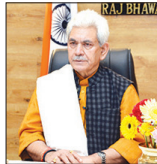


Good Morning

Kashmir

16th
Year Of Publication

Office of LG J&K
@OfficeOfLGJandK



Writers must do research & use critical proof to challenge & correct misleading historical accounts.Colonial era & subsequently some writers distorted our history to shape their ideological agenda. Writers must provide accurate & factually correct accounts challenging those lies.

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Safe Vs Risky

Seat-Sharing Standoff Continues Between NC, Congress



AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: The ‘standoff’ within the ruling alliance continues over the seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. While the National Conference is offering the ‘risky’ seat to the Congress, the latter is pushing for one of the ‘safer’ seats.

Sources said that during negotiations with the Congress high command, the National Conference offered the competitive seat to its

alliance partner. However, the Congress is insisting on one of the three safer seats for its candidate.

Sources said that the Congress may choose not to contest the ‘risky’ seat if NC remains adamant about its offer, given that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) holds a clear advantage on it.

“Talks between the leadership of both parties are still underway. The Congress may opt to stay away from the contest if they don’t concede a safer seat,”

Omar-Led Govt Lacks Political Will: MP Ruhullah
RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) senior leader and Member Parlia-

ment (MP) from Srinagar, Aga Ruhullah Mehdi on Saturday criticised the Omar Abdullah-led government in Jammu & Kashmir for “failing to show the intent as needed” on the political front.

Talking to

Terror Ecosystem Dismantled, Time To Present True Narrative Of J&K: LG

Inaugurates 2nd Edition Of Kashmir Literature Festival At Srinagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday said that the “terror ecosystem has been dismantled” in the Jammu and Kashmir UT, asserting that the time is now ripe to present its “true narrative,” free from bias and the “fear of the gun,” to foster trust and accelerate socio-economic development.

“Writers must do research and use critical proof to challenge and correct the misleading historical accounts,” the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha said. He said during colonial era and after independence a certain group of writers distorted our history to shape their ideological agenda. The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the inaugural function of Kashmir Literature Festival organised by Srikula Foundation.

“Today the young historians must provide accurate and factually correct accounts challenging those lies. In the last few years, new writers



have tried to do justice to the injustice done to the history of India, which is an excellent initiative. Efforts are also being made to take Indian literature to the world, which is highly commendable,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also called for correcting the narrative regarding Jammu Kashmir by identifying the misinformation and countering it with verified facts.

“For decades, a manipulated narrative was

Writers must do research and use critical proof to challenge, correct misleading historical accounts

Calls upon writers to correct false and fabricated narratives in the history books

During colonial era and after independence a certain group of writers distorted our history to shape their ideological agenda

Provide accurate and factually correct accounts challenging those lies

Calls for correcting the narrative regarding Jammu Kashmir by identifying misinformation

For decades, a manipulated narrative was propagated here in Jammu Kashmir

Writers, media figures admit that, out of fear of terrorists they were forced to promote narrative being pushed from across the border

“TODAY THE YOUNG HISTORIANS MUST PROVIDE accurate and factually correct accounts challenging those lies. In the last few years, new writers have tried to do justice to the injustice done to the history of India, which is an excellent initiative.”

BSF Recruits Showed Readiness During ‘Op Sindoor’: Agarwal

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

SRINAGAR: Commandant CI STC Kashmir, BSF, Yoginder Agarwal on Saturday praised the dedication and readiness of the young ‘Seema Praharis,’ saying they demonstrated full preparedness even before their formal attestation during ‘Operation Sindoor’.

“In May this year, the Government of India launched Operation Sindoor, and at that time, these law protectors had just completed 22 weeks of basic training,” Agarwal said.

He added, “After two weeks of specialised training, they stood ready without hesitation for the operation

and performed their duties with full dedication. This reflects their wartime preparedness, defensive capability, and firm determination.”

The Subsidiary Training Centre (STC) Humhama witnessed a grand passing out parade and attestation ceremony for 167 recruit constables (Trademen) of Batch No. 44, marking their first step into national service. The recruits, drawn from different parts of India, took their oath to serve the nation as brave ‘Seema Praharis’.

Solomon Yash Kumar Minz, IPS, Inspector General, STC Kashmir, BSF, the chief guest, was welcomed by Commandant Agarwal. IG Minz inspected

“IN MAY THIS YEAR, THE Government of India launched Operation Sindoor, and at that time, these law protectors had just completed 22 weeks of basic training,” Agarwal said.

Amid Rising Cancer Cases

Kashmir Struggles With Only One PET-CT Machine

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Amid an alarming rise in cancer cases across Kashmir, the valley continues to rely on just one PET-CT scan machine — located at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura — for staging, diagnosis, and monitoring of the disease.

The absence of this vital diagnostic facility at other major hospitals, including the Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, has led to long waiting periods, delayed diagnoses, and increased suffering for patients battling cancer.

According to official data, accessed, GMC Srinagar alone has registered around 8,000 new cancer cases since 2017, yet it lacks a PET-CT machine - an essential tool for detecting cancer, evaluating treatment



response, and identifying recurrence.

Oncologists told KNO that PET-CT technology has become indispensable in modern oncology but remains severely limited in Kashmir.

“The entire valley depends on a single PET-CT machine at SKIMS, which caters to thousands of patients,” said Dr Manzoor, an oncologist. “This leads to long waiting lists, something that cancer patients simply

can’t afford. We urgently need more such facilities.”

Another oncologist, Dr Aijaz, said PET-CT scans play a major role in the initial diagnosis, treatment planning, prognosis, and follow-up of cancer patients. “It’s a breakthrough technology that combines functional and anatomical imaging. Having more of these machines would significantly improve outcomes for patients,” he added.

Data from the Union Health Ministry reveals that 51,577 new cancer cases were reported in Jammu & Kashmir between 2019 and 2022. In the same period, 35,623 people lost their lives to the disease.

Since 2013, SKIMS Soura has recorded around 50,000 new cancer cases, while GMC Srinagar has registered around 8,000 since 2017.

CS Reviews Measures To Boost Handicrafts Sector In J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Saturday chaired a high-level meeting to review the measures

being taken by the Industries & Commerce Department for promotion and development of the Handicrafts and Handloom sectors in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir/ Jammu; Director, Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICCT); and other senior officers of the department.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary took stock of the initiatives undertaken to support local artisans and weavers, strengthen testing facilities, and promote genuine hand-made products across the UT.

He underscored the importance of enhancing the testing capacity of existing laboratories and directed

for establishment of a robust mechanism for traceability and QR-code based tracking of all Geographical Indication (GI) tagged items. He asked the department to ensure implementation of this digital traceability system by the end of the year without fail.

The Chief Secretary also stressed upon timely grounding of key projects including Ekta Malls in Srinagar and Jammu, besides taking forward other branding and promotion initiatives aimed at giving global recognition to J&K’s traditional crafts.

While reviewing the progress on creation

Sorry State Of Education...

‘146 Schools In JK Function With Zero Enrolments’

RIYAZ BHAT

SRINAGAR: In Jammu and Kashmir, at least 61 teachers in are posted or deployed in those schools having zero enrolments—thus raising a question on managing the human resources and quality of education.

Besides, the official data reveals that Jammu and Kashmir has at least 146 such schools wherein no student is enrolled.

According to the official figures mentioned in Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE Plus) 2024-25, Jammu and Kashmir has 61 teachers in those schools having zero enrolments and 146 schools with zero enrolments.

In September, KNO reported that Jammu and Kashmir has at least 1371 schools wherein single teachers have been posted or deployed.

The figures reveal that there is an enrolment of



32,303 students enrolled in those schools where only single teachers are posted or deployed.

Pertinently, in a previous report, the official figures have revealed that in Jammu and Kashmir more than 31,054 students were enrolled in those schools that were functioning with a single teacher.

In the previous report, there were only 1330 schools that were functioning with only a single teacher. However, the recent report suggests that the numbers have increased by at least 41 schools.

Last year, KNO first broke the news of

India-Kabul To Expand Trade Relations, Afghan Traders Likely To Visit Delhi

IANIS

NEW DELHI: As New Delhi strengthens its relations with the Taliban establishment in Kabul, FM Amir Khan Muttaqi who is one a week-long visit to the capital, is likely to push for better trade cooperation between the two countries.

According to sources aware of the matter, more than two dozen Afghan traders are likely to visit the capital on Monday and will meet the FM Muttaqi.

“These traders are likely to visit New Delhi on Monday. They will meet the FM Muttaqi, and it is being seen as a major push from the Kabul side to expand trade relations, in the domain of dry fruits, pharmaceuticals, public infrastructure and many others,” an official said.

At the restrictive press conference in the Afghan Embassy premises in New Delhi on Friday, Muttaqi backed trade through the Chabahar port route and called for opening the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah border.



Pakistan does not allow

India to export to Afghanistan via the land route, and hence, India uses the Chabahar port in Iran for trade and commerce.

Notably, FM Muttaqi, during the meeting with EAM Jaishankar at

RS Polls

Congress Top Brass To Meet In Srinagar

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Top leaders of Jammu and Kashmir Congress will meet here on Sunday to discuss party strategy for the forthcoming polls to the four Rajya Sabha seats and bypolls to the two assembly seats.

Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra will chair the meeting at the party headquarters in Srinagar. Key party leaders from both the Kashmir and Jammu regions will attend, party sources said.

They said the Congress leaders will finalise their strategy for the forthcoming polls to four Rajya Sabha seats.

Congress had sought support of the ruling National Conference in the election to one of the four seats.

National Conference on Friday named candidates for only three Rajya Sabha seats, saying that it has left one seat open as talks with Congress



were going on.

The Rajya Sabha polls are scheduled to be held on October 24.

Congress sources said the party meeting will also deliberate on its stand on bypolls to the Budgam and Nagrota assembly segments, where voting will be held in November. (PTI)

NGT Member Judge Dr. Afroz Ahmad reviews DEP in B'pora

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Member Judge of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Principal Bench New Delhi, Dr. Afroz Ahmad, on Saturday visited District Bandipora and chaired a meeting to review the compliance of NGT directions regarding the formulation and implementation of the District Environment Plan (DEP).

The meeting, held at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora, was chaired by Dr. Afroz Ahmad in the presence of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, and attended by Dr. Shakeel Ahmad from the Islamic University of Science and Technology, besides senior officers from departments including Police, Forest, Agriculture, Health, Jal Shakti, R&B, Industries, Pollution Control Board, Municipal Councils, and Rural Development.

During the meeting, the DC Bandipora presented an overview of the District Environment Plan 2024, formulated in pursuance of Government Order No. 81-JK(GAD) of 2019, under which a District Environment Committee has been constituted to oversee environment-related action plans. The DEP outlines an integrated approach across seven thematic areas viz.



solid waste management, water quality management, domestic sewage management, industrial wastewater management, air quality management, mining activity management, and noise pollution management.

It was informed that Bandipora district, with a geographical area of 345 square kilometres and nearly 1.99 lakh hectares of forest cover, maintains an overall environmental status within safe limits, though challenges persist in areas such as solid waste management, sewage disposal, and plastic pollution.

The DEP identifies major pollution sources including surface runoff of fertilizers and pesticides into local water bodies such as Arin Nallah, Gadar Kul, and Ajas Nallah, and noise pollution primarily caused by vehicular traffic in urban areas.

It was further informed that industrial pollution in the district remains minimal, with only eight stone crushers, four hot mix plants, and two operational units in the Sumbal Industrial Estate. The plan emphasizes public participation as the cornerstone of environmental preservation, promoting awareness through schools, colleges, Gram Sabhas, and initiatives such as Back to Village programmes. It also advocates the 5Rs approach: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle as a guiding principle for waste minimization and sustainable living.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Afroz Ahmad underscored the importance of scientific soil and solid waste management, noting that untreated and legacy waste pose severe threats to soil and groundwater health. He called for

the adoption of scientific methods such as segregation, recycling, and bioremediation; strict enforcement of waste management rules; and effective utilization of environmental funds for remediation purposes.

Emphasizing that a clean environment is a fundamental right, Dr. Afroz urged all stakeholders to foster eco-friendly and sustainable practices to maintain ecological and economic balance.

He appreciated the comprehensive and pragmatic approach adopted by the Bandipora Administration in preparing and implementing the DEP, while calling for sustained and coordinated efforts to conserve the district's fragile ecosystem, promote afforestation, and strengthen solid and liquid waste management systems at the community level.

In her remarks, the DC Bandipora assured full commitment from the administration and directed all departments to ensure time-bound execution of environmental measures. She emphasized the need to reduce waste generation at the source, improve scientific waste segregation and disposal, and intensify awareness programmes through local institutions for wider public participation.

DC Shopian chairs Grievance Redressal Camp at Zampathri Keller



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: As part of the Government's ongoing Public Outreach and Grievance Redressal Programme, the District Administration Shopian Saturday conducted a Grievance Redressal Camp at Panchayat Halqa Zampathri Keller, presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta.

The event aimed to bring the administration closer to the people and ensure that public grievances are addressed promptly at their doorsteps.

The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation of senior citizens, women, youth and locals from Zampathri and adjoining villages who raised a wide range of issues pertaining to road connectivity especially Zampathri to Tragpathri road, Shukroo road, Gandow road, Keller/Zrakan/Mashwara road, play ground at Zampathri, health-care facilities, dearth of staff in Keller Hospital, irrigation, drinking water & power

supplies, development of Tourism infrastructure in the area, installation of Transformers, upliftment of education, livestock development and horticulture support.

While interacting with the public, The DC listened to all grievances patiently and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for early redressal and appropriate action. He stressed on responsive, transparent and accountable governance, urging departments to act promptly on the issues projected by the people.

The DC assured that the administration is fully committed to resolving public issues in a time-bound manner and emphasized that such grievance redressal camps are an integral part of participatory governance while directing officers to make regular field visits to assess ground-level issues and to ensure the saturation of government schemes, particularly those aimed at youth empowerment, livelihood generation, rural infrastructure and welfare of weaker sections.

DLSA B'gam Organises Awareness Programme on Int'l Girl Child day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam, organized an Awareness Programme on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child in collaboration with Girls Higher Secondary School, Budgam. The programme was conducted on the directions of, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Shazia Tabasum under the supervision of, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Budgam, O.P. Bhagat and the guidance of Secretary, DLSA Budgam, Nusrat Ali Hakak.

The primary objective of observing the International Day of the Girl Child is to highlight and address the unique challenges faced by girls, promote their human rights, and empower them to build a future of equal opportunities in education, health, and safety and free from discrimination and violence.

The day also emphasizes the potential of girls as innovators and leaders, calling for greater investment in their well-being during formative years to enable their meaningful participation in sustainable development.

The DLSA, Budgam, deputised Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsels as resource persons for the

programme. They delivered insightful presentations on relevant legal schemes and raised awareness among participants about their objectives and implementation.

They spoke about the rights of girls with a special emphasis on combating child marriage, child labour, and gender-based violence. It was highlighted that child marriage is internationally recognized as a form of gender-based violence and a grave violation of human rights. Such practices expose girls and women to heightened risks of sexual, physical, and psychological violence, as well as adverse health outcomes including HIV infection, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, poor mental health, depression, and even loss of life through femicide or suicide. Furthermore, gender-based violence including child marriage that leads to reduced educational attainment and limited economic and employment opportunities.

The Programme also promoted initiatives on child marriage protection laws, gender equality, and the rights of the girl child under national and international legal frameworks. It was emphasized that marriage before the age of 18 constitutes a fundamental violation of human rights.

KVK-Shopian organizes orientation programme on PMDDKY

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Shopian Saturday organized the Prime Minister Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) orientation programme at Balapora, Shopian.

The event also featured the live telecast of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's address, which was witnessed by over three hundred farmers from across the district.

The programme was graced by the presence of MLA Shopian, Adv. Shabir Ahmad Kullay, Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta; ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain

Faaz; Senior Scientist & Head, KVK Shopian, Prof. Zaffar Afroz Badri, scientists of the Kendra, representatives from NGO REACHA, NRLM, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), progressive and champion farmers, farm women and tribal farmers.

In his address, MLA lauded the efforts of KVK-Scientists for their continued outreach to every corner of the district and for sensitizing farmers about various government schemes and initiatives aimed at their welfare.

On the occasion, the DC visited the stall displayed some of the promising varieties of Apple, Almond,

Walnut, Maize, Muskmelon and some vegetables successfully cultivated at research cum demonstration farms of Krishi Vigyan Kendra to showcase the technologies of the variety to the participants for their horizontal expansion in the district to encourage the socio-economic status of the farming community.

Prof. Zaffar Afroz Badri presented an overview of the PMDDKY programme, highlighting its objectives for holistic agricultural development through the convergence of 38 schemes operated under eleven Central Ministries, the State Government, and private entrepreneurs.

The workshop focused

on enhancing farmers' understanding of the financial, technical, and institutional benefits available under PMDDKY.

Discussions covered key themes including natural farming practices to reduce chemical load in soils, restore mineral balance, and improve irrigation facilities, increasing cropping intensity and diversifying production to achieve higher yields, processing and value addition of farm produce through grading, packaging, and efficient transportation to increase market value and shelf life, pulse production improvement, addressing both quality and quantity aspects for enhanced productivity.

KVIB Organizes Awareness Camp

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), District Office Srinagar, Saturday organized an Awareness Camp-cum-Interaction Programme at Waripora Balhama, Srinagar.

The event was attended by Deputy Chief Executive Officer KVIB Kashmir, Director JKRSETI, Development Officer Beekeeping KVIB, officers from Lead District Manager Srinagar, Cluster Head J&K Bank Srinagar, various rural Bank Branch Heads & officers from other line departments.

The programme was aimed at creating awareness among rural unemployed educated youth, aspiring entrepreneurs, artisans with a special focus on beekeepers from the rural areas of Balhama, Khonmoh, Lasjan and adjoining regions.

The event featured informative sessions and discussions on self-employment opportunities and various schemes viz. PMEGP & JKREGP implemented by the Board.

Speaking on the



event, Deputy CEO KVIB highlighted the Self-employment opportunities in khadi and village industries sector, financial assistance schemes (PMEGP/JKREGP) and employment generation programs offered by J&K KVIB, Technical training and skill development initiatives particularly in Bee Keeping sector, marketing support and linkages for rural entrepreneurs and specific guidance on beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood option.

He further added that the J&K KVIB is committed to generating employment opportunities in rural and urban areas through promotion of khadi and village industries especially Beekeeping sector.

The interactive session enabled direct dialogue between KVIB officials and local participants, addressing queries relat-

ed to loan applications, project formulation, and accessing government support schemes. Beekeepers received specialized information on modern apiculture techniques, equipment subsidies, and market opportunities.

On-spot applications from the participants under JKREGP scheme were received and it was assured to them that the same shall be processed as early as possible after prior approval from the DTFC.

It was informed that during the year 2024-25 under PMEGP scheme 322 cases were disbursed involving Margin Money of Rs 507.90 lakh generating employment to 1932 persons and under JKREGP scheme rural cases stand disbursed involving Margin Money of Rs 28.00 lakh thereby creating employment to 96 rural persons.

The initiative received an enthusiastic response from participants, who actively engaged in discussions about entrepreneurship opportunities and government support mechanisms. Beekeepers from the region showed keen interest in exploring avenues for expanding their traditional vocations through modern techniques and institutional support.

This awareness camp represents J&K KVIB's continued commitment to empowering rural entrepreneurship and fostering sustainable economic development in the region. By focusing on traditional industries such as beekeeping alongside other village industries, the Board aims to strengthen local economies while preserving indigenous skills and practices.

The programme marks another significant step in the Board's ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between government schemes and grassroots beneficiaries, ensuring that rural communities have access to the resources and knowledge necessary for economic self-reliance.

SANKALP-HEW Mission Shakti, SWD B'pora Celebrates Int'l Girl Child Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: In connection with the celebration of International Girl Child Day 2025, SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) Mission Shakti, Social Welfare Department (SWD) Bandipora in collaboration with the Education Department, Saturday organised a series of activities at Sumbal to promote empowerment, leadership, and safety among girls.



The celebration was held in line with this year's global theme "The Girl I Am, The Change I Lead: Girls on the Frontlines of Crisis."

Awareness sessions were conducted by Gender Specialist and Financial

Literacy Specialist, who sensitized students about various government welfare schemes, legal rights, health, and financial literacy for girls. The school faculty also delivered motivational talks and lauded the efforts of the Social

Welfare Department Bandipora in advancing women and child welfare initiatives.

To encourage physical fitness, confidence, and resilience among girls, sports and self-defence activities were also organised on the occasion. Free sports uniforms were distributed among students, followed by a badminton tournament among girl students of Sumbal area, aimed at promoting teamwork and sportsmanship.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION TANGMARG.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (CIVIL WORKS)

NIT No: 78/R&B of 2025-26

Dated:10-10-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways sand other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Project Authority	Tender call
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Construction of Passenger Shed at Kunzer Market.	4.99	200/-	9980/-	20 days	CDF	DEE	District Dev. Commissioner Baramulla	1 st
2	Construction of Passenger Shed at Bus stand Hardshoora.	4.99	200/-	9980/-	20 days	CDF	DEE	District Dev. Commissioner Baramulla	1 st
3	Improvement / Up-gradation of Staircase from Ferozpora to Toll Plaza Post Tangmarg at Ferozpora under CDS of Hon'ble MLA Gulmarg.	9.75	600/-	19500/-	20 days	CDF	D/C	District Dev. Commissioner Baramulla	1 st

Position Of AAA: Accorded

Position of T.S: Accorded

Position of funds: Assured

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q.),Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below--

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	10-10-2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	10-10-2025
3	Bid submission Start Date	10-10-2025
4	Bid Submission End Date	20-10-2025 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	21-10-2025 11:00 AM

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No. , Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender inviting authority)

3. All the bidders must upload Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) (The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, otherwise bids shall be rejected).

4. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority) as per rule-171 (I) of GFR 2017. The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Tangmarg (tender receiving authority).

6. The earnest money/ Bid security in favour of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of original Treasury Challan.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

8. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-

i. Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

ii. Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.

iii. Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

iv. Failure of successfully bidder to submit the performance security within the time period (as per JKPWD Engineering Manual 2020) i.e 21 Days from the issuance of latter of acceptance, after that the work will be put to fresh tenders without any notice to the contractor and the EMD will be forfeited.

38. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25(Double agreement Form), NIT, GFR 2017 & JK PWD Engineering Manual 2020.

39. As per the Circular No. 01 (Adm) FD of 2025 Dated: 08-07-2025 issued by Finance Department of UT J&K "Every participating supplier/ contractor to mandatorily disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payments shall be released by the Government Department/Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder".

No: R&B / Divn./ Tang/5024-34

Dated: 10 -10-2025

DIPK-7067-25

DT: 11/10/2025

Sd/-

Technical Officer

Sd/-

Executive Engineer

R&B Division Tangmarg.

.....Riverside Rendezvous with Heritage

'Know Your Artisan' Spotlights Kashmir's Unsung Masters at Jehlum Riverside

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a vibrant celebration of Kashmir's timeless artisanal legacy, the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Saturday launched the groundbreaking "Know Your Artisan" initiative at the picturesque Jehlum River Front.

This one-of-a-kind event, inaugurated by Commissioner= Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Vikramjit Singh, marks the beginning of a series of immersive cultural programs scheduled over the next two months.

Mussarat Islam, Director, Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, alongside other senior officials from the department were also present on the occasion.

Underscoring the Government's commitment to preserving and promoting the region's rich craft traditions, an official spokesman of thr Department stated that Kashmir's craft legacy

Is more than mere products, as these embody centuries-old traditions that define the cultural identity and economic fabric of the Valley.

"In today's fast-paced market, skilled artisans often fade into the background, overshadowed by intermediaries," he added.

To address this, the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir,



under the flagship Soulful Kashmir campaign, has introduced "Know Your Artisan" as a transformative platform under the brand "Soulful Kashmir". By bringing artisans and consumers together in lively public spaces across Srinagar, the initiative spotlights the human stories, masterful techniques, and deep heritage behind each craft, while forging direct market linkages to empower creators and captivate locals and tourists alike.

The event's core objectives include providing artisans a direct stage to demonstrate their skills and engage with the public; elevating Brand Soulful Kashmir by showcasing authentic crafts and the talented hands that craft them; strengthening market connections to secure direct orders; raising awareness among youth and visitors about

the rich diversity of Kashmir's craft heritage; and bolstering artisan livelihoods through targeted promotional and sales avenues.

The spokesman said today's launch featured captivating live demonstrations, intimate artisan interactions, and bustling display-cum-sale counters, complemented by branding exercises and cultural performances that infused the riverside venue with an air of festivity and authenticity. "At the heart of the program were seven eminent artisans, each a custodian of Kashmir's prestigious GI-registered crafts who include

Mushtaq Ahmad, Master of Pashmina Weaving; Maqbool Ahmad Jan, Virtuoso in Papier-Mâché; Farooq Ahmad Mir (Padma Shri Awardee), an icon of Kani Shawl Weaving; Mehboob Ali Beigh, National awardee in Sozni Embroidery; Shahnawaz

Sofi, specialist in Kashmir Hand-Knotted Carpets; Mohammad Yousuf Muran, awardee artisan of Walnut Wood Carving and Ali Mohammad Giru, guardian of Khatambandh craftsmanship

Vikramjit Singh, while inaugurating the event, emphasized its role in sustainable development: "This initiative is a beacon for our artisans, ensuring their voices and visions reach the world directly. By celebrating Soulful Kashmir, we not only preserve our heritage but also weave it into the future of economic empowerment, he stated.

The "Know Your Artisan" series is poised to yield tangible impacts, including heightened engagement from the public and tourists with local crafts; greater recognition and marketing avenues for artisans; a surge in sales and orders both during and after events; amplified visibility for Brand Soulful Kashmir via social and print media; and the creation of valuable documented content for ongoing promotions.

As the nodal agency, the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, will spearhead the conceptualization, coordination, and execution of this initiative in partnership with local stakeholders, ensuring seamless rollout across Srinagar's iconic locales over the coming months.

Chief Secretary reviews progress of PMGSY road works

Calls for stronger on-ground monitoring of PMGSY works across J&K



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Saturday chaired a review meeting of the Public Works Department (PWD) to assess the progress of road and bridge construction works being executed under various phases of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) across J&K.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, PWD; Development Commissioner (Works); Chief Engineers; and other senior officers of the department. All Deputy Commissioners participated through video conferencing.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary emphasized the critical importance of timely completion of road projects under PMGSY Phases I and II. He directed the concerned officers to make every possible effort to ensure the execution of all pending works within the stipulated timelines. He further instructed that clear responsibility be fixed in cases where works remain incomplete or unexecuted due to any

avoidable reasons.

Underscoring the need for stronger on-ground supervision, the Chief Secretary called for the designation of senior officers to oversee the progress of PMGSY works on a regular basis. These officers, he directed, should undertake frequent site visits and ensure that site engineers maintain daily monitoring of both the quality and quantity of work being executed.

The Chief Secretary also directed that Executive Engineers and Assistant Executive Engineers be required to conduct regular field inspections, with their movements and site visits tracked and monitored at the highest levels within the department. He remarked that the role of engineers lies more in the field where the work is executed than in the confines of their offices.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the status of works taken up under later phases of PMGSY, seeking detailed information regarding projects sanctioned, completed, ongoing, and pend-

ing, along with their physical progress and expected dates of completion.

He also reviewed in detail the works proposed under PMGSY Phase IV, including those aimed at connecting vibrant villages in frontier areas. He took stock of the status of forest clearances required for several such road projects to ensure that procedural delays are minimized.

Providing a detailed overview, ACS, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh apprised the Chief Secretary about the department's roadmap for completion of balance road and bridge works under various PMGSY phases. He informed that under Phase IV and its subsequent batches, the department has prioritized early execution and time-bound completion of projects across both divisions.

It was informed in the meeting that as of April 2025, 88 road projects under Phase I, 6 under Phase II, and 85 under Phase III were pending completion. Of these, 6 projects under Phase I and 40 under Phase III have since been completed, and a structured

roadmap has been drawn to finish the remaining works within the shortest possible timeframe.

With regard to bridges, the meeting was informed that out of 305 bridges taken up under the first three phases of PMGSY, 227 have been completed, while 50 more are targeted for completion by March 2026.

As for Phase IV, it was revealed that 316 schemes have been sanctioned, out of which 3 projects are already under execution. The remaining 313 projects have been tendered out of which 134 are under technical evaluation, 87 under financial evaluation, and 39 for which Letters of Acceptance (LoA) have already been issued and will be taken up for execution shortly.

Reiterating the Government's commitment to rural connectivity and infrastructure development, the Chief Secretary directed the PWD to ensure effective monitoring, strict adherence to quality standards, and timely completion of all sanctioned works under PMGSY across J&K.

Sustainable agricultural growth...

Sakeena Itoo calls for collaboration between scientific institutions, farming community



GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Saturday remarked that institutions like SKUAST-K have a pivotal role in promoting research and innovation in the agricultural sector.

The Minister stated this while addressing a function held on the sidelines of live telecast of launch of PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) of SKUAST-K at Pombay.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister emphasized on the need for greater collaboration between scientific institutions and the farming community to ensure sustainable agricul-

tural growth.

The Minister said that much more needs to be done in the agriculture and allied sectors to improve productivity and profitability. She urged concerned departments to provide continuous handholding to farmers and equip them with the latest technologies and scientific know-how for crop improvement.

Highlighting the recent challenges faced by farmers, the Minister noted that adverse weather conditions and closure of the National Highway have caused substantial losses to the farming community. She stressed that agricultural scientists need to come on front and play a proactive role in guiding farmers towards high-yield and climate-resilient crops.

Lauding the role of

Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah on upliftment of farming community, the Minister said that the Sher-i-Kashmir's land reforms are known across the globe for improving the conditions of farming community.

Speaking on various initiatives of government on development of agriculture sector, Minister Sakeena said that most services are now available online, making it essential to ensure proper facilitation and awareness among farmers so they can avail themselves of government schemes and programmes. She highlighted various welfare measures undertaken for the poor and underprivileged, including the revival of stalled projects, enhancement of marriage aid schemes.

The Minister reiterated that the government, under the leadership of Omar Abdullah, is committed to ensuring farmers' prosperity and economic independence.

She said that the government remains steadfast in its mission to work for the welfare of all sections of society and to deliver on the promises made to the people. The Minister also distributed farm Kits among the ST community members.

Rana reviews progress of water supply projects in Anantnag, Kulgam



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana Saturday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress and performance of various ongoing water supply projects in districts of Anantnag, Kulgam and Pulwama.

The meeting, held with the objective of evaluating on-ground implementation and identifying potential bottlenecks, was attended by Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Department, senior departmental officers and district-level officers from the these South Kashmir districts.

The review also focused on accelerating the delivery of clean and reliable drinking water to every household in line with the vision of equitable and sustainable water access under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

During the meeting, the Minister reaffirmed the commitment of Omar Abdullah led government to ensure access to safe and

clean drinking water for all its citizens.

He underscored the importance of robust monitoring systems and effective execution strategies to meet mission objectives within stipulated timelines.

Stressing on the principles of transparency, accountability and quality assurance, the Minister directed officials to enhance service delivery mechanisms, swiftly address public grievances and continuously work to improve citizen satisfaction.

Highlighting the critical importance of sustainable water management, Rana advocated for the adoption of scientific methods and technology-driven approaches to conserve water, minimize wastage and ensure the long-term viability of natural water sources.

Emphasizing the role of citizens in the success of government initiatives, he appealed for greater community involvement in water conservation efforts. "It is our moral respon-

sibility to make judicious use of available water resources. We must adopt eco-friendly lifestyle to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure a sustainable future for the generations to come," the Minister stated.

He issued directives for the rejuvenation and protection of traditional water bodies such as ponds, springs, streams and wetlands.

The Minister emphasized that such efforts not only enhance water availability but also contribute to strengthening local ecosystems and resilience against water scarcity.

Rana also called for the convergence of schemes under Jal Jeevan Mission, Jal Shakti Abhiyan and other related programs to maximize resource utilization and project outcomes.

He stressed on the timely and efficient execution of projects, with strict adherence to quality norms and transparency at all levels of implementation.

Javid Dar visits Medicinal, Aromatic Plantation farm Rohama B'la



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development, and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative, and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar visited the Medicinal and Aromatic Plantation Farm in Hadipora, Sub-Division Rohama of Baramulla.

During the visit, the Minister reviewed the ongoing activities under the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants initiative focusing on high-value crop diversification and enhancing farmers' income.

Minister Dar interacted with farmers, gathering feedback on departmental scheme implementation at grassroots level and empha-

sizing the need for farmer-oriented initiatives.

The Minister appreciated the Agriculture Department's efforts in promoting medicinal and aromatic cultivation, directing further strengthening of initiatives for sustainable and profitable agriculture.

Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer Rohama briefed the Minister about various interventions, achievements, and future strategies aimed at promoting high-value crop diversification and enhancing farmers' income under the HADP initiative. The HADP initiative aims to promote high-value crop diversification, enhancing farmers' income and contributing to the region's economic growth.

Javid Dar attends launch of PMDDKY, Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission in B'la

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj & Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, Saturday attended the virtual launch of Pradhan Mantri Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) and Self-Reliance in Pulses Mission, inaugurated by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

MLA Baramulla, Javid Hassan Beigh; Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa; Heads of various departments, and progressive farmers were also present on the occasion.

Minister highlighted that these initiatives will play a crucial role in strengthening the agriculture sector, improving farmers' income, and advancing sustainable and self-reliant farming practices across Jammu and

Kashmir.

The event, aimed at boosting agricultural growth, enhancing food security and promoting self-sufficiency in pulses production.

Participants appreciated the Government of India's continued focus on farmers' welfare. The officers underlined district's commitment to effectively implementing these flagship programmes in alignment with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE SEED PRODUCTION OFFICER, SGR.

AGRI. PROD. & FARMER'S WELFARE DEPTT. KASHMIR

Sale of Onion seedlings at Seed Multiplication Farm Sumbal

This Office is pleased to announce the availability of Onion Seedlings at Seed Multiplication Farm Sumbal from 22nd of October 2025 for open sale among all farming community.

Sd/-
(Mir Aijaz Hassan)

Seed Production Officer,
Lalmandi, Srinagar

DIPK-7088-25
DT: 11/10/2025

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE

SRINAGAR KASHMIR

Tel-0194-2474234 Fax -2482032 – email:- kash.flori@jk.gov.in

Subject: Extension Notice No. 04

In view of no response, the Bid Submission end/ opening date (Online) of technical bids in respect of e-NIT No. 27 of 2025 dated: 01.08.2025 invited by this office under endorsement No. DOFK-GS0TNDR/18/2025/E-7740808/e-NIT-27 dated: 01.08.2025 with regard to "Outsourcing of entry ticketing system of Iqbal Park Srinagar" is hereby extended as per the details given below:-

1.	Bid Submission End date & time	24.10.2025	Up to 02:00 PM
2.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	28.10.2025	At 02:00 PM

Other terms & conditions shall remain same as laid down in the concerned e-NIT.

No: DOFK-GS0TNDR/18/2025/E-7740808/e-NIT-27

Dated: 11/10/2025

Sd/-
Accounts Officer,
(Member Secretary)

DIPK-7086-25
DT: 11/10/2025

Good Morning

Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Medicine Trade In Disarray

Once again, the medicine mafia has tightened its grip on the market, vandalizing the rate structure with impunity. The common man, already burdened by inflation, is forced to buy life-saving drugs at exorbitant rates without any idea of what the actual price should be. It is a free-for-all situation where every chemist seems to have his own price list, leaving patients helpless and frustrated.

What is more distressing is the apparent silence of the authorities. Either they are genuinely unaware of the chaos, or they are projecting ignorance to cover their inefficiency. In both cases, it is the ordinary citizen who suffers. Medicines, which are supposed to save lives, have become instruments of exploitation.

There is an urgent need for strict regulation and transparent pricing. The government must ensure that every medicine carries a clear, verified retail price and that strict penalties are imposed on those found overcharging. Health is not a commodity to be traded for profit, and the ongoing disorder in medicine pricing is a blot on the system’s conscience.

Until accountability is fixed and regular inspections become the norm rather than a rarity, the medicine mafia will continue to thrive — and the common man will keep paying the price, literally and painfully.

Good Morning

Kashmir

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When Relief Turns Risky

The Dark Side Of Cough Syrup Overdose

ADIL RASHID

One of the most common and easily accessible medications on any pharmacy shelf is cough syrup. Universally recognised for providing relief from the symptoms of coughs and colds, these syrups are generally considered safe for use by the public. However, this very perception of safety often obscures a critical and dangerous reality: that an overdose of cough syrup can be not only harmful but potentially fatal. The line between therapeutic use and dangerous misuse is thinner than many realise, making education on this topic a matter of significant public health importance.

The majority of cough syrups today have complex formulations of active ingredients that address various underlying causes of symptoms. Dextromethorphan, a powerful cough suppressant; codeine, a pharmaceutical-grade opioid analgesic and cough suppressant; and chlorpheniramine, an antihistamine, are all common ingredients in medications that are marketed for use with coughs and colds along with other included preparations. When used at their recommended therapeutic dosing, some or all of these agents exert their effects through various physiological pathways that lessen and ultimately cease coughs. The danger develops when cough syrup is consumed at larger quantities than recommended. At these higher levels, the same active ingredients that were intended to produce healing can now threaten harm to the body’s vital systems, including many central aspects of the nervous system, such as the brain functions that regulate cognition, the liver, and any respiratory drive. These risks are compounded when any cough syrup is mixed with other central nervous system depressants, including alcohol or other prescription medications.

To understand the specific risks, it is helpful to examine the individual ingredients. Dextromethorphan, for instance, is a safe and effective antitussive at standard doses. However, when taken in excess, it transforms into a powerful psychoactive agent. An overdose directly alters normal brain function by affecting the central nervous system, leading to a spectrum of unsettling and dangerous symptoms. The effects of dextromethorphan can vary from mild symptoms, including dizziness, confusion, and loss of motor coordination, to severe effects, including visual and auditory hallucinations, dangerous tachycardia, and severe agitation. In the most serious overdose



cases, dextromethorphan can act as a respiratory depressant by inhibiting the brainstem’s respiratory centers, leading to respiratory depression, coma, and death. This clearly demonstrates that an active ingredient in OTC medications can become a significant threat to life, if misused.

The risks are even more pronounced with prescription cough syrups containing codeine. As an opioid, codeine is related to drugs like morphine and heroin, and it shares their capacity for causing profound respiratory depression and a high risk of dependency and fatal overdose. Even under a doctor’s supervision, these medications must be used with extreme caution. The danger of overdose is not merely theoretical; it is a well-documented and frequent occurrence in cases of opioid misuse. Furthermore, a hidden danger often lurks in the other contents of the syrup itself. Numerous cough mixtures incorporate sedating antihistamines and, in certain cases, substantial amounts of alcohol. These ingredients can increase the depressant effects of the main active ingredients such as dextromethorphan or codeine. If a healthcare provider or patient does not take these factors into consideration, or if patients are consuming alcohol at the same time, the resulting depressant effects on the central nervous system can be catastrophic, possibly leading to a drug interaction that produces a depressant overdose far beyond that of any single component.

These factors have contributed to an alarming and escalating public health crisis, particularly in youth and adolescents. The deliberate misuse of cough syrup, often referred to as using "lean",

"purple drank", or "sizzurp", involves consuming large volumes of prescription-strength cough syrup, frequently mixed with soda and candy. Users seek the dissociative, euphoric, and sedative "high" produced by the combination of dextromethorphan, codeine, and promethazine. This concerning trend is becoming increasingly common and has long-lasting effects. In addition to the acute risk of fatal respiratory depression, prolonged abuse may lead to severe dental caries ("meth mouth"), cognitive deficits, seizures, and debilitating physical dependence. The social and psychological consequences are just as grave, frequently thwarting educational and developmental progression while ensnaring individuals into a web of substance abuse. This trend highlights the urgent need for targeted public health interventions and strong educational efforts.

Within this intricate landscape, pharmacists and other health care providers positioned on the frontlines are unique opportunities to mitigate harm and prevent overdose. They are the last and most accessible point of contact before a medication reaches the consumer, giving them a unique opportunity to provide crucial guidance. Patient education is the cornerstone of this effort. Pharmacists must proactively counsel patients on proper dosing, using precise measuring devices like syringes rather than household spoons, which are highly inaccurate. They should clearly explain potential adverse effects, emphasise the critical importance of avoiding alcohol and other sedatives while using the medication, and warn against the dangers of self-medication

beyond the recommended duration. Furthermore, systemic safeguards are essential. This includes advocating for clearer, more prominent warning labels on packaging, supporting the restriction of over-the-counter sales of codeine-containing cough syrups in jurisdictions where they are still available, and implementing more secure prescription monitoring programmes for controlled substances. Also, awareness campaigns specifically designed for parents and young people about the dangers associated with abusing "lean" and cough syrup are also an important part of a comprehensive prevention plan.

In conclusion, although cough syrups are intended to be beneficial and helpful in alleviating symptoms, they also have the risk of causing harm, both unintentionally and intentionally, that people do not often consider. That extra spoonful, as it may seem insignificant in the interest of more expedient relief, has the potential to upset the fragile homeostasis of the central nervous system, possibly with damaging and lingering effects on the individual’s well-being. Safe usage comes from awareness, accountability, and most importantly, professional oversight from a qualified healthcare professional. When patients combine their own responsible education with professional education, they can receive the therapeutic advantages and utilize their medications while fully mitigating the severe medical damage some uses of cough syrup can invite.

Author is a pharmacy student with a keen interest in drug safety, pharmacology, and public health awareness. He can be mailed at ehsaanamy133@gmail.com

Selfie Festival: Where Selfies Galore



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

Festivals are the soul of our society, a time when people express gratitude to God, nature, and their relationships. But now, a new character has joined every festival, the mobile camera. As soon as the lamp is lit, the aarti plate is rotated, or a rakhi is tied, the first question is, "Did you take a photo?" Previously, the puja was completed, followed by the prasad distribution; now, the story is made first, followed by the puja. This is the same India where what was once a "festival of the mind" has now become a "festival of the media."

Diwali is no longer a night of lights, but of posts about decorations. People are more preoccupied with perfecting camera angles than cleaning their homes. Before worshipping the idol of Goddess Lakshmi, a "boomerang" is created, and before bursting firecrackers, a "caption" is decided. Diwali vibes, family love. It seems as if everyone’s festival must be reflected on social media, or else it’s incomplete. This digital competition has become more about "likes" than devotion.

The spirit of fasts like Karva Chauth, love, devotion, and blessings, has now been subsumed into photo ops and discount offers. Trends like "selfie with mother-in-law," "fasting face," and "photo with the moon" have become the new hallmarks of the festival.



Earlier, there was the thrill of seeing the moon, now there is the obsession with clicking. There was a time when women wore saris with a sense of worship; today, the same saris have become a means of branding. The festival has now become a festival of display, not love.

Holi is no longer a game of colors, but of colorful displays. Faces that used to be drenched in color are now washed away by filters. People are now more afraid of applying color to each other, fearing, "I’ll ruin my clothes and look bad in photos." "Selfie with Gulaal" has colors, but no sense of belonging. This Holi has become a Holi of makeup, not of the heart.

Eid, Christmas, Navratri, celebrations of every religion are now painted in the same color, the color of digital ostentation. Smiling pictures in front of a mosque or church, photos of dishes lined up on a plate, and the caption, "Sharing love and peace." But are they truly spreading love

and peace, or is it just a sham? Instead of uniting people, festivals are now becoming a source of comparison and competition. "His lighting is more beautiful," "His pavilion is bigger," "She has more expensive decorations", all this has swallowed up the intimacy that once defined families.

This selfie drama has become so profound that even devotion is now a play. Upon entering a temple, people first pull out their phones, then fold their hands. Aarti is performed live, but the mind is offline. Donations are displayed on social media, so that others know that they, too, are virtuous. Devotion is no longer private; it has become a public display. Faith is no longer driven by the soul, but by broadcast.

From a psychological perspective, this "digital faith" is the result of a deep unease. People now seek proof of every experience through social media. They believe that if something doesn’t catch the camera, it never happened.

This is why smiles during festivals are practiced, not genuine. Even children have learned to say "Happy Diwali" in front of the camera. The warmth of relationships has now been frozen by the cold of the camera.

That was the true meaning of festivals—to stop, to breathe, to connect. Now the meaning has changed – decorate, post, forget. People don’t even remember the original purpose of the festival—all they remember is what to post on which day. This "selfie culture" is slowly eroding the spiritual depth that once defined Indian society. Now festivals have become a mirror of the 'image', not of the soul.

The market also did not take long to capitalize on this trend. Before every festival, there is a flood of 'selfie backgrounds', 'photo platforms', 'digital decorations' and 'festival collections'. Packaging has become more important than the puja thali. Festivals have become branded occasions, not

spiritual ones. Diwali is now an "online shopping festival," Navratri is a "sponsored Garba Nights event," and Holi has become a "color blast event." Where festivals once purified the soul, they now empty the wallet.

This competition for show-off on social media has created a strange emotional distance in society. People think they’ve connected with others by looking at their photos—when in reality, that connection is an illusion. Festivals that once brought people together are now isolating people. Everyone is engrossed in their phones, each other’s presence only on a screen. The "family photo" is complete, but the family is fragmented.

Writing all this, a question lingers—are we connecting with God or with network signals? Are we finding joy or simply a 'reaction'? Could it be that our festivals are now illuminated not by soul but by camera flashes?

The true meaning of festivals will return when we put down the camera and see a genuine smile on someone’s face.

When diyas are lit not just for photos, but for darkness. When Karva Chauth is celebrated with no photos, but rather with people sitting together and finding solace in each other’s eyes. When Holi brings colors, not fear, but a sense of belonging. Festivals will return when we stop showing—and start feeling.

This selfie drama of festivals will end only when a person can look within himself and say – "I don’t need anyone’s likes, I just need the genuine smile of my loved ones."

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IDEAS, OPINIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN ARTICLES PUBLISHED ARE WRITERS' OWN AND MAY NOT BE FOUND IN ACCORD WITH THOSE OF GOOD MORNING KASHMIR

■ Reshaping Youth

Sports As A Bridge To Recovery In Kashmir

DR AFTAB JAN

The snow-clad peaks surrounding the Kashmir Valley witnessed a new kind of energy as the 69th National School Games 2025 were inaugurated at the historic TRC Stadium in Srinagar by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, marking a moment that symbolises not just a sporting event but a profound social transition.

More than four thousand young athletes from every corner of India have gathered in this breath-taking region to participate in football, wushu, taekwondo, and table tennis, filling the valley with the sounds of whistles, cheers, and the unifying language of sport.

This grand gathering is not merely a display of athletic excellence; it represents the emergence of a new culture in a region that has, for decades, grappled with instability, disconnection, and the erosion of organised recreational life. For years, playgrounds remained silent, stadiums underused, and structured sports activities were rare.

In that void, a more dangerous challenge took root: a growing drug menace that silently spread among the youth, threatening families, communities, and the very future of the valley. In recent years, Kashmir has witnessed a sharp rise in drug addiction, particularly involving heroin and synthetic substances, with health experts and local authorities raising alarm over the speed at which the problem has grown.

Factors such as unemployment, prolonged uncertainty, lack of structured engagement, and peer pressure have contributed to this crisis, leaving many young people vulnerable to the destructive pull of addiction. Families across both rural and urban Kashmir have felt the devastating impact: homes torn apart, youth drifting away, and communities struggling to cope with a challenge that is both medical and social in nature.

Against this bleak backdrop, sports have emerged as an unexpected but deeply powerful response. Recognising the critical need to offer youth meaningful engagement, the Youth Services & Sports Department of Jammu and Kashmir embarked on a mission to revive sports not as an occasional luxury but as a structured, accessible, and inspiring way of life.

Their approach has been both strategic and compassionate, build-



ing a sporting culture brick by brick, reaching into schools, panchayats, and remote villages, and ensuring that no child is left without the opportunity to play, train, and dream. By organising tournaments at every level, reviving school competitions, and creating regular sporting calendars, the department has turned silent grounds into vibrant spaces of activity.

Fields that once lay deserted now echo with the sounds of evening football matches, children's laughter, and the disciplined rhythm of training sessions. Parents speak of children who once spent aimless hours on streets now waking up early for practice, their lives reshaped by a sense of purpose.

Teachers report improved attendance, discipline, and emotional well-being among students engaged in sports. Communities that had grown weary of constant social pressures now find joy in gathering around their local teams, cheering, and participating in positive collective experiences.

This sports revival has been deliberately positioned as a strategic counter to the drug crisis. While law enforcement and rehabilitation remain essential, sports offer something those mechanisms cannot: they give young people a structure that fills their time, occupies their minds, and strengthens

their bodies and spirits. Engaging in a sport demands focus, teamwork, perseverance, and discipline—qualities that naturally build resistance against destructive habits.

By integrating sports activities with health awareness campaigns, counseling, and community outreach, the Youth Services & Sports Department has transformed playing fields into shields against addiction. In many communities, young people who once stood at the edge of despair now find belonging in teams, guidance from coaches, and pride in achievements that extend beyond winning medals.

The 69th National School Games epitomise this transformation. Hosting a national-scale event in Kashmir is not merely a logistical accomplishment; it is a statement of resilience. Bringing thousands of athletes to the valley allows local youth to see themselves as part of a larger national sporting fabric.

Competing alongside peers from every state fosters a sense of unity and identity that transcends regional divides. For the visiting teams, the experience of competing amid Kashmir's serene beauty and witnessing its hospitality dismantles stereotypes and builds bridges of understanding.

Every match played in the stadium is

more than a contest—it is a demonstration that Kashmir's youth are vibrant, talented, and ready to shine on national platforms. The presence of national media, the meticulous organisation, and the enthusiastic participation have positioned the Youth Services & Sports Department as a driving force behind this renaissance. Their work extends beyond organising events; they are shaping a sustainable ecosystem.

Equipment distribution, coaching camps, rural outreach, and inter-panchayat competitions are all part of a comprehensive plan to ensure that sporting engagement reaches the grassroots. Parents, teachers, and community leaders are now actively demanding the continuation and expansion of these programmes.

They are urging authorities to make sports a permanent and central feature of education and community life, recognising its role not just in physical fitness but in mental health, character building, and social stability. Health experts have also observed that regular physical activity has profound effects on both body and mind, strengthening immunity, improving cardiovascular fitness, and reducing stress and anxiety—factors crucial in a region where psychological strain has long been a hidden challenge.

In this context, the integration of sports and wellness is not merely recreational; it is preventive, protective, and empowering. The National School Games, broadcast under the theme "Khel Khel Mein," have captured public imagination. They are inspiring countless children watching from their homes and villages to pick up a ball, a racket, or gloves and step onto a field.

For many, this inspiration marks the first step away from idleness and vulnerability toward confidence and ambition. Visiting athletes have expressed admiration for the hospitality, discipline, and professionalism with which the event has been conducted. The seamless management of logistics, security, and competition has projected a new image of Kashmir to the rest of the country and beyond: one of capability, warmth, and youthful energy.

This is more than an event; it is a powerful narrative of transformation that international audiences can appreciate—how a region emerging from decades of challenges is using the universal language of sport to heal wounds, rebuild communities, and offer its young generation a path filled with dignity and hope. If these initiatives continue with the same vision and support, Kashmir has the potential to become a national sporting hub and a model for how sports can serve as a social stabiliser.

The Youth Services & Sports Department deserves recognition for its unwavering dedication to this cause. Its work is not confined to policies and paperwork; it is lived daily on fields, in schools, and in the lives of young people whose futures are being reshaped. By investing in sports, the department is investing in resilience, unity, and peace.

The story unfolding in Kashmir today is therefore not merely about medals and trophies; it is about reclaiming lost spaces, redirecting youthful energy toward positive goals, and showing the world that even in regions marked by turbulence, transformation is possible when vision meets action.

The 69th National School Games will be remembered not only as a sporting milestone but as a turning point in the social landscape of Kashmir, where sports are becoming a shield against drugs, a bridge across divides, and a powerful engine of hope.

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Regular Eye Check-Ups Hold Key To Healthy Vision



DR. MAHIPAL SINGH

Every year, World Sight Day serves as a global reminder of the importance of eye health and the impact it has on our overall well-being. This year, observed on October 9th, the theme "Love Your Eyes" is not just a campaign slogan but a call to action for each of us to take proactive measures towards protecting and preserving our vision. Eyes are our windows to the world, yet they are often neglected until problems become unavoidable. Caring for them consistently is vital for maintaining a good quality of life.

Cataract remains one of the most common causes of vision loss worldwide, particularly among individuals above the age of 50. It occurs when the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy, causing blurred vision, glare, and difficulty in carrying out everyday tasks. If left untreated, cataracts can lead to complete vision impairment. However, advancements in eye care technology have made cataract surgery one of the safest and most precise medical procedures today.

The introduction of bladeless femtosecond laser-assisted cataract surgery has transformed outcomes—offering unparalleled precision, minimal discomfort, and rapid recovery. The laser can fragment and remove the cataract with exceptional accuracy, often completing the critical laser step in as little as 10 seconds. Similarly, the latest generation of LASIK and laser vision correction technologies—powered by



AI-driven eye-tracking systems and high-speed lasers—deliver unmatched precision and safety, ensuring clear vision and faster return to normal life. Together, these innovations represent the future of safe, effective, and personalized eye care.

Regular eye check-ups are one of the most effective ways to safeguard vision. Many eye diseases, including glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration, develop silently without early symptoms. By the time patients experience noticeable vision loss, the damage may already be irreversible. A timely eye examination can detect these conditions at an early stage, allowing interventions that preserve sight.

For children, eye check-ups are crucial to detect refractive errors, lazy eye (amblyopia), or squint, which if untreated can affect not only vision but also their academic and social development. For adults, particularly those above the age of 40, regular screening is essential to monitor for presbyopia, cataracts, and other age-related conditions.

Lifestyle factors today—such as prolonged screen exposure, increasing digital device dependency, and sedentary habits—have also contributed to a surge in vision-related complaints. Computer vision syndrome, dry eyes, and early-onset myopia in children are becoming increasingly common. In such scenarios, an annual eye exam

serves as a preventive tool, helping individuals adapt corrective measures, lifestyle modifications, or treatment at the right time. Loving your eyes is not just about reacting to symptoms, but about preventing problems before they escalate.

Equally important is the recognition that eye health is tied closely to systemic health. Diabetes and hypertension, two of the most prevalent lifestyle diseases, have a direct impact on eye health and can lead to sight-threatening complications if unchecked. A comprehensive eye check-up often acts as the first point where underlying health issues are flagged, making it a vital element of preventive healthcare. At Centre for Sight, our mission has

always been to provide world-class eye care through cutting-edge technologies and expert medical teams. Today, the field of ophthalmology has seen remarkable advancements, and we are proud to be at the forefront of offering these to patients. From bladeless LASIK surgery for vision correction to advanced cataract surgery using femtosecond lasers, patients can benefit from procedures that are safer, more precise, and deliver faster recovery. For retinal diseases, we offer state-of-the-art diagnostics and treatments including OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography), retinal lasers, and intravitreal injections, ensuring that conditions like diabetic retinopathy or age-related macular degeneration are managed effectively.

Our hospitals are also equipped with advanced technologies such as corneal cross-linking for keratoconus, minimally invasive glaucoma surgeries, and cutting-edge treatments for pediatric ophthalmology. The adoption of AI-driven diagnostic platforms further enhances our ability to detect diseases at their earliest stages. Through constant innovation and a patient-centric approach, Centre for Sight remains committed to making high-quality eye care accessible and affordable.

This World Sight Day, let us pledge to truly "Love Our Eyes." By prioritising regular eye examinations, adopting healthy lifestyle habits, and leveraging the latest in medical science, we can ensure that vision is protected across all ages. Eye health is not a luxury—it is a necessity that allows us to live fully, work productively, and connect meaningfully with the world around us. At Centre for Sight, we stand with the global community in advocating for vision care for all, today and for generations to come.

Author is Chairman and Managing Director – Centre for Sight Group of Eye Hospitals

Labour Commissioner Attends Shram Utsav At Kathua

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA: To enhance awareness among the working community and to promote welfare-oriented initiatives, the Labour Department, J&K organised a mega event titled “Shram Utsav” at the Government Degree College Auditorium Kathua. The event was held under the theme “Awareness, Empowerment and Workers’ Rights”, focusing on educating and empowering workers about their entitlements and social security benefits.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation of over 300 workers representing organised, unorganised, and construction sectors across the district. The event was graced by Labour Commissioner, J&K, Charandeep Singh as the Chief Guest along with other departmental officers and dignitaries.

The event commenced with the Lighting of the Lamp, followed by a Welcome Address by Assistant Labour Commissioner, Kathua Piyusha Khajuria, who highlighted the department’s commitment to ensuring social and economic security for workers through the effective implementation of various labour laws and welfare schemes.

A powerful Nukkad Natak themed “Shram Ka Samman – Har Haath Ko Adhikar” was presented, delivering a strong social message on workers’ rights and the dignity of labour.

As part of the event’s major highlights, over 150 workers were registered under the J&K Building and Other Construction Workers (BOC) Welfare Board, with labour cards issued on the spot. Additionally, 80 workers were enrolled under various social security schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PMSYM). Dedicated registration stalls were set up at the venue to facilitate on-spot enrolment of workers from the unorganised and construction sectors.

At the event, workers also shared their personal success stories, narrating how the department’s interventions have positively transformed their lives. Nirmala Kumar, whose husband suffered an injury during work, expressed gratitude to the department for facilitating a compensation amount of 7.5 lakh under the Employee Compensation Act, which helped her family start a small enterprise and regain financial stability. Similarly, daughter of a registered construction worker, “Lt. Sh Nakul Sehdev” shared that after her father’s demise, the family received 5 lakh under the Death Assistance Scheme of the Board — an aid that provided crucial support in sustaining their livelihood.

The Labour Commissioner J&K also distributed financial assistance cheques worth 29.81 lakh to 495 registered construction workers under the Education Assistance Scheme. Further, three meritorious students of registered construction workers were awarded cheques of 50,000 each under the Meritorious Student Award Scheme of the Board. An additional 5 lakh was disbursed as compensation to the family of an injured worker under the Employee Compensation Act. These financial disbursements reaffirm the department’s commitment to extending tangible welfare benefits to workers and their families.

On the occasion, the exemplary workers were honoured for their dedication and contribution towards promoting a safe and dignified work culture.

Addressing the gathering, Labour Commissioner, J&K Charandeep Singh, lauded the efforts of the Labour Department, Kathua, for effectively implementing welfare measures at the grassroots level. He gave a concise overview of the department’s major initiatives and underlined the continuous efforts being made to ensure the holistic welfare of the labour community. He emphasised the importance of flagship schemes of the department and the proactive role of the Labour Welfare Board in reaching out to workers across the districts.

The Commissioner further appreciated the coordinated efforts of district teams and urged that the message of unity, awareness and welfare must continue to spread. He also noted that events like Shram Utsav serve as vital platforms to highlight the labour sector and strengthen awareness about workers’ rights and entitlements.

The event concluded with a Vote of thanks by ALC Kathua Piyusha Khajuria, who extended gratitude to the Chief Guest, departmental officials, participating workers and the media fraternity for their active participation in making Shram Utsav a resounding success.

DIPR, TLSA Chadoora Organises Event On World Mental Health Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: On the eve of World Mental Health Day, the Tehsil Legal Services Authority (TLSA) in collaboration with the Cultural Unit Kashmir, Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), organized a day-long awareness programme on mental health and drug abuse at Government High School Buzgoo Nilnag.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from members of the Tehsil Legal Services Authority Chadoora Budgam, prominent citizens, social activists, teachers, and students.

Artists from the Cultural Unit Kashmir, DIPR, presented thought-provoking musical and dramatic performances based on the themes of mental health and drug abuse, which deeply captivated the audience.

Prominent social activists, the Principal of GHS Buzgoo, and representatives from the Tehsil Legal Services Authority spoke on the occasion, appreciating the continuous efforts of DIPR in spreading awareness on vital social issues through creative and cultural means.

As a mark of encouragement, awards and certificates were distributed among the participating artists and students.

The programme successfully highlighted the importance of mental well-being and collective responsibility in combating drug abuse, reaffirming the role of cultural engagement in building a healthier society.

JMC Takes Stern Action Against Nallah Encroachment In Trikuta Nagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Saturday announced a firm stance against the rampant encroachment of ‘nallahs’ (drains/ water channels) within the city limits. In a decisive move to restore the natural flow of water and mitigate flood risks, the JMC conducted a targeted demolition drive, successfully removing illegal shuttering and construction that was actively encroaching upon a crucial nallah in the Trikuta Nagar area.

The JMC has reiterated that the encroachment of nallahs is an intolerable offense that poses a direct threat to public safety and infrastructure.

“These water channels are essential for the efficient drainage of rain-water, especially during the monsoon season. Any obstruction reduces the carrying capacity of the nallahs, leading to water-logging, flooding of low-lying areas and substantial damage to public and private property. Illegal constructions on or near nallahs are not just a violation of law; they are a direct cause of urban flooding. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards such activities,” the JMC authorities added.

They said that the removal of the illegal shuttering at Trikuta Nagar serves as a clear warning: “the JMC will not permit any activity that jeopardizes the city’s drainage network and endangers the lives and property of its residents.”

The enforcement team, on the directions of Commissioner, JMC and under the direct supervision of Joint Commissioner (R&E) successfully demolished and removed the illegal shuttering that was being used to construct an unauthorized structure over the nallah in Trikuta Nagar. This particular encroachment was significantly constricting the water flow, creating a dangerous bottleneck.

The Jammu Municipal Corporation has urged the citizens, residents’ welfare associations, and commercial establishments to cooperate with the Corporation’s efforts to protect public land and infrastructure.

MVD B'la Intensifies Enforcement To Strengthen Road Safety, Law Compliance

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: In a determined move to enhance road safety and ensure adherence to traffic regulations, the team of Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Baramulla conducted a special enforcement drive during the past week.

During the drive, over 300 vehicles were checked across various locations in the district. Out of these, more than 110 vehicles were found violating provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules.

The enforcement teams issued 95 e-challans on the spot, while 6 drivers were served notices recommending suspension of their driving licences. Additionally, 8 vehicles were blacklisted on the VAHAN portal for repeated offences.

The total fine amount from the e-challans issued during the drive is expected to exceed Rs 2 lakh.

The drive was carried out under the supervision of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Baramulla, Mukhtar Ahmad Sofi and will continue in the coming days to ensure strict enforcement of road safety norms and compliance with legal provisions.

The MVD has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting safe and responsible driving, urging motorists to follow traffic regulations and contribute to creating a safer road environment across the district.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Seat-Sharing

sources said.

Speaking to KNO, senior Congress leader GA Mir said there is no clarity yet on the slot on which the party will contest.

“We had requested that the Congress nominee file nomination papers against the first or second notification (safe seats), but there is no clarity yet on the issue,” he said, adding that talks are underway.

“We are expecting that there will be clarity on the issue by tonight or by tomorrow afternoon,” Mir added.

The National Conference on Friday announced the candidature of Choudhary Muhammad Ramzan, Sajad Kichloo, and Shammi Oberoi.

While the alliance is expected to comfortably win three seats, the BJP holds an advantageous position on the fourth. The alliance has 24 votes, whereas the BJP commands 28 votes—(KNO)

Omar-Led Govt

reporters here, Ruhullah, said, “As a year has come to an end since the elected government took over, I believe whatever was needed on the political front has not been done so far and the intent that was mandatory has not been shown yet.”

He said the government’s job is not to please him, but to please the people. “If people are happy, then I am happy. But if they have been raising the queries, then the government needs to listen to them with seriousness and should be concerned over it,” he added.

Asked about supporting the party’s candidature in the upcoming by-elections in Budgam, the MP didn’t reveal his move, but said he has already mentioned what the people of Budgam need this time. Mehdi said he will come up with a decision in this regard in the coming days.

Replying to a query on a statement by a BJP leader, MP Mehdi said that it shows the party’s ill intentions. “They want to further disempower the people of Jammu & Kashmir,” he said—(KNO)

Terror Ecosystem

propagated here in Jammu Kashmir. Writers and media figures grudgingly admit that, out of fear of terrorists and their ecosystem, they were forced to promote the narrative being pushed from across the border in the Valley. The terror ecosystem has been dismantled and now is the time to present the true narrative of Jammu Kashmir, free from all bias and fear of gun, to strengthen the trust and accelerate socio-economic growth,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor, in his address, highlighted the need for offering new perspectives and vision to the readers in a rapidly evolving world to meet unprecedented

challenges and opportunities, and understanding of nature, culture and people’s well-being.

Lieutenant General (Retd.) D.P. Pandey; Shri Yuvraj Srivastava, Founder Srikula foundation; senior officials, prominent literary personalities, members of Srikula foundation, people from different walks of life and youth in large number attended the inaugural ceremony.

LG Lays Wreath, Pays

selfless service of our soldiers. We stand in solidarity with the families of our martyrs in this hour of grief,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

BSF Recruits Showed

the ceremonial parade and praised the recruits for their discipline, dedication, and completion of rigorous training.

The ceremony concluded with the oath-taking, where the recruits pledged to uphold the highest values of integrity, courage, and service while protecting the nation’s borders—(KNO)

Kashmir Struggles

Experts attribute the growing cancer burden to multiple factors, including dietary habits, lifestyle changes, genetic predispositions, and delayed diagnoses caused by limited diagnostic infrastructure.

A 2012 SKIMS study identified “dietary practices and high salt consumption” as key contributors to the rising incidence of cancers, especially stomach and oesophageal types, in Kashmir.

The shortage of PET-CT machines has forced many patients to seek diagnostics outside Kashmir, often at enormous financial and emotional costs.

“I had to wait over a month for my PET scan at SKIMS,” said Ghulam Nabi, a cancer patient from Pulwama. “Such delays can be devastating for patients like us. The news about a PET scan being installed at GMC Srinagar brings real hope.”

Officials said the process for installing a PET-CT machine at SMHS Hospital, Srinagar, has been initiated. “We have taken up the installation and expect the facility to be available soon,” an official told KNO.

Health Minister Sakeena Itoo recently announced that Rs 124.83 crore has been allocated for major upgrades in J&K’s healthcare infrastructure. The plan includes a PET-CT at GMC Srinagar, MRI machines at GMC Baramulla, Kathua, and Rajouri, a Cath Lab at GMC Doda, and enhanced telemedicine facilities across 80 units.

A PET-CT facility has already become functional at GMC Jammu, providing much-needed relief to cancer patients in the region—(KNO)

CS Reviews Measures

of Wool and Silk Villages, Common Facility Centre for Yarn Dyeing, establishment of the Indian Institute of Textiles at Basohli, Sericulture Park, and Craft-based Resource Centre, the Chief Secretary directed the concerned officers to expedite completion of these projects.

He also advised the department to explore possibilities of NSQF accreditation for its training centres, courses, and trainers to enhance employability and credibility of skilled trainees.

Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, presented a detailed overview of the sector, highlighting that J&K presently has 18 registered GI products in the handicrafts segment, while 10 more are in the pipeline. He informed that the capacity of GI product testing has been significantly upgraded from 50 to 100 tests per day and will soon be enhanced to 250 tests daily upon induction of two additional digital microscopes.

Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, Masarat-ul-Islam, in his presentation, informed that the department has substantially enhanced its operational capacity and reduced the GI certification waiting period to just two days, providing major relief to artisans. He further informed that around 6,000 GI users are currently registered across the UT.

He revealed that the department is contemplating to make Craft Development Institute (CDI), Srinagar, a ‘Pre-Export Testing Facility Centre’ to facilitate direct export of certified products. To further augment testing infrastructure, the department is also working on signing a MoU with SKUAST-Kashmir for product testing and bulk production of woollen carpets.

The meeting was apprised that the QR code traceability project, being developed in collaboration with NIELIT, is set to be rolled out soon. Moreover, with the active involvement of NIFT Srinagar, 36 prototype designs in five different crafts have been developed, and nearly 1,000 artists trained under ten design and skill enhancement programmes.

Under the Karkhandar Scheme, it was informed that nationally acclaimed master craftsmen are mentoring new artisans, with each trainee receiving a monthly stipend of Rs 2,000 along with continuous handholding support. So far, 12 Karkhanas have been established and over 120 artisans trained under the initiative.

Regarding the work of IICT Srinagar, the meeting was told that the institute has developed 2,600 carpet designs, 600 Kani designs, and digitized 650 traditional Taleem patterns, generating a revenue of Rs 56 lakh so far.

On the establishment of Ekta Malls in Srinagar and Jammu, it was informed that locations and design layouts have been finalized. These malls will serve as one-stop destinations offering artisans and shoppers a uni-

fied platform for showcasing, marketing, and purchasing of authentic J&K crafts.

The meeting was also informed that as part of a major branding and outreach initiative titled “Soulful Kashmir”, the department is launching a series of ‘Know Your Artisan’ programmes beginning today at the Jhelum Riverfront. Eight such interactions have been planned, where the public will get a chance to engage directly with renowned artisans.

Under the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Craft Safaris have also been organized to artisan clusters in Srinagar, covering Papier Mâché, Pashmina weaving, Sozni embroidery, Carpet weaving, Copperware, Khatamband, and Walnut wood carving.

Additionally, it was informed that brand promotion campaigns for J&K’s crafts are being rolled out at airport terminals, city centres, FM channels, and Doordarshan in collaboration with the Department of Information and Public Relations to enhance global visibility and market outreach.

India-Kabul To Expand

the Hyderabad House in New Delhi, invited Indian companies to explore mining opportunities in Afghanistan, which are believed to host valuable minerals like copper, iron, lithium, gold and others.

Last year as well, the Taliban was particularly seeking Indian investments in major mining ventures, including the Khawja Gor Gor Coal project in Badghis province, the Abgarmak Copper project in Herat, the Pashti Koh Iron project in Herat, the Qale Zal Gold project in Kunduz, the Lead & Zinc Block in Ghor, the marble blocks in Wardak, the Chehal Kan Shahr Gold project in Badakhshan among many others but it did not lead to any successful result.

These developments come at a time when the relations between Kabul and Islamabad are at their lowest.

On Thursday, when Muttaqi arrived in Delhi, Pakistan conducted a cross-border operation targeting TTP camps in Kabul.

The timing of this bombing was seen as an open threat to the Taliban leadership in Kabul for their outreach to New Delhi.

‘146 Schools In

closure of over 4400 government run schools owing to ‘zero or extremely low’ enrolment of students.

In July-2024, the news agency reported that there were a total of 23,117 government run schools in Jammu and Kashmir out of which 4394 have been deleted from the UDISE data.

Despite repeated calls, Secretary, School Education Department and Jammu and Kashmir Samagra Shiksha Project Director were not available to comment on the matter—(KNO)

Muttaqi attends Delhi think tank event, enthralls audience with mention of Tagore's Kabuliwala

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan's Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi interacted with Indian analysts and experts, during an event organised by the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIP) in New Delhi. The packed gathering, which also included many noted female scholars, was enthralled as Muttaqi spoke on his country's deep relationship with India.

"The conversation underscored the deep economic, historical, cultural, and civilizational ties between the two countries. His mention of Rabindranath Tagore's Kabuliwala struck a poignant chord with the audience," the New Delhi-based think tank specialising in foreign affairs, national security and strategy and public policy posted on X along with several images from the interaction.

The Afghan Foreign Minister is currently on a seven-day visit to India with an aim to further strengthen the historic relations between both countries.

On Saturday, Muttaqi visited the historic Darul Uloom Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, holding discussions with religious scholars at the Islamic seminary.

This was the first visit by a senior Taliban leader to Darul Uloom Deoband since the regime change in Afghanistan. Darul Uloom Deoband holds significant symbolic and ideological relevance for the Taliban. Many senior Taliban leaders studied at Darul Uloom Haqqania in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, an institution modeled after the Deoband.

On Sunday, Muttaqi will travel to Agra to visit the iconic Taj Mahal, followed by meetings with Indian business and industry leaders at an event hosted by a leading chamber of commerce in New Delhi the next day.

Muttaqi's visit, initially scheduled weeks earlier, was delayed due to the lack of a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) travel ban exemption. However, India's Ministry of External Affairs confirmed last week that the UNSC Committee has now granted the exemption, allowing the visit to proceed.

On Friday, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar met his Afghanistan counterpart in New Delhi as both held



discussions on India's support for Afghanistan's development, bilateral trade, territorial integrity and independence, people-to-people ties and capacity-building besides several other issues.

EAM Jaishankar noted that Muttaqi's visit to India marks an "important step" in advancing bilateral ties. He also announced the handing over of five ambulances to Afghanistan.

Following the talks, EAM Jaishankar in a post on X wrote, "Pleased to meet FM Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi of Afghanistan today in New Delhi. This visit marks an important step in advancing our ties and affirming the enduring India-Afghanistan friendship. Discussed India's support for Afghanistan's development, our bilateral trade, territorial integrity and independence, people-to-people ties and capacity building. India will upgrade its Technical Mission in Kabul to the status of Embassy of India."

"Also handed over 5 Ambulances to FM Muttaqi. This is part of the larger gift of 20 ambulances, and other medical equipment reflecting our long standing support for Afghan people," EAM Jaishankar wrote in another post on X.

In his opening remarks during his meeting with Muttaqi, EAM Jaishankar had expressed New Delhi's commitment to Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and

independence and announced India's upgradation of Technical Mission in Kabul to the status of Embassy. He recalled the talks held with Afghan Foreign Minister after the April 22 Pahalgam attack and earthquake in Kunar and Nangarhar.

"India is fully committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Afghanistan. Closer cooperation between us contributes to your national development, as well as regional stability and resilience. To enhance that, I am pleased to announce today the upgrading of India's Technical Mission in Kabul to the status of Embassy of India," he said.

Emphasising that Kabul has always valued good relations with India, Muttaqi also assured that Afghanistan won't allow its territory to be used against other countries.

"During the American occupation, there were many ups and downs; however, we never gave statements against India and always valued good relations with India. We will not allow any troops to threaten or use our territory against others. This is a challenge for the region, and Afghanistan is at the forefront of this struggle.

The need of our region is that we combat this menace together and this is for the common prosperity of both nations," said Muttaqi during his meeting with EAM Jaishankar.

Calling India "the first responder", the Afghan Foreign Minister expressed gratitude to India for providing humanitarian assistance during the earthquake in Afghanistan.

"In the recent earthquake in Afghanistan, India was the first responder. Afghanistan looks at India as a close friend. Afghanistan wants relations based on mutual respect, trade and people-to-people relations," he stated.

Expressing gratitude to India for its hospitality, the Afghan Foreign Minister said, "India is a historic and important country of this region. We have had long civilisational and people-to-people ties for centuries, and it is not limited to geography but extends to culture, business, and other avenues that bind both the countries together."

Muttaqi further said that Afghanistan stands ready to create a mechanism of understanding between the two countries to work towards strengthening the relationship.

Had an 'incredible meeting' with PM Modi: US Ambassador-designate Gor

IAN S

NEW DELHI: US Ambassador-designate Sergio Gor on Saturday said that he had an "incredible meeting" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I had an incredible meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We discussed trade, critical minerals and defence," the US envoy told NDTV in his first comment during the ongoing six-day India visit after the US Senate confirmed his appointment as the next Ambassador to India.

Gor held a series of meetings on Saturday before calling on PM Modi in the evening.

"Glad to receive Mr. Sergio Gor, Ambassador-designate of the US to India. I'm confident that his tenure will further strengthen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership," PM Modi posted on X after the meeting.

Gor also gifted PM Modi a large framed photo of PM



Modi and US President Donald Trump from the White House presser earlier this year. The photograph was signed by Trump.

Gor and Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Michael J Rigas are travelling to India from October 9 to 14. During their stay in India, they will meet with Indian government counterparts to discuss a wide range of bilateral issues.

"The United States will continue to work with India to strengthen our strategic partnership and promote a safer, stronger, and more prosperous Indo-Pacific region," read a statement issued by the US Embassy in India.

Earlier in the day, Gor met External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar as both discussed India-US relationship and its global

significance.

Following the meeting, EAM Jaishankar took to X and posted, "Pleased to meet Ambassador-designate Sergio Gor of the US today in New Delhi. Discussed the India-US relationship and its global significance. Wish him the best for his new responsibility."

The US Ambassador-designate also met Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.

"They had a productive exchange on the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and its shared priorities. FS wished Amb-designate Gor all success for his assignment," stated MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in a post on X.

Gor was formally nominated as the US Ambassador to India on August 22 and confirmed by the US Senate on October 7.

His visit comes at a time when India-US relations are navigating a complex phase, marked by rising HIB visa costs and uncertainty over tariff measures imposed by the Donald Trump administration.

38-year-old Gor, the youngest US Ambassador to India, is considered one of the closest aides of Trump and was earlier the Director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office, entrusted with vetting more than 4,000 posts in the new Trump administration.

Japan, India to pursue joint investment opportunities in Central Asia: Report

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Tokyo established financing and labour frameworks that enable India and Japan to enhance their economic influence in Central Asia and the SCO region, a report has said.

This could be achieved through a Japan-India Eurasia Investment Partnership, combining Japanese funding with Indian execution capabilities, according to the report from Japan Forward.

Initial projects could focus on logistics hubs, renewable energy ventures, and agro-processing plants that address the region's immediate economic needs while opening new markets for Japanese and Indian firms, the report noted.

India's investments in Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) remain underleveraged, it quoted analysts as saying.

With Japanese technical and financial support, these can become reliable routes that connect Japan and India to Eurasian markets more efficiently.

Another avenue of co-operation is the establishment of joint industrial parks in countries like Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, the report hinted.

These could be by the Indian pharmaceutical and IT firms, combined with Japanese capital goods manufacturers, to generate employment and exports.

Japan's patient private capital, advanced manufacturing, and project management, combined with India's competitive manufacturing base, services



sector, and affordable pharmaceuticals, could create jobs and enhance exports through these parks.

Both countries share an interest in providing a transparent, credible alternative to China's Belt and Road model, which has created concerns in parts of the region over debt and dependence.

During PM Modi's visit, Japan announced a commitment of 10 trillion Japanese yen in private investment in India over the next five years. Leaders also introduced a mobility initiative aimed at facilitating the movement of 5 lakh people, including 50,000 skilled and semi-skilled Indian workers, to Japan.

A credible Japan-India presence in SCO member countries would not only rebalance China's overwhelming trade imperatives but also provide the region with genuine alternatives, the report mentioned.

Centre aims to scale up domestic pulses production to 350 lakh tonnes by 2030-31

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched the 'Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses' (2025-26 to 2030-31) with a budgetary allocation of Rs 11,440 crore, which aims to scale up domestic pulses production to 350 lakh tonnes and expand the cultivation area to 310 lakh hectares by 2030-31.

Nearly 2 crore farmers are expected to gain from guaranteed procurement, quality seed distribution, and enhanced value chain support, according to an official statement.

Over the years, India has experienced a significant transformation in pulses production. Consistent government efforts under the National Food Security and Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) have driven production up from 192.6 lakh tonnes in 2013-14 to 252.38 lakh tonnes in 2024-25 (third Advance Estimates), reflecting an impressive growth over 31 per cent.

While this progress is commendable, considerable potential remains to further enhance production and meet the country's increasing consumption requirements.

In 2023-24, India imported 47.38 lakh tonnes of pulses, even as it exported 5.94 lakh tonnes, highlighting opportunities for structural improvement.

This reflects that, despite being among the world's largest pulses producers, India's domestic production has significant scope to grow to fully meet demand, making imports a necessary supplement.

With pulses imports reaching 47.38 lakh tonnes in 2023-24, the government has prioritised achieving self-sufficiency in pulses as a key national objective, the statement added.

Beyond their economic and trade significance, pulses serve as a nutritional powerhouse. As per the National Institute of Nutrition, they contribute nearly 20-25 per cent of total protein intake in



Indian diets.

However, the per capita consumption of pulses continues to fall short of the recommended 85 grams per day, contributing to protein-energy malnutrition across the country. Therefore, enhancing domestic production is not only an economic necessity but also a vital step toward improving public health.

Recognizing this dual importance, the government has placed strong emphasis on strengthening the pulses sector.

The 'Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses' was announced in the Union Budget 2025-26 and was approved by the Union Cabinet on October 1 2025.

It seeks to boost domestic production, reduce import dependence, and pave the way for an "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" in pulses.

‘No new GST on carpets in UP’: CM Yogi Adityanath

IAN S

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath informed on Saturday that the government has not imposed a new Goods and Services Tax (GST) or tax on carpets.

The government has created new opportunities for the people through the recent free trade agreements with the UAE and the UK, which will help further growth.

While addressing a programme on the upliftment of crafts and craftsmen, the Chief Minister said that India's traditional artisans and craftsmen have made a significant contribution to establishing India as a global economy.

The Chief Minister said that checks for financial amounts were also provided to the beneficiaries of various schemes.

"I assure you that the government always stands with full commitment alongside traders and entrepreneurs," he said.

The Chief Minister also said that the state government has not only revived agriculture and farming but also the textile industry and the MSME sector.

"This sector has created the most employment in the state," the Chief Minister said.

Last month, the Central government reformed the GST, which reduced tax rates of a range of daily-use items for consumers.

The GST Council simplified the indirect tax system into a two-tier structure of 5 per cent and 18 per cent from a four-tier structure of 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent.



Japan reports flu outbreak, over 4,000 people affected

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NEW DELHI: Japan has reported a significant outbreak of flu, with more than 4,030 people being affected nationwide, according to local media reports.

The country is experiencing a flu season about a month earlier than last year. It is also the second earliest in 20 years, Japan Today reported, citing the health ministry.

"About 3,000 hospitals across the country reported a combined 4,030 flu patients," the report said. Okinawa Prefecture reported the most patients per hospital, followed by Tokyo and Kagoshima.

The caseload has crossed the epidemic threshold, with an average of 1.04 patients per institution, the country's health ministry stated.

More than 100 schools, kindergartens, and childcare centres have been closed due to outbreaks among children.

Flu season in Japan usually spans from December through March. The previous season started in early November and peaked in late December before it was deemed over in April.

In the wake of the rising cases, the ministry urged the general public to take precautions and follow measures, such as handwashing and wearing masks.

While the virus strain is not yet known, it recommended vaccination for vulnerable populations such as young children, the elderly, and anyone with underlying health conditions.

"The flu season has started really early this year, but in the changing global environment, this might become a more common scenario," Yoko Tsukamoto, a professor at the Health Sciences University of Hokkaido, was quoted as saying to South China Morning Post.

Tsukamoto added that global travel and population movement may be accelerating the virus's ability to adapt to new conditions.

"We are seeing a greater circulation of people, both in Japan and globally, with people taking the virus to new places, which is another factor behind the virus adapting to new environments," Tsukamoto told the post.

She added that early flu seasons are also being reported in other countries.

