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CM Omar Attends 57th GST Council Meeting In Delhi

Says GST Council Decisions Will Strengthen J&K's Fiscal Position



GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday attended the 57th meeting of the GST Council, chaired by Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirma Sitharaman, in New Delhi.

The meeting was attended by Chief Ministers and Finance Ministers from across the country, along with senior officials of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

The Council held detailed deliberations on key GST-

related issues, with discussions focused on strengthening the fiscal capacity of States and Union Territories, improving revenue mobilisation and advancing balanced fiscal federalism.

Attending the meeting in his capacity as Finance Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed confidence that the decisions taken by the Council would further strengthen Jammu & Kashmir's fiscal position, support economic growth and accelerate development and public welfare.

Govt Coming Out With Paper On AI Regulations: Ashwini Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI: Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday that the government plans to bring out a consultation paper on artificial intelligence (AI) regulations within a month, with a key focus on ensuring AI safety and curbing the danger posed by deepfakes.

"I will request the department to come out with a regulation-focused consultation paper, which focuses on safety. That's the most important point—safety related to AI use," the minister said at an event.

Vaishnaw pointed out that deepfakes are a nuisance which can cause huge problems in society.

"People believe them, and it sets a totally wrong precedent. It sets out a totally wrong narrative, and people get lured into doing wrong things and believing wrong



things," he said.

The minister further stated that the consultation paper will focus on skilling, safety and ensuring that no one is left behind as the AI technology advances.

He emphasised that the human impact of AI must remain at the centre of the regulatory approach.

The minister said AI cannot be governed through legislation alone and called for a combination of technology and regulation. "We have to bring a techno-

'Op Sindoor' Showcased IAF's Destructive Power, Air Defence Capability: Air Chief Singh

'Swift Combat Transition Reflected Force's Operational Preparedness'

REHAN QAYOOM

NEW DELHI: Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, on Thursday said that the Indian Air Force's swift transition into combat operations during the "Operation Sindoor" demonstrated its "destructive power" as well as effective air defence operations.

Addressing the 94th Air Force Day celebrations at Air Force Station Hindan in Ghaziabad, the Air Chief, said, "Air power is the primary technique to protect national interests. The IAF always remains alert and is committed and ready to meet any contingency."

Referring to Operation Sindoor, he said the IAF's swift transition into combat operations demonstrated its destructive power as well as the effectiveness of its air defence operations.

He said an air force's true strength is not merely determined by the advanced aircraft it possessed, but by its operational preparedness and its ability to act quickly and confidently whenever required.

"An air force can have the most advanced aircraft in the



world, but its true strength is measured by its operational preparedness how quickly and confidently it can act whenever the call comes," he said.

The Air Chief said this year's Air Force Day theme, "Infallible, Impervious, Precise," is not merely a tagline but a manifestation of the IAF's strength and resolve.

He also reiterated the force's commitment to technological

advancement and self-reliance, saying 'Atmanirbharta' remained its guiding principle. Emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence and autonomous systems, would be integrated while keeping human authority at the core, he said.

He stressed the need for deep synergy among the armed forces, saying joint planning and integrated combat application

with the Army and Navy had become a daily activity.

Pertinently, 'Operation Sindoor' was launched by India on May 7, 2025, in response to the April 22, 2025, terror attack in Pahalgam, which left 26 people dead. The operation involved precision strikes on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK)—(KNO)

AN AIR FORCE CAN HAVE THE MOST ADVANCED AIRCRAFT IN THE WORLD, BUT ITS TRUE strength is measured by its operational preparedness how quickly and confidently it can act whenever the call comes," he said.

Railway Infrastructure Driving Major Boost In J&K's Tourism: LG Sinha

Interacts With Delegation Of Media Representatives From Mumbai

Under the leadership of Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi, the expansion of railway infrastructure is driving a major boost in J&K's Tourism, Horticulture and Industrial sectors: LG Sinha

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The expansion of railway infrastructure under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership is driving a major boost in Jammu and Kashmir's tourism, horticulture and industrial sectors, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Thursday.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the expansion of railway infrastructure



is driving a major boost in the tourism, horticulture, industrial and other economy sectors of the Union Territory. Today, Jammu Kashmir is moving forward with unprecedented confidence towards peace and prosperity,"

LG Sinha said while interacting with a delegation of media representatives from Mumbai at Lok Bhavan, Srinagar.

During the interaction, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the rapid pace of infrastructure modernization across the Union Territory over the past few years. He said that the realisation of the dream of Kashmir to Kanyakumari rail connectivity marked a historic milestone in Jammu Kashmir's development journey.

He also noted that strengthening connectivity, especially in the border region, is vital not only for driving local economic prosperity but also for safeguarding national security.

The visiting media delegation, accompanied by Western Railway Chief Public

CS Reviews Operational Readiness Of National Waterways In J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Thursday reviewed the status of readiness for development and operationalisation of National Waterways across Jammu & Kashmir, taking comprehensive appraisal of the onshore infrastructure being developed by the Indian Port Rail & Ropeway Corporation Limited (IPRCL) and the river ecosystem and navigation facilities being prepared by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).

The meeting besides the ACS, PWD and Chairperson, IWAI was attended by the respective Divisional Commissioners; Secretary, Transport; GGM, IPRCL and several other officers from

the concerned departments and these agencies.

The Chief Secretary directed the Divisional Commissioners to undertake periodic review of the progress of National Waterway projects in their respective divisions and make occasional on-site visits to facilitate quick resolution of issues and smooth execution of works.

He observed that most of the issues confronting the projects are minor and resolvable and should be addressed promptly by the concerned Divisional Administrations in coordination with the executing agencies.

Dulloo also underscored the tourism and urban mobility potential of the National Waterways, observing that river cruises could



Houthi Attacks Indian Nationals In Saudi Arabia Advised To Remain Alert, Vigilant

IANIS

RIYADH: The Embassy of India in Riyadh on Thursday issued an advisory to all Indian nationals in Saudi Arabia to remain alert and vigilant amid ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure.

"In view of the current situation, all Indian nationals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are advised to remain alert and vigilant, stay indoors as necessary, and follow the instructions issued by local authorities through official channels," the Embassy stated in the advisory.

"Indian nationals are strongly advised to refrain from circulating or reposting any videos or news related to the ongoing events," it added.

Earlier, India condemned attacks on Abha and King Khalid international airports in Saudi Arabia's Riyadh,



terming the targeting of civilian infrastructure "completely unacceptable".

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) offered condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the attack and wished for a speedy recovery of those injured.

"India condemns the attacks over the past few days targeting Abha International Airport and King Khalid

International Airport in Riyadh, which have resulted in civilian deaths and injuries. The targeting of civilian infrastructure is completely unacceptable," the MEA said in a statement.

"We express our deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their loved ones. We wish speedy recovery for those injured. We express solidarity and

stand with the people and government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the statement further read.

The MEA's remarks come after Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) on Wednesday said that three civilians were killed and 36 others were injured in the attacks on the two international airports on October 6 and 7.

In a statement shared on X, the GACA said that the emergency response teams and relevant authorities responded immediately in accordance with established protocols and the applicable emergency response plans.

"At Abha International Airport, the attack resulted in two fatalities, both female residents of Moroccan and Algerian nationalities, may they rest in peace, as well as (28) injuries involving

PM Welcomes Fresh Round Of GST Reforms

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday welcomed the new round of GST reforms approved by the GST Council and said its focus was to take faster decisions, lower compliance costs and automated refunds.

The prime minister also said that the GST Council's recommendations on removal of arrest provisions, greater decriminalisation and simpler procedures will have a very positive impact.

The GST Council on Thursday approved removing the arrest power of tax officials and raising the threshold for prosecution fivefold to Rs 5 crore, while introducing faster and largely automated refunds for taxpayers.

"I welcome the new round of GST reforms approved by the GST Council," Modi said in a post on X.

"The focus is clear: Faster decisions. Lower compliance costs. Automated

J&K Reports 308 Child Sexual Offence Cases Under POCSO In 2024

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 308 cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act during 2024, with nearly three-fourths of the cases involving allegations of penetrative sexual assault, according to National Crime Records Bureau data.

Of the total cases, 228 were registered under Sections 4 and 6 of the POCSO Act, covering penetrative sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault. Another 65 cases were registered under Sections 8 and 10, relating to sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault.

The data further shows that seven cases were registered under Section 12 of the Act concerning sexual harassment of children, while five cases were regis-



tered under Sections 14 and 15 relating to the use of children for pornographic purposes.

Three additional cases were registered under Sections 17 to 22 of the POCSO Act, covering offences including abetment and related provisions.

Overall, J&K recorded 887 cases of crimes against children during 2024, with POCSO cases accounting for 308 of these cases. [KNT]

■ 'You Are Not Alone'

Son Runs for Father With MND, Calls for Support in Kashmir

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: A Kashmiri man living in the United Kingdom has completed the Cardiff Half Marathon to raise funds and awareness for Motor Neurone Disease (MND), a cause deeply personal to him after his father was diagnosed with the condition two years ago.

Yasir, who was born and raised in Srinagar and has lived in the UK for over a decade, crossed the finish line on 4 October in 2 hours and 30 minutes, raising money for the MND Association. He ran in honour of his father, who lives in Kashmir.

Speaking about his motivation, Yasir said the run was "never simply about running 13.1 miles."

"It was about my Dad," he said. "He was always such an active person, the kind of man who was constantly doing something, always on the move. Seeing the changes brought by MND has been very difficult for all of us."

When his father was diagnosed two years ago, MND became a reality for the family. Before that, Yasir admitted he knew very little about the condition.

"I realised that if I didn't know much about it, there must be many other people who knew even less," he



said.

He decided to use running as a way to contribute meaningfully, both by raising funds for the MND Association and by creating awareness about a disease he describes as "little-known" in many communities.

"Crossing the finish line was a very emotional moment," Yasir recalled. "I had thought about Dad throughout the training and during the race. Completing the half marathon was much more than a per-

sonal achievement. It was something I wanted to do for him."

MND, known more commonly as ALS in India, affects the nerves that control movement. Over time, it can take away a person's ability to walk, speak, swallow, and eventually breathe without support.

"How would any of us feel if, one day, the simplest things we take for granted, walking, speaking, moving, or even holding someone's hand—were suddenly no longer simple?" Yasir

asked.

He said his father's diagnosis taught him not to take ordinary things for granted. "Things that once seemed completely normal can suddenly become incredibly important."

For Yasir, raising awareness in Kashmir is particularly important. He emphasised that families dealing with MND need access to accurate information, medical care, rehabilitation, communication support, mobility equipment, and support for carers.

"I would like to see more awareness of MND in Kashmir Valley so that families who receive a diagnosis know more about the condition and know that they should seek appropriate professional support," he said.

He noted that families also need guidance on breathing support, physiotherapy, equipment, and nutrition, and that carers themselves require support.

"Caring for someone with MND is exhausting, physically and emotionally," he said.

Yasir believes the first step for communities is simply to understand and listen. "When someone is diagnosed with a serious illness, people sometimes don't know what to say or how to help," he said. "But you don't always need the perfect

words. Being there, checking in, listening, and helping with everyday things can make a real difference."

He added that Kashmir's close-knit families and communities can become a source of "real, practical help" if people understand the illness.

"Most importantly, we should continue to see the person rather than just the illness. MND may change what someone can physically do, but it doesn't change who they are."

"You Are Not Alone". Reflecting on the race, Yasir said there were moments when he felt tired and his legs hurt. But whenever he thought of slowing down, he thought of his father.

"My tiredness during the race was temporary," he said. "For Dad and many others living with MND, the challenges are part of everyday life."

His message to families affected by MND is simple: "You are not alone."

"I would say to keep talking about it, keep asking for support, and don't be afraid to let people around you know what you need," he said.

"I ran to raise awareness of MND. And I ran hoping that, somewhere along the way, this small personal challenge might help another family understand that they are not alone."

IGP Felicitates Srinagar Police Team for Busting Inter-State Drug Network

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Sujit Kumar Singh, felicitated the Srinagar Police team for successfully busting an organised inter-state narcotics network operating in Downtown Srinagar.

The team, led by SSP Srinagar Dr. G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarthy, was recognised for its role in uncovering the network during the investigation of FIR No. 135/2026 registered at Police Station Safakadal.

The investigation resulted in the arrest of eight accused persons and the recovery of substantial quantities of narcotic substances, cash, gold and other valuable assets worth crores of rupees. Police said the probe also established inter-state linkages and financial channels associated with the drug-trafficking network.

The felicitated team



included Zonal SP Showkat Ahmad, SDPO M.R. Gunj (Maharaj Gunj) Junaid Wali, SHO M.R. Gunj (Maharaj Gunj) Srinagar Bilal Khanda, along with other police officers and investigating personnel who contributed to the investigation.

IGP Kashmir appreciated the team's professionalism, dedication and sustained investigative

efforts, and encouraged officers to continue their action against organised crime and narcotics trafficking.

Srinagar Police reiterated its commitment to dismantling drug-trafficking networks, targeting their financial infrastructure and taking stringent action against those involved in the narcotics trade.

NIT Srinagar hosts Cyber Security Awareness Session for Students

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: NIT Srinagar organised a cyber security awareness session for students of the Department of Civil Engineering to sensitise them about safe, responsible and secure use of digital technologies.

The session was conducted by Dr. Vivek, Assistant Professor, who discussed cyber hygiene, online safety, password security, phishing, social-engineering attacks, protection of personal data, safe use of social media and responsible use of digital platforms.

Students were advised to remain vigilant against suspicious links, messages, emails and applications and to adopt secure digital practices.

The session concluded with an interactive discussion in which students raised queries related to cyber fraud, online safety and protection of personal information.

"Cyber security is not



only a technical issue but a daily responsibility. Students must develop the habit of verifying links, protecting passwords and personal information, and remaining alert to online frauds," Dr. Vivek said.

In his message, Director, NIT Srinagar, Prof. Anurag Kumar Misra emphasised the importance of creating a digitally aware and security-conscious student community.

"Along with academic and technical knowledge, our students must understand the responsibilities that come with the use of digital technologies. Cyber awareness will enable

them to use digital platforms safely and responsibly in their academic, professional and personal lives," Prof. Misra said.

Head, Department of Civil Engineering, Prof. Javaid Bhat said such awareness was essential as students increasingly depend on digital platforms for education, communication and professional activities.

"A strong culture of cyber awareness can help students recognise online threats and make responsible digital choices. Awareness and vigilance are the first line of defence against cyber fraud," Prof. Bhat added.

CM Omar Abdullah expresses grief over Ramban road accident

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed deep grief over the loss of two lives in a tragic road accident in Ramban, in which seven other persons were injured.

Expressing his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, the Chief Minister conveyed his solidarity with them in this hour of grief.



Omar Abdullah directed the administration and medical authorities to ensure the best possible medical treatment and all necessary assistance to the injured, and to closely monitor their condition.

Charandeep Singh assumes Charge as DC Shopian



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Charandeep Singh Thursday assumed charge as Deputy Commissioner Shopian.

Speaking after assuming the charge, he outlined his core priorities for the district, emphasizing proactive governance, complete transparency and the time-bound delivery of public services.

The DC underscored the critical need for seamless inter-departmental coordination to accelerate the execution of ongoing development projects, infrastructure initiatives

and welfare schemes across Shopian.

"Our primary aim will be to ensure a responsive, transparent and accountable administration at all levels," he added.

The DC emphasized that Public grievance redressal, rural infrastructure strengthening and ensuring basic amenities reach every corner of the district will remain top priorities.

He further called upon district officers and field staff to work with dedication, integrity and a result-oriented approach to meet public expectations effectively.

DC Shopian chairs introductory meeting with District Officers

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Charandeep Singh, convened an introductory review meeting today with district officers and field staff to assess administrative functioning, the status of ongoing development projects and public delivery systems across the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC outlined his core priorities for Shopian, emphasizing proactive governance, complete transparency, patient hearing of public grievances and time-bound delivery

of public services. He directed key departments, including RDD, Agriculture and others to coordinate seamlessly, resolve inter-departmental bottlenecks and eliminate procedural delays to accelerate key development projects and welfare schemes.

To ensure structured oversight, department-wise reviews will be prepared to identify critical needs and track performance metrics directly.

The meeting was attended by SSP, Shopian, Mush-taq Ahmed Choudhary, ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone, ADC, Dr.

J&K Prosecution Deptt secures rejection of bail in NDPS cases, murder

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Prosecution Department, J&K, today commended its Public Prosecutors, whose firm and well-reasoned opposition resulted in the rejection of three bail applications on 6 and 7 October 2026: two under the NDPS Act and one in murder case.

On 6 October 2026, the Special Judge (NDPS Cases), Jammu, Parvaiz Iqbal, rejected two bail applications. First, in UT of J&K v Vishal Kumar & Ors. (FIR No. 295/2025, PS Bahu Fort), the Special Public Prosecutor Sunil Kumar raised detailed objections, underscored the alleged sale of narcotics to young people. The prosecution placed on record the recovery of 275 grams of heroin from a co-accused and a further 55 grams, cash and a weighing machine from the residence of applicant Reena on her disclosure, besides multiple earlier FIRS. The Court held that she failed to overcome the rigour of Section 37 NDPS Act.

In another matter,



Salman Khan v. UT of J&K (FIR No. 172/2022, PS Gandhi Nagar), the Special Public Prosecutor Sunil Kumar, vehemently opposed bail, stressing the commercial quantity involved, the risk of re-offending and the seriousness of the offence. The prosecution relied on a financial trail of 35 transactions totaling Rs 1,32,514 between 17.05.2026 and 10.07.2026, the recovery of 267.92 grams of heroin from a co-accused and two earlier NDPS cases. The Court rejected the application, holding it barred by Section 37 NDPS Act.

On 7 October 2026, the Principal Sessions Judge, Budgam O.P. Bhagat, dismissed the bail application of Aqib Majeed Rather in FIR No. 143/2023 of Police

Station Beerwah, registered under Sections 302 and 506 IPC. Appearing for the UT, Public Prosecutor Suhaib Ashraf filed detailed objections and argued that neither the filing of the charge-sheet nor the examination of nine witnesses entitle an accused to bail, as material witnesses were yet to be examined and the value of testimony must be assessed after appreciation of the entire evidence. He also highlighted the reasonable apprehension of witness interference and the bar under Section 437(1) CrPC. The Court found no reasonable grounds for believing that the accused had not committed the offence and declined to exercise its discretion.

The Department said that these outcomes reflect the dedication of its Public Prosecutors, who combine thorough case preparation, command of statutory provisions and binding Supreme Court precedents with a clear sense of public duty.

The Prosecution Department reaffirmed its commitment to strong, ethical and professional prosecution in every case.

DLSA Srinagar holds Meeting on Mediation 3.0, Special Lok Adalat

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: A meeting regarding the ongoing Mediation 3.0 campaign and the upcoming Special Lok Adalat on NI Act cases, scheduled to be held on 17th October 2026, was convened at the District Court Complex, Srinagar.

The meeting was held under the guidance of Naseer Ahmad Dar Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, and under the overall supervision of the Secretary, DLSA Srinagar, with the participation of all Judicial Officers of District Srinagar.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding the objectives of Mediation 3.0, with emphasis on promoting mediation as an effective, expeditious and amicable mechanism for resolution



of disputes.

The Judicial Officers were sensitized about the importance of identifying suitable cases for mediation and encouraging litigants to explore alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

The meeting also focused on the preparations for the upcoming Special Lok Adalat for cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act (NI Act), to be held at the District Court Complex, Srinagar.

The participants discussed measures for effective case disposal, coordination among stakeholders and ensuring maximum participation of litigants for amicable settlement of eligible cases.

The meeting underscored the commitment of DLSA Srinagar towards strengthening Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and facilitating speedy, accessible and cost-effective justice for litigants.

Myntra's Big Fashion Festival Returns on Oct 8 with 8 Million+ Styles

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Ushering in the festive shopping season, Myntra has announced its flagship Big Fashion Festival, live now with thousands of brands and millions of styles for customers. The event will strengthen Myntra's role as a growth enabler for India's fashion and lifestyle ecosystem, creating scaled opportunities for emerging brands while bringing trend-first selection, compelling value and convenience to millions of customers across the country. BFF is expected to see heightened demand from metros and non-metros, driven by enhanced offerings spanning premium and value selection, trend-based styles, and tech-led personalised shopping journeys, along with faster delivery via M-Now and M-Express.

Speaking about the Big Fashion Festival, Sharon Pais, Head of Myntra, said, "The Big Fashion Festival has become a defining moment in India's festive calendar, connecting our entire ecosystem - from empowering regional sellers and small businesses to bringing the best of global and Indian fashion and lifestyle brands to millions of homes. At Myntra, we are combining that festive spirit with cutting-edge technology, leveraging

our AI tools and expanded delivery network to make fashion accessible, personalised, and seamless for over 80 million shoppers across the country."

Myntra's Seller Growth Connect initiatives have brought hundreds of D2C and emerging brands into its ecosystem, especially from Eastern India, enabling them with technology, business insights and platform capabilities to build for scale. With access to Myntra's 80M+ monthly active users, these brands can widen discovery and reach shoppers across markets during the festive season. 21,000 emerging brands and labels, including 13,000 making their BFF debut, will leverage the platform's technology, creator ecosystem and nationwide reach to connect with millions of customers across India.

This year's edition will feature 8 million+ styles, a 2X increase over the last edition, spanning international, domestic, emerging and D2C brands. Key categories expected to see strong festive demand during BFF include men's and women's ethnic wear, men's casual wear, women's western wear, beauty and personal care, watches and wearables, jewellery and accessories, sports footwear, and home and living. Some of the popu-

lar brands include Vero Moda, MANGO, H&M, Tommy Hilffiger, Levi's, Nike, adidas, US Polo Assn., Jack & Jones, ONLY, among others. Premium beauty brands include YSL, Prada, Carolina Herrera, Huda Beauty, MAC, Bobbi Brown, Olaplex, CeraVe, and Estée Lauder, among others.

Myntra's wide reach and personalised shopping experience will enable seamless discovery of festive styles across brands, including 100+ new brands and collections that have been launched across fashion, beauty, sports, jewellery, watches, home and lifestyle this festive season. This edition of BFF will see a host of new launches and an expansive selection of ethnic wear from popular brands like Masaba, Jompers, Sojanya, Divas by Manyavar, KISAH, House of Pataudi, Libas, among others, offering customers fresh looks across festive occasions.

The newly launched celebrity-led collections and collaborations include Aurelia X Ananya Panday, KALKI X Janhvi Kapoor, Mia by Tanishq X Aneet Padda, KISNA Gold & Diamond X Shahid Mira Kapoor, Levi's X Alia Bhatt, Ritu Kumar X Kareena Kapoor, ONLY X Smriti Mandanna and PALMONAS X Shraddha Kapoor.

J&K CGD Policy 2026 to expand clean fuel access, boost industrial growth: CM Omar

Policy provides time-bound single-window clearances, coverage across all 20 districts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday termed the notification of the Jammu & Kashmir City Gas Distribution (CGD) Policy, 2026 a major step towards expanding access to clean fuel, strengthening industrial competitiveness and modernising the energy infrastructure of Jammu & Kashmir.

Notified following its approval by the Council of Ministers, the policy establishes a clear, investor-friendly and time-bound framework for expanding the use of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) across households, commercial establishments, industries and the transport sector. The policy envisages phased expansion of City Gas Distribution networks across all 20 districts of J&K, bringing cleaner and reliable natural gas closer to consumers while supporting the transition away from conventional fuels.

A key focus of the policy is to simplify and accelerate project implementation



through single-window, time-bound clearances, streamlined procedures for establishing CNG stations and standardised Right of Way norms. It also provides for priority gas connectivity to major industrial estates, including those in Kathua, Samba and Pulwama, to support industrial growth and improve access to reliable energy.

The expansion of PNG and CNG infrastructure is expected to provide safer, cleaner and more affordable energy options, help reduce fuel costs, improve industrial efficiency and competitiveness, and encourage greater investment in the emerging clean-energy sector.

The policy also provides an impetus to local employment, apprenticeships and skill development, creating new

opportunities in the construction, operation and maintenance of gas distribution infrastructure and associated services.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Satish Sharma and the Department on the notification of the policy, describing it as an important step towards cleaner growth, sustainable development and a modern energy ecosystem in Jammu & Kashmir.

“The City Gas Distribution Policy will help expand clean and reliable energy access while creating an enabling environment for industry and investment. It is an important step towards building a cleaner, more efficient and sustainable energy future for J&K,” the Chief Minister said.

■ Vaccinate against influenza, pneumonia

Avoid self-medication, unnecessary antibiotics: SKIMS advisory

JAHANGEER GANAIE

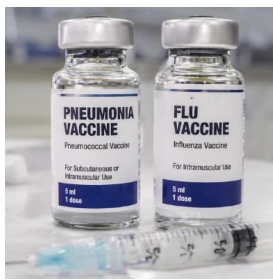
SRINAGAR: The Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) has issued a public advisory ahead of the winter season, urging people to take necessary precautions to protect themselves from respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological complications that may worsen during the colder months.

The advisory, issued in the public interest by the Department of Internal & Pulmonary Medicine, SKIMS, emphasised that viral infections tend to spread more easily during the fall and winter months, while exposure to cold weather can aggravate

several chronic medical conditions, particularly asthma, COPD, cardiovascular diseases and certain neurological disorders.

The institute has advised people to stay adequately protected from the cold, maintain good hygiene, avoid unnecessary exposure to crowded places, and ensure timely vaccination against influenza and pneumonia.

According to the advisory, people should wear multiple layers of clothing to retain body heat and limit exposure to outdoor air, particularly when temperatures fall below freezing. Those venturing outdoors have been advised to keep their nose and mouth



covered and take adequate precautions against cold air.

SKIMS has also stressed the importance of frequent handwashing and avoiding touching the face, particularly the nose and mouth. People have been advised to stay well hydrated by drinking enough fluids and to continue indoor physical activity to support cardio-

vascular and lung health.

The institute urged people to take precautions against falls on icy and slippery surfaces, recommending proper footwear with good traction and walking through well-lit areas.

“Prioritise sleep and manage stress,” the advisory stated, recommending seven to nine hours of sleep every night. It noted that stress and anxiety can act as triggers for seizures in some individuals, making adequate rest and stress management particularly important during winter.

The advisory has laid special emphasis on vaccination, urging people to get vaccinated against influenza and pneumonia,

stating that vaccination can reduce the risk of respiratory infections.

Patients suffering from hypertension have been advised to monitor their blood pressure regularly and continue prescribed antihypertensive medicines without interruption. Similarly, patients with chronic diseases have been asked to take their prescribed medicines regularly and strictly follow their doctors’ advice.

Asthma and COPD patients have particularly been advised to follow their action plans during exacerbations and carry a rescue inhaler if prescribed by their healthcare provider.

Tourists rescued from Dal Lake as winds strand Shikara

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Amid gusty winds and rain, around 15 tourists were safely rescued after their Shikara got stranded in Dal Lake in Srinagar, officials said here on Thursday.

An official said that the tourists, who were enjoying their Shikara ride on Dal Lake, were safely rescued after their Shikara got stranded near Nehru Park amid strong winds and rain. He said that upon receiving information about the incident, CRPF and SDRF personnel and rescue teams immediately launched a rescue operation and safely evacuated all the stranded tourists.

“The exact number was not counted at the time of the rescue, while the number of tourists may have been more than 15,” he said. Meanwhile, an investigation has been taken up, while the official said that all the tourists were safe and sound—(KNO)

Man died, 8 injured as Sumo loses control in Ramban

KNO CORRESPONDENT

RAMBAN: A man was killed and eight others injured after the Sumo vehicle they were travelling in met with an accident in the Senabati area of Ukherhal in Ramban district on Thursday, officials said.

An official said that the accident took place in the Senabati area after the driver lost control of the vehicle, causing it to overturn.

He said the injured were shifted to nearby health facilities for treatment. Two of the injured were referred to District Hospital Ramban, while six others were referred to Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag for further treatment, officials said.

The deceased was identified as Vijay Singh, son of Raj Singh, a resident of Chunthan, Senabathi.

The official said those shifted to District Hospital Ramban were identified as Soni Chand, son of Amar Chand, who suffered a head injury, and Sunil Singh, son of Pyar Singh. Those referred to GMC Anantnag were identified as Anand Singh, son of Pawan Singh; Anil Chand, son of Amar Chand; Naresh Singh, son of Raj Singh; Jatinder Singh, son of Pyar Singh; Ravinder Singh, son of Dharam Singh, who was critically injured; and Ravit Singh, son of Pyar Singh.

Meanwhile, cognisance of the incident has been taken and the circumstances leading to the accident are being verified—(KNO)

Mine recovered, destroyed near fence in Poonch’s Mendhar

AGENCIES

JAMMU: An old land mine was recovered and safely destroyed near the fence in Basooni Top area of Mendhar in Poonch district on Thursday, officials said.

An official said that the mine was recovered by the Army, following which a Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) team safely destroyed it on the spot in the morning.

The official said no loss of life or injury was reported in the incident. He said the source of the mine is being verified, while further investigation into the matter is underway—(KNO)

Vehicle strikes man to death in Samba’s Bari Brahmana

AGENCIES

SAMBA: A 22-year-old man died after being hit by an unidentified vehicle in Bari Brahmana area of Samba district on Thursday morning, officials said.

An official said that the incident took place in the morning near Police Station Bari Brahmana, where, as per the initial report, an unidentified vehicle struck the man, leaving him in a pool of blood.

He said that following the incident, police reached the spot and took the body into custody. The deceased was later identified as Lulain Surain (22), a resident of Jharkhand. Meanwhile, police have initiated necessary proceedings and launched an investigation—(KNO)

Loans worth ₹14.71 Cr provided to artisans, weavers in Q1 & Q2 of CFY

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Artisans and weavers across Kashmir are receiving a fresh boost of working capital, with the Handicrafts and Handloom Department extending loans worth ₹14.71 crore under its flagship Credit Card Scheme in the first two quarters of the current financial year.

Of the 3,885 applications sponsored to banks, 1,332 have been sanctioned and 1,054 disbursed by the end of September 2026.

Sharing details in a press release issued here today, spokesman of the Department stated that the department is working with lead banks and other financial institutions to widen access to this facility. “The funds are meant to help craftspeople set up independent units and buy raw material and tools in a sector that remains heavily labour-intensive,” he said.

The spokesman further stated that the beneficiaries also receive interest subvention of 7% on a tapering basis for five years, designed to help new



units become self-sustaining. “Since the credit limit was raised from ₹1 lakh to ₹2 lakh in 2020, in line with the Wool Processing, Handloom and Handicrafts Policy, more than 10,000 craftsmen have taken loans totalling ₹151 crore,” he said.

Over the same period, the department has provided interest subvention of ₹19 crore to support these unit-holders, he added.

The scheme is aimed at reducing dependence on informal credit and giving traditional crafts a more stable financial footing.

By easing access to formal loans for tools, raw material and small production units, the depart-

ment hopes to help artisans and weavers expand output, retain younger craftspeople in the trade and strengthen Kashmir’s handloom and handicraft economy.

Artisans and weavers can apply online at singlewindow.jk.gov.in to avail the benefits of the scheme. Common Service Centres set up across districts are available to help with registration.

The spokesman urged the financial institutions and lead banks to treat the craft sector as under priority lending and extend timely, hassle-free credit so that small unit-holders can build a stronger and more self-reliant base.

J&K Branch of NIRC of ICAI organises Industrial Visit for CA Students

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The ICAI - Jammu & Kashmir Branch of Northern India Regional Council (NIRC) successfully organized an Industrial Visit for Chartered Accountancy students Thursday, at the JKMPCL Milk Plant, Srinagar.

Chairman, J&K Branch of NIRC of ICAI, Amit Gupta, stated that such industrial visits are an integral part of the Branch’s continuous efforts to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical exposure, thereby enabling CA students to better understand real-world business and industrial environments.

The visit witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of CA students from the Kashmir Valley, who were keen to gain practical exposure

to industrial operations, supply chain management, and manufacturing processes in the dairy sector. The visit forms part of the Branch’s endeavor to extend its student activities across the Union Territory and to ensure that students in the Valley have equal access to such learning opportunities.

During the visit, Hamid, Plant In-charge, JKMPCL Srinagar, led the students through the plant and gave them an in-depth overview of the functioning of Jammu & Kashmir Milk Producers Cooperative Limited (JKMPCL). The students gained valuable insights into the milk procurement system, supply chain management, quality control procedures, dairy product manufacturing processes, and distribution and marketing operations.

The visit provided students with practical expo-

sure to the end-to-end dairy value chain, including the processing of products such as milk, ghee, paneer, and curd, while also highlighting the importance of hygiene standards, quality assurance mechanisms, and efficient operational management in the food and dairy industry.

The Managing Committee of the Branch, has been taking continuous efforts to provide CA students with practical learning opportunities, which play a crucial role in shaping competent and industry-ready professionals.

The J&K Branch of NIRC of ICAI reaffirmed its commitment towards capacity building, professional development, and industry interaction for CA students and expressed its intent to organise more such knowledge-enriching visits in the future.

IIM-J, NASSCOM, J&K Govt to Host J&K GCC Summit 2026

Summit to bring together global industry leaders, policymakers, investors

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: A press conference was Thursday organized by the Indian Institute of Management Jammu in collaboration with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, with NASSCOM ahead of the J&K GCC Summit 2026. The press conference provided an overview of the summit, its objectives, key focus areas, and its broader vision of positioning Jammu and Kashmir as India’s emerging destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs).

The J&K GCC Summit 2026, scheduled for 9–10 October 2026 at Mandapam, IIM Jammu, will bring together a distinguished group of senior policymakers, industry leaders, academic experts, investors, and representatives from the GCC and technology ecosystem, including Shri Atal Dulloo, IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Jammu and Kashmir; Prof. B. S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu; Padma Bhushan Shri Rajendra Singh Pawar, Chairman, NIIT; Shri Rajesh Nambiar, President, NASSCOM; Shri Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, IAS, Secretary, Labor and Employment Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir; Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Faculty and Research; Prof. Nitin Upadhyay, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu, Prof. Shyam Narayan Lal, Chairperson, Anandam, Dr. Sandeep Anantharayanan, CEO, CITAG, IIM Jammu, among other leaders from



industry, government, academia, investment, human resources, and the innovation ecosystem. Centered on the theme “Unlocking J&K’s GCC Potential for Building Growth Ecosystem & Catalyzing Investment,” the J&K GCC Summit 2026 is expected to bring together more than 300 delegates and provide a focused platform for translating Jammu and Kashmir’s emerging GCC potential into investment, employment, skills development, and sustainable economic growth.

Global Capability Centres have evolved significantly from their earlier role as offshore units focused primarily on transaction processing and cost optimization. Today, they serve as strategic centres for high-value functions such as product engineering, enterprise analytics, artificial intelligence, research and development, and other critical global operations. While India has emerged as a major hub for this transformation, GCC activity is increasingly expanding beyond established metropolitan centers into Tier-II and Tier-III cities. This

shift creates an opportunity for Jammu and Kashmir to develop a distinctive proposition built around its talent base, academic ecosystem, technology capabilities, infrastructure, innovation potential, and quality of life.

Against this backdrop, the J&K GCC Summit 2026 has been conceived as a targeted investment facilitation platform to present Jammu and Kashmir’s potential before global capability heads, location strategy leaders, and transaction advisers. The Summit will facilitate dialogue on how GCC investments can support the Union Territory’s priorities in employment generation, skills development, and economic diversification. It will also highlight the infrastructure readiness, single-window facilitation, incentive framework, and institutional support available in J&K, while enabling investors, industry stakeholders, government representatives, and knowledge partners to contribute to a comprehensive roadmap and enabling policy framework for GCC development.

■ World Sight Day

Don’t ignore blurred vision, floaters, flashes, ophthalmologists warn

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Prolonged exposure to smartphones, computers and other digital screens is increasingly being associated with eye strain and vision-related complaints, with ophthalmologists advising people to adopt preventive measures and undergo regular eye examinations.

Doctors said the growing dependence on digital devices has made eye health a major concern, particularly among children, elderly people and those already suffering from conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

Ophthalmologists said continuous screen viewing requires the eyes to remain focused at a close distance for extended periods, which can result in digital eye strain, commonly known as computer vision syndrome.

They said people experiencing prolonged screen exposure may develop symptoms including blurred vision, dryness or irritation of the eyes, headaches and discomfort in the

neck and shoulders.

Doctors also cautioned that children could be particularly vulnerable, with prolonged near-work and reduced outdoor activity being associated with an increased risk of developing myopia or short-sightedness at an early age.

Ophthalmologist Dr Tariq Ahmad stressed the importance of periodic eye examinations, particularly among the elderly.

He said that with increasing longevity, age-related eye disorders, including age-related macular degeneration (AMD), are becoming increasingly common. “Among elderly patients, an eye check-up every six months is necessary. Age-related macular degeneration has become more common, and its incidence has doubled over the past decade,” Dr Tariq said.

He said early detection and timely treatment remain crucial in preventing avoidable deterioration of vision. “As a general recommendation, people should undergo regular eye examinations, while

children should have their eyes checked at least once a year, even when they do not have any obvious symptoms,” he said.

Another ophthalmologist, Dr Shugufta, said several major causes of vision loss and blindness can either be prevented or effectively managed if detected at an early stage.

“Refractive errors, cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy are among the important causes of preventable blindness. Regular screening is therefore extremely important,” she said.

She advised people to pay attention to their diet and include green leafy vegetables, fresh fruits and nutritious sources of protein, including fish, in their daily meals.

Dr Shugufta added that people suffering from diabetes, hypertension and other systemic diseases require more frequent ophthalmic evaluation. Ophthalmologist Dr Sajad Ahmad highlighted the rapid advances in technology and research transforming the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders.

that his timely support had “saved the day” when they were dealing with significant inconvenience.

The appreciation highlights the importance of responsive and customer-friendly banking services for NRIs, particularly when they face unexpected transaction-related issues while managing their financial affairs from abroad.

The group expressed

their gratitude to HDFC Bank’s Karan Nagar Branch and Sohail Amin Bhat for going beyond routine service and assisting them when they needed support.

They said such professionalism and prompt assistance leave a lasting impression and reflect positively on the bank’s commitment to serving its NRI customers.

Good Morning

Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Gas Can Be A New Breath Of Cleaner Energy For J&K

Jammu and Kashmir has taken an important step towards reshaping its energy landscape with the notification of the Jammu and Kashmir City Gas Distribution Policy, 2026. The policy is not merely about laying pipelines and establishing CNG stations; it carries the promise of bringing a cleaner and more organised energy system to a region that has long depended heavily on conventional fuels. The decision to expand PNG and CNG access across all 20 districts is welcome. For households, industries, commercial establishments and the transport sector, natural gas can offer a cleaner and, in many cases, more convenient alternative to conventional fuels. At a time when cities are struggling with deteriorating air quality and rising environmental concerns, the shift towards cleaner fuels cannot remain a slogan, it has to become a practical reality. The proposed connectivity with the national gas grid through the Gurdaspur-Jammu pipeline gives this initiative greater significance. A reliable supply network can provide the foundation for sustained industrial growth and reduce the vulnerability associated with dependence on traditional fuel sources. The real test, however, will begin beyond the policy document. Kashmir and Jammu have seen many ambitious schemes announced with impressive objectives, only to lose momentum during implementation. The City Gas Distribution Policy must not become another framework that remains largely confined to government files. Clearances must actually become faster, coordination between departments must improve, and infrastructure must reach consumers in a time-bound manner. Industrial estates deserve particular attention. Affordable and reliable natural gas can help local industries modernise their operations, improve efficiency and reduce pollution. Small and medium enterprises, which often struggle with high energy costs, should not be left outside the benefits of this transition. Similarly, CNG infrastructure for public transport and private vehicles needs careful planning. Merely announcing stations will not create a successful gas economy. Availability, affordability, safety and uninterrupted supply will determine whether people actually move away from conventional fuels. The single-window mechanism proposed under the policy is therefore crucial. If implemented in its true spirit, it can reduce bureaucratic delays and encourage private investment. But a single window must mean a genuinely single process—not another layer of paperwork hidden behind a new name. Jammu and Kashmir also needs to look at the employment potential of this emerging sector. Pipeline construction, maintenance, technical services, CNG operations, safety management and other allied activities can create opportunities for local youth. Skill development should therefore be built into the expansion strategy from the beginning. Cleaner fuel can mean cleaner air, but infrastructure alone cannot guarantee a cleaner future. Strict safety standards, regular inspections, public awareness and responsible regulation must accompany the expansion of the gas network. The City Gas Distribution Policy, 2026, has the potential to become a significant milestone in J&K's energy journey. What is needed now is not another announcement, but determined execution. Every household, industrial estate, commercial centre and transport corridor that can practically be connected should gradually become part of this network. Jammu and Kashmir has been blessed with abundant natural beauty, but preserving that beauty requires more than environmental campaigns. It requires changing the way we produce, move and consume energy. If implemented honestly, efficiently and without unnecessary delays, the new gas policy can give J&K not only a new source of energy, but also a cleaner environment, stronger industries and a more sustainable future.

Green Nanotechnology And The Battle Against Silent Water Crisis



DR. RAM SHEPHERD BHEENAVENI

DR. SRINIVAS KATHERASALA

Freshwater resources all over the world, mainly in India, where urbanization is proceeding most rapidly, are now in a very risky situation. The discussions on water resource management are mainly focused on water scarcity, drought cycles, and unpredictability of monsoons, but another serious problem is slowly emerging - it is the water quality loss. The modern industries, intensive agriculture practices, and growing household consumption continuously inject tons of chemicals into rivers, lakes, and groundwater bodies. Environmental specialists use the term "emerging contaminants" when referring to these chemical substances that range from pharmaceuticals and personal care products to microplastics and substances like PFAS, which are used in industrial activity. These contaminating substances are always present in water in small volumes, however, their existence can be very dangerous for the health of humans, marine life, and food safety.

The main flaw in our environmental defence system rests in the design of regular municipal wastewater treatment plants. Built years ago, to deal with macropollutants, suspended solids, and Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), regular plants have never had a system to either trap or destroy synthetic compounds. Highly stable pharmaceutical leftovers, synthetic hormones, and halides can skip classical biological filtration unaffected and make treated municipal releases a major source of micro-pollutants for river basins. Although advanced tertiary filtration technologies exist—granular activated carbon, reverse osmosis, chemical oxidation—their implementation nationwide is difficult due to high energy usage, significant capital costs, need for constant addition of chemicals, and generation of additional toxic wastes that need disposal.

The Science of Green Nanotechnology and Waste Valorisation

In order to address this technological gap, the use of green nanotechnology offers a radical and environmentally friendly approach to the design of national water purification systems. In contrast to conventional synthesis of nanomaterials, which utilizes harmful solvents and provide



high-energy consumption during the production, green nanotechnology employs substances from plants, agricultural clippings, and waste products from forestry as a result of the production process. Various phytochemicals included into organic materials, such as polyphenols, flavonoids, and tannins, function as safe reducing agents to produce functioning metal oxide nanoparticles, nanocomposites, and nanocellulose filtration materials under normal temperature and pressure.

Green nanomaterials have exceptional catalytic as well as adsorptive properties at the molecular scale, making them effective in the degradation of persistent pollutants. Engineered biochar nanocomposites and nanocellulose membranes utilize directed surface forces, hydrogen bonding networks, and high surface area porosity to efficiently extract trace pharmaceuticals, microplastics, and heavy metals. In addition, solar-driven biogenic catalysts like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide nanoparticles are able to utilize sunlight to produce reactive oxygen species that mineralize hard-to-degrade organic pollutants into benign carbon dioxide and water. Using biogenic magnetic iron cores, these nanomaterials can quickly be removed from treated water through magnetic fields and reused several times, eliminating recurrent operational costs.

Ecotoxicological Safety and Economic Viability in Public Utilities

One of the key challenges faced by advanced materials for use in construction is the issue of their potential long-term ecological safety and financial viability of their use. Conventional chemical nanomaterials are often associated with the rise of ecotoxicological issues due to surface contaminants profiting from the influence of surfactants, which may occur in aquatic

environments and result in oxidative stress in micro-crustaceans and freshwater algae. Moreover, unlike chemically synthesized nanomaterials that are subject to toxic effects, eco-friendly nanomaterials are manufactured with the help of biocompatible coatings. Ecotoxicological tests showing Risk Quotients (the ratio of expected and safe environment concentrations) underscore the fact that biogenic composites do not prove to be toxic in receiving waters.

From the viewpoint of economics, the research done on Techno-Economic Analysis (TEA) indicates that green nanotechnology brings significant financial benefits compared to traditional processes of tertiary treatment. While commercial activated carbon and ozone oxidation technologies are very expensive and charge a high Levelized Cost of Water (LCOW) due to the need for costly raw materials and high electricity consumption for thermal bed reactivation and ozone production, using valorised agricultural waste for creating green nanocomposites and low energy magnetic recovery processes allows the technologies to significantly cut the price of water treatment. Therefore, advanced micro-pollutant removal becomes economically viable for municipal water utilities with limited budgets.

Recommended Policy Measures and Implementation Roadmap

Transitioning these benchtop innovations into full-scale municipal utility infrastructure requires a synchronized policy push from environmental ministries, urban planning authorities, and water governance bodies. To accelerate adoption and build resilient water infrastructure, the following policy measures must be prioritized:

Update Environmental Discharge Standards for Emerging Contaminants:

National water policy frameworks must evolve beyond legacy metrics such as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS). Regulatory bodies must establish explicit, standardized monitoring protocols and maximum discharge thresholds for trace pharmaceuticals, microplastics, and fluorinated chemicals in municipal and industrial effluents.

Incentivize Agricultural Biowaste Supply Chains: State and central governments should establish localized biowaste collection hubs within agricultural belts. Connecting farm-level biowaste management with nanomaterial manufacturing creates regional circular bio-economies, reduces agricultural stubble burning, and stabilizes raw material supply chains for water utilities.

Establish Targeted TRL Pilot Demonstrations: Water infrastructure funds should finance containerized pilot-scale units (TRL 4–6) directly at municipal wastewater plants. Demonstrating continuous-flow green nanocomposite reactors under real effluent conditions will provide the engineering data necessary for full-scale utility integration and SCADA-automated control.

Align Infrastructure Investments with UN Sustainable Development Goals: Public Utilizing procurement policies that funnel resources into water treatment technology systems that align with the UN SDGs, specifically SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 9: Industry and Infrastructure, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 14: Life Below Water, is ideal. In particular, funding green subsidies or awarding tax credits for utility facilities that implement circular nano-purification technology will prompt the involvement of private and public funding in the capital of water science.

Solving the issue of obtaining clean and safe freshwater for future generations is not a matter of making simple changes to the existing infrastructure of today. The advanced technologies in the field of green nanotechnology provide a realistic, effective, and ecological opportunity to offer an innovative solution to the problem for countries looking for ways to modernize law policies regarding their environmental governance. In fact, bridging the gaps between biological chemistry and waste valorisation allows us to change sewage treatment from a threat the society faces to an extraordinary achievement made in the field of global water security.

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RED GOLD

The Science Of Saffron

SADAFIYA AMIN

We all call it Kesar - a few red threads that my mother keeps in a small glass box, locked as if it were jewellery. And in truth, it is jewellery. In Pampore, they still call it red gold, and the world still pays more for it than for gold itself. As a student of chemistry, I have always been fascinated by how something so small can hold so much science, history, and emotion at once. This time, I wanted to write about something even smaller but even more powerful – a flower that blooms only for fifteen days a year, yet stays in our lives forever.

Saffron's scientific name is *Crocus sativus*. It does not grow wild like other flowers. It has to be cared for, planted by hand, and loved like a child. In late October, when Kashmir is preparing for winter, the fields of Pampore turn purple. Before sunrise, Kashmiri women walk into the cold fields with baskets. They pick the flowers one by one. Each flower has only three stigmas - three tiny red threads. Those three threads are the saffron we use.

To understand its value, consider this number. To make just one kilogram of pure saffron, you need to pluck around 150,000 flowers. That means 450,000 stigmas separated by hand, under the sun, with patience. No machine can do this work. This is why our grandmothers never wasted a single strand. One strand was one flower, and one flower was a morning's cold labour.

Now let me tell you the chemistry that makes this flower so magical. In my chemistry book, there are three names that I will

never forget because they belong to saffron.

The first is "Crocin": Crocin is the chemical that gives saffron its royal golden colour. When you put a strand in warm milk, crocin dissolves and slowly turns the whole cup golden yellow. It is a water-soluble carotenoid, which is rare in nature.

The second is "Safranal": Safranal is the reason saffron smells like heaven. When saffron is dried, picrocrocin converts into safranal. That sweet, honey-like, slightly earthy fragrance that fills our kitchen during Eid is safranal. You cannot make this fragrance in a factory. You need the sun of Pampore.

The third is Picrocrocin: It gives saffron its unique taste - a little bitter, a little sweet, a little royal. Without picrocrocin, saffron would be just colour. With it, it becomes taste.

Three chemicals - colour, fragrance, and taste. It is exactly like Kashmir itself. Colour from our Chinar, fragrance from our Kehwa, and taste from our Wazwan.

But saffron is more than chemistry. For us Kashmiris, it is medicine, memory, and our living tradition.

In Kashmiri tradition, no special day is complete without saffron. When a baby is born in our homes, the first thing given to the mother is warm milk with saffron and almonds to give her strength. It is our first welcome to the world. When a daughter gets married, her Kehwa is made more special with extra saffron as a sign of love and honour. On Eid, our mothers make phirni and kheer, and the golden colour on top is always saffron. Even in our Wazwan, especially in Zafrani Pulao and Shufta, saffron is what makes the dish



royal. Without saffron, a feast is just food. With saffron, it becomes a Kashmiri feast.

And the most beautiful tradition is Kehwa. Every evening in every Kashmiri house, the samovar boils, and Kehwa is made with cardamom, cinnamon, and a single strand of saffron. That Kehwa is not just a drink. It is our culture. It is where families sit together, elders tell stories, and guests are honoured. When we serve a guest Kehwa with saffron, we are saying without words, "You are special for us; you are family." Our ancestors have used saffron in Kehwa for centuries to stay warm in harsh winters. It is a thread that connects generations.

I still remember when I was a child and had a cold, my mother would warm milk, add one strand of saffron and a little honey, and say, "Bismillah, you will be fine." And I would be fine. Modern science now says she was right. Saffron has antioxidants. It improves mood, reduces anxiety, helps in better sleep, and is good for the eyes and memory. Our mothers knew pharmacology without

reading any pharmacology book. They had what no laboratory has - experience and love.

However, today this golden heritage is in danger.

First, fake saffron has filled the market. People sell dyed corn silk, coloured paper, and even horsehair as Kashmiri saffron. Tourists buy it because it is cheap. The real farmer suffers because his hard work cannot compete with fake cheap colour. The only way to check real saffron is to put it in water - real saffron will slowly give a golden colour; never an immediate dark red, and it will not break easily.

Second, our saffron land is shrinking. Pampore, which was once called the saffron town, is slowly becoming a cement town. Fields are being converted into colonies and shops. The young generation does not want to work in the fields because it is hard work and less profitable. If this continues, one day we will tell our future generation that saffron used to grow here, like a story.

What can we do? We need to

protect it as we protect our culture. The government has introduced a GI tag for Kashmiri saffron, which is a good step. It means only saffron grown in Kashmir can be called Kashmiri saffron. But we also need to do our part. We should buy only from trusted Kashmiri farmers, we should teach our younger brothers and sisters about its value, and we should be proud to serve our own saffron, not Iranian.

Saffron has taught me the biggest lesson of chemistry and of life.

In chemistry, we learn that the smallest things can cause the biggest changes. One drop of indicator can change the colour of the whole solution. Saffron is like that. One tiny stigma can change the colour, taste, and fragrance of a whole pot of Kehwa.

In life, it is the same. Small things done with sincerity can create a lasting impact. A single act of kindness, like a single strand of Kesar, can brighten someone's whole day.

Whenever I see that small glass box of saffron in my mother's kitchen, I do not see just a spice. I see the cold mornings of Pampore, the red hands of Kashmiri women, the wisdom of my grandmother, the Kehwa of our evenings, and the golden chemistry that connects my textbook to my home.

Saffron is not just Kashmir's golden chemistry. It is Kashmir's golden tradition, Kashmir's golden heart. And we must keep it beating.

Author is a science enthusiast pursuing chemistry at GDC Baramulla. Through tutoring and writing, she strives to reveal the poetry hidden within the periodic table, making the complexities of chemical science accessible to all. She can be mailed at dmuthair21@gmail.com

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

■ From Credential To Character

The Missing Dimension In Teacher Qualification

FAROOQ AHMAD BAKLOO

A teacher in a university is generally considered “qualified” when the person possesses the required academic degree, clears the prescribed eligibility requirements, completes the necessary research qualifications and secures an academic appointment. Institutionally, this is both necessary and reasonable. Universities require objective criteria for recruitment, and academic competence cannot be compromised. Yet there is a deeper question that formal qualifications cannot answer: Does being academically qualified automatically make a person qualified to educate? The answer is not necessarily. A PhD can demonstrate research competence; a publication can demonstrate scholarly engagement; an eligibility examination can demonstrate subject knowledge; and an appointment order can confer institutional authority.

None of these, by themselves, guarantees emotional intelligence, patience, social sensitivity, moral responsibility, intellectual openness, fairness or the capacity to handle authority responsibly. This distinction becomes particularly significant in Political Science and Sociology because these disciplines do not merely study institutions and society; they examine power, inequality, authority, identity, conflict, justice and social change. A teacher who teaches democracy but cannot tolerate disagreement, teaches equality while reproducing stereotypes, discusses constitutional liberty while discouraging questions, or lectures on social justice while treating students arbitrarily creates a contradiction between knowledge and conduct. The problem, therefore, is not whether such a person possesses a degree. The problem is whether the person has developed the professional character required to use academic authority responsibly.

Academic Competence: Necessary, but Not Sufficient

The first layer of a good teacher is undoubtedly academic competence. A Political Science teacher cannot effectively teach constitutionalism without understanding the Constitution, cannot explain federalism without understanding the distribution of powers, and cannot teach political theory without engaging seriously with thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, Rawls, Nozick or Hannah Arendt. Similarly, a Sociology teacher cannot explain social stratification without understanding concepts such as class, caste, status, social mobility and power. But subject knowledge alone does not make teaching effective. Consider a teacher explaining John Rawls's idea of justice as fairness.

A purely information-oriented teacher may explain the original position, veil of ignorance and two principles of justice and stop there. A more complete teacher can take the concept beyond memorisation: If you did not know whether you would be born rich or poor, male or female, rural or urban, socially privileged or disadvantaged, would you design the same rules of society? The second approach does not merely transmit Rawls; it teaches students how political theory can become a method of questioning social arrangements. The teacher's task is not simply to demonstrate that the teacher has read Rawls; it is to enable students to think with Rawls.

Teaching Democracy by Practising Democratic Habits

The distinction becomes even sharper when teaching democracy. A teacher who treats democracy simply as elections, political parties, legislatures and majority rule may provide students with an acceptable textbook definition. But a teacher with deeper pedagogical and intellectual capacity may ask a more difficult question: Can a society be democratic if citizens can vote but certain social groups remain systematically excluded from meaningful participation? Sociology immediately enters the discussion through social stratification, caste, class, gender and social capital, while Political Science contributes questions about representation, political equality and institutional participation.

The teacher can then move from the formal definition of democracy to the substantive conditions that make democratic citizenship meaningful. Such teaching requires constructive and critical thinking, because students must be encouraged to examine both the achievements and limitations of democratic institutions without being pushed towards a predetermined political conclusion. A teacher who teaches democracy should therefore understand that disagreement is not necessarily disorder. A classroom in which students can respectfully challenge an argument is itself a small

laboratory of democratic practice.

Social Aptitude and the Unequal Classroom

This is why social aptitude matters. Political Science and Sociology classrooms are socially diverse spaces. A student from a rural background may enter the classroom with limited exposure to academic English but considerable experiential knowledge of local governance. A student from a marginalised social background may understand exclusion not merely as a theoretical concept but as lived experience. A student who has never participated in a debate may remain silent even when possessing a strong argument. If a teacher interprets silence as intellectual weakness, the classroom can reproduce inequality.

A socially perceptive teacher asks why some voices dominate and others remain unheard. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is particularly useful here. Students do not enter universities with identical linguistic styles, confidence levels, cultural familiarity or academic habits. When teachers mistake these socially distributed advantages for natural intelligence, educational institutions can reproduce the very inequalities they claim to study. A good teacher therefore understands that the classroom itself is a social institution and that pedagogical practices can either reproduce or challenge existing inequalities.

Moral Aptitude: When the Teacher Becomes the Example

The issue becomes even sharper when teaching caste and social stratification. A Sociology teacher may explain caste as a system of hierarchy, endogamy and social closure. But if the teacher casually assumes that students from certain social backgrounds are naturally more articulate, disciplined or academically capable, the classroom silently reproduces the hierarchy being analysed in the textbook. Similarly, a Political Science teacher may discuss affirmative action and substantive equality but treat the lived experiences behind these policies as irrelevant to abstract theory. Moral aptitude requires the teacher to recognise that students are not merely objects of academic evaluation; they are individuals entitled to dignity and fair treatment. Teaching a controversial subject does not require the teacher to endorse one political position. It requires the teacher to distinguish evidence from assertion, argument from prejudice and criticism from caricature. The teacher's conduct therefore becomes part of the lesson.

Gender, Patriarchy and the Problem of Contradiction

The same principle applies to gender. A teacher discussing patriarchy, feminist theory or the sociology of gender cannot afford to approach the classroom with unexamined stereotypes. If a teacher explains Simone de Beauvoir's argument about the social construction of womanhood but simultaneously assumes that women are naturally less suited to political leadership, the contradiction is obvious.

Likewise, a Political Science teacher discussing political participation should distinguish between formal political equality and the social conditions that influence women's actual participation. A woman may possess the constitutional right to contest elections, while family structures, care responsibilities, economic dependence, social expectations and political networks may influence whether that formal right becomes substantive political participation. The intellectually complete teacher therefore does more than explain feminist theory; the teacher examines the assumptions through which gender itself is understood.

Emotional Intelligence and the Politics of the Classroom

Emotional intelligence becomes particularly important when teaching politically sensitive subjects. Imagine a classroom discussion on nationalism, secularism, religion, caste, federalism, minority rights or Kashmir. Students may hold sharply different views because political beliefs are often connected to identity and lived experience. A teacher who lacks emotional intelligence may interpret disagreement as disrespect and attempt to suppress it. A teacher with emotional maturity can maintain intellectual boundaries without personalising disagreement. The teacher can distinguish between challenging an argument and attacking a person.

This is fundamental to democratic education. Political Science students should experience disagreement as part of intellectual life rather than as a threat to authority. When a teacher responds calmly to a strong opposing argument, students learn something about democratic citizenship that no textbook definition of tolerance can provide. The emotionally intelligent teacher does not surrender authority; the teacher learns how to exercise

authority without abusing it.

Patience: The Forgotten Pedagogical Virtue

Patience is equally important because Political Science and Sociology frequently require students to move from concrete experience to abstract concepts. A beginner may understand that a village Panchayat makes local decisions but may not immediately understand decentralisation, subsidiarity, political participation or grassroots democracy. A Sociology student may understand inequality through everyday experience but struggle to distinguish individual disadvantage from structural inequality. A patient teacher moves from the familiar to the conceptual. For example, the question “Why does one family remain poor despite individual hard work?” can become an entry point into social structure, inherited disadvantage, education, property, social networks and unequal opportunities. Similarly, asking why citizens in one locality participate actively in Panchayat meetings while others remain disengaged can lead to discussions of political efficacy, social capital and local power structures. Patience transforms confusion into conceptual understanding; impatience transforms confusion into student humiliation.

Adversity Quotient: Teaching Beyond Comfortable Conditions

The Adversity Quotient of a teacher also matters because education rarely occurs under perfect institutional conditions. Political Science and Sociology teachers may work with large classes, students with very different academic backgrounds, limited resources, heavy examination responsibilities and administrative pressures. A teacher with little tolerance for professional difficulty may gradually reduce teaching to the minimum required for institutional compliance. A teacher with resilience continues to search for ways to make learning meaningful even when circumstances are difficult.

This does not mean accepting poor institutional conditions silently. A professionally mature teacher can simultaneously demand better infrastructure, fair working conditions and institutional accountability while refusing to lower teaching standards. Resilience is not submission; it is the capacity to preserve professional standards in the presence of difficulty.

Critical Thinking without Intellectual Arrogance



A complete teacher must possess critical thinking without intellectual arrogance. This is particularly important in the social sciences because almost every major concept contains competing interpretations. Marx's analysis of class can lead students to ask whether class remains an adequate explanation of inequality in contemporary societies. Weber's conception of authority can help students distinguish traditional, charismatic and legal-rational forms of legitimacy. Foucault can provoke questions about whether power operates only through visible political institutions or also through knowledge, discipline and social norms. Gramsci can lead students to examine whether domination can persist partly through consent and cultural leadership.

Rawls and Nozick expose students to competing conceptions of justice, property and the role of the state. The teacher's responsibility is not to turn these thinkers into ideological weapons but to create an intellectual environment in which students can compare arguments, identify assumptions and formulate their own positions. A teacher who cannot tolerate intellectual disagreement is poorly positioned to teach disciplines built upon disagreement.

Intellectual Openness and Reflexivity

Sociology teaches students that socialisation transmits norms, values and expectations across generations. Political Science examines how power can become institutionalised. Yet teachers themselves are products of

socialisation. They carry assumptions acquired through family, community, education, class, gender and political experience. The danger arises when these assumptions become invisible to the person holding them. A teacher may unconsciously associate English fluency with intelligence, assertiveness with competence, quietness with weakness, urban exposure with sophistication or particular social backgrounds with academic ability. These assumptions can influence classroom participation, expectations and assessment.

The intellectually responsible teacher therefore needs reflexivity: the capacity to examine one's own position, assumptions and possible biases. A teacher who asks students to critically examine society must also be willing to critically examine the self. Otherwise, critical thinking becomes something demanded from students but not practised by the educator.

Consistency between What We Teach and What We Do

Professional integrity requires coherence between speech and conduct. A teacher cannot effectively teach constitutionalism while treating institutional rules as personal preferences. A teacher cannot lecture on equality while applying academic standards selectively. A teacher cannot teach freedom of expression while treating every disagreement as insubordination. A teacher cannot teach rule of law while allowing personal relationships to determine professional decisions. Students observe these contradictions even when they do not articulate them theoretically.

In fact, the contradiction itself becomes an informal lesson: students may learn that institutions speak the language of principles but operate through personalities. This is where the idea of the hidden curriculum becomes particularly important. Students do not learn democracy only from chapters on democracy. They learn it from how authority behaves when challenged.

The “Accidental Teacher”: A Useful Analytical Category

This brings us to the idea of the “accidental teacher.” The term should be used carefully. It does not mean someone who literally entered teaching by accident, nor does it imply that every teacher who entered the profession for employment is professionally deficient. Teaching is employment, and teachers have legitimate economic interests. The concept instead describes a deeper

whether professional standards survive institutional difficulty. A degree provides evidence of academic achievement; professional character provides evidence of educational maturity.

The University as a Moral Institution

This distinction also changes how we understand the university itself. A university is not simply a building in which qualified individuals deliver courses. It is an institution that shapes habits of reasoning and citizenship. Every classroom interaction communicates something about authority, fairness, disagreement and knowledge. When teachers encourage questions, students learn that authority can be questioned. When teachers punish disagreement, students learn that conformity is safer than inquiry. When assessment is transparent, students learn procedural fairness. When decisions appear arbitrary, students learn that rules may depend upon who exercises power. In this sense, the teacher is part of the university's moral infrastructure. The educational influence of a university therefore extends beyond its syllabus.

What Should Change?

The solution is not to invent an unrealistic model of the “perfect teacher.” Human beings will inevitably have weaknesses, emotional limitations and professional failures. The more useful objective is to recognise that teacher development cannot end with recruitment. Universities should create environments in which teachers are encouraged to improve pedagogical skills, engage with new scholarship, reflect on classroom practices and participate in meaningful professional development. This is particularly important in the social sciences because the subjects themselves evolve through contestation. New research changes how we understand democracy, identity, gender, social inequality, political communication, digital politics and state-society relations. A teacher who stops learning eventually becomes someone teaching yesterday's understanding of today's society. Professional development is therefore not merely an administrative requirement; it is an intellectual responsibility.

From Credential to Character

Ultimately, the distinction between a qualified teacher and an accidental teacher is not a distinction between people with degrees and people without them. It is a distinction between credential and character, designation and responsibility, knowledge and educational wisdom. Academic competence is indispensable, but it is only the foundation. A teacher also needs emotional intelligence to exercise authority without unnecessary humiliation, patience to accommodate different learning speeds, an adversity quotient to withstand professional difficulties, social aptitude to recognise unequal starting points, moral aptitude to apply principles consistently, critical thinking to challenge assumptions, intellectual openness to engage with opposing arguments, and professional integrity to ensure that conduct does not contradict teaching.

The deepest test of a teacher is therefore not how much the teacher can say about democracy, equality, justice, society or power, but how the teacher behaves when confronted with disagreement, difference and institutional authority. A teacher who teaches Rawls should understand fairness not merely as a philosophical concept but as a principle relevant to academic conduct. A teacher who teaches Bourdieu should recognise that students arrive with unequal forms of cultural capital. A teacher who teaches Weber should understand that authority requires legitimacy. A teacher who teaches Ambedkar should understand that equality cannot be reduced to formal declarations while social hierarchies remain unquestioned. A teacher who teaches feminist theory should examine the stereotypes embedded in everyday institutional behaviour. A teacher who teaches democratic citizenship should be capable of allowing students to question the teacher.

Teaching a Subject or Educating a Human Being?

That is ultimately the difference between teaching a subject and educating a human being. The former requires knowledge. The latter requires knowledge accompanied by character, reflexivity, patience, emotional maturity and professional responsibility. A degree can establish that a person is academically qualified to enter a classroom; only sustained conduct can demonstrate that the person is qualified to educate those inside it. A degree can open the classroom door. It cannot teach a person how to treat the human beings inside it.

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CM Omar greets people on Urs of Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA)

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the annual Urs of Sheikh-ul-Alam, Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA), describing his life and teachings as an enduring source of spiritual guidance, harmony and compassion.

In his message, the Chief Minister said Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA), revered as Alamdar-e-Kashmir and Nund Reshi, occupies a unique place in Kashmir’s spiritual and cultural heritage, and that his teachings continue to carry profound relevance in the contemporary world.

“Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA) remains an eternal beacon of peace, harmony and spiritual enlightenment. His universal message transcends sectarian boundaries and continues to inspire people across faiths and generations,” the Chief Minister said.

He said the revered saint’s emphasis on simplicity, compassion, tolerance, devotion and brotherhood has deeply influenced Kashmir’s composite cultural and spiritual ethos.

The Chief Minister observed that the enduring appeal of Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA) lies in his message of humanity, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, values that remain as relevant today as ever.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and urged everyone to draw inspiration from the life and teachings of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA).

Rana lays foundation for forest, wildlife projects worth ₹1.31 cr in Rajouri

GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Thursday e-inaugurated and e-laid foundation stones for four projects under the Forest, Ecology & Environment Departments across Budhal, Thanamandi and Rajouri constituencies.

The projects, funded under UT Capex and having a combined cost of 131.71 lakh, are aimed at promoting eco-tourism, providing recreational spaces to local communities and strengthening forest and wildlife protection infrastructure.

The projects included two eco-parks in Nanga Thub (Bakori) and Nambal (Budhal), each being developed at an estimated cost of 40 lakh under the Rajouri Forest Division. The foundation stones for both projects were laid in presence of MLA Budhal, Javid Iqbal Choudhary.

The Minister also laid the foundation stone for a Forest Check Post at Darhal, to be constructed under the Rajouri Forest Division at an estimated cost of 11.71 lakh under UT Capex 2026-27, in presence of MLA Thanamandi, Muzaffer Iqbal Khan.

He also e-inaugurated the Range Office Building at Rajouri, constructed by the Department of Wildlife Protection at a cost of 40 lakh, in presence of MLA Rajouri, Iftkhar Ahmed.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the projects reflect the Government’s commitment to balance the environmental conservation with development while creating quality recreational and eco-tourism facilities for local communities.

Highlighting the importance of eco-parks in Jammu and Kashmir, Rana said that such initiatives promote harmony between nature, forests, wildlife and local communities while creating opportunities for eco-tourism and ecological restoration. He emphasised the need to develop eco-parks and undertake conservation measures in a manner that safeguards the natural environment while providing quality recreational spaces and sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

“These eco-parks will provide quality public spaces for the people and promote eco-tourism while the forest check post and Range Office will further strengthen the protection, monitoring and management of our forests and wildlife,” he said.

Rana directed the officers concerned to ensure timely completion of the ongoing works and maintain the prescribed quality standards. He asked them to ensure proper upkeep of the facilities after their completion so that these serve the intended purpose and benefit the local population.

The Minister also reviewed the ongoing soil conservation and forest protection measures being undertaken across the concerned constituencies and called for a focused approach towards preventing soil erosion, protecting vulnerable slopes and strengthening measures for conservation of natural resources.

He directed the officers to identify the vulnerable areas on priority and undertake appropriate soil conservation works in a timely manner, particularly in areas prone to erosion and degradation.

Rana stressed the need for effective coordination between the concerned departments and field functionaries to ensure that conservation measures yield sustainable results on the ground. He directed the officers to closely monitor the progress of works, ensure adherence to prescribed quality standards and complete all ongoing projects within the stipulated timelines. He further called for proper maintenance of the completed facilities and regular field-level monitoring to ensure their optimum utilisation for the benefit of local communities.

Chief wildlife warden, DFO Rajouri, Warden Poonch-Rajouri Range along with other officers were present on the occasion.

Mandeep Kaur presides over first ever BWG convention

Says every generator must own its waste

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: A convention for Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs) was Thursday organised by district administration Budgam with the objective of sensitising the business establishments, institutions and other bulk waste generators about their responsibilities under Solid Waste Management Rules and promoting scientific and responsible waste management.

Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Mandeep Kaur who presided over the first of its kind convention said that all business establishments and other Bulk Waste Generators have to take responsibility for processing and managing the waste generated by them.

Addressing the gathering, Mandeep Kaur said that waste generators can adopt appropriate mechanisms such as on-site processing, home or institutional composting, or engaging authorised waste collectors or agencies for collection and disposal of waste. She said the practice of dumping waste outside commercial establishments after closure of markets has to change, emphasising that every waste generator must take responsibility for its own waste.

“Municipalities cannot be expected to take responsibility for the waste generated by every establishment,” Commissioner Secretary said, adding that waste generators can engage private or municipal agencies for collection and management of their waste.

The Commissioner Secretary said similar conventions would be organised in every district to create awareness and strengthen implementation of waste management rules in both urban and rural areas. She said the committees constituted under the directions of the Supreme Court and the responsibilities entrusted to Deputy Commissioners would play an important role in ensuring effective enforcement.

Emphasising that public participation is crucial for achieving a clean environment, Mandeep Kaur said people are willing to contribute but systems need to be strengthened and responsibilities clearly assigned. She called upon the welfare associations, societies, organisations, business associations and other stakeholders to establish and implement effective systems for management of the waste generated by them, describing it as an important step forward in the Swachh Bharat journey.

The Commissioner Secretary also urged the local youth to become Swachhta entrepreneurs and create avenues of economic opportunity for themselves and others while contributing towards cleanliness and sanitation.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamar highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional capacity and fixing responsibility at every level. He stressed the need for active participation of PRIs and communities in fulfilling the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission and safeguarding the environment. He also elaborated Budgam’s rich natural heritage including Doodhpathri and Shaliganga.

Managing Director, SBM J&K, Dr. Devansh Yadav, gave a detailed introduction to Bulk Waste Generators and apprised the participants of applicable Solid Waste Management Rules and Supreme Court guidelines. He highlighted the provisions related to identification and coverage of BWGs, processing of waste, appropriate disposal and engagement of authorised waste management agencies.

Earlier, the participants were sensitised about registration through the CPCB portal, engagement of waste entrepreneurs and private vendors and opportunities under Waste to Wealth initiative.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Devastating Hailstorm

was also reported from some areas of Ganderbal.

Rainfall was reported from several other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, while cloudy conditions prevailed over most areas.

The overall extent of damage to crops and orchards in Bandipora, Kupwara and Ganderbal has not yet been officially assessed, and no district-wise loss estimates were immediately available.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness light rain at scattered places over the next two days, with light snowfall possible over higher reaches, the Meteorological Centre said.

The weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy on October 9 and 10, with generally dry conditions likely to prevail on October 11 and 12.

A brief spell of light rain is possible at a few places towards the evening of October 9, while another spell of rain may occur towards the evening or night of October 13, the weather office said.

Generally cloudy weather with light rain, light snowfall over higher reaches, thunderstorms and gusty winds is expected at many places on October 14 and 15.

The weather is likely to remain generally dry from October 16 to 18, according to the forecast.

The Meteorological Centre has advised farmers to continue harvesting and ensure safe storage of harvested apples and paddy.

Meanwhile, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 28.2 degrees Celsius, which was 4 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 10.9 degrees Celsius, 3.4 degrees above normal.

Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 31.5 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 20 degrees Celsius, while Pahalgam recorded a maximum temperature of 23.6 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 6 degrees Celsius.

Gulmarg recorded a maximum temperature of 19 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 6 degrees Celsius, the data showed—(KNO)

Govt Coming Out

legal solution,” he said, adding that stakeholders would need to be brought on board.

Vaishnaw that the industry would have to take the primary responsibility in tackling the risks associated with AI amid the mounting menace of cyber attacks and deepfakes.

The government’s India AI Governance Guidelines, released earlier this year, have already outlined a principle-based approach centred on trust, people-first governance, and responsible AI innovation. The framework also identifies misinformation, deepfakes, algorithmic bias and unintended societal harm among the big risks that need to be safeguarded against.

The guidelines recommend reviewing existing laws to identify regulatory gaps around AI, including issues such as liability, data protection, copyright, content authentication and the misuse of generative AI. Besides, they propose setting up an AI Governance Group, a Technology and Policy Expert Committee and an AI Safety Institute.

The government has separately been working on deepfake detection and responsible AI initiatives under the ‘Safe & Trusted AI’ pillar of the IndiaAI Mission. These include projects focused on deepfake detection, privacy-preserving AI, bias mitigation, and AI risk assessment.

Railway Infrastructure

Relations Officer Shri Vineet Abhishek and senior railway officials, is on a four-day visit to Jammu Kashmir to study the region’s rail network and infrastructure.

CS Reviews Operational

emerge as a major attraction for visitors while providing an alternative mode of transport in congested urban areas.

He stressed that development of waterways, should be planned to promote river-based tourism, facilitate passenger movement and help reduce pressure on the road network, while ensuring a safe, attractive and sustainable experience for both tourists and commuters.

He called upon IPRCL and IWAI to work strictly against the prescribed timelines and ensure that the necessary infrastructure, navigation facilities and supporting river ecosystem are put in place so that the waterways are ready for public use by next year.

The Chairperson, IWAI, Sushil Kumar

Lohani while speaking in the meeting revealed that three major National Waterways including Jhelum (NW-49), Chenab (NW-26) and Ravi (NW-84) are being targeted for operationalisation during FY 2026-27. He added that the Jhelum National Waterway extends 110 km from Sangam Bridge in Anantnag to Wular Lake; the Chenab waterway covers 53 km between Reasi and Akhnour; while the Ravi waterway extends 44 km from Chamera Dam to Ranjit Sagar Dam at Basohli.

The Chief Secretary was apprised of the substantial progress achieved on NW-49 (Jhelum), where a 106-km river cruise route from Sangam to Wular Lake has been proposed, covering important locations including Pantha Chowk, Zero Bridge, Amira Kadal, Maharajganj, Chattabal, Sumbal and Gund Prang.

Moreover it was given out that a work order has been issued for 10 hybrid electric catamarans with a capacity of 20 passengers each, at a cost of 66.11 crore. The vessel designs have been approved and construction is underway, with delivery targeted by March 2027.

It was further informed that all 52 navigational HDPE buoys required for the Jhelum waterway have been delivered, while six of the eight concrete pontoons/jetties have already been cast and are targeted for completion by December 2026.

Additionally the construction of eight passenger/tourist terminal facilities at Sangam, Pantha Chowk, Zero Bridge, Amira Kadal, Byopar Mandal Ghat, Chattabal Weir, Sumbal and Gund Prang has also commenced, with the works targeted for completion by June 2027. The terminals are being designed with a local Kashmiri architectural character while incorporating modern structural and utility features.

On NW-26 (Chenab), it was informed that the cruise route has been identified for initial development between the identified terminal locations, while terminal land at Reasi and Akhnour has been handed over to IWAI. On NW-84 (Ravi), a cruise route has been identified at Sohar in Jammu, with terminal land at Satwain near Ranjit Sagar Dam being processed for development.

For the same, it was elucidated that the civil works for three concrete pontoons across the Chenab and Ravi waterways are under casting and are targeted for completion by December 2026, while DPRs for the associated onshore facilities have been finalised.

ties have been finalised.

On the land and site-readiness front, it was informed by rhe GGM, IPRCL, Deepak that all the 11 identified land parcels for terminal development have been transferred to the Transport Department and formally handed over to IWAI. In addition to that the sites on the Jhelum, besides Manda in Akhnour and Talwara in Reasi, have been handed over for their development. The remaining parcel at Domar/Satwain in Kathua is being processed with the concerned authorities.

The Chief Secretary was also apprised of the issues requiring coordinated intervention of various UT departments, including modification of overhead HT/LT power lines to meet navigation safety clearances, removal of coffer dams, shifting of electrical poles, provision of permanent water and power connections, wastewater disposal arrangements and widening of approach roads to terminal sites.

The development of the National Waterways is expected to provide a new dimension to river-based tourism, passenger mobility and sustainable inland water transport in J&K, besides creating opportunities for local economic activity and enhancing the tourism potential of the regions connected by these waterways.

Indian Nationals In

Saudi citizens, a Bangladeshi resident, and a Filipino resident, ranging from minor to critical,” the GACA posted on X.

“At King Khalid International Airport, the attack resulted in one fatality, a resident of Sudanese nationality, may he rest in peace, as well as (8) injuries involving (5) Saudi citizens, (2) Egyptian residents and (1) Pakistani resident, ranging from minor to critical,” it added.

PM Welcomes

refunds. Trust-based administration,” he said.

Modi said these are in line with the government’s constant efforts to make GST more efficient, transparent and citizen-friendly.

Announcing the decisions taken at the 57th meeting of the GST Council, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said it also decided to bring down the general penalty from Rs 25,000 to Rs 10,000.

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JKAACL organises Sheena Mushaira-cum-Cultural Programme at Gurez

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages (JKAACL) organised a Sheena Mushaira-cum-Cultural Programme at GHSS Dawar, Gurez, Thursday to celebrate and promote the rich linguistic, literary and cultural heritage of the Sheena-speaking community.

The programme was presided over by MLA Gurez, Nazir Ahmad Gurezi, Secretary JKAACL, Harvinder Kour, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, attended as Guest of Honour, while Masood Samoon, participated as Special Guest.

In his remarks, MLA Gurez, complimented the Secretary, JKAACL, for organising such a meaningful programme in a far-flung area like Gurez. He appreciated the Academy's efforts towards taking literary and cultural activities to remote areas and providing a platform to local writers, poets, artists and the younger generation.

Making a special mention of various individuals who have been working for the promotion, preservation and development of the Sheena language, Gurezi stressed the need for sustained and collective efforts for its further development. He assured that he would extend all possible help and assistance for the promotion and preservation of Sheena language and literature.

He emphasised that Sheena represents a unique cultural identity



and heritage of Gurez, and stressed the need to bring the language into written and book form so that its rich linguistic and cultural legacy could be preserved for future generations. He also complimented and expressed his appreciation and thanks to Masood Samoon for his valuable contribution and for writing books in the Sheena language.

Secretary JKAACL, Harvinder Kour, highlighted the Academy's commitment to promoting and preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir, particularly the rich traditions of the Sheena-speaking community.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, highlighted the significance of preserving the region's linguistic and cultural heritage. She appreciated JKAACL for organising an event of such linguistic and cultural importance and observed that the people of Gurez are very vibrant and deeply connected with their traditions.

The DC also acknowledged the contribution of

Masood Samoon towards Sheena language, particularly his command over the language and his passion for its preservation.

She suggested that the local community, particularly students and young people, should explore innovative ways to promote Sheena, including developing software in the Sheena language and creating comics and other contemporary literary content in Sheena to generate greater interest among the younger generation.

Masood Samoon delivered the keynote address, emphasising the importance of preserving indigenous languages and cultural traditions and encouraging younger generations to remain connected with their linguistic heritage. He also shared his experiences and insights regarding the preservation and literary development of Sheena language.

An interactive question-and-answer session followed the keynote address, in which students actively participated and raised threadbare issues regarding language preservation and literary development. The presidium addressed

their concerns comprehensively, with Masood Samoon providing detailed and satisfactory replies to the queries raised by the students.

The programme also witnessed the release of "Sin Pushjee Heen," a collection of Sheena poetry authored by Masood Samoon.

A vibrant cultural segment by students added colour and enthusiasm to the programme. Students of KGBV Gurez, GHS Dawar, GHSS Gurez and GMS Wampora presented traditional Sheena songs and dances, enthralling the audience and creating an atmosphere of celebration. The performances were appreciated by the gathering, with the audience visibly enjoying the colourful presentations rooted in the region's rich cultural traditions.

The poets from Gurez presented Sheena Mushaira and showcased the richness and expressive potential of the Sheena language.

Kanika Singh, Director, Centre for Writing and Communication, Ashoka University, Haryana, also addressed the gathering and spoke about the importance of encouraging writing and literary expression in indigenous languages.

As part of the programme, the dignitaries and participants also visited the Sheena Cultural Centre, Gurez, underscoring the Academy's continued efforts towards the promotion, preservation and development of Sheena language, literature and cultural heritage.

J&K Notifies City Gas Distribution Policy 2026 to Expand Clean Fuel Access

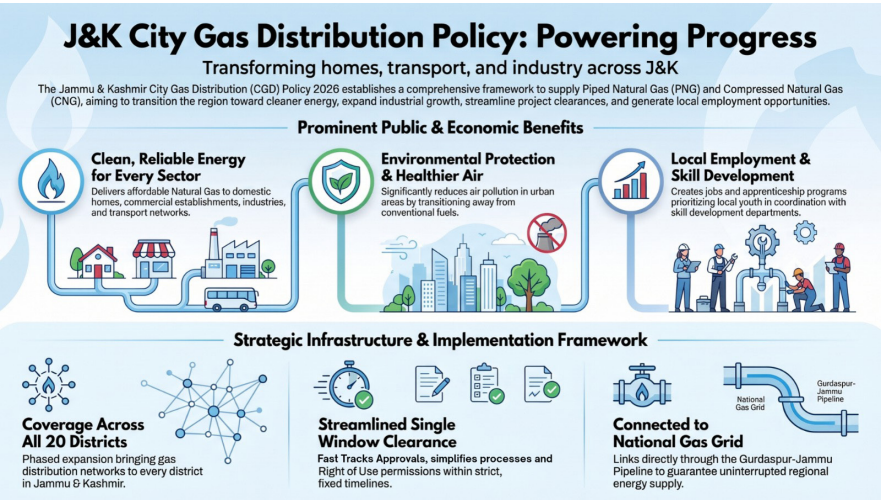
GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a major step towards expanding clean fuel access, boosting industrial growth, and modernising energy infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir, the Government has notified the Jammu & Kashmir City Gas Distribution (CGD) Policy 2026.

The policy was notified following its approval by the Council of Ministers.

The new policy establishes a user-friendly framework to transition homes, commercial establishments, industries, and the transport sector to Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

According to official details, key features of the policy include coverage of all 20 districts of the Union Territory, single-window time-bound clearances, streamlined setup of gas



stations, and standardised Right of Way (RoW) guidelines. Additionally, the policy prioritises gas supply to major industrial estates, including IGC Laspipora, Bari Brahmana, Kathua, Samba, and Pulwama.

Officials stated that

this landmark policy will deliver safe, affordable clean energy to households, lower fuel expenses, attract eco-friendly industrial investments, and enhance local employment through the creation of job opportunities, youth apprenticeships, and skill

development. The Chief Minister congratulated the Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, and the Department on notifying this "visionary policy" for sustainable development in J&K.

Mysterious Exclusion of Road Stretch Raises Questions

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: A stretch of road between Madeen Sahab and Mirza Kamil Sahab has, mysteriously, been left out of the ongoing macadamisation work, leaving residents questioning the reasons behind what they describe as a long-standing and inexplicable neglect.

While roads in surrounding areas have been taken up for improvement, this particular stretch continues to remain deprived of basic road infrastructure, causing inconvenience to pedestrians, motorists and local residents.

Residents allege that the exclusion is not a recent development but has continued for years, despite repeated expectations that the road would finally be

included in a proper macadamisation plan.

"The road has been left to deteriorate year after year. Nobody tells us why this particular stretch is being ignored," residents said, urging the concerned authorities to clarify the reasons for its exclusion.

The condition of the road, they said, raises serious questions about the manner in which macadamisation priorities are being decided and whether certain localities are being systematically overlooked.

Residents have appealed to the administration and the concerned engineering authorities to inspect the stretch and explain why it has repeatedly been left out of road improvement works, while also seeking its immediate inclusion in the macadamisation programme.

FDA conducts FoSTaC Training for Street Food Vendors in Anantnag

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: The Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K in collaboration with M/S National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) today, organised a Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) programme for 100 street food vendors/Food Business Operators (FBOs) at town Hall Anantnag.

During the training programme, the participating FBOs were sensitised about food safety requirements, personal hygiene, safe food handling practices, prevention of food contamination, repeated use of cooking oil, use of synthetic food colours, use of news paper in food handling and the importance of maintaining hygienic conditions while preparing and serving food to consumers.

On the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Food Safety, Anantnag, Sheikh

Zameer, appraised the participants regarding need for maintaining consistency with different regulatory provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The participants were also apprised of their responsibilities under the food safety regulations and encouraged to adopt safe and hygienic practices as part of their routine food business operations.

Moreover, during the training, hygiene kits and FoSTaC certificates were distributed among the participating FBOs.

The FDA informed that the training programme will continue on October 9 and 10, 2026 also, during which 200 more Street Food Vendors will be imparted FoSTaC training at Town Hall Anantnag and Kokernag.

The initiative aims to enhance capacity building and skill development among street food vendors to ensure the availability of safe, hygienic, and quality food for the general public.

District Level Event on National Launch of JOSH Teams organized in Ganderbal

TB Free Panchayats felicitated



GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: The District Administration Ganderbal today organised a district level programme at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Ganderbal, in connection with the National Launch of JOSH Teams (Joint Squad for Health Teams) and felicitation of TB Free Panchayats.

The programme was held simultaneously with the national level launch at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, inaugurated by the Minister for Health & Family Welfare, in collaboration with the Ministries of Labour & Employment, Youth Affairs & Sports and Defence.

At the district level event, field functionaries associated with the TB Mukht Bharat Programme and officials of the Health Department participated in the national launch through virtual mode. The programme focused on strengthening community participation and coordinated efforts towards achieving the goal of a TB free society.

On the occasion, TB Free Panchayats were

felicitated in recognition of their achievement and contribution towards TB elimination efforts. The felicitation acknowledged the collective efforts of Panchayati Raj Institutions, health functionaries and community stakeholders in strengthening TB detection, treatment, awareness and prevention at the grassroots level.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, highlighted the importance of collective efforts and active community participation in achieving the goal of a TB free society. He stressed upon all stakeholders to strengthen awareness, early identification, timely treatment and follow-up of TB cases and called for sustained efforts towards making Ganderbal TB free.

As part of the programme, a TB Mukht Bharat pledge was also administered to the participants, who pledged to contribute towards TB elimination and support efforts aimed at creating greater awareness about prevention, early detection and treatment of tuberculosis.

DC Samba inaugurates mega plantation drive under Swachhata Hi Seva 2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA: Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan today inaugurated a mega plantation drive at Mansar Morh, organised by the Municipal Council (MC) Samba in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department, as part of Swachhata Hi Seva 2026.

The plantation drive aims to strengthen green cover, promote ecological conservation and enhance the visual and environmental quality of public spaces across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner planted a tree sap-

ling to mark the launch. She appreciated the coordinated efforts of the Municipal Council and Forest Department towards promoting sustainable environmental practices and creating greener public spaces.

Senior officers from the District Administration, Municipal Council and Forest Department along with civic staff, students and volunteers, participated actively in the plantation drive. A variety of native, shade-giving, flowering and fruit-bearing saplings were planted along roadside stretches and available open spaces.

Training-cum-awareness session on narcotics control held at Udhampur

GMK NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR: A one-day training-cum-awareness session on Narcotics Control was conducted today by the Narcotics Control Bureau here in collaboration with District Administration Udhampur.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh presided over the training-cum-awareness session.

At the outset, Superintendent NCB Jammu Kapil Sharma delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation covering various aspects of the NDPS Act, investigation techniques, capacity build-

ing and inter-departmental coordination, enforcement intelligence and operations, demand and harm reduction, control of precursors and synthetic drugs and rehabilitation strategies for persons affected by drug addiction.

Addressing the participants, the ADC stressed the importance of effective inter-departmental coordination in combating the drug menace. He directed the concerned departments to intensify awareness activities regarding the harmful effects of drug abuse and ensure effective preventive measures across the district.

Doda joins National launch of JOSH initiative to accelerate TB elimination

GMK NEWS NETWORK

DODA: A district-level programme was organized today by the Health Department Doda here at the CMO Office to mark the National level launch of JOSH (Joint Squad for Health) under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP).

The initiative aims to strengthen community participation, awareness and collective action towards the

elimination of tuberculosis, while encouraging greater involvement of youth and community volunteers in the fight against TB.

The programme began with the virtual streaming of the national launch of JOSH by the Union Health Minister. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma; Dy CMO Dr. Sat Lal Manhas; District Tuberculosis Officer, Dr. Raj Kumar Sharma; Nodal

Officer My Bharat, Sandeep Sharma; Block Medical Officers, Divisional ASHA Coordinator, District ASHA Coordinator, Nodal Officer NTEP, ASHAs, health workers; NCC Cadets, My Bharat Volunteers, students and staff of ANMT School, besides other officials and staff of the Health Department attended the live streaming.

Addressing the gathering, the CMO highlighted

the significance of the JOSH initiative. He emphasized the need for sustained community participation, early identification of TB symptoms, timely diagnosis, treatment adherence and stigma-free support to TB patients. He appreciated the dedicated efforts of the NTEP teams, ASHAs, health workers and community volunteers in taking TB-related services to the grassroots level.

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mb-rajbagh@jk.gov.in

UNION TERRITORY GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.

H.Q'S: LAL MANDI, NEAR L.D HOSPITAL SRINAGAR-190008.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

E-NIT No. 94 /R&B/RAJ of 2026-27 issued under Endorsement No. 8309-19 Dated: 03.10.2026.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Base Cost Excl. GST (₹ in Lacs)	TOTAL / Adv. Cost (Base Cost + GST) (₹ in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc.	Earnest Money Deposit	Time of Completion	Major Head	Class of Contractor / Agency
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Construction of office Accommodation for Joint Director Of Information Department Kashmir, (DIPR)Within The Premises of Directorate Of Information at Polo View Srinagar.	191.48	226.00	₹5500/-	₹4,52000/	365 Days	M.H. Relevant Head of Account (DIPR)	AAY

Project Authority: = Directorate of Information & Public relations J&K.

Position of AAA = Accorded vide No: 140 INF(JK) of 2026 Dated: 10.08.2026.

Position of T/S = Accorded vide No: CE(R&B)CK/TS/559 of 2026 Dated: 01.10.2026.

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	03.10.2026.
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	04.10.2026.from 10:00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	05.10.2026.from 10:00 AM
4	Bid Submission End Date	15.10.2026 Up to 04:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	16.10.2026 at 11:30 AM in the office of Superintending Engineer, (PWD(R&B) Circle Srinagar South.

2. Bids must be accompanied with the cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan under M.H-0059 in favour of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender inviting Authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan & EMD should be between the Date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).

3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload Earnest Money/Bid security as mentioned above in the form of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG pledged to the Tender Receiving Authority, i.e. Superintending Engineer, (PWD(R&B) Circle Srinagar South. The Earnest Money/Bid security will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of Performance and Additional Performance Security (if applicable) and Drawl of Agreement as per FORM-25 (Double Cover) .

4. All other terms conditions shall remain as per the J&K Engineering Manual 2020 and other standing Guidelines of the Govt. of India / Govt. of J&K UT and as per PWD FORM (25) Double Cover.

No. 8309-19

Dated : 03.10.2026.

DIPK-6556-26

DT: 08/10/2026

Sd/-

Executive Engineer,

R&B Rajbagh Division Srinagar

Zeljko strike helps Mohun Bagan claim 22nd IFA Shield title with win over East Bengal

AGENCIES

KOLKATA: Riding on Samir Zeljkovic's solitary strike, Mohun Bagan Super Giant retained the IFA Shield with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over arch-rivals East Bengal in a fiercely contested Kolkata Derby at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here on Thursday.

Bosnian midfielder Zeljkovic scored the decisive goal in the 45th minute, converting shortly before the interval to give the Mariners their 22nd IFA Shield title.

This is the 22nd time that Mohun Bagan claimed the prestigious tournament and after nearly five decades that they have won the Calcutta Football League (CFL) and IFA Shield in same season. Last time they achieved the feat, late PK Banerjee was the coach in the year 1976.

It was far from a fluent performance from either side, but Mohun Bagan looked considerably more



assured than they had in the Durand Cup final earlier this season, when East Bengal had inflicted a 4-1 defeat on their city rivals.

Zeljko broke the deadlock on the stroke of half-time after controlling a chipped pass from Sahal Abdul Samad on his chest before calmly slotting the ball past the East Bengal goalkeeper.

The goal gave Mohun Bagan a crucial advantage

in a game that remained tightly contested after the break, with East Bengal pushing for an equaliser but failing to find a way past the Mariners' defence.

East Bengal and head coach Antonio Habas will be disappointed with the performance, particularly with the Indian Super League season set to begin in a couple of days. The Red-and-Gold brigade had looked

impressive in their run to the final but struggled to reproduce that attacking fluency against their arch-rivals.

East Bengal had stormed into the final with a 7-2 demolition of NorthEast United FC in the semi-final, with David Lalhlansanga scoring a hat-trick.

Mohun Bagan, in contrast, had to endure a much tougher route, edging past Punjab FC on

penalties in the last four. The semi-final had ended goalless after 120 minutes before the Mariners prevailed 4-3 in the shootout, with goalkeeper Vishal Kaith making a key contribution.

The victory also gave Mohun Bagan a measure of revenge for their Durand Cup final defeat and extended the rivalry's recent run of high-stakes encounters.

The two sides had also met in last year's IFA Shield final, with Mohun Bagan winning on penalties, and Thursday's contest marked their second successive meeting in the tournament's title clash.

The 2026 final was their fifth meeting of the year, further underlining the intensity of Indian football's biggest rivalry.

For Mohun Bagan, the Shield triumph provides a timely boost ahead of the new ISL season, while East Bengal will hope their below-par showing was only a temporary setback before the start of their title defence. (PTI)

Djokovic looks to 'build momentum' for Shanghai Masters from 'phenomenal' Beijing week

IANIS

SHANGHAI: Serbian great Novak Djokovic is looking to feed off the "phenomenal week" he had in Beijing as he enters the Shanghai Masters for another tournament in China.

Djokovic captured his first tour-level title of the 2026 season after winning the China Open, which was also his 102nd tour-level title. He defeated reigning French Open and US Open champion Alexander Zverev in the Beijing quarterfinals before Daniil Medvedev defaulted in the semifinal when the Serb was three points away from the win.

He also received a walk-over in the final against Alex de Minaur, who retired due to a thigh injury, but Djokovic had already won the first set 7-6(3) and was 0-1 down in the second.

"It was a phenomenal week for me, Beijing, the best week of this year, no doubt," Djokovic said in his pre-tournament press conference in Shanghai. "I'm trying to build momentum on that here in Shanghai as well, use the confidence, and hopefully have another great deep run in this tournament, another tournament in China where I've done very well in my career."

"I enjoy playing in China. I've said it many times, the fans, the support has been tremendous. Last week it was really something remarkable, very special in terms of the support and love that I've been getting from people on the



stadium and outside. So, that kind of energy that I really always need as a player on the court, I try to use and perform as best as I can," he added.

The 39-year-old has lifted the Shanghai Masters a record four times in his career and has been among the players who have helped grow the tournament. Kei Nishikori was one of them.

The Japanese bid adieu to professional tennis at the Japan Open last week. Djokovic paid his tribute to him. "I would like to use another opportunity to congratulate Kei for his outstanding career, a lot to be proud of," Djokovic said.

"He, unfortunately, was injured quite a lot and struggled throughout his career to keep fit. I think this probably might be the only regret that he has, that he wasn't able to maybe stay healthier longer."

"Because he was, when he was playing his best tennis, he was a top-5 player. Incredibly quick, so talented, the striking and timing of his shots was exceptional. Of course, him retiring in his country, in front of his people, is some-

thing that I think every player really dreams of, so I'm sure that he enjoyed his farewell there," he added.

He then reflected on his time in Shanghai, highlighting that the organisers put in big efforts for the players. "I remember back in 2007 was the first time I arrived to Shanghai, or to China, for that matter, for the Masters Cup here," Djokovic said.

"They had it in 2007, and 2008 was the last year. I won it in 2008. And then 2009, the Rolex Masters 1000 Shanghai tournament started, and ever since then it's been ongoing every year. It's definitely one of the favourite tournaments for many players, including myself, on the Tour."

"There's always a willingness and somewhat of a need and a challenge for the organisers to meet the demands of players and their respective teams. To make sure that every year there's some kind of improvement. Something even better than the last year, where the players are able to feel like at home, at the end of the day, and have everything they need to perform as best as they can," he added.

2nd T20I: 'You can't beat experience' - Sitanshu Kotak decodes Bhuvneshwar Kumar's T20I comeback

IANIS

RANCHI: Highlighting that one can't beat experience in international cricket, India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak said veteran pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's sustained form in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and rich experience of playing in overseas conditions were potentially behind his being given a call-up for the upcoming T20I series in New Zealand.

Bhuvneshwar earned his India T20I recall on the back of a sensational IPL 2026 campaign, where he spearheaded Royal Challengers Bengaluru's successful title defence with a 28-wicket haul. He finished as the second-highest wicket-taker in IPL 2026 and missed the Purple Cap to Kagiso Rabada by just a solitary scalp.

Bhuvneshwar's last appearance in international cricket came during a T20I in New Zealand in November 2022. Across 87 T20Is for India, Bhuvneshwar has bagged 90 wickets at an average of 23.10 while



maintaining an impressive economy rate of 6.96.

"See, one thing obviously is selectors picked it, but still I can give you an answer on what I think because in England, I also personally felt that with Bumrah not being around and all the new bowlers - like young bowlers were playing, and we all know that you can't beat experience."

"You see, they also are good and performing well and getting selected. But at some stage you also need some experience. So, I am just thinking that might be one reason. Another thing is Bhuvneshwar has been doing really well in IPL for the last two seasons."

"So, selectors must have

thought that for New Zealand conditions and all, and obviously he has been doing well and we need some experience. They must have picked him. That's what I can think of unless you can think something different," Kotak said in a press conference on the eve of the second T20I against the West Indies in Ranchi.

Reiterating that the selection doors for the senior squad remain open for any player, including senior pacer Mohammed Shami, Kotak said, "First of all, I am not a selector. So, it is difficult for me to tell you that. But Shami is also playing, and he is also doing well. If selectors feel that he is doing well and the team has a requirement, then any player can be selected."

Commenting on the Centre of Excellence (CoE), head VVS Laxman, set to be a regular fixture in senior men's selection committee meetings, Kotak gave a sneak peek into the meticulous efforts of him stepping up for the senior team's requirements.

Badminton: Sindhu books QF showdown, Tanvi bows out of Arctic Open

IANIS

VANTAA (FINLAND): Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu will face a familiar but formidable opponent in the Arctic Open quarterfinals after the sixth-seeded Indian progressed with a straight-game victory over Japan's Riko Gunji in Vantaa, Finland, on Thursday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, overcame Gunji 21-15, 21-15 in 49 minutes to set up a last-eight meeting with top seed and former world champion Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand.

The quarterfinal will revive one of the more established rivalries on the women's circuit, although the two players have not faced each other since 2022. Intanon holds a 9-4 advantage in their head-to-head record and has won their last five encounters.

Their most recent meeting came at the Indonesia Masters in 2022, where the Thai

prevailed in straight games.

Sindhu will take confidence from a strong 2026 campaign that has already produced a Japan Open Super 750 title. She defeated reigning World Champion Akane Yamaguchi in the final in July to claim one of the biggest titles of her recent career.

Intanon has also enjoyed success this season, winning the Malaysia Masters Super 500 in May after defeating China's Chen Yufei in the final. The Thai secured her place in the quarter-finals by ending Tanvi Sharma's run with a 21-18, 21-7 victory.

Tanvi stayed with the top seed for much of the opening game, even drawing level at 17-17, but Intanon showed her experience in the closing exchanges to take the first game. The second was far more one-sided, with the Thai racing to a 9-2 lead after a seven-point burst before closing out the contest comfortably.

Shubhankar Sharma opens four-shot lead in Kapil Dev Invitational Tour Championship

IANIS

GREATER NOIDA: Shubhankar Sharma fired a seven-under 65 to establish a four-shot lead after the second round of the INR 2 crore Kapil Dev Invitational Tour Championship at the Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort in Greater Noida on Thursday.

The 30-year-old Chandigarh golfer (68-65), who began the day two strokes behind overnight leader Shaurya Bhattacharya, made an eagle, seven birdies and two bogeys to reach 11-under 133.

A two-time winner on the DP World Tour, Shubhankar returned to the winner's circle at the Boulders Classic on the PGTI in April, ending an eight-year wait for a professional title.

Chandigarh's Brashwarpal Singh (72-65) matched Shubhankar for the lowest score of the day. His seven-under 65 featured eight birdies and a solitary bogey as he surged from tied 11th overnight to second place at seven-under 137.

Overnight leader Shaurya Bhattacharya (66-72) of Delhi slipped to third at six-under 138 after an even-par 72 containing three birdies and three bogeys.



Bengaluru's Khalin Joshi (72-67), a four-time winner on the DP World PGTI this season, climbed from tied 11th to fourth at five-under 139. His 67 featured an eagle on the par-five fourth, five birdies and two bogeys. Joshi entered the week second in the Race to DP World India Championship.

Shubhankar was particularly encouraged by the control he displayed with his ball-striking after struggling to bring the different parts of his game together in recent weeks.

"I played really well and felt very solid throughout the round," he said. "My ball-striking had not been at its best over the past few weeks, even though there was not much wrong with my game. Today, every-

thing came together. I hit the ball exactly where I wanted, shaped shots both ways and felt in complete control. I could have holed a few more putts, but I'm very pleased with the day," he said.

The highlight of Shubhankar's round came on the par-five fourth. After finding the left half of the fairway with his drive, he struck a six-iron from approximately 212 yards to 18 feet and converted the eagle putt. "The putt just caught the left edge," he said. "Most of my shots came off exactly as I had visualised them, and that was the most encouraging part."

Shubhankar continued creating opportunities throughout the round, including on the final hole, where he struck his

approach to about five feet but missed the birdie putt. "There were several shots like that today," he said. "Those are positive signs for this tournament and also for my preparations for next week."

Shubhankar also praised DP World PGTI President Kapil Dev for his contribution to the growth of the DP World PGTI. "Since Kapil Dev became President, more sponsors have come on board, while the organisation, social media and player facilities have continued to improve," Shubhankar said. "The introduction of a players' lounge is one example of the many positive changes on tour."

Shubhankar, who played alongside Kapil in a Pro-Am in Hyderabad recently, said their shared Chandigarh connection made their interactions particularly easy.

"Despite being one of India's biggest sporting icons, he constantly looks for ways to promote golf and move the sport forward," he said. "Everyone in Chandigarh calls him 'Paaji', so speaking with him feels very easy. I have tremendous respect for everything he is doing for the game."

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