

MHA TO MOVE FORWARD 'VERY SERIOUSLY' ON COASTAL SECURITY OVER NEXT TWO YEARS: AMIT SHAH



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
PANAJI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said the Ministry of Home Affairs would move forward "very seriously" on coastal security over the next two years, underlining the Centre's con-

Home Minister calls for stronger action against drugs, cybercrime and financial fraud at Western Zonal Council meeting

tinued focus on the security of India's coastline.

Shah made the statement while chairing the 28th meeting of the Western Zonal Council in Panaji. The meeting was attended by Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Administrator of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Praful K. Patel, besides senior officials.

"Over the next two years, the Ministry of Home Affairs will move forward very seri-

ously on coastal security," Shah said.

He also called upon the Western region to play a leading role in implementing the new criminal laws and in making India's fight against drugs a success.

Shah stressed the need to strengthen the response to cybercrime and financial fraud. He said all Urban Cooperative Banks in the states should be connected with the Central Fraud and Risk Management System (FCFRS) and called for

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'Don't just look for mountains': CM Omar invites global filmmakers to explore J&K's Stories, Culture

SYSTEM OBSERVER SRINAGAR

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday invited filmmakers from across the world to look beyond Jammu and Kashmir's mountains and explore its stories, culture, artisans and musical traditions, saying the government was working to build a world-class filmmaking ecosystem in the Union Territory.

Addressing the inaugural edition of the first International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026, Omar said the festival, which has brought together filmmakers from more than 40

countries and is showcasing over 130 films, marked a new chapter in the long-standing romance between Jammu and Kashmir and the silver screen.

"To every filmmaker in this room today, I say, when you bring your camera to Jammu and Kashmir to create, do not just look for mountains. Seek out our stories, talk to our artisans, listen to our musicians, walk through our city lanes, and let our living culture infuse your narratives," Omar said.

From 'Yaahoo' to Kashmir Ki Kali
Recalling the long

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Army sets up AASHVAST lab to screen military drones



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI**

The Indian Army has established a specialised facility in New Delhi to examine military drones for unauthorised modifications, potentially risky foreign-origin components and vulnerabilities in electronic and software systems.

New Delhi facility to detect potentially risky Chinese-origin components, tampering and cyber vulnerabilities

Named AASHVAST, short for Assessment and Analysis of Electronic Systems Hardware for Vulnerabilities and Security Threats, the facility has been established under the Directorate General of Electronics and Mechanical Engineering at its headquarters in Delhi Cantonment. Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth inaugurated it on August 14.

The laboratory goes beyond conventional physical inspection by examining firmware, embedded software and electronic components for potential security weaknesses.

It can determine whether a drone is genuine and whether its hardware or software has been altered. The

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ISRO Rejects Privatisation Concerns, Says Private Industry Essential for Space Expansion

SYSTEM OBSERVER BENGALURU

Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman V Narayanan on Monday rejected concerns over the alleged privatisation of ISRO, saying the space agency remains a government organisation and that greater participation by private companies and startups is aimed at expanding India's overall space ecosystem.

Narayanan's remarks came after nine ISRO employee associations sought clarification over concerns that some manufacturing and operational functions could be transferred to private entities.

Speaking after the inauguration of the ninth Bengaluru Space Expo, Narayanan said the concerns raised by employees were genuine and would be addressed.

ISRO has around 20,000 employees, including more than 8,000 scientists, he said, adding that the organisation has an established system of regularly engaging

ISRO Chairman V Narayanan said the space agency remains a government organisation and will retain its central role, while greater participation by private companies and startups is necessary to expand India's space capabilities.

with its workforce.

Narayanan said India's space-sector reforms, introduced six years ago, were designed to encourage private companies and startups to participate in the sector and help expand the country's space capabilities.

He said around 450 Indian industries are already working with ISRO. Nearly 80 per cent of the budget involved in PSLV and GSLV launches is invested in Indian

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DAC clears Rs.1.10 lakh crore defence acquisitions, 98% to be sourced from Indian industry

SYSTEM OBSERVER NEW DELHI

India on Monday cleared defence capital acquisition proposals worth approximately ₹1.10 lakh crore as the government moved to strengthen operational capabilities across the Army, Navy and Air Force while further reducing dependence on foreign suppliers.

The approvals were granted by the Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The Ministry of Defence said nearly 98 per cent of the procurements

covered by the approvals will be sourced from Indian industry.

The decisions cover a wide range of requirements, including battlefield mobility, counter-CBRN capabilities, mine laying, bridging systems, surveillance, electronic warfare and naval propulsion.

Importantly, Monday's decisions represent Acceptance of Necessity (AoN), which is an in-principle administrative approval and not a final procurement contract. Subsequent stages include the issuance of requests for proposals, technical evaluation, trials, negotia-

tions and final contract awards. Therefore, the approved value should not be treated as immediate expenditure or as confirmation of final quantities and suppliers.

Army receives major capability push

For the Indian Army, the DAC cleared procurement of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear reconnaissance vehicles, High Mobility Vehicles, Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers, Advanced Light Helicopters, Trawl Tanks and the Sarvatra

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Judge vs Judge: Justice Mehta's fourth letter escalates Rajasthan HC dispute

Description: Supreme Court Justice Sandeep Mehta has sent a fourth letter to the Chief Justice of India raising allegations against Rajasthan High Court judge Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma. Justice Sharma has rejected the allegations.

SYSTEM OBSERVER NEW DELHI

The dispute involving Supreme Court Justice Sandeep Mehta and Rajasthan High Court judge Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma has intensified, with Justice Mehta sending a fourth letter to Chief Justice

of India Surya Kant alleging irregularities in the functioning of the Rajasthan High Court.

In his latest communication, Justice Mehta raised allegations concerning the handling of an internal judicial inquiry, including alleged

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MHA to.....

encouraging cooperative banks to integrate with MuleHunter AI. He also said efforts should continue to ensure that all cooperative banks are connected with the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

WEST Engine of growth

Describing the Western region as the "WEST Engine" of India's economic growth, Shah highlighted its role in wealth and finance, exports and ports, start-ups and semiconductors, tourism and the blue economy.

He said the region is the country's largest economic, industrial and financial centre. He also highlighted Goa's tourism sector, Maharashtra's start-up ecosystem, Dholera's semiconductor development, Gujarat's ports and Mumbai's financial role.

Shah said the Zonal Councils had become an important mechanism for monitoring development and public welfare. He said 25 meetings of the Zonal Councils and their Standing Committees were held between 2004 and 2014, compared with 71 since 2014. Of 1,893 issues discussed, 1,445 have been resolved, according to the Home Minister.

The meeting also reviewed issues concerning Fast Track Special Courts, ERSS-112, food safety, Ayushman Bharat, banking facilities in villages, railway projects, environmental clearances, electricity supply, PACS, nutrition, school dropout rates, cybercrime and digital infrastructure.

Shah also highlighted progress in PACS computerisation, with Maharashtra at 98 per cent and Gujarat at 92 per cent, and called upon states to adopt the Gobardhan model established by Banas Dairy.

The Home Minister said the Western region had an important role to play in strengthening development, public welfare, cybersecurity and internal security while contributing to India's economic growth.

'Don't just.....

association between Kashmir and Bollywood, the Chief Minister said the region had played a defining role in shaping the visual imagination of generations of Indian cinema-goers. "In the golden era of Indian cinema, to fall in love on screen meant falling in love in Kashmir," he said.

He recalled Shammi Kapoor's iconic "Yaahoo" sequence, Kashmir Ki Kali with Sharmila Tagore against Dal Lake, and films by Yash Chopra that developed a visual language around the region. "From the vivid greens of spring, the golden hues of autumn and the quiet white of winter, Kashmir could mirror the entire spectrum of human emotion," he said.

Abdullah also recalled more recent films including Mission Kashmir, Haider, Rockstar, Highway and Bajrangi Bhaijaan, saying filmmakers had increasingly used the region to tell more nuanced and complex stories instead of relying only on its scenic beauty.

'Cinema is More Than Landscapes'

Omar said the true appeal of Jammu and Kashmir could not be reduced to mountains, lakes and snow. "Because cinema is more than landscapes, cinema is culture, and the true beauty of Jammu and Kashmir lies in its soul, its culture and ethos, built on Kashmiriyat, warmth, hospitality and a rich artistic tradition," he said.

He described Jammu and Kashmir as a "land of storytellers," referring to its musical traditions, including the santoor and rabab, Sufi music, oral traditions, and traditional craftsmanship such as walnut wood carving and carpet weaving. He urged filmmakers to engage with these cultural traditions rather than treating the region simply as a scenic backdrop. J&K Bank News

'Nostalgia Alone Cannot Build an Industry'

Moving from cinema's history to the government's plans for the future, the Chief Minister said the administration was conscious that nostalgia alone could not create a sustainable film industry.

"As an administration and as a society, we recognise that nostalgia alone cannot build an industry. To welcome the future of filmmaking, we must build a world-class ecosystem, and that is precisely what we are doing," he said.

He said the government's comprehensive film policy was aimed at transforming Jammu and Kashmir into one of the most filmmaker-friendly destinations, with a single-window mechanism to reduce bureaucratic delays, a dedicated online portal for permissions, and financial support to filmmakers based on shooting days and local expenditure.

Army sets.....

assessment includes checks for hidden passwords, embedded keys, credentials, remote-access mechanisms and unauthorised command pathways.

AASHVAST can also verify whether software updates are accepted only from authorised manufacturers and assess location-related controls, including vulnerabilities relevant to GPS spoofing

or jamming.

The facility provides the Army with an in-house capability to identify potentially risky Chinese-origin components and other unauthorised hardware or software. The initiative comes amid India's wider effort to strengthen self-reliance in critical defence technologies.

The laboratory operates offline in an air-gapped, read-only environment, allowing software to be examined without writing information back to the equipment under assessment. Software can be extracted from a drone's flight controller or camera payload, or analysed from a stored software image.

Identified vulnerabilities are rated according to severity and compiled into a structured security assessment for technical personnel and officers responsible for equipment acceptance.

With drones assuming a larger role in surveillance, reconnaissance and combat operations, AASHVAST strengthens the Army's ability to assess the security and reliability of the electronic and software systems that underpin military unmanned platforms.

ISRO Rejects.....

industries, underlining the industry's existing role in the country's space programme.

The ISRO chairman said India's growing requirements would require a substantial increase in launch activity. The country's requirement is expected to reach around 50 launch vehicles a year, he said, expressing confidence that the target would become a reality.

Narayanan also said there was no shortage of government funding for ISRO and that the Centre had been allocating funds according to the organisation's requirements.

The clarification comes amid a broader restructuring of India's space sector. Under the reforms, ISRO is expected to focus increasingly on advanced research, frontier technologies, strategic missions, human spaceflight and deep-space exploration, while mature technologies and larger-scale manufacturing can be undertaken by industry.

The Indian Space Research Organisation has separately made clear that its role will not be diminished. It will continue to remain the country's principal institution for advanced space research, technology development, national and strategic missions, space science and exploration.

IN-SPACe Chairman Pawan Goenka has also stressed that India's space ambitions cannot be achieved by ISRO or private industry working independently. The two sectors, he said, need to work together to build the scale required for India's next phase of space development.

India's space economy is currently estimated at around \$8 billion and is targeted to reach approximately \$44 billion by 2033.

The expanding role of private companies therefore represents a shift in the structure of India's space sector rather than a withdrawal of ISRO from its core responsibilities. The government-backed agency is expected to remain at the centre of strategic and advanced space programmes, while industry provides additional investment, manufacturing capacity, innovation and commercial scale.

The key challenge will be to ensure that the expansion of private participation strengthens India's space capabilities without weakening ISRO's scientific expertise, institutional capacity and strategic role.

Judge vs.....

interference and disclosure of confidential material.

The latest letter follows three earlier communications sent by Justice Mehta on August 2, 10 and 17. His complaints have included allegations of maladministration, favouritism, nepotism and misuse of administrative authority.

Justice Sharma has rejected the allegations as baseless and has submitted his response to the Chief Justice of India. No judicial finding of misconduct has been made against him.

The latest communication also refers to an internal complaint committee comprising three women judges. Justice Mehta has alleged that the committee's proceedings were affected by administrative intervention and that confidential material connected with the inquiry was circulated beyond the committee.

The controversy comes amid a change in the leadership of the Rajasthan High Court, with Justice Sanjay Kumar Agrawal taking charge as its new Chief Justice.

The dispute has drawn unusual public attention to the administration of the higher judiciary and the handling of complaints involving serving judges.

The allegations remain contested. Their substance has yet to be established through a judicial finding.

DAC clears.....

Bridge System.

The CBRN reconnaissance vehicles will enable troops to detect, identify, monitor and mark areas contaminated by hazardous agents. High Mobility Vehicles are intended to improve operational mobility and logistical support, particularly in challenging terrain.

The council also approved Self-Propelled Mechanical Mine Layers to provide faster and more responsive mine-laying capability. Trawl Tanks and the Sarvatra Bridge System will support the movement of fighting formations across varied terrain and obstacles.

Advanced Light Helicopters were also cleared for complex missions across different terrains and operational conditions.

Navy targets critical dependence on foreign propulsion systems

For the Indian Navy, the DAC approved Arudhra Radars and the design and development, followed by procurement, of Marine Gas Turbines.

The Arudhra Radar is intended to replace existing Air Route Surveillance Radars at various Naval Air Stations.

The Marine Gas Turbine programme carries particular strategic significance. The Ministry said the indigenous propulsion system is intended to reduce the Navy's dependence on foreign vendors for warship propulsion.

Developing domestic capability in propulsion remains an important element of India's broader effort to strengthen the technological and industrial base supporting naval power.

Air Force approvals focus on combat capability and electronic warfare

For the Indian Air Force, the council approved proposals aimed at enhancing the war-fighting capability of fighter, transport and helicopter fleets.

The DAC also cleared Ground-Based Multi-Purpose Jammers, designed to provide effective jamming against adversary radar systems.

Another approval was given for installation of the Defence Forces Secure Access Card system. The system will replace paper-based identity cards, passes and permits with interoperable RFID-based smart cards across the defence services.

Indigenous procurement at the centre of the package

The most significant feature of Monday's approvals is the stated level of domestic sourcing. According to the Ministry of Defence, approximately 98 per cent of the AoNs will be sourced from Indian industry.

The decision reinforces the government's continuing emphasis on self-reliance in defence manufacturing. Official government data shows that indigenous defence production has expanded substantially over the past decade, reaching a record ₹1.54 lakh crore in 2024-25.

The procurement push also comes as India seeks to strengthen domestic supply chains for critical military equipment and reduce vulnerabilities arising from dependence on overseas suppliers.

Approval is not the final contract

Despite the size of the package, the ₹1.10 lakh crore figure should be viewed as the estimated value of proposals receiving AoN rather than as the value of contracts already signed.

The Ministry's process requires further procurement stages before equipment is delivered to the armed forces. Final costs, quantities, vendors and delivery schedules will emerge only after the subsequent evaluation, negotiation and contracting processes.

For India's military modernisation programme, however, the latest approvals signal continued movement towards strengthening operational preparedness while building a larger domestic defence industrial base.

Police bust.....

Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said.

Acting on credible intelligence about the movement of narcotics, a police team from Lakhanpur police station laid a check point on the bypass road near Shamshaan ghat and intercepted a truck, they said.

A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of 1.026 kg of opium and the arrest of driver Gurvinder Singh, a resident of Tarn Taran district in Punjab, and his associate Sukhdev Singh, also from Tarn Taran, officials said.

During interrogation, Sukhdev disclosed that the consignment had originated in Gujarat and was handed over to him in Rajasthan by an unidentified handler for delivery to a receiver in Punjab, they said.

Acting on the disclosure, a police team raided a location in Nakki village in Pathankot, where the intended receiver, Rakesh Kumar, was traced.

Police found that the illicit package had been concealed at the residence of Rakesh's neighbour, Ajay Kumar, officials said.

A subsequent search of the premises led to the recovery of the remaining contraband, taking the total seizure to 2.672 kg of opium. Rakesh Kumar and Ajay Kumar were also arrested, they said.

A case of the NDPS Act has been registered at Lakhanpur police station and further investigation is underway to establish the forward and backward linkages of the inter-state drug network, officials said.

The operation was conducted under the overall supervision of Kathua SSP Mohita Sharma, with the police team led by the SHO Lakhanpur and supervised by senior officers, they added.

INDIA DRAWS A DIGITAL RED LINE FOR CHINA

Alipay+ faces setback as New Delhi puts national security and financial data ahead of deeper payment integration

SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI

India is willing to open its digital payments ecosystem to the world, but not at the cost of surrendering control over sensitive financial data.

That message is emerging from New Delhi's decision to put on hold a proposal by Ant International's Alipay+ to establish a direct connection with India's Unified Payments Interface, or UPI. The proposed arrangement could have allowed Indian travellers to use UPI across more than 150 million merchants in China, Hong Kong and other Asian markets, followed by a possible two-way payment system involving international Alipay+ users and Indian merchants.

What appeared to be a commercial payments proposal has instead become a question of strategic trust.

People familiar with the discussions said the proposal has stalled, with political considerations cited by India's foreign policy establishment. The development reflects the increasingly sensitive position of Chinese-linked technology and financial platforms in India, particularly where access to critical digital infrastructure and large volumes of financial data is involved.

Data sovereignty takes priority
For New Delhi, the issue is not simply whether Indian consumers can make payments overseas.

The government has raised concerns over national security, financial data control, money laundering and the potential involvement of Chinese-linked entities in India's payments infrastructure. Law enforcement agencies have also raised concerns about possible data breaches and cyber fraud.

Alipay+ is operated by Ant International, a Singapore-headquartered company that was separated from China's Ant Group in 2024. But its corporate restructuring has not removed the strategic concerns surrounding its Chinese origins.

At the heart of the debate is a fundamental question for India: who controls the data generated when millions of financial transactions move across borders?

A modern payment network is more than a mechanism for transferring money. It can generate detailed information about consumer behaviour, travel patterns, commercial relationships and the movement of funds. That makes payment infrastructure a strategic asset as well as a commercial one.

The China factor

The timing is significant.

India and China are attempting to stabilise relations after years of tensions following the deadly 2020 border confrontation. With Chinese President Xi Jinping expected in New Delhi for the BRICS summit, both sides are showing signs of diplomatic engagement.

Yet the Alipay+ episode demonstrates that improving political relations does not automatically translate into greater Chinese access to India's critical digital systems.

Trade can move forward. Diplomatic channels can reopen. But sensitive financial infrastructure remains a separate strategic calculation.

That distinction is becoming increasingly important as India seeks to reduce vulnerabilities in sectors that directly affect national security and economic sovereignty.

India still wants UPI abroad

The setback should not be interpreted as a rejection of international payment integration.

India has actively promoted UPI overseas, establishing payment links and merchant acceptance arrangements in markets including Singapore, France and the United Arab Emirates. Its international reach is also expanding across coun-

tries such as Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea.

The message from New Delhi is therefore more nuanced.

India wants UPI to become a global payments platform. At the same time, it wants strict safeguards around the infrastructure and data that make that expansion possible.

The distinction is particularly sharp when the proposed partner has links to China.

A warning beyond payments

The Alipay+ setback carries implications beyond the payments industry.

It signals that India's economic engagement with China will increasingly be measured against a broader strategic framework. Access to critical digital infrastructure will not necessarily follow the same trajectory as trade or diplomatic relations.

For Ant International, the stalled proposal leaves an important potential payment corridor between India and the wider Alipay+ ecosystem in uncertainty, with no clear timeline for a resolution. For New Delhi, the episode reinforces a principle that is becoming central to its economic security policy: India can welcome global digital connectivity without surrendering control over the financial data and infrastructure at its core.

Russia and India rebuild trade beyond the dollar as rupee-ruble settlements reach 96%

SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI/ MOSCOW

Russia and India have significantly reduced their dependence on the US dollar for bilateral trade, with 96 percent of settlements now reportedly being conducted in Russian roubles and Indian rupees, according to Sberbank India.

The shift is one of the clearest outcomes of the financial disruption that followed the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, when Western sanctions restricted Russian banks' access to major international payment channels.

India, meanwhile, sharply increased its purchases of Russian crude oil, making the need for an alternative settlement mechanism more urgent for both sides. As conventional dollar and euro payment routes became increasingly difficult, Moscow and New Delhi expanded the use of their national currencies to keep trade moving.

A payment system shaped by sanctions

The emerging rupee-ruble mechanism has reduced the need for Russian exporters and Indian importers to depend on Western financial infrastructure for every transaction.

Sberbank India says the system has also accelerated settlement times. Around 90 percent of payments are



reportedly completed within ten minutes, while more than half are processed within a minute.

For Indian companies, the arrangement provides an additional channel to make payments for Russian oil and other imports when sanctions or restrictions disrupt individual banks or established payment routes.

For Russia, it provides greater flexibility in receiving payments without having to rely entirely on dollar-based international banking networks.

The development also carries wider geopolitical significance. Financial infrastructure has become an increasingly important component of economic statecraft, particularly as Western sanctions have

targeted Russia's access to international finance.

The rupee imbalance

The biggest challenge for the system, however, remains the widening trade imbalance between the two countries.

During FY2025-26, India imported roughly \$55 billion worth of goods from Russia while its exports to Russia stood at around \$4.5 billion. The imbalance is approximately 12 to 1, leaving Russian exporters with a large accumulation of Indian rupees.

The issue is not that the rupee has no value for Russian businesses. The problem is that Russia earns rupees from Indian purchases much faster than it can spend them on Indian goods, services or investments.

This highlights a basic limitation of bilateral local-currency trade. Such arrangements are easier to maintain when trade flows between two countries are relatively balanced.

Russia and India therefore need mechanisms to absorb the surplus rupee balances.

Those funds can be used to purchase Indian exports, finance projects and investments in India, or be invested in Indian government securities and Treasury bills. In 2025, the Reserve Bank of India removed the earlier ceiling on investments from such balances in government securities, providing greater flexibility for managing the accumulated rupee holdings.

Why 96 percent matters

The growing use of the rupee and rouble does not necessarily signal an ideological campaign against the dollar. It reflects a practical response to the financial restrictions that emerged after 2022.

For Russia and India, reducing dependence on Western payment infrastructure offers greater room to maintain trade despite sanctions and financial restrictions.

The significance of the 96 percent figure therefore extends beyond currency choice. It demonstrates how prolonged geopolitical pressure can encourage major economies to develop alternative payment channels and financial arrangements.

The dollar remains central to global commerce, but Russia-India trade shows that bilateral transactions can increasingly be insulated from parts of the Western financial system.

For New Delhi and Moscow, the challenge now is to make that alternative system commercially sustainable, particularly by addressing the large imbalance in bilateral trade.

The evolution of the payment mechanism will remain closely watched as Russia and India seek to deepen economic ties while navigating a financial environment increasingly shaped by geopolitical competition.

China Moves Into India's Russian Oil Market as Two Wars Reshape Asian Energy Trade

SYSTEM OBSERVER
NEW DELHI

For nearly four years, India benefited from one of the most lucrative shifts in the global oil market. The disruption caused by the Ukraine war pushed Russian crude away from Europe and toward Asia, allowing Indian refiners to secure discounted supplies and build strong margins through the export of refined petroleum products.

That advantage is now coming under pressure.

Two conflicts thousands of miles apart are reshaping the market. The war in Ukraine has disrupted Russian crude supplies and shipping routes, while the ongoing US-Iran conflict has severely affected oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for India's energy imports.

Around 40 percent of India's crude imports normally pass through the Strait of Hormuz. At the same time, China's access to Iranian crude has been sharply reduced. Iranian oil loadings, which were around 2 million barrels per day in March, fell to an estimated 220,000 to 340,000 barrels per day by August.

The two major Asian economies are therefore facing different supply pressures but increasingly looking toward the same source: Russian crude.

China enters a market India once dominated.

India's Russian crude imports reached a record 2.79 million barrels per day in July. By August, however, volumes had fallen to between 1.87 million and 2.08 million barrels per day, depending on the data source.

The decline reflects several factors, including refinery maintenance, tighter Russian availability and growing competition from Chinese buyers.

The pressure is also being felt in the Black Sea. Russia's seaborne crude exports declined to about 3.7 million barrels per day in August from 4.1 million in July. Much of the reduction was concentrated at Novorossiysk, which has become India's second largest source of Russian crude since April.

Shipments from Novorossiysk fell to around 616,000 barrels per day from 800,000 in the previous month.



Ukrainian drone attacks have added to the risks facing tankers operating through the Black Sea, contributing to the disruption of shipments.

The more significant development, however, is taking place in China's buying pattern.

Chinese refiners have traditionally relied heavily on Russia's eastern ports for ESPO crude, while Indian refiners have largely sourced Urals crude from Russia's western ports. This geographical division meant the two countries generally competed for different supplies.

That distinction is now weakening.

According to Kpler data cited in the source material, crude loaded from Russia's European ports represented 31 percent of China's seaborne Russian oil imports in August, compared with 22 percent in June. The shift is bringing Chinese refiners increasingly into the same ports and grades that have been important to Indian refiners.

Competition is beginning to affect prices.

The clearest indication of the changing market is the narrowing discount on Russian crude.

Following the loss of its European customers after 2022, Russia offered significant discounts to attract Asian buyers. At one stage, the discount on Russian crude reached about \$8 a barrel.

The intensifying demand from India and China has reduced that advantage.

October ESPO cargoes were reportedly purchased at around \$1 a barrel above Brent, compared with a discount of roughly \$4 a barrel below Brent in mid-July. Urals crude delivered to India followed a similar trend, with the average discount narrowing to about \$1.50 a barrel in August and briefly disappearing toward the end of the month.

The market subsequently saw another shift after fresh US sanctions were imposed on Russian producers Rosneft and Lukoil. The measures prompted several major Indian refiners and Chinese state oil companies to pause purchases.

The resulting reduction in demand temporarily widened the discount on Urals crude to around \$3 to \$4 a barrel. Indian state refiners later resumed purchases for September and October delivery as the wider discounts once again improved the economics of Russian crude.

India faces a margin squeeze. For India, the central concern may not be access to Russian crude but the economics of buying it.

The availability of heavily discounted Russian oil allowed Indian refiners to generate strong margins, particularly by processing crude into diesel and petrol for overseas markets.

If Chinese refiners continue competing aggressively for Russian cargoes, those discounts could remain narrower for longer. That would directly affect the profitability of India's refining model, even if Indian companies continue securing adequate volumes.

India has already begun responding by broadening its sources of supply.

Venezuelan crude imports rose 64 percent in August to 358,000 barrels per day, the highest level since 2020. Imports from Angola also increased sharply, rising from 30,000 barrels per day to 198,000 barrels per day.

A new phase in the Asian oil market

India is not being pushed out of the Russian oil market. Russia is still expected to remain its largest crude supplier by a substantial margin.

But the market that emerged after 2022 is changing.

India once enjoyed relatively strong access to abundant Russian crude at deep discounts, with limited competition from other major Asian buyers. China's growing presence is altering that equation.

The competition is now moving beyond access to crude and into the pricing of that crude. As Chinese refiners seek to replace lost Iranian supplies, Indian refiners are finding themselves competing for cargoes they once sourced with comparatively little pressure.

For Moscow, the changing market offers greater bargaining power. For New Delhi, it means that the era of exceptionally cheap Russian crude may be entering a more difficult phase.

The geopolitical consequences could extend beyond oil prices. Russia's growing leverage over both India and China gives Moscow greater room to manage its Asian energy relationships, while the two Asian powers face increasing pressure to diversify their supplies and protect refining margins.

What began after 2022 as a major realignment of global oil flows is now entering a new phase, with India and China increasingly competing for the same Russian barrels.

Nepal Turns Climate Disaster Into a Compensation Fight

SYSTEM OBSERVER
KATHMANDU

Nepal is seeking compensation from the United States, China and India following the devastating floods that struck the Bhotekoshi river basin, turning a climate disaster into a broader diplomatic argument over who should bear the financial cost of a warming planet.

The August 26 disaster killed more than 1,250 people and left around 20,000 homes requiring reconstruction, according to the source material. Nepalese authorities are now pressing the three major economies to provide compensation, arguing that assistance should be viewed not simply as humanitarian aid but as a matter of responsibility.

Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal has called for a shift in Nepal's approach, from accepting post-disaster assistance to seeking what Kathmandu describes as justice and compensation.

The claim is based on the argument that rapid climate change is increasing the risks facing Himalayan countries such as Nepal, despite their comparatively small contribution to global greenhouse



gas emissions. Nepal's government estimates its share of global emissions at about 0.1 percent.

A new fault line in the Global South

The political significance of Nepal's demand extends beyond the immediate disaster.

Climate vulnerable developing countries have for years argued that

wealthy industrialised nations should provide greater financial support because of their historical contribution to global emissions. That position has been central to international negotiations on climate finance, adaptation and loss and damage.

Nepal's decision to name China and India alongside the United

States introduces a more complicated dynamic.

China is the world's largest current greenhouse gas emitter, followed by the United States and India. By focusing on present-day emissions, Kathmandu is advancing a different basis for responsibility from the traditional emphasis on historical emissions and per capita output.

That distinction is particularly significant for India and China, both of which have traditionally argued in international climate negotiations that developed Western economies carry the greatest historical responsibility for global warming.

India has also consistently highlighted its comparatively low per capita emissions while supporting international efforts to provide financial assistance to countries facing severe climate impacts.

Nepal's position does not necessarily reject the existing climate finance framework, but it puts pressure on its traditional boundaries by arguing that today's largest emitters also have responsibilities toward vulnerable neighbours.

From humanitarian aid to compensation

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Nepal floods: Death toll surges to 1,356 as rescue efforts continue; nearly 5,000 still missing

KATHMANDU

The death toll from the devastating flash floods in Nepal surged to 1,356 on Monday as more bodies were recovered from the affected areas, authorities said.

Rescue teams continued to search for 4,994 people, including at least 589 foreign nationals, who remain missing, while 13,396 people have been rescued so far, according to Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

The flash floods, triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal. The Bhotekoshi River, which flows south from the Himalayan border region, carried the floodwaters downstream, sweeping away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges and damaging hydropower projects.

The disaster also killed at least 43 people on the Chinese side, while more than 500 people remain missing in Tibet, according to Chinese media reports.

In Nepal, 363 bodies have been recovered in Chitwan district, 223 in Nawalparasi East, 221 in Nawalparasi West, 197 in Nuwakot, 169 in Rasuwa, 75 in Gorkha, 70 in Dhading and 38 in Tanahu, according to NDRRMA.

Identification of bodies has emerged as a massive challenge. Only 98 bodies were identified as of Monday, and handed over to the families, according to NDRRMA.

Most bodies recovered after being swept downstream severely damaged, decomposed or recovered only in parts. Police have said that bodies carried far from the disaster sites and those that remained in water and mud have made identification particularly difficult.

Nepal Police has been collecting DNA samples from relatives of missing people to help identify unclaimed bodies and human remains recovered after the floods. More than 1,000 unidentified bodies have been buried after DNA samples were collected to facilitate their identification in the future, officials said.

Hospitals struggled to cope with the growing number of unidentified bodies. Large crowds continued to gather at medical facilities, carrying photographs of missing relatives and scrutinising images of the dead displayed on the walls.

Nepal President Ramchandra Paudel on Monday visited flood-affected areas of Nuwakot and Rasuwa districts to take stock of the situation and review rescue and relief operations.

According to the President's Secretariat, he was briefed by senior officers on search and rescue operations, relief distribution, holding centres and rehabilitation efforts.

In a televised address to the nation after visiting the flood-hit areas, Paudel appealed to the international community to take concrete action to ensure climate justice for the Himalayan nation and other countries bearing the brunt of climate change.

The president also called on all Nepalese political parties and citizens to unite for relief efforts instead of blaming one another or engaging in confrontation.

Nepal on Monday observed a national day of mourning on the 13th day of the disaster, with the national flag flown at half-mast at government offices across the country and at Nepali diplomatic missions abroad.

The mourning was observed in keeping with the traditional Hindu practice of marking the 13th day following a death.

The government has declared September 7 a national day of mourning to honour the victims of the catastrophic floods.

"Our thoughts are with the bereaved families and all those affected. India stands with Nepal in this difficult time and will continue

to support Nepal's efforts towards search, rescue and relief," the Indian Embassy in Nepal said in a post on X.

Several families of people missing since the August 26 floods gathered at Maitighar Mandala area in Kathmandu on Monday, carrying placards bearing photographs of their loved ones and urging the government to step up efforts to locate them.

Thirteen days after the disaster, the families said they were still seeking clear information about the whereabouts of the missing and the progress of search and rescue operations.

NDRRMA Executive Chief Dharma Raj Uprety said the government has deployed security personnel round-the-clock for search, rescue and relief operations.

He further said relief had reached most of the affected areas, while efforts were continuing to deliver food and other essential supplies to locations accessible only by helicopter.

Around 3,500 people were staying in government-run holding centres across Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading as of Monday, according to the NDRRMA. But many others displaced by the floods have sought shelter wherever they could, including schools, temples, monasteries, empty office buildings, community buildings and tents set up in forested areas.

Major rescue operations are also underway at hydropower projects in flood-affected districts, where 121 men are believed to be trapped in underground tunnels.

The Nepali Army on Monday said search and rescue operations inside the tunnels would continue until a breakthrough is achieved, unless the government directs otherwise.

Brigadier General Subash Jung Thapa said rescue teams were conducting continuous searches inside the tunnels.

He further said, Army personnel, along with representatives of the Rasuwagadhi hydropower project, have reached the damaged power-

house and the "control point" while searching for possible survivors.

Nepali Army spokesperson Raja Ram Basnet said the rescue operation had been divided into three areas - air, ground and tunnel searches - with the Army working alongside other security agencies.

Teams of experts from India and China are assisting their Nepali counterparts in these operations.

Australian tunnel expert Arnold Dix, who helped rescue 41 workers from India's Silkyara tunnel in 2023, is also assisting in the search for people believed to be trapped inside the Chilime hydropower project tunnel.

Meanwhile, reconstruction efforts have gathered pace, with authorities working to restore the flood-damaged Krishnabhir section of the Prithvi Highway in Dhading, where a 252-metre temporary track has been opened to reconnect the key Kathmandu-western Nepal road link. Repairs are also underway on other damaged roads and crucial bridges.

Nepal has also stepped up efforts to reassure international tourists that the country remains open for travel, as it seeks to prevent the recent flash floods from derailing its crucial autumn tourism season and undoing a fragile recovery in the sector.

Tourism Minister Khadak Raj Poudel has launched a social media campaign under the hashtag "Nepal Calling", telling foreign tourists that the country remains open and its Himalayan trekking routes are ready to receive visitors. "Nepal is still open... Our Himalayan trekking routes are still waiting for you," he said in a video message posted on social media.

Tourism contributes about 6.7 per cent to Nepal's GDP directly and indirectly and provides more than one million jobs. Fall in the number of foreign tourist arrivals could have a wider economic impact, affecting hotels, trekking agencies, guides, porters, airlines, restaurants and transport operators.

specific disaster is considerably more complicated.

The floods were attributed in the source material to a glacial collapse and debris flow in the Langtang area near the Nepal-Tibet border, rather than the earthquake initially suspected.

Water levels in the Trishuli River reportedly rose by almost nine metres within 30 minutes. Some estimates put the speed of the resulting flood wave at close to 193 kilometres per hour.

Nepal's foreign minister has linked the instability of Himalayan glaciers to global warming driven by industrial emissions beyond the country's borders.

The central legal question, however, is whether such a broad scientific connection can be converted into a claim that particular countries are financially liable for a specific disaster.

That distinction could determine how far Nepal's argument travels internationally.

A test for future climate claims Kathmandu appears prepared to take the issue to the international stage.

Nepalese officials are considering whether Prime Minister Shah should travel to New York for the 81st United Nations General Assembly, which opens on September 8, to press the case directly. Khanal is already expected to attend.

If Nepal succeeds in gaining significant diplomatic or legal support for its argument, the implications could extend well beyond the Himalayan

Ukraine weighs legalising adult-content industry to raise war revenue

KYIV

Ukraine is considering legislation that would legalise and tax parts of its adult-content industry, with lawmakers arguing that regulation could create an additional source of revenue for the country's war effort against Russia.

The proposal, backed by lawmaker Yaroslav Zhelezniak, could generate as much as \$25 million annually, according to estimates cited in reports on the legislation. The measure has passed its first reading in Parliament and remains subject to further debate and approval.

The proposal comes as Ukraine faces mounting financial pressure from the prolonged war and continues to search for additional domestic sources of revenue.

Supporters argue that the existing legal framework leaves a growing adult-content sector operating in a grey area, while the state receives limited tax revenue from an industry that already has a significant online presence.

The estimated \$25 million in additional revenue has been compared with the cost of military drones, with reports suggesting that the amount could finance roughly 30,000 drones, depending on their type and cost.

That figure is an illustration of the potential scale of the revenue, not a confirmed government procurement plan.

The proposal has also raised broader questions about Ukraine's wartime economic policy. Kyiv has increasingly relied on taxation, international financial assistance and domestic mobilisation of resources to sustain public spending and defence requirements.

For the government, the issue is therefore not simply whether adult content should be legalised. It is also whether an activity already operating outside a clear regulatory framework can be brought into the tax system without creating new social and legal complications.

The legislation still faces further parliamentary consideration before it can become law.

For Ukraine, the proposal reflects the extraordinary fiscal pressures created by a prolonged war, where even unconventional sources of revenue are being examined as Kyiv seeks to sustain its defence effort.

The bigger question is whether a sector currently operating largely in the shadows can be converted into a transparent, taxable industry without the expected revenue being outweighed by the political and regulatory costs.

region.

The Maldives faces growing threats from rising sea levels and coastal flooding. The Philippines continues to absorb heavy losses from powerful typhoons. Bangladesh faces recurring floods, cyclones and saltwater intrusion, while Pakistan's catastrophic 2022 floods caused more than \$30 billion in damage and economic losses.

For many vulnerable countries, the issue is no longer simply about securing emergency assistance after a disaster. It is increasingly about establishing who should pay for the long-term consequences of climate change.

Nepal's demand could therefore become an important test of whether the global climate finance system can accommodate a new definition of responsibility, one based not only on historical emissions but also on present-day economic power and emissions.

What began as Kathmandu's demand for compensation following a catastrophic flood could evolve into a much larger diplomatic debate over who ultimately pays the growing cost of a changing climate.

For India and China, both major developing economies with expanding global influence, Nepal's position also presents an uncomfortable question: whether leadership of the Global South can coexist with growing expectations that today's largest emitters should contribute more directly to the countries most exposed to climate-related disasters.

Jharkhand Minister Sudivya Kumar dies after suffering heart attack in Giridih, CM Soren pays tribute



GIRIDIH

Jharkhand Minister Sudivya Kumar passed away at Mercy Hospital in Giridih late Sunday night after suffering a heart attack, hospital authorities said. He was brought to the hospital with complaints of chest pain and was declared dead despite resuscitation efforts by doctors.

Dr Shahzad Sheikh of Mercy Hospital, while providing details about the minister's health condition, said, "Patient Sudivya Kumar came to us around 02:15. The patient had chest pain for two hours, and when the patient came here, he had already aspirated.

Whatever he had vomited had gone into the lungs. Upon coming, he was immediately intubated. On the ECG, there were signs of a heart attack. Within 10-15 minutes, the patient collapsed. CPR was started. While CPR was in progress, all CPR procedures were done, and despite all resuscitation measures, the patient was pronounced dead."

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren expressed grief over the demise of Sudivya Kumar and described him as an elder brother and a dedicated colleague.

In a post on X, Soren said,

"Late at night, I received the heartbreaking news of the passing of my elder brother, our beloved Sudivya Kumar Sonu Ji. Accepting this news is extremely difficult for me. Sonu Bhaiya's departure has left a void in my life that cannot be expressed in words."

Recalling his association with Sudivya Kumar, Soren said, "Sonu Bhaiya was not just a senior colleague or political associate to me. He was like an elder brother—affectionate, guiding, and steadfastly standing by my side in every difficult time. The moments spent with him and the lessons learned from him will always remain with me."

Soren further said that Sudivya Kumar had been associated with the Jharkhand movement and devoted his life to the cause of Jharkhand's identity and rights.

He added, "As a dedicated soldier of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, he devoted his entire life to the fight for Jharkhand's identity, rights, and pride. His dedication to Jharkhandiyat and his indomitable spirit will always be remembered."

The Chief Minister said the minister's demise was a personal loss for him and added, "Sonu Bhaiya, your passing is a personal loss for me. Your absence will always be felt. I will carry your affection, your struggles, and your commitment to Jharkhand with me for life. You will always be remembered, Bhaiya."

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) also condoled the death of its senior leader and minister, saying his demise was an irreparable loss for the party, government and the state.

In a post on X, JMM said, "As a dedicated soldier of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, he

devoted his entire life to the fight for Jharkhand's identity, rights, and pride. His dedication to Jharkhandiyat and his indomitable spirit will always be remembered.

Today, as I remember him, my heart keeps thinking how fragile life is. The voice that was among us until yesterday is now only in memories. Sonu Bhaiya, your passing is a personal loss for me. Your absence will always be felt. I will carry your affection, your struggles, and your commitment to Jharkhand with me for life. You will always be remembered, Bhaiya."

The party added, "The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha family is stunned and heartbroken by the untimely demise of Sudivya Kumar, a dedicated comrade of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and a minister in the Jharkhand government. His departure is an irreplaceable loss for the party, the government, and Jharkhand. His struggles, service, and contributions will always be remembered. Heartfelt condolences from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha family. May God grant peace to the departed soul and provide strength to the bereaved family and all comrades in this difficult time."

Meanwhile, JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey mourned the demise of Sudivya Kumar, calling his death an irreparable loss for the party and state politics.

Speaking to ANI, he said, "Our colleague and Cabinet Minister is no longer with us. He suffered a heart attack; although he was rushed to the hospital, he could not be saved. It is tragic news, an irreparable loss for the JMM and for the politics of Jharkhand... Sudivya Kumar was a remarkable figure; he was also my friend. It is hard to believe that he has left us."

EOS-05 reaches 35,786-km apogee after second orbit manoeuvre

BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation has successfully completed the second orbit-raising manoeuvre of EOS-05, taking the Earth observation satellite's estimated apogee to 35,786 kilometres.

According to ISRO, the manoeuvre was completed at 7 p.m. on September 6. The satellite's Liquid Apogee Motor fired for 338.9 seconds during the operation. ISRO said the satellite's health remains normal following the manoeuvre.

The latest operation followed the first orbit manoeuvre carried out on September 5. During that operation, the Liquid Apogee Motor fired for 5,406.4 seconds, placing EOS-05 in an estimated orbit of 20,000 by 31,129 kilometres. ISRO said further manoeuvres would be carried out to place the spacecraft in its planned geosynchronous orbit at 85.5 degrees East.

EOS-05 was launched aboard the GSLV-F17 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, on September 4, 2026. ISRO lists the mission as the 19th flight of the

Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle and identifies EOS-05 as an Earth observation spacecraft designed to operate from geosynchronous orbit.

The successful manoeuvres mark important progress in the mission as the spacecraft uses its onboard propulsion system to raise and refine its orbit following launch. ISRO's official mission records confirm that EOS-05 was initially placed into a sub-geosynchronous transfer orbit before the subsequent orbit-raising operations.

EOS-05 is described by ISRO as India's first imaging satellite from geosynchronous orbit. Its deployment is intended to expand India's Earth observation capability from a high-altitude orbit and support the country's growing requirements for space-based imaging and monitoring.

With the second manoeuvre successfully completed and the spacecraft reported healthy, EOS-05 has moved another step closer to its planned operational orbit. Further orbit manoeuvres will determine the spacecraft's final orbital configuration and position.

Bengal orders crackdown on child marriage

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari has ordered a statewide crackdown on child marriage, directing authorities to identify cases, initiate criminal proceedings and take action against those who facilitate marriages involving minors.

The government has cited Health Department data showing nearly 60,000 institutional deliveries involving underage girls between January and June this year. Murshidabad recorded the highest number at 12,847, followed by South 24 Parganas with 4,178 cases.

Adhikari said authorities would invoke the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act and applicable provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, or POCSO, against those found responsible.

He said no exemption from the law would be granted on the basis of personal law and warned that people involved in child marriage could face arrest. The government also plans to examine whether welfare benefits should be withheld from individuals found to have facilitated such marriages.

The administration has directed officials to intensify field-level verification and identify families and individuals linked to underage marriages.

The Murshidabad figure, however, refers to institutional deliveries involving underage girls and should not be presented as the number of confirmed child marriages. Each case requires investigation to establish whether a child marriage took place and whether a criminal offence was committed.

The government's move comes amid concern over the scale of underage pregnancies in several districts. The proposed enforcement drive will now test the state's ability to translate the reported data into documented cases, prosecutions and effective prevention.

Authorities face the additional challenge of ensuring that enforcement is evidence-based, with criminal liability established through individual investigations rather than inferred solely from health data.

SP leader booked for 'obstructing' path as he offers namaz at Moradabad Circuit House; says 'not afraid'

NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh Police has booked Samajwadi Party leader Haji Mohammad Usman under sections related to creating public nuisance and blocking roads after a video purportedly showed him offering namaz behind his car parked on the "entry/exit passage" of the Moradabad Circuit House.

The opposition party's Moradabad district vice president rejected the charge that he was blocking anyone's path. "[I was offering namaz] behind cars in the parking lot. Offering namaz is not a matter of shame, but of pride. I am not afraid of legal proceedings," he told ThePrint.

The widely shared video purportedly shows him offering namaz behind his vehicle parked inside the Circuit House on 3 September.

An FIR was registered Saturday at the Majhola police station based on a complaint by a Circuit House officer who told the police Usman's act caused an "obstruction to the movement of vehicles and people".

Usman had gone to the Circuit House to attend a meeting called by Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council Leader of Opposition Lal Bihari Yadav on September 3. Leaders from other opposition parties were also at the venue.

"For the stay of the Honorable Leader (Lal Bihari Yadav), Gomti Room, Room No. 03, and Room No. 08 were reserved at Circuit House Moradabad from 03.09.2026 to



04.09.2026. On 03.09.2026, the Honorable Leader held a meeting in the meeting hall of Circuit House Moradabad, which was attended by a large number of people," read the FIR, accessed by ThePrint.

It then details where Usman offered the Namaz.

"A video is rapidly circulating on social media in which Shri Haji Mohammad Usman is seen offering Namaz behind his vehicle, which was parked on the entry/exit passage of the Circuit House. This caused an obstruction to the movement of vehicles and people. Therefore, I have come to the police station to report this matter. Please take necessary action," said the FIR filed by the junior engineer.

Subsequently, an FIR was regis-

tered after the police took cognisance of the complaint, according to SP City Moradabad Kumar Ranvijay Singh.

"A Junior Engineer from the circuit house approached the police and alleged that Usman had obstructed the way of other visitors to the circuit house after a purported video of the accused came to their knowledge. Following the complaint filed by the official, an FIR under BNS sections 285 (Danger or obstruction in public way or line of navigation) and 292 (Punishment for public nuisance) has been lodged. Further probe is on," said Singh.

Speaking to ThePrint over a call, Usman said that offering prayer is no crime. "Saraswati Vandana is performed in schools, and Bhoomi Pujan is conducted before government construction projects. In such a situation, filing an FIR or raising questions only about namaz is discrimination," he said.

He further said that even in the video, he is seen offering prayers behind the cars and not in front of them to block anyone's path.

"I can be seen offering namaz behind cars in the parking lot; I am not blocking anyone's path. If any law has been violated, there should be an impartial investigation. However, the case registered over offering namaz should be dismissed. The Constitution holds our right," he said.

Ram temple trust will strengthen monitoring, oversight mechanisms: Gen sec Govind Dev Giri

AYODHYA (UP)

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust will strengthen its monitoring and oversight mechanisms to prevent incidents such as a recent theft at the Ram temple from recurring, newly appointed general secretary Govind Dev Giri said on Friday.

He defended the appointment of the trust's first CEO Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra (retd) as part of efforts to bring greater discipline to its functioning.

Giri said the incident of donation theft could have been prevented with continuous supervision, and stressed that the trust did not want such episodes to be repeated.

"If we do not pay attention to all these things, there is a possibility that an incident like what happened here can happen again. We do not want to repeat such things," he said.

Giri said even a small theft at the temple is a serious matter, although he claimed the actual incident was much smaller than the figures subsequently circulated.

"Even a small theft in Lord Ram's darbar is a serious crime for me," he said, adding ensuring that nobody gets an opportunity to commit such an offence was the trust's "first duty".

He said continuous monitoring would be necessary after responsibilities were divided among different personnel.

"Once a work has been started, it does not mean it will continue properly forever. A person's mind is fickle and changes," Giri said.

Defending the appointment of Air Marshal Mishra as the trust's first CEO, Giri said the temple's religious traditions and rituals would remain under the guidance of saints and learned acharyas, while administrative and operational functions required professional management.

"Sometimes it may seem... this is a temple, so what is the need for a corporate system here? The temple's worship, festivals and traditions are the work of saints and learned

acharyas...

"But the management of the employees and other arrangements has to be on practical lines, and for that we will have to adopt modern methods," he said.

Giri said the trust needs a professional person who will remain at the complex and ensure that the administrative arrangements are carried out in a disciplined manner.

He also praised Mishra, saying the new CEO is a "Ram bhakt" and a religious-minded person who follows spiritual practices.

"We were very happy to know that he is fundamentally a very religious-minded person, one who follows proper conduct and himself reads the Gita," Giri said.

"When I gave him a copy of the Gita, he said, 'I myself read one chapter of the Gita every day'," he said.

Giri said Mishra's religious outlook would help ensure that discipline was maintained without compromising the temple's traditions.

"Whoever remains devoted and has faith in dharma will never allow devotion to be compromised along with discipline," he said.

He said three detailed meetings had been held over the past two days to familiarise Mishra with the temple complex, its personnel and the responsibilities he would oversee.

Giri said the trust would combine traditional practices with modern management systems and the process had already begun.

"The beginning has already been made and you will start seeing its impact from tomorrow. We have changed the arrangements for the Shringar Aarti," he said.

The trust is also reviewing the arrangements at the Sita Rasoi Ann Kshetra to ensure that devotees receive 'prasad' with greater dignity and comfort.

He said the trust would also work to improve facilities for pilgrims and visitors and make efforts to associate Ayodhya's saints and local residents more closely with the temple.

Shape generations of students with scientific outlook, 'Nation First' Spirit: President to Teachers



NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday asked teachers to shape generations of students who develop a scientific outlook and move forward with the spirit of "nation first".

In an article written on the occasion of Teachers' Day, she said it is the sacred duty of teachers to guide their students to be good human beings.

Students who achieve prosperity and glory while remaining ethical in their thoughts and actions are living embodiments of a teacher's success, the president said.

She said the country is moving steadily towards the goal of becoming a developed nation with social inclusion at the core.

"As we advance on this journey, I want our teachers to shape generations of students who value the richness of our cultural heritage and traditions; who develop a scientific outlook and work for the welfare of humanity; who uphold the ideal of Antyodaya; who protect the environment and all living creatures; who strive for individual and collective excellence, and who move forward with the spirit of 'nation first'," President Murmu said.

In the article titled 'Shaping Minds; Building the Future', she

said parents and guardians repose the highest trust in teachers when they send their children to study.

"They believe that the teachers will treat the children as their own and take utmost care of the child's safety and development. It is the dharma of every teacher to uphold this sacred trust placed in them," the president said.

A teacher's attitude, conduct and behaviour should not generate fear and anxiety in the children, break their morale or allow any sense of inferiority to develop, she said, adding that good teachers help their students become the best versions of themselves.

To encourage independent thinking in students, to ignite their curiosity, to promote the tendency to ask questions, to sharpen their capacity for argument and judgement, and to help them grow into independent individuals -- these are among the most useful and rewarding dimensions of teaching, the president said.

"It is only through such inspiring education that we will raise generations of successful entrepreneurs, brilliant scientists, creative artists and citizens capable of finding innovative solutions to emerging challenges," she said.

Acknowledging the role of her teachers, President Murmu said a loving and dedicated teacher can awaken limitless potential and inspiration within a student. Strengthened by that encouragement, students develop the courage to face life's toughest challenges and the confidence to pursue the loftiest of goals, she said, adding that teachers do "far more than teach a curriculum".

"To every citizen, I make an appeal: always hold our committed and sincere teachers in the highest esteem. I ardently wish that with the contribution of our dedicated teachers, India continues to learn and goes on to lead," the president said.

1266 CE Arabic manuscript, Katha Radheshyam in Urdu among rare texts in Delhi's heritage collection



NEW DELHI

A 760-year-old Arabic manuscript, 'Izah-ul-Ma'ani 'Ala al-Talkhees', has emerged as the oldest manuscript identified so far, while the 'Katha Radheshyam' manuscript, written in Urdu, is among other unusual texts being documented as part of Delhi's estimated 88,000-manuscript heritage under the Gyan Bharatam Mission.

Dated 1266 CE (687 Hijri), the Arabic manuscript deals with 'Ilm-e-Ma'ani' and 'Balaghat', the study of meaning, expression, rhetoric and eloquence in Arabic, Director and Coordinator of Gyan Bharatam

Cluster Centre at Jamia Hamdard, Akhtar Parvez said.

It discusses principles of expressing thoughts appropriately, effectively and persuasively and can help scholars understand the finer meanings and literary beauty of classical Arabic texts, including the Quranic text and Arabic literature, he said.

The collection covers a wide range of subjects reflecting the intellectual, religious, literary and scientific traditions of the region. These include the Quran and Tafsir, Fiqh, Tibb or Unani medicine, Tasawwuf, Nahw and Sarf or Arabic grammar, Balaghat, Mantiq or logic, Falsafa or philosophy, Lughat or lexicography,

Tarikh or history, Aqa'id or theology, Usool-e-Fiqh and Adab or literature and poetry, Parvez said.

The collection also reflects India's diverse religious and literary traditions, with manuscripts of works such as the Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita and Katha Radheshyam, he said. The latter is particularly unusual as it is a manuscript written in Urdu, making it significant for linguistic, cultural and manuscript studies.

Another manuscript of potential importance is Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb, relating to Unani medicine. It could be useful to researchers studying the history of medicine and the development and transmission of Unani medical knowledge, Parvez said.

The university said no previously unknown information has so far been conclusively established through the identification and preliminary examination of the manuscripts.

However, several holdings have considerable research potential in Unani medicine, religion, literature, linguistics and cultural history, subject to further scholarly study, Parvez said.

The work at Jamia Hamdard also provides an opportunity to preserve collections beyond its own holdings. Delhi is estimated to have around 88,000 manuscripts in institutions, temples, mosques, libraries and other organisations, representing

traditions and languages including Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Buddhist languages, he added.

The task comes with several challenges, including fragile paper, ageing, termite damage and fungal or insect infestation, he said. Experts also have to identify and verify manuscripts, decipher old handwriting and scripts, establish accurate dates and provenance, and prepare the material for digitisation without causing physical damage.

The manuscripts are among the significant holdings being identified as part of Jamia Hamdard's work in association with the Delhi Department of Archives under the Gyan Bharatam Mission for preservation, conservation, digitisation, translation and research of India's rich manuscript heritage.

Jamia Hamdard signed an MoU with Gyan Bharatam on December 11, 2025, following which it was designated as a Cluster Centre under the mission. The university is responsible for manuscript-related activities for its own collection and for coordinating and supervising the work of up to 20 Cluster Partner Centres across the country, he said.

Jamia Hamdard has begun digitising its own manuscript collection and established a Digitisation Lab. It is also in the process of setting up a Conservation Unit to support the preservation and long-term care of its manuscript holdings, Parvez added.

EDITORIAL



AVINASH BASSAN

The battlefield is changing, and so is the nature of the threat.

Drones have become essential military platforms for surveillance, reconnaissance and combat. But as their dependence on electronics and software grows, securing an unmanned system now requires more than inspecting its airframe or testing its flight performance.

This is why the Indian Army's decision to establish the AASHVAST laboratory deserves attention.

The facility, established under the Directorate General of Electronics and

THE DRONE THREAT MAY BE HIDDEN INSIDE THE MACHINE



Mechanical Engineering in Delhi Cantonment, is designed to examine military drones for unauthorised modifications, foreign-origin components and vulnerabilities in firmware and embedded software. Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth inaugurated it on August 14.

The significance of AASHVAST lies in addressing a blind spot in conventional equipment inspections. A drone can appear genuine and perform normally while its software contains hidden credentials, remote access mechanisms, altered firmware or other vulnerabilities. The laboratory is intended to bring these risks into the assessment process.

Supply chains are part of the threat landscape

The laboratory's ability to identify potentially risky Chinese-origin components is significant as India pushes for greater self-reliance in defence technology.

But the issue is bigger than the nationality of a component. The real question is whether an unknown, unauthorised or inadequately secured component can compromise a military platform.

That makes supply-chain security a national security concern.

India's effort to build indigenous drone capabilities must therefore go beyond assembling complete platforms. Critical elements such as software,

engines, batteries and electronic components also need to meet security and reliability standards. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has stressed the importance of extending self-reliance to these areas.

Supplier declarations and documentation cannot be the sole basis for establishing trust in mission-critical equipment. Independent technical verification is increasingly necessary.

Inspecting what cannot be seen

AASHVAST's air-gapped and read-only design is an important feature. It allows embedded software to be examined without writing information back to the equipment under assessment. Software can be extracted from a drone's flight controller or camera payload, or analysed from a stored software image.

This reflects a basic reality of modern warfare: a weapon can be physically secure while its digital architecture remains vulnerable.

The Army therefore needs to know not only whether a drone works, but whether the software governing it can be trusted.

The laboratory's system

of assessing vulnerabilities by severity and compiling the findings into a structured security assessment also gives commanders and technical personnel a common basis for deciding whether equipment is fit for use.

From self-reliance to trusted technology

India's defence self-reliance should ultimately be measured not only by where a system is assembled, but by how confidently its critical technology can be verified.

That means scrutiny of firmware, navigation systems, communications, electronic components and software must become an integral part of military equipment evaluation.

AASHVAST is a step towards that approach.

As unmanned systems become more central to military operations, cyber resilience and electronic supply-chain security will increasingly determine whether a platform is merely operational or genuinely trustworthy.

The most important question is no longer simply whether a drone can fly.

It is whether the machine can be trusted once it takes to the battlefield.

Start-ups Can Become a New Engine of Employment, But the Real Test Lies Beyond the Metros



BY ER PRATEEK

India's employment challenge is no longer limited to the question of how many jobs the economy can create. The larger challenge is whether the country can generate enough productive and sustainable employment for a young population entering the workforce every year.

The latest labour market figures present a mixed picture. India's unemployment rate among people aged 15 years and above stood at 5.5 per cent in June 2026. At the same time, the female labour force participation rate was 32.7 per cent, highlighting the considerable pool of potential workers who remain outside the labour market.

The situation is more challenging for young Indians. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, unemployment among people aged 15 to 29 was 9.9 per cent in 2025, compared with 10.3 per cent a year earlier. In urban areas, youth unemployment was significantly higher at 13.6 per cent.

These figures point to a larger economic question. India

needs not only more jobs, but also an ecosystem capable of turning young people into entrepreneurs, skilled professionals and job creators.

As a young entrepreneur leading Excellence Automations, I have seen how technology, entrepreneurship and access to the right opportunities can influence the way businesses grow and create employment. India's start-up ecosystem therefore deserves attention not simply as a technology story, but as an important part of the country's employment and economic strategy.

Since the launch of Startup India in 2016, the government has sought to build an ecosystem in which entrepreneurship can complement conventional employment. What began as an initiative to encourage innovation has developed into a broader policy framework involving funding, credit guarantees, incubation, taxation support, market access and regulatory assistance.

The scale of the ecosystem has expanded considerably. By March 31, 2026, more than 2.23 lakh start-ups had received recognition from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. These enterprises had reported the creation of more than 23.36 lakh direct jobs.

More than 55,200 start-ups were recognised during 2025-26 alone, the highest number recorded in a single financial year since the initiative was launched.

But the real measure of this transformation cannot be the number of companies registered. It must be their ability to survive, expand and generate stable employment.

Government intervention has increasingly focused on that

challenge.

Under the Fund of Funds for Startups, supported investment funds had invested more than Rs 26,900 crore in over 1,420 start-ups by the end of 2025-26. The government has also introduced a second Fund of Funds with a proposed corpus of Rs 10,000 crore, aimed at strengthening domestic venture capital and supporting areas such as deep technology, manufacturing and other high-growth sectors.

For early-stage entrepreneurs, access to initial capital remains one of the biggest barriers. The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme, with a corpus of Rs 945 crore, has been implemented through 219 incubators. More than 3,400 start-ups had received approvals involving over Rs 605 crore under the scheme.

Credit support is another important component. Under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Start-ups, government-backed guarantees are intended to encourage lenders to extend financing to eligible businesses. The maximum debt eligible for guarantee cover has been increased from Rs 10 crore to Rs 20 crore per borrower.

Such measures are important because a promising entrepreneur should not be forced to abandon a viable business idea simply because traditional lending institutions consider a young enterprise too risky.

Capital, however, is only one part of the equation.

A start-up can receive funding and develop a product, but without customers it cannot create sustainable employment. Market access is therefore as important as financial support.

More than 38,600 start-ups had been onboarded on the Government e-Marketplace. Start-up orders on the platform

crossed 1.40 lakh during 2025-26, with an order value exceeding Rs 19,190 crore.

This demonstrates how public procurement can provide young businesses with an opportunity to establish themselves while enabling government institutions to access new technologies and services.

Yet an important question remains: Can India's start-up revolution become an employment revolution?

The answer will depend largely on what happens beyond India's established metropolitan centres.

The start-up ecosystem remains concentrated in major cities, where entrepreneurs generally have greater access to investors, incubators, skilled manpower, universities and large consumer markets. For a young entrepreneur in a smaller city or district, the barriers can be very different.

Access to finance may be limited. Mentorship can be difficult to find. Skilled workers often migrate to larger cities. Market connections can be weak. Even a promising business can struggle to move from the idea stage to commercial success.

This is where the next phase of government policy needs greater attention.

India must take entrepreneurship deeper into smaller cities and districts. Universities, technical institutions, local incubators and digital infrastructure can play a much larger role in creating regional start-up ecosystems.

Women entrepreneurs also represent a major opportunity. Increasing female participation in the workforce would expand the productive capacity of the economy while creating new household and community-level

opportunities.

There is also a need to distinguish between start-up creation and start-up success. Registration figures are useful indicators of entrepreneurial activity, but they do not automatically translate into durable employment. The long-term measure should be how many businesses survive, how many scale up and how many stable jobs they create.

India cannot expect start-ups alone to solve its unemployment problem. Manufacturing, infrastructure, agriculture, services and traditional small businesses will remain critical sources of employment.

But a strong start-up ecosystem can become an important additional engine of economic growth and job creation.

The opportunity before India is therefore much larger than creating a generation of technology companies. It is about building an economy in which a young person with an idea can access finance, skills, mentorship and markets without necessarily having to move to a metropolitan city.

The government has built a substantial policy framework. The next test is implementation and reach.

India has demonstrated that it can create start-ups at scale. The more important task now is to create businesses that survive, grow and employ people at scale.

That is where India's start-up story will ultimately be judged.

Author is Civil engineer; Young entrepreneur

Eisha Singh on 'Juhi Mui' going off air: 'I am heartbroken because I wanted this journey to continue'



Television actress Eisha Singh has opened up about her show "Juhi Mui" going off air. She admitted that

she is heartbroken as she wanted the journey to continue. In an exclusive quote shared with IANS, the

actress reflected on her experience with the show and shared her emotions about bidding farewell to the

character and the story. Eisha said, "I am heartbroken because I wanted this journey to continue. There was still so much that I wanted to explore as an actor and so much more I wanted to give to the character. But I also believe that every journey teaches you something." "If this is truly the end of this chapter, I want to remember it for the love, the memories and the people who stood by us. And if my fans are still fighting to save the show, all I can say is that I see you, I hear you and I am deeply grateful."

The 'Ishq Subhan Allah' actress added, "When you put so much of yourself into a show, it stops feeling like just a show. You build the character, you live those emotions, you spend so many hours on set and slowly the entire journey becomes a part of your life. I have genuinely given this show everything I could, from my performance to my time and my energy. So when you suddenly hear that it is coming to an end, it naturally hurts. I am very upset because I know how much effort I have personally put into making this journey special."

"What has touched me the most is seeing the love

coming from the audience. My fans are not simply accepting the show going off air; they are actually going all out to save it. They are raising their voices, talking about the show and showing the makers just how deeply connected they are with the story and the characters. As an actor, there is no bigger validation than knowing that people care enough to fight for something you have worked so hard on. Their love honestly means more to me than I can explain," mentioned Eisha.

Eisha Singh went on to state, "There is a very different kind of emotion when you realize that your audience doesn't want to say goodbye to your character. We actors often wonder whether our work has reached people or whether they have connected with what we are trying to portray."

The series starred Eisha Singh and Vijayendra Kumeria in the lead roles. Loosely adapted from the popular Korean drama Extraordinary "Attorney Woo," "Juhi Mui" premiered on Colors TV on June 29, 2026.

'Bigg Boss 20': Aamrapali Dubey says she doesn't care about people bringing up her controversy

Aamrapali Dubey, who has entered the 'Bigg Boss 20' house, says the reality show is less about expanding her stardom and more about allowing people to see the person behind the characters. The Bhojpuri star went on to say that she has faced only one controversy in her life and added that she does not care if fellow contestants bring it up inside the show.

Asked what Bigg Boss 20 gives her that her established career in Bhojpuri cinema couldn't, Aamrapali told IANS: "I think Bigg Boss will give me a chance to show my real side to my audience, which they've never witnessed. I've always played certain roles and characters that were scripted. This time, it will be all real, and that's why Bigg Boss."

She also spoke about showing her unfiltered side on the show, dealing with emotional vulnerability and the one controversy she says no longer bothers her.

Talking about entering Bigg Boss means admitting that Bhojpuri stardom alone isn't enough for the kind of national visibility one wants, she said: "When you are a Bhojpuri actor, trust me, I'm saying this from my first-hand experience, you're not just someone who's nationally known but globally



known..."

"I'm very blessed that Bhojpuri is a language which is spoken in many parts of the world, maybe

Fiji, Mauritius and so forth. There are Bhojpuri-speaking and understanding people living in the United States of America, the United

Kingdom, almost every part that I know of," added the actress, who has given out successful films in collaboration with star Nirahua.

The actress, who is known for her vibrant dance performances, added: "Luckily for our industry, the films that we make and the music videos that are made here very regularly are watched and heard everywhere. So it's not about the fan base in particular, but yes, to the existing fans, I would really like to show another side of me, which is the real side."

So, what scares her more inside the house controversy, losing emotional control, or discovering that your popularity outside doesn't translate into votes?

The actress said: "I think votes and everything are something that is based on others. It is not something that I can control."

"Being emotionally stable is something that is in my hands to control, and if I'm not able to do that, and if I end up being in a vulnerable position, that is more discomforting for me," concluded the actress.

Talking about controversies, is she worried her fellow contestants might bring up inside the house, the actress said: "There's just one controversy that I've ever had in my whole life, and now I'm so used to it that I don't care about people bringing that up."

Why your gut needs extra care during monsoon; expert weighs in

Sakshi Srivastava

The arrival of the monsoon offers relief from the scorching summer heat, but it also marks the beginning of a season when digestive complaints become significantly more common. Gastroenterologists often see a rise in patients reporting bloating, acidity, nausea, diarrhoea and stomach cramps during the rainy months. While these symptoms may seem similar, they do not always point to the same problem. In some cases, they result from indigestion or dietary habits, while in others they may signal a bacterial, viral or parasitic infection that requires prompt medical attention.

Supporting this, a review of international studies published in the journal *Pathogens* found a significant association between environmental conditions and gastrointestinal infections. The researchers reported that temperature, rainfall and humidity can influence the spread of infectious gastroenteritis, highlighting the importance of food hygiene, safe drinking water and timely medical care during the rainy season.

To understand why gut problems become more common during the monsoon, how to distinguish between bloating, acidity and infection, and the warning signs that should never be ignored, we spoke to Dr Kaushik Subramanian, Senior Consultant - Surgical Gastroenterology, Aster Whitefield Hospital.

Why digestive problems become more common during the rains

According to Dr Kaushik Subramanian, the monsoon season brings a noticeable rise in patients seeking treatment for digestive complaints such as bloating, acidity, nausea, diarrhoea and stomach pain. While many people assume these symptoms are simply due to food poisoning, the reality is more complex.

"Consumption of contaminated food and water is certainly one of the



major causes of stomach infections during the monsoon, but it is not the only reason. Increased humidity encourages bacterial growth and speeds up food spoilage. At the same time, changes in eating habits, frequent consumption of oily snacks and reduced physical activity during the rainy season can all affect digestion," he said.

He added that because symptoms such as bloating, acidity and infections often overlap, many people find it difficult to identify the underlying cause, delaying appropriate treatment.

Your gut is more than just a digestive organ

Dr Subramanian explained that the gut is no longer viewed merely as an organ that digests food. It is home to trillions of beneficial microorganisms, collectively known as the gut microbiome, which play a crucial role in digestion, vitamin production, immunity and protecting the body against harmful microbes.

"When this delicate balance is disturbed - whether due to infections, unnecessary antibiotic use, unhealthy eating habits or poor lifestyle choices - it can lead to

digestive symptoms such as bloating, excessive gas, abdominal discomfort and changes in bowel habits. While some episodes settle on their own, persistent symptoms may indicate an underlying problem that needs medical attention," he said.

He also noted that maintaining a healthy gut microbiome is essential for overall digestive health, particularly during the monsoon when infections become more common.

How do you know what you're dealing with?

Dr Subramanian said recognising the pattern of symptoms can help distinguish between common digestive problems.

"Bloating usually develops after meals and is characterised by a feeling of heaviness, abdominal fullness or excess gas. Acidity, on the other hand, typically causes a burning sensation in the chest or upper abdomen and may be accompanied by a sour taste in the mouth, especially after consuming spicy or oily foods," he explained.

Intestinal infections, however, present differently.

"Loose motions, vomiting, severe

abdominal pain, fever and dehydration are warning signs of an infection rather than simple indigestion. These symptoms can worsen rapidly, particularly in young children, older adults and people with weakened immunity, and should not be ignored," he said.

Healthy habits can prevent most monsoon gut problems

According to Dr Subramanian, maintaining good food hygiene is one of the simplest yet most effective ways to reduce the risk of digestive illnesses during the rainy season.

"Always choose freshly prepared meals instead of food that has been left out for several hours, and ensure that drinking water is clean or boiled. A balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and fibre supports healthy digestion, while probiotic foods such as curd and buttermilk can help maintain a healthy gut microbiome in many individuals," he said.

He also advised against unnecessary use of antibiotics, as they can disrupt beneficial gut bacteria when used without medical indication.

Lifestyle habits are equally important, he added. Poor sleep, chronic stress, irregular meal timings and lack of physical activity can all affect digestion through the gut-brain axis, the two-way communication between the digestive system and the brain.

While most cases of bloating and acidity improve with dietary changes and adequate hydration, Dr Subramanian stressed that persistent or recurring symptoms should always be evaluated by a doctor.

"Seek medical attention if you experience severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, diarrhoea, blood in stools, unexplained weight loss or signs of dehydration. Not every stomach problem during the monsoon is simply 'something you ate'. Understanding the difference between bloating, acidity and infection is key to receiving the right treatment at the right time," he said.

Want to stay dementia-free longer? These 3 simple lifestyle changes could help protect your brain

Simple lifestyle choices such as keeping blood pressure under control, avoiding smoking, managing diabetes, eating a healthy diet and staying physically active may help people remain free from dementia for significantly longer, according to findings from two recent studies.

The research highlights the growing evidence that while some dementia risk factors, including age and genetics, cannot be changed, several important factors affecting brain health can be influenced through lifestyle and timely medical care.

A US study published in *Neurology Open Access* followed 12,409 adults with an average age of 56 for approximately 26 years. During the long-term follow-up period, 3,008 participants developed dementia. Researchers examined the relationship between three major risk factors - high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking - and the number of years people lived without developing dementia.

The findings showed a substantial difference in dementia-free life expectancy between people who had these risk factors and those who did not. Participants who maintained normal blood pressure, did not have diabetes and did not smoke lived nearly 13 years longer without dementia compared with individuals

who had all three risk factors.

On average, people without the three risk factors remained free from dementia for about 30.1 years, while those with all three risk factors remained dementia-free for approximately 17.5 years.

The researchers also observed differences between men and women. Women generally lived longer without dementia than men, regardless of how many of the identified risk factors they had.

The study authors noted that people affected by all three risk factors were not only more likely to develop dementia but were also more likely to die at younger ages from other health problems. This combination resulted in shorter overall survival and fewer years in which their thinking and memory abilities remained intact.

The findings are particularly significant because high blood pressure, diabetes and smoking are common and, in many cases, manageable. Controlling these conditions earlier in life could therefore have benefits extending well beyond cardiovascular health.

A separate study conducted in Sweden has provided further evidence linking cardiovascular and lifestyle-related health problems with changes in the brain. Published

in *The Journal of Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease*, the study followed nearly 500 healthy adults for four years.

Researchers found that smoking, high blood pressure, heart disease and high cholesterol were associated with damage to the brain's small blood vessels and white matter. Such changes can interfere with communication between different parts of the brain and are considered important contributors to cognitive decline and vascular dementia.

The Swedish research also found a connection between diabetes and increased accumulation of amyloid beta, a protein associated with Alzheimer's disease. Abnormal accumulation of amyloid beta in the brain is one of the key biological features associated with Alzheimer's.

Together, the two studies underline the close relationship between brain health and overall physical health. Problems affecting the heart and blood vessels can also affect the brain because the brain depends heavily on a continuous supply of oxygen-rich blood.

High blood pressure, for example, can gradually damage blood vessels and increase the risk of stroke and other forms of brain injury. Diabetes can affect blood vessels and nerves, while smoking contributes to vascu-

lar damage and inflammation. High cholesterol and heart disease can also affect circulation and potentially increase the risk of cognitive impairment.

Experts emphasize that preventing dementia is not simply about doing one thing. Instead, maintaining brain health is likely to involve a combination of healthy habits throughout adulthood and particularly during midlife.

Regular physical activity, a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and other nutrient-dense foods, maintaining a healthy weight, getting adequate sleep and avoiding tobacco can all contribute to better overall health. Regular medical check-ups can also help identify conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol before they cause significant complications.

Importantly, the studies do not suggest that lifestyle changes can completely prevent dementia. Dementia has many causes, and factors such as advancing age, genetics and certain underlying diseases cannot always be controlled. However, reducing modifiable risk factors may help delay the onset of cognitive decline and increase the number of years people live with healthy brain function. **(Observation)**

SC,ST,OBC & Minorities Adhikaar Manch (JKUT)

Reservation is a Constitutional Right, Not a Favour: Narinder Datt



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The SC, ST, OBC & Minority Rights Forum held a press conference today at the Press Club, Jammu, which was addressed by Forum Chairman Narinder Datt.

Narinder Datt said that elected representatives of reserved categories raised the issues of reservation in promotions and transfer policy before Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. He said that whenever any elected representative raises the constitutional rights of their community, the Forum will stand firmly with them. He appealed to the Chief Minister to take concrete and timely action on these demands.

He further urged the Central Government, the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister and the Lieutenant Governor to increase SC reservation in Jammu & Kashmir from the existing 8 percent to 15 percent & OBC's 8% to 27%, so that welfare of the Scheduled Caste /OBC's community can be possible more effectively.

On demands to replace or abolish reservation on economic grounds from various groups as well as one Hon'ble Mla from Bani constituency, Narinder Datt said that reservation is not a poverty-removal scheme; rather, it is a constitutional mechanism aimed at addressing caste-based discrimination,

social oppression and historical social backwardness. He said that before demanding the removal of reservation, there should be a serious discussion on eliminating the caste system and caste-based discrimination. As long as caste-based discrimination continues in society, the need for social justice will also remain.

Responding to those who question the competence and quality of doctors, engineers and other professionals from reserved categories, he said that although reservation may provide benefits at the stage of admission, once admitted, all students follow the same curriculum, undergo the same training and appear for the required examinations. Therefore, questioning someone's professional competence merely on the basis of reservation is unjustified.

Addition of OBC Column in the Census: Banshilal Chaudhary

Banshilal Chaudhary, OBC Chairman, demanded that a column for OBCs should be included in the Census form so that the actual population and social status of the OBC community can be accurately recorded. He also appealed to the Govt for enhancement of reservation from 8% to 27% as per Mandal commission recommendation.

Protection of Constitutional Rights and Social Brotherhood
Sardar Narinder Singh Khalsa, President, Shiromani

Akali Dal, Jammu & Kashmir; Sardar Harsis Singh, Youth President, Shiromani Akali Dal, Jammu & Kashmir; and Comrade Daljit Singh said that the system and institutions of society must function in accordance with the Constitution and that the rights of every section must be respected. They stressed the need to maintain social harmony and assured their support to weaker and disadvantaged sections.

Social activists Kartik Bhagat and Ankush Bhagat, President, Bhagat Youth Club, stressed the importance of social unity and said that any violation of constitutional rights would be opposed through peaceful, democratic and lawful means.

Advocate Rajat Rameet and Advocate Satish Vidrohi said that the debate on reservation should be based on facts and the actual proportion of reservation, rather than emotion or misinformation. They said that SC, OBC, ST-1, ST-2, ALC and EWS categories should all be considered together to understand the actual picture.

Ashok Bhagat, Chairman, All Jammu & Kashmir Megh Sabha, Akhnoor Unit, said that society must remain vigilant about its constitutional rights and, whenever required, be prepared for democratic and peaceful movements to safeguard those rights. Rakesh Keemti (President, Sadgur kabir Nowjwan Sabha, Rajinder Bhagat, Vice President, All Jammu & Kashmir Megh Sabha, and Vishal Bhagat also stressed the importance of social unity, brotherhood and protection of constitutional rights.

The SC, ST, OBC & Minority Rights Forum made it clear that it is not against any particular community; rather, it stands for social justice, equality, constitutional rights and social harmony. The Forum stated that it will continue to work for the protection of constitutional rights through democratic and peaceful means.

DPS Jammu student Madhav Oberoi wins gold medal in district Netball Championship

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Madhav Oberoi, a student of Class X-A at Delhi Public School, Jammu, has made the school proud by winning a Gold Medal in the District Netball Championship 2026.

The championship was organized by the Netball Association of Jammu and Kashmir and was held on 27 August 2026 at Shastri Nagar, Jammu. Along with the gold medal, Madhav was also awarded a Certificate of Merit-cum-Participation in recognition of his performance and participation in the championship.

The esteemed management of DPS Jammu, under the visionary leadership of Sh. M.K. Ajatshatru Singh Ji (President, RCT), Kuwarani Dr. Ritu Singh Ji (Pro-Vice Chairperson), and Sh. S.S. Sodhi Ji (Director), along with Ms. Ruchi Chhabra (Principal) and the staff, congratulated Madhav on his commendable achievement. They appreciated his hard work and dedication and wished him continued success in both sports and academics.

Road Safety symposium organised at GDC Kathua

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KATHUA**

Government Degree College, Kathua, in collaboration with the Traffic Police, organised a Road Safety Symposium on the theme "Road Safety Begins with Responsibility, Not Enforcement" to sensitise students towards responsible road-user behaviour and adherence to traffic rules.

The programme commenced with a formal welcome address by Dr. Neelima Gupta, Convenor, Road Safety Club, GDC Kathua, who welcomed the Chief Guest, traffic police officials, Principal, faculty members, media representatives and students.

The opening address was delivered by DySP Traffic, Shri Sunil Gupta, who highlighted the importance of road discipline and responsible behaviour among young road users.

Principal Dr. Manohar Lal, GDC Kathua, appreciated the initiative and emphasised the role of educational institutions in creating responsible and safety-conscious citizens.

As many as 15 students participated in the symposium, sharing their views on road safety, responsible driving and the importance of following traffic regulations.

The performances were evaluated by a jury comprising Prof. Yash Pal Sharma, HOD, Urdu Department; Prof. Neelam Bhagat, HOD, Department of Home Science; and Prof. Neeraj Sharma, HOD, Department of English.

The SSP Traffic Rural Jammu, Shri Farooq Qaiser, interacted with the students and delivered a detailed presentation on road safety and traffic awareness. He highlighted the major causes of road accidents and stressed the importance of responsible road behaviour, particularly among young two-wheeler riders.

The first three winners of the symposium - Rahul Thakur, Sanam Sharma and Abhishek - were awarded certificates in recognition of their performance.

Before the conclusion of the programme, the DySP Traffic Police administered a road-safety oath to the participants and audience, urging everyone to uphold traffic rules and act as responsible citizens on the road. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by the DySP Traffic Police.

Prominent among those present on the occasion were senior faculty members Prof. Karlupia, Prof. Rakesh Jasrotia, Prof. Ram Singh and Prof. Anamika Baru, along with members of the Road Safety Club and other faculty members of the college.

The programme served as a meaningful platform for engaging students in discussions on road safety and reinforcing the message that road safety begins with individual responsibility and responsible choices on the road.

Army conducts recruitment training for Agniveer and TA aspirants at Chhatroo, Kishtwar

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KISHTWAR**

As part of Operation Sadbhavana, the Indian Army commenced a recruitment training programme for Agniveer and Territorial Army (TA) aspirants at Village Chhatroo, District Kishtwar on 07 Sept 2026. The training programme will be conducted till 21 Sept 2026.

The initiative has been undertaken with the aim of preparing local youth for the Defence Forces recruitment process by providing structured training, professional guidance and motivation. The programme focuses on enhancing physical fitness, endurance, preparation for written examinations, medical screening and imparting recruitment-oriented counselling to the aspirants.

A total of 17 youth from the region are participating in the training programme. The aspi-



rants are being trained to improve their physical capabilities, develop confidence and gain better understanding of the various aspects of the recruitment process.

The initiative is particularly beneficial for youth from remote areas, providing them with an opportunity to access organised training and guidance required to pursue their aspirations of joining the Defence Forces.

Through such initiatives under Operation Sadbhavana, the Indian Army continues to promote youth empowerment, skill development and positive engagement with local communities.

The programme reflects the Indian Army's commitment towards encouraging youth to pursue meaningful career opportunities and contribute towards nation-building.

BJP holds 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' workshop in Kathua Priya Sethi hails Modi's 25 years of public service, says India has emerged stronger globally



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KATHUA**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) organised a district-level workshop in Kathua to prepare party workers for the upcoming 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan', which will be observed from September 17 to October 17 to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years of public service.

The workshop was organised under the chairmanship of BJP Kathua District President Updesh Andotra and witnessed the participation of BJP Jammu and Kashmir Vice President, district in-charge and former minister Priya Sethi, BJP Jammu and Kashmir General Secretary Gopal Mahajan, Co-in-charge Sanjay Baru, MLA Dr Bharat Bhushan, Raghunandan Singh Babloo, BJP Kathua General Secretary and programme in-charge Rajesh Mehta, Ravinder Sharma 'Sittu', Gagan Singh, Prem Nath Dogra, Shakti Kendra Pramukhs, Mandal-level functionaries and a large number of party workers.

Addressing the gathering, Priya Sethi highlighted the significance of the campaign and hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years of public service, describing his tenure as a

period that has contributed to making India stronger and more prominent on the global stage.

Sethi said the country had witnessed significant transformation under Modi's leadership and expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for his contribution towards making India more confident, capable and globally influential.

She said the occasion was an opportunity for party workers to reaffirm their commitment to public service and work for the welfare of people.

She recalled that Modi began his tenure as Gujarat Chief Minister in October 2001 and subsequently assumed the responsibility of leading the country as Prime Minister. His 25-year journey in public life, she said, provided an opportunity for workers to draw inspiration from his dedication and commitment to nation-building.

Referring to India's economic performance, Sethi highlighted the reported 7.8 per cent GDP growth, saying that the figure reflected the resilience and strength of the Indian economy. She said India's growing economic stature was strengthening its position in the global community and creating new opportunities for development.

Sethi called upon BJP workers to actively participate in the

month-long 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' and ensure that the benefits of Central Government welfare schemes reach people at the grassroots level, particularly those at the last mile.

Gopal Mahajan, while addressing the workshop, stressed the organisational importance of the campaign. He urged Mandal and Shakti Kendra teams to work with dedication and ensure effective coordination between district, Mandal and booth-level workers. He said the campaign should go beyond organisational activities and become an opportunity to strengthen the party's connect with the people through service-oriented initiatives. Workers were encouraged to spread awareness about welfare schemes and assist eligible beneficiaries in accessing their benefits.

MLA Dr Bharat Bhushan, while addressing the gathering, called upon party workers to make the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' a meaningful grassroots initiative. He said the campaign should reflect the BJP's commitment to public service and urged workers to remain connected with people, understand their concerns and ensure that the benefits of government welfare schemes reach deserving beneficiaries.

He also emphasised the importance of unity, discipline and coordinated efforts at the booth and Mandal levels for the successful implementation of the campaign.

Sanjay Baru, BJP Kathua district co-in-charge, also addressed the workshop and stressed the need for active participation of workers in all programmes planned under the campaign. Baru urged the organisational teams to ensure effective coordination and wider public outreach so that the objectives of the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' are achieved at the grassroots level.

DC Rajouri reviews progress of digital crop survey under AgriStack

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
RAJOURI**

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the progress of the Digital Crop Survey (DCS) being conducted under the AgriStack framework in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed assessment of the progress achieved by the concerned departments and reviewed the status of field-level data collection and other related activities.

The Digital Crop Survey (DCS) is an initiative of the Government of India under the AgriStack framework, aimed at creating a verified and reliable digital database of farm plots, crops sown and farmer-related information. The initiative seeks to facilitate better agricultural planning, improve delivery of farmer-centric services and ensure effective implementation of various government

schemes.

The DC stressed upon the concerned officers to ensure accurate, comprehensive and timely collection and updation of data. He directed them to closely monitor the field-level progress, identify and address bottlenecks promptly and ensure achievement of the assigned targets within the stipulated timelines.

He further emphasised the need for close coordination among all stakeholders to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the Digital Crop Survey across the district.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Malikzada Sheraz Ul Haq; ADC Ravi Kumar Sihag; ADC Kalakote Mohammad Tanvir; ADC Nowshera Pritam Lal Thapa; ADC Sunderbani Ramkesh Sharma; ADC Koteranka Dil Mir; ACR Mohd Jahangir Khan; SDM Thanamandi Abid Hussain Shah; CAO Rajesh Verma; Tehsildars and other concerned officers.

Public Advisory issued for Kailash Yatra-2026 in Baderwah

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
BHADERWAH**

Additional District Magistrate Baderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal has issued a Public Advisory for the safe and smooth conduct of the Kailash Yatra-2026, scheduled to be held from September 8 to September 10, 2026.

The advisory highlights the challenging nature of the pilgrimage to Kailash Kund, situated at an altitude of around 14,500 feet and urges devotees to undertake the Yatra with adequate preparation, caution and strict adherence to the instructions of the Yatra Administration.

Devotees have been advised to ensure their physical fitness, carry valid identity proof, begin the journey early, maintain a slow and steady pace, take adequate rest and stay properly hydrated. Pilgrims have also been advised to follow weather advisories issued by the IMD and District Administration and carry essential items including warm and waterproof clothing, rain gear, suitable footwear, torch, medicines, food items and other necessary supplies.

The advisory further stresses that pilgrims experiencing

symptoms of high-altitude illness should immediately descend to a lower elevation and seek medical assistance.

As part of the precautionary measures, persons above 70 years, children below 14 years, persons suffering from serious illnesses, pregnant women and lactating mothers with their babies have been advised not to undertake the Yatra beyond the specified points, keeping in view the difficult terrain and high-altitude conditions.

The administration has strictly prohibited intoxicants, narcotic drugs, alcohol, caffeinated drinks and tobacco products, with violators liable to action under relevant laws. Pilgrims have also been directed to use only designated tracks, avoid shortcuts and refrain from activities causing pollution or damage to the local ecology, flora and fauna. Single-use plastics are strictly banned in the Yatra area.

The administration has urged all devotees to cooperate with the authorities and follow the prescribed safety and environmental guidelines for a safe, disciplined and spiritually fulfilling Kailash Yatra-2026.

Free Health Camp Highlights Importance of Early Screening and Preventive Healthcare: Ritika Trehan

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

Senior BJP leader and Convenor, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, J&KUT, Ritika Trehan, attended a Free Health Camp organised at KCV Diagnostic Centre, 38 BC, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, and appreciated the organisers for promoting preventive healthcare and awareness about early screening and timely diagnosis.

The camp, organised by Dr. Shikha Choudhary, Radiologist at KCV Diagnostic Centre, under the theme "Your Health, Our Priority," focused on early screening, detection and preventive healthcare, with special emphasis on breast and cervical screening.

Speaking on the occasion, Trehan appreciated Dr. Shikha Choudhary and the entire medical team for bringing specialised healthcare and consultation closer to the community. She said such initiatives



encourage people to undergo regular check-ups and seek timely medical advice instead of waiting for health problems to become serious.

Trehan laid special emphasis on women's healthcare, stating that women's health is central to the well-being of families and society. She said facilities for breast and cervical screening can play an important role in creating awareness and encouraging women to prioritise their health.

The camp featured consultations by specialists from dif-

ferent fields. Dr. Retaish Kumar, Sports Injuries Specialist; Dr. Jahanara, Gynaecology & Obstetrics; and Dr. Shabnam, Pathologist & Gynaecologist were available on September 5, while Dr. Kanchan Kaur, Breast Oncosurgeon and HoD, Medanta Gurgaon; Dr. Indu Gupta, Eye Specialist; and Dr. Vijay Bharti, Psychiatrist were among the visiting specialists scheduled for September 6. Dr. Sarita Sharma was also listed among the visiting professionals.

"Contingency plan for Jammu's economic upliftment" Panic struck Modi govt, BJP registering false FIRs against Rahul: Bhardwaj



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
VIJAYPUR**

A massive demonstration followed by a protest march was held here on Sunday in which Congress leaders and workers of Samba District took part. They were protesting against Uttarakhand Police registering a FIR against Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Mr Rahul Gandhi and vain attempts to silence him from raising people's concerns and raising issues affecting them. They raised slogans in support of Mr Gandhi and criticising the Central Government and the BJP for denying a proper democratic set up to Jammu and Kashmir as they felt that control of BJP rule of Central government has severely harmed interests of people in J & K particularly in Jammu region.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Mohinder Bhardwaj, Senior

Advocate and Senior Congress Leader, said registration of multiple FIRs against Mr Gandhi in different parts of the country on behalf of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi and BJP, is an act of cowardice and a failed attempt to try and silence him in his fight against attempts to subvert the constitution but also defend rights of students/youth, women, farmers, poor and downtrodden of the society.

The latest FIR in the election-bound Uttarakhand is a panic reaction by Mr Modi who is used to covering up his failures through spreading falsehood and concocting stories. Fudging figures to show a higher GDP, as a sign of economic prosperity, is a glaring example of how he and his party hoodwink the people in portraying a wrong picture. Why is the higher GDP growth as claimed by central government not reflect-

ing on ground in terms of employment opportunities, improvement in farm sector, growth in business and thereby income of the small and medium traders and businessmen?, he questioned.

He further said since Mr Gandhi has systematically, backed by facts, exposed policy failures of the Modi government and BJP's evil designs to subvert the Constitution and spread communalism through religious polarisation, it has created panic in the ruling dispensation. As against Mr Modi imposing his directionless "MAN KI BAAT" on people without listening to their grievances, Mr Gandhi has been regularly interacting with different sections of the society to listen to "THEIR MAN KI BAAT". That is where Mr Modi is feeling cornered.

Mr Bhardwaj, also demanded immediate restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, to usher the Union Territory into a full democratic set up answerable to the people. The present control of Union Government is meaningless as the Union government through the Home Ministry is overshadowing the democratically elected government. The Central government and the BJP are solely responsible for the current administrative mess, rampant corruption and total lack of development in Jammu and Kashmir.

The question is how to make the Union Home Ministry accountable to people of J&K? It means that common people rush to Delhi with their complaints of "paani, bijli and sadak" and other day to day problems since their MLAs have totally failed. It is a ridiculous situation and BJP and the central government have cut a cruel joke on the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

A New Voice for J&K Architecture: Indian Institute of Architects, Jammu and Kashmir Chapter Elects New Governing Body

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, has announced its newly elected Governing Body for the 2026-2028 term, following elections conducted from September 1 to 3, 2026.

Ar. Vishal Abrol has been elected as Chairperson of the IIA J&K Chapter, leading a newly constituted 14-member team of architects.

The new leadership comprises Ar. Habinder Pal Singh as Vice Chairperson, Ar. Sandeepu Dhar and Ar. Sunil Nagari as Joint Honorary Secretaries, and Ar. Manu Rajput as Honorary Treasurer.

The Executive Committee includes Ar. Maninder Singh, Ar. Randhir Chand, Ar. Vivek Sagar Sharma, Ar. Kulbir Thakur, Ar. Anav Sharma, Ar. Archana Razdan, Ar. Arshia Khajooria, Ar. Anoop Sharma and Ar. Kushagra Anand.

A notable feature of the newly elected 14-member Governing Body is the representation of four women architects, reflecting the growing contribu-

tion and leadership of women in the architectural profession in Jammu & Kashmir. Their representation also underscores the Chapter's commitment to greater inclusivity, diversity and recognition of women's leadership within the profession.

The elections witnessed active participation from architects across the Union Territory, reflecting the fraternity's strong engagement with the democratic process of the Institute and its collective interest in shaping the future direction of the profession.

Speaking after the declaration of the results, Chairperson Ar. Vishal Abrol expressed his gratitude to the members of the Chapter for placing their trust in the newly elected team. He stated that the incoming Governing Body would focus on strengthening unity within the Architectural fraternity, expanding professional opportunities, promoting knowledge exchange and creating greater avenues for professional development.

He further emphasised that the IIA J&K Chapter would seek to proactively engage with government departments, civic

bodies, educational institutions and other stakeholders to address professional concerns, promote better architectural practices and contribute constructively towards improving the quality and standards of the built environment across Jammu & Kashmir.

Under the new leadership, the Chapter intends to strengthen professional engagement and advocacy while creating platforms for continuing education, research, collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Particular emphasis will also be placed on encouraging young architects and architecture students and facilitating greater interaction between professionals, academia and other stakeholders.

The architectural fraternity of Jammu & Kashmir has extended its congratulations and best wishes to Ar. Vishal Abrol and the newly elected Governing Body, expressing confidence that the new team will work collectively to uphold the dignity of the profession and effectively represent the interests and aspirations of architects across the Union Territory.

NSF Pays Rich Tributes to Sarat Chandra Bose on His Birth

**Anniversary
SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The National Secular Forum (NSF), University Unit, organised a commemorative programme at the University of Jammu to mark the birth anniversary of the eminent nationalist leader and freedom fighter Sarat Chandra Bose, paying rich tributes to his contribution to the freedom struggle and the nation.

Amid patriotic slogans such as "Shaheed Sarat Chandra Bose Amar Rahe" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," NSF activists paid floral tributes and garlanded the portrait of Sarat Chandra Bose, recalling his dedication, courage and commitment to the cause of India's freedom.

Ankush Abrol, Provincial Joint Secretary, JKNC, was the Chief Guest, while Dr. Vikas Sharma, Coordinator and Secretary, Central Zone, JKNC, presided over the function.

Speaking on the occasion, Ankush Abrol said that Sarat Chandra Bose was a distinguished nationalist who made significant contributions to India's freedom movement and public life. He said his commitment to democratic values, national unity and social justice continues to inspire the younger generation. He urged students to study the lives of freedom fighters and draw inspiration from their sacrifices and dedication to the nation. He also said that Sarat Chandra Bose represented courage, patriotism and public service. He stressed the need to preserve the legacy of the freedom movement and pass its values on to future generations.

Presiding over the programme, Dr. Vikas Sharma said that remembering national heroes is not merely a ceremonial exercise but an opportunity to understand the values for which they worked throughout their lives. He said the younger generation must be made aware of the contributions of lesser-remembered freedom fighters and national leaders who played an important role in shaping modern India.

Dr. Sharma emphasised that students and youth have a vital role in strengthening the ideals of unity, secularism, democracy and social harmony. He called upon the students to follow the principles of patriotism, discipline and service to society and contribute positively towards nation-building.

Vikshay Vashist, State working-President, NSF, also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the importance of commemorating the lives and contributions of national leaders. He said that such programmes provide students with an opportunity to connect with India's history and understand the struggles that shaped the country.

Irfan Ahmed, Chairman, NSF University Unit, delivered the welcome address and highlighted the importance of remembering the sacrifices of the nation's freedom fighters.

Abhishek Uppal, President, NSF Jammu District Unit, presented the vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to the distinguished guests and participants for making the programme successful. The programme concluded with patriotic slogans and a reaffirmation by the participants to uphold the ideals of national unity, peace, democracy and social harmony.

Shiv Sena Opposes Proposed Vaishno Devi Helicopter Fare Hike

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU**

The Jammu and Kashmir unit of Shiv Sena (UBT) has strongly opposed the proposed hike in helicopter fares for the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage and urged the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board not to increase fares in the interest of pilgrims. State President Manish Sahni said that burdening pilgrims with additional financial costs at a time when people are already facing inflation was unjustified. He urged the Shrine Board to immediately stop the proposed 15-16 per cent fare hike.

Sahni said the one-way helicopter fare from Katra to Sanjichhat was ₹1,039 on April 1, 2014, and has now reached ₹2,320. With the proposed hike, it could rise to around ₹2,700.

"Inflation has already burdened the common people, but at least spare the devotees of Mata," Sahni said. He said helicopter services are an important facility for elderly people, women, children and pilgrims unable to undertake the trek. "The Mata shrine is a centre of faith, not a means of profiteering. The Shrine Board must give top priority to pilgrims' convenience and faith and refrain from any fare hike," he said.

L-G VK Saxena approves New LAHDC (Nautor Regularisation) Rules, 2026, paving way for proprietary rights of Nautor Land

SYSTEM OBSERVER
LEH

The Union Territory of Ladakh, under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, has taken another historic step towards resolving a long-pending and contentious issue of regularising and granting ownership of "Nautor" Land in Ladakh, with the Lieutenant Governor today approving the landmark Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Nautor Regularisation) Rules, 2026.

The Rules provide a comprehensive framework for granting proprietary rights/ownership of up to 10 acres of eligible Nautor land holdings to the occupants, across all seven districts of Ladakh. For Nautor land beyond the 10-acre limit, the proprietary rights may be allotted on a leasehold basis, in accordance with the Rules. The Rules offer a one-time regularisation mechanism for Nautor land, occupied before the repeal of the J&K Tenancy Act, 1980, on October 27, 2020. Any possession of Nautor land after this cut-off date will be ineligible for regularisation.

Nautor land refers to barren or wasteland, owned by the government, that was earlier allotted to individuals for cultivation or other productive use. More than 60,000 acres of land in the UT of Ladakh is presently recorded in revenue records as Nautor holdings.

Till now, the absence of a clear and uniform legal framework has restricted the effective utilisation of Nautor land till now. In particular, landholders with limited or non-proprietary rights were unable to use the land as a financial asset, including for purposes such as obtaining loans against it. At the same time, the absence of uniform rules also posed a threat of claims and disputes over government/Council land.

According to the Rules, the authority to allot Nautor land is now vested in LAHDCs in all seven districts. "Under Section 42 of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils Act, 1997, land within the district stands transferred to the Council, while clause (i) of Section 23 vests executive powers in the Council in relation to the allotment, use and occupation of land vested in it," the

Rules read.

L-G Shri Saxena said that the Rules provide a much-needed legal certainty to genuine Nautor landholders, bring in transparency and accountability into the regularisation process, establish uniform procedures across the Union Territory and, at the same time, safeguard the land vested in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) from encroachment and unauthorised claims.

"The Nautor issue has a deep historical connection with the lives and livelihoods of the people of Ladakh. For generations, our people have worked hard to bring barren and waste land under cultivation in one of the most challenging agricultural environments in the country. These Rules provide a transparent and uniform mechanism to address this long-pending issue and give legal certainty to genuine holders. It will also enable such land to be utilised as a financial asset, including for availing bank loans," said L-G Shri Saxena.

The rules will be put for public consultation for two weeks before the final notification is issued.

Manjit Singh slams PWD over substandard drainage work at Vijaypur MC



SYSTEM OBSERVER
VIJAYPUR

Provincial President of the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, Manjit Singh, today strongly objected to the alleged substandard drainage work being executed by the Public Works Department (PWD) under the jurisdiction of Municipal Committee, Vijaypur, asserting that there can be no compromise with the quality of public infrastructure being developed with taxpayers' money.

Taking serious cognizance of complaints received from local residents regarding the poor quality of the ongoing drainage work, Singh personally visited the site to assess the situation. During his inspection, he found deficiencies in the execution of the work and expressed concern over what he described as substandard construction that could fail to serve the very purpose for which the drainage project has been undertaken.

Singh interacted with the residents at the spot and listened to their grievances regarding the ongoing work. The locals reportedly raised concerns over the quality of the drainage construction and the manner in which the work was being carried out. Taking immediate action, Singh contacted the concerned officials of the PWD and apprised them of the complaints and deficiencies noticed at the site. Following his intervention, the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) Avinash Chadgal reached the spot.

Singh showed the AEE the portions of the drainage work where deficiencies were observed and emphasised that the work must be executed strictly according to the approved design, technical specifications and prescribed quality standards. He said that drainage infrastructure plays a crucial role in protecting roads, residential areas and public spaces from waterlogging, particularly during heavy rainfall. If such works are constructed without maintaining the required quality, he said, the public would ultimately

bear the consequences.

"The government spends public money on development works with the expectation that people will receive durable and quality infrastructure. If the drainage work itself is substandard, its purpose is defeated and public money is effectively wasted," Singh said. The Apni Party leader called upon the PWD authorities to immediately inspect the entire stretch of the ongoing drainage work and undertake necessary corrective measures wherever shortcomings have been detected. He also stressed the need for proper supervision by field-level officials to ensure that contractors do not compromise on quality.

The Apni Party leader said that merely sanctioning or executing development projects was not enough, as the concerned departments must also ensure proper supervision and quality control at every stage of execution. He called upon the PWD authorities to immediately examine the work and take corrective measures wherever deficiencies have been found. "The people cannot be made to suffer because of negligence or lack of supervision. Roads and other public infrastructure are built from taxpayers' money, and every rupee must be utilised honestly and efficiently," Singh asserted. He further urged the PWD authorities to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and ensure that field-level officers regularly inspect ongoing works instead of waiting for complaints from residents.

Singh warned that if the deficiencies were not rectified and the required corrective measures were not taken, he would highlight the matter publicly and raise the issue on the roads, so that the people could know how public works were being executed in their areas. He said that accountability cannot be limited to files and offices, adding that officials responsible for monitoring development works must remain answerable for the quality of projects executed on the ground.

Dharmarth Trust organises Grand Shobha Yatra ahead of Shri Krishna Janmashtami

SYSTEM OBSERVER
JAMMU

Ahead of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, the J&K Dharmarth Trust organised a grand and impressive Shobha Yatra, commencing from the iconic Shri Raghunath Ji Temple in the heart of Jammu city.

The Shobha Yatra was organised in collaboration with the Sanatan Dharm Sabha and Dharmik Yuvak Mandal. The procession featured beautifully decorated tableaux (Jhankis) depicting various significant episodes and important moments from the life of Lord Krishna, drawing large crowds of devotees and citizens along the route.

The Shobha Yatra commenced after the Murti Poojan at Shri Raghunath Ji Temple, which was attended by MLA Shri Yudhvir Sethi, former Minister Smt. Priya Sethi, former Minister Shri Ajay Sadhotra, President of Shri Sanatan Dharm Sabha Shri Parshotam Kumar Dadechi, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Jammu, Shri Arun Gupta, President of J&K Dharmarth Trust Dr. P.S. Pathania and Secretary of the Trust Shri Ashok Kumar Sharma (IPS Retd.).

Thereafter, Rath Poojan and Dhawajrohan ceremonies were performed before the Shobha Yatra set off from the temple premises.

The procession passed through several prominent markets and thoroughfares of Jammu, including Veer Marg, Shahidi Chowk, Rajinder Bazar, Kanak Mandi, City Chowk, Old Hospital Road, Purani Mandi, Link Road, Jain Bazar, Chowk Chabutra, Pacca Danga, Moti Bazar, Geeta Bhawan, Ranbireshwar Temple, Shalamar Road, City Chowk and Raghunath Bazar, before finally culminating at Shri Raghunath Ji Temple.

Thousands of devotees, along with prominent citizens, politi-



cal leaders and representatives of various social and religious organisations, participated in the Shobha Yatra with great enthusiasm and devotion. Members of the Muslim community also accorded a warm and cordial welcome to the Yatra at various places en route, reflecting the spirit of communal harmony, mutual respect and brotherhood that characterises Jammu's rich cultural ethos.

Speaking on the occasion, President of the Dharmarth Trust, Dr. P.S. Pathania, extended his greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami. He prayed that the sacred festival would usher in peace, progress and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Pathania said that festivals form an integral part of India's glorious cultural and spiritual heritage and play an important role in strengthening communal harmony, brotherhood and social cohesion. Such celebrations, he added, help reinforce the spirit of mutual respect and further enrich the secular and inclusive ethos of society. He prayed for peace, prosperity and the well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Secretary of the Dharmarth Trust, Shri Ashok Kumar Sharma, said that the Dharmarth Trust, under the patronage of its Chairman

Trustee Dr. Karan Singh Ji and the Trustees, remains committed to preserving and promoting Jammu and Kashmir's rich religious, cultural and spiritual heritage. He said that festivals such as Shri Krishna Janmashtami provide an opportunity for people to come together, celebrate their shared cultural traditions and strengthen the bonds of unity and brotherhood.

The Secretary appreciated the collective efforts of the Sanatan Dharm Sabha, Dharmik Yuvak Mandal, volunteers, devotees, civil administration and police authorities for ensuring the smooth and successful conduct of the Shobha Yatra.

Elaborate security and traffic arrangements were put in place by the District Administration and Jammu Police across the city to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of the religious procession. Senior police officers remained present at various locations along the route and supervised the security arrangements to ensure that the event remained orderly, safe and incident-free. I can also make this more media-oriented with a stronger national-media headline and a sharper opening paragraph if you want.

Civil Society Akhnoor Pays Tribute to Late Sh. Padam Dev Singh 'Nirdosh' on His 32nd Punyatithi



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

Civil Society Akhnoor today paid floral tributes to Late Sh. Padam Dev Singh 'Nirdosh' at Nirdosh Chowk, Akhnoor, on the occasion of his 32nd Punyatithi. Members remembered his immense contribution to Dogri literature, culture and society and stressed the need to preserve his legacy for future generations.

Sh. Shiv Kumar Gupta emphasised the need to revive Dogri Mushairas and Kavi Sammelans, which were once regularly organised in the region but have gradually declined. He said such programmes are essential for keeping Dogri literature and cultural traditions

alive.

CA. Anshul Gupta stressed that the younger generation, which today spends considerable time on mobile phones and digital gadgets, should be introduced to the life, works and ideals of Late Sh. Padam Dev Singh 'Nirdosh' so that they may draw inspiration from his contribution and follow the path of literature, culture and social responsibility.

Sh. D. N. Abrol described Nirdosh Ji as a legend of Dogri literature and one of its finest poets, whose contribution deserves to be remembered and celebrated by generations to come.

Dr. Tilak Raj Gupta said that Nirdosh Sahib was a great personality and that his life and

work should serve as a source of inspiration, particularly for the youth.

Anil Abrol emphasised that Dogri culture can flourish only when people actively use the language in their everyday lives. He urged families to speak Dogri at home and make it a natural part of daily communication.

Pawan Bharti remembered Nirdosh Ji as a towering personality who made a remarkable contribution towards taking Dogri language and literature to a much wider audience.

M. S. Jamwal, prominent Dogri artist and reporter, also paid an emotional tribute to Nirdosh Ji. Recalling his personal association with him, Sh. Jamwal described Late Sh. Padam Dev Singh 'Nirdosh' as his Guru and said that the guidance, inspiration and values imparted by him had left a lasting impression on his life.

Those present on the occasion included Sh. Shiv Kumar Gupta, CA. Anshul Gupta, Sh. D. N. Abrol, Dr. Tilak Raj Gupta, Sh. Anil Abrol, Sh. Pawan Bharti and Sh. M. S. Jamwal.

The programme concluded with a collective resolve to preserve and promote Dogri language, literature and cultural heritage and to ensure that the legacy of Late Sh. Padam Dev Singh 'Nirdosh' continues to inspire future generations.

Narinder Singh Bhau Leads Delegation to SDM Khour, Pushes for Veterinary Hospital; Felicitates Satish Sharma

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
KHOUR**

Chhamb area leader Narinder Singh Bhau, along with local residents, met Sub-Divisional Magistrate Khour Satish Sharma and raised the long-pending demand for establishment of a Veterinary Hospital in Khour.

During the meeting, Bhau apprised the SDM that approximately two Kanals of land is available near Gurwala Ground and urged the administration to consider the site for construction of the proposed Veterinary Hospital. He highlighted the importance of the facility for livestock owners, farmers and animal rearers of Khour and adjoining areas.

SDM Satish Sharma assured the delegation that the demand would be duly considered and that a suitable location for the Veterinary Hospital would be identified in consultation with local residents, subject to necessary verification,

approvals and government procedures.

The delegation also felicitated SDM Satish Sharma in recognition of his exemplary leadership and contribution towards civilian evacuation and relief operations during Operation Sindoor. He had earlier been felicitated by Chief of Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth for his outstanding contribution during the challenging period.

Narinder Singh Bhau appreciated the SDM's commitment towards public service and expressed hope that the process of identifying and allotting suitable land for the Veterinary Hospital would be expedited.

The delegation maintained that establishment of the Veterinary Hospital would be a significant step towards strengthening veterinary healthcare and supporting the farming and livestock-dependent communities of Khour and the wider Chhamb region.

Tara Chand seeks early restoration of J&K Statehood, safeguards for land and jobs

**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

Working President of J&K Congress and former Deputy Chief Minister Tara Chand on Friday called for the immediate restoration of Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir along with constitutional safeguards to protect the land, employment and other rights of local people. He also demanded urgent measures to address the growing unemployment among educated youth.

Tara Chand was addressing a Jan Samvad programme at Bandwal village in the Jourian area of Akhnoor Assembly constituency. During the programme, he interacted with residents, listened to their grievances and discussed issues concerning farmers, youth, workers and the rural population.

Speaking on the political and constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, Tara Chand said restoration of Statehood should not be delayed any further and must be accompanied by effective constitutional guarantees to safeguard the interests of the people.

He stressed that land and employment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir should remain protected, asserting that local people must have the first right over their land and employment. He said the restoration of Statehood should be



carried out at the earliest with adequate constitutional protection for the rights and interests of J&K residents.

Expressing concern over the rising unemployment among educated youth, Tara Chand said thousands of qualified young people were struggling to find suitable employment despite spending years pursuing education. He demanded a Special Employment Package for educated unemployed youth and special allowances for those awaiting employment.

"Our educated children have degrees and qualifications but no opportunities. The government cannot remain a silent spectator while the future of an entire

generation is being affected by unemployment," he said.

Tara Chand also highlighted the problems being faced by farmers due to the loss of fertile agricultural land along vulnerable stretches of the Chenab. He urged the government and administration to take immediate steps to protect agricultural land by constructing strong protective walls and permanent bunds.

He demanded that vulnerable areas be identified on priority and protective works initiated without further delay. He also sought proper and timely compensation for farmers who had already suffered losses due to erosion.

The former Deputy Chief Minister assured the villagers that he would raise the issue at the appropriate level and continue to press the government for effective protective measures.

Tara Chand also criticised the delay in improving the Jourian-Pallanwala road, saying residents had been facing considerable inconvenience due to poor road infrastructure. Recalling development works initiated during his tenure, he said construction of the road up to Jourian, work on the bridge over Jourian Nallah and widening of Khour market had been taken up in the first phase.

He said it was unfortunate that nearly 12 years had passed and several basic development works were still awaiting completion. He demanded that the Jourian-Pallanwala road be taken up on priority, stressing that better connectivity was essential for rural economic development and access to education, healthcare, markets and employment.

Raising the issue of daily-wage workers, Tara Chand demanded a clear and time-bound policy for their regularisation. He said workers who had served government departments and public institutions for years deserved dignity, job security and a fair resolution of their longstanding demands.

Tara Chand said Congress would continue to remain connected with people at the grassroots level and raise genuine public issues. He urged party workers to visit villages, listen to people and stand with them in difficult times. He also appealed to the people of Akhnoor to support Congress in the forthcoming Panchayat and Urban Local Body elections.

Senior party leaders Narinder Sharma, PCC General Secretary; Master Rashpal, Captain Kalidass, Madan Lal Sharma, Somraj Sharma, KK Bhagat, Bittu Chib, Bodhranj Sharma, Sham Lal, Rohit Kumar, Saidass and others were present on the occasion.

Grand Janmashtami Procession Draws Thousands in Akhnoor, Highlights Communal Unity



**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

Thousands of devotees turned out for a grand Shobha Yatra organized by the Shri Ram Leela Club (Regd.) on the occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, marking the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna with widespread devotion and

celebration.

The procession began at the Shri Radha Krishna Temple in Akhnoor and moved through the town's main market area. Among those present were former MLA Rajeev Sharma, Deputy Superintendent of Police K.D. Bhagat, and Akhnoor MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat. DDC members, sarpanchs

and panch representatives also joined the gathering, along with Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee president Ranvir Singh and representatives of the Rajput Sabha, Brahma Kumaris and Hari Mandir organizations.

The event also saw participation from Buntu Prabhu Pad Aji's team and

Mata Sathar Sewak Buntu Sharma, as members of various communities, trade bodies and local residents joined the celebration. Organizers said the turnout reflected the town's tradition of unity and communal harmony, with people from different backgrounds coming together for the occasion.

Elaborately decorated

tableaux depicting scenes from Lord Krishna's life, along with devotional songs and religious performances, formed the centerpiece of the procession. Chants of "Jai Shri Krishna" rang out through the market as the yatra made its way through the town, lending the event a festive and spiritual character.

Addressing the gathering, organizers said the Janmashtami celebrations serve as a reminder of the values of righteousness, service and humanity associated with Lord Krishna's teachings. They thanked the religious and social organizations, traders and residents who contributed to the event's success.

The procession concluded without incident, with organizers describing it as a demonstration of devotion and social harmony among the town's residents.

Remembering Nirdosh: 32 Years On, His Dogri Verses Still Speak

The poet's words captured love, loneliness, rural life and the social realities of his time

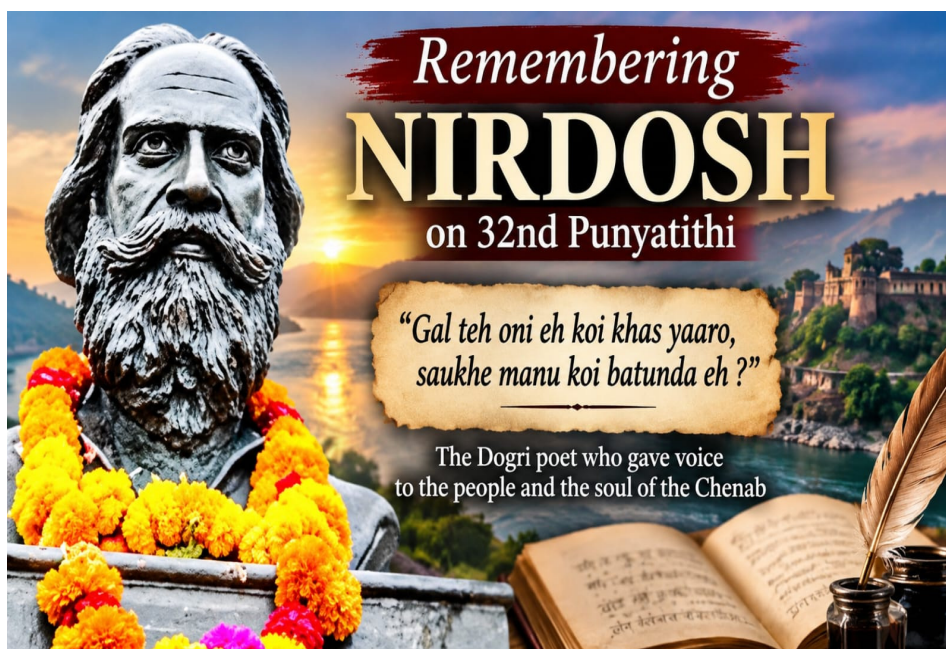
**SYSTEM OBSERVER
AKHNOOR**

Thirty-two years after his death, Padam Dev Singh 'Nirdosh' continues to hold a distinctive place in the literary and cultural memory of Akhnoor. His poetry, written in the language of ordinary people, reflected the emotions, experiences and social realities of the Dogra region.

On his 32nd punyatithi, Nirdosh is being remembered not only for the recognition he received during his lifetime, but also for verses that continue to be recited and remembered by people familiar with Dogri literature.

Born on Baisakhi Day in 1940 at Kaleeth Fort in Akhnoor, Nirdosh belonged to a royal family but chose to remain closely connected with ordinary people. Farmers, labourers and marginalised communities became an important part of his literary world, giving his poetry a strong social and regional character.

His strength as a poet was the simplicity of his language. He could take an ordinary expression and give it emotional depth. His verses often carried the rhythm of everyday conversation while addressing relation-



ships, loneliness, social inequality and human emotions.

Among the lines remembered from his poetry is:

"Gal teh oni eh koi khas yaaro, saukhe manu koi batunda eh?"

The simplicity of the expression reflects the distinctive character of Nirdosh's writing. His poetry remained close to the spoken language of the people, allowing readers and listeners to connect with it without the barrier of complicated literary language.

Another remembered verse presents a more reflective picture:

"Samjhen jine gi dosti,
tu meri mastiya Chanki,
akhiyen ch dikh viraan bastiyan."

The imagery of deserted settlements reflected in the eyes gives the verse a deeper meaning. Behind memories of friendship and moments of happiness, the poet identifies a sense of emptiness and loss.

The Chenab in Nirdosh's poetry

The Chenab occupied an important place in Nirdosh's literary imagination. The river was not merely part of the geography of Akhnoor. In his poetry, it became closely associated with love, separation, memory and the cultural landscape of the Dogra region.

His well-known composition,

"Balle Balle Bag Ha Chinab Deya Paniyan,
Aaj Ghar Chutti

Aunaa Saade Dil Janiaan,"

continues to remain part of the region's cultural memory.

Nirdosh's poetry, however, went beyond romance and nostalgia. His writing also contained sharp observations on society. Through satire and folk expression, he questioned feudal practices, inequality and the conduct of influential sections of society.

Akhnoor's poet Nirdosh died in Akhnoor in 1994. In 1997, Fountain Chowk was renamed Nirdosh Chowk in his memory. A statue was subsequently installed at the site, giving the poet a permanent place in the public landscape of Akhnoor.

The chowk continues to serve as a focal point for commemorative programmes. His birth anniversary on April 13 is marked with floral tributes and gatherings involving public representatives, civil society members and local residents.

A legacy beyond the memorial

For Nirdosh, the most important part of his legacy is not the statue or the name of the chowk. It is the continued relevance of his poetry.

His verses brought together the personal and the social. He wrote about love and friend-

ship, but also about rural life, inequality, hardship and the experiences of people whose voices were often absent from mainstream literary discourse.

His contribution helped strengthen the cultural place of Dogri poetry and preserved a picture of the society in which he lived and wrote.

Thirty-two years after his death, Akhnoor continues to remember Nirdosh.

His memorial stands in the town, but his lasting presence remains in the Dogri words that people still read, recite and remember.

6 Members Of 'Khuf Gang' Held With Pistol, Tokkas In Jammu: Police

Police have arrested six members of the 'Khuf Gang' and recovered a pistol and sharp-edged weapons from their possession in Arnia area of Jammu.

Officials told that on September 03, the gang members, residents of Bishnah, had threatened one Ashwani Kumar at Kool Kalan by displaying a pistol and tokkas.

Acting swiftly on the complaint, Police Station Arnia registered a case and started investigation. All the six accused were apprehended today.

During search, police recovered one pistol along with a magazine, three live rounds and five tokkas from their possession.

Further investigation is underway to ascertain their involvement in other criminal activities, police said.

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