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'J&K Can Become A Global GCC Hub': CM



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today called upon industry leaders to explore Jammu and Kashmir as an emerging destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs), emphasising that the government is committed to creating a competitive, business-friendly ecosystem that attracts investment, fosters innovation and generates meaningful employment.

"We have to make Jammu and Kashmir a place that is competitive, a place that is attractive to do business, a place where you can make money, and a place where we can compete with the Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities around the country," the Chief Minister said while addressing the inaugural session of the J&K GCC Summit 2026 at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu. He addressed the gathering virtually from New Delhi.

The two-day summit, themed 'Unlocking J&K's

GCC Potential for Building Growth Ecosystem and Catalysing Investment', brings together representatives of government, industry and academia to explore opportunities for developing Jammu and Kashmir's presence in India's expanding GCC ecosystem.

Highlighting the evolution of GCCs in India, the Chief Minister said that what began as call centres and business process outsourcing operations had evolved into centres of innovation, talent, capability and enterprise.

"The story of GCCs in India is a story of evolution, as is the story of Jammu and Kashmir," he said, and added that the transformation of GCCs demonstrated how capabilities and value addition could create new economic opportunities.

Drawing a parallel with Jammu and Kashmir's own journey over the past three to three-and-a-half decades, Omar Abdullah said the fact that the

Devotees Arrive From Across Country

Thousands Attend Annual Urs Of Sheikh-ul-Aalam At Charar-i-Sharief

50,000 Devotees Participate In Religious Congregation; Visitors Pray For Peace, Prosperity

NAVEED UL HAQ

BUDGAM: Nearly 50,000 devotees from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country participated in the annual Urs of revered Sufi saint Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA), popularly known as Sheikh-ul-Aalam, at Charar-i-Sharief in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Friday.

The main Urs was marked by Friday prayers and special supplications, with thousands of devotees gathering at the revered shrine to offer prayers and seek blessings.

The shrine witnessed a large gathering of devotees, many of whom travelled long distances to participate in the annual religious congregation and pay



their respects to the revered Sufi saint, also known as Alamdar-e-Kashmir.

Among the devotees was Shaheen Ansari, who travelled from Delhi to attend the Urs. She said, "I have come from Delhi especially for this occasion. We wait for this day, as we have deep faith in Alamdar-e-Kashmir. People

come here with their wishes and prayers, believing that their supplications will be fulfilled."

Ansari said that devotees from different backgrounds visit the shrine, reflecting their faith in the revered saint.

Another devotee Mohammad Aslam said he visits the shrine every year on the occasion of Urs to offer special prayers for the peace and prosperity of the nation.

"I come here every year on this day to offer prayers. I prayed for peace, prosperity and development of Jammu and Kashmir as well as the entire country. We should all live together in peace and harmony," he said.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Traffic Police and other civil departments remained deployed on roads from early morning

J&K Likely To Witness Rain, Snow From Oct 10



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Friday predicted that higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir are likely to witness light snowfall on October 10 and again on October 13 and 14.

The weather office forecast accessed, predicts cloudy conditions with light rainfall at scattered to many places on October 10 and light snowfall over higher reaches. Thunderstorms and gusty winds are also possible.

The weather is likely to remain generally dry on October 11 and 12. Light rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds are likely at many places on October 13 and 14, while October 15 is expected to remain generally dry, with brief spells of light rain possible at a few places, the forecast predicts. Weather is likely to remain dry from October 16 to 18, it adds.

The Meteorological Centre has advised farmers to continue harvesting and ensure the safe storage of harvested apples and paddy in view of the possibility of thunderstorms and gusty

FDA Steps Up Street Food Safety Enforcement Across UT



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SRINAGAR: Continuing its efforts to ensure safe and hygienic food for consumers Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K, has conducted enforcement and awareness activities among street food vendors across Jammu Division, combining regulatory action with targeted awareness initiatives to promote compliance with food safety standards and protect public health.

During the drive, 95 street food vendors were inspected, 11 cases were compounded and fine of 16,000 were

imposed for violations of prescribed food safety requirements. In addition, 19 cases were recommended for adjudication under Sections 56 and 58 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, before the competent Adjudicating Officers, i.e., the respective Additional Deputy Commissioners of the concerned districts. 17 awareness sessions were organized to educate vendors on safe food-handling practices, personal hygiene, sanitation and statutory compliance.

During inspections, violations involving unhygienic food-handling

NIA Chargesheets Four Accused In Kishtwar Terror Attack Case

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a 535-page chargesheet against an arrested man and three Pakistani terrorists killed in a gunfight with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district in February, the agency said on Friday.

The chargesheet was filed before a special NIA court in Jammu against Maneer Ahmed, a resident of Naidgam village in Chatroo, and three killed terrorists, including Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander Saifullah, also known by several aliases, including Atiq Nazir and Atiq Ur Rehman.

The case relates to a terrorist attack on February 22 in Wani Mohalla, Passer Kote, in

Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the NIA, its investigation found that Ahmed had provided support to the terrorist group and was involved in harbouring and concealing terrorists accused of attacks on security forces and civilians in the district's hilly areas.

The agency has invoked provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, against Ahmed. It has also charged the three killed terrorists under relevant penal provisions relating to waging war against India and conspiracy, the NIA said.

The three terrorists were

led by Saifullah and affiliated with Kashmir Tigers, identified by the agency as an offshoot of the proscribed JeM organisation.

All three were killed after security forces returned fire during the encounter, according to the NIA.

The agency said the group had been active in Kishtwar's upper reaches and was linked to several attacks that resulted in the deaths of security personnel and civilians.

The investigation, which lasted nearly five months, traced the conspiracy to Pakistan, the NIA said.

Further investigation in the case is continuing.



Topples US UAE Bounces Back As India's Largest LPG Supplier



FIANS

NEW DELHI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has bounced back as India's key LPG supplier after having lost the top slot to the USA due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the continuing Middle East conflict.

Data compiled by maritime intelligence firm Kpler shows that the UAE accounted for 39 per cent of India's LPG imports in September, up from 13 per cent in the previous month, overtaking the US, which had been the biggest supplier of the cooking gas over the previous six months.

The UAE supplied 547,000 tonnes of LPG, 182 per cent more than 193,000 tonnes in August, while the US was the second-largest supplier as its shipments fell 58 per cent from 323,000 tonnes in August. While the US accounted for 53 per cent of India's total LPG imports in August, its share in September fell to 23 per cent.

"The physical market has demonstrated greater resilience than assumed. Combined crude volumes exiting the Gulf (excluding Iran) plus volumes from West Coast Saudi and East Coast UAE are around pre-conflict levels of

'Op Sindoor' Proved Air Power Can Deliver Decisive Victory: IAF Chief

Calls For Anticipating Technological Changes To Prepare For Future Warfare

REHAN QAYOOM

NEW DELHI: Operation Sindoor and ongoing global conflicts have reinforced the importance of air power in modern warfare, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said here on Friday. He stressed the need to anticipate technological changes to prepare for future conflicts.

Addressing a seminar at the Air Force Auditorium in New Delhi, Air Chief AP Singh, said the rapidly changing nature of technology is transforming warfare and that armed forces need to prepare for future challenges rather than react after they emerge.

"The rate at which the tech-



nology is changing is bringing change in the character of warfare. If we do not anticipate, if we don't look at the

future, if we just wait for it to happen and then adapt, then it might be too late," he said.

Referring to the centrality

of air power, the IAF chief cited ongoing global conflicts and India's experience during Operation Sindoor last year as examples of its growing importance in modern warfare.

"CAPS mentioned the centrality of air power. There is no doubt about it because you look at the two contests, the two wars that are going on in the world, or you look at our own experience of last year, Operation Sindoor, that four-day war that proved very clearly that it is the air power which is going to get you decisive victory," he said.

"It is the air power which is going to be used majorly in any contest," Singh added—(KNO)

Two Dead, 21 Hurt As Vehicle Skids Off Road In Rajouri

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RAJOURI: Two persons were killed and 21 others sustained injuries after a passenger vehicle they were travelling in skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge in Rajouri District on Friday.

An official said that the vehicle (bearing no. JK20C-8295), met with an accident near Moghla village within the jurisdiction of Triyath Police Post.

The commuters were returning from Marchola village after attending a condolence meet. Soon after the accident, locals, along with police personnel, launched a rescue operation and shifted the injured to Primary Health Centre (PHC) Moghla for treatment.

According to medical records, two persons, identified as Balbir Singh (45), son of Suram Singh, and Pritam Singh, son of Sant Ram, both residents of Moghla, were brought dead to the health facility.

The twenty injured persons include men, women

Apple Picking In Kashmir Speeds Up Ahead Of Rain Forecast



JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: Apple harvesting across Kashmir is gathering momentum, with growers stepping up picking and transportation of fruit to markets and cold storage facilities as the Meteorological Department forecasts rain in parts of Jammu and Kashmir in the coming days.

With the autumn harvest entering a crucial phase, orchardists are keen to complete the picking of mature fruit before adverse weather conditions affect orchard operations and the quality of the produce.

Growers said that the ongoing harvesting period

is particularly important for the Valley's horticulture sector, which supports the livelihoods of thousands of farming families, labourers, transporters, fruit dealers and other people associated with the apple trade.

They said the pace of harvesting has increased in several apple-growing areas as orchardists try to make the most of the available dry weather before the anticipated precipitation.

"Every day is important for us at this stage of the season. We have to ensure that the mature fruit is picked on time and shifted to the market or cold storage before the

■ Stipend Hike

MBBS Interns Give J&K Government Five-Day Deadline

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SRINAGAR: The one-month deadline given by the Jammu and Kashmir Government to finalize the proposed stipend hike for MBBS and BDS interns expires on Friday, but the promised formal order remains awaited, prompting the interns to give the administration five additional days before deciding their next course of action.

The interns had suspended their agitation on September 8 after Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo assured their representatives that the long-pending issue would be finalised within 30 days on the basis of recommendations of the Stipend Enhancement Committee.

Seeking an increase in their monthly stipend from Rs 12,300 to Rs 30,000, the interns had resumed their academic and clinical duties following the assurance, expecting the government to issue a formal order within the stipulated period.

However, with the original deadline ending today, a delegation of interns and representatives of the Association of Interns and Medical Students Association (AIMSA) met Peerzada



Zahoor Ahmad, Officer on Special Duty to the Health and Medical Education Minister, to seek an update on the pending proposal.

According to the association, the officer informed the delegation that the necessary administrative processing and signatures had been completed and assured them that the formal order was expected within the next few days.

Following the latest assurance, the interns agreed to wait for five more days, while warning that failure to issue the order within this period would leave them with no option but to resume their agitation.

The earlier protest had included an indefinite strike and a 48-hour hunger strike, with interns maintaining that repeated

assurances would not resolve the issue without a formal government order implementing the enhancement.

The stipend has remained at Rs 12,300 for nearly seven years, according to the interns, who have cited rising living expenses and their clinical responsibilities while demanding a revision.

The latest extension has temporarily deferred the prospect of renewed agitation, but the outcome now hinges on whether the government issues the promised order within the additional timeframe. The interns have urged the Health and Medical Education Minister to intervene and ensure that the commitment is fulfilled without further delay. [KNT]

Div Com Orders Safety Audit of Chinar Trees Across Kashmir



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SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg has written to all Deputy Commissioners and the Forest Department, directing a safety audit of Chinar trees across the Valley and the pruning of hollow and structurally weak branches that could pose a threat to life and property during windstorms.

The direction comes against the backdrop of recurring incidents in Kashmir in which branches of old Chinar trees have broken off during strong winds, damaging vehicles, structures and other property. The large, spreading canopies of mature Chinars can extend over roads, public spaces and residential areas, making the con-

dition of their branches a public-safety concern, particularly during periods of unsettled weather.

Under the proposed exercise, district administrations and the Forest Department are expected to identify vulnerable trees and branches and assess the risks posed by them, especially at locations where people, vehicles and buildings may be exposed to falling limbs. Particular attention is required for branches showing signs of decay, hollowness or structural weakness.

"The exercise is intended to help authorities identify potential hazards before further windstorms cause damage. A systematic assessment would also help district administrations prioritize locations where

remedial work is required, including along busy roads, near public buildings and in other areas with regular pedestrian or vehicular movement," an official told the news agency Kashmir News Trust.

Chinar trees are among Kashmir's most prominent natural and cultural landmarks, and their protection remains an important consideration in any intervention. The objective of a safety audit is therefore to address hazardous branches without resorting to unnecessary damage to healthy trees. Any pruning or lopping would need to be carried out by the competent authorities in accordance with the applicable permissions and procedures.

The need for such precautions has been raised previously. In April 2025, the management of Srinagar's historic Amar Singh Club sought an urgent safety audit of Chinar trees around its premises and the adjoining Sonwar road after a large portion of a tree fell onto the club's boundary wall, damaging a substantial section of the wall and its gates. No casualties were reported in that incident. [KNT]

Former Ayurvedic Doctor Arrested in Multiple Kashmir Land Fraud Cases

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: An 80-year-old former Ayurvedic doctor has been arrested in connection with multiple alleged land fraud cases in Kashmir, including transactions involving properties belonging to Kashmiri migrant families, after investigators traced several complaints linked to the use of different identities and allegedly forged documents.

The accused, identified by police as Sonnath Koul, was arrested after a prolonged search and is currently lodged in Srinagar Central Jail in judicial custody, according to reports citing the Economic Offences Wing of the Crime Branch.

Investigators allege that the accused operated under several names, including Brijnath Bhat, Hadinath Dhar and Mohan Lal Dhar,

and posed either as the owner of properties or as a person authorised to sell them. Police have said that multiple cases involving alleged cheating, forgery and fraudulent land transactions have been registered against him.

One complaint, lodged by a south Kashmir resident in November last year, alleged that the complainant had agreed to purchase five kanals of land in Drusoo village of Pulwama and 300 poplar trees in Bijbehara for Rs 93 lakh. The complainant reportedly approached the court to have the agreement to sell ratified, only to discover that the land did not belong to the person named as the seller.

Investigators alleged that the land in Drusoo belonged to a Kashmiri migrant Pandit and that the accused had posed as the owner's attorney. In the Bijbehara transaction, he allegedly represented himself as the owner. The

Crime Branch registered an FIR in the case on April 1.

Police have also linked the accused to earlier complaints involving alleged advance payments for land in Baramulla and Srinagar. These include allegations that buyers paid Rs 9.17 lakh for a property in Goshabugh, Pattan, and Rs 47 lakh in a transaction involving land at Gulab Bagh Pandach. Investigators have further alleged that the same parcel of land in Humhama was promised to two different buyers, from whom a combined amount of Rs one crore was allegedly taken.

According to investigators, at least four other cases dating from 2017 to 2026 were identified during the probe. The allegations include the use of false identities and documents in agreements involving properties left behind by Kashmiri migrant families. [KNT]

40-Hours Role Play Training Programme on Mediation Concludes at JKJA

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The 40-Hours Role Play Training Programme for Advocates / Experts, concluded Friday at the Srinagar and Jammu campuses of the J&K Judicial Academy. The practical training sessions were held on 05th, 06th, 08th and 09th October, 2026, under the aegis of the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, Supreme Court of India organized by the Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, in collaboration with the J&K Judicial Academy.

The second day of the Srinagar session was graced by Dr. Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, who highlighted the significance of mediation in strengthening the justice delivery system. Emphasizing its transformative potential, Chief Justice observed that mediation is not merely a professional skill but also a means of becoming a better human being and a more effective advocate, public prosecutor or judge. He underscored that practical exercises and role-play



sessions foster empathy, understanding and sensitivity in resolving disputes.

Drawing upon examples from Indian epics, religious traditions and the history of Kashmir, Chief Justice highlighted the deep-rooted cultural and historical significance of mediation as a means of peaceful dispute resolution. Referring to Surah An-Nisa of the Holy Quran, Chief Justice observed that it envisages a process remarkably close to modern mediation, contemplating the appointment of representatives from both sides of a dispute with the express objective of restoring harmony.

Chief Justice emphasized that such examples across religious and cultural traditions demonstrate the enduring relevance of reconciliation and amicable settlement in resolving disputes.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal,

Chairman, Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, was also present on the occasion. He continued guidance and support have been instrumental in advancing mediation initiatives in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Rajeev Gupta, I/C Director, J&K Judicial Academy, in his introductory address, welcomed the dignitaries, resource persons and participants, and highlighted the importance of practical training in developing effective mediation skills.

He emphasized that the interactive and role-play sessions provide participants with valuable hands-on experience in understanding the mediation process and facilitating amicable dispute resolution. He also underscored the importance of

strengthening mediation as an effective means of resolving disputes and promoting a culture of mutual understanding and reconciliation.

At the Srinagar Campus, the resource persons, Monika Jalota and Swarn Sandhir, experienced advocates and certified mediators, conducted interactive sessions and role-play exercises aimed at strengthening the participants' understanding of mediation techniques and their practical application.

The sessions were moderated by Faizan-ul-Haq Iqbal, Coordinator, Main Mediation Centre, who coordinated the proceedings and facilitated the conduct of the programme at the Srinagar Campus.

At Jammu Campus, the programme commenced with a welcome and introductory address by Sunil Kumar, Secretary, J&K

Legal Services Committee, who welcomed the resource persons and participants and emphasized the importance of practical training in developing effective and competent mediators.

The Role Play Training Sessions at the Jammu Campus were conducted by Yashpal Singh Dahiya and Balbir Kaur Gandhi, Resource Persons, Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), Supreme Court of India.

During the concluding session at the Srinagar Campus, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Chairman, Mediation and Conciliation Committee, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, emphasised that mediation should be the preferred choice for dispute resolution rather than a last resort.

Justice Rajnesh Oswal observed that the spirit of mediation is inherent in everyday life, beginning within families and extending to schools, communities and professional relationships. Sharing his judicial experience, He highlighted how mediation can facilitate amicable settlements even in long-pending disputes where resolution may initially appear unlikely.

Sufi Tahir Joins ' Vocational Trainers ' Protest, Urges Govt to Address Pending Demands

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SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference (JKPC) Youth President-Kashmir Sufi Tahir on Friday joined the ongoing protest by Vocational Trainer and extended his support to their long-pending demands.

Addressing the protesting Trainers, Sufi Tahir urged the government to take immediate steps to address their grievances and ensure a meaningful resolution to the issues.

He said the concerns raised by the protesting employees need to be

addressed through appropriate intervention and dialogue, while calling for timely action on their service-related demands.

Tahir assured the protesters of his continued support and said he would stand with them in their struggle. He also said he would participate in their future protests until their demands are addressed.

The Vocational Trainers have been staging protests over their pending service-related demands, seeking government intervention and resolution of the issues raised by them.

Two Srinagar Youth Rescued After Losing Way in Kangan Forest

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Two youths from Srinagar who lost their way in the Royal Forest area of Kangan in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district were safely rescued by police and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) on Friday.

The youths, identified as Mohammad Hareez and Manan Ahmad, reportedly lost their way on Thursday while undergoing training in the forest. Unable to find their way back, they contacted the emergency helpline 112 and sought assistance.

Following the distress call, Ganderbal Police, in coordination with the SDRF, launched a search operation to trace the missing youths. After an extensive search, both were located and brought to safety on Friday.

The rescue brought the search operation to a successful conclusion, with both youths safely recovered after spending the night in the forest.

SDPO Kangan Rajiv Raina told Kashmir News that both the young men have been rescued and are being questioned. [KNT]

Army Recovers, Destroys Three Landmines Along LoC in Poonch

GMK NEWS NETWORK

MENDHAR: Three landmines were recovered and destroyed by the Army in forward areas along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, with two detected near the fence at Basooni Top in Mendhar sector and another during routine patrolling in Balakote.

Officials said an Army bomb disposal squad reached Basooni Top and safely destroyed the two mines. In a separate incident, troops detected a landmine in the Balakote forward area, which was also destroyed by a bomb disposal team.

No loss of life or damage to property was reported in either incident, officials said.

The forward areas along the LoC contain landmines as part of the anti-infiltration obstacle system. Some mines can be displaced from their original positions by rain and other natural factors, making their detection and safe disposal necessary to reduce risks to personnel and people who may enter the affected areas.

The latest recoveries underline the continuing requirement for patrols and explosive-disposal teams to identify and neutralise mines that are found outside their original positions. [KNT]

Maulana Sajad Hashmi Calls for "Jihad Against Drugs" to Save Kashmir's Youth

GMK NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA: Leading Islamic scholar Maulana Sajad Hashmi on Friday sounded a sharp alarm over the worsening narcotics crisis in Kashmir, urging society to close ranks and launch an all-out "jihad against drugs" to save Kashmir's youth from devastation.

Addressing a gathering on Friday, Maulana Hashmi voiced deep anguish over the unraveling of families across the Valley, pointing out how addiction has shattered the traditional bond between parents and children.

"An unfortunate reality has gripped Kashmir today where a son cannot look into his father's eyes, nor does a father realize where his child contracted this deadly disease of addiction," Hashmi said.

He stressed that administrative action alone cannot solve the problem unless communities take ownership. "To stop this ruin, we all have to stand up together,

er, every single one of us."

Noting that public awareness is steadily building across Kashmir, the Hashmi commended Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for spearheading the 100-day Nasha Mukht Abhiyan. Hashmi described the initiative as unprecedented in the region's recent history.

"In my lifetime, I have seen for the first time an LG take such a direct, personal initiative to fight substance abuse," he remarked. While noting that LG cannot physically visit every doorstep, he praised LG Manoj Sinha for touring each and every district of Jammu and Kashmir, including Shopian, Kulgam, Anantnag, and Pulwama, to mobilize the public despite his heavy administrative commitments.

"Whatever was within his domain, he delivered. From schools and colleges to civil society seminars, NGOs, and the J&K Police, the administration has stepped forward. Now the

responsibility rests heavily on our shoulders," Hashmi added.

Redefining the community's moral obligations, Hashmi called on people to channel their religious conviction into social reform. "If you truly want to wage a Jihad, wage a jihad against narcotics. Go into your neighborhoods, speak up, and save people from this curse," he said.

Turning to the origin of the contraband flooding the local market, Hashmi asserted that hard drugs like heroin are being pushed from neighbouring country, Pakistan, to deliberately destabilize Kashmir's social fabric.

"Heroin is not grown in the soil of Kashmir," Hashmi said. "Open your phones and look at the seizures, these poisons are coming directly from neighboring Pakistan. There is a calculated effort to ruin the youth of Kashmir with these drugs, and society cannot afford to stay silent while an entire generation is poisoned."

High Court Says Government Jobs Cannot Be Exchanged for Land

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court has ruled that government employment cannot be promised or granted in exchange for land donated for public projects, while clarifying that eligible workers who have completed 10 years of continuous service may be considered for regular engagement under the applicable rules.

A Division Bench of Justices Sanjeev Kumar and M.A. Chowdhary passed the ruling while deciding a challenge filed by the Jammu and Kashmir Government and three others against an order issued by the Central Administrative Tribunal's Jammu Bench on February 3.

The dispute arose after landowners donated one kanal each in 2014 for the construction of tubewells. Their gift deeds reportedly stipulated government jobs in return, but they were engaged as casual workers in the Irrigation and Flood Control Department instead of being given permanent appointments.

The workers approached the court in 2019 seeking regularization. The tribunal subsequently directed their regularization against avail-



able posts, prompting the government to challenge the order before the High Court.

The High Court held that permanent government appointments must be made in accordance with recruitment rules and through a fair and transparent selection process consistent with Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution, which provide for equality before the law and equality of opportunity in public employment.

The Bench observed that the government had no authority to promise permanent jobs in return for donated land, cautioning that such arrangements would effectively put government employment up for sale. It also disapproved of the practice of engaging workers without a proper selection process and later regularising them through policy decisions.

However, the court distinguished between a claim to a

permanent job in exchange for land and eligibility for regular engagement under the Jammu and Kashmir rules notified in 2017. It held that the workers who had completed 10 years of continuous service as casual or daily-rated employees were entitled to consideration for regular engagement under those rules, subject to the prescribed conditions.

The Bench modified the tribunal's operative directions and ordered that eligible cases be taken up immediately, with the benefit of regular engagement and related entitlements to be determined in accordance with the rules.

The ruling reinforces the requirement that public appointments follow established recruitment procedures, while preserving the separate rights available to eligible long-serving casual workers under the applicable framework. [KNT]

CM Omar Abdullah expresses grief over Rajouri road accident

Directs district admin to ensure best possible treatment to injured

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed deep grief over the tragic road accident in Rajouri district this evening, in which precious lives were lost and several others sustained critical injuries.

Conveying his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, the Chief Minister expressed sympathy with those who lost their loved ones in the tragic incident. He directed the district administration to expedite rescue operations



and ensure the best possible medical treatment for all the injured.

The accident occurred when a passenger vehicle met with an accident in the Bdhog area of

Moghla, falling under the jurisdiction of Police Post Teryath in Rajouri district. Two persons died on the spot, while five others sustained critical injuries.

Advisor Wani highlights Kashmir Marathon, winter experiences at TTF Hyderabad

Invites tourists from southern India, runners nationwide to explore Kashmir

GMK NEWS NETWORK

HYDERABAD: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, Friday invited people from Hyderabad and other parts of southern India to explore the diverse tourism offerings of Jammu and Kashmir. He also called upon fitness enthusiasts and professional runners from across the country to participate in the upcoming Kashmir Marathon, scheduled to be held in Srinagar on October 25.

Addressing the media at the Travel and Tourism Fair (TTF) Hyderabad 2026, where Jammu and Kashmir is participating as the Partner State, the Advisor highlighted the region's rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes and expanding adventure tourism opportunities. He emphasised the need to strengthen tourism linkages with southern India and encourage more visitors from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states to experience the diverse attractions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Giving a special push to the upcoming Kashmir Marathon, Wani invited runners and fitness enthusiasts from across the country to participate in the event and experience the natural beauty and hospitality of Kashmir. He



said the marathon offers an opportunity to promote Kashmir as a destination for sports tourism while showcasing its scenic landscapes to participants and visitors.

The Advisor also called for enhanced strategic collaboration and closer liaison between the travel trade fraternities of Jammu and Kashmir and Hyderabad to expand tourism opportunities, facilitate greater tourist inflows and forge stronger regional partnerships.

The Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir, is showcasing J&K's diverse tourism potential at the three-day TTF Hyderabad 2026, with a focus on strengthening its presence in the southern Indian market and attracting visitors for the upcoming winter and spring tourism seasons.

The fair was jointly inaugurated by Telangana Minister for Tourism

Jupally Krishna Rao and Advisor to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Nasir Aslam Wani. Prominent representatives of the national travel and tourism industry were also present on the occasion.

A major focus of Jammu and Kashmir's participation is the promotion of the Kashmir Marathon, alongside customised travel experiences for the winter and spring seasons. The department is showcasing premium hospitality facilities, curated holiday packages and emerging tourist destinations to encourage visitors to explore experiences beyond conventional travel circuits.

A high-level delegation from Jammu and Kashmir, led by Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, is representing J&K at the fair, engaging with tourism stakeholders and travel industry representatives to strengthen market outreach and explore avenues for collaboration.

FDA organises FoSTaC Training for Street Food Vendors in Anantnag

200 vendors trained; hygiene kits and FoSTaC certificates distributed

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K, in collaboration with the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), organised a Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) programme at Town Hall, Anantnag. The programme, sponsored by Nestlé India, was attended by 200 street food vendors and Food Business Operators (FBOs), with another 100 vendors scheduled to be covered in the subsequent session.

During the training, participants were sensitized about food safety requirements, personal hygiene, safe food handling practices, prevention of food contamination, the hazards of repeatedly using cooking oil, the use of un-authorised synthetic food colours and the use of newspapers for wrapping or serving food. Emphasis was also laid on maintaining cleanliness and hygienic conditions at food preparation and vending sites to ensure that safe and wholesome food is served to consumers.



The participants were apprised of their responsibilities under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and the rules and regulations framed thereunder. They were encouraged to adopt good hygiene practices in their daily business operations. Hygiene kits were also distributed among the participants, and FoSTaC certificates were provided to those completing the prescribed training requirements.

Similar training programmes will be organised in other districts of the Union Territory in the coming days, with a focus on street food vendors and other Food Business Operators, particularly those dealing in high-risk food categories.

The initiative aims to strengthen the capacity of food handlers, improve compliance with food safety standards and promote hygienic street vending practices. Measures to facilitate food business registration, wherever applicable, and promote clean and hygienic street food hubs will also be pursued in accordance with the applicable provisions and schemes.

The FDA, J&K, reiterated its commitment to promoting food safety through training, awareness, regular inspections and enforcement, with the objective of ensuring the availability of safe, hygienic and quality food to the general public across the Union Territory.

Min Rana inaugurates Wildlife Eco-Tourism Hut at Mughal Road

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SURANKOTE: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Friday inaugurated a Wildlife Eco-Tourism Hut along the Mughal Road in Surankote area of Poonch district, developed by the Department of Wildlife Protection at an estimated cost of ₹1.87 crore under the UT Capex Budget.

Emphasising the importance of eco-tourism infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister said that such facilities are essential for harnessing the tourism potential of ecologically rich areas while ensuring that development remains aligned with environmental conservation.

ervation.

"The Mughal Road is endowed with immense natural beauty and ecological significance. Developing eco-tourism facilities in this area will provide visitors with an opportunity to experience nature more closely while promoting awareness about our rich biodiversity and the importance of wildlife conservation," Rana said.

He observed that the eco-tourism hut would add to the visitor infrastructure along the Mughal Road and help promote nature-based tourism in the region. Such facilities, he said, can encourage visitors to explore the area's natural attractions while fostering a greater appreciation of forests, wildlife and fragile mountain eco-



systems.

"Our objective is to promote tourism that respects nature and contributes to the conservation of our natural heritage. Eco-tourism must go hand in hand with environmental protection, ensuring that the ecological character of these areas is preserved even as tourism-related activities expand," Forest Minister said.

Highlighting the potential socio-economic benefits of the initiative, Rana said that the development of eco-tourism infrastructure could generate opportunities for local communities through tourism-related services and associated economic activities. Greater tourist interest, he added, could support local livelihoods while encouraging communities to participate in protecting the region's natural resources.

participate in protecting the region's natural resources.

The Minister stressed that the long-term success of such facilities would depend on their proper maintenance, effective management and responsible use. He called for sustained efforts to ensure that eco-tourism initiatives contribute meaningfully to conservation objectives and provide lasting benefits to the local population.

"We must ensure that the benefits of tourism reach local communities without compromising our environmental priorities. Responsible eco-tourism can help create livelihood opportunities, strengthen conservation awareness and establish a sustainable relationship between people and nature," Rana added.

'OPERATION SINDOOR'

In 88 hours, Northern Command destroyed 7 terror camps: Lt. Gen Sharma

'12,000 artillery rounds exchanged along LoC amid heavy ceasefire violations'

REHAN QAYOOM

NEW DELHI: Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Friday said that Northern Command destroyed seven terrorist camps during 'Operation Sindoor,' while nearly 12,000 artillery rounds were exchanged along the Line of Control (LoC) during an 88-hour operation in May 2025.

Addressing Defence Summit in New Delhi Lieutenant General Sharma, said, the Northern Command was assigned the responsibility of destroying seven out of the nine camps. "The task was accomplished successfully," he added.

He said that while fighting continued in the air and missile domains, troops along the Line of Control (LoC) were also involved in frequent exchanges of fire and faced heavy ceasefire violations.

"Exchange of artillery fire continued for nearly 88 hours. Almost 12,000 rounds were used. It was a successful execution," Sharma said—(KNO)

Budgam fake job scam: Three more arrested, total five

NAVEED UL HAQ

BUDGAM: Budgam Police on Friday said they have arrested three more persons in connection with an alleged fake job and financial fraud syndicate, taking the total number of arrests in the case to five.

A police spokesperson, in a statement issued, said the newly arrested accused have been identified as Zahoor Ahmad Bhat of Watpora, Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat of Kaloosa and Saleem Ali Bhat of Plan, all in Bandipora district.

Police said Zahoor Ahmad Bhat has emerged as a key alleged conspirator during the investigation, while questioning of the three accused is underway to ascertain their individual roles and identify other persons linked to the network.

Earlier, police had arrested Jehangir Ahmad Dar and Firdous Ahmad Bhat in connection with the case. The alleged syndicate is accused of cheating people by promising government jobs, admissions to educational institutions outside Jammu and Kashmir and lucrative business opportunities through fictitious business entities.

According to police, the accused allegedly gained the confidence of victims by claiming connections with senior government officials and political figures, thereby inducing them to pay substantial amounts of money.

Investigators are now examining financial transactions linked to the alleged fraud and tracing other suspected associates to establish the full extent of the network's activities, the spokesperson said, adding that further arrests and recoveries are likely as the investigation progresses—(KNO)

Apple stock goes up in flames in Sopore

WARIS FAYAZ

SOPORE: Heavy rain and gusty winds turned disastrous in Sopore's Sempora area after a fire, triggered by an electrical short circuit, gutted an apple storage shed on Thursday evening, officials said.

An official said that the fire broke out late Thursday evening, gutting a godown where freshly harvested apples and packaging boxes had been stored. A portion of the grower's house also suffered damage.

He said locals and police personnel intervened to bring the blaze under control and prevent it from spreading further, but the apple storage unit had already been engulfed in flames.

He said the godown belonged to fruit grower Manzoor Ahmad, said that he had been unable to sleep since the incident. "It has been a very difficult time since yesterday. My year's hard work has been destroyed in the fire. I could not sleep the entire night. The losses are huge and I appeal to the government to help me," he said.

Meanwhile, locals appealed to Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmad Dar and Sopore MLA Irshad Rasool Kar to intervene and extend assistance to the affected grower—(KNO)

Risk lives on boats

Pulwama villages wait nearly two decades for Jhelum bridges

JAHANGEER GANAIE

PULWAMA: Nearly two decades after construction of two bridges over the River Jhelum was initiated, residents of Dogripora and Reshipora villages in south Kashmir's Pulwama district continue to wait for their completion, forcing people to risk their lives to cross the river.

The two bridges, located at Dogripora and Reshipora in Avantipora, were expected to provide a crucial link between villages and improve access to roads, educational institutions, healthcare facilities and public transport. However, despite years of construction and repeated assurances, both projects remain incomplete.

Residents said that the successive governments have come and gone since the projects were taken up, but the situation on the ground has remained largely unchanged.

"We have witnessed governments change, officials get transferred and assurances being made, but our problem remains where it was nearly two decades ago. If both bridges cannot be completed at once, the authorities should at least ensure that one is made functional without further delay," they said.

The Dogripora bridge was sanctioned in 2006, with construction beginning in 2008, while work on the Reshipora bridge was also taken up around the same period. However, funding



constraints, administrative delays and prolonged interruptions in construction have kept the projects from becoming operational.

In the absence of permanent river crossings, residents said they are compelled to depend on wooden boats to move between the two banks. Schoolchildren, elderly people, patients and daily commuters face the greatest difficulties, particularly when they need to reach hospitals, schools or workplaces.

The situation becomes more dangerous during rainfall and winter, when rising water levels and strong currents make crossing the river particularly risky.

"We should not have to wait for another tragedy before our concerns are taken seriously. Every day, people cross the river because they have no practical alternative," a local resident said.

Javid Ahmad, a resident of Dogripora, said the prolonged delay had affected almost every aspect of daily life.

"For us, these bridges are not just concrete structures; they are essential links to the outside world. Their completion would make travelling easier, connect our villages with the national highway

and provide better access to Panzgam Railway Station," he said.

He said a functional bridge would also reduce travel time between Tral and Shahoora and boost local economic activity by improving the movement of people and goods.

Tariq Ahmad, a resident of Reshipora, said the absence of a direct crossing forces them to take a long detour to reach the highway.

"An ordinary journey becomes a major problem when the bridge is missing. During a medical emergency, bad weather or when children have to reach school, every extra kilometre matters," he said.

The Dogripora bridge project received fresh attention last year when the government sanctioned Rs 1,529.47 lakh for its completion. The allocation raised hopes that the long-pending work would finally move forward, but residents said they have yet to see the progress they expected.

Basit, another Dogripora resident, said nearly 70 per cent of the bridge structure had been completed before construction came to a halt.

India Post Celebrates National Postal Week

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: India Post is celebrating National Postal Week from October 9 to 15, commencing with World Post Day, which commemorates the establishment of the Universal Postal Union in 1874.

Addressing the media at the Srinagar GPO Complex, Chief Postmaster General, J&K Circle, Shri Sagar Hanuman Singh, extended greetings to the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and reaffirmed the Department's commitment to reliable, technology-driven postal, banking, insurance, parcel and citizen-centric services.

Singh said India Post's extensive network covers urban centres, rural villages, border areas and remote regions, including Doda, Kishtwar, Reasi, Rajouri, Gurez, Machil, Tetwal, Keran and Zanskar. He informed that the Department has opened more than 17 lakh Post Office Savings Bank accounts in Jammu and Kashmir, while core banking, digital banking, e-KYC and India Post Payments Bank services, including doorstep banking, are strengthening financial inclusion. He also highlighted the role of the Sukanya



Samridhi Account in securing the financial future of the girl child.

He stated that digitalisation, modern postal software, track-and-trace facilities, computerised operations and self-booking kiosks are improving customer convenience. The Department also provides Speed Post, parcel and logistics services, Aadhaar enrolment and updation, Postal Life Insurance, Rural Postal Life Insurance and passport services through Post Office Passport Seva Kendras. He added that India Post supports government initiatives through the delivery of PMEGP kits to artisans and beneficiaries.

Highlighting export facilitation, Shri Singh said Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra helps exporters, artisans, craftsmen, MSMEs and small businesses access international markets

through assistance with export documentation, customs clearance, packaging, booking and tracking. Local products such as walnuts, saffron, handicrafts, carpets, Pashmina and handloom goods can benefit from this postal export channel. He also cited the Department's reported 99 per cent insurance claim settlement rate.

Singh further highlighted India Post's efforts to preserve the region's cultural and natural heritage through commemorative stamps and special covers. Of the 32 stamps highlighted by J&K Circle, 18 feature Kashmir-based themes, four Jammu-based themes, nine Ladakh-based themes and one a combined Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh theme, including subjects such as the Chinar Tree, Hangul, Pashmina, Mehjoor and Sindhu Darshan.

Good Morning Kashmir

J&K's Medical Interns Deserve Justice

The continued delay in revising the stipend of MBBS and BDS interns in Jammu and Kashmir raises an uncomfortable question: why should young medical professionals have to repeatedly protest for a demand that the government has already acknowledged and promised to address?

The one-month deadline given by the government to finalise the proposed stipend enhancement expires on Friday, yet the formal order remains elusive. The interns, who suspended their agitation on September 8 following an assurance from Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo, have now agreed to wait another five days. This extension offers the administration one more opportunity to honour its commitment, but it also tests the patience and credibility of the government.

At the heart of the dispute lies a monthly stipend of just Rs 12,300, which, according to the interns, has remained unchanged for nearly seven years. They are demanding an increase to Rs 30,000, citing rising living expenses and the responsibilities they shoulder in hospitals during their internship. Their demand deserves serious consideration, not endless rounds of assurances.

Medical interns are not merely students observing the functioning of hospitals from the sidelines. They participate in clinical duties, work alongside other medical professionals and contribute to patient care. Their training is an essential stage in becoming qualified doctors, but the responsibilities they undertake should not be overlooked simply because they are still completing their education.

The question is not whether the government can afford to listen to its young medical workforce. The question is whether it recognises the importance of treating them fairly and keeping its word. When the interns called off their indefinite strike and 48-hour hunger strike, they did so in good faith. The minister's assurance that the matter would be settled within 30 days, based on the recommendations of the Stipend Enhancement Committee, created a reasonable expectation that the issue would finally reach a conclusion. Returning to academic and clinical duties was their response to that assurance.

Yet, as the deadline approaches its end, the interns are once again left waiting. They have now been told that the administrative processing and required signatures are complete and that the order is expected within a few days. If that is indeed the case, there should be little justification for any further delay.

Government functioning cannot be reduced to a cycle of protests, meetings, assurances and fresh deadlines. An assurance from a minister must carry weight. Otherwise, every commitment risks becoming another exercise in postponing an issue rather than resolving it. The additional five days offered by the interns should be treated as a final opportunity to settle the matter peacefully. The administration must use this period to issue the formal order, provided the proposal has completed the necessary approvals. If the decision has already been processed and the required signatures obtained, the government should explain what is preventing its implementation.

The Health and Medical Education Minister must intervene personally to ensure that the commitment made to the interns is honoured. The government should also communicate clearly with the affected students rather than leaving them to depend on informal updates and repeated assurances.

A renewed agitation would disrupt the lives of the interns and could create difficulties for hospitals and patients. Such a situation must be avoided. But responsibility for preventing it cannot rest solely on the interns, who have already demonstrated their willingness to suspend their protest and return to duty.

The government must understand that trust is built by delivering on promises, not by extending deadlines. Young medical professionals should not have to resort to hunger strikes to secure a fair revision of their stipend.

Jammu and Kashmir needs a strong, motivated and respected medical workforce. Fair treatment of interns is not merely a financial issue; it is also a question of institutional responsibility, professional dignity and the government's commitment to those who will shape the future of healthcare in the region.

The five-day extension should not become another chapter in a prolonged dispute. It should mark the end of uncertainty. The interns have waited long enough. Now it is the government's turn to act. Promises have been made. The time has come to translate them into a formal order.

Gender Equality Must Be Central To Diplomatic Leadership



SHOBHA SHUKLA

From the diplomatic corridors to the healthcare system, Ambassador of Switzerland to India and Bhutan Maya Tissafi highlights the persistent gender gap, the economic costs of women's ill health, and the need to defend sexual and reproductive rights. In her thirty years of experience in diplomacy, peace building and development, Maya Tissafi has witnessed a significant transformation in the representation of women in the diplomatic service. Yet, she says, the journey towards genuine gender equality remains unfinished.

Globally, women occupy only around 21% of ambassadorial positions despite constituting half of the world's population. For the Swiss Ambassador, while this figure reflects a deep-rooted institutional problem, it also needs to be viewed against the progress that has been made.

"When I started my career, women were still a clear minority in diplomatic leadership," she says. Today, women constitute 40.3% of Switzerland's diplomatic corps, an increase of about 10% since 2013. Women also account for almost 36% of Swiss ambassadors serving abroad - significantly higher than the global figure of 21%."

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), she points out, has set itself an even more ambitious target of achieving 45-55% representation of both women and men at all hierarchical levels by 2028.

"So, I would not describe the situation simply as a story of a persistent gap. It is also a story of significant progress. The challenge is to make that progress sustainable - and to ensure that the next generation of women diplomats does not have to overcome the same barriers that previous generations faced," she said. Ambassador Maya Tissafi gave an exclusive interview with CNS ahead of SHE & Rights session on gender equality and human right to health.

Diplomacy's gender gap reflects deeper structural barriers

For Tissafi, the under-representation of women in diplomacy cannot be separated from the way diplomatic institutions have historically been structured. "Diplomacy is no exception to institutions that were historically shaped by and for men," she says.

She rightly points out that foreign-service careers frequently demand mobility, repeated postings abroad and long periods away from home. Such requirements can be particularly difficult to reconcile with caregiving responsibilities, which continue to fall disproportionately on women. Alongside these structural challenges informal professional networks, stereotypes about leadership and the lack of visible



female role models compound the problem.

But representation can itself become a catalyst for change. Once women occupy positions where decisions are made - not merely attending meetings but leading negotiations and heading missions - the assumptions surrounding leadership begin to shift.

"Once women are present in the room - not simply as participants, but as ambassadors, negotiators and decision-makers - perceptions change as well."

Women's health is also an economic and development issue

The same inequalities that block women's access to power can also block something even more fundamental - their access to health. Tissafi's perspective on gender equality extends beyond diplomacy. Her career has included work on health-sector reforms in Tanzania, while her academic training includes a Master of Public Health. All this has shaped her understanding of the persistent inequalities women face in accessing healthcare.

"My background in public health has taught me that health outcomes are never simply biological. They are shaped by social conditions, economic opportunities and political decisions," she says.

Women's health has historically been under-researched and underfunded, while medical research has frequently relied predominantly on male bodies. This has implications for the diagnosis and treatment of conditions that affect women differently. At the same time, millions of women continue to lack adequate access to maternal, sexual and reproductive healthcare.

But, Tissafi believes that the discussion needs to go beyond healthcare itself and examine the economic dimension of women's ill health that receives less attention. Poor health can interrupt girls' education, limit women's participation in employment, reduce earnings and increase unpaid care responsibilities. At household level, this can deepen poverty; at the national level it means economies are failing to make full use of women's potential.

"Investing in women's health," she says, "is not only a matter of human rights and health equity. It is also an investment in human capital, economic participation and sustainable growth."

This requires a fundamental shift in how women's health is viewed.

"We need to stop thinking of women's health as a specialised or secondary issue. It is a core issue of health, equality, human rights and economic development." This framing places women's health firmly within the broader development agenda. Healthier women are better positioned to study, work and earn, while also contributing to their families, communities and economies.

Switzerland too is facing a pushback on gender equality

Switzerland's reputation for strong institutions and a long-standing commitment to human rights does not place it outside the wider global debates around gender equality. Tissafi acknowledges that "Switzerland is not immune to the broader pushback against gender equality and women's rights that we are seeing internationally." It is experiencing increasingly polarised debates, including those over reproductive rights, gender-based violence and women's role in society.

Such developments, she says, need to be taken seriously

At the same time, she points to Switzerland's institutional framework, civil society and longstanding commitment to human rights and gender equality as important safeguards. Women's rights and gender equality are embedded in Switzerland's constitutional and legal framework and form an integral part of its human rights diplomacy.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has identified five strategic priorities in its gender equality work: strengthening women's economic empowerment and political participation; combating gender-based violence; promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights; and placing gender equality at the centre of bilateral and multilateral engagement.

Recently, at the UN intergovernmental

Commission on Status of Women (CSW70), Switzerland emphasised on: effective and equal access to justice for women and girls; strengthening the rule of law and accountability (including for international crimes); combating gender-based violence (including conflict-related sexual violence); equal participation of women in decision-making; protection of civic space; and specific needs of older women and of women in detention.

Switzerland's work on the Women, Peace and Security agenda is one example. It seeks to strengthen women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and peace processes while protecting women from sexual and gender-based violence in situations of conflict. For the Ambassador, the answer to the current pushback is not defensiveness but a clearer articulation of the principles of equality and their benefits.

"The way forward is not to become defensive when these issues are challenged. It is to stand up clearly for the principles we believe in, demonstrate their value with evidence, and keep building broad support for equality," said Maya Tissafi. Her argument is that advancing women's rights should not be framed as a 'competition' in which gains for women necessarily come at someone else's expense.

Gender equality is not a zero-sum game

For Tissafi "Gender equality is not a zero-sum game. It strengthens societies, economies and, ultimately, peace and stability." Tissafi places safe abortion within the broader framework of sexual and reproductive healthcare, arguing that when safe and timely services are unavailable, women can face serious consequences not only for their health but also for their ability to participate fully in social and economic life.

"Women must be able to make decisions about their own bodies and their own health, based on evidence, dignity and access to appropriate healthcare. For me, this is ultimately about dignity, equality and the right to make informed decisions about one's own life."

And amid the often polarised debate surrounding abortion, she says the individual women affected should not disappear from view. "We should not lose sight of the women behind the debate: their health, their choices and their dignity must remain at the centre."

From representation to structural change

Across diplomacy, healthcare, reproductive rights and peace building, a common thread runs through Tissafi's reflections: representation matters, but representation alone is not enough. The growing number of women in diplomatic leadership demonstrates that institutional change is possible.

The larger challenge now is to make that progress sustainable - to move from individual advances to structural change—so that equality is not dependent on women having to overcome the same barriers generation after generation.

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

■ ALI AND FATIMA

The Love That Became A Life



ASIYA AKHTER

Human civilisation has perhaps produced no emotion more extensively celebrated than love. Every age has created its own language for describing the mysterious inclination through which one human being begins to find another indispensable to his emotional existence. Poets have immortalised it in verses, novelists have turned it into tragedy, and cultures across the world have preserved stories of lovers who challenged families, social conventions and even death in their pursuit of union. Romeo and Juliet, Laila and Majnoon, Heer and Ranjha, and Shireen and Farhad continue to survive in the human imagination not just because of the circumstances of their stories but because they represent a universal psychological experience: the desire to find in another human being a sense of belonging that the self alone seems unable to provide.

Yet there is an important distinction between a love that exists in the imagination and a love that has to pass through the actual conditions of life. The former can remain eternally beautiful precisely because it is protected from the exhaustion of domestic responsibilities, financial difficulties, differences of

temperament, illness, children and the countless mundane demands through which a real relationship is tested. The real examination of love begins, in fact, after the poetry of courtship has ended and two people are required to live with one another. It is at this point that our search for a love that was not only imagined but actually lived takes us towards the marriage of Ali ibn Abi Talib (A.S.) and Fatima al-Zahra (S.A.).

The story of Ali and Fatima therefore takes us beyond the conventional understanding of romance and compels us to look at love not purely as an intense emotional attraction between two individuals but as a form of companionship that is tested, refined, and ultimately revealed through the ordinary difficulties of life. In an age where love is more calculated by the abundance of comforts one is able to provide to the beloved, their marriage presents an entirely different imagination of intimacy: two people possessing very little in material terms but finding in each other the emotional strength to endure what life placed before them.

The circumstances of their marriage make this even more striking. Ali (A.S.) was not a man who could offer Fatima a life of material abundance. The traditions describe his shield becoming her mahr, while the household they established was built on simplicity. Yet Fatima (S.A.) was the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), a woman whose father stood at the centre of the emerging Muslim community. Her position was exceptional. If proximity to power naturally produced privilege, hers was a life in which such privilege



could easily have been expected.

But their story raises a more interesting question than whether they were poor. Why did a woman of such extraordinary lineage live a life so distant from the material privileges that her position might have brought her?

Poverty itself is not a spiritual ideal. Their small mud house, therefore, can be read as more than a consequence of limited means. In its very simplicity, it stood in quiet disagreement with a social mentality increasingly inclined to measure life through what could be accumulated, possessed and displayed.

Perhaps this is why the image of Fatima (S.A.) working within her household carries such force. The daughter of the Prophet was not protected from the ordinary labour of domestic life by the extraordinary dignity of her birth. The traditions speak of her grinding grain, carrying water and attending to the household. There is something almost startling in the contrast: a woman of immense spiritual stature performing the same repetitive work that has occupied countless anonymous women

throughout history.

And yet, within this demanding life, there was also tenderness. What makes Ali's description of Fatima particularly moving is that he does not merely speak of her beauty, lineage or exalted position as the daughter of the Prophet. He speaks of the psychological effect her presence produced upon him. Looking at her, according to the narration, would cause his sorrow and anxiety to disappear. In that simple admission lies a remarkably intimate understanding of marital love: the beloved is not just the person with whom one shares happiness, but the person whose presence makes the burdens of existence somewhat more bearable.

There is a difference between having someone who makes life pleasurable and having someone whose presence makes life bearable. The first can belong to romance; the second belongs to companionship. Attraction may bring two people together, but marriage eventually removes the distance created by imagination. One begins to see the other's tiredness, worries, limitations and silence. The beloved ceases to be an ideal figure and becomes a human presence encountered through the ordinary hours of life.

It is perhaps here that the marriage of Ali and Fatima becomes psychologically compelling. Their love did not exist in a protected world where hardship could be kept outside the door. They had work to do, children to raise, limited resources to manage, and a society around them that was itself passing through profound upheaval. Their relationship

had to survive reality.

Their concern for others also remained visible within that reality. The Qur'anic passage describing the righteous giving food to the needy, the orphan and the captive has traditionally been associated in sources with the household of Ali and Fatima. Their own difficult circumstances did not make the suffering of another person irrelevant.

This is where their private and public lives seem to meet. The same household that contained little material wealth produced an idea of wealth that was measured differently. Their possession of one another, their devotion to a larger moral purpose and their willingness to give despite having little all formed part of a life in which accumulation was never allowed to become the final measure of success.

The great lovers of literature are remembered because circumstances prevented them from living life together. Their love remained suspended in longing, separation, or tragedy. Ali and Fatima provide more difficult to imagine; that is the love after union.

They had to live with one another. And perhaps that is the greater test of love. To remain when the poetry has become routine, affection has to share space with responsibility when life offers little comfort and the beloved is no longer an imagined perfection but the person standing beside you through the entire weight of existence. Their story survives because love, in their case, did not remain an emotion preserved in memory; it became a life.

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■ Nobel Laureate Anne Carson

She Transformed Modern Literary Forms



DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Few writers of the modern era have transformed literature as profoundly as Anne Carson. As a Canadian writer deeply connected to ancient Greek literature, Carson resists what could be understood as conventional classifications of national literary identity. Her work resists easy categorisation. She is simultaneously a poet and a scholar, a translator and a philosopher, a storyteller and a literary innovator. In an age increasingly characterised by fragmented identities, uncertain truths, rapid technological transformations, and emotional disconnection, Carson's voice has emerged as one of extraordinary relevance and enduring significance. To many readers and critics, she is not merely an important contemporary writer; she is perhaps the most important literary voice of our age. The awarding of the 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature to Anne Carson represents one of the most significant moments in contemporary literary history. The Swedish Academy recognised the Canadian poet, essayist, translator, and classicist for her "bold and inventive oeuvre" and for creating new forms of contemporary literature through an imaginative dialogue with classical traditions. Born in Toronto in 1950, Carson developed an early fascination with the ancient Greek world, a passion that would shape her intellectual and creative life.

Eros the Bittersweet published in 1986 is Carson's brilliant work of nonfiction and literary criticism. It expands on the ancient Greek poet Sappho's coining of the word *glukupikron* ("sweetbitter") to describe the dual nature of desire. Carson introduces a triangular model of romantic longing. It requires three components: the lover, the beloved, and the gap (the obstacle separating them). She argues that desire cannot exist without this gap; if you fully possess the object of your affection, the desire itself vanishes. She brilliantly links the birth of romantic obsession in ancient Greece to the development of the written Greek alphabet. Both writing and love, she argues, require a person to navigate space, absence, and representation.

Autobiography of Red published in 1998 is a groundbreaking novel in verse that reimagines a fragmented, ancient Greek myth by the poet Stesichorus. In the original myth, Herakles kills a red, winged monster named Geryon. Carson turns Geryon into a sensitive, quiet queer boy growing up in modern Canada. He deals with childhood abuse from his brother and escapes his trauma through photography. Geryon falls into a passionate, consuming romance with Herakles, a drifter who eventually abandons him. Geryon's red wings serve as a visual metaphor for being an outsider. The book explores how art (photography) and self-discovery can help a person reclaim power from trauma.

Men in the Off Hours published in 2000 is a hybrid collection of short poems, essays, and translations that contrasts the grand scale of history with ordinary, quiet moments ("the off hours"). Carson places classical historical figures into surreal, modern settings. For example, she writes about the biblical Lazarus dealing with TV crews after his resurrection, and a dialogue about war between ancient historian Thucydides and modernist author Virginia Woolf. A central sequence of the book satirizes how modern television and media capture, distort, and oversimplify ancient myths and historical truths. The book is deeply moving toward the end. It shifts from intellectual history to personal loss, documenting her father's battle with dementia and her mother's death.

The Beauty of the Husband published in 2001 is a narrative poem structured as a "fictional essay" that tracks the agonizing, slow collapse of a marriage. It won the T.S. Eliot Prize. Relying heavily on John Keats's idea that "Beauty is truth," the narrator explores her toxic relationship with her husband. He is a compulsive liar, thief, and cheater, but she continually forgives him simply because he is unbelievably beautiful. The 29 sections are written as "tangos." Carson uses the dance as a metaphor for marriage—an intense, rule-bound, back-and-forth movement where partners alternate between coming together and pulling



apart. It highlights how desire can override dignity.

Red Doc published in 2013 is the official, yet highly experimental, sequel to *Autobiography of Red*. The > character in the title mimics a computer command prompt, indicating a leap forward in time. The characters return under new names. Geryon is now "G," a middle-aged, quiet herder of musk-oxen. Herakles is now "Sad," a broken veteran suffering from severe PTSD. The youthful passion of the first book is replaced by the heavy realities of aging, war trauma, and mental illness. The book is printed in a narrow central column down the middle of each page. This unusual layout forces the reader to experience text in a restricted, claustrophobic format, mirroring the fractured mental states of the characters.

Inspired by fragments from the Greek poet Stesichorus, the work reimagines the mythological figure Geryon as a contemporary young man navigating love and self-discovery. The book exists simultaneously as poetry, novel, mythology, and psychological exploration. Through this extraordinary fusion of forms, Carson demonstrated that literary innovation could be both intellectually sophisticated and emotionally moving. The work has become one of the defining achievements of contemporary literature.

One reason Carson speaks so powerfully to modern readers is her understanding of fragmentation. Contemporary life often feels discontinuous and unsettled. Traditional narratives no longer provide easy certainties. Identities are fluid, cultures intersect, and

ed as one of the most innovative literary explorations of grief in contemporary literature. Equally important is Carson's contribution as a translator. Her translations of ancient Greek writers, including Sappho, Sophocles, and Euripides, have received international acclaim. These translations go

Carson introduces a triangular model of romantic longing. It requires three components: the lover, the beloved, and the gap (the obstacle separating them). She argues that desire cannot exist without this gap; if you fully possess the object of your affection, the desire itself vanishes. She brilliantly links the birth of romantic obsession in ancient Greece to the development of the written Greek alphabet.

beyond conventional scholarly practice. Carson approaches translation as a creative act, allowing ancient voices to speak with contemporary energy while preserving their essential character. The Swedish Academy noted that her translations can be regarded as independent artistic achievements in their own right.

Another reason Carson stands out as a defining voice of our age is her intellectual courage. In a culture that often prefers simplification and instant conclusions, she embraces ambiguity. Her books rarely provide easy answers. Instead, they invite readers into sustained reflection. She understands that the most important questions concerning love, truth, mortality, identity, and meaning cannot be resolved through simplistic formulas. This openness has made her especially influential among younger generations of writers. Across the world, contemporary poets, novelists, translators, and scholars recognise Carson as a pioneering figure who expanded the possibilities of literary expression. She demonstrated that literature can remain daring, experimental, and intellectually rigorous while retaining emotional accessibility. The Nobel Prize awarded to Anne

THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE 2026



Anne Carson studied Classics at the University of Toronto and later taught at several distinguished universities. Yet unlike many scholars who remain within academic boundaries, Carson transformed scholarly knowledge into a powerful artistic force. She brought ancient myths, philosophical questions, and classical texts into direct conversation with contemporary experiences of love, loss, identity, memory, and desire. Among what distinguishes Carson from many modern writers is her refusal to separate past from present. For her, ancient literature is not a collection of distant relics. It is a living presence that continues to illuminate contemporary existence.

Carson's literary career began attracting widespread attention with *Eros the Bittersweet*, published in 1986. Combining literary criticism, philosophy, and poetic insight, the book examined the nature of desire in ancient Greek thought. It revealed Carson's unique intellectual style: deeply learned yet emotionally engaging, scholarly yet intensely personal. The work challenged conventional distinctions between criticism and creative writing and established her reputation as a major literary thinker. Her international reputation reached new heights with *Autobiography of Red* in 1998.

experiences frequently resist simple interpretation. Carson embraces this reality. Her works often consist of fragments, reflections, quotations, images, and multiple voices. Rather than imposing artificial order upon chaos, she allows complexity to remain visible. Yet Carson is not merely a chronicler of fragmentation. She is also a creator of connections. Her writing builds bridges between ancient and modern worlds, between emotion and intellect, between personal memory and cultural history. She reveals hidden relationships between apparently separate experiences. In doing so, she offers readers new ways of understanding both themselves and the world around them.

Perhaps no aspect of her work demonstrates this more clearly than her meditation on loss and memory. Modern societies frequently struggle to speak meaningfully about grief. Carson approaches the subject with rare depth and originality. Her acclaimed work *Nox*, dedicated to her deceased brother, combines photographs, letters, translations, memories, and poetic fragments in a format unlike any conventional book. It reflects the reality of mourning itself, where memories arrive in fragments and understanding remains incomplete. The work is widely regard-

Carson therefore acknowledges far more than an individual achievement. It recognises a literary vision that has reshaped contemporary writing. The Swedish Academy praised her ability to create new literary forms through dialogue with classical traditions. That assessment accurately captures the uniqueness of her contribution. She has shown that innovation does not require abandoning the past. Instead, genuine innovation often emerges through the creative reimagining of inherited traditions.

In an age dominated by distraction, Carson reminds readers of the importance of attention. In a culture of certainty, she celebrates doubt and inquiry. In a fragmented world, she seeks unexpected connections. Her writing offers neither comforting illusions nor easy solutions. Instead, it provides something far more valuable: a deeper awareness of the complexities and mysteries that define human existence. For these reasons, Anne Carson occupies a singular place in contemporary literature. She has transformed the relationship between scholarship and creativity, between antiquity and modernity, between intellectual inquiry and emotional experience. Her works challenge readers, inspire writers, and expand the horizons of literary possibility. The 2026 Nobel Prize confirms what many readers have long believed: that Anne Carson is one of the most original and influential writers of the modern era. Her literature speaks directly to the anxieties, uncertainties, and aspirations of contemporary humanity while remaining rooted in the timeless questions that have shaped civilisation for centuries. In this remarkable balance between the ancient and the modern, the personal and the universal, lies her enduring greatness. She is, indeed, the most important literary voice of our age.

In her translation of Sappho's *Surviving Poetry in If Not Winter* Carson maintains the gaps and interruptions of the original fragments, rather than attempting to disguise them through speculative reconstruction. This attention to what remains incomplete establishes an unexpected affinity between archaic poetry and modern literary experimentation. Fragmentation is frequently associated with the crisis of representation in 20th-century literature. Carson reveals that the ancient textual tradition already contains discontinuities that resist the modern desire for completeness. The resulting poems make absence visible, allowing silence and discontinuity to participate in the production of meaning. *Eros the Bittersweet* focuses on the relationship between ancient thought and contemporary experimentation and combines classical scholarship, philosophical inquiry and poetic reflection. Carson begins with the Greek understanding of eros as an experience that combines pleasure and suffering. She draws particular attention to Sappho's description of desire as *glukupikron* or *bittersweet*. Carson explores the fundamentally relational character of desire: Desire emerges in the interval separating the lover from the beloved. It is precisely this distance that generates both the intensity of attraction and the suffering associated with absence. She connects the paradox to the emergence of self-consciousness and exposes the impossibility of complete identification. Her dealing with eros may be described as an archaic drive within her postmodern writing. Through ancient metaphors she renews the contemporary forms. This is why we may call Carson a philosopher who allows poetic diction to generate concepts.

Autobiography of Red the novel in verse reconfigures the ancient myth of Geryon, the red winged monster defeated by Herakles. Carson draws upon the surviving fragments of the Greek poet Stesichorus, whose account of Geryon belongs to a mythological tradition organized around the heroic adventures of Herakles. Carson changes the moral and narrative structure of the ancient myth and the monster is no longer the embodiment of an external threat against which heroic identity can be established. Her use of the language of contemporary sexuality and emotional experience is quite challenging in the exploration of the relationship. This modernized version of the Greek mythology reveals a fresh look on the relationship between heroism and monstrosity. We may call her work postmodern because of her use of the most recognizable techniques of postmodern literature – intertextuality, hybrid genres, disrupted chronology and unstable narrative authority – to reactivate experiences and symbolic structures inherited from antiquity. This is the way of examining anew the limits of language.

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'J&K Can Become A

region was now being discussed as a potential destination for GCC investments reflected a significant change in the opportunities being explored.

Acknowledging that Jammu and Kashmir continued to face a perception challenge arising from its past, he said the government was working to address it through investments across industry, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and other emerging sectors, including GCCs.

The Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir need not replicate the growth trajectories of established GCC hubs such as Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai, but could learn from their experiences and position itself to compete with Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

“Coming late to the party is disappointing, but it is not always disadvantageous. We can learn from the experiences of others. We don’t have to reinvent the wheel. We just have to use it better,” CM Omar observed.

He pointed out that the rising cost of doing business in larger cities had created opportunities for emerging destinations. Jammu and Kashmir, he said, could explore this space by building on its inherent advantages and offering an attractive environment for businesses to establish and expand their operations.

Underscoring the importance of educational institutions in developing a skilled workforce, the Chief Minister highlighted the presence of a strong network of higher education institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, including IIM Jammu, IIT Jammu, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, the University of Jammu, the University of Kashmir and the Islamic University of Science and Technology.

These institutions, he continued, were producing talented and well-educated young people who were often compelled to seek employment opportunities outside the region, including in the GCC sector, because of limited opportunities at home.

He said the establishment of GCCs in Jammu and Kashmir could help retain local talent, create quality employment and connect the region’s educated youth with emerging opportunities in the technology-driven economy.

The Chief Minister said the success of the summit should not be measured by an immediate target of establishing a large number of GCCs, but by the creation of a foundation for sustainable growth.

“We’d be quite happy to have one, first GCC. One will lead to five. Five will lead to ten. And the story will grow from there,” he said, stressing that the government wanted investors to choose Jammu and Kashmir on the strength of its business potential rather than out of sympathy for its past challenges.

Emphasising that commercial viability would remain central to attracting and retaining investment, Omar Abdullah said businesses would continue to operate in a destination only as long as it made economic sense for them.

The Chief Minister highlighted the government’s efforts to improve the business environment, including the passage of comprehensive Ease of Doing Business legislation during the recent session of the Legislative Assembly, which received the assent of the Lieutenant Governor and has become law.

He said the legislation was intended to make doing business in Jammu and Kashmir easier, adding that its implementation on the ground would be critical. The government, he said, would learn from experience and undertake further improvements wherever required.

Describing the summit as an opportunity for the government to learn from industry leaders and established GCC ecosystems, he said the deliberations would help identify the measures needed to make Jammu and Kashmir a more attractive destination for investors.

He said the government was keen to build sustained engagement with NASSCOM and other industry stakeholders, and invited companies to explore the region’s potential.

Pointing to Jammu and Kashmir’s climatic conditions and connectivity by road, rail and air, Omar Abdullah said the region had inherent advantages that could be developed into a compelling proposition for businesses considering new locations.

“I am just going to assure all of you that whatever we can do in the government to make your journey easier, to ensure that you’re able to establish here easily and also profitably, please rest assured that at the highest levels in the government, we are committed to making your journey easy,” he said.

Expressing hope that the summit would mark the beginning of a long-term association between Jammu and Kashmir and the GCC industry, he said emerging technologies could open up opportunities for new destinations, including the Union Territory.

The Chief Minister thanked the participating industry leaders and delegates

for their engagement and appreciated IIM Jammu for organising the summit. He expressed hope that the two days of deliberations would translate into tangible outcomes and meaningful investment opportunities on the ground.

The inaugural session was attended by Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department; Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Secretary, Department of Labour and Employment; Rajesh Nambiar, President, NASSCOM; Rajendra Singh Pawar, Chairman, NIIT; and Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, among other representatives from government, industry and academia.

With participation from approximately 45 organisations, over 55 industry leaders and more than 300 delegates, the J&K GCC Summit 2026 seeks to strengthen engagement between policymakers, industry and academia and identify pathways for translating Jammu and Kashmir’s potential into investment, innovation, employment and sustainable economic growth.

Thousands Attend

to regulate traffic and facilitate the smooth movement of devotees arriving from different parts of the country. The coordinated efforts of the concerned departments were aimed at ensuring the smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual Urs amid the large gathering.

The annual Urs holds immense spiritual and cultural significance in Kashmir, with devotees gathering at Charar-i-Sharief to remember the teachings of Sheikh-ul-Aalam and pray for peace, harmony and prosperity—(KNO)

IGP Prays For

During the visit, the IGP also interacted with the shrine management and reviewed the arrangements made for devotees visiting the shrine.

The annual Urs of Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (RA) popularly known as Sheikh-ul-Alam draws devotees from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere, who gather at the shrine to offer prayers and pay their respects to the revered Sufi saint.

IGP Felicitates Police Personnel in Budgam

Later, IGP Sujit Kumar felicitated police personnel of District Budgam by distributing commendation certificates, appreciation letters and rewards in recognition of their work in effective policing. The event was attended by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Central Kashmir Range, Rajiv Pandey.

Among those recognised were SSP Budgam Hariprasad KK, SDPO Magam Ashrif Lissery, SHO Police Station Beerwah Mudassir Nassar, SHO Police Station Magam Khurshid Awan and 17 other police personnel.

The team of Police Station Beerwah was recognised for its role in busting a fake employment syndicate, while Police Station Magam was appreciated for adopting the Digital Beat Policing System—(KNO)

J&K Likely To

winds on October 10 and October 13-14.

According to the department, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 28.2 degrees Celsius, 4 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 9.3 degrees Celsius, 1.8 degrees above normal.

Qazigund recorded a maximum temperature of 27 degrees Celsius, 4 degrees above normal, while Pahalgam registered 23.6 degrees Celsius, 2.5 degrees above normal. Kupwara recorded 27.7 degrees Celsius, 2.8 degrees above normal, and Gulmarg recorded 19 degrees Celsius, 3.9 degrees above normal.

In Jammu division, Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 31.5 degrees Celsius, while Katra registered 29 degrees Celsius and Kathua 31.4 degrees Celsius. Batote and Bhaderwah recorded maximum temperatures of 25.1 and 26.5 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Reasi ARG recorded the highest rainfall at 28.5 mm, followed by Katra at 20.8 mm and Jammu at 18.6 mm, according to the department’s data—(KNO)

FDA Steps Up

practices and the use of prohibited or unsuitable materials for food packaging and serving were observed. In a specific enforcement action, 10 kg of newspapers and 20 kg of snacks were destroyed on the spot by the concerned food business operators, and a fine of 4,000 was imposed in connection with the violations detected. Further regulatory action was initiated, wherever warranted, in accordance with the applicable provisions of law.

The awareness activities focused on

the importance of maintaining personal hygiene, keeping food vending premises clean, preventing contamination, using only food-grade materials for packaging and serving, and ensuring proper storage and handling of food. Street food vendors were also sensitised to their legal responsibilities under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and the importance of adopting hygienic practices to prevent foodborne illnesses.

Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, reiterated that ensuring food safety requires both strict enforcement and sustained awareness among food business operators. Street food vendors have been urged to maintain prescribed sanitary and hygienic conditions and ensure that all food offered for sale is safe and wholesome. FDA, J&K, will continue its coordinated inspection, awareness and enforcement activities across the Union Territory, with appropriate legal action against violations of food safety norms.

Consumers are encouraged to actively participate in safeguarding public health by reporting suspected food adulteration, unsafe food or unhygienic food-handling practices email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in.

UAE Bounces Back

18.5 million barrels per day, but when you include diverted volume shipped from the Saudi West coast and UAE East coast it's now around 100 per cent," Kpler said.

India imports 60 per cent of its LPG requirements, of which 90 per cent used to come from the Gulf countries via Hormuz.

India’s LPG imports from Kuwait and Qatar also went up in September. Kuwait was the third-largest supplier, followed by Qatar. India’s overall LPG imports fell 4 per cent in September to 1.39 million tonnes compared with August.

The volume of oil flowing from the Middle East region has also returned to pre-war levels despite the continued restrictions Iran is placing on vessels attempting to travel through the Strait of Hormuz.

Seven months after the US-Israel war with Iran led to the effective closure of the critical waterway, Kpler said that in the final week of September, daily oil flow from the Middle East reached 92 per cent of its pre-war baseline.

Analysts attribute the rebounding flow of oil and petroleum products to ships being escorted with US military assistance. Shuttle super tankers are being used through the strait, which then transfer the crude and petroleum products to other vessels waiting nearby. Besides, the Gulf countries are also using pipelines to bypass the Strait.

Two Dead, 21 Hurt

and elderly people. They have been identified as Kaushal Singh (23), son of Rattan Singh; Joginder Singh (80), son of Tirath Singh; Ambika Sharma (45), daughter of Gidish Kumar; Kaushalya Devi (65), wife of Tirath Singh; Babli Devi (30), wife of Tara Singh; Kamal Singh (55), son of Bhim Singh; Digpal Singh (50), son of Sansar Singh; Sanjay Kumar (30), son of Mool Raj, resident of Thalka; Rano Devi (61), wife of Bihari Lal; Shardi Devi (60), wife of Sajib Singh; Darshana Devi (35), wife of Deepo Singh; Sudesh Kumar (50), son of Karnail Singh; Satya Devi (70), wife of Tarlok Singh, resident of Badhog; Bindo Devi (35), wife of Joginder Singh; Satvir Singh (60); Parvez Singh (65), son of Chander Singh; Bimla Devi (60), wife of Hari Singh; Neelam Devi (40), wife of Rakesh Singh; Joginder Singh (45), son of Janak Singh; Sundar Singh (60), son of Dilip Singh; and Sanyogita Kumari (55), wife of Sundar Singh.

Most of the injured are residents of Moghla, officials said.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has expressed grief and anguish over the tragic road accident in Rajouri.

In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor wrote: "Deeply anguished by the loss of lives in a tragic road accident in Rajouri. My heart goes out to the families who have lost their loved ones and prayers for the swift recovery of those injured. I've directed the Dist Admin to ensure the best possible treatment to injured."

Apple Picking In

weather changes,” a grower from south Kashmir said.

He said growers are closely watching weather updates while coordinating with labourers, transporters and traders to avoid delays in harvesting and the movement of fruit.

Another orchardist said unseasonal or prolonged rainfall during harvesting can complicate orchard operations, particularly when workers are required to pick fruit and transport it from orchards to collection points.

“We cannot afford unnecessary delays during the peak harvesting period. Once the fruit is ready, it needs to be picked care-

fully and handled properly. Any disruption in the weather or transportation can create difficulties for growers,” he said.

The growers, however, stressed that the impact of the forecast would depend on the intensity, duration and location of the precipitation.

Alongside the faster harvesting, demand for cold storage facilities is also gaining attention as growers and traders look for ways to preserve fruit and manage its sale over a longer period.

Cold storage enables growers and traders to hold suitable varieties under controlled conditions instead of being compelled to sell the entire produce immediately after harvesting. This can help spread supplies over time, although the eventual returns depend on market prices, storage charges, quality and demand.

Growers said storage facilities are particularly important when market arrivals increase during the peak season, as a large volume of fruit entering the market simultaneously can put pressure on prices.

“Cold storage gives us an option to keep good-quality fruit for a later sale instead of sending everything to the market at once. But storage is useful only when the price we receive later covers the cost of storage, transportation and other expenses,” another grower said.

Orchardists said smaller farmers often face greater difficulties in accessing storage facilities because of limited financial resources and the additional expenditure involved in keeping their produce for an extended period.

They called for affordable storage services, transparent charges and timely access to facilities so that growers could make decisions according to the quality of their fruit and prevailing market conditions.

Despite the progress in harvesting, growers said their returns would ultimately depend on market prices, transportation costs and the quality of fruit reaching buyers.

They said fluctuations in market rates, combined with expenditure on labour, packaging, pesticides, fertilisers and freight, continue to influence the profitability of apple cultivation.

“Growing an apple crop requires investment throughout the year. When harvesting begins, we have to spend more on labour, packaging and transportation. If market rates are not satisfactory, the returns become difficult to manage,” a grower said.

Apple cultivation remains one of Kashmir’s principal economic activities, providing employment and income across the agricultural supply chain. The harvesting period therefore has implications beyond orchards, affecting labourers, packaging units, transport operators, commission agents and wholesale markets.

Growers said the coming days would be important in determining how efficiently the remaining harvest is completed and how smoothly fruit is moved to storage facilities and markets.

They urged the authorities to ensure regular weather advisories, adequate transportation arrangements and better market support so that growers can minimise avoidable losses during the peak season—(KNO)



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DC Bandipora reviews winter preparedness for Gurez

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Friday chaired a comprehensive meeting to review winter preparedness for Gurez and Tulail at Dak Bungalow, Badugam, Tulail, with concerned district and sectoral officers.

The meeting focused on ensuring uninterrupted essential services, timely snow clearance, road connectivity, availability of essential commodities and adequate healthcare arrangements in the snow-bound areas ahead of the winter season.

Reviewing the status of roads, bridges and ongoing infrastructure projects, the DC sought details from the concerned engineering departments, including the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and PMGSY. She directed the officers to expedite pending works, resolve bottlenecks and road alignment issues, and adhere to strict timelines to ensure completion of critical projects before heavy snowfall.

The DC stressed the need for advance planning and effective coordination among BRO, Roads and Buildings (R&B) and



Mechanical Engineering Department (MED) for timely snow clearance. She directed the concerned departments to submit road-wise snow clearance plans to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Gurez, and ensure the availability of adequate machinery, equipment and manpower, with priority to main roads and vital link roads.

On the occasion, SDM Gurez, Mukhtar Ahmad highlighted the requirement for snow clearance machinery at Razdan Top and Kanzalwan, particularly for clearing the Z-Khushi curve and Rane Mode. The issue regarding mechanised snow clearance of the Dawar helipad was also discussed. The DC directed the Executive Engineers of PWD and MED to formulate a coordinated plan to ensure timely clearance of the helipad for emergency

requirements.

The meeting also reviewed arrangements for the deployment and monitoring of emergency vehicles, including GPS-based tracking, and the availability of adequate fuel and other essential resources to ensure an effective response during snowfall and emergencies.

Reviewing the preparedness of the Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (CAPD) Department, the DC took stock of ration distribution and the advance stocking of essential commodities in Gurez and Tulail before the onset of winter. The availability of LPG cylinders across the subdivisions was also reviewed, with directions to ensure adequate supplies and uninterrupted distribution.

The DC further reviewed the healthcare prepared-

ness including the stocking of medicines and other essential medical supplies, availability of staff and arrangements for providing healthcare services during winter. The Chief Medical Officer, Bandipora, informed the meeting that pregnant women at different stages of pregnancy had been identified for their timely relocation to the district headquarters, as per the established schedule, to facilitate safe deliveries and ensure access to necessary medical care.

The preparedness of the Power Development Department was also reviewed. The Executive Engineer, KPDCL Bandipora, apprised the DC of the department's winter action plan, including the routine operation of generator sets to support power availability. Arrangements of the

Jal Shakti Department for uninterrupted water supply were also discussed.

The DC additionally reviewed winter preparedness measures of the Sheep Husbandry, Animal Husbandry, Education and Social Welfare sectors, including Anganwadi services, and stressed the need for advance planning to minimise inconvenience to residents during the harsh winter months.

Emphasising the strategic importance of advance preparedness in Gurez and Tulail areas, the DC directed all departments to remain vigilant, strengthen interdepartmental coordination and ensure that men, machinery and essential supplies are positioned well in advance to meet any eventuality during the forthcoming winter.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ACD Bandipora, OC BRO Gurez, Chief Education Officer Bandipora, District Information Officer Bandipora and Executive Engineers of PHE Hydraulic Division Gurez, PMGSY Bandipora, R&B Division Gurez, PDD Division Bandipora, besides AD Handicrafts/Handloom Bandipora.

■ Tests 55 pesticides

SKUAST-K harvests pesticide-free apples in Kashmir for first time: VC Ganai



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) has harvested pesticide-free apples in Kashmir for the first time, with laboratory testing showing all 55 pesticides screened were below the quantification level, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai said on Friday.

Speaking at a seminar on natural farming organised by SKUAST-K in collaboration with the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and the Kisan Advisory Board, J&K, at Shalimar, Ganai, said the university is promoting natural and organic farming to reduce dependence on chemical pesticides and protect soil, water, biodiversity and human health.

"We have harvested a pesticide-free apple for the first time in Kashmir. We tested the apples for 55 pesticides, and all 55 were found to be below the quantification level," he said.

Ganai said intensive agricultural practices and excessive use of chemicals and pesticides were adversely affecting the environment, soil, water and air, besides contributing to biodiversity loss.

"Ultimately, it has a bad effect on human health. We can see that the incidence of cancer is increasing. We need to focus on natural farming and organic agriculture," he said.

He said SKUAST-K had established a Centre of Excellence in Natural Farming and a major organic farming centre equipped with an industrial-scale bio-input production facility.

"We have a big incubation facility where we are teaching youth and farmers of Kashmir how to produce bio-fertilisers, bio-controls and bio-input agents on a large scale and how to deploy them," Ganai said.

He said these initiatives would help reduce the use of chemical pesticides and promote environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.

Ganai said the university was working with farmers, the government and agricultural experts to create awareness across Jammu and Kashmir about sustainable farming methods.

He also highlighted SKUAST-K's One Health programme, under which environmental, agricultural, animal and human health are addressed together—(KNO)

UAE bounces back as India's largest LPG supplier, topples US

IANIS

NEW DELHI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has bounced back as India's key LPG supplier after having lost the top slot to the USA due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the continuing Middle East conflict.

Data compiled by maritime intelligence firm Kpler shows that the UAE accounted for 39 per cent of India's LPG imports in September, up from 13 per cent in the previous month, overtaking the US, which had been the biggest supplier of the cooking gas over the previous six months.

The UAE supplied 547,000 tonnes of LPG, 182 per cent more than 193,000 tonnes in August, while the US was the second-largest supplier as its shipments fell 58 per cent from 323,000 tonnes in August. While the US accounted for 53 per cent of India's total LPG imports in August, its share in September fell to 23 per cent.

"The physical market has demonstrated greater resilience than assumed. Combined crude volumes exiting the Gulf (excluding Iran) plus volumes from West Coast Saudi

and East Coast UAE are around pre-conflict levels of 18.5 million barrels per day, but when you include diverted volume shipped from the Saudi West coast and UAE East coast it's now around 100 per cent," Kpler said.

India imports 60 per cent of its LPG requirements, of which 90 per cent used to come from the Gulf countries via Hormuz.

India's LPG imports from Kuwait and Qatar also went up in September. Kuwait was the third-largest supplier, followed by Qatar. India's overall LPG imports fell 4 per cent in September to 1.39 million tonnes compared with August.

The volume of oil flowing from the Middle East region has also returned to pre-war levels despite the continued restrictions Iran is placing on vessels attempting to travel through the Strait of Hormuz.

Seven months after the US-Israel war with Iran led to the effective closure of the critical waterway, Kpler said that in the final week of September, daily oil flow from the Middle East reached 92 per cent of its pre-war baseline.

A Garden of Flowers, a Flavour of Biryani: Sahba's Little Taste of Happiness at Nishat

GMK NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar: At Kashmir's world-famous Nishat Garden, a young local man is winning hearts with something other than flowers, fountains and breathtaking views — his homemade biryani.

Nishat Garden has always had a way of drawing people towards it. Its terraced lawns, cascading fountains and magnificent view of Dal Lake have made it one of Kashmir's most loved tourist destinations. But these days, there is another attraction quietly adding flavour to the garden's familiar charm.

His name is Sahba. A young man from the locality, Sahba has been winning admirers with his homemade biryani, a simple culinary offering that is fast becoming a talking point among locals and tourists alike.

In a place where nature provides the spectacle, Sahba is adding the aroma.

His biryani has become more than just a dish for those who have tasted it. It has turned into a reason to stop, enquire, savour and return. Word of mouth is doing what expensive pub-



licity often struggles to achieve — bringing people together over the promise of good food made with a personal touch.

For Sahba, the appeal appears to lie in the warmth of homemade cooking. There is something special about food prepared with care, served without pretence and remembered long after the last bite. And when such food finds its place in the welcoming surroundings of Nishat, the experience becomes all the more memorable.

He is fast becoming a familiar and much-loved face in and around the garden. Locals know him, visitors are discovering him, and his growing popularity has earned him a

special place in the hearts of people who appreciate both good food and a friendly face.

Nishat is already a garden of unforgettable sights. Sahba is giving some of its visitors an unforgettable taste.

His little story also reflects a larger truth about Kashmir. Tourism is not built by grand landscapes and celebrated monuments alone. It flourishes through the people who give a destination its character — the boatman who welcomes a visitor, the artisan who preserves an old craft, the vendor who offers a local delicacy and the young man who turns his culinary skill into a source of happiness for others.

India and Qatar review multifaceted strategic partnership

IANIS

NEW DELHI: India and Qatar on Friday reviewed the multifaceted Strategic Partnership and explored ways to further strengthen bilateral ties during the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) held in New Delhi.

"Ms. Sripriya Ranganathan co-chaired the 6th Foreign Office Consultations between India and Qatar in New Delhi with Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar, H.E. Dr. Ahmad Hassen Al Hamadi," the MEA stated on X.

"Both sides reviewed the multifaceted Strategic Partnership, including in the areas of trade, investment, energy, security, consular affairs, education and cultural cooperation, and explored ways to further strengthen bilateral ties. The two sides also exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest," it added.

India's Ambassador to Qatar, K Srikar Reddy, was also present during the discussion.

Last month, Ambassador Reddy met a senior Qatari Foreign Affairs Ministry official to exchange views on bilateral relations and discuss ways to further strengthen the partnership

between the two countries.

"Dr. K. Srikar Reddy, Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, met with the Director of Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar. They exchanged views on India-Qatar bilateral relations and discussed ways to further strengthen the close and multifaceted partnership between India and Qatar, including areas of mutual interest," the Indian Embassy in Qatar said in a post on X.

On September 10, Reddy presented a copy of the Letter of Credentials to Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi and discussed ways to further deepen and enhance the strategic partnership between both countries.

"Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, Dr K Srikar Reddy, called on H.E. Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and presented the copy of the Letter of Credentials. Ambassador conveyed the greetings of the leadership of India, and they exchanged views on India-Qatar relations and ways to further deepen and enhance the strategic partnership," the Indian Embassy said on X.

J&K Govt shuffles Police Brass, 100 officers transferred

REHAN QAYOOM

SRINAGAR: In a major administrative shake-up, the Jammu and Kashmir Government on Friday ordered the transfer and posting of 100 senior police officers across the Union Territory with immediate effect.

According to an order issued by the Home Department, the reshuffle includes officers from both the Indian Police Service (IPS) and Jammu and Kashmir Police Service (JKPS) cadres.

Senior IPS officer Danesh Rana, who was awaiting posting, has been appointed Managing Director of the J&K Police Housing Corporation, relieving S.J.M. Gillani of the additional charge.

Garib Dass, Director of the Sher-i-Kashmir Police Academy (SKPA), Udhampur, has been posted as ADG Homeguards, Civil Defence and SDRF, while Dr Mohd Haseeb Mughal has been appointed Director of SKPA Udhampur.

Abdul Jabbar has been posted as IG Armed Police Jammu, while Shahid Mehraj Rather

has been appointed IG Technical Services J&K, retaining the additional charge of Director Police Telecommunications.

Rayees Mohammad Bhat has been transferred from DIG CID Kashmir to DIG CID Headquarters J&K.

At the range and directorate levels, Shiv Kumar Sharma has been posted as DIG Railways, while Swarn Singh Kotwal has been appointed DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range. Zahid Naseem Manhas has been posted as DIG Armed Police Jammu, and Hareesh H.P. has been appointed Director of the Special Security Force (SSF).

The government has also effected several changes in district police commands.

Sudhanshu Dhama has been appointed SSP Kupwara, replacing Syed Al Tahir Gilani, who has been transferred as SSP PCR Kashmir.

Harshal Rajesh Mahajan has been posted as SSP Ganderbal, Neha Jain as SSP Sopore, Anna Sinha as SSP Ramban and Vaibhav Meena as SSP Poonch.

Tahir Saleem Khan has been

appointed SSP Bandipora, Sajad Khaliq Bhat SSP Handwara and Irshad Hussain Rather SSP Awantipora.

In traffic policing, Bisma Qazi has been appointed SSP Traffic City Srinagar, replacing Aijaz Ahmad Bhat, who has been posted as Commandant of the 23rd JKAP IR Battalion.

K.M. Priyanka has been appointed SSP Traffic National Highway, while Master Popsy has been posted as SSP Rural Traffic Jammu.

Anand Kumar Mishra has been posted as head of the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) J&K.

The order also entails the transfer and posting of several commandants across Armed Police and India Reserve (IR) battalions, besides changes in intelligence wings, training institutions and other key police formations.

The sweeping reshuffle is aimed at reassigning responsibilities across various operational, administrative and specialised wings of the J&K Police, with the transfers taking effect immediately.—(KNO)

DC Bandipora Tours Tulail, Inspects Developmental Projects

Holds Public Darbar to address Grievances

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today toured Tulail Valley and inspected various ongoing and recently completed developmental projects before holding a Public Darbar at Dak Bungalow, Budugam, to take first-hand appraisal of public grievances and address issues concerning infrastructure and essential services.

During her visit to Neeru, Tulail, the DC was apprised of the long-pending construction of Neeru Bridge. Taking note of the issue, she sought on-the-spot details from the concerned Executive Engineer and directed him to coordinate with the Superintending Engineer for a site visit along with the concerned team. She stressed the need for prioritised examination of the matter and directed the officers to take necessary steps to ensure further progress on the project.

At Budugam, Tulail, the DC inspected the recently constructed double-storey Revenue Department Complex and reviewed the facilities available



there. She also inspected the under-construction residential complex for the Tehsil Tulail within the same premises. The DC directed the concerned authorities and executing agencies to ensure timely completion of the building and instructed them to fence the entire premises to safeguard government property.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited the site of the Barnai-Jawdara Road project along with the Executive Engineer, PMGSY, and reviewed its implementation status. The Executive Engineer informed her that the project envisages a road length of approximately 19 kilometres. The DC directed the concerned officers to identify and remove all bottlenecks hindering execution and ensure that the work progresses in a coordinated and time-bound

manner to improve road connectivity in the area.

Subsequently, the Deputy Commissioner held a Public Darbar at Dak Bungalow, Budugam, Tulail, wherein local residents raised several issues pertaining to road connectivity, essential services and public infrastructure. These included macadamisation of Wazirthal road along with a proper drainage system, pending construction of Neeru Bridge, LPG gas connections, snow clearance arrangements and chopper services. Issues related to compensation for land acquired for the Badugam helipad, ration cards, mobile connectivity, electricity billing discrepancies and water supply were also brought to the notice of the DC.

After patiently listening to the grievances, the DC assured the public that their

genuine demands would be taken up with the concerned departments for time-bound redressal. She issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers to examine the issues falling within their respective jurisdictions and take necessary action on priority. Emphasising coordinated efforts among all line departments, she directed the officers to ensure prompt resolution of public grievances and uninterrupted availability of essential services, particularly in view of the approaching winter season.

Later, the DC, accompanied by the Executive Engineer, Power Development Department (PDD), apprised the locals about the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, a Government of India initiative promoting rooftop solar installations in residential households. The scheme provides eligible households with central financial assistance for installing rooftop solar systems, enabling them to generate their own electricity and reduce dependence on conventional power supply.

Konstas, Johnson power Australia A to series-clinching 69-run win over India A

IAN S

PUDUCHERRY: Sam Konstas top-scored with 67 while left-arm pacer Spencer Johnson led a relentless bowling display with a three-wicket haul as the duo powered Australia A to a series-clinching 69-run victory over India A in the second 50-over game at the Cricket Association Pondicherry Siechem Ground on Friday.

Australia A once again delivered a complete performance on a sluggish pitch. Their top order set the game up early, with Konstas and number three Josh Philippe (58) striking fluent half-centuries. The duo were also supported by handy contributions from skipper Nathan McSweeney (32), Mitch Owen (25), and Lachlan Shaw (25).

Even when India A's bowlers triggered a late collapse, Australia A's



top-heavy blitz ensured they reached 275 in 49.5 overs, a target that proved far beyond the reach of India A. For India A, seam-bowling all-rounder Arshad Khan took 3-56, while Yash Thakur grabbed 2-46.

When it came to defending the total, Australia A's pacers out-classed India A's batters with pace and bounce. With Mahli Beardman rested, Johnson, Riley Meredith, and Ben Dwarshuis extracted

sharp bounce and movement to reduce India A's chase to a mere procession by taking out Devdutt Padikkal, skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and B Sai Sudharsan in the power-play.

With Kumar Kushagra

and Nishant Sindhu falling without doing much, India A never recovered from the early damage in the chase of 276. For India A, Rajat Patidar offered the sole resistance through hitting 67 off 82 balls - his second consecutive half-century of the series.

However, with wickets tumbling around him, Patidar lacked support as the chase unravelled, before he fell to Johnson. Eventually, India A were bowled out for 206 in 45.2 overs, giving Australia A an unpassable 2-0 lead in the three-game series, with the final game to happen on Sunday.

Brief Scores: Australia A 275 all out in 49.5 overs (Sam Konstas 67, Josh Philippe 58; Arshad Khan 3-56, Yash Thakur 2-46) beat India A 206 all out in 45.2 overs (Rajat Patidar 67, Anukul Roy 34 not out; Spencer Johnson 3-35, Riley Meredith 2-31) by 69 runs.

2nd T20I: Motie replaces Forde as WI elect to bowl in Ranchi

IAN S

RANCHI: The West Indies won the toss and elected to bowl first against India in the second T20I of the series at the JSCA International Stadium Complex in Ranchi on Friday.

West Indies captain Shai Hope said his side opted to bowl first, taking into account the wet conditions and the possibility of them worsening as the evening progresses. He acknowledged the quick turnaround between matches and said the team was keen to learn from its mistakes and come back stronger. Hope also confirmed one change to the West Indies playing XI with Gudakesh Motie coming in for Matthew Forde.

"We are going to bowl first, this time around. We gotta look at the conditions; it's wet and will get worse in the evening. Quick turnaround, trying to learn from the mistakes. Just come back stronger. It's already a bit wet, so it's going to get even worse as the evening goes on. We're just going to try to put them under pressure



with the ball and then chase them down. It's about trying to learn from the mistakes we made in the first game. Especially against a quality side like India, you can't really give them too many chances. We've got to make sure we put that game behind us quickly and come back stronger today. One change. Matthew Forde is out, and Gudakesh Motie is in. Everyone's probably going to get a go on this tour," said Hope after the toss.

India captain Shreyas Iyer said his team would

have preferred to bowl first as well, but stressed the need to adapt quickly to the conditions. He said the focus was on maintaining high standards throughout the 40 overs and challenging themselves to improve, adding that India would field an unchanged playing XI.

"We were looking to bowl first as well; we will have to adapt quickly. We have talked about maintaining standards for 40 overs. We want to challenge ourselves to get better. We are going with the same team," said Iyer.

England Test would be 'certainty' if ECB assist, financially-burdened CWI says on women's landmark match



IAN S

NEW DELHI: Cricket West Indies chief executive Chris Dehring stated that the board is hopeful of staging the one-off Test between the West Indies and England and that help from the England and Wales Cricket Board would certainly help keep the match alive.

Recently, ECB chair Richard Thompson had stated that the English board can step in and help fund the hosts for the Test match after CWI revealed financial struggles the board is facing.

"We would welcome any assistance from our much

wealthier member boards," Dehring said, as quoted by BBC Sport, over possible help from the ECB for the Test. "It is very expensive to host cricket in the Caribbean."

The Test, if played, will help provide crucial practice for England ahead of the Women's Ashes next summer and will be the first Test for the Windies since 2004. England are due to play three ODIs and three T20Is too on the same trip to the Caribbean in April and May. However, hosting the Test match would be a challenge for CWI logistically too, Dehring highlighted.

"We have to fly all of the equipment and crew into any venue to be able to

broadcast a match," Dehring said. "That is a significant figure. Sky doesn't have to fly from London to Manchester for one match," he added.

He emphasised that there is interest in hosting Test cricket and that they are hopeful of staging the match on their own, but assistance from the ECB would make it a different ball game altogether. "Once we develop a schedule, we will know how much it will cost," he added.

"It is far cheaper to host everything in one location, but one of the allures of the Caribbean being able to travel to more than one location for matches.

"We are hoping still we will be able to cover from our own resources, but it (the Test) would be a certainty if the ECB were to assist us," he said.

Thompson had earlier suggested that the ECB can fund the match. "We will definitely look at it," Thompson said. "Look what we did with Zimbabwe two years ago. Look, it will be awful for the West Indies. We want that Test match to play out.

Inter-District UT-Level Thang-Ta C'ship Inaugurated in Shopian



GMK SPORTS DESK

SHOPIAN: The Inter-District UT-Level Thang-Ta Championship for All Age Group Girls was inaugurated Friday in Shopian.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by the District Youth Services & Sports Officer, Shopian, along with participants, coaches, technical officials, escort teachers and other officials associated with the event.

The championship aims to provide young athletes with a competitive platform to showcase their talent, discipline, skills and sporting spirit while promoting the traditional martial art of Thang-Ta among the youth of Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing the gathering, the District Youth Services & Sports Officer, emphasized the importance of games and sports in the overall development of young people. He high-

lighted that participation in sports not only improves physical fitness but also inculcates discipline, confidence, teamwork, leadership and a sense of healthy competition among students and youth.

He encouraged all participating players to display the true spirit of sportsmanship, respect their opponents and officials, and make the best use of the opportunity to learn and excel.

The championship brings together talented players from different districts of the Union Territory, providing them with an opportunity to compete at a higher level and further strengthen the sporting culture across Jammu & Kashmir.

The event commenced with enthusiasm and sporting fervour, with all participating teams and officials contributing to the successful conduct of the championship.

PGTI Tour: Shubhankar Sharma retains lead in Kapil Dev Invitational Tour Championship

IAN S

GREATER NOIDA: Shubhankar Sharma returned an even-par 72 to retain a two-shot lead after the third round of the INR 2 crore Kapil Dev Invitational Tour Championship at the Jaypee Greens Golf & Spa Resort in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday.

The 30-year-old Chandigarh golfer (68-65-72), who began the day with a four-stroke advantage, mixed five birdies with three bogeys and a double bogey to remain at 11-under 205 heading into the final round. Bengaluru's Manoj S (70-71-66) and Italy's Michele Ortolani (72-70-65) emerged as Shubhankar's closest challengers at nine-under 207.

Manoj climbed from sixth to tied second after making six birdies in a bogey-free 66. Ortolani rose from seventh overnight with a blemish-free seven-under 65, the joint-lowest score of the day. Last year's PGTI Order of Merit champion Yuvraj Sandhu (71-69-69) of Chandigarh made a three-under 69 to occupy fourth place at seven-under 209.



Shubhankar began strongly, making four birdies on the front nine before adding another on the 10th. However, he dropped three bogeys and a double-bogey on the closing stretch that reduced his lead from his overnight four strokes to two.

"It was an up-and-down day," Shubhankar said. "I started strongly and made four birdies on the front nine, including gains on the second, fourth, and seventh, before adding another on the 10th."

"The back nine was disappointing because I missed a few opportunities coming in and dropped some shots. However, I'm still playing good golf and have plenty to look forward to tomorrow. Hopefully, I can carry the momentum

from today's front nine through all 18 holes in the final round," he added.

Chandigarh's Brashwarpal Singh (72-65-73) and Bengaluru's Khalin Joshi (72-67-71) shared fifth place at six-under 210. Joshi, a four-time winner on the DP World PGTI this season, began the week second in the Race to DP World India Championship.

Current Race to the India Championship leader Saptak Talwar (75-72-72) climbed from tied 31st to tied 25th at three-over 219.

The Pro-Am on Friday was won by the team consisting of professional Tapendra Ghai and amateur Prem Duggal. The Pro-Am winning team had a total of 48 Stableford Points.

Baramulla Kicks Off UT-Level U-17 Football Showdown



GMK SPORTS DESK

BARAMULLA: The UT-Level Inter-District Provincial-Level Football Championship for Under-17 Boys commenced Friday at St. Joseph's School Ground, Baramulla, with teams representing 19 districts of Jammu and Kashmir competing for the coveted title.

The tournament, featuring 344 young footballers, is organised by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K, under the supervision of the Director General, Anuradha Gupta and hosted by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, District Baramulla.

The championship was inaugurated by Pranjal Hazarika, ADDC Baramulla, in the presence of the 2IC, 112 Battalion BSF Baramulla, and Suresh Brittoo, Principal, St. Joseph's School, Baramulla.

Addressing the gathering, the ADDC appreciated the department's efforts in promoting grassroots sports and encouraged young footballers to uphold discipline, sportsmanship and the spirit of healthy competition.

Mushtaq Ahmad Pampori, DYSSO Baramulla, reaffirmed the department's commitment to providing young athletes with competitive platforms to showcase their talent.

The Principal welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of sports in nurturing leadership, teamwork and character among students.

The competition will be conducted on a league basis across five venues. In the opening encounter, hosts Baramulla delivered an impressive performance, defeating Doda 7-0 to begin their campaign on a winning note.

2025 ODI WC win is Harmanpreet's biggest legacy as India's captain: Anjum Chopra

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Former India captain Anjum Chopra believes Harmanpreet Kaur's biggest legacy as the side's skipper will be the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup triumph on home soil, adding that she has left the team as a far stronger, more experienced and more confident side than the one she inherited.

Harmanpreet stepped down as India captain across formats this week after nearly a decade in charge, and Smriti Mandhana has been named her successor. Harmanpreet captained India in five Tests, 51 ODIs and 155 T20Is and signed off from her tenure by leading India to their second consecutive Asian Games gold medal in Nishin, Japan last month.

"The biggest legacy Harmanpreet will always have to her credit as a leader is winning the ODI World Cup in 2025. Look at how her batting shaped up in that tournament - in the league games, the semifinal, and the final, and how the team evolved to get there through everyone's contribution. It wasn't just Harman. With every player contributing, Harman was able to lift that crown and India was able to win."

"Harman has grown in stature alongside this team, especially over the last three and a half years since taking over the ODI captaincy. Earlier, we played T20s far and few between with more one-day games on the schedule. In recent years, that shifted to where

almost every bilateral tour includes T20s, sometimes even more than ODIs.

"I've seen her grow into that leadership role, and her legacy will always be measured by where she took the reins to where she leaves them. In the one-day format, the Indian team are world champions."



They are a far stronger, more energised, skillful, and experienced unit than when she took over.

"That will be her legacy, alongside the aggression and confidence she brought into that dressing room over the years. If those qualities are carried forward, this Indian team is on the right path and the process is well set," Anjum told IANS in an exclusive conversation on Friday.

Anjum, who has known Harmanpreet since meeting in a training camp in 2008, felt the persona behind the former captain has stayed the same through years of drastic changes in the women's game. "I've thought through this question so many times in the last 48 hours. What is that one memory? It will not be just one memory."

INOX

LIVE the MOVIE

SRINAGAR

MOVIES SCHEDULE

10 OCTOBER 2026, SATURDAY

DRISHYAM : THE CONCLUSION (UA 16+)

HINDI ATMOS

10:45 AM | 01:45 PM

04:45 PM | 07:45 PM

HINDI

12:00 PM | 03:00 PM

06:00 PM

THE VVAAN (UA 16+)

HINDI

11:20 AM

DORAEMON THE MOVIE: NEW NOBITA AND THE CASTLE OF THE UNDERSEA DEVIL (U)

HINDI

04:35 PM

THE SOCIAL RECKONING (A)

ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

02:10 PM

OTHER MOMMY (TBA)

ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

06:50 PM

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