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SYSTEM OBSERVER

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Students protest outside GCW Gandhi Nagar over death of student, allege negligence

JAMMU

Students staged a protest outside Government College for Women (GCW) Gandhi Nagar in Jammu on Monday, demanding action against those responsible for the death of a

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BUS ROLLS DOWN HILL IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR'S UDHAMPUR; 21 DEAD



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
UDHAMPUR**

A passenger bus rolled down a hillside in Jammu

and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Monday, leaving 21 people dead and 29 others injured, officials said.

The bus crushed an

PM Modi announces Rs 2 lakh relief for deceaseds' kin, Rs 50,000 for injured

auto-rickshaw before landing upside down on the road below.

Officials said those travelling in the auto-rickshaw sustained injuries but survived.

An Army convoy passing along the hilly stretch led the rescue operation after the driver of the private bus lost control while negotiating

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Udhampur Bus Tragedy: Survivors Recall Cries Of Despair, Hail Army's Heroic Act

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
DESK
RAMNAGAR**

Survivors of the deadly Udhampur bus tragedy recalled scenes of sheer panic and desperate cries for help, crediting the Army's swift and heroic rescue with saving numerous lives.

At least 21 people were killed and 29 others injured on Monday when a packed private passenger bus plunged nearly 100 metres down a treacherous hillside in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur, crushing an

auto-rickshaw before landing horrifically upside down on the road below.

An Army convoy passing along the winding hilly stretch rushed to the spot and led the intense rescue operation after the driver of the private bus lost control while negotiating a sharp blind curve near the hilltop Kagort village in the Ramnagar area around 10 am.

Amid piercing screams, mangled metal and entangled bodies, hope seemed to fade with each passing

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CM Omar Abdullah hits out at BJP over 'unfulfilled' Statehood promise

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday hit out at the BJP-led central government over what he termed as its "unfulfilled promise" of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, and said there was "no clear answer" from it on the issue.

The chief minister also targeted the BJP over the issue of the implementation of women's reservation in legislatures.

"There is no clear answer about the restoration of statehood in Jammu and Kashmir. They (BJP) say — 'at the right time'. What does 'the right time' mean? I keep asking them — tell us clearly. If you say it is your promise, if you have given your word, does your word have no



value? "Should we consider your promises so light that you repeat them everywhere — in the Supreme Court, in Parliament, in rallies, in elections— and then step back?"

Abdullah told a public rally in Nowshera border area of Rajouri district.

The chief minister urged the

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J&K ACB Report Card (2020-2026): 23,798 Complaints, Just 27 Convictions

An RTI-based analysis exposes a sharp gap between anti-corruption enforcement and judicial outcomes in J&K, with a low complaint-to-FIR conversion rate and a conviction rate of only 12.6% over six years.

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

: A detailed report based on official data from the Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), accessed through a Right to Information (RTI) query filed by activist Raman Sharma, reveals significant gaps in the Union Territory's anti-corruption framework between January 2020 and March 2026. During the six-year

period, the ACB received 23,798 complaints, but only 534 FIRs were registered—reflecting a complaint-to-FIR conversion rate of just 2.24%. Officials stated that complaints undergo strict scrutiny before formal registration.

On the judicial front, the bureau chargesheeted 325 cases, while 432 cases remain under investigation. Out of 214

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Cook, Plumber, Painter, Stock Trader: Unusual 'Career Path' Of Oldest Lashkar Terrorist

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
SRINAGAR/NEW
DELHI**

From a cook to plumber, and painter to electrician, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who had been tasked with setting up bases outside Jammu and Kashmir, even took share trading as his profession to blend with the masses in other parts of the

country in pursuit of his sinister agenda, officials said on Monday.

Tracking his stay in various parts of the country, including Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab, Abdullah, who was the oldest surviving LeT terrorist, gave a detailed picture about his stay in these states and told

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NSA Doval Discusses Bilateral Relations, Regional Situation With Saudi Leaders

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
RIYADH**

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has met Saudi Arabia's senior leaders and discussed the bilateral relations, the regional situation and other areas of mutual interests.

Doval, who reached Riyadh on Sunday, was received at the airport by India's Ambassador Suhel Khan and Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister for Political Affairs Saud Al-Sati.

Doval held meetings with Saudi

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Bhagwat Bats For Greater Promotion Of Sanskrit In India

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI**

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday made a strong pitch for the greater promotion of Sanskrit in the country, saying increase in its prevalence will not only enrich all other Indian languages and serve as a bridge between them, but also connect people with ancient thoughts and culture of Bharat.

Addressing an event organised here to inaugurate newly constructed central office of the Sanskrit Bharati, Bhagwat said the essence of the name 'Bharat' is not merely geographical; nor is it solely a political-economic entity.

"Bharat is a tradition, a foundation upon which life continues to flow. It is a tradition that sustains life across the entire cosmos,

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FROM PAGE-1

Bus Rolls.....

a blind curve near the hilltop Kagort village in the Ramnagar area around 10 am.

The bus was carrying 50 passengers, mostly those heading to their daily jobs, from Ramnagar to Udhampur.

The rescue operation proved extremely challenging as the vehicle had been reduced to a mangled heap of iron, with its top portion almost completely torn off.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives in the accident.

He also announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the families of those killed and Rs 50,000 for those injured in the accident.

J-K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assured all possible assistance to the families of the deceased and those injured.

They also directed authorities concerned to provide immediate relief and necessary support to those affected.

"A bus en route from Ramnagar to Udhampur lost control while negotiating a hilly stretch, plunged down the slope, and crushed an auto-rickshaw upon landing upside down on the road below. Fifteen passengers were found dead at the scene, while four others later succumbed to their injuries in hospital," Deputy Inspector General of Police, Udhampur-Reasi Range, Shiv Kumar Sharma told reporters at the site.

Officials said two more critically injured persons succumbed to their injuries at Udhampur District Hospital during treatment, raising the death toll to 21.

Sharma said the local residents extended significant help during the rescue. Police teams, including the Senior Superintendent of Police, SHO Ramnagar, and other officers, reached the spot.

Army personnel also assisted, and a joint rescue operation was carried out. The vehicle was later straightened using a hydraulic crane, the DIG said. He said this is a very tragic incident, and "we stand in solidarity with the families who have lost their loved ones. Jammu and Kashmir Police stand with them in this hour of grief." Sharma said Director General of Police, Nalin Prabhat and Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti are monitoring the situation over the phone.

Expressing grief over the incident, J-K Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra urged authorities to immediately provide all possible relief, proper medical care, and necessary support to the affected families in this hour of immense pain.

Earlier, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said he spoke to Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur, Minga Sherpa following the accident, informing that arrangements are being made to airlift the seriously injured victims.

"Just now spoke to DC Udhampur, Minga Sherpa after learning about a tragic road accident, less than an hour ago, at village Kanote, involving a public transport bus on way from Ramnagar to Udhampur.

"The rescue operation has been immediately undertaken. Heavy casualties are expected. All possible assistance is being provided. The injured will be shifted for medical aid. Arrangements being made to airlift the seriously injured," the minister said in a post on X.

Singh said he is in constant touch with the local administration as well as the

BJP local workers team involved in the rescue operation.

Udhampur Bus.....

moment, survivors said, recalling the harrowing accident on the Udhampur-Ramnagar road, about 40 km from the district headquarters.

"Army personnel were the first to reach us, appearing like messiahs amid the chaos and confusion. They pulled us out of the wreckage. I had a miraculous escape — this feels nothing less than a second life for me," said Neetu Rani (32), wife of Sanjay Sharma, speaking to PTI from her hospital bed.

Still shaken, she recalled the terrifying moments after the crash, saying there were cries for help all around as injured passengers lay trapped inside the mangled bus before rescuers arrived swiftly and began evacuating them.

Having sustained injuries to her back, legs and face, she said she was on her way to her maternal home in Udhampur when the accident occurred. Rani said the journey, meant to be a routine visit to her mother's house, turned into a nightmare within moments as the bus lost control

on the treacherous stretch.

"I have lost all my belongings, but life saved is everything. Nothing else matters now — I am just grateful to be alive," she said, her voice trembling, adding that the horrifying moments of the crash would stay with her for a long time.

CM Omar.....

Centre to spell out a clear roadmap for restoring statehood.

"Explain to us what this 'right time' is, so that we can work towards it. Just like when we set exams for children — we tell them what marks are needed to pass, for first division, for distinction. They know what they must achieve. Similarly, tell us what conditions need to be met so we can reach that goal," he said.

Asserting that his government was delivering on its commitments, Abdullah said, "We are fulfilling our promises. The promise you made to the people — where is it? Give us back statehood, because people voted for it — whether they voted for Congress, National Conference, BJP or any party." He said the people had voted with the hope that the perceived injustice against Jammu and Kashmir would be addressed.

J&K ACB

cases that reached conclusion in courts, only 27 resulted in convictions, yielding a conviction rate of 12.6%.

In contrast, 72 accused were acquitted, and 115 cases failed due to lack of evidence, highlighting persistent challenges in securing successful prosecutions.

Enforcement vs Outcomes:

Despite limited convictions, enforcement activity remained visible. The ACB arrested 267 public servants, including 20 gazetted and 247 non-gazetted officers, and conducted 208 trap operations, recovering over ₹1.22 crore in bribes.

However, the disparity between action and outcomes underscores systemic issues in investigation quality, prosecution, or evidentiary standards.

Regional Performance:

The Srinagar-Budgam-Ganderbal unit recorded the highest activity, registering 178 FIRs and arresting 93 officials through 70 trap cases. Yet, only 4 convictions were secured, alongside 17 acquittals and 25 discharges.

The Jammu-Samba-Kathua unit followed, with 94 FIRs and 15 convictions, the highest among all regions, but still modest relative to caseload.

Other units reported uneven outcomes:

Baramulla-Kupwara-Bandipora: 81 cases, zero convictions despite 89 chargesheets

Central unit: 51 cases, no convictions

Additional activity was recorded in Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian, Pir Panjal, Doda, and Udhampur regions with varying results.

Systemic Concerns:

Commenting on the findings, Raman Sharma noted that while arrests and trap operations indicate active enforcement, the conversion of complaints into FIRs and convictions remains disproportionately low, pointing to structural inefficiencies.

"The data reflects a mixed scenario-visible enforcement but weak judicial outcomes, raising concerns about the effectiveness of anti-corruption mechanisms," he said.

Preventive Measures:

The ACB continues awareness initiatives, including observance of Vigilance Awareness Week and International Anti-Corruption Day (December 9), aimed at promoting transparency and accountability.

Source:

RTI reply from the Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (2020-2026 data), accessed by activist Raman Sharma.

Students protest.....

student in a recent accident.

The demonstration saw a large number of students gathering outside the college premises, raising slogans and expressing anger over what they described as negligence leading to the incident.

The protest follows the death of a student Anjali Choudhary, a 4th semester student of Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar Jammu, who lost her life after reportedly falling from a moving bus during a college trip a few days ago.

Students called for accountability and urged authorities to take strict action against those found responsible. Police personnel were deployed in the area to maintain law and order as the

protest intensified.

The situation remained tense for some time, with students continuing their demonstration while security forces monitored the gathering.

NSA Doval.....

Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman and National Security Advisor Musaed Al-Aiban.

During the meetings, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, the regional situation and other issues of mutual interests, the Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia said in a post on X.

Doval's visit comes amid a possible second round of talks between the US and Iran this week in Pakistan to end the West Asia conflict.

The first round of talks between the US and Iran in Pakistan on April 11 and 12 concluded without any agreement. (Agencies)

Bhagwat Bats.....

encompassing all its animate and inanimate constituents. The world remains in constant need of this tradition; and fulfilling this need is the duty of those who identify themselves as Indians," he said.

For this, Bhagwat said that one has to "know and comprehend Bharat" alongside the entirety of its "wealth of knowledge" to keep it alive and carry it forward.

"And if all these have to happen, then understanding Sanskrit is essential to understanding India. India is home to numerous languages. Every language of India is, in its own right, a national language. But what is the link that connects these diverse national languages? It is Sanskrit," he added.

Bhagwat called upon the Sanskrit Bharati to make efforts for greater promotion of Sanskrit in the country, saying the work in this regard should progress to such an extent that every individual in India is able to converse in Sanskrit.

"Sanskrit is not merely a language. In India, Sanskrit is the very 'prana' (life force) of the nation. For the most ancient tradition still in existence today—of thought, of life, and of culture—is India," he said.

Cook, Plumber.....

interrogators about the professions adopted by him to gel with the local population, the officials said.

These details emerged after Srinagar police busted a "deep-rooted" interstate LeT module and arrested five people, including Abdullah, who had been on the run for 16 years.

The officials said that after undertaking menial jobs in Rajasthan, Abdullah, who had infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir from the north side in 2010, took up plumbing work as he had some basic knowledge about it from Pakistan.

After getting in touch with the contacts of Umer Harris, known with the alias 'Khargosh' in the counter-terrorism grid in Jammu and Kashmir, he managed to procure an Aadhar card followed by a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card so that he could receive digital payments from his customers, the officials said.

Hailing from Kasur village in Pakistan's Punjab province, Abdullah, who was well-versed in Punjabi dialect, decided to shift his base to Amritsar but the fear of getting caught by security agencies restrained him from doing so.

After doing other jobs like that of a painter and electrician in Rajasthan and Haryana, Abdullah decided to shift to Malerkotla village in Punjab where he could speak in his Punjabi dialect, the officials said.

The LeT terrorist opened a 'dhaba' (roadside eatery) for some time, during which he learned how to trade in stocks. The eatery did not generate much profit, so he decided to close it down, but by then he had gained significant experience in stock trading from YouTube, the officials said.

At the time of his arrest, he had a profit margin of over Rs 50,000 in his Demat account and he was also teaching others and giving them tips for investments, the officials said.

Abdullah was arrested by Jammu and Kashmir police earlier this month and is being questioned extensively about the possible cells created by him outside the union territory.

The arrest of Abdullah, along with another Pakistani national, Usman alias Khubaib, was another major success for the Srinagar police that comes six months after the dismantling of a "white-collar" terror cell centred at Faridabad's Al Falah University that is linked to the November 2025 Red Fort blast case.

Snowden Files Revisited: The Surveillance Net That Reached Ordinary Citizens

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

In one of the most consequential intelligence disclosures of the 21st century, former NSA insider Edward Snowden exposed how the National Security Agency built a vast surveillance system that extended far beyond conventional national security targets-reaching into the private lives of ordinary people.

Snowden, who leaked classified documents in 2013, described the NSA as an agency driven to collect intelligence "wherever it can, by any means possible," under the justification of safeguarding national interests. His revelations challenged official claims that surveillance pro-

grams were narrowly focused on foreign threats.

Surveillance Beyond Traditional Targets

According to Snowden, the NSA's capabilities were not confined to monitoring hostile actors or foreign governments. The agency was also able to collect and analyze communications of everyday individuals, including emails, phone calls, and internet activity, often without their knowledge.

This raised serious concerns about the scope of domestic surveillance and whether adequate safeguards were in place to protect citizens' privacy.

Access at the Analyst Level

One of the most controversial aspects of Snowden's disclosures

was the level of access within the system. He claimed that NSA analysts had the technical ability to target individuals and retrieve their personal data. In practice, this meant that surveillance could be initiated without the subject ever being aware.

Powers at the Top

Snowden further alleged that certain senior officials possessed sweeping authority, with the ability to approve surveillance on a wide range of individuals-from ordinary citizens to members of the judiciary and even the highest levels of political leadership.

Such claims intensified the debate over oversight mechanisms and whether intelligence agencies operated with sufficient accountabil-

ity.

A Debate That Still Continues

More than a decade later, Snowden's disclosures continue to shape global discussions on privacy, civil liberties, and the balance between security and individual rights. Governments maintain that surveillance tools are vital for preventing threats, while critics argue that unchecked powers risk undermining democratic freedoms.

System Observer Perspective

The Snowden revelations marked a turning point in how the world understands digital surveillance. As technology becomes more advanced, the questions raised then remain just as urgent today:

How much surveillance is justified-and who ensures it does not cross the line?

Who Would Hold Iran's Uranium in a Future Deal?



By System Observer

The most volatile sticking point in ongoing US-Iran negotiations-reportedly mediated through regional backchannels-is no longer just about limits or inspections. It is about custody.

At the heart of the dispute lies Iran's stockpile of uranium enriched to 60% U-235, material that places the country within striking distance of weapons-grade capability. Following the 2025 Israel-US strikes on Iranian nuclear infrastructure, this reserve has

become the single greatest barrier to any durable agreement.

The question now confronting negotiators is stark: if Iran cannot retain full control, who can be trusted to hold it?

Russia: The Leading Contender

has emerged as the most credible and actively discussed option. Moscow has offered to take custody of Iran's enriched uranium-either storing it or converting it into less sensitive forms.

Russia's involvement is not new. It already operates Iran's civilian nuclear facility at and played a supporting role in fuel arrangements under the 2015 .

For Tehran, Russia represents a trusted partner with technical expertise. For Washington, however, the

proposal raises strategic concerns-potentially handing leverage over a critical proliferation asset to a geopolitical rival.

China: Capable but Unacceptable

Technically, China could serve as a custodian. It possesses advanced nuclear infrastructure and remains Iran's largest economic partner.

But politically, the idea collapses under its own weight. Western negotiators are unlikely to accept transferring sensitive nuclear material to another major adversary. Notably, Beijing has not been formally proposed in current discussions, underscoring its limited viability.

Iran's Red Line: Control Over Capitation

Iran's position remains firm: its nuclear assets are

not bargaining chips to be surrendered outright.

Officials have signaled openness only to limited measures-such as down-blending uranium or transferring small quantities under supervision by the . Full external custody, however, crosses a red line tied to sovereignty and strategic deterrence.

The Bottom Line

The uranium question has transformed from a technical compliance issue into a geopolitical standoff. Any agreement will hinge not just on enrichment levels or inspection regimes, but on trust-who holds the material, and who ultimately holds the power.

Until that question is resolved, a comprehensive deal remains out of reach.

Why wars never end: Politics, profit & power

SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

For decades, world leaders have promised peace. From campaign speeches to global summits, the message is consistent: wars must end. Even figures like Donald Trump publicly claimed they could "stop wars."

But history tells a different story.

Behind the language of diplomacy operates a far more powerful reality-war is not just a political failure; it is an economic system.

The business behind the battlefield

Modern warfare is deeply tied to industry. Conflicts don't just involve armies-they activate entire supply chains of weapons, technology, logistics, and reconstruction.

During the Vietnam War, American defense manufacturers saw unprecedented demand. Profits surged as conflict intensified, establishing a pattern that would repeat for decades.

After the September 11 attacks, the United States launched wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. What followed was not only military engagement-but an economic boom for defense contractors.

Companies like Lockheed Martin expanded massively, benefiting from long-term government contracts,



weapons production, and global demand tied directly to conflict zones.

War and the stock market

The financial side of war is often less visible-but highly significant.

Defense stocks historically rise during periods of conflict or geopolitical tension.

Military spending increases create guaranteed revenue streams for contractors.

Long wars mean long contracts-and sustained profits.

Even in recent conflicts like the war in Ukraine, a familiar pattern emerged:

While broader markets such as the New York Stock Exchange showed volatility,

Defense companies saw notable gains.

Firms such as Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics benefited from rising military budgets and weapons demand.

This divergence highlights a critical truth: instability in the world can translate into stability-and growth-for the defense sector.

The contradiction of power Here lies the central paradox: Politicians speak of peace. Governments prepare for war.

Industries profit from both.

National security narratives justify massive defense budgets. Those budgets sustain industries. And those industries, in turn, become essential to national power structures.

This creates a cycle where ending war is politically desirable-but economically disruptive.

Why wars persist

Wars continue not just because of ideology or threats, but because they are embedded in a larger system:

Political incentives: Leaders must appear strong on security

Economic incentives: Defense industries rely on continuous demand

Strategic incentives: Global influence often depends on military capability

The result is a self-reinforcing loop-conflict fuels profit, profit sustains influence, and influence shapes policy.

Final word

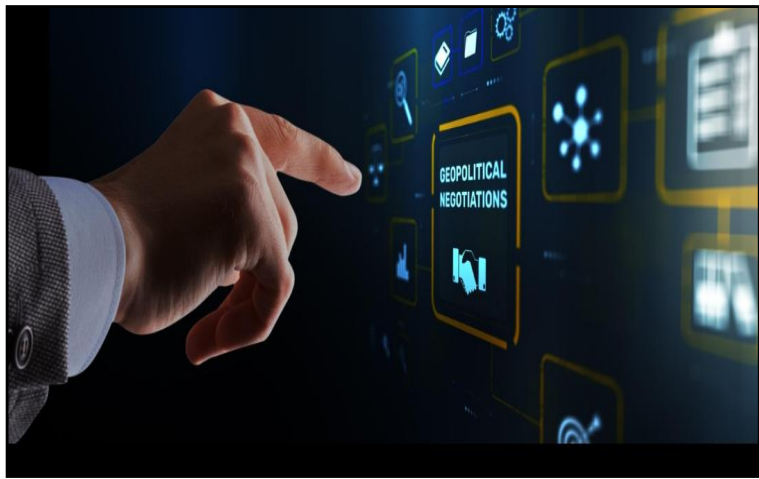
War today is no longer just about territory or ideology. It is intertwined with economics, politics, and global power structures.

Peace remains a public promise.

But war, for many systems, remains a private necessity.

And until those underlying incentives change, the question is not why wars happen-but why they would ever truly end.

The Lonely Superpower: Is the United States Choosing Isolation Over Leadership?



SYSTEM OBSERVER EXCLUSIVE

ed, and long-term investments are being reconsidered.

These shifts are subtle but they are structural. Once economic systems adjust to uncertainty, they rarely revert to previous levels of dependence.

The Silent Transformation of Alliances
Military alliances do not collapse overnight—they evolve.

Across Europe, there is a growing push for defence autonomy. While partnerships with the United States remain intact, European nations are increasingly investing in independent capabilities and coordination mechanisms.

This is not a rejection of the US—but a hedge against unpredictability.

Elsewhere, countries are adopting multi-alignment strategies. They are strengthening regional ties, diversifying defence suppliers, and reducing reliance on any single power.

Canada is expanding trade and security linkages beyond North America. Nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are pursuing balanced foreign policies rather than exclusive alignment.

Meanwhile, China continues to expand its global presence—through trade,

infrastructure, and diplomacy—filling strategic gaps left by inconsistent US engagement.

The Decline of Strategic Trust

At the core of American global influence was a simple but powerful asset: trust.

Trust that alliances would endure

Trust that agreements would be honoured

Trust that policy direction would remain broadly stable

That trust is now eroding.

International students are increasingly choosing alternative destinations. Skilled professionals are reconsidering long-term prospects in the United States. Research ecosystems are becoming more globally distributed.

The shift is not dramatic—but it is measurable.

Trust, once weakened, compounds in reverse. It reduces cooperation, increases hedging behaviour, and gradually weakens influence.

Strategic Retrenchment and Its Limits

The idea of reducing global commitments—often described as retrenchment—has clear appeal. It lowers costs, limits foreign entanglements, and prioritizes domestic concerns.

However, there is a structural trade-off.

Global leadership is not just about capability—it is about presence and reliability.

ty. As the United States steps back, others step forward. As alternatives emerge, dependence declines.

Influence is rarely lost in a single moment. It disperses gradually.

A Changing Global Balance

The international system is not witnessing an immediate collapse of American power. Instead, it is experiencing diffusion.

Allies are hedging rather than aligning fully

Economic networks are diversifying

Security frameworks are becoming more regional

Influence is spreading across multiple centres

In this environment, the United States remains powerful—but less central.

The Loneliness of Power

History shows that great powers rarely fall abruptly. More often, they become less indispensable.

They remain strong—but no longer trusted in the same way.

They remain influential—but no longer the default choice.

They remain present—but no longer at the center.

The United States is not declining in absolute terms. But it risks drifting into a position where its power is less connected, less relied upon, and ultimately more isolated.

That is how a superpower does not collapse—but becomes strategically alone.

The United States is entering a phase of strategic redefinition. Under Donald Trump, Washington has begun to question—and in some cases, dismantle—the very global architecture it constructed after World War II.

For decades, that system rested on three pillars: stable alliances, open economic integration, and institutional leadership. Together, they ensured that American power was not just dominant—but central.

Today, each of those pillars is under pressure.

A Shift From Leadership to Leverage

US foreign policy is increasingly defined by transactional decision-making. Tariffs on allies, conditional security commitments, and unilateral withdrawals from agreements signal a move away from cooperative leadership toward strategic bargaining.

This approach is not without logic. It promises flexibility, reduced obligations, and a stronger emphasis on national interest.

But geopolitics is not measured in election cycles. Over time, consistency matters more than assertion. When predictability declines, even allies begin to reassess their dependence.

Economic Integration Under Strain

The US relationship with Canada has long been one of the most deeply integrated economic partnerships in the world. Cross-border trade, investment, and labour mobility were built on mutual trust and policy stability.

That stability is now weakening.

Trade disputes, regulatory uncertainty, and political volatility are forcing businesses to adapt. Supply chains are being diversified, production is being relocat-

India-Russia defence axis underscores limits of US-led global order

India and Russia continue to sustain one of the world's most enduring military partnerships, spanning arms transfers, joint pro-

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-MiG-29 aircraft
-T-90 Bhishma main battle tanks
-S-400 Triumf air defence systems

-Sukhoi Su-30MKI assembled domestically
-T-90 Bhishma produced under licence

-BrahMos jointly developed and manufactured in India

These programmes strengthen India's indigenous manufacturing base while reducing external supply vulnerabilities.

Logistics and strategic reach

Recent logistics arrangements are enhancing operational flexibility:

-Naval port access for warships
-Refuelling and repair infrastructure

-Aircraft maintenance support
-Faster turnaround during joint exercises and deployments

India gains expanded access across Eurasian regions, while Russia deepens its operational footprint in the Indian Ocean.

American Global Order

For decades, the United States has shaped global security through alliances, sanctions leverage, arms exports, and institutional dominance. However, India's sustained defence engagement with Russia highlights emerging constraints on that model.

-Western sanctions have not halted India-Russia defence cooperation

-Major powers are increasingly pursuing multi-alignment strategies

-National interest is outweighing bloc-based alignment in security decisions



duction, logistics, maintenance, training, and strategic coordination.

A recent bilateral understanding allows up to 3,000 troops, five warships, and ten military aircraft from either side to be stationed on each other's territory for a period of five years, extendable by mutual consent for another five years.

For the United States, this sig-

nals an evolving global landscape where major powers are increasingly shaping security arrangements outside traditional US-led frameworks.

Russia's role in India's Armed Forces

Russia remains central to India's military ecosystem, with a significant share of platforms rooted in Russian and Soviet-origin systems:

-Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets

-BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles (jointly developed)

This deep integration ensures Moscow's long-term operational relevance within one of the world's largest armed forces.

Defence production inside India

Technology transfer and licensed production remain key pillars of the partnership:

PM SHRI GHSS Sohal Celebrates Annual-cum-Sports Day with Enthusiasm

MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat Graces as Chief Guest



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

PM SHRI Government Higher Secondary School Sohal celebrated its Annual-cum-Sports Day with great enthusiasm and zeal under the able guidance of Principal Smt. Sushma Thakur. The event was graced by the Hon'ble MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat, who attended as the Chief Guest, while Dy. CEO Pardeep Rakhwal was present as the Guest of Honour.

Among the Special Guests were Arushi Shukla, along with Principal GHSS Akhnoor Manmeet Wali, IC ZEO Akhnoor Harjeet Singh, Advocate Chetan Sharma, and other distinguished members of the staff and local community.

Addressing the gathering,

Arushi Shukla educated students about the Constitution of India, highlighting fundamental rights and duties. Advocate Chetan Sharma spoke on the ill effects of drug abuse and urged students to stay away from such harmful practices.

The event featured a vibrant mix of cultural and sports activities, including Saraswati Vandana, a skit on drug awareness, tug of war, and other performances that showcased the talent, discipline, and enthusiasm of students.

A science exhibition was also organized, in which students from nearby schools-including GHS Gurha Jagir, GMS Gurha Mandiwala, GMS Badgal Kalan, and GMS Sohal Tal-participated and presented their innovative projects. The Chief Guest appreciated the creativity and efforts

of the students.

Principal Sushma Thakur presented the annual school report, highlighting the achievements and progress of the institution. In his address, MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat encouraged students to work hard, remain focused, and stay away from drugs. He urged teachers to impart quality education along with co-curricular development, and called upon parents to actively participate in Parent-Teacher Meetings to keep a close watch on their children's progress.

The program concluded on a successful note, with dignitaries appreciating the well-organized event and encouraging students to actively participate in both academics and sports for their overall development.

Congress Strengthens Organisation; Mangal Bral, Kuldeep Sharma Appointed as Incharges for Chhamb, Akhnoor



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

In a significant organisational move ahead of upcoming municipal and panchayati elections, the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) has appointed Mangal Bral as Incharge for Chhamb Assembly Constituency and Kuldeep Sharma as Incharge for Akhnoor Assembly Constituency. The appointments have been approved by JKPCC President Tariq Hameed Karra.

Expressing gratitude over his appointment, Mangal Bral thanked the party high com-



mand and senior leadership including Raman Bhalla, Mula Ram and Neeraj Kundan. He said he would work with full dedication to live up to the trust reposed in him by the party.

Bral asserted that he would make all-out efforts to strengthen the Congress party in Chhamb Assembly Constituency. He said that the organisation would be further reinforced across all four blocks of the constituency by mobilising party workers at the grassroots level. He added that people are disillusioned with the "false promises" of BJP and other parties, and are once again looking towards Congress

with hope.

He further stated that Congress has played a pivotal role in taking the country forward on the path of development since Independence and remains committed to regaining public confidence. He appealed to party workers to stay united and work collectively for strengthening the organisation, terming unity as the key to electoral success.

Meanwhile, Kuldeep Sharma also expressed his gratitude to the party leadership for entrusting him with the responsibility. He said he would work tirelessly to strengthen the organisation in Akhnoor and ensure that party policies and programmes reach every section of society.

Party sources said that the appointments have generated enthusiasm among Congress workers at the grassroots level. With elections approaching, the move is being seen as part of the party's strategy to consolidate its base.

Political observers believe that the appointment of Mangal Bral holds particular significance, as he heads the Bral Brahmin community, one of the largest population groups in the region. His nomination is being viewed as a major social and political outreach by the Congress to strengthen its position in the Chhamb constituency.

NIT Srinagar shines at SAE World Congress 2026 in Detroit, USA

Srinagar

In a major boost to its global academic standing, the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar made a strong impression at the prestigious SAE World Congress 2026 held in Detroit, Michigan, USA, with its faculty presenting cutting-edge research on sustainable mobility and advanced automotive systems.

Representing the institute, Dr. Harveer Singh Pali and Dr. Noor Zaman Khan, faculty advisors of the SAE Collegiate Club from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, showcased innovative research addressing key challenges in the rapidly evolving mobility sector, including energy efficiency, emissions reduction, material processing, and smart mobility solutions.

Organised by SAE International, the global congress witnessed participation from leading industry giants such as Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai Motor Company, Toyota, IBM, Dassault Systèmes and Samsung, among others, making it one of the most influential platforms for engineers, researchers, and industry leaders worldwide.

The research contributions from the NIT Srinagar team were widely appreciated by international experts for their focus on sustainability and future-ready automotive technologies.

Their participation also opened avenues for collaboration through high-level interactions with global leaders, including Peter Doty, Executive Vice President of SAE International, G. Nagarajan, President of SAEINDIA, Richard Butcher of BP Castrol, and Catherine Amodio from Ford Motor Company.

Both faculty members expressed gratitude to the Institute leadership, including the Board of Governors Chairman, Director, Registrar, and all Deans, for their continued support and facilitation.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, said the achievement a "matter of immense pride" for the Institute.

"Our faculty's participation and recognition at a global forum like WCX 2026 reflects the growing research capabilities of NIT Srinagar. It underlines our commitment to innovation, industry engagement, and contributing to sustainable technological advancements," he said.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, also lauded the achievement. This accomplishment highlights the institute's expanding global footprint and the quality of research being carried out by our faculty.

"Such international exposure not only enhances institutional reputation but also creates meaningful opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange," he said.

Prof. Rehman said this participation aligns with NIT Srinagar's broader vision of fostering high-impact research and nurturing future-ready engineers capable of contributing to the global mobility ecosystem.

Awareness activities organised across Samba under Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyaan

SAMBA

District Administration Samba continued its intensified outreach and awareness efforts under the Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, with multiple activities conducted across the district to sensitise different sections of society on the harmful effects of drug abuse.

An awareness camp was organised by the Department of Horticulture at Panchayat Dagore, Nud, where locals were sensitised about the dangers of substance abuse and encouraged to adopt a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. Officials also provided information regarding various departmental schemes for the benefit of the public.

An awareness programme among youth was conducted at Gho Brahmana, Block Ramgarh, under the ongoing 100-Day campaign promoting awareness and encouraging young individuals to stay away from drugs.

At District Hospital Samba, an interactive session with recovered substance abusers was held, focusing on counselling, awareness and community participation. Participants shared their experiences, while anti-drug pledges were also administered at District Hospital Samba and CMO Office to reinforce collective commitment.

Grand Celebrations of Bhagwan Parshuram Jayanti Witness Massive Participation in Akhnoor



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

Bhagwan Parshuram Jayanti was celebrated with great religious fervour and enthusiasm in Akhnoor on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. A grand program was held at the historic Parshuram Temple situated near the banks of the Chenab (Chanderbhaga) River, where thousands of devotees gathered to pay obeisance and seek blessings.

The celebrations began in the morning with a grand Shobha Yatra that started from Kameshwar Temple and passed through key locations including Bus Stand, Nirdosh Chowk, and Radha Chowk before culminating at the Parshuram Temple. The procession witnessed overwhelming participation, particularly from the youth. Hundreds of motorcycles and scooters accompanied the rally, while a large number of devotees also joined on foot. The entire route resonated with devotional slogans such as "Jai Shri Parshuram," "Sanatan Dharma Ki Jai," and "Brahmin Ekta Zindabad."

Devotees from various nearby areas including Maira Mandrian,

Chowki Choura, Sohal, Sungaal, Sumah, and Gurha Brahmana participated in large numbers, reflecting the widespread significance of the occasion. The Shobha Yatra was led by Sudesh Magotra, President of Dogra Brahmin Pratinidhi Sabha, Akhnoor.

Several prominent dignitaries graced the occasion, including MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat, Mahamandaleshwar Mahant Rameshwar Dass, former MLA Rajeev Sharma, Baral Biradari President Mangal Baral, and former DDC Suresh Sharma. Upon reaching the temple, devotees offered prayers and participated in religious rituals.

Padma Shri Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri attended the event as the Chief Guest. In his address, he highlighted the historical contributions of the Brahmin community and emphasized their responsibilities in contemporary society. MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat reiterated his commitment to public service and assured full support for the development and upgradation of the Parshuram Temple. Mahant Rameshwar Dass stressed the importance of unity within Sanatan Dharma.



Speaking on the occasion, Vice President Vinay Sapolia stated that Bhagwan Parshuram is revered not just by a particular community but by the entire Sanatan Dharma, and his Jayanti should be celebrated collectively. President Sudesh Magotra credited the grand success of the procession to the enthusiastic participation of the youth, stating that this year's event surpassed all previous records.

During the procession, various social and religious organizations set up stalls along the route to provide refreshments and welcomed participants with flower showers. The organising committee comprised several prominent members including Senior Vice President Sham Sharma, Vice President Vinay Sapolia, Raman Mishra, Babbu Malhotra, Ashwani Dubey, Ballu Takaiya, Brij Mehta, Mangu Ram Sharma, Mohan Lal, Dayal Sharma, Pritam Sharma, Roshan Baral, Yuva President Rajendra Sharma, former Sarpanch Ashwani Sharma, Prateek Mehta, Kuldeep Sharma, Harish Sharma, Kewal Sharma, Tilak Raj Sharma, and Sanjay Sharma, who played a key role in the successful organisation of the event.

At the temple premises, a felicitation ceremony was organized to honour individuals who have excelled in different fields, followed by a community langar (Bhandara) for devotees.

In a parallel development, the Brahmin Grameen Sangathan, under the leadership of Chairman Ganesh Sharma and President Rajni Sharma, organized a separate procession from Sungaal to VK Resort, which later merged with the main Shobha Yatra before reaching the temple.

However, despite the grand scale and success of the event, traffic congestion remained a major concern. The town witnessed traffic jams lasting nearly four hours. As the JKSSB Junior Assistant examination was also scheduled on the same day, many candidates faced inconvenience in reaching their examination centres. Local residents and members of the Brahmin Sabha expressed dissatisfaction over the administrative arrangements, stating that despite prior intimation, adequate traffic management and security measures were not put in place, leading to disruption of both the procession and public movement.

Motorcycle Theft Case Solved by PP Jourian; Bike Lifter Gang Busted, 11 Stolen Vehicles Recovered

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

In a significant breakthrough against vehicle theft, Akhnoor Police has successfully solved a motorcycle theft case registered at Police Station Akhnoor and busted an inter-district bike lifting gang operating in the Jourian-Akhnoor belt. During the operation, police recovered 11 stolen motorcycles from different locations and arrested two accused persons involved in the thefts.

The case was registered under FIR No. 85/2026 under section 303(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at Police Station Akhnoor following a written complaint lodged on April 13, 2026 by Ashok Kumar, son of Ram Lal, resident of Datyal Khour. In his complaint, he reported that his Hero Passion Pro motorcycle bear-



ing registration number JK02BE-8530 had been stolen by unknown persons after being parked near the Veterinary Hospital at Jourian.

Acting swiftly, police initiated an investigation and developed leads regarding suspicious movement of

stolen vehicles in the area. During checking at a naka laid near Jadh Bridge, police noticed one suspicious person riding a motorcycle without a registration plate. On seeing the police party, the suspect attempted to flee but was apprehended after a brief chase.

During questioning, the accused identified himself as Vishal Singh alias Labbi, resident of Sitriyala, Jourian. Sustained interrogation led to the disclosure of his involvement in multiple vehicle thefts along with his associates, identified as Gourab Singh alias Chippu and Vishal Singh alias Rencho. Acting on his disclosures, police arrested another accused, Gourab Singh alias Chippu, and recovered several stolen motorcycles hidden in the forest area of Sitriyala and near Degree College Jourian.

The stolen motorcycle belonging to complainant Ashok Kumar was also recovered on the disclosure of the accused persons. Further investigation revealed that the accused were part of an organised gang involved in stealing motorcycles from different parts of Jammu and adjoin-

ing areas. The vehicles were allegedly sold at throwaway prices to arrange money for drug addiction.

The recovered motorcycles include Hero Splendor, Pulsar, CT-100, Passion Pro, XCD and CBZ models, some of which have already been linked to theft complaints registered in different police stations, while ownership details of a few recovered vehicles are still being verified.

Police said more arrests are likely as investigation continues to identify other members of the gang and recover additional stolen property.

Jammu Police has urged citizens to remain vigilant and immediately report any suspicious activity or abandoned vehicles to the nearest police station so that timely action can be taken. District Police Jammu

Lieutenant Governor Joined Padyatra in Rajouri under Drug-Free J&K Campaign



SYSTEM OBSERVER RAJOURI

The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today joined Padyatra and addressed a public rally in Rajouri under Drug-Free J&K campaign.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that border district Rajouri is sensitive and prone to cross-border drug smuggling.

"But we are determined to crush these challenges, dismantle the drug trade and liberate society from addiction. From April 11, J&K Police had launched a relentless crackdown in Jammu Division. More than 45 FIRs were filed, 63 smugglers nabbed and massive drug hauls seized between the 11th and 15th. Regular Checks are now covering schools, pharmacies, drug

agencies and this drive will continue relentlessly," the Lieutenant Governor said.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor emphasised that not all wars rage on borders. He said some battles brew unseen and for years, countless Jammu Kashmir families have fought addiction within their walls and many have lost loved ones to it.

"On April 11, from the hallowed grounds of Jammu's MA Stadium, we sounded the clarion call to total war by launching a resolute 100-day crusade against drug addiction. I believe addiction is no mere personal failing but it's a gaping wound in our society's fabric. Our terrorist neighbour deploys it as an insidious weapon, nurturing terror through drug smuggling and eroding our

nation's strength from within. We shall prevail in this battle by uniting as one and every citizen rising with unyielding resolve," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that cases registered before 11 April has witnessed a 3 times increase in last 7 days.

"In 100 days, we must completely break the back of drug networks. When the power of society and the might of the administration come together, neither smugglers nor criminals will be spared," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted that prevention anchors Drug-Free J&K campaign and he considers that prevention is mightier than any cure in such cases.

"We must reach our children before drugs do, ignit-

Border district Rajouri is sensitive and prone to cross-border drug smuggling. But we are determined to crush these challenges, dismantle the drug trade and liberate society from addiction: LG Sinha

From April 11, J&K Police had launched a relentless crackdown in Jammu Division. More than 45 FIRs were filed, 63 smugglers nabbed and massive drug hauls seized between the 11th and 15th. Regular Checks are now covering schools, pharmacies, drug agencies and this drive will continue relentlessly: LG

ing awareness and self-respect in every school, college, playground, and community hub," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also called upon J&K Police and other enforcement agencies to ensure exemplary punishment for drug smugglers.

"Make sure no culprit escapes. We should unleash exemplary crackdowns on traffickers poisoning our youth. Those ruining generations won't slip away," the Lieutenant Governor said further adding that administration has crafted an SoP to obliterate drug smugglers networks and ensuring swift justice.

The Lieutenant Governor said that from detection and counseling to detox, rehab, and aftercare, our pledge is total rehabilitation. He asked the officials to audit weekly activities including

list of rehabbed lives, list of arrested smugglers while ensuring that fake centers are shuttered.

"We will restore people's dignity, reconnect them to our shared society, and unleash their potential to build Rajouri's brighter future. This mission demands more than government efforts. I call upon every social organization and NGOs to join us in this noble endeavor," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor administered the Anti-Drug pledge and also launched Rajouri Premier League and Rajouri Football Club under the Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan.

Artists through Musical opera spread awareness on the devastating impacts of substance abuse.

Adopt outcome driven approach: Saurabh Bhagat tells officials during Anantnag 100 day campaign review

SYSTEM OBSERVER ANANTNAG

To evaluate the progress and impact of the ongoing 100 day intensive campaign under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan, Commissioner Secretary Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Saurabh Bhagat, who is also the District Mentor for Anantnag, today virtually held a comprehensive meeting with the concerned officers of the district.

The meeting mainly focused on outcome-driven initiatives and was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, SP, Sunny Gupta, SDMs, ACD, CMO, College Principals, DSWO and other officials.

Expressing satisfaction on progress of the district, the Commissioner Secretary emphasized that the campaign must focus on the tangible outcomes through a multi pronged and holistic



approach. He called for proper identification, treatment and rehabilitation of the victims on scientific lines while strictly maintaining their privacy. He directed the CMO to analyze drug use pattern, specifically class and intake route of drugs, to ensure targeted interventions are made by the authorities. He further stressed the need for a

robust follow-up system to prevent relapse in recovered victims.

The Commissioner Secretary issued directions that teachers and other officials be trained as professional counselors to mentor the vulnerable students and specifically reach out to school dropouts. He further called for tough action on cannabis cultivation belts

and intensified surveillance in tourist areas and hotels to break the supply chain. To create a strong deterrent, law enforcement agencies must impart wide publicity to the legal actions such as seizures, arrests and property attachments through print and social media, he remarked.

During the session, the Commissioner Secretary noted that the success stories of recovered victims and testimonials of their parents, on voluntary basis, be shared through social media and other platforms, to inspire hope and change within the community.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner provided a comprehensive briefing on the district's multi-pronged approach, which included district, department and Panchayat-level action plans. He highlighted the success of awareness rallies, sports activities and the active involvement of influencers and religious leaders

who are using their platforms to denounce drug abuse.

The district has also prioritized the sensitization of tuition centers and the monitoring of courier services to prevent the illicit transport of substances while maintaining a close vigil on hotspots via CCTV surveillance and regular raids. Besides, identification, treatment and rehabilitation of victims through DDAC and ATF also featured in DCs briefing.

SP updated on enforcement efforts including seizures, convictions and the attachment of properties belonging to drug suppliers and peddlers.

Concluding the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary asked the DC to explore the establishment of a larger and augmented Drug De-addiction Centre (DDAC) to cater to the treatment and rehabilitation of possibly higher number of identified victims in future.

EDITORIAL



AVINASH BASSAN

The alleged rape of a seven-year-old child in Ghaziabad is not merely a crime story-it is a moral crisis. When brutality targets a child, it strips society of any claim to civility. At seven, a child barely understands the world; to violate that innocence is to cross the final boundary of humanity.

This is not just about one accused individual. It is about a deeper and more disturbing question: what is our society becoming?

A Pattern, Not an Exception

India has witnessed such horrors before. The Kathua rape case remains one of the darkest

WHEN A CHILD IS NOT SAFE, SOCIETY HAS ALREADY FAILED

chapters in recent memory. Globally, the Jeffrey Epstein scandal exposed how exploitation of minors can exist even within powerful circles.

These cases underline a harsh truth-such incidents are not isolated. They reflect a recurring pattern of violence against the most vulnerable.

The Numbers Tell a Disturbing Story

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau presents a grim trajectory:

2023: 1,77,335 crimes against children registered

2022: 1,62,449 cases

POCSO cases (2023): ~67,000+

Increase: Over 30% rise in child sexual offence cases in the last five years

Behind these numbers lies an even more unsettling reality-they may represent only a fraction of actual incidents. Social stigma, fear, and lack of access to justice prevent many families from reporting such crimes. The silence surrounding these cases is as alarming as the crimes themselves.

A critical insight from official data is that in over 90% of cases, the accused is known to the victim-a neighbour, a relative, or someone within the child's immediate environment. This shatters the illusion that danger exists only outside.

Who Is Responsible?

Blaming one perpetrator is not enough. Crimes of this nature emerge from a broader ecosystem of failure:

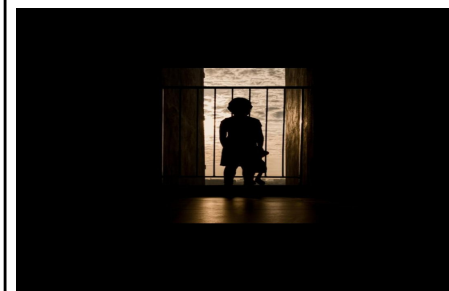
A society that avoids uncomfortable conversations on child safety

Families where awareness and communication gaps persist

Institutions that focus more on reaction than prevention

Ghaziabad: Alfazuddin, the accused in the rape of an innocent 7-year-old girl in Indirapuram, has been ARRESTED following an encounter.

During the encounter, the accused was shot in both legs, and illegal weapons were recovered from the scene.



A rapidly evolving digital space where exposure without guidance can distort behaviour. Recognizing these layers is essential-not to dilute guilt, but to prevent repetition.

Justice Must Go Beyond Arrest

The swift police action in apprehending the accused is a necessary first step. If the individual arrested is indeed the principal offender, it reflects prompt enforcement. Such action deserves acknowledgment.

However, justice is not complete at arrest. It must ensure:

A fair and thorough investigation

Timely prosecution

and strict punishment

With conviction rates in such cases hovering around 30%, the gap between crime and justice remains deeply concerning.

Beyond Outrage

Public anger is immediate but often tempo-



rary. Headlines fade, attention shifts, but the trauma endured by victims does not diminish. The challenge is not only to react-but to reform.

That requires:

Sustained awareness and education

Institutional accountability and a cultural shift that prioritizes the protection of children above all else

The Final Question

A society is ultimately judged by how it treats its most vulnerable. When a child is not safe, it is not just law enforcement that has failed-it is the collective conscience.

The tragedy in Ghaziabad is not just an incident. It is a warning.

The question is no longer whether such crimes shock us.

The real question is-will they change us?

Women's Reservation Bill: A historic opportunity lost

BY ANOOP BOSE

On April 17, 2026, "a date which will live in infamy", the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, seeking to reservation of 33 per cent seats for women in an expanded Lok Sabha and State Assemblies and facilitate delimitation of constituencies, nosedived in the Lok Sabha and crashed even before taking off into self-sustained growth. Of the 528 members present in the House, 298 voted in favour of the Bill and 230 opposed it, resulting in the Bill failing to clear the decisive hurdle of attaining the two-thirds majority (popularly termed as the "special majority") required for a Constitutional Amendment Bill to clear the House, in terms of the affirmative procedure mandated by Article 368 of the Constitution of India. Our most respected and revered Prime Minister Narendra Modi, valiantly leading the charge of the government, had sought to allay a lurking fear of the Opposition parties regarding inequitable representation of Southern States and had personally guaranteed that no injustice would be done to the southern states with the increase in seats in the Lok Sabha. Modi had thundered in ringing tones on the floor of the Lok Sabha, "Let all of us not miss this important opportunity to give reservation to women. I have come to appeal to you - do not see this from a political lens, this is in the national interest". The Union Home Minister Amit Shah (affectionately known as "Mota Bhai"), in his characteristic style, had also assured the House that the current representation of southern states would be preserved, or increased marginally, once the seats in the Lok Sabha were increased from the current 543 to roughly 816.

Yet, the Bill, despite its avowed merits, faced a wholly unjustified defeat because of the machinations of the opposition parties led by Rahul Gandhi, resplendent in his signature white T shirt, whose grasp of and commitment to the Constitution (his great grandfather, the versatile Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was one of the principal

architects of the Constitution and authored the pivotal "Objectives Resolution" on 13th December, 1946, which laid the philosophical foundation of the Constitution, and chaired key committees like the Union Constitution Committee!) leaves much to be desired and has yet to pass the acid test. It is indeed a lamentable travesty of fate that Rahul Gandhi is the great grandson of the brave and resilient first and only Lady Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi who was aptly hailed as "Maa Durga" by the prodigious former Prime Minister of India Atal Behari Vajpayee in the very same Lok Sabha after India's spectacular victory over Pakistan in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War as well as the formidable Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray in an interview published in the Shiv Sena mouthpiece Samana on 19th October, 2011.

In his lacklustre speech, full of polemics but shorn of substance and conviction, Rahul fondly remembered his "Dadi", but conveniently strayed away from the very subject matter of an important constitutional debate and raised wholly extraneous, frivolous and irrelevant pleas. Rahul ranted, "There is a hidden power, massive, extremely strong, but completely hidden. And that power, that force, that doesn't show itself, but is there, knows the entire history of the magician, it knows every single detail about the magician from when he first came into politics, till when he arrived as Prime Minister. The truth is, the magician has been caught. The magician of Balakot, the magician of Demonetisation, the magician of Sindoor has suddenly got caught, why?...

what happened was, the last session of Parliament completely destroyed the structure because a deal was signed with the United States that under no circumstances would have been signed by any Prime Minister of this country, unless he was compromised." Reprehensively, apart from ridiculing, disparaging and denigrating Modi sarcastically as a "magician" and mockingly assailing the Indo-US

trade deal (apparently blissfully ignorant of the fact that Nehru had fostered a warm and cordial "Nehru-Kennedy spirit" and the US had promptly come to the aid of an embattled and encircled India after the Chinese Dragon (with whom the Gandhis have dishonourably struck a secret pact!) tossed the 1955 Bandung Declaration aside, treacherously stabbed Nehru in the back and unleashed upon India a devastating war on 20th October, 1962, and induced China to declare a unilateral ceasefire on 21st November, 1962 and cede considerable territory it had forcibly captured in Arunachal Pradesh!), Rahul has unpatriotically roped in our brave armed forces into the debate and has sought to portray them in a very poor light by raising the spectre of Balakot and Sindoor! Surprisingly, even an astute, enlightened and erudite parliamentarian like the charismatic Shashi Tharoor, who is known as an indefatigable feminist and who is feted, admired and adored by women the world over virtually a la the Italian born actor and dancer Rudolf Valentino (popularly known as the "The Sheik of Araby"), scrupulously chose to tow his party line virtually throwing all his lofty ideals about women's rights and empowerment literally to the wind! The hopes and dreams of over 60 crore Indian women have been rudely dashed to the ground, and the just and worthy cause of greater parliamentary representation for women has been consigned to the freezer locker of history!

In a powerful, hard hitting special televised address to the nation at 8.30 pm on 18th April, 2026, Modi, said, "Today, every citizen of India can see how the rise of women's power has been halted and how their dreams have been brutally crushed. Despite our best efforts, we could not succeed. The Women's Reservation Bill could not be amended, and for this, I sincerely apologize to all mothers and sisters." He then launched an all-out scathing attack on the opposition saying that the opposition had committed "bhroon hatya" ("female foeticide") of this honest endeavour by defeating the

women's quota bill. He further went on to assert without mincing words, "What happened in Parliament was not just desk thumping, but an attack on the dignity and self-respect of women. A woman may forget many things, but she never forgets her insult. The conduct of the Congress and its allies in Parliament will remain in the minds of women across the country."

Retracing the pages of our chequered history, Swami Vivekananda, a staunch advocate of the cause of women, had proudly proclaimed on 21st January, 1895, "Our God is both personal and absolute, the absolute is male, the personal, female. And thus it comes that we now say: 'The first manifestation of God is the hand that rocks the cradle.'" Again, in May, 1896, he had asserted, "There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing." Likewise, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, was a firm believer in women's empowerment. He had remarked at the All India Women's Conference on 23rd December, 1936, "When a woman, whom we call abala becomes sabala, all those who are helpless will become powerful." We are indeed proud of our women parliamentarians and the names of some of them like Radhabai Subbarayan, Rukmini Devi Arundale, Anne Mascarene, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Vijaya Raje Scindia, Sucheta Kripalani, Sheila Dikshit, Sushma Swaraj and Geeta Mukherjee, read like a veritable roll of honour in the glorious saga of Indian politics.

I am highly emboldened to conclude with the invigorating words of our national poet and Nobel laureate, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, "For we women are not only the deities of the household fire, but the flame of the soul itself."

The hopes and dreams of over 60 crore Indian women have been rudely dashed to the ground and the just and worthy cause of greater parliamentary representation for women has been consigned to the freezer locker of history!

Rinku, Anukul script dramatic turnaround as KKR end winless run with four-wicket win vs RR

KOLKATA

Vice-captain Rinku Singh lived up to expectations with a composed unbeaten 53 as Kolkata Knight Riders survived anxious moments to script their first win of IPL 2026 with a four-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals, here on Sunday. Courtesy Rinku and Anukul Roy, the target was achieved with two balls to spare and the win took them to ninth spot in the 10-team table.

Wily Varun Chakravarthy (3/14) returned to his best, showing perfect chemistry with veteran Sunil Narine (2/26) as KKR rediscovered their spin magic at Eden Gardens to restrict RR to an under-par 155/9. Rookie pacer Kartik Tyagi (3/22) also shone at the death with important wickets.

The bowlers had done half the job for KKR in pursuit of their maiden victory after six matches, and it was up to the batters to finish the task.

But what followed was another familiar batting horror from a line-up that has struggled for consistency this season.

Reeling at 85/6 in 13.3 overs, KKR needed 69 runs from the last six overs, with RR's bowlers tightening the screws and Rinku alongside Anukul Roy appearing to be the last recognised pair.

Then came a moment of fortune as Rinku was dropped on eight by Nandre Burger — a sitter that proved to be



the turning point. The KKR vice-captain made full use of the reprieve to change gears, while Roy played the perfect supporting role as the duo stitched a match-winning 76-run seventh-wicket stand off just 37 balls to seal KKR's first win of the season.

The much-awaited victory came after a six-match winless run, taking KKR to three points at the halfway stage. For RR, it was a second successive defeat, with their middle-order concerns persisting, especially with skipper Riyan Parag enduring a lean run.

The win will bring much-needed relief for KKR, who had lost from winning positions in recent games. It took them 22 days to finally break the jinx.

On a day when skipper Ajinkya Rahane failed again, registering a second successive duck, it was

Rinku who led from the front with 53 not out off 34 balls (5×4, 2×6). Roy complemented him well with 29 not out off 16 balls (1×4, 2×6).

Rinku shifted momentum with a slog-sweep six off Ravi Bishnoi in the 16th over, while Roy matched him with a six in an over that yielded 19 runs.

Rinku then took on RR's best bowler Jofra Archer with two boundaries, and Roy showed great composure by striking a six off him in the penultimate over as KKR were left needing just 11 runs in the final over.

RR will rue falling short by at least 30 runs, undone by the brilliance of Chakravarthy, Narine and Tyagi.

However, they had a perfect start while defending 155. The fiery pace duo of Archer and Burger reduced KKR to

5/2 in 1.2 overs.

Archer struck with the very first ball, rattling Tim Seifert's stumps with a sharp incoming delivery. Rahane followed soon after, edging behind to depart for a duck.

Cameron Green, who had impressed with a 79 in the previous match, counter-attacked with three consecutive boundaries and a six to revive KKR, taking them to 31/2 in four overs.

But a smart spell from Bishnoi, combined with a moment of brilliance from wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel, cut short Green's innings at 27 (13).

Thereafter, experienced campaigner Ravindra Jadeja applied further pressure with his tight lines and turn, dismissing Angkrish Raghuvanshi (10) and Rovman Powell (23) to leave KKR struggling at 70/5 in 10.1 overs.

But just when the chase seemed to be slipping away, Rinku and Roy turned the game on its head with a partnership full of composure and belief. Earlier RR raced to 63 for no loss in the power play after electing to bat.

Skipper Ajinkya Rahane appeared overly defensive with his approach, delaying the introduction of spin as the Rajasthan openers —

Yashasvi Jaiswal and young Vaibhav Sooryavanshi — clocking at over 10 an over against the innocuous KKR pace attack.

But when they were insert-

ed, the much-anticipated match-up between

Sooryavanshi and the experienced spin duo lived up to the expectations.

The 15-year-old struck Narine for a second ball six, but the veteran responded with five dot balls in his first over.

Chakravarthy then dismissed him with his fourth delivery, reaching his landmark 200th T20 wicket.

Sooryavanshi's slog sweep lacked power and was taken by a well-judged Ramandeep Singh at deep midwicket.

That dismissal triggered a collapse as RR, cruising at nearly 10 runs per over at the halfway stage, slipped to 118/4 in 15 overs, with the run rate dropping below eight.

They lost Sooryavanshi (46 off 28), Dhruv Jurel (5), Jaiswal (39 off 29) and skipper Riyan Parag (12) in quick succession against the run of play. Parag, the controversial choice as RR skipper, has been the worst performer for Royals so far. The middle phase belonged entirely to KKR's spin duo, who bowled in tandem and choked the scoring.

Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 155 for 9 in 20 overs (Jaiswal 39, Sooryavanshi 46; Chakravarthy 3/14, Tyagi 3/22, Narine 2/26).

Kolkata Knight Riders 161 for 6 in 19.4 overs (Rinku 53 not out; Ravindra Jadeja 2/8).

Floundering Mumbai Indians look for answers against confident Gujarat Titans



AHMEDABAD

An embattled Mumbai Indians side will be desperate to arrest its slide when it takes on a confident Gujarat Titans outfit, which is eager to extend its winning run, in the Indian Premier League here on Monday.

The two teams enter the fixture having endured contrasting fortunes in recent weeks. The Titans, after opening their campaign with back-to-back defeats, have rediscovered their rhythm with three successive wins which has placed them sixth on the table.

Mumbai, in stark contrast, began with a rare

opening-game victory but have since unravelled, suffering four defeats on the bounce and the margin of their losses have been huge, leaving them languishing at ninth.

For the five-time champions, it has been a season where little has clicked. Their campaign has been undermined by a combination of timid powerplay returns, inconsistent middle-order output, and a bowling attack that has lacked penetration.

Much of the spotlight has been on Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma, the fulcrum of MI's middle order.

While Suryakumar has

shown flashes of brilliance, including a half-century, he has struggled for consistency. Tilak, meanwhile, has been woefully out of form, managing just 43 runs in five innings.

Skipper Hardik Pandya hasn't fared much better either, with 81 runs from four games, further compounding Mumbai's batting woes.

The problems, however, run deeper than just batting. Mumbai's inability to seize control in the powerplay has left them chasing games too often.

The redoubtable Jasprit Bumrah's wicket-less run is one of MI's major concerns. The premier fast bowler has been economical and disciplined but remains wicketless, with opposition batters content to play him out without taking undue risks.

Support from the rest of the attack has been minimal. Shardul Thakur and Deepak Chahar have failed to make decisive breakthroughs as has Pandya, while the spinners have been erratic with their lengths.

On batting-friendly sur-

faces, this has proved costly, with MI repeatedly conceding momentum early.

To add to their woes, Mumbai are sweating on the availability of talisman Rohit Sharma, who hurt his hamstring against Royal Challengers Bengaluru and missed the previous game against Punjab Kings.

In contrast, Gujarat Titans have found ways to win despite their own issues. Their batting remains heavily top-dependent, relying on skipper Shubman Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler to do the bulk of the scoring.

The middle-order comprising Glenn Phillips, Washington Sundar and Rahul Tewatia is yet to inspire confidence.

With the ball, the Titans have shown promise but lack consistency. Mohammed Siraj and Kagiso Rabada have been expensive at times, while Prasidh Krishna and Rashid Khan have blown hot and cold.

The bowling unit will be brimming with confidence though after the solid performance against KKR in the previous game.

Teams
Gujarat Titans:
Shubman Gill (c), Anuj Rawat, Jos Buttler, Kumar Kushagra, Glenn Phillips, Rashid Khan, Manav Suthar, Nishant Sindhu, Rahul Tewatia, Washington Sundar, Gurnoor Brar, Arshad Khan, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Kagiso Rabada, Ravisrinivasan Sai Kishore, Ishant Sharma, Ashok Sharma, Jason Holder, Tom Banton, Luke Wood, Sai Sudharsan, M Shahrukh Khan, Jayant Yadav, Kulwant Khejroliya.

Mumbai Indians: Hardik Pandya (c), Quinton de Kock (wk), Danish Malewar, Robin Minz (wk), Ryan Rickelton (wk), Sherfane Rutherford, Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Atharva Ankolekar, Raj Bawa, Corbin Bosch, Will Jacks, Mayank Rawat, Naman Dhir, Mitchell Santner, Shardul Thakur, Ashwani Kumar, Trent Boult, Jasprit Bumrah, Deepak Chahar, AM Ghazanfar, Mayank Markande, Mohd Izhar, Raghu Sharma.

SC issues Pan-India directions for road safety, says expressways should not become corridor of peril



NEW DELHI

Observing that expressways must not become corridors of peril due to administrative lethargy or infrastructural gaps, the Supreme Court has issued a slew of pan-India guidelines for enhancing road safety, including a ban on parking of heavy vehicles on such roads.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AS Chandurkar pointed out that national highways constitute two percent of India's total road length but account for nearly 30 percent of all road fatalities.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AS Chandurkar issued directions to the Ministry of Road and Transport, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and States and Union Territories to make roads safer, observing that the loss of even a single life to avoidable hazards like illegal parking or blackspots etc., represents a failure of the State's protective umbrella.

"The loss of even a single life to avoidable hazards like illegal parking or blackspots etc., rep-

resents a failure of the State's protective umbrella. The 'Right to Life' enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India is not merely a guarantee against the unlawful taking of life, but a positive mandate upon the State to ensure a safe environment where human life is preserved and valued," the top court said in its order of April 13.

It passed the order in a suo motu case registered in the aftermath of the loss of 34 lives in successive road accidents on November 2 and 3, 2025, in Phalodi in Rajasthan, and Rangareddy in Telangana on the systemic negligence and catastrophic infrastructure failures that led to these inevitable casualties.

The bench, which issued pan-India directions said, "Recognising the safety of the commuter as an integral facet of the right to live with dignity as a constitutional obligation under Article 21 of Constitution of India, it is necessary in the interest to address the systematic root causes that these interim directions are issued in exercise of powers under Article 142

of the Constitution of India." The bench said the court reiterates that no pecuniary or administrative constraint can outweigh the sanctity of human life, and the strict timelines provided herein reflect the urgency of this constitutional obligation.

It directed no heavy or commercial vehicle shall park/stop on any national highway carriageway or paved shoulder except at a designated bay, lay-bye, or wayside amenity.

It said enforcement of the direction shall be effected through the Advanced Traffic Management System - ATMS real-time alerts to State Police, GPS - timestamped photographic evidence, and integrated eChallan generation.

"These directions must be complied with by the officials and personnel of National Highway Authority of India, state police, state transport department.

The district magistrates of the concerned districts shall set-up a standard operating procedure for this purpose as regards periodical inspections and patrolling by all these authorities. These directions must be complied within 60 days from the date of this order," it said.

One of the important directions included prohibition with immediate effect on construction/operation of any new dhaba, eatery, or commercial structure within the Right of Way (ROW) of any national highway. "District magistrates shall enforce demolition/removal of all new or existing unauthorised structures within 60 days, in terms of the CNH Act procedure and SOP dated August 7, 2025," the bench directed.

Rijiju terms TMC 'anti-women' for opposing bill in Lok Sabha

KOLKATA

Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Sunday termed the Trinamool Congress as "anti-women", accusing it of "foiling" the efforts to pass the women's reservation bill in Lok Sabha.

He claimed that there was no valid reason to oppose the bill.

Rijiju told a press meet that there should not have been any reason to oppose the bill by four-five parties, including TMC, Congress and now women of Bengal will "teach the TMC", as they are angry with the stand of the party regarding the bill.

Countering the claims of TMC supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Rijiju said the BJP had never imagined the bill would bring political dividends for the party, as all "we wanted was a very simple and transparent bill" aimed at substantially raising the number of representation of women.

"How can they cite excuses and reasons not to support the women's bill?" he wondered.

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill was defeated in the Lok Sabha on Friday night after opposition parties voted against it.

Rijiju said increasing seats in the Houses "is a progressive step" and one must keep in mind the ratio behind the number of voters in a constituency and a people's representative, which is not the same in India as compared to many other democracies in the West.

"The number of seats should be increased, and it would be double the existing number of seats in every state, as spelt out by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. There was no ambiguity in it, no hidden agenda," he said.

A two-third majority was required for the passage of the crucial bill, but the BJP-led ruling alliance could not muster the numbers.

About the TMC's charge that central agencies like ED, CBI, and IT become active during the poll season in West Bengal by conducting raids at the houses of TMC candidates, close aides and police officers, Rijiju said, "Any agency, any organisation can investigate any case of corruption, they have the authority. If you have grievances, you can approach the judiciary, and if there are any lacunae, you will get protection in the court."

About the arguments cited by Banerjee and other TMC leaders regarding crime against women in other states, Rijiju said, "West Bengal used to be one of the safest places even a few years back, but now we hear about one incident after another. Thus, you cannot cover up the failure by pointing to issues in other states."

Describing the attitude of "CM as anti-women", he said "one Rajya Sabha MP from TMC had resigned in protest against the state's failure to ensure women's security in 2024. And she (Banerjee) is shamelessly saying why women should go out at night," while talking about a rape incident at a medical college in the state.

About TMC lodging a complaint against Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for handing over weaver card during her recent visit to poll-bound Bengal, Rijiju said: "In a federal set-up, a state has to help in implementing the policies and projects of the Centre, not to oppose it for political reasons."

"Bizarre step taken by Mamata Banerjee. When the Union government takes any step, it is the duty of the state to help implement it. Nirmala Sitharaman is the first woman finance minister, and she has done exceedingly well. What they did to her is unfortunate," he said.

About the BJP's promise to project a 'bhrashtachar mukt sarkar' in West Bengal, he said, "BJP has zero tolerance to corruption... Before 2014, during the Congress rule, there were tales of corruption every day as newspaper stories. Several MPs and ministers were embroiled in scams at that time."

"However, since 2014, not a single minister in the Modi cabinet is tainted by scam. In a similar way, in Bengal, when the BJP takes over, there will be zero corruption cases," he said. (PTI)

Opposition stalling women's empowerment for political gains: Uttarakhand CM Dhami

DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Congress and its allies, accusing them of intentionally stalling a bill to amend the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, or women's quota law, to prioritise "party interests over national progress".

The remarks followed an exchange between the BJP and the opposition parties over the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, which failed to secure the required two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Addressing the media, Dhami said the Congress, along with the Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress and the DMK, tried to mislead the public with "baseless arguments" to block a "revolutionary decision" for half the country's population.

"While the BJP is committed to balanced representation, the negative politics of the opposition blocked a historic opportunity. Postponing the constitutional rights of half the population is equivalent to injustice," Dhami said.



He alleged that these parties, driven by a legacy of "stall and mislead" tactics, celebrated the bill's defeat instead of supporting a move toward a 'Viksit Bharat'.

The chief minister also claimed that the bill failed to achieve consensus in the House because the opposition parties shifted the focus to "irrelevant" issues.

Criticising the Samajwadi Party for demanding religion-based quotas within the bill, Dhami said the Constitution does not provide for reservations based on religion and termed the demand a "diver-

sionary tactic".

He said that while the bill aimed to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in 2029, when parliamentary elections are due, the opposition's lack of political will and attempt to politicise the census and the delimitation exercise acted as the final barrier.

"The record of the Congress speaks for itself; it has consistently opposed landmark decisions, be it the Shah Bano case, triple talaq or the abrogation of Article 370," Dhami said.

He also claimed that "family-run" parties fear that empowering women from ordinary households will weaken their own political grip.

"The Congress and its partners, including the Samajwadi Party and the DMK, only want to see women from certain political families in power. They are intimidated by the prospect of women from humble backgrounds in policy-making roles," he claimed.

Stating that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had already assured the House that no state would face a loss of seats after the delimitation exercise, Dhami dismissed claims that southern India's representation would be diminished as "baseless rumours" intended to mislead the public.

New Queen Elizabeth II charity to bring communities together in UK

LONDON,

The UK government is marking the birth centenary of the late Queen Elizabeth II this month with a new independent charity that will honour her lifelong commitment to public service by focusing on bringing communities together across the country.

The Queen Elizabeth Trust will be formally launched on Tuesday, which would have been the British monarch's hundredth birthday, with a one-off government endowment of 40 million pounds as a catalyst for future fundraising. King Charles III will be instrumental in bringing his mother's values to life for present and future generations as the Royal Patron of the charity, the Cabinet Office said.

"This is a real chance to support communities across the United Kingdom and bring shared spaces back to life: places where people of all ages and backgrounds can meet, connect, and belong," said Sir Damon Buffini, founding-chair of the Queen Elizabeth Trust.

"I've seen first-hand the differ-

ence these spaces can make, creating opportunities, sparking connections, and giving people a sense of pride in where they live. At a time when so many feel disconnected, this work feels more important than ever.

"As an organisation, we're ambitious about what we can achieve, and our goal is to significantly increase our impact by attracting support from others. I'm looking forward to rolling up my sleeves, listening and learning from communities, and seeing what we can make happen," he said.

Local projects undertaken by the charity could include the development and transformation of under-used buildings and green spaces, as well as neighbourhood hubs. Funding will also help communities ensure they have access to the skills and training they require to deliver local events.

The Cabinet Office said that the new trust's targeted support for communities will be inspired by the late Queen's stated belief that "everyone is our neighbour".

"I hope this new charity will encourage people to remember the

life and service of the late Queen by recognising the importance she attached to strengthening that sense of engagement and belonging amongst local communities," said Lord Robin Janvrin, Chair of the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Committee.

The charity is one of three related projects in memory of Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's longest-serving monarch, who died aged 96 in September 2022. A national memorial in St James's Park and a digital memorial to honour her legacy will also be formally unveiled in London on Tuesday.

The Cabinet Office said the move is part of a long-standing British tradition of honouring the monarch through living memorials that make a "real difference" in people's lives.

The Queen Elizabeth Trust will ensure Her late Majesty is remembered for her unique ability to bring people together across generations and from all walks of life, it said.

The new charity is said to be the result of the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Committee's recommendation following over two years of engagement with diverse groups

across the UK.

The announcement came as Buckingham Palace confirmed award-winning historian, biographer and curator Dr Anna Keay as the official biographer of the late Queen. The biography has been commissioned by King Charles, and Keay will therefore be given access to Queen Elizabeth II's extensive personal and official papers held in the Royal Archives. She will also be able to talk to those who knew her well throughout her life and service, including members of the royal family. "It is a profound honour to have been asked to write the official biography of Queen Elizabeth II," said Keay, a member of the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Committee.

"She was our longest-reigning monarch and an extraordinary woman, whose life spanned a century of great change. I am deeply grateful to His Majesty the King for entrusting me with this responsibility and for granting me access to her papers, and I will do all I can to do justice to her life and work," she said.

Over 2,200 Sikh pilgrims return to India from Pakistan after Baisakhi celebrations

LAHORE

Over 2,200 Indian Sikhs on Sunday returned to their homeland after attending the 10-day Baisakhi Festival and the 327th Khalsa Janam Din celebrations in Pakistan, an official said.

"Pakistan's Punjab Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Chairman Evacuee Trust Property Board Qamar-uz-Zaman and Additional Secretary Shrines Nasir Mushtaq saw the Sikh pilgrims off at Wagah Border," Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) spokesperson Ghulam Mohyuddin said.

Around 2,238 Sikh pilgrims arrived on April 10 to participate in Baisakhi festivities. Pakistan had issued around 2,800 visas to Sikh pilgrims this year, while approximately 600 pilgrims were unable to travel.

At the end of their visit, a cultural night was hosted by the Punjab government at historic Hazuri Bagh outside the Lahore Fort for Indian Sikh pilgrims, and a special ceremony was held at the Dayal Singh Trust Library under the World Centre for Punjabi on Saturday.

The Hazuri Bagh event featured

colourful cultural performances, traditional music, and a lively atmosphere, wherein Sikh pilgrims enthusiastically participated. Many were seen enjoying the music and performing bhangra to the beat of drums, reflecting the spirit of joy and unity.

During the visit, the pilgrims performed religious rites at Gurdwara Panja Sahib Hassan Abdal, Gurdwara Janamasthan Nankana Sahib, Kartarpur Sahib and Dera Sahib Lahore, where they made collective supplications for peace and interfaith understanding.

They also offered special prayers for regional peace and improved Pakistan-India relations.

A traditional Kabaddi tournament was organised for the visiting Sikhs at Kartarpur Sahib.

In Lahore, the pilgrims visited various historical and cultural landmarks, including the Lahore Fort, and toured the Walled City, the Mall, and Liberty Chowk.

They also explored prominent city markets, such as Anarkali Bazaar and Shah Alam Market. Talking to the media, a visitor, Sardar Surjit Singh, expressed satisfaction with the provision of facilities.

India-Russia Defence Pact Allowing Limited Troop Deployment Becomes Operational



New Delhi/Moscow

A key defence cooperation agreement between India and Russia enabling the deployment of military personnel and assets in each other's territory has become operational, marking a notable step in their long-standing strategic partnership.

The agreement, originally signed in 2025 and brought into force earlier this year, allows both countries to deploy up to 3,000 troops, along with a limited number of aircraft and naval vessels, under mutually agreed conditions. Officials indicate that the framework is designed primarily to facilitate joint military exercises, training activities, humanitarian missions, and disaster response operations.

The arrangement does not provide for permanent basing of forces. Instead, deployments will be temporary, activity-based, and subject to

prior approval by both sides. Defence analysts note that such agreements are increasingly common among strategic partners seeking to enhance interoperability and logistical coordination.

This development builds on decades of close defence ties between New Delhi and Moscow, including joint exercises such as INDRA, defence procurement, and technology collaboration. The new framework is expected to streamline operational cooperation and enable quicker coordination during contingencies.

Both governments have reiterated that the agreement is not directed against any third country and is intended to strengthen mutual security interests and regional stability. Further details regarding implementation protocols and future joint activities are expected to emerge in due course.



Tanishaa Mukerji drops three-generation pic featuring Tanuja, Kajol, Nysa on latter's birthday



Actress Tanishaa Mukerji took to her social media account to wish her niece Nysa Devgan on her birthday, sharing a heartwarming picture that feature together three generations of her family, her mother and veteran actress Tanuja, her sister Kajol, herself, and the birthday girl Nysa Devgn.

In the picture, Tanishaa is seen posing for a happy selfie along with Kajol, their mother Tanuja and Nysa.

Tanishaa is seen sporting stylish sunglasses, while Kajol looks radiant in a traditional outfit.

Tanuja is seen exuding grace in a bright pink ensemble, holding a small dessert.

The birthday girl Nysa is seen standing close to her mother and grandmother smiling for the photo.

Tanishaa wrote, "Happy birthday darling Nyskins! keep shining baby!"

Meanwhile, Kajol had earlier given fans a glimpse into her daughter's intimate birthday celebrations.

On Sunday, the actress had shared a video featuring a dessert topped with a "Happy Birthday" topper and a cute candle.

For the uninitiated, Nysa Devgan was born on April 20, 2003, and is the daughter of Bollywood star couple Kajol and Ajay Devgn.

The young girl who turned 23 this year, is reportedly pursuing her studies abroad currently.

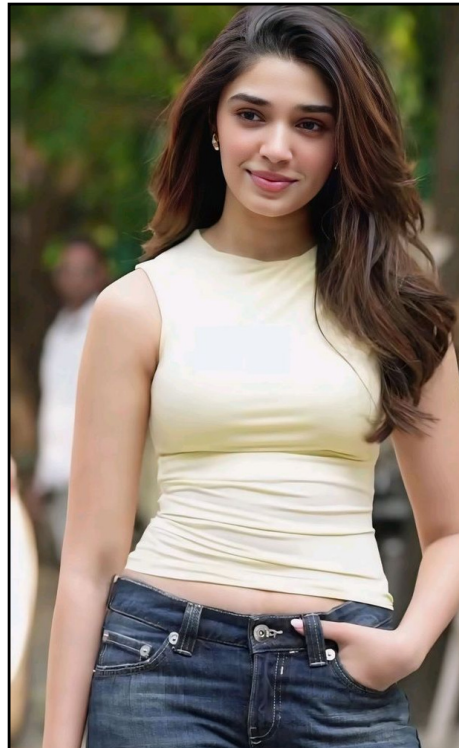
Nysa is a paparazzi favourite and is often spotted at events and outings with social media influencer Orry.

Kajol and Ajay Devgn also have a younger son, Yug Devgn.

Talking about Kajol and Ajay's love story, it dates back to the sets of their 1995 film Hulchul, where the two first met. Reportedly, they fell in love while filming their other movie Pyaar Toh Hona Hi Tha.

The couple tied the knot in 1999 in a Maharashtrian traditional setup.

Krithi Shetty: We need to know that we're enough and that love is given, not earned!



Actress Krithi Shetty, who played the lead along with Pradeep Ranganathan in director Vignesh Shivan's Love Insurance Company (LIK), has now penned a note of gratitude in which she has disclosed that she personally connected with the message of the film and that somewhere one needs to know that "we're enough" and that "love is given and not earned".

Taking to her Instagram page to pen a note of gratitude, the actress, while sharing Behind The Scene videos and pictures from the sets of the film, wrote, "A colourful BTS for a colourful film #loveinsurancecompany (still in theatres near you). Firstly, I'm grateful to God and the universe for letting us make this dream of a film come to life."

She then thanked director Vignesh Shivan saying, "Thank you

for choosing to say this story even though every frame was extremely difficult and expensive to pull off, and for writing a character like Dheema – someone who has had a broken and emotionally distant childhood, who sees her phone as a parent, who has had to work to receive love... until someone shows her that there's no validation required to be loved. I personally really connected to that message because somewhere we need to know that we're enough and love is given not earned."

To the film's cinematographer Ravi Varman, she said, "I'm beyond grateful to (you). If I ever feel insecure about how I look... I'll come watch LIK because how beautifully he has presented me. Apart from that, I'm a huge admirer of his craft and how effortlessly he can compose a brilliant shot."

The actress also praised actor S J Suryah, saying she had learnt so much from him. She pointed out that the actor brought his best every single day to every single shot. Stating that she had a dream-come-true moment working with music director Anirudh, the actress said his music was the soul of her film.

She also had words of praise for her co-stars Gouri Kishan, who she called her 'partner in fun' and an 'effortless' actor, and Pradeep Ranganathan, who she called extremely talented.

Having thanked her team and every single member of the cast and crew, she concluded the post by expressing gratitude to the audience. She said, "(Thank you) my dear audience for all the love for a film which was truly made with the effort of literally thousands of people. And @billieeilish because 'what was I made for' was the theme song I had picked for Dheema while portraying the character."

Munmun Dutta shares glimpse of her gut-friendly summer morning routine

Actress Munmun Dutta, popular for essaying the role of Babita in the superhit show Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah, on Monday morning gave a peek into her healthy summer morning routine, focusing on gut-friendly foods.

Taking to her social media account, the actress shared visuals of her breakfast, and highlighted the importance of digestive health during summers.

She wrote, "Made our morning glass of great gut health."

In the first video, Munmun is seen preparing a buttermilk-based drink, which she called "morning glass of great gut health".

The drink seems to have ingredients such as chopped onions, fresh coriander leaves, and a fermented base, making it a probiotic-rich drink.

In the other picture, Munmun wrote, "Ragi Ambali: Fermented overnight, great for gut microbiome and digestive health and very cooling for summer months."

Talking about "Ragi Ambali", it is a traditional fermented beverage made using ragi (finger millet).

The cooling drink is prepared by fermenting ragi overnight and is known for supporting gut microbiome and aiding digestion and keeping it cool.

Talking about Munmun Dutta, the actress is a fitness freak and enthusiast and often is seen sharing allot many videos and photos from her workout and Yoga sessions.



On the professional front, the actress has been a part of "Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah" for over 15 years and remains one of the most loved faces on the show.

Her on-screen pairing with Iyer has been appreciated by audiences over the years.

Apart from her work, the actress is also an avid animal lover.

She is often seen taking care of stray animals around her and on the sets of the show.

Recently, Munmun had shared pictures of herself rescuing a kitten on a set, whom she also fostered, and was seen spending time with it in her green room.

Dipika Kakar says MRI scans are now a part of life: We have to live with it

Television star Dipika Kakar took to her YouTube vlogs to share a health update, where she revealed that her doctor has advised her to undergo MRI scans almost every month for better diagnosis of her health and illness.

The actress revealed that regular MRI scans have now become a part of her life as she continues to battle health complications, saying that she will now have to 'live with it'.

In a recent vlog on their YouTube channel, her husband and television actor Shoaib Ibrahim and Dipika revealed that recent MRI reports showed two tiny spots, but doctors have assured them that they are too small to act upon at the moment.

"In the MRI, there are two small dots again, but they are very small. Doctors have said that taking any action right now will not be sensible. We will repeat the scan after a month. I think this is going to be a routine for us. We have to do very close scans," Dipika said.

Both Dipika and Shoaib further explained that these spots are so minute that they don't even appear in CT scans and are only visible through MRI due to its sensitivity.

Dipika added that the doctors will take timely action if required,

similar to her earlier treatment with RFA (Radiofrequency Ablation) as advised by doctors.

The actress also shared that she will soon begin immunotherapy, which has been recommended by multiple doctors. "It will start this week. It requires going to the hospital every 20-30 days, and each session lasts about 5-6 hours," she said.

For the uninitiated, Dipika, who has been dealing with a serious health condition involving cysts and cancer concerns, has earlier too spoken about the emotional and physical toll of constant medical examinations.

She had admitted that fatigue and mental exhaustion often take over.

Shoaib was seen stressing over the importance of maintaining a positive environment at home especially when there's somebody who is not in the best phase physically and mentally.

"There should be fun and laughter at home. Being happy is also an important part of your well-being," he said.

Shoaib also shared that Dipika has been following a strict diet and has naturally lost around 2 kg over the past month.

Pallanwala Club Clinches Patyari Volleyball Tournament 2026 Title



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

Pallanwala Club emerged victorious in the Patyari Volleyball Tournament 2026, defeating Khour Club in a thrilling final match held at Patyari under the aegis of Patyari Youth Club.

The final turned out to be a nail-biting contest, with Pallanwala Club securing the win by 2-1 sets. Pallanwala dominated the first set with a score of 25-21, while Khour Club made a strong comeback in the second set, winning 25-22. However, in the decisive third set, Pallanwala held their nerve and sealed the match 15-

12 to lift the championship trophy.

The tournament witnessed participation from around 20 teams representing Akhnoor, Pargwal, Jourian, Khour, and nearby areas, highlighting the growing enthusiasm for volleyball in the region.

Sh. Mohan Lal Bhagat, MLA Akhnoor, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Sh. Shamsher Singh, Sarpanch Gurha Brahmana (East), attended as Guest of Honour. Among the Special Guests were Smt. Sonia Verma and prominent social figure Sh. Atul Sudan.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat lauded

the efforts of the organizers and appreciated the players for their performance. He emphasized that such tournaments play a vital role in promoting sports culture and channelizing the energy of youth in a positive direction. He further assured continued support for the development of sports infrastructure in the Akhnoor region and encouraged young players to pursue sports with dedication and discipline.

In the final, Yuvraj Singh captained Khour Club, while Ankush led Pallanwala Club to victory with commendable leadership and teamwork.

The winning team was awarded a cash prize of ₹8,000 along with a trophy and medals, while the runner-up Khour Club received ₹4,000 along with a trophy and medals.

The matches were officiated by Sahil, Ritesh, Sahil Chib, Smarty, Amit Singh, and Ankush Sharma, ensuring fair play throughout the tournament.

The event was successfully organized by Patyari Youth Club, with active support from local volunteers including Arun Chib, Deepak Verma, Amit Singh, Sahil Singh, Naginder Singh, Parveen Sharma, Tarun Singh, Ankush Sharma, Ritesh, and Uttam Singh.

BOPEE conducts CET for admission to B.E./B.Tech Engineering Courses in J&K, Ladakh

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) today conducted the Common Entrance Test (CET) for admission to B.E./B.Tech Engineering Courses for the academic session 2026-27 in Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir & Ladakh.

The test was held at several examination centres in Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Doda, Rajouri, Jammu, and Leh districts, with 1263 candidates appearing out of 1538 applicants.

To ensure smooth conduct of the entrance test, arrangements were made in collaboration with the respective institutions/college administrations and law enforcement agencies, under the guidance of Chairperson, J&K BOPEE Prof. Minu Mahajan.

Due to keen oversight of capable staff members from the respective institu-

tions/colleges, no untoward or unfair incident was reported from anywhere.

Notably, for the second time, BOPEE had arranged Examination Centres in other districts like Baramulla, Anantnag, Doda, Rajouri and Leh. Extensive measures were established to ensure that students from remote areas can access these facilities within their respective districts.

The Chairperson, along with the Members, Secretary, Controller of Examinations, and officials of the JKBOPEE actively monitored the conduct of entrance Test across J&K and Ladakh.

The JKBOPEE administration expressed gratitude to the staff members of the respective Institutions/Colleges and the staff deployed under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioners in the respective district headquarters for the smooth conduct of the entrance test.

Satish Sharma pays tributes to Martyr Subedar Parveen Singh

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
SUNDERBANI**

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma, today paid glowing tributes to Vir Chakra awardee Martyr Subedar Parveen Singh at the unveiling of the Shaheedi Sthal and his statue in Village Devak, Tehsil Sunderbani.

The memorial was formally unveiled by Major General G.D. Bakshi, YSM, SM, in a ceremony organized by the Kalidhar Ex-Servicemen Welfare Association (KEWA) to honour the supreme sacrifice of the valiant soldier during the historic 1947-48 Jammu and Kashmir operations.

Joining a large gathering of Ex-Servicemen, Veer Naris, local citizens and dignitaries, Satish Sharma laid floral tributes at the Shaheedi Sthal and bowed in reverence to the martyr.

The Minister underscored that the nation's freedom and sovereignty are safeguarded by the unparalleled courage and sacrifices of its soldiers.

"Subedar Parveen Singh's life is a saga of courage, sacrifice and unwavering devotion to the motherland. Such heroes are the true pillars of our nation. Their legacy must not only be remembered but actively carried forward by the future generations," he said.

Highlighting the vital role of youth in nation-building, Satish Sharma stressed the need to connect the younger generations with the inspiring stories of India's bravehearts. He said that Shaheedi Sthals and memorials play a crucial role in nurturing patriotism,



discipline and a sense of national responsibility among youth.

He further reiterated the government's commitment towards promoting youth-centric initiatives, strengthening sports culture and expanding training programmes aimed at fostering leadership, resilience and national pride.

Satish Sharma also acknowledged the immense contribution of the armed forces and ex-servicemen in safeguarding the nation's integrity and mentoring society with a spirit of discipline and service.

He appreciated the efforts of KEWA for organizing the event and for preserving the legacy of martyrs through such meaningful initiatives.

A wreath-laying ceremony was conducted as per the military traditions, with Maj Gen G.D. Bakshi laying the first wreath and unveiling the statue. This was followed by floral tributes by Satish Sharma, other

dignitaries, Ex-Servicemen, Veer Naris and members of the public.

A two-minute silence was observed to honour the supreme sacrifice of the martyr.

The ceremony was also graced by Balk Yogeshwar Ji, along with senior members of KEWA, Ex-Servicemen, Veer Naris and a large number of citizens from Sunderbani and adjoining areas, reflecting deep respect and admiration for the braveheart.

Recalling the extraordinary valour of Subedar Parveen Singh, it was highlighted that on 22 September 1948, in the Ladakh Sector opposite Nimu Hill, he led a daring fighting patrol against a heavily fortified enemy position. Displaying exceptional courage and leadership, he launched a bold attack on an enemy post far superior in strength and successfully led his men to capture the position.

MLA Yudhvir Sethi inaugurates Rs 6.55 Cr Road Development Works in Jammu East

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

In a significant push toward strengthening infrastructure in Jammu East, MLA Yudhvir Sethi has announced a series of public works initiatives with a total investment of Rs 6.55 crore. The projects aim to improve road connectivity and ensure safer, more reliable transportation for residents in key areas.

The MLA was accompanied by Bajalta Mandal President Shiv Kumar Sharma, Bajalta Mandal Mahila Morcha President Amita Rajput, Bishan Singh General Secretary, Abdul Mehmood District President ST Morcha and PWD AEE Jamal Din with team of officials.

The development works include the restoration of a link road at Lower Ragoora with an allocated cost of Rs 25 lakh. Another Rs 25 lakh has been sanctioned for the restoration of the road stretch from Dawara to Ragoora, which will involve providing and laying T-wire crates to strengthen and stabilize the route.

The most significant component of the initiative is the permanent restoration of the road from Sidhra to Surinsar, with an estimated cost of Rs 605 lakh. This major project is expected to greatly enhance connectivity between the two locations, benefiting daily commuters and boosting local economic activity.

Speaking on the occasion, he highlighted the severe damage caused during the floods of 2025 in Jammu, particularly in this area, where connectivity and road conditions were badly affected. He expressed gratitude to the PWD for taking up the restoration work and ensuring timely action.

"The highway stretch starting from Sidhra-Bajalta road and extending up to Mansar-Surinsar had suffered significant damage during the floods. Today marks the beginning of restoration and strengthening works worth approximately Rs 6 crore, fulfilling the commitment we made to the people during that difficult time," he said.

Govt may hike FDI limit in pension sector; Bill likely in Monsoon Session



NEW DELHI,

The government may hike the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the pension sector to up to 100 per cent and a Bill in this regard is expected in the next Parliament session, according to sources.

This would align with the insurance sector where up to 100 per cent FDI is permitted.

Last year, Parliament approved a Bill to increase the FDI limit in the insurance sector from 74 per cent to 100 per cent.

Prior amendments of the Insurance Act, 1938 was done in 2015 following which the FDI ceiling increased from 49 per

cent to 74 per cent.

Amendment to Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013 seeking to raise the FDI limit in the pension sector may come in the Monsoon Session or Winter Session depending on various approvals, sources said. Currently, the FDI in pension fund is capped at 49 per cent.

Besides, sources said the amendment Bill may contain separation of NPS Trust from the PFRDA. The powers, functions and duties of the NPS Trust, which are currently laid down under the PFRDA (National Pension System Trust) Regulations 2015, may come under a charitable trust or the

Companies Act, they said.

The intent behind this is to keep NPS Trust separate from the pension regulator and managed competent board of 15 members. Out of this, the majority of members are likely to be from the government as they, including states, are the biggest contributor to the corpus.

The PFRDA was established for promoting and ensuring the orderly growth of the pension sector with sufficient powers over pension funds, the central recordkeeping agency and other intermediaries. It also safeguards the interest of members.

The National Pension System (NPS) was introduced by the Government of India to replace the defined benefit pension system. NPS was made mandatory for all new recruits to the central government service from January 1, 2004, (except the armed forces in the first stage) and has also been rolled out for all citizens with effect from May 1, 2009, on voluntary basis.

The government had made a conscious move to shift from the defined benefit, pay-as-you-go pension scheme to defined contribution pension scheme, NPS, due to rising and unsustainable pension bill. The transition aimed at freeing the limited resources of the government for more productive and socio-economic sectoral development.

Majhi, Vaishnaw unveil India's first advanced 3D chip packaging unit in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESHWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday laid the foundation stone for India's first advanced 3D semiconductor packaging unit in Bhubaneswar, an official said.

The facility is expected to produce 70,000 glass panels annually, along with 50 million assembled units and around 13,000 advanced 3DHI modules, Majhi said.

The Heterogeneous Integration (3DHI) is an advanced semiconductor packaging technology.

The project is being implemented by US-based 3D Glass Solutions Inc through its wholly owned Indian subsidiary Heterogeneous Integration Packaging Solutions Pvt Ltd (HIP-SPL) at Info Valley in Khordha district. It is a greenfield, vertically integrated, advanced packaging and embedded glass substrate ATMP facility.

The total investment in the project is Rs 1,943.53 crore, including approved Central fiscal support of Rs 799 crore and additional state support of approximately Rs 399.5 crore.

The project will generate around 2,500 direct and indirect jobs.

The chips to be produced in Odisha will serve key sectors including aerospace, defence, artificial intelligence, 5G technologies and Data Centres, the official added.

Describing the project as one of the most advanced manufacturing initiatives of its kind, Vaishnaw said it would significantly strengthen India's semiconductor value chain.

Addressing the gathering in which state IT Minister Mukesh Mahaling was also present, Majhi described the project as a historic milestone for Odisha and the nation.

He said that for the first time in India, an advanced 3D semiconductor packaging unit is being established, bringing immense pride to the state.

Majhi said that the products manufactured in the state will support next-generation sectors such as AI, high-performance computing, defence electronics, telecommunications, and advanced

digital systems.

"Odisha is ready to play a pivotal role in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India self-reliant in semiconductor and electronics manufacturing," the CM added.

The growing semiconductor ecosystem in Odisha will open large-scale employment opportunities for engineering graduates, diploma holders, and ITI students, helping transform the state from a resource-based economy into a technology-led growth centre, he added.

Vaishnaw said that Odisha, traditionally known for its strengths in minerals, metals and energy, is now steadily establishing itself in advanced sectors such as electronics, IT and semiconductors.

Highlighting the country's progress in electronics manufacturing, Vaishnaw said production in the sector has grown sixfold over the past 12 years.

"India has now become the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer and emerged as the leading exporter of mobile phones in 2025," he added.

The Union minister said that two semiconductor projects have already been approved for Odisha under the India Semiconductor Mission, while three more electronics and semiconductor-related proposals are in the pipeline.

"Discussions are also underway with major global companies, including Intel, for future investments in the state," he mentioned.

Speaking on railway infrastructure, Vaishnaw said projects worth over Rs 90,000 crore are currently under execution in Odisha, reflecting an unprecedented expansion of rail connectivity.

He added that the state has received a record railway budget allocation of Rs 10,928 crore, while 59 stations are being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

He said that 26 districts of Odisha have been brought under rail connectivity through planned interventions, while efforts are on to cover the remaining four districts, alongside key projects such as the proposed four-line coastal rail corridor from Balasore to Berhampur.

India, US chief negotiators to begin three-day trade pact talks in Washington from Apr 20

NEW DELHI,

About a dozen officers from India will reach Washington on April 20 for three-day talks with the US authorities on the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA), an official said. As the tariff landscape has changed in the US, both sides may like to relook at the framework of the agreement, the text of which was released on February 7.

Following the decision of the US Supreme Court against the sweeping tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on a number of countries, the Trump administration imposed a 10 per cent tariff on all countries from February 24 for 150 days.

"The meeting will happen from April 20-22 in Washington DC. India's chief negotiator Darpan Jain (additional secretary in the department of commerce) is leading the team. Officers from customs and external affairs ministry are also part of the Indian team," the official said.

Further, the two unilateral investigations launched by the US Trade Representative (USTR) may also figure in the three-day deliberations.

India has strongly rejected allegations made by the US Trade Representative in those two investigations under its Section 301 of trade law and has requested to terminate the probes as the initiation notice has failed to provide cogent rationale to substantiate the claims.

According to that framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on India to 18 per cent,



from 50 per cent. It had removed the 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods for buying Russian oil and was to cut the remaining 25 per cent to 18 per cent under the pact.

But on February 20, the US Supreme Court ruled against Trump's reciprocal tariffs which were imposed under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

After that, the President announced the imposition of 10 per cent tariffs on all countries for 150 days, starting February 24.

In light of these changes, a meeting between chief negotiators of India and the US scheduled in February was postponed. Now, they are meeting in Washington from April 20, 2026.

Under the agreed framework, India proposed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil,

wine and spirits, and additional products.

India had also expressed its intentions to purchase USD 500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years.

Further, when India finalised the deal, it enjoyed a comparative advantage over its competitor countries. Now, with all US trading partners facing a uniform 10 per cent tariff, the pact requires recalibration.

"So the agreement will have to be recalibrated, redrafted," a government source has said, adding, "that amount of change will take place from their side".

"In our case, since the agreement has not been signed, we have got the option where we can right now change whatever needs to be changed," the source has said.

As the circumstances have changed, every country is engaging with the US to see what is going to be the nature of their trade agreements with America.

Romesh Singh Elected President of Akhnoor-Khour Contractors Association

Announces Struggle Over Pending JJM Dues and Other Issues



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

A significant meeting of contractors from the Akhnoor and Khour areas was held on Saturday at R.N. Grand, Akhnoor, with participation from around 150 contractors. During the meeting, the formation and registration of the "Akhnoor Khour Contractors Association" was unanimously announced. A new executive body for the next two years was also constituted.

As per the decisions taken, Devraj Bhagat was appointed as Chairman, Romesh Singh (Meshi) as President, Ashwani Sharma as Working President, Anudeep Sharma as Vice President, Romesh Kumar Verma as General Secretary, Vinod as Cashier, and Rakesh Malhotra and Parveen Sharma

as Advisors.

Various important issues concerning contractors were discussed in detail during the meeting. Key concerns included pending dues under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and PWD, delays in payments for completed works due to royalty/mining-related complications, extremely low tender rates, issuance of proxy contractor cards in the names of family members of employees, and the practice of transferred officials bringing contractors from other regions.

The Association made it clear that it will collectively struggle for the resolution of these issues and strongly raise them before the concerned departments and the administration.

Prominent contractors present in the meeting included Jagdish Bakshi, Babu Ram,

Rameshwar Dass, Sunil Dutt Sharma, Lalit, Saurav, Keval Khajuria, Ashok Kumar Bhagat, Sandesh, Mohan Lal, Jugal Sharma, Madan Lal, Raman Sharma, Rakesh Kumar, Rahul Dev, Keval Kumar, Preetam Sharma, among others.

Addressing the gathering, President Romesh Singh (Meshi) thanked all members and stated that contractors play a vital role in the development of the nation, yet their issues are often overlooked. He emphasized that rules should not be imposed without consulting stakeholders. He assured that the new team will work with full commitment to safeguard the interests and welfare of contractors. He also informed that the Association will be expanded further in the future to include more contractors and strengthen their collective voice.

Sakeena Itoo lays foundation stone for Additional Classroom building at Chambgund Kulgam



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KULGAM**

Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited Chambgund Kulgam and laid foundation stone of Additional Classroom building for Government Girls Middle School.

Addressing a large gathering on the occasion, the Education Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing quality education and improving learning environments, particularly for girl students in rural and underserved regions. She noted that the construction of additional classrooms will help ease space constraints, enhance student enrolment, and create a more conducive atmosphere for academic growth of female students.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated that the education sector remains a top priority of Omar Abdullah led Government and sustained efforts being made to upgrade school infrastructure, ensure availability of adequate teaching staff, and promote inclusive education across Jammu and Kashmir.

"Regular investments are being made in education sector which directly contributes to improved learning outcomes and empowerment of young girls", she stated.

While highlighting various achievements of the Government, Sakeena Itoo stated that the present Omar Abdullah led Government has brought significant improvements and upgradations in all sectors, especially in health and educational sectors.

On the sidelines of the foundation laying ceremony, the Minister also interacted with locals and listened to their issues and grievances. She assured them that all of their genuine issues will be addressed on priority.

The locals appreciated the Minister for her continued commitment towards strengthening education and health infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, as well as in Kulgam district.

YRS President Mandeep Singh Chib Honours Journalist Shambhu Sharma in Khour



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KHOUR**

In a gesture recognising dedication and excellence in journalism, Mandeep Singh Chib, President of the Yuva Rajput Sabha (YRS), honoured senior journalist Shambhu Sharma for his outstanding contribution to the field of media and public awareness.

The felicitation ceremony was held in Khour, where prominent members of the local community and representatives of YRS gathered to acknowledge the remarkable work carried out by Shambhu Sharma over the years. Speaking on the occasion, Mandeep Singh Chib laud-

ed Sharma's fearless approach to journalism and his unwavering commitment to highlighting issues faced by people, especially in rural and far-flung areas.

He said that in today's rapidly changing media landscape, journalists like Shambhu Sharma serve as a bridge between the administration and the public by bringing ground realities to the forefront. He further emphasized that Sharma's work reflects integrity, courage, and a deep sense of responsibility toward society.

Shambhu Sharma, a well-known name in the region, has earned respect for his extensive ground reporting and dedication

to uncovering stories that often go unnoticed. As Editor-in-Chief of Duggar Samvad, he has consistently focused on grassroots-level issues, ensuring that voices from remote villages and border areas are heard and addressed.

Mega Awareness Rally held at Dooru to safeguard vulnerable sections of society from drugs

ANANTNAG

As a major people led initiative, a mega awareness rally under Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan was held at Dooru Shahabad, drawing participation from students, youth, religious figures, ex public representatives besides members of civil society, trade union and transporter association.

The overwhelming participation of the local community members reflects a growing concern over substance abuse, necessitating people coming together to sustain the fight against it at grassroots.

Speakers on the occasion emphasized protecting the younger generation from drug addiction, stressing that the responsibility lies with all sections of society. They reiterated their commitment of providing full supporting to the administration and law enforcement

agencies in realising the objective of a healthy and drug free society.

"It is our moral and civil duty to safeguard our youth and vulnerable sections of society from drugs", the participants reaffirmed in one voice, urging coordinated efforts and collective resolve to combat the issue.

As part of the programme, a signature campaign was held, encouraging participants to pledge their commitment to a drug-free society. A selfie point was set up at the venue to engage youth. Placards and posters were also displayed to promote awareness about the campaign.

The rally concluded with a call for sustained awareness campaigns and community-driven initiatives to effectively tackle substance abuse and ensure a safer future for younger generations.

Sahib Bandgi's Expanding Influence: Lakhs Witness 77th Incarnation Day in Jammu

Decades of teachings by Sadguru Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj drive the rise of a discipline-based movement focused on moral reform, purification of the soul, and guiding humanity towards liberation



SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Lakhs of devotees, including a significant number from overseas, gathered at Ranjri in Jammu to mark the 77th Incarnation Day of Sadguru Shri Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj, as the Sahib Bandgi organisation continues to expand its presence as a discipline-oriented spiritual movement rooted in decades of continuous teachings.

The scale of the gathering reflected the steady rise of Sahib Bandgi from a limited following into a movement reaching lakhs across regions. Its growth has been driven not by institutional promotion but through daily

satsangs, a clearly defined code of conduct, and visible transformation in the lives of followers.

Sadguru Madhu Paramhans Ji Maharaj, who earlier served the nation as an army serviceman, has over the years led this expansion through consistent engagement focused on reforming human behavior and strengthening moral discipline. Through daily discourses, Sahib Ji addresses issues such as addiction, dishonesty, anger, and social conflict, with followers attributing changes such as leaving harmful habits, improving family stability, and adopting ethical livelihoods to these teachings.



During the address, Sahib Ji stated that the Jivatma (individual soul) is being subjected to immense plunder despite having no inherent dealings or connections with worldly relations. Sahib Ji explained that the soul is inherently free from lust and anger, yet becomes influenced by the mind and intellect, leading individuals to act against their own nature. Sahib Ji compared this condition to addiction, where habit overrides awareness, and stated that attachment binds the soul so deeply that its influence continues even beyond death.

Sahib Ji further stated that the soul has no parents, no creator, no beginning, and no end; it neither

increases nor decreases and cannot be destroyed. Sahib Ji clarified that the soul is only a fragment and not the Supreme, and that confusing the two leads to misunderstanding of spiritual reality.

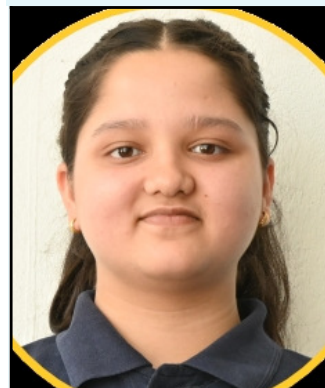
Referring to Kabir Sahib, Sahib Ji stated that such truths were once understood by the common man and are reflected in the couplets of Rahim, but were later suppressed. Sahib Ji emphasized that truth inevitably resurfaces. Sahib Ji further stated that while most teachings remain confined to the concept of three worlds, Kabir Sahib described a higher realm beyond them—a state free from lust, anger, attachment, and greed.

According to Sahib Ji, these forces dominate human life within the material domain and can only be brought under control through the guidance of a True Guru.

Reaffirming the foundation of the organisation, Sahib Ji emphasized the seven principles of Sahib Bandgi-speaking the truth, abstaining from meat, avoiding alcohol, staying away from gambling, not stealing, maintaining disciplined conduct, and earning honestly—stating that these principles directly address the roots of social evils and are essential for building a civilized society.

Through decades of teachings, Sahib Ji's contribution has extended beyond individual reform to a broader effort aimed at uplifting humanity by purifying conduct and guiding the soul towards liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The presence of international devotees and the scale of participation at Ranjri highlighted the expanding global reach of Sahib Bandgi, reflecting its emergence as a structured movement focused on discipline, behavioral reform, and spiritual clarity.

Academic Excellence Marks a Historic Milestone: First Batch of Class 10 Achieves Outstanding Results



FIRST RANK
AVNI PANDIT
95%



SECOND RANK
BHANVI SHARMA
93%



THIRD RANK
HUNAR GUPTA
91%



FOURTH RANK
ALINA SINGH
90%

SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR

Shubh International School, Akhnoor proudly announces the exceptional performance of its first-ever Class 10 batch in the CBSE Board Examinations 2025-26. This remarkable achievement marks a significant milestone in the school's journey of academic excellence and holistic education.

The inaugural batch has set a high standard, with students delivering outstanding results across all sub-

jects. Leading the cohort, Avni Pandit secured the first rank with an impressive 95%, followed by Bhanvi Sharma with 93%, Hunar Gupta with 91%, and Elina Singh with 90%. Their dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence have brought immense pride to the institution.

In addition to overall toppers, several students excelled at the subject level, showcasing academic depth and consistency. Achievements in English, Science, Social Science, Hindi,

Mathematics, and Artificial Intelligence highlight the well-rounded capabilities of the students and the strong academic foundation provided by the school.

This success is a testament to the unwavering efforts of students, the guidance and mentorship of dedicated faculty members, and the continuous support of parents. The school's emphasis on quality education, discipline, and a nurturing learning environment has played a crucial role in shaping these results.

The Principal Mrs. Shilpa Mahajan and management of Shubh International School extended heartfelt congratulations to all the students for their hard work and determination. They also expressed gratitude to teachers and parents for their invaluable contribution to this success story.

As the school celebrates this proud moment, it remains committed to fostering excellence and empowering students to achieve greater heights in the years to come.

GCOE Srinagar hosts Divisional-Level Road Safety Programme

SYSTEM OBSERVER
SRINAGAR

Government College of Education (GCoE) (IASE), Srinagar, organised a divisional-level Road Safety Awareness Program under the Road Safety Annual Action Plan (2024-25) on the theme "Sadak Suraksha - Jeevan Raksha."

Sponsored by the State Road Safety Council, J&K, the event saw enthusiastic participation from students across colleges in the Kashmir Division.

The valedictory session was graced by the Director of Colleges, Higher Education Department, J&K, Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Aijaz Bashir, who, in his address, emphasised strict adherence to traffic regulations and the adoption of essential safety measures such as wearing helmets and seatbelts. He urged students to act as ambassadors of

road safety awareness and contribute towards building a more responsible and vigilant society.

The Principal of the host college, Prof. (Dr.) Seema Naz, in her address, underscored the pressing need to address the alarming rise in road accidents attributed to negligence, overspeeding, and distracted driving.

Emphasising that road safety is a collective societal obligation, she called upon the youth to emerge as responsible stakeholders and catalysts of change.

Prof. Aijaz Ahmad Dar, Convener, Road Safety Club, highlighted the significance of sustained awareness and responsible conduct in fostering a culture of road discipline. He reiterated that meaningful transformation in road safety can only be achieved through collective effort and informed participation.