

Good Morning

Kashmir

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CAG Flags MGNREGA Failures In J&K

Only 5.34 Lakh Of 27.14 Lakh Works Completed



RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: Of the 27.14 lakh works planned under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Jammu and Kashmir between 2019-20 and 2023-24, only 20.16 lakh works were taken up for execution, while just 5.34 lakh were completed, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

The CAG, in its report for the period ending March 2024, noted that 14.82 lakh works remained incomplete, accounting for nearly 74 per cent of the works taken up during the period.

The audit, further found that Rs 1,897.10 crore had been incurred on these incomplete works as of March 2024.

The reasons for the non-completion of the works could not be established from the records made available to the audit, the CAG observed. The report was recently

tabled by the Jammu and Kashmir Government in the Legislative Assembly.

The audit also pointed to substantial pending liabilities under the scheme. As of March 2024, an amount of Rs 704.39 crore remained unpaid, comprising Rs 49.19 crore towards unskilled wages, Rs 646.92 crore towards material and semi-skilled/skilled wages, and Rs 8.28 crore in administrative expenses.

The report noted that against expenditure of Rs 1,333.25 crore incurred on material, including skilled and semi-skilled wages, during 2019-20 to 2023-24, nearly half—Rs 646.92 crore or 49 per cent—was still outstanding. The pending payments had remained unsettled for periods ranging from one to five years.

According to the audit, the prolonged pendency reflected shortcomings in the financial management of the scheme, particularly in settling payments

AI-Human Synergy Needed In Agriculture, Says LG Sinha

Calls For Empowering Women Innovators, Ensuring Their Leadership In Agricultural Technology

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday called for synergy between artificial intelligence (AI) and human intelligence to address emerging challenges in agriculture and horticulture, including climate change, resource constraints and sustainability.

Addressing the inaugural function of the international symposium on “AI and Robotics for Gen-Z Farming” at the Shalimar Convention Centre, SKUAST-Kashmir, LG Sinha said he would like to stress that artificial intelligence and human intelligence should work together.

Extending a warm welcome to distinguished guests, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated ISAE on completing six decades of service to the nation and commended SKUAST-Kashmir for its pioneering role among India’s leading agricultural universities.

In his remarks, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the significance of the convention’s



themes- Women-Led Engineering Innovations in Smart Farming and AI and Robotics for Gen-Z Farming. He noted that these subjects underline India’s transition from overcoming food security challenges to assuming a leadership role in global agriculture. He emphasized that Jammu Kashmir, with its rich agricultural heritage and

challenging terrain, is the most suitable venue for such deliberations.

Reflecting on the journey of agricultural engineering since ISAE’s inception in 1960, the Lieutenant Governor recalled how scientists and engineers contributed to the Green Revolution through mechanisation and innovations

- Create technology that can endure in real fields, under real monsoon conditions
- Do not measure your success solely by patents or published research papers
- Small farmer in Anantnag, Amritsar or Akola is genuinely better off because of your tools
- Young generation to draw inspiration from past achievements while addressing contemporary challenges
- Institutions and private-sector stakeholders must support women-led start-ups and create laboratories
- Artificial intelligence and robotics in agriculture sector must be developed with affordability, accessibility at their core

■ Rain And Snow Likely Weather Set To Change Across J&K From Oct 6



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: After a prolonged dry spell and unusually warm daytime temperatures, weather conditions are expected to change across Jammu and Kashmir from Tuesday, with the Meteorological Centre Srinagar forecasting thunderstorms and gusty winds at some places and the possibility of rain, while higher reaches may receive light snowfall.

According to the latest forecast issued by the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, weather is expected to remain generally dry on Monday, Oct 5, before partly to generally cloudy conditions develop from Oct 6. Light rain and light snowfall over higher reaches are likely at a few places during the initial phase of the change.

The latest IMD warning indicates the possibility of thunderstorms, lightning and squall on Oct 6, followed by further thunderstorm and lightning activity on Oct 8 and from Oct 9 to 11. No warning has been issued for Oct 5.

The weather shift comes after temperatures

Statehood Delayed Due To Security Concerns: Ravinder Raina

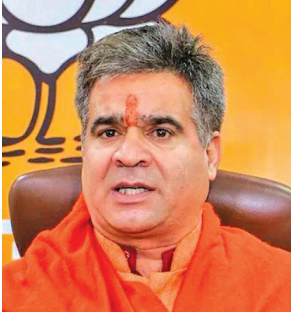
SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: BJP leader Ravinder Raina on Monday said the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir had been delayed due to security concerns and other factors, while reiterating that his party remained committed to fulfilling the promise.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to Kupwara district in north Kashmir, Raina, expressed hope that statehood would be restored at an appropriate time.

His remarks come amid renewed debate over the issue following the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly’s passage of a resolution seeking the restoration of full statehood.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah moved the resolution on September 25, and it was passed on September 28. The resolution also referred to earlier Assembly resolutions on autonomy and special status, drawing strong



objections from the BJP.

The BJP staged a walkout during the discussion, with Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma saying the party supported the restoration of statehood but opposed references linking the demand to autonomy and Article 35A.

Abdullah, however, maintained that the central issue was the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir’s constitutional status before its reorganisation and accused the BJP of using the autonomy reference to avoid backing the statehood resolution.

Meanwhile,

J&K Notifies Common Duct Policy To Build Modern Urban Infra

CM Calls Policy Major Step Towards Modern Urban Infrastructure

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has notified the Common Duct Policy 2026, which will support planned urban growth and digital connectivity in the Union Territory.

“Following approval by the Council of Ministers, the Government has notified the Jammu and Kashmir Common Duct Policy 2026, establishing a framework for shared utility corridors for power, water, telecom, gas and digital networks,” Chief Minister Omar Abdullah posted on his official X handle on Monday.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the Jammu and Kashmir Common Duct Policy 2026 as a major step towards modernising urban infrastruc-



ture, improving utility management and creating cleaner and more orderly cityscapes across Jammu and Kashmir.

Following approval by the Council of Ministers, the Government has notified the Jammu and Kashmir Common Duct Policy 2026, establishing a framework for shared underground utility corridors for power, water, telecom, gas, sewerage

and digital networks.

The policy mandates integration of common ducts in the planning and construction of new roads, while also providing for phased retrofitting of existing infrastructure. It introduces a coordinated framework for Right of Way (RoW) clearances through a single-window mechanism and provides for cost-sharing arrangements

CS Calls For Accelerated Action Towards Zero-Casualty Corridors

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Monday chaired a high-level meeting to take comprehensive stock of the Road Safety Action Plan, accident data, i-RAD, black spot rectification, trauma care, digital enforcement and other road safety interventions across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, PWD; Principal Secretary, Home; Secretary, Transport Department; Inspector General of Police, Traffic; Transport Commissioner; Representatives from BRO; NHAI; NHIDCL and other concerned senior officers.

The Chief Secretary directed all the executing agencies to accord top priority to the time-bound rectification of identified black spots and hazardous stretches, stressing that every identified engineering deficiency



should be addressed through short- and long-term corrective measures.

He also enjoined upon all concerned to maintain sustained momentum on road safety interventions and ensure that identified deficiencies are not allowed to persist.

Dulloo called upon all District Road Safety Committees (DRSCs), chaired by the respective District Magistrates, to meet mandatorily every month, closely monitor the i-RAD real-time

PM Modi Gifts Kashmiri Walnut Wood Wall Panel To Swiss President

IANIS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted some of India’s finest cheese varieties and a walnut wood wall panel to Swiss President Guy Parmelin who began his first State Visit to India on Monday.

Switzerland is famous around the world for its cheese and PM Modi gifted three special Indian cheese varieties to President Parmelin, offering a glimpse into India’s own rich and growing tradition of cheese-making.

It included Gulmarg - French-style Brie, a heart-shaped, soft and creamy Brie made from pasteurised cow’s milk, with a snowy-white rind and earthy, mushroom-like notes. It received a Super Gold



award at the 2026 Mundial do Queijo do Brasil; Konark - a French Tomme-style cheese, a rustic, natural-rind cheese with a supple texture, earthy and savoury flavours and a lemony finish. It won Gold at

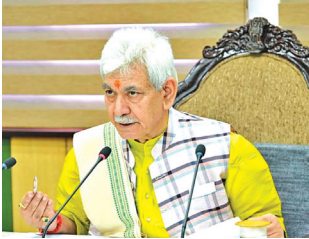
the 2023 World Cheese Awards in Norway and Silver in Switzerland in 2025; and, Yeoor - a mountain-style cheese, an aged cheese inspired by Swiss Gruyere, matured for around eight to nine months to devel-

op nutty, sweet and herbaceous flavours. Its rose-petal and fennel-decorated rind gives it a distinctive Indian-Alpine character.

The Kashmiri wood wall panel showcases Kashmir’s centuries-old woodcarving heritage, crafted from premium Himalayan walnut wood and intricately hand-carved in deep relief. Depicting traditional landscapes, flora, human figures, horses, carriages and village life, it reflects Kashmir’s distinctive artistic traditions shaped by indigenous and Central Asian influences, celebrating the skill and craftsmanship of Kashmiri artisans.

PM Modi also gifted a Kutchi Shawl and Sadeli Box to President Parmelin’s wife, showcasing Gujarat’s

LG Prorogues J&K Assembly



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday prorogued the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, marking the conclusion of the current session.

A bulletin issued by the Assembly Secretariat on Monday said that the LG exercised powers under clause (a) of sub-section (2) of Section 18 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, to prorogue the House.

“I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me under clause (a) of sub-section (2) of

150 Bangladeshis Deported From J&K ‘Aadhaar Discrepancies Raised Suspicion, Prompted Nationality Verification’



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Authorities have deported around 150 Bangladeshi nationals from Jammu and Kashmir after discrepancies in their Aadhaar details raised suspicion and prompted verification of their nationality, officials said on Monday.

An official said that the deportees, who were working as labourers in Kashmir, were flown out in a special Indian Air Force aircraft and taken to Bagdogra in West Bengal, where they were handed over to the Border Security Force for repatria-

tion.

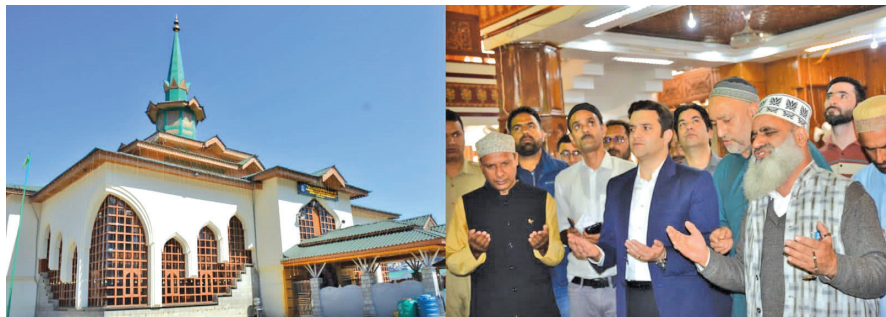
The official said the workers were asked to produce their Aadhaar cards during a registration exercise and discrepancies in the information provided by them led authorities to conduct further verification.

Their details were subsequently shared with authorities in Bangladesh, which confirmed their nationality, following which action was initiated under provisions of the Foreigners Act, he said.

The BSF is responsible for escorting the deportees from designated transit points in West Bengal to

DC Budgam visits Charar-i-Sharief, reviews arrangements for Urs

Directs departments to ensure smooth facilities for devotees



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Monday visited Charar-i-Sharief to review arrangements for the forthcoming Urs and facilities for devotees.

The Deputy Commissioner paid obeisance at the revered shrine of Sheik Nooruddin Noorani (RA) and inspected the ongoing development works, including the under-construction Guest House comprising 12 rooms and two halls.

During visit, the DC interacted with local residents and stakeholders and assured them that their genuine concerns would be examined on priority.

The Deputy Commissioner subsequently chaired a meeting at Town Hall Charar-i-Sharief with concerned officers to review preparations for the Urs. He directed PDD to ensure uninterrupted power supply

and keep backup arrangements in place. Officers from Jal Shakti Department were instructed to ensure adequate water supply and availability of water tankers.

For seamless transport facility, the ARTO was directed to ensure adequate public transport and proper parking arrangements to facilitate smooth traffic movement. CMO Budgam was asked to establish a medical camp near the shrine.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed concerned Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Charar-i-Sharief, to ensure cleanliness, sanitation and proper illumination in the town and around the shrine.

Similarly, the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department was directed to ensure timely distribution of ration of October month.

while the Food Safety Department was asked to intensify market inspec-

tions and prevent adulteration, overcharging and sale of substandard food items.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed close coordination among all concerned departments and directed officers to remain available on the ground and ensure prompt redressal of issues during the Urs.

He reiterated that all arrangements should be completed well in advance to ensure a safe, peaceful and hassle-free pilgrimage for devotees.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner also visited the revered shrine of Syed Mohammad Ali Aali Balkhi (RA), Pakherpora and paid his obeisance. He took stock of ongoing works and stressed on their timely completion.

The DC was accompanied by SDM Chadoora, CMO, concerned R&B, PHE and KPDCI officers, Tehsildar Charar-i-Sharief, ARTO, EO MC Charar-i-Sharief and other officers.

DC Kulgam reviews implementation of Mission YUVA

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Monday chaired a meeting at the Conference Hall, Kulgam to review the implementation and progress of Mission YUVA.

The meeting was held in connection with the visit of the GDI Team to the district for an assessment of Mission YUVA. A detailed review was undertaken of beneficiary-wise progress, applications under process, loan sanctions, bank linkages, enterprise establishment and the overall implementation of Mission YUVA.

The DC directed the concerned officers to ensure effective handholding of beneficiaries, expeditious disposal of pending cases and stronger coordination among SBDUs, BHDs, banks, JKEDI and other implementing agencies so that eligible youth receive timely financial and insti-



tutional support.

Emphasizing an outcome-oriented approach, the DC stated that the success of Mission YUVA would be measured not merely by the number of applications processed or loans sanctioned, but by the actual establishment of viable enterprises, generation of sustainable livelihoods and creation of employment opportunities for local youth.

Tejal Sharma, Officer from the GDI Team made a brief presentation highlighting the implementation status, achievements, progress of beneficiaries and key areas requiring further intervention.

As part of the review, Mission YUVA beneficia-

ries representing different stages of the entrepreneurial journey including fresh applicants, entrepreneurs who have already commenced their enterprises, and beneficiaries whose loans have been sanctioned and enterprises are under establishment, interacted with the GDI Team and shared their experiences, progress and challenges.

The meeting was attended by the ADDC, Altaf Ahmad Khan and other officers including Assistant Director, DE&CC Kulgam, DNO, JKEDI, Lead Bank Manager, Kulgam, SBDU/ BHD members and other concerned officials associated with the implementation of Mission YUVA.

DDC Kulgam visits Animal Birth Control Centre

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Monday visited the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Centre at Kulgam and took stock of the arrangements being put in place for its operationalisation.

During the visit, the DDC inspected the various facilities at the centre and reviewed the preparedness

with regard to infrastructure, equipment, sanitation, animal handling facilities and other essential arrangements required for commencing operations.

The DDC directed the concerned officers to ensure that all requisite arrangements are completed in a time-bound manner and that the centre is made fully functional with focus on maintaining proper hygiene, animal welfare and effective management

of the facility.

The concerned officers briefed the DDC regarding the status of the arrangements and the steps being taken for early operationalisation of the centre. The Animal Birth Control Centre is aimed at facilitating scientific and humane management of the stray dog population through sterilisation and vaccination, thereby contributing towards a safer and cleaner environment in the district.

KPDCL announces power shutdown in Kashmir Parts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCI Monday informed that the Shutdown of 33 kV Airforce line will be observed due to which power supply to Peerbagh, Cooperative Colony, Jeelanaabad, Hyderpora, Nadru, PHQ, Airport, Sheikhpura, Friends Colony, Humhama Heights, Tawheed Bagh and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 AM to 03 PM on 07 October 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of

33 kV Wanganpora-Khanar-Rainawari line will be observed due to which power supply to Kondabal, Hasanabad, Hazaribagh, JLNH Hospital, Joglanker, Maqdoom Sahib, Miskeen Bagh, Rozbal and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 02 PM on 06 & 12 October 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV Cheshmashahi-TRC-Nedous line will be observed due to which power supply to CM residence, Dy. CM residence, Paras Hospital and 11 KV F4 Sonwar will be affected

from 11 AM to 02 PM on 07 October 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Alusteng-Zakoora feeder and 33 KV Alusteng-Nagbal line will be observed due to which power supply to Pandach, Pathan Colony, Gulabagh, Mir Mohalla, Umarhair, Nowbugh, Ahmad Nagar, 90 ft road, Kholmullah, Shuhama, Bakura, Darend, Nagbal, Fetehpura Gadoora Tulbagh, Chunduna, Saloora, Shairpathri and adjoining areas will be affected from 12 Noon to 02 PM on 06 October 2026.

VC JKLCMA conducts inspection of Dole Demb area

Assesses scope for beautification, development of site

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Vice Chairman (VC), Jammu and Kashmir Lake Conservation and Management Authority (JKLCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Monday conducted an extensive inspection of the Dole Demb area to review the existing condition of the water body and its surrounding areas and assess the scope for beautification and development of the site.

The Vice Chairman was accompanied by the Superintending Engineer, Collector Land Acquisition, FA&CAO, Executive Engineers of Lake Division 1st and Lake Division 2nd, Technical Officer, Assistant Executive Engineers, Junior Engineers, and other officers and officials



of the Authority.

Emphasizing the importance of developing the site in a planned and sustainable manner, the Vice Chairman directed that the beautification proposal should incorporate modern landscaping, suitable plantation, improved pathways, aesthetic features, and

other necessary amenities. He stressed that the area should be developed as a state of the art public space while maintaining the ecological character of the water body. He observed that the development of Dole Demb would also contribute towards enhancing the overall tourism poten-

tial of the area and attract more visitors to Dal Lake.

The Vice Chairman directed the concerned officers to immediately undertake bush cutting along the site and carry out other necessary site clearance works to improve the overall appearance and accessibility of the area, so that further dredging and restoration works in the Dole Demb area can be taken up. He further instructed the Engineering Wing to prepare detailed estimates for the proposed beautification and development works at Dole Demb.

The Vice Chairman further directed the concerned officers to ensure close coordination among the Engineering, Revenue, and field wings so that the proposed works are planned and executed in a time

bound manner. He emphasized that the development should focus on environmental improvement while enhancing the visual appeal and overall utility of the area for tourism.

Reiterating the Authority's commitment towards the conservation and beautification of water bodies and their surrounding areas, the Vice Chairman stated that LCMA will continue to undertake integrated conservation, restoration, and development measures to improve urban water bodies and create clean, attractive, and environmentally sustainable spaces for the public and tourists. He emphasized that such initiatives would also contribute towards strengthening the tourism potential of Dal Lake and its adjoining areas.

ADDC Kupwara chairs Development Review Meeting at Karnah

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Kupwara, Ghulam Rasool Monday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Sub-Divisional Headquarters, Karnah, to take stock of ongoing developmental initiatives and implementation of various Government schemes across the Sub-Division.

During the meeting, the ADDC conducted a detailed sector-wise review of developmental works being executed by PWD (R&B), PMGSY, Jal Shakti, KPDCI, Rural Development Department, focusing on physical progress, timelines, quality of execution and bottlenecks affecting completion.

The ADDC directed the executing agencies to proactively accelerate the pace of works while maintaining prescribed quality standards and ensuring timely completion. He stressed regular field monitoring and close inter-departmental coordination for prompt resolution of issues impeding execution.

The meeting also reviewed implementation of various beneficiary-oriented schemes of Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry Departments. The concerned departments were directed to intensify awareness and outreach camps to ensure maximum coverage of eligible beneficiaries and effective delivery of scheme benefits at the grassroots level.

Special emphasis was laid on Farmer ID generation, with directions for coordinated efforts between the Revenue and Agriculture

Departments to expedite the process and achieve the assigned targets within stipulated timelines.

Earlier, SDM Karnah, Mohd Raiyaz presented a detailed sector-wise presentation highlighting the status and progress of ongoing developmental works, implementation of Government schemes and issues requiring intervention.

The meeting was attended by Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Tangdhar, Executive Engineer Hydraulics, Executive Engineer PMGSY Kupwara, Tehsildar Karnah, BMO Karnah, ZEOs, CDPO Tangdhar, representative of RDSS, AEE KPDCI and other officers of the concerned departments.

Following the review meeting, the ADDC conducted spot inspections of various works under execution across Karnah to assess their progress and quality on the ground.

He inspected the ongoing OT works at SDH Tangdhar, NTPHC Hajinar, Naibat Tangdhar, construction of Revenue Hut and ongoing works at Naichayan.

During the inspections, the ADDC interacted with the concerned officers and executing agencies and directed them to maintain quality of execution, adhere to stipulated timelines and expedite completion of the works so that the intended benefits reach the public at the earliest.

The ADDC reiterated that developmental works and public welfare programmes should be monitored closely at the field level, with emphasis on timely execution, quality, accountability and tangible outcomes for the people of Karnah.

OPERATION SADBHAVANA

Kashmir Girl Students Return Inspired After NDA, AFMC, AIT Visit

IRFAN TILGAMI

BARAMULLA: The Indian Army hosted a warm homecoming reception for 20 girl students from the Kashmir Valley upon their return from an educational and Capacity Building Tour (CBT) to premier defence and higher education institutions in Pune, Maharashtra.

Organized under the aegis of Operation Sadbhavana, the tour offered the young cohort an intensive, firsthand look into India's premier military training and academic environments. During their stay in Pune, the students toured the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakwasla, the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), and the Army Institute of Technology (AIT).

A central highlight of the visit was an interactive session with female cadets currently undergoing training at the NDA, alongside serving women



officers and faculty members. For many participants, witnessing women training on the drill squares and in advanced academic laboratories served as a powerful motivator to consider career pathways in the Armed Forces, engineering, and medical sciences.

During the welcome-back debriefing in the Valley, students and accompanying faculty shared their experiences, recounting the rigorous discipline, state-of-the-art facilities, and diverse campus cultures they wit-

nessed. Several students noted that the journey broadened their academic outlook and bolstered their self-confidence to compete at national platforms.

Senior military officials and parents congratulated the students on completing the visit. Reaffirming its commitment to youth empowerment, the Indian Army highlighted that such exposure tours remain vital in bridging regions, fostering national integration, and opening wide-ranging professional horizons for the daughters of Kashmir.

J&K Punjabi Sahit Sabha Srinagar Celebrates 59th Annual Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The J&K Punjabi Sahit Sabha Srinagar, in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), organised a one-day Punjabi Seminar to commemorate the 59th Annual Day of the Punjabi Sahit Sabha Srinagar at Tagore Hall, Srinagar.

The programme brought together eminent Punjabi writers, poets, scholars, intellectuals and literary enthusiasts from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The event highlighted the importance of promoting Punjabi language and literature and showcased the literary and cultural activities undertaken by the Sabha and JKAACL.

Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL; R.S. Rajan, President, Punjabi Sahit Sabha Srinagar; Ajit Singh Mastana, renowned Punjabi poet and writer; and Popinder Singh Paras, Editor, Sheeraza Punjabi, JKAACL, along with other distinguished personalities, were present on the occasion.

Secretary, JKAACL,



appreciated the initiatives of the Punjabi Sahit Sabha Srinagar for the promotion of Punjabi language and literature. She highlighted the various initiatives and support extended by the Academy for literary and cultural activities across Jammu and Kashmir and stressed the importance of collaborative efforts for enriching the regional literary tradition.

The Chief Guest, S. Jaipal Singh, in his address, said that the Punjabi Sahit Sabha and the Cultural Academy are making significant efforts towards the promotion and development of Punjabi language and literature. He appreciated the initiative of organising such programmes and observed that literary and cultural activities provide the

younger generation with meaningful opportunities to remain connected with their language, literature and cultural heritage.

In his address, Additional Secretary, JKAACL, Lal Chand said that the Academy is committed to organising Punjabi literary-cultural programmes at regular intervals, including in far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir, so that the rich Punjabi literary and cultural traditions reach wider sections of society.

R.S. Rajan highlighted the activities and achievements of the Punjabi Sahit Sabha Srinagar and presented an overview of its annual progress. He expressed gratitude to JKAACL for its support and cooperation in organising the annual event.

NIT Srinagar takes Swachhata Hi Seva campaign beyond campus

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The National Service Scheme (NSS) unit of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar organised a three-day series of cleanliness, environmental awareness and community outreach activities under the Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 campaign from October 1 to 3.

The programme wit-



nessed participation from students, faculty members, staff, NSS and NCC

volunteers and members of the campus community, with activities focusing on

cleanliness, sustainability and civic responsibility.

As part of the programme, the NSS unit organised a poster painting competition on cleanliness and environmental awareness. The competition featured separate groups for teachers and staff and students, while children of professors also participated and presented their artwork.

The entries were evaluated by Dr. Nitika Kundan and Dr. Venington K. The winners were awarded following the evaluation.

A "Best out of Waste" competition was also organised, encouraging participants to create innovative and useful products from discarded materials. The entries were judged by Dr. Dinesh Kumar Rajendran and Dr. Ashok Kumar.

J&K intensifies surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir has intensified surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), with a state-level workshop underway in Srinagar to strengthen early detection, case investigation, data collection and public health response.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the workshop, Director Health Services Kashmir (DHSK) Dr Nighat Yasmeen, said the exercise would focus on identifying disease patterns, analysing data and detecting gaps in immunisation coverage.

“The aim is to identify pockets reporting higher numbers of cases, assess immunity levels and understand where corrective measures are needed,” she said.

Dr Yasmeen said the surveillance programme covers six vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles, rubella and tetanus, and is aimed at identifying vulnerable populations and areas requiring targeted interventions.

She said the surveillance mechanism, earlier carried out with technical support from the World



Health Organisation (WHO), is now transitioning to an indigenous system under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

“The transition will take place in phases, beginning at the state level and gradually extending to hospitals and other tiers of the healthcare system. The process is expected to be completed by March 2027,” she said.

Dr Yasmeen said officials were being trained in key aspects of disease surveillance, including identification and reporting of suspected cases, specimen collection, laboratory procedures, data analysis and uploading information to a unified portal.

“The officials are being trained on how to identify cases, collect specimens, analyse data and upload information to the unified portal. Public health experts

will use the findings to help shape future policies,” she said.

She said robust surveillance was essential for identifying immunisation gaps and ensuring preventive interventions reached populations most at risk.

Describing the initiative as a major undertaking, Dr Yasmeen said the Health Department was committed to implementing it effectively.

“It is a very big task, but we will do it. The Government of India is very particular about this,” she said.

The initiative is expected to strengthen the health department’s capacity to detect vaccine-preventable diseases early, systematically track cases and use field-level evidence to improve immunisation and disease-control strategies across Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

AMRUT 2.0

Mandeep Kour chairs stakeholders consultation meeting for GIS Based Master Plans

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), Mandeep Kour, Monday chaired a comprehensive stakeholders’ consultation meeting to deliberate upon the draft GIS-based Master Plans for Baramulla, Sopore and Pattan being prepared under AMRUT 2.0, at Dak Bungalow, Baramulla.

The meeting was attended by Member of Legislative Assembly Baramulla Javid Hassan Beigh; MLA Sopore Irshad Rasool Kar; MLA Pattan Javid Reaz Bedar; MLA Wagoora-Kreeri Irfan Hafeez Lone; Deputy Commissioner Baramulla S.F. Hamid, ADDC Baramulla, ADC Baramulla, ADC Sopore, senior officers from the HUDD and other line departments, public representatives, stakeholders, representatives of various organisations and members of civil society.

The meeting had a comprehensive presentation on the draft Master Plans highlighting the major provisions, proposed plan-

ning interventions, land-use considerations, infrastructure requirements, development priorities and other components envisaged for the systematic and



sustainable development of the three towns.

The Commissioner Secretary held detailed discussions with the participants on various provisions of the draft plans and sought their suggestions and observations.

The elected representatives and other stakeholders also put forward their views and suggestions concerning urban development, infrastructure, connectivity, public amenities, institutional requirements and other local priorities.

MLA Baramulla Javid Hassan Beigh highlighted the limited availability of state land within Baramulla town as a major challenge. He suggested that

envisaged under the Master Plan should be sustainable and balanced with adequate safeguards to protect the region’s agricultural and horticultural land and live-



lihood interests.

Meanwhile, Reaz Bedar highlighted the need for widening of road in Pattan town, provision of a truck terminal, and effective utilisation of available state land for various development projects.

Various other stakeholders and representatives from civil society also raised issues. They offered suggestions concerning land utilisation, infrastructure, connectivity, public amenities, traffic management, institutional

Kathua Police Recover 105 Lost, Stolen Phones Worth ₹23.50 Lakh



GMK NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA: J&K Police in Kathua have recovered 105 lost and stolen mobile phones valued at approximately ₹23.50 lakh, including nine iPhones, as part of a sustained drive to trace missing handsets and return them to their rightful owners.

According to police, the recovered phones had been traced from different States and Union Territories using technical assistance and coordinated efforts by the district police’s IT and cyber teams. The handsets were subsequently handed over to their verified owners.

Police said the latest recovery has taken the total number of lost or

stolen mobile phones recovered by District Police Kathua over the past two years to around 700, with their estimated combined value reaching approximately ₹1.29 crore.

In a parallel cyber-fraud recovery effort, Cyber Police Station Kathua recovered ₹50.43 lakh between May and September 2026 in different financial fraud cases. The recovery forms part of efforts to trace fraudulent transactions and prevent financial losses to victims.

Police have urged citizens to promptly report lost or stolen mobile phones and suspected cyber-fraud incidents to the concerned police authorities and use available official reporting mechanisms. [KNT]

Two Arrested in Alleged Employment Fraud in Budgam: Police

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Police have arrested two persons in connection with an alleged employment fraud in Budgam in which several job aspirants were reportedly duped through fabricated appointment letters and promises of government employment, SSP Budgam Hariprasad K.K. said during a press conference at Beerwah on Monday.

Briefing the media, the SSP said the accused have been identified as Advocate Jehangir Ahmad Dar, son of Ghulam Mohammad Dar of Ratsun, Beerwah, and Firdous Nabi of Zabgul, Beerwah, chairman of the Jammu Kashmir People’s Front (JKPF). Both accused are presently being questioned at Police Station Beerwah following formal complaints, he said.

According to the SSP, the accused allegedly targeted job aspirants from different parts of Budgam by issuing fabricated appointment letters and making assurances of lucrative employment. Police are examining the

complaints and the circumstances in which the alleged fraud was carried out, with the possibility of further arrests as the investigation progresses.

A key development in the investigation, the SSP said, was the recovery of an allegedly forged official communication bearing fake Ministry of Home Affairs stamps. The document was purportedly issued in the name of then Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and addressed to J&K Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat.

Police said the fabricated communication purported to direct the appointment of ten youths from different villages of Budgam as Special Police Officers in the J&K Police, allegedly on the directions of the Union Ministry.

So far, three FIRs have been registered in connection with the alleged fraud, including FIR Nos. 183 and 188 at Police Station Beerwah. A Zero FIR was also registered at Beerwah and subsequently transferred to Police Station Budgam, the SSP said.

‘Youm-e-Meeras’ celebrates Atiqa Bano's vision of preserving Kashmir's heritage

Speaker Rather hails her legacy, says Meeras Mahal will emerge as major heritage museum

WARIS FAYAZ

SOPORE: The legacy of late educationist and heritage conservationist Atiqa Bano was celebrated during “Youm-e-Meeras” in Sopore, with speakers highlighting her contribution towards preserving Kashmir’s rich cultural heritage through Meeras Mahal.

The event, as reported, was organised by Majlis-un-Nisa and Adbi Markazi Kamraz, with Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather attending as the chief guest.

Rather thanked the organisers for holding the event in Sopore and said the town had a significant historical, cultural and political legacy.

“Sopore has historical importance, besides its cultural and political significance,” Rather said, while recalling the town’s historical association with King Avantivarman and the engineer Suyya, who played a role in addressing the recurring floods in the region.



He said Sopore had also produced political leaders who contributed beyond the town and served the larger interests of the people.

The Speaker praised Sopore MLA Irshad Rasool Kar for his participation in Assembly proceedings and his efforts to raise issues concerning his constituency.

“He has the urge to do something for his constituency. He is on the right track and will become an important legislator in Kashmir,” Rather said.

Recalling his association with Atiqa Bano during his tenure as a minister, Rather said she would

approach him over public issues and rarely for personal matters. “She never came for her personal matters. She used to come for the people,” he said.

The Speaker said the collection and assets preserved at Meeras Mahal carried immense historical and cultural significance. He expressed confidence that the institution would develop into a major museum and play an important role in preserving Kashmir’s heritage.

“Time will come when it will become an important museum. It is progressing and is on its way,” Rather said.

134 kg banned plastic recovered in Ladakh, Rs 76,500 collected in fines

RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: The Ladakh Pollution Control Committee (LPCC) has apprised the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that authorities have recovered around 134 kg of banned single-use plastic and collected fines amounting to approximately Rs 76,500 during enforcement drives across the Union Territory.

The committee made the submission in an affidavit filed before the Principal Bench of the NGT, New Delhi, in connection with Original Application No. 993/2024, pertaining to a Times of India report published on July 30, 2024, titled “Package: Where has the Plastic Waste Disappeared”. The affidavit was submitted on behalf of the Union Territory of Ladakh on September 19, 2026.

The Ladakh administration has outlined the enforcement mechanism being used to prevent the use of prohibited single-

use plastic (SUP) items. According to the affidavit, action is being carried out through a UT-level Special Task Force, district-level task forces and designated enforcement teams.

The teams have carried out inspections at restaurants, shops and other establishments, besides keeping a special focus on locations vulnerable to the use or disposal of banned plastic items. Enforcement and awareness drives were also stepped up in tourist destinations and areas witnessing heavy public movement.

The Ladakh Police has also been involved, with personnel directed to inspect vehicles entering Ladakh through entry points from Manali and Srinagar and check for banned single-use plastic items. Plastic items seized during such checks were disposed of through the prescribed procedure.

On the collection of plastic waste, the LPCC

said waste generated across the UT is being collected by the concerned Urban Local Bodies and other designated agencies under the existing municipal solid-waste management system. The collected material is thereafter segregated and transported for further processing in accordance with the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, along with subsequent amendments.

The affidavit outlines that recyclable plastic waste is taken to Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), where initial segregation is carried out largely with the help of trommel machines, followed by additional sorting and processing. After segregation, the recyclable material is transferred to authorised recycling agencies.

The administration stated that the Ladakh Recycling Solutions facility has an installed processing capacity of around 12 tonnes per day (TPD).

J&K Prosecution Deptt secures 3 major convictions in 2 days

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: In a major breakthrough demonstrating unwavering legal diligence, the Prosecution Department of Jammu and Kashmir has secured three significant convictions within a 48-hour span (September 29-30, 2026). The verdicts, delivered by Sessions Courts across Udhampur, Ganderbal and Jammu districts, cover two high-profile murder trials and a major narcotics trafficking case.

The Special Court under the NDPS Act convicted Sajjad Ahmed Bhat for illegal possession of 1.500 kg of charas. Sentenced under Section 20 of the NDPS Act, the convict was sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of Rs.1,00,000. The Special Public Prosecutor Sunil Kumar successfully con-



ducted the prosecution.

The Court of Additional Sessions Judge, Udhampur, found Arwant Singh guilty of murdering a 70-year-old man in village Sarmali, Majalta. The court sentenced him to life imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs. 20,000. The Addl. Public Prosecutor Jaswant Raj and Asst. Public Prosecutor Ritu effectively led the case to its final outcome following a smooth prosecutorial transition.

The Court of Additional Sessions Judge, Ganderbal, convicted Mohd Shafi Magrey under Sections 302 (murder), 379 (theft) and 201 (disappearance of evidence) of the Ranbir Penal

Code (RPC). Addl. Public Prosecutor Shafaq Murtaza anchored the State’s case through a long trial, relying on meticulously presented circumstantial evidence. The hearing on quantum of sentence is scheduled for October 15, 2026.

These successful outcomes reflect years of sustained diligence, effective court navigation and close coordination with investigative agencies. By addressing procedural defenses and technical gaps, the designated Prosecutors ensured that the evidence remained central to each verdict.

To build on these successes, the Department remains dedicated to capacity building, trial monitoring in heinous offenses and tight coordination with police and forensic teams to maintain law and order across the Union Territory.

All Eyes on J&K Govt as Deadline Nears on Medical Interns’ Stipend Hike

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: With the one-month period given by the Jammu and Kashmir Government to finalise the enhancement of the stipend for MBBS and BDS interns nearing its deadline, attention has now shifted to the government’s next move on the long-pending demand.

The interns had called off their strike on September 8 last month after Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo assured their representatives that the issue would be finalised within 30 days on the basis of the recommendations of the Stipend Enhancement Committee. The assurance followed an eight-day agitation by interns across government

medical colleges and hospitals in J&K.

The interns are seeking an increase in their monthly stipend from the existing Rs 12,300 to Rs 30,000. The government’s commitment, however, was to finalise the matter within the stipulated period; it did not itself amount to an immediate approval of the demanded amount.

The administrative process has continued since then. The Finance Department, in a communication dated Sep 15, asked the Health and Medical Education Department to examine the interns’ demand for enhancement of the stipend from Rs 12,300 to Rs 30,000 and take further necessary action as per rules.

The government’s

30-day assurance is now approaching its Oct 9 deadline. Intern representatives have said they are awaiting a formal government order and implementation of the promised enhancement.

The interns have also indicated that failure to fulfil the commitment within the stipulated timeframe could lead to renewed agitation. They have announced that they would begin an indefinite hunger strike from Oct 10 if the government does not issue orders on the stipend enhancement by Oct 9.

For now, the focus remains on whether the government will finalise the matter within the timeline given to the interns and issue the formal order they have been seeking. [KNT]

Man killed, two injured as tractor falls into gorge in Kupwara

KNO CORRESPONDENT

KUPWARA: A man was killed and two others injured after a tractor they were travelling in fell into a deep gorge at Manchatter Kralpora in Kupwara district on Monday, officials said. An official said that the tractor, travelling from Manchatter Kralpora,

fell into a deep gorge, leaving three persons injured.

He said the injured were shifted to SDH Kralpora for treatment, from where one of them was referred to GMC Handwara, where he was declared dead on arrival. The deceased was later identified as Tahir Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Ahad Dar, resi-

dent of Kralpora, while the injured were identified as Gh Qadir Ganie, son of Mohammad Sidiq Ganie, resident of Manchatter and Gh Qadir Ganie, son of Abdul Rahim Ganie, resident of Manchatter. Meanwhile, police have taken up an investigation to ascertain the details leading to the accident—(KNO)

Good Morning

Kashmir

EDITORIAL

When Water Itself Becomes A Crisis

Kashmir, once known for its countless springs, lakes, streams and rivers, is slowly reaching a point where even drinking water can no longer be taken for granted. The irony is painful: a land historically identified with an abundance of water is now witnessing repeated shortages in its towns and villages. The alarm bells were sounded decades ago. Shrinking water bodies, unchecked construction, pollution, encroachments, disappearing springs and poor management were all visible warnings. Yet, those entrusted with planning and governance largely failed to act with the urgency the situation demanded. What was once a warning has now become a daily reality.

The water shortage in Srinagar areas, where residents have reportedly been without regular drinking water for nearly a week, is not merely a neighbourhood inconvenience. It is a reflection of a much larger systemic failure. Families are being forced to make alternative arrangements for something as basic as drinking water, while the concerned department is expected to explain why a regular supply has been disrupted and when it will be restored.

Even more troubling is the recurring pattern of water-supply disruptions. Pipelines mysteriously burst, supplies are interrupted and extreme weather events, including cloudbursts, expose the fragility of the existing system. Every disruption is treated as an isolated incident, while the larger question remains unanswered: why does a modern region continue to depend on such a vulnerable and poorly resilient water-supply network? The world has moved towards smart water management, leak detection, modern distribution systems, conservation and climate-resilient infrastructure. In Kashmir, however, people are still compelled to wait for tankers, search for alternative sources or plead with authorities for restoration of a basic public service.

This is no longer a matter that can be addressed through temporary repairs and assurances. Kashmir's water crisis requires a comprehensive policy—protection of water bodies, revival of springs, scientific assessment of groundwater, replacement of ageing pipelines, prevention of wastage and encroachment, and infrastructure capable of withstanding increasingly unpredictable weather.

The government must also stop reacting only after complaints emerge. Water security has to be planned, monitored and protected before a crisis reaches people's doorsteps. Srinagar deserves immediate relief, but the lesson must go far beyond one locality. If a water-rich Kashmir is unable to guarantee regular drinking water to its people, the failure is not of nature alone, it is a failure of foresight. And the time for foresight is rapidly running out.

■ Standing With Teachers

Sixtieth Anniversary, And An Unfinished Promise



DR. MD NAWAZ SARIF

Sixty years after the world first put teachers' status in writing, the shortfall is measured in the tens of millions, and India's own numbers show why applause alone will not close the gap.

5th October marks World Teachers' Day, and this year, a milestone. It is sixty years since the 1966 ILO–UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers first set down, in writing, what most societies already claimed to believe: that the person standing in front of a classroom deserves security, a living wage, and a voice in how education is run. UNESCO's theme for the anniversary, “Standing with Teachers”, is framed as a celebration. Read against the data released alongside it, it reads more like a warning.

That warning has a number attached to it. UNESCO's first-ever Global Report on Teachers, published this year, estimates that the world needs 44 million more primary and secondary teachers by 2030 just to meet existing enrolment targets: roughly 24 million at the primary level and 20 million at the secondary. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for 15 million of that gap; South Asia, several million more. Teacher attrition worldwide has roughly doubled since 2015. This is not confined to poorer nations with thin budgets. School principals across wealthy OECD countries routinely report that a shortage of staff is holding back instruction, even in systems that spend many times what India does per pupil. The common thread is not a lack of people willing to teach. It is a lack of reasons to stay.

India's own numbers tell a similar story of averages concealing gaps. UDISE+ data for 2024–25 shows over a crore teachers across nearly 14.7 lakh schools teaching close to 24.7 crore children, one of the largest teaching workforces on earth. The national pupil-teacher ratio has improved and now sits close to the National Education Policy's benchmark of 30:1. But states and union territories together reported roughly 3.5 lakh sanctioned teaching posts lying vacant last year, nearly



three lakh of them at the elementary level. Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for well over half that number. Vacancies at the secondary and higher-secondary level, where subject specialists in science, mathematics and languages are hardest to find, nearly doubled in a single year even as elementary numbers improved. Kerala, Odisha and Nagaland report their posts fully filled; the burden for the rest of the country falls disproportionately on a handful of large, populous states. A healthy national average is not the same thing as a healthy system.

Much of that gap is quietly filled by a workforce the system depends on but does not fully own. Nearly a quarter of government school teachers nationally, and in states such as Jharkhand close to half, are contractual or “para” teachers hired at a fraction of a regular salary, often around Rs 8,000 to 11,000 a month against Rs 40,000 or more for a permanent colleague doing identical work. The Supreme Court itself confronted this in February this year, ruling on a plea from part-time instructors in Uttar Pradesh's junior high schools, and held that paying teachers a fixed honorarium below minimum wage amounts to “begar,” or forced labour, barred under Article 23 of the Constitution. It is a significant judgement, but it also states plainly what a functioning policy should never have allowed to happen in the first place: that the state itself has been the largest violator of fair pay in the very profession it asks to build the nation's human capital.

The state itself has been the largest violator of fair pay in the very profession it asks to build the nation's human capital.

Money explains a good part of why the gap persists. The Kothari Commission recommended, in 1966, that India spend 6 per cent of GDP on education; the National Education Policy of 2020 reaffirmed the same figure. Six decades on, public expenditure on education has hovered between roughly 4 and 4.6 per cent of GDP, by the widest available measure, and closer to 2.7 to 2.9 per cent by the narrower one Indian budgets use for themselves. Every recruitment

Nearly a quarter of government school teachers nationally, and in states such as Jharkhand close to half, are contractual or “para” teachers hired at a fraction of a regular salary, often around Rs 8,000 to 11,000 a month against Rs 40,000 or more for a permanent colleague doing identical work.

freeze, every contractual appointment in place of a permanent one, traces back to that unmet arithmetic.

If India wants its ablest young people to choose teaching rather than fall back on it, the profession has to offer more than reverence in speeches. Finland builds its teaching workforce on exactly this logic: a master's-level qualification is mandatory, pedagogical training is rigorous, and in exchange teachers are given real classroom autonomy and treated as trusted professionals, not compliance officers. Singapore goes further at the point of entry, screening candidates through academic review, structured interviews and, in some tracks, a probationary period that tests communication and judgment as much as subject knowledge. Both systems share a premise India has been slower to act on: raising the status of teaching and raising the

bar for entering it are the same project, not two competing ones.

Selection, in fact, may be the more urgent half of that project, because when it breaks down, it breaks public trust in the profession itself. West Bengal's own recruitment process is the cautionary tale here. The Calcutta High Court found systemic manipulation, tampered answer sheets, rank-jumping, appointments issued beyond sanctioned posts, in the 2016 hiring of over 25,000 teaching and non-teaching staff. The Supreme Court, calling the process “vitiated and tainted beyond resolution,” ordered it scrapped and a fresh recruitment held; that fresh process has itself run past its original deadline. Whatever the eventual outcome, the episode has left a generation of aspirants unsure whether merit or manipulation decides who gets to teach, and left classrooms staffed, for years, under a legal cloud. No amount of ceremonial respect repairs that kind of damage. Only a recruitment process nobody has to sue their way through does.

Greater recognition, if India is serious about it, has to come with greater expectation of the role itself. A teacher today is not competing with a textbook for relevance; she is competing with a smartphone, and increasingly with AI, both of which already deliver information faster than any classroom can. What neither can do is teach a child to question what they're told, to sit with a wrong answer long enough to learn from it, or to treat a classmate's failure with patience rather than contempt. The National Education Policy calls teachers “the heart of the learning process” and asks schools to cultivate character alongside curriculum. That ambition is not yet matched by pay scales, training pipelines, funding, or protection from the administrative duties that eat into instructional time, nor, in states like West Bengal, by a recruitment process the public can simply trust.

India is not merely trying to educate its children; it is trying to become, by 2047, a developed and globally competitive nation, an ambition that rests as much on the quality of its people as on its infrastructure or its capital. That human capital is built nowhere else but in the classroom, by teachers who are recruited fairly, paid on time, trained properly, and then left alone to do the job. Standing with teachers, sixty years after the promise was first written down, cannot mean applause once a year. It has to mean standing behind them: with pay, with filled posts, and with a selection process worthy of the trust every classroom asks a child to place in the person at its front.

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Privacy In The Digital Age: Rights And Growing Challenges



DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

Today, a person's digital identity has become as important as their physical existence. What we search for, where we go, what we buy, who we communicate with, and what topics we are interested in—all of these leave a digital trail. The question then is not only who has our information, but also how much control we have over it. In this context, the issue of privacy in the digital age has emerged as a serious constitutional and social challenge concerning individual freedom, dignity, and autonomy.

Privacy is an individual's right to control others' access to their personal information, identity, and private life. This right gained historical significance in India when the Supreme Court, in *K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017), recognized privacy as a fundamental right protected by the Constitution. The Court linked privacy to life and personal liberty, dignity, and autonomy. It also clarified that any intrusion on privacy must comply with constitutional standards such as law, legitimate purpose, and proportionality. The proliferation of digital technology has broadened both the scope and challenges of this right.

First, the state's growing surveillance capabilities pose a significant challenge to privacy. Technologies such as facial recognition, biometric identification, location tracking, and digital communication analysis can be useful in crime control and national security. However, without adequate legal limits and independent



oversight, these same technologies can become a means of mass surveillance. Striking a balance between security and privacy is therefore a crucial responsibility of democratic governance.

On the other hand, the massive collection of personal data by private digital companies is also a matter of concern. Social media, e-commerce, search engines, and mobile applications collect vast amounts of data about our behavior. By combining this information from different sources, detailed behavioral profiles of individuals can be created. This makes it possible to personalize services, but this process also creates the potential to influence consumer preferences, behavior, and decisions. Thus, data becomes not just information but a source of economic and social power.

Privacy threats aren't limited to large-scale data collection. Incidents like doxing involve the disclosure of a person's address, phone number, photo, or other personal information without their permission. This can lead to online harassment, threats, and physical safety threats. Similarly, deepfake technology has added

a new dimension to identity and reputation abuse. Artificial intelligence can be used to create content that appears authentic, using a person's face or voice. This can impact privacy as well as a person's dignity and reputation.

Additionally, data breaches and cyberattacks pose a serious threat to citizens' privacy. Theft of financial information, health records, identity documents, and other sensitive information can lead to identity theft, financial fraud, and blackmail. Compounding the problem is algorithmic profiling. When automated systems make decisions about people based on personal data, inaccurate or biased data can lead to discriminatory outcomes. If such decision-making processes are not transparent, it becomes difficult for individuals to understand or challenge decisions made against them.

Another characteristic of the digital economy is that data is no longer confined to a single entity. Governments, private companies, advertising agencies, app developers, cloud service providers, and technology vendors may be involved in

various processes related to an individual's data. As a result, it becomes difficult to trace the full chain of data flow and establish responsibility. Cross-border data flows further exacerbate this problem, as a citizen's information may be collected in one country and stored or processed in another.

One of the biggest practical difficulties in protecting privacy is “consent fatigue.” Users click “I Agree” without reading long and complex privacy policies. In this situation, consent becomes a legal formality but no longer a truly informed choice. Another challenge is that technological innovation often moves faster than regulation. Artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and new data-analysis techniques can create risks that were not anticipated when existing laws were created.

However, protecting privacy does not mean completely restricting state security needs or technological innovation. In some circumstances, access to information may be necessary to combat crime, terrorism, and national security. The challenge is to ensure that such powers

are lawful, necessary, and proportionate, and that their abuse is effectively monitored and remedied.

India has taken significant steps in this direction through the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. What is needed now is effective implementation, robust institutional oversight, and a simple grievance redressal mechanism for citizens. Furthermore, “privacy by design” should be integrated into the technology architecture of digital governance and the private sector. This means embracing principles such as data minimization, secure storage, encryption, and limited data collection from the outset, rather than adding privacy protections after a technology is built.

The accountability of digital platforms should also be increased. There should be a quick and accessible mechanism for complaints of doxing, deepfakes, and identity misuse. Citizens also need to be educated through digital literacy about how to protect their personal information. Measures such as strong passwords, multi-factor authentication, proper use of privacy settings, and caution against suspicious links can strengthen personal security.

Ultimately, in the digital age, viewing privacy solely as a matter of data protection is insufficient. It is a question of protecting individual dignity, freedom, identity, and the right to self-determination. Just as freedom of expression is essential for citizens in a democracy, control over their data is also essential in a digital democracy. Therefore, India must develop a digital system where technology is a tool of power, not control; data is a tool of development, not exploitation; and citizens' freedom and privacy are equally protected along with security.

(Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

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Wildlife Week

Our Changing Relationship With Nature



SHOIAB MOHMMAD BHAT

Wildlife has always been an important part of our surroundings. Forests, rivers, wetlands, mountains, and grasslands are home to many species of animals, birds, insects, and plants. Each of them has a role in nature. When one part of this system is disturbed, other parts can also be affected. Wildlife Week, observed in India from October 2 to October 8, gives us a chance to think about our relationship with nature. It is a time to understand why wildlife matters, how human activities are affecting natural habitats and what we can do to use natural resources more carefully.

Why Wildlife Is Important

It is not just the animals found in the woods or in reserves. Birds assist in seed dispersal, insects help in the process of pollination, and various kinds of animals are linked together in terms of their food chain interactions. Additionally, forests and wetlands also provide us with clean water, fertile soil, and many other ecological processes.

Each and every species plays its role in this complex ecosystem. If some particular species becomes endangered or extinct in a particular area, the consequences of this extinction may affect other species as well. Therefore, protecting wildlife involves protection of habitats as well.

Understanding Food Chains and Food Webs

One simple way to understand the importance of wildlife is through a food chain. Plants are eaten by herbivores, and herbivores may

become food for carnivores. In this way, energy moves from one living organism to another.

On the other hand, it is not as simple as one food chain. There are several food chains interconnected, forming a food web. For example, in the forest, there can be a case where the plants feed insects, insects feed birds, and the birds, along with other small animals, serve as prey for large animals. Moreover, there are cases where several species feed on the same food sources.

This interdependence explains why sometimes the death of one species affects other species. When the number of predators decreases, the number of prey increases, which results in increased burden on the flora. When there is a decrease in the number of pollinating insects, plants depending on them suffer too.

Food chains and food webs remind us that wildlife cannot be looked at separately. The health of one species is often connected to the health of the wider ecosystem.

A Growing Population and Growing Pressure

Our relationship with nature has changed considerably over time. In the past, many communities lived with fewer buildings, less infrastructure and comparatively lower consumption of natural resources. Open spaces, fields, forests and water bodies were more closely connected to everyday life.

Today, populations are growing, and our needs are also changing. We need more houses, roads, schools, hospitals, markets, industries, electricity and water. As demand increases, more land and natural resources are required.

Such developments pose challenges to wildlife. Natural environments can be transformed for purposes of development or any other activity, leading to habitat fragmentation for certain species. Roads and human settlements can fragment habitats, making it difficult for some species to access food, water or shelter by restricting mobility within the environment.

It is also reflected in the increased demand for water; timber; soil and any other resource. Increased demand leads to greater generation of



waste and pollution when poorly managed. Such trends have impacts both on wildlife and people.

While population growth alone is not the cause of environmental pressure, there are other elements that play a critical role. These include the management of resources, patterns of development, and consumption choices. This brings the need for responsible development into perspective.

Development and Conservation Together

Development is essential in society, particularly when there is an increase in the number of people. Development should provide good housing, transportation, education, medical care, and work opportunities. Environmental considerations have to be taken into account during development.

Well-planned development will help minimize environmental damage to forests, wetlands, and other natural ecosystems. It is essential to conserve fragile environments; proper use of land, minimal waste production, and water conservation are essential.

The aim should be to find a practical balance between human needs and the capacity of

nature. Development and conservation do not have to be viewed as completely separate goals.

The Need for Sustainable Use

These resources cannot be taken for granted; hence, sustainable use entails utilizing these resources responsibly to ensure their existence in the future.

This is true for forest reserves, water resources, land, and other resources. Responsible tourism enables individuals to enjoy natural resources in a manner that does not cause too much harm to these resources. On the same note, proper utilization of water and efficient waste disposal would reduce environmental strain.

It is important to consider the needs of future generations; therefore, the use of resources without considering their sustainability will leave future generations with limited options.

Protecting Wildlife Habitats

Wildlife needs suitable places to survive. Forests provide shelter and food for many species, while wetlands support birds, fish, insects and other forms of life. Grasslands and mountains also have their own ecosystems.

Protecting these habitats benefits people as well. Forests help protect soil and water sources, while wetlands can help regulate water and support biodiversity.

Habitat protection should therefore be seen as part of protecting our own environment and future.

Communities and Young People Have a Role

Wildlife conservation cannot depend on one department or organisation alone. Local communities, government agencies, conservation groups, schools and individuals all have a role. People living close to natural areas often have a close understanding of their surroundings. Their participation can be useful in protecting local habitats and reducing harmful practices.

The contributions can even be made by youngsters in an easy manner. Being aware of the local flora and fauna, maintaining cleanliness of the environment, not indulging in any activity that could hurt living beings, and giving correct information will all contribute towards creating awareness.

A Responsibility We Share

Wildlife Week should not remain limited to one week of the year. It can be a reminder to look at our everyday choices and their impact on nature.

As the population grows and our needs increase, the pressure on land, water and other natural resources will also require greater attention. We cannot stop development, nor can we ignore the needs of people. What we can do is make more responsible choices about how resources are used and how development is planned.

The connection exists among animals, the food chain, forests, rivers, and people. The conservation of this connection is crucial for the ecological balance as well as the future of mankind.

Responsibility toward nature is not incumbent on any one specific generation. The resources that we preserve and utilize today are the ones that our children will live in tomorrow.

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Century-Old Error

Why J&K's Land Records Need More Than Just Digitisation

Discrepancies Between The Massavi And The Record Of Rights In Levдора Raise A Larger Question About The Need For A Systematic Review Of Century-Old Land Settlements.



MOHD AMIN MIR

Land records are the foundation of ownership, agricultural administration and public confidence in the Revenue Department. A small discrepancy in a revenue entry may appear insignificant on paper, but when it concerns the actual area of a field, it can become a serious problem for landowners, their successors and revenue officials.

During my service as Patwari of village Levдора, Tehsil Qazigund, District Anantnag, for two years approximately a decade ago, I came across a problem that deserves wider attention. My experience in the village revealed discrepancies between the areas recorded in the Record of Rights (RoR) and those indicated by the village Massavi and the original settlement map.

One example was Survey No. 10. Its area was recorded as 8 kanals and 11 marlas in the revenue record. However, measurement on the spot, with reference to the village Massavi, indicated an area of only 7 kanals and 5 marlas. The difference was 1 kanal and 6 marlas. Similar discrepancies were observed in Survey Nos. 32, 64, 186 and several other fields. These observations raised a fundamental question: could some of these discrepancies have originated during the original settlement operations conducted approximately a century ago?

This was my professional observation during my tenure in the village. It calls for verification through the original settlement documents and a properly conducted technical survey before any conclusion is drawn about the cause or the correction required.

The Massavi is not merely an old piece of paper. It is the original field-measurement map prepared during settlement operations. The Record of Rights, commonly associated with the Misal Haqiat, contains important information about landholders, their rights and interests, and the fields forming part of their holdings. The Jammu and Kashmir Government's own explanatory material recognises the Massavi as the original settlement map and the Misal Haqiat as the record prepared at settlement or its revision.

These documents serve different but interconnected purposes. The map represents the spatial arrangement of fields, while the record documents the rights and particulars associated with them. When



the area entered in the RoR differs from the area established by a reliable survey of the corresponding field boundaries, the discrepancy cannot simply be ignored. Nor can it automatically be assumed that the figure in either document is correct in every respect. The original measurement sheets, field book, settlement record, village map, subsequent mutations and present ground position may all need examination.

The first task, therefore, is to establish the nature of the discrepancy. Is it a clerical or arithmetic mistake? Was the area incorrectly calculated during the original settlement? Has a field boundary changed over time? Is there an issue involving a subdivided field, a Min or Bata number, or a map that no longer corresponds accurately with the ground? Each possibility requires a different approach.

Levdora's settlement dates back approximately one hundred years. The passage of such a long period makes the issue particularly important.

Over generations, land has passed through inheritance, partition, sale, acquisition and other forms of transfer. Revenue entries have been updated, while old maps and measurement records have continued to serve as the basis for identifying fields. If an error entered the record during the original settlement, subsequent updates may have carried that error forward without resolving its underlying cause.

Digitisation can make these entries easier to access, search and preserve. But digitisation alone cannot establish whether an inherited area figure accurately corresponds with the physical field. If an incorrect figure is transferred from an old record into a digital database, the discrepancy may simply acquire a digital form. This is why the modernisation of land records must be accompanied by a mechanism for examining

and resolving genuine historical discrepancies.

The legal question: what is the remedy?

The Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996, provides the legal framework for the preparation and maintenance of records of rights, annual records and related revenue matters. However, the appropriate remedy depends on the nature of the error, the documents available and whether any person's recorded rights or interests would be affected.

Section 31 of the Act provides a presumption in favour of entries in records of rights and annual records prepared in accordance with law, until the contrary is proved. Section 32 provides a mechanism for a person aggrieved by an entry to seek correction before the Collector (Deputy Commissioner), subject to the applicable statutory requirements and limitation provisions. These provisions are important, but a distinction must be maintained between an individual dispute over an entry and a possible technical discrepancy affecting several fields in an entire village.

Where a straightforward clerical or arithmetical mistake is established, the competent authority should examine whether it can be corrected through the applicable legal procedure. Where the discrepancy concerns the original measurement, field boundaries or the relationship between the Massavi and the RoR, a more detailed inquiry may be necessary.

The relevant provisions should be applied only after examining the facts of each case. An area discrepancy, by itself, does not authorise an official to alter a record without following the prescribed procedure and protecting the rights of affected parties.

What should the Revenue Department do? The issue calls for a systematic, transparent and technically sound response. The

following measures deserve consideration by the Financial Commissioner (Revenue), the concerned Deputy Commissioner and the Survey and Land Records authorities. First, conduct a preliminary village-level assessment. The original Massavi, Misal Haqiat, available field-measurement records, Jamabandi and subsequent mutations should be examined together. Survey numbers where the recorded area appears inconsistent with the map should be identified and documented.

Second, undertake a technical verification of the affected fields. Qualified survey personnel should examine the original map, reference points, field boundaries and available measurement records. Where necessary, fresh measurements should be conducted in accordance with the applicable rules. A discrepancy should be confirmed only after the relevant evidence has been assessed.

Third, provide notice and an opportunity to affected landholders. Where a proposed correction could affect ownership shares, possession or the rights of adjoining landholders, the persons concerned must be heard. A transparent process will help prevent a technical correction from becoming a fresh land dispute.

Fourth, classify the discrepancies. Clerical mistakes, arithmetic errors, map-related inconsistencies, disputed boundaries and substantive questions of ownership should not be placed in one category. Each requires the appropriate authority and procedure under the applicable law.

Fifth, establish a time-bound mechanism for genuine cases. A designated team of revenue and survey officials could examine the verified cases, record its findings and recommend action to the competent authority. The objective should be to resolve genuine discrepancies without subjecting citizens to unnecessary rounds of Tehsil offices. Finally, preserve the original evidence. Any approved correction should be properly documented and reflected in the relevant records and digital system, with an audit trail showing the basis of the change. The original settlement documents must remain preserved for future reference.

My experience in Levдора was not a comprehensive survey of the entire village, much less of every village in Jammu and Kashmir. Nevertheless, it raises a question worth examining: are similar discrepancies present in other villages whose settlement records are many decades old? The answer should come from evidence, not assumptions. The Revenue Department could consider a pilot assessment in selected villages where discrepancies have been reported. The findings would help establish whether the problem is isolated or whether a broader technical review is warranted.

Such an exercise would also help distin-

guish errors in recorded area from disputes over possession or title. These are not interchangeable matters, and treating them as such could create further complications for landowners and officials. For an ordinary landholder, the area recorded in the Jamabandi is not an abstract figure. It can influence a land transaction, inheritance proceedings, a partition, a mortgage or the resolution of a boundary dispute.

When a citizen discovers that the recorded area does not correspond with the field as measured on the basis of the settlement map, the natural question is: where should the correction be sought, and what evidence will be accepted? The administration must provide a clear answer. Citizens should not be left moving from one office to another merely because the discrepancy originated in an old settlement record that they had no role in preparing. At the same time, the solution cannot be to change recorded areas indiscriminately. Revenue records carry legal significance, and a correction affecting rights must be supported by evidence and made by the competent authority under the prescribed procedure.

The case of Survey No. 10 in Levдора, along with the discrepancies I observed in Survey Nos. 32, 64 and 186, deserves examination through the original settlement records and a technically verified process. I therefore appeal to the Financial Commissioner (Revenue), the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag and the concerned Survey and Land Records authorities to consider a preliminary inquiry into the matter and clarify the procedure for resolving such discrepancies.

If the examination establishes that the problem originated in the old settlement, the department should determine the legally permissible way to correct the affected records. If the discrepancy arises from some other cause, the appropriate remedy should follow the evidence.

A century-old settlement should not become a permanent obstacle to accurate land administration. Modern technology can preserve and display revenue records, but their reliability ultimately depends on the accuracy of the underlying information. The larger question is not simply how many records have been digitised. It is whether those records faithfully reflect the land they describe—and whether a citizen has a fair, accessible and legally sound remedy when they do not. That is a question the Revenue Department should examine, not only for Levдора, but wherever similar discrepancies can be established.

Mohd Amin Mir is a columnist and legal affairs writer who focuses on governance, land reforms, and institutional accountability in Jammu & Kashmir. He can be mailed at miramin354@gmail.com

DLSA Conducts Legal Awareness Programmes At Various Institutions

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the guidance of Naseer Ahmad Dar, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District & Sessions Judge), Srinagar and overall supervision of the Secretary DLSA Srinagar, conducted a series of legal awareness programmes at various educational institutions and Legal Aid Clinics through the PLVs deputed there.

An awareness programme was conducted at Bilaliya School by the PLV deputed

at the Legal Literacy Club, wherein students were sensitized about the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. The students were made aware of the safeguards available to children against sexual abuse and exploitation, besides the importance of reporting offences and seeking timely legal assistance.

At the Zoology Department, University of Kashmir, an awareness programme was organized by the PLVs deputed at the Legal Aid Clinic, at Law Department, on various NALSA schemes. The participants were informed

about the objectives and benefits of different legal services schemes and the avenues available for persons seeking legal assistance.

An awareness programme was also conducted at Government Higher Secondary School, Kothibagh, by the deputed PLVs on Free Legal Aid and Social Welfare Schemes. The students were apprised of their legal rights, eligibility for free legal services and various welfare measures available through Government departments.

Further, at Kashmir Law College, an awareness programme regarding the func-

tions and role of Legal Aid Clinics and Legal Literacy Clubs, along with the importance and availability of Free Legal Aid Services was conducted. The students were encouraged to utilize legal aid mechanisms and participate in legal literacy activities for promoting awareness and access to justice.

The programmes aimed at strengthening legal literacy among students and the public and creating greater awareness regarding their legal rights, entitlements and the services available through the Legal Services Authorities.

ADC Jammu Reviews Arrangements For Navratras, Ram Navami

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Jammu Ansuya Jamwal Monday chaired a meeting to review preparedness for the Navratras, Ram Navami and Dussehra festivals in the district.

Arrangements at major shrines, including Bahu Fort Temple, Kol Kandoli Temple and Laxmi Narayan Temple were reviewed in detail. The arrangements planned for the Dussehra venues at Parade Ground, Sainik Colony, Channi Himmat and Gandhi Nagar were also reviewed.

The ADC directed Police and Traffic Police to ensure foolproof

security, barricading, crowd management, traffic diversions and designated parking. She asked for Ram Leela permissions to be processed expeditiously, subject to safety norms.

The JMC was directed to ensure thorough sanitation and regular garbage lifting, deploy mobile toilets and carry out fogging against mosquitoes. Functional streetlights and adequate night illumination at temples, Ram Leela venues and Dussehra grounds were stressed. PDD and Jal Shakti were directed to ensure regular power and water supply.

The Health Department was asked to deploy medical teams, ambulances and first-aid facilities

at key locations.

Underlining the role of religious bodies, the ADC called for their close cooperation with the district administration in ensuring safety, convenience and facilitation of visitors. She stressed that organisers of langars must strictly adhere to food safety protocols.

The meeting was attended by SDM South Manu Hansa; SDM North Dr Deepak Kumar; Assistant Commissioner General Sania Haq Khan; Addl SP Traffic City Arvinder Singh; SDPO City North Vikram Bhau; officers of various departments besides representatives of religious bodies.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

CAG Flags MGNREGA

related to material procurement and wages within prescribed timelines.

The CAG noted that as per conditions attached to sanction orders issued by the Government of India, the UT administration was required to transfer MGNREGA funds to the State Employment Guarantee Fund (SEGF) within three to 15 days of receiving the funds.

Audit findings revealed that the release of funds by the J&K Finance Department was delayed on several occasions. During 2019-20 to 2023-24, the release of Rs 2,150.39 crore to the SEGF was delayed by periods ranging from four to 122 days. The audit noted that these delays could have attracted interest liability of Rs 44.18 crore, though records did not show that such interest had been claimed.

The audit highlighted a large number of rejected transactions under MGNREGS in J&K, with the majority relating to wage payments to unskilled workers.

According to the findings, 3,16,178 transactions were rejected between 2019-20 and 2023-24. Of these, 2,83,196 transactions (around 90 per cent) involved unskilled workers' wages amounting to Rs 48.91 crore.

The audit attributed the rejections mainly to dormant bank accounts, changes in bank accounts, discrepancies in IFSC codes, incorrect bank account details and failure to link beneficiaries' Aadhaar with their accounts.

Of the 3,16,178 rejected transactions involving Rs 77.24 crore, only 2,67,321 transactions worth Rs 65.45 crore were regenerated. However, 40,349 transactions involving Rs 8.26 crore were still pending at the bank level as of March 2024, with no reasons recorded for the delay.

The audit also assessed the implementation of one of the key objectives of MGNREGS—providing up to 100 days of guaranteed wage employment annually to rural households.

During 2019-20 to 2023-24, 37,82,594 households demanded employment under the scheme, of which 34,99,449 households (93 per cent) were provided employment.

However, the audit found that only 77,512 households, constituting about two per cent of those demanding work, received the mandated 100 days of employment during the five-year period.

The audit observed that the non-payment of wages, material costs and administrative charges due to rejected transactions led to the accumulation of pending liabilities. It further noted that vendors were also facing difficulties, as payments due to them had accumulated to several crores of rupees each year—(KNO)

Ai-Human

that reduced post-harvest losses. He urged the young generation to draw inspiration from these achievements while addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity and sustainable farming.

The Lieutenant Governor underscored the critical role of women in agriculture, noting that nearly 64% to 76% of the rural female workforce is engaged in farming and allied activities, often without wages or land ownership. He called for empowering women innovators and ensuring their leadership in agricultural technology. He urged institutions and private-sector stakeholders to support women-led start-ups and create laboratories, fellowships and incubation platforms that nurture young women engineers from rural areas.

"Women-led start-ups in agricultural technology should receive financing with the same confidence with which any other start-up is provided the necessary support and facilities.

We must ensure that our engineering colleges and agricultural universities actively nurture them to reach positions of technological leadership. Laboratories, fellowships and incubation platforms should be created where a young woman engineer or scientist from a village in Kishtwar or Kupwara can see her idea progress through a credible journey into a market-ready product," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor stressed that artificial intelligence and robotics must be developed with affordability and accessibility at their core. He cautioned that innovations should not remain confined to large land-holding farmers but must reach small and marginal farmers, who constitute nearly 86% of India's farming community. He advocated for tools that can

operate on ordinary smartphones in low-bandwidth villages and for collective ownership models through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

The Lieutenant Governor cited examples of drones, IoT-based sensors, and machine-learning models that are already transforming agriculture. He urged innovators to focus on practical solutions that endure in real fields under real conditions, rather than merely impressing conference halls. He said success of technology must be measured by whether small farmers genuinely benefit from these tools.

"I urge the Indian Society of Agricultural Engineers, SKUAST-Kashmir, and every young engineer and innovator to develop tools with affordability and access at their core. Create instruments that work not only on cloud infrastructure, but also on an ordinary smartphone in a low-bandwidth village in Reasi.

Develop robotic instruments that can be leased through Farmer Producer Organisations or collectively owned by farming communities. I believe that this is the true meaning of developing technology for Gen-Z farming, technology that progresses alongside small and marginal farmers," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said Jammu Kashmir's Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) is a replicable model for other states. He expressed confidence that agricultural scientists and engineers across India would learn from the UT's experience in precision agriculture and sustainable resource management.

"Create technology that can endure in real fields, under real monsoon conditions, and within the limited budgets of real farmers. Do not measure your success solely by patents or published research papers. Measure it by whether, five years later, a small farmer in Anantnag, Amritsar or Akola is genuinely better off because of your tools," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also felicitated the recipients of ISAE awards.

Shri Javid Ahmad Dar, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election; Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production; Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST Kashmir; Dr SN Jha, President, ISAE; Prof. VP Singh, Texas, A&M University; Dr PK Sahoo, Secretary General, ISAE; Prof. Rohitashw Kumar, Convener, 60th ISAE Convention; Dr Mudasar Ali, Organising Secretary of the Convention; members of ISAE; researchers, academicians, technocrats, innovators, industry leaders, faculty and students were present.

Weather set To

remained above normal at several places. According to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, Srinagar recorded a maximum of 31.2°C on Oct 4, while Qazigund recorded 31.4°C and Kokernag 29.4°C. Pahalgam recorded 25.8°C and Gulmarg 23.2°C.

The Meteorological Centre has also indicated a more significant spell of rain and snowfall around Oct 8 to 11 under the influence of a Western Disturbance, with the possibility of snowfall becoming more pronounced over higher elevations. [KNT]

Statehood Delayed

Raina said Jammu and Kashmir had moved beyond the era of Hurriyat calendar politics, with people now focused on development, education and improving their lives.

"People are now focused on their own development. Students are attending universities, colleges and schools, and normal life is moving ahead," he said.

Raina also criticised the ruling National Conference, alleging that the party had failed to fulfil several commitments made in its election manifesto—(KNO)

J&K Notifies

among utility service providers.

The policy also provides for digital asset mapping and real-time fault detection through Smart IoT and GIS-based systems, supported by the "Call Before You Dig" platform. This will enable agencies and utility providers to identify underground infrastructure before undertaking excavation, reducing the risk of damage and service disruption.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the policy would help move J&K towards a more coordinated and future-ready approach to urban infrastructure development.

The Common Duct Policy is aimed at preventing repeated road cutting for laying and repairing utility networks, thereby protecting public road infrastructure and reducing inconvenience to commuters.

The shared infrastructure model will also help optimise operational and maintenance costs for utility providers, enable faster fault detection and repairs through dedicated inspection chambers, and reduce the visual clutter caused by overhead utility networks.

The policy is expected to support planned urban expansion, improve the resilience of utility infrastructure and facilitate the growth of digital connectivity across Jammu and Kashmir.

CS Calls For

accident dashboards, review accident-prone locations and ensure prompt rectification of residual infrastructure hazards.

Reviewing the key performance indicators, the Chief Secretary was informed by the Secretary, Transport Department, Avny Lavasa that concerted multi-departmental interventions have resulted in a significant decline in road fatalities revealing that against 1,090 fatalities recorded in 2024, the number has come down to 756 up to mid-September 2026, indicating steady progress towards the targets of restricting fatalities to 600 or below by 2027 and 450 by 2030.

Moreover it was further divulged that the total number of road accidents has also declined, with 4,222 accidents recorded during the current period against the 2024 baseline of 5,808.

The meeting was further apprised that 367 black spots have been identified by the Transport Commissioner, of which 165 have been audited by central agencies and 68 hotspots have already been completely rectified.

Similarly under the Road Safety Fund, a comprehensive audit of 1,433 roads has also been completed, with 11.60 crore released to 15 districts for immediate corrective interventions.

Emphasising the need to make roads safer for vulnerable road users, the meeting was informed that Municipal Corporations have constructed 135.85 km of footpaths and cycle tracks, including 39.58 km by Jammu Municipal Corporation and 96 km by Srinagar Municipal Corporation. As many as 398 encroachment clearance drives have also been undertaken.

Giving special emphasis to the critical Golden Hour in saving accident victims, the Chief Secretary reviewed the findings of the first comprehensive UT-wide audit of 15 Level-III Trauma Centres, comprising eight in Jammu and seven in Kashmir.

The Health and Medical Education Department has prepared a blueprint too for upgrading these centres, including provision for additional manpower and advanced medical equipment, aimed at strengthening emergency response and trauma care facilities across J&K.

The meeting was also informed that 906 road accident victims have so far availed cashless treatment under the PM-RAHAT and Rah-Veer schemes.

The Transport Department has further issued necessary orders, providing one-time token tax exemption for the registration and operationalisation of state-owned ambulances.

The meeting also reviewed the expanding use of technology for traffic enforcement and road safety. Enforcement agencies have issued 10.39 lakh e-challans during the current year, marking a significant shift towards technology-enabled enforcement and reducing dependence on manual checks.

To extend technology-based traffic management to rural areas, a DPR for Rural ITMS has been prepared, covering 2,144 digital devices across 25 critical corridors and 195 rural junctions.

The meeting was informed that four Traffic Control Units are presently functional at Srinagar, Jammu, Ramban and Udhampur, while 13 additional sites are under revenue mutation for further expansion.

Reviewing capacity-building initiatives, the Chief Secretary was informed that the infrastructure of the Institute of Driver Training and Research (IDTR), Kot Bhalwal, Jammu, has been completed. Additionally under the government-approved partnership with Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), the institute is scheduled to commence operations from next month

with a 45-day commercial driving training curriculum to be started there.

The meeting noted that around 116 % increase in mass awareness campaigns, which have risen to 4,509 during 2026, underscoring the importance of sustained public awareness alongside enforcement and engineering interventions.

The meeting was also apprised that in a significant compliance measure, the Transport Commissioner has engaged oil marketing companies for implementation of the "No Helmet, No Fuel" directive for two-wheelers.

The Chief Secretary was informed that manual vehicle fitness testing has been discontinued in key districts with the introduction of Automated Testing Stations (ATS) in Jammu and Samba. As many as 23 additional applications from private investors are under process for establishing such facilities.

Simultaneously, nine Consent Letters have been issued through the National Single Window System for setting up Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs), paving the way for systematic removal of end-of-life vehicles from J&K roads.

Concluding the Chief Secretary stressed the need for moving beyond isolated interventions towards a data-driven, coordinated and outcome-oriented road safety framework, with the ultimate objective of developing zero-casualty corridors across Jammu & Kashmir.

PM Modi Gifts

rich traditions of weaving and decorative craftsmanship.

The Sadeli Box from Gujarat's Surat features intricate geometric patterns created by precisely assembling and layering contrasting materials, while the Kutchi Shawl is a vibrant handwoven textile from Kutch, distinguished by geometric motifs and supplementary-weft weaving. Together, they celebrate Gujarat's artistic heritage and the skill and ingenuity of its artisans.

Earlier in the day, President Parmelin arrived in India on a three-day State Visit at the invitation of PM Modi. This is President Parmelin's first State Visit to India and his second visit to the country this year, as he had earlier visited in February 2026 to participate in the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

LG Prorogues

Section 18 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, do hereby prorogue the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly," reads the order.

‘Aadhaar Discrepancies

the international border, the official added.

The action comes amid an intensified exercise by the J&K administration to identify and remove undocumented foreign nationals from the Union Territory.

It also follows a field assessment by a Centre-appointed High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes, which visited the Jammu region from August 10 to 12 as part of its examination of demographic changes and illegal immigration.

During the visit, members of the committee inspected the Rohingya settlement at Karyani Talab in Narwal and visited the Jagti Migrant Township to interact with displaced Kashmiri Pandits.

The panel had also met J&K Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, DGP Nalin Prabhat and representatives of various social and political groups to gather their views on demographic changes in the region.

The committee is headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar and was constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a high-powered demography mission.

The committee has been collecting demographic information from states and Union Territories as part of its broader assessment.

Its exercise in Jammu and Kashmir identified 504 Bangladeshi nationals in the Union Territory, including 46 in the Jammu region and 458 in Kashmir, according to officials.

The administration has also initiated action against properties where undocumented families are alleged to have been residing and issued notices to some private landowners, officials said.

Another batch of Bangladeshi nationals is expected to be deported from J&K on October 7, they said—(KNO)

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First ever Women’s Sports Festival begins at GDC Sopore

GMK SPORTS DESK

SOPORE: The first ever North Kashmir Women’s Sports Festival commenced Monday at Government Degree College (GDC) for Women, Sopore, with around 900 athletes from 14 Degree Colleges and 5 Higher Secondary Schools participating in the three day mega event.

Commissioner Secretary Higher Education, Ram Nivas Sharma, inaugurated the festival while Secretary in Higher Education Safqat Iqbal and SSP Sopore Iftikhar Talib were the guests of honour. Principal GDC Women Sopore Prof. Subeena Chiloo was also present.

The inaugural ceremony commenced with an Izband ceremony presented by the students of the host college, reflecting the rich cultural tradi-



tions of the region. Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner said that sports play a vital role in holistic development of students by promoting discipline, teamwork, confidence and leadership qualities. He appreciated the initiative of organising the first-ever North

Kashmir Women’s Sports Festival and lauded the participation of athletes from Degree Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools across North Kashmir.

Ram Nivas Sharma encouraged the participating athletes to make the most of the opportunity, compete with dedi-

cation and sportsmanship and continue striving for excellence in their respective disciplines.

Secretary in Higher Education and SSP Sopore also appreciated the initiative and the efforts put in by the host institution for providing a platform to young women athletes from

across North Kashmir.

The occasion also witnessed release of the college’s Bi-Annual Newsletter and Annual College Magazine, MEHAK.

Around 900 athletes representing 14 Degree Colleges and 5 Higher Secondary Schools are participating in the festival and will compete in seven different sporting disciplines over the next three days.

Dr. Tanvir Ahmad Bhat, Physical Director and Sports Coordinator, presented a detailed note on the structure and significance of the festival.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Principals of Degree Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools from North Kashmir, Physical Directors, faculty members, athletes and members of the media fraternity.

Ashutosh Sharma switches from Railways to Gujarat for 2026/27 domestic season

IA NS

AHMEDABAD: Ashutosh Sharma has switched allegiance from Railways to Gujarat for the 2026/27 domestic season, Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) Secretary Anil Patel told IANS on Monday. It is understood that Ashutosh has been training with the Gujarat team and even featured in some of their practice games.

Known for his explosive power-hitting in the death overs in the shortest format, Ashutosh is among three guest players signed by the GCA alongside India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, who is currently in the squad for the T20I series against the West Indies, starting in Lucknow on Tuesday, and fast bowler Ashok Sharma, who moved on from Rajasthan but is currently undergoing rehab at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru.

“Yes, Ashutosh Sharma will be playing domestic cricket for Gujarat from this year. He’s definitely a great addition to our batting order, especially in the white-ball formats. We are waiting for good results now. There’s a need for us to get a big title, as last to last year (2024/25 season),



we missed out after coming into the Ranji Trophy semifinals. With a new coach in Monty Desai, let’s hope for the best,” Patel told IANS on Monday.

Ashutosh initially played domestic cricket for Madhya Pradesh before moving to Railways. His reputation as a high-impact finisher

in the shortest format earned him Indian Premier League (IPL) stints with Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals.

Earlier this year, Ashutosh had a stint with Hampshire in the One-Day Cup, where he picked 14 scalps in seven games, including a five-wicket haul, though he made only 56 runs with the bat. Gujarat will open their 2026/27 Ranji Trophy campaign against Odisha at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

The first round of the Ranji Trophy will also see senior opener KL Rahul turn out for Karnataka against Andhra in Vijayawada, while left-arm spinner Manav Suthar will captain Rajasthan in their opening game against Tamil Nadu in Jaipur.

Off-spin bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar is in line to turn out for Tamil Nadu against Rajasthan, after he was pulled out of the T20I squad against the West Indies to get some game time in red-ball cricket, keeping the Test tour of New Zealand in mind. Washington recently came back from Japan, where he was part of the gold medal-winning Indian team.

Football: Spain eye UEFA Nations League quarterfinal berth against Croatia



IA NS

MADRID: World Cup winner Spain could secure a place in the UEFA Nations League quarterfinals on Tuesday with a win over Croatia in Split.

Spain travel to Croatia after three consecutive wins in their opening group games. Another victory would give the world champions 12 points from four matches while leaving Croatia on three.

If England also win or draw at home to the Czech Republic, neither Croatia nor the Czechs would be able to catch Spain, assuring Luis de la Fuente’s side of a top-two finish with two games remaining, at home to England and away to the Czech Republic in November.

While Spain travel with a perfect record, Slaven Bilic’s Croatia go into the match looking to respond to arguably the most humiliating defeat in their history, a 7-0 home defeat to England on

Saturday.

“Against England, we didn’t bring the necessary energy, which affects confidence; confidence affects technical performance, and in the end, it all looks like a question of willpower. Now we have to play a good match, a match for real men, against Spain,” Bilic said, suggesting Spain could face a physical contest.

Spain beat Croatia 4-1 in Seville just a week ago and followed that with a 3-1 win over the Czech Republic on Saturday, although their performance in Oviedo was arguably their least impressive of the three games so far during the international break.

De la Fuente made nine changes from the team that faced Croatia and is expected to continue rotating his squad, particularly after highlighting the limited recovery time available to his players during the international break.

19th J&K UT Water Skiing Championship Concludes at Nigeen Lake

GMK SPORTS DESK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Water Skiing Association, affiliated with the Wakeboard and Wakesurfing Association of India, successfully organised the 19th J&K UT Water Skiing Championship 2026-27 at the Water Sports Centre, Nigeen Lake. The two-day event, held from 4th to 5th October 2026, was conducted under the aegis of the J&K Sports Council.

The championship saw enthusiastic participation from talented boys and girls from across Jammu & Kashmir, providing young athletes with a valuable



platform to compete, develop their skills, and excel in water sports.

The closing ceremony was graced by Mr. Ab Majeed, In-charge Water Sports, Nehru Park, as the Chief Guest. He was accompanied by Adnan Ah from the Sports Council,

along with other esteemed guests and dignitaries.

The event concluded with appreciation for the athletes, organisers, coaches, and officials for their contribution towards promoting and strengthening water sports in Jammu & Kashmir.

DC Kupwara inaugurates Boys Volleyball Championship

GMK SPORTS DESK

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Monday inaugurated the Inter-District UT-Level U-19 Boys Volleyball Championship at BHS Natnussa, Kupwara.

Teams from all 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir are participating, and the event gives young athletes a significant platform to compete at the UT level.

The championship is being organised by the Department of Youth Services & Sports (YSS), Kupwara. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javid Ahmad Masoodi, was also present on the occasion.



The opening match between Kupwara and Bandipora was played in a spirited atmosphere, with both teams displaying excellent skills, determination and sporting spirit before an enthusiastic gathering of players, officials and spectators.

District administration

Kupwara has reiterated its commitment to providing quality opportunities to young sportspersons and encouraging them to pursue sports with dedication and discipline. The tournament will continue with matches between the participating districts in the coming days.

Provincial-Level U-14 Girls Kho-Kho Competition inaugurated at Doabgah

GMK SPORTS DESK

BARAMULLA: A Provincial-Level Kho-Kho Competition for Under-14 Girls was inaugurated Monday at the Sports Field, Doabgah, Sopore, with enthusiastic participation from 10 teams from across Kashmir Province.

The competition was inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Sopore, Shabir Ahmad Raina. The event was organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, District Baramulla.

Speaking on the occasion, the ADC appreciated

the efforts of the Department of Youth Services and Sports in providing young girls with opportunities to



participate in competitive sports. He said that sports play an important role in developing discipline, confidence, teamwork and leadership qualities among children.

The ADC encouraged

the participating players to display true sportsmanship, dedication and determination, and make the best use of such platforms to nurture their talent. He also stressed the importance of greater participation of girls in sports and said that such competitions provide a strong foundation for identifying and promoting sporting talent at the grassroots level.

He congratulated all participating teams and wished the young players success in the competition. He also appreciated the officials, coaches and organisers for their efforts in conducting the event smoothly.

China Open: Djokovic reaches Beijing final after Medvedev defaulted

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Beijing: Former World No.1 Novak Djokovic has advanced to the championship match at the China Open after Daniil Medvedev was defaulted from the pair’s semifinal clash in Beijing.

The record six-time champion Djokovic was serving for the match at 7-5, 5-3, 15/15 when a ball bounced off the back wall. Medvedev instinctively reacted and hit the ball, with it going into the crowd and hit a fan.

Now in his first ATP 500 championship match since he won Astana in 2022, Djokovic will take on Alex de Minaur in Tuesday’s championship match. Djokovic leads the fifth-seeded Australian 3-1 in the pair’s Lexus ATP head-to-head series.

“A bit of a shock, to be honest,” Djokovic said. “Sorry for the person [who got hit]. I honestly didn’t see what happened. I hope that person is not badly injured. On the other hand, I also feel sorry for Daniil, because I know exactly how he feels to be disqualified in a big match. I was disqualified at the 2020 US Open in similar circumstances. I am sure



that Daniil didn’t want to do this intentionally. It just happens.”

Prior to being defaulted, Medvedev and Djokovic had played out an absorbing semifinal encounter on Beijing’s stadium court across two hours and 29 minutes. With last week’s Hangzhou champion Medvedev playing full of confidence in pursuit of his eighth consecutive tour-level win, Djokovic rallied from a break down to claim the opening set, breaking his opponent’s serve twice in the second to move to the brink of victory.

“I was three points away from the win,” Djokovic, who is 33-0 in Beijing, was quoted as saying by the ATP Tour. “It was a grueling battle, and I definitely didn’t want [a] third set. It was looking like that. I don’t know how many break points I saved; it was crazy. It’s always a big battle with Daniil, and it’s so hard to play him when he’s feeling the ball well in slower conditions with a big serve. But we move on.”

Having previously defeated top seed Alexander Zverev in a quarterfinal

epic in Beijing, Djokovic is now one win away from his 102nd tour-level title. That would move him within one of Roger Federer, who won 103 crowns, with Jimmy Connors (109 titles) the only other man to have won more.

Djokovic showcased some trademark elite baseline ball-striking despite at times appearing to struggle physically between points, just as he had in his previous two rounds against Buyunchaokete and Zverev. His ability to repeatedly escape trouble on serve against Medvedev was particularly remarkable: The 39-year-old saved 16 of 18 break points he faced, according to Infosys ATP Stats.

“I always believe in myself, and to be quite frank I felt like I played really well in the training sessions, but obviously it’s different when you play an official match,” Djokovic said when asked about reaching his 146th tour-level final. “My draw wasn’t very favourable, to be honest- tough matches from the beginning, but it makes the run to the final sweeter. I’m in another final. There’s something about Beijing that keeps me going.”

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