

Good Morning

Kashmir

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LeT Terrorist Killed In Budgam Identified As Yasir: Police



NAVEED UL HAQ

BUDGAM: The terrorist killed in a joint operation in the Ashdar Gali area of Budgam district has been identified as Yasir, a Pakistani national affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jammu and Kashmir Police said on Saturday.

In a post on X, J&K Police, confirmed the identity of the slain terrorist, stating, “You Can Run But You Can’t Hide!”

Yasir was killed during Operation Ashdar, a joint search operation launched by the Indian Army,

J&K Police and CRPF in the Ashdar Gali area based on specific intelligence inputs.

Earlier, according to the Army, security forces observed suspicious movement during the operation and challenged the suspected terrorists, who opened fire on the troops. A fierce exchange of fire followed, resulting in the neutralisation of one terrorist.

An AK-series rifle and other war-like stores were recovered from the site, the Army said. The operation had been underway since Thursday, **●P-06**

Kashmir Receives First Snowfall Of Season



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Rain lashed parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, while Kashmir upper reaches recorded the season’s first snowfall, bringing a nip in the air and signalling the gradual onset of autumn.

According to the details available, the rainfall was accompanied by hailstorms and gusty winds at a few places, including parts of Srinagar, while light snowfall was reported from the extreme higher reaches, including the mountains around Zojila Pass, Gumri, Gulmarg and the Pir Panjal range.

Snowfall was also recorded over the higher reaches of Srinagar, with Mahadev Peak seen **●P-06**



1ST

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IFFJK 2026

J&K Set For Grand Cinematic Homecoming From Monday

135 Films From Over 40 Countries To Be Screened; Rs 96 Lakh Prize Purse, Over 300 Delegates

REHAN QAYOOM

SRINAGAR: A film fever is set to sweep across Kashmir from Monday, with the maiden International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026 bringing 135 films from over 40 countries to the Union Territory from September 7 to 10 under the theme ‘Rang-e-Cinema’, as J&K seeks to revive its cinematic legacy and emerge as a destination for film-making and cultural exchange.

Organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Gov-

ernment of J&K, the four-day festival aims to revive the region’s cinematic legacy, promote local talent and



build a sustainable film economy.

Joint Director DIPR Shah Nawaz Bukhari, speaking to reporters, said the festival was a

well-intentioned effort to strengthen the natural connection between Bollywood and Kashmir and revive film tourism in the region.

“The connection between Bollywood and Kashmir is a natu-

unate circumstances, that activity declined. We are now trying to promote film tourism here,” he said.

Bukhari said the government intends to institutionalise the festival as an annual event and use it as a platform to bring filmmakers, industry professionals, academicians and students together.

“Our attempt is to bring Kashmir back into the frame. We would like J&K to become the film frame, rather than merely being a backdrop for films,” Bukhari said.

He said around 1,100 films from 92 countries were received **●P-06**

Seizes 6.90 Kg Heroin NCB Busts Two Cross-Border Drug Routes Into J&K

AGENCIES

JAMMU: Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) investigations have exposed two key heroin trafficking routes from Pakistan into Jammu and Kashmir, with four major interceptions in the Jammu division over the past month resulting in seizure of more than 6.90 kg of heroin, an official said on Saturday.

The routes — one directly from Pakistan through north Kashmir’s Uri sector and the other via Punjab — have



emerged as key conduits for movement of heroin into Jammu and Kashmir, a spokesman of NCB’s Jammu zonal unit said.

He said with the interception of four heroin consignments in the Jammu division over the past month, along with a linked **●P-06**

Govt Committed To Strengthening Education Ecosystem: Sakina Itoo

Says Govt Will Bring Resolution On TET In Upcoming Assembly Session

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, Saturday, said that the Government will bring resolution on Teacher Eligibility Test during the upcoming Assembly Session of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

The Minister made these remarks while addressing the



Teachers’ Day celebrations held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre

(SKICC) here today.

Addressing a gathering of teachers, educationists, students, senior officers and other stakeholders from the education sector, the Minister described teachers as the torchbearers of the nation, saying that their contribution extends far beyond classrooms as they help shape the character, aspirations and values of generations.

“Teachers are **●P-06**

India Votes In Favour Of UNGA Resolution Endorsing New World Map

AGENCIES

UNITED NATIONS: India has voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution aimed at correcting the world map to promote a “more accurate representation” of continental landmasses.

The 193-member UN General Assembly on Friday overwhelmingly adopted the resolution “Correct the map”: rebalancing global cartographic representation and promoting equitable representation of the world’s regions, particularly Africa’.

The resolution was sponsored by Togo, receiving 164 votes in favour, with abstentions from Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine, and a lone vote against from the United States.

The resolution noted that the Mercator projection, designed in the 16th century for navigational purposes, remains widely used in educational, media, digital and official materials, despite the considerable distortion of landmasses to the North and South, far from the equator.

The resolution also noted with “concern” **●P-06**

25,000 MTs Of Apples Transported By Rail From Kashmir Last Season

'Railways Emerging As Alternative Mode Of Horticulture Transport, Reduce Logistical Hurdles'

WARIS FAYAZ

SRINAGAR: Around 25,000 metric tonnes of apples were transported from Kashmir by rail during the last season, Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing Ghulam Jeeleeni Zargar said on Saturday, calling railways an emerging alternative for transporting horticultural produce to markets across the country.

“About 25,000 metric tonnes of apples were transported by rail from Kashmir during the last season,” Zargar SAID.



He said the establishment of rail connectivity between Kashmir and different parts of the country marks a significant milestone for the

horticulture sector and offers a promising and cost-effective option for transporting produce, particularly during the peak apple season.

“There is a need for effective utilisation of railway freight and Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ro) services to further strengthen the transportation and marketing system,” Zargar said.

He said improved rail connectivity can facilitate the timely movement of produce, reduce logistical challenges and strengthen the overall transportation network, benefiting growers, traders and other stakeholders associated with the horticulture sector.

Zargar was **●P-06**

Gala, Kulu Fetch Good Returns Apple Harvest Begins On Encouraging Note

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The apple harvesting season in Kashmir has begun on an encouraging note, with early varieties such as Gala and Kulu fetching good returns in the market, bringing relief to fruit growers who had faced significant challenges during the previous season.

Although harvesting has so far started mainly in the low-lying and comparatively warmer areas of the Valley, growers and traders said the initial market response has been positive. Kulu **●P-06**

EAM To Address Annual UNGA Session On Sep 26

AGENCIES

UNITED NATIONS: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will address the annual high-level UN General Assembly session on September 26.

The 81st session of the UN General Assembly will kick-off on September 8, and world leaders will address the 193-member organisation at the General Debate, which will run from September 22 to 28.

Jaishankar is scheduled to address the General Debate in the afternoon session on September 26, according to a revised provisional list of



speakers for the high-level session released here Friday.

Brazil will be the traditional first speaker at the General Debate that opens on September 22, followed by the US. The year-long 81st session of the UN General Assembly will be presided over by **●P-06**

Comm SMC launches education initiative for children of sanitation workers

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, on Saturday formally launched an education initiative aimed at supporting the academic aspirations of children of the Corporation's sanitation workers.

The initiative was inaugurated in the presence of Joint Commissioners, sanitation workers and their children and parents, besides representatives of participating educational institutions.

The programme seeks to facilitate scholarship-based coaching and academic support for eligible students, particularly those studying in Classes IX to XII and those aspiring to pursue competitive examinations such as NEET and JEE.

Speaking at the inaugural programme, the Commissioner said the initiative was rooted in the Corporation's recognition of the contribution made by its sanitation workforce and its responsibility towards creating meaningful opportuni-



ties for their children.

"Those who work every day to keep our city clean deserve to see their children move forward with dignity, confidence and opportunity. Education can be one of the strongest pathways to make that possible. This initiative is an investment in the aspirations of the next generation," he added.

Faz Lul Haseeb said the initiative should not be viewed merely as an assistance programme, but as an effort to build a sustained ecosystem of opportunity, mentorship and educational advancement.

The initiative has been structured as a collaborative effort, with participating educational

institutions extending academic support to eligible students. The Private Coaching Centres Association of Srinagar has facilitated the participation of its member institutions.

SMC will facilitate the identification and verification of eligible students through a transparent mechanism. The programme will cover students across Classes IX to XII as well as those preparing for NEET and JEE, in accordance with the prescribed eligibility and selection modalities.

The Commissioner said that the larger objective was to ensure that the contribution of the sanitation workforce translates into greater opportunities for the gen-

eration that follows.

The presence of sanitation workers and their children at the inaugural programme gave the initiative a distinctive human dimension, placing their educational aspirations at the centre of the Corporation's intervention.

Commissioner Faz Lul Haseeb expressed appreciation to the institutions that have joined the initiative and called for sustained collaboration to progressively widen its reach.

The initiative is envisaged as an evolving platform through which SMC will continue to strengthen educational opportunities for eligible children of its sanitation workforce.

SWD Shopain organises awareness programme to empower senior citizens



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Continuing its efforts towards building an inclusive and compassionate society, Social Welfare Department (SWD) Shopain, Saturday organised a Sensitization and Awareness Programme at Wachi, Zainapora, focusing on the welfare and empowerment of senior citizens and constructive engagement of youth.

The programme was organised under Atal VAYO Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens, with the objective of creating awareness among senior citizens and youth about various welfare initiatives, legal provisions and support mechanisms available for the elderly.

The programme also served as a platform for intergenerational dialogue, with emphasis on strengthening family and community bonds, recognising the valuable experience and wisdom of senior citizens and encouraging youth to contribute

towards their care and well-being.

A large number of senior citizens from Wachi and adjoining areas participated enthusiastically in the programme and appreciated the proactive outreach of the Department. Youth volunteers from NSS/NSKY also played an important role, demonstrating their commitment to social service and community support.

The Tehsil Social Welfare Officer, Shopain, provided detailed information about the scheme and its various components and addressed queries raised by the participants. Officials from Lead Bank also sensitised the participants about various social security schemes, along with digital and financial literacy.

The Department reiterated its commitment to ensuring the dignity, healthcare, welfare and social security of senior citizens and taking such initiatives to reach beneficiaries across every corner of district Shopian.

ADC Anantnag reviews progress under PM-SYM Scheme

Emphasises complete coverage through enhanced awareness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: In order to review the progress and implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Scheme in the district, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anant-

nag, Vikas Ahlawat, Saturday chaired a meeting with the concerned stakeholders at DC Office.

During the meeting, the ADC reviewed the status of enrolment under the scheme and emphasized that all eligible unorganised workers must be registered on the PM-SYM portal. He directed the concerned officers to identify and address gaps through enrollment drives in both rural and urban areas to ensure wider coverage of eligible beneficiaries.



The ADC stressed the need for effective inter-departmental coordination among the concerned departments, Common Service Centres (CSCs) and local bodies to accelerate enrolment. He directed that awareness camps be organ-

ised across all Blocks and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to sensitise eligible workers about the benefits of the scheme and facilitate their registration.

Ahlawat emphasized that VLEs, CSCs and KGCs must play a proactive role in mobilising and enrolling eligible workers. He further directed the Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO), Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) and Executive Officers of Municipal Committees to mobilise resources and ensure achievement of the enrolment targets within the stipulated timeframe.

The ADC called for time-bound action, regular monitoring and coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to ensure maximum coverage of eligible unorganised workers under the PM-SYM scheme. The meeting was attended by the Chief Agriculture Officer, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Chief Executive Officer MC Anantnag, Executive Officers of Municipal Councils and District Coordinator, CSCs Anantnag, among other concerned officials.

Dir Agri reviews expenditure status of Srinagar, Ganderbal districts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah Saturday chaired a comprehensive meeting to review implementation status of different schemes, in Srinagar and Ganderbal districts, with respect to achievement of physical and financial targets allocated for the current financial year.

The meeting was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer Srinagar, Chief Agriculture Officer Ganderbal, Deputy Director Planning, Drawing and Disbursing Officers and other senior officers of the department.

During the meeting, the Director undertook a



detailed review of the physical and financial progress of various schemes, implementation of approved programmes, expenditure position and progress of ongoing developmental activities in both districts. He also assessed the field-level implementation of various farmer-oriented initiatives and took feedback from the concerned

officers regarding the challenges being faced in execution.

Sartaj Ahmad Shah stressed the need for ensuring timely and effective implementation of all departmental programmes, with particular focus on achieving the prescribed targets within the stipulated timelines. He directed the officers to

maintain close field-level coordination, accelerate the pace of implementation and ensure optimum utilisation of available resources.

The Director further emphasised that the benefits of various government schemes and initiatives should reach the farming community in a transparent, efficient and time-bound manner. He called upon the officers to remain proactive in addressing field-level issues and strengthen their outreach to farmers.

The Director laid special emphasis on Aatmanirbharta in Pulses and instructed the concerned officers to achieve all the targets earmarked for the year for implementation of the scheme.

DC B'pora Inspects Ongoing Development Projects in Kudara, Aragam

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Saturday conducted an extensive visit to the far-flung Upper Kudara and adjoining areas to inspect the progress of various ongoing developmental projects.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by officers and engineers of the concerned departments during the visit.

During the inspection, the Executive Engineer, PMGSY, apprised the DC of the progress of two major road projects being executed in the area.

It was informed that, the first project, Renewal Coat/Macadamization of the road from Chuntimulla to Kudara, being executed under Package No. JK03-125, has a total length of 7.50 km and an estimated cost of Rs. 264.16 lakh. The Executive Engineer informed that approximately 3.5 km of BT (Renewal Coat) has been executed so far, while the remaining work is targeted for completion within the next few weeks.

The second project, Construction and Maintenance of road from L022



(Link Road) Kudara to Kudara Bala under Waste Plastic Technology, being executed under Package No. JK15-4003, has a total length of 2.90 km and has been taken up under PMGSY-IV, Batch-I (2025-26) at an estimated cost of Rs. 590 lakh. The Executive Engineer informed that approximately 500 metres of earthwork has been completed, while protection works are presently in progress.

Taking stock of the progress, the DC directed the concerned executing agencies to accelerate the pace of work while ensuring adherence to prescribed quality standards and technical specifications. She stressed that the works should be completed within the stipulated timelines, keeping in view the difficulties faced by the residents of these far-flung areas. She also directed the

officers to maintain close field-level monitoring and ensure timely resolution of any bottlenecks affecting execution.

The DC further instructed the concerned departments and executing agencies to exercise due care and caution while undertaking construction and road works in residential areas and ensure that households and private properties are not unnecessarily affected. She directed that all necessary measures be taken to prevent any damage or loss to residential structures, boundary walls, utilities or other private property during execution, and that any unavoidable impact be dealt with strictly as per the applicable rules and procedures.

The DC subsequently inspected the ongoing Kudara Bridge project being executed by the

R&B Department. The Executive Engineer, R&B, informed that the bridge is a 1x20 metre span truss girder bridge, sanctioned under NABARD RIDF-XXVIII at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.69 crore. The abutment foundation works are presently in progress, and the project is targeted for completion by March 2027.

The DC directed the R&B Department to ensure regular monitoring of the bridge construction and adherence to the approved timeline, besides maintaining strict quality control at every stage of execution. She also stressed that all requisite clearances, coordination and technical requirements be addressed proactively to avoid any delay in completion.

Later, the DC visited Aragam village to inspect the near-completion Bridge project.

The Executive Engineer, R&B, informed that the Aragam Bridge, a 1x20 metre span plate girder bridge, has been sanctioned under NABARD RIDF-XXVIII at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.50 crore. The work is presently nearing completion, with approximately 95 per cent of the project already completed.

SKUAST-K Promotes Sustainable Livelihoods, Urban Farming around Dal Lake

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Srinagar, SKUAST-Kashmir, launched a first-of-its-kind outreach campaign around Dal Lake to explore sustainable livelihood and urban farming opportunities for peri-urban and Dal-dwelling farming communities. The initiative focused on technical support, entrepreneurial skill development, awareness generation and access to quality farm inputs to enhance farm incomes and promote self-reliant livelihoods.

The outreach campaign was undertaken as part of KVK Srinagar's commitment to strengthening resilient livelihoods and empowering farming communities at the grassroots level under its mission, "No Village Too Remote, No Farmer Left Behind."

To develop and document a real-time database of farming communities

and their livelihood activities, a KVK team comprising Dr. Rukhsar A. Dar, Dr. Showket A. Dar, Dr. Haseeb and Dr. Owais Bashir, under the leadership of Prof. & Head, Dr. S. A. Simnani, conducted a comprehensive baseline transect walk across Meer Behri, Lati Mohalla, Kalan, Kralpora, Sofi Mohalla and Malik Mohalla, covering major vegetable-growing areas in and around Dal Lake.

During the interaction, Prof. Simnani sensitised farmers about the vision, mission and mandate of KVK and encouraged local youth to explore skill-development and entrepreneurship opportunities under national flagship programmes.

The technical sessions focused on Khet Bachao and sustainable agricultural practices, including natural and organic farming approaches, with emphasis on soil health, conservation of natural resources, reduced dependence on external inputs,

environmentally responsible food production and the One Health approach.

Farmers were also apprised of JKCP, HADP and other government-supported initiatives, including relevant registration platforms through which eligible beneficiaries can access financial and technical assistance for establishing commercial agribusiness enterprises.

The Phase-I intervention culminated in an interactive scientist-farmer session, during which experts from KVK Srinagar addressed farmers' queries and discussed locally relevant livelihood and agricultural opportunities. Zulfikar Ali Sofi, representing the communities of Meer Behri, Lati Mohalla Kalan, Kralpora, Sofi Mohalla and Malik Mohalla, appreciated the efforts of KVK Srinagar in extending agricultural extension services and technical guidance to farming communities around Dal Lake.

KPCDL announces power shutdown in Kashmir parts



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPCDL has informed that the Shutdown of 33 kV Airforce line will be observed due to which power supply to Humama, Jeelani Abad, Co-Operative Colony, Nadroo, Sheikhpora, PHQ, Airport, Hyderpora and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 02 PM on 07 September 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Awantipora-Sangam-2nd line will be observed due to which power supply to Siamoh, K-koot, Kiagam, Hari-pargam, Chakoor, Gularpora, Panzgam, Railway and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 AM to 03 PM on 08, 12 & 15 September 2026.

SKIMS Soura holds Workshop on Early Genetic Screening, Diagnosis in B'la



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer, Baramulla, organised a one-day workshop on "UMMID: Early Genetic Screening, Diagnosis and Counselling for Healthier Future" at Dak Bungalow, Baramulla.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musavi, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. The workshop brought together healthcare professionals and public health workers with the objective of creating awareness about the early identification, screening, diagnosis and counselling of genetic and metabolic disorders

among pregnant mothers and newborns.

Speaking on the occasion, ADC Baramulla highlighted the importance of early screening and timely diagnosis of genetic and metabolic disorders, saying that early identification can facilitate appropriate intervention and counselling, thereby contributing towards a healthier future for children and families.

He appreciated the efforts of SKIMS Soura and the health department for organising the awareness-oriented programme and stressed the need for strengthening coordination between healthcare institutions and field-level health workers for effective implementation of genetic screening initiatives.

JKCPJ Hosts Chapter 6 of 'Let's Connect' Season 2 in Kupwara

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: The JK Centre for Peace and Justice (JKCPJ) Saturday conducted sixth chapter of its flagship programme, 'Let's Connect' Season 2, here in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. The session brought together students for an interactive engagement focused on mental well-being, self-awareness, and peer support.



The event aimed to create a safe and expressive environment where participants could explore and articulate different facets of their personalities. Through a series of structured conversations and group activities, the students were encouraged to understand the importance of emotional expression while learning how to sup-

port their peers effectively.

The chapter featured a variety of engaging activities designed to foster connection and empathy. These included a 'Unique Introduction' round, a creative exercise in 'Drawing a Landscape,' and the energetic 'Passing the Ball Game.' Organisers noted that these activities were instrumental in helping students build bonds, improve communication,

Edu Min congratulates people on J&K being declared fully literate UT



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for School Education, Higher Education, Health & Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Masood Itoo, has congratulated the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the Union Territory being declared a fully literate UT under ULLAS–Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram.

In her message on Teachers’ Day celebrated at SKICC Srinagar, the Minister said the declaration of J&K as Fully Literate UT, with over 95 percent literacy, treated as 100 percent as per Government of India norms, is a moment of immense pride. She said J&K has emerged as the biggest State/UT till date to achieve this milestone and has secured 10th position nationally.

The Minister said, “This achievement is not merely a number or a statistic; it repre-

sents thousands of lives transformed through the power of education. ULLAS has demonstrated that when government commitment is strengthened by community participation, every citizen can be brought within the fold of learning, dignity and empowerment.”

Sakeena Itoo lauded the dedicated efforts of teachers, volunteers, learners, field functionaries, educational institutions and district administrations, whose collective spirit of Jan Bhagidari made this possible. She said from 2023 to 2026, the School Education Department identified 7.58 lakh non-literates through door-to-door surveys and 5.53 lakh learners qualified the FLNAT, including 3,16,883 in 2025-26 alone.

The Minister reiterated that the government remains committed to ensure that the gains of literacy translate into lifelong

learning, digital literacy, vocational skills and financial awareness for sustainable empowerment.

On the occasion, the Minister also inaugurated major educational initiatives under Samagra Shiksha including 460 civil works worth Rs. 38 crore for strengthening school infrastructure, 2,403 Vocational Labs in High and Higher Secondary Schools to equip students with employable skills and Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK), Srinagar for real-time, data-driven monitoring of learning outcomes in line with NEP-2020.

The event was attended by Director Samagra Shiksha J&K Bhawani Rakwal, Director School Education Jammu Naseem Javaid Choudhary, Director School Education Kashmir Naseer Ahmad Wani, senior officers of the Department and a large gathering of teachers and students.

Javid Dar reviews development works, public service delivery in Rafiabad

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Saturday conducted an extensive visit of Rafiabad constituency to review the progress of ongoing development works and assess the availability of essential public services.

At Government High School Haman Kandi, the Minister inspected the infrastructure and had detailed feedback on the



facilities being provided to the students. He directed the Chief Education Officer, Baramulla, to ensure adequate availability of teaching staff and effective implementation of the Mid-

Day Meal Scheme, with focus on providing nutritious meals to students.

The Minister also visited Tannula village and took stock of the progress on road construction works aimed

at improving the connectivity and facilitating smoother movement for the local population. He stressed the need for timely completion of the works while maintaining prescribed quality standards.

Later, Javid Dar visited Community Health Centre (CHC) Chatosa and inspected the functioning of the health facility. He enquired about the medical services and facilities available to patients. He stressed the need for ensuring adequate basic healthcare services for the people of the area.

The Minister directed the concerned officers

to work in coordinated manner and ensure effective delivery of essential services in the sectors of health, education and social welfare. He emphasised that development initiatives should translate into tangible benefits for the people, particularly those living in rural and underserved areas.

Among others, Chief Medical Officer, Baramulla; Chief Education Officer, Baramulla; District Social Welfare Officer, Baramulla and other concerned officers accompanied the Minister during the visit.

Div Com reviews issues concerning River Jhelum National Waterway-49



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Saturday chaired a meeting to review various issues and bottlenecks affecting the execution of works under River Jhelum National Waterway-49 aimed at facilitating water transport.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, RTO Kashmir, Chief Engineers of KPDCI, KPTCL and I&FC, SE UEED, besides officers from the Departments of Tourism, R&B, Traffic, Forest and ULB.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner took a detailed review of the issues associated with the project, including removal of trees and wid-

ening of the road at Gund Parang, construction of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) for water treatment, shifting of KPDCI and KPTCL utilities, and relocation of houseboats.

Taking note of the issues raised by the concerned departments, the Divisional Commissioner directed all stakeholders to incorporate the required construction and utility-shifting works in their respective departmental plans to ensure coordinated and timely execution.

He further directed officials of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) to conduct a comprehensive joint survey of the proposed works at Gund Parang in coordination with the concerned

officers and identify the nature of land required for execution of the project.

The IWAI officials were also directed to undertake a detailed assessment of existing utilities at the site, identify modalities of their exact locations and coordinate with the concerned departments for timely shifting wherever required.

The Divisional Commissioner stressed the need for close inter-departmental coordination and directed IWAI officials to adhere strictly to prescribed timelines for resolution of issues. He also called for regular coordination with field teams to ensure that identified bottlenecks are addressed promptly and the project progresses as per schedule.

J&K intern doctors continue protest to seek stipend hike

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The ongoing agitation by MBBS and BDS intern doctors across Jammu and Kashmir intensified on Saturday, with protesting interns holding peaceful demonstrations and reiterating their demand for an immediate enhancement of their monthly stipend.

According to the details available, the protesting interns have maintained that their demand has remained pending for a considerable period and have sought a formal government order on the enhancement of the stipend, asserting that verbal assurances alone would not be sufficient to end their agitation.

The development comes a day after a delegation of intern doctors met Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo to discuss the issue and apprise her of the difficulties being faced by interns.

According to representatives who attended the meeting, the government sought time to examine the matter and take a decision. However, the interns said they want the assurance to be translated into a written and formal government order.

The representatives said



they would continue their peaceful protest until a concrete decision is taken by the government. They also warned that if their demand is not addressed soon, they may intensify the agitation and resort to a hunger strike.

The intern representatives who participated in the meeting have also appealed to the protesting doctors and the public to rely only on their official statements regarding the outcome of the discussions and avoid circulating unverified information.

AIMS J&K President Dr Mohammad Momin Khan also sought greater transparency from the government regarding the discussions held with the intern delegation.

“Yesterday, you told the intern doctors’ delegation to wait for one month. Why are you not stating the same thing publicly? Interns and the people of J&K deserve transparency

and clarity,” he said.

Meanwhile, CPI(M) leader and MLA Kulgam M Y Tarigami has written to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, urging him to personally intervene in the matter and ensure a time-bound resolution to the interns’ demand.

In his communication, Tarigami said the ongoing agitation by MBBS and BDS interns over enhancement of their monthly stipend warranted the Chief Minister’s personal attention.

He said young doctors and dental graduates undergoing internship form an important part of the healthcare system and often work long hours under difficult conditions while shouldering clinical responsibilities.

Tarigami said the interns’ demand, as he understood it, was to bring their stipend in line with what their counterparts in other states receive and to account for the rising cost of living.

NHM employees in J&K announce 72-hour strike from Sep 9

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The UT Level Joint Coordination Committee of NHM Employees of Jammu & Kashmir on Saturday said that the forum has decided to observe a 72-hour strike from September 9 onwards in support of their long-pending demands.

A spokesman of the committee, said that the decision was taken after no concrete or satisfactory response was received from the Govt of Jammu & Kashmir within the stipulated ultimatum period.

“The decision was taken during a virtual meeting of the UT Level Joint Coordination Committee held this evening which was attended by core members and representatives of NHM employees from both the Jammu and Kashmir Divisions, including representatives of the RNTCP/ NTEP Association J&K



and other schemes under the National Health Mission,” he said.

“The Committee had earlier served a final ultimatum to the Govt and concerned authorities up to September 05, 2026, seeking concrete and meaningful action towards resolving the long-pending issues and genuine demands of NHM employees. However, despite the expiry of the stipulated deadline, the Committee expressed deep disappointment over the absence of any concrete response or tangible action from the concerned authorities,” the spokesman said.

“After detailed deliberations on the prevailing situation, the Committee

unanimously resolved that all NHM employees across Jammu & Kashmir, including NTEP employees and employees working under other NHM schemes, shall observe a 72-hour UT-level strike from September 9, onwards,” he added.

“The Committee made it clear that the strike shall be observed across the length and breadth of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, with all district, block and field-level NHM employees extending their collective support to the programme,” the spokesman said.

Dr. Vikas Sharma, Divisional President, All JKNHMEA Jammu Division, stated that the decision to proceed with the 72-hour strike has not been taken in haste, but has become necessary due to the continued non-resolution of the genuine and long-pending issues of NHM employees despite repeated representations, discussions and assurances.

Advisor Wani meets public delegations

Reaffirms govt’s commitment to prompt redress of public issues

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, Saturday met with several delegation and individual citizens at the Chief Minister’s Public Service and Outreach Office ‘Raabita’ in Srinagar.

The visiting groups included local citizens, employee associations and individuals. They brought forward issues related to development, media, land and revenue records, employment and service-

related matters. The Advisor took up these matters with the concerned authorities to ensure these are resolved without delay.

Highlighting the government’s focus on public welfare, the Advisor stated that the present government under the leadership of the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is paying attention to every grievance, big or small. He assured the public that all genuine demands will be resolved within the shortest possible time.

Altaf Bukhari questions NC’s ‘B-team’ remark

Seeks Ruhullah’s clarity on Article 370, 35-A

NAVEED UL HAQ

BUDGAM: Launching a scathing attack on ruling National Conference, Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Saturday accused the party of betraying the people of Kashmir.

Addressing media persons at Watakulu Charar-e-Sharief, Bukhari said people would not forget what he termed the National Conference’s “betrayal” and questioned the party’s political approach towards the issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir.

Reacting to the National Conference’s allegation that the Apni Party was the “B-team of the BJP,” Bukhari questioned whether the same yardstick would be applied

after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah’s meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday.

On reports regarding the possible resignation of National Conference leader Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Bukhari said that if Ruhullah intended to resign, he should first explain to the people how Articles 370 and 35A could be restored.

Bukhari said the people of Kashmir had already faced what he described as “repeated political betrayals” and now needed clear answers and a concrete roadmap instead of political assurances.

He also questioned the National Conference’s political strategy and the promises made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

Comm Secy chairs UTLIMC meet to review computerisation of PACS in J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Commissioner Secretary Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, Saturday chaired a meeting of the Union Territory Level Implementation and Monitoring Committee (UTLIMC) constituted to review implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Project for Computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Registrar Cooperative Societies, J&K; Deputy General Manager, NABARD; representative

of the Finance Department, J&K; Managing Director, J&K State Cooperative Training Board (JKSTCB); representatives of the System Integrator besides other senior officers of the Cooperative Department.

During the meeting, a detailed PowerPoint presentation was made on the current status of implementation of PACS computerisation project. The Committee was apprised of the progress achieved, so far. Various issues and requirements related to handholding support to PACS, scanning and digitisation of legacy data, deployment of man-

power and reconciliation of data were also placed before the Committee for consideration.

The Committee held detailed deliberations on the implementation status and associated operational issues, with emphasis on ensuring adequate support to PACS at the field level to facilitate their smooth transition to the computerised system.

While reviewing the progress, Yasha Mudgal directed the System Integrator to ensure that all assigned deliverables are completed strictly within the stipulated timelines. She stressed that the approved implementation

schedule must be adhered to in letter and spirit and that avoidable delays should not be allowed to impede the overall objectives of the project.

The Commissioner Secretary emphasised the need for close and continuous coordination among the Cooperative Department, Registrar Cooperative Societies, NABARD, DCCBs, System Integrator and other concerned stakeholders for ensuring smooth, timely and effective implementation of the project. She observed that strong field-level coordination would be crucial for resolving

operational bottlenecks and ensuring that the intended benefits of computerisation reach PACS in a timely manner.

Yasha Mudgal directed that regular monitoring of the PACS computerisation project be undertaken at the level of the Registrar Cooperative Societies, J&K. She made it clear that monitoring should go beyond routine reporting and must include verification of the actual completion of each milestone and deliverable.

She specifically directed that every milestone and deliverable must be duly verified before being treated as completed, with

proper supporting documentation and records maintained in each case. She stressed that a robust verification mechanism would provide a clear and reliable basis for assessing the actual status of implementation.

Emphasising the importance of institutional accountability, transparency and proper record keeping, the Commissioner Secretary directed that all communications and directions issued to the System Integrator in connection with implementation of the project should invariably be conveyed in writing and properly documented.

Good Morning

Kashmir

■ Sunday Column

Ghat No. 2, Nishat – The Fishing Rod

JAVED SHAH

Every time I return to Ghat No. 2, I am reminded of something I had almost forgotten. Last Sunday, I wrote about the place that came into my life at a time when my mind had become tired of carrying the burden of things that had happened over the preceding years. I wrote about how the quiet waters of Nishat slowly became a refuge, a place where I could sit without having to explain myself to anyone. But there was another little story behind my daily visits to Ghat No. 2. Once I had discovered this place as a safer hideout for my troubled mind, I needed a reason to keep coming back without making my visits look unusual. I did not want questions. I wanted solitude. And then I found the fishing rod.

It may sound rather ordinary, even amusing, that a fishing rod could become an excuse for someone to spend hours at a particular ghat. But for me, it became much more than that. It took me back to my childhood. I was born in Nowpora's Daulatabad Mohalla. Behind our house, in those days, there was a small offshoot of the Dal Lake. That waterway does not exist anymore. It has disappeared somewhere between the passage of time and the changing face of Srinagar. But in my memory, it is still there. I can still see the water. I can still feel the innocence of those days.

As children, we never imagined that the things around us would one day disappear. We took the water for granted. We believed the little stream behind our house would always flow, the lanes would always look the same, and the familiar world of our childhood would remain exactly where we had left it. Children are blessed with that innocence. They believe everything they love is permanent. It is only when we grow older that we discover how temporary everything really is. Perhaps that is why, when I first held the fishing rod at Ghat No. 2, something stirred deep inside me. It was not really about catching fish. It was about catching a piece of my childhood. The fishing rod gave me a perfectly natural reason to sit beside the lake for hours. I could watch the water, follow the ripples, look at the float and simply wait. And there is something strangely healing about waiting. When the mind is troubled, it wants answers immediately. Why did this happen? How did it happen? What happens next? But fishing teaches you the opposite. It teaches you to wait without knowing whether anything will happen at all. You throw the line into the water. Then you wait. Sometimes nothing happens. Sometimes the float moves. And sometimes you pull the line back only to discover that there was nothing there.

Yet you return the next day. Perhaps life is much the same. We keep throwing our hopes into the waters of time, waiting for something to return. Some things do.

Some never do. And for some things, we eventually stop waiting altogether. Sitting at Ghat No. 2 with a fishing rod in my hands slowly became a routine.

To anyone passing by, I was simply a man enjoying an old childhood pastime. But only I knew what those long hours meant. The fishing rod gave me an excuse.

The lake gave me solitude. And that solitude gave my tired mind a little space to breathe. There were days when I would sit for hours without catching a single fish. Strangely, I never felt that those hours had been wasted. I had gone there to catch fish. But more often than not, I returned with something else, peace. And there was an irony in all of this.

The little waterway behind our childhood home in Daulatabad had disappeared. Yet, decades later, a simple fishing rod beside another part of the same great lake somehow brought that lost childhood back to me. Perhaps that is what memory does. It preserves what time destroys. A waterway may disappear. A house may change. People may move away. Childhood may become nothing more than a faded photograph. But a smell, a sound, a familiar view of water—or even something as simple as a fishing rod—can suddenly open a forgotten door inside us. And behind that door, childhood is still waiting. For me, Ghat No. 2 became that door. I began going there for peace. Then I stayed for the memories. And slowly, those memories themselves became a form of healing. The fishing rod was only an excuse. The real purpose was to sit beside the water and search for a part of myself that I thought I had lost somewhere along the way. Perhaps that is why, even today, every visit to Ghat No. 2 feels less like going somewhere and more like returning. Returning to the water. Returning to silence. Returning to childhood. And perhaps, more than anything else, returning to myself.



SUDHANSH PANT

In the light of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), the glory of the elderly is their insight, their knowledge and their wisdom. In Indian homes, there is always a memory everyone carries, a grandfather narrating an adventurous story from his childhood or a grandmother demonstrating knitting while sitting in the balcony on a fine winter afternoon. These ordinary afternoons are where a family's real inheritance gets passed on quietly, one small skill and one shared story at a time.

We often speak about the generation gap, about grandparents who do not understand smartphones and grandchildren who do not have the patience for long stories of golden past. But I think we speak far less about generation bridges. Almost invisible ways in which the old and the young still complete each other.

What Each Generation Is Actually Giving The Other?

A grandparent gives a child something no school can teach: time, that asks for nothing in return. With growing urbanisation and both parents often working, a child's day is usually structured around strict timetables but, a grandparent is often the one person willing to simply sit. To listen to a story being told for the fifth time. To wait while a shoelace is tied. That unhurried attention given to children shapes a sense of being valued in ways we rarely measure.

And what do these children have for giving back? Presence, which seems something very modest, yet it is not. A grandchild's visit changes the shape of an elderly person's whole week. A video call from a grandson away at college or a granddaughter telling her grandmother how much she misses her cooking, a great-grandchild simply climbing into a lap- these moments do for an elderly what medicine alone cannot. This is the logic behind 'Ageing At Home', an idea that elderly people are happiest and healthiest not in an institution but in their own home, surrounded by the family and



neighbourhood they have always known and cherished.

This is not a new discovery for us. In most parts of India, touching the feet of an elder for their blessing remains one of the first gestures a child learns, a small act that teaches something no lecture could: that age is to be honoured. The Sanskrit teaching 'Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava', 'Regard Your Mother And Father As You Would The Divine', remains the foundation of the values Indian families try to instil in their children. Those who raise us, deserve our reverence in return. There is another divine saying, "Paradise Lies Beneath The Feet of Your Mother", again reflects the eternal source of blessings and contentment one can earn through love, care and service to our parents and grandparents. It means that serving, respecting and lowering oneself to care for a mother is a direct path to earning God's pleasure and entering Paradise. Besides, it acknowledges the immense pain, hardship, and lifelong sacrifice a mother endures while raising her children.

This is why, when families stay close across generations, under one roof some exchange happens. Children raised close to grandparents tend to grow knowing the stories that shaped their family, the values their elders lived by and experiencing what patience actually looks like. And elderly people who remain woven into a family's daily life are healthier, less anxious and less lonely.

When The Thread Frays?

But we would be telling only half the truth if we did not admit that this thread is fraying across cultures in many Indian homes today. Migration for work, nuclear families, the sheer pace of modern life, all of these have quietly left many of our elders spending their days in empty houses, waiting for a call that comes less often than it used to.

This is not a failure of love. It is usually a failure of time and distance. And because ageing at home remains the outcome every family and every elderly person requires, the support that steps in should be built to help a parent stay in their own home rather than moving out. What we need to fully understand and embrace that the elderly are a source of wisdom, experience and stability in a world that is constantly changing. Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Central Government's ELDER LINE, a toll-free helpline (14567), is there the moment they simply need to talk to someone, day or night.

And under the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY), elderly citizens receive walking sticks, hearing aids, spectacles and other assistive devices free-of-cost, so that independence is never out of reach for want of means. These quiet supports exist precisely so that distance does not have to mean disconnection. When a grandchild does finally visit, they find a grandparent who is well, engaged and still at home, full of stories, not one who has simply been waiting.

Even when a family genuinely cannot

be present every day, ageing at home need not mean ageing without care. The SHATAYU (Senior Holistic Care Assistance and Training For Your Utility) dashboard is helping build something India has long needed, a trained, trackable network of geriatric caregivers available district-by-district, so that a qualified pair of hands can step in for the hours a working son or a distant daughter simply cannot. It is care that comes to the home, rather than care that requires leaving it.

For a smaller number of elders who have no family close by, this idea of home simply takes a different shape and government-supported old age homes, run under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), step in to become exactly the family they need. Residents share meals together, celebrate festivals as a household would, take part in Yoga and health check-ups and have someone to talk to over tea. It is a family, rebuilt in a different form, so that no elder ever has to grow old entirely alone.

A Small Practice Worth Reviving

If there is one thing every family could do, it is to let the generations sit together. Just an evening where a grandparent tells a grandchild about their own childhood, or a teenager teaching their grandmother to send a voice note. Teaching her to use the JEEVAN (Joint Elderly Empowerment & Virtual Assistance Network) App on her phone, where she can check which welfare schemes she is eligible for or simply have an emergency help button within her reach. These moments cost nothing and require no grand gesture. They only require intention.

Because in the end, inter-generational bonding is not really about the old teaching the young or the young energising the old. It is about both generations reminding each other of something the middle years of life tend to make us forget.

Somewhere in India today, a grandparent is folding a paper boat with a child who will not remember why that afternoon mattered. It mattered anyway. Let us make sure there are many more such afternoons and with the quiet support of schemes built exactly for this purpose, no grandparent has to spend theirs alone. (PIB)

Sudhansh Pant, IAS is Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India

Krishna Janmashtami

Timeless Relevance Of Bhagavad Gita In Materialistic World

Albert Einstein is frequently associated with admiration for the Gita, although quotations attributed to him about the text should be treated cautiously unless supported by reliable primary evidence. Such global intellectual engagement nevertheless reflects the extraordinary reach of India's philosophical heritage.

Krishna Janmashtami therefore provides an appropriate occasion not merely to celebrate the birth of Lord Krishna through rituals, devotional singing and recitation, but to contemplate the ethical and spiritual message associated with his teachings. The true homage to Krishna lies not simply in ceremonial observance but in attempting to incorporate his teachings into everyday conduct. Compassion instead of cruelty, duty instead of selfishness, equanimity instead of agitation, devotion instead of arrogance and selfless action instead of avaricious pursuit can transform both individual character and society.

In an era increasingly dominated by materialistic aspirations, the Bhagavad Gita reminds humanity that prosperity without tranquility, knowledge without wisdom and achievement without moral purpose remain fundamentally incomplete. Its message does not demand withdrawal from the world; it calls for a nobler manner of inhabiting it. It teaches mankind to act courageously, think profoundly, cultivate detachment and remain anchored in righteousness. On the sacred occasion of Krishna Janmashtami, therefore, the most meaningful celebration would be to rediscover this timeless wisdom and allow it to illuminate the moral labyrinth of contemporary existence. The Gita's message is ancient in origin yet astonishingly modern in application, and its spiritual resonance remains undiminished in a world desperately searching for purpose, balance and inner peace.

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OMKAR DATTATRAY

Krishna Janmashtami, celebrated with profound devotion and spiritual fervour, is not merely a religious observance commemorating the divine advent of Lord Shri Krishna; it is also an occasion for humanity to rediscover the perennial wisdom embodied in the Bhagavad Gita. The festival assumes particular significance in an age increasingly characterised by avarice, acquisitiveness, moral disquiet and an unrelenting pursuit of material prosperity. At a time when success is frequently measured in terms of wealth, influence, status and possessions, the teachings of the Gita offer an alternative philosophy of existence, one founded upon self-discipline, equanimity, righteous action, devotion and detachment.

The Bhagavad Gita is a spiritual and philosophical masterpiece whose relevance transcends the temporal, geographical and cultural boundaries within which it emerged. It is not merely a theological text intended for ritualistic contemplation; rather, it constitutes an extraordinarily profound exposition of human psychology, ethical responsibility and spiritual consciousness. Its dialogue between Lord Krishna and the warrior Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra represents one of the most consequential philosophical conversations in the history of humanity. Arjuna's anguish, confusion and moral paralysis are not confined to the battlefield; they symbolise the dilemmas, anxieties and contradictions that confront human beings in their own lives.

The Gita therefore remains particularly pertinent in the contemporary world, where individuals are frequently

consumed by competition, anxiety, greed and the insatiable desire for recognition. Modern civilisation has undoubtedly produced unprecedented technological and material advancement, yet material abundance has not necessarily translated into inner tranquility. The ceaseless pursuit of gratification often leaves the human mind more restless rather than more fulfilled. It is in this predicament that the Gita assumes the character of a spiritual compass, teaching mankind how to participate in the world without becoming psychologically enslaved by its temptations. One of its most profound teachings is the doctrine of Karma Yoga. The Gita exhorts an individual to perform his or her prescribed duties with sincerity, competence and dedication without becoming excessively attached to the fruits of action.

This does not signify indifference towards achievement, nor does it advocate indolence. On the contrary, it demands disciplined action while cautioning against allowing success or failure to determine one's inner equilibrium. The individual must act because action is a fundamental obligation of human existence, while the ultimate consequences of action cannot always be controlled. Such a philosophy possesses immense practical value in contemporary society. People frequently become psychologically tormented by expectations regarding promotions, wealth, social recognition, professional success and personal accomplishments. The Gita's principle of detached action provides a powerful antidote to this incessant anxiety. It teaches that one should concentrate upon the integrity and excellence of one's actions rather than becoming consumed by the anticipated rewards. In this sense, Karma Yoga is not escapism; it is a philosophy of responsible engagement with life.

The Gita's conception of renunciation is equally profound. It does not demand abandonment of society, family or worldly responsibilities. True renunciation, according to its philosophical



spirit, lies in relinquishing selfish attachment, destructive desires and egocentric motivations while continuing to discharge one's obligations. One may remain amidst the complexities of worldly existence and yet cultivate an inward state of detachment. The celebrated metaphor of the lotus is particularly evocative in this context: just as the lotus remains in water without becoming submerged in it, a person should remain engaged in the world without allowing worldly impurities to dominate consciousness.

The scripture also illuminates the paths of Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Jnana Yoga emphasises the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and discrimination between the transient and the eternal, while Bhakti Yoga centres upon devotion, surrender and loving communion with the Supreme. Devotion, however, is not merely an external ritual; it represents the transformation of the ego through humility, faith and surrender. In an age of enormous intellectual sophistication but considerable spiritual restlessness, the synthesis of knowledge, action and devotion offered by the Gita possesses enduring significance.

The Bhagavad Gita is often described as the essence of the Upanishadic wisdom. The traditional analogy comparing the Upanishads to cows and the Gita to their milk beautifully conveys

the relationship between the two. The profound metaphysical insights of the Upanishads are rendered comparatively accessible and practical through the Gita's dialogue. Consequently, the scripture serves not merely as an abstract philosophical treatise but as a practical manual for navigating the moral and existential complexities of human life. Its universal appeal lies precisely in its capacity to address the human condition rather than merely a particular historical circumstance.

Questions concerning duty, morality, fear, grief, attachment, ambition, mortality and the meaning of existence remain as relevant today as they were in antiquity. Scientific and technological advancement may transform the external circumstances of human life, but the fundamental struggles of the human mind remain remarkably persistent. The Gita addresses these inner conflicts with an intellectual and spiritual profundity that continues to command admiration across generations. Mahatma Gandhi regarded the Gita as a source of spiritual strength and repeatedly turned to its teachings during moments of personal difficulty. Its influence has also extended far beyond the Indian spiritual tradition, attracting the attention of philosophers, scholars and scientists across the world.

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

Beyond Disguise

Defending Women's Rights Against The Anti-Rights Backlash



SHOBHA SHUKLA

With just 52 months left to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is already falling dramatically short on goals related to gender equality and health rights. Decades of progress secured through legally binding treaties and other international agreements and commitments, are being threatened by a growing anti-rights backlash. Well-coordinated anti-rights forces are invoking seemingly benign and reassuring words like 'national sovereignty', 'family values', 'culture' and 'religion' to oppose or dilute measures intended to advance women's equality, bodily autonomy and health rights.

Such anti-rights narratives are increasingly being deployed to 'legitimise' discrimination and restrict women's autonomy. Under the garb of 'protecting the family', laws and policies are being proposed that can curtail women's bodily autonomy, reproductive choices, economic rights and equality within marriage, said the experts on the panel of the latest SHE & Rights session on the theme 'Countering anti-rights pushes and upholding human right to health and gender equality.'

The central question, they argued, is fundamental human rights (like gender equality and right to health) survive when confronted with forces that misinterpret 'equality' in the name of 'family', 'tradition' or 'sovereignty'.

This is at the heart of the growing anti-rights backlash. The family, supposedly a place of safety and protection, is being invoked to so-called 'legitimise' discrimination within the family itself. Sovereignty, meant to affirm the independence of nations, is being turned into an argument against accountability to human rights standards.

Family should be a safe haven for equality, not inequality

The extent to which discriminatory practices can become normalised was brought home by an exercise recounted

by Dr Robert Eno, Registrar of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights at the African Union. At a recent conference in Nairobi, participants were given several statements and asked whether they were fact or fiction. One stated that a woman seeking a no-fault divorce is required to compensate her husband financially. Another said a daughter could inherit only half the share of her brother, with property passing to male relatives where there was no brother. A third suggested that a husband cannot not be held responsible for rape within marriage because the wife cannot refuse his sexual demands.

Eno assumed these were fictional. "I was mistaken," he acknowledged. All three, he said, reflected provisions that have existed, or continue to exist, in laws in several countries and represent the lived realities of women and girls.

That is precisely why the current battle over the meaning of family values matters. As Rehema Namukose of Musawah pointed out that the garb of 'family' is increasingly being used to wrongly 'justify' harmful practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation/ cutting, confine women to unpaid care work, deny them property and inheritance rights, and institutionalise patriarchal male authority within households. The rhetoric of family protection therefore needs to be interrogated: 'Whose family is being protected, and from what?' A family cannot be strengthened by making its women less equal. Nor can children be protected by denying girls education.

Sovereignty is not a licence to discriminate

The anti-rights push is diabolically sophisticated. It camouflages itself so that it is not perceived as opposition to human rights. An analysis by the Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA) of the regressive draft African Charter on family values and sovereignty, found precisely this pattern: "rights language is kept on the surface, but the substance of the rights is narrowed." 'Family protection' becomes a rationale for exclusion, 'sovereignty' a means of resisting accountability, and 'culture' and 'values' a way of limiting equality protections.

This makes the debate about sovereignty particularly important. States have every right to preserve their constitutional independence and cultural identities. But sovereignty cannot mean freedom from human rights obligations. It is not about dismissing sovereignty but preventing it



from becoming a shield against accountability. As Dr Eno put it, tradition deserves respect, culture deserves protection and religion deserves freedom - but none can be invoked to legitimise discrimination or diminish human dignity.

#PauseForPurpose

The debate over the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, (AU CEVAWG), illustrates why scrutiny of new legal instruments matters. The Convention was adopted in February 2025 and had been signed by nine states and ratified by two. But fifteen ratifications are required for it to enter into force. Fatou Bantou Salah of the Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA) argues that this period before the convention's entry into force should be used for careful scrutiny rather than simply pushing ahead with ratification.

ISLA has called for a "Pause for Purpose" campaign around AU CEVAWG. The proposal is not to abandon the convention, but to pause long enough to allow an independent, Article-by-Article legal review, wider consultation and comparison with existing African human-rights standards, says Salah. The message is simple: "pause, listen, review, strengthen, then ratify." Such scrutiny is not anti-rights. It is precisely what a serious rights framework requires, says Salah.

The same principle applies to national laws. If a law discriminates against women in marriage, divorce, inheritance or custody, it must be challenged. If a girl is pushed out of school because she is pregnant, the response cannot stop at blaming her. If a woman cannot obtain healthcare without stigma or permission, the existence of a

health policy on paper means little.

Reclaiming religion, culture and community

Perhaps one of the most effective ways to counter anti-rights narratives is to stop allowing their proponents to claim exclusive ownership of religion, culture or family. Samah Hadid, Global Executive Director of Musawah, argues that religion itself is being weaponised to police the women and reinforce patriarchal control. Her response is not to abandon religious discourse but to reclaim it. "We do not cede the ground on religion to conservative voices. We rather reclaim it," she says, advocating gender-just interpretations from within religious traditions.

Human rights advocates cannot simply speak to those who already agree with them. As Dr Eno argues, sustainable change requires engagement with communities rather than addressing them only from outside. Conversations must move beyond courtrooms and conference halls into homes, schools, places of worship, traditional institutions and communities.

This also means engaging men - not to speak over women or occupy feminist spaces, but to challenge the attitudes and systems that sustain inequality. As Vimbai Kapurura of Girls Not Brides and Women Unlimited Eswatini put it, women and girls must remain at the centre, but equality has to involve the whole ecosystem around them.

The strongest counter to anti-rights politics is therefore not another polarising slogan. It is a better vision of family, culture and community - one in which equality does not destroy families but makes them safer and fairer.

Lived realities on the ground

Vimbai Kapurura's experience from Eswatini offers a useful reminder. The country has made progress in reducing adolescent births and early childbearing, yet girls in rural and poorer communities continue to face greater risks. Access to services often exists on paper, and unmet need for contraception stays high. The question cannot simply be why a girl became pregnant. It must also ask whether she had access to information, healthcare and support to remain in school.

That is the test of whether rights are real. Does a girl stay in school? Can a young woman access healthcare without stigma? Can a survivor report sexual harassment and be believed and protected? Can a woman inherit property on equal terms? Can she make decisions about her own body? These are more meaningful measures of progress than the number of treaties signed or declarations adopted.

From good policies to implementation

Policy commitments alone do not save lives. A treaty that is not implemented, a judgment that is ignored, and a strategy that remains only on paper do not change the reality of a woman who cannot reach a hospital or a girl who is denied education. The next frontier is implementation and accountability, said Kapurura. Kapurura pointed to mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as opportunities to move from commitments to budgets, services and community-level change, keeping the focus on those still left behind. Communities cannot simply be beneficiaries of change; they must be partners in creating it.

The anti-rights backlash thrives when discrimination is 'normalised', when fear is converted into policy and when silence is mistaken for consensus. The response must therefore be equally determined: challenge discriminatory laws, expose manipulative narratives, reclaim religion and culture from those who weaponise them, and, above all, work with communities rather than simply speaking at them.

The family should be where rights begin, not where they end. And sovereignty should be the foundation for democratic self-determination, not a convenient excuse for denying women equality, dignity and freedom.

Shobha Shukla is a feminist, health and development justice advocate. She can be mailed at ramakanbobby@gmail.com

Straight Talk

Why Are Daughters Still Unsafe Despite Tough Laws?

YOGESH KUMAR GOYAL

The alleged gang rape of a 16-year-old student inside a sleeper bus travelling between Greater Noida and Delhi has once again put all claims of women's safety in the dock. The bus continued to travel for nearly 47 kilometres in the darkness of night, yet there was no effective monitoring anywhere. Tough laws were enacted after the Nirbhaya case, but the audacity of criminals shows that what is more important than the law is the real deterrent effect of fear of the law. The question is not merely about arrests; it is about accountability. The incident involving a 16-year-old student inside a sleeper bus in Delhi-NCR is a mirror reflecting the simultaneous failure of four things: our security system, monitoring of public transport, policing and social consciousness. On the night of August 4, a minor student was allegedly made to board a sleeper bus from Pari Chowk in Greater Noida by giving her misleading information, and the driver and conductor are accused of sexually assaulting her until Kashmere Gate.

After travelling approximately 47 kilometres, she was left near Ring Road close to Kashmere Gate. The most horrifying aspect of this incident is not merely the brutality of the crime but the entire security vacuum in which this crime became possible. A minor girl boards an unfamiliar bus at night, the bus travels a long distance, a crime takes place inside it, and at no point along the way is there any effective monitoring capable of preventing the crime. According to reports, curtains had been installed inside the bus, and serious questions have also arisen regarding the availability of CCTV cameras. If the interior of a public transport vehicle is so cut off from external surveillance that the safety of the passengers sitting inside becomes questionable, it is natural to demand answers from the system that allows such vehicles to operate on the roads.

There is another uncomfortable question here: the incident is said to have taken place on August 4, but the police made the information public on August 31. What happened during this long interval? Was investigative confidentiality the reason? Was information kept lim-



ited because of the privacy and safety of the victim? Or was there a lapse at some administrative level in information management? Clear and credible answers to these questions should be made public because, alongside the seriousness of the crime, police accountability is also an essential part of a democratic system. It is certainly noteworthy that after receiving the complaint, Kashmere Gate police took action, identified the bus through CCTV footage, arrested the accused driver and conductor, and also recovered the bus. In other words, before questioning the investigative capability of the police after the crime, it must also be acknowledged that technological surveillance played an important role in reaching the perpetrators. But the real test begins after the arrest. The job of the police is not merely to catch criminals after a crime has been committed; the most important objective of modern policing is to prevent crime before it occurs. If CCTV can identify the bus after the crime, the question is why the same technology could not detect suspicious activity beforehand.

After the Nirbhaya case, the country believed that the system would now change. The brutality inflicted on a 23-year-old woman in a moving bus in December 2012 stirred the entire country. Laws were made stricter, the legal definitions of sexual offences were expanded, a separate legal framework for sexual offences against minors was strength-

ened, and the issue of safety in public transport became part of the national debate. Four convicts in the Nirbhaya case were executed in 2020, but 13 years later, if a minor girl again becomes a victim of such brutality inside a moving bus, it is necessary to ask: we changed the laws, but how much did we change the system? The strictness of the law is necessary, but fear of the law is not created merely by the severity of punishment. The greatest fear in the mind of a criminal is the certainty of being caught. If he believes that he can commit a crime under the cover of darkness, on a deserted route, inside a vehicle beyond surveillance, and that no one will be there to stop him, then even the harshest punishment written in the law books cannot immediately become an effective deterrent. Therefore, the challenge is not merely that of stringent laws, but of assured surveillance, prompt arrest and time-bound justice.

The alleged contradictions that have emerged between the Delhi and Noida police regarding the incident are also a matter of concern. Delhi-NCR is today such a metropolitan region where the boundaries between cities are almost invisible to ordinary citizens, but when a crime occurs, those very boundaries become a question of police jurisdiction. If a girl boards a bus in Noida, travels towards Delhi and is dropped off in Delhi, why cannot there be real-time coordination between the different police units? Another aspect of this

incident relates to accountability in public transport. The use of curtains in sleeper buses, surveillance inside the vehicle, identification of passengers, verification of drivers and conductors, deviation from prescribed routes, and the safety of lone or minor passengers travelling at night—all these aspects cannot be addressed merely by having rules on paper. Actual compliance with the rules must be ensured. Joint accountability of the transport department, police and bus operators must be established. Night buses should undergo mandatory monitoring, all sleeper buses should have functioning CCTV cameras and emergency communication systems, police verification and training of drivers and conductors should be conducted regularly, the prescribed routes and stops of buses should be digitally monitored, the crew should be required to follow a special protocol in suspicious situations involving a minor or a lone female passenger, and a shared real-time monitoring mechanism should be developed among the Noida, Ghaziabad and Delhi police. Most importantly, no woman or girl should be made to run from one police station to another in the name of 'jurisdiction' when she lodges a complaint.

However, we cannot free ourselves from our social responsibility by describing this incident merely as a failure of the police. On the one hand, a 16-year-old girl travelling alone at night becomes a target of criminals, while on the other hand, elderly women are abandoned by their own families. The question is not merely about the law; it is about the social mindset in which a vulnerable person becomes the easiest target. When sensitivity weakens within families, when power begins to command respect and criminal tendencies begin to be treated as influence, when wealth and muscle power become the basis of social prestige, the law alone cannot save society. Our greatest irony is that political statements begin after a crime. The opposition attacks the government, the ruling side presents the arrests as its achievement, and after a few days the debate gets buried under some other issue. But the fear of the victim, her future and the trauma inflicted upon her mind do not disappear because of any political statement. Women's safety should not be an electoral slogan; it should be a fundamental test of govern-

nance.

Questions such as 'How safe are women at night?' cannot be answered through advertisements or political claims.

The answer must be visible on the streets, inside buses, in the response of the police and in those systems that provide security to a lone girl before she falls into danger. The present incident offers some clear lessons for Delhi-NCR. Night buses should be subject to mandatory monitoring, and all sleeper buses should have functioning CCTV cameras and emergency communication systems. Police verification and training of drivers and conductors should be conducted regularly; the prescribed routes and stops of buses should be digitally monitored; the crew should be required to follow a special protocol in suspicious situations involving a minor or a lone female passenger; and a shared real-time monitoring mechanism should be developed among the Noida, Ghaziabad and Delhi police. Most importantly, no woman or girl should be made to run from one police station to another in the name of 'jurisdiction' when she lodges a complaint.

We changed a great deal after Nirbhaya, but perhaps not as much as we should have. Making stringent laws is easy, but implementing the law on the ground is difficult. Installing CCTV cameras is easy; keeping them operational 24 hours a day is difficult. Parking police vehicles is easy; ensuring genuine patrolling is difficult. Making claims about women's safety is easy, but creating a system in which no girl feels unsafe even when she is alone in the darkness of night is difficult. Therefore, treating this incident as merely another crime and forgetting it would be the biggest mistake. It is a warning that criminals become fearless when, somewhere within the system, the fear of consequences disappears. They must fear not merely the law, but its certain and impartial enforcement. Society must also decide whether it wants to remain a society that lights candles after a crime or become a society that ensures the safety of its daughters before a crime occurs.

(The author is a senior journalist actively engaged in journalism for 36 years and author of several books including 'Sagar Se Antariksh Tak: Bharat Ki Raksha Kranti')

LeT Terrorist

with security forces conducting extensive searches in the area following the encounter. Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Sujit Kumar, also visited the operation site on Friday and took stock of the security situation and the ongoing search operation—(KNO)

Kashmir Receives First

covered in fresh snow. Moreover, there were also reports of snowfall from Kaobal Gali, Tulail Valley. “Snowfall today has remained confined to around 3900 metres and above. This was expected as the prediction for extreme higher reaches was already shared,” said an independent weatherman. “When snowfall begins to occur over the extreme higher reaches, even during short spells, it can signal the onset of autumn and the withdrawal of monsoon season,” he added. According to the India Meteorological Department's evening weather bulletin, Srinagar recorded 0.4 mm of rainfall between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm, while Pahalgam received 2.6 mm, Qazigund 1 mm, and Kukernag 1.2 mm. Gulmarg recorded 7.2 mm of rainfall during the period, while Katra received no rain during the day but recorded 42.6 mm in the preceding 24 hours. Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 26.6 degrees Celsius, 1.2 degrees below normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 17.2 degrees Celsius, 2 degrees above normal. Pahalgam recorded a maximum of 23.4 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 13.4 degrees, while Gulmarg recorded 19 degrees and 7.6 degrees, respectively. In Jammu, the maximum temperature was 32.7 degrees Celsius, which was normal for this time of the year, while the minimum stood at 23.4 degrees, 0.4 degrees below normal. The weather system has now largely cleared the J&K region, though a short-duration spell of rain or thundershower is possible at a few places on Sunday, particularly during the morning and afternoon hours. Mostly dry weather is expected to prevail across Jammu and Kashmir thereafter till September 12, according to the forecast. The fresh snowfall over the extreme higher reaches is considered a seasonal indicator, with such snowfall during this period often coinciding with the gradual transition towards autumn and the withdrawal of the monsoon season—(KNO)

J&K Set For Grand

for the festival, while the preview committee selected 135 films representing more than 40 countries for screening. “The response has been encouraging. We received around 1,100 films from 92 countries, and the preview committee has short-listed 135 films representing more than 40 countries,” he said. Bukhari said the festival would also provide local students and aspiring filmmakers an opportunity to interact with established names from the industry through masterclasses and panel discussions. “We want to connect the tourism potential of J&K with cinema and give our students and local talent an opportunity to engage directly with leading names from the industry,” he said. The Joint Director added that the government hoped to institutionalise the festival on the lines of major international film festivals. “Our attempt is to institutionalise this film festival every year, like the Cannes Film Festival in Europe. If we make sustained efforts, I am confident we can bring that kind of festival culture to India,” Bukhari said. Notably, the festival programme includes screenings, masterclasses, workshops, in-conversation sessions, panel discussions, roundtables and cultural performances. The major activities will be held at SKICC and INOX in Srinagar, besides a dedicated one-day programme in Gulmarg, while a floating cinema on Dal Lake is also planned as part of the festival experience. Masterclasses by leading filmmakers and academicians will be organised at SKICC, while media professionals and professors from local universities are also expected to participate in panel discussions. Students from universities will get an opportunity to interact with prominent filmmakers and industry professionals, providing them exposure to different aspects of cinema and filmmaking. The festival is also expected to bring more than 300 delegates from different parts of the world to Jammu and Kashmir, creating opportunities for local professionals and emerging filmmakers to network and explore collaborations. The festival carries a prize purse of Rs 96 lakh across nine award categories, with Best Film carrying the highest prize of Rs 25 lakh, while Best Director and Best Debut Film of a Director carry Rs 15 lakh each.

The Best Film—J&K Select award carries a prize of Rs 10 lakh. The selected films will be presented across categories including International Panorama, Bharat Panorama, Cinema of the World, Documentary, Hybrid Documentary and J&K Select. Gulmarg is also being prepared to showcase Jammu and Kashmir's tourism potential before visiting filmmakers and delegates. The Gulmarg Development Authority has worked on a dedicated itinerary highlighting the resort's scenic beauty, adventure activities, hospitality, local culture and tourism infrastructure. Special attention is being paid to branding and beautification along the Narbal-Gulmarg stretch, besides sanitation, cleanliness, healthcare and emergency response arrangements. The administration has also inspected Dal Lake to assess its cleaning and aesthetic presentation ahead of the arrival of filmmakers and guests. The festival is intended to use cinema as a vehicle to showcase Jammu and Kashmir's landscapes, cultural heritage, handicrafts, tourism potential and creative talent before a national and international audience—(KNO)

NCB Busts Two

follow-up recovery in Punjab, the NCB has seized a total 6.92 kg of heroin. The spokesman said two of these operations were conducted in drug-affected slums, with the enforcement action targeting vulnerable pockets exploited for drug trafficking. In the latest operation conducted September 3, the NCB intercepted a passenger bus near New Bus Stand, Samba, and recovered 522 grams of heroin from Aqib Bashir, resident of Kakapora village of Pulwama. Pursuing the backward linkage of the consignment led investigators to Punjab's Ludhiana, where a follow-up operation resulted in recovery of another 197 grams of heroin, the spokesman said. He said the twin Samba-Ludhiana operations resulted in seizure of 719 grams of heroin, while further investigation is underway to identify and apprehend other persons connected with the supply, transportation and intended distribution of the consignment. The Punjab trail comes close on the heels of another NCB operation involving seizure of 5.16 kg of heroin from Jammu's Punjirthi area. Investigation in the case indicated that the consignment had originated from Pakistan and entered Jammu and Kashmir through the Uri sector. NCB pursued the trail beyond the point of seizure up to Leh, where the alleged supplier was apprehended, the spokesman said. He said the two investigations have therefore exposed two different supply channels pushing heroin into the region — one originating across the Pakistan border and another operating through the Punjab-Jammu and Kashmir corridor. Additionally, as part of the sustained offensive on drug trafficking in the region, the NCB conducted two separate operations in drug-affected slums in Jammu and Samba districts, recovering 438 grams and 603 grams of heroin, respectively. The spokesman said NCB's strategy is not merely intercepting drugs or apprehending carriers. “Every consignment is being pursued backwards towards its source, forwards towards intended recipients and through its financial trail, with the objective of identifying and dismantling the entire trafficking chain. The Pakistan-Uri trail pursued up to Leh and the latest Samba trail pursued backwards to Ludhiana demonstrate this approach,” the spokesman said. He said further investigation is underway to identify the source, intended recipients, financiers and other associates of these networks and to trace their wider interstate and cross-border linkages. The NCB appealed to the public to join the fight against drug trafficking. “Any information relating to the sale, storage, transportation or trafficking of narcotic drugs may be shared on the MANAS National Narcotics Helpline — 1933. The identity of the informant will be kept confidential,” the spokesman said.

Govt Committed

not merely imparting knowledge; they are shaping minds, nurturing values and preparing the citizens who will build the future of our society. Their role in nation-building is therefore unparalleled,” the Minister said. She added that the Teachers' Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the dedication, commitment and sacrifices of the teaching fraternity. The Minister said that the Government recognises teachers as one of the most important pillars of the education system and is committed to creating an enabling environment where teachers can discharge

their responsibilities with dignity, confidence and professional excellence. She underlined the need for continuous improvement in the quality of education, strengthening of school infrastructure, adoption of innovative teaching methodologies and greater focus on holistic development of students. She said that the Government is working towards ensuring that children in every part of Jammu and Kashmir have access to quality education and adequate learning opportunities. Referring to issues concerning the teaching community, the Minister said that the Government is conscious of the concerns being raised by teachers and aspiring educators and is committed to addressing them through due institutional processes. On the issue of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), Sakeena Itoo stated that the Government will bring a resolution on TET in the upcoming session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, reiterating that the concerns associated with the matter would be examined and taken forward through the appropriate process. She called upon teachers to remain at the forefront of educational transformation and urged them to encourage curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and ethical values among students. The Minister also emphasised the importance of strengthening the connect between teachers, parents and communities, saying that a child's development is a shared responsibility. She maintained that education must equip students not only with academic knowledge but also with confidence, compassion, discipline and the ability to contribute meaningfully to society. Highlighting the changing nature of education, she encouraged teachers to make effective use of technology and modern pedagogical tools while retaining the human and value-based dimensions of teaching. Sakeena Itoo expressed appreciation for teachers serving in difficult and remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir, acknowledging their dedication in ensuring continuity of education despite geographical and logistical challenges. She said that the Government would continue to engage with the teaching fraternity and other stakeholders to strengthen the education system and address genuine concerns in a structured and time-bound manner. The Minister also felicitated outstanding teachers including Namarita Sharma, Amol Sharma, Abhinav Gupta, Anita Rani, Jagat Dev Singh, Sandeep Kumar, Kulbeet Singh, Reyaz Ahmad Khan, Tawheed Parvaiz, Rabia Mukhtar, Gh. Mohd. Dar, Muzaffar Ahmad Wani, Javid Ahmad Rather, Altaf Ahmad Bhat, Towfeeqe Ali, Showket Hussain Bhat (Lecturer), Dr. Sameena Wani (Principal), Badhar Singh (Lecturer), Shahid Qureshi (Senior Lecturer) and Anwar Khan (Principal) for their exemplary contribution to the field of education and wished the entire teaching fraternity on Teachers' Day. Speaking on the occasion, Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani highlighted the vital role of teachers in building an enlightened, responsible and progressive society. Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Bhanu Rakhwal; Director School Education Jammu, Naseem Javid Chowdhary; Joint Director Education (Central), Principals of various higher secondary schools, lecturers, teachers and large number of students were also present on the occasion.

India Votes In Favour

that “this distortion contributes to minimising the perceived sizes of Africa, Latin America and South Asia, and perpetuating an unbalanced view of the world.” In an explanation of the vote in the General Assembly, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, Raghu Puri, said India “welcomes” the intention behind the resolution to promote more accurate and representative cartographic practices. “We believe that maps play an important role in how societies understand geography and the relative scale of the world around us,” he said. However, India clarified its understanding of the scope of this resolution, saying, “We believe that the resolution should be understood as supporting the broader use and consideration of Equal Area map projections, and not as endorsing the Equal Earth projection or any other specific map projection.”

EAM To Address

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, who was elected in June to head the 193-member UN organisation. US President Donald Trump will address world leaders from the iconic UNGA podium on September 22, his second address to the UN session in his second term in the White House. Considered the “busiest diplomatic season” of the year at the United Nations Headquarters, the high-level session opens

annually in September. The session this year comes amid continuing geopolitical conflicts across the world, including the months-long US-Israel war against Iran that has had a devastating cascading impact on countries of the Global South as well as the least developed nations, affected by rising food and fuel costs in the wake of the continued disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. Meetings scheduled to take place during the UNGA session include high-level session to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development; meeting on climate action and the just transition. High-level meeting to address the existential threats posed by sea level rise; pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The heads of Government of Bangladesh and Nepal will address the General Debate on September 24 followed by Pakistan a day later. This will also be the last high-level UN General Assembly session for current UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, whose second five-year tenure as head of the global organisation ends in December this year. The process to elect the next UN chief is underway, with all eyes on whether a female will be selected to the lead the 80-year old body for the first time in its history.

Apple Harvest Begins

apples are currently fetching around Rs 1,200–1,400 per box, while demand for quality Gala apples has also remained encouraging. Fruit growers said the early market trend has raised hopes of a better season, particularly after the uncertainty and losses witnessed last year. Basheer Ahmad Basheer, President of the Fruit Growers Association Kashmir, said that the apple season has started on a positive note compared to last year. “Unlike last year, when the closure of the highway badly affected the movement of fruit and growers suffered heavy losses, the market this year has started on an encouraging note. The demand is good, and growers are getting reasonable returns for their produce,” he said. Basheer said growers were hopeful that the positive trend would continue as the harvesting season progresses across different parts of Kashmir. “We are hopeful that the market will remain stable throughout the season. If the demand continues and transportation remains smooth, growers can expect handsome returns this year,” he said. Another fruit grower from south Kashmir said the initial rates had provided some confidence to orchardists, particularly those cultivating early varieties. “The beginning is certainly better than what we witnessed last year. Kulu is getting around Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,400 per box, and there is good demand for Gala as well. We hope the rates remain stable when harvesting picks up in the main apple-producing areas,” he said. Growers, however, said the real picture of the season would become clearer once harvesting gains momentum in the major apple-producing belts, and the volume of arrivals increases in fruit markets. They urged the authorities to ensure uninterrupted transportation, adequate market facilities and timely movement of fruit outside the Valley so that the initial positive trend is sustained. “Good rates at the beginning of the season are encouraging, but what matters is whether growers continue to receive remunerative prices throughout the harvesting period. Smooth transportation and proper market management will be crucial,” another grower said. Apple growers have also expressed hope that improved market conditions will help them recover some of the losses incurred in previous seasons and meet rising cultivation, labour, packaging and transportation costs—(KNO)

25,000 MTs Of Apples

speaking after a stakeholder consultation meeting convened by the Directorate of Horticulture Planning and Marketing at Rajbagh, Srinagar, under his chairmanship to deliberate on the effective utilisation of railway goods/freight and Ro-Ro services for transportation of horticultural produce. The Director Horticulture said greater utilisation of railway services could provide an additional and reliable transportation option during the peak harvest season, when large quantities of apples need to be moved to markets outside the region. The increased focus on rail transportation comes amid persistent challenges in transporting Kashmir's apple produce by road. During the peak season, heavy traffic on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, frequent highway closures, traffic restrictions, landslides and adverse weather conditions can delay the movement of fruit to markets outside the region—(KNO)

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'Intensity, energy is different': Ishan sees 'hunger and motivation' in Shami for India return

IAN S

CHENNAI: Despite being away from the International team, Ishan Kishan sees the "hunger and motivation" in veteran fast bowler Mohammed Shami in his bid for an India comeback after repeated strong performances in the domestic circuit.

Shami has not played an international game since India's 2025 Champions Trophy win in early 2025 and has not been picked in any squads despite turning up and performing in the domestic arena across formats.

However, Ishan, who is leading Shami in the Duleep Trophy for East Zone, can see the "intensity and energy" in the 36-year-old, stating that the veteran still keeps an India return in his wish list. "I feel age is just a number," Ishan said on the eve of the Duleep Trophy final against South Zone.

"If he is working hard, it doesn't matter - he has been doing so well. Having him in our team, it gives us a bit more confidence when you have such bowlers in your team who can get you wickets and especially looking



at Shami bhai this season, his intensity, his energy has been very different.

Ishan emphasised Shami's motivation to play for the domestic sides despite not being in the scheme of things for the national selectors for now. "It has been three years since that (2023) World Cup (when he was in excellent form); it is hard when you are not regularly playing for Indian team and to again have that same kind of motivation for your domestic games, it is tough. But I feel I see that hunger in him because who better than me can judge about hunger right now?"

"I think he has that hunger and that motivation right now. He wants to do that comeback; he wants to

be part of the Indian squad again, and which you can see it in him when he is trying to help me, also when I'm leading the side... he is trying to come to me, give me options of what you can do right now," he added.

Shami has been prolific in the domestic arena. He picked 37 wickets in the Ranji Trophy 2025-26 at an average of 16.72 and was the second-highest wicket-taker for Bengal. In the 2025-26 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, a T20 tournament, Shami was Bengal's leading wicket-taker, with 16 scalps in seven innings, and he was also the highest wicket-taker for his state in the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26, a 50-over tournament, where he took 15 wickets in seven innings.

Raina backs Pant to return to white-ball setup, urges him to play with freedom

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Former India batter Suresh Raina believes wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant possesses the required talent to replicate his stellar Test cricket form in white-ball formats, provided he plays without hesitation and navigates through mental blockages.

Despite being a match-winner for India in Tests, Pant has been unable to establish himself in the white-ball setup. Though he's played 31 ODIs and 76 T20Is, Pant last played both white-ball formats for India in 2024. He was an unused member of the 2025 Men's Champions Trophy-winning Indian team, before being left out of the ODI team from the series against Afghanistan in June.

"He is my favourite player. I think what Rishabh has done is that he's playing well and scoring tremendously in the Test matches. No, no, he is working hard. Dhruv Jurel is doing well; Sanju Samson is there. But Rishabh has that x-factor. What I feel and think is that he's slowly maturing. You are talking about the



white ball side of things, but it's even true in the case of IPL," Raina said to Aakash Chopra on his YouTube channel.

Despite Pant's established pedigree in the longest format of the game, his consistency in white-ball international cricket has drawn scrutiny. "I think he has done really well, as everyone knows, as far as Test matches are concerned. But why is the same not happening in T20Is or ODIs?"

"Is he looking for something in his mind? What is it? I think he needs to figure out how to pace an innings there. In the Test matches, he used to play without any hesitation. Now if he has to hit a six there, he will hit on the very first ball,"

noted Raina.

The former left-handed batter, who was a member of the teams that won the 2011 ODI World Cup and 2013 Champions Trophy, suggested that being free in his batting style can help Pant, who didn't have memorable IPL 2025 and 2026 campaigns with Lucknow Super Giants before moving back to Delhi Capitals right after this year's tournament.

"But sometimes a player feels a blockage, and I have seen and felt it - that I couldn't communicate better or that I could have been much better in Test matches. So, if Rishabh tries, he can spend time with someone who can guide him in white-ball cricket.

DC Budgam Attends Finale of Sukhnag Premier League in Beerwah

GMK SPORTS DESK

BUDGAM: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Saturday attended the grand finale of the Sukhnag Premier League (SPL) held at SAIL, Beerwah.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the vital role of sports in channelizing the energy, talent and potential of youth towards productive and constructive pursuits.

He emphasized the need to further strengthen the sporting ecosystem in the district by providing aspiring players with better opportunities, professional coaching and adequate sports facilities.

"Our focus is to create a strong sports ecosystem in Budgam where every young person gets an opportunity to play, com-



pete and excel. Sporting events like the Sukhnag Premier League play an important role in nurturing talent while promoting discipline, teamwork and a healthy lifestyle among youth," the Deputy Commissioner said.

He further stated that the District Administration is committed to developing quality sports infrastructure across Budgam and providing youth with improved facilities at local sports grounds.

"Our endeavour is to create quality sports

infrastructure across the district so that our youth can pursue their sporting ambitions in a better and more conducive environment," he added.

The Deputy Commissioner also appreciated the enthusiastic participation of local youth and the community, noting that their active involvement contributed significantly to the success of the tournament.

The organizers expressed their gratitude to the District Administration for its support and cooperation in making the Sukhnag Premier League a successful sporting event.

The league also witnessed the participation of prominent Ranji Trophy players, including Jahan-gir Lone, Imtiyaz Lefty, Waseem Kachru and Irfan Mir, adding further significance and sporting value to the tournament.

Sr Men Inter-Department Hockey: RSPB rout TNP, SAI, AIPSCB win again

IAN S

HYDERABAD: Railway Sports Promotion Board handed a 12-1 drubbing to Tamil Nadu Police to start their campaign in the 6th Hockey India Senior Men Inter-Department National Championship 2026 with two successive wins in Hyderabad.

Amandeep Lakra and Simranjot Singh both struck hat-tricks, as Shreyas Dhupe scored twice in the huge win, with Rohit, Rahim Sayyad Niyaz (C), Rawat Yogender and Lovepreet Singh also sounding the board in the 12-1 win in the Pool D clash. This came a day after RSPB had defeated Canara Bank 5-1 with Amandeep, Parddeep Singh and Lovepreet Singh scoring.

Central Secretariat also began their campaign with two straight wins after handing Sasashtra Seema Bal a 5-1 drubbing in a Pool A game. For CS, skipper Chandan Singh and Bharath Mahalin-gappa Kurtakoti scored



braces, while Manikanta Venkataashwarlu added a fifth.

The Sports Authority of India, which had routed Defence Accounts Sports Control Board 20-1 on the opening day in the Pool B clash, defeated Central Reserve Police

Force 5-0 in their second Pool B outing as they also started with wins in both of their matches.

All India Police Sports Control Board also bagged their second win as they handed a 4-0 defeat to Steel Plant Sports Board in Pool C. Arun Sahani

starred with a hat-trick, while Singh Suraj scored the other goal.

Food Corporation of India had another successful day at the office as they defeated Steel Plant Sports Board 4-0 in the Pool D clash. Nitin and Navraj Singh scored

braces in another strong win for them. They had beaten Tamil Nadu Police in their opener.

Comptroller & Auditor General of India topped the goal fest against Punjab & Sind Bank in Pool B as they emerged victorious 5-4 in a nine-goal show. They had also started their campaign with a 4-1 win over Central Reserve Police Force previously.

Meanwhile, Services Sports Control Board, who won their opener 6-3 against Steel Plant Sports Board, lost to Central Board of Direct Taxes in their second Pool C outing 2-5.

Petroleum Sports Promotion Board played an absorbing 4-4 draw with Punjab National Bank as Chirmako Sudeep, Turkey Dipsan, Dilbar Barla and Singh Talwinder scored for PSPB, while Sachin, Singh Gursimran, Panchal Prikshant and Mahipal sounded the back of the board for PNB. PSPB had won their opener 7-1 against Sasashtra Seema Bal.

DC Sgr discusses roadmap for creating sports infrastructure in Srinagar

GMK SPORTS DESK

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Saturday chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, Srinagar to discuss and formulate the Action Plan for 2026-31 under the Khelo India Movement for District Srinagar.

The meeting was convened to deliberate on a comprehensive and structured roadmap aimed at strengthening sports infrastructure, promoting greater participation in sports and creating sustainable opportunities for young and aspiring athletes across the District. Detailed discussions were held on measures to improve existing sports facilities, identify infrastructure gaps, create and upgrade facilities for priority sports, organise sports competitions, identify sporting talent and provide



avenues for its systematic development.

On the occasion, the DC stressed the need for a coordinated and result-oriented approach involving all concerned Departments and stakeholders to ensure effective formulation and implementation of the Action Plan. He emphasised that the plan should focus on expanding access to sports facilities at the grassroots level, particularly in rural and underserved areas, while providing young people with adequate opportunities to participate in various sporting disciplines.

The DC also emphasised

the need for strengthening and developing sports infrastructure in the Downtown/Shahr-e-Khaas areas of Srinagar District, with a view to providing accessible sporting facilities to youth in these densely populated areas.

He directed the concerned Officers to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the existing sports infrastructure and identify locations requiring new facilities, upgradation or renovation. He also called for proper mapping of sports facilities and sporting disciplines being practised across

the District so that interventions under the Khelo India framework are planned in a systematic, need-based manner and unnecessary duplication of facilities is avoided.

The DC underlined the importance of encouraging youth participation in sports as a means of promoting physical fitness, discipline, teamwork and overall personality development. He said that strengthening the sporting ecosystem at the grassroots level would help identify and nurture sporting talent while providing promising athletes with better opportunities to excel at the dis-

trict, national and international levels.

The DC stressed that all interventions under the five-year plan should be aligned with the objectives of the Khelo India initiative and should deliver tangible and sustainable benefits to the sporting community. He also called for regular monitoring and coordinated efforts to ensure that the planned interventions translate into improved sporting opportunities and facilities for youth across the district.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Assistant Commissioner Development, Tariq Ahmad, Chief Education Officer, Ghulam Mohi-Ud Din, District Youth Services & Sports Officer, Ghulam Hassan, Executive Engineer JK Sports Council, Kashmir, representatives of Kashmir University, SKUAST-K and other Officers.

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