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Research investigate Expose

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Over 50 licenses cancelled for rash driving;
Transport Commissioner J&K urges safe driving
SRINAGAR

Transport Commissioner Vishesh Mahajan has urged motorists across Jammu and Kashmir to drive responsibly and follow

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J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR REACHES RUSSIA TO BRING BACK HOLY RELICS OF LORD BUDDHA



SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Shri

Manoj Sinha said that exposition of Holy Relics of Lord Buddha to Kalmykia will strengthen the people to people ties between India &

Russia. Interacting with media persons after paying his reverent homage to the relics, enshrined at the iconic Geden Sheddup Choikorling Monastery, popularly known as the "Golden Abode of Shakyamuni Buddha, he said that exposition of the Holy Relics of Lord Buddha in Kalmykia is a landmark event that represents a historic homecoming of faith for the Kalmyk people, the only Buddhist nation in Europe. It stands as a powerful bridge of spiritual friendship between India and Russia, showcasing India's efforts in cultural ties and the unifying power

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Jitendra Singh calls on Prez Murmu, briefs her on J&K situation

SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS in the PMO, Jitendra Singh, on Saturday called on President of India, Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan to exchange Diwali greetings and brief her about recent developments and forthcoming Government initiatives under his Ministries.

An official statement said, "During the meeting, Jitendra Singh also gave an update on the current situation in Jammu & Kashmir, from where he is



an elected representative. The Union Minister apprised the President of India of two major upcoming national science events — the 4-day India International Science Festival (IISF-2025) to be held in Chandigarh, and the Emerging Science,

Contd on Page 2

MLA Akhnoor Mohan Lal's Surprise Inspection Exposes Negligence; ACS Shantmanu Orders Inquiry and Disciplinary Action



Shantmanu
Additional chief secretary
AVINASH BASSAN
AKHNOOR

In a major revelation exposing deep-rooted administrative negligence, nearly half of the teaching staff at Government Degree College (GDC) Akhnoor were found absent during a surprise inspection conducted by local MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat. Out of 47 teachers, only 18 were present, while the

Major Administrative Shock in GDC Akhnoor:
Nearly 50% Teachers Absent, Principal Missing
for Days - ACS Shantmanu Confirms Action



Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Romila

Contd on Page 2

Kashmiri Pandits' plight neglected, used for 'political gains': BJP Leader Slams Party

SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Accusing his party of using displaced Kashmiri Pandits for "political gains", disgruntled BJP leader Jahanzaib Sirwal on Sunday called upon the party leadership to take meaningful steps to address the "long-standing injustice" with the community.

"This community has been among the most steadfast, yet unpaid, unrecognised, and unacknowledged campaigners for the BJP. Their suffering has been referenced

over 500 times in Parliament by the BJP leadership for political gains and used as a tool against every political adversary," Sirwal, who joined the BJP in April last year after leaving Congress, said. "I call upon the party leadership to take decisive and meaningful steps to address the longstanding injustice (with the Kashmiri Pandit community). They deserve more than symbolic gestures or repeated mentions in parliamentary debates," he

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Illegal Mining Mafia Challenges Law in Akhnoor; DMO Confirms Continued Sand Extraction from Seized Site

Questions Mount on Administrative Nexus



AVINASH BASSAN
AKHNOOR

The illegal sand mining network in Akhnoor has once again come under the spotlight, exposing how the sand mafia

continues to operate even after police and administrative intervention. What began as a joint crackdown by Jammu (Rural) Police and the District Mining

Contd on Page 2

MHA invites Apex body Leh, KDA Sub Committee for fresh talks on Oct 22

SYSTEM OBSERVER
KARGIL

In a significant development amid the tension in Ladakh arisen after the September 24 violence, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) have extended a fresh invitation to representatives of Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) for fresh round of talks in New Delhi on October 22.

Sources told Greater Kashmir that the MHA has invited the Sub Committee of Ladakh leadership for meeting in New Delhi and the meeting has been scheduled in North Block.

It has been sent to all members of

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Massive Spike in Khair Smuggling Across Kalidhar and Jammu Range; Forest Officials Attacked

The culprits involved in the repeated activities of Khair Smuggling will be booked under PSA : DFO during interaction with System Observer



AVINASH BASSAN
JAMMU

Illegal smuggling of Khair wood - a high-value

species used in the production of catechu (kattha) and other industries - has witnessed a sharp spike across the Kalidhar and Jammu range over the past couple of months. The illegal trade has not only led to major ecological damage but has now escalated into open attacks on forest officials and law enforcement personnel.

In a recent and alarming development, a group of

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FROM PAGE-1

J&K Lieutenant.....

of the Buddha's teachings. Lieutenant Governor of J & K presented "Khatak" to the Holy Relics and lighted a lamp in the temple. He also offered prayers and presented "Khatak" in front of Bakula Rinpoche. Shri Shina presented a Kashmiri shawl to Shajin Lama and received blessings.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Friday arrived in Russia to bring back the Holy Relics of Lord Buddha to India following their exposition in Elista, the Capital city of the Republic of Kalmykia. Shri Shina, who is leading the Indian delegation, was received by the First Deputy Chairman of the Government of Kalmykia, Tserenov Erdni Nikolayevich, Deputy Chairman Dzhambinov Ochir Vladimirovich and India's Deputy Chief of Mission Shri Nikhilesh Giri. The delegation will accompany the Holy Relics back to India on October 19th 2025.

Earlier in the day, Shri Sinha announced his departure for Kalmykia, saying he would lead the delegation entrusted with bringing back the holy relics of Lord Buddha. In a post on X, the LG's office said, "Leaving for Kalmykia, Russia, where I will lead the delegation to bring back holly relics of Lord Buddha after a week-long exposition. I sincerely thank Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for this sacred opportunity. 'Om Mamo Buddhaya'.

In a powerful display of spiritual devotion and shared cultural heritage, the exposition of Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha from India has drawn an unprecedented response in the Republic of Kalmykia, Russia. As of today, over Ninety Thousand devotees have paid their reverent homage to the relics, enshrined at the iconic Geden Sheddup Choikorling Monastery, popularly known as the "Golden Abode of Shakyamuni Buddha."

Jitendra Singh.....

Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC-2025) to be held in New Delhi — both positioned as landmark gatherings aimed at showcasing India's innovation ecosystem and advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047."

Speaking about the Emerging Science, Technology and Innovation Conclave (ESTIC-2025), Jitendra Singh informed the President that the event, scheduled from November 3 to 5, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, will mark India's first integrated platform dedicated to science, technology, and innovation.

The conclave, themed 'Imagine, Innovate, Inspire for Viksit Bharat 2047', will convene scientists, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to deliberate on frontier technologies, including semiconductors, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, space science, and clean energy.

He highlighted that ESTIC-2025 has been conceptualised with the participation of 13 ministries and departments, embodying a "whole-of-government" approach to fostering innovation.

Jitendra Singh said the conclave will include 11 thematic sessions and feature interactions between researchers, startups, and industry stakeholders to promote actionable collaborations.

He noted that India's innovation landscape has witnessed a remarkable transformation over the past decade, with the country emerging among the top six globally in patent filings and expected to surpass major economies in research publications by 2029.

Massive Spike.....

15-20 men with iron rods and lathis have attacked forest officials in the Nardani area of Jammu while they were transporting a Mahindra Pickup (JK02AX-5967) seized for carrying 16-20 quintals of Khair wood. The vehicle had earlier been intercepted and confiscated by Gharota Police during routine night patrolling on the intervening night of October 12-13, 2025, at Mathwar Road, Kotli area as per sources.

According to police sources, when signaled to stop, the driver of the pickup tried to flee under the cover of darkness but was intercepted after a brief chase. The vehicle was found loaded with illegally felled Khair logs and was later handed over to the Forest Department for further legal action under the Forest Act.

However, while the forest team was moving the seized vehicle to the departmental yard at Narwal Jammu, they were ambushed near Nardani by a group of smugglers armed with rods and accompanied by a tractor. The attackers forcibly restrained the officials and captured the seized vehicle, taking control of the ignition key and wood consignment.

Speaking to System Observer, Forester Vikram Charak confirmed that the vehicle had indeed been captured by a group of attackers. "They surrounded our staff, threatened them, and took away the vehicle. The group is suspected to have links with the Rajpura area. We immediately informed the police and an FIR No. 220/2025 has been registered at PS Domana," Charak said.

When contacted by System Observer, DFO Jammu, Anurag Arya (IFS), acknowledged the rising trend of Khair smuggling and confirmed that the seized vehicle was recovered later through a joint operation by the Forest Department and the Jammu

Rural Police.

"The department is aware of the increasing incidents of illegal Khair wood transportation. The culprits behind these activities are being identified, and those involved repeatedly will be booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA)," Arya stated.

He further added, "Some locals have been planting Khair trees on private lands, but the transportation of such Khair wood without legal permit remains entirely illegal. We are working rigorously to curb this menace. No one will be spared."

The continuous attacks on forest staff have raised serious concerns over safety and enforcement capacity in the Kalidhar-Jammu belt. Smugglers appear emboldened, operating with organized networks and strong local roots. The Forest Department has reportedly requested additional police protection and surveillance support in vulnerable zones.

Authorities have intensified joint patrolling and are preparing a list of habitual offenders under the Public Safety Act (PSA) to break the chain of illegal felling, transport, and sale of Khair wood - a growing environmental and law-and-order threat in the region.

Key developments

Illegal Khair smuggling surging in Kalidhar and Jammu Range.

Forest staff attacked near Nardani; vehicle captured by a group of people.

Vehicle (JK02AX-5967) seized earlier by Gharota Police during naka checking.

FIR No. 220/2025 registered at PS Domana.

Vehicle recovered in joint Forest-Police operation.

PSA action being prepared against habitual offenders.

Disclaimer:

This report is based on official statements from the Forest Department and Police sources. Allegations and details mentioned are under investigation, and facts may be updated as the inquiry progresses.

MLA Akhnoor.....

Malla, had been absent for several consecutive days.

The issue has now reached the highest levels of the administration, with Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) for Higher Education, Shantmanu (IAS), confirming to System Observer that the department has taken cognizance of the situation and initiated action.

Exclusive Conversation with System Observer:

During a special telephonic interaction with System Observer, ACS Shantmanu said,

"The matter came into my notice a few days ago and was also brought forward by the concerned MLA from Akhnoor, Mr. Mohan Lal. We have already forwarded the case to the Director of Colleges, and an explanation has been sought from the concerned officers. Several transfers of college principals are also under consideration, and this issue will be duly factored in during those transfers."

He further assured, "Action will certainly be visible soon," while briefing System Observer on the department's next steps.

Meanwhile, MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat also spoke exclusively to System Observer, expressing concern over the deteriorating discipline in educational institutions.

"We have been closely monitoring the functioning of institutions in our area. We received repeated inputs about irregularities in the college, and as a public representative, it was my duty to verify the situation myself. Education is the backbone of society, and such negligence cannot be tolerated," the MLA stated firmly.

Local residents and students welcomed the MLA's action and appreciated the higher education department's swift response following System Observer's reporting.

With the ACS confirming administrative measures and MLA Bhagat pushing for accountability, the GDC Akhnoor absenteeism case has now become a test of the government's resolve to ensure discipline and transparency in higher education institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

Illegal Mining.....

Department on October 18 has now raised more questions than answers, as illegal excavation continues from the same seized site in Kotgarhi.

On October 17, various press & media platforms highlighted rampant illegal sand and boulder extraction along the Chenab River belt in the Kotgarhi area. Acting swiftly, a joint operation was conducted by the Mining Department, led by Sh. Rajesh Kumar (Supervisor), in coordination with the Police Station Akhnoor.

During the raid, officials seized a dumper (JK02CA/9809) involved in illegal transportation of sand, and found thousands of metric tonnes of unweighed sand dumped on-site. The area was sealed, and it was decided that the seized material would be auctioned within four days, with proceeds credited to the government account.

However, in a shocking revelation, the illegal mining reportedly resumed from the very same location within 24 hours of the crackdown.

DMO Confirms Continuation of Illegal Mining

When the System Observer confronted the District Mining Officer (DMO), Jammu, regarding the

ongoing illegal mining, the DMO confirmed the reports, stating:

"Yes, it has come to our knowledge that illegal extraction has been reported again from the same site. We have even received pictures of JCB machines operating there. We have already directed the concerned person not to carry out any such activity. It's like back-biting - they had assured the department that they would refrain from further activity at that location."

On being asked to reveal the names of those behind the Kotgarhi seizure and continuing operations, the DMO responded:

"Give me time till Monday. I will share a detailed report after verifying all facts. It would be too early to name anyone at this stage."

Big Questions, Few Answers

The situation raises a series of troubling questions:

Who is backing the illegal mining in Akhnoor?

Why did the mining resume so swiftly after an official seizure?

Are certain administrative and enforcement officials turning a blind eye?

Is the department truly powerless before the mining mafia-or complicit?

Despite clear evidence, no visible deterrent action has been taken against those repeatedly violating the law. Locals allege that 'Gaunda Tax', a form of illegal commission, continues to be collected openly for sand-laden trucks.

A Systemic Failure

The continuation of illegal mining even after a high-profile joint raid suggests a deep-rooted nexus between local mafias and elements within the administration. The seized sand stock worth lakhs, instead of being auctioned, appears to be back in the control of the same operators, undermining both legal procedures and public confidence.

If illegal activity can resume right under the nose of authorities, the larger question remains -

Who truly controls the sand in Akhnoor - the law, or the mafia?

Until transparent investigations, accountability, and consistent monitoring are enforced, the Chenab's sandbed will continue to symbolize the failure of governance and the triumph of corruption.

System Observer will continue to pursue this issue, follow up on the DMO's promised report, and bring forth the truth behind the Kotgarhi mining nexus.

Kashmiri Pandits'.....

said.

Earlier, on October 3, Sirwal had threatened to resign from the party, citing Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's "unacceptable" remarks against Muslims and the state police's "vindictive" attitude towards the minority community.

The BJP leader said the leadership must prioritise policies that ensure the safe return of Kashmiri Pandits to their homeland, restore their rights, and provide them with the security and opportunities they have been denied for too long.

"They deserve tangible action, starting with visits by senior leaders to their camps to witness their struggles firsthand, followed by inclusive consultations with community representatives, including the few party members among them, to develop a comprehensive roadmap for their dignified rehabilitation," Sirwal said in a statement here.

MHA invites.....

the Sub Committee besides other stakeholders.

The meeting will be chaired by Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai and will be attended by top officials of the Union Home Ministry including Home Secretary Govind Mohan and Joint Secretary Incharge Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Speaking to Greater Kashmir, Apex Body Leh Co-chairman Chering Dorje confirmed that they have received the communication about the sub committee meeting with MHA in New Delhi after Diwali, adding that most likely the meeting will be held on October 22. He said that they will attend the meeting and are hopeful that the talks will be result oriented than time consuming. Earlier, the MHA had called the Ladakh leadership for talks on October 6, however both the ABL and KDA pulled out of the talks and didn't attend the meeting following the Sep 24 incident which left four civilians dead.

Over 50.....

road safety norms.

In a post on X, Mahajan stated, "Please drive carefully on roads. We shall continue with this drive." He informed that the RTO Jammu and ARTO Kishtwar have already cancelled more than 50 driving licenses of careless and rash drivers over the last two days.

Mahajan emphasized that the enforcement drive against traffic violations will continue to ensure safer roads across the Union Territory. (KNC)

J&K Bank's half-yearly net profit up at Rs 979 Cr, Q2 net at Rs 494 Cr



While maintaining higher provisioning requirements owing to regulatory compliance, J&K Bank posted a net profit of Rs 494.11 Cr for the July-September Quarter (Q2) of current financial year (CFY), remaining well on course to meet its annual market guidance. The Bank's net profit for half-year (H1) witnessed an increase to Rs 978.95 Cr from Rs 966.41 Cr recorded for H1 last FY.

The Bank announced financial numbers after its Board-of-Directors reviewed and approved the quarterly and half-yearly figures during a meeting held at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters.

Key Highlights

Moderated by the provisioning of Rs 92 Cr towards its investment in the Regional Rural Bank — Jammu and Kashmir Grameen Bank — following the amalgamation of EllaquaiDehati Bank with the erstwhile J&K Grameen Bank under Central Government's "One State, One RRB" direction, the Bank today recorded a net profit of Rs 494.11 Cr for the Q2 and Rs 978.95 Cr for H1 of the CFY.

Reflecting steady core operations, the Bank's Net Interest Income (NII) for the half-year (H1) is marginally up by 3.4% Year-on-Year at Rs 2899.43 Cr, while for Q2 NII stood at Rs 1433.99 Cr. In line with its market guidance, the Bank has

maintained its NIM at 3.64% for the half-year (H1). The Bank's other income for H1 was at Rs 405.19 Cr while the Cost to Income Ratio for the half-year stood at 60.80%.

Commenting on the Bank's Q2H1 numbers, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "In spite of widespread disruptions during the first quarter following the Pahalgam incident and the extensive damage caused by floods in the second quarter, the overall growth we have recorded is both encouraging and reassuring."

"Even though profitability for Q2 was moderated due to an additional impairment provision of Rs 92 Cr made during the quarter in compliance with regulatory requirements, the performance is better than what was anticipated under the challenging circumstances," he added. Notably, the Bank has made a total provisioning of Rs 180 Cr towards Jammu and Kashmir Grameen Bank during the first two quarters of the current financial year. Excluding the impact, the Bank's H1 profitability would be upwards of 15% YoY.

Asset-Quality

Despite difficult situation arising out of Pahalgam attack in Q1 and floods, landslides thereafter in Q2, the Bank has gained further stability in asset quality. During the quarter, the Bank's Gross NPA Ratio has declined 18 basis-points QoQ to 3.32% and decreased by 63 bps YoY from 3.95% recorded in September, 2024.

The Net NPA ratio has also moderated by 9 bps YoY to 0.76% from 0.85%, while declining 6 bps from 0.82% recorded for the June quarter of current financial year. Meanwhile, Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) of the Bank continued at above 90% level, while the Return on Assets (RoA) stood at 1.17% for

the half-year.

On the Bank's asset-quality, MD & CEO expressed optimism, saying, "With GNPA around 3.30% half-way through the year, I think on asset quality front, our progress is steady. And with our robust and focused risk-management practices in place, I remain optimistic about meeting our annual guidance of below 3% GNPA by the financial year-end. Besides, our PCR is also healthy at 90.39%."

Business Growth

During the quarter, the Bank's deposits witnessed growth of 10.23% Year-on-Year basis reaching Rs 152030 Cr, while as the net advances increased by 9.38% YoY to Rs 105153 Cr from Rs 96139 Cr recorded last year. Up by 18 bps in sequential terms from 45.71% recorded in Q1, the Bank's CASA stood at 45.89% for the Q2 and continues to be one of the highest in the industry.

Regarding business growth, MD & CEO said, "Marking a nearly 10% year-on-year growth in business numbers reaching Rs 2.57 Lac Cr, our Q2 performance demonstrates the Bank's operational discipline."

"Our deposit growth is at par with the industry average, while advances primarily driven by Agri/corporate segments have shown good credit growth both in sequential and YoY terms. Our CASA ratio also exhibited a slight uptick to 45.89% on sequential basis, underscoring our commitment to sustained, quality growth", he added.

He further said, "Despite tough challenges, this steady performance in the first half of the financial year affirms my confidence that we are very much on track to achieve our annual guidance growth numbers."

Kissan Mela a unique platform for empowering farming community: Javid Dar

BARAMULLA

Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar today inaugurated a Kisan Mela-cum-Exhibition at Dak Banglow here, organized by department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Baramulla.

Addressing the Mela, the Minister said that this Kisan Mela serves as a unique platform to connect farmers, agri experts, agri entrepreneurs and institutions, showcasing modern technologies, government schemes and success stories aimed at empowering our farming community. He added that the mela also demonstrated improved crop varieties and animal breeds, advanced farm and agricultural machinery, displays of innovative technologies as well as sustainable agricultural practices and improve crop yields.

Javid Dar expressed confidence that the Kisan Mela would go a long way in empowering farmers and promoting sustainable agricultural practices in the region. He urged farmers to take advantage of the event and learn about the latest technologies and schemes aimed at improving their livelihoods.

The Minister stated that the department will exercise strict control over the sale of sub-standard pesticides and fertilizers in the markets. "We will establish check post to regularly monitor and check the quality of pesticides and fertilizers being sold in the markets", he said. He warned that strict action will be taken against those found selling substandard pesticides and fertilizers.

Javid Dar urged upon the officers to work tirelessly to resolve all the issues of farming community. He also called for conducting awareness camps at all block levels so that the farmers gets benefits from all schemes run by central as well as state government.

Earlier, Javid Dar also inspected the stalls established by Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, allied sector and other stakeholders.

MLA, Baramulla, Javed Hassan Beigh; MLA Patten, Javid Riyaz Bedar; MLA Sopore, Irshad Rasool Kar; MLA Uri, Dr. Sajad Shafi; Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah; others District officers and larger number of farmers were present on the occasion.

Ghanta Ghar to tick craft bells on Oct 25 in 2nd edition of 'Know Your Artisan' series

SRINAGAR

Riding high on the resounding success of its inaugural outing, the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, is all set to host the second chapter of the "Know Your Artisan" initiative under the vibrant Soulful Kashmir campaign.

Following the overwhelming response at the Jhelum River Front, where crowds flocked to witness live craft demonstrations, forge direct connections with master artisans, and snag authentic GI-tagged treasures, the spotlight now shifts to Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower Arena), here in the city centre, on October 25.

In a press statement issued here today, a spokesman of the department, urged the people to come in large numbers to support the renowned artisans from Kashmir, whose exquisite handmade products have set the highest standards in global markets.

"Expect an afternoon brimming with immersive experiences, hands-on interactions with a fresh lineup of renowned artisans showcasing specialties like intricate woodwork, exquisite embroidery, and timeless weaving techniques; interactive storytelling sessions revealing the soul-stirring journeys behind each creation; and vibrant display-cum-sale stalls offering exclusive deals on Soulful Kashmir-branded masterpieces," he added.

Giving details, the spokesman stated that as many as 10 stalls will be installed in various GI crafts during the 'Know Your Artisan' campaign from 10.00 am to 9.00 pm. "The campaign will also have separate 'Try Your Hands' corner where visitors can have firsthand experience on pottery wheels, handlooms and spinning of Pashmina.

Issuing a fervent appeal to the visitors to become 'Vocal for Local', the spokesman hoped that the event will rekindle our shared pride in Kashmir's artisanal legacy while opening doors to sustainable livelihoods.

Dentists not merely tooth doctors; they are integral to preventive, systemic healthcare: Sakeena Itoo

SYSTEM OBSERVER
SRINAGAR

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today addressed the 16th Indian Dental Association J&K Dental Conference at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here today.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Sakeena lauded the vital contributions of dental professionals in strengthening the healthcare system of Jammu and Kashmir. She underlined that oral health is cornerstone of overall well-being and must be integrated more prominently into general healthcare policies.

The Health Minister highlighted that oral health was commonly an overlooked aspect for most of the individuals, but in recent times people have understood that oral health plays a critical role in preventing systemic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular ailments

and respiratory infections.

The Health Minister added that in recent years oral hygiene practices and dental check-ups have emerged as an essential routine for people, especially the young generation. She urged the dentists and participants to aware people about adopting regular oral hygiene practices and dental check-ups an essential part of their healthcare routine.

Acknowledging various issues faced by dental doctors, Minister Sakeena emphasized that dental doctors are as important as MBBS doctors and dentists need to be given due recognition at par with other kind of doctors.

"Dentists are not merely tooth doctors; they are integral to preventive and systemic healthcare. It is high time that dental professionals are given due recognition and status, at par with MBBS doctors," she asserted, drawing a resounding applause from the audience of leading dental experts, practi-

tioners and students.

Highlighting the government's commitment to improving dental education and public oral health awareness, the Minister highlighted that policy measures are being explored to strengthen dental infrastructure, research, and service delivery across urban and rural areas. She also added that measures are being explored for creating employment avenues for dental doctors.

Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof. Nilofer Khan and Principal Indira Gandhi Govt. Dental College and Hospital Jammu, Dr. Parveen A Lone also spoke on the occasion.

The dental conference, organized by the J&K chapter of Indian Dental Association (IDA), brought together eminent academicians and practitioners from across the country to deliberate on advances in dental science, public health dentistry and innovations in oral care technologies.

CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates National Conference on Patient Safety at SKICC



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
SRINAGAR**

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the two-day National Conference on Patient Safety (NCPS-2025) at Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), organized by Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura. The theme of the conference is "Every Error a Lesson, Every Lesson a Safer Care."

In his inaugural address, the Chief Minister expressed hope that such conferences will generate clear recommendations for the government to implement across health institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, thereby ensuring better healthcare and patient safety standards.

"Through this conference, I hope actionable points emerge which the government can adopt in both major and smaller hospitals, ensuring that patient safety becomes as much a focus as patient care," Omar Abdullah said. He emphasized that while patient care and patient safety are closely connected, they are distinct aspects of healthcare. "Patient care is about how we treat the disease—diagnosis, treatment, and empathy for the patient. On the other hand patient safety would mean tak-

ing every precaution to avoid errors that can endanger life. A treatment cannot be considered good unless both are ensured," he added.

Highlighting the purpose of the conference, the Chief Minister said the deliberations should not remain limited to academic discussions but translate into practical measures that can be replicated in hospitals across Jammu and Kashmir. "The biggest benefit of such conferences is that we can learn from the best practices of others and adopt them to our own unique circumstances," he remarked.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah released the Souvenir of NCPS-2025 and Annual Appraisal Report 2024-25 of SKIMS on the occasion.

Addressing the inaugural session, Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo lauded SKIMS as a premier medical institution envisioned by Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. She said, "We must remain eternally grateful to Sher-i-Kashmir and his team for establishing SKIMS. The government under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed to strengthening our health institutions by providing modern equipment and facilities so that people need not travel

outside J&K for treatment."

She underlined the importance of behavioural change among doctors and public awareness to build a stronger doctor-patient relationship based on trust.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, in his address, said that the credibility of SKIMS lies in its strong commitment to patient care and safety, which has made it a trusted institution in Jammu and Kashmir. He lauded the contribution of SKIMS in producing thousands of specialist doctors who are contributing towards quality healthcare in J&K, other parts of the country and abroad.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Secretary Health & Medical Education Dr. Abid Rashid, Director SKIMS Prof. M. Ashraf Ganie, Head of Hospital Administration Prof. G.H. Yatoo, and founder Director SKIMS Dr. A.K. Nagpal.

The conference is being attended by faculty members, senior doctors, researchers, scholars, and delegates from across the country. Among those present were several MLAs, former directors of SKIMS, Director SKICC Haris Ahmad Handoo, administrative officers, and senior faculty members of SKIMS.

Ensure jailed leader Mehraj Malik can vote in RS Polls: Court to J&K Govt

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on Saturday directed the government to ensure Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Mehraj Malik can vote in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election for four seats in the Union Territory.

The defence council informed the court that the authorities have already dispatched postal ballots to Kathua jail, where the legislator is lodged under the Public Safety Act (PSA) since September 8. The court order came on an application filed by Malik seeking permission to participate in the upcoming assembly session starting in Srinagar

on October 23, and to cast his vote in the Rajya Sabha election scheduled for the next day.

Justice Rajesh Sekhri directed the government to ensure that the detainee is allowed to cast his vote, an Aam Aadmi Party spokesperson.

The AAP leader was represented by senior advocate Rahul Pant, and advocates S S Ahmed, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Appu Singh Slathia, Tariq Mughal, and M Zulkarnain Chowdhary.

The counsels stressed that the application must be considered today. Senior Additional Advocate General Monika Kohli, along with senior advocate Sunil Sethi, appeared for the government and apprised the court that they had filed the reply to the

application on Friday. The court responded that it was not on record.

Sethi submitted that the government had already sent the postal ballot papers to the authority to ensure that the detained legislator could register his choice.

Meanwhile, officials said J-K Legislative Assembly Secretary Manoj Pandit, who is also the returning officer for the Rajya Sabha polls, dispatched three postal ballots to Kathua jail for Malik to vote as per the law, which allows a detained legislator to participate in the exercise.

Malik's identity must be confirmed by a declaration signed by the jail superintendent, officials said.

Paddy Procurement Centre inaugurated at Village Marh

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

In line with the Government's food policy that emphasizes farmers welfare and national food security, a Paddy Procurement Centre was inaugurated today at Village Marh, Sub-Division Marh by Member Legislative Assembly Marh Surinder Kumar, in the presence of a large number of enthusiastic farmers from the area.

The initiative aims to ensure that farmers receive fair and assured prices for their produce and to prevent distress sales by facilitating procurement at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) prescribed by the Government of India for the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2025-26.

The inaugural program was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer Jammu Manohar Lal Sharma; Subject Matter Specialist (DL) Rajeev Katoch; Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer Khalid Hassan and zonal staff of the Agriculture Department.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Surinder Kumar highlighted that the establishment of procurement centres closer to farmers' fields will help reduce transportation costs and ensure timely sale and payment for their produce. He reiterated the government's commitment to uplifting the farming community through transparent procurement systems and farmer-centric reforms.

Chief Agriculture Officer Jammu, Manohar Lal Sharma, in his address, stated that the Agriculture Department is working in close coordination with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to ensure smooth procurement operations across the district. He urged farmers to bring their paddy to the designated centres and assured them of fair weighing, quality assessment and prompt payments under MSP norms.

Farmers present at the event expressed gratitude to the government and the Agriculture Department for opening the Paddy Procurement Centre in their vicinity, which they said would greatly benefit them by saving time, transportation expenses and ensuring guaranteed returns at MSP.

Edu department team wins cricket tournament, felicitated

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
UDHAMPUR**

A felicitation ceremony was today organized here at the Chief Education Office to honour the Departmental Cricket Team for its outstanding achievement in winning the Civic Action Cricket Tournament 2025 final.

The tournament was held under the Civic Action Programme by the IRP 24th Battalion at Subash Stadium, Udhampur. The Education Department Team clinched victory by defeating the District Youth Services and Sports Office Team in a thrilling final match held on October 15, 2025.

The event at the CEO Office was graced by Joint Director School Education Udhampur-Reasi Dr Jagdish Chander Mehra, who commended the team for its discipline, teamwork and commitment that led to their remarkable performance.

Deputy Chief Education Officer Dr. Kalpana Jasrotia also lauded the team for their convincing victory and expressed pride in their spirited representation of the department.

Section Officer Geeta Kumari, along with other officials and staff members of the Chief Education Office, extended congratulations to the players for bringing laurels to the Education Fraternity through their emphatic win.



Justice Rajnesh Oswal reviews progress of upcoming judicial infra projects in Kathua



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KATHUA**

Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for District Kathua today inspected and reviewed progress of the judicial infrastructure projects coming up in the District.

Justice Oswal began his tour from Hiranagar, where he inspected the under-construction new Court Complex. The HC Justice assessed the pace of work and directed the executing agency to expedite the remaining work and complete the project at the earliest.

He was warmly received by Principal District Judge Kathua Jatinder Singh Jamwal, Munsiff Hiranagar, and members of the Bar Association. Member Legislative Assembly Hiranagar Vijay Kumar Sharma was also present. SDM Hiranagar and functionaries of the executing agency briefed the visiting dignitary about the status of the project.

Later in Kathua, Justice Oswal interacted with the concerned Executive Engineers and functionaries from J&K Housing Board to take an appraisal of the progress of

Judicial Infrastructure Development work at Billawar, Basohli, Mahanpur and the new District Court Complex.

Special emphasis was laid on the timely completion of the Lawyers' Chambers block. The Administrative Judge directed the functionaries of Executing Agencies to expedite the works to ensure early completion of the same.

Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma and Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma also met Justice Oswal during his visit.

The HC Justice later held a meeting with the Bar Association Kathua, where President, Y.C. Katoch presented a charter of demands on behalf of the Lawyer fraternity.

Responding to the demands, Justice Oswal assured that the genuine concerns of the Bar would be given due consideration.

Justice Oswal also reviewed facilities at the District Court Complex Kathua and emphasized creating adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of litigants and lawyers alike. In separate meetings at Kathua and Hiranagar, he impressed upon judicial officers to work with devotion and ensure speedy disposal of cases with focus on clearing old matters.

His visit, marked by detailed inspections and interactions with officers and members of the legal fraternity, assured timely strengthening of judicial infrastructure in the district.

SDM Chowki Choura reviews ground situation, resolves public grievances

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Chowki Choura Ankush Hans today conducted an extensive day-long tour of the most severely affected area, Kasandar, Village Salyote-a remote habitation that has remained cut off from the mainland for the past two months following incessant rains, flash floods and landslides.

The SDM was accompanied by Tehsildar, BDO, BMO, ZEO, AE PMGSY, AE Jal Shakti (PHE), Tehsil Supply Officer Chowki Choura, Officials of the Health, Veterinary and Education Department, ex-PRI members and Village Lambardar.

During the visit, the SDM interacted with residents and took stock of the damage caused by the recent natural calamity, which has affected 17 families in the area. Several public grievances were heard and redressed on the spot.

The residents highlighted the urgent need for the restoration of road connectivity to the village. Responding to the demand, the SDM directed the Block Development Officer Chowki Choura and Assistant Engineer PMGSY to ensure early restoration of the road link to Kasandar on a priority basis.

A medical camp was also organised by the team of the Health Department, during which health check-ups and distribution of medicines were carried out. Simultaneously, officials from the Veterinary Department examined livestock, administered vaccinations and provided necessary medicines free of cost.

Considering the forthcoming winter season, the residents requested the temporary relocation of the affected families to a safer place. Acting on the request, the SDM instructed the Education Department to make adequate rooms available in the Government High School, Salangar for temporary accommodation of the affected families.

Officers from PMGSY were further directed to expedite road restoration work, while officials from the Jal Shakti (PHE) Department were asked to ensure an uninterrupted supply of clean drinking water.

To meet the ration requirements, the Tehsil Supply Officer Chowki Choura was directed to provide one month's advance ration to all affected families before Diwali.

ADDC reviews performance of banks

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The District Level Review Committee (DLRC), District Level Consultative Committee (DLCC) and District Level Review and Action Committee (DLRAC) meetings for the quarter ending June 2025 were held today under the chairmanship of Additional District Development Commissioner Jammu Sher Singh.

The meetings, organised by Lead District Manager Jammu Ajay Kumar Thapa, were attended by Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Ajaypal Singh, representatives from DIC, KVIB, KVIC, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, NABARD, RBI (Lead District Officer), RSETI and senior officials from various banks.

The ADDC reviewed the performance of banks and the implementation of government-sponsored schemes. He advised banks to take measures to improve the Credit-Deposit Ratio and ensure effective financial inclusion so that benefits reach eligible beneficiaries.

He emphasised special focus on flagship schemes such as PM Surya Ghar and Mission YUVA, directing banks and departments to provide timely credit assistance to beneficiaries. He also called for conducting Information, Education and Communication activities to raise awareness among the public, especially youth, about welfare and financial assistance programmes.

The ADDC urged banks to expedite Re-KYC processes and resolve DEAF (Unclaimed Deposit) accounts. He said coordinated efforts among banks, line departments and the district administration are essential for strengthening the financial ecosystem and achieving development goals. The ADDC appreciated the efforts of the banking sector and urged continued coordination with the district administration to ensure effective implementation of financial inclusion and timely achievement of targets under priority sector lending and government schemes.

Paddy Procurement Mandi inaugurated at Ramgarh

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
SAMBA**

Member Legislative Assembly Ramgarh Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, along with Director, Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Department Jammu Anil Gupta today jointly inaugurated the Paddy Procurement Mandi (Registration-cum-Facilitation Centre) at Ramgarh- Samba.

The initiative aims to ensure smooth and transparent procurement of paddy from local farmers at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of ₹2,369 per quintal for Paddy (Common) and ₹2,389 per quintal for Paddy (Grade-A), thereby providing farmers with fair, assured and timely returns for their produce.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to the welfare of farmers through improved procurement facilities, enhanced transparency, and timely disbursement of payments. He emphasized that such centres will play a vital role in strengthening the rural economy, reducing the role of middlemen and empowering local farming communities.

Dr. Manyal further informed that only a few days earlier, he had inaugurated another Paddy Procurement Mandi at Rajpura. With the establishment of two



Paddy Mandis in the Ramgarh Constituency, he noted that the long-standing demand of local farmers has been met, ensuring better accessibility and convenience for paddy procurement in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta, highlighted that the Agriculture Department, in coordination with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) is committed to ensuring efficient procurement operations and timely payments to farmers. He directed field officers to extend full support to farmers during the procurement process and to ensure that no farmer faces any inconvenience.

Anil Gupta also urged farmers to make use of the registra-

tion-cum-facilitation centres for smooth documentation and quick processing of their procurement claim. He added that awareness campaigns are being intensified through panchayat-level meetings, posters and social media so that every farmer is well-informed about mandi operations and MSP benefits.

Among those present at the event were Rakesh Khajuria, Chief Agriculture Officer Samba; SantNavneet Kumar Rana, Divisional Manager, FCI; Rohit Gandotra, SDAO Samba; Rakesh Pandit, Kissan President J&K; Prem Paul, Former Sarpanch; Surjeet, SMS SDL; Ram Saroop, and several local farmers and officials from the Agriculture Department.

IMO, others celebrate Lord Dhanwantari Jayanti with great enthusiasm



SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Indigenous Medicines Organization (IMO) commemorated the Jayanti of Lord Dhanwantari, the creator of Ayurvedic System of Medicine with full enthusiasm today.

In this connection a function was held under the chairmanship of Dr. K K. Gandotra former Deputy Director, Ayush in which large number of professionals participated. While pay-

ing floral tributes, he stressed upon to follow the path shown by Lord Dhanwantari and serve the ailing humanity selflessly with the spirit of dedication.

Dr. Varinder Mahajan former president J&K Registration Board of Ayurvedic and Unani Systems of Medicine while paying floral tributes, stressed on the need to educate the people about health and hygiene as mentioned in Swasthivritta and Yoga of Ayurveda which has been recognised across the Globe.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma general secretary, IMO ion his address criticised the Government for running Government Ayurvedic Medical College Akhnoor on adhocism. He reminded the Government that on the inaugural ceremony of the College Government stated that it will be the one of the State of the art colleges in the country. NCISM Commission gave its very poor grading, so State Government should appoint technically qualified professional Principal as per NCISM norms along with the competent Academic Staff

at the earliest.

Dr. Sharma stressed upon the Government and the Lieutenant Governor to fulfil their commitment for the betterment of ancient system and also the commitment of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in this regard.

Dr. Sanjeev Kumar, secretary IMO presented the vote of thanks.

Another function was organised in the premises of Rahul Pharma here which was attended by large number of industrialists and professionals.

Dr Virender Mahajan former president, Board of Ayurveda and Unani System of Medicines and founder of Rahul Pharma while speaking on the occasion said with the direct patronage of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi the acceptance of Ayurveda increases many fold across the world which further confirms that Ayurveda is for everyone and need of the everybody.

Dr Mahesh Chander Sharma general secretary IMO also spoke on the occasion.

ADC detects irregularities during visit to Kandi schools

SYSTEM OBSERVER
RAJOURI

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Koteranka (Kandi), Dil Mir, conducted a surprise inspection of several Government schools in Kandi area and detected irregularities there.

Addl DC paid visit to Govt Middle School Bejee, Government Primary School Narbani, and Primary School Thandasoo. The visit aimed to assess the functioning of schools and ensure punctuality and accountability among the teaching staff.

During the inspection, ADC Koteranka found several discrepancies, including teachers absent from duty, non-availability of the attendance register in one school, non-preparation of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) in one school and MDM was prepared but was of substandard in another school.

Following the visit, ADC Koteranka submitted a detailed

report to the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Rajouri for necessary and strict action against the defaulters.

When contacted, ADC Koteranka Dil Mir said that such visits are part of the administration's continuous efforts to improve the quality of education and ensure that all Government schools function efficiently. He emphasized that negligence and absenteeism will not be tolerated.

CEO Rajouri Mohd Hafiz said he has taken serious note of the findings and ordered immediate action. He confirmed that two teachers – Naseeb Hussain and Haradesh Singh – have been attached to Middle School Phagoli, and their salary also withheld. Additionally, the salary of two other staff members has been withheld, and explanations have been sought from the staff of all three schools. He said an inquiry has been ordered in this regard.

JJSF's relay fast concludes with paying tribute to student martyrs of 1966



SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Three-day relay fast by Jammu Joint Students Federation (JJSF) at Shahidi Sthal, GGM Science College Jammu, concluded today with solemn tribute to the student martyrs of 1966 who laid down their lives for the cause of higher education in Jammu.

The fast was held to commemorate the sacrifices of the brave students who fought for the establishment of University of Jammu, Government Medical College Jammu, and SKUAST-Jammu, as well as to protest against the then relocation of the Agriculture University from Jammu to Kashmir.

The fast observance culminated with a Havan Yajna and Purn Ahuti ceremony at Shaheedi Sthal, where floral tributes were offered to the martyrs. The event witnessed the participation of senior academicians, JJSF leaders, and student activists who paid homage to the selfless sacrifices that shaped Jammu's educational landscape.

Prominent among those present on the concluding day included Dr Vinod Bakshi, Director, Physical Education & Sports, Cluster University of Jammu; Prof Devinder Kumar Sharma; Dr Rahul Kaith; Atul Sudan, State Vice President, JJSF; Keshav Malhotra, District President, JJSF; Harish Sharma, Convenor, ABVP Jammu Province; along with several student leaders and faculty members who served juice to the fasting students as a symbolic conclusion of the fast.

Dr Vinod Bakshi, while addressing the gathering, lauded the unwavering spirit and commitment of JJSF activists, stating that "the sacrifices of these student martyrs are the cornerstone of Jammu's educational progress."

Keshav Malhotra, District President, JJSF, expressed deep concern over the deteriorating condition of Shaheedi Sthal, calling for its immediate restoration. Atul Sudan, State Vice President, JJSF, reaffirmed the Federation's commitment to uphold the legacy of the student martyrs.

Students who observed the three-day fast from October 16 to 18, included Ritik Verma, Gourav Sharma, Anmol Sharma, Sahil, and Navi Jasrotia.

The three-day observance concluded with a collective pledge by JJSF leaders and students to continue the movement for strengthening educational infrastructure in Jammu and to ensure that the sacrifices of the student martyrs remain immortal in the hearts of the people.

Another undertrial dies in Udhampur District Jail

UDHAMPUR

Another undertrial prisoner, facing charges of narcotic smuggling, today died under mysterious circumstances at Udhampur District Jail.

This was the second mysterious death of undertrial at Udhampur district Jail within four days.

According to a police spokesman, Sukhvinder Singh (37) son of Balwinder Singh, resident of Resham Ghar Colony Jammu was found unconscious at Jail Barrack in Udhampur Jail, early this morning. Jail staff rushed him to District Hospital Udhampur where doctors referred him to GMC Jammu in view of his serious condition. However, he died on the way to GMC Jammu.

Later, a Board of doctors conducted post-mortem of the body. The doctors said further details will be known after the post-mortem report is received.

DoP honours Shakti K Gupta with personalized postal stamp

SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Prof (Dr) Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO, AIIMS Jammu today was honored with a personalized postal stamp by the Department of Posts (DoP).

The stamp, presented by Ashish Kumar, Sub-Postmaster, AIIMS Vijaypur, stands as a recognition of his exemplary leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing healthcare services in the region.

This rare distinction places AIIMS Jammu and the Union Territory on the national map, as such personalized stamps have been conferred only upon a handful of distinguished healthcare personalities across the country who reflects leadership that heals, inspires

and unites.

Dr Gupta expressed gratitude for the honour, said, "True greatness doesn't come from crowns, titles, or awards, it comes from how many people walk a little further because of the light you shared. Let others count the awards, I'll keep counting the lives we light up along the way."

He humbly accepts this honour bestowed upon him by the Department of Posts with gratitude and grace with a message, "If life ever offers you a choice between chasing recognition or spreading light, choose the light. Recognition has a short memory, but light leaves a lasting glow. Light doesn't boast of how brightly it shines, it simply keeps burning, quietly helping others find their way. May we too keep being that light".



DB directs personal appearance of Principal Secy R&B, Principal



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

A Division Bench of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh comprising the Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal, while expressing displeasure over the slow pace of the proposed construction of over bridge/under pass for connecting GMC Jammu with the Associated Hospitals, has issued directions for personal appearance of Principal

Secretary PW(R&B) Department and Principal Government Medical College, Jammu on the next date of hearing.

When the much publicized PIL filed by a renowned RTI activist Balwinder Singh came up for hearing, the Division Bench observed, "the petition at hand, which is being tried in public interest, is pending since 2018 and in the interregnum, numerous orders have been passed by this court from time to time".

The Division Bench further observed and referred to the latest status report dated August 6, 2025 furnished by the Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Department which reveals that the matter was taken up by the higher authorities for necessary approval/sanction but the subject DPR was found to be incomplete (being without drawings/technical note), meaning thereby, the matter has not made any tangible progress. The Division Bench, while expressing its anguish, directed, "The Court is choiceless but to direct Principal Secretary to Government, PW(R&B) Department and Principal Government Medical College, Jammu to join the proceedings online on the adjourned date—06.11.2025".

Advocate S S Ahmed with Advocates Supriya Chouhan and M Zulkarnain Chowdhary appeared for the petitioner whereas DSGI Vishal Sharma appeared for UT of Ladakh and Advocate Salika Sheikh appeared vice Senior AAG S S Nanda for the Government of J&K.

DIG JSK range reviews security, border preparedness in Kathua

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KATHUA**

In a major security review exercise ahead of the festive season, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Jammu-Samba-Kathua (JSK) Range, Shiv Kumar Sharma, conducted an extensive meeting to assess operational preparedness, border management, and inter-agency coordination in Kathua district. The visit was part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the region's security grid in view of heightened cross-border threats and increased movement during upcoming festivals.

During his visit, DIG Sharma held detailed deliberations with senior officers, including SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma, SP Operations Mukund, SP Operations Amir Billawar, ASP Kathua Rahul, and SDPOs of Border, Billawar, Basohli, and Kathua. The discussions centered around the prevailing security scenario, festival-related security arrangements, and measures to enhance coordination between police, paramilitary forces, and other agencies.

DIG Sharma directed all officers to maintain a robust security posture, particularly in sensitive and border areas. He emphasized strengthening of joint nakas, effective area domination, and improved coordination between police and Village Defence Groups (VDGs) to ensure the safety of local residents. He urged officers to be vigilant, proactive, and responsive in addressing emerging security challenges.

The DIG also undertook an on-ground review of the border security grid and visited several Border Police Posts (BPPs). He interacted with officers and personnel deployed along the



International Border, reviewing surveillance infrastructure and communication systems in place to detect and deter any infiltration attempts. He instructed the field officers to remain alert during night hours and to ensure that public grievances are addressed promptly.

Highlighting the importance of community participation in maintaining peace, Sharma urged residents, especially those living in border villages, to remain alert and share timely information about suspicious activities with the nearest police unit. He said that the cooperation of the public plays a crucial role in preventing anti-social and anti-national elements from disturbing the peaceful environment.

Later, DIG Sharma visited the Tapan Border Outpost (BOP) in Hiranagar, where he interacted

with BSF officers and jawans. Marking the festive spirit, he distributed Diwali sweets among the personnel and commended their dedication and service to the nation. He praised the BSF and J&K Police for their synergy and collective efforts in securing the border belt.

During his interactions, DIG Sharma reiterated the importance of real-time intelligence sharing, inter-agency coordination, and use of advanced surveillance technology to safeguard the vulnerable stretches of Kathua and Samba districts, which have witnessed attempts of infiltration and smuggling in the past. He assured that continuous monitoring, coordination, and preparedness would remain the top priorities of the JSK Range Police to ensure peace and security in the region.

Miniso Japan inaugurates its store in Jammu

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Miniso Japan, the globally renowned lifestyle and fashion retail brand today inaugurated its store in Jammu at Wave Mall.

The store was inaugurated by Madan Mohan Rana, General Manager of Wave Mall, along with Ashok Bhandari, Chairman of Sacred Group.

The new Miniso outlet offers a wide range of high-quality lifestyle products, including fashion accessories, home essentials, cosmetics, toys and electronic accessories, all designed with a blend of Japanese aesthetics and affordability.

Speaking on the occasion, Rana said, "We are delighted to bring Miniso Japan closer to the people of Jammu. This launch marks another milestone in providing global-quality lifestyle products at accessible prices to our customers."

Darbar Move to boost economy, business of both regions: CCI

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Jammu today said that Chief Minister's decision to restore the age-old historic tradition of the Darbar Move will immensely strengthen the brotherhood and harmony between the two regions boost the economy and business of both the regions.

In a press statement here today CCI president Arun Gupta requested the Chief Minister to immediately release the SGST refund as withholding of SGST refunds has caused severe cash flow crunch among the industry especially small scale units.

He further pointed out that delay in disbursement of turnover incentive has demoralized the industrial community and has also impacted the operational sustainability for many industrial units. He urged that all the pending incentives including the turnover incentive be released at the earliest to save the Industrial sector from going sick.

Gupta also raised a serious concern about the dilapidated condition of roads across the Jammu region including fourth Tawi Bridge near Bhagwati Nagar. He highlighted that the flash floods and water-logging on August 26, 2025, severely damaged the road infrastructure and washed away some portion of fourth Tawi Bridge. Despite a lapse of over 45 days, no steps are visible to repair these damaged roads/fourth Tawi Bridge, causing great inconvenience to the public and hampering the free movement of vehicular traffic. He urged an urgent need for a permanent solution to the road infrastructure crisis.

He voiced strong opposition and resentment against the Power Development Department (PDD) authorities' plan to abruptly switch from smart meters to a prepaid system in a short time-frame.

CCI chief warned that this sudden shift would cause undue mental distress to power consumers, terming it a "direct attack on the fundamental rights of the citizens." He appealed to the government to immediately stall the move to switch over to the prepaid system to relieve honest consumers of this mental distress.

Jamkash Vehicleades unveils all new VICTORIS

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The all-new Maruti Suzuki VICTORIS was unveiled at Jamkash Vehicleades Pvt Ltd in a grand launch ceremony held here today.

The launch was graced by Jayant Mani, DGM, SBI Jammu Zone and Maj Gen (Retd) J S Isher, CEO, Jamkash Vehicleades, Sumit Malhotra, COO Sales Vehicleades Group, Siddarth Manhas, COO Sales Jamkash Vehicleades, Sanjeev Kanwar, COO Bodyshops Jamkash Vehicleades, in the presence of Ajay Kamdi, RM SBI, heads of major banks, esteemed customers and the dedicated Jamkash team.

The launch event witnessed an enthusiastic response from guests and customers, symbolizing a new chapter in Jamkash Vehicleades' journey of trust, excellence and customer delight.



EDITORIAL

The India-Australia Energy Dialogue marks a significant milestone in bilateral relations, reflecting both nations' commitment to sustainable development, energy security, and strategic cooperation. Held in a spirit of partnership, the dialogue aims to enhance collaboration in areas including renewable energy, critical minerals, energy efficiency, and low-carbon technologies, aligning with global commitments to combat climate change while fostering economic growth. India and Australia, as leading players in the Asia-Pacific region, share complementary strengths in energy resources. India, with its rapidly growing economy and energy demand, is focusing on diversifying its energy mix through renewables such as solar, wind, and hydropower, alongside cleaner fossil fuel technologies. Australia, on the other hand, possesses abundant reserves of coal, natural gas, and critical minerals, including lithium and rare earth elements, which are essential for modern energy storage and electric mobility solutions. The dialogue provides a platform to syner-

gize these capabilities, ensuring mutual benefits in energy trade, technology transfer, and capacity building. During the dialogue, both sides underscored the importance of transitioning to a low-carbon economy. India has set ambitious targets under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), aiming to achieve 50% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. Australia, committed to renewable energy expansion and critical mineral development, stands as a reliable partner in providing raw materials and technology for India's energy transition. Cooperation in battery storage, hydrogen energy, and electric vehicle supply chains emerged as key focal areas, reflecting the shared vision of sustainable and resilient energy systems. The dialogue also emphasized energy efficiency and policy collaboration. Experts from both countries exchanged best practices on smart grid development, energy conservation measures, and demand-side management to reduce carbon footprints. This knowledge-sharing extends to research and development, encouraging joint projects in energy technologies, carbon capture, and grid modernization, which could strengthen domes-

tic capabilities while fostering regional energy security. Another highlight of the dialogue was the discussion on critical minerals and clean energy supply chains. Australia's mineral wealth, especially in lithium, cobalt, and nickel, is vital for India's renewable energy and electric mobility goals. Collaborative exploration, sustainable mining practices, and secure trade routes were identified as strategic priorities, ensuring that supply chains remain resilient in the face of global uncertainties. This partnership not only boosts bilateral trade but also contributes to regional stability by reducing dependence on single-source suppliers. Economic and strategic dimensions of the India-Australia Energy Dialogue go hand in hand. Beyond trade and technology, the dialogue strengthens diplomatic ties, promotes energy diplomacy, and aligns with broader Indo-Pacific engagement strategies. By building trust, fostering transparency, and facilitating public-private collaboration, both nations aim to create a blueprint for energy partnership that is environmentally responsible and economically rewarding. Furthermore, the dialogue underscores the role of innovation, entrepreneurship, and capacity building. Initiatives



in training, research collaborations, and knowledge transfer are expected to empower young professionals and scientists, fostering a skilled workforce capable of driving clean energy adoption. The private sector, including energy companies, technology providers, and startups, has been encouraged to actively participate, creating a multi-stakeholder approach that enhances implementation and scalability of energy projects. The India-Australia Energy Dialogue is more than a bilateral exercise; it is a strategic framework for sustainable energy cooperation.

Better global governance, led by China and India

QIN JIE

The year 2025 marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and India. Since April 1, 1950, exchanges between the two great countries have come a long way, in which heads of state (government) diplomacy plays a key role in enhancing mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual complementarity. Highlighting more recent achievements are the interactions and friendship between the two leaders — China's President Xi Jinping and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. From 2014 to 2024, Mr. Xi and Mr. Modi have met 18 times. When the year 2014 was declared as the Year of China-India Friendly Exchanges, Mr. Xi paid a state visit to India in September and made a trip to Ahmedabad, the home town of Mr. Modi. China and India issued a Joint Statement on Building an Even Closer Partnership for Development. In May 2015, Mr. Modi made his first visit to China, and Mr. Xi received him in Xi'an, Mr. Xi's home town.

From 2016 to 2019, the two leaders met multiple times each year on the occasions of the BRICS summit, the G-20 summit, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the next few years saw the two leaders exchange greetings and messages through letters and in telephone conversations. With the resumption of face-to-face meetings, Mr. Xi held talks with Mr. Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg in August 2023. And in October 2024, the two leaders held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS summit in Kazan, reaching important understandings on improving and growing China-India relations.

A milestone for the United Nations

This year also marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, following the victory of the world anti-fascist war. Eighty years ago, upon deep reflection on the bitter lessons of the First and Second World Wars, the international community established the UN,

commencing a brand new practice in global governance. In the past 80 years, the UN-based visions and practice of global governance have made historic contributions to maintaining world peace and development. However, the first few decades of the 21st century saw the world increasingly confronted with volatility, turbulence, uncertainty and unpredictability.

Faced with harmful "isms" such as unilateralism, protectionism, isolationism, separatism, terrorism, extremism and hegemonism, humanity needs to dwell on a major subject of our times, i.e., in order not to slip into a rule of jungle law, the kind of global governance system that needs to be built and how to reform and improve our global governance. Therefore, at such an important juncture, the 25th SCO Summit in Tianjin and the 19th in-person Xi-Modi meeting during the summit have been highly anticipated and expected by not only the more than 2.8 billion people in China and India but also the rest of the world, to shed some light on subjects such as bilateral relations, global governance and the future of humanity.

Partners, not rivals

Indeed, as pointed out by Sudheendra Kulkarni, political adviser and scholar, the 2025 Tianjin SCO Summit could be one of the most successful in the organisation's history. This could be because of the changing world order (with the West rapidly losing its dominance in global affairs in the irreversible trend of multipolarity and multilateralism), and, more significantly, due to the growing importance of Asia and Eurasia. Mr. Xi and Mr. Modi are two leaders who have shown vision and wisdom in their friendly interactions.

Mr. Xi has emphasised that China and India shoulder the crucial responsibility of improving the well-being of the two peoples, promoting solidarity and rejuvenation of developing countries, and advancing the progress of human society. China and India should be good neighbours and partners who help each other succeed. He made four points

of suggestion — China and India should strengthen strategic communication and deepen mutual trust; expand exchanges and cooperation to achieve mutual benefit and win-win; accommodate each other's concerns and get along in peace and harmony, and strengthen multilateral coordination to safeguard our shared interests. Mr. Modi echoed Mr. Xi in this by saying that the India-China relationship is back on a positive trajectory, that peace and stability in the border regions have been maintained, and that direct flights were to resume.

Such progress benefits not only the peoples of India and China but also the whole world. India and China are partners, not rivals. Their consensus far outweighs their disagreement. India-China cooperation will make the 21st century a genuine Asian century, and the two sides joining hands will increase the strength of multilateralism in international affairs.

The highlight of the Tianjin SCO summit was the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) raised by Mr. Xi, based on five basic principles. First, stay committed to sovereign equality. All countries, regardless of size, strength or wealth, shall have their sovereignty and dignity respected, their domestic affairs free from external interference, the right to independently choose their social system and development path, and the right to participate in, make decisions in and benefit from the global governance process as equals. Greater democracy should be promoted in international relations to make the global governance system better reflect the interests and the aspirations of the majority of countries, especially the developing countries.

Second, stay committed to international rule of law. The purposes and principles of the UN Charter are universally recognised basic norms of international relations and must be upheld unwaveringly. International law and rules must be applied, equally and uniformly, without any double standards or imposition. Major countries must take the lead in advocating and

defending international rule of law.

Third, stay committed to multilateralism. Global affairs should be decided by all, the governance system built by all, and the fruits of governance shared by all. The UN is the core platform for practising multilateralism and advancing global governance, whose role must be enhanced, not weakened.

Fourth, stay committed to the people-centered approach. The people of all nations are the fundamental actors in global governance, and their well being its ultimate benefit. It must seek improvement through reforms in order to inspire a greater sense of fulfilment through accelerated common development, a greater sense of safety through more effective response to humanity's common challenges, and a greater sense of well being through advancing the common interests of different countries and communities.

Fifth, stay committed to real results. Effective global governance is essentially one that resolves real problems. It must address both the root causes and symptoms to find sustainable solutions. Developed countries should earnestly take on their responsibilities and provide more resources and public goods, while developing countries should pull together for strength and do their best for the world.

The task ahead

The GGI is another major initiative and public good offered by China. With the aim of addressing the deficit of global governance, the GGI stems from the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and responds to the shared aspiration of most countries. To reform and improve global governance does not mean overturning the existing international order or to create another framework outside the current international system. Rather, the goal is to make the existing international system and institutions better in taking action, working effectively, adapting to changes, responding promptly and effectively to various global challenges, and serving the interests of all countries.

Courtesy: The Hindu

Ranji Trophy: Mumbai beat J&K by 35 runs; Delhi secure 3 points vs Hyderabad



SRINAGAR

Left-arm spinner Shams Mulani spun a web around Jammu and Kashmir to grab a seven-wicket haul as Mumbai beat the hosts by 35 runs in an exciting opening round group D encounter in the Ranji Trophy, here on Saturday.

Jammu and Kashmir needed 222 runs to reach the winning target of 243 on the final day but courtesy Mulani, who also scored 91 in Mumbai's first essay, the home team were all out for 207 in 64.4 overs.

With the pitch assisting slow bowlers, Mulani returned with 7/46, his 17th five-wicket haul in first-class cricket, as the portly left-arm orthodox spinner once again became his team's 'go-to' man with his all-round skills.

For the hosts, opener Qamran Iqbal (56) and his 53-run stand with skipper Paras Dogra (29) did raise hopes at one point with the scoreboard reading 84/2.

But once Mulani breached Dogra's defence and off-spinner Tanush Kotian induced a return catch from IPL specialist Abdul Samad (15), things went downhill for J&K.

Once Iqbal became Mulani's third victim and J&K were reduced to 131/6, there was no turning back for Mumbai as he got wickets at regular intervals to get six points for his team.

Skipper Ayush Badoni claimed 6/73, while fellow spinner Arpit Rana (3/23) took a couple wickets as Delhi ensured three points against hosts Hyderabad.

Resuming on 400/7, Hyderabad innings folded at 411 within half an hour as Badoni and Rana polished off the tail in a jiffy.

Delhi, already 118 runs ahead and assured of three points, were 138/3 in their second innings when play was called off after Hyderabad bowled 42 overs. Sanat Sangwan was unbeaten on 56.

Inter-college volleyball, weightlifting tournaments conclude at KU

SRINAGAR

The University of Kashmir successfully concluded its inter-college volleyball and weightlifting tournaments, organized by the Directorate of Physical Education and Sports (DPE&S).

More than 320 athletes from various colleges participated across men's and women's categories. Held under the University's Annual Sports Calendar, the tournaments showcased outstanding talent, sportsmanship, and competitive spirit, providing a platform for students to qualify for All India and North Zone Inter-University Championships under the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), New Delhi.

In the women's volleyball event, 23 teams from across the Kashmir Division competed over ten days. The final featured a thrilling five-set battle between the Post Graduate team and Government College of

Physical Education (GCOPE) Ganderbal. After a strong comeback by the Post Graduate team, GCOPE Ganderbal clinched the championship in the decisive final set.

The University hosted the Inter-College Weightlifting Championship for the first time, promoting Olympic and Commonwealth disciplines. Over ten colleges participated, with GDC Shopian, Srinagar Women's College, and the Post Graduate contingent securing the top three positions in the overall medal tally.

A prize distribution ceremony held at Ground "A" of the Varsity saw medals and certificates presented by Prof Showkat Ahmad Shah (Department of Psychology) and Dr Surjeet Singh (coordinator, Directorate of Physical Education and Sports).

The event proceedings were conducted by Tausif Bhat (Assistant Director) and Muneer Alam (Volleyball Coach).



India Championship Golf: Shubhanka shines with 66; Tommy Fleetwood takes the lead on Day Two

NEW DELHI

Shubhankar Sharma's grand comeback cheered up Indian fans in the second round of the US\$4 million DP World India Championship 2025 being played at the Delhi Golf Club (DGC).

Two-time DP World Tour winner Shubhankar Sharma (74-66) produced a bogey-free six-under 66 to gain 67 spots and end the day in tied 32nd place as the highest-placed Indian at a total of four-under 140. PGTI winner Dhruv Sheoran (68-73), as well as multiple international winners Shiv Kapur (72-69) and Anirban Lahiri (70-71), were the next best Indians in tied 41st position at three-under 141.

Two-time PGTI winner Abhinav Lohan (70-72) was the fifth and last Indian to make the cut as he totalled two-under 142 to be placed tied 58th.

The biggest international names at the tournament dominated the leaderboard as Englishman Tommy Fleetwood (68-64) struck a 64 on day two to enjoy the halfway lead at 12-under 132. Former Open champions Brian Harman (68-65) of the United States and Shane Lowry (64-69) of Ireland were tied second at 11-under 133.

Five-time Major winner, world no. 2 and reigning Masters champion Rory McIlroy (69-69) of Northern Ireland closed the day in tied 17th place at six-under 138. A total of 66



players made the halfway cut, which came down at two-under 142.

Shubhankar Sharma, who was overnight tied 99th after an ordinary first round of 74, had a contrasting second round on Friday where he made birdies on three out of the four

par-5s and sank a couple of birdie putts from a range of 15 to 18 feet.

Shubhankar said, "I got off to a good start yesterday, but was a little tired, with some tired swings coming in. Despite the good start yesterday, I knew I was slightly edgy, which

showed in the end when I dropped those shots. I got some good sleep last night, so playing in today's afternoon session, I felt a lot fresher, hit it well, putted well, and my mind was clearer.

"The last six months were tough for me, but things have been coming together in the past two weeks. I've found some form after changing my irons recently. I just couldn't get the right combination of club and shaft together after trying several times. But three weeks ago, I changed my clubs, and then I changed the ball as well. Finally, I feel I've got these things right."

Dhruv Sheoran, who was overnight tied seventh following his first round of 68, hung in there on Friday with a round of 73 featuring three birdies and four bogeys. Dhruv survived some tense moments on the closing 18th hole after his tee shot went right. He then made a great up and down from the bunker, ending the day with a 15-foot conversion for bogey that gave him a major boost going into the weekend.

Sheoran said, "After things didn't go right for me on the first nine holes, I went to the changeroom and was telling myself that I need to change the momentum. I washed my face, looked at the mirror, and told myself that it can't be going this way, and I need to pull up my socks. Then after stepping out of the changeroom, I was a different person."

"Sab Kuch Luta Ke Hosh Mein Aaye To Kya Kiya": Owaisi takes dig at Omar Abdullah amid calls to remove PSA



NEW DELHI

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi said that the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978, has been "misused" by every elected and unelected government, which has led to "untold suffering and human rights violations".

"Sab kuch luta ke hosh mein aaye to kya kiya. Din mein agar chiragh jalaye to kya kiya," Owaisi posted on X.

He said that the previous Chief Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir, including Omar Abdullah, could have repealed the PSA and prevented human rights violations.

"The Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA) was introduced by Sheikh Abdullah in 1978 to deal with smuggling. Farooq Abdullah, GM Shah, Mufti Sayeed, GN Azad, Omar Abdullah & Mehbooba Mufti have all been CMs of J&K. They could have easily repealed PSA & prevented untold suffering and human rights violations," the AIMIM chief said.

Owaisi stated that over 20,000 people have been jailed since 1978, from the time of for-

mer JK CM Sheikh Abdullah, without fair trials.

"The law has been misused by virtually every elected CM & unelected Governors. Over 20,000 people have been jailed since 1978 without criminal charges, fair trials or even a proper appeals process," he added.

The Lok Sabha MP further stated that removing PSA has dawned on a "truncated elected government" even though previous governments in Jammu and Kashmir extended detentions of some people.

"Some detentions were extended for up to 7-12 years. One separatist was detained under the PSA and, when he was later needed, he was served with a court warrant and granted bail. Now there is a truncated elected govt, and it has dawned on it to do away with the PSA," he added.

His remarks come after Omar Abdullah asserted that the elected government must have control over state subjects, including law and order and security, for it to remove the PSA.

"We said in the manifesto that we would remove the Public

Safety and Security Act (PSA) from Jammu and Kashmir. To remove it, we must have statehood. Security, law and order, all these things should be under the control of the elected government. The day these things are ours, I won't even wait for the assembly session. We will remove the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA) through an ordinance," the JK CM said in a press conference.

Moreover, Abdullah said that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in centre should be honest in telling people that statehood for the Union Territory is subject to their coming to power here.

"The BJP, in its manifesto or in its promises to Parliament and to the Supreme Court, never said that statehood is dependent on the BJP coming to power in Jammu and Kashmir. If that is the case, I think the BJP should be honest that so long as there is a non-BJP government, you will not get statehood," Abdullah said.

Taking a dig at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) over its alliance with the BJP in 2015, the CM ruled out the possibility of future alliance with the ruling party in centre to attain statehood, saying that people in Jammu and Kashmir were still enduring its aftereffects.

"However, tying up with the BJP or an alliance with the BJP is out of the question. We've already seen how much that has destroyed Jammu and Kashmir. An unnecessary alliance between the PDP and the BJP was born in 2015. We are still suffering the aftereffects of that. I have no intention of repeating mistakes that other people have made," Abdullah said.

Left groups allege police brutality during JNU protest; Delhi Police says students broke barricades

NEW DELHI

A protest by Left-affiliated student groups at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) demanding registration of an FIR against ABVP on allegations of violence turned tense on Saturday evening, with the organisations accusing Delhi Police of "brutal assault" while the police claimed the protesters broke barricades and injured personnel.

The All India Students' Association (AISA) said that JNUSU president Nitish Kumar and several students were "brutally beaten up" and detained by police at the JNU West Gate when they attempted to march to the Vasant Kunj police station.

"JNUSU president and other students were brutalised by Delhi Police while demanding FIR against ABVP's violence across School GBMs," AISA said in a statement.

The Students' Federation of India (SFI) also alleged that the police "pulled female students by their hair and manhandled them, including by male personnel." It said SPS councillor Abhishek was "brutally beaten" and taken to hospital.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Amit Goel denied the allegations, saying around 70-80 students, including women, gathered at the JNU West Gate around 6 pm and "broke police barricades, manhandled personnel, and obstructed traffic" on Nelson Mandela Marg.

"A total of 28 students, including JNUSU office bearers, were detained to prevent any untoward incident," Goel said, adding that six police personnel were injured.

Earlier, posters circulated by Left-affiliated groups had called for a "social march for social justice" to the Vasant Kunj police station, questioning why no FIR had been filed yet against ABVP members accused of attacking Left-affiliated students.

In letter to Modi, Mamata seeks revocation of appointment of interlocutor on Gorkha issues

KOLKATA

Expressing "surprise and shock" over the appointment of an interlocutor to hold discussions on the issues relating to Gorkhas, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded revocation of the decision.

Banerjee claimed her government was not consulted before retired IPS officer Pankaj Kumar Singh was appointed as an interlocutor to hold discussions on the issues relating to Gorkhas in Darjeeling Hills, Terai and Doars regions of West Bengal, which she said was "inconsistent with the spirit of cooperative federalism".

"This appointment has been made without any consultation with the Government of West Bengal, even though the issues under reference directly relate to the governance, peace, and administrative stability of the area under the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), an autonomous body under the Government of West Bengal," she said in the two-page letter.

"Such unilateral action is inconsistent with the spirit of cooperative federalism that forms one of the foundational principles of our Constitution," she added.

Banerjee stressed that any initiative concerning the Gorkha community must involve the West Bengal government to ensure sustained peace and harmony in the region.

"It may be recalled that the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was constituted following a Tripartite Agreement signed on 18th July, 2011 at Darjeeling, between the Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) in the presence of the then Hon'ble Union Home Minister and the Chief Minister of West Bengal," she said.

"The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was created to ensure socio-economic, infrastructural, educational, cultural and linguistic developments of the hill areas, while safeguarding the ethnic identity of the Gorkhas and promoting peaceful co-existence among all communities, a hallmark of the unity and harmony of the hills," she noted.

Telangana bandh against HC stay on BC quota passes off peacefully

HYDERABAD

A statewide bandh called by the BC JAC to protest against the High Court's stay on the 42 per cent quota for BCs in local body polls passed off peacefully in Telangana on Saturday.

The ruling Congress, opposition BRS, BJP, CPI and CPI (M) extended their support to the bandh call.

R Krishnaiah, Chairman of Backward Communities Joint Action Committee and BJP Rajya Sabha member, had urged all political parties and civil society organisations to extend support to the bandh.

Barring emergency and essential services, all the sectors were requested to cooperate.

The Telangana High Court on October 9 issued an interim stay against a Government Order providing 42 per cent BC reservation in local body elections.

Leaders of various political parties and BC organisations held dharnas in front of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation bus depots preventing vehicles from coming out.

Krishnaiah told PTI the bandh was successful as all the educational institutions, shops



and other establishments remained closed. "Bandh was a total success and it was historical. It was observed in villages as well, as everyone including political parties and voluntary organisations extended support for bandh," he said.

A senior police official said the bandh passed off peacefully.

Telangana Congress leaders, ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and party workers participated in protests, the party said.

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president B Mahesh Kumar Goud, who joined the protests, said people

peacefully and voluntarily observed the bandh.

Ministers Ponnampalabakkar, Vakiti Srihari, Seethakka, Konda Surekha and party MP Anil Yadav participated in the bandh in Hyderabad while Minister Tummalapudi Nageswara Rao joined demonstrations in Sattupalli.

Opposition BRS leaders Talasila Srinivas Yadav, V Srinivas Goud, Gangula Kamalakara and party cadres took part in protests. They raised slogans demanding implementing 42 per cent reservation to the BCs.

Pakistani airstrikes on Kabul kill 5, leave dozens injured



KABUL

At least five Afghans were killed and dozens of others were injured in recent Pakistani airstrikes on Kabul, local media reported on Saturday.

Several of the injured are reportedly undergoing treatment at Emergency Hospital in the Afghan capital, where doctors said nearly 40 wounded people were brought in following the airstrikes.

According to Zabiullah, one of the doctors at Emergency Hospital, some patients were in critical condition and receiving intensive care.

"We were sitting in the car when the plane came and attacked; after that, I don't remember anything. I was half-conscious, and when I opened my eyes, I was already taken to the hospital, and one of my hands had been amputated," Afghan media outlet TOLO news quoted one of the victims, 17-year-old Ahmad Wali, as saying.

Mawludin, another victim, describing the horrific attack, said, "When the explosion happened, glass fell on me from above. My friends pulled me out, but I wasn't fully conscious. When I got outside, I saw the situation was terrifying; everything was dark, and there was dust everywhere. Everyone, old and

young, was in a terrible condition."

Following clashes between Afghan border forces and Pakistani troops, around 20,000 families have been displaced from Spin Boldak city in Afghanistan's Kandahar province, according to local officials.

They added that these families were forced to flee due to Pakistan's indiscriminate bombings and have taken shelter in deserts and other areas lacking basic living facilities.

"The Pakistani side carried out brutal bombings in densely populated areas of Spin Boldak. As a result, 20,000 families were displaced, and we are working to assist them," TOLO news quoted Nematullah Olfat, deputy head of the Kandahar Department of Refugees and Repatriation, as saying.

Meanwhile, the Taliban and Pakistani representatives are set to hold talks in Doha, mediated by Qatar, after days of deadly cross-border clashes, Pakistani daily Dawn reported on Saturday.

The meeting follows after Pakistan carried out multiple airstrikes in Afghanistan's Paktika province on Friday, prompting Kabul to accuse Islamabad of violating the fragile ceasefire agreement between the two countries.

During the Pakistani airstrike in Paktika, three Afghan cricketers were killed, as confirmed by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB).

The players had travelled from Urgun to Sharana, near the Pakistan border, to participate in a friendly cricket match.

The ACB identified the deceased players as Kabeer, Sibghatullah, and Haroon, adding that five other civilians also lost their lives in the strike.

No sign yet of Trump-Kim meeting during APEC summit in South Korea

NEW YORK

South Korea's top envoy to the United States said that there is no indication yet that U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will meet on the occasion of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit set to open in Korea later this month.

Ambassador Kang Kyung-wha made the remarks during a parliamentary audit at the South Korean mission to the U.N. in New York, amid lingering speculation that Trump could seek reengagement with Kim when he visits Korea for the APEC gathering slated to take place in the southeastern city of Gyeongju on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, reports Yonhap news agency.

"President Trump has said he is open to dialogue, and North Korea has also shown an indication (leaning toward dialogue). But there is no sign yet that something will materialise on the occasion of the APEC (summit)," Kang said during the audit session of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee.

"But we are trying to follow up on the (related) developments while leaving open that possibility (of the Trump-Kim meeting)," she added.

Last month, the White House said that Trump remains open to talking to Kim "without any preconditions" — a comment that reinforced the speculation that Trump could try to resume his personal diplomacy with Kim during his upcoming visit to Korea.

Kim has also expressed openness to resuming talks with the U.S. if Washington drops its demand for the North's denuclearisation.

During his first term, Trump's personal diplomacy with the North Korean leader led to three in-person meetings between them — in



Singapore in June 2018, in Hanoi in February 2019 and at the inter-Korean border truce village of Panmunjom in June 2019.

Asked if Kim wants to get U.S. recognition of its nuclear arms should he agree to meet Trump, the ambassador refused to make any prejudgment.

"As for the U.S., it has repeatedly expressed its position to resume dialogue without conditions," she said.

Commenting on the possibility of a summit between South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and Trump during the APEC gathering, Kang said, "I understand that final-stage coordination is taking place to ensure that the summit can take place." At the start of the audit, Kang reiterated Seoul's policy commitment to reducing tensions and promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue with North Korea, vowing to reinforce cooperation with Washington in the efforts. Her remarks came as Seoul hopes to resume inter-Korean engagement despite Pyongyang's rejection of dialogue and its continued push to advance nuclear and missile programs.

"While actively pushing to address Korean Peninsula issues through dialogue with North Korea, (we) will also make parallel efforts to elicit Pyongyang's earnest response," Kang said.

'Let both claim victory': Trump urges Russia, Ukraine to 'stop' war after Zelensky meeting

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump hosted his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House, a day after holding a two-and-a-half-hour-long phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

After the meeting, Trump posted his assessment on Truth Social, calling his meeting with Zelensky "very interesting and cordial".

"The meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine was very interesting, and cordial, but I told him, as I likewise strongly suggested to President Putin, that it is time to stop the killing, and make a deal!" he wrote.

Trump also advocated that both leaders should "stop where they are" and "claim victory".

"They should stop where they are. Let both claim victory, let history decide! No more shooting, no more death, no more vast and unsustainable sums of money spent. This is a war that would have never started if I were President. Thousands of people being slaughtered each and every week — no more, go home to your families in peace!" he



added.

While speaking to the media ahead of the bilateral meeting, Trump appeared to move away from his earlier position of providing Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, saying "he would rather have them not need Tomahawks."

"We are going to be talking about tomahawks, and would much rather have them not need tomahawks. Would much rather have the war be over, to be honest. We are in it to get the war over," he added.

Trump said that the United States needs those missiles for its own security.

"We need tomahawks. And we need a lot of other things that we've been sending over the last four years to Ukraine," he noted.

However, the Ukrainian leader once again pressed Trump for the Tomahawks, which have a range of around 2,500 kilometres and could hit targets deep inside Russia.

"Ukraine has thousands of our production drones, but we don't have

Tomahawks. That's why we need Tomahawks," the Ukrainian President added.

Trump and Zelensky also offered contrasting views on Putin's intentions, with Trump asserting that the Russian leader "wants to end the war", while Zelensky maintained that "Putin doesn't want" to end it.

After speaking with Putin on Thursday, Trump said he believed "great progress was made during today's telephone conversation" and announced plans to meet the Russian leader in

Budapest, Hungary.

He also revealed that a team of high-level advisors led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio will meet next week with Russian officials to set the stage for a second Trump-Putin meeting in three months.

Trump's highly publicised summit in Alaska in August ended without an agreement, and he began taking a hard line on Russia.

Fresh off the success in stopping the Gaza conflict, Trump has turned his attention back to the Ukraine War. When asked whether Putin was merely trying to buy time, Trump responded that he had been "played by the best of them", but insisted he still "came out really well".

"I'm pretty good at this stuff. I think that he wants to make a deal. I made eight of them. I'm going to make a ninth," he emphasised.

Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Gregory Meeks, criticised the US President for failing to "deliver today on providing any support for Ukraine."

"This isn't Trump bringing peace through strength; this is weakness through appeasement," he added.

Hrithik Roshan to step into OTT as producer with upcoming thriller 'Storm'



Hollywood icon Reese Witherspoon, known for her powerful portrayals of women on screen, has now turned author with her debut thriller novel *Gone Before Goodbye*. The 49-year-old Academy Award-winning actress revealed that she was determined to create a story with a compelling female protagonist at its core - a character who breaks away from traditional thriller stereotypes.

In collaboration with best-selling author Harlan Coben, Witherspoon has crafted a gripping narrative that follows Maggie, an accomplished and intelligent surgeon who finds herself caught in a dangerous web of conspiracy and deceit. The novel blends fast-paced suspense with deep emotional undertones, centering on a woman whose brilliance and intuition become both her strength and her vulnerability.

Speaking to BBC News, Witherspoon explained how

her early movie-watching experiences shaped her creative vision. "Growing up, I always saw James Bond movies - my dad was obsessed with them - but I was like, why are the girls all in bikinis? I didn't understand what that had to do with solving the crime," she said. "If I was going to do a thriller, I wanted the woman to be at the centre of it. I wanted her to have a unique skill set everybody in the world wanted, but she didn't even realise it. She doesn't have to shoot guns or punch bad guys; she's actually just very smart, intuitive, and an incredible surgeon."

Witherspoon shared that much of her inspiration for *Gone Before Goodbye* came from her own upbringing. "I grew up in a medical military family and on a military base," she recalled. "I was surrounded by other mums and dads who were medical military people. There was this sense of service - that what they were doing wasn't

just important to humanity, but also to their country." This background helped her infuse Maggie's character with authenticity, resilience, and a deep sense of duty.

The Legally Blonde star, who has long been an advocate for women's representation in media, emphasized that her journey into writing and producing stems from a desire to amplify female voices. Through her media company Hello Sunshine, founded in 2011, Witherspoon has consistently pushed for narratives that highlight complex, intelligent, and independent women - a mission that continues with her new literary venture.

ENTERTAINMENT

Vin Diesel remembers his mother's support during his early journey in cinema



Hollywood star Vin Diesel has penned a touching note in honour of his mother, reflecting on her unwavering support throughout his journey in cinema.

Diesel took to Instagram, where he shared a string of pictures of himself.

In the caption section, the star recalled how his mother accompanied him to the Sundance Film Festival in 1997, when he was recognised

as a "Sundance Director," alongside contemporaries such as Darren Aronofsky and Jon Favreau.

"Mind if I take a second to talk about someone whom I have marveled at my whole life... My mother. Never forget how she came with me to Sundance in 1997, because her son was officially a 'Sundance Director' with contemporaries like Darren Aronofsky and Jon Favreau ...

a few years before my friend Chris Nolan," he wrote.

"She was there..." he wrote, marking her presence during an important time for the actor.

He also shared that he has started reading a book on spirituality, a gift from his mother.

"And just yesterday, I started a book she gave me about Celtic Spirituality... she knows I have been tasked with developing the Kaulder Universe and thought it would be a helpful read," he wrote.

He added: "God was gracious when he allowed me to be born from this incredible woman.... Grateful and blessed."

Last month, Diesel gave fans of the *Fast & Furious* saga a big reason to celebrate, as he dropped hints about the road ahead for the blockbuster franchise.

Taking to Instagram, Diesel shared a picture with Rodriguez, with whom he has worked in several installments of the *Fast and the Furious* franchise. In the image, the two actors are looking at the camera and smiling.

In the caption section, Diesel, who has been the face of the high-octane series since its inception, shared an emotional note after wrapping up a day of filming with his "ride-or-die" co-star.

The *Fast Furious* franchise commenced in 2001 and has spawned 10 films and spin-offs. However, he did not confirm if he is shooting for *Fast & Furious 11* or *Fast X: Part 2*.

Kajal Aggarwal wishes Happiest birthday to her 'darling baby sister' Nisha

Actress Kajal Aggarwal shares an extremely close bond with her sister Nisha Aggarwal, and the siblings are often seen making appearances on each other's feeds.

As Nisha turned a year older on Saturday, Kajal used social media to pen a lovely birthday post for her darling baby sister.

The 'Singham' actress posted a string of unseen photos of herself with Nisha on her official Instagram handle.

From chilling at the beach together to playing with each other's kids, Kajal and Nisha never fail to give out sister goals.

Kajal also accompanied the pictures with a heartfelt note for her dear sister that read, "Happiest birthday, my darling baby sister! (Though at this point, we might have to retire that word) (Tongue out face emoji) (sic)."

Expressing her admiration for Nisha, the 'Hey Sinamika' actress went on to write, "You've grown into such a beautiful, strong, and inspiring woman- inside and out. Watching you embrace life with grace, laughter, and courage fills my heart with pride. Here's to all the incredible memo-

ries behind us and the magical moments still to come. Also, You've aged like fine wine- slightly more expensive, occasionally unpredictable, but always worth it."

"You wear every decade like such a queen! (Crown emoji) Happy birthday, my forever favourite troublemaker! Love you endlessly, you gorgeous grown up! (Dizzy and red heart emoji) @nishaaggarwal," she added.

Work-wise, Kajal has concluded the shoot for her upcoming drama "The India Story," where she will be seen sharing screen space with Shreyas Talpade.

The makers, MIG Production & Studios, announced the conclusion of the shoot by sharing a new poster from the show.

"It's a Wrapppp! The journey of emotions, truth, and resilience comes to a close! Kajal Aggarwal and Shreyas Talpade complete filming for #TheIndiaStory a gripping drama inspired by real pesticide scandals that once shook the nation. Get ready for a story that will move hearts and spark conversations. (Fire cracker emoji)," they penned the caption.

AI-driven breast cancer screening revolutionises West Bengal healthcare



By Prema Rajaram

Using Artificial Intelligence(AI) for medical mapping has translated into the West Bengal health department developing an app for identifying cases on ground.

The Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education&Research(IPG-MER), which operates a specialised breast cancer clinic and works with state-level initiatives to improve cancer treatment, has received funds from the state Health and Family Welfare Department to develop the app with the help of an IT firm. The app is expected to be launched soon.

How it works:

The initial premise of the app will be data collected by Accredited Social Health Activists(ASHA) at the ground level. ASHA workers who are chosen from the community in local areas act as a bridge between the public health system and people in their community. They ask women three questions based on which data

is collected and teach them through talks and videos on how to identify anomalies during self-examination. ASHA workers will go back again after about thirty days to collect data and detect breast cancer patients. The data will be accessible on a real-time basis and, based on ultrasound reports, will be categorised as high or low-risk patients.

Oncologist Dr Diptendra Sarkar, who is instrumental in working with the state Health and Family Welfare department to develop the app, said, "It is important that we have a decentralisation of healthcare. We don't want patients to come to bigger hospitals in the city and bear huge out-of-pocket expenses. Instead, this app focuses on ASHA workers going door to door mapping breast cancer cases and we create an ecosystem for them to visit local hospitals to begin the first line of treatment."

There is also a separate app for the state government, for ASHA workers to upload the names,

addresses, locations and ID numbers for suspected breast cancer patients.

"There is a gap between knowing about breast cancer and getting treatment in rural areas. Our support group workers, who are termed as DISHA, have found in a survey that 84 per cent of rural people know about breast cancer," he added.

This is part of the 'Pink Corridor' initiative launched in the state in 2024, which aims at breast cancer awareness and treatment by empowering local hospitals through telemedicine as an attempt to include more rural areas. A year ago, the 'Pink Corridor' initiative was introduced and showcased in August this year as the 'Bengal Model' at the Association of Breast Surgeons of India(ABSICON), for treating such cases.

Breast cancer awareness

October is known as Breast Cancer Awareness Month or the 'pink month' where regular check-ups, workshops and camps are encouraged to educate women to address these health concerns. Community outreach programmes are conducted in rural areas.

The government of India has an early breast cancer detection programme, which is under the national non-communicable disease programme, in which 3 cancers are covered: oral, cervical and breast cancer.

Indian Cancer Society(ICS), an NGO that has about eighty cancer outreach programmes every year, has an app too, called 'Rise Against Cancer', to educate people. For example, if a woman has a lump on her breast, what should she do? The app, which is primarily in English, can answer questions in Bengali,

Marathi, Bengali and Hindi. Helpline numbers are also provided.

The risk of developing breast cancer is 1 in 28 women, who will develop breast cancer if they don't die of any other disease, keeping an average age of 74 years. About 1,50,000 women are at lifetime risk of developing breast cancer, 13,000 new cases every year in West Bengal, between 45-70 years of age. "More than 30 per cent of all cancer cases are breast cancer in West Bengal, with an approximate 44,000 new cancer cases every year, of which 40,000 are breast cancer cases. We are seeing younger age groups of women developing breast cancer because of lifestyle changes, late marriage, and late childbirth." Said Dr.Arunabha Sengupta, Surgical oncologist, secretary of the India Cancer Society.

Dr Sengupta also points out that breast cancer cases are increasing among women in India and West Bengal, except in rural areas like Purulia and East Midnapore district. Earlier, a larger number of uterine and cervical cancers were reported. Lifestyle changes and urbanisation have led to breast cancer surpassing uterine and cervical cancer and hence there is more focus now on breast awareness and assisting women in rural and urban areas with treatment..

Earlier, lung cancer topped the list and now breast cancer has become the common cancer globally. WHO has set a breast cancer initiative which targets such cases being identified from when a lump is discovered and initiates the first line of treatment within 60 days after which the stage goes up.

Courtesy: The Week

Dark side of quick commerce: The untold health struggles of India's gig workers

By Sakshi Srivastava

At just 19, Mohammed Ayan balances two worlds—his first year of a BBA course and his part-time job as a rider for a platform that offers 10 minute deliveries. But in only four months on the job, he has already faced experiences that would make most people rethink the risks of gig work.

"This summer, I fainted on the road while riding," he recalls, the memory of exhaustion and heat stroke symptoms still fresh. "Another time, I met with an accident because I was rushing to deliver an order." The rush, he explains, is not just about keeping customers happy but about chasing incentives. The quicker the delivery, the more money a rider earns. "The company pushes us with incentives. It makes us drive recklessly. I've had two accidents because of this," he says.

One of those accidents left him in the hospital. Treatment was covered under a government policy that ensures emergency care for accident victims, but Ayan points out that the support system of the platform he works for is slow, almost discouraging.

Ayan is one among the lakhs of gig workers in India, working as delivery persons associated with the various food and grocery delivery platforms, and others who fall outside the traditional employee-employer arrangements.

Remember the time when we used to send our siblings to fetch something from the nearby grocery store, or when our mother realised she had forgotten an ingredient while cooking and relied on her child to run and get it? That was how life worked not long ago—small errands and last-minute runs formed part of everyday life. Today, however, with just a click, people like Ayan in yellow, red, orange, or green uniforms arrive at our doorsteps on two-wheelers to deliver everything from food to medicine. This shift in how we access basic items has been enabled by the growing gig economy. According to a NITI Aayog report, the gig workforce in India is expected to grow from around 77 lakh in 2020 to 2.35 crore by 2030.

Despite the large workforce, these people work with little to no health benefits or protections. The demands of their jobs also put gig workers at risks of road acci-

dents, weather related illnesses, and other occupational health hazards.

Who are gig workers and what health benefits do they get?

Gig workers are individuals engaged in short-term, task-based, or flexible employment that falls outside the traditional employer-employee relationship. Unlike salaried employees, they are typically hired on a per-task or per-delivery basis, without the benefits of fixed salaries, paid leave, or retirement funds.

They are most visible in urban India through food delivery executives working with Swiggy and Zomato, ride-hailing drivers associated with Ola and Uber, and e-commerce delivery personnel linked with Blinkit, Amazon and Flipkart. But the gig workforce also extends to other areas, such as household services, logistics, and freelance online tasks. As these workers do not function within the ambits of traditional employee-employer relationships, many of them do not receive employment benefits including health insurance covers. In the Union Budget 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made an announcement that

directly addresses the health security of gig workers. Acknowledging their growing role in India's digital economy, she stated that the government will arrange for their identity cards, register them on the e-Shram portal, and provide them healthcare under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. Their inclusion in social protection schemes, particularly health insurance, is not just relevant but necessary for the sustainable growth of the economy.

Launched in September 2018, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is the largest health assurance scheme in the world. It was designed to provide health cover of up to five lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. Unlike earlier fragmented schemes where the annual cover ranged between thirty thousand to three lakh rupees depending on the state, PM-JAY created a uniform, comprehensive, and higher coverage system.

The scheme is fully funded by the government, with implementation costs shared between the Centre and the states. It operates on a cashless and paperless model,

ensuring that beneficiaries can walk into any empanelled public or private hospital across the country and access healthcare without out-of-pocket expenses. Importantly, there are no restrictions on family size, age, or gender, and all pre-existing conditions are covered from the very first day. The scheme also provides for pre-hospitalisation expenses of up to three days and post-hospitalisation care of up to fifteen days, including diagnostics and medicines.

Over the years, PM-JAY has expanded from its initial coverage of 10.74 crore families to 14.74 crore families, benefitting nearly 70 crore individuals. With the inclusion of gig workers in Budget 2025, the scheme is moving closer to the vision outlined in the National Health Policy 2017, which emphasised universal health coverage for all citizens. For gig workers who often lack any kind of safety net, this coverage could be transformative.

However, as per a Lok Sabha answer in August 2025, while gig workers has started registering on the e-Shram portal, "the AB-PMJAY scheme for platform workers has not been launched."

Courtesy:- The Week

India will not be buying oil from Russia: Trump reiterates



WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump reiterated that India will not be buying oil from Russia, saying that New Delhi has already “de-escalated” and “more or less stopped” its oil purchases from Moscow.

While speaking to the media during a bilateral lunch with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on Friday, “Trump said India will not be buying oil from Russia, they have already de-escalated and they have more or less stopped.”

“They are pulling back. They have bought about 38 per cent of the oil, and they won’t be doing it anymore,” Trump said while replying to a question.

India on Thursday said it is

“broad-basing and diversifying” its sourcing of energy to meet market conditions, hours after US President Donald Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that New Delhi will stop procuring Russian crude oil.

Washington has been maintaining that India is helping Putin to finance the war through its purchase of Russian crude oil.

The relations between New Delhi and Washington have been reeling under severe stress after Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent, including a 25 per cent additional duty for India’s purchase of Russian crude oil.

India described the US action as “unfair, unjustified

and unreasonable”.

Meanwhile, Trump has once again repeated his claims about resolving the war between India and Pakistan, adding that Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif has said, “I have saved millions of lives.”

“The Prime Minister of Pakistan said I saved millions of lives by interceding ... you look at Pakistan and India as an example that would have been a bad one for two nuclear nations,” the US President said.

Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a “full and immediate” ceasefire after a “long night” of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim dozens of times that he “helped settle” the conflict between India and Pakistan.

India has consistently maintained that the understanding on cessation of hostilities with Pakistan was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two militaries.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the April 22 Pahalgam attack that killed 26 civilians. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Revlon launches ‘Lip Love’ with perfect gifting collection

JAMMU

This Diwali, Revlon brings more than just color – it brings Lip Love. With a spectrum of stunning lipstick shades, Revlon celebrates the season of light, love, and beauty by making lipsticks the ultimate festive gift for your loved ones or for yourself.

From rich browns and classic reds to playful pinks and versatile nudes, Revlon lipsticks are designed to complement every mood, outfit, and celebration. Whether it’s the longwear matte of Limitless, the bold color payoff of Suede Ink, or the iconic Super Lustrous enriched with 80% conditioning ingredients, Revlon lipsticks offer something for every look, every celebration, and every woman.

“For decades, Revlon has been a part of women’s beauty journeys, and this Diwali, we are proud to celebrate with Lip Love. Our iconic range of lip-

sticks brings together the timeless shades women love and the festive vibrancy the season deserves. We believe that a Revlon lipstick is more than just makeup – it’s a perfect gift of self-expression,” said Meghna Modi, Executive Director, Revlon India.

As part of the campaign, Revlon has curated a special Lip Love Diwali Box for influencers, showcasing a range of 20 beloved shades in festive packaging. While this exclusive box has been created for campaign storytelling, all the shades inside are available to consumers across leading beauty stores and online platforms.

Available across www.revlon.co.in, Revlon Exclusive Brand Outlets, leading departmental stores and general trade outlets across India, this festive collection is the perfect way to share beauty, love and light with those who matter most.

India must move beyond tokenism in climate-gender policy: CRF Dialogue

NEW DELHI

India must shift from checkbox approaches to fully integrating gender justice into climate policy, speakers said at a dialogue hosted by the Chintan Research Foundation (CRF).

Titled ‘Climate Futures Through a Gender Lens’, the event brought together researchers, advocates, and policymakers at the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature to discuss the need for gender-responsive frameworks in India’s climate and energy transitions, according to a statement issued by the organisers.

CRF President and former WTO Director Priyadarshi opened the session by stating, “Climate justice and gender justice are inseparable. For our policies to be truly sustainable, they must be equitable, inclusive, and people-centric.”

CRF researcher Meheli Roy Choudhury said while gender is reflected in global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals, its translation into policy and implementation in India remains limited.

Keynote speakers included Kalyani Raj, President of the All India Women’s Conference, and Mini

Govindan, Senior Fellow at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

Raj highlighted the “double and triple burdens” women face, including limited access to finance, systemic exclusion from capacity-building, and disproportionate climate vulnerability. She called for climate policies that prioritize social inclusion and community resilience.

Building on these insights, Govindan criticized centralized, top-down climate governance models, noting they often exclude women’s voices. She advocated for participatory, bottom-up approaches and urged India to lead the Global South in promoting a just and inclusive development model.

Panellists agreed that India’s climate and energy strategies must move beyond technocratic and investment-led models to include those most affected by the climate crisis – especially women, who are often frontline agents of change.

The session concluded with a call to institutionalize gender-responsive planning through inclusive frameworks, gender budgeting, and accountability mechanisms.

India’s Gold Rush Goes Digital: E-jewellery winning over a traditionally tactile market

NEW DELHI

Once a domain of velvet-lined trays and neighbourhood jewellers, jewellery shopping in India is undergoing a glittering transformation. What was long anchored in trust, tradition, and touch is now increasingly just a click away.

India’s deep-rooted love affair with gold and diamonds is entering a bold new chapter – online. As digital platforms gain credibility through hallmark certifications, brand assurances, and seamless service, Indian consumers are warming up to the idea that buying fine jewellery doesn’t necessarily require a trip to the store.

And the numbers prove it. According to a recent FICCI-Deloitte report, 73 per cent of consumers now begin their product discovery journey online – even for tactile categories like jewellery – while 53 per cent still lean on offline stores to seal the deal. But the tides are shifting fast.

The Indian jewellery market, pegged at USD 91 billion in 2025, is expected to reach USD 146 billion by 2030. And e-commerce platforms are set to claim a growing slice of that pie.

According to Siddharth Bhagat, Director, Amazon Fashion and Beauty, India, precious jewellery sales on the platform have surged 96 per cent year-on-year, with gold and diamond jewellery, including lab-grown diamonds, driving the demand.

Amazon’s jewellery segment, covering hallmarked gold, dia-



mond, silver and lab-grown diamond collections, has registered a sharp rise in consumer confidence.

With positive demand, the marketplace now has over five lakh styles from established brands such as CaratLane, PN Gadgil Jewellers, Joyalukkas, PC Chandra, Malabar Gold and Diamonds, and KISNA.

“Over the past few years, we have witnessed a shift in how customers select and purchase jewellery on Amazon Fashion, reflecting evolving consumer priorities, from impulse and occasion-led purchases to more informed, trust-driven decisions. Ahead of Dhanteras, precious jewellery sales have grown by 96 per cent year-on-year, with strong traction in hallmarked gold, diamond, and lab-grown diamond jewellery from some of India’s top jewellery brands,” Bhagat told PTI.

He noted that customers are increasingly choosing everyday-wear pieces in 14-karat gold,

which has grown nearly 50 per cent year-on-year, followed by a strong uptick in 18-karat jewellery. The platform also reports that fine jewellery now starts at Rs 2,000 for sterling silver and goes up to Rs 40,000 for gold and diamond pieces, expanding affordability and access to a wider audience.

“The growing shift toward online shopping shows how quickly the jewellery market is embracing digital change, a move the industry fully supports. While physical stores still dominate big purchases like bridal or investment jewellery, the online space has found its place for everyday wear, lightweight designs, and jewellery in lower caratages such as 9K and 14K. Younger, tech-savvy shoppers appreciate the ease and variety that e-commerce brings,” Aksha Kamboj, Vice President – India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA) said.



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"Let the light of Diwali burn away every shadow of corruption and hatred — and brighten our nation with unity, peace, and progress."



AVINASH BASSAN
Editor in chief System Observer Newspaper
Managing director The Fire Flyers.

MOB : 7780824836 EMAIL : SYSTEMOBSERVER18@GMAIL.COM
www.thesystemfiles.com , www.thefireflyers.in