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P:12

Abhishek Sharma powers India to Asian Games gold, father hails 61-run knock on tough Japan pitch

Saffron growers fear further production slump amid dry weather

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 03: Saffron growers in Kashmir are pinning their hopes on timely rainfall, fearing that prolonged dry weather and high temperatures could hurt flowering and further reduce production this season.

Growers, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said inadequate soil moisture has raised concerns across saffron-growing areas, stressing that rainfall at this stage is critical for flowering and yields.

Abdul Majeed Wani, president of the Saffron Growers Association Kashmir, said high temperatures were a concern as saffron corms require favourable weather and adequate moisture for proper flowering.

“Temperatures are quite high these days, and this can affect flowering. When corms do not get favourable

➤➤➤MORE ON P02

“Even Under British Rule, Civil Services Exam Had a Sanskrit Paper”: PM Modi

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, OCT 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the centenary celebrations of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), highlighted the historical evolution of India's civil services examination, recalling that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose appeared for a Sanskrit paper in the examination in 1920. Referring to an archival exhibition at Bharat Mandapam, Modi said the historical display showed how Bose had gone through the same examination process more than a century ago. He noted that Sanskrit was among the subjects offered even during British rule. Modi also released a commemorative coin, postage stamp and a book marking 100 years of the UPSC.

: Highlighting a historical detail from India's pre-Independence administrative setup, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pointed out that even under British rule, the civil services examination included a paper in Sanskrit.

Addressing the centenary celebrations of the Union Public Service Commission

(UPSC) at the Bharat Mandapam on Thursday, the prime minister shared an

about how Subhas Chandra Bose went through this very process in 1920,” the



observation from an archival exhibition set up at the venue, noting that legendary freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had appeared in a Sanskrit paper during his examination in 1920.

“While looking through the gallery, I noticed that it also contains information

prime minister said, adding, “What caught my attention was that although India was under British rule at the time, there used to be a Sanskrit paper in the examination, and Subhas Babu wrote this paper,” Modi said.

➤➤➤MORE ON P 02

India Defend Asian Games Cricket Gold Beat Pakistan by 19 Runs

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

country.

NEW DELHI, OCT 3: India defeated Pakistan by 19 runs in the men's cricket final at the Asian Games 2026 to retain the gold medal. Batting first, India scored 211 for six, with Abhishek Sharma scoring 61 off 28 balls and Tilak Varma remaining unbeaten on 51. Pakistan finished at 192 for six despite Hasan Nawaz's 96 off 51 balls. Axar Patel, Washington Sundar and Shivam Dube took two wickets each for India. Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated the team on the victory, describing it as a “smashing victory” and praising the players for their performance. (KNS) : Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday congratulated the Indian men's cricket team for winning the gold medal at the Asian Games 2026, describing the triumph as a “smashing victory” for the

Pakistan by 19 runs in a thrilling final to successfully defend the gold medal it had won at the 2023 edition.

In a post on X, Amit Shah aa per news agency Kashmir News



Service (KNS) said, “Smashing Victory for India! Hats off to our Men's Cricket Team for the exhilarating win in today's match, clinching the Gold Medal at the #AsianGames2026.” “The typhoon of

➤➤➤MORE ON P02

Chief Secretary Reviews Implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes Across J&K

Focus on time-bound execution, monitoring and effective utilisation of funds



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 3: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Additional Secretary (Foreigners & UT), Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Nitesh Vyas, jointly chaired a high-level meeting at SKICC to review the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and ongoing development projects across Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting emphasised time-bound completion, effective monitoring, inter-departmental coordination and measurable outcomes. Detailed reviews were held on education, power, digital connectivity, social security, housing, health, tourism, sanitation, drinking water, fisheries,

rural development and other sectors. Progress under schemes including PM SHRI, PMKVY, PM Surya Ghar, BharatNet, PM-JAY, NHM, PMAY, AMRUT 2.0, Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission was examined. The officials stressed that infrastructure and services created under these programmes should translate into sustained benefits for beneficiaries. A separate review was also held on implementation of the new criminal laws and the legal framework relating to immigration and foreigners management in J&K. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Additional Secretary (Foreigners & UT), Union Ministry of Home Affairs,

➤➤➤MORE ON P02

Man injured, kitchen damaged in gas cylinder explosion in Kupwara

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

KUPWARA, OCT 03 : A man was injured after a gas cylinder exploded accidentally at his residence in Bandi Haril area of Handwara in Kupwara district on Saturday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the

gas cylinder exploded accidentally at Bandi Haril, Handwara.

He said the house owner sustained injuries in the incident and was shifted to GMC Handwara for medical treatment. He was later identified as Mohd Rafiq Bherwal, son of Ab Jameel.

Meanwhile, the official said the incident caused partial damage to the kitchen of the house, while an investigation has been taken up. Police have registered a case against a man for impersonating government officials and cheating

➤➤➤MORE ON P02

“We’ll Seek Permission Before Visiting Kupwara”: Nasir Wani Takes Dig at Fayaz Mir

Advisor refers to recent remarks concerning elected representatives and constituency visits

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCT 3: Advisor to Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani took a sarcastic dig at Kupwara MLA Mir Mohammad Fayaz while referring to recent remarks concerning visits to the constituency. “We will try to seek permission before coming to Kupwara and consult whether we are allowed to come to Kupwara or not,” Wani said, without directly naming the MLA. He also referred to statements he described as “Qadir Khan-style” remarks and alleged that some individuals approach his office in Srinagar for official work but later make statements against him. The comments followed Fayaz Mir's earlier statement in the Legislative Assembly that he was the “Chief Minister of his constituency” while raising issues related to Kupwara. Advisor to Chief Minister

Nasir Aslam Wani said he would seek permission before visiting Kupwara, in an apparent reference to remarks made by Kupwara MLA Mir Mohammad Fayaz.

“We will try to seek permission before coming to Kupwara and consult



whether we are allowed to come to Kupwara or not,” Wani said sarcastically, without naming the MLA directly.

Wani also referred to what he described as “Qadir Khan-style” statements and

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Sakeena Itoo Inaugurates Social Welfare Facilities at Nanil

Four buildings for Old Age Home and PLASH constructed at a cost of ₹11.27 crore

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

ANANTNAG, OCT 3: Minister for Social Welfare, Education, Health and Medical Education Sakeena Itoo inaugurated four newly constructed Social Welfare Department buildings at Nanil, Anantnag, dedicated to an Old Age Home and PLASH facilities. Director Social Welfare Mohammad Akbar Khan said the buildings had been constructed at an estimated cost of ₹11.27 crore, while another ₹1.10 crore has been earmarked for roads, parks and allied infrastructure. Itoo said the facilities would provide care, shelter and support to vulnerable sections, including orphaned children and destitute elderly persons. She also assured that demands concerning a gymnasium, recreational park, road connectivity and an ambulance for the PLASH facility would be taken up on priority. MLA Anantnag East

Reyaz Ahmad Khan projected several development demands, including upgradation of the Nursing College at Aukura, road widening, a science laboratory, smart classrooms and



strengthening of health infrastructure at Nanil.

Minister for Social Welfare, Education, Health & Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, today visited Nanil in Anantnag and

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7-year-old girl injured in leopard attack in Kulgam

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

KULGAM, OCT 03: A seven-year-old girl was injured after being attacked by a leopard in the Damhal Hanji Pora area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the girl sustained injuries in the leopard attack in Damhal Hanji Pora, Kulgam. He said the girl was shifted to SKIMS Srinagar for specialised medical care and identified her as Shahida Akhtar (7), daughter of Rafia Kalas, a resident of DH Pora, Kulgam.

Meanwhile, the incident has cast a pall of gloom over the area, while locals have urged the authorities to take immediate measures to prevent further leopard attacks—(KNO)

Chugh Accuses NC Government of Using Statehood Issue to Divert Attention From Governance

BJP leader says focus should remain on jobs, development and delivery of election promises

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, OCT 3: BJP National Office Prabhari and Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Chugh criticised the Omar Abdullah-led government over its approach to the statehood issue, alleging that the proposed resolution was being used to divert attention from governance-related issues. Chugh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already committed in Parliament to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. He questioned the government over jobs, development and implementation of its election commitments. Chugh also criticised the Congress and National Conference over their political positions and said BJP legislators would play a strong opposition



role in the Assembly. He reiterated the BJP's stated position in favour of restoration of statehood and also spoke on electoral-roll revision, development and the performance of Indian sports persons.

BJP National Office Prabhari, Rajya Sabha MP and Gujarat Prabhari Tarun Chugh, on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Omar Abdullah-led NC government, accusing it of using the statehood issue as a disguise for its autonomy agenda and a diversion from its failure on basic governance.

Chugh, who earlier served as J&K BJP Prabhari, here said the proposed statehood resolution was a political gimmick because Prime Minister

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“Drones Are Evolutionary, Not Revolutionary”: IAF Chief Rules Out Separate Drone Force

Air Chief Marshal AP Singh stresses integrated deployment of unmanned systems



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 3: Indian Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said drones and loitering munitions were evolving capabilities within the IAF but ruled out the need for a separate drone force. Addressing the IAF's annual press

conference, he said unmanned systems should operate in coordination with other weapons and platforms rather than function as an independent arm. Singh said the IAF was expanding the number and types of drones and loitering munitions and already had specialised units dealing with these capabilities. He also acknowledged a decline in the IAF's aircraft strength and delays in planned inductions, citing programmes including Tejas Mark-1A, MRFA and the future Mark-2 fighter. On the AMCA programme, he said further

➤➤➤MORE ON P02

ASHA workers protest, demand pay hike, parity with other States

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

ANANTNAG, OCT 03 : ASHA workers on Saturday staged a protest at the Sports Stadium in Anantnag under the banner of the Trade Union Coordination Committee (TUCC), demanding the fulfilment of their long-pending demands, including an enhancement in their monthly remuneration.

The protesting workers, raising slogans in support of their demands, said they have been performing crucial grassroots-level responsibilities in the healthcare system but continue to face financial difficulties due to what they described as inadequate remuneration.

The protest, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was led by ASHA Workers' President Shaheena Akhtar and Trade Union General

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Sakeena Itoo stresses girls empowerment through education, sports

Chairs BBBP felicitation event; inaugurates UT-level U-17 Girls Netball Tournament

■ **Farooq Rather**

KULGAM, OCTOBER 03: Minister for Social Welfare, Education, Health & Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, today presided over a felicitation ceremony organized under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) for top performer teams of various Girls Sports Tournaments and NEET Qualifiers of the district at Government Degree College, Kulgam.

The ceremony was organized by the Social Welfare Department Kulgam in collaboration with Sports, Higher Education and other departments of district administration with the objective of celebrating the achievements of girls in sports and academics, promoting the message of women empowerment.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister highlighted the importance of empowering women and girls through education, sports, skill development and awareness. She also emphasized the need to create greater awareness among women and girls about various government schemes and welfare initiatives being implemented by different departments for their benefit.

Sakeena Itoo stressed that participation



in sports helps girls develop confidence, discipline, leadership qualities and teamwork while providing them opportunities to showcase their talent at different levels.

Director General ICDS Sajad Hussain Ganie,

DPO Zaheer Ahmad Kaifi, ACR Kulgam Reyaz Ahmad Shah and District Social Welfare Officer Kulgam Rameez Ahmad Ganie, also addressed the gathering. They spoke on women empowerment, education, sports participation

and initiatives available for women and girls.

The programme witnessed participation of girls, officials, sports personnel, students and other stakeholders. The speakers appreciated the efforts being made to provide girls with opportunities in sports and education and encouraged them to pursue their aspirations with confidence.

As part of the felicitation ceremony, medals and trophies were presented to the winners and runners-up of the Girls Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Cricket and Badminton tournaments organized at the Inter-Block and Inter-Municipality levels under BBBP in the district while 20 girls from District Kulgam who qualified NEET were also felicitated with certificates.

Earlier, the Minister inaugurated the Inter-District UT-Level U-17 Girls Netball Tournament at Shri Nazir Ahmad Wani Higher Secondary School Kulgam. The tournament, organized by the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, J&K and hosted by YSS Kulgam, is witnessing participation of eight districts of the Union Territory, providing young sports persons an opportunity to showcase their talent and gain competitive exposure.

Speaker emphasizes inter-departmental coordination for Urs celebrations at Charar-i-Sharief

■ **HT News Network**



BUDGAM, SEPTEMBER 03: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and MLA Charar-i-Sharief, Abdul Rahim Rather, today chaired a meeting to review arrangements for the forthcoming annual Urs of the revered 14th-century patron saint of Kashmir, Hazrat Sheikh-ul-Aalam Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA), scheduled to commence from October 7.

During the meeting, the Speaker reviewed the arrangements being put in place by various departments for smooth, peaceful and hassle-free conduct of the Urs, with particular emphasis on ensuring adequate civic amenities and facilities for devotees.

Reviewing the arrangements for drinking water, the Speaker directed the concerned departments to ensure adequate and uninterrupted water supply in and around the shrine and Charar-i-Sharief town. He called for ensuring round-the-clock availability of water in washrooms for both male and female devotees and deployment of water tankers as an emergency measure, wherever required.

Regarding power supply and illumination, the Speaker directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply throughout the Urs period and proper illumination of the shrine and adjoining areas.

On health and medical facilities, the Speaker called for deployment of adequate medical teams, availability of ambulances and sufficient stocks of essential medicines to deal with any medical emergency during the celebrations.

The Speaker also directed the concerned authorities to make arrangements for distribution of ration to the residents of Charar-i-Sharief, keeping in view the anticipated increase in the number of visitors and the requirements of the local population during the Urs.

Emphasizing the importance of cleanliness and sanitation, the Speaker directed for adequate deployment of sanitation staff, installation of sufficient toilets and dustbins at strategic locations and regular lifting and scientific disposal of waste to maintain cleanliness in and around the shrine and town.

He further directed the concerned departments to conduct regular inspections of shops and food establishments to ensure compliance with prescribed standards of food hygiene and sanitation. He also called for strict monitoring of prices, weights and measures to safeguard the interests of devotees and the general public.

Reviewing the transport and traffic management arrangements, the Speaker stressed the need for adequate public transport facilities, designated parking areas and a well-coordinated traffic management plan, including proper diversions and regulation of vehicular movement, to ensure smooth traffic flow during the Urs.

On security arrangements, the Speaker called for adequate deployment of security personnel for effective crowd management and maintenance of law and order. He stressed the need for strict vigil in and around the shrine and other sensitive areas. He also directed for positioning of adequate fire-fighting and emergency response vehicles at strategic locations to deal with any eventuality.

Pulwama conducts District-Level Workshop on Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan under VB-G RAM G

■ **HT News Network**

PULWAMA, OCTOBER 3: The Department of Rural Development, District Pulwama, today organised a district-level one-day workshop on the Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan (VGPP) under the VB-GRAM G initiative, with the theme "From Planning to Action."

The workshop focused on strengthening grassroots development through effective, participatory and outcome-oriented Panchayat-level planning.

The workshop was inaugurated by Additional District Development Commissioner Pulwama, Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, and Assistant Commissioner Development Pulwama, Hilal Arafat. BDO Shadimarg, M. Ashraf Mir, along with Resource Persons and other officers, also participated in the proceedings.

Addressing the participants,



the officers underscored the importance of participatory governance, robust grassroots-level planning and effective implementation of development initiatives at the Panchayat level. They stressed the need for coordinated efforts among Rural Development functionaries and Line Departments to ensure systematic planning, efficient

execution and timely monitoring of developmental works.

The workshop also focused on strengthening the Gram Panchayat development planning process and enhancing the capacity of field-level functionaries to effectively translate approved development plans into tangible outcomes on the ground.

ADDC Shopian Flags Off Exposure Visit for Children with Special Needs

■ **HT News Network**

SHOPIAN, OCTOBER 3: An educational exposure visit for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) was flagged off from the Mini Secretariat, Shopian, by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, here today.

The exposure visit to Dar-ul-Shikwa Park, Bijbehara, was organised by the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Shopian, through the Inclusive Education (IED) Wing of Samagra Shiksha (J&K), with the objective of promoting inclusivity and experiential learning among Children with Special Needs.

Present on the occasion were ADC Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR Shopian, Shakoar Ahmed Dar; CEO Shopian, Bashir Ahmed Shah; Cultural Coordinator, Sajad Ahmed Bhat; along with Central Zone Officers, coordinators and other officials from the Education Department.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADDC highlighted the importance of such initiatives under Samagra Shiksha in fostering an inclusive educational environment. He emphasised that experiential activities provide children with special needs opportunities to explore, learn and grow beyond the boundaries of a



conventional classroom.

He appreciated the Education Department for organising the exposure visit and stressed the importance of providing equal opportunities to every child to participate, learn and develop with confidence. Present on the occasion were ADC Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR Shopian, Shakoar Ahmed Dar; CEO Shopian, Bashir Ahmed Shah; Cultural Coordinator, Sajad Ahmed Bhat; along with Central Zone Officers, coordinators and other officials from the Education Department.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADDC highlighted the importance of such initiatives under Samagra Shiksha in fostering an inclusive educational environment. He emphasised that experiential activities provide children with special needs opportunities to explore, learn and grow beyond the boundaries of a conventional classroom.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar visits Child Care Institutions "Palaash" and "Pareesha" at Nishat, Srinagar

■ **Farooq Rather**

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 03: Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority today visited "Palaash" (Children Home for Boys) and "Pareesha" (Children Home for Girls) at Nishat, here to take stock of the facilities being provided to the children in these Homes.

On his arrival at Pareesha, Justice Sanjeev Kumar was accorded warm welcome by the District Child Protection Officer Srinagar, CWC Srinagar Chairperson, Superintendent, Pareesha and staff of the homes.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar interacted with children staying there and enquired about their studies and other activities of interest. The DCPO, Superintendent Pareesha informed Justice Sanjeev Kumar about the various upgraded facilities provided at Pareesha like improved Computer room, open gym, and facility of evening Tutor.

The Home for Boys "Palaash" situated adjoining to Pareesha was also inspected where boys of different age groups were present. Similar facilities were available



in the said Home. During an interaction with the children both at "Palaash" and "Pareesha", Justice Sanjeev Kumar was informed that they are being provided with nutritious and satisfactory meals, educational and health facilities. They further informed that they are being provided with books as well as sports equipment.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar gave some onspot directions to the DCPO, Superintendent of these Home to provide all required facilities to the children in Home and to involve IMHANS for mental health psycho social camps and for referrals

in case of any severity.

Thereafter, Justice Sanjeev Kumar visited Observation Home Harwan, Srinagar and inspected the facilities being provided to the inmates. While interacting with inmates of the Home, Justice Sanjeev Kumar issued necessary directions to the management for ensuring that the facilities are maintained and the needs of the inmates are duly attended to.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar appreciated the efforts of the Social Welfare Department in ensuring satisfactory services and care for children, while maintaining cleanliness and the required standards of living in

the child-care institutions.

He directed the authorities to organize district and UT-level programmes on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, with the active involvement of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs), District Social Welfare Offices, Department of Education and relevant stakeholders.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar further emphasized leveraging the technical expertise and long-standing collaboration of UNICEF with the J&K Legal Services Authority (JKLSA) to strengthen awareness, prevention, child-friendly responses, and effective implementation of the POCSO framework across the Union Territory.

This visit underscored the commitment of the J&K Legal Services Authority to the welfare of children in institutional care, ensuring they receive the necessary support and opportunities for their development. Thereafter, Justice Sanjeev Kumar visited Observation Home Harwan, Srinagar and inspected the facilities being provided to the inmates. While interacting with inmates of the Home, Justice Sanjeev Kumar issued necessary directions to the management.

District Admin Bandipora organises drowning prevention, Water safety demonstration at Athwatoo

■ **Farooq Rather**

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 03: In view of recent drowning incidents and as part of an extensive awareness drive initiated by the District Administration, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) on Saturday conducted a comprehensive live demonstration and awareness programme at Government Middle School, Athwatoo.

The primary objective of the program was to sensitize the local populace, particularly youth and school children, on drowning prevention, water safety measures, and life-saving rescue techniques during water-related emergencies. During the session, SDRF personnel demonstrated practical rescue operations, standard operating procedures to follow during flash floods or swift water currents, and essential first-aid measures to be administered before hospital transit.

On the occasion, experts and officials urged the community to exercise utmost caution around vulnerable water bodies, strongly advising children and youth against swimming, bathing, or venturing near perilous stretches of Nallah Madhumati.



The demonstration witnessed active participation from officers and officials representing the Revenue Department, Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES), SDRF, Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC), Rural Development Department (RDC), along with local representatives, school faculty, students, and a large gathering of local residents. It is pertinent to mention that similar joint sensitization programmes and live safety demonstrations will continue across vulnerable habitations. It is pertinent to mention that similar joint sensitization programmes and live safety demonstrations.

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HT EDITORIAL

When Kashmir's Seasons Start Losing Their Rhythm....

Early September Snow And Fresh Forecast Of Heavy Rain And Snow Should Prompt Preparedness, Not Panic

Kashmir has always had a distinctive seasonal rhythm. Autumn arrives with its familiar colours, temperatures gradually decline, and winter follows in its own time. But that rhythm appears to be becoming increasingly difficult to predict. The snowfall witnessed in the higher reaches of the Valley as early as September this year, followed by the latest weather forecast of heavy to very heavy rainfall in the plains and snowfall in the upper reaches from October 6, deserves more than casual attention.

The early snowfall was striking precisely because it came well before the period traditionally associated with the onset of winter. Gulmarg, Sonamarg and other higher reaches receiving snow in September created a dramatic landscape, but also prompted a legitimate question: are Kashmir's weather patterns becoming increasingly erratic?

The answer cannot be drawn from one snowfall or one spell of rain. Weather naturally varies from year to year, and it would be scientifically premature to declare that an early snowfall necessarily means a severe winter is on the way. Yet, dismissing every unusual weather event as an isolated occurrence would be equally unwise.

What is becoming increasingly important is the pattern of change—untimely rainfall, sudden temperature fluctuations, intense precipitation, unexpected snowfall and abrupt transitions between different weather conditions. These developments need systematic observation because Kashmir's environment and economy are particularly sensitive to changes in weather.

The forecasted change from October 6 once again underlines the importance of preparedness. Heavy rainfall in the plains and snowfall in the higher reaches could affect roads, agriculture, horticulture, power infrastructure and tourism. Even when such weather events are short-lived, their impact can be significant if preparations are inadequate.

For farmers and horticulturists, accurate and timely weather information is becoming indispensable. A sudden spell of rain or an unexpected drop in temperature can affect crops and fruit. For the administration, the challenge is to ensure that roads, essential services, drainage systems and vulnerable areas remain adequately prepared. For the tourism sector, meanwhile, unpredictable weather can create both difficulties and opportunities.

There is also widespread speculation that the early snowfall could be an indication of a harsh winter ahead. Such predictions should be treated cautiously. The severity of an entire winter cannot reliably be determined simply from an early snowfall episode. What can reasonably be said is that the unusual timing reinforces the need to remain prepared for a range of possible weather conditions.

The bigger issue, therefore, is not whether September snow should frighten us. It is whether we are paying sufficient attention to the changing behaviour of our weather.

Kashmir's mountains, forests, glaciers, rivers and wetlands form a delicate ecological system. Changes in precipitation and temperature can have consequences extending well beyond a single season. They can influence water resources, agricultural cycles, tourism, infrastructure and the overall resilience of communities.

This is where science must lead the discussion. The Meteorological Department, universities and research institutions should continue building comprehensive long-term datasets and studying deviations from established seasonal patterns. Better forecasting, stronger early-warning systems and wider public awareness can help society adapt to changing conditions.

There is no need for alarmism. But there is equally no justification for complacency.

The September snowfall has already provided an early reminder. The October forecast provides another. Whether these events ultimately prove to be isolated variations or part of a larger climatic transition can only be established through sustained scientific observation. The snow on Kashmir's higher mountains may be beautiful, but the message beneath it deserves serious attention: when the seasons begin to lose their familiar rhythm, preparedness must become our new seasonal habit.



Sahil Manzoor

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

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

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

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

No to drugs yes to happiness

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

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

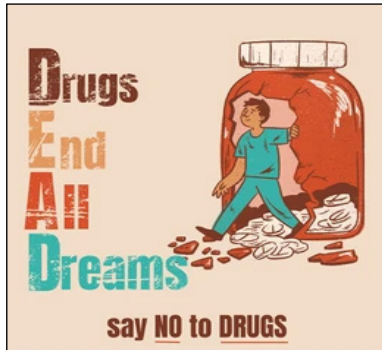
Our society has many talented and respected people who have done great things for the nation. We should use their experience and knowledge to guide our young generation. We should also make proper use of the facilities available to us. The government and administration are making efforts to reduce crime and drug addiction among young people. However, it is unfortunate that we are still far from completely solving this problem. Government departments, schools, parents, teachers, and society must work together.

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

One such positive activity is sports and physical exercise. Today, sports and fitness activities are becoming popular throughout the country. I would like to encourage my friends, especially young people, to take part in sports and physical activities instead of harmful activities. Benefits of Bodybuilding and Exercise

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

Exercise can improve our overall health and



fitness. It can strengthen our muscles and bones.

It can help control extra body fat when combined with a balanced diet.

Regular exercise can improve our physical appearance and confidence.

Exercise can help us feel fresh, active, and relaxed. Physical activity can also support our mental well-being and reduce stress.

These points are based on my personal experience. First of all, we should motivate ourselves and say: "I want to stay fit, look good, remain healthy, and stay away from drugs."

I want to motivate my friends towards sports

and physical activities so that they can remain fit, healthy, and active.

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

After starting exercise, we should also follow a balanced and healthy diet. Diet plays an important role in bodybuilding and fitness. We should eat nutritious food and drink enough water. Gyms can provide equipment, music, a clean environment, and guidance from trainers. We should always follow proper instructions from a qualified trainer to reduce the risk of muscle and bone injuries. I suggest that young people take part in sports, exercise, and other healthy activities. These activities can keep us away from drugs and other harmful habits. I hope everyone will feel healthier, stronger, and more confident.

The government administration at the district level should also consider providing gym and sports facilities at the Panchayat level so that young people in rural areas can easily take part in physical activities. Finally, I would like to say that we should focus on natural and balanced nutrition and avoid unnecessary supplements. Proper exercise, healthy food, discipline, and a positive attitude can help us build a healthy life. Let us protect our young generation. Let us keep our surroundings safe. Let us choose sports, health, education, and a positive life instead of drugs.

SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI
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A Doctor Beyond the Clinic: The Journey of Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo



Wani Arfat

Some professionals are known mainly for the work they do inside their institutions. Others slowly build a wider public identity through education, writing, health awareness and service to society. Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo belongs to the latter group. Born in Poshkri village of Anantnag district in South Kashmir, he has built a professional journey that brings together clinical medicine, diabetes care, public health, medical education, science, health communication and writing.

His journey began in a simple setting. Poshkri village in Anantnag became the starting point of a career that later connected him with medical and professional institutions in India and abroad. A profile published by The Kashmir Horizon in 2018 described him as a native of Poshkri and recorded his early education. He studied at Iqra English Medium High School, Srigufwara, and Public Senior Secondary School, Bijbehara. He later completed his B.Sc. in Biology from the University of Kashmir and pursued MBBS from the University of Jammu.

Becoming a doctor was his childhood ambition. The 2018 profile also noted that he became the first student from his village to clear the Jammu and Kashmir Common Entrance Test for MBBS. From this beginning, his academic journey continued well beyond the MBBS degree.

Dr. Itoo continued his education in family medicine, diabetes, endocrinology, public health and medical education. His professional profile lists a Post Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine from Christian Medical College, Vellore, along with postgraduate training in diabetology and clinical endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism. He has also undertaken specialised training

through the International Diabetes Federation School of Diabetes and programmes connected with the European Society of Endocrinology.

His profile also records advanced certifications and learning connected with institutions including Stanford University School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Tokyo and the University of Manchester. His professional development reflects a continuing interest in learning rather than stopping after one qualification.



Diabetes and other non-communicable diseases have become important parts of his clinical work. His professional profile describes more than eight years of clinical experience in chronic disease management, particularly diabetes. His work focuses on patient-centred, preventive and evidence-based care.

In 2024, reports noted his completion of specialised diabetes management courses accredited for European continuing medical education through the International Diabetes Federation School of Diabetes. He also received Academic Life Membership of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India after completing a Certificate Program for Clinicians in Diabetes Management.

In 2025, he was awarded the Fellowship of the International Diabetes Federation. Reports described the recognition in connection with his work in diabetes care, education and advocacy. His professional affiliations also include the

American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pain Medicine and the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India.

Public health is another important part of his professional identity. His work includes preventive healthcare, health literacy, patient guidance and community health awareness. In 2026, he received the Fellowship of the Royal Society for Public Health in the United Kingdom. His public-health approach focuses not only on treating illness but also on prevention, screening, correct health information and healthier lifestyles.

Medical education has developed alongside his clinical career. His earlier professional journey included work as an educator with Unacademy. His profile records a Top Educator Award in 2017 and a Best Educator Award in 2018. In December 2025, he received Membership of the Academy of Medical Educators in the United Kingdom. In 2026, he was appointed as an Assessor by the Academy, taking part in the assessment of applications for professional membership and fellowship.

His connection with biological sciences has also grown. His professional profile lists membership of the Royal Society of Biology, along with the professional distinctions of Chartered Scientist and Chartered Biologist. These achievements add another area to a career that already includes medicine, public health and education. But medicine is only one part of Dr. Itoo's public work. Writing has been another major part of his journey. For years, he has contributed articles to newspapers and digital publications. His 2018 profile mentioned publications including Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Daily Excelsior, Kashmir Monitor, Kashmir Images, Kashmir Horizon and Kashmir Pen. At that time, it recorded around 100 published articles. His health writing covers a wide range of subjects. He has written about diabetes, hypertension, obesity, metabolic syndrome, stroke, heart disease, dengue, gastric cancer, hypothyroidism, viral infections, HIV/AIDS,

mental health and preventive healthcare. Titles such as Winter Viruses and Viral Infections, Floods and the Threat of Infections, Managing Obesity in the 21st Century, Hypothyroidism: The Silent Slowdown of Body, Preventing Heart Diseases, Stroke, Breakthrough Treatment for Gastric Cancer, Understanding Obesity, World Stroke Day: Know About Stroke!, About Metabolic Syndrome, Know It Here!, Treatment of Diabetes: Semaglutide Tablet vs Injection, World Heart Day: Understanding Heart Diseases, Dengue Fever: A Health Concern and Epidemic of Hypertension show the range of his medical writing.

His article Youth and Mental Health Awareness, published in 2026, focused on emotional wellbeing, stigma, peer support and the importance of professional mental-health care. His other health writings include subjects such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension and doctor-patient communication.

His writing, however, does not stop with medicine. He has also written about social issues, education, spirituality and human values. Articles such as Challenges of Poor and Our Responsibility, The Mother and Her Ailing Daughter, The Cobbler and His Moral Worthiness and Healing Power of Mother Tongue use everyday experiences to discuss compassion, dignity and social responsibility.

Education is another recurring theme in his work. His writings include Technological Advancement in Online Education, Opportunities & Challenges: When I Was a B.Sc 1st Year Student and other pieces dealing with motivation, learning and personal development. Spirituality also has a place in his writing. Articles such as Seeking Guidance From Surah Al Asr of Holy Qur'an, Finding the Purpose of Life Through Spiritual Motivation,

(Mohammad Arfat Wani is a writer, social activist and nursing student from Kuchmulla, Tral, Kashmir. He writes on social issues, culture and public concerns with the aim of raising awareness and inspiring change.)

From Drugs to Politics: A Bitter Story of Punjab

an abandoned career, a worried mother, a disappointed father or a family that does not know where to seek help.

From a Health Problem to a Political Issue Substance abuse is fundamentally a public-health and social issue, but in Punjab it has also become an important political subject.

Political parties and governments have discussed drug control, enforcement, rehabilitation, prevention and employment at different times. During election periods, allegations and counter-allegations about the extent of the problem and the effectiveness of government action can become especially prominent.

Such debates are part of democratic politics. However, the human suffering behind the issue should not disappear beneath political rhetoric.

Whether a particular government has performed better or worse is a matter that should be examined through documented evidence—such as crime data, treatment statistics, convictions, seizures, prevention programmes, rehabilitation outcomes and independent assessments—rather than slogans alone.

The Politics of the Drug Narrative There is another uncomfortable dimension to this story.

When a social crisis becomes politically useful, there can be a temptation to simplify it. One side may highlight the failures of previous governments. Another may emphasize the actions taken under its own administration. A third may argue that the real causes are unemployment, social inequality or international trafficking networks.

Each of these explanations may contain part of the picture, but none should replace evidence.

The danger comes when the suffering of families becomes a political weapon rather than a reason for sustained public policy.

Punjab does not need only dramatic statements about drugs. It needs measurable results.

How many people are receiving treatment? How many are successfully returning to education or employment? How many trafficking networks have been dismantled? How quickly are cases being investigated? How accessible are rehabilitation services in rural areas? What support is available to families? What happens to young people after rehabilitation?

These are the questions that deserve continuous public attention.

The Rural Dimension Punjab's villages have their own vulnerabilities.

A young person in a village may face limited employment opportunities, migration pressures, changing agricultural economics and social expectations. When meaningful opportunities are absent, frustration can become fertile ground for harmful habits.

This does not mean that unemployment automatically causes addiction. Most unemployed young people do not become drug users. But economic insecurity, social isolation and lack of purpose can increase vulnerability for some individuals.

The solution therefore cannot be limited to policing.

Skill development, sports facilities, libraries, vocational education, career counselling, entrepreneurship opportunities and community activities can give young people constructive alternatives.

A village with a library, playground, skill centre and counselling facility is investing in prevention just as surely as a government investing in enforcement.

The Role of the Family Families are the first line of support.

Unfortunately, addiction is sometimes treated as a moral failure or a matter of family honour. This can prevent people from seeking professional help at an early stage.

Addiction is a complex health and social problem. Stigma can push individuals and families into silence, while timely professional intervention can create an opportunity for recovery.

Parents should be encouraged to notice changes in behaviour, education, friendships, finances and physical well-being without immediately responding with humiliation or violence.

Young people need communication rather than only punishment.

Education as Prevention Schools and colleges have an important role in preventing substance abuse.

Drug education should not consist only of frightening posters or occasional lectures. Students need age-appropriate information about addiction, peer pressure, decision-making, emotional regulation, online influences and the consequences of substance use.

Teachers can create environments where students feel comfortable discussing anxiety, failure, loneliness and career uncertainty.

A student who can talk openly to a trusted teacher or counsellor may seek help before a problem becomes severe.

Education must therefore address not only the examination but also the individual.

Employment and Purpose

Young people need more than warnings; they need hope.

Punjab has produced generations of doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers, entrepreneurs, soldiers, artists and professionals. But today's young people are growing up in a highly competitive environment.

Academic pressure, unemployment, migration aspirations and social-media comparisons can create enormous psychological and social pressure.

Career counselling should begin early. Students should learn about vocational education, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, agriculture technology, healthcare, digital professions and other legitimate career pathways.

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HT SUNDAY GOSSIP

The Power of the Tune



By **YOUSUF MIR, Bandipora**
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Long ago, there lived an old man in a village. He held a unique place in the hearts of the villagers because of his many qualities. He was respected and honoured by everyone. Every day, during his leisure hours, he would tell stories to the children of his household. Once a week, the children and young people of the neighbourhood would gather around him to listen to stories, old and new.

One day, the old man made an announcement and called the entire village together to hear a story. Everyone came: children, elders, young people, women, employees, students, doctors, engineers and lawyers. They all gathered in one place. The old man began his story, and the people listened with great attention.

“Once upon a time, there was a Raja...”
A young man in the crowd interrupted.

“Another old story?”

“Listen first,” the old man replied.

The young man sat down. The old man began again.

Once upon a time, there was a Raja. He possessed a special kind of musical instrument. On certain days, the Raja would play it. The tune he played was unlike any other. It touched the hearts of everyone who heard it. Once a person heard the Raja's tune, he became devoted to the Raja. Whatever command the Raja gave was then obeyed without question.

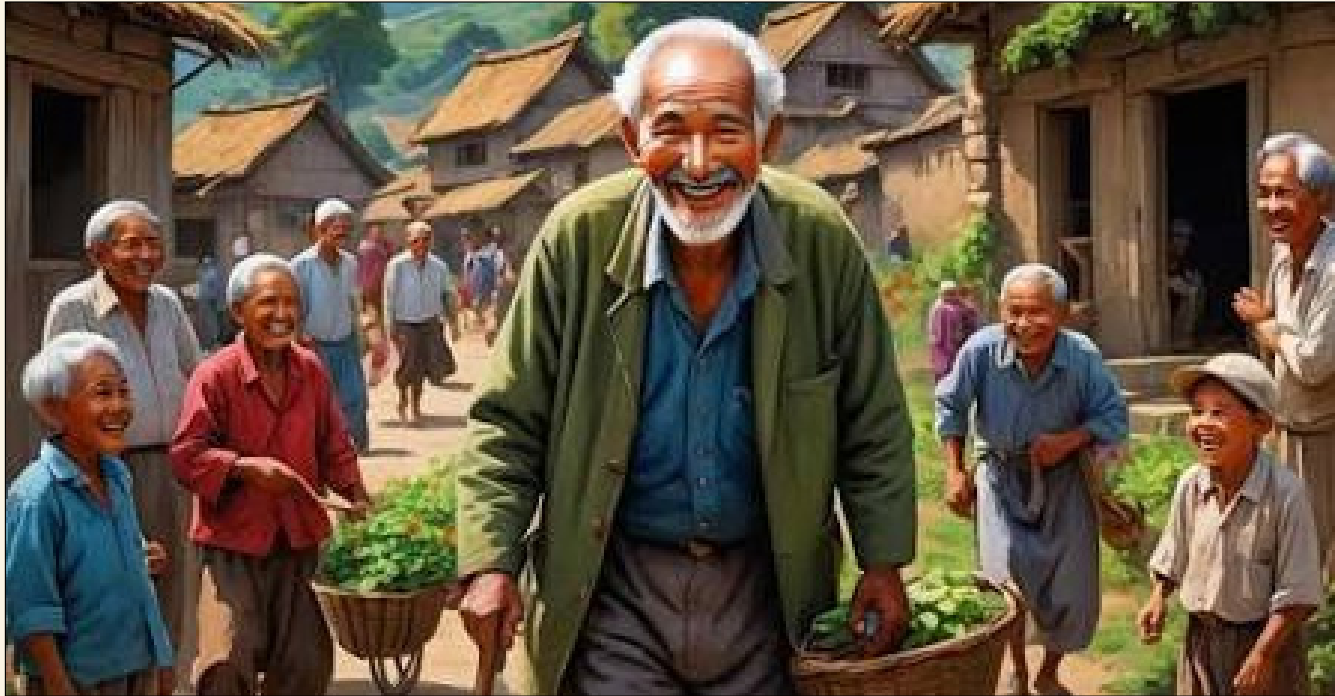
The Raja's growing popularity greatly troubled the King of the time. He tried every possible means to break the Raja, but all his efforts were in vain. Meanwhile, the Raja's circle of influence continued

to expand. It grew and grew until he had reached a position almost equal to that of the King. He was no longer a Raja merely in name; he had become

message.

“Greetings, Raja Sahib. I am the King's messenger. I have been entrusted with delivering His Majesty's

were shown colourful spectacles and alluring entertainments. Whenever necessary, the King sent his officers to keep the people under control.



a Raja in power as well. Without his command, it seemed that not even a bird could spread its wings.

The Raja's tune was becoming his greatest source of strength, and he used it to the fullest. Such was its power that the King of the time was beginning to appear almost powerless. The King's authority had been reduced to a narrow sphere. This filled him with fear.

He set all his agents to work and sought advice from outside as well. Combining every suggestion and every available resource, he began shooting his arrows in every direction, hoping somehow to render the Raja's tune ineffective.

The King employed every possible means to reach the Raja and finally sent messengers with a

message to you.”

The messenger addressed the Raja.

“The King's command is that you must change your tune. Whatever compensation is due to you will be paid.”

Having delivered the message, the messengers departed from the Raja's mansion.

But the Raja was no less determined than the King. He took great pride in his tune and remained firmly committed to it. He declared that if the King sincerely wished the tune to be changed, then the King himself should ask the people.

The King, meanwhile, continued with his efforts. Relying on the strength of his kingdom, he began testing the people in one way after another. People

Whenever a particular method seemed to work, he adopted it.

He also placed restrictions on the Raja's movements and on his contact with the people. At the same time, the King composed several tunes of his own, each more attractive than the last. He tried every possible method to make those tunes increasingly appealing and enchanting.

Gradually, the people began to develop a taste for them. Yet whenever the King found an opportunity, he would again urge the Raja to change his tune, while the Raja remained stubbornly attached to that one tune of his.

The King had begun to realise that the Raja's tune was slowly losing its influence. With each

passing day, the need to replace it seemed to diminish. Even so, from time to time, the King would provoke the Raja once again, urging him to change his tune.

The Raja remained proud of his tune. He was convinced that the people were devoted only to his tune, while the King, too, was becoming convinced that the people had begun to dance to his tune rather than the Raja's.

Then the King was given an opportunity to test the people with a new tune. This new spectacle strengthened his belief that the people were now listening less to the Raja's tune and beginning to prefer his own.

But the Raja remained lost in his own world. The King decided to test him once more. But who could persuade the Raja? Pride had taken hold of him. He knew only one tune, and that was the tune he had always played.

One day, the King said to the Raja, “Raja Sahib, how are you? I think you will have to listen to me now. Change your tune.”

With pride and unwavering determination, the Raja replied that the tune would not change.

“Try, Raja Sahib,” said the King. “You are the master. The people of this land move at your signal. Listen to me, Raja Sahib, my brother. In any case, the people are no longer prepared to dance to your tune.”

The King provoked the Raja. Unable to control his anger, and without thinking or weighing the circumstances, the Raja challenged the King.

“Prepare yourself for tomorrow.”

And so, every preparation was made to ask the people. The news spread like wildfire. Observers arrived from all over the world. Everyone expected that the people would choose to listen to the Raja's tune.

But the people's decision was the opposite, and the Raja's tune...

The old man's story left the entire gathering in stunned silence. They sat there astonished, unable to utter a word...

A Year So Far, For Al Noor Group

Laurels, trials, perseverance and the quiet strength of faith



By **Abid Bashir**
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Some years are measured in numbers, projects and milestones. Others are measured in the tests they place before us, and in the strength with which we emerge from them.

For Al Noor Group, the year so far has been a confluence of both: a year of laurels and recognition, but also of examinations, uncertainties and moments that demanded patience, resilience and an unwavering belief in the purpose with which the journey began.

At the centre of much of this journey has been Bashir Ahmad Naik, President of the J&K Fruits & Vegetables Processing & Integrated Cold Chain Association (JKPICCA) and Managing Director & CEO of Al Noor Group. His professional journey has increasingly extended beyond the boundaries of an individual enterprise. It has become intertwined with the larger concerns of Kashmir's horticulture ecosystem, its entrepreneurs, its cold-chain sector and, ultimately, its youth.

Publicly available corporate records identify Naik as a director/promoter associated with several Al Noor Group entities, while Al Noor Agri Fresh Pvt. Ltd. has been described in industry records as a Kashmir-based controlled-atmosphere cold-storage enterprise serving the apple and fresh-fruit sector.

A voice for an industry:

The significance of leadership is often tested not when circumstances are comfortable, but when the road becomes difficult.

Through JKPICCA, Naik has sought to take the concerns of the cold-chain and horticulture fraternity to various institutional and policy platforms. His interventions have increasingly placed issues concerning growers, post-harvest infrastructure, cold-chain development and the wider horticulture economy within conversations involving policymakers and industry stakeholders.

His participation in industry forums, including the CII J&K Apple Conclave, reflects this larger engagement with the horticulture sector.

For a sector as important to Kashmir as horticulture, such representation is not merely about business. It is about livelihoods. It is about preserving value within the region, creating opportunities for young people and building an ecosystem in which the farmer, entrepreneur, technologist and worker can all find a meaningful place.

That is perhaps why the recognition received during the year carries a meaning beyond a

certificate or a memento.

When recognition comes home:

Among the most memorable moments of the year was the visit of Shri Sanjay Seth, Hon'ble Minister of State for Defence, to Naik's residence to present a memento on behalf of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, in appreciation of his contribution towards the development of Jammu & Kashmir, particularly the apple-growing community.

For Naik, the moment represented more than personal recognition. It was, in many ways, an acknowledgement of the countless hours, representations, meetings, consultations and efforts that often remain invisible behind public achievements.



There is something profoundly meaningful when recognition travels back to the home of the person who spent years carrying the concerns of an entire fraternity beyond the walls of his own office.

And perhaps the most humbling aspect was the process that preceded such recognition, the extensive verification of credentials and contribution that, as understood by those close to the matter, preceded the presentation. Recognition becomes even more meaningful when it survives scrutiny.

The whirlpool behind the laurels:

Yet, every photograph of an award has a story that the photograph cannot tell.

Behind the laurels were challenges. Behind the applause were difficult decisions. Behind the achievements were moments of uncertainty, pressure and examination.

The year was not a straight road paved with success. It was, at times, a whirlpool, demanding composure when circumstances could easily have produced impatience.

It is perhaps that is what makes the journey worth recording.

Steadfastness. Patience. Faith.

These are not merely words when one has lived through uncertainty. They become a way of walking.

And for Naik, the deepest source of that strength has been his faith in ALLAH.

There is a particular kind of strength in believing that one is not walking alone. That even when the road becomes unclear, there is

a hand that guides; when circumstances become overwhelming, there is a wisdom beyond one's immediate understanding; and when doors appear closed, patience itself can become a form of worship.

Looking back at the year, the gratitude is therefore not limited to what was achieved. It extends equally to what was endured.

“How Allah has been there to guide, protect and handhold me through every difficult passage is something I can neither forget nor take for granted.”

That perhaps is the more personal story behind the public one.

And then, another chapter began:

The year brought another development that connected Al Noor's professional journey with an entirely different world, the world of literature, philosophy and ideas.

Mir Muzamil, a management professional associated with Al Noor Group, successfully launched his debut book, “The Ant—A Philosophy of Human Existence”, at SKICC, Srinagar, on 2 August 2026.

The book's arrival was significant not merely as a literary event, but as an expression of an idea that perhaps complements the larger philosophy of the organisation: that professional life and intellectual life need not exist in separate worlds.

A management professional writing about human existence; an entrepreneur engaging with horticulture and cold-chain infrastructure; an industry association taking the concerns of its members to policy platforms—these may appear to be different journeys, but underneath them lies a common thread: the pursuit of meaning, progress and human possibility.

And the literary journey continued.

On 21 September 2026, “The Ant—A Philosophy of Human Existence” was nominated for TRI Literary Awards, Season 5, adding another feather to an already eventful year for the author.

For an organisation and its people, such moments matter because they expand the meaning of achievement. Growth is not confined to balance sheets, infrastructure or physical assets. It can also be measured by the ideas one produces, the conversations one initiates and the intellectual culture one helps nurture.

More than a business story

The story of Al Noor Group, therefore, cannot be reduced simply to the story of a company.

It is increasingly a story about enterprise and endurance; horticulture and human aspiration; leadership and responsibility; achievement and faith. At a time when Kashmir's economy is looking towards greater value addition, modern cold-chain infrastructure, youth entrepreneurship and stronger integration with national markets, institutions and individuals working in these spaces carry a responsibility that extends beyond commercial interests.

From our Drills to Your Dreams



By **M S Nazki**

Sometimes love is not enough and the road gets tough. I don't know why..... NSG Commando

I'm tougher than you think. You just need to believe in me. You know, like a fairy!.. — Becca Ritchie & Kristia Ritchie, Long Way Down

“Coming out of your comfort zone is tough in the beginning, chaotic in the middle, and awesome in the end...because in the end, it shows you a whole new world. Make an attempt.

-From our Drills to Your Dreams.

Today, NSG didn't just demonstrate capability, they ignited purpose amongst 600 NCC Cadets who, beyond the skills & capabilities, witnessed and experienced the ethos that drives NSG: discipline without compromise, courage without hesitation and service without self. The engagement was aimed to motivate young minds to pursue excellence, develop leadership and remain committed to the service of the nation!

-True discipline without compromise means acting on your commitments consistently rather than waiting for motivation or the right mood.

-The most prominent romantic story featuring an NSG (National Security Guard) commando is the novel Love Story of a Commando by author Swapnil Pandey.

-Plot and Key Details

• Main Characters: The book centers on Captain Virat, an elite Black Cat NSG commando, and Riya, a regular college student and millennial.

• The Encounter: Riya first meets Captain Virat in Delhi, followed by a dramatic reunion during the deadly 2008 terrorist attacks at Mumbai's Taj Palace hotel, where Virat rescues her.

• The Journey: Their relationship continues across high-risk locations, including getting stranded behind enemy lines in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (PoK) during a period of intense violence.

• Themes: The story blends intense military combat and counter-insurgency operations with the emotional toll, sacrifices, and realities faced by military families.

-As well, I want our special force commandos to silently slip into Cat Bi and Gia Lam airfields and destroy the aircraft stationed there. That will deal the French forces at Dien Bien Phu a stunning blow!”

-The Geneva peace accords said that it recognized the nationality and fundamental rights of the Vietnamese people including their sovereignty, their territory and unity. Due to the Geneva Conference allowing the imperialist combined forces of the Franco-USA coalition, on the one hand to hold South Vietnam under the 17th parallel and allowing the National resistance by the People of Vietnam to hold the north on the other, it stopped the Vietnamese from completely liberating their country.

-“Cairo. An inter-services game of cricket was in progress in the lush grounds behind him as Powell made his way through the grand portal of the Gezira Sporting Club. It was a hot and humid day and Powell was dripping with sweat. A fellow officer had given him a lift for part of the way but he had had to walk the last mile. Uniformed Egyptian attendants bowed and guided him through the lobby towards the bar, where he could see his host with a drink already in hand!..

-The National Security Guard (NSG) is India's elite federal counter-terrorism force, famously known as the “Black Cats,” trained to neutralize high-risk terrorist threats and resolve hostage crises. -Major Operations

• Operation Black Tornado (2008): During the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, NSG commandos carried out a 61-hour operation across landmarks like the Taj Mahal Palace, Trident-Oberoi, and Nariman House, rescuing hundreds of hostages and neutralizing multiple terrorists. Heroic figures like Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan and Havaldar Gajendra Singh made the ultimate sacrifice during these engagements.

• Pathankot Attack (2016): NSG commandos were airlifted to neutralize terrorists who attacked the Pathankot Air Force base. During the sanitization phase, Lieutenant Colonel Niranjan E.K. lost his life while safely clearing booby-trapped IEDs from the bodies of dead terrorists.

• Operation Ashwamedh (1993): Sixty Black Cat commandos successfully stormed a hijacked Indian Airlines flight at Amritsar, neutralizing a Pakistani hijacker in just 12 seconds without any loss of passenger lives.

-Core Responsibilities:

• Hostage Rescue: Swiftly intervening in hijacked planes, trains, or buildings.

• Counter-Terrorism: Conducting surgical strikes and room-to-room clearances with a zero-error ethos.

• Bomb Disposal: Detecting and safely neutralizing complex improvised explosive devices (IEDs). -The National Security Guard (NSG) serves as an elite federal counter-terrorism and house-intervention force in Jammu and Kashmir, deployed alongside the army, paramilitary forces, and local police to handle high-risk operations.

Satish Sharma Undertakes Extensive Development Tour of Chhamb

Inaugurates and Lays Foundation Stones for Major Works worth more than 3 Cr.

■ HT News Network

CHHAMB, OCTOBER 3: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Information Technology (IT), Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today undertook an extensive tour of the Chhamb Assembly Constituency, inaugurating and laying foundation stones for a series of development works worth more than 3 Cr aimed at strengthening basic infrastructure, improving connectivity and enhancing public amenities across the constituency.

The day-long programme covered several villages and habitations, with the Minister personally reviewing



the progress and requirements of infrastructure works and interacting with local residents.

The development initiatives included roads, culverts, drainage and protection works, community

infrastructure and educational facilities, reflecting a focused approach towards addressing the immediate infrastructure needs of the people.

At Migrant Colony, Kodewala Camp, Satish Sharma laid the foundation stone for construction of a park and inaugurated the newly constructed drains, aimed at improving the local environment, drainage management and public amenities for residents.

The Minister also laid the foundation stone for construction of a link road from Kharah to Thanda Choa, underlining the importance of improved road connectivity for facilitating movement of people and access to essential services.

At Village Kalah, the Minister inaugurated protection works near the house of Madan Lal, Ex-Punch, followed by inauguration of protection works at Mohalla Chatyala. The works are intended to strengthen vulnerable stretches and protect residential and public infrastructure.

At Village Jawan, Satish Sharma laid the foundation stone for construction of a culvert near Atta Chakki and inaugurated a Community Hall. He said that community infrastructure plays an important role in providing people with accessible spaces for social, public and community activities and called for ensuring that such facilities are completed within stipulated timelines and maintained properly.

DHSJ reviews functioning of Health Department in district Rajouri

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 3: Director Health Services Jammu, Dr. Poonam Sethi on Saturday reviewed the overall functioning and progress of the Health Department in district Rajouri here at a meeting. During a tour to this border district, she was accompanied by State Tuberculosis Officer (SfO) Dr. Jyoti Jolly and her team, besides State ASHA Coordinator Johnson. The review meeting was attended by Chief Medical Officer Dr. ML Rana; WHO Consultant NTEP Dr. Ashfaq, District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO), all Block Medical Officers (BMOs) and other officers and officials. The physical and financial progress of different National Health Programmes and departmental activities was reviewed in detail. The discussions covered National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) with special focus on case detection, notification, treatment and programme indicators – Non-communicable Diseases (NCD) Programme. The meeting assessed the Human Resources and manpower availability; Machinery, equipment and their functionality; Health infrastructure and ongoing requirements; DVDMS and supply-chain management; Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services; Clinical Establishments; PCPNDT Act implementation.

JMC launches first under Fly-over Badminton Court at Akhnoor Highway

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 3: The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) today inaugurated a newly constructed Badminton Court at Pata Paloura, Akhnoor Road, in Ward No. 61, providing a dedicated sports facility for local residents and youth. The facility was inaugurated by Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North, in the presence of Dr. Devansh Yadav, Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation.

The new badminton court has been developed by the JMC with the aim of promoting sports and encouraging greater participation of youth in healthy and constructive activities. Located beneath the flyover opposite BSF School, the facility is expected to provide a convenient space for residents, particularly young people, to pursue badminton and other recreational activities. CCTV cameras will also be installed at the site to ensure the safety and security of the badminton court. It was noted that a plantation drive had previously been conducted at the site by the Jammu Municipal Corporation under the National Clean Air Program. A green walkway has already been completed under NCAP by JMC under this flyover. Speaking on the occasion, Sham Lal Sharma appreciated the JMC for developing the sports facility and emphasized the importance of providing accessible sporting infrastructure in residential areas. Dr. Devansh Yadav said that the JMC is committed to developing public spaces and community facilities that contribute to a healthier and more active urban environment. He said such initiatives would be taken up at suitable locations across the city to encourage community participation and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Kathua: Implementation of District Plan 2026-27 reviewed

DC stresses timely execution, quality, transparency

■ HT News Network

POONCH, OCTOBER 02: To co KATHUA, OCTOBER 03: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the physical and financial progress of ongoing and new works being executed under the District Capex Budget (DCB) 2026-27 in the district.

The DC took a detailed review of the status of works being implemented by different executing agencies, with focus on physical achievements, financial expenditure, work-wise timelines and bottlenecks affecting execution. The concerned officers briefed the chair on the progress of ongoing works and the status of newly approved works under the current financial year.

The Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma directed all concerned departments and executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work and ensure



timely completion of projects within the prescribed timelines. He stressed that all works must be executed as per approved specifications and quality standards, while maintaining transparency and financial discipline at every stage.

The DC Kathua called for close monitoring of works at

the field level and directed officers to ensure that no approved project is delayed due to avoidable procedural or inter-departmental issues. He also emphasised effective utilisation of allocated funds and regular updating of physical and financial progress.

One dies, 46 injured in 2 road mishaps at Marog- Ramban

DC, SSP monitor rescue operation, treatment of victims

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, OCTOBER 3: A tourist bus bearing registration number WB 37D 8989, carrying tourists from West Bengal, met with an accident on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) near Marog in Ramban district today. The bus was travelling from Srinagar towards Jammu when the accident occurred.

One person died and at least 37 persons sustained injuries in the accident. The injured were immediately evacuated from the accident site and shifted to District Hospital Ramban for treatment. Four injured were referred to Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital Jammu for specialised treatment.

Soon after receiving information about the accident, the District Administration Ramban swung into action and launched a coordinated rescue operation. Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan, SSP Arun Gupta, ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak and other officers rushed to the hospital and personally monitored the medical care, rescue and evacuation operations.

Personnel from J&K Police, CRPF, Civil QRT Ramban and Civil Administration actively participated in the rescue operation and ensured the safe evacuation of the injured tourists from the accident site.

Meanwhile, a rescue team vehicle also



met with an accident in the Marog area, in which nine security personnel, including seven J&K Police personnel and two CRPF personnel, sustained injuries. The injured personnel were also provided medical assistance.

Senior officers subsequently visited District Hospital and supervised the treatment being provided to the injured. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Medical Superintendent to ensure the best possible medical treatment and all necessary healthcare facilities to the injured tourists and security personnel.

The District Administration continued to closely monitor the rescue, evacuation, medical treatment and other arrangements to ensure timely assistance and necessary support to all affected persons.

DC undertakes extensive Tour of Warwan Reviews Relief measures, dev works, Public Grievances

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 03: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma, who is on an extensive tour to Warwan in Sub-Division Marwah, reviewed relief and rehabilitation measures, ongoing developmental works and public grievances.

On arrival in Warwan yesterday, the Deputy Commissioner immediately proceeded to Mungli and met the families affected by the recent fire incident. A devastating fire had engulfed a cluster of wooden houses on the intervening night of



September 29-30, in which 07 houses were gutted. Fortunately, there was no loss of human life.

The Deputy Commissioner assured the affected families of all possible assistance and

support from the administration. He informed them that relief under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) had already been credited to the bank accounts of eligible

beneficiaries. Compensation for fully damaged houses, livestock and other eligible losses would be provided as per applicable disaster relief norms. Timber required for reconstruction of the seven damaged houses would also be provided as per applicable provisions. Immediate relief in the form of kitchen sets, blankets, tents, mattresses, kitchenware, jugs, buckets and other essential items has been provided through the District Red Cross Society. Food and ration kits have also been arranged, while hydroelectric power project companies have dispatched relief kits under their CSR initiatives.

DC Rajouri reviews progress of development works taken up under District, UT-CAPEX 2026-27

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, OCTOBER 03: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today reviewed the progress of different works taken up under District CAPEX and UT-CAPEX 2026-27. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the physical and financial progress of works, including tendering, allotment, commencement status and expenditure, and directed all concerned departments to expedite execution while ensuring optimal utilisation of available funds. The Deputy



Commissioner stressed the need to accelerate the pace of execution and ensure timely completion of approved works. He also conducted a department-wise review of PWD, Rural Development Department (RDD), Jal Shakti, Power Development Department

(PDD), JAKEDA, Ground Water and Health Department. The DC directed the concerned officers to recommend cancellation of contractor cards in cases where contractors fail to commence work within 15 days of tender allotment, as per applicable

rules. Emphasising accountability, transparency and quality, the DC instructed all officers to closely monitor the progress of works and ensure their timely completion for the benefit of the public. The meeting was attended by ADDC Rajouri Malikzada.

Enforcement Wing Agri Deptt reviews measures to strengthen quality control of Inputs

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 3: A comprehensive review meeting of the Enforcement Wing of the Agriculture Department, Jammu, was held today under the supervision of Director Law Enforcement, J&K, S. Balbir Singh, to review ongoing enforcement activities and strengthen the quality control mechanism for agricultural inputs across the Jammu Division.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Director Law Enforcement, Jammu, S. Kuldeep Singh along with Law Enforcement Inspectors from different districts of the Jammu Division.

The meeting focused on reviewing enforcement activities and ensuring the

availability of standard and quality-certified seeds, pesticides and fertilizers to farmers. Detailed deliberations were held on measures to curb the sale and distribution of misbranded, spurious and substandard agricultural inputs and to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of relevant Acts and Rules.

The status of court cases initiated by the Enforcement Wing was also reviewed, with emphasis on their timely follow-up and effective prosecution. The officers were directed to ensure proper documentation, regular monitoring and prompt action in all pending cases as per the provisions of the relevant Acts and Rules.

Special emphasis was laid on achieving prescribed sampling targets and



intensifying field-level inspections. The functioning of Point of Sale (POS) machines in fertilizer distribution was also reviewed.

The officers were directed to closely monitor fertilizer transactions and take appropriate action against defaulters. Particular

attention was given to verifying whether fertilizers recorded as supplied through the distribution system actually reach genuine and authorized retailers.

The meeting further emphasized regular sampling of bio-fertilizers and organic fertilizers, in addition to seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, to ensure that all agricultural inputs supplied to farmers conform to prescribed quality standards.

Addressing the officers, Director Law Enforcement, J&K, S. Balbir Singh, stressed the need for strict vigilance, proactive field inspections and swift action against violations. He called upon the enforcement teams to discharge their duties with dedication and ensure that the interests of the farming community remain paramount.

The Enforcement Wing reiterated its commitment to working round the clock for the welfare of farmers and ensuring the availability of genuine, standard and quality agricultural inputs across the Jammu Division. Special emphasis was laid on achieving prescribed sampling targets and intensifying field-level inspections. The functioning of Point of Sale (POS) machines in fertilizer distribution was also reviewed. The officers were directed to closely monitor fertilizer transactions and take appropriate action against defaulters. Particular attention was given to verifying whether fertilizers recorded as supplied through the distribution system actually reach genuine and authorized retailers.



DC launches Reforms Utsav in District Kishtwar Special Gram Sabhas held across All 136 Gram Panchayats

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 03: The Reforms Utsav 2026 was today launched across the District Kishtwar by Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma. The initiative started with Special Gram Sabhas in all 136 Gram Panchayats with the aim to take governance reforms to the grassroots, generate awareness among citizens and eliciting community participation in development planning.

The Reforms Utsav is being implemented through multiple stages, beginning with Jan Manthan that focuses on identification of developmental priorities and seeking suggestions from citizens; Vimarsh, focused on deliberation and identification of actionable reforms and Jan Samadhan, focused on delivering quick-wins and medium-



term reforms. The three-month nationwide campaign from October to December will culminate with Sankalp Siddhi from December 25 to 27, 2026, showcasing progress, outcomes and best practices.

The district-level launch was conducted at BDO Office Inderwal, Panchayat Lower Chatroo-Bof Block

Inderwal, where Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma participated in the Special Gram Sabha and formally launched the Reforms Utsav. He also participated in deliberations on the Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan (VGPP) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

Addressing the gathering, the

Deputy Commissioner highlighted the objectives of the Reforms Utsav to take major governance reforms and citizen-centric initiatives to the people and to provide citizens an opportunity to understand the reforms, assess their impact and identify local development priorities.

He referred to important reforms and initiatives including the three new criminal laws, strengthening of the cooperative sector, digitisation of land records, PMGKAY, Jal Jeevan Mission, VGPP and quality GPDP, among others. He emphasised that the broader objective of these reforms is to make governance more accessible, transparent, responsive and citizen-centric. The Deputy Commissioner also explained the significance of the GPDP as an instrument of participatory and decentralised planning. He called upon the people to assess the actual requirements and developmental

gaps of their respective Gram Panchayats and ensure that genuine local priorities are appropriately reflected in the GPDP. Elaborating on the VGPP, the Deputy Commissioner informed the participants that the Perspective Plan provides a comprehensive framework for long-term, saturation-oriented development of Gram Panchayats. The VGPP encompasses 04 Master Work Categories, 30 Sub-Categories and 375 permissible works, providing a wide range of interventions for addressing identified developmental gaps.

He stressed that the planning exercise should commence with proper assessment of existing gaps, needs and available resources and should be saturation-oriented, evidence-based and scientifically planned, with appropriate use of the Yuktdhara platform for scientific and spatially informed planning.

AgriStack implementation reviewed in Bharderwah

■ HT News Network



BHADERWAH, OCTOBER 03: In-charge AgriStack DKR (IAS Probationer) Ganesh Reddy today reviewed the progress of AgriStack implementation in Sub-District Bharderwah here at a meeting with Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sunil Kumar Bhutyal and the functionaries of stakeholder departments.

Detailed discussions were held on the status of AgriStack-related work and the measures required for its timely and effective completion.

The meeting was attended by Tehsildar Kamalpreet Singh, Naib Tehsildars, Girdawars and Patwaris, who apprised the chair of the progress achieved in their respective areas and briefed about the status of the ongoing work.

District-Level workshop on VGPP under VB-GRAM G held at Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 03: A district-level workshop on Village Growth and Prosperity Plan (VGPP) under VB-GRAM G was today organized here under the theme 'From Planning to Action'.

The workshop was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh.

The workshop focused on strengthening participatory planning at the grassroots level and translating village-level priorities into actionable development initiatives. Participants discussed the preparation, implementation and monitoring of VGPPs, with emphasis on convergence, community participation, sustainable development and effective utilization of available resources.

The workshop provided a platform for officials and stakeholders to deliberate on strategies for transforming village development plans into tangible outcomes and ensuring that local aspirations are effectively incorporated into the development process. The workshop focused on strengthening participatory planning at the grassroots level and translating village-level priorities into actionable development initiatives. Participants discussed the preparation, implementation and monitoring of VGPPs, with emphasis on convergence, community participation, sustainable development and effective utilization of available resources. The workshop provided a platform for officials and stakeholders to deliberate on strategies for transforming village development plans into tangible outcomes and ensuring that local aspirations are effectively incorporated into the development process.

Awareness-cum-Medicine distribution camp organised by AHD at Bhabore- Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, OCTOBER 03: The Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) Doda on Saturday organised an awareness-cum-medicine distribution camp at village Bhabore under the Information, Education, Communication (IEC) Scheme.

As part of the camp, 1 kg mineral mixture was given to each participating farmer to support the health and productivity of dairy animals. The farmers were encouraged to maintain proper hygiene, provide clean drinking water, ensure adequate nutrition and undertake regular health monitoring of their livestock.

Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Dr. Irfan Ali Wani highlighted various programmes and welfare schemes being implemented by the department for the benefit of livestock farmers. He briefed the participants about entrepreneurship



opportunities available in the dairy and livestock sector. He encouraged farmers and rural youth to adopt scientific practices and avail themselves of the technical and financial support available under different departmental initiatives. He also interacted with the farmers and listened to their concerns and queries related to livestock farming and departmental services.

Veterinary Assistant Surgeon LDC Ghat Dr. Naveed Anjum delivered a technical session and sensitised the farmers about important animal and public health issues, particularly Rabies and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD). He explained the major signs,

modes of transmission, and preventive measures associated with these diseases. While discussing Rabies, he emphasised the public health risks associated with dog bites and stressed the importance of seeking immediate medical attention after suspected exposure.

Regarding LSD, the farmers were advised to remain vigilant, maintain proper hygiene and biosecurity, follow recommended vaccination practices and promptly report suspected cases to the nearest Animal Husbandry Centre.

The session also covered Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and the importance of responsible use of antibiotics.

DHJ flags off 30 farmers on Inter-District exposure tour to promote Women Entrepreneurship

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 3: Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed today flagged off a group of 30 aspiring women agri-entrepreneurs on an Inter-District Exposure Tour, here from the Chief Canning Instructor Office.

The exposure tour has been designed to familiarise participating farmers, particularly women entrepreneurs, with modern horticultural processing techniques, innovative models of horticultural development.

During the tour, the farmers shall visit different locations to gain first-hand knowledge and explore opportunities for adopting profitable horticultural activities. The participants will gain exposure to fruit processing activities, including the preparation of juices, jams, jellies, pickles and other



processed fruit products, along with scientific methods of preservation, hygienic handling, attractive packaging and marketing.

These initiatives are expected to encourage farmers, especially women, to explore small-scale food processing ventures, reduce post-harvest losses, enhance the shelf life of their produce and generate

additional sources of income.

The tour has been coordinated by Chief Horticulture Officer R.K. Kotwal in collaboration with Chief Canning Instructor Sanjeev Kurlupia.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Manager-cum-Chemist Shrestha Gaur and other officers and officials of the Horticulture Department.

MVD Udhampur hosts medical camp, conducts enforcement drive to promote Road Safety

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 03: As per the directions of the Transport Commissioner J&K and under the supervision of the ARTO, the Motor Vehicles Department Udhampur conducted an extensive enforcement drive in Udhampur town, near Chenani-Nashri Tunnel and along National Highway-44.

During the enforcement drive, more than 79 vehicles were checked, out of which 16 vehicles were e-challaned for different violations under the Motor Vehicles Act. The expected amount involved through the e-challans is approximately ₹ 40,000.

In addition to the enforcement activities, a medical and health awareness camp was organized here at the General Bus Stand, in collaboration with the Medical Department. The camp aimed to promote health awareness and encourage regular health and eye check-ups among drivers, conductors and other transport stakeholders.

BJP OBC Morcha Holds Cleanliness Drive in Kathua, Gives Message of Cleanliness and Social Responsibility

■ HT News Network

Kathua, October 3: BJP OBC Morcha organised a cleanliness drive in Kathua with the active participation of party workers and office-bearers, reinforcing the message of cleanliness, civic responsibility and collective service to society.

The programme was led by Vinod Kumar Shinda, District President, BJP OBC Morcha, Kathua, and was conducted under the guidance and supervision of Updesh Andotra, District President, BJP. During the drive, BJP workers actively participated in shramdaan and collectively cleaned the premises, stressing the importance of maintaining clean and hygienic surroundings.



In his message, Braham Jyot Satti, State President, BJP OBC Morcha Jammu & Kashmir, said that cleanliness is not merely a government responsibility but a collective duty of every citizen. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently encouraged people to make cleanliness an integral part of their daily lives and has placed Seva and social responsibility

at the centre of public participation. He said that such cleanliness activities help create awareness among people and encourage them to take greater responsibility for their surroundings. He called upon party workers and the general public to carry forward the spirit of cleanliness beyond organised programmes and make it a regular habit in their homes.

CMO Doda Reviews NQAS Preparedness at AAM SC Bitola, Conducts Routine Visit to CHC Thathri

■ HT News Network

Doda, October 03: Ahead of the forthcoming National Assessment under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS), Chief Medical Officer Doda, Dr Vinod Sharma, today 03-10-2026 visited AAM Sub Centre Bitola, falling under Medical Block Thathri, to review the functioning and preparedness of the health facility for the upcoming assessment.

During the visit, the CMO took a detailed review of the facility's preparedness and functioning with particular focus on service delivery, infrastructure, documentation and other quality parameters relevant to the NQAS assessment.



He interacted with the staff and emphasized the need for maintaining the prescribed standards and completing all necessary preparations well in advance. The CMO also conducted a routine visit to Community Health Centre Thathri, where he reviewed the overall functioning of the health

institution and the delivery of healthcare services. He interacted with the staff and took stock of the routine activities being carried out at the facility. BMO Thathri, Dr Shakeel Ahmed Kichloo and District Epidemiologist, Mr Umar Anayat, accompanied the CMO Doda during the visits.

JKTPO hosts Export Awareness-cum-E-Commerce Onboarding Drives across 4 districts

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, OCTOBER 3: The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO), under the aegis of the Industries & Commerce Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, has conducted a series of Export Awareness-cum-E-Commerce Onboarding Drives across Samba, Kathua, Budgam and Pulwama, as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen the export ecosystem and facilitate wider market access for enterprises across the Union Territory.

The programmes, conducted during September and October 2026, brought together MSMEs,

entrepreneurs, artisans, weavers, farmers, SHGs, FPOs, startups and aspiring exporters, with a common focus on creating awareness about export opportunities, improving export preparedness and facilitating access to digital marketplaces.

The initiative is aimed at taking export promotion and market-access facilitation to the district level and strengthening the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) and One District One Product (ODOP) framework in Jammu & Kashmir. Through such interventions, JKTPO is working to connect locally produced goods and district-specific products with wider domestic and international markets.

The awareness drives focused on key aspects of the export



ecosystem, including export procedures and documentation, international market opportunities, export finance, credit risk mitigation, regulatory requirements, government procurement and digital commerce. Participants were also sensitised about opportunities emerging from

international trade arrangements, including the India-EU Free Trade Agreement and the importance of improving product quality, packaging, branding and market readiness.

A major component of the programmes was e-commerce onboarding and handholding, with

participants being facilitated for registration and onboarding on platforms such as ONDC, GeM and Flipkart, enabling local enterprises to establish a digital presence, improve product visibility and access a larger customer base.

The programmes also provided a platform for direct interaction between local enterprises and various government departments, export promotion bodies, financial institutions and digital commerce platforms. Representatives and resource persons associated with ECCG, EXIM Bank, FIEO, GeM, ONDC, Flipkart and Mission YUVA, among others, sensitised participants and addressed their queries relating to exports, finance, risk mitigation,

government procurement, entrepreneurship and digital market access. The district-level outreach is particularly significant in the context of J&K's ODOP initiative, under which district-specific products are being promoted for enhanced market visibility and export potential. By combining export awareness with e-commerce onboarding, JKTPO is facilitating a pathway for local producers and enterprises from formalisation and digital adoption to market access and export readiness.

The initiative also seeks to bridge the information and market-access gap faced by smaller enterprises by providing on-the-spot guidance, institutional linkages and continued handholding support. This approach

is intended to enable enterprises to better understand market requirements and progressively integrate themselves into domestic and international value chains.

The four programmes form part of JKTPO's broader district outreach strategy to build a strong, inclusive and export-oriented enterprise ecosystem across Jammu & Kashmir. The remaining districts of the Union Territory are also being taken up under the initiative and will be covered through similar Export Awareness-cum-E-Commerce Onboarding Drives in the coming months, ensuring wider outreach and access to export-related information, digital platforms and institutional support for enterprises across all districts.



Can you eat ultra-processed foods and still be healthy?

A dietitian analysed my weekly shop

Going to the supermarket has become a minefield.

I'm in aisle 15, reading long lists of ingredients and worrying if what's in my trolley is good for me or not.

There's growing evidence that a hefty proportion of the food we consume could be damaging to our health, with ultra-processed foods (UPFs) linked to a range of health problems.

But I've had enough of second-guessing myself and panicking I'm poisoning my child if I feed him chicken nuggets, so I've given my shopping list to a dietitian to analyse.

First things first, what is a UPF?

It depends who you ask. A basic rule of thumb is that to be ultra-processed a product needs more than five ingredients, with at least one not normally found in your kitchen - things like emulsifiers, additives and flavourings.

There is a large and growing body of evidence that shows UPFs are linked to obesity, cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders such as type 2 diabetes, as well as mental health problems and even premature death. But scientists, doctors and dietitians can't agree on why. Is it purely down to the high fat, sugar, salt and calorie content? Or is the ultra-processing also a factor?

Studies show more than half the calories we consume in the UK come from ultra-processed food. And my shopping list isn't UPF-free either.

Maeve Hanan, a member of the British Dietetic Association, pauses as she scans through some of my weekly shopping list (there was more fruit and veg, honest) and points to a box of bran flakes.

"This is ultra-processed, but I often buy this for my family. It's got so many health benefits."

Hanan says there's a "growing hysteria" about UPFs.

"Mainly because the messaging around them is so black and white," she says. "This food is good. This food is bad."

"It just fuels fear - and fear around food is never good."

So what is her verdict on my grocery shopping?

Not as bad as I expected, I'm relieved to learn. While there are UPFs in there, that doesn't necessarily make it an unhealthy food shop. In fact, Hanan says, "there's a good mix of foods which cover each food group".

Just because some products have a long ingredient list, it doesn't make them "inherently bad", she explains, with the nutritional value "far more important".

What about foods that contain ingredients I can barely pronounce, never mind recognise? Hanan takes my son's chicken nuggets as an example.



"There are mandatory vitamins and minerals which manufacturers in the UK are required to add to white wheat flour such as calcium carbonate, niacin and thiamin," she says.

Raising agents, such as disodium diphosphate, are used alongside sodium bicarbonate (baking powder) to make the batter crisp and light.

Hanan says even the most chemical-sounding ingredients will have been tested or approved under UK food laws.

"But while chicken nuggets are a good source of protein," she warns, "they are higher in fat and salt than a plain chicken breast, so I would eat them in moderation as part of a balanced diet."

I tell Hanan my son usually eats them with raw carrot sticks and pasta.

"One food does not make your diet healthy or unhealthy," she says, "it's about getting that balance over time."

Megan Bamford believes cutting out UPFs from her diet has helped her manage irritable bowel syndrome and chronic pain.

But now, as a mum to two young children, cooking from scratch is not always viable. Her eldest, seven-year-old Ella, has struggled on and off with food since she was little.

"It's not always easy to feed your children what you think they should eat," Megan says. "Ella has been poorly in the past because of her severe picky eating - we had no choice but to give her ultra-processed food from a packet."

So Megan's kitchen is still full of fruit, vegetables, seeds and oats but there are now also breakfast cereals, crisps, biscuits and other processed foods too.

She looks for food with five ingredients or fewer.

"Most of the snacks, pizzas, and cereal I buy are not ultra-processed," she says. "I'm happy with that. I feed my children in the best way I can, I choose the healthiest options I can find."

While many UPFs are high in fat, sugar and salt, which we know cause a whole range of health problems, some scientists say there is not as much understanding about what the act of processing does to our food.

Author and food scientist Prof David Julian McClements says the "ultra-processed food idea is not very well defined".

"Focussing on the processing element is a

The Food and Drink Federation, which represents food and drink manufacturers in the UK says it has invested millions of pounds "in healthier product innovation" and its members have "cut the salt, sugar and calories from their products by almost a fifth just in the last five years".

"This work," it says, "has been done in line with government regulation and dietary



bit of red herring," he says, "I don't think that's the main problem here."

Some studies suggest the more processed food is, the easier it is to overeat it. Others link UPFs to changes in our gut microbiome. But McClements says there is no conclusive evidence to say this alone inherently damages our health.

But given he works in the food industry, does he have a vested interest?

"Any successful food scientist works a lot with the food industry," McClements says, "and I think trying to get rid of UPFs is holding back innovation."

So many of us lead busy lives, he says, convenience is a major part of society.

"What I want to do is to redesign processed foods to make them healthier," he says.

Jean Adams, professor of diet and public health at the University of Cambridge, says focusing on making UPFs healthier is not the answer. It's about encouraging a change in society, so people have more time to cook from scratch, and healthy food is made cheaper and more accessible.

Adams is a member of the government's Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, but was speaking to the BBC in her capacity as an academic.

Whether it's down to the high fat, sugar and salt content, or because they're also ultra-processed, we do know, she says, that "these foods are not very good for us".

Meanwhile, the industry making them is profiting, she says.

"These companies are generating a lot of value for their shareholders but also generating a lot of harm through the likes of chronic diseases."

"We've set up a way of feeding ourselves that is not very good for us, which is a problem in itself."

She says it's also very difficult to get out of that "spiral" because these companies generate growth and governments are attracted to that.

guidance, which focusses on the nutritional content of food rather than the level of processing."

So as I slide four chicken nuggets on to my son's dinner plate - alongside his carrots and pasta - I'm not feeling the usual shame and panic. He's an active little boy, he doesn't have nuggets every night, and he's eaten from a range of food groups through the day.

He gives me a grin. "This is the best tea ever, Mummy," he says.

One day I'm sure he will eat less beige food, but, for now, he's healthy (I hope) and happy.

(BBC NEWS)

Ruth's shopping trolley packed with UPFs	
Red seedless grapes	£1.94
Strawberries, bananas & apples smoothie	£2.00
Smoked haddock fishcakes	£3.75
Olive oil margarine	£3.00
Oat milk	£2.00
Strawberry yoghurt drink	£3.00
Chicken style pieces	£2.75
Smoked salmon	£3.00
Frozen chicken nuggets 38 pack	£3.75
Choc & vanilla ice cream cones x 4	£1.65
Lean beef steak mince 5% fat	£4.92
Bran flakes	£3.00
Chocolate curls cereal	£2.50
White tortilla wraps 8 pack	£1.40
Wholegrain sliced bread	£1.75



Asian Games: China sweeps golf team golds as Kim, India's Pranavi Urs take individual titles



United News Of India

NAGOYA (JAPAN), OCT 3: China swept the men's and women's golf team titles on Saturday at the 2026 Asian Games, securing its first gold medals in the sport, while South Korea's Kim Joo-hyung and India's Pranavi Urs won the men's and women's individual titles.

Yin Ruoning, Liu Yan and Zhang Weiwei won the women's team title with a four-round total of 538 strokes, eight ahead of India. Chinese Taipei took bronze. Liu shot a closing 66 and Yin a 67 to deliver China's first Asian Games golf gold.

Yin, 24, who had taken team bronze at the Asian Games in both 2018 and 2023, said the Asiad

represented the highest level of competition in Asia.

"Standing on top of the podium for the first time, watching our national flag raised and hearing our national anthem played, it's a breakthrough for Chinese golf. I hope this victory will also help the sport grow in China," she said.

Ding Wenyi, Zheng Yunhe and Jin Zihao completed China's team double in the men's event with 532 strokes, two ahead of South Korea, while host Japan took bronze. It was China's 166th gold at Aichi-Nagoya, marking its best performance at an overseas Asian Games, with the previous record of 165 coming from the Doha Games in 2006.

"We came here as underdogs. I'm very proud of what we've achieved," Jin said. In the men's individual event, Kim, known as Tom Kim on the PGA Tour, closed with a six-under-par 64

for an 18-under total of 262. Japan's Kazuki Higa, Thailand's Sodom Kaewkanjana and Ding finished three strokes back on 265. Higa took silver and Kaewkanjana bronze after a playoff.

, leaving Ding fourth, according to Xinhua.

Urs overcame a triple bogey at the third hole to finish the women's individual event with an even-par 70 and a 15-under total of 265. She held off Yin and Singapore's Shannon Tan by one stroke to become India's first women golf champion at the Asian Games.

Yin took silver on the first playoff hole, making par to Tan's bogey. Tan delivered Singapore its first Asian Games medal in golf with a bronze.

Asian Games: Wong secures first tennis gold for Hong Kong, China

United News Of India

NAGOYA (JAPAN), OCT 3: Coleman Wong won the first Asian Games tennis gold medal for Hong Kong, China after defeating China's Wu Yibing 6-2, 6-4 in the men's singles final at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games on Saturday.

The victory also secured Wong a qualification berth for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, while Wu claimed his second silver medal at the Asian Games after Jakarta 2018.

Wong took early control of the match, breaking Wu's serve in the fifth and seventh games to win the opening set 6-2. The second set remained deadlocked at 4-4 before Wong broke in the ninth game and then served out the match.

"Winning an Asian Games gold medal was my dream, and although I didn't achieve it today, it's alright. I gave it my absolute all and

lost to a deeply respectable opponent," Wu said after the match. "A loss is a loss, no excuses.



I hope I'll have the chance to compete in the next Asian Games." The two players have played tight matches in recent years. At the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023, Wu squandered five match points in a final-set tiebreak before falling to Wong in a two-hour.

Abhishek Sharma powers India to Asian Games gold, father hails 61-run knock on tough Japan pitch



United News Of India

CHANDIGARH, OCT 3: Indian all-rounder Abhishek Sharma's father and coach Rajkumar Sharma hailed his son's match-winning 61 off 28 balls after India clinched the Asian Games cricket gold, saying the innings carried added significance because it came in difficult batting conditions in Japan.

Celebrations broke out in the family after India secured the title, with Rajkumar congratulating the players, coaching staff and the BCCI for the campaign.

"It is a very proud and happy day for the entire country. The players worked together as a team and made sure the Indian flag flew high with a gold medal," Rajkumar said.

He said the triumph was especially special because India also won gold in the women's competition.

"First our daughters won the gold, and now our boys have repeated that achievement. It is a proud moment for

every Indian," he said.

Rajkumar singled out Abhishek's aggressive innings, saying the left-hander's 61 from 28 deliveries provided the momentum India needed to push its total beyond the 200-run mark.

He said conditions in Japan had posed a challenge to batters throughout the competition and required players to adapt quickly.

"The pitches in Japan were not easy for batting. Making runs in those conditions required maturity and confidence," Rajkumar said. "As a father and as a coach, I am proud that Abhishek stood up in an important match and contributed to the team's victory."

Rajkumar also praised Tilak Varma and Shivam Dube for their batting contributions and said India's bowlers ensured the opposition remained under pressure.

"This was not the victory of one player. The batsmen did their job, and the bowlers maintained the pressure.

Hong Kong Sixes turns it up to six for bigger 2026 edition

United News Of India

HONG KONG, OCT 3: The Hong Kong Sixes is back, and bigger than ever. The iconic six-a-side cricket tournament will return from October 30 to November 1 at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground, bringing together 12 international teams, which includes the recently announced strong Indian cricket connection and a new community carnival designed to make the tournament a celebration both on and off the field.

Just like in 2024 and 2025, the Hong Kong Sixes 2026 has also awarded the prestigious M-Mark Status by Major Sports Events Committee. The "M" Mark System aims to encourage and help local "national sports associations" and private or non-government organisations to organise more major international sports events and nurture them into sustainable undertakings. Among the key attractions this year will be the Hong Kong, China men's team, featuring all the players who represented Hong Kong, China in its men's campaign at the recent Asian Games,

iving the home crowds to witness an opportunity to build on its performance on the international stage.

India will also be among the 12 teams competing for the Hong Kong Sixes title, alongside cricketing powerhouses including Pakistan.

Aman upgrades bronze to gold, Antim settles for silver as India sign off with six wrestling medals

United News Of India

NAGOYA, OCT 3: Aman Sehrawat upgraded his Asian Games bronze to gold while Antim Panghal's bid to become only the second Indian woman wrestler to win the continental title ended in disappointment after being outclassed by Japan's Moe Miyooka here on Saturday.

India signed off with six medals -- two gold, two silver and two bronze -- in one of the best shows in the tournament, especially after missing out on top-of-the-podium place in Hangzhou Games in 2023.

Aman, who had won bronze at the 2023 Hangzhou Games, held his nerve to beat North Korea's reigning World Champion Chong Song Han 10-7 in the men's 57kg final.

This was India's second wrestling gold after Sujeet Kalkal's sensational title win on Friday. India have won two gold at Asian Games after the 2018 Jakarta

game when Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat had triumphed in their respective men's and

women's events.

The 23-year-old Sehrawat was initially frustrated by Han's defensive approach, with the North Korean repeatedly locking his arms



to prevent attacks.

Aman was put on the clock, from where he got his first scoring move and followed it with a takedown to make it 4-1. He converted another left-leg attack into points, throwing Han to the mat for a 6-1 lead. Han took treatment on his left knee but returned to produce three consecutive scoring moves after the resumption, taking a slender 7-6 lead.

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