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P:12
Arshdeep sets Indian record with 38 T20I wickets in 2026

Centre appoints Dr Sajjan Singh Yadav as J&K Chief Secretary

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, OCT 24 : The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday appointed Dr Sajjan Singh Yadav, a 1995-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre, as the new Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to an official order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, a copy of which lies with Kashmir News Service (KNS), Yadav has been transferred from Delhi to Jammu and Kashmir with the approval of the competent authority.

"With the approval of the Competent Authority, Dr. Sajjan Singh Yadav, IAS (AGMUT:1995) is hereby transferred from Delhi to Jammu & Kashmir and posted as Chief Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir w.e.f. 01.11.2026 or from the date of joining, whichever is later," the order reads.The order, bearing number 15041/07/2023.UTS.I., was issued on October 24, 2026, and signed by Anish Muraledharan, Director in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

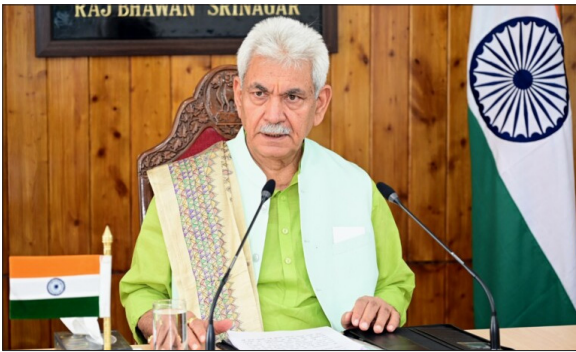
>>>MORE ON P 02

India's Diversity Must Remain the Source of Strength and Youth Should Preserve Heritage While Embracing Innovation : LG Manoj Sinha

LG Manoj Sinha Pays Tribute To Rahi Masoom Raza, Calls For Unity Through Cultural Harmony

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid tribute to eminent writer Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza on his birth centenary, recalling his lasting contributions to Indian literature and cinema. In a message delivered at a commemorative programme in Ghazipur, the LG said Raza's celebrated works, including Aadha Gaon and Topi Shukla, reflected India's cultural diversity and human values. He stressed that dialogue, cooperation and compassion were essential to strengthening social harmony, while urging young people to preserve their



cultural roots and contribute to the vision of a developed, self-reliant and technologically advanced India. : The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha paid rich tributes to eminent litterateur Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza on the occasion of his birth centenary

celebration event and highlighted his immense contribution to Indian literature and cinema.

In a message delivered for the commemorative programme organised in Ghazipur, the Lieutenant Governor noted that Rahi

Sahab's writings reflected the spirit of Ghazipur, Purvanchal, and India, while carrying a universal vision rooted in humanity and cultural harmony.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza, through works such as Aadha Gaon, Topi Shukla, and Katra Bi Arzoo, as well as his contribution to the screenplay of Mahabharat, conveyed the message that India's culture, heritage, and future belong to every citizen.

Highlighting the relevance of Rahi Masoom Raza's message and vision in present time, the Lieutenant Governor stated that the

>>>MORE ON P 02

J&K Cabinet Expansion Likely Next Week As Omar Says Ministerial Selection Finalized

Chief Minister asks party aspirants to stop lobbying; decision on swearing-in date rests with Lieutenant Governor

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has indicated that the long-awaited expansion of the Council of Ministers could take place next week, saying the selection of ministers has already been finalized. Speaking to reporters after meeting Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Omar urged party colleagues seeking ministerial positions to stop sending messages and making personal approaches, adding that the decision-making process had been completed. The government currently has six ministers, including the Chief Minister, with three positions vacant. Omar also said he would approach the Ministry of External Affairs



regarding Kashmiri Umrah pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia following flight cancellations.

The much-awaited reshuffle and expansion of the Jammu and Kashmir Council of Ministers is likely to take place next week, with the selection of ministers understood to have been finalized following consultations

>>>MORE ON P 02

Fresh Snowfall In Shopian Heights, Rains Cool Plains; Mughal Road Remains Open

Snow recorded around Pir Ki Gali as BRO keeps machinery ready; commuters advised to check traffic advisories



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SHOPIAN, OCTOBER 24: Fresh snowfall in the upper reaches of Shopian and rainfall across the plains brought a further dip in temperatures in south Kashmir on Saturday, while the historic Mughal Road remained open to traffic despite snow at Pir Ki Gali. The Border Roads Organisation has kept personnel and machinery on standby to deal with possible snow accumulation and weather-related disruptions. Authorities are monitoring the situation, with commuters advised to check the latest traffic advisories before travelling along the mountainous route connecting Shopian with the Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu division.

The upper reaches of Shopian district in south Kashmir received fresh snowfall while rainfall lashed the plains, bringing a noticeable change in weather conditions across the region.

The higher-altitude areas witnessed fresh snow, while intermittent rain in the plains brought cooler conditions. The changing weather has drawn attention to road connectivity, particularly along the mountainous Mughal Road.

Despite fresh snowfall at Pir Ki Gali, the historic Mughal Road, which connects Shopian with Poonch and Rajouri districts in the Jammu region, remains open for vehicular traffic, according to the information provided.

The Border Roads Organization (BRO), responsible for maintaining the road, has kept its personnel and machinery on standby to respond to potential weather-related challenges and address any snow accumulation or obstruction that may affect traffic movement.

The district administration is also monitoring the prevailing conditions in view of the snowfall in the upper

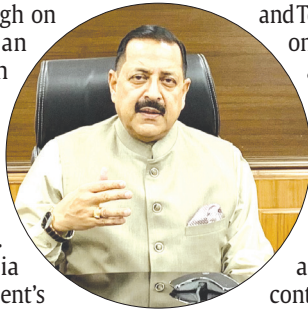
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New Air Pollution Lab To Help Identify Delhi-Ncr's Pollution Sources In Real Time

Jitendra Singh inaugurates AATAL facility; high-resolution forecasts to support targeted pollution-control measures

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24: Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh on Saturday inaugurated an integrated air pollution analysis laboratory in Delhi-NCR aimed at identifying pollution sources in real time and supporting targeted mitigation measures. Established at the India Meteorological Department's Delhi branch under Mission Mausam, the Integrated Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Toxicity Analysis Laboratory will analyse pollutants from sources such as vehicles, industries, crop-residue burning and road dust. Integrated with IITM's AIRWISE system, the facility is expected to strengthen air-quality



forecasting and help authorities plan evidence-based interventions to tackle pollution across the region.

Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh on Saturday inaugurated an integrated air pollution analysis facility in Delhi-NCR designed to identify pollution sources in real time, analyse the chemical composition of pollutants and support targeted control measures.

The facility, called the Integrated Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Toxicity Analysis Laboratory (AATAL), has been established at the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Delhi branch under Mission Mausam, according to the

>>>MORE ON P 02

Kutbal-Yousmarg Road Inaugurated, Bringing Connectivity Boost To Rural Villages

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather opens five-kilometre stretch, raising hopes of tourism growth and local employment

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 24: Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Speaker and Charar-i-Sharief MLA Abdul Rahim Rather inaugurated the five-kilometre Kutbal-Yousmarg road, fulfilling a long-standing demand of residents of several villages in the area. The road is expected to improve connectivity with the popular tourist destination of Yousmarg, facilitate daily travel and open new avenues for tourism, trade and employment. Rather stressed that rural infrastructure projects must meet prescribed quality standards and deliver tangible benefits to people living in remote and underserved areas.

In a major boost to connectivity and tourism in the area, Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, who is also MLA Charar-



i-Sharief, today inaugurated the much-awaited 5 kilometre Kutbal-Yousmarg road, turning a long-cherished dream of residents of dozens of villages into

reality.

The newly inaugurated road is expected to significantly improve connectivity between the villages and the popular tourist destination of Yousmarg. Besides

>>>MORE ON P 02

LCMA reviews Dal Lake cleanliness ahead of Kashmir Marathon

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

Srinagar, Oct 24: Vice Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Lake Conservation and Management

Authority (JKLCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, on Saturday inspected several stretches of Dal Lake shoreline to review cleanliness and maintenance arrangements ahead of the third edition of the Kashmir Marathon scheduled for October 25.

Accompanied by officers and field staff, Shah inspected the

shoreline from Dal Gate to Hazratbal, covering Lalit Ghat, SKICC backwaters, Nishat Basin and Habak.

During the visit, he reviewed sanitation measures along the lakefront and adjoining areas and expressed satisfaction over the progress of cleaning operations.

Shah directed officials to ensure regular monitoring and prevent the

accumulation of waste and litter along the shoreline, particularly during the marathon, which is expected to attract participants and visitors from different parts of the country and abroad.

He said maintaining the cleanliness of Dal Lake was essential to preserving

>>>MORE ON P 02

Headlines Today, Lubaab Publications Group Mourn Demise Of Mohammad Anwar Rather

Editor-in-Chief Expresses Deep Condolences to Bereaved Family of Senior Journalist Rasheed Rahi

HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24: The management and staff of Daily Headlines Today and Lubaab Publications Group have expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of Mohammad Anwar Rather, elder brother of senior journalist and CNS Media Group Editor-in-Chief Rasheed Rahi.

Editor-in-Chief of Daily Headlines

Today Dr Jehangir Bukhari and Lubaab Publications Group extended their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, expressing solidarity with them in this hour of immense grief.

In their condolence message, they prayed to Almighty Allah to grant the departed soul eternal peace and the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous, while bestowing patience, strength and fortitude upon the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

Tanvir Sadiq Seeks Daily Wagers' Regularisation Report By October 31

NC spokesperson urges Chief Secretary to expedite process, warns prolonged delay could trigger workers' protests

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24: National Conference spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq on Saturday urged the Chief Secretary to submit the pending report on the regularisation of daily wagers and casual workers to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah before October 31. Sadiq said the report, which was expected within six months, had not yet been submitted, delaying further action on the government's commitment to thousands of workers. Highlighting the concerns of employees awaiting regularisation, he appealed to the administration to act without further delay and cautioned that continued inaction could lead to protests. National Conference spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq on Saturday urged the Chief Secretary to submit the pending report on regularisation of daily wagers and



government from fulfilling its promise to thousands of workers. Speaking to reporters, Sadiq said the government had sought a report on the issue within six months, but it had not been submitted so far.

>>>MORE ON P 02

Altaf Bukhari Urges Centre To Facilitate Early Return Of Stranded Umrah Pilgrims

Appeals to PM Modi and Jaishankar for immediate assistance as pilgrims face mounting expenses in Saudi Arabia

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24: Apni Party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to ensure the safe and early return of Kashmiri Umrah pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia following the cancellation of their return flights. Expressing concern over the difficulties faced by the pilgrims, Bukhari said many were struggling to meet expenses for accommodation, food and essential medicines. He urged the Union government to arrange their return at the earliest and provide necessary financial and logistical assistance until travel arrangements are restored.

Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on



Saturday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to ensure the safe and early return of Kashmiri Umrah pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia following

>>>MORE ON P 02

Continue from Front Page.....

Centre appoints

The appointment will become effective on November 1 or the date Yadav assumes charge, whichever is later.

Copies of the order have been forwarded to the Chief Secretaries of Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and other AGMUT cadre administrations, besides the Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. (KNS)

India's Diversity

country's unity is anchored in constitutional ideals and in shared traditions, brotherhood, aspirations, and everyday experiences. He called upon citizens to strengthen social trust through dialogue, cooperation, and compassion, and to view India's diversity as a source of collective strength.

The Lieutenant Governor urged the youth to remain connected to their roots while pursuing ambitious goals. He said the younger generation should carry the values of their heritage wherever they go and transform opportunities into new possibilities through innovation, hard work, and dedication.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India is witnessing unprecedented development. Significant progress had been achieved in infrastructure, digital connectivity, financial inclusion, women's empowerment, housing, sanitation, and access to essential services. The massive efforts for inclusive development have enhanced the dignity and opportunities available to ordinary citizens," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor underscored that the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 requires the active participation of every citizen and the accelerated development of all the regions so that they can play a vital role in India's transformation.

"Today, India is demonstrating its capability in many fields, from space to digital public infrastructure and the world sees our country as a reliable partner. I want us to move forward with a collective resolve and a single goal to build an India that is developed, prosperous, strong, self-reliant, and technologically advanced.

Dr. Rahi Masoom Raza's birth centenary celebration is an opportunity to give a new direction to the future. It should be our resolve to make our diversity our strength, and by choosing dialogue, cooperation, and compassion, we will further strengthen social trust," the Lieutenant Governor said.

J&K Cabinet

within the National Conference leadership, even as Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has urged party colleagues seeking ministerial berths to stop lobbying and exercise patience.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Omar said the decision on the reshuffle had already been taken and asked aspirants not to approach him or National Conference president Dr

Farooq Abdullah to press their claims. The file is with Dr Farooq Abdullah.

"The decision that had to be made has been made. Now please do not WhatsApp, do not call, do not knock on the door. Whatever has to be done will be done in the next two to three days," Omar said, signalling that the process had moved beyond the stage of internal deliberations over prospective ministers.

The Chief Minister said he had been receiving numerous WhatsApp messages from party colleagues sending lengthy biodata in the hope of securing ministerial positions. He urged them to refrain from such efforts, making it clear that repeated calls, messages and personal approaches would not influence a decision that had already been taken.

The proposed exercise is expected to bring changes to the Council of Ministers, including the induction of new faces and possible changes in portfolios. The government has been functioning with six ministers, including the Chief Minister, leaving three positions vacant under the maximum permissible strength of nine ministers.

Omar said he had sought time for the expansion and that the Lieutenant Governor would decide the date. The formal process is therefore expected to proceed once the necessary arrangements and constitutional formalities are completed.

Separately, the Chief Minister said he would take up the issue of Kashmiri Umrah pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia with the Ministry of External Affairs and try to facilitate their return home. At least 34 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir have reportedly been unable to return as scheduled following flight cancellations, with some facing mounting expenses for accommodation, food and medicines.

Omar acknowledged that airfares had risen but pointed out that flights were operating, indicating that efforts would be made to explore ways to bring the stranded pilgrims back. The affected families have been seeking intervention from the Union Territory administration to ease their difficulties and ensure an early return.

The cabinet expansion has remained pending for months, with political attention focused on the possible induction of new ministers, regional representation and the distribution of portfolios. The next week is now emerging as the likely window for the exercise, although the final date will depend on the Lieutenant Governor's decision. [KNT]

Kutbal-Yousmarg

facilitating the movement of local residents, the road is likely to give fresh impetus to tourism-related activities and create new employment and livelihood opportunities for local youth.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdul Rahim Rather reiterated the government's commitment to strengthen the road connectivity across rural and remote areas

of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that improved road infrastructure is vital for ensuring equitable development, facilitating access to essential services and unlocking the tourism and economic potential of underserved areas.

He directed the concerned authorities to maintain a focused approach towards addressing the connectivity-related issues and ensuring timely completion of road projects while adhering to prescribed quality standards. He stressed that development initiatives must translate into tangible benefits for the people, particularly those residing in far-flung and rural areas.

Expressing gratitude to the Speaker, the residents said the project had been a long-pending demand of dozens of villages which has come to reality. They said improved connectivity with Yousmarg would open new avenues for tourism, trade and employment in the region.

New Air Pollution

Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Singh said the facility would help authorities move beyond Air Quality Index (AQI) readings to understand what is polluting the air, where the pollutants originate and their potential health implications.

The laboratory brings together atmospheric measurements, chemical analysis, source identification and decision-support capabilities. It can help distinguish contributions from vehicular emissions, industrial activity, biomass and crop-residue burning, construction and road dust, and pollution transported from surrounding regions.

The facility is equipped to analyse fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), atmospheric gases, metals and other potentially harmful components. Such analysis can help scientists assess differences in pollutant composition and investigate their potential health effects.

During the inauguration, Singh cited an example in which transport emissions were shown to account for around 25 per cent of Delhi's pollution at that particular moment, while the overall pollution level was recorded at approximately 180. He said real-time source information could help authorities direct interventions towards the activities contributing most to poor air quality at a given time.

AATAL is integrated with the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology's AIRWISE system – Air Quality Warning and Integrated Decision Support System for Emissions – which combines observations, forecasts and source-apportionment data to support pollution management.

According to the project team, the forecasting system provides air-quality predictions at a spatial resolution of 400 metres for the next 72 hours, helping authorities assess pollution trends and likely sources in different parts of Delhi. The integrated system is intended to support

advance planning as air quality conditions change.

Dr Sachin Ghude, Project Director, MAQWS, said the system would help the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) and other agencies identify major pollution sources, plan targeted interventions and assess their effectiveness. He said the technology could also provide a basis for extending high-resolution forecasting capabilities to other cities.

Singh stressed that air pollution required coordinated action by scientific institutions, environmental authorities, pollution-control agencies and disaster-management bodies. He said the facility would provide scientific evidence to help authorities prioritise sectors and locations for intervention, including measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).

The inauguration was attended by Earth Sciences Secretary T. Srinivasa Kumar, IITM Director A. Suryachandra Rao and IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, among other officials.

The ministry said the facility was intended to connect advanced atmospheric research with policy and on-ground action, enabling a more targeted, evidence-based response to Delhi-NCR's air pollution challenges. (PIB)

LCMA reviews

its ecological importance and ensuring a pleasant environment for athletes, tourists and visitors.

The Vice Chairman also visited Pokhribal, where he reviewed ongoing cleanliness works and directed field teams to maintain the area through regular upkeep and coordinated efforts.

He stressed that cleanliness measures should continue beyond the sporting event to protect the lake's environment and maintain its surroundings. (KNS)

Altaf Bukhari

the cancellation of their return flights.

In a statement, Bukhari expressed concern over the difficulties faced by the pilgrims, saying their prolonged stay in Saudi Arabia had left many struggling to meet expenses for accommodation, food and essential medicines.

He urged the Union government to intervene immediately and make necessary arrangements for their safe return.

"I appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to intervene and ensure that the Kashmiri pilgrims stranded in Saudi Arabia are brought back home safely and at the earliest," Bukhari said.

He said the government must extend all possible assistance to the affected pilgrims until their return flights are arranged.

Bukhari also stressed the need for

immediate financial and logistical support, saying the stranded pilgrims should not be left to face further hardship because of circumstances beyond their control. (KNS)

Tanvir Sadiq

He appealed to the Chief Secretary to ensure that the regularisation file reaches Chief Minister Omar Abdullah before the end of the month.

"You are a son of the soil. If you want to do something for your people, this is an opportunity. Send the regularisation file to the Chief Minister before October 31 so that we can fulfil the promise we made," Sadiq said.

He said several daily wagers and casual workers had met him earlier in the day and raised concerns about the continued delay in their regularisation.

Sadiq said the workers had been waiting for a decision despite repeated assurances and that the pending report was holding up further action.

"We had asked for a report within six months, but it has not been submitted yet. Now is the time to submit it before October 31," he said.

Referring to the recent change in the office of the Chief Secretary, Sadiq said the new appointment provided an opportunity to move the long-pending issue forward.

He said the administration should recognise the difficulties faced by workers who have been waiting for regularisation.

"History will remember what you have done for your people," he said, urging the Chief Secretary to act without further delay.

Sadiq also warned that continued inaction could force daily wagers and casual workers to take to the streets in protest.

"If these poor workers are forced to come onto the roads tomorrow, the responsibility will lie with those who failed to submit the report," he said.

He reiterated that the government remained committed to fulfilling its promise but said the necessary report must first be placed before the Chief Minister to enable further action. (KNS)

Fresh Snowfall

reaches and rainfall in the plains, with vigilance being maintained should the weather deteriorate.

The Mughal Road serves as an important alternative route between the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu region. However, snowfall and falling temperatures at Pir Ki Gali, one of the highest points along the route, can create difficult driving conditions if snow accumulation increases.

Commuters planning to travel on the road are advised to check the latest traffic advisories and confirm its status with the concerned authorities before starting their journey. [KNT]

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DC Srinagar, Principal GMC inspect newly built 15-Bedded Additional NICU Block for new borns at Lal Ded Hospital

Facility established by District Admin to strengthen neonatal healthcare services, another 15-bedded NICU block to come up at JLNH Hospital soon: DC

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24:- Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, along with the Principal, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, Dr Iffat, on Saturday visited Government Lal Ded Hospital and inspected the functioning of the newly built additional 15-bed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) block for new born babies established by the District Administration at a cost of Rs 75 lakh using convergence of funds available at district level.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner and Principal GMC Srinagar reviewed the functioning of the newly established facility, which has been created to augment the hospital's existing capacity and address the growing demand for specialised neonatal healthcare services, catering not only to patients from Srinagar district but also to newborns from across the Kashmir Division.

The Officers assessed the operational status of the additional NICU beds and reviewed the facility's role in strengthening the hospital's capacity to provide specialised medical care to newborns requiring intensive monitoring, treatment and support. The additional beds are aimed at improving the availability of



critical neonatal care services for patients from Srinagar and other Districts of the Kashmir Division.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that the establishment of the additional 15-bed NICU block at a cost of Rs 75 lakh marks an important step towards strengthening neonatal healthcare infrastructure at Lal Ded Hospital, one of the major healthcare

institutions catering to expectant mothers and newborns from across the Kashmir Valley.

The DC added that the facility has been created to augment the hospital's existing neonatal care capacity and facilitate the provision of specialised medical services to newborns requiring intensive care. He also emphasised the importance of strengthening healthcare infrastructure to ensure better

access to essential medical facilities.

The Deputy Commissioner further stated that the District Administration is also set to establish another 15-bedded NICU block at JLNH Hospital Rainawari soon, further expanding the availability of specialised neonatal healthcare facilities in Srinagar. He underlined that the proposed facility is expected to supplement the existing healthcare infrastructure and enhance the capacity to cater to newborns requiring specialised medical attention.

Earlier, the Principal, GMC Srinagar also highlighted the importance of additional 15 NICU beds at Lal Ded Hospital. She appreciated the continued support extended by the District Administration towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure and improving the availability of specialised medical facilities for newborns. She also highlighted the assistance provided by the District Administration in completing various infrastructure upgradation projects and supporting other developmental initiatives at GMC Srinagar. She noted that these efforts are contributing towards strengthening the overall institutional infrastructure and improving facilities for both staff and students, besides the patient at tertiary care hospitals.

DC Baramulla launches Poster for Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2027



BARAMULLA, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, S.F. Hamid, today launched the official poster for the District-Level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2027, being organised by MY Bharat Baramulla on November 3, 2026, at Government Degree College (GDC), Baramulla.

The district-level competition will be held on the theme "One Nation, One Election," providing a platform for young participants to express their views, engage in constructive debate and develop a deeper understanding of democratic processes.

The competition will be conducted at District, State and National level. Selected participants will have the opportunity to advance to the national level, with the final stage offering them an opportunity to reach the Parliament of India in New Delhi.

During the poster launch, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the importance of youth participation in democratic processes and encouraged young people to actively engage in discussions on issues of national importance.

The event was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, District Information Officer, District Youth Officer MY Bharat and other officials.

MY Bharat Baramulla has invited eligible youth to participate in the district-level event and contribute their perspectives on the theme through informed discussion and debate.

Chief Horticulture Officer Pulwama to organise Machinery Mela on 27 October

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, OCTOBER 24: The Office of the Chief Horticulture Officer, Pulwama, is organising a Machinery Mela on 27 October 2026 (Tuesday) at its office premises in Pulwama to facilitate identified and authorized beneficiary growers in procuring farm machinery of their choice from registered dealers under the Farm Mechanization Scheme. All registered farm machinery dealers have been invited to participate in the event along with the requisite dealership/brand authorization certificates, registration particulars and other relevant documents, ensuring the availability of machinery for the authorized beneficiaries. During the event, physical verification and embossing/marketing of the purchased machinery shall be carried out on the spot under the supervision of the District Level Monitoring and Supervising Committee (DLMSC). The initiative aims to facilitate a transparent and streamlined procurement process, ensuring convenience to eligible growers and timely completion of the requisite departmental formalities.

VC LCMA inspects Dal Lake Shoreline, Pokhribal ahead of Kashmir Marathon

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24: Ahead of the third edition of the Kashmir Marathon, scheduled for October 25, 2026, Vice Chairman (VC), JKLCMA, Khurshid Ahmad Shah, visited key stretches of the Dal Lake shoreline from Dal Gate to Hazratbal, covering Lalit Ghat, SKICC backwaters, Nishat Basin, Habak, etc. to review the progress of cleanliness and upkeep measures undertaken by the Authority.

The Vice Chairman was accompanied by officers and field staff of the Authority during the visit. During the inspection, the Vice Chairman reviewed the cleanliness measures undertaken along the shoreline and adjoining areas. He expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved and appreciated the efforts of the



concerned officers and field staff in ensuring that the lakefront areas had been properly cleaned and maintained ahead of the prestigious sporting event. He emphasized that Dal Lake, one of Srinagar's most prominent landmarks and a major tourist attraction, should reflect the city's natural beauty and environmental commitment, particularly during events of national and international significance such as the Kashmir Marathon. He stressed that maintaining the cleanliness of

the shoreline and its adjoining areas was essential to providing a pleasant environment for marathon participants, visitors and tourists. The Vice Chairman directed the concerned teams to sustain the cleanliness achieved along the inspected stretch through regular monitoring and timely intervention to prevent the accumulation of waste and litter. He underscored the importance of continued coordination between the officers and field staff to ensure that the lakefront

DC Ganderbal holds Public Outreach Programme at Kangan Directs On-Spot redressal of Public Grievances

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal, today chaired a public outreach programme at Kangan Ganderbal, to listen to the grievances, issues and demands of the general public and ensure effective redressal through coordinated departmental intervention.

During the programme, locals from the area put forth their grievances and highlighted various issues concerning essential services and public infrastructure. The Deputy Commissioner gave a patient hearing to the people and directed the concerned officers to address the issues on priority, with particular emphasis on matters related to the Jal Shakti (PHE), Power Development Department (PDD) and Rural Development Department (RDD).

Emphasising responsive and accountable governance, the DC stressed that public grievances must be dealt with promptly and that officers should make every effort to resolve issues on the spot wherever feasible. She directed the concerned departments to take immediate cognisance of the issues raised, ensure timely action and maintain proper



follow up on matters requiring further intervention.

During the outreach programme, the Deputy Commissioner also inspected departmental stalls set up at the venue and reviewed the progress of various activities being undertaken by the departments. She interacted with the concerned officials and took stock of initiatives across agriculture, horticulture and other allied sectors, with particular focus on production, innovative practices and activities being implemented under different government schemes. She stressed the importance of promoting new ideas, improving productivity and ensuring that the benefits of departmental initiatives reach the intended beneficiaries.

DLSA Kulgam organises mega legal awareness programme on POCSO Act 2012

Justice Sanjeev Kumar stresses child protection, privacy and timely justice under POCSO Act

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, OCTOBER 24: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kulgam, under the aegis of the Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority, organised a Mega Legal Awareness Programme on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, at the Auditorium Hall of Government Degree College, Kulgam. Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and Executive Chairman, Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority, presided over the programme as the Chief Guest. The programme commenced with the registration of participants and the arrival of dignitaries, followed by a Guard of Honour and the rendition of the National Song and the National Anthem.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, in his address, emphasised the need to strengthen child protection mechanisms and ensure the effective implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012. Stressing the importance of



safeguarding the privacy, dignity and emotional well-being of child victims, he called for their concerns to be handled with utmost sensitivity at every stage. He also encouraged girls to come forward and raise their voices against abuse without fear or hesitation, underscoring the responsibility of the legal system and concerned institutions to ensure justice.

Furthermore, he highlighted the need to create awareness about the provisions of the Act in educational institutions and among officers and departments dealing with such cases and called for prompt action, better coordination among stakeholders and a child-friendly approach to ensure effective protection of children and timely delivery of justice.

Addressing the gathering, Aijaz Ahmed Khan, Principal District and Sessions Judge (Chairman, District Legal Services Authority), Kulgam, provided a detailed overview of the POCSO Act, 2012, highlighting its key provisions and the importance of ensuring effective legal protection for children and also underscored the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to stand by victims and extend the necessary assistance throughout the process. This was followed by an address by Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam who emphasised the importance of quality education, proper guidance and adequate exposure in ensuring the safety and overall development of children. He stressed that the provisions of the POCSO Act, 2012, must be implemented more effectively on the ground. Further emphasising a victim-centric approach, he called for ensuring that victims are not subjected to pressure or intimidation and receive appropriate support during difficult circumstances.

District Treasury Bandipora concludes Four-Day JKIFMS Training Programme



■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, OCTOBER 24: District Treasury Bandipora today concluded a four-day training programme on the implementation of the JKIFMS e-Bill, e-Voucher, e-Receipt and e-Account framework at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

District Treasury Officer (DTO) Bandipora, Imtiyaz Ahmad, chaired the concluding session and emphasised the importance of effective implementation of digital financial systems to ensure transparency, accuracy

and efficiency in government transactions.

The training, held from October 21 to 24, witnessed participation from Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs), Dealing Assistants and accounts personnel from various departments.

Participants were provided practical guidance on e-Bill processing, three-tier authentication, e-signing mechanisms and other technical aspects of JKIFMS.

The DTO appreciated the cooperation of the District Administration and participating departments in ensuring the successful conduct of the programme.

"Last Man, Last Bullet"

Docu-Drama to Stream on Snowtales OTT from October 26

■ **GULFAM BARJI**

Jammu/Oct:24 The screening of Last Man, Last Bullet a docu-drama depicting the valour and sacrifice of Brigadier Rajinder Singh the legendary Dogra warrior who laid down his life defending J&K in 1947, received an overwhelming response from the audience at Palm Island Cineplex, Jammu. The event was attended by Rajya Sabha Member Sat Sharma, Major General Gordhan Singh and Colonel Ajay Raina, among other distinguished personalities. Congratulating the team behind the production, Sat Sharma appreciated the initiative saying that such creative efforts help acquaint younger generations with significant historical events and the sacrifices of great personalities associated with Jammu and Kashmir. One of the most emotional moments of the event was the presence of Usha Parmar the youngest daughter of Brigadier Rajinder Singh along with his grandson Hamir. Usha Parmar was felicitated on the occasion as a mark of respect and



gratitude towards the family of the legendary Dogra warrior. The founders of Snowtales, Shivani Vaid Sharma (Producer) Varun Sharma (Director) and Sajjan Karmi (Executive Producer) played a key role in organising the screening. The film's cast members, including Balvinder Singh, Meenu Salathia, Sunil Sharma, Soham Khuship, Vikas Soodhi, Ravi Sharma, Shammi Dhami and Madan Rangeela, were also present. Mandeep Singh of Yuva Rajput Sabha and representatives of various social and cultural organisations attended the event. Kashmiri Tikoo conducted the proceedings. Last Man, Last Bullet portrays the life, courage and historic contribution of Brigadier Rajinder Singh in defending J&K in 1947. The docu-drama seeks to familiarise younger generations with the region's history and honour the extraordinary sacrifices made by those who defended the land. The docu-drama will be available on the Snowtales OTT platform from October 26, enabling viewers to watch this significant chapter of J&K's history.

VC chairs 13th Board of Management of EMRC at KU

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR: The 13th meeting of the Board of Management of the Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMRC), University of Kashmir, was held on Thursday at the Vice-Chancellor's Secretariat, under the chairpersonship of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan. The meeting was attended by Prof. (Dr.) Parikshat Singh Manhas, Director, Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), New Delhi; Prof. Paramveer Singh, Head, Department of Mass Communication and New Media, Central University of Jammu; Sheikh Asif, Deputy Registrar, University of Kashmir, as the nominee of the Registrar and Prof. Syeda Afshana, Director, EMRC, University of Kashmir, who served as the Member Secretary. Dr. Nikhil Kumar, Deputy



Secretary, University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi, participated in the meeting online.

CLUJ Vice-Chancellor Releases Book on Teacher Education

■ **HT News Network**

Jammu: The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Cluster University of Jammu (CLUJ), Prof. K. S. Chandrasekar, released the book titled "Teacher Education: Inspiring Minds, Shaping Teacher Educators, Building a Better Tomorrow", authored by Dr. Sushma Bala, Associate Professor of Education, Government College of Education (GCOE), Jammu. Published by Red Shine Publication, London, the book was released during a ceremony held at the Vice-Chancellor's Office, Cluster University of Jammu.

The Vice-Chancellor was accompanied by Dr. Jyoti Parihar, Principal, GCOE Jammu; Satish Kumar, Associate Professor and Head,

Department of Hindi; and Nirmal Singh, Executive Engineer. Dr. Jyoti Parihar welcomed the Vice-Chancellor and highlighted the institution's achievements, ongoing initiatives and future plans.

The book underscores the transformative role of teacher education in fostering innovative pedagogical practices, promoting professional excellence and nurturing competent, committed and socially responsible educators. It seeks to serve as a valuable academic resource for teacher educators, student-teachers, researchers and educationists, while encouraging reflection on emerging perspectives and contemporary challenges in the field of education.

'Future Forward' panel discussion held at Kashmir University

Intel India President interacts with students

■ **HT News Network**

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir (KU) on Friday hosted a panel discussion on "Future Forward: AI, Innovation and Entrepreneurship" at the Main

innovation, entrepreneurship, start-ups, administration and governance. She also referred to work in data science and robotics and stressed the need to keep students and scholars abreast of technological change through skill development and capacity-building.



Campus, bringing students, scholars and faculty members together to discuss the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of technology. Held in collaboration with Intel India, the programme featured a fireside chat and a panel discussion with Gokul V. Subramaniam, President, Intel India, Vice President, Client Computing Group, and General Manager, Client Computing Platforms and Systems, Intel Corporation.

The event aimed to promote direct dialogue between academia and industry, familiarise students with developments in artificial intelligence, and encourage an innovation and entrepreneurial mindset. It also sought to inspire students to pursue research, start-ups and technology careers.

In her keynote address, Vice-Chancellor KU Prof. Nilofer Khan highlighted the significance of AI in education and research. She said that engagement with industry can help bridge the gap between classroom learning and industry needs, particularly in a region facing geographical challenges. During the panel discussion, Prof. Khan spoke about the University's efforts to integrate AI into academics, research,

During his interaction, Gokul V. Subramaniam advised students to keep learning and remain curious as technology changes rapidly. He emphasised the importance of strengthening the fundamentals of their disciplines, asking questions and developing the ability to adapt.

He also spoke about AI's potential to personalise learning and encouraged participants to use the technology ethically. He said that aspiration, ability and attitude are among the qualities industry looks for in prospective human resources. Earlier, in his welcome address, Registrar KU Prof. Naseer Iqbal referred to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the University and Intel India in May 2024 under Intel's AI for Future Workforce programme. He said AI is reshaping industry, academics, research and everyday life and called on universities to help students become problem-solvers and leaders in technological development.

Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Chachoo moderated the panel discussion, while Prof. Aijaz A. Wani proposed the vote of thanks. Dr. Javed Ahmad Sheikh coordinated the event and also conducted the proceedings.

University of Jammu Organises Memorial Lecture on Digital Humanities

■ **HT News Network**

Jammu, October 24, 2026: The Department of English, University of Jammu, in collaboration with the Prof. D.K. Rampal Memorial Trust, organised a Memorial Lecture on "Methods in Digital Humanities - Ideas for Interdisciplinary Research" at the Auditorium of The Business School, University of Jammu.

Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies, University of Jammu, presided over the event as the Chief Guest, while Prof. Girish Nath Jha, Professor of Computational Linguistics, School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, delivered the keynote address.

In her address, Prof. Neelu Rohmetra emphasised the importance of research integrity and the effective utilisation of government-provided resources to strengthen the research culture. Highlighting the evolving research landscape at the University

of Jammu, she appreciated the Department of English and Prof. D.K.



Rampal Memorial Trust for organising such lectures annually. She also encouraged researchers to uphold originality in their work and contribute to language development.

Delivering the keynote address, Prof. Girish Nath Jha deliberated on the literary dimensions of Digital Humanities and introduced the audience to various research methodologies and data collection tools used for studying and analysing regional dialects and translated texts. He explained how these tools could facilitate the wider dissemination of

regional languages. He also highlighted funding agencies that could support the development of language systems across the country and make them accessible through digital platforms. Underscoring the immense potential of Digital Humanities, he encouraged students and scholars to pursue research in this emerging field. His address highlighted significant innovations in promoting languages and literature through interdisciplinary research. Earlier, Prof. Ravinder Singh, Head, Department of English, welcomed the dignitaries, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Prof. Monika Chadha subsequently introduced the keynote speaker and formally welcomed him. Dr. Vinay Rampal, a renowned physician, while addressing the gathering on behalf of Prof. Y.R. Malhotra, Chairman, Prof. D.K. Rampal Memorial Trust, reflected on the importance of values and education in shaping individuals and contributing to society.

Jashn-e-Manasbal Season 5 Celebrates Kashmir's Rich Cultural Heritage; Literary Awards Presented, New Book Released

■ **HT News Network**

Manasbal, Oct 24: The fifth edition of Jashn-e-Manasbal was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Open Air Theatre, Manasbal, bringing together prominent poets, writers, theatre personalities, artists and culture enthusiasts to celebrate the rich artistic and cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

Organised by Manasbal Dramatics in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) and the Department of Information and Public Relations, Kashmir, the event featured folk music, dance, drama and solo performances that received an enthusiastic response from the audience.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, attended the programme as the Chief Guest, while JKAACL Secretary Harvinder Kaur was the Guest of Honour. Joint



Director Information Shah Nawaz Bukhari was also present.

Addressing the gathering, Wular and Manasbal Development Authority CEO Ahsan Ul Haq Cheshi highlighted ongoing developmental initiatives and stressed the need to develop Manasbal as a major tourist destination after Srinagar.

JKAACL Secretary Harvinder Kaur appreciated Manasbal

Dramatics for its contribution to promoting art and culture. She emphasised the importance of organising more cultural programmes, particularly at the Open Air Theatre, and announced schemes aimed at the welfare and betterment of artists. Chief Guest Nasir Aslam Wani lauded the organisers and called for similar cultural initiatives across Jammu

and Kashmir, particularly in rural areas. He said such programmes could help younger generations remain connected to their cultural roots while encouraging positive engagement among youth.

Literary Excellence Recognised A major highlight of the event was the presentation of literary and theatrical awards recognising distinguished contributions to Kashmiri literature and theatre.

The Niyamatullah Parry Award was presented to renowned poet and writer Fayaz Ahmed Teligami, while the Lal Mohammad Khan Zakhmi Award was conferred upon noted poet and writer Shehbaz Haakbaari. The Khilat-e-Raheem Padshah (R.A.) was presented to acclaimed poet, playwright and actor Rasheed Gameen. The occasion also witnessed the release of Shafqat, the eighth collection of plays by Rasheed Gameen. The book was formally released by Nasir Aslam Wani and Harvinder Kaur.

Jamia Zia Ul Uloom Poonch Celebrates 52 Years of Educational Excellence at Alumni Meet.

■ **Farooq Rather**

Poonch, October 24: Jamia Zia Ul Uloom, Poonch, organised an Alumni Meet on Saturday to commemorate its 52-year journey of educational service, scholarship and community development. The event brought together distinguished scholars, academicians, alumni, heads of various institutions, teachers and well-wishers to celebrate the institution's legacy and reaffirm their commitment to its educational mission. Over the past five decades, the Jamia has produced thousands of Ulama, Huffaz

and Qurra who are serving society in various capacities. With approximately 1,000 students currently enrolled, the institution continues to impart religious education through separate facilities for boys and girls.

The first session was presided over by Maulana Ghulam Qadir, Mohtamim and Chief Patron of the Jamia, who attended as the Chief Guest. Qari Jameel delivered the welcome address, extending a warm welcome to the distinguished guests, alumni, scholars and participants. He highlighted the importance of the Alumni Meet as a

platform for reconnecting former students with their alma mater, exchanging experiences and strengthening ties between the institution and its alumni.

Maulana Sayeed Ahmad Habib, Naib Mohtamim of the Jamia, presented a detailed account of the institution's journey over the past five decades. He highlighted its achievements, major milestones and contributions to Islamic education while recalling the challenges, hardships and struggles faced during its establishment and development.

He acknowledged the



dedication, sacrifices and perseverance of those who contributed to building and sustaining the institution. He also paid heartfelt tributes to the teachers, students and

others associated with the Jamia who have passed away, recalling their invaluable services and sacrifices with gratitude.

The Alumni Meet featured

research paper presentations by alumni and distinguished scholars, providing a platform for academic exchange, intellectual engagement and the sharing of experiences. Participants reflected on their association with the institution and its role in shaping their educational and professional journeys while nurturing generations of scholars committed to serving society.

The participation of heads of various institutions and academicians added significance to the event, highlighting the Jamia's wider academic connections and its enduring contribution to

Islamic education.

Books documenting the history, achievements and development of Jamia Zia Ul Uloom were also released on the occasion. The publications are aimed at preserving the institution's rich heritage and documenting its contributions for future generations.

The gathering also provided alumni an opportunity to reconnect with their former teachers and fellow students, revisit cherished memories and express gratitude to the institution for its role in their intellectual and spiritual development.

The programme concluded with Maulana Ghulam Qadir leading prayers, seeking Allah's mercy, blessings and well-being for all. He prayed for the continued progress of the Jamia and for the acceptance of the efforts and sacrifices of everyone who had contributed to its 52-year journey.

The Alumni Meet marked an important milestone in the history of Jamia Zia Ul Uloom, celebrating its educational achievements, remembering its departed benefactors and reaffirming its commitment to scholarship, religious education and service to society.

HT EDITORIAL

Saving Kashmir's Youth Requires a War on Drugs Beyond Policing

The arrest of seven alleged drug peddlers in Anantnag, following five separate operations in which charas, ganja and other narcotic substances were recovered, has once again brought into focus a crisis that demands far more than routine law-enforcement action. The growing threat of narcotics is not merely a policing challenge; it is a social emergency that strikes at the health, dignity and future of Jammu and Kashmir's younger generation.

Every drug seizure represents a potential tragedy prevented, but every new case also raises an uncomfortable question: why does the supply of narcotics continue to find a market despite repeated arrests, seizures and awareness campaigns? The answer lies in the fact that the drug menace cannot be defeated by targeting suppliers alone. Unless society addresses the conditions that make young people vulnerable to addiction, the cycle of trafficking and substance abuse will continue to reproduce itself.

The police deserve recognition for their efforts to identify and dismantle drug networks. Their vigilance is indispensable, and those who deliberately poison society for financial gain must face strict legal consequences. Yet, the success of an anti-drug campaign cannot be measured solely by the number of arrests made or the quantity of narcotics seized. Its real measure must be the number of young lives protected, the number of addicts brought back to normal life and the extent to which the demand for drugs is reduced.

This is where the responsibility of society becomes decisive. Families cannot afford to treat addiction as a distant problem that affects only other households. Parents must maintain open communication with their children, recognise troubling behavioural changes and seek timely professional assistance when necessary. Schools and colleges must go beyond occasional awareness programmes and create environments where students can discuss emotional distress, peer pressure and personal difficulties without fear of humiliation.

Equally important is the role of community institutions, religious leaders, civil society organisations and the media. Their influence must be directed towards prevention, early intervention and the rejection of social indifference. Communities should remain alert to suspicious activities and cooperate with the authorities, while ensuring that vulnerable young people are not abandoned to isolation or stigma.

A particularly damaging mistake is to treat every person struggling with addiction as a criminal. Those who organise and profit from the drug trade must be distinguished from individuals trapped in substance dependence. Addiction requires professional treatment, psychological support and sustained rehabilitation. Punishment alone cannot restore a life damaged by dependency. Accessible treatment facilities, trained counsellors, family support and opportunities for education, sports and employment must become essential components of the campaign against drugs.

Jammu and Kashmir has a particularly compelling reason to act decisively. Its young population represents its greatest resource, and the loss of even one promising life to addiction is a setback for an entire family and community. The region cannot aspire to lasting progress while a section of its youth remains exposed to a trade that thrives on vulnerability, despair and easy money.

The administration must therefore strengthen coordination between police, health institutions, educational authorities and social welfare agencies. Prevention programmes should reach villages and neighbourhoods, rehabilitation services must be accessible, and the financial networks behind drug trafficking must be investigated effectively. Equally, citizens should have safe and credible channels to report suspected trafficking without fear. The Anantnag arrests should not fade from public attention as another routine crime report. They must serve as a reminder that the struggle against narcotics requires continuity, public participation and measurable results. The authorities must pursue the suppliers, healthcare institutions must help the victims recover, educational institutions must protect students, and families must ensure that no young person is left to confront vulnerability alone.

The future of Jammu and Kashmir will not be secured by arrests alone. It will be secured when drugs lose their market, addiction loses its stigma, rehabilitation becomes accessible and every young person finds a reason to choose life over dependency. A drug-free J&K must become a shared social commitment, backed by firm enforcement and sustained public action—not merely a slogan repeated after every seizure.

Minority Rights Are Not Special Privileges: The Constitutional Case for Equality and Justice



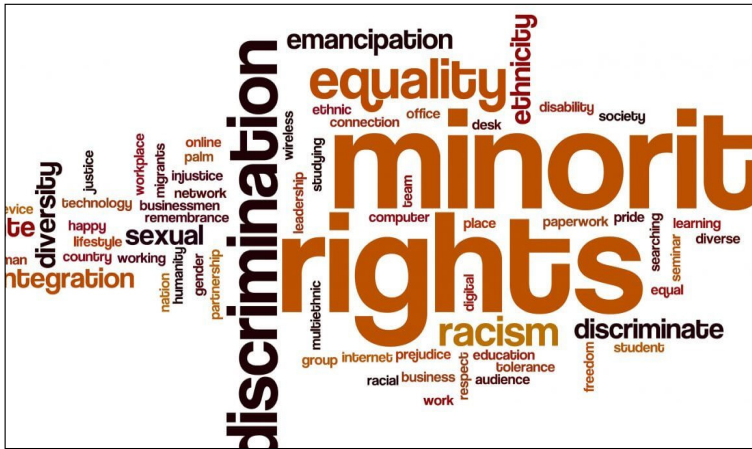
By Altaf Shafi

In a democracy, equality is often understood as treating everyone alike. Yet, the real test of a democratic society lies not merely in whether all citizens are subject to the same rules, but in whether they can genuinely enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. This distinction is central to understanding why minority rights are not special privileges, but essential safeguards for a just and inclusive society.

At first glance, special protections for religious, linguistic and cultural minorities may appear to offer certain groups advantages over the majority. However, such an interpretation overlooks the fundamental purpose of constitutional safeguards: to ensure that numerical strength does not become a source of domination and that every citizen, irrespective of identity, enjoys equal dignity and freedom.

A simple example illustrates this principle. Consider a public building accessible only by stairs. Everyone is permitted to enter, but a wheelchair user cannot access it without assistance. Providing a ramp or lift does not grant that person an unfair advantage; it removes a barrier that prevents the person from enjoying the same opportunity as others. The arrangement may be different, but its objective is equality.

This is the difference between formal equality and substantive equality. Formal equality requires that the same rules apply to everyone, while substantive equality recognises that identical treatment may not always produce fair outcomes. Justice, therefore, sometimes



demands measures that address specific disadvantages so that equal rights become meaningful in practice.

The same reasoning applies to minority rights. A majority, by virtue of its numbers, often possesses greater influence over public institutions, political decisions and cultural life. Its language, traditions and beliefs may naturally enjoy wider representation in society. Minorities, on the other hand, may face difficulties in preserving their distinct identities, protecting their institutions and ensuring that their voices are heard.

Without appropriate safeguards, the principle of majority rule can gradually turn into majority domination. Democracy, however, is not simply the rule of the largest number. It is a system in which majority decisions operate within constitutional limits and fundamental rights remain protected, including when those rights concern groups that lack numerical strength.

Consider a situation in which the majority of passengers in a train compartment favour

smoking while one passenger objects because of a serious respiratory condition. A simple majority vote could legitimately override the basic concern for another person's health and safety. The example demonstrates that numerical superiority does not automatically confer moral or legal authority over every issue. Certain fundamental interests must be respected regardless of how many people support them.

This principle finds expression in the Indian Constitution, which seeks to balance democratic governance with individual liberty, equality and cultural diversity. Articles 25 to 28 provide for freedom of religion and related protections, while Articles 29 and 30 recognise important cultural and educational rights, including the rights of minorities to conserve their distinct culture and establish and administer educational institutions, subject to applicable constitutional provisions.

These safeguards are not intended to place minorities above the law or exempt them from legitimate public regulation. Nor does every demand made in the name of a minority

automatically become constitutionally justified. The exercise of rights must remain consistent with constitutional requirements, and the interests of the wider public must be considered where relevant.

The real question, therefore, is not whether minority rights involve different forms of protection, but whether those protections serve a legitimate constitutional purpose. A measure designed to prevent discrimination, preserve cultural identity or secure equal opportunity cannot be dismissed as a privilege merely because it addresses the particular circumstances of a group.

At the same time, concerns about misuse or arbitrary advantages should not be ignored. Constitutional protection must not become a justification for discrimination against others, nor should identity be used to claim unlimited authority. Every safeguard must be assessed on the basis of its purpose, fairness, necessity and conformity with the Constitution.

The distinction between privilege and protection is crucial. Privilege confers an unjustified advantage; protection seeks to prevent rights from being denied or undermined. A ramp does not make a wheelchair user superior to someone who can use stairs. It makes access possible.

Likewise, minority safeguards are meant to ensure that cultural, religious and linguistic differences do not become reasons for exclusion or marginalisation.

India's diversity makes this principle particularly significant. The country's democratic strength rests not on uniformity, but on the ability of people belonging to different faiths, languages and cultural traditions to coexist with mutual respect.

Protecting this diversity is not an obstacle to national unity. On the contrary, it reinforces the confidence of citizens that their identities and freedoms will be respected within the constitutional framework.

Is Packaged Drinking Water Really Safe



BY- MOOL RAJ

What the label promises, where the risks lie and how to choose wisely before you pay for your next bottle

Walk into any shop, bus stand or tourist spot and you will see rows of bottled water. For millions of people, buying a bottle has become the default way to quench thirst. It feels clean, sealed and trustworthy. But a simple question keeps coming up in homes and offices: is packaged drinking water actually safe? The honest answer is that it can be, but it depends on who made it, how it was handled and how you use it.

Packaged water is not just tap water poured into a bottle. Reputed companies treat their source water in several steps. They filter out dirt and particles, remove harmful germs with methods like ultraviolet light or ozone, and often use reverse osmosis to take out dissolved impurities. The water is then filled in sealed bottles under controlled conditions. When all these steps are followed properly, the result is clean water that meets the standards set for drinking.

The trouble begins when the process is not followed. India has many small units that fill bottles, pouches and large jars. Some are well run. Others are not. Poor plant hygiene, dirty storage tanks, untested source water and skipped treatment steps can leave germs or chemicals



in the final product. A few cases of fake bottles, refilled with ordinary water and sold under copied labels, have also been reported over the years. A bottle with a nice label is not a guarantee of anything.

This is where reason regulators have been paying closer attention. In late 2024, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India placed packaged drinking water and mineral water in its high-risk food category. Under this rule, manufacturers must face a risk-based inspection every year, and units with a central licence must also be audited every year by an agency recognised by the authority. This came soon after the government removed the earlier requirement of mandatory BIS certification for such water, so the extra checks were meant to keep safety standards from slipping.

That change matters for buyers. The BIS mark used to be a common sign that a brand had passed a standard test. Now the more important thing to look for is a valid FSSAI licence number

printed on the label. If a bottle has no licence number, no batch number, no manufacturing date or no company address, it is better to leave it on the shelf. These details are the minimum a genuine product should carry.

Another worry that has grown in recent years is microplastics. These are extremely tiny pieces of plastic, and researchers around the world have found them in many things we eat and drink, including bottled water. Scientists are still studying what effect they may have on the human body, and there is no clear final answer yet. This does not mean you should panic. It does mean that bottled water is not automatically purer than every other source, and that plastic itself is part of the question.

How you store and use a bottle also changes its safety. A bottle left for hours in a hot car or in direct sunlight is not a good idea. Heat can affect the plastic, and a bottle that is opened and left around can pick up germs. Reusing a single-use

bottle again and again is another common habit. These bottles are thin and hard to clean properly, and tiny scratches can hold bacteria. If you wish to carry water daily, a steel or good quality reusable bottle is a much better choice.

Large twenty-litre jars deserve a special mention. Many homes and offices depend on them, yet the supply chain is often informal. The jars may be washed poorly, refilled by unlicensed suppliers and stored in dusty corners. If you use them, buy from a supplier who can show a licence, ask how the jars are cleaned and keep the dispenser itself clean, because a dirty tap or stand can spoil good water.

Some people worry that reverse osmosis removes natural minerals. For most healthy people on a balanced diet, drinking water is a small source of minerals, so the bigger concern is whether the water is free from germs and harmful chemicals.

There is also a cost to consider, both for your pocket and for the planet. Bottled water is far more expensive per litre than water filtered at home. Millions of empty bottles end up in drains, rivers, lakes and mountain trails every year. In beautiful places that depend on tourism, plastic waste is a visible and growing problem. Choosing a safe home option, when you have one, helps both your budget and your surroundings.

So what is the practical answer? If you must buy packaged water, choose a known brand and check the seal, the date and the FSSAI licence number. Avoid bottles that look dented, have a loose cap or have been sitting in the sun at a roadside stall. Keep them in a cool, shaded place and finish them within a reasonable time after opening.

The Author Is A Regular Columnist And Freelance Writer

This is because we care for the vetrans and those who sacrificed their lives for the nation



By M S Nazki

As time passes by, many men and women go as generations pass on the baton to fill up the vacant spots but they do say something that makes you shiver in a park on a rainy gloomy day! Then it is left to their beloved ones to carry forward their legacy!

-Oh! I forgot! The Veer Naris and the dependents! The question that immediately arises after the thirteenth or 40th day is who will look after them!

-It has to be the Indian Army and none other! -This is because we care for the vetrans and those who sacrificed thir lives for the nation.....

-A few stories

Either I will come back after hoisting the Tricolor, or I will come back wrapped in it. But I'll be back for sure. Few lines have come to symbolise the spirit of the 1999 Kargil War as powerfully as these words of Captain Vikram Batra, PVC. Spoken before heading into battle, they reflected complete confidence in the mission and an acceptance of whatever sacrifice it demanded.

Captain Batra would go on to lead his men in the capture of crucial enemy positions before making the ultimate sacrifice while rescuing a fellow officer. His words continue to remind us that true courage lies not in the absence of fear, but in placing the mission above oneself.

-If death strikes before I prove my blood, I

promise, I will kill death: Long before he earned the Param Vir Chakra, Captain Manoj Kumar Pandey had written these unforgettable words. They reveal a young officer determined to live a life of extraordinary purpose rather than ordinary safety.

-During the Battle of Khalubar, despite sustaining multiple bullet wounds, he continued leading his men until the objective was secured. His actions transformed this quote from an inspiring line into a promise fulfilled through unmatched bravery. The enemies are only 50 yards from us. We are heavily outnumbered...I shall not withdraw an inch but will fight to our last man and our last round. These were among the final words transmitted by Major Somnath Sharma, PVC, during the Battle of Badgam in 1947. Outnumbered and under relentless attack, he refused to retreat, buying invaluable time for Indian forces to secure Srinagar. Awarded independent India's first Param Vir Chakra, Major Sharma demonstrated that duty often means standing firm even when victory seems uncertain. His last radio message remains one of the most stirring examples of battlefield resolve in Indian military history.

-Duty before self: Although Major Shaitan Singh, PVC, is remembered more for his actions than for a famous quotation, his leadership at the Battle of Rezang La during the Sino-Indian War of 1962 perfectly embodied the principle of duty before self. Leading just 120 soldiers of 13 Kumaon against thousands of advancing Chinese troops, he repeatedly moved between positions under intense fire, motivating his men instead of seeking safety. His refusal to abandon his post, even at the cost of his own life, turned Rezang La into one of the greatest last stands in military history and gave lasting meaning to the idea that a leader never asks others to do what

he will not do himself.

-One thing remains the same. That is, your task and your duty. You are required to ensure the security of this country against any aggressor... you should have to fight, and fight to win. There is no room for the loser. If you lose, don't come back.

-Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, MC, believed that military leadership demanded absolute clarity of purpose. His words remind every soldier that the armed forces exist for one reason—to safeguard the nation. The line is characteristically direct, reflecting Manekshaw's belief that preparation, professionalism, and determination leave no room for complacency. It remains a timeless lesson in accountability, leadership, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

-I won't die in an accident or die of any disease.

I will go down in glory: Words of Major Sudhir Kumar Walia, AC, SM & Bar, reflect the mindset of a Special Forces officer who embraced risk as an inseparable part of service. During counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir, he displayed extraordinary courage before laying down his life in action. His statement was never about seeking death; it was about choosing a life of purpose, where honour mattered more than personal safety. -We fight to win and win with a knockout because there are no runners-up in war: War leaves little room for half-measures, and the words of Gen JJ Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, capture that reality with remarkable simplicity. Victory in conflict is not about participation—it is about achieving the objective decisively while protecting the nation. His quote highlights the importance of preparedness, professional excellence, and the relentless pursuit of success, values that continue to shape the ethos of the Indian Army. -I regret I have but one life to give for my country: This deeply moving statement

reflects the highest ideal of military service: complete devotion to the nation. Rather than expressing regret over sacrifice itself, this quote by Fg Offr Prem Ramchandani suggests that a single lifetime is hardly sufficient when serving a cause as significant as one's country. It echoes a sentiment shared by countless Indian soldiers across generations—that the privilege of serving the nation outweighs every personal cost.

The 204th Raksha Pension Samadhan Aayojan at Akhnoor concluded successfully. 961 Veterans, Veer Naris and dependents engaged with concerned authorities for resolution of pension and allied issues across Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh, connecting on-site as well as virtually. Dedicated helpdesks to facilitate documentation, information dissemination and other administrative assistance to attendees were set up. #NorthernComd remains committed to the welfare of our Veterans.

-The Raksha Pension Samadhan Aayojan (RPSA) is a single-window grievance redressal and outreach program organized by the Indian Army and the Defence Accounts Department (such as the Principal Controller of Defence Accounts) to resolve pension-related issues for defense pensioners, veterans, "Veer Naris" (war widows), dependents, and civilian defense employees- Key Features and Objectives

*Single-Window Platform: It brings together multiple stakeholders—including Records Offices, the PCDA, the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), the Rajya Sainik Board, banks, and digital helpdesks—under one roof so pensioners do not have to shuttle between different offices.

*SPARSH & Digital Assistance: It provides dedicated assistance for SPARSH (System for Pension Administration Raksha), helping veterans with digital life certification, profile updates, and online pension queries.

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Atal Dulloo : An Administrative Legacy Rooted in Service

As J&K's Chief Secretary Prepares to Retire on October 31st, 2026, His Decades of Public Service Offer an Opportunity to Reflect on His Contribution to Governance.



Dr S Jahangir Bukhari

Atal Dulloo, a 1989-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre, will conclude his tenure as Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir on October 31, 2026, bringing to a close a distinguished phase of his long administrative career. Having assumed office on December 1, 2023, he has led the Union Territory's bureaucracy through a period of significant developmental priorities and complex governance challenges.

Son of the soil, Dulloo brings an understanding of Jammu and Kashmir's administrative landscape shaped by decades of service across districts and key government departments. His assignments in health, finance, agriculture, infrastructure and rural development have given him a broad

perspective on the issues that directly affect the lives and livelihoods of people.

His association with the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme reflects the importance of modernising agriculture, strengthening rural incomes and creating sustainable economic opportunities. These priorities are particularly relevant to Jammu and Kashmir, where agriculture and horticulture remain vital to the regional economy. His wider administrative responsibilities have also involved coordinating development initiatives, reviewing departmental performance and advancing public service delivery.

The Chief Secretary's office demands the ability to reconcile competing priorities, resolve administrative bottlenecks and ensure that policy decisions translate into practical results. It also requires sound judgement and the capacity to bring different departments together in pursuit of common objectives. Dulloo's extensive experience has provided a strong institutional foundation for discharging these responsibilities.

Beyond administrative expertise, the temperament of a senior civil servant can influence the functioning of the system. Dulloo is regarded by many as a measured and courteous officer, qualities that can encourage constructive



engagement within the administration and improve its accessibility to citizens. Such attributes are most meaningful when accompanied by accountability, transparency and demonstrable outcomes.

Any assessment of his tenure must, however,

go beyond personal reputation or official designations. The lasting value of an administrative leadership lies in completed projects, improved services, stronger institutions and policies that continue to benefit people after the officer's departure. These are the standards against which

Dulloo's contribution, like that of every senior civil servant, will ultimately be judged.

His retirement also provides an opportunity to reflect on the broader role of the civil services in Jammu and Kashmir. The region requires continuity in development planning, responsive institutions and administrators capable of addressing local concerns with professionalism and fairness. Sustaining progress will depend on how effectively the next generation of officers builds upon existing initiatives and addresses the challenges that remain.

As Dulloo prepares to demit office, his long association with Jammu and Kashmir deserves recognition. Whether history places him among the region's most successful Chief Secretaries will ultimately depend on the enduring impact of his decisions and the public outcomes of his tenure. His career nevertheless illustrates the significance of experience, institutional knowledge and a sustained commitment to public responsibilities.

The true measure of a civil servant's legacy is not the power of the office held, but the lasting value of the work accomplished. For Atal Dulloo, the coming years will provide the clearest perspective on how his tenure contributed to Jammu and Kashmir's administrative and developmental journey.

Digital Minimalism Way To A Healthier Life



SURINDERPAL SINGH

The twenty-first century is marked by the dynamic progress of science and technology keeping along with the development path the digital technology has become an inseparable part of our daily lives. Smartphones, social media, online entertainment and digital communication have transformed the way we work, study

and mindless scrolling, excessive gaming and constant social media checking. The aim is to make technology serve human beings instead of humans becoming servants of technology.

The need for digital minimalism has become increasingly important because modern technology is designed to capture and hold our attention. Social media platforms constantly send notifications, videos automatically play one after another and endless online content encourages users to remain connected for hours. As a result, many people unknowingly develop habits that reduce productivity, disturb sleep, weaken concentration and increase mental

pain, poor posture and disturbed sleep patterns. The blue light emitted by digital devices interferes with the body's natural sleep cycle, making it harder to fall asleep and obtain restful sleep. Lack of proper sleep further increases irritability, stress and difficulty in concentrating.

Another serious consequence of excessive technology use is the decline in meaningful human relationships. Family members may sit together in the same room while each person remains absorbed in their own smartphone. Real conversations are replaced by text messages, and genuine emotional connections gradually weaken. Digital minimalism encourages people to spend

time with family and friends. Even dedicating one day each week as a digital detox can refresh the mind and restore mental balance. The responsibility for promoting digital minimalism lies not only with individuals but also with families, schools, workplaces and governments. Parents should encourage healthy digital habits from an early age. Schools should educate students about responsible technology use and digital well-being. Employers should promote a healthy work-life balance by respecting employees' personal time and reducing unnecessary digital demands.

Although technology is one of humanity's greatest achievements, but its value depends on how wisely it is used. Digital minimalism teaches us that life is richer when we focus on meaningful experiences rather than endless screen time. By using technology intentionally, we can improve our physical health, protect our mental well-being, strengthen relationships and live more balanced and fulfilling lives. In an age where digital distractions surround us every moment, digital minimalism is not merely a lifestyle choice—it is becoming an essential life skill for maintaining happiness, productivity and inner peace.

Its programmes in medical science and engineering cover subjects such as human physiology, mathematical modelling, clinical neuroscience and medical imaging. These subjects help students understand how engineering principles can be applied to the study of the human body, disease diagnosis and medical research.

Professor V. Kamakoti, Director of IIT Madras, has emphasised the importance of technical institutions taking an active role in medical science. Developing India's capabilities in medical equipment and healthcare technology is an important long-term national priority.

By encouraging interdisciplinary education and research, IIT Madras aims

Three IITs Bring Medical Science and Engineering Together: The Mission to Develop Medical Engineers



Dr. Vijay Garg

Modern medicine is becoming increasingly dependent on technology. Hospitals today rely on CT scans, MRI, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, biosensors and advanced diagnostic equipment. As medical technology continues to evolve, the need for closer collaboration between medicine and engineering has become more important than ever.

In this direction, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) at Madras, Kharagpur and Kanpur are working to bring medical science and engineering together. Their aim is to develop specialists who understand both the functioning of the human body and the technology behind modern medical equipment.

Why Is Collaboration Between Medicine and Engineering Necessary? Imagine a patient undergoing a CT scan, but a portion of the resulting image appears blurred. The doctor may find it difficult to determine whether the problem is caused by a technical fault in the machine or is related to the patient's medical condition. Meanwhile, the engineer responsible for developing the equipment may not fully understand the clinical implications of the problem.

In such situations, specialists with knowledge of both medicine and technology can play an important role. They can improve communication between doctors and engineers, enhance the performance of medical equipment and help make disease detection more accurate.

These specialists are not intended to replace doctors or conventional engineers. Instead, they are trained to work alongside them, combining their respective areas of expertise to solve complex healthcare problems.

IIT Madras: A New Convergence of Medical Science and Engineering

IIT Madras has undertaken academic initiatives in medical science and technology to strengthen the relationship between medicine, engineering and modern scientific research.

Its programmes in medical science and engineering cover subjects such as human physiology, mathematical modelling, clinical neuroscience and medical imaging. These subjects help students understand how engineering principles can be applied to the study of the human body, disease diagnosis and medical research.

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By encouraging interdisciplinary education and research, IIT Madras aims

to contribute to the development of innovative healthcare solutions and advanced medical technologies.

IIT Kharagpur: Advancing Medical Education and Research

IIT Kharagpur has been working in the field of medical science and technology for many years. Its School of Medical Science and Technology was established in 2001.

The institute's Master of Medical Science and Technology (MMST) programme was designed particularly for qualified doctors who wish to strengthen their medical expertise through knowledge of engineering and physical sciences. IIT Kharagpur has also developed medical facilities and research initiatives through the Dr. B. C. Roy Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology on its campus.

Research opportunities in this field include medical imaging, molecular imaging, biomaterials, implants, biophysics, early cancer detection, immunotechnology and clinical biomarker discovery.

These initiatives aim to encourage the development of innovative medical technologies and connect scientific research with the practical needs of patients.

The broader vision is to create an environment in which doctors, engineers and researchers work together to improve diagnosis, treatment and healthcare delivery.

IIT Kanpur: The Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology

IIT Kanpur's Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology represents another important initiative to bring medical education, advanced healthcare research and engineering innovation together.

Such interdisciplinary institutions offer significant opportunities for developing advanced diagnostic systems, medical robotics, biomedical devices and AI-based healthcare solutions.

The objective is not merely to design new machines, but also to understand how technology can be made safer, more effective, affordable and responsive to the actual needs of patients.

Collaboration between medical professionals and engineers can help ensure that technological innovations address genuine clinical problems rather than simply introducing new equipment into hospitals.

Will the Demand for Medical Engineers Increase in the Future?

As technology transforms healthcare, demand is likely to grow for specialists with expertise in biomedical engineering, medical imaging, medical artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, robotics and the design of healthcare equipment.

Professionals trained in these fields can explore career opportunities in hospitals, medical-device companies, research institutions, universities and health-technology enterprises.

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and interact with others. While the technology has offered countless benefits, excessive dependence on digital devices has created a silent crisis. People are spending more time on screens than with their families, friends, nature, or even themselves. This growing dependence has given rise to the concept of digital minimalism, a lifestyle that encourages using technology wisely rather than allowing technology to control our lives.

Digital minimalism is the practice of intentionally reducing unnecessary use of digital devices and online platforms while keeping only those technologies that genuinely add value to our lives. It does not mean rejecting technology altogether. Instead, it means using digital tools with purpose, setting healthy boundaries and eliminating

fatigue.

One of the greatest impacts of excessive digital use is on mental health. Continuous exposure to social media often leads people to compare their lives with carefully edited images and achievements of others. This comparison may create feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, low self-esteem and dissatisfaction. Constant notifications and information overload also keep the brain in a state of continuous stimulation, making it difficult to relax. Many psychologists believe that excessive screen time contributes significantly to stress, anxiety, depression and emotional exhaustion, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

Digital overload also affects physical health. Long hours spent staring at screens cause eye strain, headaches, neck and back

quality time with loved ones, engage in face-to-face conversations and build stronger personal relationships.

Students are among the most affected by digital distractions. Frequent checking of messages, notifications and social media interrupts concentration and reduces learning efficiency. Digital minimalism helps students improve focus, strengthen memory, increase academic performance and develop better time management skills. Reading books, participating in sports, pursuing hobbies and spending time in nature become more enjoyable when digital distractions are minimized.

An important question today is whether digital minimalism should be considered essential for protecting people from depression, anxiety and stress. The answer



Divisional Commissioner reviews Developmental Scenario of Ramban, Directs Timely Completion of Projects

Inspects Progress of Multi-Storey Bus Stand, Bridge Project

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, OCTOBER 24: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Vikas Kundal, today undertook his maiden visit to District Ramban and reviewed the overall developmental scenario, progress of ongoing infrastructure projects and implementation of various government schemes across key sectors.

He chaired a comprehensive review meeting with district officers and directed all concerned departments and executing agencies to expedite developmental works, adhere to prescribed timelines and maintain the highest standards of quality and accountability.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Aliyas Khan, Additional SP Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, POICDS, ACR,



SDMs, ACD, CPO and other district and sectoral officers attended the meeting.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner presented a detailed

overview of the district's developmental progress through a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting physical and financial achievements, the status of major infrastructure

projects, implementation of welfare schemes and issues requiring inter-departmental coordination. The Divisional Commissioner reviewed the progress of the four-laning project of National Highway-44, particularly the construction of tunnels and viaducts along the Ramban-Banihal stretch. Taking stock of the physical progress of key components, he underscored the strategic importance of NH-44 in ensuring seamless connectivity and directed the concerned executing agencies and officers of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to accelerate the pace of work and complete all ongoing works within the stipulated timelines. He also undertook a comprehensive review of the functioning and progress of various departments, including Public Works

(Roads and Buildings), PMGSY, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Jal Shakti, Power Development, Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Industries and Commerce, Labour and other concerned sectors.

Reviewing the District Capex Plan for 2026-27, the Divisional Commissioner directed all departments to achieve 100 per cent of their physical and financial targets within the stipulated period. He assessed the bottlenecks affecting implementation and issued necessary directions for their prompt resolution, stressing improved inter-departmental coordination, accountability, efficient utilisation of resources and regular monitoring of progress.

DC Kishtwar flags off exposure visit, sports event for Children with Special Needs

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today flagged off a contingent of 40 Children with Special Needs (CWSN) of district Kishtwar from the Mini Secretariat, New DC Office Complex for a one-day exposure visit and sports event to Gulabgarh, Sub-Division Paddar.

The programme has been organised by the School Education Department Kishtwar under the supervision of Chief Education Officer Sanjay Dogra, under the Inclusive Education component of Samagra Shiksha J&K district Kishtwar.

The initiative aims to provide children with special needs opportunities for participation, recreation, social interaction and holistic development.

The contingent, comprising 40 students accompanied by their parents, is being led by District Nodal Officer (DNO) Sanjay Parihar. During the event at Gulabgarh, students will participate in various sporting activities and competitions, including Cricket, Carrom, Chess and Badminton.

Special enforcement drive conducted in Samba, Kathua to curb diversion of Habit-Forming Drugs

■ HT News Network

SAMBA/KATHUA, OCTOBER 24: In a major enforcement drive to curb the diversion and misuse of habit-forming drugs, the Drugs Control Department has suspended the operations of 17 pharmaceutical establishments in Samba and Kathua districts for violating licence conditions, particularly failure to maintain sales records through computerized billing systems. The surprise inspections, conducted by team of Drugs Control Officers under the supervision of the Assistant Drugs Controller, Samba/Kathua, covered rural and far-flung areas. Of the 17 establishments found violating norms, eight were in Samba and nine in Kathua. Their operations were disallowed pending compliance with the prescribed requirements.

In a separate action, 400 capsules of Pemagyl and SP NYL, manufactured by M/s Shiv Shakti Pharma, Haryana were confiscated from the supply chain due to deficiencies in mandatory record-keeping. The licences of two other pharmaceutical establishments were also cancelled for violations of prescribed conditions.

State Drugs Controller J&K, Rajesh Kumar urged chemists and wholesalers to strictly comply with the Department's Restriction Order and refrain from procuring Pregabalin 300 mg, Tapentadol, Tramadol and other habit-forming formulations from unauthorized suppliers outside Jammu and Kashmir or through online platforms and courier services in violation of applicable restrictions.

DC Kathua reviews Diwali arrangements, Stresses vigilance and preparedness

Directs departments to ensure public safety, fire preparedness, emergency medical services

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, today chaired a meeting at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex to review arrangements for the safe and smooth celebration of Diwali across the district.

It was informed during the meeting that a multi-departmental committee would be constituted to conduct market inspections, check the rates and quality of food items and prevent food adulteration. The DC also directed the Fire and Emergency Services Department to conduct a comprehensive fire safety audit of firecracker vendors to ensure strict compliance with prescribed safety norms and rule out any lapses.

The DC stressed the need for close coordination among departments to ensure public safety, particularly in crowded markets and other vulnerable locations. He directed the Fire



and Emergency Services Department to keep men and machinery in a state of readiness to respond promptly to emergencies and ensure adequate fire safety measures at public places.

The Chief Medical Officer was directed to ensure the availability of medical staff and emergency healthcare services during the festive period. The Jammu Power Distribution

Corporation Limited (JPDC) was asked to ensure uninterrupted power supply and take necessary precautions to prevent electrical hazards.

Reviewing security arrangements and traffic management, the DC directed the concerned officers to ensure effective crowd management, smooth vehicular movement and adequate safety measures in both urban and rural areas.

DC Rajouri reviews RDD Sector; Directs expediting of tendering, execution and creation of durable assets

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Dr. Devansh Yadav, today reviewed the Rural Development Department (RDD) sector and directed the concerned officers to expedite tendering and execution of developmental works under the District CAPEX Budget, UT CAPEX and VB-G RAM G.

Emphasising the need for visible and tangible outcomes at the grassroots level, the DC stressed the creation of durable community assets, including sports stadiums, playgrounds, bowalis and other infrastructure aimed at improving rural amenities and providing better facilities to the public.

The DC directed the concerned officers to expedite the tendering process for material components under VB-G RAM G and ensure that procedural formalities are completed without further delay to facilitate timely commencement and execution of approved works as working season was being reduced and some areas of district were snow bound.

Reviewing works under the District CAPEX Budget and UT CAPEX, he stressed the need for close monitoring of tendering, allotment and execution, utilisation of available funds as per time lines of the



Finance Department. He directed the officers to ensure that developmental works are taken up in accordance with approved plans and completed within stipulated timeframe without compromising quality of work.

The DC called for coordinated efforts among the concerned officers and field functionaries to accelerate rural development and ensure that government-funded projects translate into visible improvements in the lives of people.

The Chief Planning Officer, Maqsood Ahmed Assistant Commissioner Development, Sheraz Chowhan; all Block Development Officers (BDOs), Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs) and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

National NQAS Assessment of AAM SC Kilhotran, AAM SC Paryote conducted in Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, OCTOBER 24: In a significant step towards strengthening the quality of primary healthcare services, the Physical National Assessment under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) was conducted at AAM Sub-Centre Kilhotran and AAM Sub-Centre Paryote in district Doda by external assessors from the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI.

Upon their arrival at the respective health facilities, the external assessment teams were accorded a warm welcome by



the facility staff. The staff expressed appreciation for the visit and extended full cooperation to the visiting assessors to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the assessment process.

The two-member external

assessment team comprised Tarun Bhardawaj and Parvesh Sharma, who assessed the facilities against the prescribed NQAS parameters, focusing on various aspects of healthcare service delivery, patient safety, infection control, infrastructure,

availability of essential medicines and equipment, maintenance of records and adherence to quality protocols.

The District Quality Assurance Unit (DQAU) Doda, accompanied the visiting assessment team throughout the assessment process and extended the necessary coordination and support to facilitate the smooth conduct of the exercise.

The assessment reflects the sustained efforts of the Department of Health and Family Welfare Doda towards improving healthcare standards at the grassroots level and ensuring the delivery of safe, effective, patient-centred and quality healthcare services.

Child Helpline Desk Bhaderwah concludes awareness campaign against Child Labour

■ HT News Network

BHADERWAH, OCTOBER 24: The Child Helpline Desk Bhaderwah, under Mission Vatsalya of the Department of Social Welfare, conducted an awareness campaign against child labour at various locations across Bhaderwah, including Sarna Panchayat, Sungli Panchayat and Athkar Panchayat, Sartingal.

The campaign successfully concluded with the objective of sensitising the public about child protection and promoting Child Helpline Number 1098.

During the campaign, the locals were sensitised about



the harmful effects of child labour, the importance of safeguarding children's rights and the need to ensure access to education, care and protection

for every child. The initiative emphasised that children should be encouraged to learn, grow and pursue their dreams rather than being subjected to labour

and exploitation.

Special emphasis was laid on promoting Child Helpline 1098, a toll-free, 24x7 service for children in distress and those requiring care and protection.

The public was urged to remain vigilant and report cases of child labour, abuse, exploitation or any other situation in which a child may require assistance and encouraged to work collectively towards ensuring that no child is deprived of education, dignity and a happy childhood.

The campaign highlighted the importance of community participation in preventing child labour and creating a safe, supportive and child-friendly

DC Kishtwar reviews preparations for Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas-2026 celebrations

Directs 100% saturation of welfare schemes in 19 Tribal Villages; Day-wise activity calendar finalized for November 1-15

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting at the Meeting Hall of the New DC Office Complex, Kishtwar, to review preparations and finalize arrangements for the observance of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas-2026 from November 1 to 15, 2026 across the district.

The meeting focused on ensuring effective implementation of the programme through coordinated departmental efforts, community participation, awareness activities and targeted outreach to tribal

habitations, with particular emphasis on the welfare, empowerment and socio-economic development of tribal communities.

POICDS (Nodal Officer, Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas) Rishi Kumar Sharma delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation outlining the key themes, proposed activities, day-wise schedule and responsibilities assigned to various departments for the successful conduct of the 15-day programme.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to ensure 100% saturation of eligible beneficiaries under various tribal welfare schemes in all 19 identified tribal villages. He directed all



District and Sectoral Heads of the concerned line departments to submit the day-wise

activity schedule of their respective departments positively by October 26,

2026 (Monday), to facilitate effective planning and coordination.

Emphasizing the need to ensure that the benefits of government initiatives reach every eligible beneficiary, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to organize dedicated awareness and outreach activities regarding UT Government schemes and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, particularly those aimed at tribal welfare. He stressed that field-level participation by officers of line departments is essential to ensure effective implementation and meaningful engagement with tribal communities, including those residing in remote and

far-flung areas.

The DC also emphasized the importance of facilitating the creation and updation (wherever required) of essential beneficiary documents, including ABHA cards, Aadhaar cards and e-Shram cards, along with registration under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY).

He further emphasized the need to ensure enrolment of eligible tribal beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and other social security and financial inclusion schemes, with a special focus on expanding insurance coverage and ensuring access.



BJP's Dr Abhijeet Jasrotia Demands Unconditional Apology from Farooq Abdullah Over Remarks on Pakistan and Kashmir; Calls for Media Unity Against Allegations That the Press Is "Sold Out"

HT News Network

Jammu/Srinagar|24October 2026

Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Dr Abhijeet Jasrotia on Saturday strongly condemned the recent remarks made by National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah at a party workers' convention in Baramulla, demanding an unconditional public apology for statements he said undermine national unity and misrepresent the historical and political realities of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr Jasrotia also criticised Abdullah's reported remarks describing the media as "sold out", calling them an unacceptable generalisation that undermines the credibility of journalists and media institutions. He urged media organisations to collectively defend the dignity, independence and professional integrity of the press.

In a strongly worded statement, Dr Jasrotia said:

"Farooq Abdullah's latest remarks in Baramulla are deeply unfortunate and politically irresponsible. His assertion that Pakistan is 'saving' Kashmiris by raising the Kashmir issue internationally raises serious questions about his political priorities and his understanding of Pakistan's role in the region.

"Pakistan has repeatedly sponsored terrorism and violence that have cost countless innocent lives in Jammu and Kashmir. A responsible political leader should be highlighting the suffering caused by terrorism rather than lending credibility to Islamabad's narrative.

"Dr Farooq Abdullah credits Pakistan for 'saving' Kashmiris and questions India's intentions. A former Chief Minister openly thanking a neighbour accused of supporting terrorism, while portraying his own country as a threat, raises serious concerns. This is not constructive politics; it is deeply disappointing.

"Farooq Abdullah's statement is reckless, factually inverted and deeply corrosive to national integrity.

"Claiming that external Pakistani advocacy is what

prevents harm to Kashmiris from India is not merely political debate; it raises serious questions

against the press and consider a united response, including refusing to provide platforms

narratives that deepen divisions or encourage dependence on external validation.

While the Modi government has emphasised development, infrastructure, tourism, investment and democratic participation in Jammu and Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah continues to make statements that the BJP believes are contrary to the spirit of national integration.

If Farooq Abdullah considers Islamabad's political position more sympathetic to Kashmiris than India's democratic framework, he owes the people of Jammu and Kashmir a clear explanation. He must stop confusing the public with statements that risk legitimising Pakistan's propaganda.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve peace, prosperity, dignity and opportunity. They do not deserve to be drawn into political narratives that blur the distinction between constructive criticism of the government and endorsement of the positions advanced by a neighbouring country.

"We demand that Farooq Abdullah withdraw his controversial remarks and issue an unconditional public apology to the people of India. The National Conference must recognise that the future of Jammu and Kashmir lies in peace, democratic participation and development, not in rhetoric that creates further uncertainty," he said.

Dr Jasrotia further stated that the BJP would continue to challenge political statements it considers divisive and stand firmly for the unity, integrity and development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. Its future must be shaped by the aspirations of its people, not by narratives promoted from across the border," he added.



about his perception of the Indian state and its intentions towards its own citizens. Such rhetoric risks emboldening those who reject India's sovereignty over the region.

"Freedom of speech protects robust criticism of the government, but political leaders must also recognise their responsibility to avoid statements that may legitimise the narrative of a neighbouring country accused of supporting terrorism. The Laxman Rekha of responsible political discourse must not be crossed."

Dr Jasrotia also took strong exception to Farooq Abdullah's reported statement that the entire media is "sold out".

"Farooq Abdullah's sweeping allegation that the entire media is 'sold out' is an insult to the countless journalists who work tirelessly to report facts, question those in power and uphold democratic accountability.

"If a political leader disagrees with a particular report or media outlet, he is entitled to express his disagreement and provide evidence. However, dismissing the entire media as compromised simply because its coverage may not suit his political interests is neither fair nor responsible.

"The media must stand united in defending its professional dignity and independence. I appeal to media organisations and journalists to collectively reject sweeping, unsubstantiated allegations

for political attacks that undermine the credibility of journalism. Accountability must apply to political leaders as well as to the media."

Dr Jasrotia further stated that Farooq Abdullah must remember the history of Jammu and Kashmir and the contribution of Maharaja Hari Singh. The Maharaja's support for the education of Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah's father, is an important part of the historical record. It is therefore disappointing to see political rhetoric that appears to disregard the legacy and historical complexities associated with Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India.

History should be approached with dignity, honesty and respect, not selectively invoked for political convenience.

The National Conference must also answer for its own political legacy in Jammu and Kashmir. Instead of repeatedly cultivating a politics of grievance and victimhood, the party should explain how its policies have contributed to the challenges faced by the people of the region. Kashmir deserves constructive leadership, not political

Devyani Rana Kickstarts Works Worth Rs 2.90 Crore in Bhagani, Keri, Jandial Upper of Nagrota Constituency

HT News Network

Mathwar 24.10.2026:

Reaffirming her commitment to public welfare and the holistic development of Nagrota Constituency, Devyani Rana MLA Nagrota today inaugurated development works worth 2.90 crore in Bhagani, Keri and Jandial Upper, of Mathwar block of Nagrota Constituency marking another significant step towards strengthening grassroots infrastructure and improving the quality of life of local residents.

The development initiatives reflect the vision of inclusive growth and equitable progress, ensuring that the benefits of development reach every section of society and every corner of the constituency. These projects aim to address local needs, strengthen basic infrastructure and accelerate the pace of



development in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Nagrota Devyani Rana emphasised that the guiding principle of the BJP remains the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas." She stated that inclusive development, public welfare and equal opportunities for all remain central to the party's commitment to nation-building and grassroots empowerment.

She also recalled the contribution and developmental vision of Late Devender Singh Rana ji, former MLA of Nagrota, whose dedication to public welfare and commitment to the progress of the constituency continue to inspire efforts towards public service and development.

The inauguration of these works reflects the commitment to translating its vision into tangible outcomes for the people. The focus remains on

strengthening rural infrastructure, addressing public aspirations and creating better opportunities for future generations.

Devyani Rana reiterated that the development of Nagrota Constituency will continue to be pursued with dedication, transparency and a people-centric approach, in line with the BJP's vision of inclusive development and the resolve to ensure that no area or section of society is left behind.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Public Works (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA

NO: T-1/EEA/9401-06

Dated :-24/10/2026

Extension Notice

Subject: -

1. Completion of Lane by tiling from the house of Gulzar Ah Bhat to Farooq Ah Malla Awantipora.

Reference: -

1. This office e-NIT No. 115/EEA/RNB of 2026-27/6004-14 Dated 08-09-2026.

The critical dates for the above noted Works are hereby extended as under:

S.No	Particular	Existing Date
1	Bid Submission End Date	30-10-2026 up to 4 PM
2	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	31-10-2026 up to 12 Noon

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned NIT

DIPK-7043/26

Send Date: Oct 24, 2026

Sd/-

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES, COMMAND SRINAGAR

Tel/Fax: 01942455050 Email: ddfire-srinagar@jk.gov.in

Advisory for General Public for Winter Season

As temperatures drop in Kashmir, people rely heavily on traditional and modern heating practices. While these sources provide warmth, improper use, substandard equipment, and unsafe habits significantly increase the risk of fire incidents, suffocation, and fatalities. The following advisory highlights common hazards and prescribes safe practices to prevent disasters.

1. Heating Appliances:

Use only ISI-marked LPG bukharis, heaters, blankets, and electric devices. Service and inspect all heating gadgets before reuse each winter. Always unplug electrical heaters, blankets, and stoves and switch off LPG bukharis and cylinders before sleeping or leaving home. Avoid high-wattage and faulty appliances that may cause short circuits.

2. LPG Bukharis & Gas Safety:

Do not use LPG heaters while asleep.

Ensure proper room ventilation to prevent oxygen depletion and toxic gas buildup. Regularly check gas pipes, regulators, and chimneys for leaks and damage.

2. Kangris & Charcoal:

Do not prepare or store charcoal in attics.

Handle kangris carefully and place them securely at night to avoid toppling.

Dispose of embers safely.

4. Water Bottles & Electric Blankets:

Avoid using electric blankets with hot water bottles.

Check blankets for damaged wiring and unplug before sleep.

5. Electrical Safety:

• Do not use substandard appliances or overloaded extensions.

Install proper fuses, MCBs, and ELCBs.

Keep electrical wires away from hot or wet surfaces.

6. Combustible Material:

Do not store dry grass, wood, or waste inside homes.

Store such materials in isolated sheds away from living areas.

7. Kitchen Safety:

Stay in the kitchen while cooking.

Turn off LPG stoves and cylinder knobs when not in use.

8. Ventilation & Access:

Ensure ventilation when using LPG heaters.

Keep escape routes and water access points clear.

9. General Precautions:

Do not throw live cigarette butts.

Keep sand/water handy near heating devices.

10. In Case of any fire incident, please call immediately on toll free No. 101,

Srinagar Control Room: 0194-2452155, 2452222 or contact the

nearest fire station.

Your safety is in your hands - prevent fire before it starts.

DIPK-7055/26

Send Date: Oct 24, 2026

Sd/-

Dr. Aqib Hussain Mi
Deputy Director,
Fire & Emergency Services,
Command Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, Nazir Ahmad Mir, S/o Mohammad Assadullah Mir, R/o Dundmoha, wish to state the following: The electricity connection bearing Consumer ID 0212040011976, installed at my residential premises, is currently registered in the name of my deceased Father, Mohd Assadullah Mir, S/o Abdul Samad Mir, R/o Dandmoha. I am the legal heir and am currently residing in the same premises. I now intend to transfer the electricity connection to my name. If any person has an objection to this name transfer, they may file their objection at the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, JKPDD, Sub Division Watergam, Wagoora, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections shall be entertained after the expiry of the said period.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Father's name GH MOHD BHAT S/O MOHD SUBHAN BHAT R/O.. WAGOORA Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040000627 wants to be registered on my name NAZIR AHMAD BHAT S/O GH MOHAMMAD BHAT If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained
Name...NAZIR AHMAD BHAT
S/O....GH MOHAMMAD BHAT
R/O . WAGOORA
BLOCK..WAGOORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of the general public and the concerned department (KPDCL) that I, Gh Nabi Dar s/o Mohammad Ayoub Dar R/o Rampora Veer Chattabal Srinagar is the old consumer holder of electricity connection bearing Consumer ID No. 0203010011345. I have transferred all rights of my residential property to Farooq Ahmad S/This is for the information of the general public and the concerned department (KPDCL) that I, Gh Nabi Dar R/o Rampora Chattabal Srinagar is the old consumer holder of electricity connection bearing Consumer ID No. 0203010011345. I have transferred all rights of my residential property to Farooq Ahmad S/o Habibullah Gadda R/o Guzarbal Chattabal Srinagar through an Irrevocable General Power of Attorney. Now I want to change the name of the said electricity connection from OLD NAME: Gh Nabi Dar to NEW NAME: Farooq Ahmad. If anybody has any objection regarding the change of name of the said electricity connection, he/she may contact / file objection before the concerned AEE, Electric Sub Division, KPDCL within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice. After the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained and the name change will be processed. Old Consumer Name: Gh Nabi R/o Rampora Chattabal
New Consumer Name: Farooq Ahmad S/o Mohd Habibullah Gadda R/o Guzarbal Chattabal Srinagar
Consumer ID No.: 0203010011345 from OLD NAME: Gh Nabi Dar to NEW NAME: Farooq Ahmad. If anybody has any objection regarding the change of name of the said electricity connection, he/she may contact / file objection before the concerned AEE, Electric Sub Division, KPDCL within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice. After the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained and the name change will be processed. Old Consumer Name: Gh Nabi R/o Rampora Chattabal
New Consumer Name: Farooq Ahmad S/o Habibullah Gadda R/o Guzarbal Chattabal Srinagar.



German firms see India as manufacturing, R&D & innovation hub: Piyush Goyal

■ HT News Network/UNI

BERLIN, Oct 24: German companies are increasingly viewing India as a strategic hub for manufacturing, research and development, and innovation alongside its role as a key consumer market, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

Addressing the media after concluding his two-day visit here, the minister said he held a series of bilateral meetings with representatives from companies including Siemens Healthcare, Bertelsmann Investment, Volkswagen and Skoda.

"The CEOs echoed one message - German companies no longer see India only as a market, but as their partner, as a base for manufacturing,

for research and development, for innovation," he said.

German precision and research, combined with India's skill and talent to innovate and manufacture for the future, and investing in the India growth story, will change the global perspective and outlook toward India, he said.

About 2,000 German firms currently have operations in India. The minister was here to discuss ways to boost trade and investments between the two countries.

Headed that relations between the two countries open doors not just for trade in goods and services, but also open the door for talent, innovation, co-creating, co-designing, co-developing, and co-manufacturing.

"The focus of this visit has been to translate this partnership to greater



levels of investment, industrial cooperation, and research and development," he said, adding that the success of the India-EU free trade agreement in the years to come will be measured by new business, new orders, greater investments, and technology partnerships.

The India-European Union trade pact would be signed by the end of

this year and may be implemented next year. In January, the two sides concluded negotiations for the agreement. "Today the greatest imperative before German industry is to cut costs and become more competitive in global markets. Therefore, they are looking at manufacturing in a much greater degree in India. As regards their innovation and their design work, almost every company tells me about existing centers, GCCs, in a big way in India, where they employ lakhs of talented young boys and girls," he said. He said, India's over 2,100 global capability centres (GCCs) employ millions of people, with individual centres ranging from a few hundred employees to several lakh. He added that German companies are planning significant expansions, with most aiming to

double or triple their operations over the next two to five years. Buy Maps "That is the level of excitement about working in India... Gradually, this is obviously going to result in co-creation and co-innovation also. But I would like to go step by step. And I'd like to invite the German Institutes of Research and to come there and start working and take the next step forward for developing this partnership," he said. Goyal said the European Union appreciates India's efforts to address climate change and its progress in meeting its commitments under the Paris Agreement, including exceeding its intended nationally determined contributions ahead of schedule. He added that European countries want to partner with India in areas such as green hydrogen, financial assistance and its green initiatives.

SBI assures customers of safety of funds amid probe into suspected data leak

■ HT News Network/UNI

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday



assured customers that their account balances and funds are safe, as the country's largest lender began a probe into suspected exposure of 3,897 customer records with personally identifiable information on the dark web. Buy Maps

SBI on Wednesday said it was investigating the suspected data exposure following alerts received on October 16 from its threat intelligence service provider, the Defence Cyber Agency and CERT-In.

"We reiterate that your account balances and funds are safe with us," the bank said in a post on X.

SBI advised customers to follow safe digital banking practices and cautioned them against sharing their one-time passwords (OTPs), PINs or passwords with anyone. The bank also urged customers to remain vigilant against suspicious calls, messages and emails.

"Further to our earlier post regarding the recent cyber incident, the bank has individually informed all customers whose data was identified as involved, through email and WhatsApp," it said.

DC Poonch reviews functioning of Industries and Commerce Department

■ HT News Network

POONCH, OCTOBER 24: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma today chaired a review meeting to assess the physical and financial progress of the District Industries Centre (DIC) and the implementation of industrial development schemes. The Deputy Commissioner assessed sector-wise progress, achievements against targets and the implementation of schemes promoting industrial growth and entrepreneurship. To strengthen the local economy and create sustainable livelihood opportunities, the DC directed General Manager DIC Naheem Un Nissa Bhatti to formulate an investment roadmap focussed on attracting fresh investment through Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and other government incentives. The DC said the district's industrial development strategy should align with its local resources, tourism potential, agricultural produce and entrepreneurial capabilities. He called for a proactive approach to facilitate new enterprises, encourage private investment and generate employment for local youth. The focus areas identified for the roadmap include promotion of rural tourism through registered homestays, development of hospitality infrastructure, establishment of modern restaurants and highway amenities and expansion of agro-based industries, particularly food-processing.

MIET organizes 'Micro Entrepreneurship Challenge-2026'

■ HT News Network/UNI

JAMMU, Oct 24: The School of Management, Model Institute of Engineering and Technology (MIET), here today, in collaboration with Institution's Innovation Council organized 'NourishPreneur: Micro Entrepreneurship Challenge 2026'. The event was inaugurated by Prof. Ankur Gupta, Director, MIET, who highlighted the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students and encouraging them to take initiative, think creatively and develop practical solutions to emerging market needs. Prof. Gupta took a round of the various ventures and interacted with the teams of students to understand their food philosophy, brand values and innovative propositions.

A key highlight of the event was the presence of two distinguished culinary experts



as jury members - Vijay Kumar Menon, Managing Director and Partner, Chef Aroma Group and Rajeev Haryani, Executive Chef, Sanjeev Caterers, Royal Retreats Hari Niwas. Their professional expertise and industry perspectives brought valuable insights to the evaluation process.

The jury assessed the participating teams on their product offerings, relevance to the event theme, creativity, business potential, presentation and understanding of their target

customers.

Ten business ventures viz Healthpreneurs, MBA Blues, Baked and Unbothered, Clean Canteen, Amulya Swaad, Fresh Fusion, Popeye's Fuel, Wholesome Bites, The Whimsical Kitchen and Clean Cravings showcased their food ventures through a range of health food-based business ideas, demonstrating creativity, teamwork and an understanding of the opportunities and challenges involved in building and launching a micro-business.

Finance Minister chairs 30th FSDC meeting; RBI Governor, SEBI head attend

■ HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Oct 24 (UNI) union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday chaired the 30th meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) in New Delhi, bringing together the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, heads of financial sector regulators and senior government officials.

The meeting was attended by the secretaries of the Department of Economic Affairs, Department of Revenue and Department of Financial Services, along with the Chief Economic Adviser to the government.

The chairpersons of key regulatory bodies, including the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), were also present.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) participated in the meeting, reflecting the involvement of multiple government institutions in discussions concerning the financial sector.

The FSDC is the government's highest-level institutional mechanism for addressing issues related to financial stability, financial sector



development and coordination among regulators. Its mandate also covers financial inclusion, financial literacy and macroprudential supervision, including monitoring risks associated with large financial conglomerates.

Established through a government notification on December 30, 2010, the council is chaired by the union Finance Minister and comprises the RBI Governor, senior Finance Ministry officials and heads of major financial sector regulators.

The council and its subcommittee, which is chaired by the RBI Governor, deliberate on matters raised by members concerning financial stability, regulatory coordination and the development of financial markets. The forums also consider measures to address emerging risks and strengthen the resilience of the country's financial system.

Jamkash Vehicle leads inaugurates satellite outlet at Surinsar

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, : Aimed towards strengthening its presence and bringing quality automotive services closer to customers in the region, Jamkash Vehicle leads, North India's No. 1 dealership group today inaugurated a new satellite outlet at Surinsar. Buy Maps

The newly opened outlet will cater to Surinsar and adjoining areas, enabling customers to access automotive services closer to their homes and enjoy greater convenience.

The inauguration witnessed a large gathering comprising prominent people from Surinsar and adjoining areas, representatives from Jammu & Kashmir Bank and J&K Grameen Bank, and the management and staff of Jamkash Vehicle leads.

Stock Markets extend losing streak for fourth session, Nifty recovers to 22,600

■ HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Oct 24 (UNI) Indian Stock Markets on Friday extended losing streak for the fourth consecutive session. During the session, Nifty recovered to around 22,600 after slipping below 22,400 amid broad-based selling across sectors. At close, the Sensex was down 125.56 points or 0.17 percent at 73,123.83, recovering 670 points from the day's low, while the Nifty 50 index also recovered 228 points from day's low to close at 22,600, down 87.65 points or 0.39 percent. For the week, the BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 snapped their two-week winning streak, declining



2 percent and 2.35 percent, respectively.

Among the sectors, all the indices ended in the red. The key ones were Consumer Durable down 3 percent, while Realty, Energy, Metal, PSU Bank down more than 2 percent each. On Nifty, the biggest losers were Shriram Finance, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles (TMPV),

Adani Enterprises, Tata Steel, Jio Financial, while among the losers were Eternal, Apollo Hospitals, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Maruti Suzuki. Indian rupee ended lower for the second consecutive session falling 12 paise to 94.94 per US dollar from the previous close of 94.82. Over 700 stocks touched 52-week low, including Swiggy, Jaiprakash Power Ventures, Inox Wind, NAVA, Credit Access Grameen, HEG, Afcons Infrastructure, NTPC Green Energy, CEAT, Jupiter Wagons, Reliance Power, Colgate-Palmolive India, Vedanta Aluminium, Torrent Power, CIE Automotive India, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail, JM Financial,

Jio Platforms IPO receives over one crore applications, sets global record

■ HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Oct 24 (UNI) Jio Platforms Ltd's initial public offering (IPO) has received more than one crore applications, setting a new global record for an IPO, according to exchange data on Friday.

The issue has surpassed the previous reported record of around 97 lakh applications received by Waaree Energies Ltd, making it one of the most widely subscribed public offerings in terms of investor participation.

Jio Platforms Ltd's Rs 30,200-crore initial public offering (IPO) has attracted demand worth approximately



Rs 6.5 lakh crore, including interest from anchor investors and bids placed during the public subscription period, according to available figures.

The company raised Rs 8,109.85 crore through its anchor book by allotting shares to 212 investors at the upper end of the price band. Institutional interest in the anchor portion reportedly exceeded Rs 2.5 lakh crore, translating into demand

of more than 30 times the shares set aside for these investors. The public issue also witnessed strong participation on the third day of bidding on October 22, with applications representing shares worth around Rs 4.5 lakh crore, calculated at the upper price of Rs 1,119 per share.

Overall, the public portion attracted bids exceeding 18 times the shares on offer, making it the highest-value bid recorded for an Indian IPO of more than Rs 15,000 crore, based on the available figures. Among investor categories, the portion reserved for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) was subscribed 54.68 times, receiving bids for around 268 crore shares against 4.9 crore shares on offer.

OPPO India raises the bar for premium flagship smartphones with the All-New OPPO Find X10 Series

■ HT News Network

New Delhi, Oct 24 OPPO India launched the all-new OPPO Find X10 Series, comprising OPPO Find X10 and OPPO Find X10 Pro Max, marking the 10th generation of its innovative and premium flagship OPPO Find X Series. Built to set a new benchmark for the premium smartphone experience, the Find X10 Series brings together breakthrough true-to-life imaging, uncompromising performance, exceptional battery endurance and refined design. All this, along with the new ColorOS 17, aiding superior and smooth user software experience. OPPO also expanded its flagship connected ecosystem with the OPPO Enco X4 and OPPO Pad Mini, so that users can capture, create and share in one flow. Together, the flagship portfolio elevates everyday experience, so every shot, edit and share feels authentic and true to the moment.

At the heart of the OPPO Find X10 Series is a camera system designed to deliver images closer to how they are seen in real life. The OPPO Find X10 features a Dual 200MP Camera System, while the OPPO Find X10 Pro Max introduces the revolutionary Triple 200MP Camera System, bringing 200MP resolution across all three rear cameras. Co-developed with Hasselblad, it is paired with the new LUMO True Image Engine and Second-Generation True Colour Camera for natural colours, tones and details, while LUMO Color Palette lets users build a personal style on top of that natural starting point. Video gets cinema-grade tools, including 4K Cine-Grade HDR Video, Dolby Vision and Open Gate Capture.

The all-new ColorOS 17 brings AI Mind Pilot with Agent Mode, which can work with photos and files on the device to complete multi-step tasks. The series is backed by up to an 8000mAh battery, the 2nm MediaTek Dimensity 9600 Pro on the Find X10



Pro Max, and a new Borderless Design.

Complementing the OPPO Find X10 Series is the OPPO Pad Mini, the brand's first compact 8.8-inch tablet, combining flagship performance with AI-powered productivity in an ultra-portable design,

and the OPPO Enco X4, featuring a premium audio experience co-developed with Dynaudio for exceptional sound quality. Together, these devices extend OPPO's flagship experience beyond smartphones, enabling seamless connectivity, productivity, creativity and entertainment across everyday moments. Commenting on the launch, Goldee Patnaik, Head of Communications, OPPO India, said, "For ten generations, the OPPO Find X Series has pushed the boundaries of smartphone innovation. With the OPPO Find X10 Series, we are solving what creators struggle with most: pictures that drift from what the eyes see, results that change with the light, and AI that adds steps instead of removing them. The Pad Mini brings a new form factor from OPPO, compact and creator-friendly, and with the Enco X4, it completes a connected ecosystem that lets users capture, create and share in one flow." A new benchmark for mobile imaging

Developed in collaboration with Hasselblad, the OPPO Find X10 Series brings together high-resolution camera hardware and OPPO's latest computational photography technology. The LUMO True Image Engine is designed to retain natural colours, tonal depth and finer details, helping images stay faithful to the original scene rather than appearing overly processed. The True Colour Camera captures additional colour information from the surrounding environment to improve colour reproduction in different lighting conditions. The imaging system also draws on Hasselblad's approach to tonal rendering, preserving the relationship between highlights and shadows to deliver more natural-looking portraits and scenes.

On the OPPO Find X10 Pro Max, the 200MP Ultra-Wide Camera features a 1/1.56-inch sensor and a 124-degree field of view. Its 200MP Ultra HDR Main Camera uses a 1/1.28-inch ISOCELL HPC sensor co-developed by OPPO and Samsung.



'They knew she was ill - days later she killed her three kids'

A mother who was suffering from severe mental health problems before she killed her three children was let down by a failing system, her friend has said.

Fares Bash, seven, Joury Bash, three, and nine-month-old Mohammed Bash died from knife wounds inflicted by their mother, Yasmeen Ali, in the early hours of 18 February 2024 in Sea Mills, Bristol.

A friend of Ali's said serious concerns about her mental health were raised with social services and health teams with calls for her to be sectioned but this did not happen.

"They all knew that she was suffering from mental health [problems], especially from 6 February," she said.

"How can this then happen less than two weeks later?

"Somebody failed. She was sick but she didn't do this without any prior warning.

"It could have been prevented," Ali's friend, who the BBC is calling Gemma, said.

In a joint statement, Bristol City Council, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and Avon and Somerset Police said a safeguarding review would be published in the coming weeks to ensure there was "learning from this tragic case".

Ali, who is originally from Sudan, pleaded guilty to three counts of manslaughter by reason of diminished responsibility on Friday and was sentenced to an indefinite hospital order in a secure psychiatric facility.

She was described by Gemma as someone who had previously been "very loving" and who "would do everything she could" with the children.

"They were amazing, all three of them," she said.

"[They had] so much potential - Fares with football, cars, Joury was so, so clever.

"She loved art, colouring, painting, alphabet, everything and Mohammed had just started to walk, really inquisitive, into everything.

"They loved everybody and... I loved them," she said.

But Gemma called social services and police on 6 February 2024 when she became concerned about a rapid decline in Ali's mental health.

She said her friend's behaviour had become "really, really erratic".

"Her whole demeanour, her whole character was totally different," Gemma said.

"She kept thinking there was a camera in her tumble dryer.

"She didn't sound like herself. The way she



was talking, her tone of voice was very low and it was almost demonic but it wasn't her voice," she said.

Gemma said members of social services, mental health teams and the police were at the house for about five hours and they discussed if Ali should be sectioned but a decision was made not to.

"I don't know why she wasn't sectioned that night," she said. "She should never have been alone with the children."

That night, Gemma was sent a message by a social worker which said: "[I'm] quite worried, don't think I'll sleep much tonight".

The BBC understands Ali then agreed her children should be placed with another family. They were returned to her three days later.

'Absolutely horrified'

professional close to the family - whose identity the BBC is protecting and who saw Ali on 6 February - said they too believed she "was acting very out of character" with "signs of acute mental distress".

"I was horrified, absolutely horrified the children had been placed back with her," the professional said.

"I really struggle to understand why those children were placed back in her care, who authorised it and why she had received no mental health support.

"If she had been sectioned, had a proper mental health assessment within that week, this [the children's deaths] probably wouldn't have happened," they said.

An assessment under the Mental Health Act - to establish whether Ali required inpatient treatment - was requested but not progressed, Bristol Crown Court was told on Friday.

The judge said this was due to a lack of available hospital beds.

The assessment was then cancelled on 9 February after Ali appeared "a great deal better" to medical staff and told them she was "back to her normal self", the judge said.

The court was told Ali has since been diagnosed with a schizoaffective disorder and that Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership had written to Ali to apologise for failings in her care.

The professional spoken to by the BBC said: "There was a systemic failure, but [it was] not any one individual's fault.

"There is chronic underfunding of services that should be there to help people, but that sadly are not," they said.

A spokesperson for the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership - made up of the local authority, police and health partners - said a Safeguarding Practice Review would be published alongside an action plan in the coming weeks.

Its purpose, it said, would be to "help agencies understand what happened, identify lessons from the case and ensure that learning continues to inform and strengthen safeguarding practice across Bristol".

Avon and Somerset Police said that a mandatory referral was made to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) following the children's

deaths, due to prior police contact with the family, but the watchdog said no investigation was required.

Eleven days after the incident on 6 February, all three children were dead.

"Five past midnight is when I get a phone call but there was no-one on the other end, there was just screaming and crying from Joury," Gemma said.

"I listened for a minute and then at some point, I don't remember when, it went quiet.

"Then I get another phone call from Yasmeen.

"She said she's going to God. That's when I called the police," Gemma said.

Bristol Crown Court was told police attended the property and could hear "screaming and chanting", with Ali discovered partially clothed with self-inflicted stab wounds to her throat and stomach.

Her three children, who had suffered "terrible injuries", were discovered dead on her bed, the judge said.

"[The injuries] are clearly consistent with you being in a psychotic state when you inflicted them," he added.

'A tragedy'

"If you've got so many services involved, then how can that happen?" Gemma said.

"The system is failing everybody. Everybody with mental health [problems]. Social services failed the family, the police failed the family and the mental health team failed the family," she said.

Gemma believes "someone needs to be held accountable" for what happened to the family.

"Fares could be preparing for secondary school, Joury could be preparing to go into juniors and Mohammed would be preparing to go to primary school, that should still be happening," she said.

Mr Justice Linden said the deaths of the children were "a tragedy" from which neither parent would ever recover. Sentencing Ali, he told her: "It's inconceivable you would have done what you did had you been well.

"Your actions came as a total shock to those who knew you and saw you on a regular basis - you were clearly a loving mother to your children and cared deeply for them.

"For the rest of your existence you will live with the knowledge of what you've done... I'm quite sure you are heartbroken by what has happened."

(BBC News)

Woman, 65, becomes second patient to die of Ebola in Kenya

Kenya has recorded its second death from Ebola as it handles its first ever outbreak of the disease.

A woman, aged 65, who was a close family member of the first victim, a man who had travelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo, died after being placed in quarantine, the health ministry said.

Seven other Ebola patients were receiving treatment at two isolation facilities, it added.

All the cases were within "one cluster, with no evidence of community spread", the ministry said.

More than 4,000 people have died in Africa since Ebola was confirmed in DR Congo in May, making it the second most deadly outbreak of the disease.

Kenya's latest victim had been under quarantine when she developed symptoms on 13 October, the health ministry said.

The first death, on 5 October, was that of a man who fell ill in September and was treated in several hospitals in DR Congo before arriving in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, where he died a few days later.

Those still being treated are three other relatives of the first victim, three health workers and a hospital cleaner.

The US has warned its citizens against travelling



to Kenya, while neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia are also on alert.

Ebola is a rare but deadly disease caused by a virus. As the disease progresses, vomiting and diarrhoea develop and it can lead to organ failure. Some, but not all, patients develop internal and external bleeding.

The disease spreads from one person to another by contact with infected bodily fluids such as blood or vomit.

The Bundibugyo species of Ebola is relatively

rare, with no approved vaccine or treatment - though trials are under way.

With more than 9,500 cases in DR Congo, Kenya faces a steady risk of new cases arriving across borders, according to the International Rescue Committee, which has been working alongside both governments to contain the spread.

Kenya has introduced enhanced screening for travellers arriving from DR Congo and nine other countries it considers to be at high risk: Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola,

Zambia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Travellers arriving from those countries are required to complete a digital surveillance form before boarding their flights and present a QR code to port health officials on arrival.

Kenya also ordered enhanced public health screening of aircraft arriving from those countries, as authorities seek to prevent further imported cases.

Within the country, the government has been sharing public messages to create awareness about Ebola, including encouraging people to promptly report any suspected cases and seek care at a hospital.

Nigeria's health minister said its sole confirmed case of Ebola appeared to be genetically related to a strain identified earlier in Kenya.

Prof Ali Pate said there was no evidence so far that the Kenyan patient had travelled to Nigeria, but that further testing was under way.

Health officials have been investigating whether Nigeria's first case crossed paths with Kenya's first patient. Both are believed to have travelled through Uganda's Entebbe airport earlier this month.

Uganda's health ministry announced on Friday that people who had travelled to DR Congo would no longer be able to transit via Uganda as part of its prevention measures.

(BBC News)

Gambhir's backing fuels Tilak's match-winning effort

United News Of India

CHRISTCHURCH, OCT 24 : A message of belief from head coach Gautam Gambhir and batting coach Sitanshu Kotak gave Tilak Varma the conviction to stay till the end and steer India to victory against New Zealand in the second T20 International, the left-hander revealed after being named Player of the Match.

With India losing five wickets in the chase, Tilak said his priority was to bat deep rather than panic under pressure, drawing confidence from the faith the team management had expressed in him before the match.

"Just before today's game, I was talking with coach Gautam sir and Sitanshu Kotak sir. They said one thing that we all believe, and the whole India believes in you. If you stay till the end, then you will win the game for us," Tilak said.

"That's what was going through my mind. I wanted to take the game as deep as possible. At the end of the day, everyone's belief has paid off, and I'm really proud of myself," he added. The advice became the guiding principle of Tilak's innings as he



resisted the temptation to force the pace and instead concentrated on keeping India in contention until the closing stages.

His partnership with Naman Dhir proved crucial in rebuilding the chase. Tilak said the two batters recognised that the pitch was slower than the one used in the previous match and adjusted their approach accordingly.

"I was telling Naman that we'll stay till the end. The wicket was slightly slower today compared to the last game, so I told him we would push hard in running between the wickets when the spinners were bowling," he said.

Rather than attempting big shots against the spinners, the pair focused on finding gaps and turning singles into twos, ensuring the required runs did not climb beyond reach.

Tilak said their running between the wickets yielded four to five additional twos against the spinners, translating into eight to ten valuable runs.

"I think we played smartly there. Later on, we knew that we could hit sixes against the fast bowlers. We needed that pace in

this huge ground. We were waiting for that, and we finished off in style," he said.

The dismissal of Dhir in the final over of Mitchell Santner's spell briefly interrupted the partnership, but Tilak acknowledged his contribution in keeping India on course.

"Credit goes to Naman as well, the way he batted. Unfortunately, Naman got out in the last over of Mitchell Santner. Otherwise, I think we would have finished the game in the 18th over," he said.

With Dhir's departure, the responsibility fell on Tilak and fellow Hyderabad batter Nitish Kumar Reddy to complete the job.

"The Hyderabad boys were in play today, Nitish Reddy and myself, and we are really happy that we finished the game," Tilak said.

New Zealand's bowling resources were also affected during the chase, with Matt Henry leaving the field midway through the innings because of an issue and being unable to complete his quota. Lockie Ferguson was also off the field during the final couple of overs.

For Tilak, however, the defining factor was the clarity of purpose that came from the team management's backing.

Kerala Blasters look to rebound at home as Mumbai City chase first win

United News Of India

KOCHI, OCT 24 : Kerala Blasters FC will host Mumbai City FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Sunday, in what is their first home match of the MG Indian Super League 2026-27 season.

The Blasters will look to respond after their 4-1 defeat to NorthEast United FC, while the Islanders seek their first win after managing just the sole point from two games.

Kerala head coach Ashley Westwood acknowledged the defensive errors that contributed to the defeat but stressed that his team was still in the process of finding its feet. Having had limited time together during pre-season, the Blasters are continuing to build combinations and establish a consistent starting eleven.

Westwood, however, expects his side to maintain an aggressive approach.

"We try and play intense, aggressive football. We try and get numbers forward. We try and win every game," he said, outlining his intention to take the game to the opposition rather than

adopt a cautious approach.

The Kerala coach also highlighted the



importance of reconnecting with the club's supporters ahead of their home opener.

"You can't guarantee a result, but we can guarantee we give everything we've got," he said, urging fans to back the team as it develops through the season. Mumbai City, meanwhile, will look to turn their performances into three points.

Arshdeep sets Indian record with 38 T20I wickets in 2026

United News Of India

CHRISTCHURCH, OCT 24 : Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh has set a new benchmark for Indian bowlers in T20 Internationals, claiming 38 wickets in 2026 to become the country's highest wicket-

annual bowling records on three occasions, having taken 36 wickets in 2024 and 33

in 2022. Spinner Varun Chakaravathy also claimed 36 wickets in 2025, while Axar Patel has taken 32 wickets in 2026.

The latest statistical milestones emerged from India's second T20I against New



taker in the format in a calendar year.

Arshdeep surpassed the previous Indian record of 37 wickets held by Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who achieved the feat in 2022. The milestone underlines Arshdeep's growing importance to India's T20 bowling attack and his consistency in the shortest format.

Arshdeep's latest tally also places him among the leading wicket-takers in a calendar year in T20Is among full-member nations. Ireland's Josh Little holds the benchmark with 39 wickets in 2022, while Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga claimed 38 wickets in 2024.

The Indian left-arm pacer has now featured prominently in the country's

Zealand in Christchurch, which also saw the hosts produce a notable middle-order batting performance.

Glenn Phillips scored 70 and Bevon Jacobs made 58, becoming the latest New Zealand pair batting at No. 4 or lower to register half-centuries in the same

T20I innings. Previous instances included Colin de Grandhomme and Tom Bruce against Sri Lanka in 2019, Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips against Pakistan in 2024, and Mitchell and Michael Bracewell against Sri Lanka later that year.

The feat is also rare in T20Is against India. South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen and David Miller scored half-centuries in

Travis Head urges batting reset ahead of Cape Town decider

United News Of India

CAPE TOWN, OCT 24 : Travis Head has offered an honest assessment of Australia's collapse in Gqeberha in the second ICC World Test Championship Test against South Africa.

While Head's slow-burn 121 in the second innings stood out as a highlight in Australia's heavy loss, it stressed on a persistent issue across recent matches - Australia's dependence on lone-ranger batting performances rather than collective team efforts.

"We've spoken as a group going into this series that we've sort of had one individual each time, but we haven't been able to get that collective batting day that we would desire as a team," Head said, calling on the team's top order to fix a troubling trend ahead of the final Test in Cape Town. Despite boasting individual contributors, such as Cameron

Green's efforts against Bangladesh, Matt Renshaw's 190 in Durban, and Head's own century at St George's Park, the Aussies have failed to register two fifty-plus individual scores in the same innings across their last four Tests.

Iyer hails Tilak, Reddy; Santner rues missed chances

United News Of India

CHRISTCHURCH, OCT 24 : India captain Shreyas Iyer on Saturday hailed Tilak Varma and Nitish Reddy for showing immense character under pressure, admitting that the game appeared to be slipping away after his team lost wickets in succession before the duo helped turn the contest around against New Zealand.

"When we lost wickets, consecutive wickets especially, we thought that the game was going away from us. But Tilak and Reddy, they showed immense character, and also a great cameo by Naman Dhir," Iyer said after the match.

The India captain said the contest underlined the match-winning ability within the squad, with players stepping up when the team needed them most. "I feel that every individual in our game is a match-winner, and today we saw the example of that," he said.

Iyer also praised Naman Dhir for his all-round abilities, describing him as a comprehensive cricketer capable of contributing with both bat and ball, besides making an



impact in the field.

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner, meanwhile, acknowledged that his side had come close to turning the contest in its favour, saying one more wicket could have changed the outcome. "I think if we got one more wicket there, it was kind of game over," Santner said, praising the way Tilak, Naman and Reddy controlled the chase and forced New Zealand into errors towards the end.

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