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Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K

## DIPK-9023/25 Dated:16/12/2025 Polio 21 December 2025 Sunday @dipr\_jk @informationprjk Information & PR, J&K

## Floods Damage 0.78 **Lakh Hectares Of** Crop Area In J&K: Gol



**RAJA SYED RATHER** 

SRINAGAR: Heavy rains and floods damaged crops over nearly 0.78 lakh hectares across Jammu and Kashmir during the current year, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.

The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, in a written reply informed the Lok Sabha that due to recent weather-related disasters, Jammu and Kashmir reported crop damage on 0.78 lakh hectare area.

The Ministry clarified that the primary responsibility of providing relief to affected farmers lies with the respective state or Union Territory governments in accordance with the National Policy on Disaster Management. Relief measures are • P-06

### **Cold Wave Tightens Grip Across Kashmir**

IMD Says Dry Weather Prevails Across Region SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Cold conditions intensified across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Tuesday as minimum temperatures dropped sharply at most places, plunging several areas of the Kashmir Valley well below the freezing point compared to the previous day.

In the Kashmir region, Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius, a sharp fall from 1.9 degrees Celsius recorded

### **Policeman Killed In Udhampur Encounter, Op On: IGP**

UDHAMPUR: Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti on Tuesday said that a policeman was killed in the ongoing encounter with terrorists in Udhampur district, while terrorists have fled toward the dense forest after initial

Talking to reporters, the IGP Jammu, said, "A cordonand-search operation was launched yesterday evening in Soan village following a specific input. The input proved



accurate and an encounter broke out when a small team of the Special Operations Group (SOG) came under fire

from terrorists.' He said that during the exchange of fire, a policeman Amjad Ali • P-06

Vijay Diwas

## Tricolour Symbol Of Our Freedom, Self-Respect, Sacrifices: LG Sinha

Unveils 108-Ft High Mast National Flag At Kachrial

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that the Tricolour symbolises India's freedom, self-respect, and the people's sacrifices and martyrdom.

"May our beloved and victorious Tricolour fly high in the World. Our tricolour is a symbol of our freedom, of our self-respect, and of sacrifices and martyrdom. Together, we should march to achieve the lofty vision of making India a Developed Nation," the Lieutenant Governor said after unveiling the 108-feet high mast National Flag here at Kachrial in Akhnoor on the occasion of Vijay Diwas.

The Lieutenant Governor paid homage to the martyrs,

soldiers and officers, who made the country proud by their valour and sacrifice during 1971 war. He also felicitated the War Veterans and

"The land of Kachrial not only holds historical significance but it is also a holy land for the countrymen as

nation.

Veer Naris and saluted their

courage and sacrifice for the

every inch of this place gratefully remembers those brave soldiers who laid down their lives while guarding sovereignty and integrity of the nation in 1965 and 1971 wars,' the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the General Officer Commanding, White Knight Corps (16 Corps), Lieutenant • P-06

May our beloved and victorious Tricolor fly high in the world

Pays homage to the martyrs, soldiers and officers, who made country proud by their sacrifice

Land of Kachrial not only holds historical significance but it is also a holy land for the countrymen

Imust congratulate GoC 16 Corps, Lt. Gen PK Mishra of this very thoughtful gesture of installing 108 feet high mast national flag

Together, we should march to achieve the lofty vision of making India a Developed Nation

### **Soldier Dies In Explosion In** Kupwara

SRINAGAR: A soldier was killed in an explosion in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said on Tuesday.

Officials said that the soldier died on Monday in an explosion in Putaha Khan Gali of the Trehgam area of the district of the Line of Control (LoC).

The soldier has been identified as Havaldar Zubair Ahmad of J&K Light Infantry (JAKLI).

"The injured soldier was rushed to a military hospital in the Drugmulla area of Baramulla district, but doctors said he was dead on arrival," officials said.

The officials said that the explosion occurred during road construction in the area, and the soldier was accidentally critically injured in this blast. • P-06

...12 Suspects **Detained** 

## **Busts Terror-Linked Social Activism Network In Kashmir**

SRINAGAR: The Counter-Intelligence wing of the J&K Police on Tuesday was carrying out raids at multiple locations across Kashmir in connection with a terrorrelated case and online glorification of terrorism.

Officials said that the Counter-Intelligence Kashmir launched simultaneous raids at multiple locations across the Kashmir Valley as part of an ongoing investigation into a terror-related case involving online glorification of terrorism and recruitment activities.

Raids are being carried out at 12 locations across seven districts, including Pulwama, Budgam, Kulgam, Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag and Kupwara.



"The searches are being conducted after obtaining proper search warrants in connection with FIR No. 03/2023, registered under Sections 153-A and 505 of the IPC, and Sections 13 and 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act at Police Station Counter-Intelligence Kashmir. The case pertains to terror-related crimes, particu-

larly the online glorification and propagation of terrorist ideology with the intent to radicalise and recruit individuals into terrorist ranks," officials said.

More details were awaited. The J&K Police and the security forces are carrying out aggressive anti-terrorist operations against terrorists, their overground • P-06

### **CS** Reviews Mining Reforms, **Technology-Driven Enforcement In J&K**

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday chaired a review meeting of the Mining Department to assess the progress of mining sector reforms, revenue realisation measures, technological interventions and enforcement mechanisms aimed at curbing illegal mining across J&K

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the department's performance in implementing policy reforms, auctioning of mineral blocks and strengthening monitoring systems, while underscoring the need for transparency, sustainability and maximisation of revenue from mineral resources. The Chief Secretary, on

the occasion, commended the role of BISAG-N in creating a robust and efficient mining surveillance system equipped

with modern technological features. He took a live demonstration of the vehicle tracking

system, public grievance redressal platform and ATMC cameras installed at key exit points. and expressed satisfaction over the system's potential to significantly deter illegal mining and unauthorised transportation of minerals.

Emphasising the importance of scientific assessment of mineral resources, the Chief Secretary directed the department to undertake G3-stage • P-06

### India Fences Over 93% Pak **Border: MHA**

SAJID RAINA

NEW DELHI: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday said that India has physically fenced more than 93% of its international border with Pakistan.

In a written reply to a query by two Trinamool Congress MPs, Jagdish Chandra Barma Basunia and Sharmila Sarkar, regarding the unfenced portions of India's international borders, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, informed the Lok Sabha that fencing has been completed along 2,135.136 kilometres, accounting for 93.25 per cent of the total 2,289.66-kilometre India-Pakistan border.

The remaining 154.524 kilometres, or 6.75 per cent, is yet to be fenced, the reply added.

It stated that border fencing remains a key component of India's strategy to •P-06

## Kashmir Rivers, Springs Dry Up Amid Drought Like Situation

Experts Warn Situation May Worsen, Increase Forest Fire Risk

SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Reduced snowfall and prolonged dry weather are having a severe impact on rivers, streams, and springs across Kashmir, marking a sharp contrast to December months in the past, when the region usually remained clad with thick snow blanket.

According to the details available, level of river Jhelum, considered to be Kashmir's lifeline, has fallen to 0.65 meters at key points such as Sangam and Pampore. Its lowest level this season.

Several tributaries have dried up, while many natural springs in Pulwama, Shopian, and Bandipora have reduced



flow, affecting drinking water

in these areas, said an official. He said that monitoring wells show groundwater levels dropping between 0.5 and 3 meters, and wetlands are shrinking, impacting migra-

"Every year, the situation worsens. Farmers are anxious

as irrigation water is limited and household supplies are

strained," said Bashir Ahmad, of Pulwama.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported a 17 per cent rainfall deficit across Jammu and Kashmir during the post-monsoon

season from October 1 to

December 10, with Srinagar recording a 47 per cent short-Other districts such as

Baramulla (-67 per cent), Bandipora (-65 per cent), Shopian (-78 per cent), and Kargil (-93 per cent) also recorded below-average precipitation, while some districts, including Samba and Jammu, received excess rainfall.

Officials said the current dry spell, with minimal Western Disturbances bringing precipitation, has directly caused the depletion of rivers and springs.

Forecasts indicate continued dry weather into late December, potentially worsen...In 5 Years

### **Centre Releases Rs 235** Crore For Panchayati Raj **Institutions: Gol To LS**

RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: The Centre on Tuesday said that it has released Rs 235 crore during the past five years to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a written reply to a query, Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj, informed Lok Sabha that under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) Jammu and Kashmir received ₹25 crore in 2020–21, ₹40 crore in 2021–22, ₹40 crore in 2022–23, and ₹65 crore each in 2023–24 and 2024-25.

Capacity building, training of elected representatives and officials, and strength-



structure— are some of the areas where funds were used, the reply stated. It said that under the

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, more than 7.25 lakh participants from J&K were trained between 2022–23 and 2025–26 with an aim to improve governance, planning, and service delivery at the grassroots level.

Also, for uplifting the Panchayat infrastructure • P-06



# **Br MSME DFO Srinagar** holds stakeholder meeting at Sonamarg

Discusses feasibility of establishing Laundary CFC under MSE-CDP

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

**GANDERBAL:** The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, Br MSME DFO Srinagar held a stakeholder meeting at Sonamarg with the Chief Executive Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority, and local hoteliers to examine the feasibility of establishing a Laundry Common Facility Centre (CFC) under the MSE-Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP).

During the meeting, Assistant Director, MSME, Saheel Alagband explained in detail the guidelines of the MSE-CDP Scheme and highlighted that financial assistance up to 95% is available from the Government for eligible projects, enabling MSMEs and service enterprises to avail substantial support for common facilitation





The hoteliers and their managerial representatives welcomed the initiative and expressed keen

interest in the proposed

Laundry CFC. They suggested that another meeting be convened to rope in more hoteliers and to discuss the proposal in greater detail so as to ensure wider participation and

consensus. The CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority, Bilal Mukhtar, welcomed the initiative of the Ministry of MSME and stated that if the hoteliers come forward collectively, the proposed facility would prove to be extremely beneficial for the hospitality sector in Sonamarg.

On the occasion, certificates were also distributed among the participants who had attended the oneweek Management Development Programme on Customer Handling and Effective Communication conducted in the month of October.

The President, Beopar Mandal, stated that the programme had been extremely successful and that a visible improvement has been observed in the operations of hotels, cafes, and restaurants.

## House Committee inspects Water Supply Schemes in Kupwara

KUPWARA: The House Committee constituted by the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly for inspection of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes, headed by Chairman Hassnain Masoodi, Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of district Kupwara to review the implementation and progress of various Water Supply Schemes.

During the visit, the

Committee inspected several JJM projects at different locations across the district. The inspection team included members of the Committee, MLA Tral Rafiq Ahmad Naikoo and MLA Pattan Reyaz Ahmad Bedar besides Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission, Khurshid Ahmad Shah; Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic Circle Kupwara; Superintending Engineer (Mechanical); Assistant Director, Assembly Secretariat: Executive Engineers and other concerned officers.

The Chairman first inspected the Water Supply Scheme Gulgam Tangwari, which has been completed at a cost of Rs. 799.60 lakh. He was informed that the scheme has successfully

provided potable drinking water facilities to 671 households across three Panchayats, significantly improving water accessibility in the area.

The Committee also visited WSS Hatmulla-Bubernag, where it was apprised that the scheme has an approved cost of Rs. 521.12 lakh and has achieved 74 percent physical progress. The Chairman stressed

the need for expediting the remaining works to ensure timely completion.

Later, the Chairman inspected the Regional Water Supply Scheme Wayne, Kupwara, which is known for its big size having a capacity of 5 lakh

gallons. He also reviewed its operational efficiency and service coverage.

While visiting Lolab Sub-Division, the Committee inspected the Water Supply Scheme at remote village Dardpora, which has been completed and is catering to the drinking water needs of the local population.

The Chairman interacted with the field officers and emphasised the importance of ensuring sustained functionality of schemes in far-flung and difficult terrain areas.

The Committee on its day long tour to Kupwara district visited several other schemes including Water Supply Scheme Nutnussa and WSS Watayen and inspected the functionality of these schemes.

During the tour, Hassnain Masoodi interacted with the local people and sought feedback about the water supply scenario.

The Chairman underscored that the objective of these inspections is to ensure transparency, quality execution and effective delivery of drinking water under the Jal Jeevan Mission. He directed the concerned departments to address bottlenecks promptly and maintain high standards so that the benefits of JJM reach every household.

### **H&H Dept flags of artisans** for participation in GI **Mahotsav in Delhi**



**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

SRINAGAR: In a major boost to promotion of GI registered crafts, Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, Tuesday flagged of a group of 06 artisans from Numaish Gah-here today for participation in GI Mahotsav, scheduled to begin from December 18 till December 21, in Noida Haat, New Delhi.

The Mahotsav is designed to provide a robust national platform for GI artisans and sellers from across the country to exhibit their unique products, establish direct market linkages with buyers and celebrate country's diverse culture and craft traditions.

In a press statement issued today, a spokesman of the department stated that the artisans shall represent Kashmir in Wagguv, Namda, Walnut Wood Carving, Crewel, Chainstitch and Kashmir tweed GI registered crafts in the trade fair, organized by Ministry of MSME in collaboration with PHD Chamber of Commerce &

Kashmir has 15 GI registered crafts, out of which 08 were registered by GI Registry Chennai in April this year which include the languishing crafts like Wagguv,

The spokesman further stated that the artisans shall represent Kashmir's globally acclaimed handmade products, reflecting the region's exceptional craftsmanship, authenticity and centuries old cultural legacy. "Their participation is expected to create new market opportunities, promote GI awareness and strengthen the recognition of Kashmiri handicrafts at the National level," he

While flagging off the artisans, the Department reiterated its commitment to preserving, promoting and protecting Kashmir's traditional crafts and empowering artisans through exposure to national platforms, improved market access and institutional support.

### "Kahani Jeet Ki"

## DC B'pora holds interaction with Govt Scheme Beneficiaries

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Tuesday chaired the second monthly interaction under the 'Kahani Jeet Ki' initiative with beneficiaries of various government-sponsored schemes and livelihood programmes at the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

interaction brought together beneficiaries from multiple departments, including Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Handloom Handicrafts District Industries Centre (DIC) and allied sectors, who shared their progress, experiences and challenges.

During the interaction, a beneficiary from the Sheep Husbandry Department informed the DC about receiving a 50-ewe unit under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) with a subsidy of ₹2.5 lakh, which has significantly improved her livelihood. Another beneficiary showcased a finely crafted Pashmina shawl and narrated how

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

Vice



₹50,000 received through the Handicrafts Department enabled her to start Sozni work (Pashmina embroidery) generating a sustainable source of income. Other beneficiaries who received similar units also shared how these interventions have enhanced their earning

A progressive farmer from Watapora, Mohammad Azad Bhat, shared his success story of starting farming on three kanals of land and achieving an annual income of ₹5 lakh through seedling sales. With continued support from the Agriculture Department and SKUAST-K, he has established six

two mini hi-tech polyhouses. Now recognised as a "Champion Farmer" in Bandipora, he runs his own enterprise "Bhat Vegetable Nursery," and has received several awards for his progressive work.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Javeed Ahmad Bhat, a 32-year-old entrepreneur from Ajas, Bandipora, representing JCP Enterprises, manufacturers of hollow blocks and tiles, shared his entrepreneurial journey. He stated that starting with a ₹7-lakh loan from EDI Bandipora in 2014, his enterprise has grown into a successful unit with an annual turnover of ₹6–7 crore, providing employment to around 120 people.

Two-Day 68th RCM for Rabi 2025-26 SKUAST-K Concludes

Addressing the gathering, the DC said that such monthly interactions would continue as a platform to review groundlevel implementation of schemes, promote transparency, and strengthen inter-departmental convergence to further boost livelihood generation across the district. She appreciated the efforts of the beneficiaries and encouraged them to adopt innovative practices while motivating others in their communities to avail benefits under government schemes.

Other beneficiaries also shared their individual future expansion plans under various components of HADP and allied livelihood schemes, highlighting the role of training, subsidies and departmental support.

The interaction was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Bandipora, District Sheep Husbandry Officer Bandipora, Chief Horticulture Officer Bandipora, representatives of concerned departments and a large number of beneficiaries.

### DC B'la reviews implementation of PM-SYM Scheme

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

BARAMULLA: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) scheme in the district, with a focus on expanding coverage among eligible unorganised sector workers.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized that PM-SYM scheme is Centrally Sponsored Scheme for unorganised sector labourers in the age group of 18 to 40 years who are not covered under any other pension scheme. Under the scheme, beneficiaries are entitled to a minimum assured nen sion of ₹3,000 per month on attaining the age of 60

The DC directed the concerned officers to ensure saturation coverage of all eligible unorganised workers, including those registered under the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) category.

It was apprised that around 7,530 workers fall under the BOCW category in the district and the DC instructed all Block Development Officers (BDOs) to take proactive steps to enroll these workers under the PM-SYM scheme by utilising the services of Common Service Centres (CSCs).

Emphasis was also laid on enrolling MNREGA workers, along with those associated with the handloom and handicrafts sectors. The DC stressed the need for focused outreach and awareness campaigns to ensure that all eligible workers from these sectors are brought under the ambit of the scheme.

The DC further directed the departments concerned to closely monitor the enrollment process, ensure proper documentation, and submit regular progress reports to the district administration.

Meanwhile, the DC reitrated that the PM-S scheme is a significant step towards providing social security and financial stability to unorganised sector workers in their

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi: ADC Sopore, S.A.Raina; SDM Uri, Shubhankar Pratyush, SDM Pattan, Gulzar Ahmad, CPO Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad, ACD Baramulla, Chaudhary Mudasir Hussain, and other officers and officials.

### Dir Agri reviews expenditure under HADP, Capex and CSS in Srinagar

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

SRINAGAR: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, on Tuesday reviewed the expenditure and implementation status of key agriculture schemes. including the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Capex and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), in Srinagar

During a review meeting held at the Agriculture Complex, Lalmandi, the Director sought detailed updates on financial and physical progress, applications received, sanctioned and implemented under

various schemes. He reviewed achievements recorded so far, progress under the Daksh Kisan programme, establishment of units on the ground and the pace of credit linkage. Officers were directed to expedite spending, avoid procedural delays and ensure timely utilization of funds to meet set targets.

The Director emphasized strengthening coordination among the Agriculture Department, farmers and financial institutions to ensure schemes deliver tangible benefits on the ground.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officers and other departmental

### SRINAGAR: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) concluded its two-day 68th Meeting of the Research Council (RCM) for Rabi 2025-2026 on Tuesday at the Shalimar Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Nazir

Ahmad Ganai, who was the chief guest at the event. delivered a comprehensive address centred on the strategic imperatives for the region's agricultural sector. He emphasised on the urgent need for a strategic and action-oriented approach to bolster the sustainability and resilience of agriculture due to mounting challenges posed by increasing climate variability and rising water scarcity in the region. Prof Ganai appreciated

the contributions of the

University to the thirdbest State Agricultural University ranking. He further remarked that the institution has not grown in isolation, rather, its coordination and partnership with line departments and administration in the dynamic planning and execution of agricultural policy have played a pivotal role in its growth.



Haroon Rashid Naik, presented the university's research achievements and the action taken report on the agenda items of the previous RCM. He stressed on developing and deploying novel technologies and collaborative approaches to addres wide ranging issues from food safety, pesticide misuse and climate change. Secretary, Science and

Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, who joined the meeting virtually, gave inputs on the strategic priorities for research in Jammu and Kashmir and highlighted the need for submission of project proposals addressing critical issues like, good safety monitoring systems, AI-Powered research data banks, and reduction in pesticide usage.

the university presented policy papers for deliberations. The key R&D policy initiatives included-SKUAST-K Data Research Bank, Herbal Technology, Residue and Quality analysis, Bio-inputs for regenerative agriculture, Micro-irrigation system, Reproductive Biotechnology, Protected cultivations, Fruit tree breeding for designer plants, and tissue culture to meet demands of planting material. Besides the heads of different Faculties, and Research Stations also presented their research achievements and future plans.

The RCM was dominated by discussions addressing the severe regional impacts of ongoing dry weather and climate change. Participants prioritized urgent research and policy changes, focusing on developing droughtresistant crops and implementing advanced water conservation techniques to counter growing water scarcity and safeguard the long-term stability of agriculture.

The council also reviewed the progress of key government initiatives like HADP and JKCIP. A critical segment of the session involved feedback from key stakeholders, including progressive farmers.

Heads of various Development Departments, including Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, and Sericulture gave their remarks, ensuring alignment with the university's research agenda and field-level implementation. Expert members from allied institutions and universities, also offered their insights.

On the occasion, nine publications authored by various university scientists were also released.



# CM pays tribute to Late **Masud Choudhary on his** 3rd death anniversary

Calls for dedicated research centre at GDCT for Tribal studies

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday attended the commemoration of the third death anniversary of Late Dr. Masud Ahmed Choudhary, former IPS officer, eminent educationist and founder of the Guriar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT), at Jammu, and paid glowing tributes to his life and legacy.

Recalling Dr. Choudhary's distinguished service to the nation and society, the Chief Minister described him as a visionary public servant who embodied integrity, institution-building and selfless

He highlighted Dr. Choudhary's pivotal role as the founding Vice-Chancellor of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (BGSB) University, Rajouri, and his lifelong commitment to empowering the Gujjar-Bakerwal community and other marginalized sections of Jammu and Kashmir.



He noted that through GDCT, Dr. Choudhary had laid a strong institutional foundation, establishing schools and nurturing spaces such as a reading room, library, museum and cultural centre. However, the Chief Minister emphasized that the true tribute to the late visionary would be to ensure that these institutions actively benefit the community for whom these facilities have been established.

Highlighting the growing challenges posed by climate change, especially to nomadic and seminomadic communities like the Gujjar-Bakerwals,

the Chief Minister called for setting up a dedicated research centre under GDCT. He stressed the need for in-depth research on issues such as effects of climate change, migration patterns, livelihood viilnerabilities and long-term preservation of tribal cul-

ture & traditions.. "The government has schemes for all, but communities facing unique challenges need focused research and tailored solutions. Research papers prepared by knowledgeable people can guide policy and help us understand how best to safeguard their future," he said.

The Chief Minister also suggested undertaking research on the concept and functioning of tribal universities, to assess their impact elsewhere and to prepare a roadmap for making such institutions successful in Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring that tribal communities derive maximum benefit.

Acknowledging the presence of retired and serving officers, lawyers, scholars, teachers and intellectuals within the community, the Chief Minister urged the Trust to harness this collective wisdom to carry forward Dr. Choudhary's mission.

"The best tribute to Dr. Masud Ahmed Choudhary would be to fulfill, with our own hands, the purpose for which he established this institution—so that his community benefits and people's lives change," he said, while thanking the organizers for inviting him to the

# CS reviews land, infrastructure issues of JNVs, KVs



**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

JAMMU: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the availability of land and infrastructure for Central Government educational institutions, including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and Kendriya Vidvalavas (KVs), that are either non-functional or presently operating from temporary premises across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary, School Education Department Ram Niwas Sharma: Commissioners of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan; Director School Education, Jammu

and Kashmir; Regional Officer, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Jammu, along with other senior officers of the department.

**Deputy Commissioners** from all districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing. During the review, the

Chief Secretary sought district-wise and school-wise details regarding the current infrastructural status of these institutions. He specifically enquired about the availability or identification of suitable land for the construction of permanent school buildings, as well as the arrangements made for their temporary functioning until permanent infrastructure is established.

Emphasising the importance of timely intervention, he impressed upon the district administrations and concerned departments to ensure that all procedural formalities are completed expeditiously to facilitate smooth functioning of these institutions.

Secretary, School Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma, apprised the meeting of the present status of each JNV and KV and highlighted the specific requirements of land and buildings for their effective functioning.

He assured that the department would take all necessary steps to ensure early operationalisation of the non-functional schools from the forthcoming academic session, in coordination with the district administrations and central institutions.

The Deputy Commissioners, in turn, briefed the meeting about the land parcels and buildings identified in their respective districts for these schools. They informed that the process for transfer and allotment of land would be initiated shortly, following the assessment of feasibility and completion of requisite formalities in consul tation with the authorities of JNVs and KVs.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening educational infrastructure across J&K and directed all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure that students are provided access to quality education through wellequipped and fully functional institutions at the earliest.

### Nizam-ud-Din Bhat chairs meeting of Committee on Privileges

Discusses protocols of Legislators



JAMMU: A meeting of the Committee on Privileges of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was held Tuesday under the Chairmanship of MLA, Nizamud-Din Bhat, at Assembly Complex, Jammu to deliberate on issues related to the constitutional privileges and entitlements of Legislators

Legislators, Vikram Randhawa, Riyaz Ahmad Khan, Salman Sagar, Javaid Iqbal, Dr Narinder Singh Raina and Dr Bharat Bhushan besides Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Manoi Kumar Pandit were present in the meeting.

Threadbare discussions were held on various issues related to privileges and protocols in respect ofembers of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. Besides, present status of observations made by the Committee in its previous meetings was also deliberated upon

Commissioner Secretary, GAD, M Raju; Secretary, H&P Department, Niraj Kumar and Secretary, Law, Justice and PA Achal Sethi were also pres-

ent in the meeting.

The Committee was informed that the concerned departments have deliberated upon the observations made by the Committee in its previous meetings and a proposal in this regard has been prepared and forwarded to the CM for approval.

The Chairman directed the officers to share entire deliberations in respect of proposal forwarded to the Chief Minister with the Committee in its next meeting.

The members gave their valuable suggestions to make the Committee more vibrant and result oriented. They stressed on maintaining protocols to safeguard the dignity and effective functioning of elected representatives.

Earlier, the Committee observed two minute silence on the demise of mother of Secretary Law, Justice and PA, Achal Sethi.

Among others, senior officers of the concerned departments and Assembly Secretariat attended

### J&K Bank conducts Workshop-cum-**Capacity Building Programme for FPOs**

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

SRINAGAR: In its continued efforts to strengthen institutional credit flow to the agriculture sector, J&K Bank Tuesday organised a Workshop-cum-Capacity Building Programme on Creating Credit Awareness for Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) at its corporate headquarters.

The Bank's General Manager (Government Business) Ashutosh Sareen chaired the session that was held in the presence of General Manager (Retail, Agriculture & MSME) Rakesh Magotra, DGM Aneet Kanwal Singh, representatives of the FPOs and other senior officers of the Bank.

The workshop aimed at sensitising FPOs about the banking system, availability of credit facilities, and structured financing options tailored for collective farming institutions.

Addressing the particinants. General Manager Ashutosh Sareen emphasised the Bank's commitment to supporting FPOs as key drivers of agricultural transformation and rural prosperity.

He said, "At J&K Bank, we are deeply committed to strengthening the agricultural ecosystem by empowering Farmer Producer Organisations with seamless access to institutional credit. Through initiatives like our dedicated Loan



Scheme for FPOs and NAB-Sanrakshan credit guarantees, we are enabling hightech farming, infrastructure development, and market linkages—paving the way for sustainable growth and prosperity for our farmers.

"FPOs play a pivotal role in aggregating farmers, improving bargaining power and enabling value addition", he added.

Further, he highlighted that access to timely and affordable credit is crucial for strengthening FPOs and enabling them to operate as sustainable and commercially viable entities.

Earlier, while congratu-

lating the participants for taking the lead in carrying forward the FPO initiative, General Manager Rakesh Magotra said, "There may be challenges along the way, but the end results will be rewarding and beneficial for all stakeholders. This is a mission you have undertaken with a larger purpose. With nearly 95 per cent of farmers in the UT being small and marginal. FPOs have emerged as an effective platform to promote their welfare, particularly by enabling structured and sustainable credit linkages.

He also highlighted the range of agriculturefocused financial products and services offered by the Bank and encouraged FPOs to proactively engage with the Bank for meeting their working capital and long-term credit requirements. On behalf of the Bank, he assured the participants of full guidance from the Bank's specialised agriculture and MSME vertical.

During the workshop, a detailed presentation was made to familiarise participating FPOs with various credit facilities and Government-sponsored schemes relevant to their operations. Participants were also sensitised about loan facilities against Electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (e-NWRs) to support postharvest liquidity and price realisation.

The programme witnessed active participation from FPO representatives, who interacted with Bank officials and sought clarity on various creditrelated aspects. The participant FPOs thanked the Bank for building their capacities through such detailed credit awareness National Immunization Day

### Over 19.85 lakh children set to get Pulse Polio dose in J&K: Dr. Poonam

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

JAMMU: A media sensitization meeting regarding the upcoming National Immunization Day (NID) 2025 - Pulse Polio Campaign was Tuesday held here at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar to mobilize media support and ensure widespread public awareness. Director Family Wel-

fare MCH & Immunization J&K, Dr. Poonam Sethi addressed the media in the presence of Dr. Narinder Bhutiyal, Medical Superintendent GHGN; Dr. Shahid Hussain, State Immunization Officer J&K; Dr. Azmat Khan, SMO WHO-NPSN Jammu: Rakesh Sharma. State Mass Media & Information Officer J&K and Parshotam Kumar, State Cold Chain Officer J&K.

Speaking to the media persons, Dr. Poonam Sethi informed that National Immunization Day (Pulse Polio Campaign) 2025 would be observed on December 21, 2025, followed by house-to-house activities on Dec 22 and Dec 23 to ensure that no child is missed. She shared key operational details, stating that a total of 19,85,736 children (0-5 years) are targeted across Jammu & Kashmir for immunization against Polio. "For successful implementation, 10,993

booths and 248 transit points have been established across the UT," she informed and added that 518 mobile teams have also been deployed to conduct the drive.

The Director appealed to the media fraternity to disseminate the message extensively so that every eligible child receives two drops of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) and the goal of a polio-free J&K is sustained.

State Immunization Officer, Dr. Shahid Hussain elaborated on the availability of OPV and assured that cold chain systems are fully functional and strictly monitored to maintain vaccine potency throughout the campaign.

Dr. Azmat Khan, (WHO-NPSN Jammu) briefed media persons about microplanning, monitoring and supervision mechanisms, highlighting the role of field

supervision to ensure quality implementation and zero missed children.

Rakesh Sharma, State Mass Media & Information Officer outlined the IEC BCC activities planned by the department and acknowledged the proactive support of the Information Department in strengthening public outreach and awareness.

In her concluding remarks, Dr. Poonam Sethi appealed to parents and community members to enthusiastically participate in the campaign to ensure a healthy future for children and the Nation.

The Family Welfare MCH & Immunization Department reiterated its commitment to protecting every child from polio and sought continued cooperation from the media to make NID 2025 a resounding success.

## Heart attack cases spike in Kashmir during harsh winter; cardiologists issue advisory

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Cardiologists in Kashmir have expressed concern over a rise in heart attacks and strokes during the harsh winter months. warning that extreme cold significantly strains the cardiovascular system. They said the number of cardiac emergencies almost doubles in winter compared to warmer seasons.

Cardiologist Dr Mohammad Ashraf Khan said prolonged exposure to low temperatures leads to constriction of blood vessels—a condition known as vasoconstrictionwhich sharply increases the heart's workload.

"During winter in Kashmir, we observe more than a twofold rise in cases of heart attacks and strokes,' he said. "Cold weather narrows blood vessels, causing blood pressure to rise. This forces the heart to pump harder, which can trigger lifethreatening cardiac events, particularly in people with underlying heart

Dr Ashraf explained that cold conditions also increase blood viscosity, making it thicker and more prone to clot formation, thereby elevating the risk of heart attacks and strokes. "Patients with diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and smokers are especially vulnerable. Winter further aggravates their health risks,'

Dr Khan further highlighted seasonal lifestyle changes that contribute to the problem. "During winter, people consume excessive tea, sugary drinks, and calorie-dense foods to stay warm. This often leads to poor sugar control and weight gain, both of which are major risk factors for heart disease," he said.

Another worrying trend, he noted, is the misinterpretation of early symptoms. "Initial signs of a heart attack are frequently mistaken for chest infections, acidity, or muscle pain. This delay in correct diagnosis and treatment can prove fatal," he



cautioned.

Dr Zahoor Bhat, another cardiologist, called for adopting preventive measures during the cold season. He advised people to keep themselves adequately warm by wearing layered clothing, including woollen caps. gloves, and scarves, and to ensure proper heating inside homes.

"Outdoor activity should be restricted during extreme cold spells," Dr Bhar said. "People should opt for light indoor exercises and strictly avoid sudden strenuous activities, which can abruptly overload the

He emphasised the importance of maintaining a heart-healthy diet.

"Winter is not an excuse to abandon healthy eating. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and lean proteins is crucial. Intake of salt, sugar, and saturated fats must be limited to control blood pressure and cholesterol," he advised.

Doctors stressed that hydration remains vital even in cold weather. They said people often drink less water in winter, leading to dehydration, which can thicken blood and increase clotting risk.

They urged the public to remain alert to warning signs of heart attacks—such as chest pain, shortness of breath, sweating, nausea, or pain radiating to the arms or jaw-and stroke symptoms, including facial drooping, arm weakness, difficulty speaking, or sudden loss of

Timely medical intervention can save lives, the doctors emphasised, advising people not to ignore symptoms and to seek immediate care at the nearest health facility.

Doctors recommended wearing layered clothing and protecting the head, hands, and feet from cold exposure. They said regular check-ups are essential, especially for high-risk individuals.

Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins; reduce salt, sugar, and fried foods, and engage in light exercises like stretching, yoga, or walking indoors, they said, advising against heavy physical work, particularly in extreme cold.

The health experts further advised people to avoid smoking and excessive tea or coffee, saying these increase cardiac risk. "Drink adequate water despite reduced thirst in winter and do not dismiss chest discomfort, breathlessness, or sudden weakness; seek medical help immediately," they

According to doctors, awareness, timely precautions, and early medical attention can significantly reduce winter-related cardiac deaths in the Valley—(KNO)



# Morning Kashmir

### When the Springs Fall Silent

he steady decline of water levels across Jammu and Kashmir is no longer a distant warning but an unfolding reality that demands urgent attention. A pro-longed spell of deficient rainfall has begun to exact a visible toll on rivers, streams and, most worryingly, on the Valley's traditional springs, lifelines that have sustained communities for generations.

Data from the Meteorological Department confirms what people on the ground are already experiencing: precipitation has remained significantly below normal over the past several weeks, disrupting the natural seasonal recharge of water bodies. Officials from irrigation and water supply departments report reduced inflows in major rivers and tributaries, while several perennial springs have weakened or dried up entirely. This is not merely a hydrological concern; it is a social and economic alarm.

In rural and semi-urban areas, the impact is immediate and harsh. Traditional springs, often the sole source of drinking water, are witnessing unprecedented decline. In some villages, residents have been pushed into dependence on tanker supplies and improvised alternatives, a fragile arrangement that underscores the vulnerability of existing water infrastructure. What was once taken for granted is now uncertain.

The implications extend well beyond domestic water use. Agriculture and horticulture, the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's rural economy—stand at risk. Reduced soil moisture is already affecting preparation for winter crops, while orchard owners fear lasting stress on fruit-bearing trees if the dry spell persists. Water scarcity at this stage could translate into lower yields, economic losses and deeper rural distress in the months ahead.

While officials say the situation is under close watch and contingency measures are being discussed, monitoring alone will not suffice. This moment calls for proactive planning: prioritised water distribution, protection and revival of natural springs, efficient irrigation practices and transparent communication with affected communities. Appeals for judicious water use are necessary, but they must be matched by institutional responsibility and long-term water management strategies.

The forecast of light snowfall in the coming days offers some hope, but it should not breed complacency. One weather event cannot compensate for sustained deficits or undo years of neglect of natural water systems. The drying of springs is a warning signal—of climate variability, of fragile ecosystems, and of the cost of inaction.

Water security must now be treated as a core policy priority in Jammu and Kashmir. The silence of springs today may well echo as a crisis tomorrow, unless decisive steps are taken now.

### Morning Kashmir

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Backsliding On A Promise

## Why FGM Is Rising Despite Global Pledges



SHOBHA SHUKLA

en years back at the United Nations General Assembly, all world leaders promised to eliminate the harmful practice of female genital mutilation/ cutting (SDG-5 target 5.3) by 2030. But instead of declining, female genital mutilation/cutting has instead increased by 15% over the past 8 years: from 200 million in 2016 to over 230 million in 2024.

More than 230 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting in 92 countries - mostly in Africa (144 million), the Middle East (6 million), and Asia (80 million), where it is still practised. Female genital mutilation/ cutting is a violation of the human rights of girls and women. Without urgent, accelerated action, an additional 27 million girls are projected to undergo the procedure by 2030.

We cannot meet SDGs when half the population is harmed, silenced or excluded. Development justice demands that policies centre women's safety, agency, and bodily integrity. Female genital mutilation/cutting is a human rights violation," says Dr Huda Syyed, an Australia-based researcher, founder of Sahara Sisters' Collective and a key part of the Asian Network to End Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C).

The devil of patriarchy ferments such gruesome and shocking practices as female genital mutilation/cutting. After all, patriarchy is all about wrongly 'normalising' male privileges, entitlements and rights (and pleasures) and 'legitimising' their denial to women and girls and other genders.

According to the UN health agency - the World Health Organization (WHO) – the practice of female genital mutilation/ cutting is recognised internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

Female genital mutilation/cutting reflects deep-rooted gender inequality and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against girls and women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practice also violates a person's right to health, security, physical integrity and bodily autonomy; the right to be free from tor-



ture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and the right to life, in instances when the procedure results in death

There is no medical justification for female genital mutilation/cutting, and it is never 'safe'. It is a gross human rights violation. That is why the WHO strongly urges health workers not to perform female genital mutilation/ cutting. When performed in a clinical setting, FGM/C violates medical ethics.

"In a joint statement issued by several organisations to end female genital mutilation/cutting, there was a condemnation of its medicalisation in all forms. Female genital mutilation/cutting compromises bodily autonomy. Young girls are made to have it without prior knowledge or understanding, and sometimes they are told that they are going to 'another place', whereas they are actually being taken to get female genital mutilation/cutting," said Dr Huda Syyed while speaking in the SHE & Rights (Sexual Health with Equity & Rights) session hosted by Global Center for Health Diplomacy and Inclusion (CeHDI), Women Deliver Conference 2026. International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR), Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health, Gender and Development Justice (APCAT Media) and CNS.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), FGM/C can never be 'safe', and there is no medical justification for it. Under any circumstances, FGM/C violates the right to health, the right to be free from violence, the right to life and physical integrity, the right to non-discrimination, and the right to be free from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

"We are here to hold systems, institutions, and even governments accountable for gendered harm. So social and cultural notions of shame, secrecy and silence which are attached to girls' and women's bodies can lead to further silencing and perpetuation of various gendered customs, including gender-based violence of various forms, including female genital mutilation/cutting," said Dr Huda Syyed.

'We need to approach communities with a trauma-informed lens which could also help with dismantling shame, dismantling secrecy, and allow communities to share their voices with willingness and join us all in this advocacy to stop harmful gendered customs. Ending female genital mutilation or cutting in Asia and globally is not a 'marginal issue' rather it is a central issue to gender and development justice as well as central to bodily autonomy, public health, right to equality, human rights, children's rights and girl child rights. Patriarchal notions of women's bodies which are shaped into shame and secrecy need to be challenged and dismantled," she concluded while speaking in SHE & Rights this month.

Female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice has no health benefits for girls and women and can result in severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, menstrual difficulties, infections, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

WHO agrees that "female genital mutilation/ cutting has NO health benefits, and it harms girls and women in many ways. It

and normal female genital tissue, and it interferes with the natural functions of girls' and women's bodies.'

Although all forms of female genital mutilation/ cutting are associated with increased risk of health complications, the risk is greater with more severe forms of it. Its immediate complications can include severe pain, excessive bleeding (haemorrhage), genital tissue swelling, fever, infections (like tetanus), urinary problems, wound healing problems, injury to surrounding genital tissue, shock and death

Long-term complications of female genital mutilation/ cutting can include urinary problems (painful urination, urinary tract infections); vaginal problems (discharge, itching, bacterial vaginosis and other infections); menstrual problems (painful menstruations, difficulty in passing menstrual blood, etc.); scar tissue and keloid; sexual problems (pain during intercourse, decreased satisfaction, etc.); increased risk of childbirth complications (difficult delivery, excessive bleeding, caesarean section, need to resuscitate the baby, etc.) and newborn deaths; need for later surgeries: women with severe types of female genital mutilation/ cutting might require deinfibulation (opening the infibulated scar to allow for sexual intercourse and childbirth), psychological problems (depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, etc.) (source: WHO).

Fundamentally, ending female genital mutilation/cutting is human rights imperative. But even if you take economic impact into account, there is an astronomical economic cost too: Treatment of its health complications is estimated to cost health systems US\$ 1.4 billion per year, a number expected to rise unless urgent action is taken towards its abandonment.

With only 5 years left to deliver on SDGs, it is high time for accountability because instead of progressing towards elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting by 2030, the rates have risen in recent years.

We cannot deliver on Agenda 2030 of Sustainable Development, "where no one is left behind", unless we completely end harmful practices like female genital mutilation/ cutting. Gender equality and human rights are bedrocks for progressing towards SDGs.

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# Human Dilemma Caught Between Compassion And Constitution

LALIT GARGG

oluntary euthanasia, ending one's life according to one's own will, has long been a subject of social, ethical, and legal debate in India. This issue is not merely about death; it is deeply intertwined with unbearable suffering, human dignity, compassion, and the right to selfdetermination. These days, the case of a 32-year-old man who has been in a coma-like state for the past thirteen years has become a living symbol of this tragedy. There is no consciousness, no communication, and no possibility of recovery, yet the family is forced to endure immense emotional, mental, and financial agony. This case has once again reignited public discourse on euthanasia. Across the country, thousands of such cases silently endure suffering, with neither solutions nor a clear legal pathway. This situation is not just a medical crisis; it is a profound test of human sensitivity and social justice.

Modern medical science has developed the ability to artificially prolong life, but it has not resolved the ethical question of whether sustaining life at all costs is truly humane when life itself becomes nothing more than pain, unconsciousness, and a meaningless biological process. The irony is that for those compelled to live a hellish existence due to incurable illness, prolonged coma, or complete loss of consciousness, Indian law has yet to provide a clear and compassionate framework. Many believe that when dignity, awareness, and hope disappear from life, a dignified death becomes more meaningful than the mere continuation of

This raises a fundamental question: why does our legal system still view such a death through the lens of suspicion, fear, and criminality? Sections 309 and 306 of the

existence.

Indian Penal Code long remained euthanasia. Although the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 partially decriminalised attempted suicide by recognising it as a consequence of mental distress, there is still no comprehensive and explicit law addressing euthanasia. Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, yet the debate continues as to whether this right also includes the right to a dignified death.

A historic turning point in India's judicial approach to euthanasia came in 2011 with the Aruna Shanbaug case. Aruna Shanbaug, a nurse at Mumbai's KEM Hospital, suffered severe brain damage after a brutal assault in 1973 and remained in a persistent vegetative state for forty-two years. In response to a petition filed on her behalf, the Supreme Court rejected active euthanasia but permitted passive euthanasia under strict conditions. The Court held that if a patient's condition is irreversible, with no possibility of regaining consciousness, and medical treatment merely prolongs life mechanically, life-sustaining treatment may be withdrawn under expert opinion and judicial supervision. While this judgement marked a significant milestone in Indian legal history, it was clearly an exception rather than a perma-

nent legislative solution. Subsequently, in 2018, the Supreme Court, in Common Cause v. Union of India, made the landmark observation that the right to life is not merely the right to live but also the right to live—and die-with dignity. The Court recognised the legality of a "living will" or "advance medical directive", allowing individuals to state in advance that life-sustaining treatment should not be administered in the event of an incurable condition. However, the process was burdened with such complex procedural formalities that, in



practice, this right remains largely inaccessible to the common citizen. In recent years, several cases have emerged that starkly reveal the gravity of this problem. The very need for euthanasia arises from this harsh reality.

In terminal cancer, severe neurological disorders, and end-stage illnesses, life often becomes synonymous with suffering. Keeping an unconscious body alive through machines appears less like living and more like prolonged torment. Individuals should have the right to make decisions about the final chapter of their lives, as selfdetermination is a core value of a democratic society. Prolonged medical treatment shatters families emotionally and financially, while also raising questions about the allocation of limited medical resources. Opponents of euthanasia argue that it may be misused, that the elderly or the poor could be coerced, and that doctors might become arbiters of life and death. These concerns are serious, but their solution lies not in rejecting euthanasia outright, but in framing clear, stringent, and transparent laws. International experience shows that where well-defined legislation and multi-layered oversight mechanisms exist, the scope for misuse is minimal. Countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, and Switzerland have demonstrated that compassion and regulation can coexist.

In India, the Jain practice of Santhara (or Sallekhana) and modern euthanasia may appear similar at first glance, yet at the levels of philosophy, purpose, process, and constitutional interpretation, they differ fundamentally while also sharing certain deeper parallels. This is why Santhara has continued without obstruction in the same country where euthanasia remains a subject of intense debate. In Jainism, Santhara or Sallekhana is not viewed as death but as the final spiritual discipline—a celebration of death rather than an escape from life or pain. It is neither a flight from suffering nor from existence, but a conscious process of shedding attachment, anger, fear, and delusion. Santhara is undertaken when an individual realises that the body is no longer capable of spiritual practice, when illness has become incurable, or when old age has rendered the body frail. Food and water are renounced gradually, with discipline and under the guidance of a spiritual mentor. Its purpose is not to destroy the body but to purify the soul. Jain philosophy holds that death is inevitable; the only question is whether it occurs in attachment and agitation or in equanimity and awareness.

In contrast, voluntary euthana-

sia is a modern legal concept whose able physical or mental suffering. Here, the individual seeks an end to life's torment when consciousness, communication, and hope of recovery are irreversibly lost. This decision is emotional, medical, and situational—not a part of spiritual discipline. Euthanasia involves physical interventions such as medication, injections, or the withdrawal of life-support systems, whereas Santhara involves no act of active violence.

The time has come for India to shed its hesitation and enact a clear, compassionate law on euthanasia. Such a law must scientifically define incurable and irreversible conditions, place the patient's will and dignity on the highest pedestal, spare families unnecessary suffering, and provide doctors with ethical and legal protection. Euthanasia is not an act against life; it is a compassionate response against meaningless suffering. When life is reduced to a mechanical biological process sustained only by machines, devoid of consciousness, dignity, and hope, death should be seen not as a crime but as a human right.

If our Constitution accords dignity to life, it must also recognise the right to choose death with dignity. Enacting a clear law on euthanasia would not merely be a legal reform; it would be a defining mark of a sensitive, mature, and compassionate society. Human empathy demands that a balance be struck between the sanctity of life and the cruelty of suffering. When euthanasia is guided by consent, safeguards, and compassion, humanity itself is preserved. The judiciary must deliver justice that liberates the patient from suffering and paves the way for a more humane future.

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## **Beyond Natural: The Case Against Homosexual Attraction**

RAOIF MAKHDOOMI

Homosexual' is a term used for a person who is attracted to his own sex physically and emotionally. The most well-known term used is "GAY". The words 'lesbian' and 'bisexual' aren't that much used or known. But they are there, and people with such sexual orientations exist. 'Lesbian' is a term used for a woman or a girl who's attracted to a woman, and 'bisexual' is one who is attracted to both men and women. Another word for 'bisexual' is 'ambisexual'. Well, before I go into what religions, psychology and other things say about homosexuality. It must be clear that the attraction between a male and female is all NATURAL. A male and female get attracted to each other in various ways, but the attraction that often is spoken about is physical or love. Well, if we speak about it in a scientific way, it's all the hormonal secretion that leads to attraction.

The hormone called testosterone works for men, and oestrogen for women. They play their roles in attraction. Well, if we speak about love, it is connected with several hormones that make us feel warm and fuzzy. Dopamine is the reward hormone that is released when we do something that makes us feel good. such as spending time with loved ones and having connections. Norepinephrine is also released during attraction, and the combination makes you feel giddy. Attraction is also associated with higher levels of serotonin, the happy hormone. And physical contact, hugging as well as sexual contact, has been shown to increase oxytocin, the love hormone. So it makes sense that spending more time with someone. enjoying their company, and touching the more would make you feel more attracted to them. So as I said, it's all about hormonal secretion, and it's all about that. And yes, no doubt the same happens with homosexual people, but it's "Irregular Secretion"

I have been calling this secretion "abnormal secretion" and will keep calling it so. It must be noted that the American Psychiatric Association listed HOMOSEXUALITY in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1952. The World Health Organization in 1977 had listed



HOMOSEXUALITY in CD-9. However, they later removed it. But the point is that still it's linked to mental disorder by my research. In the beginning of the 19th century, people began studying homosexuality scientifically. At this time, most theories regarded homosexuality as a disease, which had a great influence on how it was viewed culturally. There was a paradigm shift in the mid-20th century in psychiatric science in regard to theories of homosexuality. Psychiatrists began to believe homosexuality could be cured through therapy and freedom of self, and other theories about the genetic and hormonal origin of homosexuality were becoming accepted. There were variations of how homosexuality was viewed as pathological.

Some early psychiatrists, such as Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis, adopted more tolerant stances on homosexuality. Freud and Ellis believed that homosexuality was not normal but was "unavoidable" for some people. Alfred Kinsey's research and publications about homosexuality began the social and cultural shift away from viewing homosexuality as an abnormal condition. These shifting viewpoints in the psychological studies of homosexuality are evident in its placement in the first version of the

Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) in 1952 and subsequent change in 1973, in which the diagnosis of ego-dystonic homosexuality replaced the DSM-II category of "sexual orientation disturbance". However, it was not until 1987 in DSM-III-R that it was entirely dropped as a mental disorder.

A 2016 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that many medical professionals in countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia believed that homosexuality is a disease and that such misconceptions continue to exist in professional materials. This goes against Council of Europe Recommendation 2010(5), which recommends that homosexuality not be treated as a disease. Well, the recommendations were a recommendation with no proof that will make us believe that homosexuality must not be seen as a stable orientation. I remember reading a piece which clearly said that homosexuality has a higher risk of being psychologically affected.

And all homosexuality has a thing in common called "hormonal imbalance". Well, science and psychology are still in the "researching phase" The religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Christianity

have clearly declared homosexuality a crime, and some a punishable crime! If we talk about Christianity, most of the sects don't recognise homosexuality and go so far as to call it sinful and immoral. Pope Francis, after his election in 2013, repeatedly spoke about accepting homosexuality and the need of allowing them into the church. So the need to allow them to church easily shows how sinful homosexuality is in the eyes of Christians. He also blessed a gay couple in July 2015, but the spokesperson, Ciro Benedettini, the Vatican spokesman, said in the statement after the Pope blessed a "Gay Couple" that this doesn't mean that we endorse this behaviour or go against the teachings of the Gospel.

The Gospel has clearly termed homosexuality a sin. Well, if we speak about Judaism, the book of Vayikra (Leviticus) is traditionally regarded as classifying sexual intercourse between males as a to'eivah (something abhorred or detested) that can be subject to capital punishment by the currently non-existent Sanhedrin under halakha (Jewish law). The Book of Leviticus refers to male homosexual sexual practices twice "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is detestable." And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed a detestable act: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. Deuteronomy 23:17 tells followers, "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a kedeshah, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a Kadesh."

This has been interpreted as prohibiting the "sons of Israel" from serving as homosexual temple prostitutes. The story of Ruth and Naomi in the Book of Ruth is also occasionally interpreted as the story of a lesbian couple, while the relationship between David and Jonathan in the Book of Samuel is sometimes interpreted as male homosexual love (see David and Jonathan). Prohibitions for gay men besides anal intercourse. The laws of negiah prohibit affectionate touch between an unmarried man and woman (except close relatives). because this touch is considered "approaching" a forbidden relationship. As gay male sex is included in the category of arayot along with other sexual prohibitions, the prohibition of negiah would seem to also apply between two gay men. Nevertheless, some sources raise the possibility that the law may be more lenient for two men than for a man and a woman.

The consensus seems to be that touch between gay men which involves sexual desire (including hugging and kissing) is rabbinically forbidden, while touch which does not involve sexual desire is permitted. While Hinduism has no different view on homosexuality. It also prohibits homosexuality by calling it a sin. And in some cases makes it a punishable offence. Now the question has to be asked of them: what do they want to show by celebrating Pride Month and coming out of nowhere and asking society to accept something that came out of somewhere and which still is a controversial thing to the whole world? Until there is some solid proof for homosexuality, it won't be accepted. But it must be made clear that they are humans as well and deserve to live and have respect. And above all have human rights. Love them and accept them as part of society but not homosexuality

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# Forgotten Foundation Why We Must Celebrate Teaching As Premier Profession

has become a common practice in public programmes to motivate the young generation by repeatedly projecting a few so-called "prestigious" professions, such as engineers, doctors, lawyers, IAS or JKAS officers. While these careers certainly deserve respect, the constant repetition of only these options presents a narrow definition of success. Unfortunately, the noble and foundational profession of teaching is often left unmentioned, as if it is less important, less respectable, or less successful. This silence speaks volumes and slowly shapes the mindset of young learn-

**ZAHOOR AHMAD LONE** 

One major reason behind this trend is the growing societal belief that success is measured only by power, high salaries, social status, or administrative authority. In this race for material achievement, teaching is wrongly portrayed as an ordinary or fallback career. This flawed perception completely ignores the reality that every engineer, doctor, scientist, judge, or civil servant begins their journey under the guidance of a teacher. Teachers are the first mentors who identify talent, nurture potential, and ignite dreams. Without them, no profession can sustain itself.

ers in an unhealthy way.

Teachers are, in the truest sense, nation builders. They do not merely teach subjects; they shape personalities, instil moral values, promote discipline, and encourage critical and creative thinking. A teacher influences not just the academic growth of a child but also their social, emotional, and ethical development. The strength of a nation's future depends largely on the quality and commitment of its teachers. When public speakers fail to acknowledge teaching as a worthy career, it sends a subtle yet dangerous message to students—that teaching lacks prestige and ambition. This erodes the dignity of the profession and discourages talented and motivated youth

from entering it. Such neglect has long-term con-



sequences. When bright minds avoid teaching, the education system suffers, and the overall quality of learning declines. A society that does not honour its teachers cannot expect progress, innovation, or social harmony. Respect for teachers reflects a society's commitment to knowledge,

values, and human development.

Therefore, it is high time that speakers, educators, policymakers, and opinion makers consciously change this narrative. Teaching must be projected as a career of purpose, leadership, and lasting impact. Students should be inspired to understand that choosing to be a teacher is not a sign of compromise but a mark of vision and responsibility.

If we genuinely aspire for a strong, enlightened, and progressive future generation, we must encourage young people to dream not only of becoming officers and professionals but also of

becoming dedicated, passionate teachers—the real architects of tomorrow's nation and the silent force behind every great achievement.

Author is a teacher and works in school education department. He can be mailed at zahoorlone1979@gmail.com



## EOW Files Chargesheet In Municipal Fraud Case In Budgam

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

SRINAGAR: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch Kashmir has filed a chargesheet before a special anti-corruption court in Srinagar in connection with an alleged municipal fraud case involving the illegal allotment of govern-

ment property in Budgam of the Ranbir Penal Code, district, the CBK said on Tuesday.

As per a statement issued, the chargesheet has been filed in FIR No. 03/2022 before the court of the Special Judge Anti-Corruption, Srinagar, under Sections 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) read with Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption

Three persons have been named as accused in the case, including the former president of the Municipal Committee Budgam, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Dar, and two private individuals—Ghulam Mohammad abused his official position Mir and Abdul Majid Bhat all residents of Budgam.

According to officials, the case originated from a complaint alleging large-scale embezzlement and illegal allotment of a Municipal Committee building. Investigation revealed that the then municipal president to confer undue benefits on one of the accused by issuing a forged allotment

The probe found that the allotment order was falsely shown to have been issued on the basis of a Municipal Committee resolution and approval

from the Director, Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir, which were later found to be non-existent.

It said the accused had entered into a criminal conspiracy and prepared forged documents, including fake allotment, partnership and dissolution deeds, without lawful authority.

During the investiga tion, all three accused were examined and admitted their roles, officials said, adding that sufficient oral and documentary evidence was collected to substantiate the charges.

Further proceedings in the case are pending before the court.

### FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

Floods Damage 0.78
undertaken through the State Disaster Response
Fund (SDRF), while in the case of calamities of a severe nature, additional assistance is provided from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), following established procedures.

'The financial assistance under SDRF and NDRF comes in the form of relief and not as compensation. The crop losses are also covered under crop insurance schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS), which provide risk coverage against non-preventable natural calamities," it said.

The Government further explained that admissible insurance claims are settled directly into the accounts of insured farmers based on yield data provided by the UT administration, conforming to the operational guidelines of the schemes—(KNO)

## Cold Wave Tightens Qazigund settled at minus 2.2 degrees Celsius

against 2.2 degrees Celsius on Monday, while Pahalgam recorded minus 2.6 degrees Celsius, down from 2.2 degrees Celsius

Kupwara registered a minimum of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius, compared to 1.6 degrees Celsius previously, while Kokernag dropped to minus 0.6 degrees Celsius from 2.4 degrees Celsius.

Pampore and Pulwama were among the coldest places in the Valley, each recording minus 4.0 degrees Celsius. Shopian recorded minus 3.8 degrees Celsius, Anantnag minus 3.3 degrees Celsius and

Baramulla minus 2.9 degrees Celsius. Srinagar Airport recorded a minimum of minus 2.0 degrees Celsius, down from 1.4 degrees Celsius a day earlier, while Awantipora recorded minus 2.6 degrees Celsius. Gulmarg, which had recorded 1.0 degrees Celsius on Monday, settled at 0.5 degrees Celsius. Zojila Pass recorded an extreme low of minus 17.0 degrees Celsius

In the Jammu region, temperatures also dipped, though remaining above freezing in most areas. ■ Jammu city recorded a minimum of 8.4 degrees Celsius, down from 11.4 degrees Celsius the previ-

Banihal recorded 1.7 degrees Celsius, while Bhaderwah dropped to 2.9 degrees Celsius. Rajouri recorded a minimum of 1.0 degrees Celsius, Udhampur 4.0 degrees Celsius and Ramban 4.6 degrees Celsius. Doda recorded 6.2 degrees Celsius.

Ladakh continued to experience severe cold, with Leh recording minus 4.8 degrees Celsius, compared to minus 1.8 degrees Celsius a day earlier. Kargil recorded minus 4.2 degrees Celsius, while Nubra Valley recorded minus 1.9 degrees Celsius.

Drass recorded minus 8.2 degrees Celsius, Padum minus 9.1 degrees Celsius and Nyoma recorded the lowest temperature in the region at minus 14.3

Meanwhile, the IMD forecast said weather is likely to remain mainly dry over Jammu and Kashmir during the next 24 hours and the subsequent two

From December 18 to 20, isolated light snowfall is likely at higher reaches of north and central Kashmir, while plains are expected to remain largely dry.

It said the weather is likely to remain partly to generally cloudy on December 20 and 21, with the possibility of light snowfall over the higher reaches of Kashmir division and light rain over scattered plain areas of Jammu, mainly from the late night of December 20 to the afternoon of December 21.

The weather department has advised that shallow to moderate fog is likely to continue at many places in Kashmir division and at isolated places in Jammu

It also cautioned that light snowfall combined with sub-freezing temperatures over higher reaches may lead to slippery road conditions during the late night of December 20 and the morning hours of December 21, advising travellers and transporters to follow traffic and administrative advisories—(KNO)

### Policeman Killed

Khan of Poonch, sustained critical injuries. "He was evacuated for medical treatment, but unfortunately succumbed to his injuries due to excessive blood loss," the IGP said.

He said that after the initial firefight, terrorists fled toward the dense forest. "The entire area stands cordoned off and a joint combing operation has been launched with the support of the Indian Army and CRPF," he said.

"The terrain is extremely difficult, with hilly features and thick forest cover. As per the original intelligence, three terrorists were hiding there, which was later confirmed during the encounter. The operation is on to track terrorists," he said.

Meanwhile, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, led the solemn wreath laying ceremony at the District Police Lines in Udhampur, to honour constable Amjad Ali Khan of the 22nd Battalion of the Indian Reserve Police (IRP) who died fighting terrorists in the operation.

Besides the DGP wreaths were laid by IGP (Jammu Zone) Bhim Sen Tuti, Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, along with senior police officers, CRPF personnel and district administration officials, who paid floral tributes to the fallen policeman.

A gun salute was given as a final farewell, following which the mortal remains were sent to his hometown in the Mendhar border area of Poonch district for burial, officials said—(KNO)

**Tricolour Symbol**General PK Mishra of this very thoughtful gesture of installing the 108 feet high mast national flag. He also appreciated the Flag Foundation of India for its remarkable contribution in this historic initiative.

'May our beloved and victorious Tricolour fly high in the world. Our tricolour is a symbol of our freedom, of our self-respect, and of sacrifices and martyrdom. Together, we should march to achieve the lofty vision of making India a Developed Nation," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Shri Satish Sharma, Minister for Youth Services & Sports, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, ARI & Trainings: Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command; Lt Gen P K Mishra, GOC White Knight Corps (16 Corps); Maj Gen HS Brar GOC 10 RAPID; Brig. Dayanand Sharma, Commander Pallanwala Brigade, Maj. Gen. Ashim Kohli (Retd), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Flag Foundation of India; senior officials; War Veterans, Veer naris and students were present.

### **Soldier Dies In**

The soldiers sometimes step on preplanted landmines during patrolling near the LoC. In most such accidents, due to rain, snow and other weather conditions, these mines have been swept away from the area where they were planted. Such landmines are technically called 'drift mines'.

As part of the robust anti-infiltration mechanism, area close to the border/LoC fencing is often mined to prevent incursion into this side of the line.

Jammu and Kashmir has a 740 km long LoC situated in Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora districts of the Valley, and Poonch, Rajouri and partly in Jammu district of Jammu division.

The Army guards the LoC in J&K, while the 240-km-long international border situated in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts is guarded by the Border Security Force (BSF). The Army and the BSF guard against infiltra-

tion, exfiltration, cross-border smuggling and drone activities initiated from across the border. The J&K Police and the security forces

carry out anti-terrorist operations in the hinterland against terrorists, their overground workers (OGWs), sympathisers and drug smugglers.

Guarding the LoC is a Herculean task, especially during the winter months when heavy snowfall and avalanches hit the Army posts on the LoC, resulting in casualties. The temperature during both day and night remains below zero at the LoC, and logistics and supplies become a big challenge for the Army in the winter months

### **CIK Busts Terror-**

workers (OGWs) and sympathisers. The revised strategy is aimed at dismantling the complete support system of terrorism rather than targeting the gun-wielding terrorists alone.

Drug smugglers, drug peddlers and those involved in hawala money rackets and other unlawful financial activities are also on the scanner of the security

It is believed that funds generated through these unlawful activities are finally used to sustain terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Anti-terrorist operations are carried out in the hinterland by the J&K Police and the security

The Army and the Border Security Force (BSF) deployed on the Line of Control (LoC) and the international border guard against infiltration, exfiltration, drug smuggling and drone activities initiated from across the border.

Recently, the Counter-Intelligence wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police (November 13) carried out raids at several locations in Kashmir in connection with the "white-collar terror module", and the terror blast near Red Fort in Delhi.

### **CS Reviews Mining**

geological studies of major mineral blocks such as lignite, marble, graphite and granite through MECL, so as to establish clear estimates of mineral reserves and attract better investor response during future auctions.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the department to expedite the operationalisation of 110 nonoperational minor mineral blocks across various districts to unlock their revenue potential and ensure availability of construction material for developmental works. He also directed the department to remain uncompromising in dealing with illegal mining and to create sufficient deterrence through strict enforcement and penal action.

About the mining reforms and major achievements made by the Department, the ACS Mining, Anil Kumar Singh informed that the e-auction of seven limestone blocks was formally launched by the Union Minister of Coal and Mines on November 24, 2025, marking a major step towards scientific and transparent exploitation of major minerals.

Under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) 2025-26, he added that the Department had secured a grant of 100 Cr after implementing key mining reforms, including adoption of a Minor Mineral Policy, allocation of all minor mineral blocks through auction mode, introduction of mine closure provisions with monitoring mechanisms, and initiation of survey, mapping and exploration of identified minor mineral blocks.

In addition, the department has operationalised a star rating system for minor mineral mines, established the State Mineral Exploration Trust, and notified District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) Rules in accordance with revised PMKKKY guidelines, thereby strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable mining.

A major focus of the review was the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSS), developed for the first time by the department in collaboration with BISAG-N (Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics). The system integrates GPS tracking, RFID, e-challan, weighbridge data and public grievance redressal mechanisms on a real-time digital dashboard to enhance transparency, accountability and compliance in mining

The department reported that 114 system-generated triggers were verified on the ground, resulting in confirmation of 14 cases of illegal mining and imposition of penalties amounting to 90 lakhs.

Moreover it was given out that a pilot run of GPSenabled mineral-carrying vehicles has been successfully conducted in District Samba, with plans to extend GPS, RFID and e-challan compliance to all mineral transportation across the UT by January 26. 2026 after carrying out an extensive IEC campaign.

The department is also setting up Quick Response Teams (QRTs) at the district level with modern gadgets and logistics to respond swiftly to illegal mining activities, supported through SASCI, DMFT and regular budgetary resources. PoS machines for on-the-spot digital challaning and compounding are being provided to enforcement agencies to ensure immediate action on violations.

For the financial year 2025–26, the department has set a revenue target of 300 Cr, including 200 Cr from minor minerals and 100 crore from RCCrelated activities, while revenues from major minerals are projected in FY 2026–27 following completion of the limestone auction process.

The Chief Secretary stressed the need for timebound implementation of reforms, deeper use of technology, and close coordination among departments to ensure transparent, environmentally sustainable mining here.

He directed the department to adhere to set timelines, strengthen field-level monitoring and fully leverage digital systems to eliminate illegal mining and maximise public benefit from mineral resources

### **India Fences**

curb infiltration and enhance national security. Notably, in total, India has a land border of 15,106.7 km and a coastline of 7.516.6 km, sharing boundaries with seven neighbouring countries.

The government's efforts to fence the Pakistan border are part of broader measures to secure India's sensitive western frontier.

The government said fencing work along the remaining stretches is underway, with challenges in difficult terrains and strategically sensitive areas.

The completed fencing is expected to enhance surveillance, reduce cross-border smuggling, and prevent infiltration by hostile elements. India has also made progress on other borders,

including Bangladesh and Myanmar, though the focus on the Pakistan border underscores the government's emphasis on national security in the west. The government has strengthened intelligence

gathering, inter-agency coordination and border management over the past two years, leading to improved detection of infiltration attempts and neutralisation of terror networks, Nitvanand Rai told the LS in an answer to another question.

He said capacities of central and state law enforcement agencies have been enhanced to mitigate terror

He said closer coordination between central agencies and state police has enabled joint operations against terror modules involved in recruitment, financing and other activities.

Border guarding forces have been equipped with drones, thermal imagers, night-vision devices and radar systems under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System.

These measures, Rai said, have resulted in reduced infiltration attempts, increased drone interceptions and recovery of arms, ammunition and narcotics.

Pertinently, India-Pakistan border stretches across Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, and includes the Line of Control in

## Kashmir Rivers, Spring unless significant rain or snow arrives.

Authorities warned that dry vegetation and prolonged moisture deficits are increasing the risk of forest fires in the Valley.

"The combination of low river levels and dry weather is alarming for both agriculture and water security," said an official from the Department of Disaster Management, Srinagar.

Experts at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) stressed the need for urgent, sciencedriven interventions.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai said, "Rising climate variability and water scarcity are major threats to agriculture. We need drought-resilient crops and better water management strategies immediately.'

Scientists recommended research on regenerative agriculture, efficient water-use technologies, and climate adaptation to mitigate the impact of changing weather patterns.

Meanwhile, the air quality in J&K is currently rated as poor, with a live AQI of 129 according to the US standard. PM10 levels are recorded at 91 μg/m³ and PM2.5 at 65 µg/m³, indicating that pollution may pose health concerns for sensitive groups. In a fresh podcast, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

expressed concern over climate change, saying he finds it hard to understand those who do not believe it is real. Recalling his childhood, he said that during trips

to Sonamarg, large glaciers were visible, but today they have receded, and only small patches remain 'Gulmarg used to witness snow ski courses shortly after winter vacations. It was impossible for the

area to be snowless during Christmas. But now, even in December, there is no snow," he said. The Chief Minister also warned that while people often talk about pollution in Delhi, air quality in Kashmir is rapidly declining and approaching simi-

"We need to take concrete steps, not only by the government but also by the people. Everyone must make an effort to ensure a greener environment," he said—(KNO)

### **Centre Releases Rs**

in the Union Territory, approval has been granted for the construction of 1,000 Gram Panchayat Bhawans, besides the procurement of 1,318 computers to promote digital governance and transparency in rural local bodies, the reply stated.

It said the to bridge the digital divide, the Ministry is implementing initiatives such as eGramSwaraj, AuditOnline, and the People's Plan Campaign in Jammu and Kashmir, which will reinforce participatory planning, online monitoring, and accountability in Panchayat functioning—(KNO)

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

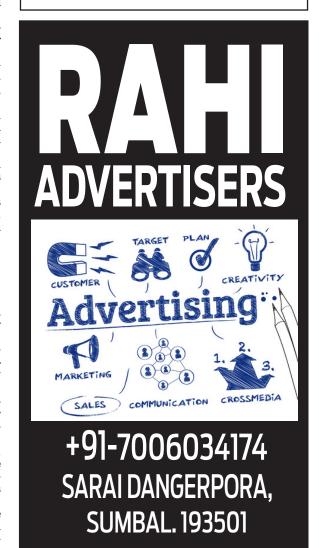
I have changed my name from (old Name) Nusrat Abbas Ansari to (new Name) Nusrat Abbas. In future, I will be known as (new name) Nusrat Abbas.

If any body is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days, no objection will be accepted.

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### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

SRINAGAR | Wednesday, 17, December 2025

# PM Modi lauds 'vibrant welcome' in Addis Ababa, thanks Ethiopian counterpart for special gesture

ADDIS ABABA: Members of the Indian community Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he arrived at the hotel in Addis Ababa on Tuesday accompanied with his Ethiopian counterpart Abiy Ahmed Ali.

In a unique gesture, Abiy Ahmed Ali - who in 2019 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his "decisive initiative" to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea - drove PM Modi to the hotel from the airport. On the way, he took a special initiative of taking PM Modi to the Science Museum and Friendship park, which sources said was not in the original

At the hotel, PM Modi interacted with members of the Indian community who had been waiting for long to catch a glimpse of the Indian PM. They carried Indian flags in their hands and chanted "Modi Modi" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai" while presenting flowers to PM Modi.

PM Modi and Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed Ali witnessed cultural performances and took photographs with the gathering. A group of artists sang 'Dharti Sunehra Ambar Neela' song from Bollywood Movie 'Veer Zaara' as they welcomed PM Modi at



the hotel.

Sharing a video of the artists singing Hindi song on Instagram, PM Modi wrote, "A vibrant welcome in Addis Ababa! Indian songs and music are indeed very popular here."

Earlier, Abiy Ahmed Ali welcomed PM Modi at the airport as he arrived for his two-day State visit to Ethiopia. Upon arrival in Ethiopia, PM Modi stated that he looked forward to engaging with Ethiopian leadership to further strengthen ties in various sectors.

"Landed in Addis Ababa a short while ago. Honoured by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's gesture of welcoming me at the airport. Ethiopia is a nation with great history and vibrant culture. India and Ethiopia share deep civilisational ties. I look forward to engaging with the Ethio-

pian leadership to further strengthen our partnership in diverse areas," PM Modi posted on X.

The visit is being held at the invitation of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and underscores the growing strategic importance of India-Ethiopia relations.

Both leaders also engaged in an informal conversation at the airport.

"At Addis Ababa airport, took part in a traditional Coffee Ceremony with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali. The ceremony beautifully highlights Ethiopia's rich heritage,' PM Modi posted on X.

During the visit, PM Modi will hold comprehensive discussions with Abiy Ahmed Ali covering all aspects of bilateral ties, including political engagement, development coopand people-to-people relations. As partners in the Global South, both leaders are expected to reaffirm their shared commitment to strengthening friendship and expanding coop-

PM Modi will also be meeting members of the Indian diaspora and address a Joint Session of the Ethiopian Parliament.

eration for mutual benefit.

This is the first visit to Ethiopia by an Indian Prime Minister since 2011 and Addis Ababa has been decked up with welcome hoardings, posters, and Indian flags in honour of PM Modi.

Ethiopia is considered an important and trusted partner for India in Africa and the Global South, and the visit is expected to further elevate bilateral engagement.

Īn his departure state-

ment on Monday, PM Modi highlighted the significance of Addis Ababa as the headquarters of the African Union, noting that during India's G20 Presidency in 2023, the African Union was admitted as a permanent member of the G20. He said he looks forward to detailed discussions with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, meeting members of the Indian diaspora, and addressing a Joint Session of the Ethiopian Parliament.

"I eagerly look forward to sharing my thoughts on India's journey as the 'Mother of Democracy' and the value that the India-Ethiopia partnership can bring to the Global South," the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali has been a prominent participant in previous editions of the Voice of Global South summit. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the visit reflects India's continued commitment to deepening South-South cooperation and strengthening its partnership with Africa.

PM Modi arrived in Ethiopia after concluding his two-day visit to Jordan, where he met King Abdullah II, Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, addressed India-Jordan Business Forum and visited Jordan Museum on Tuesday.

# PM Modi's Jordan visit opens new chapter in bilateral business ties: Industry leaders



AMMAN: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jordan has marked a significant step forward in strengthening economic and business relations between the two countries. with industry leaders highlighting fresh opportunities across multiple sectors.

Speaking to IANS on the sidelines of the India-Jordan Business Forum, Rukam Capital Founder and Managing Partner Archana Jahagirdar said the visit has unlocked wide-ranging collaboration prospects.

Jordan's rich cultural heritage and scenic natural locations offer strong potential for film and media projects, while Indian rice has gained popularity in the Jordanian market, gradually replacing imports from countries such as the US and Egypt,

Jahagirdar also underscored Jordan's strategic

geographical location, calling it an important partner for India in the region.

Echoing similar sentiments, Florence Shoe Company Private Limited's Ageel Panarwana described the day as positive for trade and economic engagement between the two nations. He said such high-level visits are crucial in boosting bilateral trade and strengthening India's position as an emerging global economic leader.

Jordan-based fintech firm Get-To-Pay General Manager Rasha Asfour said that India-Jordan relations are built on mutual trust and shared interests.

Asfour noted that Prime Minister Modi's visit has elevated the partnership, combining Jordan's wellregulated business environment with India's scale, talent and innovation, thereby creating multiple avenues for collaboration.

Earlier, addressing the India-Jordan Business Forum, Prime Minister Modi said India is steadily moving towards becoming the world's third-largest economy, growing at over 8 per cent. He attributed this momentum to productivity-driven governance and innovation-led policies.

The Prime Minister invited Jordanian investors to explore opportunities in India, assuring them of strong returns.

He also highlighted significant scope for cooperation in pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, describing healthcare as a strategic priority rather than just a sector.

The Prime Minister said that if Indian companies manufacture medicines and medical equipment in Jordan, it would not only serve local needs but also position Jordan as a reliable hub for Africa and West Asia.

The visit is being seen as a catalyst for deeper economic integration and long-term partnership between India and Jordan.

## Congress in Haryana to bring no-confidence motion against BJP govt

CHANDIGARH: The main Oppsition Congress in Haryana will bring a noconfidence motion against the BJP government during the winter session of the Vidhan Sabha, beginning on December 18.

A decision in this regard was taken on Tuesday at a meeting of the Congress Legislative Party, chaired by former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Among others who attended the meeting was the state party President, Rao Narendra Singh.

The meeting discussed in detail issues that the party would raise during the Assembly session, including adjournment motions, calling-attention motions, and zero-hour submissions.

The party has decided to bring adjournment motions on issues such as the dilapidated condition of sports facilities and equipment in sports complexes and the misuse of government machinery to form the government.

Additionally, issues such as saving the Aravalli range, compensation for waterlogging, rising



MNREGA, increasing drug abuse, corruption, education, and health will be raised through callingattention and short-duration discussion motions.

demand a discussion against the statements made by BJP MLAs and MPs that spread castebased hatred. The party will also demand a discussion on the issues of the SYL canal, law and order situation in the state and the status of Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab

asked to the government regarding rising unemployment and the Haryana Public Service Commission (HPSC) giving priority to outsiders in government jobs.

clarified that the BJP formed the government by stealing votes. "To achieve this, they resorted to tac-

The Congress will also

and Haryana. Questions will also be

At the meeting, Hooda



tics such as offering illegal inducements before the elections and creating multiple votes for a single person. Therefore, a noconfidence motion will be brought against the government, and its misdeeds will be exposed in the House," he told the media.

The legislative party meeting welcomed the court's decision to reject the chargesheet in the

National Herald case. A condolence resolution was also passed on the demise of senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Shivraj Patil and former MLA Sahib Singh Saini, and a two-minute silence was observed to pay tribute to them.

## Govt determined to clear VB-G RAM G Bill in current Parliament session

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on Tuesday introduced the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aieevika Mission (Gramin): VB-G RAM G Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha.

According to sources, the government is firm on getting the bill passed during the current parliamentary session.

The ruling side argues that renaming employment schemes is not new, citing the transition from Jawahar Rozgar Yojana to NREGA, and later to MGNREGA, as part of a continuous evolution in rural employment policies.

Sources also indicate that failure to pass the bill in this session could complicate budgetary provisions, as VB-G RAM G is a new scheme requiring a fresh legal framework.

Once enacted, rural workers will need to register afresh under the new law to avail benefits.

The proposed legislation aims to establish a new rural development framework aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.



Under the bill, the government seeks to provide a statutory guarantee of 125 days of wage employment in every financial year to each rural household whose adult members voluntarily undertake unskilled manual work.

The bill also focuses on promoting empowerment, growth, convergence, and saturation to build a prosperous and resilient rural

The introduction of the bill effectively proposes renaming and restructuring the existing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural **Employment Guarantee** Act (MGNREGA) into the

new VB-G RAM G Scheme. This move has triggered sharp reactions from the opposition, with senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi and several other opposition leaders accusing the government of attempting to dilute the legacy and intent of MGN-

Addressing criticism over the guarantee of employment, government sources stated that nearly 40 lakh families have already received 100 days of work under MGN-REGA, countering claims that workers do not get the assured employment. The government has

planned to allocate Rs 7.50 lakh crore over the next five vears for the new scheme. which highlights its largescale commitment to rural livelihoods. If passed, the VB-G RAM G Bill will officially replace MGNREGA. It will increase guaranteed workdays from 100 to 125, and will also redefine India's rural employment framework for the coming decades, say analysts.

### Migrant boat sinks off Greek island, 28 rescued

ATHENS: A total of 28 people were rescued, while three others remained missing, after a boat carrying irregular migrants from Turkev sank off the Greek island of Samos on Tuesday, Greek authorities said.

A search-and-rescue operation was underway to locate the missing ones, the Hellenic Coast Guard said, adding that winds of up to force 5 on the Beaufort scale were affecting the area. Xinhua News Agency reported.

According to the Coast Guard, the migrants were found near the coastline after their boat crashed into rocks. They were taken to a local hospital for first aid, while an injured baby in serious condition was airlifted to Athens, local media outlet Samos Today reported. The nationalities of the migrants have not yet been confirmed.

Greece has been a key entry point for irregular migrants and refugees into the European Union since 2015. Over the past decade. more than one million arrivals have been recorded. while hundreds of people have lost their lives during dangerous sea crossings.

Data released recently by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) showed that irregular migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean

declined by 30 per cent in the first 11 months of 2025 compared with the same period in 2024.

According to Frontex, about 46,200 arrivals have been recorded in Greek waters this year.

Last week, a 12-year-old boy died after a trafficker forced migrants to jump from a speedboat off the Greek island of Samos, the state broadcaster ERT reported on December 8.

According to the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG), the vessel was carrying 38 migrants when a patrol boat approached. The smuggler then allegedly ordered the passengers to jump into the water before escaping toward the shore. The child suffered fatal injuries after being struck by the boat's propeller.

The boy's body and the 37 survivors were transferred to a local hospital. Authorities have launched a manhunt for the trafficker.

Greece has been a major entry point for irregular migrants and refugees into the European Union since 2015, with more than 1 million arrivals recorded. Hundreds have lost their lives attempting the sea crossing over the years.

The latest fatality followed another incident on December 6, when Greek authorities recovered 17 bodies and rescued two migrants from a vessel off

## 'India sees Taiwan as vital technology partner'

IANS

NEW DELHI: India sees Taiwan as a vital technology partner as it is a leading chip manufacturer, and cooperation in this sector offers a critical pathway for economic growth, technological advancement and strategic autonomy, a media report said.

The Indian government has courted major Taiwanese companies for several years, but awareness and engagement must expand across institutions, industries and policymaking circles, according to an article in the Taipei Times.

It highlights that a promising initiative already exists in the joint master's program in semiconductor technology between four Taiwanese universities and the Indian Institute of Science. The program boosts links between Indian academia and Taiwan's semiconductor ecosystem. Indian engineers and technology professionals should be encouraged to participate, ensuring the transfer of expertise and know-how that India urgently needs.

Beyond education, India should consider establishing a

Taiwan science park. A dedicated facility of that nature would attract Taiwanese companies facilitate structured and longterm collaboration, and provide a visible symbol of India's commitment to advancing its technological and industrial capacity in partnership with Taiwan, the article stated.

It expressed the view that India must shed unnecessary caution and adopt a more confident and consistent approach to Taiwan. Consultations and dia-



logue should be elevated. Where unofficial channels already exist, Indian officials beyond senior levels should participate. Ministries responsible for economics, technology and

trade must engage, with meetings conducted at least at the deputy minister level to ensure sustained and effective engagement. Parliamentary channels must be leveraged to advance Indian interests.

A dedicated parliamentary committee on Taiwan-India relations could provide continuity, oversight and strategic direction, ensuring that engagement is deliberate and long-term rather than ad hoc and reactive, the article further stated.

It criticises China's increasing assertiveness, highlight-

ing the incident of an Indian woman from Arunachal Pradesh being detained and harassed at a Shanghai airport, targeted solely because China claims her home state as its territory. That was followed by a statement from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserting that China has never recognised Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing calls Zangnan.

The article observes that India cannot afford passivity in its dealings with China. This is not about confrontation. It is about asserting India's priorities, protecting its sovereignty, safeguarding strategic interests and recalibrating its regional posture. If India continues to approach Taiwan with excessive caution, it risks losing critical opportunities to bolster its position in Asia's evolving bal-

It also highlights that some Indian states have been engaging with Taiwan, which has produced positive results in terms of commercial and technological collaboration with Taiwan. However, beyond those pockets of progress, tangible outcomes

### **NEWS**





## **J&K: Uncapped Augib** Nabi sold to Delhi Capitals for Rs 8.40 crore



**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

SRINAGAR, DEC 16 () For the first time in J&K's cricket history, pacer Auqib Nabi, belonging to Baramulla district, created history on Tuesday when he was sold to Delhi Capitals for a whopping sum of Rs 8.40 crore.

The uncapped Indian seamer has been making waves with consistent performances across domestic tournaments, and the Capitals moved quickly to secure his services.

Nabi has been in remarkable form this season. In the T20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, he picked up 15 wickets in seven matches

at an economy rate of 7.41. In his most recent outing against Madhya Pradesh, he delivered a crucial all-round perfor-

mance, scoring 32 off 21 balls to help set a defendable total before returning to claim three vital wickets to seal the win for Jammu & amp; Kashmir.

His domestic exploits go beyond T20s. Nabi had an exceptional start to the 2025-26 Ranji Trophy, finishing as the only seamer among the top-five wickettakers in the first half of the season

He claimed 29 wickets in nine innings, including three five-wicket hauls and a sensational 7 for 24 against Rajasthan, helping J&K secure a spot in the knockout stages.

This dominance followed his brilliant 2024-25 Ranji Trophy campaign, where he ended with 44 wickets at an average of 13.93. No other seamer in the country came close,

with the next best taking 35 wickets, while only Vidarbha all-rounder Harsh Dubey bettered Nabi's tally with 69 wickets.

Delhi Capitals, who earlier in the auction secured David Miller and Ben Duckett at their base prices of Rs 2 crore, will be hoping Nabi can replicate his domestic form at the highest level.

His aggressive pace, wicket-taking ability, and handy batting make him a compelling addition to the Capitals' lineup as they look to build a balanced and dynamic squad for IPL 2026.

There was widespread jubilation among cricket lovers in J&K, especially in Baramulla town, after news came about Auqib's being auctioned for an unbelievable amount

## Ali Sagar chairs meeting of Committee on Public Undertakings

**GMK NEWS NETWORK** 

JAMMU: A meeting of Committee on Public Undertakings (PUC) of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Tuesday held under the Chairmanship of MLA, Ali Mohammad Sagar, at Assembly Complex here to discuss and examine the Audit Paras pertaining to PWD (JKPCC).

Legislators, Saifullah Mir, Baldev Raj Sharma, Shakti Raj Parihar, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Dr Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri, Showkat Hussain Ganie, Saif-ud-Din Bhat and Tanvir Sadiq besides Secretary, JKLA, Manoj Kumar Pandit were also present in the meeting.

Threadbare discussions were held on various issues pointed out in CAG's audit

7.3. pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC).

Accountant General J&K, Tsewang Tharchin, highlighted the issues of

Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh, also briefed the Committee about steps

being taken to clear issues mentioned in the audit paras besides the present status of ongoing projects of the department.

Director, Finance (PWD) and MD, JKPCC briefed the present status of liabilities of JKPCC.

The members of Committee gave their valuable suggestions and raised their issues regarding

audit paras besides working of the department.

The Chairman exhorted upon the officers of PWD to take concrete measures for completion of all ongoing projects. He also stressed on the importance of audit and evaluation of PSU's to ensure transparency and accountability in their

operations. The Committee unanimously decided and pro posed the concerned department to submit a written detailed report to clear liabilities of JKPCC and there after the audit paras number 7.1 and 7.2

will be dropped. Senior officers of concerned departments and Assembly Secretariat were present in the meeting.

'Extortion row'

## Kashmir livestock traders aghast over Punjab govt's silence

**REHAN QAYOOM** 

**SRINAGAR:** Twelve days after the Jammu and Kashmir Government formally wrote to the Punjab Chief Minister seeking an end to alleged extortion and harassment of livestock transporters at Shambhu and Madhopur checkpoints, there has been no response from the Punjab administration, fuelling anger and frustration among Kashmir's mutton

The communication, dated December 4, was sent by the office of the J&K Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Transport and allied departments, requesting "an urgent appointment" with the Punjab Chief Minister to resolve issues concerning the interstate movement of

However, despite repeated follow-ups, Punjab has not even acknowledged the letter, insiders from the Mutton Dealers Association said.

"It's shocking that even after a formal letter from one government to another, there's total silence. The transporters are being bled dry at these checkpoints, and nobody in Punjab seems to care," said a senior mutton dealer.

The J&K Government had earlier flagged the issue after reports of "illegal payments and harassment" at Punjab's transit points surfaced, with dealers warning of a possible 'price hike' if the extortion continued unchecked.

'We are being pushed to the wall," said Mehraj Ud Din, General Secretary

of the Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association. "Our government did its job by taking up the issue officially on December 4. The question is, why is Punjab silent? Does this mean they endorse what's happening on the highways?'

Dealers have urged the Punjab government to immediately intervene and direct its enforcement agencies to stop illegal practices that obstruct livestock transport to

"If this continues, it will hit not just traders but consumers in the Valley. Prices will shoot up, and the blame will rest squarely on Punjab's inaction." Mehrai Ud Din said. adding, "As of now, we are waiting, but there should be a decision on this soon: otherwise, our stance may shift."—(KNO)

### Two residential houses damaged in Shaheed **Gunj Fire**

'Swift response prevents major tragedy; cause under investigation'

**REHAN QAYOOM MIR** 

SRINAGAR: Two residential houses were damaged in a fire incident that broke out in Shaheed Gunj area of Srinagar on Tuesday evening, officials said.

The officials said that the timely intervention of the authorities prevented the flames from spreading further.

An official said that two adjoining three-storeyed residential houses were damaged in the blaze that broke today out late this afternoon.

He said that the fire incident was reported at around 4:38 PM and was doused by multiple fire tenders from Habba Kadal, Batamaloo, MR Gunj and Shaheed Pora stations. "The flames were brought under control by 5:16 PM—preventing the fire from spreading to nearby houses in the densely populated locality," he said

Meanwhile, eyewitnesses said thick plumes of smoke rose from the spot. They said that the firefighting operation was carried out efficiently despite the narrow lanes and closely nacked structures.

Officials also confirmed that no injuries or loss of life occurred in the incident. "The damage remained confined to the affected houses. The cause of the fire is being investigated."—(KNO)

Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December

## IPL 2026 Auction: Never thought of trying to trade Washington Sundar, says Parthiv Patel

NEW DELHI: Gujarat Titans (GT) assistant coach Parthiv Patel has insisted that off-spin bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar was never considered for a trade to another team ahead of IPL 2026. Patel also said Sundar's versatility made him integral to the side, noting that he could slot in anywhere in the batting order while offering balance with the

Ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 retentions, reports came of Sundar being potentially traded to Chennai Super Kings (CSK) from GT, but it never materialised.

"In our thought process, we never thought of trying to trade Washington Sundar, or even if someone asked us, we didn't even think about it. So that was never a doubt at all. As far as Washington Sundar, how he has played really well for India in the past year, whether it was Test cricket or wherever he has got a chance, he's a versatile player.

"He can bat well at the top as well as at the bottom. So, depending on the season, we can use Washington Sundar anywhere," Patel told reporters in a virtual press conference after the auction ended in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

Sundar was bought by the Gujarat Titans for Rs 3.2 crore last year, and has been given limited opportunities in recent seasons under the 'Impact Player' rule. He featured in only six matches this year, though his knock of 49 against Sunrisers Hyderabad showed his superlative batting skills.

With his stocks seeing a surge following strong performances for India in all formats, GT will be banking on Sundar's versatility to address their number four slot issue to support a fantastic top three in captain Shubman Gill, B Sai Sudharsan, and



Jos Buttler, especially after having traded Sherfane Rutherford to the Mumbai Indians.

Patel also addressed the flexibility issue in the middle order, noting that team decisions would be guided by conditions to decide between Sundar, Glenn Phillips, and new buy Tom Banton. "So basically, when we pick a team, it's in our mind that whichever player comes in. he should fit in our team and be ready to play in the

"So obviously, the way the pitch conditions will be, the way we feel on the ground and in the nets, we will make a decision according to that. But whether it's Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, or Tom Banton, who we took in the auction, no player is out of consideration. But we have the luxury that we have such players who can play at any number any-

where," he added. England wicketkeeperbatter Jamie Smith was a surprise unsold player at the auction, and Patel felt Banton, having more experience of playing T20s for England, drew them to acquiring him in the auc-

"No, it's not that we don't have any interest. Obviously, Tom Banton and Jamie Smith have almost the same kind of skill set. But Tom Banton has more experience. He has played in the IPL before. He is doing well in international cricket. So that's why

we had to choose one out of the two.

"But for that, we were very sure before in the way we were thinking, and that's why we took Tom Banton in the team. He brings a lot of value in terms of experience and batting at any number. Also, he is someone who can bat from the top till

wherever we want. "So obviously, we look at a batter who is versatile. On top of everything, he has the experience of playing international cricket and IPL cricket. So that's the reason why we thought that he could be a classic fit for our team," he elaborated.

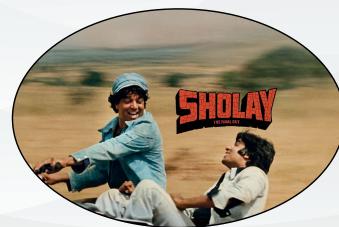
On concerns around the form and rhythm of lowerorder hitters Rahul Tewatia and Shahrukh Khan, Patel expressed confidence in their abilities when IPL 2026 begins. Tewatia has been out of action due to a shoulder injury needing surgery, while Shahrukh was sent back home after having a poor time for Tamil Nadu in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy league stage in Ahmedabad, GT's

home venue in IPL. "March is still three months away. We feel that Shah Rukh Khan and Rahul Tewatia are both very, very valuable players for us. Even last year, Tewatia won a couple of games. He won a couple of games - one against Mumbai and one against Delhi. He did that job, which we feel that he has the capability to do.





DHURANDHAR (A) HINDI ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 02:25 PM HINDI ATMOS - 10:30 AM, 06:25 PM HINDI - 12:55 PM, 05:05 PM



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



TERE ISHK MEIN (U/A 16+) HINDI - 11:00 AM



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