaments.

"Nobody knows when and where I will have to play for India. Even for IPL, playing domestic cricket will be good for me. If I play domestic or white ball, my preparation will be the same. I will play as many matches as I can. My rhythm will be good."

Shami also feels there is little point in thinking about the ODI World Cup in South Africa next year.

"I don't think so far. Today we are playing cricket. Tomorrow we don't know what will happen to someone or what the situation will be. There is no point in thinking so far." Whatever matches you are getting, you keep playing and keep improving yourself. I always say that your focus should be on your skill, your fitness," said the wily operator.

Has he had any conversation with the national selectors over the past year?

"Sir, I am not in the Indian team, who will talk to me? And why will they talk to me?" responded Shami.

He also praised Bhuvneshwar, saying he should have made a comeback much earlier considering his form. On giving his 100 per cent for Bengal day in and day out, Shami added,

"This team has given me this name. This is all because of this team. The day I end my career, it will be with this team. You should be loyal, you should be dedicated. Nothing else is in your hands."

Swimmers Himanshu, Niranjn bag bronze medals in Asian Para Games

Press Trust Of India

NAGOYA, OCT 20: Indian swimmers Himanshu Nandal and Niranjn Mukundan added two bronze medals to the country's tally with podium finishes in their respective events at the Asian Para Games here on Tuesday.

Himanshu, the 22-year-old who was born blind due to an optic nerve failure, clocked 5:10.91 to finish third in the four-swimmer field in the men's 400m freestyle S11 event.

Niranjn then completed the men's 200m individual medley SM7 event with 2:57.01 to secure a bronze, while Suyash Jadhav finished fifth with a time of 3:03.40.

However, Chaitanya Kulkarni finished fifth in the men's 100m freestyle S6 final with a time of 1:12.35.

The S6 classification in para-swimming is for athletes with moderate physical impairments, short stature, amputations, or coordination challenges.

Competing in his fourth consecutive Asian



Para Games, the 32-year-old, who was born with spina bifida and clubbed feet, has undergone 19 surgeries since childhood.

At the age of seven, doctors recommended swimming as aquatic therapy to strengthen his muscles, but what began as rehabilitation soon developed into a lifelong passion for the sport. The SM7 is for medley swimmers with movement affected from a low to moderate level in the arms, trunk and legs, moderately down one side, those with short stature, or absence of limbs.

Haryana: Girls throw punches for 1st place on Day 5 of National Girls Boxing Championship at RKSD School

United News Of India

KAITHAL, OCT 19: Talented female athletes from various states showcased their talent with enthusiasm, confidence, and sportsmanship on the fifth day today

discipline, self-confidence, patience, and leadership skills in students' lives.

Principal Nivedita Bhatt thanked the CBSE officials, judges, coaches, players and organizing committee members who



of the CBSE National Girls Boxing Championship held at RKSD Public School, Kaithal. Chief guests included Pankaj Bansal and Praveen Jain, Secretary of the National Vidya Samiti and members of the Managing Committee, along with Kaithal DSP Sushil Prakash and Dr. Vinay Gupta. Principal Nivedita Bhatt welcomed all guests.

Pankaj Bansal said that today's girls are proving their mettle in every field and bringing glory to the country through sports. He encouraged all participants to participate in the competition with a sporting spirit and to achieve their goals through continuous hard work.

Sushil Prakash said that sports develop

contributed to the successful conduct of the competition.

The results of the fifth day's matches were as follows: Under-14 winners in different age groups and different zones were Arthika, Drisha, Tanya, Siya Patel, Priyanka, Khushi, Ruja, Nisha, Sanvi, Mansi, Riva, Rachita, Khushi, Thrunka, Soumya, Dhanushree, Riya, Pakhi, Gungun, Sakshi, Chhavi and Sanjana. Under-17 teams in different zones and categories are Abby, Niyati, NG, Arzoo, Bhoomi, Akshita Thakur, Umra Khan, Khushi Ahlawat, Tanvi, Shrutisampat, Neeti, Nikita Pandey, Jiya Anand, Vanshika Yadav, Vanshika, Sonika, Nischal Sharma.

Cycling Association JK to Organise District Pulwama Cycling Championship on October 28

ZAID RIYAZ

PULWAMA, KASHMIR: The Cycling Association of Jammu and Kashmir is organising the District Pulwama Cycling Championship 2026 on October 28, 2026, with the aim of promoting cycling among young people and encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle. The championship will feature both Mountain Bike (MTB) and Road Cycling events, providing an opportunity for aspiring cyclists to showcase their talent, endurance, and sporting skills. The event is open to boys and girls across three categories: Senior (above 23 years), Junior (Under-17), and Sub-Junior (Under-14). The event will be held at Saffron Town, Pampore, with the cycling route starting from Water Tank Tulbagh and proceeding towards Passenger Shed Gundbal before returning. The flag-off is scheduled for 7:30 AM. The championship is expected to encourage greater participation in cycling, identify promising local talent, and provide young cyclists with a platform to demonstrate their abilities. It will also promote physical fitness, sportsmanship, environmental awareness, and the development of cycling as a sporting discipline in the district.

Aarav Gupta won VCA 7th Open Khelo Jammu Dussehra Cup Chess

Ishaan & Kiaana Won in their respective categories

HT News Sports

JAMMU, Vivek Chess Academy Organized its 7th Open Jammu Khelo Dussehra Cup Chess. Aarav Gupta won the competition with 5 points out of 6 & got winner trophy. 2nd prize goes to Surinder Gupta & 3rd place goes to 10 year old Triyansh verma in open category. A total of Rs. 3200 cash & trophies & medals were presented to the winners by Senior National Arbiter Amrita Gupta & VCA coach & director vivek bharti. Ishaan chowdhary won Gold in u-13 boys category with 5 points Keshav Mahajan won silver in u13 boys category with 3.5 points Gaurav Kumar Won bronze in u13 boys category with 3.5 points Kiaana Gupta won Gold in u-13 Girls category with 3.5 points Manushree Nischal won silver in u13 Girls category with 3 points Ruby Kumari Won bronze in u13 Girls category with 2.5 points Consolation prize goes to Naisha Handoo with 2.5 points. Detailed results are – Round -1 Surinder beat Keshav Ishaan beat kiaana Aarav beat manushree Aryaveer draw

with naisha Prajanya beat Divyansh Gaurav draw with ruby Gulshan beat triyam Triyansh got bye point Round 2 Surinder beat prajanya



Ishaan beat Gulshan Aarav beat triyansh Ruby beat Aryaveer Gaurav beat Naisha Manushree beat Divyansh Kiaana beat keshav Triyam got bye point Round -3 Ishaan beat surinder Aarav beat Gaurav Manushree beat Ruby Triyansh draw with Gulshan Prajanya beat triyam Kiaana beat Aryaveer Keshav beat Naisha Divyansh got bye point Round 4.

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