

Good Morning

Kashmir

16th
Year Of Publication



Interacted with the families of Nowgam's accidental blast martyrs at Srinagar Lok Bhavan and handed over compassionate appointment letters to them. Entire nation stands united with the families of martyrs to ensure they live a life of comfort and dignity.

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Road Safety First

WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians have the right of way — one moment of caution can save a life.

Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K

In collaboration with TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF J&K

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Information & PR, J&K

DIPK-8962 /25
Dated:12/12/2025

Biting Cold, Falling Water Levels In Rivers Add To Winter Woes Of Kashmiris



SRINAGAR: Biting cold with no prospect of major rain/snowfall till the end of the month continued in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday as minimum temperature remained several notches below the freezing point in the Valley.

Srinagar city had minus 3.6 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam minus 4.6 and Gulmarg zero as a minimum temperature.

Jammu city had 8.5 degrees Celsius, Katra 9.4, Batote 6.3, Banihal 4.2 and Bhaderwah 1.9 as the minimum temperature.

An extended dry spell has resulted in several serious problems erupting in Kashmir. Due to the lack of rain/

snow, the suspended particulate matter (SPM) has mixed with low-lying fog, especially in areas in and around Srinagar city, resulting in smog.

The air quality index (AQI) has worsened, and people in large numbers are suffering from chest-related ailments exacerbated by cold and chilly winds. Pulmonologists have advised people to avoid direct exposure to cold air by wrapping themselves in woollens, especially mufflers to cover their neck and face while coming out of their homes in the mornings/evenings.

People facing chest diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are rated as the most vulnerable group in

LG Meets Kin Of Nowgam Blast Victims, Hands Over Appointment Letters

Says Entire Nation Stands Shoulder To Shoulder With Families Of Martyrs

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Friday met the families of Nowgam's accidental blast martyrs in Srinagar and handed over appointment letters on compassionate grounds.

The Lieutenant Governor paid tribute to the martyrs and expressed gratitude to their families. He said the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the families to ensure they live a life of comfort and dignity.

The Lieutenant Governor said the whole country is proud of J&K Police for stopping terror in its tracks by unearthing and dismantling the terror network last month. He appreciated J&K Police's meticulous investigation and multi-faceted effort to detect, disrupt and prevent



terrorist acts.

He also directed the senior officers to disrupt terrorist financing pipeline and effectively counter the radicalisation attempts by certain separatist elements.

Special DG Coordination PHQ, Shri S.J.M. Gillani;

Martyrdom Day LG Pays Tribute To Legendary Warrior Zorawar Singh



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday paid tributes to brave warrior, India's greatest commander and military strategist, General Zorawar Singh, on his Martyrdom Day.

"General Zorawar Singh's vision inspired generations by igniting passion, guiding people toward a shared vision, courage, purpose and commitment to bigger

...Toxic Residues Authorities Launch Valley-Wide Inspection Of Eggs

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

SRINAGAR: After serious concerns were raised over reports of 'nitrofuran and nitroimidazole residues' in eggs, the Food Safety Department on Friday launched a valley-wide inspection drive, collecting samples from both organised and unorganised markets.



The concerns were first raised on Thursday by MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq, who took to social media, urging authorities to investigate immediately, trace sources and take strict action against violators.

In a series of tweets, Sadiq said, "Deeply concerned by reports of nitrofuran and nitroimidazole residues being detected in eggs,

'No New Govt hospitals for J&K in 5 years'

RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: The Union Government has not sanctioned any new government hospitals for Jammu and Kashmir in the last five years, Health and Family Welfare informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

It also said that Ladakh has received over Rs 14.39 crore under the National Health Mission (NHM) for health infrastructure development during 2025-26, the Ministry of

The ministry informed that Jammu & Kashmir received 'zero allocation under NHM's building infrastructure component

for both 2024-25 and 2025-26'. Ladakh was approved Rs 1,274.33 lakh in 2024-25 and Rs 1,439.05 lakh in 2025-26 for strengthening health infrastructure.

It also said that setting up new hospitals is primarily the responsibility of States and Union Territories, though the Centre supports them under schemes such as NHM, PM-ABHIM, ECRP-II, PMSSY and the 15th Finance Commission grants.

The Ministry noted that both J&K and Ladakh UTs can seek central assistance based on proposals submitted through their annual Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs).



Over 1,200 Acres Of Defence Land In J&K Encroached Or In Court: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: Union Ministry of Defence Friday informed Lok Sabha that more than 1,200 acres of defence land in Jammu and Kashmir is either under encroached or involved in litigation.

The official figures placed before Parliament reveal that "J&K has 877.98 acres of surplus defence land, identified as not currently required for operational needs of the Armed Forces."

On the issue of encroachments, the Ministry reported that 311.86 acres of defence land in J&K and 29.58 acres in Ladakh are currently under encroachment. "Across the country, over 11,000 acres are



IMAGE FOR REPRESENTATION

encroached," the Ministry said.

The data further reveal that 930.36 acres of defence land in J&K is under litigation, making it one of the higher figures among Union Territories. No litigation-related land was listed for Ladakh in the annexure.

The government clarified that surplus land identified

CS Reviews PM Ujjwala Yojana Implementation Across J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Friday chaired a review meeting on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) and assessed the LPG stock availability in the Kashmir Valley for the forthcoming winter months.

The meeting besides Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA and Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir was attended by Director, FCS&CA, Jammu/Kashmir; and senior officers from Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), who shared district-wise progress, implementa-

tion challenges and preparedness under the newly extended phase of PMUY.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the performance under the first phase of PMUY and directed Deputy Commissioners to intensify enrolment of eligible beneficiaries, increase the number of subscription vouchers and conduct vigorous Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns to raise awareness about e-KYC and Aadhaar seeding.

He stressed that completion of e-KYC is vital in view of the latest instructions from the



Jaish-e-Mohammad's New Playbook

Proxy Modules Emerge As ISI Pushes Low-Visibility Terror In India

VICKY NANJAPPA

NEW DELHI: The probe into the Faridabad module and the subsequent Delhi Red Fort blasts has found that the Jaish-e-Mohammad was in the process of setting up proxy modules in India.

An Intelligence Bureau official said that a proxy module is one where the involvement of the terror group's command is limited, and the members of the module would be doing most of the work, with the terror group stepping in only at crunch moments, such as providing expertise.

The involvement of the terror group would not be from start to end.

The manner in which the



IMAGE FOR REPRESENTATION

Faridabad module operated makes it clear that it worked largely on its own. This included setting up the module, radicalisation, recruitment, arranging for the ammunition and even the logistics.

The module at Faridabad

could be termed as either Jaish-e-Mohammad-inspired or linked, said an official.

The Jaish's role in the module was limited to setting up and functioning of the module. The basic propaganda material was provided

by the terror group. Further, there was limited interaction between the top command of the terror outfit and the members of the module.

The Jaish stepped in to provide a handler when it came to giving assistance about preparing the explosives, another official said.

An Intelligence Bureau official said that the country would increasingly witness this trend in future. Had this module not been busted, the ISI would have hoped that similar modules would come up in the rest of the country at a rapid pace.

For Pakistan, such modules suit its narrative. It does not have to provide funds, as these self-inspired proxy

J&K Has 4 Trauma Care Facility Centres Sanctioned: Centre

RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Friday informed Lok Sabha that Jammu and Kashmir has a total of four Trauma Care Facilities (TCFs) sanctioned under the National Programme for Prevention & Management of Trauma and Burn Injuries (NPPMT&BI).

The ministry has stated that the sanctioned trauma care centres in J&K include MMAM District Hospital, Anantnag (Level III), Trauma Hospital, Ramban (Doda) (Level III), Government District Hospital Udhampur (Level II) and District Hospital Kupwara (Level III).

It also said that 196 trauma care facilities were sanctioned across the country

Kashmir's Shrinking Farmland Deepens Dependence On External Rice Supplies



JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The rapid and continuous conversion of agricultural land into residential colonies, commercial structures, orchards and other non-farm uses has sharply impacted Kashmir's food security, pushing the region into growing dependence on rice and other food grains sourced from outside Jammu & Kashmir.

Official figures, accessed, reveal that the Valley has lost nearly 34,000 hectares of

cultivable farmland between 1996 and 2023, a trend experts say is alarming and unsustainable. The shrinking land bank has drastically reduced local food production at a time when population growth and consumption demands are steadily rising.

As a result, Kashmir now faces an overall food grain deficit of around 0.89 million tonnes, forcing reliance on supplies from Punjab, Haryana, and other states.

The region produces only 0.45 million

Srinagar’s main water plants at full capacity: JSD warns of shortages if dry spell persists

CE Rakesh Kumar Gupta urges public cooperation, judicious use of water

REHAN QAYOOM

SRINAGAR: With a prolonged dry spell tightening its grip over Kashmir, the Jal Shakti Department on Friday said normal water supply is being maintained across Srinagar city through its major treatment plants.

However, officials also warned that if the dry weather continues, it could soon trigger shortages in rural and tail-end areas where natural water sources are already showing signs of decline.

Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Kashmir, Er Rakesh Kumar Gupta, said, that the department’s Nishat, Rangeel, Sukhnag, and Ganderbal treatment plants are currently operating at a combined capacity of 92 million gallons per day (MGD), ensuring a stable supply across urban zones. “Due to the dry spell, there has been a shortage in rural areas where our water sources are in higher reaches,” Er Gupta said. “But our major treatment plants in Srinagar are running at a normal capacity



of 92 MGD.”

He, however, cautioned that if the dry spell continues, the situation may tighten. “It is anticipated that there may be a shortage. In the tail-end areas, there may be a problem in water supply,” he said, adding that water tankers have been arranged to meet demand in affected pockets.

Er Gupta further said the department is taking measures to conserve water at its sources, particularly in districts suffering from “a 40–59% rainfall deficit”.

“We are trying to conserve water through earthen bunds and stone pitching to preserve available resources until rainfall occurs and our groundwater

gets recharged,” he said.

Moreover, appealing for public cooperation, the Chief Engineer urged residents to use water judiciously. “We will try our best to provide a normal water supply, but people should not waste water during the dry spell. Use treated water only for drinking and not for other purposes,” he said—(KNO)

Satish Sharma for time bound action on issues relating transport sector

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Transport Minister Satish Sharma Friday asserted that the transport sector is crucial for boosting the region’s economy, emphasising the government’s commitment to a transparent and efficient system in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister was interacting with the representatives of Transport Welfare Associations during a meeting convened to deliberate on the challenges being faced by the transport fraternity in both Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa; IG Traffic; DG Finance in Transport Department; MD JKRTC, M.A. War; Additional Commissioner Kashmir; RTOs of Jammu, Kashmir and Kathua and other senior officers of the Transport Department and representatives of Associations.

During the meeting, the associations presented a detailed memorandum highlighting several pressing issues impacting transporters’ livelihood and day-to-day operations.

Satish Sharma assured that all concerns raised by the representatives will be taken up promptly with the concerned for speedy redress.

The Associations apprised the Minister of non-imple-



mentation of the already approved and finalized E-bus schedule in Jammu and Srinagar.

The Minister assured that he would personally review the matter to ensure structured and regulated E-bus operations, safeguarding the interests of existing transport operators.

Seeking enhanced ATS capacity, the associations requested continuation of the existing MVD Fitness and Passing system.

The Minister acknowledged the operational difficulties faced by the transporters due to a limited number of ATSs and assured necessary corrective measures to ease the process.

The transporters expressed concern over the 200% increase in fitness and passing fees under new MoRTH guidelines, citing severe financial strain.

Satish Sharma assured that the matter would be reviewed with sensitivity, keeping the economic conditions of the transport community in mind.

The meeting also delib-

erated upon the prolonged pendency of tariff revision, unresolved since 2021.

The Minister assured that the tariff revision process will be examined and advanced through proper consultations with all stakeholders.

The transporters also requested for streamlining of the E-challan system in accordance with MoRTH guidelines and the provision of proper supporting documentation.

The Minister assured that the concerns would be taken up with traffic authorities to ensure rationalisation and transparency.

The Associations raised the issue of illegal adda fee collection on National Highways despite the existing government orders prohibiting such practices.

Satish Sharma assured strict action against the violators and directed for immediate verification of complaints. He reiterated that all concerns discussed will be addressed on priority and reviewed regularly until resolved.

He emphasised that

protecting the interests of transporters and ensuring smooth mobility across the UT remains a key priority of the government.

Earlier, Satish Sharma attended the Martyrdom Day ceremony of General Zorawar Singh, the legendary Dogra warrior known for his extraordinary courage, military brilliance and historic campaigns.

Speaking at the event, the Minister paid rich and heartfelt tributes to General Zorawar Singh. He described him as “one of the greatest military commanders in the history of India whose valour continues to inspire generations.”

He highlighted that General Zorawar Singh’s unmatched leadership, strategic acumen, and spirit of sacrifice remain a proud chapter in the socio-military history of Jammu and Kashmir. The Minister noted that the Dogra General’s campaigns across Ladakh, Tibet, Baltistan and beyond showcased exceptional bravery and a deep sense of duty towards the nation.

Armed intruder apprehended by BSF on IB in Jammu



IAN S

JAMMU: An intruder was apprehended alongwith a weapon by Border Security Force (BSF) troopers near the international border in J&K’s Jammu district on Friday

Police said that the intruder, identified as Abdul Khalik, was apprehended in the Pargwal area.

“The individual has been handed over to Police Post Pargwal (Police Station Khour) for further legal action,” Jammu police said.

J&K has a 740-km-long line of control (LoC) and an international border which is 240-km-long.

The LoC is situated in Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora districts of the Kashmir Valley and in Poonch, Rajouri, and partly in Jammu district of Jammu division.

The international border is situated in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts of Jammu division.

The army guards the LoC while the BSF guards the international border. Both are deployed to check infiltration, exfiltration, drug

smuggling, and drone activity on the border in J&K.

J&K Police and the security forces are deployed in the hinterland to carry out anti-terrorist operations and operations against drug smugglers, drug peddlers and those involved in hawala money rackets and other unlawful financial activities.

It is believed that funds generated by these unlawful activities are used to sustain terrorism in J&K.

The revised strategy by the police and the security forces is aimed at dismantling the complete support system of terrorism rather than just focusing on the gun-wielding terrorists.

The security forces are carrying out aggressive operations against terrorists, their overground workers (OGWs) and sympathisers.

Properties created through drug smuggling and by engaging in terrorist activities are being attached after obtaining court orders, and a constant 24X7 vigil is being maintained in both the border and the hinterland in J&K after the suspension of Operation Sindoor.

IndiGo flight count rises over 2,000 as DGCA tightens oversight

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Demonstrating the sign of operational normalisation and stability since the last four days after the government stepped into the crisis management, IndiGo said that it is set to operate over 2,000 flights on Friday, as per its revised scaled-down schedule.

The airline has been continuously increasing its number of flights. It operated over 1,700 flights on December 8, over 1,800 on December 9, over 1,900 and 1,950 on December 10 and 11, respectively. The airline said that it would operate over 2,050 flights on Friday, i.e. December 12.

“All our 138 operational destinations are connected, and our on-time performance has been consistently normal as per IndiGo standards,” the airline said in a statement.

“Yesterday, we operated over 1,950 flights with just four cancellations, due to unfavourable weather, with all affected customers promptly informed to avoid inconvenience,” the statement added.

Post the major disruption that had erupted in the domestic civil aviation industry due to operational failure of the airline, IndiGo appointed an independent aviation con-



sultancy to investigate the recent operational disruption that affected its flights.

The airline said its Board has approved hiring Chief Aviation Advisors LLC to carry out a detailed review and identify the factors that caused the issue.

“The Board has approved the appointment of Chief Aviation Advisors LLC, led by Captain John Illson, veteran Aviation Expert, to conduct an independent expert review and assessment of the recent operational disruption and the contributing factors,” the airline said in a statement.

Captain Illson has over 40 years of experience in global aviation. He has worked with major international bodies such as the FAA, ICAO and IATA, as well as leading airlines around the world.

Earlier, the DGCA dismissed four flight inspectors who were responsible for monitoring the safety and operational standards of IndiGo.

The action comes amid the deep crisis at the airline, which has cancelled thousands of flights this month due to poor planning and failure to meet

stricter safety norms. According to sources, the DGCA acted against the inspectors after finding negligence in their inspection and monitoring duties.

The regulator has now deployed two special oversight teams at IndiGo’s Gurugram office to track the airline’s operations closely. Additionally, earlier this week, IndiGo was ordered to reduce its operations by 10 per cent to stabilise its schedules and control further disruptions.

The airline usually operates around 2,200 flights per day.

Iltija Mufti hails ‘Dhurandhar’, calls it “very well made”

IAN S

MUMBAI: Iltija Mufti, daughter of former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, took to her social media to share her thoughts on the recently released film ‘Dhurandhar’.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Iltija called the movie “pretty good” and applauded it for “portraying women without reducing them to mere props”. She also praised the casting of the movie and called it ‘perfect’.

In her post, Iltija Mufti wrote, “Much outrage over Dhurandhar, but I quite liked the movie & found it interesting. The casting especially is perfection. Women, for once, as is the case in most violent Bollywood movies, weren’t used as props. Very well made.”

For the uninitiated, ever since its release, Dhurandhar has sparked debate online, dividing the internet into two.

While one group of audiences has criticised the film, accusing it of being propaganda and distorting facts, another section has lauded it for showing real-life events and tragedies honestly and for also highlighting the impact of terror-



ism on the country and beyond. Talking about Dhurandhar, the movie was released nationwide on December 5 and has been directed by Aditya Dhar, known for his work on sociopolitical dramas.

The film stars Ranveer Singh in the lead role, supported by Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, and R. Madhavan in key roles. A particular scene from the movie featuring Akshaye Khanna’s entry dance has taken the internet by storm and gone viral.

The movie has been lauded by many Bollywood celebrities. From Akshay Kumar and Hrithik Roshan to Vicky Kaushal, Allu Arjun, and Rohit Shetty, all have taken to their respective social media accounts in praising the movie and the performance of the star cast.

FDA issues advisory on environmentally complaint disposal of seized Food Items

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), has issued a detailed advisory to ensure scientific and responsible disposal of seized, rejected, and expired food items, following recent reports of such materials being improperly dumped into rivers and other natural water bodies.

Reiterating the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and guidelines issued by FSSAI, the advisory directs all Designated Officers, Food Safety Officers, and enforcement teams to strictly adhere to approved disposal procedures to pre-



vent environmental harm, health risks, and misuse of unsafe food items.

The Department has emphasized that disposal of any seized, rejected, or expired food items including their packaging, into rivers, lakes, natural water bodies, or open land is strictly prohibited.

The advisory directs enforcement teams to adopt the approved dis-

posal methods such as, authorized incinerators compliant with Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) norms. Disposal in designated sanitary landfills with leachate control, composting or anaerobic digestion of biodegradable waste through certified units, in coordination with local municipal bodies, panchayats, or other statutory authorities.

All disposal activities must be video recorded in the presence of two independent witnesses. After completion, the supervising FSO must submit a certificate of disposal to the Designated Officer, with copies to the Commission-

er of Food Safety and the concerned Food Business Operator (FBO).

Designated Officers have been instructed to identify suitable incineration, composting, or alternative disposal facilities and share the list with the Commissioner of Food Safety. For high-volume disposals, coordination with the State Pollution Control Board has been advised.

Additionally, Designated Officers must submit monthly disposal compliance reports to the Commissioner of Food Safety by the 3rd of following month, highlighting any deviations from the prescribed guidelines.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB)

Muthi, Akhnoor Road, Jammu / Zam Zam Complex, Rambagh, Srinagar (www.jkssb.nic.in)

Subject: Supplementary Document Verification of candidates falling under consideration zone for the posts of Constable (Telecommunication), advertised vide Notification No. 01 of 2024, under Item No. 03 In the Home Department,

NOTIFICATION

All such candidates who are falling under consideration zone and were called for Document Verification for the post of Constable (Telecommunication), Home Department, advertised vide Notification No. 01 of 2024, under Item No. 03, vide Notification No. JKSSB-COE0EXAM(UT)/36/2024-03 (7593651), dated 04-12-2025, but could not appear before the Document Verification Committee(s) from 08-12-2025 to 10-12-2025, due to various reasons, are hereby given last and final opportunity to appear before the Document Verification Committee on 15-12-2025 (Monday) from 10 AM to 04:30 PM at JKSSB Office, Muthi, Akhnoor Road, Jammu (Jammu Centre Based Candidates) and at JKSSB Office, Zam Zam Complex, Rambagh, Srinagar (Kashmir Centre Based Candidates), failing which no further claims in this regard shall be entertained at any stage.

No. JKSSB-COE0EXAM(UT)/36/2024-03 (7593651)

Dated: 11-12-2025

DIPK-8936-25
DT: 12/12/2025

Reyaz Ahmad Malik (JKAS)
Controller of Examinations
J&K Services Selection Board

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Food Safety Cannot Depend On Viral Videos

The recent raids conducted by the Food Safety Department in Srinagar, triggered by allegations of adulterated eggs in the market, have once again exposed a deeper and more troubling pattern. While officials maintain that clarity will emerge only after laboratory analysis, the episode has revived a familiar criticism: that the department remains largely reactive, waking up only when outrage erupts on social media or when a complaint forces its hand.

Across the Valley, public sentiment is unambiguous. People believe that food safety enforcement in Kashmir has become episodic, marked by sudden bursts of raids rather than the consistent, year-round vigilance required under the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 and its 2011 Rules. These laws mandate regular inspections, routine sampling of all categories of food, and timely legal action against violators. Yet, traders and consumers alike argue that these responsibilities are carried out half-heartedly and only when a crisis becomes too big to ignore.

The recent cases of rotten meat, suspected adulterated eggs, and other substandard food items reinforce the perception that Kashmir's food safety net is riddled with gaps. A system meant to prevent contamination seems to activate only after contaminated products have already reached consumers. In a region where public health infrastructure is already stretched, such lapses carry serious consequences.

Officials say they will act once lab results arrive, but that assurance has done little to calm public anxiety. People are asking a more fundamental question: Why are contaminated food items making it to the markets in the first place? The department's monitoring network clearly needs strengthening, both in scale and credibility. Preventive checks, not post-facto raids, must define the approach.

Kashmir cannot afford a food safety regime that is guided by viral videos rather than statutory duty. Until the department transitions from a reactive posture to a proactive, surveillance-driven system, the Valley will continue to witness recurring adulteration scares, crises that could have been averted with timely detection and regular oversight.

Public health demands more than sporadic action; it requires institutional vigilance. The Food Safety Department must rise to that responsibility.

When Stray Duties Undermine Dignity



HAROON RASHID BHAT

The dignity of a teacher is the dignity of society itself. Teachers are not merely instructors; they are the sculptors of human character, the first line of mentorship, and the backbone of every educated generation. Yet, recent directives requiring teachers in some districts to report every stray dog seen around school premises have sparked discomfort and disappointment within the teaching community. The orders, issued by certain Chief Education Officers directing ZEOs, Principals, and Headmasters to nominate Nodal Officers for reporting stray dog sightings and related incidents, have been perceived as an unnecessary extension of duties unrelated to academic or professional responsibilities.

Though the intention may have been to prevent harm and ensure student safety, the mode of implementation raises valid concerns. Teachers already carry a large academic load, administrative duties, and counselling responsibilities. Adding tasks such as monitoring stray dogs seems to dilute the essence of their profession and diverts attention from their primary role—teaching and mentoring students. Many educators feel the directive unintentionally portrays them as general watchers rather than respected academic professionals. The teaching community feels that such responsibilities trivialize their role. It is not the act of concern for student safety that bothers them, but the implication that teachers must now act as field reporters for stray dog surveillance. Schools should indeed be safe spaces, but ensuring safety is a shared responsibility requiring coordination with municipal bodies, animal welfare departments, and local administration—entities better equipped and formally mandated for such tasks.

The current situation has rekindled a broader debate on how teachers are perceived and treated within society. When any policy or instruction undermines their dignity, the ripple effect reaches the classroom. A teacher who



feels undervalued cannot be expected to contribute wholeheartedly to the moral and intellectual growth of students. To understand why local teachers feel disheartened, it is useful to observe how educators are respected in many developed nations. In countries like Finland, South Korea, and Japan, the teaching profession carries a social prestige comparable to doctors and engineers.

The respect is not merely symbolic; it is embedded in systems, policies, and everyday interactions. Finland, for instance, is globally admired for its education system. Becoming a teacher there is as competitive as entering a law or medical program. Teachers undergo rigorous training, and once appointed, they are trusted as experts. They are not burdened with miscellaneous tasks unrelated to education.

Their opinions are valued in policy-making, and they are given the autonomy to design lessons creatively. It is this trust—not administrative pressure—that inspires excellence. In South Korea, teachers enjoy a status that borders on reverence. Teachers'

Day is a national event where students traditionally honor their educators with heartfelt notes and gifts. Parents view teachers as moral guides, not just academic instructors. The government ensures that teachers are supported, well-trained, and protected from undue responsibilities that could hinder classroom performance. Similarly, in Japan, teachers are seen as nation-builders.

The term *sensei* itself carries deep cultural respect. Even retired teachers are addressed with the same honor. Schools have dedicated staff and community volunteers for tasks like safety monitoring, cleaning, and external reporting. This allows teachers to fully focus on nurturing minds, not chasing administrative errands. In contrast, teachers in many developing regions—including ours—face a multitude of extra responsibilities: census duties, election duties, survey work, and now stray dog reporting. While each task may have a public purpose, collectively they overshadow the core mission of teaching. It is no surprise that educators feel their dignity is being chipped

away, piece by piece. If we aim to build a society where education thrives, we must re-evaluate how we assign responsibilities to teachers.

Their role is noble and irreplaceable. Policies must reflect that nobility by supporting teachers, not burdening them. Instead of placing unrelated duties on educators, the administration should strengthen coordination with relevant departments to address safety issues. A teacher's dignity is not maintained by words but by actions. If society expects excellence from its educators, it must first treat them with the respect and recognition they deserve. Assigning duties that undermine their academic identity sends the wrong message to students and the community. Let teachers teach. Let them inspire, guide, and nurture. And let institutions ensure their dignity remains intact—for when a teacher stands tall, the whole society rises with them.

Author is a government teacher. He can be mailed at minamharoon123@gmail.com

INTANGIBLE WORLD HERITAGE

India's Light Becomes The World's Legacy



LALIT GARG

UNESCO's decision to declare Diwali as an Intangible World Heritage is a historic moment for India's cultural consciousness. It not only fills every Indian with pride but also reaffirms that the soul of Indian civilization still possesses the power to guide humanity. Diwali is not merely a festival—it is a scripture of light that celebrates life, spirit, relationships, harmony, and universal brotherhood. For thousands of years, this heritage has led humanity from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, from jealousy to love, and from fear to faith. To understand the grandeur of Diwali is to understand the depth of Indian culture. This culture does not reside only in temples, rituals, scriptures, or festivals, but flows through human memory, emotion, belief, and conduct. That is why it is called "intangible"—not visible in form, yet profoundly alive. Diwali is the highest celebration of this living essence.

When 26.17 lakh earthen lamps illuminated Ayodhya's Ram Ki Paidi in a single radiant moment, the spectacle was not just a sea of lights; it was the global proclamation of India's cultural luminosity. The world saw that India's traditions continue to be a universal source of inspiration. UNESCO's recognition is the natural outcome of this wonder. At its core, Diwali is



not merely about worship but about the philosophy of life. The festival reminds mankind that within every difficulty lies the possibility of light. Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh traditions may celebrate Diwali for different reasons, but the message remains one, the path of light is the path of humanity. Today, this eternal message is receiving global recognition.

India's intangible cultural heritage has always served the larger good of humanity. Traditions like the Kumbh Mela, Vedic chanting, Ram-lila, Yoga, and Durga Puja are already part of UNESCO's heritage list. With Diwali added, the list grows even more luminous. Diwali fulfills UNESCO's purpose: to protect traditions that carry humanity's highest wisdom across time. Diwali also carries profound economic, social, and human lessons. The small

potter who molds a simple clay lamp brings light into crores of homes. The small shopkeeper's livelihood becomes as important as that of a large business. The festival teaches that society becomes truly radiant when every individual receives light. Thus, Diwali is a celebration of community consciousness, equality, and shared opportunities.

In a world burdened with division, war, anxiety, material greed, and emotional darkness, Diwali's message becomes even more relevant—one small flame can challenge the deepest darkness. India has always taught that moral courage, harmony, peace, and spiritual energy are what make civilizations sustainable. Diwali is the living symbol of this truth. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's modern vision and cultural diplomacy have carried India's timeless concepts

to the global stage. Whether it is the worldwide acceptance of yoga, the rising interest in Ayurveda, international Ramayana conferences, or the global celebration of Indian festivals, this is India's soft power in action. UNESCO's recognition of Diwali marks the next beautiful milestone on this journey. Modi's philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has now become not only India's foreign policy but a global viewpoint. From the G20 to international forums, this vision has strengthened India's global identity. The world honouring Diwali is an extension of the same principle, it reminds humanity that the world is one family, pain is shared, and joy must be shared too.

Diwali is not merely a spiritual festival—it is also a profound cultural psychology. It does not empty the mind; it fills it. It does not extin-

guish the self; it awakens it. Diwali is an occasion to dust the mind, awaken new hope, and recognize the inner light. Declaring it a world heritage acknowledges the spiritual future of humanity. Globalization may have connected the world technologically, but emotional fragmentation has also increased. In this scenario, India's cultural diversity—especially traditions like Diwali—serve as philosophical bridges between civilizations. They remind the world that life is not only consumption but compassion; not only progress but harmony; not only development but values.

After UNESCO's announcement, the world will no longer see Diwali merely as an Indian religious festival. It will be regarded as a global ethical consciousness. This honour celebrates a heritage rooted in the past yet guiding the future. It validates India's spiritual strength, respected across centuries. Now it becomes our responsibility to preserve and elevate this radiant heritage—not just as a festival, but as a philosophy of life. When we light a lamp within, the world finds a direction in its glow. This is the power of Diwali. This is the glory of Diwali. Undoubtedly, Diwali's global recognition is the triumph of India's cultural soul. It proves that India is not merely a geopolitical power but also a spiritual guide for humanity. May this light reach every corner of the world in the years to come—this is the message of Diwali and India's cultural responsibility. The festival of lamps is no longer only India's; it now belongs to all of humanity. And this light of India will rise as a new sun of global consciousness in times ahead.

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Fight For Health Rights: When Treatment Becomes A Market



DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

The direction and structure of healthcare in India is rapidly changing. Medical care, once considered a public obligation and a fundamental responsibility of the welfare state, is increasingly being taken over by the private sector. On the one hand, the government health system struggles with limited budgets, limited human resources, and poor infrastructure; on the other, the reach and influence of private hospitals and corporate medical chains is steadily increasing. In the midst of this, ordinary citizens, especially the poor, rural residents, Dalits, tribals, minorities, and marginalized communities, are increasingly burdened by rising healthcare costs and unequal access.

In this changing landscape, the debate in India has intensified over whether health should be made a justifiable and enforceable fundamental right. Can the judiciary enforce this right when the system itself is fundamentally unequal, expensive, and privatized? This question is not merely legal; it is deeply political, social, and economic. Because a right is meaningful only when the state has both the capacity and the willingness to provide it.

In India, the right to health is implicitly recognized by the courts under Article 21, but it has not yet been explicitly made an independent fundamental right. A major reason for this is that the state is not yet in a position to accept the binding responsibility of ensuring equal, accessible, and quality treatment for every citizen. But it is equally true that until it is made an enforceable right, issues like inequality, exploitation, and arbitrary fee-charging will continue to grow.

The greatest irony of India's public health system is that while the country is on track to become the world's fifth-largest economy, public spending on health remains among the lowest



in the world. When the state doesn't allocate adequate budgets for healthcare, the private sector naturally fills the void—and this leads to inequality, uncontrolled fees, unnecessary medical procedures, and economic devastation for the common man.

Another aspect of the expanding privatization is that it's not limited to the operation of healthcare facilities; it's also influencing health policy, drug prices, insurance schemes, and the direction of public-private partnerships (PPPs). When health becomes a profit-driven industry, the nature, cost, access, and quality of treatment all become subject to market rules. In such a situation, the right to health may exist on paper, but it's not widely implemented on the ground.

Another serious problem is the poor implementation of the Clinical Establishments Act, 2010. Even in states where it is in place, regulation and transparency are extremely weak. Issues such as arbitrary patient fees, unnecessary testing recommenda-

tions, expensive packages, and surgeries at exorbitant rates have become commonplace. This situation is further compounded by the weak and ineffective mechanisms for patient complaints and justice.

Additionally, out-of-pocket expenditure in India still accounts for around 40% of total health expenditure, meaning patients have to spend a significant amount out of their own pockets. While government insurance schemes—such as Ayushman—intend to provide financial security, the procedures covered are limited, and their use by private hospitals is often arbitrary. The insurance-based model has not solved the root problem of health expenditure; instead, it has often become a new source of customers for the private sector.

Another level of inequality is social exclusion. Dalits, tribals, Muslims, women, transgender people, and citizens with disabilities—these individuals face even more difficult access to healthcare. Often, lack of sensitivity

in government hospitals, discrimination, communication gaps, or structural barriers deprive them of quality care. Therefore, the right to health should not remain merely a matter of legal language; it must be understood from the perspective of social justice.

The right to health can only be implemented judiciously if the health system is strong. This first requires the government to increase public health spending. According to the World Health Organization, health should account for at least 5% of GDP; India currently spends less than 2%. Without strengthening the primary health infrastructure, increasing the number of specialist doctors, nurses, and community health workers, making medicines and tests affordable, and strengthening accountability in health institutions—the implementation of any right will remain merely theoretical.

High drug prices and the influence of pharmaceutical companies are another cause of health inequal-

ity in India. Nearly 80% of medicines are still price-controlled. Until strict price controls are imposed on essential medicines and the Jan Aushadhi system is expanded, poor and middle-class families will continue to be burdened by expensive medications.

Furthermore, the conditions of health workers are a significant aspect of this crisis. Temporary appointments, low salaries, workload pressure, and unsafe working environments—all these factors impact the quality of medical care. Strong public health services are only possible if the government invests adequately in human resources.

In all these circumstances, the right to health can only be truly implemented when governance structures become more transparent, decentralized, and accountable. Community-based monitoring mechanisms, strengthening district health committees, digital transparency, and effective grievance redressal mechanisms can ensure that citizens can assert their rights and governments are held accountable.

Policy change, as well as political will, is essential. Improving the health system is a long-term task; but it can begin immediately by increasing budgets, bringing private hospitals under stricter regulatory frameworks, controlling drug prices, and strengthening the primary health infrastructure. This will not only make the health sector more equitable but also lay the foundation for a healthy and productive society for the future.

Ultimately, making health judicially enforceable would reaffirm India's constitutional philosophy—specifically, social justice. But this is only possible if the public health system is strong enough to ensure this right reaches every citizen. If the state's priorities remain focused on promoting a market-based model rather than health security, the term 'right' will lose its relevance, and citizens' suffering will continue to increase.

India must recognize today that health is not merely a product of economic growth, but the foundation of human dignity. And until this foundation is strengthened equitably, the right to health will remain on paper, but not in the lives of the people.

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Beyond The Screen: Redeeming Kashmir's Winter Break

BASHIR AHMAD DAR

The schools in the Kashmir Valley have formally closed for their three-month-long winter break. As per the directions of the School Education Department, schools up to 8th standard closed from the 1st of December, while secondary and higher secondary schools are about to close from the 11th of December.

This break provides a significant stretch of time for families to do something productive, something worth cherishing and something worth spending on. This winter break may not merely be seen as a break from active academic activities. It is a critical opportunity for parents to guide their children towards meaningful engagements and steer them away from the pervasive shadows of unguided, damaging habits.

Foremost among these modern damaging habits is screen addiction. It is the most brutal, yet universal habit. Almost all our children have fallen prey to it. This habit poses a multi-pronged, multi-dimensional assault on their physical health, moral framework, and social well-being.

There is palpable apprehension that the children will waste this winter vacation in front of phones, playing endless games and watching mindless reels. They may click on harmful adult content and trigger the release of dopamine. In a world where everything is just a click away, the risk is profound.

Therefore, the primary task for families this winter should be to help their children break free from this digital addiction and quicksand. In this mission, parents, and particularly mothers, have an invaluable role to play.

It stirs a deep nostalgia to recall our own childhoods, those of us who grew up in the 90s or early 2000s. Back then, we considered it a luxury if our parents allowed us to increase the volume of the TV or radio. Listening to a song on the radio in solitude was a seldom-granted privilege.

Watching TV in isolation was a dream. No child of the 90s can claim otherwise. At least, I cannot. Yet, we had the most beautiful and memorable



childhood, which most of today's children unfortunately lack.

Back then, we would involve ourselves and busy our whole days with different leisure activities. If these games and activities could keep us busy physically and mentally, they could surely keep modern children engaged as well. They did not only entertain us but also socialized us and taught us moral values like discipline, cooperation, love and care.

For example, the game of Katren gindun (pebble play) taught cooperation and obedience while maintaining the physical well-being of players. Similarly, Loung Sooz (hopscootch) would accommodate as many children as were available. A single game could last for hours, yet remain unfinished, and it developed not only hip and leg muscles but also cognitive capabilities. The game of marbles, lal phael, sharpened both gross and fine motor

skills, which directly influenced handwriting in academics. Likewise, games with matching cards, patten gindun, would engage players for hours, developing the ability to compare things for qualities and quantities.

Besides, we would play outdoor day games like Kho-Kho, cricket and badminton with enthusiasm and valor. But the evenings were not lazy either. As soon as darkness fell, a different set of games began.

For instance, in my house, our aunt would assemble all the family kids, hand over five small stone particles locally called tancheh fael to each, and ask us to play in a disciplined manner. I vividly remember how difficult it was for a novice to play the game.

The challenge was tricky, yet entertaining and engaging. It was to throw one particle up, quickly gather the rest from the ground and catch the thrown particle before it hit the floor. It would

take novice weeks, if not months, to finally master the art of catching the particles artistically. Diverse skills like hand-eye coordination, motor development, and cognitive skills were touched and honed.

Our parents were not highly literate, yet they deeply understood the art of nurturing a child. They knew how to groom a kid with values, discipline and purpose. They believed that feeding a child was not enough; raising a responsible and productive human being for the future was what truly mattered. Parents of today have much to learn from the parenting wisdom of the past.

Children today are addicted to phones largely because their parents are too. Imagine a child returning home after a long day at school only to find his mother glued to a screen. Imagine a kid watching his father play mobile games in the witching hours of the night.

Children imitate what they see.

So before parents stop their children from using phones, they must first discipline themselves. These phones are like termites—silent destroyers. They are the worst kind of pests. Their models and versions grow more sophisticated at the cost of our health, wealth, and social relationships.

I don't advocate for a total cut-off from phones. That is neither possible nor practical. Phones are an important part of our lives. But they are not the only part. We should limit their use, and put limitations on how often we reach for them. We should spend our leisure time on something meaningful and productive, and what could be more productive than spending it with our children?

Parents can play games with their kids, tell them meaningful stories, and even sing songs with them. They can divert their children's attention away from phones through real-life engagement. They can give them age-appropriate, challenging tasks—and believe me, children love to accept and solve challenges. I have a friend from Bandipora who, just last year, would read out Arabian Nights to his children, adding his own insights and takeaways to each story. In doing so, he positively engaged his kids while making every evening memorable. His children have not only developed a strong English vocabulary but have also become passionate listeners. We can imitate parents like him.

This winter break is more than a holiday pause. It is a treasure trove of possibilities. If parents take the lead, these three months can become a turning point in their children's lives. If parents can just set boundaries for their kids, and engage them meaningfully with love, care and affection, the children can surely beat the draining habit of screen addiction. Let us not allow our children to sink deeper into this silent trap of phones. Instead, let us gift them memories, skills, stories, and real human warmth—treasures no device can ever replace. The onus is on us. If we shape their winter wisely, we will help shape their future beautifully.

(The author is a teacher and hails from Anantnag district)

CS Directs To Cut Down Grievance Disposal Time, Strengthen Citizen Responsiveness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Friday chaired a detailed review meeting of the JK Samadhan public grievance redressal system, taking an extensive assessment of grievance disposal performance across departments, districts, and their allied offices.

The review meeting attended by all the Administrative heads along with Secretary Grievances, Niraj Kumar and other concerned officers was based on the latest data updated till 11 December 2025.

The Chief Secretary took this occasion to note that JK Samadhan has emerged as the

central platform for transparent citizen-services monitoring and emphasized the need to further streamline responsiveness, improve appeal mechanisms, and enhance integration with CPGRAMS for seamless grievance handling.

During the review, the Department of Public Grievances (DoPG) informed that the platform has received 1,02,110 grievances to date, of which 88,091 have been redressed, reflecting an overall disposal rate of 86.27. The redressal patterns were also analysed separately for Samadhan-origin grievances (87.59% disposal) and CPGRAMS-linked grievances (76.35% disposal).

The Chief Secretary appre-

ciated the progress in district-level citizen registration under JK Samadhan, noting that several districts have achieved exemplary household coverage with Ganderbal leading with 115%, Shopian (105%), and Kishtwar (101%) leading the list. The overall registration coverage across the UT stands at 69% of target households, the Secretary apprised the meeting.

A comparative month-wise trend analysis showed consistent citizen engagement, with grievance inflow peaking at 7,087 cases in February 2025, and sustained levels in subsequent months.

The meeting reviewed department-wise grievance loads and disposal efficiency. Key depart-

ments such as Revenue, PWD (R&B), Rural Development, Power Development, Housing & Urban Development, Home, and Jal Shakti reported the highest grievance traffic and were directed to ensure faster disposal and improvement in public satisfaction ratings. Several departments displayed strong performance, maintaining disposal rates above 85%, while others were instructed to reduce pendency further.

Performance of other major organisations including J&K Bank, Universities, BSNL, EPFO, SMVDSB, and Central Government entities was also examined. The Chief Secretary stressed the need for all stakeholder agencies

to adopt uniform standards of citizen responsiveness.

A separate assessment of average time taken for grievance disposal revealed notable inter-departmental variations. While departments such as Tribal Affairs, Labour & Employment, Food & Civil Supplies, and Social Welfare demonstrated swift disposal times, others with higher workloads were advised to reduce delays and streamline follow-up processes. District-level analysis also highlighted Budgam, Ganderbal, and Anantnag among the faster-performing districts in grievance resolution.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the citizen feedback dashboard, which recorded feed-

back on 8,704 grievances. While many departments received favourable satisfaction ratings and high responsiveness scores, certain departments were advised to improve citizen communication, especially in cases where users reported not receiving follow-up calls or messages from officials.

The DoPG apprised that BIS-AG-N has deployed a new system build (Version 2.6.2 RM) today morning, aimed at addressing existing technical issues. Initial observations, however, indicate areas that still require improvement, including the appeal mechanism, MIS synchronisation, feedback modules, and CPGRAMS integration.

The Chief Secretary directed the DoPG to continuously engage with BISAG-N to ensure full stabilization of the platform and resolution of the highlighted issues.

Reiterating government's commitment to accountable and citizen-centric governance, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo stressed that timely, transparent, and empathetic grievance redressal is a core responsibility of every department.

He urged all Administrative Secretaries, Heads of Departments, and District Administrations to bring down pendency levels, improve departmental communication with complainants, and ensure that every grievance stands resolved up to the satisfaction of the complainants.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Biting Cold, Falling Water

extreme cold weather.

Water levels have gone down in all the rivers, lakes, streams, wells and springs in the Valley as the Jhelum River running through the middle of the Valley from south to north has almost hit the bottom.

The Meteorological (MeT) Department has no forecast for rain or snow in the near future. Except for a couple of feeble Western Disturbances resulting in isolated rain/snow in higher reaches of J&K, there is no likelihood of any major snowfall till the month end, Director MeT, Mukhtar Ahmad, said.

The 40-day-long period of extreme winter cold called the 'Chillai Kalan' starts each year on December 21 and ends on January 30.

During this period, rivers, lakes, streams and other water bodies freeze partially in the Valley, and the gap between the maximum and minimum temperature narrows down, triggering harsh cold conditions.

LG Meets Kin

Shri VK Birdi; DIG CKR, Shri Rajiv Pandey; SSP Srinagar, Dr GV Sundee Chakravathy; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Shri Akshay Labroo and senior officials of Police and Civil Administration were present.

LG Pays Tribute To

ideals," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Addressing a commemorative event in Jammu, the Lieutenant Governor spoke on General Zorawar Singh's monumental military campaigns in Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit, and Skardu, and highlighted his pivotal role in expansion of the Dogra Empire.

He called upon the youth and all sections of society to follow the message of General Zorawar Singh for moral clarity, unwavering conviction to shape the better future and empower the marginalised.

"Let us dedicate ourselves to changing lives, guiding and supporting youth and build a more just and peaceful society," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that the Government of India, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is committed to honour the contributions of General Zorawar Singh.

"To honour his legacy, the Government of India has named an advanced indigenous light tank after General Zorawar Singh Ji.

The General Zorawar Singh Chair has also been established at the University of Jammu. Dedicated efforts are also being made to encourage new generations to study his unparalleled military campaigns and vision for societal organization," he further said.

Shri Vikram Randhawa, Member of Legislative Assembly from Bahu; Shri Devinder Singh Kaluria, Chairman, General Zorawar Singh Memorial Education and Charitable Trust and Trustees-Ms Riya Kaluria and Ms Diksha Kaluria; Lt Gen RK Sharma (Retd.), President, J&K Ex-Services League; Shri Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture, prominent citizens and people from different walks of life were present.

Major General Goverdhan Singh Jamwal (Retd.); Padma Shri Dr SP Varma, President, Gandhi Global Family, J&K; Col. Karan Singh (Retd.), President Dogra Sadar Sabha; Ex-servicemen and senior officials of Army, Civil and Police Administration were also present.

Over 1,200 Acres

been fully digitised under the 'Raksha Bhoomi' project, though public access remains restricted due to security considerations—(KNO)

CS Reviews PM

Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG), under which targeted subsidies will be processed only after e-KYC is completed. He emphasised that OMCs and district administrations must ensure 100% e-KYC compliance so that beneficiaries do not face delays in receiving their entitled subsidies.

The meeting was informed that under the newly approved extension of PMUY, 25 lakh new LPG connections will be provided nationally during FY 2025–26. The eligibility criteria have been simplified into a single unified category of "adult women from poor households submitting a Deprivation Declaration", replacing the earlier 14-point declaration.

It was added that OMCs have introduced a revamped Standard Operating Procedure to streamline enrolment, verification and connection release processes. Moreover the budgetary support per connection has been enhanced to 2,050, while LPG stoves and the first refill will continue to be provided by the OMCs. Aadhaar and ration card-based electronic de-duplication mechanisms have also been strengthened to ensure that households do not receive multiple connections, the meeting was apprised.

Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA, Saurabh Bhagat informed that District Ujjwala Committees (DUCs) have been established in all districts and are actively monitoring application pendency, beneficiary identification, awareness generation, installation checks and cases of low or no refills.

He stressed the importance of expanding the LPG distribution network, especially in remote and underserved areas, and urged Deputy Commissioners to flag requirements for additional distributors so that gaps may be filled promptly through OMCs.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the LPG stock position in the Kashmir Valley and was informed that 3,660 MT of LPG is the storage capacity along with an additional 200 MT of "on-wheel" stock from IOC and BPC, ensuring up to seventeen days of assured availability once storage tanks are fully replenished.

To further strengthen winter preparedness, HPCL's Pampore plant has deployed 212 dedicated tank trucks, while a multi-source supply plan has been activated with consignments dispatched from Bhatinda, Loni/Bahadurgarh, Jammu and Kandla. The projected stock buildup at Pampore is expected to reach 1,400 MT by December 15, 2,500 MT by December 20 and the optimum capacity of 3,000 MT by December 22.

To strengthen last-mile service delivery, the Chief Secretary also called for expansion of the Common Service Centre (CSC) network, particularly in far-flung areas lacking LPG distributors. He was briefed that their MoU with

can the situation be clarified. Consumers are urged not to panic until results are officially released."

He said the department is continuing inspections across supermarkets and local markets, and any product found will be immediately sampled in accordance with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

In a related move, the Office of the Assistant Commissioner/DO Food Safety Anantnag prohibited the sale of Priyagold Butter Delite biscuits (Batch No. E25KPO2FB). "Laboratory tests conducted by the National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad, confirmed that the biscuits contained sulphite levels above permissible limits, posing a health risk to consumers. The sale ban will remain in effect until further orders," the official order accessed reads.

Representing traders, Tariq Ahmad, who deals with eggs and is part of a larger traders' group, told the media at Srinagar Mandi: "We fully support the department's drive. We want complete transparency. Results should be made public. Our families consume these products too. Any issue must be clarified after sampling."

Meanwhile, officials from the Food Safety Department assured the public that monitoring and testing will continue, stressing that consumer safety remains the top priority—(KNO)

'No New Govt

The Centre also reiterated that substantial investment continues nationwide through schemes including PM-ABHIM's Critical Care Blocks and PMSSY upgrades—(KNO)

J&K Has 4 Trauma

during the 11th and 12th Five-Year Plans, including the four centres in J&K.

However, under the current scheme, there is no provision for establishing new trauma care facilities, and the focus has shifted to capacity building of doctors and paramedical staff in trauma management.

The government further stated that monitoring of trauma care centres, including patient data and quality of services, is carried out at the state level—(KNO)

Kashmir's Shrinking

tonnes of food grains against a need of 1.34 million tonnes, leaving a deficit of 0.89 million tonnes. Official estimates warn the shortfall could hit 36 per cent by next year and cross 50 per cent by 2030.

Farmers across the Valley say they have watched their fertile paddy fields vanish year after year.

"We used to harvest enough rice for the whole family and even store some for the next season," said Abdul Rashid, a farmer from Pulwama. "Now half the land around our village has turned into housing colonies, orchards and other purposes. Young people prefer selling land rather than cultivating it."

Several growers believe that unregulated conversion of agricultural tracts, coupled with inadequate incentives for farming, has discouraged many from continuing traditional agriculture.

Agriculture experts argue that the decline in farmland will have serious long-term consequences if the trend continues unchecked. "Food self-sufficiency is slipping away from

CSCs has been extended till November 2027 and mobile app access for all three OMCs has been enabled for CSC Village Level Entrepreneurs, allowing them to support PMUY enrolments, refill bookings, delivery authentication and grievance redressal.

Reiterating the government's commitment to ensuring household energy security and timely rollout of the new phase of PMUY, the Chief Secretary urged all departments and OMCs to work in mission mode to achieve 100% e-KYC compliance, improve last-mile service delivery and ensure uninterrupted LPG supply throughout the winter season.

Proxy Modules Emerge

modules would have arranged for the money. Further, it gives Pakistan the deniability factor, while also ensuring that acts of terror continue unabated in India.

This also has to do with the fact that the Narendra Modi government changed its doctrine on terror.

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, the Modi government changed its doctrine, whereby it decided to consider an act of terror not as a cross-border strike, but as an act of war.

With such modules mushrooming, Pakistan can classify terror incidents as an internal incident.

Another official said that similar modules were to be replicated in Jammu and Kashmir as well. The infiltrations have become hard, and the ISI has failed to revive homegrown terror groups such as the Hizbul Mujahideen. It had hoped that the likes of Mufti Irfan Ahmed would pick the youth and radicalise them, following which they would be recruited into a fully homegrown module that has no direct association with terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba or the Jaish.

The security agencies have analysed and understood this risk. They say that the problem mainly lies with the large-scale propaganda that is on. This is an issue that has been tackled on a war footing, as this is the main reason why there are inspired and proxy modules that are coming up.

Officials say that this is more or less on the model that the Islamic State set up when it came to lone wolf terrorists. It was only the propaganda that the Islamic State put out. The rest of the work was all done by the lone wolf who was inspired by such propaganda. The same is happening with modules such as the one that was busted in Faridabad.

Although this module was busted and major terror attacks were averted, groups such as the Jaish would once again push their agenda in specific parts of the country so that more such self-inspired proxy modules come up.

Another issue that is associated with such modules it comprises white-collared criminals. These persons are educated, intelligent, capable of handling the dark web and have the resources to raise funds for terror attacks in addition to procuring the wherewithal for it. (IANS)

Authorities Launch

drugs that are strictly banned in food-producing animals because of their carcinogenic and toxic effects. This issue becomes even more serious because eggs are consumed heavily by children, senior citizens, and patients."

He added, "Doctors often prescribe eggs as a primary source of protein, making this a direct public-health risk. I urge the Hon Health Minister @sakinaitoo Sahiba and Hon. Food and Supplies Minister @satishsharmajnk Ji and their Department of Food & Supplies and Food Safety authorities to immediately investigate, conduct residue testing across markets, trace the source, and take strict action against violators. For the safety of our people, there can be no compromise. This must be treated with utmost urgency."

The tweet also referenced a nationwide report titled "Cancer-Causing Eggs by Eggos? The Lab Report That Sparked a Nationwide Food Safety Panic".

The Food Safety teams conducted market checks and collected multiple samples for laboratory analysis.

Assistant Commissioner of Food Safety Srinagar, Yameen ul Nabi, told the media, "No physical inspection can confirm contamination. Reports are expected soon, and only then

Kashmir at a worrying pace," said an agricultural economist who has served at a senior level in the Agriculture department. "If 34,000 hectares vanish in less than three decades, imagine what the situation will look like in the next 20 years. The region's dependence on outside markets will only deepen."

Experts called for a strict implementation of land-use laws, promotion of high-yielding rice varieties, and increasing farmer incentives to protect what remains of the Valley's fertile land.

Officials in the Agriculture Department acknowledge that rapid urbanisation has contributed significantly to the decline of farmland. An official said that although laws exist to prevent the conversion of cultivable land, violations continue due to population pressure and lax enforcement.

"We are focusing on modern farming techniques, land conservation, and awareness programmes," the official added. "But the challenge is huge and requires stronger coordination among all departments."

It is pertinent to mention here that in 2022, new government rules allowed landowners to convert farmland for commercial or industrial use with fewer restrictions. The 400 square metre cap on converting farmland for commercial or industrial use was lifted.

A district-level committee, led by the District Collector, reviews applications and must decide within 30 days. The owner pays 5 per cent of the land's market value as a fee. If the land isn't used as approved within two years, the permission is cancelled.

With local production unable to meet the region's needs, Kashmir imports massive quantities of rice every year. Residents say that while market shelves are full, the dependence on external supplies makes the Valley vulnerable to price fluctuations and transport disruptions.

"Every household depends on rations from outside states," said a resident from Pulwama. "If road connectivity is affected even for a few days, prices shoot up instantly. This shows how fragile our food system has become."

Experts, farmers, and civil society groups agree that safeguarding the remaining agricultural land is crucial. Many are urging the government to strengthen enforcement against illegal land conversion and create better economic prospects for farmers to prevent further loss of farmland.

"If we keep losing land at this pace, future generations will have nothing left to cultivate," said another farmer from north Kashmir. "Agriculture has always been Kashmir's backbone, but now it is weakening."—(KNO)

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Parliament to accommodate more lawmakers after Census and delimitation that will follow

IAN S

NEW DELHI: In a significant decision, the government on Friday (December 12) approved a two-phase, fully digital Census 2027 with an allocation of Rs 11,718 crore. According to officials, the digital design will speed operations and improve data quality.

The decadal count was postponed from 2021 largely because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, with authorities arguing that immediate post-pandemic enumeration in many countries produced quality and coverage problems.

Additionally, it was also pointed out that logistical and human-resource disruptions warranted a delay.

The Census is India's foundational demographic exercise, involving extensive planning, resource allocation, and the legal process of delimitation that shapes electoral rolls.

Incidentally, India's last full census in 2011 recorded a population of 1.21 billion, documented trends in urbanisation, literacy gains, and a slowly improving sex ratio. Such data help in guiding a decade of policy and planning. These decadal snapshots are the primary source for socio-economic indicators used by ministries, states, and researchers to design welfare schemes and infrastructure investments.

The population count helps the constitutional process of delimitation, redrawing constituency boundaries to ensure, roughly, equal representation. It supplies the demographic frame that forms the base for electoral rolls



and for sample groups selected for surveys.

However, the delayed process and the decision to include caste data have raised political and technical concerns; while in southern states, there are worries over population-based seat redistribution. The delimitation exercise that follows the decennial Census reallocates seats among states based on updated population figures.

The freeze on the total number of Lok Sabha seats is due to be revisited after 2026, which opens the door to redistribution and potential increases in total seats if Parliament so decides.

The southern states have publicly expressed concern that fresh census figures could trigger delimitation that reduces their relative representation, given slower population growth in parts of the South compared to those in the north.

The Centre has assured that such concerns will be discussed at the appropriate time.

Meanwhile, the inclu-

sion of caste enumeration has also added political sensitivity, with debates over how the data might be used in reservation and electoral calculations. Considering that the increase in population through this period would result in a larger number of lawmakers, the government had to design a Parliament building to comfortably accommodate them.

Thus, planning ahead, the government built the new building where the Lok Sabha can seat up to 888 members and the Rajya Sabha, up to 384. The exact number of future representatives would be known only after appropriate legal and political steps, following the conclusion of the 2027 Census and a delimitation process. The increased capacity removes a physical constraint that previously limited how many members could be accommodated in each house at one time.

The new complex was planned not only as a modern workplace but also to future-proof India's legislature for a larger membership and more complex

committee work.

Reports quoting experts emphasised that the old circular chamber was cramped for a growing democracy and lacked space for expanded membership, modern technology and committee rooms. Thus, the practical rationale was for a larger, triangular complex that can host more simultaneous legislative activity.

The new Parliament building thus removed a practical bottleneck, being ready to accommodate a larger legislature, but actual seat increase requires political consensus and legal action after the Census and delimitation. Until those steps are taken, the building's greater capacity remains a contingency rather than a guarantee.

In practice, Parliament would need to pass enabling legislation or a constitutional amendment to change the total number of seats; the Delimitation Commission then redraws boundaries and allocates seats among states using the new population data.

IAN S

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday approved the proposal to conduct the Census of India 2027 at an estimated cost of Rs 11,718.24 crore, marking the country's first fully digital census and one of the largest administrative exercises in the world.

The census will be carried out in two phases—the Houselisting and Housing Census from April to September 2026, followed by the Population Enumeration in February 2027.

In the Union Territory of Ladakh and snow-bound areas of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, the Population Enumeration will be conducted earlier, in September 2026, due to weather constraints.

Largest digital enumeration exercise

Nearly 30 lakh field

enumerators, supervisors, master trainers, and census officers—will participate in the operation. For the first time, data will be collected through mobile applications available on Android and iOS platforms.

A dedicated Census Management & Monitoring System (CMMS) portal has been developed for real-time tracking of fieldwork, while a new Houselisting Block (HLB) Creator web-mapping tool will assist charge officers in digitally defining enumeration areas.

Caste enumeration to be included

In a significant decision, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, in its meeting on 30 April 2025, approved the inclusion of caste enumeration in the

upcoming census. The data will be captured electronically during the Population Enumeration phase, marking a major expansion in the scope of demographic data collection.

Option for self-enumeration

For the first time, citizens will have the option to self-enumerate via a secure online platform. The government has assured that the digital exercise will incorporate robust security features to protect personal data.

Employment and capacity building

The Census 2027 exercise is expected to generate approximately 1.02 crore man-days of work, with about 18,600 technical personnel to be engaged for nearly 550 days across local administrative units. The initiative is also expected to enhance digital and data management skills among

personnel, improving future employment prospects.

Faster and better data delivery

The government aims to release census data faster than in previous cycles, supported by improved digital infrastructure. A new "Census-as-a-Service (CaaS)" platform will provide clean, machine-readable datasets to ministries and agencies, while advanced visualisation tools will make results more accessible to the public down to the village and ward levels.

Census 2027 will be the 16th national census and the 8th since Independence. Conducted under the Census Act, 1948 and Census Rules, 1990, the decennial exercise remains India's most comprehensive source of primary demographic, social, and economic data.

Airfares can't be capped as deregulated market drives growth in aviation: Naidu

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said in the Lok Sabha on Friday that it would not be feasible for the government to cap airfares throughout the year in a deregulated market, which has enabled India's aviation sector to grow at a rapid pace that has ultimately benefited consumers.

Responding to a private member's bill seeking airfare regulation amid the IndiGo crisis, which sent ticket prices soaring, the minister said that the core idea of deregulation remains, and "If we want the civil aviation sector to grow, the foremost requirement is to keep it deregulated so that more players can enter the market."

"Airfares usually rise during the festive season because of increased demand on specific routes and at particular times. These fluctuations are seasonal, and it is not feasible to cap fares for an entire



year on any given sector. Market demand and supply naturally regulate airfares on their own," the minister said.

The Aviation Minister pointed out that regulating airfares is "not a one-way solution," as the government must consider the long-term viability of the entire aviation ecosystem, including airlines, airports, and the operational network that connects them.

He pointed out that

countries that have seen rapid growth in the aviation sector typically have deregulated markets that encourage more players and competition.

Ticket prices are best discovered through demand and supply, with passengers gaining over time as competition among airlines brings down fares, he added.

"We also have statistics to show that when we compare India's airfares with those in other countries,

the rate of increase is actually negative," Naidu said.

At the same time, Naidu highlighted that the Centre retains powers under the Aircraft Act to cap fares in extraordinary situations to protect passengers.

He cited instances such as Covid-19, and events like Mahakumbh, the Pahalgam-Srinagar situation and the recent disruption in IndiGo flights when the government has stepped in to curb the sudden surge in airfares.

Citing another example of price regulation, Naidu highlighted the 'Fare Se Fursat' scheme, launched in collaboration with the Alliance of Airlines, under which the government has fixed fares on 25 routes, including those in the Northeast and South India. The minister pointed out that an increase in capacity was the longer-term answer to recurring price spikes, signalling the government's view that supply constraints, not just airline pricing, shape fare volatility.

India, Austria review bilateral ties, discuss regional and global developments

IAN S

VIENNA: India and Austria held 8th Foreign Office Consultations in Vienna on Friday and undertook a comprehensive review of the entire gamut of bilateral ties. The two sides held discussions over various sectors, including political engagement, trade and economic cooperation, science and technology, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people ties.

For the meeting, the Indian delegation was led by Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Sibi George while the Austrian side was led by Nikolaus Marschik, Secretary General for Foreign Affairs, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

In a statement, MEA said, "During the Foreign Office Consultations, the two sides undertook a comprehensive review of the entire gamut of bilateral relations. Views were exchanged on India-EU relations as well as key regional and global developments of mutual interest. The discussions covered a wide range of areas, including political engagement, trade and economic cooperation, science and technology, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people ties. Cooperation between the two countries in international and multilateral fora was also discussed."

The officials of two nations agreed to maintain regular official exchanges and hold the next Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi at a mutually convenient time.

Earlier in October, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar

extended greetings to his Austrian counterpart Beate Meinl-Reisinger and the people of Austria on their National Day and expressed India's commitment to advance the enhanced partnership between the two nations.

While sharing a picture with Beate Meinl-Reisinger on X, EAM Jaishankar wrote, "Felicitations to FM Beate Meinl-Reisinger, the Government and the people of Austria on their National Day. Look forward to advancing the Enhanced India-Austria Partnership."

EAM Jaishankar met Beate Meinl-Reisinger on the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September.

In May this year, EAM Jaishankar held a telephone conversation with Beate Meinl-Reisinger and congratulated her on her appointment as Austria's Foreign Minister.

The two leaders agreed on zero tolerance of terrorism and firm opposition to nuclear blackmail.

Following the talks, EAM Jaishankar, in a post on X, said, "Appreciated the conversation today with Austrian FM Beate Meinl-Reisinger. Congratulated her on her appointment. Agreed on zero tolerance of terrorism and firm opposition to nuclear blackmail. Discussed our excellent bilateral ties and the Ukraine conflict."

Diplomatic relations between India and Austria were established in 1949.

Last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Austria. This visit coincided with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of India-Austria diplomatic relations.

BJP conspiring to delete three crore voters in UP: Akhilesh Yadav

IAN S

HYDERABAD: Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Akhilesh Yadav, on Friday, alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is conspiring to delete three crore names from voter list in Uttar Pradesh through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

Talking to media persons here, Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP and the Election Commission of together conspiring to delete votes wherever BJP suffered defeat.

"This is not SIR. This is NRC under the guise of SIR. They could not have directly implemented NRC and are now implementing it indirectly. They are asking to people show papers. These are the papers one has to show whenever NRC is going to be implemented," he said.

Akhilesh Yadav said that Aadhaar is not being accepted which is very unfortunate.

He said that people were worried because of SIR.

"First they troubled people with demonetisation and later harassed traders with GST and now bothering people with SIR," he added.

The SP President on Thursday expressed confidence that the political landscape in Telangana is poised for change and that the people will once again extend their support to the Bharat Rashttra Samithi (BRS) if the party continues to remain closely connected with them.

He said parties that stand firmly with the people and fight for their causes inevitably receive public backing.

Akhilesh Yadav called on Bharat Rashttra Samithi (BRS) Working President

K.T. Rama Rao.

The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister later told media that ups and downs are common in politics.

"Sometimes people accept us and sometimes they give us an opportunity to reassess," he said referring to the defeat of BRS in 2023 Assembly elections.

Akhilesh Yadav said there was a time when they (SP) too were confined to a few seats but they remained amid the people.

"People supported us and today BJP is number two there," he said.

The SP leader said that no one can predict when people will support you.

He hoped that things would change.

"The country needs to march on the path of progress with a vision. The politics of division should end. Negativity in politics should end. Positivity should come. Progress should be discussed. We will continue to work in that direction," he said.

"KCR and KTR are our friends. I have been with them and I will always remain with them," he remarked in response to another query.

K.T. Rama Rao said Akhilesh Yadav's leadership -- despite losing power in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections but securing a remarkable performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls, turning the SP into the third-largest party in India -- is an inspiration for the BRS.

He expressed confidence that the BRS would similarly "bounce back" and return to power in Telangana.

KTR said party leaders held discussions with Akhilesh Yadav on various issues and noted that the SP Chief would meet KCR again during his next visit to Hyderabad.

TPL 7: GS Delhi Aces stay firm at top, SG Pipers rise to second after Day 4

IAHS

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Panthers were held to a draw by Gurgaon Grand Slammers; Chennai Smashers beat Hyderabad Strikers, GS Delhi Aces went down to SG Pipers while in the last match of the day, Yash Mumbai Eagles defeated Rajasthan Rangerson on the fourth day of Tennis Premier League (TPL) Season 7 at the Gujarat University Tennis Stadium in Ahmedabad on Friday.

In the Women's Singles, Sahaja Yamalapalli continued her strong form, narrowly defeating Italy's Nuria Brancaccio 13-12 in a match defined by long rallies and bold shot-making. She then paired with Sriram Balaji in the Mixed Doubles, where the duo's clean returning and controlled net play earned them a 14-11 win over Brancaccio and Anirudh Chandrasekar, giving the Gurgaon Grand Slammers an early lead.

The Gujarat Panthers responded in the Men's Singles as Alexandre Müller pulled back a 14-11 win over Dan Evans. Müller then teamed up with Chandrasekar in the Men's Doubles, edging Balaji and Evans 13-12 in a tightly contested match. With both teams tied at 50 points, the game ended in a draw.

In the second match, the Chennai Smashers faced the Hyderabad Strikers. Carole Monnet led the way in Women's Singles, defeating Irina Bara 15-10. In



Mixed Doubles, Bara and Rithvik Choudary Bollipalli narrowly overcame Monnet and Vishnu Vardhan 13-12, shifting momentum in favour of the Chennai Smashers.

Dalibor Svrčina then lit up the court and dominated the Men's Singles with a 15-10 win over Pedro Martínez, before teaming with Bollipalli to deliver a commanding 17-8 victory in Men's Doubles over Vardhan and Martínez. Their performance secured a 55-45 overall win for the Chennai Smashers.

In the third match of the day, GS Delhi Aces faced the SG Pipers. The tie opened with Sofia Costoulas taking on Shrivalli Bhamidipaty in the Women's Singles, and Costoulas delivered a composed performance to claim a 14-11 win. In the Mixed Doubles, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Sofia Costoulas went up against Rohan Bopanna

and Shrivalli Bhamidipaty, where the SG Pipers pair dialled in with sharp returning and controlled net play to take the match 14-11.

The Men's Singles saw Billy Harris up against Ramkumar Ramanathan, and Harris showcased high-quality tennis under pressure to edge a tight 13-12 win. The Men's Doubles featured Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Billy Harris against Ramkumar Ramanathan and Rohan Bopanna, where the Pipers duo produced a display of sheer quality to secure a 14-11 victory and wrap up a narrow 51-49 overall win for the SG Pipers.

In the final match of the day, the Yash Mumbai Eagles went head-to-head with the Rajasthan Rangers. In the Women's Singles, Riya Bhatia faced Ekaterina Kazionova. Riya put up a strong fight, but Kazionova held firm in the

closing exchanges to take a narrow 13-12 win. Kazionova then returned for the Mixed Doubles alongside Dhakshinewar Suresh, going up against Riya Bhatia and Niki Poonacha. In another tightly contested encounter that went point for point, the Rajasthan Rangers duo edged out a 13-12 victory by the barest of margins.

The Men's Singles brought together the two highest-ranked players in TPL Season 7, as world No. 57 Damir Dzumhur closed horns with world No. 26 Luciano Darderi. The experienced 33-year-old Dzumhur delivered a high-quality performance to claim a 14-11 win and pull the Eagles back into the tie. The Men's Doubles then featured Niki Poonacha and Damir Dzumhur against Dhakshinewar Suresh and Luciano Darderi, and in a dramatic finish, the Yash Mumbai Eagles pair held their nerve to take a tight 13-12 victory, sealing a 51-49 overall win for the Eagles.

The Tennis Premier League is Asia's biggest tennis league, showcasing India's top talent alongside international tennis stars. Supported by tennis legends like Leander Paes, Sania Mirza, and Mahesh Bhupathi (CEO of SG Pipers), along with Bollywood icons such as Rakul Preet Singh and Sonali Bendre Behl, TPL brings together sports, entertainment, and business leaders in a unique blend of competition and engagement.

Duffy five-for triggers West Indies slide to give New Zealand first win of WTC cycle

AGENCIES

Jacob Duffy, who had to wait until his 31st birthday for a Test debut earlier this year, claimed his second five-wicket haul of the series as West Indies folded tamely on the third day in Wellington. Bowled out for just 128, West Indies left New Zealand a target of 56, which was knocked off before tea for a 1-0 lead in the three-match series with one game to go. It was New Zealand's first win of the 2025-27 World Test Championships (WTC) cycle. West Indies, meanwhile, have now lost six of their seven outings in this cycle and remain winless.

The collapse began with Brandon King's run-out for 22 in the morning session. After a careful start with overnight partner Kavem Hodge (35), King set off for a risky single in the morning's eighth over. Sent back and left stranded, he was gone once substitute Michael Bracewell's sharp throw was relayed on to the stumps by debutant wicket-keeper Mitchell Hay.

Shai Hope fell in the same over after closing the bat face in an attempt to work Michael Rae to the leg side, offering a simple return catch. Roston Chase, averaging under 16 as Test captain, then nicked a rising delivery from Duffy through to the keeper.

Hodge and first-Test hero Justin Greaves (25) attempted to stabilising things, with Hodge unfurling crisp strokes through the covers and square leg. But in the 31st over, one of those well-struck pulls picked out substitute fielder Will Young, who held a



superb rebound catch at midwicket.

At 88 for 6, with the lead still below 20, the match was effectively gone, and Duffy accelerated the finish. He trapped Greaves lbw with a full delivery that jagged in, a decision first turned down but later overturned on review. In his next over, Duffy drew Tevin Imlach into a loose drive away from his body for an edge to second slip. Rae added his third by removing Jayden Seales caught behind, before Duffy completed his five-for by going short to No. 11 Ojay Shields, who miscued a leg-side swipe to fine leg.

Duffy walked off to applause with the innings ball raised, and openers Tom Latham and Devon Conway dashed away to pad up with an hour left before tea and a small target in front.

The pair added 26 in seven overs before Latham got a leading edge off Anderson Phillip to third slip. Conway held fort, attacking with six fours in his unbeaten 22-ball 28. Kane

Williamson, with 16 off 12 balls, wrapped up the match with back-to-back boundaries in the tenth over.

Earlier in the Test, Blair Tickner's first-innings four-for and Rae's three wickets dismissed West Indies for 205. New Zealand replied with a disappointing 278 for 9 declared, with Tickner unable to bat after picking up a shoulder injury. But half-centuries from Conway (61) and Hay (60) ensured a meaningful lead, which, combined with West Indies' limp second-innings effort, set up a comfortable win.

After the game, New Zealand captain Latham said they got "better and better" as the game progressed. "We took a little bit to get into the game, morning of day one, potentially some heavy legs. But we adjusted things and we bowled better and better in the second innings. And obviously Duffy on the back of that [five-wicket haul] and some of our substitutes coming on and getting on the board [was pleasing].

"Mitch Hay played beautifully in the first innings coming under pressure. The way he played was pretty much the way he plays for Canterbury and that's what we asked of him. And Michael Rae picked up some really important wickets on day one, trucked into the wind all week. All those efforts do not go unnoticed. We probably weren't where we wanted to be with the bat but we can look into that over the rest of this week."

Chase said West Indies' batters didn't make the most of the conditions on offer: "Batting is a bit of a concern, after coming from the first Test, that beautiful second innings [in Christchurch]. But we came here and our batters never really capitalised. Initially we thought the pitch would be similar to Christchurch. But this pitch was a lot easier for batting. The scores didn't reflect that. There is still one Test match left and we can still level the series. That can help motivate the guys further."

Rahul Gandhi to attend Messi's GOAT India tour event in Hyderabad



IAHS

HYDERABAD: Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will attend football legend Lionel Messi's 'GOAT India tour' event at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad on December 13.

LoP Rahul Gandhi will witness a friendly match between the teams led by Messi and Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

The Chief Minister, during his visit to Delhi on Thursday, had invited Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi to attend the event.

Meanwhile, tight security arrangements are being made for an hour-long event on Saturday night. Thousands of fans are eagerly waiting for the event to see Messi's magic live on the field.

Authorities have made elaborate arrangements for the smooth conduct of the event, which is expected to see a participation of 39,000 spectators.

Police have announced a series of measures for crowd management. Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu has announced that only ticket holders would be allowed into the stadium.

A total of 2,500 police personnel will be deployed as part of the security arrangements for the event.

Police have imposed

traffic curbs on the roads surrounding the stadium located in the busy Uppal area.

Messi is scheduled to arrive at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at 4 p.m. He will drive to the Taj Falaknuma Hotel to attend a programme before leaving for the stadium. After the event, he will return to the hotel for the night's halt.

CM Revanth Reddy, who will be leading RR9 against Messi10, has been practising hard with football players at different grounds in the city for the last few days.

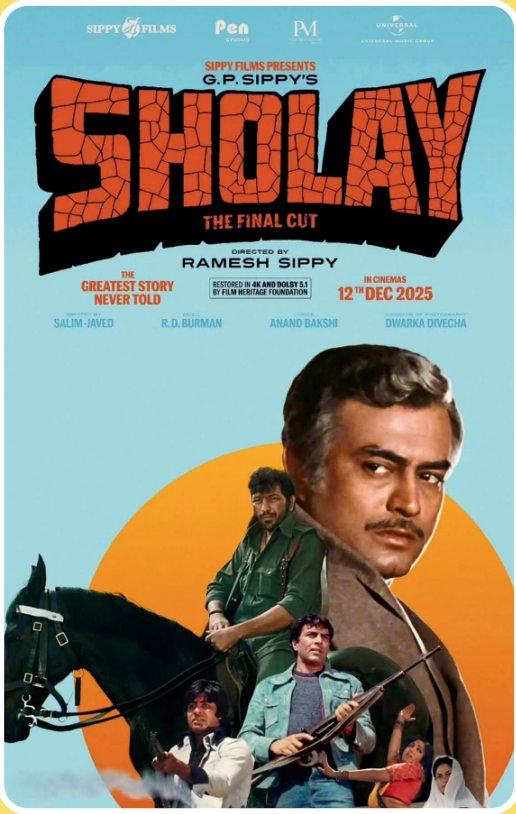
The match is to be played as part of Messi's 'GOAT Tour 2025'. The Chief Minister will wear Jersey number 9, and Messi his famous jersey number 10.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said thousands of football fans were expected to come to see the match.

He urged them to arrive early and settle into their seats to ensure both security and convenience.

Special routes have been designated for the arrival and departure of Messi, LoP Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, ministers, and other VIPs.

Vikramarka stated that the match is being organised as part of "Telangana Rising" celebrations. According to him, Messi showed personal interest in being part of the celebrations.



SHOLAY: THE FINAL CUT (U)
HINDI - 02:45 PM



KIS KISKO PYAAR KAROON 2 (U/A16+)
HINDI - 10:30 AM, 06:45 PM



DHURANDHAR (A)
HINDI ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 02:00 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 06:00 PM
HINDI - 10:45 AM, 04:50 PM



TERE ISHK MEIN (U/A 16+)
HINDI - 10:40 AM, 01:25 PM

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