

Good Morning

Kashmir

17th
Year Of Publication

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India-China Boundary Question

NSA Arrives In Beijing For Special Representatives' Talks



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NEW DELHI: National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval arrived in Beijing on Monday for a two-day visit to attend the 25th Round of Special Representatives' Talks on the India-China Boundary Question. NSA Doval, India's Special Representative (SR) on the

India-China Boundary Question, travelled to Beijing at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. NSA Shri Doval and Wang Yi, who is China's Special Representative, will hold the 25th round of the Special Representatives' Talks on the India-China Boundary Question on Tuesday, according to

LG Celebrates Raksha Bandhan With Students From DPS B'la



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lok Bhavan Jammu Kashmir Monday hosted a special Raksha Bandhan celebrations for the students of Delhi Public School (DPS) Baramulla, at Srinagar. As a part of the celebrations, the students tied sacred thread of Rakhi to the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha and

exchanged greetings. The Lieutenant Governor called upon the students to carry forward the true spirit of Raksha Bandhan. He encouraged the young minds to spread the message of peace, love, unity and harmony. Ahead of the Raksha Bandhan, which will be celebrated on August 28, 2026, the event offered the young students a unique

CM Defends 6.83% Power Tariff Hike

Says Previous Governments Raised Rates By 14-15%

REHAN QAYOOM



SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday defended the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs by 6.83%, saying those questioning the hike should also remember that previous governments had raised power rates by more than 14%. The Chief Minister while talking to reporters here, said his government had never promised that electricity rates would not increase. He said the latest revision was a necessity rather than a decision the government took with satisfaction. "When did we ever say that electricity rates wouldn't rise?" CM Omar said the government had kept the latest increase to the absolute minimum possible and pointed out

that it came after a gap of four years. "We have raised electricity prices by only 6% and that too, after four years," he said, while referring to the rise in inflation, fuel prices and the overall cost of goods during the same period. CM Omar also hit back at those criticising the tariff revision, saying previous governments had increased electricity rates by more than 14 per cent during their tenure without facing similar criticism. "Four years ago, rates went up by 15% and the BJP remained silent then as well," he said. The Chief Minister

Hot, Humid Weather To Prevail In J&K: MeT



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness generally hot and humid weather over the coming days, with brief spells of rain and thundershowers at scattered places, the Meteorological Centre here said on Monday. According to the latest forecast accessed, brief spells of rain or thundershowers are likely at scattered places during the early morning and afternoon hours between August 25 and 28. The weather activity is expected to increase slightly from August 29 to 31, when light to moderate rain and thundershowers may occur at scattered to many places, with brief intense showers

CM Reviews Roadmap To Strengthen Senior Secondary Education In J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday chaired a review meeting of the School Education Department at the Civil Secretariat here to review a comprehensive roadmap for strengthening access to senior secondary education and improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the higher secondary level in Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting discussed a phased plan to upgrade 714 High Schools into K-12 composite schools, with focus on requirements of teaching and non-teaching staff, infrastructure, laboratories and other essential facilities. The proposed upgradation is aimed at ensuring continuity in school education, expanding

Apni Party, PDP Protest Power Tariff Hike In Srinagar, Demand Rollback

Opposition Parties Call 6.83 % Hike Anti-People; Apni Party Alleges Poll Promises Betrayed

REHAN QAYOOM



SRINAGAR: Apni Party and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders and workers on Monday staged separate protests in Srinagar against the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs by an average 6.83 per cent, demanding immediate rollback of the hike. According to the details available, Apni Party workers led by Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir gathered at Press Colony, where police stopped them from proceeding in the form of a procession. Talking to reporters, Mir said the government has increased power tariffs despite people facing unemployment, shrinking business opportunities and

rising prices. "It is unfortunate that, despite being fully aware that people are already facing severe financial hardships, the

CS Reviews Readiness For Drug Rehab Programme Phase-I

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparedness for implementation of the Phase-I Pilot of the Rehabilitation & Socio-Economic Reintegration Scheme for Drug Abuse Victims, 2026, being coordinated by the Social Welfare Department. The meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, H&ME; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department; DC, Srinagar; Head, IMHANS, Srinagar; Director, Health, Jammu/



Kashmir and other concerned officers. Deputy Commissioners from outside districts along with the Institution heads connected with the meeting through video conferencing. The meeting reviewed the readiness of the identified pilot institutions and districts, availability of human resources and infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, inter-departmental coordination and the development of a dedicated digital mechanism for end-to-end monitoring of beneficiaries. The Phase-I pilot is proposed to be

High-Density Apples Fetch Rs 150-200/ Kg, Growers Report Better Returns

JAHANGEER GANAIE



SRINAGAR: High-density apple cultivation is gradually transforming the traditional horticulture landscape of Kashmir, with growers reporting higher productivity, improved fruit quality and better returns compared to conventional orchard systems, as prices of high-density apples have touched nearly Rs 200 per kilogram in some markets this season. Growers from Pulwama and Shopian said modern plantations have enabled them to make better use of limited

land while reducing the waiting period for substantial returns. Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, a grower from Pulwama, told the news agency—Kashmir News

Observer (KNO) that traditional apple trees require considerable space and take several years before reaching full production capacity, whereas in high-den-

Farooq Abdullah Asks Ruhullah To Resign, Seek Fresh Mandate

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Monday hit back at party MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi over his recent statements, asking him to resign from the Lok Sabha and return to the electorate if he believes his victory was secured on the strength of his personal support. City & Local Guides Reacting to Ruhullah's public positions, Abdullah said the Srinagar MP was free to raise issues such as restoration of Article 370 in Parliament, but questioned his approach to the matter. "If he thinks Article 370 can be restored, he should take up the issue

Kashmiri Pandits Under PM Package Flag Fresh Threats; Seek Security



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: A new threat letter targeting Kashmiri Pandits working in the Kashmir Valley has surfaced, naming several members of the community and revealing detailed information about their residences, raising fresh security concerns, officials and media reports said on Monday. The communication, which emerged nearly two weeks after a similar warning was circulated online, names around six Kashmiri Pandits and includes details such as their house numbers and street names in different parts of Jammu, according to The Indian Express. The individuals were described in the letter as "white collar terrorists" and "traitors" allegedly working for their "masters" in Delhi. Security agencies are examining the latest communication and an earlier threat letter to



DC Shopian chairs District-Level NCORD meeting

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, Monday chaired a District-Level Narcotics Coordination (NCORD) Committee meeting at the Mini-Secretariat, Shopian, to review and strengthen coordinated efforts to combat the drug menace in the district.

The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Choudhary; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, Shakoor Ahmed Dar; SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed; ACD, Muzaffar Ahmed; and senior officers from various departments, including Health, Education, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Horticulture, Transport, Excise & Taxation, besides representatives of concerned enforcement agencies.

During the meeting, threadbare discussions were held on issues pertaining to narcotics control, prevention, enforcement and inter-departmental coordination. The participating officers shared updates and inputs from their respective departments and deliberated on measures to further strengthen the collective response against drug

abuse.

The DC stressed the need for close coordination among all stakeholders, effective enforcement and sustained awareness among youth and the general public to prevent drug abuse and safeguard the younger generation from the harmful consequences of substance abuse.

He directed all concerned departments and enforcement agencies to maintain close coordination and ensure timely follow-up and implementation of decisions taken during NCORD meetings.

The DC further directed SDM Zainapora to convene awareness meetings in the concerned areas to sensitise farmers and the general public against the cultivation of poppy and make them aware that such illegal cultivation invites strict legal action under law.

He also directed the Chief Education Officer (CEO) to ensure that all educational institutions remain clean, safe and drug-free, besides maintaining strict vigilance to prevent any substance-abuse-related activity.

The meeting concluded with directions for continued concerted efforts towards making Shopian a drug-free district.

Div Com reviews Dev Proposals for heritage sites in Budgam, Pulwama



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Monday chaired a meeting to review proposals for the development, renovation and upgradation of heritage sites including Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama Budgam and Khoo Sahb Yarwan Shadimarg, Pulwama.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Director Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Superintending Engineer PWD South Kashmir, Tehsildar Waqf Board, officers from Budgam district and representatives of the District Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Pulwama.

During the meeting,

members of the Prabandhak Committee submitted a detailed proposal for the development and renovation of the Holy Spring at Khoo Sahb Yarwan. They sought inclusion of several components in the Detailed Project Report (DPR), including construction of Nishan Sahib, development of the Holy Spring, a langar room, glass room, cottage rooms, footpath and fencing.

Taking note of the demands, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Superintending Engineer, PWD South Kashmir, to incorporate the requirements in the proposal and conduct a site visit in coordination with the concerned district administration. He also stressed the

need to involve community representatives during the process to ensure that their requirements are appropriately reflected in the development plan.

Regarding Asar-i-Sharief Peth Makhama, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Tehsildar, Waqf Board, to engage with local community members, assess the requirements of the proposed project and examine the feasibility of facade development and renovation of the shrine.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized coordinated efforts among the concerned departments and stakeholders for the timely and effective development of both religious and heritage sites.

DC Srinagar reviews arrangements for Raksha Bandhan Festival

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: To review and finalize arrangements for the upcoming festival of Raksha Bandhan, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Monday chaired a meeting of senior Officers at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The festival is scheduled to be celebrated on August 28, 2026, with great religious and cultural significance.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Qureshi, IAS Probationer Aakash Garg, SP Headquarters Umar Shah, SP Traffic Zaheer Abbas, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Executive Engineer KPDCS Syed Abrar, Executive Engineer PHE Aijaz Rafiq, Tehsildar South Sajad Rasool Shah, District Health Officer Dr Rubena and other officers of concerned departments, besides representatives of the Dharmarth Trust, Shankaracharya Temple.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed review of the arrangements being put in place by the line Departments for the seamless observance of the festival, including water & power supply, cleanliness & sanitation, traffic management, parking facility, medical facilities, fire safety, security and other logistical requirements. The DC directed all concerned



Departments to ensure that all essential arrangements are put in place well in advance for the devotees expected to visit the Shankaracharya Temple.

Emphasizing the importance of close inter-departmental coordination, the DC called for a coordinated approach to ensure that devotees are provided a safe, smooth and hassle-free experience throughout the celebrations.

Regarding, the traffic management, the DC directed the concerned agencies to ensure smooth vehicular movement and adequate transportation and parking facilities at designated locations. He further asked the ARTO to facilitate shuttle services from Nehru Park to Shankaracharya Temple for the convenience of devotees.

The DC stressed the need for an uninterrupted supply of electricity and drinking water at the venue to ensure that devotees do not face any inconvenience.

The Health Department was directed to deploy a medical team equipped with emergency medicines and first-aid facilities at the venue. The DC also instructed that an ambulance be stationed at the site to respond promptly to any medical emergency.

The SMC authorities were directed to maintain proper sanitation and cleanliness at the temple premises and along the entire pilgrimage route, both before and after the culmination of the festival.

During the meeting, the DC also sought the requirements of the Dharmarth Trust representatives and assured them of all possible support from the District Administration for the seamless conduct of Raksha Bandhan celebrations and the convenience of devotees.

The DC reiterated that all departments must remain closely coordinated and ensure timely completion of every arrangement so that the festival is celebrated seamlessly and in a grand manner

DC B'la reviews arrangements at Major Shrines ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW)

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr. S.F. Hamid, accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner and officers of various line departments, Monday visited Hazrat Syed Janbaz Wali (RA) Shrine and Dargah-e-Aliya Shere Khaas, Baramulla, to review the arrangements being put in place ahead of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), when a large number of devotees are expected to visit the shrines.

During the visit, the DC took a detailed assessment of the arrangements concerning sanitation, street lights, drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, road connectivity and other essential facilities required for the convenience of devotees.

The management committees apprised the DC of various requirements and highlighted the need for adequate fencing, street lights and improved sanitation in and around the shrine premises, besides proper cleanliness along the approach roads.

Taking immediate note of the issues raised, the DC directed the Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla to ensure immediate installation of street lights at the identified locations. He also directed the Executive Officer, Municipal Council Baramulla, to ensure thorough sanitation and cleanliness in



and around both shrines, including the roads and approach routes leading to the religious sites.

The DC further directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the shrines and along the routes used by devotees. He stressed that all essential services should remain functional throughout the period of the religious observance, particularly during evening and night hours.

At Hazrat Syed Janbaz Wali (RA) Shrine, the Deputy Commissioner also inspected the ongoing works for upgradation of facilities and took stock of the progress being made. He enquired about the facilities being developed for devotees and sought details regarding the arrangements to be made during the ongoing construction process.

The concerned Executive Engineer, R&B Department, apprised the DC about the status of the ongoing works and informed him that necessary arrangements would

be ensured to facilitate devotees and minimise inconvenience during their visit to the shrine.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to complete the required arrangements in a time-bound manner and maintain close coordination with the shrine management committees. He emphasized that special attention should be given to cleanliness, sanitation, drinking water, power supply, accessibility and the overall movement of devotees.

The DC also stressed the importance of ensuring that the approach roads and areas surrounding the shrines remain clean, well-lit and accessible, particularly in view of the expected footfall during the occasion.

The DC called for coordinated and proactive efforts by all concerned departments to ensure that devotees are provided with a safe, clean and comfortable environment and that the observance of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) is facilitated smoothly and peacefully.

DM Kupwara chairs NCORD Committee Meeting

Reviews Anti-Drug Measures in the district

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: District Magistrate Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Monday chaired a meeting of the District-Level NCORD (Narcotics Coordination Centre) Committee to review the anti-drug measures being implemented across the district. The meeting comprehensively assessed inter-departmental coordination in the areas of prevention, enforcement, awareness, and rehabilitation measures.

At the outset, a detailed discussion was held regarding enforcement achievements, including FIRs registered under the NDPS Act by the district police (Kupwara & Handwara), attachment of properties belonging to drug peddlers, preventive detention of offenders, removal of encroachments, and destruction of illicit cannabis and poppy cultivation across the district.

The DM also reviewed action initiated under the SOP of the Home Department, including cancellation of driving licences, contractor cards, gun licences, and passport-related actions against individuals involved in narcotics-related offences.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned



departments to promptly conclude pending Regular Departmental Action (RDA) and other applicable legal proceedings against government employees found involved in drug-related offences, emphasizing that strict action is essential to ensure accountability and uphold the integrity of public institutions.

Reviewing the district's de-addiction and rehabilitation initiatives, the Medical Superintendent, Government Medical College (GMC) Handwara, and the District Health Officer (DHO) Kupwara briefed the meeting on the number of patients registered at de-addiction centres, those currently undergoing treatment, and individuals who have successfully

recovered through rehabilitation programmes.

Appreciating the efforts of the Health Department, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to further strengthen counselling, treatment, and post-rehabilitation follow-up services. During the same meeting, review of panchayat wise playfield development was also undertaken. Rural Development Department was directed to expedite completion of playfield on priority.

SSP Kupwara, Syed Al Tahir Gilani; SSP Handwara, Sahil Sarangal; ACR, Principals of GDCs, DEPO, Officers from Prosecution deptt, RDD, Agriculture, Drug control, social welfare as well as Tehsildars and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

DC Kulgam chairs meeting of SDRF to review hailstorm damage

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Monday chaired a district level meeting of State Disaster Relief Force (SDRF) to review the damages caused due to hailstorms across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the villages affected by the recent hail storms in the district and took stock of the relief measures extended to the affected farmers.

He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the final assessment of damages is carried out in a time-bound and transparent manner, and that admissible relief is disbursed to the affected beneficiaries without delay.

The meeting also deliberated upon the provision of Anti-Hail Nets as a preventive measure to safeguard horticulture produce from future hailstorm-related losses. The DC directed the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to identify vulnerable orchard belts and explore convergence with available schemes for wider coverage of Anti-Hail Nets across the district.

The DC further asked all concerned officers to remain proactive in disaster preparedness and to submit accurate and expeditious reports so that affected people get timely relief under SDRF norms.

DC visit Fruit & Vegetable Market Kulgam

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Monday visited Fruit and Vegetable Market Kulgam with a view to take stock of its overall functioning and facilities available for growers and traders.

During his extensive tour of the Mandi, the DC interacted with the President and members of Fruit Growers and Traders Association Kulgam, transporters, and concerned stakeholders.

The growers and traders highlighted various issues including connectivity from Fruit Market Kulgam to NH-444 and further need for extension of truss to the auction platforms, macadamization of the left out work in mandi, adequate transport facility during peak season, regulation of freight charges, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, parking and security arrangements in the mandi.

The DC gave a patient hearing to their demands and assured action on all flagged off demands and apprised that every step will be taken to resolve their genuine issues on priority. He directed the Horticulture Planning & Marketing, for ensuring smooth functioning of the mandi.

The DC also reviewed the status of allotments and functioning of allottees in the mandi and directed the concerned department to maintain proper sanitation inside the premises of Mandi.

DC Kulgam Inaugurates Annual Athletic Meet 2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: The Youth Services & Sports (YSS) Department, District Kulgam, organised the Annual Athletic Meet 2026 under the Annual Activity Calendar of the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, J&K, with enthusiastic participation from young athletes representing all six zones of the district.

The meet was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, who appreciated the efforts of the YSS Department in promoting sports and providing young athletes with opportunities to develop and showcase their talent at the grassroots level.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam and Tehsildar Kulgam, along with other officials and sports enthusiasts, were also present on the occasion.

MLA B'pora reviews functioning of Jal Shakti Deptt

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Bandipora, Nizam Ud Din Bhat, Monday convened a meeting here to review the functioning and progress of the Jal Shakti Department in the Bandipora Assembly Constituency, with particular focus on implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), water supply infrastructure, irrigation and flood management works, and the financial and physical progress of various

schemes.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer, Er. Anbreena Anjum; Executive Engineer PHE Bandipora, Er. Mudasar Malik; Executive Engineer I&FC Sumbal, Umar Jan Bhat; Executive Engineer PHE Sopore, Er. Mudasar Mushtaq and other concerned officers.

The department presented a detailed status of works and schemes being implemented under the PHE and I&FC sectors in the constituency.



Reviewing the progress under Jal Jeevan Mission, it was informed that a total of 57 schemes are being implemented in the Bandipora Assembly Constituency, of which 23 schemes have been completed. Against a target of 24,736

Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs), 21,187 connections have been provided, achieving an overall coverage of 85.65 percent. The Hydraulic Division Bandipora has achieved 80 percent coverage, while PHE Division Sopore, cov-

ering parts of Bandipora district, has achieved 95 percent coverage.

While reviewing the status of water quality monitoring, it was informed that 84 Field Test Kits (FTKs) are available across all 84 Gram Panchayats falling within the constituency, ensuring coverage for water quality testing at the grassroots level.

The meeting also reviewed the financial progress of Jal Shakti works. The department informed that the overall expenditure

against releases under the PHE sector stood at 98.88 percent, reflecting substantial utilisation of available funds.

Under the I&FC sector, the meeting was apprised of the status of various works being executed under NABARD, UT CAPEX/SASCI, FMBAP Phase-II, PMKSY (AIBP), District CAPEX and other schemes. The review also covered ongoing works related to flood protection, drainage, irrigation and strengthening of water infrastructure.

CM Omar calls for mission-mode action to address Srinagar's stray dog menace

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday called for a focused, coordinated and humane response to the growing stray dog menace in Srinagar, directing the concerned departments and Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to accord the issue top priority and work towards tangible results.

Chairing a review meeting on the issue, the Chief Minister observed that the stray dog menace has emerged as one of the foremost practical concerns for residents of Srinagar, with the issue affecting the daily lives and sense of security of citizens across the city and beyond.

The Chief Minister noted that the progress in addressing the issue in Jammu through better handling of sterilisation coverage needs to be replicated in Kashmir division. He questioned why the relatively better implementation of Animal Birth Control being followed in Jammu has not been imple-



ed efficiently in Kashmir. "Within the same territory, we have success of having achieved around 80 per cent sterilisation in Jammu, while Srinagar has not been able to make comparable progress. If we have demonstrated that it can be done in Jammu, we should be able to replicate that success in Srinagar," the Chief Minister said.

Seeking a clear assessment of the requirements of the concerned departments in terms of veterinary surgeons, paravets and other support staff needed in Kashmir division, Omar Abdullah assured full government support for the resources needed to undertake the work in a sustained manner and directed to immediately engage the requisite staff and take immedi-

ate action on ground to address the issue of dog menace including measures for quick disposal of garbage dumps so that dogs do not thrive on road side piles of food waste. CM exhorted SMC and JMC to deal with garbage disposal within municipal areas in quick time, which is seen as major hazard by the public as giving rise to dog menace and giving an impression of polluted cities.

He directed that a dedicated team be constituted within SMC to address the issue in mission mode, with emphasis on substantially increasing the number of trained dog catchers, scaling up sterilisation operations and strengthening the availability of veterinary doctors and trained personnel.

The Chief Minister stressed that the response must be humane and in accordance with established procedures, while remaining focused on effectively controlling the stray dog population and addressing the concerns of citizens.

He called for greater coordination among the Housing & Urban Development Department, Health and Medical Education Department, SMC and other concerned agencies to ensure that the measures adopted translate into measurable improvement on the ground.

The Chief Minister said the objective should be to develop a sustainable and effective mechanism for addressing the stray dog issue not only in Srinagar but across Jammu and Kashmir.

Education sector holds key to progress: Sakeena Itoo

Addresses Foundation Day celebrations of Maple Grove Education Institute

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Education, Health & Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo Monday addressed the Foundation Day celebrations of Maple Grove Education Institute Rawalpura here.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that education remains the most important sector for the overall progress and development of society, adding that no amount of discussion on the subject can be considered enough given its far-reaching impact on individuals and communities.

She underscored the pivotal role of education in shaping the future of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister said that both government and private educational institutions are making sustained efforts to provide quality education to students, with several private institutions making a significant contribution to the education sector. "There are some private institutions whose contribution is so remarkable," she observed, while appreciating institutions that have consistently demonstrated commitment towards academic



excellence.

Sakeena Itoo said that while a number of government schools, including middle, high and secondary schools, are performing exceptionally well, there is always scope for further improvement. She emphasised that the government and private sectors must continue working together to strengthen the educational ecosystem and provide better opportunities to children.

The Minister further said that education must contribute to the holistic development of children by nurturing not only their academic abilities but also their values, character and sense of responsibility.

Emphasising the importance of equality and inclusiveness in education, Sakeena Itoo said that every child must be treated equally irrespective of social or economic back-

ground. "For us, children are one. We should never discriminate. Every child deserves equal opportunity to learn, grow and realise their potential," she said.

Referring to an interaction with students during the programme, the Minister said she was particularly encouraged by the aspirations expressed by the children about their future careers. She noted that while some students expressed their desire to become doctors, others aspired to enter public life and become ministers.

"This is a very encouraging sign. Our new generation is not only dreaming of professional success but is also conscious of its role in public life and governance. Their aspiration to become political leaders and ministers reflects their confidence and belief that they too can contribute to society," Sakeena Itoo

remarked.

The Minister said that such aspirations need to be nurtured through an education system that encourages children to think freely, dream ambitiously and develop a strong sense of social responsibility.

She called upon educational institutions to continue creating an environment where academic excellence, ethical values, inclusiveness and leadership qualities grow together, saying that the children of today will shape the social, economic and democratic future of Jammu and Kashmir.

Director School Education Kashmir, other senior officers of School Education department, management and teachers of Maple Grove Education Institute, large number of students and their families were also present on the occasion.

Min Rana attends seminar on "Implementation of Forest Rights Act"



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, Monday chaired a day-long seminar on "Implementation of Forest Rights Act and the Way Forward" organised by the Gujjar Bakarwal Students Alliance (GBSA), Jammu & Kashmir, at the University of Jammu.

The seminar, organised as part of the 3rd Foundation Day celebrations of GBSA, was attended by students, members of tribal communities and other stakeholders for deliberations on implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

Addressing the gathering, the Minister highlighted the importance of ensuring effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act. He said that the legislation represents an important step towards recognising the legitimate rights and entitlements of forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers.

Javed Rana emphasised the need for greater awareness among the eligible communities about the provisions of the Act so that they are able to exercise their rights and access the benefits available to them within the prescribed legal framework. He said that aware-

ness, participation and collective action are essential for translating the provisions of the Forest Rights Act into meaningful rights and opportunities for the tribal communities.

"Let us engage, learn and act for our rights and our future. Awareness is the first step towards empowerment and collective participation is the key to ensure that every eligible beneficiary is able to realise the rights guaranteed under the Forest Rights Act," Rana asserted.

He stressed that empowerment of tribal communities must remain an integral part of the development process, with focused efforts required to improve access to education, livelihood opportunities and government welfare programmes.

The Minister also underlined the importance of close coordination among the concerned departments, grassroots institutions and community representatives for addressing implementation-related challenges and ensuring that the objectives of the Forest Rights Act are achieved effectively. He called for constructive engagement with the tribal communities and youth. He said that informed participation and awareness are essential for strengthening the implementation of rights-based legislation.

Acting CJ inaugurates Lawyers' Chambers at DCC Anantnag

Lays foundation stone for Munsiff Court Complex at Dooru

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Sanjeev Kumar, accompanied by Justice Sanjay Dhar, Judge High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Administrative Judge for District Anantnag), inaugurated the newly constructed Lawyer's Chambers at the District Court Complex, Anantnag.

The inauguration marks an important step towards strengthening the judicial infrastructure and providing improved working facilities to the members of the legal fraternity. The newly constructed Lawyers' Chambers are expected to provide Advocates with a more conducive professional environment and facilitate their interaction with litigants and other stakeholders.

Addressing the gathering, the Acting Chief Justice highlighted the importance of providing adequate and modern infrastructure to members of the Bar and ensuring a conducive working environment



for advocates and judicial officers. He underscored the role of a strong and well-equipped judicial infrastructure in facilitating efficient delivery of justice.

He stressed upon the young lawyers that legal profession is not merely a means of earning the livelihood, it is a noble profession which carries with it a great responsibility towards judiciary, society and the cause of justice. He also highlighted the importance of professional/ legal ethics which must remain at the centre of legal practice and reminded the young lawyers that success in the legal profession is earned through hard work, perseverance and

continued learning.

The Acting Justice also emphasized the vital role of the legal profession in upholding the rule of law and ensuring meaningful access to justice. He underscored the collective responsibility of the legal fraternity to uphold the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity and discipline.

He expressed confidence that the newly inaugurated chambers would not only provide improved facilities and a better working environment for members of the Bar but would also strengthen the professional capacity of advocates and contribute towards the efficient, accessible and

effective functioning of the justice delivery system.

Justice Sanjay Dhar, while speaking on the occasion, emphasised the importance of the continuous development and upgradation of court infrastructure for ensuring accessible, efficient and people-oriented justice. He underscored the need for all stakeholders in the justice delivery system to uphold the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity and responsibility.

Emphasising that the legal profession plays a vital role in the administration of justice, Justice Sanjay Dhar highlighted the importance of maintaining the dignity and decorum of the institution, while ensuring that the interests of litigants and the cause of justice remain paramount. The inauguration of the lawyers' chambers at District Court Anantnag is expected to provide improved facilities and a dedicated workspace for members of the Bar, thereby strengthening the overall functioning of the court complex, he added.

KPDCL announces power shutdown in Kashmir parts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCCL has informed that the Shutdown of 33 kV Budgam SIDCO line will be observed due to which power supply to Ompora, SIDCO, Housing Colony, Railway Station Budgam, NIFT and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 02 PM on 31 August 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Pampore BK Pora line will be observed due to which power supply to BK Pora, Khanda, Chattergam,

Kenihama, Summerbugh, Railway Station Shalina, Wagoora, Wadpora, Aribagh, Checkpora and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 02 PM on 29 August 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV GIS-BAMK line will be observed due to which power supply to Industrial Estate, BAMK, Raja Colony, Alamgari Bazar, Lal Bazar, Hawal and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 01 PM on 30 August 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Khanyar-Rainawari line will be

observed due to which power supply to Kondabal, Hassanabad, Hazaribagh, JLNH Hospital, Jogilanker, Maqdoom Sahib, Miskeen Bagh, Rozbal and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 01 PM on 29 August 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV Kanipora-Batapora Gagren line will be observed due to which power supply to Gagren, Memender, Sharatpora, Khudpora, Haddipora, Town Shopian and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 02 PM on 30 August 2026.

CM directs SED to complete inquiry into Kishtwar schoolgirl incident

GMK NEWS NETWORK



SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday directed the School Education Department to complete its inquiry into the heinous incident in Kishtwar involving a young schoolgirl on an expeditious basis, so that stringent and exemplary action can be ensured in the matter.

The Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to complete the inquiry within one month and take all necessary steps to bring the investigation to its logical conclusion.

He stressed the need for a thorough and time-bound inquiry, underscoring that the matter must be dealt with firmly and that appropriate action be taken based on the findings of the inquiry.

India Among Most Spam-Affected Nations; TRAI App Sees Surge in Complaints

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: India ranks among the world's most spam-affected countries, with mobile subscribers receiving an average of two to three nuisance calls daily, primarily from financial services, real estate, and telemarketing sectors, according to data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

In a significant development highlighting growing consumer participation in combating unsolicited communications, TRAI's Do Not Disturb (DND) mobile application has recorded 3.316 million downloads as of June 30, 2026. The app, designed to empower consumers to report spam calls and messages while exercising greater control over commercial communications, now accounts for nearly 89% of all complaints received by Telecom Service Providers.

During the first quarter of FY 2026-27 alone, registered DND preferences enabled the blocking of approximately 1.48 billion promotional calls and 7.30 billion promotional SMSs after verification against consumers' registered preferences.

While most users respond to spam by simply disconnecting and blocking numbers or deleting messages—offering immediate personal relief—TRAI officials emphasize that this approach does little to identify repeat offenders or uncover wider spam networks.

"When spam goes unreported, valuable intelligence for enforcement is lost. Blocking protects one consumer; reporting helps protect millions," a TRAI spokesperson stated.

Between April and June 2026, a total of 1.085 million Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC) complaints were received through all means, of which 0.966 million were received through the TRAI DND App.

Acting on citizen complaints over the past year, TRAI facilitated the disconnection and blacklisting of more than 21 lakh mobile numbers and approximately one lakh entities involved in sending spam and fraudulent messages.

Entities identified through complaints were also notified that they were being monitored, strengthening accountability and enforcement under TRAI's Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPCR).

Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW)

DC Srinagar conducts on-site review of arrangements at Hazratbal Shrine

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR:- Ahead of the observance of auspicious occasion of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) and the Friday following, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Monday conducted an on-site review of the arrangements at Hazratbal Shrine and took stock of the facilities being put in place for devotees.

Vice Chairman Lakes Conservation & Management Authority (LCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah,



Additional Deputy Commissioner Aadir Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Qureshi, IAS Probationer Aakash Garg, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SP Hazratbal, Hilal Khaliq, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Tehsildar Wakaf Board,

Ishtiyayq Ahmad, Tehsildar Khanyar/North, Syed Shahid, BMO Hazratbal, Dr Abdul Majeed, Executive Engineers of KPDCCL, PHE, R&B, SMC, UEED, ARTO, Officers of fire & Emergency, besides members of the Shrine management.

During the visit, the

DC reviewed the arrangements related to availability of drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, sanitation and cleanliness measures, traffic management, parking, transportation, healthcare, fire safety, security and other essential services required for the smooth conduct of the auspicious occasion.

While chairing a meeting at the Shrine, the DC took a department wise comprehensive review of the arrangements from the Officers of the concerned departments and the DC

directed the Officers to ensure that all necessary facilities are put in place well in advance to cater to the large number of devotees expected to visit Hazratbal for prayers.

Emphasizing the importance of meticulous coordination, the DC called upon all concerned departments to work in close synergy to ensure adequate facilities for devotees and seamless observance of auspicious occasion. He directed the concerned agencies to put in place a comprehensive traffic management plan

to facilitate smooth movement of devotees and emergency vehicles. Adequate parking arrangements and effective regulation of vehicular movement around the shrine were also emphasized.

In order to assist and facilitate senior citizens, specially abled visiting the shrine, the DC instructed officials from Transport department to arrange e-Rickshaw services from designated parking areas to the shrine during their visits to the Hazratbal shrine on the auspicious occasion.

Good Morning

Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Electricity Tariff Hike

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's defence of the 6.83 per cent electricity tariff hike may explain the government's financial predicament, but it does little to answer the larger question: why should ordinary consumers bear the burden of inefficiency and unpaid government dues?

The Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission's decision to raise tariffs from September 1 has understandably triggered public concern. The Chief Minister says the increase was a compulsion arising from mounting losses in the power sector and rising input costs. He has also pointed out that previous governments approved significantly higher tariff increases. But comparing today's hike with those of the past cannot, by itself, make the present burden acceptable.

The real issue is not whether the increase is six, 10 or 15 per cent. The real issue is who is responsible for the losses and who ultimately pays for them.

The figures presented before the Legislative Assembly expose an uncomfortable contradiction. Jammu and Kashmir's power distribution companies are struggling with thousands of crores in unpaid dues, even as consumers are being asked to accept higher tariffs in the name of financial sustainability. Total outstanding electricity dues were put at Rs 3,747.35 crore, including Rs 2,310.22 crore with KPDC and Rs 1,437.13 crore with JPDCL.

What makes the situation more difficult to defend is that a substantial portion of these arrears is owed by government departments, public sector undertakings and security establishments. The Public Health Engineering Department alone reportedly owes around Rs 1,300 crore, while the Irrigation and Flood Control Department has dues exceeding Rs 580 crore. Security establishments, municipal bodies, the Home Department and even the Power Development Department itself are among those carrying substantial liabilities.

This raises a fundamental question: if the government is itself one of the biggest defaulters, why should the common consumer be made to pay more for the government's financial indiscipline?

Tariff rationalisation may be unavoidable in the long run. Power generation, transmission and distribution involve enormous costs, and a financially distressed electricity sector cannot remain sustainable indefinitely. But tariff revision must go hand in hand with accountability, recovery and efficiency.

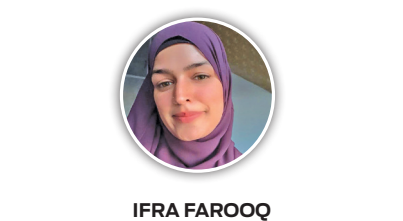
Before asking households to accept higher bills, the administration must demonstrate that every serious effort is being made to recover outstanding dues from institutional defaulters. There can be no credible argument for financial discipline if government departments continue accumulating unpaid bills while paying consumers are repeatedly told to tighten their belts.

The government also needs to distinguish between genuine inability to pay and habitual default. Welfare measures for the poorest households can and should continue, but subsidies must be targeted, transparent and fiscally sustainable. The previously announced provision of 200 units of free electricity to eligible Antyodaya households is a welfare intervention; it should not be used to obscure the larger structural weaknesses of the power sector.

The tariff hike, therefore, should not become merely another revenue-raising exercise. It should be accompanied by a clear roadmap for recovering arrears and reducing losses. Consumers can understand financial compulsion; what they cannot accept is being made to finance institutional inefficiency without accountability. If the government wants people to share the burden of rescuing the power sector, it must first demonstrate that those who owe the system billions will also be made to pay.

Weight Of Waiting

The Unspoken Anxiety Behind 'Aage Kya?'



IFRA FAROOQ

In Kashmir, there is a question many young people hear soon after completing their studies: Ab aage kya? It sounds like a simple question. Most people probably ask it because they care. But when you are already worried about your future, hearing it again and again can start feeling less like a question and more like pressure.

Sometimes, after finishing your studies, you meet someone and before they even ask how you are doing, they ask, Job lag gayi? Exam diya? Aage kya plan hai? They may not mean to hurt you. But when you yourself don't have a clear answer, it can be difficult to keep answering the same questions.

There is this idea that by the time we reach our twenties, we should have everything figured out. A degree, a good job, financial independence and a proper plan for the future. And when we don't have these things, we sometimes start wondering, Am I falling behind?

For many young people in Kashmir, this pressure is not easy to handle. Job opportunities are limited, and government jobs are still seen as one of the safest options. Every year, thousands of educated young people prepare for competitive exams. Some succeed. Many don't. And some continue trying for years.

The difficult thing is that failing an exam doesn't always feel like just failing an exam. You may have spent months studying for it. You may have stayed away from things you wanted to do because you thought, this time, maybe it will work. So when the result isn't what you hoped for, it can hurt more than people realise.

You start thinking: Maybe I'm not good enough, maybe everyone else is moving ahead and I'm still here. But we forget something important: not everyone is starting from the same place.

Some people have financial support from their families. Some have responsibilities at home. Some have someone who guides them when they are confused. Some have the freedom to try different things. Others don't.

Some people know what they want to do when they are 20. Others are 25 or 26 and still trying to figure it out. And honestly, that doesn't mean they have failed. We just don't always see the whole story behind someone's success.

Social media makes this even harder. You open Instagram and see someone



clearing an exam, getting a job, starting a business or finishing another degree. You see their happy picture and the congratulations underneath it. But you don't see the attempts that didn't work. You don't see the rejection emails, the difficult days, the uncertainty or the nights when they also wondered whether things would ever work out.

After seeing enough of these success stories, you can start feeling as if everyone is moving forward except you. Maybe this is something we don't talk about enough, how all this pressure actually feels. A person can be worried about their career, money and future and still hear Don't worry, everything will be fine. I know that sometimes people say it with good intentions. But sometimes it isn't what we need to hear. Sometimes we don't need another piece of advice.

We just need someone to sit with us and ask, What is actually worrying you? Sometimes the hardest part is not the uncertainty itself, but feeling that you have to hide it. You may smile when someone asks about your future, even when you have spent the night worrying about it. You may say, In sha Allah, something will work out, while quietly wondering when it will.

What does Islam teach us about difficult times? For a young Muslim, faith can give a different way of looking at uncertainty. The Qur'an reminds us that Allah does not burden a soul

beyond what it can bear. (Qur'an 2:286) This doesn't mean that difficult things won't happen. It doesn't mean we won't feel tired, disappointed or lost. It reminds us that hardship does not mean Allah has forgotten us.

The Qur'an also says: Indeed, with hardship comes ease. (Qur'an 94:5) Sometimes we see that ease quickly. Sometimes we don't. A door may close and we may not understand why. Something we wanted may be delayed. A plan we were sure about may not work out. Later, we may realise that life took us somewhere we had not planned to go. We may not understand the reason at the time. But not understanding it doesn't mean there is no wisdom in it.

Islam also teaches us not to constantly compare ourselves with people who seem to have more than us. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: Look at those who are below you and do not look at those who are above you. (Sahih Muslim)

That feels especially relevant today. We are constantly looking at other people's achievements, while knowing very little about what their journey actually looked like. Maybe we need to change the way we speak to young people. Instead of always asking, When will you get a job?, maybe we can ask, What do you want to do? Instead of saying, Everyone else is ahead of you, maybe we can remind them that life doesn't work on the same timetable

for everyone. And instead of looking at an unemployed young person and assuming they are not doing enough, maybe we should remember that some people are trying much harder than we can see.

Your twenties are not a deadline. You are allowed to be confused. You are allowed to change your plans. You are allowed to try something, realise it isn't for you and start again. A delayed career does not mean a failed career. A rejected application does not decide your worth. And taking longer than someone else does not mean you have been left behind. For the young people of Kashmir, perhaps the question should not always be, When will you succeed?

Sometimes it can simply be, 'How can I support you while you're trying?' Because behind someone who looks confused, unemployed or unsuccessful may simply be a young person who is still trying to find their way, carrying worries that others cannot see and trying much harder than they realise. They may not have everything figured out yet, but that does not mean they are falling behind. Their journey is still unfolding, and perhaps they simply need a little more time, understanding and faith in the process.

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Tailor's Gift: A Kashmir We Must Remember

"We May Have Been Poor In Material Possessions, But We Were Rich In Human Values."



HAROON RASHID BHAT

The recently telecast interview of Dr. Ghulam Qadir Alaqband, conducted by a local journalist, was highly informative, engaging and, above all, deeply moving. What made this interview particularly special was the liberal and relaxed manner in which it was conducted. The interviewer gave ample time and space to the guest to share his life experiences, memories and reflections without unnecessary interruption. There was no apparent language barrier. Dr. Alaqband used language with remarkable skill, expressing some experiences in his native tongue with great lucidity and warmth. Perhaps he understood that certain memories carry an emotional attachment that can be expressed most naturally in one's own language.

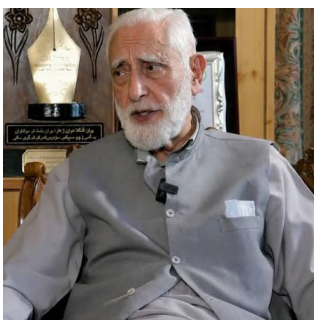
Another remarkable aspect of the interview was Dr. Alaqband's honesty. While narrating the ups and downs of his life, he did not hesitate to speak about the hardships he faced in meeting even his basic needs and pursuing his education. He spoke about a time when life was difficult and resources were scarce, yet determination and hope kept him moving forward. His story was not merely the story of an individual. In many ways, it was the story of Kashmir itself—a land and society

that has passed through profound social, economic and political changes over the decades. The experiences of one person reflected the experiences of an entire generation that grew up with limited resources but abundant resilience.

One particular incident narrated during the interview has stayed with me. Dr. Sahib recalled how, on the occasion of Eid, his family was unable to arrange a new dress for him. At a time when even fulfilling basic needs was a challenge, a local tailor showed an extraordinary gesture of kindness. The tailor arranged a dress for the young Dr. Sahib so that he could celebrate Eid like other children. The incident may appear small in today's materialistic world, but its emotional significance is enormous. The tailor perhaps did not possess great wealth himself, yet he possessed something far more valuable—the sensitivity to understand another person's difficulty and the generosity to help without expecting anything in return.

This simple incident tells us something profound about the Kashmir of that time. People might have been poor in material terms, but they were often rich in compassion. A neighbour's difficulty was not always considered someone else's problem. People cared for one another and tried to share whatever little they had. Such acts of kindness were not necessarily publicised; they were part of everyday life.

The story also made me think about the meaning of Eid. Beyond new clothes, delicious food and celebrations, Eid has always carried a message of sharing, compassion and remembering those who may not be in a position to celebrate. The tailor's gesture embodied that spirit in its simplest and purest form.



As the conversation progressed, it became increasingly emotional. With his eyes filled with tears, Dr. Alaqband spoke about the health condition of his better half, who, as he acknowledged, played a pivotal role in his journey and success. His words reflected not only gratitude but also the deep bond, sacrifice and companionship that often remain hidden behind a person's achievements.

There was something deeply human in the way he spoke about his past. He did not try to hide his struggles or present his life as a smooth journey. Instead, he allowed the audience to see the difficult phases as well as the moments of achievement. Perhaps that is what made the interview so relatable. Behind every successful person there is often a story of sacrifice, uncertainty, struggle and the support of people who stood beside them. As I watched the interview, new windows seemed to open into our past. A past that was undoubtedly marked by financial difficulties and political uncertainties, but which was also rich in social values, morality, compassion and mutual care. People had fewer material resources, yet they often stood by one another in times of need. There was a

stronger sense of community and responsibility towards neighbours and fellow beings.

The episode narrated by Dr. Shab during the interview was particularly revealing. His account of the tailor's gesture brought before us a picture of a society in which kindness could emerge from the most ordinary corners of life. It reminded us that greatness does not always belong to those who occupy important positions. Sometimes, an ordinary person performing an ordinary act of kindness can leave an extraordinary mark on another person's life.

Such stories are becoming increasingly important in our times. We live in an age of rapid technological advancement and unprecedented material choices. Yet, in the midst of this abundance, we sometimes find ourselves longing for the simplicity, trust and human warmth that characterised earlier generations.

Interviews such as this are, therefore, more than conversations with accomplished individuals. They are living archives of our collective memory. They preserve experiences, struggles, values and stories that might otherwise disappear with time. When an elderly or accomplished person speaks about his childhood, education, family and hardships, he is also giving us a glimpse into the social history of the place to which he belongs.

The interview also demonstrates the importance of allowing people to speak freely and at length. Masood Hussain's conversational approach enabled Dr. Alaqband to move naturally from one memory to another. There was no sense of haste. The pauses, emotions and

personal recollections were allowed to become part of the conversation. That made the interview feel less like a formal question-and-answer session and more like a sincere conversation between two people about life.

My appreciation goes to Masood Sahib for conducting such meaningful interview sessions with distinguished personalities. By bringing their life journeys before the public, he is not merely interviewing individuals; he is helping us understand our own society and reconnect with the Kashmir of our memories. Dr. Ghulam Qadir Alaqband's interview will remain memorable not simply because of the personality he is, but because through his life story, we were given an opportunity to look back at a Kashmir that was economically poor and politically troubled, yet socially, morally and emotionally rich.

Perhaps the greatest lesson from the interview is that a person's journey is never entirely his own. Behind every achievement there are people, known and unknown, who contribute through their sacrifices, prayers, encouragement and acts of kindness. The tailor who arranged an Eid dress for a struggling child may never have imagined that his small act would become a cherished memory decades later. That is the Kashmir we must remember—not merely for its hardships, but also for its humanity. And that is why such interviews matter. They do not simply tell us where we came from; they quietly ask us what kind of society we wish to become.

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■ Wular Blooms Again

From Ecological Decline To A New Beginning



SHOIAB MOHAMMAD BHAT

Zain-ul-Abidin, popularly known as Budshah. The island was more than an architectural curiosity. It provided refuge for boatmen during storms and was associated with royal structures, including a palace and mosque. Zaina Lank remains one of the most distinctive historical features of Wular and reflects the importance of the lake



regenerate. Conservation authorities have also reported efforts to introduce lotus seeds after natural recovery was observed. The revival therefore appears to be the result of several factors, including sediment removal, improved habitat, natural regeneration and conservation intervention.

Return of the lotus is vital since it is much more than an introduction of new landscape. This is a clear indication that some areas of the wetland may regain conditions suitable for indigenous aquatic vegetation. Moreover, it presents a prospect of resumption of nadru cultivation and linking ecological rehabilitation with the needs and culture of the Kashmiris. However, the return of the lotus does not indicate at all that the environmental issues of the Wular Lake are solved. The issues of pollution, sedimentation, encroachment, and changes in the ecology of the lake are still there.

Wular Lake has witnessed centuries of change. It has survived geological transformations, become part of ancient legends, supported medieval royal life and sustained generations of local communities. It has also suffered from environmental degradation and the effects of major floods. Yet the return of the lotus offers a new chapter. The blooming flowers are a reminder that nature can recover when damaged ecosystems are given the right conditions and sustained protection. For Wular, the lotus is more than a flower. It is a symbol of ecological renewal, cultural memory and hope. Wular Lake is a remarkable combination of natural beauty, ancient tradition, historical heritage and ecological importance. From the legends of Satisar and Mahapadmasaras to the medieval Zaina Lank, from the Jhelum's waters to the migratory birds that visit its wetlands, Wular has shaped and been shaped by Kashmir for centuries.

This recent history too holds significance. Despite years of degradation and sediment deposition, some conservation measures have started to bear fruit. Lotus has made its appearance after decades to bring back one of the most beautiful parts of Wular and the hope of bringing back nadru. The fate of Wular will remain dependent on conservation efforts and collaboration with the local communities that rely on the lake. With proper conservation practices, the lake will continue to act as a haven for wildlife, an earning resource, a natural barrier against floods, and an epitome of Kashmir's cultural heritage. The lotus flower has reappeared, and so has the hope of better times ahead at Wular Lake.

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Wular Lake is more than a vast freshwater lake in the Kashmir Valley. It is a place where geology, mythology, history, wildlife and human livelihoods come together. Wular has been part of the area for hundreds of years. This lake is connected to the Jhelum River, has a diverse wetland habitat, and plays a role in flood mitigation and livelihood support for the local population. Today, Wular is witnessing a remarkable ecological story: the return of lotus flowers after nearly three decades. The revival has brought new attention to a lake that has experienced both natural changes and serious environmental pressures.

Wular Lake is generally considered to have been formed through tectonic activity in the Kashmir Valley. Its water level and extent change with the seasons, influenced by rainfall, snowmelt and river discharge. The lake has also been woven into the ancient traditions of Kashmir. Hindu mythology describes the Kashmir Valley as having once been covered by a vast prehistoric lake called Satisar. While this belongs to the region's religious and cultural tradition rather than modern geological explanation, it reflects the deep connection between Kashmir's identity and its ancient water landscape.

More evidence is found in ancient Sanskrit writings. The Nilamata Purana talks about a great lake named Mahapadmasaras, and the Rajatarangini of Kalhana refers to another one as Ullola. This is indicative of the fact that lakes have been an integral part of Kashmir since very ancient times.

Many interesting myths have been attached to Wular. According to one myth, Wular Lake swallowed a city linked with the evil King Sudarsen. It is believed that when the water level falls, the vestiges of buildings could be found. Whether or not such stories have an archaeological basis, they add to the mystery of Wular. Like many ancient waterbodies, the lake has become a place where history and folklore exist side by side.

Wular's medieval history is marked by Zaina Lank, an artificial island traditionally dated to around 1444 CE. It was built during the reign of Sultan

Wular Lake is generally considered to have been formed through tectonic activity in the Kashmir Valley. Its water level and extent change with the seasons, influenced by rainfall, snowmelt and river discharge. The lake has also been woven into the ancient traditions of Kashmir.

during medieval Kashmir.

The Jhelum River is the principal river connected with Wular Lake. It enters the lake and continues onward, making Wular an important part of the Jhelum's drainage system. The lake also receives freshwater from mountain streams such as the Madhumati and Arin, along with rainfall, snowmelt and local runoff. Together, these sources

sustain Wular's wetlands and help maintain its changing seasonal water levels.

The Wular Wetlands serve as an essential habitat for fish, aquatic life, and birds, including migratory birds. It serves as a breeding ground and rest stop for migratory birds passing through the Kashmir Valley. Recognizing its ecological importance, Wular was designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 1990. The designation placed greater emphasis on protecting the lake as a living ecosystem rather than treating it simply as a large waterbody.

For locals in the region, the lake has always been a key part of their lives. The fishing industry has employed many, and aquatic plants were sources of food and money. One of the plants of major cultural importance in the region is the lotus, with its edible stem called nadru. In Kashmiri cooking, nadru is a common ingredient that is normally collected from the lake. The well-being of Wular is thus tied up with both the culture and livelihood of the local communities. The disappearance of the lotus species has thus had far-reaching consequences.

Another significant role Wular Lake plays for the environment is that it stores excess water during times of floods due to its large storage capacity. It is able to control extra water in the Jhelum system. In cases of excessive rainfall when the amount of discharge from the river is high, Wular Lake serves as a reservoir. This flood-regulating function of the lake is critical in the Kashmir Valley, which experiences floods.

Despite its importance, Wular has faced serious environmental pressures. Sedimentation, pollution, encroachment and changes in shoreline vegetation have affected the lake over the decades. Siltation has had an especially negative impact. As silt builds up,

the lake becomes shallower, and its capacity for holding water may decrease. It could also affect the needs of the vegetation and animals living in the water.

The devastating 1982 floods brought another major blow to Wular. Large quantities of silt were deposited across parts of the lakebed, covering areas under thick layers of sediment. One of the most visible consequences was the disappearance of extensive lotus beds. For almost three decades, the familiar sight of lotus flowers became largely absent from parts of Wular. The loss was ecological as well as economic. With fewer lotus plants, the traditional harvesting of nadru declined, affecting local families who had depended on this seasonal resource.

In recent years, the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) has undertaken major restoration measures. Among the most important has been extensive de-silting and dredging. Millions of cubic metres of accumulated sediment have been removed in restoration efforts. The aim is to improve water depth and circulation, restore open-water habitat and strengthen Wular's natural ability to store water. Conservation has also included the management of vegetation and other factors that have contributed to the degradation of the lake. However, restoration is a long-term process. Removing silt is only one part of protecting such a large and complex wetland.

One of the most spectacular symbols of the Wular Lake restoration is the emergence of lotuses again after almost thirty years. The return of lotus is believed to be connected largely with improved conditions created through restoration and de-silting. Lotus grows from underground rhizomes, and some plant material may have survived beneath the accumulated sediment. Once parts of the lakebed were restored, these dormant structures could

Burden Of Tradition

Saving Our Daughters From Financial Ruin



RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

Marriages are strongly recommended in Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) says, "Nikah is my Sunnah; whoever denies it is not among us, and we have nothing to do with him." It is through marriages that a clan is preserved and its roots give rise to new branches. When nikah becomes expensive, zina becomes cheap.

Therefore, we must take every possible step to make weddings as simple and affordable as possible. After a child is born, parents aspire to provide him or her with a good education so that, in the years ahead, he or she does not become a financial liability upon them. Once the child has received a good education and secured a good job, the parents then wish to find a suitable life partner for their loved one. But once the nuptial knot is tied, they often forget the most important aspect of the wedding ceremony—the manner in which a wedding should be celebrated and the teachings of our beloved Prophet (PBUH) regarding simplicity and austerity in marriages. Due to extravagance in marriages, thousands of girls belonging to low-income families have crossed the marriageable age.

Extravagance in marriages among



economically well-off families is not only one of the biggest evils in our society, but it also proves to be a disaster for those families and parents who cannot afford luxurious items for their daughters. With each passing day, new customs and traditions are emerging in Kashmir, which is known as the Pir Vaer, where we ought to live with simplicity and celebrate our weddings with

austerity. Unnecessary customs such as Thaph Travin—the first step before the wedding, in which a few people from the groom's side visit the bride-to-be's home, where they eat, drink, and exchange money and gifts, placing a heavy financial burden on both parties—have added to the expenses.

Similarly, Pialas Trawun, a decades-old custom in which a few people from

the groom's side used to visit the girl's home with an amount of Rs 1,100, signifying the agreement between the two families, has also become unnecessarily expensive with the introduction of new and costly practices. Pachhi, in which a large number of men and women from both families visit each other's homes, is another major financial burden, particularly on the bride's

parents. Yeaz Boug, in which both parties visit each other's homes with Eid gifts and other items after every Eid before the wedding, is another practice that adds to the financial burden.

All these customs and many others are putting an increasing financial burden on poor people who cannot afford them and are forced to spend their years-long savings on such ceremonies. The concept of dowry, though an old practice, is definitely a big curse in our society and needs to be uprooted at the earliest. Well-off families not only provide their daughters with items needed for daily life but, in some cases, even give cars, houses and residential plots as dowry.

It is because of these practices that, in every corner of the Valley, thousands of girls above the age of 35 to 40 are waiting for marriage. Instead of spending extravagantly on the weddings of their own children, if well-off families come forward to help children from poor backgrounds, especially daughters, get married, it would not only help uproot one of the biggest evils in our society but would also bring great relief to such families.

Individuals, social groups, NGOs and religious organisations must come forward and encourage people to give up extravagance in weddings and instead adopt simplicity while tying the nuptial knots of their beloved children. This, besides making our society healthier, will also develop a tradition of saving our money, energy and resources for more meaningful purposes, rather than spending our entire earnings on ceremonies and sinking ourselves into huge debts.

The author can be mailed at rayeeskumar31@gmail.com

NSA Arrives In

the statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

During his visit, NSA Doval will call on Chinese Vice President Han Zheng.

Earlier this month, on August 6, India and China held discussions on issues related to boundary delimitation, border management, mechanism-building and trans-border cooperation.

The discussions were held during the 36th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in New Delhi, the MEA said in a statement.

"The two sides engaged in frank discussions and reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Further, it was underlined that maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas is essential for the overall development of bilateral relations," said the MEA.

Sujit Ghosh, Joint Secretary (East Asia), MEA, led the Indian delegation while the Chinese delegation was led by Hou Yanqi, Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the meeting, the officials of the two nations agreed to continue to use existing diplomatic and military channels, including the WMCC, local commander-level meetings and other agreed mechanisms, to resolve outstanding issues and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation along the LAC.

"As a follow up to the outcomes of 24th SR Talks, two sides held detailed exchanges on issues related to boundary delimitation, border management, mechanism-building and trans-border cooperation," the MEA stated.

The Indian side reiterated the need for early convening of the next meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism on trans-border rivers and stressed the importance of sharing technical details on upstream projects.

Cm Defends

said the government is not celebrating the tariff increase and called it as a compulsion arising from losses in the power sector. "We take no pleasure in raising electricity rates. This is a necessity for us," he said, adding that the need for such measures would reduce as electricity-related losses come down.

On the government's promise of providing 200 units of free electricity to the poorest households, Omar said the benefit would be implemented through a solar-based scheme.

He said the provision of free electricity and the general revision of power tariffs were two separate matters and had no connection with each other. "We stated that we would provide 200 units of free electricity to the poorest people and those who need it the most," he said.

CM Omar said he had also repeatedly explained in the Legislative Assembly that the government intended to deliver the benefit through a free electricity scheme using solar panels. "There is no connection between general electricity pricing and this specific scheme. We will continue to provide free electricity to those entitled to it," he said.

On speculation over a cabinet expansion or reshuffle, CM Omar said there is no crisis in the government and that administrative work was proceeding smoothly.

He said a reshuffle would be carried out whenever the government felt it was necessary. "We will do it when the time is right. Why are you all so anxious? No work has stalled. There is no crisis in the government. Our work is proceeding smoothly," he said.

The Chief Minister while replying to query about the cabinet reshuffle said, "You had asked me back then whether a reshuffle would happen before August 15th or not. I said it wouldn't. I never told you it would happen immediately after August 15th," he said.

He added that the timing and circumstances of any reshuffle would be decided by him. "As for when or under what circumstances it will happen, leave that to me," he said.

On fresh threats received by Kashmiri Pandit employees, the Chief Minister termed the matter serious and urged the police, intelligence agencies and security administration to conduct a thorough investigation. "This has indeed become a serious issue. They should not be receiving threats at all," Omar said.

He said the authorities must identify the source of the threats and ensure the safety of government employees. "The law and order and security administrations including the police and our intelligence agencies must not take these matters lightly," he said.

The Chief Minister recalled that similar circumstances in the past had resulted in attacks on Pandit employees, saying the authorities must ensure that such threats do not escalate. "Two or 2.5 years ago, under similar circumstances, some Pandit employees were targeted and we suffered significant losses as a result," he said.

Clarifying that law and order and security fall under the purview of the Lieutenant Governor's administration, CM Omar urged the concerned agencies to treat the latest threats seriously.

"While this is not my direct responsibility, that falls under the purview of the J&K LG my advice to the law and order administration is simply this: do not treat this lightly. A full investigation must be conducted," he said—(KNO)

CM Reviews Roadmap

access to Classes XI and XII and reducing dropouts at the critical transition after Class 10, particularly in underserved and geographically remote areas.

The meeting also deliberated on better utilisation of existing human resources, strengthening academic facilities and improving the overall school network. The roadmap envisages a planned and requirement-based approach to expansion, besides coordination with the Government of India for necessary support under centrally sponsored schemes.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasised the need for a focused and need-based strategy to expand senior secondary education, with particular attention to accessibility and ensuring better educational opportunities for

students across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Education Sakina Itoo, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, ACS PWD Anil Kumar Singh, ACS Finance Shalendra Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Planning, Development and Monitoring, R Alice Vaz, Commissioner Secretary Education Ram Niwas Sharma, Mission Director Samagra, Director Education Kashmir and other concerned officers.

Hot, Humid

possible during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The MeT said hot and humid conditions are likely to continue from September 1 to 2, with brief spells of rain or thundershowers at scattered places. Between September 3 and 5, similar weather is expected, though rainfall activity is likely to remain confined to isolated places.

The weather office cautioned that brief intense showers at localised places could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides, particularly in vulnerable areas.

Meanwhile, temperatures remained largely above normal at several places in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 30.5 degrees Celsius against a normal of 29.3 degrees, while the minimum temperature settled at 16.4 degrees.

Qazigund recorded a maximum of 29.8 degrees and a minimum of 14 degrees, while Pahalgam recorded 25 degrees and 11.7 degrees, respectively.

In North Kashmir, Kupwara recorded a maximum of 30.2 degrees and a minimum of 14.8 degrees. Kokernag recorded 28.4 degrees during the day, while its minimum temperature was 14.2 degrees.

Gulmarg, meanwhile, remained cooler with a maximum of 21 degrees and a minimum of 9 degrees.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 34.3 degrees and a minimum of 24.2 degrees. Katra recorded 32.5 degrees during the day, while Banihal recorded 29.5 degrees.

The weather office advised farmers that harvesting and other agricultural operations could continue, while urging people in vulnerable areas to remain cautious during intense rainfall spells—(KNO)

LG Celebrates Raksha

opportunity to engage with the Lieutenant Governor.

Dr. Shashwata Shiva, Principal, DPS, Baramulla, Coordinators, teachers and officer bearers of the school also accompanied the students.

Apni Party, PDP

government has chosen to increase power tariffs," he said, demanding immediate withdrawal of the decision.

Mir also accused the ruling party of failing to honour its election promises, saying the government had promised 200 units of free electricity and free gas cylinders to households but had instead increased the power tariff.

Meanwhile, PDP leaders and workers also staged a protest against the tariff hike, at party headquarters accusing Omar Abdullah-led government of failing to address the concerns of ordinary consumers.

Protesters raised slogans against the government and termed the tariff increase an "anti-people" measure, saying it would add to the financial burden on households already facing inflation and economic difficulties.

PDP leaders and workers, in their protest, also accused the government of overall failure and opposed the tariff hike, demanding relief for consumers.

Pertinently, the protests comes after the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) approved an average 6.83 per cent increase in electricity tariffs for Jammu and Kashmir, with the revised rates scheduled to take effect from September 01—(KNO)

CS Reviews Readines

implemented at IMHANS Srinagar, ATFs at Jammu, Kathua, and in Budgam district. The pilot is aimed at testing the rehabilitation model on the ground, identifying operational gaps, refining the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and generating the necessary learning for its subsequent expansion across the Union Territory.

Taking stock of the preparedness in the pilot districts, the Chief Secretary reviewed the availability of infrastructure and manpower at each location and stressed the need for focused training and capacity-building of Medical Officers, Counsellors, Case Managers, ASHA workers and SHG members so that each stakeholder is adequately equipped to discharge the role assigned under the rehabilitation framework.

The Chief Secretary directed the Social Welfare Department to coordinate the implementation of the programme and ensure its commencement at the earliest. He further directed the Department to simultaneously identify the requisite human resources and infrastructure for extending the rehabilitation mechanism to other districts, so that the pilot exercise facilitates a smooth transition towards wider implementation.

He also sought a first-hand appraisal from the heads of the concerned institutions and the Deputy Commissioners of the districts where the pilot is being initiated. Emphasising the importance of ground-level coordination, he observed that the success of the programme would depend upon each stakeholder performing the designated role with commitment and ensuring seamless coordi-

nation throughout the rehabilitation process.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the capacity-building initiatives undertaken by IMHANS Srinagar for Medical Officers, Counsellors, Case Managers, SHG members and ASHA workers. He directed IMHANS to continue conducting such training programmes across all districts so as to create a sufficiently large and skilled pool of human resources capable of supporting the rehabilitation programme as it expands.

He further directed the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to complete the Rehabilitation Monitoring Portal without further delay, emphasising that an effective digital monitoring mechanism would be critical for tracking beneficiaries and ensuring coordinated implementation of the programme. The proposed portal envisages confidential, end-to-end digital case management, with each beneficiary assigned a Unique Digital ID (UDIN) and role-based access restricted to authorised officials.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of building a trained multidisciplinary human-resource pool capable of undertaking screening, assessment, referral, counselling, family engagement, case management and relapse-risk identification, while maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards in handling beneficiaries.

The Chief Secretary underscored that the Phase-I pilot should serve as a practical model for coordinated rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration, with effective convergence among the concerned departments, health institutions, district administrations and community-level stakeholders.

Giving a detailed presentation on the pilot, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez, apprised the meeting of the proposed implementation framework, site-readiness, manpower requirements, capacity-building initiatives and digital monitoring mechanism.

He informed that every pilot location would require suitable medical, counselling and social-work facilities, including doctors' rooms, patient and family counselling spaces, group therapy facilities and referral/emergency linkages. The facilities would also have identified Medical Officers/Psychiatrists, Counsellors and Social Welfare Officials/Case Managers, besides linkages with community networks including ASHA workers and Self Help Groups. Orientation and training of the concerned personnel would precede beneficiary intake under the pilot.

The meeting further deliberated upon strengthening addiction psychiatry capacity in J&K through proposed collaboration with the National Drug De-addiction & Treatment Centre (NDDTC), AIIMS New Delhi. The proposed collaboration includes structured training, mentoring, observerships and joint research in addiction psychiatry, opioid agonist treatment, dual-diagnosis management and evaluation of rehabilitation interventions.

On this occasion the Head, IMHANS Srinagar, Dr Arshad Hussain, briefed the meeting about the interventions undertaken so far by the Institute and the facilities covered under the pilot. He also highlighted certain areas requiring focused attention at the participating health facilities.

Dr Hussain informed that training modules for different categories of personnel have been developed and several batches have already been trained. He expressed confidence that the ongoing capacity-building exercise would create adequate trained manpower within the next two to three months to satisfactorily operationalise the rehabilitation centres in accordance with the approved policy framework.

It was further elucidated that the first phase of the Circle of Care training module has already been completed, with more than 300 frontline workers, including ASHA workers, NRLM/SHG representatives and teachers, trained across Kashmir Division. The proposed next phase envisages expanding the programme to 1,020 participants through 34 cohorts across J&K, covering Counsellors, ASHA workers, Social Welfare officials, police personnel, teachers, SHGs and other stakeholders.

Additionally the meeting was apprised that the capacity-building component envisages training of Medical Officers/Psychiatrists, Counsellors, Social Welfare Officials, ASHA workers, SHGs and other frontline stakeholders in areas including screening, assessment and referral, counselling and family engagement, Individual Rehabilitation Plans and case management, relapse-risk identification, confidentiality and ethical handling, besides the portal and reporting workflow.

The meeting also reviewed the proposed training programme for Higher Secondary and College teachers, aimed at ensuring that at least one teacher in every Higher Secondary School and College is trained as an institution-based counsellor for prevention, early identification and referral of substance-use disorders. The proposed initiative envisages coverage of approximately 2,200 Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges across J&K.

A significant component of the proposed programme is the Rehabilitation Monitoring Portal (RMP), designed to facilitate confidential and end-to-end digital case management. The system will cover assessment, treatment, counselling, stabilisation, risk classification, Individual Rehabilitation Plans, referral, vocational support and follow-up, besides enabling real-time inter-departmental coordination and programme performance monitoring.

The coordinated Phase-I pilot is envisaged to provide the operational learning required for strengthening the model and preparing it for UT-wide implementation.

High-Density Apples

beneficial for farmers with small landholdings, as they allow many more plants to be grown on the same piece of land, giving small farmers an opportunity to produce a sizeable quantity of fruit. "The advantage becomes more evident during marketing, as high-density orchards can produce a higher volume of commercially desirable fruit, and if the market remains favourable, growers can earn

significantly better returns," he said.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has been encouraging the transition towards high-density horticulture as part of efforts to increase productivity, modernise the apple industry and improve farmers' incomes. It has been extending support towards planting material, infrastructure and other components required for establishing high-density plantations to reduce the initial financial burden on farmers.

Officials and horticulture experts have stressed that government assistance, coupled with proper technical guidance, can help growers adopt modern systems while improving overall productivity.

However, growers acknowledge that high-density cultivation requires greater investment and more intensive management during the initial stages.

Bhat said farmers need proper rootstock, irrigation, pruning, fertigation and disease management, and without scientific management the expected returns may not be achieved.

Experts also point out that the system requires regular pruning, irrigation, fertilisation and plant-protection measures. Although establishment costs are higher than those of traditional orchards, the higher productivity, earlier fruiting and improved quality can help farmers recover the investment over time, they said.

Reshie said the government's continued support would be important for encouraging more growers to make the transition. "Farmers need quality planting material, technical guidance and financial support during the initial years, and if these facilities are provided properly, more growers can shift to high-density cultivation and improve their income," he said.

Despite the growing adoption of modern plantations, traditional orchards continue to occupy an important place in Kashmir's horticulture economy, with growers believing that modernisation should complement rather than completely replace the existing orchard system—(KNO)

Farooq Abdullah Asks

in Parliament," Abdullah said.

The NC chief also challenged Ruhullah to test his claim of having secured the Lok Sabha mandate through his own political standing.

"If you think people voted for you, resign and go back to them. We will see how many votes you get," he said. South Asians & Diaspora

Abdullah said party members were expected to stand by decisions taken by the organisation, particularly during elections, and cited the Budgam poll to underline the importance of party discipline.

He said NC workers could not reasonably have been expected to campaign against a candidate officially nominated by the party.

On speculation about differences within the NC, Abdullah said disagreements were common in political organisations and should not automatically be construed as a revolt against the leadership.

He also maintained that the party and the government have separate roles, saying that as NC president he did not want to unnecessarily interfere in the administration.

Abdullah recalled the sacrifices made by generations of NC leaders and workers, saying the organisation had endured because of the commitment of its grassroots cadre.

Asked about Ruhullah's political direction, Abdullah advised the MP to seek guidance from the Quran, while reiterating his assessment that he was presently taking the "wrong path". (KNS)

Kashmiri Pandits Under

establish their authenticity and identify those responsible, officials said.

The inclusion of detailed personal information has particularly alarmed security agencies. Officials were quoted as saying by The Indian Express that it was the first time in decades that threats against Kashmiri Pandits had reportedly included information as specific as house numbers and street names.

The letter has been attributed to a group calling itself the United Liberation Council (ULC), which security agencies suspect could be a front for the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The latest communication attempts to distinguish between Kashmiri Pandits who remained in the Valley during the terrorism of the 1990s and those who left. While claiming that those who stayed back had nothing to fear, it specifically threatened members of the community who migrated from Kashmir and those accused of pursuing what it described as an "RSS agenda".

The letter warned that the targeted individuals were being monitored regardless of their location.

Earlier this month, another threat letter circulated online naming several Kashmiri Pandit employees working in the Valley and publishing the phone numbers of some of them. The employees were warned to stay indoors and "change their ways".

Following the earlier threat, the employees were also advised to remain vigilant and move to safer locations if necessary.

Police sources had said the earlier communication appeared to target some Revenue Department employees over their alleged involvement in government action against properties linked to terrorists.

The threats come as authorities continue efforts to facilitate the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits under the Prime Minister's employment package and other government initiatives.

The first letter also came days after two migrant workers were killed by terrorists at a brick kiln in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on July 31.

The ULC first drew the attention of security agencies in July after issuing a poster marking the death anniversary of former Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani, according to officials.

The fresh threat has added to concerns over the security of Kashmiri Pandit employees who returned to the Valley under government rehabilitation and employment schemes.

Ministry of MSME Conducts Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme in Kupwara

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Branch MSME DFO Srinagar under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) conducted an Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP) in the remote area of Khumriyal, Kupwara, with a special focus on the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

The programme was organised in collaboration with the District Administration, Kupwara, with the objective of taking awareness about government schemes and entrepreneurship opportunities to people in remote and underserved areas.

The programme was attended by senior officials from the District Administration, including the Chief Agriculture Officer, Kupwara; Lead District Manager (LDM), Kupwara; BDO concerned; Industrial Promotional officer (IPO) DIC Kupwara.

A.K. Tamar, Head of Office, MSME-DFO Jammu, attended the programme as the Chief Guest.

In his inaugural address, A.K. Tamar emphasised the importance of taking the schemes and programmes of the Ministry of MSME to remote areas so that people at the grassroots level are aware of the opportunities available to them and are able to avail the benefits.

He stated that MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian economy and that greater awareness and participation are essential



for strengthening entrepreneurship and employment generation at the local level.

In his keynote address, Saheel Alaqband, Assistant Director, Branch MSME-DFO Srinagar, highlighted the need to promote entrepreneurship activities in the region and encouraged local youth and aspiring entrepreneurs to come forward and explore the opportunities available under various government schemes.

Highlighting the achievements of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme in Jammu & Kashmir, he stated that the scheme has made significant progress in the Union Territory, facilitating the reach of toolkits and other benefits to traditional artisans and craftspeople. He also highlighted the initiative of onboarding Vishwakarma products on Meesho free of cost, providing artisans with an opportunity to access wider markets and strengthen their livelihoods.

Alaqband further emphasised that several schemes and programmes are being implemented by different government departments, but their success depends significantly on people coming forward, acquiring information and availing the benefits avail-

able to them. He urged the participants to actively explore these opportunities and consider entrepreneurship as a viable avenue for sustainable livelihood and employment generation.

The Chief Agriculture Officer, Munab, delivered a detailed presentation on various schemes and opportunities available through the Agriculture Department and related sectors, encouraging participants to explore entrepreneurship opportunities linked with agriculture and allied activities.

The Lead District Manager, Kupwara, explained the role of banks in supporting MSMEs through credit and financial assistance. He highlighted the importance of proper financial planning and encouraged prospective entrepreneurs to approach banks for availing credit facilities under relevant government schemes.

Ishaq Ahmad, Industrial Promotional officer (IPO), DIC Kupwara, elaborated on the PMEGP and PM Vishwakarma schemes, along with other schemes being implemented by the department. He explained the eligibility criteria, benefits and application processes, enabling participants to better understand how they could avail themselves of the available assistance.

Justice reaches frontier as NALSA Jagriti programme held at GDC Tangdhar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: In a significant outreach initiative aimed at taking legal awareness and access to justice to the remotest and far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Kupwara, under the aegis of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority (JKLSA) and in furtherance of the objectives of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), today organised an awareness programme on the NALSA JAGRITI (Justice Awareness for Grassroots Information and Transparency Initiative) Scheme, 2025, under the theme "Empowered Youth, Stronger India", at Government Degree College, Tangdhar.

Acting Chief Justice of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Patron-in-Chief and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, Justice Sanjeev Kumar, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The programme was attended by M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh; Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority; Manjeet Singh Manhas, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kupwara; Shrikant Suse, Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara and Syed Tahir Geelani, SSP Kupwara, besides officers of the district administration, police and education department, judicial officers, members of the Bar Association Tangdhar, faculty members, representatives of civil society and students from Government Degree College Tangdhar, Government Higher Secondary Schools and other educational institutions.

Addressing the gathering, Acting Justice Sanjeev Kumar emphasised that legal awareness is an important instrument of empowerment and that



the justice delivery system must remain accessible to every section of society. He stressed that geographical distance and difficult terrain should never become a barrier to justice, particularly for people living in remote and frontier areas.

He appreciated NALSA for bringing out the JAGRITI Scheme, 2025, observing that the initiative provides an important framework for taking legal awareness and the benefits of legal services to the grassroots. He particularly appreciated the efforts of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority and DLSA Kupwara for taking the scheme to a remote and frontier area like Tangdhar, thereby giving practical expression to its grassroots philosophy.

The Acting Chief Justice emphasised that rights and duties go hand in hand. While every citizen must be aware of and exercise his or her rights, equal importance must be attached to understanding one's duties and respecting the rights of others. Such awareness, he observed, creates an environment in which everyone can exercise his or her rights freely, with dignity and responsibility.

He also spoke about youth empowerment and legal literacy, saying that the young people constitute an important force in shaping the future of society. Knowledge of law, constitutional values, rights and responsibilities, he said, enables young persons to make informed decisions and become responsible citizens.

Addressing the issues concerning children and juvenile justice, the Acting Chief Jus-

tice emphasised the need for a sensitive, child-friendly and rehabilitative approach towards children in conflict with law. He stressed that children should not be permanently labelled for mistakes committed at a young age and highlighted the importance of counselling, education, parental care, guidance and rehabilitation in helping them return to a constructive path.

He also drew attention to the growing challenge of substance abuse and drug trafficking, particularly among youth, emphasising that the menace cannot be addressed through punitive measures alone. He called for equal focus on prevention, early identification, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation and urged the young people facing difficulties to seek help without fear or stigma.

On mental health, the Acting Chief Justice observed that mental and emotional well-being deserves the same attention as physical health. He called upon the parents, teachers and society to create an environment in which children and young people can speak about their concerns without fear or judgment. He also encouraged them to remain closely engaged with their children and understand their emotional well-being, friendships and online activities.

He highlighted the challenges associated with the digital environment, including cyber fraud, online harassment, identity misuse and misinformation. He emphasised the importance of digital awareness and responsible use of technology.

B'pora Felicitates Anchors for Outstanding Performance on I-Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: The District Administration Bandipora felicitated two student anchors for their outstanding performance during the Independence Day celebrations held at the main event at Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Nadihal.

The students felicitated were Iqra Ashraf Wani, daughter of Mohammad Ashraf Wani and a student of HKM Government Degree College Bandipora, and Waseem Ahmad Poswal, son of Bashir Ahmad Poswal and a student of the Gujjar and Bakerwal Hostel.

Recognising their confident stage presence, effective communication and commendable anchoring skills, the District Administration honoured the students for their valuable contribution to the smooth and successful conduct of the national event.

On the occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Zaffar Hussain Shawal, along with Deputy Superintendent of Police Bandipora Ahmad Shafee, presented a cheque of 5,000 each to the two students as a token of appreciation for their exemplary performance.

The felicitation was aimed at encouraging young talent and motivating students to actively participate in co-curricular activities that foster communication, leadership and public-speaking skills.

The District Administration appreciated the students for their dedication, confidence and professionalism, and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence while inspiring their peers through their talent and achievements.

ADDC Budgam Reviews Progress of JJM, Har Ghar Jal Certification

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Budgam, Vivek Agarwal, Monday chaired a meeting to review the physical and financial progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district, besides taking stock of the status of Har Ghar Jal certification and the rollout of Sujalam Shakti.

During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted of the Action Taken Report (ATR) on directions issued in previous meetings. The ADC reviewed the progress towards Har Ghar Jal certification at the Panchayat and village levels and directed the concerned officers to expedite the certification process wherever it remains pending.

The meeting was informed by the Project Manager, JJM Budgam, that the district has achieved 100 per cent coverage of functional tap-water connections in all Anganwadi Centres under the mission. Appreciating the achievement, the ADC stressed the need to ensure sustained functionality of the connections through regular monitoring and proper maintenance of the water supply infrastructure.

The ADC also emphasised the importance of regular field inspections of JJM schemes to monitor the quality and pace of ongoing works and ensure their timely completion in accordance with prescribed standards. The concerned officers were directed to maintain close field-level supervision and address bottlenecks promptly to avoid delays in implementation.

The issue of unauthorised mining activities in the vicinity of JJM schemes also came under discussion. Taking serious note of the matter, the ADC directed the concerned officers to immediately bring instances of unauthorised mining to the notice of the District Administration, Budgam, for appropriate action. He stressed that water sources and JJM infrastructure must be adequately protected from activities that could adversely affect their sustainability and functionality.

The meeting further deliberated on the operationalisation and rollout of Sujalam Shakti, with emphasis on coordinated efforts among all concerned departments for its effective implementation and achievement of the intended objectives.

FRESH 'THREAT' LETTER

Vivek Bali Urges HM to Ensure Security of PM Package Employees

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) J&K State President, Vivek Bali has expressed serious concern over the reported fresh threat letter targeting PM Package employees in Kashmir, stating that such developments have created fear and insecurity among employees serving in the Valley.

Vivek Bali urged the Hon'ble Union Home Minister to take immediate and effective measures to ensure the safety and security of PM Package employees and Kashmiri Pandit families residing and working in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that employees



who have returned to or are serving in the Valley under the PM Package must be provided adequate security so that they can discharge their duties without fear. He also called for a comprehensive security assessment of vulnerable employees and residential areas.

"Threats against innocent employees and members of the Kashmiri Pandit

community cannot be taken lightly. The government must ensure that every citizen living and working in Kashmir feels safe and protected," Bali said.

He further appealed to the Union Home Ministry and the J&K administration to strengthen security arrangements, closely monitor threats, and take strict action against those attempting to create fear and disrupt peace in the Valley.

Vivek Bali reiterated that the safety, dignity and confidence of Kashmiri Pandits and PM Package employees must remain a priority, and urged the authorities to take immediate, concrete and visible steps to restore a sense of security among the affected community.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that I, Syed Mohammad Ifhaam Naqshbandi, S/o Syed Irfan Hussain Naqshbandi, R/o Lari Preng, Kangan, Ganderbal-191202, have misplaced/lost my original Provisional-cum-Character Certificate bearing Registration No. 223900001110186. Now, I have applied for the issuance of a Duplicate Certificate to the concerned authorities. Therefore, if any person has any claim, right, title, interest, or objection regarding the above-mentioned certificate, they are hereby notified to write or contact Principal, BHSS Khulmulla, Ganderbal. within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated time, it will be presumed that there is no claim/objection, and the issuance of the duplicate certificate will be processed accordingly.

Syed Mohammad Ifhaam Naqshbandi
S/o Syed Irfan Hussain Naqshbandi
R/o Lari Preng, Kangan, Ganderbal-191202
Phone No: 9622522249

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PHE

MECHANICAL RURAL DIVISION, SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.

CORRIGENDUM-III

For E-NIT No's. **PHE/MRD/TS/ 27 of 08/2026 Dated: - 10-08-2026** published vide No: 2026_PHE_320273_1 is hereby extended again due to nil response. The new closing and opening dates are given below:

S.NO.	Description	Date	Time
1.	Closing date	27-08-2026	11:00 AM
2.	Bid opening date	27-08-2026	12:00 PM

No: PHE/MRD/1716-20
Dated: 24-08-2026
DIPK-4962-26
DT: 24/08/2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
PHE Mechanical Rural Division,
Srinagar.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION KUPWARA

019551-3221002

No: I&FCDK/CS/2072-87

Dated: 22/08/2026.

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: - Corrigendum regarding mode of payment for EMD/Tender Document Fee.
Reference: This office e-NIT No IFCDK/03 of 2026-27 Dated. 03.08.2026 issued vide endstt. No. IFCDK/1752-63, Dated.03.08.2026.

Please read

1. Bid Security/ Earnest Money and Cost of Tender Document:
Bids must be accompanied with Earnest Money (Bid Security) in shape of Call Deposit Receipt (CDR)/ Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR) to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara. and Cost of Tender document (Non-refundable/ Non-transferrable) to be deposited under MH: 0702-Revenue Misc. in shape of Treasury Challan/ Receipt pledged in favour of Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara.

Instead of

Bids must be accompanied with Earnest Money and Tender fee in cash as per Circular instruction issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Finance Department, (Codes Division) Civil Secretariat Jammu/Srinagar vide No: FD-Code/290/2026, Dated.22.05.2026, which should be deposited in the single centralized pooling Bank Account,

&

2. Performance Security/ Additional Performance Security:
The Successful bidder (L1) has to furnish Performance Security @03% of contract value in the form of Cash Deposit Receipt (CDR)/ Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR)/ Bank Guarantee (BG) from any Scheduled Bank within 07 days after opening of financial bids which shall be released on successful completion of Defective Liability Period (DLP).

Instead of

The Successful bidder (L1) has to furnish Performance Security @03% of contract value in the form of Cash in centralized Designated Pooling Bank Account mentioned above after opening of financial bids which shall be released on successful completion of Defective Liability Period (DLP).

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the e-NIT.

DIPK-4939-26
DT: 24/08/2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Irrigation and FC Division Kupwara

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE FLORICULTURE OFFICER

NMBG CHESHMASHAH SRINAGAR.

DEPARTMENT OF FLORICULTURE

Email:-fonmbg@gmail.com

GIST OF SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE NO: 07 OF 2026-27

DATED: 24 -08-2026

For and on behalf of the Government of J&K Union Territory, sealed tenders affixed with revenue stamp of Rs. 6/- in two envelope system (technical bid and price bid) are invited from Government Registered Manufacturers/Dealers/Suppliers who will fulfill the eligibility prescribed criteria for the supply of wooden poles (Kiker) as indicated below.

S.NO	Particulars	Specifications	Quantity
1	Supply of wooden poles (Kiker)	2wx 2" with 48 inches height, pointed base, wood turned circular top, color paint white/Green with proper prior primer coating, having holes after every 9 inches as per sample lying in the office of Floriculture Officer NMBG Cheshmashahi- Srinagar	1000 Nos.

The sealed tenders addressed to Floriculture Officer, NMBG, Cheshmashahi should reach to the office of the Floriculture Officer, NMBG, Cheshmashahi, Srinagar through Registered post/speed post or in person on 3rd September 2026 upto 04 p.m. The tender documents along with terms and conditions can be obtained from the Office of the undersigned against cash payment of Rs.200/- (Non-refundable) as per the schedule given below:

1	Start date for issue of tender document	25-08-2026
2	Last Date of issue of tender document	03-09-2026 upto 02 PM
3	Tender document submission start date	25.08.2026
4	Last date and timing of tender submission	03-09-2026 upto 04 PM
5	Date and timing of opening of short-term Tender	04-09-2026 at 02 PM

The tenders shall be opened on 4th September-2026 at 2.00 P.M. in the undersigned office by the committee constituted for the purpose in front of tenderers who may wish to remain present. In case of any eventuality/ Government Holiday then the tender opening date will be considered on other convenient working day.

Note: The Terms and conditions can be had from office of the Floriculture Officer, NMBG Cheshmashahi Srinagar.

No: FO/NMBG/GS-132/1061-62
Dated:24 /08/2026

DIPK-4944-26
DT: 24/08/2026

Floriculture Officer,
Department of Floriculture
NMBG, Cheshmashahi

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CMYK

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Water Skiing C'ship Concludes with Grand Ceremony in Srinagar



GMK SPORTS DESK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Water Skiing Association brought the curtains down on its highly anticipated Water Skiing Championship Monday with a grand closing ceremony at Nehru Park, marking a significant milestone for water sports in the region.

The championship, which commenced earlier this week, witnessed an impressive turnout of over 150 athletes representing more than nine districts across Jammu & Kashmir. The participation underscored the growing enthusiasm for water sports among the youth in the Union Territory.

The ceremony was graced by Mr. Mushtaq Zargar, In-Charge of Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, who also holds the additional charge of Sports Centre, Nehru Park, as the Chief Guest. Mr. Ashraf Dijoo, Executive Member of the All India Ice Hockey

Federation, attended the event as the esteemed guest of honour.

In his address, Mr. Zargar commended the organisers and participants for their dedication, emphasising the importance of promoting water sports in the Valley. "The enthusiasm displayed by athletes from across nine districts is a testament to the untapped sporting talent in Jammu & Kashmir. Such events provide a vital platform for our youth to showcase their skills on a national stage," he stated.

Mr. Ashraf Dijoo lauded the association's efforts in organising the championship and stressed the need for more such initiatives to nurture talent in the region.

The event was coordinated by a team of key officials, including Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed Shah, General Secretary; Mr. JASSM Muzaffar, Vice President; and Mr. Zaid Ul Hassan, Public Relations & Media

In-Charge of the J&K Water Skiing Association. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed Shah expressed his satisfaction with the successful conclusion of the championship. "This event has not only brought together athletes from various districts but has also strengthened the water skiing community in the region. We are committed to organising more such events to elevate the sport to greater heights," he said.

The championship, affiliated with the Wakeboard & Wakesurfing Association of India, showcased thrilling performances in various categories, drawing cheers from spectators gathered at Nehru Park.

With the successful culmination of this edition, the association has set its sights on expanding the sport further across the Union Territory, with plans to introduce training programmes and upcoming events to nurture the next generation of water skiers.

2nd Test: Jurel's ton, Pant's fifty, bowlers help India seize control against SL

IAN S

COLOMBO: Dhruv Jurel hit an unbeaten 115 while Rishabh Pant smashed a rollicking 63 before Prasidh Krishna and Manav Suthar struck late in fading light as India asserted total dominance over Sri Lanka on Day Two of the second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Ground in Colombo on Monday.

Having declared their first innings at 503/9 after a rain delay of two hours and ten minutes in the final session, Sri Lanka were reduced to a precarious 8/2 in just three overs. India crossing the 500-run mark was possible thanks to wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel hitting an unbeaten and rock-solid 115 off 177 balls – his second Test century and first in the island nation, while Rishabh Pant hit a rollicking 63.

In fading light, Suthar finished with figures of 1-6 from his lone over, while Krishna took 1-1 as Sri Lanka now trail India by 495 runs with eight wickets remaining in their first innings. India entered Day Two looking to build upon their firm foundation, but Sri Lanka made an early breakthrough with the second new ball.

Fast bowler Asitha Fernando surprised debutant Saransh Jain with a sharp bouncer from round the wicket, extracting a leading edge that was safely taken by gully. The early setback brought Pant to the crease, after he retired hurt on three due to a blow to his left wrist.

Pant was immediately targeted with a barrage of short-pitched bowling by the Sri Lankan seamers. But Pant soon began batting in his usual destructive style. A short ball down leg from Lahiru Kumara was pulled by Pant over the stadium roof, even damaging a solar panel as a replacement ball was sought.

Tested thoroughly by Kumara and Fernando, Pant took two painful hits to his right shoulder

that required medical treatment. However, he countered using paddle sweeps, decisive footwork, and aggressive strokes to unsettle the opposition.

Alongside a solid Jurel, who relied on crisp drives, flicks, and authoritative pulls against spinners Prabath Jayasuriya and Keshara Nuwantha, India wrested complete control. Both batters reached their half-centuries smoothly – Pant thumping a pull to square leg for his 21st Test fifty, while Jurel pulled through mid-wicket to bring up his third half-century, as the duo took India to safety at lunch.

But Sri Lanka struck on the very first delivery after lunch when Pant hit Nuwantha straight to long-off and departed for an entertaining 63 off 89 balls. Jurel quickly re-established authority alongside Manav Suthar, who proved to be an able partner by handling the host side's short-ball tactics with composure and stepping down the pitch to loft Nuwantha over the mid-off boundary.

The pair added 39 runs to take India past the 450-mark before Jayasuriya broke through by drawing Suthar (18) into pushing outside off-stump and extracting a thin edge which was safely pouched by wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella.

With Mohammed Siraj content to defend at the other end, Jurel smartly farmed the strike, deploying a fine reverse sweep

off Sonal Dinusha to move into the 80s. As dark clouds gathered ominously overhead, Jurel flicked a full toss from Fernando through mid-wicket to reach 95. High winds, darkening skies, and heavy rain subsequently forced an early tea break, as a lengthy interruption of two hours and ten minutes occurred.

When play resumed under cleared skies and a little bit of sunshine, Jurel took his time against Sri Lanka's tight close-in fielders. After playing out a maiden over from Jayasuriya, Jurel reached his second Test century, and his first in Sri Lankan conditions, by driving Fernando over the bowler's head and diving full length to complete a risky single. Jurel celebrated by raising his sleeve to display a tattoo reading "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan".

With his century secured, Jurel shifted gears immediately by launching Fernando over long-on for six. Jayasuriya ended Siraj's 29-ball stay by trapping him plumb LBW with a slider. Prasidh Krishna then joined Jurel, who pulled Fernando over deep backward square leg for another six.

Krishna added the final touches by scything a low full-toss through cover for a boundary to push India past the 500-mark. After that, skipper Shubman Gill immediately declared the innings and called the batters back to have a crack at the Sri Lankan batting order in the toughest time to bat.

Hockey World Cup: Indian men's team's semis hopes end in 3-5 defeat against Argentina

IAN S

AMSTELVEEN: India's hopes of reaching the semifinals of the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 ended with a 3-5 defeat against Argentina in their concluding Pool E match at the Wagener Stadium in Amstelveen on Monday.

Argentina raced into a 2-0 lead inside the opening six minutes through Joaquin Toscani and Nicolas della Torre, before Sukhjeet Singh pulled one back for India in the 10th minute.

Tomas Domene restored Argentina's two-goal cushion in the third quarter and added another from a penalty stroke before Lucas Toscani made it 5-1. Sukhjeet scored his second late in the fourth quarter, while Hardik Singh converted a penalty stroke to give the scoreline a more respectable look.

Argentina moved to six points and will now await the result of the Netherlands-England clash to learn which two teams will progress to the semifinals from Pool E. India finished last in the pool and will now play for the 7th-8th position.

Argentina could hardly have made a more emphatic



start. With less than a minute on the clock, Joaquin Toscani found space at a tight angle after a ball was pushed across the face of goal from the right and slapped it into the net.

India were immediately under pressure, and Argentina continued to attack with pace, repeatedly catching the Indian defence and midfield short of time.

Argentina earned another penalty corner in the third minute after Jarmanpreet Singh was adjudged to have intentionally used his stick to send the ball out of the baseline. Mohith made an excellent save, but the reprieve was brief.

Another loose defensive challenge, this time

by Yashdeep Siwach, handed Argentina another PC in the sixth minute, and Nicolas della Torre beat Mohith to his right to double the advantage.

India gradually tried to find a foothold. Abhishek helped construct an attack in the 10th minute, with the ball eventually reaching Sukhjeet, whose firm push found the net to reduce the deficit to 2-1.

Argentina, however, remained dangerous and almost restored their two-goal advantage before the end of the quarter when Amit Rohidas failed to collect an aerial inside the Indian 23-metre area. The hooter came just in time for India.

The second quarter was goalless, but India

struggled to turn possession into clear chances. Argentina frequently used aerial balls to bypass the Indian midfield and find their forwards deep inside the attacking quarter. India created openings through Aditya Arjun Lalage, Dilpreet Singh, Sanjay and Hardik Singh, but unforced errors at crucial moments prevented them from capitalising.

The third quarter proved decisive. Mohith saved another Argentine penalty corner early in the period, while Argentina's appeal for a re-award was rejected following a video referral. But India were punished soon after when Sanjay was dispossessed while attempting to weave through several Argentine midfielders. Argentina immediately broke forward, and Tomas Domene finished the move to make it 3-1.

India then had a frustrating spell of penalty corners. Harmanpreet Singh's dragflicks repeatedly found the Argentine rusher or failed to produce the desired finish. A subsequent PC earned through a move involving Yashdeep, Hardik and Jarmanpreet also went unrewarded, while India's referral was unsuccessful.

Argentina extended their lead in the 45th minute. Mohith made two successive saves, but after another Argentine attempt, Yashdeep was struck by the ball in front of goal, resulting in a penalty stroke. Domene made no mistake, scoring his second of the match to put Argentina 4-1 ahead.

India pushed forward in the final quarter, but Argentina delivered another blow in the 53rd minute when Lucas Toscani was given time and space to unleash a tomahawk that beat Suraj Karkera. At 5-1, the contest appeared beyond India's reach.

Sukhjeet gave India renewed hope in the 58th minute, producing a deft first-touch deflection from Mandeep Singh's cross to score his second goal. A minute later, he was brought down inside the circle, and Hardik converted the resulting penalty stroke to make it 5-3.

India had one final opportunity when Harmanpreet earned a penalty corner just before the final hooter. But Argentina goalkeeper Tomas Santiago stood firm, making the save that confirmed India's exit from semi-final contention.

2nd Test: Pant got hurt in the shoulder, says Jurel as he keeps wickets on Day 2 in Colombo

IAN S

COLOMBO: India batter Dhruv Jurel stated that wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant picked up pain in his right shoulder during the ongoing second Test match against Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club as he kept wickets at the end of Day 2 in Colombo on Monday.

Pant was absent from the field as India came out to bowl in the dying stages of Day 2 after posting a mammoth 503/9d in Colombo. He had earlier scored a stroke-filled 63 but had copped a blow to his shoulder following a hit on his left wrist on Day 1 of the fixture; the latter forced him to retire hurt.

As he stayed away from the field, Jurel, the second of the three wicketkeepers in the Playing XI (KL Rahul is another one), kept wickets for the final phase of the day as India put the hosts down to 8/2 in three overs before stumps were called.

Speaking at the end of



Day 2, Jurel, who smashed a jaw-dropping unbeaten 115, revealed that Pant has a shoulder issue.

"He (Pant) got hurt on his right shoulder. Physio is monitoring him. Today, I kept wickets because he had pain in his right shoulder. Hopefully, he'll be fine tomorrow," Jurel said in the press conference after Day 2.

Notably, Pant was hit on his right shoulder by a bouncer from Asitha Fernando in the 94th over of the first innings on Day 2. The batter did not gauge the line and length and could not do much but

take a blow to his shoulder. The physio tended to him, applied an ice pack to the hit shoulder before he continued his work and went on to hit a strong 63 from 89 balls.

Pant had earlier copped a blow to his left wrist while batting early on the opening day. He was hit by a short ball from Lahiru Kumara in the 58th over of India's innings on Day 1. Pant needed medical attention as the physio ran out to apply ice to his wrist. A tape was also put on the wrist as he walked off the field unbeaten on three runs.

Bhatia is set for Tour Championship as Clark completes wire-to-wire win

IAN S

ST. LOUIS: Akshay Bhatia produced a spectacular eagle-birdie finish to close with a two-under 68 and tie for 12th at the 2026 BMW Championship, securing his place in the season-ending Tour Championship and retaining 15th position in the FedEx Cup standings.

Bhatia, who started the BMW Championship 15th in the FedEx Cup rankings, finished comfortably inside the top 30, becoming the only one of the three Indian-origin players in the field to qualify for the Tour Championship. The season finale features the top 30 players in the FedEx Cup standings.

The Indian-origin star made three birdies and an eagle against three bogeys in his final round, saving his best for the finish with an eagle followed by a birdie.

Aaron Rai also ended his campaign with a two-under 68, making four birdies and two bogeys to

finish tied 16th. However, the result was not enough to secure a top-30 spot as Rai slipped two places to 39th in the FedExCup standings.

Sahithi Theegala closed with a one-under 69 and finished tied 41st. He dropped to 48th in the FedExCup standings and therefore missed out on the TOUR Championship.

At the top, Wyndham Clark completed a wire-to-wire triumph, closing with a 17-under total to win the BMW Championship by three shots. The 32-year-old claimed his sixth PGA Tour title and third victory of the 2026 season, adding the BMW Championship to his earlier triumphs at the CJ Cup, Byron Nelson and U.S. Open.

Clark became the first player since Dustin Johnson in 2016 to win both the U.S. Open and BMW Championship in the same season. The victory also lifted him to third in the FedExCup standings and secured his third Tour Championship appearance.

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