



Firefighters at the site after a sleeper bus caught fire on the Yamuna Expressway in the Greater Noida area, killing nine passengers, in Noida.

Nine killed, more than 20 rescued as bus catches fire on Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

NOIDA, Sept 24: Nine passengers were killed after a bus travelling from Delhi to Mahoba in Bihar caught fire on the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida, officials said on Thursday.

More than 20 passengers were rescued safely during the incident that took place late Wednesday night. The driver and conductor of the bus, which was carrying 35 passengers, have been taken into custody, the officials said.

According to preliminary investigation, the fire might have been caused by a spark or blast in the air-conditioning system of the bus.

Chief Fire Officer Pradeep Kumar said the bus, bearing registration number BR32PA8647, was travelling from Kashmere Gate in New Delhi towards Mahoba when it caught fire near the 33-km milestone on the expressway in the Jewar police station area.

Contd. on Page 7

Katra-Reasi-Mahore Highway: A New Lifeline to Connect Jammu and Srinagar in Just 3.15 Hrs



RAJESH GUPTA

THE proposed Katra-Reasi-Mahore-Gulabgarh-Nandimarg-Kulgam highway could become more than another road between Jammu and Srinagar. For the remote communities of the Chenab region, it could be an awaited lifeline, opening access to markets, healthcare, education, employment and tourism while providing a dependable connection with the rest of Jammu and Kashmir.

The proposed corridor, described as an extension of the Delhi-Amritsar-Jammu-Katra Expressway, would cover less than 200 kilometres, compared with around 245 kilometres on NH-44 through Udhampur, Ramban and Banihal and about 330 kilometres via Mughal Road. With nearly 50 kilometres planned through tunnels, bridges and flyovers, travel between Jammu and Srinagar could fall to around three to three and a quarter hours.

Its greatest impact, however, could be felt in places such as Mahore, Gulabgarh, Dharmari, Arnas, Chassana, Budhal, Kotranka and Khawas. Residents of these areas have long faced difficult journeys because mountain roads are vulnerable to snow-fall, landslides and closures. During winter, people can be forced to travel towards Jammu before reaching Kashmir, adding time and expense. A reliable all weather corridor could change this reality.

For students, patients, traders, farmers and small businesses, improved connectivity means more than shorter journeys. It can mean easier access to hospitals and colleges, faster movement of agricultural produce, wider markets, better tourism opportunities and employment prospects. Remote villages could become economically connected rather than geographically isolated.

The project also carries strategic significance by improving links towards Rajouri and Poonch and strengthening connectivity in border areas. Diverting traffic from NH-44 could further reduce pressure on the existing corridor and provide an alternative during disruptions. Yet speed must not come at the cost of sustainability. Environmental safeguards, fair compensation, geological assessments, tunnel safety and construction quality must remain central to implementation. Communities whose lands make the highway possible should also receive benefits from it.

If planned and executed responsibly, this corridor could transform the Chenab region from a difficult-to-reach hinterland into a connected economic and tourism zone. Its success will be measured not only in kilometres saved, but in opportunities created for people who have waited for reliable connectivity for decades.

BANTALAB TRAGEDY: 2 students killed, 1 seriously injured as reckless driving raises traffic safety concerns

Rajesh Gupta

JAMMU: The tragic road accident at Bantalab Kheri in Jammu, in which two students lost their lives and another was seriously injured, has once again brought the spotlight on the alarming state of traffic enforcement in the city.

The accident involving students has raised fresh questions over whether enough is being done to prevent overspeeding, reckless driving, triple riding, signal jumping and other dangerous traffic violations. The loss of young lives in a road accident should not be treated merely as another statistic; it must trigger a serious review of the existing traffic enforcement system.

Public concern is particularly high over the movement of dumpers, minibuses and other commercial vehicles. Residents frequently complain about heavy vehicles being driven at dangerous speeds on roads shared by students, pedestrians, two-wheelers and other motorists. The demand is not for selective enforcement, but for strict and equal enforcement against every violator.

Traffic Police must answer a basic question: Where are

the regular speed checks and surprise inspections on roads witnessing frequent violations? If CCTV cameras and traffic personnel are available, why are habitual offenders allowed to repeatedly put lives at risk?

The Bantalab-Kheri tragedy should serve as a wake-up call. Authorities need to identify accident-prone stretches, install or strengthen speed-monitoring systems, conduct checks on commercial vehicles and take immediate action against reckless drivers. Overloading, vehicle fitness, permits and other violations involving commercial vehicles also require regular scrutiny.

The Traffic Police has issued repeated advisories urging motorists to follow lane discipline and avoid dangerous driving. But road safety cannot depend only on advisories. Visible enforcement on the ground is essential.

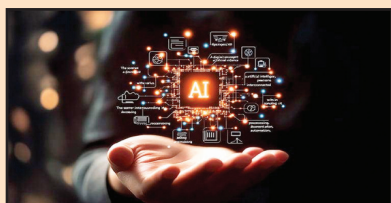
Two young students have reportedly lost their lives and another is seriously injured. Their families are now facing a tragedy that cannot be reversed. The authorities must ensure that the Bantalab Kheri accident becomes a turning point not another case forgotten after a few days.



"Representational image."

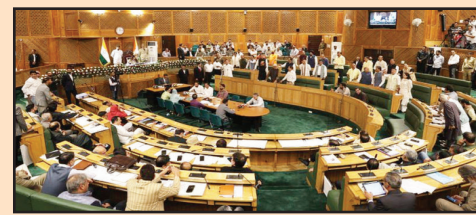


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SYNOPSIS

Man injured in firing in Samba

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SAMBA, Sep 24: A man was injured in a firing incident near a tea stall in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, with police filing a case and launching a probe, officials said on Thursday.

The incident took place around 11.45 pm on Wednesday in the Tarore area of Bari Brahmana, when two to three rounds were allegedly fired by a person near a tea stall following a heated argument over a past issue, they said.

The firing hit the 30-year-old man in the leg, officials said.

J&K Sets Oct 31 Deadline For 2027-28 Budget Proposals, Mandates Online Submission

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, Sept 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Finance Department has directed all administrative departments to begin preparations for the 2027-28 Budget and Revised Estimates of 2026-27, setting a strict deadline of October 31, 2026, for the submission of estimates to the Civil Secretariat.

Peer-Ki-Gali receives season's first snowfall, rain lashes J&K parts

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: Peer Ki Gali in the Pir Panjal range received the season's first snowfall on Thursday, while rainfall was reported from several parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The snowfall, according to recorded at the higher reaches of Peer Ki Gali along the Mughal Road, marking the first snowfall of the season in the area.

Rain was reported from several parts of the Union Territory, bringing a change in weather conditions after a largely dry spell.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has, however, forecast mainly dry weather in Jammu and Kashmir over the next two days.

According to the IMD's latest subdivision-wise forecast, no weather warning has been issued for Jammu and Kashmir for September 25 and 26.

Thunderstorm, lightning and squall activity has been

Contd. on Page 7

Uproar in Assembly over free gas cylinder scheme



Minister Satish Sharma says scheme has been approved; LoP Sharma slams 'betrayal' of 12 cylinder election promise

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: The Legislative Assembly descended into chaos on Thursday after Minister for Consumer Affairs Satish Sharma announced that the scheme of providing six free gas cylinders to Antyodaya Anna Yojana

(AAY) families had received approval from the competent authority. The announcement prompted the main opposition party, Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP), to question the government over its election promise of 12 free cylinders. Making the announcement in the House,

Sharma, said the scheme for AAY families had been cleared and an order rolling it out would be issued shortly.

Contd. on Page 7

J&K IS A POOR STATE, WE CAN'T AFFORD LUXURIES' Speaker Pulls Up Minister Over Multiple Official Vehicles



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: J&K Legislative Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday pulled up Transport Minister Satish Sharma over the use of multiple official vehicles by officers holding charge of more than one department, stress-

ing that the government could not afford such expenditure.

The issue came up during Question Hour after BJP MLA R.S. Pathania sought to know whether the government had enforced, or proposed to enforce, a "One Officer, One Vehicle" ceiling

Contd. on Page 7

Bankers demonstration held at Jammu today

Eight lacs bank officer & employees all across country will observe 3 days strike on Sept 28,29,30 & indefinite strike from 26th Oct

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, Sep 24: The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) consisting of 7 Unions of Bank employees and officers viz. All India Bank Employees' Association - AIBEA, All India Bank Officers Confederation - AIBOC, National Confederation of Bank Employees - NCBE, All

India Bank Officers association - AIBOA, Bank Employees Federation of India - BEFI, Indian National Bank Employees Federation - INBEF, Indian National Bank Officers Congress - INBOC, will observe a three days All India Bank Strike on 28th, 29th and 30th September, 2026 in which 8 lacs

bank employees and officers working in Public sector banks, Private sector banks, Foreign banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-op. Banks will be on strike.

Accordingly, a large demonstration was held today at Jammu in which many Bank Officers and Employees participated. The leaders of United Forum of Bank

Unions, from various Banks addressed the media and briefed about their demand.

Speaking on occasion Com Rajesh Mehta, Secretary All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC) J&K and Ladakh UT told that they are demanding approval of the Government for

Contd. on Page 7

Woman 'gang-raped' by 2 UP cops, 2 CRPF men at U'khand MLA's farmhouse

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

MUZAFFARNAGAR, Sep 24: According to Superintendent of Police Lakhman Singh Yadav, the woman, aged around 24 and a resident of Haryana's Fatehabad, has alleged that she was contacted on September 20 by a female acquaintance, who asked her to meet CRPF Inspector Mohit, a resident of Saurang village in Muzaffarnagar district, to visit religious places in Amroha.

Contd. on Page 7

Another Bihar horror: Girl molested in public by group of men



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

PATNA, Sep 24: A girl was allegedly harassed in public by a group of people who behaved indecently with her in Bihar's Samastipur district, following which four accused were arrested,

Contd. on Page 7

'First person I would shoot is CEC Gyanesh Kumar'



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

NEW DELHI, Sep 24: Launching an attack on the functioning of the Election Commission of India (ECI) under Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) supremo Mukesh Sahani on Thursday remarked that if he were "pardoned for one murder," the first person he would shoot is Gyanesh Kumar.

Contd. on Page 7

"Plant earthen water pot next to saplings": PM Modi shares traditional tree-watering technique Seva Yatris

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

NEW DELHI, Sep 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday interacted virtually with participants of the Seva Yatra, discussing community service initiatives,

Contd. on Page 7



"Where is statehood?" Dy CM hits back at BJP amid LPG cylinder row

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Thursday hit back at the BJP amid a ruckus in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly over the government's decision to provide six free LPG cylinders annually to Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) fami-

lies.

Speaking to reporters, Choudhary, questioned the BJP over the delay in the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

"Ask BJP where is statehood? They had promised statehood after the elections. Where is that?" he said.

Contd. on Page 7

J&K Assembly passes resolution seeking TET exemption for teachers appointed before October, 2019



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution seeking exemption of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) for teachers appointed before October 31, 2019.

Contd. on Page 7

CM Omar introduces Bill to amend J&K Municipal Act, 2000 in Assembly

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the Housing and Urban Development portfolio, today introduced a Bill in the ongoing Autumn Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Act, 2000.

The Jammu and Kashmir Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 2026 (L.A. Bill No. 10 of 2026) has already been published in an extraordinary issue of the Official Gazette.



India strongly rebukes "so-called" OIC's Kashmir statement, calls bloc to stop peddling Pak's propaganda

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

NEW DELHI/NEW YORK, Sep 24 India has categorically nullified the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) authority to com-

ment on matters internal to the country following references to it in the Joint Communiqué issued by the "so-called" OIC Contact Group on Jammu & Kashmir on the sidelines of the UN

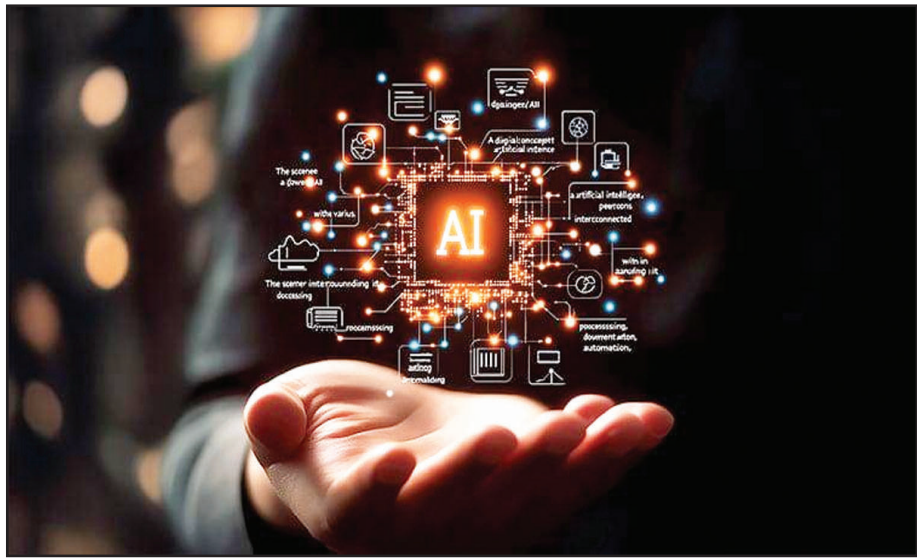
General Assembly in New York.

In a sharply worded response, the Ministry of External Affairs strongly rebuked both the 57-member bloc and Islamabad, stating that the continuous endorsement of "politically motivated propaganda" severely undermines the credibility of the organisation.

Jammu Local Events "India categorically rejects the unwarranted and factually incorrect references to India in the Joint Communiqué of the so-called OIC Contact Group on Jammu & Kashmir," MEA spokesperson

Contd. on Page 7

J&K working on establishing AI centre of excellence



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: The Jammu and Kashmir government has set in motion plans to establish an Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence, adopting a phased roadmap to build a regional AI ecosystem and advance its digital transformation agenda, the legislative assembly was informed on Thursday. In a written reply to Zadibal MLA Tanvir Sadiq, the government said it is promoting AI and other emerging technologies in the Union territory as part of its broader digital transformation and technology-enabled development initiatives.

"A phased and coordinated approach has been adopted for development of an AI ecosystem encompassing technological infrastructure,

capacity building, skill development, research, innovation, entrepreneurship and deployment of AI-based solutions across different sectors," it said.

It said the Department of Information Technology, being the nodal department for IT and digital initiatives in J&K, is facilitating various initiatives in collaboration with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, IIT Jammu, B h a s k a r a c h a r y a National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics, academic institutions, industry and other stakeholders.

"The Department has initiated the process for establishment of an AI Centre of Excellence in J&K, equipped with advanced AI laboratory and computing infrastructure,

incubation and innovation facilities, and support for research, skilling and development of AI-based solutions," the government said. It also said that a whole-of-government approach is being pursued for identification and implementation of suitable AI use cases in different departments, with emphasis on improving efficiency of processes, evidence-based decision-making and citizen-centric service delivery.

"The Government is also exploring development of IT/ITeS (Information Technology Enabled Services) infrastructure and IT Park in the UT, while leveraging existing institutional facilities such as it is and Polytechnics for imparting AI skills and facilitating access to laboratory and learning centres,"

Caste based reservation is a curse; revoke it immediately Sainik Samaj Party

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU: Col SS Pathania, Chief Convener and President Sainik Samaj Party, JKUT expressed his deep anguish and concern on caste based reservations, which are killing the merit and dividing the country. Reservations were brought in to help the marginalised community, provide level play field and empower them in 1950 and were applicable till 1960 .Aim was also to ensure social justice being a Welfare state. Initially reservations was only 22.5 percent, out of which 15 percent was for SC category and 7.5 for ST categories. Later on post Mandal commission 27 percent OBCs were added,taking the reservations to a whopping level of 49 percent. Inspite of Supreme Court ceiling of reservations not exceeding 50 percent another 10 percent was added for Economically Weaker Sections and reservations moves up to 60 percent. And another factor of reservations for disabled persons ,we have reservation percentage of 64 percent. Matter of concern is that reservations have been provided in all India civil examination, class A services, Central Armed Police Forces(CAPF) including Assam Rifles. A great injustice has been caused to general category, where they have to fight for vacancies which are only 35 percent. A nation where merit ceases to be a criteria for jobs and nation, can not ever dream of becoming a devloped nation. It is very clear that reservations are a great tool in the hand of our political masters and for their vested interests and appeasement, aimed at consolidation of vote bank,reservations may extend to private sectors,sports and armed forces too.Only criteria for basing the reservations should be economy factor and government must use the bitter pill to safeguard against any catastrophe, likely to happen in future.



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: This year's theme * E m p o w e r i n g Pharmacists for Healthier Futures* highlights contribution of Pharmacists in prevention, access to care, resilience, sustainability, futuristic services with expansion of service dimensions evolving at global levels. The skills, professional abilities, recognition and system support provided by pharmacists today stands realized by the world that focuses on advancing pharmacy to call on governments, policymakers, regulators and the public regulators to strengthen supportive policies by investing in



skilled professionalism for ensuring integration within existing health systems.

It is a recognized and adored fact that empowering pharmacists is a step to equip them with the competences, recognition and working environments necessary to meet evolving health needs.

The unique position of

pharmacists at the inter-sections of medicine supply, scientific innovations and patient care delivery with determination and dedication 24x7 today makes us feel proud of being part to such human related services.

Let us be the part and parcel to world class and national pharmacy evolving trends by celebrating the day for visible professional contributions on the ground to keep living in the souls we treat and manage in emergencies , OPDs, medicine regulations with the Standard Operating Procedures within the code of conduct in the theatres where we evolve as humans.

FICCI FLO JKL Holds Capacity-Building Workshop for Women Panchayat Leaders in Jammu



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, Sep 24: FICCI FLO Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh (JKL), in collaboration with Prevest DenPro, organised a one-day capacity-building workshop for women Gram Panchayat leaders from across the Jammu region, focusing on grassroots leadership, village-level governance and the use of digital tools in local administration.

The workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation from women Panchayat leaders, who shared challenges faced in their respective villages and discussed practical approaches to addressing them.

Shri Amit Shukla was the guest speaker, while Mr Amar Shukla of Empower Panchayat conducted sessions on Panchayat leadership,

the role of standing committees, Digital Gram Sabha and Panchayat Mitra, a digital tool aimed at helping elected representatives navigate local governance issues and processes.

The programme was attended by Varsha Bansal, Chairperson, FICCI FLO JKL; Aarti Chowdhary, Immediate Past Chairperson, FICCI FLO JKL; and Namrata Modi, Executive Director, Prevest Dental. FICCI FLO JKL acknowledged Modi's support and collaboration in facilitating the workshop.

"Through our work with women at the grassroots, we saw a clear need to equip Panchayat leaders with practical knowledge, confidence and ongoing support.

This programme grew out of that need," Bansal said. The workshop is part of a 15-day capacity-

building programme launched by FICCI FLO JKL in collaboration with Empower Panchayat.

Under the initiative, participants are encouraged to engage Gram Sabha members, identify local issues, conduct Gram Sabhas and implement practical solutions. They are also provided one-year access to the Digital Gram Sabha platform, Panchayat Mitra and a learning platform for continued guidance and support. The active participation at the Jammu workshop underscored the growing interest among women Panchayat leaders in practical governance training and digital tools. FICCI FLO JKL said it plans to expand the initiative to more women grassroots leaders across Jammu and Kashmir.

BTSM Holds Workers' Meeting and Joining Programme in Anantnag, Strengthens Grassroots

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

ANANTNAG: The Bharat Tibet Sahyog Manch (BTSM) organised a workers' meeting and joining programme at Tawheed Abad, Hiller, Anantnag, with the objective of strengthening its organisational activities and expanding its outreach at the grassroots level.

The meeting was chaired by Mushtaq Ahmad Khanday, State Secretary, Bharat Tibet Sahyog Manch, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, while the programme was organised by Tariq Ahmad Bhat, District Youth President, Anantnag. A number of workers and supporters participated in the programme and discussed various organisational matters and future activities of the Manch in the region.

During the programme, several political workers associated with the Indian National Congress and the Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) formally joined the Bharat Tibet Sahyog Manch. The newly joined members expressed their willingness to contribute to the

activities and objectives of the organisation.

Addressing the gathering, the organisers highlighted the importance of strengthening the organisational network of BTSM at the grass-

roots level and encouraging greater public participation in programmes related to Tibet, India's civilisational and cultural heritage, national awareness, and people-to-people engagement.

Fire and Fury Corps GoC reviews operational preparedness in Ladakh's Zaskar Valley



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

L E H / J A M M U : General Officer Commanding (GoC) of Fire and Fury Corps Lt Gen Madanraj Pandey visited the strategically

important Zaskar valley in Ladakh and reviewed operational preparedness, officials said on Thursday.

During his visit on Wednesday, Lt Gen Pandey also visited

Army installations at Padum and reviewed the ongoing and upcoming infrastructure projects, including those along the Nimmu-Padum-Darcha (N-P-D) Axis, with a focus on enhancing operational preparedness and sustainability in the challenging high-altitude terrain, they said.

The N-P-D Axis is a strategic 298-km road connecting Nimmu in Ladakh with Darcha in Himachal Pradesh through Padum in Zaskar Valley.

The GoC also interacted with troops and commended them for their professionalism, operational commitment and steadfast devotion to duty, the officials said.



General Zorawar Singh Memorial Trust Honours Balwant Thakur

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

REASI, Sep 24,: Son of the soil and internationally acclaimed theatre director and Padma Shri awardee Balwant Thakur was honoured here today by the General Zorawar Singh Memorial Trust, Reasi, for his outstanding contribution to theatre, culture and for bringing Reasi to the international limelight through his innovative creations.

The honour was conferred by Sh. Maheshwar Singh, President, General Zorawar Singh Memorial Trust, Reasi, during celebrations marking the 131st birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh. The programme was jointly organised by the General Zorawar Singh Memorial Trust and Yuva Rajput Sabha, Reasi, at the Reasi Auditorium and was attended by a large gathering of youth, students, cultural activists and prominent citizens.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Balwant Thakur called upon the people, particularly the youth, to rediscover, reinterpret and proudly present the history and cultural heritage of Reasi.

"Our history is not merely a collection of dates and events. It is a source of inspiration, courage and identity. We must discover the stories of our heroes and present them in ways that inspire the younger generation," he said.

Thakur urged the youth to take pride in the personalities who shaped the history of Reasi and the wider region, saying that their stories could provide powerful foundations for building a confident and creative future.

He gave an inspiring call to young people to become creators rather than mere consumers of opportunities.

"Do not wait for someone to change your life. Develop the confidence, skills and imagination to create your own opportunities. Your ideas, cre-

ativity and determination can take you far beyond the limitations of geography," he said.

Emphasising the importance of education and personality development, Thakur said that young people must cultivate communication skills, confidence, creativity, leadership and the ability to think independently. He stressed that education should not merely lead to degrees and employment, but should empower young people to become capable and responsible contributors to society.

Offering his personal support to the youth of Reasi, Thakur said he would extend all possible help and professional guidance within his capacity to those who wish to pursue theatre, creative arts, communication and other cultural and creative fields. He said he would particularly encourage initiatives aimed at transforming the personalities of



young people, building their confidence and helping them discover and develop their individual talents.

"Every young person has a unique potential. What is needed is the right guidance, exposure and confidence to bring that potential out," he said.

Thakur further observed that Reasi has immense potential to establish a distinctive identity on the global cultural map through its history, heroes, tradi-

tions and creative talent. "The city of Reasi needs to be glorified globally through the narratives of its heroes, who deserve their rightful place in history. Let every young person become an ambassador of this land," he said.

Concluding his address, Thakur urged the youth to dream beyond limitations, learn beyond textbooks, create beyond circumstances and remain deeply connected with their roots.

MOURNING

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad and untimely demise of **Smt. UMA SHORI** W/o Lt. Omkar Nath Bhat(MAHANOORI) originally from Mahanoora, Chadoora Budgam, presently at H.No.303/1 Vinayak Nagar,Muthi Jammu (Near Raju Cement Store) on 24-09-2026.Cremation will take place on 25-09-2026 at Bantaleb cremation ground at 10 A.M. May the lord grant peace to the departed soul.



Smt. UMA SHORI

Grief Stricken
(Son and daughter-in-law)
Sh. Chand Ji Bhat & Smt. Girja Bhat
Sh.Rattan Lal Bhat & Smt. Kiran Bhat
Sh. Raj Kumar bhat & Smt. Ritlu Bbat

(Daughter and Son-in-law)
Smt. Usha Bhan & Sh. Satish Bhan
Smt. Janak Rani
Smt. Shakti Bhat
Mr. & Mrs. Veer Ji Bhat
Mr. & Mrs. Vijay Kumar Bhat
Mr. & Mrs. Sanjay Bhat
Mr. & Mrs. Sunil Bhat

Deeply remembered by Grand childrens
Mr. Vinny Bhat & Mrs. Monu bhat
Mr. Ankush Bhat & Mrs. Shriya Bhat
Mr. Ankit Bhat & Mrs. Priyanka Bhat
Mr. Rahul Bhat & Mrs. Vandana Bhat
Mr. Vishal Raina & Mrs. Chetna Raina
Rishab, Hritik, Kayra , Vivian, Darsh and Viransh
Contact Numbers
9419131609, 9682556842, 9999768942, 7889663660

From
SAMAST MAHANOORI PARIVAR

'India Should Stop Listening To The US'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald John Trump meet during the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, June 17, 2026

By SHOBHA WARRIER

KEY POINTS

- 'The US is imposing illegal tariff on India. Let them impose 1,000% tariffs. But India in return should not take any action to appease the US, that will hurt India's interest.'
- 'They want our agricultural markets open. And in return, they are not cutting any of their MFN tariffs.'
- 'We should royally ignore them. Everybody else ignores the US.'

THE US House of Representatives passed the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 by 262 to 159 on September 16.

The Senate had approved it by 86 to 11 on August 7.

The bill will now go to President Donald J Trump, and he is expected to sign it.

The Act is to sanction Russia and Iran and any country that buys crude oil and natural gas from Russia and Iran.

These countries will face an additional tariffs of up to 100%.

India and China are the major buyers of Russian crude. But the likely target of 100% tariff will be India, and not China.

What should India do now?

"These sanctions are imposed by the US illegally. By international law, we are supposed to honour only those sanctions that are released from the UN body and not by a country," Ajay Srivastava, Founder, Global Trade Research Initiative, tells

Now that the US House of Representatives has passed the bill, it is expected that once Trump signs it, the trade tariff will go up to 100%. Though the ministry of external affairs issued a statement that India had to take into consideration the energy requirement of 1.4 billion people, do you think India would buckle under pressure?

The Act is aimed at targeting the top importers of Russian oil and gas. And the number one importer of Russian oil is China, and number two is India.

Last time also, when the US imposed tariffs of 25% on India for the same reason, that is, buying oil from Russia, it did not impose any tariff on China. The US is too scared of China.

Even though China is the biggest buyer of

Russian oil, the US will not dare impose any tariff on China because China will retaliate.

But the US has very clearly understood that India is not going to retaliate against whatever action they take.

So, what will they do? They will impose a high tariff.

It could be 25%, 50%, or 100%.

Then, they will bargain with the Indian government to lower the tariff to 18%, 19% or 20%. And in return, they would ask India to sign the bilateral trade agreement which India is negotiating with them.

This trade agreement is a very, very, unequal agreement.

The problem with this approach is that even after signing the bilateral trade agreement, India will not have any peace from future actions.

For example, even after signing the agreement, the US may impose future tariffs using Section 301. There are so many other ways they can impose tariffs.

They already done this with their trade partners like the European Union, Japan, South Korea and many other countries after they signed trade agreements last year.

Even after signing the trade agreement, the US initiated Section 301 and imposed tariffs on them.

Here, we are talking about energy. India import 88% to 90% of oil we consume here.

In such a scenario, India should not cut down on our buying of oil from Russia, because they are the largest supplier of oil to India.

I was looking at the July 2026 data, and I found that almost 51.1% of India's imports was coming from Russia.

In July 2026, Russia supplied crude worth \$7.27 billion, which is 51.1% of its total crude imports of \$14.21 billion.

The other suppliers were far behind. The UAE accounted for 10.8% of India's July imports, Saudi Arabia 9.6%, Venezuela 6.3%, Brazil 5.5%, Oman 5.3% and the US 2.9%.

It means Russia alone supplied more crude oil than all these six countries combined.

India's sources of oil have changed sharply. Four years back in 2022, before the start of the Ukraine war, the Gulf countries supplied more than 55% of India's crude, while Russia's share was below 15%.

Because of the US-led disruptions in the Gulf, oil from the Gulf coun-

We don't know that. That information is not in the public domain.

India should buy oil from Russia as long as we get oil at a competitive price.

These sanctions are imposed by the US illegally. By international law, we are supposed to honour only those sanctions that are released from the UN body and not by a country.

So, we should royally ignore them. Everybody else ignores the US.

What can happen now?

There will be more tariff on our exports and their consumers will suffer.

applicable on more services.

In a scenario where the options are between buying oil from Russia and surrender to the US, you feel India should opt for buying oil from Russia?

Yes. India should royally ignore the US.

In 2018-2019 during Trump's first term, he imposed tariffs on steel and aluminium.

What the Indian government did at that time was, it imposed counter tariffs on their products.

That was how we behaved at that time.

Now, India is not willing to take counter



US President Donald Trump at the White House, September 17, 2026.



tries is less than 30%, less than half of India's oil supply.

This has pushed India to buy more oil from Russia. Imagine in 2022, India's share of oil from Russia was only 15%.

'India should buy oil from Russia as long as we get oil at a competitive price'

At a discounted price?

India also will suffer somewhat in the process.

But compared to the suffering, signing a deeply unequal trade agreement is worse. That will bind India to a bad agreement for a long, long time.

After a few months, the charges will be

measures. At least India should ignore them.

Everybody is standing up. Yes, Canada is imposing counter tariffs.

The US is so scared of China because China also imposed counter-tariff last year. And the US will not dare touch China.

Because we are listening, this is happening. If you listen to a rowdy in a class, he will keep on bullying you.

India should stop listening to the US.

India can say do whatever you want. We will not compromise on anything.

Do you think in signing the trade treaty,

India is acting like a subservient partner?

I will say, it is a deeply unequal partnership.

It means India is not getting anything, and India is giving everything.

For example, if you recall, they want us to commit that we would be buying \$500 billion worth of US goods.

Then we have to align security and economic alignment with the US. For example, if Russia is their enemy, Russia is India's enemy too.

Then we have to do tariffs on most things at zero.

They want our agricultural markets open. And in return, they are not cutting any of their MFN tariffs.

It is bad for India and one sided.

So, India should walk away.

Do you think the presence of Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin at the BRICS summit must have disturbed the US in any way?

BRICS is only a little more than talk shop. It could be effective if they adopt the local currency for trading in a big way. Because that will amount to a lesser use of the dollar.

We expected some firm steps will be announced this time. I think because of the differences between India and China, nothing was announced.

So, it was a missed opportunity as far as opting for a local currency for trade is concerned?

See, you have countries with diverse loyalties. Some are loyal towards the US, some anti-US. So, forming one opinion on anything is very difficult.

BRICS would have been impactful if it would have taken firm steps to implement local currency for trading.

'The US is imposing illegal tariff on India'

How will it be for India now if the US impose 100% tariff?

The US is imposing illegal tariff on India.

Let them impose 1,000% tariffs.

But India in return should not take any action to appease the US, that will hurt India's interest.

For example, India should continue to buy oil from Russia if you are getting it at a competitive price.

Feature Presentation: Rajesh Alva/Rediff

Sharp Decline in Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan Deserves Support and Appreciation in World

By Bharat Dogra

IN year 2010 the area under poppy opium cultivation in Afghanistan was very high at 122,513 hectares. By year 2020 this had increased further to 223,696 hectares. During this period the peak was reached at 328,308 hectares in 2017. There were ups and downs from year to year but all along during this decade 2010-2020 the opium poppy cultivation area in Afghanistan remained at a very high level. The production of the opium crop in Afghanistan was 3576 tons in 2010. By 2020 this had increased to 6270 tons. There was a peak production of 8984 tons in 2017.

This was the period when the USA and allied forces were the most powerful forces in Afghanistan and US supported governments were in control in the country. The cultivation data is from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Drug Monitoring Platform.

A big question here is—as the USA with its War on Drugs has always stated that checking illicit supply of drugs, particularly heroin is a big priority for it, and as most of this illegal cultivation of opium was being used for processing into heroin, why did not the USA make it a top priority to curb illegal cultivation of opium poppy here, particularly when US funds could also have been available for compensating farmers to give up poppy opium and attract them towards cultivation of food crops or safe cash crops?

In 2021 the US forces left Afghanistan and soon the Taliban government came in. In 2022 this new gov-

ernment announced a ban on poppy cultivation and all types of narcotics. Within a year or two opium cultivation area declined by 90% or more. Whereas the area under cultivation of opium poppy was 223,696 hectares in 2020, this had declined to 12,800 hectares in 2024 and 10,200 hectares in 2025, according to UN data. The production of opium crop was reduced from 6270 tons in 2020 to just 296 tons in 2025.

Now all along the Taliban government has faced severe shortage of funds and so did not have the funds to compensate farmers and for other expenses but it could still achieve this. So why the USA with all its huge funds could not achieve the same in times of friendly governments when US and allied forces were also in the country (during 2002-2020)?

Anyway, once the Taliban government has achieved this, should there not be adequate appreciation for this? The least that the USA and allies can do is to release seized or frozen funds of Afghanistan so that the government here has funds to reduce the acute humanitarian crisis existing here, accentuated by the deportation of millions of Afghans earlier residing abroad. If the USA can spend billions on its War on Drugs, can it at the very least not restore to the Afghanistan government its own funds for meeting urgent humanitarian needs, also expressing appreciation of the work done by the Afghanistan government for reducing opium cultivation in a big way.

UN officials in Afghanistan (or dealing with Afghanistan affairs) have been recently emphasizing the need

for increasing humanitarian assistance on urgent basis, keeping in view also adverse weather conditions that have imposed additional burden on farmers. UN officials have also emphasized that to sustain the gains of farmers giving up poppy opium cultivation, help for them is needed. Farmers who give up poppy opium cultivation incur economic loss, and as they move to food or normal cash crops, they need help, particularly in adverse weather conditions. UN officials while emphasizing this have also stated that when such help is non-existent, then sometimes examples of farmers moving back to poppy opium cultivation can be seen. Hence now is the time to sustain the move away from poppy opium by helping farmers. However this essential responsibility is being ignored by the west.

We should also revisit what happened over two decades back. In year 1999 the opium cultivation in Afghanistan had extended to 91,000 hectares. After this the newly formed Taliban government took strong steps to curb this and in year 2001 this had come down to just 8000 hectares. However later in this year the US attacked Afghanistan and the Taliban government was removed, while a government supported by the USA came in. In 2002 the poppy opium cultivation again increased to 74,000 hectares, while in 2004 this increased to 131,000 hectares. Those following the changes closely were not surprised as they had noted that while preparing to invade the US authorities had re-established their earlier contacts with powerful opium promoters—in fact in some cases even close relatives of the

new ruling elite brought in by the USA were involved with opium and drugs.

In fact we should go back still more for a more complete understanding of this. During the 1970s the production of poppy opium in Afghanistan was about 100 tons annually. However a big increase took place during the 1980s as the USA with the help of Pakistan supported several Afghanistan warlords, including those involved with drugs and opium, to fight against the Soviet army and the Afghan government supported by the Soviet Union. Apart from getting CIA arms and funds, these warlords also generated huge funds from opium and drugs trade, leading to a big increase in opium cultivation. In fact in their strongholds, some of these warlords even forced many farmers to resort to cultivating poppy opium even when they did not want to do so, using threats and violence. Historian Alfred McCoy has stated "caravans carrying CIA arms into that region for resistance often returned to Pakistan loaded down with opium." The Washington Times reported in May 1990 that the US government had over several years been receiving reports of heroin trafficking by some of its allies, but chose not to investigate. This neglect continued even as Afghanistan's opium became the main sources for illicit drugs supplied to the west, generating huge illegal profits for powerful traffickers. At the same time there were reports of the USA encouraging drug smuggling to the Soviet Union and Iran to weaken their societies. The overall result was that opium production which had averaged around 100 tons annually in Afghanistan.



'Cannot Set A Rigid Timeframe': J&K Govt On Regularising Contractual And Need-Based Workers



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday said it cannot set a "rigid timeframe" for finalising a policy on regularising casual, seasonal, temporary, contractual, and need-based workers, citing the legal, administrative, and financial implications.

In a written reply to a question by Kulgam MLA M Y Tarigami, the government said that the committee, constituted in March last year under the chairmanship of chief secretary, has been examining the matter relating to casual, seasonal and other temporary/contractual/need-based workers engaged in different departments. "The committee has been tasked to examine various issues including humanitarian, legal and financial related to the regularization of these workers," it said.

The government said that as the matter concerns a diverse set of workers engaged at different points in time under varying terms and conditions of engagement, therefore, the proposed policy is required to conform to the applica-

ble statutory provisions, legal position, prescribed recruitment framework while duly accounting for the consequential financial implications.

"The committee is accordingly undertaking a comprehensive examination for the formulation of a uniform framework that is legally enforceable and administratively implementable across all departments," it said.

It added that consultations with the concerned departments and examination of the issues from administrative, legal and financial perspectives are required before a final policy decision is taken.

The government asserted that the time taken in the process attributable to the need for comprehensive examination and reconciliation with legal and financial aspects and requirements of the established framework governing employment.

However, the government stressed that it is conscious of the need for structured and sustainable resolution of the matter.

"The issue is under active consideration, and efforts are being made to

complete the requisite examination and consultations at the earliest," the reply by the general administration department said.

In response to a question about the proposed time-frame for submission of the committee's report and final policy decision to ensure a fair, transparent and time-bound resolution of the long-pending regularization issue, the government said setting a rigid timeframe at this stage was not appropriate.

"However, in view of the multiplicity of categories involved and the legal, administrative and financial implications of any decision, it would not be appropriate to indicate a rigid time-frame at this stage," it added.

The J-K government also said that it will take a considered decision after completion of the examination of all relevant aspects and receipt of the requisite inputs from the concerned departments and authorities.

There are over 60000 casual and daily rated workers in Jammu and Kashmir who have been awaiting regularisation for years

Abdul Quddir Kundria appeals for constructive discussions on public issues in J&K Assembly

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, Sep 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly is an important institution of public representation, where people expect their elected representatives to address issues concerning the development of their areas, basic amenities and public welfare. In such a situation, instead of unnecessary uproar and disagreements inside the Assembly, greater focus should be placed on public issues and developmental matters.

This was stated by noted social worker, writer and poet Abdul Quddir Kundria in a press statement. He said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are looking forward to development, prosperity, better educational facilities, roads, healthcare and other basic amenities in their respective areas. People have elected their representatives

with the hope that they will effectively raise their concerns and issues in the Assembly.

Abdul Quddir Kundria said that the Assembly is a forum where serious discussions should be held on public projects, developmental works and policy matters, with time and energy devoted towards finding solutions and taking these issues to their logical conclusion. If Assembly proceedings are consumed by unnecessary disputes and disruptions, it directly affects public interest.

He said that several areas still require new colleges, while there is also a need for upgradation of schools and improvement of basic infrastructure and essential services. These issues require serious discussion and concrete action in the Assembly, rather than situations in which public concerns are pushed to the back-ground.

Cyber X Strikers and The Real Sultan Sumerbugh Enter Finals of Greenlam Laminates BIG Premier League 2026



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

S R I N A G A R , September 24, 2026: The Greenlam Laminates BIG Premier League 2026 witnessed two thrilling semifinal encounters at Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, with Cyber X Strikers and The Real Sultan Sumerbugh emerging victorious to book their places in the grand final.

The first semifinal between Cyber X Strikers and United Imports Srinagar turned into a nail-biting contest, with Cyber X Strikers securing a sensational one-run victory. Cyber X Strikers won the toss and elected to bat first, setting a target of 171 runs.

United Imports Srinagar came close in the run chase, but Cyber X Strikers held their nerve in the closing stages to defend their total by the narrowest of margins. The one-run victory made for a tense finish and secured Cyber X Strikers' place in the final.

Amir Aziz was declared Player of the Match for his crucial bowling performance. He claimed three important wickets, playing a key role in restricting United Imports Srinagar

and helping his side cross the semifinal hurdle.

The second semifinal featured Sultan Warriors Baramulla and The Real Sultan Sumerbugh. The Real Sultan Sumerbugh won the toss and elected to field first. Sultan Warriors Baramulla put up a strong total of 190/8 in 20 overs, setting a challenging target for The Real Sultan Sumerbugh.

However, The Real Sultan Sumerbugh produced a commanding response with the bat. They successfully chased down the target with 32 balls to spare, securing a convincing victory and their place in the final.

Ankit Dabas delivered an outstanding all-round performance and was declared Player of the Match. He scored a valuable 77 runs and also claimed four wickets, making a significant contribution to his team's emphatic semifinal victory.

With two contrasting semifinal victories, Cyber X Strikers and The Real Sultan Sumerbugh have qualified for the final of the Greenlam Laminates BIG Premier League 2026.

JMC Commissioner Inspects Preet Nagar, Directs Time-Bound Redressal of Civic Issues



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 24: Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), Dr. Devansh Yadav, today conducted an on-ground inspection of Preet Nagar and adjoining areas of Ward Nos. 45 and 52 to assess the civic infrastructure and review the problems being faced by local residents.

During the visit, members of the Mohalla Welfare Committee, Preet Nagar, along with residents of the two wards, apprised the Commissioner of a range of civic concerns, particularly relating to drainage, sanitation, garbage disposal, damaged internal roads and lanes, waterlogging and inadequate wastewater outlets.

The residents explained that several internal lanes have damaged or uneven surfaces and face persistent drainage problems due to blocked drains and inadequate outlets. They said that during rainfall, accumulated water overflows onto roads and lanes, causing considerable inconvenience to residents and commuters and resulting in

unhygienic conditions.

Residents of Street No. 52, Extension Trikuta Nagar, specifically brought to the Commissioner's notice the blockage of drains on both sides of the street, the damaged culvert and obstruction of the main water outlet. They stated that these issues have severely affected the drainage of the area and contribute to the accumulation of stagnant wastewater.

The residents also raised concerns regarding inadequate dustbin facilities and indiscriminate dumping of garbage along roadsides and near an open plot being used as a nursery, particularly along the main Preet Nagar road. They requested improved sanitation arrangements and regular monitoring to prevent garbage accumulation and unauthorized dumping.

The poor condition of several internal roads and lanes was another major concern highlighted during the inspection. Residents stated that uneven and damaged surfaces are causing difficulties for school-going children, elderly persons, patients, pedestrians and other residents,

while water accumulation during rains further deteriorates the condition of the roads and creates unhygienic surroundings.

The Mohalla Welfare Committee requested the JMC to take up the repair and reconstruction of damaged lanes, restoration and improvement of drainage infrastructure, repair of the culvert, clearing of blocked outlets, strengthening of garbage collection and disposal arrangements, and other essential civic works on priority.

After personally inspecting the affected locations and interacting with the residents, Dr. Devansh Yadav assured the members of the Mohalla Welfare Committee and local residents that their genuine civic concerns would be examined and addressed at the earliest possible.

The Commissioner issued clear and strict directions to the Health and Sanitation Wing to ensure immediate and thorough cleanliness in the affected areas, remove accumulated garbage and strengthen sanitation arrangements to prevent indiscriminate dumping.

BJP OBC Morcha Undertakes Service and Environmental Conservation Activities under 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' at Jammu and Kupwara



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

Jammu, September 24: Under the ongoing 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan', the BJP OBC Morcha, Jammu & Kashmir, organised a series of service-oriented and environmental conservation activities across Jammu and Kashmir, focusing on extending support to needy people and promoting awareness about environmental protection.

A ration distribution programme was organised at the Kushth Ashram in Ward No. 14, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu, where ration and essential food items were distributed among needy residents. The programme was organised by Arun Sethi, District President, BJP OBC Morcha, Jammu, with the participation of senior Morcha functionaries and workers.

A plantation drive was conducted in the Langate area of Kupwara, with active participation from students, teachers and school staff.

The plantation drive was led by Shabeer Ahmad Zargar, State Vice-President, BJP OBC Morcha, J&K, and was organised at Darululoom Anwar-ul-Quraan, Kahipora Qaziabad;

Supernaghama Public School, Supernaghama; and Government Middle School, Kralgund, Qaziabad. Students and members of the school staff enthusiastically participated in the programme and planted saplings in and around their respective institutions. While Addressing, Shabeer Ahmad Zargar and Arun Sethi highlighted the importance of protecting the environment and urged students to actively participate in plantation and other environmental conservation initiatives.

They said that environmental protection requires sustained participation from all sections of society and that educational institutions can play an important role in developing environmental awareness among young people.

They said that the plantation activities in Langate and the ration distribution programme in Jammu reflected the broader spirit of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, which seeks to combine service to society with responsibility towards the environment.

In his message, Braham Jyot Satti, President, BJP OBC Morcha, J&K, said that the essence of Seva

Sankalp is to remain connected with society and extend a helping hand to those who need support. He said that service to humanity is an important responsibility and that the Morcha would continue organising programmes aimed at supporting needy sections of society.

He said that the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan is not limited to one particular form of service, but encompasses a wide range of activities including assistance to needy people, cleanliness, environmental conservation, plantation and community welfare. He appreciated the efforts of Shabeer Ahmad Zargar, Arun Sethi and all the Morcha workers and participants for carrying the message of service and social responsibility to the grassroots.

He further said that such initiatives strengthen community participation and encourage people, particularly the youth, to contribute positively towards society. He called upon BJP OBC Morcha workers across Jammu and Kashmir to continue undertaking constructive activities that benefit people and promote cleanliness, environmental protection and social welfare.

Ashok Salgotra, State Secretary, BJP OBC Morcha J&K; Arun Mehra, District Vice-President; Vicky Panday, District Vice-President; Sanjay Verma, General Secretary; Parveen Kumar; Onkar Verma, Mandal President, Talab Tillo; Pardeep Kumar, General Secretary, Amphalla Mandal; Satish Nargotra, Shakti Kendra in-charge; Anita Sharma, Booth President; Rajnath Bhat, Booth President, and other party workers were present on the occasion

Sajad Lone Raises Questions Over Powers, Privileges Of Elected Representatives In J&K Assembly

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference president and Handwara MLA Sajad Lone on Thursday raised concerns in the Legislative Assembly over the powers and privileges of elected representatives in the union Territory.

Opening with a direct question to the Speaker, Lone sought clarity on the constitutional standing of MLAs under the union Territory framework.

"Now today we are MLAs of a UT. My question is for you, sir, and no one else. What are our rights Do we have any privilege " he asked.

At the heart of his grievance was the overt diversion of constituency development funds and the bypassing of elected MLAs in favour of ministers belonging to the ruling party. "If I, as an MLA, the representative of Handwara Assembly, give a list stating that these works need to be done, is that privilege mine or the minister's " he asked, demanding clarity from the Speaker.

Lone warned that opposition MLAs were fully capable of taking the matter to the Prime Minister and the union Home Minister, questioning whether public funds allocated to J&K were intended for the people or for the benefit of a particular political party. He also pointed out that opposition members from Kashmir had

deliberately exercised restraint in their public conduct, conscious that their statements could potentially be used against the broader demand for restoration of statehood.

"We are sitting quietly so that the things we say aren't used against us somewhere," he said.

Invoking the Assembly's seven-decade history, Lone made an impassioned appeal to the Speaker to safeguard the dignity and sanctity of the institution. Referring to veteran legislators of earlier eras, he argued that no ministerial appointment, including what he pointedly described as an "accidental" one, could supersede the authority and dignity vested in the

House and its elected members.

"For God's sake, tell these accidental ministers the truth. This money doesn't belong to them. It flows from the government. The people who stood in elections, who swore by an Act and a Constitution, hold that authority. Not these ministers," Lone said, while making it clear that opposition members would not accept being sidelined. "If they think they will walk over us, the question doesn't arise," he asserted.

Lone concluded by putting the Speaker on notice over the consequences of any alleged breach of privilege, asking what institutional remedy remained available to elected members.

Over 12.89 Lakh J&K Farmers Covered Under Crop Insurance: Govt Tells House

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: The government on Thursday informed the Legislative Assembly that the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme are being implemented across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, with over 12.89 lakh farmers covered and claims worth rupees 221.71 crore disbursed so far.

According to data tabled in the Assembly, the Minister in charge of Agriculture Production said the schemes are demand-driven and open to all eligible farmer families in J&K.



Responding to questions raised by MLAs Farooq Ahmed Shah, Irfan Hafiz Lone and Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Mir, the government said around 13.985 lakh farmer families (FoFs) are eligible to avail benefits under the schemes, subject to prescribed

guidelines and eligibility criteria.

The data showed that between 2017-18 and 2025-26, a total area of 6.86 lakh hectares was brought under insurance coverage, benefiting 12,89,917 farmers. During the period, 3,72,134 crop insurance claims were

settled, with a cumulative disbursement of rupees 221.71 crore.

The data showed that the highest farmer participation was recorded during the Kharif 2025-26 season, when 2,01,480 farmers were covered across all 20 districts. During the same season, 93,680 claims were settled, with compensation amounting to Rs 54.80 crore. The government further said that PMFBY coverage, which was earlier limited to fewer districts, has now been extended across the Union Territory, widening access to crop insurance benefits for farmers vulnerable to weather-related losses and crop damage.

The Association reiterated that the protest is peaceful and democratic and will continue through September 26, 2026, in support of the above demands.

CS reviews implementation of new Labour Codes in J&K

Stresses seamless integration with national digital platforms for benefit of stakeholders



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 24: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a review meeting to assess the status of the implementation of the four new Labour Codes in Jammu and Kashmir, directing the concerned departments to expedite the remaining formalities and ensure a smooth transition to the new regulatory framework.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Law; Secretary, Labour and Employment; Labour Commissioner, J&K; and other concerned officers.

Reviewing the overall progress, the Chief Secretary appreciated the steps taken by the Labour and Employment Department and directed the concerned departments to strictly adhere to the prescribed timelines. He emphasised the need for timely completion of the remaining statutory and administrative formalities to ensure the effective

implementation of the new Labour Codes in Jammu and Kashmir.

He underscored that the transition to the new framework should strengthen workers' welfare and social security while promoting transparency, industrial harmony and a more efficient regulatory environment for industrial establishments across the Union Territory. During the meeting, the Secretary, Labour and Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan gave a detailed presentation on the progress achieved in implementing the four Codes, namely the Industrial Relations Code, 2020; Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020; Code on Social Security, 2020; and Code on Wages, 2019.

He apprised the meeting about the new framework that consolidated 29 existing labour laws into four Codes to strengthen workers' welfare, improve industrial relations and facilitate ease of doing business.

Reviewing the status of

rule formulation, the Chief Secretary was informed that Jammu and Kashmir has already notified the rules under the Industrial Relations Code and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code. The rules under the remaining two Codes are in the final stages of notification.

The Department further informed that the draft rules under the Code on Social Security and the Code on Wages had been pre-published following the necessary approval of the Lieutenant Governor, attracting 27 and five objections respectively. Additionally these objections have been examined and are being disposed of, with the Department targeting submission of the rules for final publication within the next ten days. The meeting was further informed that administrative notifications under all four Codes have been framed and submitted to the Law Department for statutory vetting.

CM Omar Abdullah reviews draft Industrial Policy 2026-35

Directs department to ensure policy is balanced, pragmatic, responsive to evolving needs of J&K's industrial sector



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

SRINAGAR, Sep 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a meeting here at Civil Secretariat to review the draft Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Policy (2026-35).

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, ACS Finance Shailendra Kumar, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce Viramjit Singh, MD & CEO J&K Bank Amitava Chatterjee and senior officers of the Industries & Commerce Department and allied departments attended the meeting.

Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce made a presentation on the draft policy and apprised the meeting of its broad framework, objectives and the policy formulation process.

The Chief Minister held detailed discussions on the proposed policy and directed the department to ensure that the final framework is balanced, pragmatic and responsive to the evolving

needs of Jammu & Kashmir's industrial sector.

He emphasised that the policy should provide a conducive environment for investment while ensuring that its benefits translate into greater opportunities for local entrepreneurs, businesses and employment generation.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the new policy should provide a comprehensive and competitive incentive framework, with focused support for priority sectors and emerging sunrise sectors. He also stressed strengthening market access for local industries, further improving ease of doing business, and closely linking incentives with local employment generation and skill development. The Chief Minister also stressed the importance of a robust implementation mechanism, with clear focus on simplifying processes, facilitating ease of doing business and ensuring effective delivery of the policy's objectives.

The department was directed to further refine the draft in light of the discussions before it is finalised through the prescribed process.

India, the Harbinger of World Peace, Witnessing Unrest Today Is Unfortunate and a Matter of Concern: Swami Hari Chaitanya Puri Ji Maharaj



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, September 24: Premavatar, Yugdrashta, Peethadishwar of Shri Hari Kripa and internationally renowned spiritual saint Swami Shri Hari Chaitanya Puri Ji Maharaj, while addressing a large gathering of devotees at Jammu Club today, said that it is unfortunate and a matter of serious concern that India, the beloved land that has historically been a harbinger of world peace, is witnessing unrest today.

He appealed to people not to become contributors to unrest, but instead to play an important role in establishing an atmosphere of peace. He said that if people become aware in time and make sincere, selfless and collective efforts, keeping the welfare of the nation and society above personal interests, peace can certainly be established here, and once again the message of peace can reverberate from India across the entire world.

He said that the entire world is in need of peace today. Peace is attainable, but unfortunately, human beings often fail to establish it in their lives. True happiness and peace lie in one's thoughts and in seeking the guidance and refuge of saints and spiritual masters. He emphasized that without control over the senses, lasting peace cannot be attained.

"Speak well, listen to what is good, see what is good, keep good company, think positively and make benevolent resolutions," he said. He added that without remembrance of the Divine, one can never attain true peace. Human beings can learn even from their own mistakes; otherwise, even if the Supreme Being were to appear before them, they might still fail to learn from the opportunity.

He further said that if one changes one's perspective even once, one can begin to see goodness in creation that one may never have imagined before.

Urging the gathering to awaken themselves and inspire others, Maharaj Ji said that people should become partners in the welfare of others along with their own well-being. "Rise, awaken, and do not be discouraged by difficulties, obstacles or trials. Continue moving forward until you reach your goal," he said.

He observed that the life of a person without a goal is like the pendulum of a clock-it keeps moving from one side to another but never moves even a single step forward. He called upon people to follow the path of devotion by overcoming ego, just as Lord Hanuman symbolically conquered pride. He said that ego is one of the greatest obstacles in attaining the Divine. Whether it arises from physical appearance, wealth, prosperity, austerity, knowledge or any other achievement, pride is never beneficial.

Maharaj Ji emphasized that the company one keeps inevitably influences one's life. Therefore, he urged people to see good, hear good, speak good, think good and associate with good people. He advised everyone to maintain a sattvic, pure and disciplined lifestyle and diet, pointing out that food has a profound influence on the mind. He also stressed the importance of respecting the laws of nature and giving peace a central place in one's life. "An agitated person cannot find happiness anywhere," he said. Describing truth as a manifestation of the Supreme Being, he said that wherever truth prevails, distortion and corruption cannot flourish. A person whose life is blessed with the company of truth, truthful speech, noble conduct, virtuous behaviour and goodwill is truly fortunate.

He added that a person who embodies compassion, forgiveness, generosity, gentleness, service, selflessness and devotion to the welfare of others is truly saintly.

National Conference Govt Committed to provide social justice, dignity and socio-economic empowerment to Dalit Samaj : Rattan Lal Gupta Says Omar led Govt framing and focusing Dalit oriented policies



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, September 24: Expressing satisfaction over the welfare-oriented policies and initiatives being pursued by the Omar Abdullah-led Government for the Scheduled Caste (SC) and other weaker sections of society in Jammu and Kashmir, a growing number of people from the Dalit Samaj in the Jammu region are coming closer to and joining the National Conference in a colourful function of Dalit Samaj, Chaired by Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell and organized by Ramesh Kumar Motton District President Jammu Urban SC Cell at Provincial Party headquarter, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu.

Addressing function Rattan Lal Gupta Advocate Provincial President Jammu welcomed new entrants in the party and congratulated them on behalf of Dr. Farooq Abdullah President JKNC and Omar Abdullah Vice President, Hon'ble Chief Minister J&K said that the policies of the present government reflect

the commitment of the National Conference towards social justice, dignity and socio-economic empowerment of the weaker and deprived sections. He recalled that Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had undertaken historic land reforms in Jammu and Kashmir, including measures that transferred land rights to tillers and sought to free cultivators from the traditional domination of landlords and moneylenders. These reforms brought significant socio-economic changes to rural society.

He said that the Omar Abdullah-led Government is focusing on the welfare and empowerment of the Dalit community by promoting social justice, equal opportunities, education, employment and access to government welfare schemes.

Addressing the gathering Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Provincial Secretary Jammu said that the Scheduled Caste community expects continued implementation of policies that strengthen their economic security,

educational opportunities, representation and dignity.

Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell reiterated that the welfare of SCs and other weaker sections remains an important part of National Conference commitment to inclusive development and social justice in Jammu and Kashmir.

On this occasion more than two dozen social activists and workers of different political parties from Dalit Samaj joined National Conference in the presence of Rattan Lal Gupta Provincial President Jammu. The joining names are: Prem Chand, Suran Paul, Surinder Kumar, Subhash Chand, Shanker Lal, Pyush Bhagat, Subash Chander, Thoru Ram, Man Mohan, Sanjeev Choudhary, Rajinder Singh, Sonu Singh, Subash Kumar, Ashwani Kumar, Tarsem Lal, Ramesh Kumar Dogra, Rattan Lal, Lal Chand, Jarnail Chand, Ramesh Lal, Vivek Kumar, Ram Krishan, Sansar Chand, Pankaj Kumar, Ganesh Paul and others.

Chief Of Air Staff Visits Northern Command In J&K, Reviews Operational Preparedness

NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

JAMMU, Sep 24: Chief of Air Staff (CAS) Air Chief Marshal A P Singh visited the strategically-vital Northern Command theatre to review the prevailing operational environment and preparedness, a defence spokesperson said on Wednesday.



During the visit, the CAS was briefed by General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma at the command's Udhampur-based headquarters on key operational dynamics and the ongoing inter-services synergy initiatives for the effective execution of multi-domain operations, the spokesperson said.

Expressing full confidence in the operational capabilities of the forces, the CAS highlighted that the exemplary synergy and jointness displayed between the Western Air Command and the

Northern Command at each echelon, ranging from strategic to tactical levels, serves as a beacon for future operations.

He complimented all ranks for their unwavering commitment towards safeguarding national interests, the defence spokesperson said.

CEO inspects EVM warehouse in Reasi; reviews security protocols



NEWS TILL DATE BUREAU

REASI, SEPTEMBER 24: Chief Electoral Officer, Jammu and Kashmir, Sanjeev Verma, today visited Reasi and conducted the quarterly inspection of the warehouse/Strong Room designated for secure storage of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and other election-related materials.

District Election Officer Reasi Kumar Abhishek, Deputy DEO Akshay Rajan, ACR Nitin Verma, CPO Narinder Kumar and other concerned officers were present during the inspection. Representatives of all recognised political parties also participated in the inspection.

The Chief Electoral Officer had a comprehensive review of the security arrangements and infrastructure at the warehouse, including CCTV surveillance, access-control mechanisms, power supply, fire-safety measures and other requisite security provisions. He assessed the overall preparedness of the facility and reviewed the measures instituted to ensure the safety and integrity of election-related materials.

Emphasising the critical importance of secure storage and strict procedural compliance, Sanjeev Verma underscored the need for full adherence to the guidelines and protocols prescribed by the Election Commission of India for

the security, storage and maintenance of EVMs and Strong Rooms. He stressed the importance of round-the-clock security, continuous surveillance, effective access control and meticulous compliance with all prescribed procedures.

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