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Good Morning Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication

Office of Chief Minister, J&K
@CM_JnK



Following the reopening of offices in the winter capital, the Chief Minister inspected the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to review administrative readiness and facilities for the public and employees.

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Aga Ruhullah To Resign From Lok Sabha, NC Today



NAVEED UL HAQ

SRINAGAR: All eyes will be on Srinagar MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi today as he is set to announce his decision to resign from the Lok Sabha during a rally in central Kashmir's Budgam district.

Ruhullah said he would resign from the Lok Sabha on Tuesday (Today).

"I will resign from the Lok Sabha tomorrow (Tuesday)," he said.

Ruhullah is set to quit both the National Conference and the Lok Sabha over differences with the party on issues including Article 370 and other emotive matters.

A three-time MLA from the Budgam Assembly segment, Ruhullah won the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat in 2024 by defeating PDP candidate Waheed Ur Rehman Para by a record margin of 1.88 lakh votes.

Ruhullah, who catapulted to the centre stage of Jammu and Kashmir politics for his outspoken stand on Article 370, also played a key role in the National Conference's victories in the 2024 Assembly elections.

The MP is known for his strong advocacy of issues related to Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir's political rights, and reservation policy.

With Ruhullah's resignation, the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat will fall vacant, necessitating a by-election within six months. The bypoll is likely to witness a direct contest between Ruhullah and the National • P-06

152-Year-Old Darbar Move Tradition Lives On

Move Offices Reopen In Jammu; CM Omar Receives Guard Of Honour

GMK NEWS NETWORK



JAMMU: As part of the 152-year-old tradition of the biannual shifting of government offices between Srinagar and Jammu and vice versa, the Darbar Move offices, including the Civil Secretariat, which houses the offices of Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Minister, Ministers, and top bureaucrats, reopened here on Monday.

The Civil Secretariat and other government offices, which had closed in Srinagar on October 30 and 31, reopened in Jammu and will function from here for the next six months as part of the long-standing tradition.

On reaching the Civil Secretariat in the morning, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was accorded a ceremonial Guard of Honour.

The Chief Minister inspected the ceremonial parade presented by a contingent of the Jammu and Kashmir Police at the Civil Secretariat.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, ministers, Acting Chief Secretary Shailendra Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, and senior officers of the civil administration and police were present on the occasion.

Soon after the ceremony, the Chief Minister proceeded directly to his office to attend to official business.

The Darbar Move practice was introduced in 1872 by Maharaja Ranbir Singh and has remained a distinctive feature of Jammu and Kashmir's administrative system.

After 1947, Dogra rule came to an end, but the practice of shifting offices between the erstwhile state's two capitals continued.

In 1987, the Farooq Abdullah-led government mooted the idea of abolishing the Darbar Move, but the proposal was met with fierce opposition in Jammu, forcing the government to abandon the plan.

In 2021, the government abolished the Darbar Move practice, but it was revived in 2025—(KNO)

Winter Capital Admin Resumes Functioning From Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The administration of Jammu and Kashmir resumed functioning from the winter capital, Jammu, on Monday, with the Civil Secretariat and other government offices, including the Lok Bhawan, reopening here as part of the 154-year-old biannual Darbar Move practice, officials said.

The reopening marks the resumption of the biannual administrative arrangement under which the government shifts its offices between Jammu and Srinagar, officials said.

Security arrangements have been strengthened in Jammu, with police and paramilitary personnel deployed in key areas, particularly around the Secretariat. Security has also • P-06

Dry Weather Likely In J&K Till Nov 9: MeT



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Weather is expected to remain largely dry across Jammu and Kashmir till November 9, with brief spells of light rain and light snowfall over higher reaches possible on November 5 and 6, the Meteorological Department said on Monday.

According to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, dry weather is likely to prevail on November 3 and 4. However, isolated areas may witness light rain or snowfall in higher reaches during the evening of November 5 and 6.

The department, said dry conditions are expected to resume from November 7 to 9, with no significant weather activity forecast during the period.

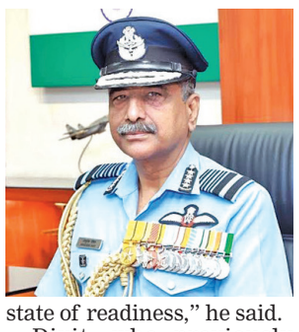
Meanwhile, Gulmarg recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Kashmir at minus 0.2 degrees Celsius. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 5 degrees Celsius, while Pahalgam, Qazigund, Kupwara and Kokernag recorded 2.8 degrees Celsius, 2.6 degrees Celsius, 4.3 degrees Celsius and 4 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The Meteorological Department has • P-06

During 'Op Sindoor'

IAF Demonstrated Capabilities Of Decisive Air Power: Air Chief

REHAN QAYOOM



SRINAGAR: Newly appointed Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit on Monday recalled the Indian Air Force's role in Operation Sindoor, saying the force demonstrated the capabilities of precise and decisive air power under the leadership of his predecessor, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh.

In his first address after taking over as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff, Dixit, said, the security environment remained demanding and the changing character of warfare required the Air Force to maintain high operational readiness. "I take over from Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, under whose leadership in 'Operation Sindoor,' the Air Force displayed what precise and decisive air power can achieve. I thank him for handing over a force in a high state of readiness," he said.

Dixit, who previously served as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, said, "Modern warfare is being reshaped by emerging technologies, including drones, long-range precision weapons, space, cyber, artificial intelligence and the electromagnetic spectrum."

He said the IAF, while transforming into the force India would need in the next decade, must always remain ready to fight and win.

Outlining his • P-06

Sakeena Itoo Reviews Health Sector Scenario In J&K

Calls For Strengthening Food Safety, Drug Testing Measures Across J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK



JAMMU: Minister for Health and Medical Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo, Monday, undertook a comprehensive review of the overall health sector scenario across Jammu and Kashmir, taking stock of the functioning of healthcare institutions, availability of medical facilities, manpower position, infrastructure development and delivery of patient-care services across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Health and Medical Education, Saugat Biswas; MD NHM, CEO SHA, Managing Director JKMSCL, Commissioner Food and Drugs Administration, Director SKIMS, Special Secretary Health and Medical Education department, Director Health Services Jammu/Kashmir, Director Family Welfare, Principals of all GMCs, Principals of Dental College Srinagar/Jammu, State Controller Drugs J&K, Director Ayush, Medical Superintendents of various hospitals and other senior officers of health department.

During the meeting, the Minister emphasised on strengthening of food safety measures as well as drug testing across Jammu and Kashmir. She called upon the officers to procure more number of mobile testing vans so that the testing facilities can be increased across J&K.

The Minister emphasized that strengthening the public healthcare delivery system, upgrading medical infrastructure and ensuring accessible, affordable and quality healthcare for every citizen remain the foremost priorities of the Government.

She stressed on the need for a coordinated and result-oriented approach among all concerned departments and healthcare institutions to address existing gaps in service delivery and ensure that the benefits of ongoing healthcare initiatives reach people at the grassroots level.

The Minister underscored that healthcare institutions, particularly those operating in far-flung, remote and underserved areas, must be adequately equipped with essential medical facilities, diagnostic services, medicines and qualified healthcare professionals so that patients are not compelled to travel long distances for basic treatment.

The Minister called for optimal utilisation of available human resources, • P-06

Paddy Loses Ground

Kulgam bets big on apple economy

UMAISAR GULL



KULGAM: Once widely known as the 'Rice Bowl of Kashmir', Kulgam district is witnessing a big shift in its agricultural landscape, with apple cultivation increasingly replacing paddy fields and emerging as a major driver of its rural economy.

In a major push to strengthen the growing apple economy, two cold storage facilities with a combined capacity of around 10,000 metric tonnes have become operational in the district, while the administration has identified around 250 kanals of state land at Adipora for establishing a second fruit mandi.

Bashir Ahmad Lone, General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC) Kulgam, said both cold storage facilities were functional, had received bookings and could collectively accommodate around five lakh apple boxes.

"Both facilities are operational, have received bookings and are currently functioning. Their combined capacity is approximately five lakh apple boxes," he said.

Lone said that work was underway on two additional cold storage projects, each having a proposed capacity of around 10,000 metric tonnes. "Taking all four projects together, the total investment is expected to exceed Rs 100 crore," he said.

The General • P-06

Centre Committed To Eliminate Terrorism; Make India Drug Free By 2029: Amit Shah

SAJID RAINA



SRINAGAR: Reiterating Centre's commitment to eliminate terrorism from the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that the government is working on a plan to make India 'drug-free' by 2029.

Addressing a public gathering in Hyderabad, Telangana, HM Shah, said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to eliminate terrorism and he has fulfilled it. The government acted against terrorism through surgical strikes, airstrikes and Operation Sindoor."

The Union Home Minister also reiterated the Centre's commitment to make India drug-free by December 31, 2029, saying the government would eliminate drugs from the country before the deadline.

Targeting Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Shah accused him of turning the state into an "ATM" for Congress leaders in Delhi and alleged that the six guarantees promised by Rahul Gandhi had not been fulfilled.

He also challenged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to participate in a discussion in a special session of Parliament, alleging that the opposition was deliberately disrupting parliamentary proceedings.

"Parliament's responsibilities are discharged through the country's Constitution, but Rahul ji does not allow Parliament to function. We are ready to convene a special session. Come and participate in a discussion," Shah said.

Taking a swipe at Gandhi over his criticism of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Shah said the BJP had won the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections without any such exercise.

He also cited the BJP's electoral victories in Maharashtra, Haryana, Delhi and Bihar, accusing the Congress of questioning election results when it failed to win.

Shah further said the BJP would ensure that every infiltrator was removed from electoral rolls, reiterating the party's position on illegal immigration.

Referring to • P-06

India's Economic Resilience Driven By Aspirations: FM

IANS

MUMBAI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said India's economic resilience is rooted in the aspirations of its people and strength of its large domestic market, while highlighting the government's focus on financial inclusion, social security, skills development and fiscal prudence.

Speaking during a fireside chat with HSBC India CEO Hitendra Dave at HSBC India's 'Furthering Financial Inclusion' event here, FM Sitharaman said the expansion of the middle class has increased purchasing power and supported domestic demand.

On financial security, she said universal insurance coverage remains a high priority for the government.

She highlighted schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), which offer insurance protection at affordable premiums, • P-06

Diwali Ahead

Authorities Beef Up Security Along J&K Borders



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: To prevent any attempt to disrupt the festive celebrations authorities have beefed up the security along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of Diwali.

An official said that security forces are conducting a series of joint mock drills and stepping up surveillance along vulnerable border stretches. "Security grids particularly along sensitive stretches in Poonch and Rajouri districts of the Jammu region, have been strengthened, while additional vigilance is being maintained along traditional infiltration routes in Kathua district," the official added.

He said, "A joint mock exercise was recently conducted by security forces along old infiltration routes in Kathua to assess preparedness and strengthen coordination in responding to possible security threats."

Another official said that in North Kashmir, heightened vigilance is also being maintained in Gurez, Uri, Karnah and Tangdhar sectors, while Sunderbani remains among the sensitive areas in the Jammu region.

Along the • P-06

J&K Tourism bags Best Tourist Destination Award at ITM Goa–2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK



SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir Tourism has added another significant milestone to its achievements by securing the Best Tourist Destination Award at ITM Goa–2026, reaffirming the Union Territory's growing prominence as a preferred tourism destination.

The award was received by Rashid Raina, Deputy Director Tourism Publicity, Kashmir, and Pankaj Sasan, Deputy Director Tourism Publicity, Jammu, on behalf of Jammu & Kashmir Tourism.

The J&K Tourism Pavilion witnessed encouraging footfall and generated considerable interest among members of Goa's travel trade fraternity, with numerous enquiries about the Union Territory's diverse tourism offerings. The visiting officers actively engaged with travel professionals, addressed their queries and highlighted J&K's rich tourism potential, including its scenic landscapes, cultural heritage, adventure activities and emerging tourism experiences.

On the sidelines of ITM Goa–2026, the visiting officers also visited the National Institute of Water Sports, Goa, to explore possibilities for institutional collaboration and identify new avenues for promoting water sports and adventure tourism in Jammu & Kashmir.

The recognition further strengthens Jammu & Kashmir's position on the national tourism map and reflects the continued efforts of the Tourism Department to expand its outreach, forge industry partnerships and showcase the Union Territory as a year-round tourism destination.

DC Pulwama reviews Mission YUVA implementation

GMK NEWS NETWORK



PULWAMA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, Monday chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under Mission YUVA at the Administrative Complex, Pulwama, to review the implementation of the scheme and discuss cases submitted for approval.

At the outset, Assistant Director Employment, Pulwama, presented a detailed presentation highlighting the progress achieved under Mission YUVA, including the status of applications received, verified and approved, loans sanctioned and disbursed, bank-wise pendency and sector-wise distribution of proposed enterprises. The presentation also highlighted the status of applications under different Business Help Desks (BHDs), SHG cases and applications pending approval at various levels.

The chair was apprised that 4,741 applications had been approved by DLIC in the district till date, while 2,826 loans had been disbursed by banks. Of the approved cases, 1,839 pertained to the services sector, 1,517 to trading, 921 to manufacturing and 464 to the agri-allied sector. The committee also reviewed 515 applications pending approval at the DLIC level.

During the meeting, the DC sought component-wise details of the scheme and reviewed the progress and pendency at different stages of implementation. He stressed the need for establishing a clear timeline covering the entire process, from submission and verification of applications to approval, loan sanction, disbursement and subsequent establishment and operationalisation of enterprises.

He directed that meetings of the DLIC be convened every 15 days to ensure regular review and timely disposal of cases. He further directed the banks to furnish Action Taken Reports (ATRs) within 15 days after each DLIC, detailing the status of pending cases and action taken towards their disposal.

Emphasising inclusivity in the implementation of Mission YUVA, the DC stressed the need to ensure adequate participation of women, members of the transgender community and specially abled persons. He called for focused outreach and facilitation measures to ensure that eligible beneficiaries from these sections are made aware of the scheme and receive appropriate support in accessing its benefits.

The DC stated that the focus of Mission YUVA should extend beyond the creation of enterprises to the generation of sustainable and perennial livelihood opportunities. He stressed the need to identify and promote viable enterprises in sectors having strong local potential, particularly saffron, dairy and other activities, so that the district's existing economic strengths are translated into sustainable employment opportunities.

Highlighting the potential of the dairy sector, he called for exploring the establishment of milk collection points and strengthening the supporting infrastructure to facilitate better market access for dairy farmers and encourage the growth of dairy-based enterprises.

KPDCL announces power shutdown in Kashmir parts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL Monday informed that the Shutdown of 33 kV Switchyard of GSS sheeri, 132 KV Awantipora –Lassipora Tr Line (Ckt-I&II), 132 kV Awantipora- Wanpoh Tr Line (Ckt-I&II) and 132/33 KV Grid Station AIS Lassipora will be observed due to which power supply to Ludoora, Delina, Jetty, Railway, Chandoosa, Sultanpora, Sangrama, Kreeri, Wagoora, Kalantra, Hard-Ichloo, Sopore Town, TSS Baramulla, Salamadbad, Uri, Bandi, Rampora, Noorkhah, Mohara, Peernia, Nowshera, Boniyar, Sheeri, Drangbal, Bagi-Islam, Baramulla Town, DC Office Baramulla, GMC Baramulla, Kanlibagh, MES, Malpora, Gantamulla, Keller, Pinjura, Batpura, Aglar, Ganowpora, Berthipora, Moshwara, Shadimarg, Town Shopian, Memendar, Sharatpora, IE Gagren, DC office Shopian, Town Arhama, Pinjora, Killora, Imamsahib, Vehil, Nowgam, Reshinagri, Pahnoo, Zawoora, Shirmal, IGC Aglar, Pakherpora, Hawl, Rajpora, Rahmoo, Keegam, Gulshanabad, Akhal, Chararipora, Zainapora, Chitragam, Sugan, Turkewangam, Watchi, Babpora, Momen, Hermain, Hajipora and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 03 November 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Alusteng-Ganderbal Power House feeder will be observed due to which power supply to Beehama, Arampora, Arch, Nunner, Manigam, Duderhama, Malshaibagh, Wayil, Gultibagh and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 04 & 07 November 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV Shariefabad Narbal line will be observed due to which power supply to Narbal, Kawoosa, Mazhama, Lawaypora, Sozeith, Sanoor, Malpora, Radbugh, Railway Station Mazhama and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 04 November 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Budgam Ichgam line will be observed due to which power supply to Barwah, Nowpora, Kralwari, Ichgam, Ichkoot, Choon, Budibagh, Razwain, Kanir, Hushroo, Zuhama, Hanjura, Dadaompora and adjoining areas will be affected from 09 am to 03 pm on 05 November 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 kV Mattan Pahalgam line will be observed due to which power supply to Hutmurrah, Seer, Akad, Salia, Aishmuqam, Batkoot, Pahalgam, Sallar, Aru and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 am to 03 pm on 04, 09 & 11 November 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 kV Wanpoh-SICOP line will be observed due to which power supply to SICOP, Zirpora, Bijbehara, Veer, Cheeniwader, Shamsipora and adjoining areas will be affected from 10 am to 03 pm on 03 November 2026.

SMC places two Officials under suspension; Orders departmental inquiry

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Dr. Basharat Qayoom has placed Ghulam Hassan Sheikh, I/C Ward Officer, SMC, under suspension with immediate effect, pending enquiry into the matter of alleged dereliction of duties, till further orders.

The order further directs Nuzhat Khurshid Qureshi, Joint Commissioner, Administration), SMC, to conduct an in-depth inquiry into the matter concerning supervision and monitoring of unauthorized constructions within the jurisdiction of officer. The Inquiry Officer shall submit a comprehensive report with specific recommendations.

Further, Jameel Mohammad Sheikh, Senior Building Inspector, I/C Ward Officer, SMC, has also been placed under suspension for dereliction of duties as per rules.

Bandipora observes Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: The District Administration Bandipora organised awareness programmes at Chandaji and Panchayat Halqa Aragam Gojerpati, Chithay Banday B, to mark Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, commemorating the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda and recognising his invaluable contribution to the upliftment and empowerment of tribal communities.

At Chandaji, the programme focused on creating awareness about the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, and educating members of the tribal community about their rights and entitlements under the Act. The participants were also sensitised about the legacy of Bhagwan Birsa Munda and his historic role in championing the rights and dignity of tribal people.

Similarly, at Panchayat Halqa Aragam Gojerpati, Chithay Banday B, participants were introduced to the significance of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas and sensitised about the activities planned as part of the 15-day observance programme. The Horticulture Department also participated in the programme and highlighted key departmental schemes and initiatives aimed at creating awareness and extending benefits to the people.

DDC Kupwara reviews Mission YUVA, PMGSY Projects

Stresses last-mile Connectivity and development of Vibrant Villages

GMK NEWS NETWORK



KUPWARA: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Abhishek Sharma, Monday chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review the physical and financial progress of developmental projects being executed under the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) across the district.

Emphasising the importance of robust road infrastructure, particularly last-mile connectivity, the DDC observed that reliable connectivity is fundamental to grassroots development. He directed executing agencies and line departments to work in close coordination, address procedural bottlenecks and ensure timely completion of all ongoing projects.

The Superintending Engineer, R&B Circle Kupwara, presented a detailed overview of NABARD-funded works under RIDF 27, RIDF 29, RIDF 30 and RIDF 31. Key projects, including Galizoo Stadium and Bohipora Bridge, were reviewed, with directions to expedite their execution.

Taking note of procedural delays, the DDC directed the Forest Department to ensure timely compliance with online clearance requirements on the PARIVESH portal. He stressed that Essential Details Sought (EDS) should be raised in a single instance rather than through piecemeal queries to avoid unnecessary delays. Executive Engineers were also directed to actively pursue pending cases.

The Forest Department was further asked to expedite clearances under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), while the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) was directed to resolve pending land-related issues and facilitate the requisite land possession for project execution.

Reviewing road connectivity under the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) and PMGSY, the DDC highlighted the importance of improved connectivity for remote and border habitations, particularly Keran, Machil and Amroohi. He observed that bridging the infrastructure gap in these areas remains a priority for the administration, ensuring that residents of far-flung border villages have access to essential public utilities and improved connectivity.

DC Kupwara inspects SDH Kupwara

Reviews patient care, healthcare facilities & winter preparedness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara undertook an extensive inspection of Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Kupwara Monday to take stock of the healthcare facilities, patient care services, and overall functioning of the institution.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by the Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Kupwara, Deputy Chief Medical Officer (Dy. CMO), Block Medical Officer (BMO) Kupwara, along with other concerned administrative and health officers

During the visit, the DC inspected multiple vital sections of the hospital, including the Dialysis Unit, Casualty/Emergency Room (ER), Surgical Wards, Medicine Wards, and General In-Patient Wards. He took detailed stock of the availability of essential life-saving drugs, surgical disposables, and diagnostic facilities, emphasizing that seamless delivery of medical services must remain the top priority.

The DC interacted directly with admitted patients and their attendants to obtain on-spot feedback regarding the quality of healthcare, sanitation standards, and hospital amenities. He also held detailed deliberations with doctors and paramedical staff, urging them to work with dedication, empathy, and professional integrity.

Issuing directions on the spot, the DC instructed the hospital administration to resolve all issues pertaining to non-functional medical equipment on a war footing so that patient care does not suffer. To mitigate traffic bottlenecks within and around the hospital premises, the concerned officers were directed to ensure the optimal utilization of available parking space, ensuring unrestricted movement for ambulances and critical patient transit.

DC Pulwama holds maiden interaction with Media Fraternity

Calls for stronger Media-Administration Coordination



GMK NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha, Monday held his first formal interaction with the media fraternity of the district after assuming charge, with the interaction focusing on strengthening coordination between the district administration and the media and ensuring effective dissemination of information and public-oriented initiatives.

The interaction was attended by Chief Planning Officer Pulwama, Aashiq Khanday, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Pulwama, Shahbaz Ahmad Bodha, District Information Officer Pulwama, Wajeeza, besides representatives of the print and electronic media, news agencies and social media content creators.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner expressed gratitude to the media fraternity for attending the interaction and appreciated its role in connecting the administration with the people.

Addressing the gathering, the DC emphasized that the media is an integral part of the government-society-administration framework and serves as a vital bridge between the administration and the public.

Describing the media as a mirror of society, he highlighted its important role in reflecting public concerns, disseminating information and creating awareness about government initiatives and social issues.

Emphasizing the wide reach and influence of both print and electronic media, the DC stressed that the information people read, watch and consume has a significant and lasting impact on public perception. He underlined that responsible journalism, accuracy, objectivity and credibility are therefore essential, particularly while reporting on sensitive issues concerning society.

Calling for greater professional learning within the media fraternity, the DC urged senior media persons to share their experience and professional wisdom with younger journalists. He observed that practical experience and wisdom are acquired through continuous engagement and learning and contribute to greater clarity, balanced reporting and credibility in journalism.

Highlighting the collective responsibility of the administration and media in addressing social challenges, particularly drug abuse, the DC called for sustained and impactful awareness efforts aimed at reaching ordinary citizens and vulnerable sections of society. He said that visual content, in particular, has a strong recall value and can play an important role in creating social awareness.

The DC further emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability and objectivity in public communication, urging all stakeholders to guard against misinformation, bias and any form of malicious intent. He stated that responsible reporting contributes significantly towards strengthening public confidence in institutions and reinforcing trust between the administration and citizens.

Janjatiya Gaurav Divas

Multi-Departmental Awareness Camps held in Uri villages



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: As part of the second-day celebrations of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, the District Administration Baramulla organised multi-departmental awareness camps at Churanda, Bandi Brahman and Ladi villages of Tehsil Uri to strengthen awareness among tribal communities about various government welfare schemes and public services.

The camps witnessed active participation from the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Education Department, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Agriculture Department, which disseminated information about their respective schemes, programmes and services.

During the camps, officials from the concerned departments interacted with local residents and briefed them about various initiatives related to child development, nutrition, education, rural development, livelihood generation and agricultural welfare. They also encouraged eligible beneficiaries to avail themselves of the benefits available under different government schemes.

The camps provided an opportunity for residents of these far-flung tribal villages to interact directly with departmental representatives, seek information and understand the process of accessing various welfare services.

The initiative aimed at strengthening grassroots-level awareness, ensuring wider coverage of government schemes and facilitating last-mile delivery of public services to tribal communities.

DC Kulgam reviews progress on Farmer ID generation

GMK NEWS NETWORK



KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Monday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of Farmer ID generation under the AgriStack initiative and review the implementation of the SVAMITVA scheme in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed review of the progress achieved in Farmer ID generation and discussed various issues and bottlenecks hampering the implementation process. He emphasised the need to ensure comprehensive coverage of all eligible farmers and directed the concerned revenue functionaries to intensify their field-level efforts to facilitate the timely generation of Farmer IDs.

The DC directed the revenue functionaries to reach out to farmers at the grassroots level, extend necessary assistance in completing the requisite formalities and ensure the smooth and hassle-free generation of Farmer IDs. He also stressed the need to establish contact with migrated families, wherever required, and facilitate the resolution of related issues to ensure that no eligible farmer is left out of the exercise.

The meeting also reviewed the status of village bucketing, which has been completed in 208 villages of the district. The DC took stock of the progress achieved and deliberated upon the issues requiring intervention and resolution to expedite the remaining work.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed the concerned officers to expedite pending mutations and rectify discrepancies in revenue records on priority to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the database.

CM calls for accelerating pace of development works, effective funds utilisation

Directs Ministers to review performance of their departments , budget commitments

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday chaired an introductory meeting with Ministers and senior officers of the Civil Administration at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, following the resumption of the traditional bi-annual Darbar Move.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, all Ministers, Advisor to the Chief Minister, Acting Chief Secretary Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Administrative Secretaries, heads of departments of several departments and other top civil and police administration.

Outstation officers attended the meeting via video conferencing.

At the outset, Acting Chief Secretary Shailendra Kumar briefed the meeting on administrative arrangements and key issues concerning the functioning of various departments, including preparation of the Budget for 2027-28.

Deputy Chief Minister and other Ministers also highlighted various issues of public importance and sought the administration's cooperation for timely resolution.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister congratulated the Ministers and officers on the commencement of the Darbar Move in Jammu and stressed that administrative functioning must remain focused and unaffected by external distractions.

Observing that the next six months are crucial for accelerating developmental activities and ensuring optimal utilisation of funds allocated to various departments, the Chief Minister urged all departments to enhance the pace of execution and ensure timely completion of developmental works.

He asked newly inducted Ministers and those assigned new portfolios to undertake a detailed review of their respective departments and assess the implementation status of commitments made during the last Budget.

The review, he said, should clearly identify completed projects, ongoing works and projects yet to be initiated, along with reasons for delays and measures required to expedite their implementation.

The Chief Minister also called for a comprehensive review of the Government's manifesto commitments to assess progress and identify further steps required for fulfilment.

Emphasising the need for close monitoring of developmental projects, particularly those being implemented under SASCI, the Chief Minister directed Ministers to regularly review their progress and ensure timely execution.

For the financial year 2027-28, he directed all departments to prepare project proposals and Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) well in advance for projects proposed under SASCI. Departments were asked to keep DPRs and tender documents ready so that tendering and other preparatory formalities could be completed ahead of time, enabling immediate commencement of works once allocations are received.

He said these directions had already been conveyed to the departments and reiterated the need for their effective implementation.

The Ministers were also asked to undertake reviews of the districts assigned to them at the earliest and ensure close monitoring of developmental works.

The Chief Minister reviewed winter preparedness and stressed the importance of maintaining uninterrupted essential services through effective inter-departmental coordination. Taking note of concerns regarding ration dumping in certain areas, he asked the concerned department to address the issue and ensure adequate availability of essential commodities.

Calling for a proactive approach towards budget formulation, the Chief Minister directed departments to initiate consultations with the Finance and Planning Departments well in advance for preparation of the next financial year's Budget.

He observed that early identification of priorities and preparation of realistic proposals would provide adequate time for proper consideration and help avoid last-minute inclusion of commitments that may be difficult to implement.

The Chief Minister also emphasised the need to ensure comfortable working and living arrangements for employees who have shifted to Jammu in connection with the Darbar Move.

He directed the administration to address shortcomings relating to accommodation, office facilities and other essential requirements to ensure smooth and efficient functioning of the Secretariat.



CM visits fire-hit Shiv Market, assures assistance to affected

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday visited Shiv Market near Jammu Railway Station to take stock of the situation following the recent fire incidents in which several shops were gutted, causing extensive damage to property and affecting the livelihood of shopkeepers.

During the visit and inspection, the Chief Minister took an assessment of the losses suffered by the affected shopkeepers and interacted with them to understand their concerns and difficulties. He expressed concern over the damage caused by the fire and the hardships faced by the traders.

President Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Jammu, Arun Gupta, briefed the Chief Minister about the extent of losses suffered by the traders due to the fire incidents. He apprised the Chief Minister of the damage caused to shops, goods and other business assets, besides highlighting the concerns of the affected shopkeepers.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the affected shopkeepers and assured them that the Government would extend all possible assistance to the affected shopkeepers to help them overcome the difficulties arising from the fire incidents.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Disaster, Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Ali Mohammad Sagar, Commissioner Secretary DMRRR M. Raju, and other senior officers accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.

Sagar holds extensive Public interaction in Jammu

Assures Time-Bound Redressal of Grievances

GMK NEWS NETWORK



JAMMU: Reaffirming the government's commitment to responsive governance and people-centric administration, Minister for Revenue, Power Development Department (PDD), Law, Justice, Parliamentary Affairs, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR), and Elections, Ali Mohammad Sagar, Monday held an extensive public interaction at Jammu, meeting several deputations and individuals who apprised him of issues concerning their respective areas and communities.

During the interaction, various deputations raised a range of public importance issues, seeking the Minister's intervention for addressing their grievances and resolving matters requiring administrative attention. The issues highlighted included developmental concerns, public infrastructure, basic civic amenities, power-related matters, revenue issues and other matters concerning public service delivery.

Giving a patient hearing to the visiting deputations, Sagar underlined that direct engagement with people is essential for understanding ground realities and ensuring that governance remains responsive to their needs and aspirations.

He assured the deputations that all genuine issues brought to his notice would be examined on priority and taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate action. He also emphasised that administrative delays in resolving public grievances must be avoided and that officers need to adopt a proactive approach towards addressing people's concerns.

The Minister stressed that public representatives and government departments must work in close coordination to ensure effective delivery of services and timely resolution of issues confronting the people.

"Government is committed to inclusive development, equitable allocation of resources and strengthening the institutional mechanism for public grievance redressal",the Minsiter reatraited.

Sagar observed that the government's priority is not merely to hear public grievances but to translate people's concerns into concrete action on the ground. He assured the deputations that their representations would receive due consideration and necessary follow-up.

Rana reviews Jal Shakti works in Mendhar

Calls for timely completion, effective monitoring

GMK NEWS NETWORK



JAMMU: Minister for Tribal Affairs, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and Transport, Javed Ahmed Rana, Monday chaired a review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to assess the progress of Jal Shakti and Irrigation & Flood Control works in Mendhar Constituency of Poonch district.

The Minister had a detailed review of functioning and progress of the Jal Shakti and Irrigation works in Mendhar, with focus on implementation of developmental works, physical and financial progress besides scheme-wise utilisation of funds.

The concerned Executive Engineers apprised the Minister of the latest status of ongoing works, funds released and expenditure incurred under various schemes.

Emphasising the importance of strengthening the public infrastructure and ensuring improved service delivery, Rana called upon the officers to maintain close coordination and adopt a result-oriented approach towards the execution of developmental projects. He stressed that the timely completion of water supply schemes must remain a priority to ensure reliable access to drinking water for people, particularly in areas facing challenges in water availability.

"The government is committed to ensure equitable access to basic amenities and improve the quality of life of people, particularly in far-flung and underserved areas. Developmental works must translate into tangible benefits for the people on ground," asserted the Minister.

Reviewing the progress of irrigation works in Mendhar, Javed Ahmed Rana directed the officers to expedite the ongoing projects, ensure quality execution and adhere to stipulated timelines. He emphasised the need for regular field inspections, effective monitoring and close coordination among the concerned agencies to address implementation-related issues and ensure timely completion of projects for the benefit of the local population.

"Officers must ensure that public funds are utilised judiciously and that every project progresses in accordance with its prescribed timelines. Effective monitoring and timely intervention are essential to overcome the bottlenecks and ensure quality execution of works," he said.

The Minister also emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts between the Jal Shakti and Irrigation & Flood Control departments to address local infrastructure requirements and ensure that developmental initiatives respond effectively to the needs of the people of Mendhar.

Shaleen Kabra assumes charge as Director General, J&K IMPA&RD

GMK NEWS NETWORK



SRINAGAR: Shaleen Kabra, a 1992-Batch IAS Officer Monday assumed charge as Director General, Jammu & Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (J&K IMPA&RD).

Following the assumption of charge, Shaleen Kabra held an introductory meeting with the officers, faculty members and staff of the Institute. He discussed various administrative and institutional matters and sought their feedback on issues and challenges concerning the functioning of the Institute.

The Director General also took stock of the overall functioning and infrastructure of the IMPA&RD campus and discussed measures for addressing the issues identified and ensuring their timely resolution.

Later, Shaleen Kabra interacted with the Officer Trainees of the Jammu & Kashmir Administrative Service, Jammu & Kashmir Accounts (Gazetted) Service and Jammu & Kashmir Police (Gazetted) Service, who are presently undergoing training at the Institute. He exchanged views with the trainees on the ongoing training programmes and sought their feedback on various aspects of the training.

Shaleen Kabra also reviewed the facilities and amenities being provided to the Officer Trainees, including the academic and training-related arrangements.

At the conclusion of the visit, the Director General expressed satisfaction over the facilities and arrangements available to the Officer Trainees under the ongoing training programmes.

Speaker accorded welcome as Secretariat opens in Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK



JAMMU: Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, was accorded a warm and enthusiastic welcome by senior officers and staff of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on the first day of opening of Darbar Move offices in the winter capital, Jammu, Monday.

The Speaker was received by senior officers and officials of the Assembly Secretariat, who extended greetings on the commencement of the winter functioning of the Assembly Secretariat in Jammu.

Interacting with the officers and staff, the Speaker appreciated their dedication and commitment towards ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of the Legislative Assembly Secretariat. He emphasised the importance of maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, discipline and efficiency in discharge of the official responsibilities.

The Speaker called for close coordination among all branches of the Secretariat to ensure timely disposal of official business and seamless delivery of services. He also underscored the need to maintain a responsive, transparent and public-oriented institutional approach while facilitating the smooth conduct of legislative affairs.

ED attaches properties in Patnitop hotel land encroachment case

AGENCIES

JAMMU: The Enforcement Directorate has provisionally attached immovable properties worth Rs 10.66 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with the Patnitop Hotels land encroachment case, an official said on Monday.

The attached properties include the land and buildings of Hotel Holiday Inn, Hotel Broadway, Hotel Hollywood and Hotel Mountview, located in Patnitop hill resort in Udhampur district, an ED spokesperson said in a statement.

Earlier, the ED had issued two provisional attachment orders in 2025, attaching properties worth approximately Rs 30.72 crore in the same case.

With the latest attachment of Rs 10.66 crore, the cumulative value of properties provisionally attached in the case has reached approximately Rs 41.38 crore, he said.

The ED initiated its investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu, against various owners and directors of hotels, guest houses, resorts, cottages and residential properties in the Patnitop area, as well as officials of the Patnitop Development Authority (PDA).

The allegations relate to the commercial use of residential buildings, construction beyond approved limits and operation of commercial establishments in prohibited areas, including dense forest, agricultural and residential zones, the spokesperson said, adding the investigation also revealed alleged lapses on the part of PDA officials in ensuring compliance with the prescribed rules and regulations.

In 2023, the CBI filed six chargesheets against eight hotel owners associated with six hotels and several PDA officials under various provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Prevention of Corruption Act, Ranbir Penal Code, Registration of Tourist Trade Act, and Jammu and Kashmir Forest Act. JammuKashmir travel

The ED investigation revealed that Hotel Holiday Inn, despite having sanctioned building permission, had raised unauthorised construction measuring 7,552.74 square feet beyond the approved building plan, the spokesman said.

He said it was further found that Hotel Broadway, Hotel Hollywood and Hotel Mountview were being commercially operated without obtaining the requisite permissions for running hotels.

Accordingly, the hotel buildings, unauthorised constructions, appurtenant land and identified properties equivalent in value to the proceeds generated through such unauthorised commercial exploitation have been provisionally attached as Proceeds of Crime under the PMLA, the spokesperson said.

Strengthen Srinagar security grid in line with winter strategy: IGP directs officers

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Sujit Kumar, on Monday chaired a comprehensive review meeting on the Srinagar City security grid and directed the officers to strengthen it in line with winter security strategy.

In a post on X, Kashmir Police, posted: "IGP Kashmir chaired a comprehensive review meeting on the Srinagar City Security Grid today at Cargo, attended by DIG CKR, DIG SKR, SSPs Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, Pulwama and Awantipora, along with concerned Zonal SPs and SP SOG."

The post further said: "During the meeting, the prevailing security scenario, threat inputs concerning Srinagar and adjoining districts and measures to further strengthen the security grid under the Winter Security Strategy were discussed in detail. The security arrangements and ongoing operational measures along the Jhelum Corridor, particularly in Pulwama and Awantipora, were also reviewed, with emphasis on enhanced inter-district coordination and effective implementation of the Winter Security Strategy."—(KNO)

CM inaugurates ₹189 lakh infrastructure works at Civil Secretariat Jammu



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday inaugurated infrastructure works worth ₹189 lakh at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, aimed at strengthening office infrastructure and improving facilities for employees and visitors following the resumption of the traditional Darbar Move.

The Chief Minister inaugurated the newly constructed pre-fabricated office accommodation block, developed at an estimated cost of ₹158.09 lakh under the CAPEX budget.

He also inaugurated the renovated Reception Hall at the entrance gate of the Civil Secretariat, completed at a cost of ₹31. 10 lakh under the Maintenance and Repairs (M&R) component.

The inauguration of these facilities marks another step towards strengthening infrastructure and enhancing the working environment at the Civil Secretariat following the reopening of offices in Jammu under the traditional Darbar Move.

The concerned engineers briefed the Chief Minister about the projects, highlighting the facilities created and the infrastructure developed as part of the works.

The Chief Minister also took a round of the newly created facilities and inspected the arrangements put in place to facilitate the smooth functioning of offices at the Civil Secretariat.

The newly developed infrastructure is aimed at providing improved working facilities for government employees while ensuring a better reception environment for visitors and the public.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister, Dheeraj Gupta, Acting Chief Secretary Shailendra Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Estates M. Raju, Secretary Revenue Avny Lavasa, Director General Estates Jammu Mushtaq Ahmed and other concerned officers were present on the occasion.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

From Manifesto To Delivery

Omar Abdullah's Six-Month Test

The real measure of a government is not the promises it makes before elections or the announcements it puts on paper in the Budget, but the extent to which those promises translate into visible change in the lives of ordinary people. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's direction to Ministers to review the progress of Budget commitments and election manifesto promises is therefore a welcome step. However, the exercise must go beyond official meetings, presentations and departmental statistics to establish what has actually been delivered.

With the traditional Darbar Move resuming in Jammu, the first meeting with Ministers and senior administrative officers has set the tone for the next six months. The Chief Minister has rightly underlined the need for faster execution of projects, better utilisation of allocated funds and accountability for delays. His emphasis on identifying completed works, ongoing projects and commitments yet to take off reflects an understanding that governance cannot remain confined to announcements.

What makes this review particularly important is the need to examine the reasons behind the slow pace of implementation. Departments often have funds available but projects remain stuck because of administrative bottlenecks, delayed clearances, weak coordination or a lack of ownership among officials. Merely showing expenditure or presenting files as evidence of progress cannot substitute for actual development on the ground.

The election manifesto of the National Conference carries expectations that go beyond routine administrative work. People voted on promises relating to employment, economic relief, public services and development. They now expect measurable progress rather than repeated assurances. The government must honestly distinguish between promises fulfilled, commitments under implementation and those where little or no progress has been made.

The forthcoming Budget for 2027-28 offers another opportunity to correct shortcomings and align financial allocations with realistic implementation targets. There is little value in announcing fresh projects if previously sanctioned works remain incomplete. Better utilisation of funds should mean timely completion, quality infrastructure and tangible public benefits, not merely exhausting departmental allocations before the financial year ends.

The next six months will consequently be a test of both political commitment and administrative efficiency. Ministers must take personal responsibility for their portfolios, while senior officers should be answerable for avoidable delays. Regular monitoring, clear timelines and transparent progress reports can help turn the review into a meaningful exercise.

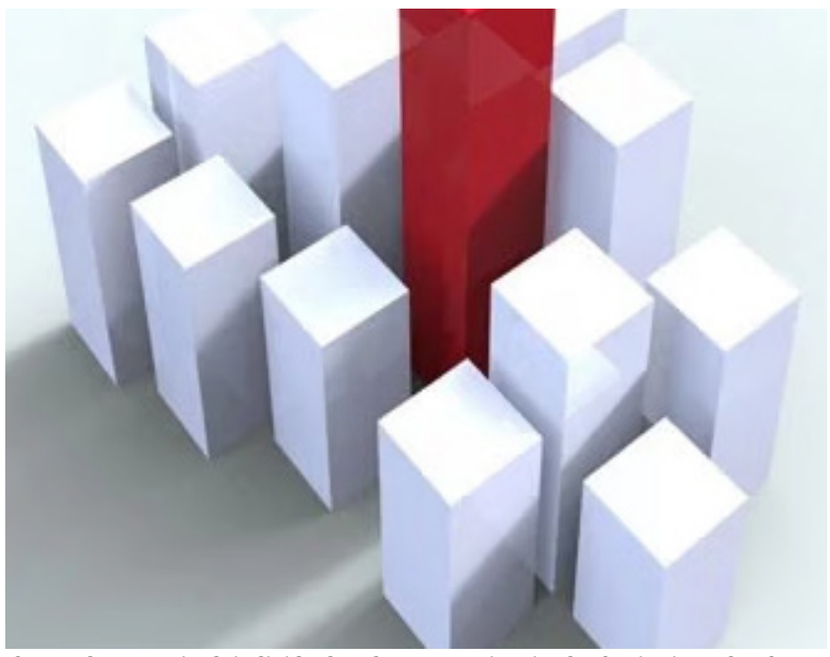
Omar Abdullah has initiated the right process. The challenge now is to ensure that it does not become another round of official paperwork. People are less interested in how many meetings are held than in whether roads are built, hospitals function better, employment opportunities expand and development reaches neglected areas.

Ultimately, a manifesto is a promise made to the people, and a Budget is a commitment backed by public money. Both demand accountability. The government must now move from counting announcements to counting achievements.

Is Conformity Killing Our Potential?



ABROO MUSHTAQ



In a world where everyone seems eager to follow the same path, being different has quietly become an act of courage. Society often celebrates individuality in words, yet questions it in practice. Those who think differently, make unconventional choices or refuse to follow established patterns are frequently misunderstood. Somewhere between social expectations and the fear of judgement, many individuals begin to lose the freedom to express who they truly are.

From childhood, we are introduced to certain definitions of success, intelligence and achievement. We are often encouraged to follow familiar paths, choose socially accepted careers and behave according to established expectations. While guidance and discipline are important, problems arise when these expectations leave no room for individual choices.

But when did fitting in become more important than finding ourselves? A society that fears different opinions risks losing the very ideas that could move it forward. The Pressure to Become Like Everyone Else One of the greatest challenges in modern society is the pressure to conform. People are often judged not by their abilities or intentions but by how closely they fit into society's expectations.

A student who chooses an unconventional career may be considered unrealistic. Someone who questions a traditional belief may be labelled disrespectful. An individual who prefers a different lifestyle may become the subject of unnecessary criticism. Such attitudes create an environment where people hesitate to express their thoughts. Instead of exploring their potential, they begin adjusting their personalities to gain acceptance. Over time, the desire to be accepted can become stronger than the courage to be authentic.

Independent Thinking: The Foundation of Progress

History reminds us that progress often begins with a question. Every meaningful change has required individuals who were willing to examine existing beliefs, challenge limitations and introduce new possibilities. Independent thinking does not mean opposing everything or rejecting every tradition. It means having the ability to think critically, examine different perspectives and make decisions based on understanding rather than blind acceptance.

A society that discourages questions eventually limits its own growth. Young minds, especially, must be encouraged to explore ideas, develop opinions and learn from mistakes without being made to feel inferior for thinking differently. A society that fears different opinions risks losing the very ideas that could move it forward.

The Difference Between Individuality and Rebellion

Being different does not mean considering oneself superior to others. Nor does it mean disrespecting traditions, values or the opinions of others. True individuality is accompanied by responsibility. It requires the confidence to stand by one's principles while remaining open to learning and correction. We must recognise that disagreement is not always disrespect, and questioning something is not necessarily an act of rebellion. Sometimes, a sincere question is the beginning of a better understanding.

The ability to disagree respectfully is one of the most important qualities of an educated society.

The Role of Families, Educational Institutions and Society

Families and educational institutions have an important responsibility in shaping how young people understand themselves and the world around them. Children should not grow up believing that their worth depends entirely on academic results, career choices or social approval. They should be encouraged to discover their interests, develop their abilities and understand that different people may succeed through different paths. Educational institutions must create spaces where curiosity is welcomed, questions are encouraged and creativity is valued alongside academic achievement.

Similarly, society must learn to appreciate people for their contributions rather than constantly comparing their choices with those of others. We cannot expect a generation of independent thinkers if we punish every attempt to think independently.

The Fear of Judgement Must Not Define Our Identity

Perhaps the most difficult part of being different is dealing with the opinions of others. Criticism can sometimes be constructive, but constant judgement can discourage individuals from expressing themselves. Not every criticism deserves rejection, just as not every opinion deserves acceptance. The important thing is to develop the wisdom to distinguish between advice that helps us grow and judgement that merely limits us.

Confidence is not about believing that we are always right. It is about having the courage to learn, improve and make thoughtful decisions without allowing public approval to become the measure of our identity.

Building a Society That Respects Differences

A healthy society does not demand that everyone think, speak or live in exactly the same way. It creates room for different perspectives while maintaining mutual respect and shared responsibility. Our differences should become opportunities for learning rather than reasons for division.

We need a culture where young people can express ideas without unnecessary fear, where unconventional ambitions are given a fair chance and where individuality is recognised as a strength rather than treated as a problem.

Conclusion: The Courage to Remain Yourself

Perhaps the greatest challenge of our time is not discovering who we are, but having the courage to remain true to ourselves in a world constantly asking us to become someone else. Being different is not about standing apart from society; it is about contributing to society through our own thoughts, abilities and perspectives.

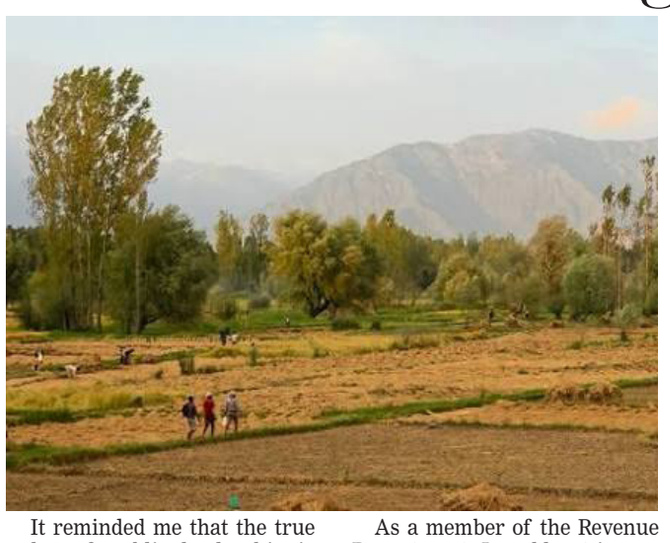
The world does not need everyone to follow an identical direction. It needs individuals who can think independently, act responsibly and bring meaningful change through their unique contributions. Because real progress does not begin when everyone agrees. It begins when someone has the courage to think beyond what already exists. Sometimes, the most meaningful contribution we can make to the world is to have the courage to be ourselves.

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From A Patch Of Migrant Land To A Message Of Unity



MOHD AMIN MIR



Sometimes, the most meaningful experiences of life do not happen in conference halls, official meetings or government offices. They happen in ordinary fields, among ordinary people, where a simple conversation reveals extraordinary feelings. One such experience recently unfolded in the picturesque village of Levdoora, Tehsil Qazigund, District Anantnag, during an official visit by the Revenue Department team.

The team had visited a patch of migrant land following the receipt of a grievance alleging encroachment. The exercise was being conducted under the supervision of the Tehsildar Qazigund, with the objective of verifying the facts and carrying out demarcation on the spot. As the revenue officials were engaged in their assigned work, a few villagers gathered nearby to observe the proceedings. Being part of the team, I interacted with the villagers. What began as an ordinary conversation gradually turned into an unforgettable experience that left a lasting impression on my mind.

The villagers appreciated various steps being taken by the government, particularly the digitisation of revenue records, the availability of Jamabandies online and the introduction of grievance-redressal portals. They spoke about how technology was gradually changing the functioning of government departments and making public services more accessible to ordinary citizens. Their appreciation was not limited to technology. It reflected a wider expectation that governance should be transparent, responsive and accountable and that the grievances of common people should receive timely attention.

A Meeting That Recalled the Kashmir of Yesterday

The most touching moment came when the migrant families who had travelled from Jammu arrived at the spot. They interacted with the local villagers right there in the fields. Their conversation, mutual respect and friendly exchanges created an atmosphere that transported my thoughts to the Kashmir of the pre-1990s.

For a moment, the fields of Levdoora seemed to tell a story of an earlier Kashmir—a Kashmir where neighbours shared happiness and sorrow, where people stood by one another and where human relationships were stronger than differences.

I watched the interaction with deep interest. There was no visible distance between the people. Instead, there was warmth, affection and a sense of belonging.

It was then that I realised that Kashmiriyat is not merely a word used in speeches, books or political discussions. It is a living tradition rooted in the hearts of ordinary Kashmiris. It survives in their hospitality, their relationships, their compassion and their willingness to welcome one another.

The sight of migrant families conversing freely with local villagers in the middle of agricultural fields was, in itself, a beautiful reminder that the bonds of brotherhood have not disappeared.

Kashmiriyat is still alive. It only needs opportunities, trust and an atmosphere of mutual respect to express itself.

A Conversation About Leadership and Governance

As the conversation continued, the villagers began discussing the country's political leadership, particularly Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Several people present expressed appreciation for his leadership and spoke positively about various government initiatives. What attracted my attention was the enthusiasm with which people participated in the discussion. They shared their individual observations and opinions, particularly about the initiatives intended to benefit ordinary citizens.

Listening to them, my thoughts turned towards a simple but important principle: public appreciation is often shaped by people's everyday experiences with governance. When citizens feel that a system is becoming more accessible, when their grievances are heard and when development reaches their surroundings, they naturally discuss the changes they observe.

It reminded me that the true value of public leadership is ultimately reflected in the lives of ordinary people. A leader's policies and programmes acquire meaning when their benefits reach the last person in society. Whether it is the digitisation of records, improved connectivity, better public services or grievance redressal, citizens judge governance through its impact on their daily lives.

The Train That Added Another Dimension to the Moment

While the villagers were expressing their views, a train passed along the railway track at Levdoora. The sound of the moving train suddenly caught my attention and interrupted my chain of thoughts. I looked towards the railway line and reflected on how infrastructure, connectivity and development have become important subjects in the lives of people in this region.

The railway passing through the landscape added another dimension to the discussion taking place around us. It reminded me that development is not merely about announcements or official documents; it is also about infrastructure that connects people, places and opportunities. By that time, the remaining members of our Revenue Department team had completed the demarcation exercise. Everyone gathered together, and the conversation continued with renewed warmth.

The experience had become much more than an official assignment.

Revenue Administration: Beyond Files and Field Measurements

As a member of the Revenue Department, I could not ignore another important lesson from the day. The department is often associated with land records, mutations, Jamabandies, demarcations and certificates. But its responsibilities extend far beyond maintaining registers and conducting field inspections. Revenue officials frequently deal with matters involving people's property, livelihood, security and emotions.

This is particularly important in cases concerning migrant property, where the protection of lawful ownership requires sensitivity, impartiality and professional responsibility. Every grievance deserves proper verification. Every allegation of encroachment must be examined on its merits. Every demarcation must be conducted according to the relevant records and established procedure.

The presence of the Tehsildar and the field team at Levdoora demonstrated the importance of taking administration to the doorstep of the people rather than expecting citizens to remain confined to government offices. The digitisation of revenue records and the creation of grievance portals can further strengthen this process, provided that errors are corrected, complaints are addressed promptly and officials remain accessible. Technology must become an instrument of justice and transparency, not merely a replacement for physical registers.

The Message That Levdoora Gave Me

As I reflected on the entire episode, one thought continued to occupy my mind: the strength of a society lies in the trust its people have in one another.

A piece of migrant land was the reason for our official visit, but the real achievement of that day was the atmosphere of understanding and friendship that developed around it.

The migrant families and local villagers were standing together in the same fields, exchanging words and sharing their thoughts. For someone who remembers the social atmosphere of Kashmir before the 1990s, such a scene carries a special emotional significance. It tells us that relationships can survive difficult periods and that the desire for peace and brotherhood remains deeply rooted in society.

We must protect these relationships. We must encourage more interaction between migrant families and local communities. We must ensure that property-related grievances are resolved through lawful procedures so that no dispute becomes a source of bitterness. Government institutions can facilitate this process, but ultimately it is the people who keep the spirit of Kashmiriyat alive. As our team concluded its assignment and prepared to leave, I carried home memories that no official report could fully describe.

I had gone to Levdoora to participate in the demarcation of a piece of land. I returned with a much larger realisation: the land may have been the subject of an official grievance, but the people present there offered a beautiful reminder of Kashmir's social fabric. The fields of Levdoora witnessed an ordinary administrative exercise that day, but they also reflected something extraordinary—the continuing strength of human relationships. Kashmiriyat is not dead. Brotherhood is not lost. And the desire to live together in peace remains alive in the hearts of our people. That is perhaps the most precious message I brought back from Levdoora.

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The Silence After The Wanwun

Surviving The Financial Siege Of Kashmiri Marriages

NADIA AFAQ



By two in the morning, the heavy aroma of cardamom, saffron, and woodsmoke begins to sour, trapped beneath the damp ceiling of the wedding marquee. While the guests trade banter over their final sips of kehwa, a father draws the balance sheet of the khandar (marriage) in the back room, tucked away from congratulatory eyes, staring at numbers: fifty thousand rupees spent on dry-fruit hampers, thirty-two meat dishes laid out for guests, gold sets worth lakhs purchased by mortgaging orchard land, and huge amounts poured into luxury tents, decorations, floral arrangements, lighting, sound systems, designer outfits, photography, videography, and other wedding arrangements. There are expenses for transportation and countless details that seem small but add up to a staggering sum. Out front, the family's generosity is praised as unmatched izzat (honour), while behind closed doors, the price of that honour is measured in debt, sacrificed savings, and land put at risk.

Weddings have always been occasions of warmth, hospitality, and togetherness in Kashmir. The aroma of Wazwan, the gathering of relatives, the excitement of the bride and groom, and the blessings of elders make a wedding much more than a ceremony. But somewhere along the way, the meaning of this celebration has begun to change. Weddings are increasingly becoming displays of wealth, status, and social standing. The bigger the venue, the grander the feast, the more expensive the clothes, and the more elaborate the decorations, the more impressive the wedding is seen. What was once a celebration of marriage is increasingly turning into a competition over who can spend more.

The question is not whether we should celebrate weddings or not. The real concern is why a celebration that ought to bring happiness has become a source of anxiety, financial pressure, and social comparison for so many families. Behind the photographs of smiling couples and beautifully decorated stages are parents calculating expenses, boys postponing marriage until they can afford it, and girls worrying about whether their families will be judged for spending less.

And while some families struggle to meet these expectations, others deliberately spend beyond what is necessary simply to make a statement.

The Parents Who Pay The Price

A wedding seems to have become an opportunity to announce, without words, how wealthy a family is. The designer bridal outfits, expensive jewelry, stage decorations, luxury cars, multiple functions, and an extravagant wazwan become symbols of status. The intention is no longer simply to make the occasion memorable. It is to make sure that people notice it, discuss it, and compare it with other weddings. They want people to talk about how grand their wedding was. One family spends a considerable amount, and another feels the need to spend even more. A celebration that should be personal becomes a public competition. What one family considers extravagant becomes another family's minimum expectation.

Parents want their children to have a beautiful beginning to married life and their guests to leave with cherished memories. But slowly, this love and desire to make everyone happy become mixed with social expectations. Parents start worrying about what relatives will say, whether the food will be good enough, whether the arrangements will look impressive, and whether their wedding will match those they have attended. Instead of spending according to their means, they feel pressured to spend more just to avoid embarrassment. What begins as a sincere effort to make the occasion special gradually turns into a burden, with parents trying to satisfy everyone else while putting their own financial peace at risk.

A father with a modest income spends years saving for his daughter's wedding. A mother quietly sacrifices her needs, believing that her son's happiness must come first. Money that could have been used for home repairs, healthcare, education, or future security is spent on jewelry, clothing, decorations, and hospitality. The pressure becomes worse when parents compare their circumstances with those of wealthier families. They know that they cannot afford a grand celebration, yet worry that a simpler wedding will invite comments from relatives or neighbors.

The Burden On Boys: When Marriage Becomes Unaffordable

For young Kashmiri men, the pressure often begins with the expectation that they must become financially established before marriage. Nowadays, having a job is not enough. A young man may be educated and employed, yet still be considered an unsuitable match if he does not possess a government job or own a car or a house. Discussions about a prospective groom increasingly revolve around questions such as: How is the boy settled? Is he doing a government job? Does he have his own house and car? What is the total worth of property he owns, how is his job/business going, and what is the family thinking of giving to the bride in terms of gold and mehr?

A car has become a symbol of status. A government job is considered minimum eligibility. Owning a house is similarly treated as proof of stability. Gold jewelry remains an important part of Kashmiri wedding traditions, but even a modest set of ornaments costs lakhs of rupees. People compare how much gold one bride received: one family may give a few sets of jewelry, a dozen gold coins, bangles, and other ornaments, while another family's choices are judged against that example. Instead of asking what they can comfortably afford, parents feel pressured to match or even surpass what others have given. The expectations do not stop at gold; people also expect a luxury smartphone, costly clothes, and numerous gifts. Then there is mehr, the amount the groom undertakes to give the bride under the Islamic marriage contract, a right that belongs to her. What was once a few thousand rupees is now reaching lakhs. While mehr is the bride's right and should be respected as such, the growing amounts reflect how financial expectations around marriage have changed. For those with uncertain employment or limited incomes, meeting these expectations makes marriage feel unattainable.



The Pressure On Girls: More Than Clothes And Jewellery

A girl is often expected to bring gold jewellery and numerous things such as expensive pherans, suits, shawls, shoes, handbags, cosmetics, perfumes, watches, and other personal accessories. Rather than being seen simply as thoughtful gifts to help her begin married life, these belongings become expectations against which the bride and her family are judged. There are gifts for the groom's family. Under the name of tradition, families feel obliged to prepare separate gifts for the groom's family members and other close relatives. These include clothes, shawls, dry fruits, sweets, copper utensils, and gold jewellery for the mother-in-law, referred to as hash kant. The day after the wedding, the bride's brother is supposed to bring an expensive samawar filled with dry fruits, along with numerous other gifts, to ask about her well-being, commonly known as 'kehwa khabar'.

Not every gift exchanged between families is dowry, and gifts given freely out of affection are different from demands. But when a family is expected to provide a long list of expensive items simply because it is marrying off a daughter, the distinction becomes difficult to ignore. Whether these expectations are called gifts, customary offerings, or wedding preparations, their financial effect on the bride's family can be much the same.

Parents spend beyond their means to ensure their daughter feels valued. Some parents dip into their savings, borrow money, or postpone their needs to meet expectations that seem to grow with every wedding they attend.

Wazwan: Hospitality Or Competition?

For Kashmiris, wazwan is more than a meal served at a wedding. It is part of who we are. The sight of a traami placed before guests, the aroma of freshly prepared meat, and the familiar bustle around a wedding feast carry memories of family gatherings, traditions, and hospitality. We have grown up seeing Wazwan as an expression of love and respect for those who share our happiness. Traditionally, Wazwan consisted of seven dishes: Rista, Rogan Josh, Tabak Maaz, Daniwal Korma, Aab Gosht, Marchwangan Korma, and Gushtaba. Today, the menu has grown to 25 or 30 dishes, sometimes even more. Alongside the Wazwan, there are several varieties of salad, pulao, coke, halwa, disposable glasses, spoons, and packaging items with numerous other arrangements for every guest. Each addition seems insignificant on its own, but together they make the feast pricier. The choice of meat, too, has become a matter of social standing. Serving sheep meat is considered a sign of prestige, while families serving beef worry that their arrangements will be considered less. Those who can afford sheep meat are regarded as wealthier or socially superior.

There is another side to these grand arrangements that we do not always like to discuss: the food left behind. We have all seen how a wedding feast can unfold. Dish after dish arrives, guests eat what they can, and the meal eventually comes to an end. But not everything on the traami (big copper plate) is finished. Meat and rice remain, salads may go untouched, and bottles of water and soft drinks are left half-full. Food prepared with considerable effort ends up being thrown away. We worry about what guests might say if we serve fewer dishes or choose a less expensive menu but rarely think about what it means when so much is left uneaten.

Social Media And The Need To Impress

Social media has reorganized the psychology of the Kashmiri weddings. A celebration that once belonged solely to close family and immediate neighbors now demands an audience of thousands who will never set foot inside the courtyard. Bridal entries, choreographed under theatrical smoke and captured by hovering drones, are engineered not for the intimacy of the moment but for the algorithmic lifespan of a reel. Every detail, from the florist's imported backdrop to the bride's hand-embroidered veil, is increasingly selected through the camera lens, judged not by how it feels in person, but by how convincingly it projects luxury on a screen.

The bigger the venue, the grander the feast, the more expensive the clothes, and the more elaborate the decorations, the more impressive the wedding is seen. What was once a celebration of marriage is increasingly turning into a competition over who can spend more.

Scroll through the feed during the wedding season, and you will find an alarming absence of conscience: the very figures who claim to lead modern culture have abandoned all responsibility toward the community watching them. They call themselves "influencers," yet remain willfully blind to the cultural erosion and emotional wreckage trailing behind their digital footprints. By trading basic communal empathy for brand sponsorships, barter deals, and fleeting algorithmic validation, they have downgraded sacred, private milestones into high-gloss commercial propaganda. They either fail to comprehend or simply do not care that every loaned designer lehenga, choreographed bridal entry flanked by artificial pyro-smoke, and sponsored five-tier dessert spread establishes a toxic, unattainable benchmark for thousands of impressionable minds. For households who cannot barter their dignity in exchange for PR tags, trying to replicate these subsidized fantasies requires real, agonizing sacrifice. By confusing vulgar consumerism with authentic cultural stature, they have become the architects of modern societal anxiety, glorifying israaf (wasteful excess) for a few clicks while leaving middle-class parents to silently drown in crushing, generational debt.

This compulsion to project stature extends beyond digital aesthetics into a naked pursuit of political clout. A wedding is no longer judged complete by the heartfelt blessings of elders but by the attendance of influential figures like ministers, MLAs, and administrative elites. Ordinary guests are subtly repositioned into spectators as hosts scramble to stage photographs with these prominent guests, using their brief, calculated appearances to manufacture an aura of social elevation and security. Power, much like the floral decor, becomes just another prop hired for the evening.

Yet the polished frame of an Instagram post never captures the quiet panic behind it, the mortgage quietly signed at the bank to fund that dessert spread, the decades of government provident funds liquidated in a single weekend, or the father staring blankly at a mounting stack of receipts long after the guests have gone. Social media captures the gloss and conceals the debt. In doing so, it normalizes an unattainable standard, convincing the next middle-class household that anything less than cinematic perfection is an embarrassment and chaining yet another family to the unending theater of public validation.

Who Remembers The Wedding After The Lights Go Out?

A wedding remains a topic of conversation for a few days, but eventually, the guests return to their routines, the decorations come down, and the photographs find their way into archives. What remains for the family, however, is years of financial strain and sacrifices made to fund a single day of celebration. Those who admired the grandeur never fully realized what it cost the family behind the scenes.

I wonder why we have made it so difficult. Why should a father worry about whether he can afford enough gold for his daughter? Why should a mother feel that her sacrifices are incomplete because she cannot provide everything that other families do? Why is a young man mismatched for marriage because he isn't a government official and can't afford luxurious sets of gold, gifts, a car, or a house? And why should a girl remain unmarried or have her marriage prospects suffer simply because her family cannot afford the gold, gifts and other expectations placed upon them? These are not signs of a lack of love or responsibility. They are realities of life that deserve understanding, not judgment.

We have turned the sacred bond of Nikah into an expensive social obligation, and then we wonder why our homes are hollowed of peace. We fear neighborhood gossip far more than divine accountability, liquidating lifelong savings to impress guests who will complain about the salt in the gushtaba anyway. We spend eighteen months choreographing a two-day spectacle but barely eighteen minutes preparing two souls for a shared lifetime. We follow Instagram trends more religiously than the Sunnah, prioritize the aesthetic of a rented marquee over character, and dread an ordinary wedding hall far more than a union completely drained of barakah (blessing).

And the bitter irony? The very audience we bankrupted ourselves to please will be the first to tally our shortcomings, debate the weight of our traami, and forget the entire affair by next Friday.

It is time to ask ourselves what we actually value; a brief afternoon of applause on borrowed money or a marriage that can endure when the marquee is taken down. Perhaps it is time we finally started preparing for a marriage, not just staging a wedding.

Nadia Afaq is the author of "The Loudest Silence", her debut book, which explores the emotional weight of unspoken thoughts, overthinking, and the sacred spaces we carry within ourselves. She can be mailed at nadiaafaq.ink@gmail.com

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Air Force schools across country, including 3 from J&K, adopt child digital safety programme

YOGESH

JAMMU: Air Force schools across the country, including three schools of J&K, have been on-boarded onto Scroll Control, a comprehensive child digital safety programme through Information Sharing and Analysis Center Foundation (ISAC).

An official statement reads that the ISAC will build a cyber safety capability in these schools and protect children from online hazards.

"This initiative has been taken by the Indian Air Force Educational and Cultural Society under the aegis of Air Headquarters that as many as 261 teachers from 42 Air Force Schools, including three Air Force Schools namely AFS, Jammu, AFS Srinagar and AFS Udhampur, operating in J&K have undergone certification course as Cyber Crime Intervention Officers, to protect children from online grooming and exploitation, misuse of artificial intelligence, gaming-related harm and financial frauds, and also enabling them to preserve digital evidence and act as first responders," the statement reads.

"In the era of affordable high-speed internet, smart devices and access to social media, school-going children are extensively exposed to unregulated digital spaces which are primarily designed for adults. To ensure safety of school children in the cyberspace, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed affiliated schools to incorporate cyber safety best practices through the monthly observance of Cyber Jagrookta Diwas. The present initiative enables Air Force Schools to align with this requirement with trained in-house capability," the statement said.

"Through ScrollControl, Air Force Schools will be able to form cyber clubs, certify students on cyber safety, conduct awareness sessions for parents and staff, access age-appropriate content rating platform for families, and be recognised as a cybersafe school," it said, adding, "The training and certification of teachers, their empanelment on the National Security Database, and 24x7 victims supports through a multidisciplinary ecosystem of cyber lawyers, cyber psychologists and forensic experts are being provided under this programme through ISAC."

"Set up as welfare measures and provide continuity of education in face of frequent transfers, Air Force Schools have been established at many important Air Force stations and primarily cater to serving and retired defence personnel, and a limited number of entitled civilians. They are co-educational and predominantly affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education, offering education from kindergarten up to Class 12 in science, commerce and humanities streams," the statement said—(KNO)

FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

Aga Ruhullah To

Conference, although other political players are also expected to enter the fray—(KNO)

Winter Capital Admin

been stepped up along important roads and around vital installations, they said.

The Civil Secretariat, which houses the offices of the chief minister, ministers, chief secretary and other senior government functionaries, underwent renovation and facelift ahead of the reopening. Government buildings and residential accommodation for employees were also renovated.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, all Ministers, Acting Chief Secretary Shailendra Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, and senior officers of Civil Administration and Police were present on the occasion.

Soon after the ceremony, the Chief Minister proceeded directly to his office to attend to the official business of the day.

Dry Weather Likely In

advised farmers to continue harvesting and other agricultural activities in view of the favourable weather conditions—(KNO)

IAF Demonstrated

priorities under the 'VAYU' vision, Dixit said the focus would be on vigilance and readiness, self-reliance, innovation and unity of effort among the armed forces.

He said restoring the IAF's combat strength towards its sanctioned level would be a foremost priority, while indigenous platforms, sensors and weapons would be central to strengthening operational capabilities.

Dixit also stressed the need for innovation in technology, doctrine and operational procedures, and greater coordination among the Army, Navy and other national agencies to strengthen joint operations.

Pertinently, Air Chief Marshal Dixit assumed charge on October 31, succeeding Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, who retired after 42 years of service. The new Air Chief has over 3,500 hours of flying experience and has held several key operational and strategic appointments—(KNO)

Sakeena Itoo Reviews

directing the department to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the requirement and deployment of doctors, specialists, nurses, paramedical staff and other supporting personnel across healthcare institutions. She stressed that rational deployment of manpower should be guided by patient load, institutional requirements and the availability of specialised services, with special attention to areas facing staff shortages.

"Doctors, paramedics and other healthcare professionals are the backbone of our public health system. We must ensure that their services are utilised in the most effective manner and that no healthcare institution, particularly in remote and underserved areas, suffers due to avoidable manpower gaps," the Minister said.

Reviewing the status of healthcare infrastructure, she directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely completion of ongoing projects, proper maintenance of existing facilities and early operationalisation of completed infrastructure. She emphasised that the focus should not remain confined to the creation of physical assets but must also ensure that hospitals and health centres are adequately equipped, staffed and made fully functional.

The Minister also stressed the need to strengthen primary and secondary healthcare services, improve diagnostic facilities and expand access to specialised treatment so that patients can receive quality medical care closer to their homes.

"Every investment in the health sector must translate into better facilities, improved patient outcomes and greater public confidence. Our objective should be to build a healthcare system where quality treatment is accessible to every citizen, irrespective of their geographical location or economic background," she maintained.

On the availability of medicines and medical equipment, Sakeena Itoo stressed the importance of a robust procurement and distribution mechanism, strict quality control and transparent procedures. She directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely availability of essential and life-saving medicines, surgical consumables and functional medical equipment in all government healthcare institutions.

She also called for strengthening emergency healthcare services, ambulance facilities, referral mechanisms and critical care infrastructure to ensure timely medical intervention, particularly in cases requiring specialised and emergency treatment.

Emphasising the importance of preventive healthcare, the Minister called for sustained efforts in immunisation, maternal and child healthcare, disease surveillance, health awareness and community-level interventions. She stressed that greater emphasis must be laid on early diagnosis, preventive screening and public awareness to reduce the burden of preventable diseases.

"Public healthcare must be driven by compassion, accountability and commitment. Every patient visiting a government health institution deserves dignified treatment, timely attention and quality medical care. There should be no compromise on patient safety, cleanliness and the overall standards of healthcare services," she said.

The Minister also called for strengthening the monitoring mechanism at the administrative as well as institutional levels, directing senior officers to undertake regular field visits, interact with healthcare professionals and assess the functioning of hospitals and other health facilities.

She stressed that officers must remain responsive to public grievances and ensure prompt corrective measures wherever deficiencies are identified.

Reiterating the Government's commitment to transforming the healthcare landscape of Jammu and Kashmir, Sakeena Itoo said that the department must work with a clear roadmap, measurable targets and a strong focus on outcomes.

"Our endeavour is to establish a robust, inclusive and responsive healthcare delivery system across Jammu and Kashmir. We have to move forward with a shared sense of responsibility and ensure that the Government's initiatives translate into visible improvements in the lives of ordinary people," the Minister said.

The Minister, during the meeting, also directed the department to procure around 100 Ambulances, including ample number of 4x4 Ambulances for hilly terrain areas. She also called for immediate posting of medical officers, who have been recruited recently.

The Minister also directed all concerned officers to maintain close coordination, ensure time-bound implementation of decisions and work with dedication towards strengthening the public healthcare infrastructure and service delivery mechanism across both divisions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kulgam bets

Manager said the projects are expected to generate around 120 permanent employment opportunities, besides providing seasonal employment to nearly 200–250 people at each cold storage facility.

He said the facilities would also generate indirect employment for truck operators, auto drivers, apple box suppliers and other associated workers, giving a further boost to economic activity in the district.

Inviting entrepreneurs to invest in the sector, Lone said the Single Window Portal was currently open for applications for land allotment. He added that entrepreneurs could also establish cold storage units on private land after completing the required formalities, including Change of Land Use (CLU).

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam Shahzad Alam said around 250 kanals of state land at Adipora had been identified for establishing a second fruit mandi.

He said the existing fruit mandi, located near District Hospital Kulgam, frequently witnesses traffic congestion, particularly during the apple season, prompting demands for an additional facility.

"Keeping in view the growing demand, around 250 kanals of state land at Adipora have been identified for the proposed fruit mandi. A proposal for transfer of the land has already been submitted to the government," Alam said.

The DC said the initial steps would include clearing encroachments and undertaking walling work to secure the site, followed by preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) and development of the mandi in phases.

He said the proposed mandi's proximity to the National Highway would ensure better connectivity and help ease traffic congestion in Kulgam town.

Alam said that fruit growers from neighbouring Shopian district would also be able to utilise the facility.

The changing agricultural profile of Kulgam is evident in government figures. Once predominantly known for paddy cultivation, the district now has more than twice the area under apple cultivation compared to rice.

According to government data, only 6,951 hectares remained under paddy cultivation in 2024-25, against 18,255 hectares under apple orchards.

A spatial land-use analysis published in 2020 had also documented this transition. Between 2011 and 2020, the area under rice cultivation declined from 18,500 hectares to 12,900 hectares, while land under apple orchards increased from 14,667 hectares to 20,787 hectares—(KNO)

Centre Committed

Hyderabad's integration with India, HM Shah paid tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and said the city would not have become part of the country had Patel not made the Nizam surrender at the time.

He also accused the Congress, BRS and AIMIM of failing to stop alleged corruption in Telangana, claiming that only the BJP under PM Modi's leadership could address the issue—(KNO)

India's Economic

as well as the Atal Pension Yojana which supports pension coverage for citizens.

She said the government aims to achieve the goal of 'Insurance for All' by 2047 and is working to deepen insurance penetration across the country.

The finance minister further said initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat -- which provides health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family -- have enabled people to access medical treatment without being forced to sell assets or property. The expansion of primary healthcare centres has also helped improve access to healthcare services, according to her.

She said stability in governance provides businesses with clarity and confidence, contributing to sustained economic growth.

FM Sitharaman highlighted the World Bank's estimate that around 50 crore people have moved out of poverty, saying the achievement reflects consistent policy efforts and improved access to basic services.

"Access to schools and skill training after schooling has supported poverty reduction," she said.

Addressing future employment opportunities, FM Sitharaman said the government is focused on equipping young people with skills required for artificial intelligence-related jobs.

AI-focused training programmes would help bridge the gap between industry expectations and workforce capabilities, according to her.

On the macroeconomic front, FM Sitharaman said capital expenditure remains a key pillar of the government's growth strategy and stressed the need to closely monitor the fiscal deficit and maintain fiscal discipline.

"Government spending must remain responsible," FM Sitharaman said.

Authorities Beef Up

International Border, Border Security Force (BSF) personnel have intensified round-the-clock patrolling and surveillance, particularly at vulnerable locations. Electronic monitoring systems, drones and other modern equipment are being used to detect suspicious movement.

Officials said troops deployed along the LoC have also increased area domination exercises and maintained close coordination with other security agencies to respond promptly to any infiltration attempt or ceasefire violation.

Meanwhile, security forces in Bandipora district have conducted several counter-terrorism exercises over the past few days to assess their operational readiness.

Bandipora Police, Army's 13 Rashtriya Rifles and 45 Battalion CRPF, along with other agencies, conducted a joint Cordon, Intervention and Rescue (CIRS) drill at PM High School, Gundgahagir in Hajin.

The exercise was based on a simulated situation in which two civilians were held hostage by terrorists inside the school building. After receiving information at 11 am, participating teams reached the location within 15 minutes, cordoned off the area and evacuated students and other civilians.

A coordinated intervention was subsequently carried out in which both simulated terrorists were neutralised. One hostage was rescued unharmed, while another, who was shown injured during the exercise, received first aid and CPR before being shifted to hospital.

A thorough search of the school and adjoining areas was conducted following the operation.

A day earlier, Bandipora Police and 13 RR held an anti-fidayeen mock drill at Aragam, where a simulated terrorist hiding in an under-construction building was neutralised. Joint teams subsequently sanitised the area to check for suspected explosive material and assessed casualty evacuation arrangements.

Meanwhile, District Police Bandipora conducted another anti-fidayeen exercise at the District Police Lines, involving SOG Bandipora, 3rd Battalion CRPF, 14 RR and 27 Assam Rifles.

During the exercise, four simulated terrorists hiding in two under-construction buildings were neutralised, followed by an area sanitisation operation involving an explosive detection team and a sniffer dog.

Officials said such exercises are aimed at improving response time, testing operational preparedness and strengthening coordination among agencies in dealing with any emergency.

With Diwali falling on November 8 this year, security agencies have maintained heightened alert across vulnerable areas to ensure that celebrations pass off peacefully—(KNO)





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DC Budgam conducts late evening Visit to District Hospital; Inspects Patient Care Facilities

Interacts with patients, attendants; inspects various wards; reviews availability of essential medicines, healthcare services

GMK NEWS NETWORK



BUDGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Jatin Kishore, today conducted a late evening visit to District Hospital Budgam to take stock of the healthcare facilities and assess the functioning of various healthcare services, with a particular focus on patient care and the availability of essential amenities.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various sections of the hospital, including the Emergency Ward, General Surgery Ward, Gynaecology and other facilities, and reviewed the arrangements in place for providing timely and quality healthcare services to patients.

He also inspected the hospital pharmacy and took stock of the availability of essential medicines, directing the concerned authorities to ensure adequate stocks and their timely availability to patients.

The Deputy Commissioner interacted with patients and their attendants to enquire about the healthcare facilities and services being provided to them. He sought their feedback regarding the quality of treatment, availability of medicines and overall patient care arrangements.

Emphasising the need for a responsive and patient-centric healthcare system, the Deputy Commissioner stressed that ensuring quality medical care, timely attention to patients and proper hospital facilities must remain a priority.

He also underscored the importance of maintaining cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene across all sections of the hospital to provide a safe and comfortable environment for patients and their attendants.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the hospital administration and concerned officials to ensure the smooth and efficient functioning of all hospital services and address any shortcomings in patient care facilities promptly.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Budgam; Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Budgam; and other concerned officers during the visit.

DC G'bal reviews functioning of Revenue Department

GMK NEWS NETWORK



GANDERBAL: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shreya Singhal chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Revenue Department at the VC Room, Mini Secretariat Ganderbal, to take stock of the overall functioning and progress of various revenue-related activities in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Kangan, all Tehsildars and other concerned officials of the Revenue Department.

At the outset, the Assistant Commissioner Revenue presented a detailed overview of the general functioning of the department, highlighting the progress achieved under various schemes and initiatives, besides discussing key issues pertaining to removal of encroachments and other administrative matters.

During the meeting, a detailed review was undertaken of the progress under DILRMP 2.0, SVAMITVA, ULPIN generation and other digitisation initiatives. The status of digitisation of Jamabandis, cadastral maps, missing Mussavies, scanning and uploading of revenue records and issuance of Land Passbooks was also discussed.

Reviewing the progress under Agristack, the DC stressed the need to expedite Farmer ID generation and directed the concerned officers to ensure maximum coverage within the stipulated timelines.

The meeting also reviewed various online services being provided by the Revenue Department. The DC stressed the importance of improving the delivery of basic public services and ensuring timely, transparent and quality disposal of applications in accordance with the prescribed timelines.

The disposal of public grievances and complaints received through the JK Samadhan Portal and CPGRAMS was also reviewed during the meeting.

The DC directed all concerned officers to ensure prompt and effective redressal of public grievances. She emphasized regular monitoring of grievances, and accountability at all levels to strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism and improve citizen-centric service delivery.

Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwara 2026 commences across Kathua district

Educational institutions, AWCs organise awareness activities to promote tribal heritage, honour tribal freedom fighters



GMK NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA: Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwara 2026 commenced across District Kathua with educational institutions, Anganwadi Centres and tribal habitations organising awareness activities to highlight the rich cultural heritage, indigenous traditions and contributions of tribal communities to the nation.

Government Degree Colleges Mahanpur and Bani organised awareness programmes on tribal heritage, indigenous traditions and the role of tribal communities in India's freedom struggle and nation-building.

The Government schools across the educational zones conducted special morning assemblies, lectures, speeches and interactive sessions to sensitise students about tribal identity and the legacy of tribal freedom fighters, particularly Bhagwan Birsa Munda, revered as Dharti Aaba. Anganwadi Centres across the Poshan Projects and tribal habitations also organised awareness programmes and creative activities, including painting competitions, to promote tribal culture and traditions.

The activities witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, teachers and community members, highlighting the importance of preserving indigenous heritage and fostering respect for cultural diversity.

To sustain these efforts, the District Administration Kathua has launched a 15-day calendar of events to sensitise the public about tribal heritage and traditions. The observance will culminate on November 15, 2026, marking the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

What makes Pune Metro's new Pink Line so special? PM Modi highlights key features

IANS

NEW DELHI: Pune is set to take a major leap towards modern, sustainable and inclusive urban transportation as the inauguration of Metro Line 3, popularly known as the Pink Line, is scheduled for Tuesday (November 3).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the ambitious 23-kilometre corridor and lay the foundation stone for the second phase of Pune Metro projects, collectively worth around Rs 21,800 crore, on November 3 at 12:30 p.m. through video conferencing. He will also address the gathering on the occasion.

Highlighting the significance of the project, the Prime Minister shared a post on X, stating, "What makes Pune Metro's new Pink Line so special? 23 km connecting Hinjewadi's IT hub with Shivajinagar. Operated by women. Almost a third of the electricity needs planned from solar energy. Tomorrow, this Rs 8,300 crore infra enhancement will be inaugurated! A significant boost to 'Ease of Living' for Pune!"

Built at a cost of over Rs 8,300 crore, the Pink Line will connect Maan to District Court Metro station. It will provide direct Metro connectivity between Hinjewadi, Pune's prominent IT hub, and Shivajinagar.

According to the official release, the corridor is expected to significantly improve daily commuting for thousands of IT professionals and other passengers. This will also reduce dependence on private vehicles, easing traffic congestion and lowering vehicular emissions, the press release said. Its integration with the existing Metro network will further strengthen connectivity across the city.

Its focus on women's empowerment makes the Pink Line particularly remarkable. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the entire corridor will be operated by women train operators. This will highlight the growing role of women in the country's urban transport sector. The project also embraces environmental sustainability, with approximately 30 per cent of its electricity requirements envisaged to be met through solar energy.

Alongside the inauguration, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for Pune Metro Phase-II, estimated to cost around Rs 13,500 crore. The expansion will comprise Lines 2A, 2B, 4 and 4A, substantially extending the city's Metro network. These corridors will connect important locations such as Vanaz, Chandani Chowk, Ramwadi, Vitthalwadi, Kharadi, Khadakwasla, Hadapsar, Swargate, Manik Baug and Nanded City.

The new corridors will also integrate with intercity bus services and existing Metro routes through key interchange points, including Swargate, Nal Stop and Kharadi Bypass.

DC Samba reviews progress under Mission YUVA

Directs re-verification of cases to expedite loan disbursement

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA: Deputy Commissioner Samba Dr. Rupesh Kumar today chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under Mission YUVA to review the progress and implementation of the scheme in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner held a detailed review of the cases processed under Mission YUVA, with emphasis on the status of applications, progress of bank-level verification and the rate of loan disbursement. He stressed the need for close coordination between the concerned departments and banking institutions to ensure timely processing of eligible cases and facilitate greater coverage of beneficiaries under the scheme.

Taking note of the need to improve the pace of loan disbursement, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Assistant Director Employment to undertake a comprehensive re-verification of all cases with the respective bank branches and identify the reasons for delays, wherever applicable. He emphasised that all pending issues must be addressed promptly so that eligible beneficiaries do not face unnecessary delays in availing financial assistance.

The Deputy Commissioner also directed the Cluster Head, J&K Bank, Samba, to ensure that the entire exercise of verification and scrutiny of cases is completed within a week's time. He further instructed that the verified cases be processed accordingly and placed before the next meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee for timely consideration and necessary action.

Dr. Rupesh Kumar underscored that Mission YUVA is an important initiative aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, generating self-employment opportunities and empowering the youth by facilitating financial assistance for setting up their own ventures.

He called upon all concerned departments and banking institutions to work in close coordination, maintain accountability and adopt a result-oriented approach to ensure effective implementation of the scheme at the grassroots level.

DC Bandipora inspects upcoming Waste Management Facility at Watrina



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Monday inspected the upcoming waste management facility of Vendor at Watrina, aimed at strengthening scientific waste management, segregation and disposal mechanisms in the district.

During the inspection, the DC reviewed the proposed arrangements at various sites, including the waste segregation facility and the designated waste dumping and storage site. She also inspected the proposed operational yard for managing project activities, GPS-enabled vehicles, vehicle parking and related operational arrangements.

The DC directed the establishment of dedicated spaces for an e-waste collection centre, a Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (RRR) Centre, and an office to ensure efficient functioning of the facility. She also instructed the Vendor to install proper signboards for public awareness and identification of designated sites, besides ensuring the construction of a shed for the safe storage of collected waste.

Emphasising the need for a robust supply chain, the DC stressed that effective waste management requires separate collection of different waste categories and their timely transportation to designated facilities through the concerned companies.

She directed the concerned officers to schedule a meeting with the companies involved to streamline collection, transportation and processing arrangements and ensure seamless coordination.

The upcoming facility is expected to strengthen waste management operations in Bandipora and contribute towards a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

NIT Srinagar concludes Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 with cricket, football matches

GMK NEWS NETWORK



SRINAGAR: As Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 celebrations concluded at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, the Institute organised friendly cricket and football matches between faculty members and non-teaching staff, highlighting the importance of integrity, teamwork, discipline and fair play in institutional life.

The sporting events witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty and non-faculty members, providing an opportunity for employees to engage in healthy sporting activities while reinforcing the spirit of unity, cooperation and collective responsibility.

The initiative was organised under the guidance of the Institute's Chief Vigilance Officer and Dean Faculty Welfare, Prof. Manzoor Ahmad Ahangar, as part of the Institute's broader efforts to create awareness about transparency, accountability and ethical conduct in public institutions.

Dr. Shakeel Waseem from the faculty side and Faisal Irshad Ganai from the non-teaching faculty represented the cricket teams. Similarly, Dr. Manoj Kumar captained the faculty football team, while ASO Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat represented the non-teaching faculty team.

The matches provided a platform for employees from different departments to interact beyond their routine professional engagements, highlighting the importance of teamwork, mutual respect and sportsmanship in building a positive institutional environment.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Anurag Misra, emphasised that sporting activities serve as an effective medium for reinforcing values such as fairness, discipline, honesty and respect for rules, which are equally essential to promoting integrity and probity in public life.

He said such initiatives complement conventional awareness programmes by encouraging teamwork, mutual respect and a sense of collective responsibility.

Prof. Misra further said that the institute observed Vigilance Awareness Week 2026 from October 26 to November 1 under the theme 'Probity for Prosperity', with a series of activities aimed at sensitising employees and students about ethical practices, transparency and accountability.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER.

PULWAMA-192301 (J&K)

सत्यमेव जयते

PUBLIC NOTICE

It has been observed that numerous applications relating to various services and transactions on the VAHAN and SARATHI Portals have remained pending in this office (ARTO PULWAMA); for a considerable period due to deficiencies such as pending or incomplete e-KYC, non-uploading of requisite documents, incomplete address particulars, pending challans, incomplete applications, non-submission of requisite documents in cases involving mobile-based applications, non-receipt of confirmation from financiers, discrepancies in names and addresses, pending driving licence trial tests, and other procedural deficiencies.

The deficiencies necessitating the withholding of such applications are duly reflected in the application status on the respective Portals and SMS notifications are also being sent to the registered mobile numbers of the applicants, wherever applications are placed on hold. However, a substantial number of applicants have yet to rectify the deficiencies or complete the requisite formalities, resulting in prolonged pendency of their applications.

It is pertinent to mention that vehicle registration and transfer of ownership relate to the legal rights and interests of individuals' property, whereas driving licences are essential for the lawful exercise of driving privileges and, in many cases, are directly connected with an individual's livelihood. It is therefore, imperative that such services are delivered in a timely and transparent manner, while ensuring due compliance with the applicable provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the rules framed thereunder, and other relevant instructions.

SPECIAL SERVICE FACILITATION DRIVE: In pursuance the directions conveyed by the Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Transport Department, J&K, and the Transport Commissioner, J&K, a Special Service Mela is being organised during Vigilance Awareness Week, 2026, from 26.10.2026 to 01.11.2026, to facilitate the disposal of pending applications and enable applicants to complete the requisite formalities without further delay.

All applicants whose applications relating to VAHAN or SARATHI services are pending due to any deficiency are hereby advised to personally visit the office of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer. Pulwama by or before 05.11.2026, along with the requisite original documents and other supporting records, as applicable, for verification and completion of the pending formalities, failing which such applications will be disposed off without further notice.

The concerned office branches shall facilitate the applicants in rectifying the deficiencies and processing their applications on priority. On-the-spot approval, and disposal shall be undertaken, wherever feasible, upon removal of all deficiencies, verification of the requisite documents, and fulfillment of the applicable statutory and procedural requirements. Applications involving unresolved deficiencies or requiring further verification shall be processed in accordance with the applicable rules and prescribed procedure.

All applicants are advised to avail themselves of this opportunity to avoid further delay in the disposal of their applications.

Issued in the public interest.

ARTO/Pul/2026/1079-84
Dated: 31-10-2026

DIPK-7286-26
DT: 02/11/2026

Assistant Regional Transport Officer
Pulwama

Ranji Trophy

Puducherry reach 261/6 against J&K on Day 1

REHAN QAYOOM



SRINAGAR: Puducherry scored 261 for six on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group A match against Jammu and Kashmir at the Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar on Monday.

After winning the toss and opting to bowl, J&K managed to restrict the visitors to 261 runs in 77 overs by stumps.

Mohit Kale, as per the details obtained, top-scored with 73 off 123 balls, while skipper Neyan Shyam Kangayan contributed 70 off 126 deliveries. Ritesh Gudge (39) and Ankit Sharma (45) also made valuable contributions.

For J&K, Sunil Kumar was the pick of the bowlers, claiming three wickets for 59 runs, while Umar Nazir and Waseem Bashir picked up one wicket each.

Prasad Pawar (1) and Aman Khan (9) were unbeaten at the crease when stumps were drawn.

The four-day encounter will continue on Tuesday, with play scheduled to resume on the second day—(KNO)

Ranji Trophy: Dubey picks nine scalps as Vidarbha bowl out MP for 209

IANS

NEW DELHI: Left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey rewrote the Vidarbha record books on Monday by claiming 9-53 to bowl out Madhya Pradesh for 209 on an eventful opening day of their Ranji Trophy match at the VCA Stadium in Jamtha.

Dubey became the first bowler from Vidarbha to claim a nine-wicket haul in an innings of the Ranji Trophy. The previous best figures for the side was Arun Ogiral's 8-39 in 1967-68, which ironically came against Madhya Pradesh. Dubey is now the 30th bowler overall to take nine or more wickets in an innings in the Ranji Trophy.

It was Vidarbha all-rounder Nachiket Bhute, though, who made the first breakthrough by removing opener Yash Dubey. From there onwards, the innings belonged to Harsh. He opened his account in the 17th over and kept chipping away, leaving Madhya Pradesh at 64/5 in the 29th over.

Atharva Mahajan and Saransh Jain resisted with a 72-run stand. It lasted nearly 18 overs before Dubey returned to break it, and the lower order did not survive long after that. The last nine-wicket haul in the Ranji Trophy came from Gujarat's left-arm spinner Siddharth Desai, who took 9-36 against Uttarakhand in 2024-25.

Surprised Kuldeep Yadav didn't get to play in five T20Is against NZ, says Venkatapathy Raju

IANS



NEW DELHI: Former India left-arm spinner Venkatapathy Raju said he was surprised that wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav did not get a game in the recently concluded five-match T20I series against New Zealand, which the visitors won 3-2, and urged the team management to give him more game time ahead of next year's ODI World Cup.

India has played 35 matches in SENA countries in the last 24 months under the current team management, and Kuldeep has featured in only three games. "It's surprising. We are all former cricketers who sit here. We do commentary and then we have our own interactions. When you take Kuldeep, why are you not making him play?

"We all know wrist spinners are such an asset in white-ball cricket, right? And then, when you have him in all three formats and sitting on the bench, it's quite surprising. Or you allow him to go play domestic cricket. Because any spinner – might be wrist, left-arm, whatever – the more matches they play, the more control they have.

"Because now we are already seeing New Zealand team batters, or any batter who is playing against India, they just attack nowadays because now we don't have the variations. The skill is there, but the variations are lacking in the present set-up. That's why I think Kuldeep has to be given more and more chances. Because we are trying with different medium-fast bowlers. But then, I think they are lacking that experience. So, I think if you pick Kuldeep, he should be playing. We might lose a couple of matches.

"But then, bowling in those tight situations in international games, he can be one of those guys who can adjust. Because he is hardly playing any domestic cricket and then he is hardly playing any international cricket. So, for me, as a spinner, I feel very surprised that he has not been put in and did not to find a game in five T20s, especially after the series was won," Raju told IANS in a select virtual interaction facilitated by Sony Sports Network, ahead of the India-New Zealand ODI series starting on Wednesday.

Taking note of head coach Gauta Gambhir's remark that he was not there to please everyone, Raju felt the team management was not being asked to please anyone, but to make full use of its match-winners. Raju, who has also served as a national selector, questioned why Kuldeep continued to be picked across formats without getting any game time.

"Even now, sometimes we feel really surprised. Why is Kuldeep there in the team? We all know he is such a brilliant bowler, and he hardly gets to play. But they pick him in all three formats – T20s, 50s and Test matches. But then, he hardly plays, because the wrist spinner plays a very important role. We all know that, right?

"Then he has to be playing more games to be match-fit. So, experience-wise, we don't have to bother about (Virat) Kohli or Rohit (Sharma) – as long as they are fit enough, they are always an asset for a team."

SA women's historic home tour vs AUS pushed by a week to fit in inaugural Champions Trophy

IANS



JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's maiden home series against Australia women has been rescheduled to run from March 24 to April 18, 2027, following the confirmation of the inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy, which will be held from February 14 to 28.

The landmark bilateral tour will feature three T20 Internationals, three One-Day Internationals and a one-off Test, with matches scheduled across seven venues in South Africa.

The T20I leg will begin in Kimberley on March 24, followed by matches in Benoni on March 27 and Potchefstroom on March 30. The teams will then move to the 50-over format, with ODIs scheduled in Durban (April 3), Paarl (April 7) and Gqeberha (April 10). The tour will conclude with a historic four-day Test from April 15 to 18 at Buffalo Park Cricket Stadium in KuGompo City, which will host a women's Test for the first time.

The ODI series will also carry added significance, forming part of the ICC Women's Championship 2026-29, through which teams compete for qualification to the 2029 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup.

The opening ODI in Durban on April 3 will coincide with the sixth edition of the Black Day ODI, an initiative aimed at raising awareness about gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) chief executive officer Pholetsi Moseki welcomed the revised schedule and highlighted the significance of hosting the Australian side for the first time.

"Hosting a heralded team like Australia will always be a special occasion, let alone doing so for the first time. We are very appreciative of the work put in by both Cricket South Africa and Cricket Australia to ensure the tour's new dates were confirmed following the scheduling of the ICC Women's Champions Trophy," Moseki said in a statement.

"This is an exciting opportunity for fans across South Africa to get behind the Proteas as they take on the defending T20 World Cup champions at seven venues nationwide. The tour builds towards a historic finale in KuGompo City with the first women's Test between South Africa and Australia on South African soil. It's a landmark occasion for women's cricket, and we look forward to seeing supporters fill the stands."

Afghanistan attain all-time high sixth spot in ICC ODI rankings

IANS



DUBAI: Afghanistan have reached a new landmark in their cricketing journey, climbing to sixth place in the latest ICC Men's ODI Team Rankings to register their best-ever position in the format.

The rise sees Afghanistan move past Sri Lanka, adding another significant achievement to the rapid progress they have made since entering international one-day cricket in 2009. They are now ranked ahead of several established cricketing nations, having already moved above Bangladesh, England and the West Indies.

The latest rankings milestone reflects Afghanistan's growing consistency in the 50-over format. They have won 96 of their 191 ODIs, maintaining an impressive win-loss ratio of 1.09.

Their emergence as a formidable side has been particularly evident in major international competitions. At the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, Afghanistan registered landmark victories over Pakistan and Sri Lanka, underlining their ability to challenge teams with considerably greater experience at the highest level. Their progress has also extended to the shortest format, where they reached the semi-finals of the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup for the first time.

Recent results have further strengthened their credentials. Afghanistan completed a 4-0 series sweep against Ireland in Ireland before going through the recently concluded tri-series involving Zimbabwe and Bangladesh without suffering a defeat.

Their momentum has continued in T20Is, with a comprehensive 3-0 series victory over Zimbabwe in Sharjah on Sunday. Afghanistan wrapped up the final match with a seven-wicket win after dismissing the hosts for just 79.

Left-arm wrist-spinner Noor Ahmad delivered a career-best performance, claiming 5/13 to dismantle Zimbabwe's middle and lower order. Fazalhaq Farooqi, Azmatullah Omarzai and Abdullah Tarakhail had also contributed with early breakthroughs as Zimbabwe struggled to recover from losing three wickets for 13 runs.

Afghanistan's chase was completed in 11.4 overs, with Ibrahim Zadran remaining unbeaten on 25 and Omarzai contributing an unbeaten 18.

ICC reprimands SA batting coach Prince, wicketkeeper Verreynne for Code of Conduct breach

IANS

DUBAI: South Africa batting coach Ashwell Prince and player Kyle Verreynne have been reprimanded for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct on the third day of the third Test against Australia in Cape Town.

Prince and Verreynne were reprimanded for the same incident, which occurred after the dismissal of opener Marques Ackerman in South Africa's second innings.

Ackerman tried to review the caught verdict, but the umpires ruled that his appeal for a review did not come within the prescribed 15 seconds and thus could not be taken.

As the batter walked towards the boundary line, Prince shouted repeatedly at the umpires that there was still time left for the appeal to be taken, while Verreynne, who was not in the playing eleven, asked Ackerman to remain inside the boundary line, which caused a delay in him leaving the field.

"Prince and Verreynne were found to have breached Article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to showing dissent at an umpire's decision during an international match," ICC said in a statement.

It added, "One demerit point has been added to each of their disciplinary records, as these were their first offences in a 24-month period."

Prince and Verreynne admitted their offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Javagal Srinath of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for formal hearings.

On-field umpires Richard Illingworth and Richard Kettleborough, third umpire Chris Gaffaney, and fourth umpire Lubabalo Gcuma levelled the charges.

Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

A stellar fightback on Day 4, backed by a hostile bowling performance on the final day of the Cape Town Test, guided South Africa to a famous 2-1 series win over Australia.

From being doubted to race in F1 to 2026 champion: Kimi Antonelli's fairytale comeback

IANS



NEW DELHI: When Kimi Antonelli crossed the finishing line in P3 at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico City, there were tears flowing down the eyes of the 20-year-old Mercedes driver, who had just scripted history.

The tears of joy made it hard for him to reply to the congratulatory messages he was getting on the radio from the team, with his parents in company at the Mercedes garage.

At 20 years and 68 days old, Antonelli became the youngest-ever F1 champion in the history of the sport, breaking the previous record of Sebastian Vettel, who was 23 years and 134 days old when he won the first of his four titles in 2010.

But the driver's journey from one of the darkest points in his young racing career with Mercedes in 2025 to a title win in 2026 is a story of inspiration.

Several doubted him for even being competitive enough to feature in a sport like F1 that early in his career after he had a tough phase. He came into the seat of one of the most successful F1 drivers ever when he replaced a seven-time world champion, Lewis Hamilton, in the Mercedes W16.

The only real example of such a young driver being put in a top team like Mercedes was when Max Verstappen was put in to race for Red Bull in 2017.

The debut season tested Antonelli in many ways. He was out in Q1 in his first qualifying session in 2025 but managed to achieve a respectable fourth position in the race. Antonelli took a Sprint pole in Miami and won his maiden podium in Canada later, which promised that he might keep on improving.

But then came the hit, the dark point in Antonelli's season. He endured a very difficult European leg. Three points from nine races in the continent had put immense pressure on him. Criticism followed. The teenager was reduced to tears after a tough Belgium weekend.

"Underwhelming this weekend, underwhelming," Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said after Antonelli was ninth. "You can't put the car in the gravel bed and expect to be there. All of the race was underwhelming."

But the hard love might have pushed Antonelli to bounce back in the last few races in 2025. He finished second in Brazil in wet conditions in what was a memorable drive.

Then came 2026. Mercedes were tipped to have one of their drivers a champion when the sport made landscape changes in power unit regulations. But it was not Antonelli, who was the favourite; instead it was George Russell, who was called the favourite for the crown.

Mercedes were faster than everyone else, and Russell won the first race in Australia with Antonelli second. But then came a streak that will be remembered for a long time. Antonelli won his first five races in a row and became the youngest championship leader.

But the Italian was still far from a title. Antonelli then went out of the podium in Barcelona and then finished P15 in Silverstone after a wheel-guard failure. Russell was back on Antonelli's heels with a gap of 25 points and Hamilton seven points further behind, which made it look like a three-way battle.

But the Italian then won the Belgian GP and also took podiums in Hungary and the Dutch GPs. Then he had to take a grid penalty for exceeding his power unit component allocation at the Italian GP.

He started on 19th, and this was the very track where he suffered crashes in practice in 2024 and 2025. Ghosts of that would have been fresh in his mind, but this time Antonelli produced a masterful drive to win the race from P19, making it an absolutely legendary drive.

