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happy to wait for Kishan to  
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foundation stone of New  
Nursing College and Nursing

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# J&K's Interim Budget 2024-25 is a Commitment of Rapid Economic Growth : LG Manoj Sinha Expressed Gratitude to PM Modi

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, FEB 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the third term of his government is not far and this time the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will win 400 seats and the Bharatiya Janata Party, individually will get 370 seats.

PM Modi, while replying to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Lok Sabha, cited the revocation of Article 370, which was removed during the second term of his government and said that the BJP will win 370 seats in its third term.

"A Ram Temple of Lord Ram was built which will continue to give new energy to the great tradition of India. Now the third

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## I Want Youth To Hold Rein Of Change As They Are The Only Power That Is Future-Oriented: LG Sinha

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEB 05: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha interacted with the NCC cadets, who took part in the Republic Day Parade 2024 in New Delhi.

On the occasion, the Cadets shared their experience about the spectacular march on the Kartavya Path, interaction with youth from all over the country and wonderful exposure about the regimented way of life they had at the Republic Day camp.

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## Rs 59364 Crore

## Interim Budget For J&K Presented In Parliament

UT's total budget estimates for 2024-25 expected to be Rs 1.18 lakh crore

■ HT News Network / UNI

NEW DELHI, FEB 5: The Revised Estimates for 2023-24 and Interim Budget 2024-25 of Government of Jammu and Kashmir were today placed before the Parliament by Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman. The two Appropriation Bills on the Supplementary Budget for 2023-24 and Vote on Account for 2024-25 will be considered by the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in this regard.

Finance Department of the UT had drafted the Supplementary Budget for the current year and the Interim Budget for the next financial year. For this, the Department had assessed the revenue receipts of the UT Government from GST, motor spirit tax, excise, and stamp duty. Fur-

J&K INTERIM  
BUDGET 2024-25



ther, the non-tax revenue from electricity and water supply, mining royalty, timber sales, annual rent from industrial lands, etc were also examined. The own revenue of the UT Government has been estimated at Rs. 20,867 crore. The UT Government also pursued Government of India for getting central financial assistance.

Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha and Chief Secretary, Shri Atal Dulloo led the UT's efforts in this direction. Crucial meetings were held in August 2023, October 2023 and January 2024 in Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Finance to review these demands of the UT Government. Union Home Minister and Union Finance Minister personally reviewed the fiscal management of the UT Government in recent months.

Accordingly, the Central Government has agreed to provide ₹ 41751.44 Cr to the UT Government in this financial year and ₹ 37277.74 Cr in the next financial year. These assistance figures have been duly captured in the Revised Estimates of 2023-24 and the Budget Estimates of 2024-25 of the Union Government. This assistance will be provided under the MHA's demand no 58 for

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## NEWS BRIEF

### 4 Drug Peddlers Held In Budgam

BUDGAM, FEB 5: The Jammu Kashmir police on Monday arrested four drug peddlers along with contraband substance in Budgam.

According to a statement issued here said that continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from society, Budgam police arrested 04 drug peddlers and recovered contraband / Psychotropic substance from their possession.

During routine naka checking at Wata Magam, Police party of Police station Magam intercepted one suspicious vehicle bearing registration number JK04B-2152 with three persons on board.

During preliminary questioning they disclosed their identities as Abid Ahmad

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### SIU Baramulla Produces Charge Sheet Of Narco-Terror Case

SRINAGAR, FEB 05: The State Investigation Unit (SIU) Baramulla produced a charge sheet against six accused in a narco-terror case.

In a recent development in narco-terror related cases, today, SIU Baramulla produced charge sheet of case FIR No. 104/2023 under section 7/25 IA Act, 120-BIPC, 13, 18, 18B, 20, 23 and 40 UAP Act of Police Station Uri before the Hon'ble Court of Additional Sessions Judge (NIA Court) Baramulla.

The charge sheet was produced

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### Police Solves Theft Case In Ganderbal, 2 Held

SRINAGAR, FEB 5: Police on Monday solved a theft case when they arrested two burglars and recovered stolen property in Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district, Police said.

Police in Ganderbal received information through reliable sources that some unknown thieves had entered the residential house of one Ghulam Mohammad Sofi, a resident of Patipora Saloora, and taken away some jewellery and cash during the evening hours of February 4.

Accordingly, a case under relevant sections of the law was registered, and an investigation was initiated.

Police constituted a special team that swiftly acted and, with the help of

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## NDA Will Get 400 And BJP 370+ In Lok Sabha Polls: PM Modi In Lok Sabha



■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, FEB 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the third

term of his government is not far and this time the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) will win 400 seats and the

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## Opposition Has Lost Courage To Contest Polls: PM Modi

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, FEB 05: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said he was convinced that the opposition parties have lost the courage to contest elections and have resolved to stay on the opposition benches for a long time.

Responding to the debate in Lok Sabha on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address, Modi said some opposition leaders were keen to change their parliamentary seats, while some others were planning to move to Rajya Sabha.

"I appreciate the resolution the

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### BJP will win Parliamentary, J&K Assembly polls with huge majority: Tarun Chugh

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEB 04: BJP Nation-



al General Secretary and In-charge

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### Sports is the best tool to prevent drug abuse: Secy J&K Sports Council

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEB 5: Asserting that Jammu and Kashmir administration is making all out efforts to make Union Territory a powerhouse of sports, Secretary, Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul on Monday said that only sports can prevent the drug abuse and channelise the energy of the youth with positivity.

Gul was speaking to media after declaring open a three-day T7S Lawn Tennis Championship here at Maulana Azad Stadium.

The Championship is being

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## JK BJP leaders set to participate in National Council meeting on Feb 17-18 in New Delhi

'Top functionaries to discuss upcoming Lok Sabha election strategy in Executive Meet on Feb 16'

■ Ishtiaq Kar

SRINAGAR, FEB 05: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) gears up for its mega National Council meeting on February 17 and 18 in New Delhi, drawing 200 to 300 party leaders, from Jammu and Kashmir, along with top functionaries.

The forthcoming gathering follows the BJP's National Executive meeting on February 16, where the party's meticulously



crafted strategy for the Lok Sabha elections is set to take center stage.

Preceding the National Council meeting, the BJP has slated its National Executive assembly for February 16, drawing representation from Jammu and Kashmir.

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## Kashmir Experiences All-Time High Temperature In Jan

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JAN 5: In the absence of snowfall and inactive Western disturbances, Kashmir Valley experienced unusually high temperatures during January.

Kashmir region and certain areas of Jammu region experienced unusually high temperatures, marking it as the

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### Flight Operations Resume As Weather Improves

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEB 5: With the improvement in weather, the flight operations at Srinagar

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# Union Health Minister lays the foundation stone of New Nursing College and Nursing Hostel at Handwara

About 4500 seats have been added in MBBS, PG and Nursing education within the past 4 years: LG Sinha

**NEW DELHI, JAMMU, KUPWARA, FEB 05:** Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya laid the foundation stone of new Nursing College and Nursing Hostel at Handwara, Kupwara, through video conferencing today.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha expressed gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Union Health Ministry for the unprecedented expansion of health facilities and medical education infrastructure in the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir.

He said the new Nursing College will go a long way in augmenting the Medical education



infrastructure and overall Health care in the border district of Kupwara.

The Lt Governor shared the rapid advances made in increasing access to healthcare in Jammu Kashmir. About 4500 seats have been added in MBBS, PG and Nursing education within the past 4 years, he added.

He reiterated the commitment of the Administration to provide quality health services to the citizens and to give a major push to develop and deploy modern health technologies for future care.

The Handwara Nursing College project is targeted to be completed within 4 working seasons.

Union Health Minister also inaugurated the new building of National Dental Commission, laid the foundation stone of three nursing colleges in Andhra Pradesh and launched the National Dental Register.

Dr. Manik Saha, Chief Minister, Tripura; Dr. Dibyendu Mazumdar, President, Dental Council of India and Sh Apurva Chandra, Union Secretary, Health and Family Welfare attended the event.

Sh Irfan Sultan Panditpuri, Chairman, District Development Council Kupwara; besides Principal, Doctors and medical staff of the Government Medical College Handwara also joined through virtual mode.

## Commissioner SMC takes extensive review of Works Wing

**SRINAGAR, FEB 05:** Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed today chaired a meeting to review all projects within the domain of Works Wing of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC).

During the review, Commissioner SMC assessed the progress made on various infrastructure and developmental projects, emphasizing the importance of timely and efficient completion.

Dr. Owais expressed satisfaction with the dedication and hard work exhibited by the Works Wing,



commending their commitment to enhance the city's infrastructure, a vital urban component. He further emphasized the significance of maintaining high-quality standards in all projects, ensuring they align with the corporation's vision for a sustainable urban infrastructure.

In addition, Dr. Owais highlighted the corporation's determination to prioritize citizen-centric services, aiming to address the evolving needs of Srinagar City. He emphasized the Works Wing's crucial role in achieving these objectives and urged the team to continue their efforts in delivering projects that positively impact the community.

The Commissioner reiterated the corporation's commitment to transparency and accountability, encouraging open communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in the projects. He also assured the general public that the Srinagar Municipal Corporation remains dedicated to nurture a culture of excellence and innovation in all its endeavors.

## MD, NHM, Principal GMC Srinagar review functioning of Tele MANAS Cell at IMHANS Srinagar

**SRINAGAR, FEB 5:** Mission Director, National Health Mission, J&K, Nazim Zai Khan along with Principal Govt. Medical College, Srinagar Dr. Tanvir Masood reviewed the functioning of Tele-MANAS Cell at the Centre of Excellence, Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Government Medical College here today.

On the occasion, the Mission Director and Principal GMC interacted with the consultants and counsellors working in Tele-MANAS Cell and also had a live demonstration of the working

of call centre. They also conducted an extensive tour of the IMHANS (Centre of excellence), established through financial support of the Govt. Of India and reviewed the infrastructure, interventions and innovations being implemented there. They also took feedback from the faculty members in order to improvise the services being delivered to the patients and beneficiaries.

The Mission Director assured all possible support to the Tele-Manas Cell/ IMHANS. Principal GMC on the occa-



sion extended gratitude to the Mission Director, NHM for his maiden visit to the Centre of Excellence.

Among others present during the visit were Professor IMHANS /Nodal Officer Tele-MANAS, Dr. Arshid Hussain; Professor IMHANS Srinagar, Dr. Zaid Ahmad Wani; Divisional Nodal Officer/ Programme Manager Mental Health NHM, J&K, Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Dar and other faculty members of the IMHANS.

Pertinently, the public can take benefits of Tele-MANAS Toll free 24x7 on 14416/1-800-891-4416.

## Commissioner, SMC reviews progress of National Clean Air Program

**SRINAGAR, FEB 05:** The Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed Monday conducted an extensive review of the progress made in the National Clean Air Program (NCAP).

The meeting aimed to assess the progress made in the program undertaken to improve air quality and reduce pollution in the city.

During the review, the Commissioner, SMC emphasized the significance of the NCAP and reaffirmed the corporation's commitment to achieve its objectives. The meeting provided a platform to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures implemented so far and to identify areas that require further attention and intervention.

Dr. Owais highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts involving various stakeholders, including government agencies, environmental organizations, and the community, to address the challenges posed by air pollution. He emphasized the need for adoption of innovative solutions to ensure a significant impact on air quality in Srinagar. The Commissioner expressed



his appreciation for the dedication and hard work of all those involved in the implementation of the Program. He urged for continued cooperation and coordination among relevant departments and agencies to accelerate progress and achieve the desired outcomes.

The review meeting concluded with a commitment to intensify efforts and implement additional measures to

mitigate air pollution and enhance the overall air quality in Srinagar. The Corporation reiterated its determination to contribute effectively to the NCAP and to create a healthier and sustainable environment for the future generations of Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by the Officers of SMC and representatives of concerned departments.

## Javid Ahmad Rather Assumes Charge as SDM Uri

**URI, FEB 05:** Javed Ahmad Rather, an officer from the 2011 JKAS Batch, officially assumed the charge of Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) URI.

With an illustrious career spanning various roles including SDM Kangan, Assistant Director Information, BDO Srinagar, BDO Ganderbal, and DMO Sri-



nagar. Javed Ahmad brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of dedication to his new role.

Javed Ahmad was extended a warm welcome by both colleagues and the community to his new position, who have expressed confidence in his ability to lead with distinction and make a positive impact in URI.

Javid Ahmad wasted no time in familiarizing himself with the responsibilities of his new position. Upon assuming office, he diligently visited all sections of the office, engaging with his subordinates and emphasizing the importance of coordination and a people-friendly approach in their work. He urged his team to adopt a people-centric approach in their interactions and endeavors.

The SDM expressed his gratitude for the heartfelt welcome and said that he is fully committed to upholding the values of integrity, transparency, and service to the people and looks forward to working closely with the team and the community to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

## Apple Growers Advocate for Standard Pesticides and Fertilizers to Boost Crop Quality

**SRINAGAR, FEB 05:** After witnessing a year of quality produce, the apple growers of Kashmir urge the government to enforce the sale and distribution of quality pesticides and fertilizers in the valley.

They believe that the quality pesticides and fertilizers will further elevate the production of apples and other horticulture products in the valley.

President of Kashmir Fruit Growers And Dealers Association Fruit Mandi, Sopore told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the flow of spurious and substandard pesticides has had its impact on the quality of

agriculture and horticulture produce in the valley.

"This is one of the prime concerns for the fruit growers of Kashmir. Kashmir has the potential to produce quality produce but it is the flow of spurious pesticides and fertilizers, which impact our crop every year," he said.

Malik said the government should enforce strict laws against the dealers as well as the retailers involved in the sale of spurious pesticides.

"Horticulture is the biggest employment-generating industry of Jammu and Kashmir. So, we urge the government to enforce strict



laws against those persons who promote or sell substandard pesticides," he said.

In this regard, he said they have already conveyed the authorities

to launch a sustained campaign against the sale and use of substandard pesticides and fertilizers.

"It calls for a sustained campaign. The government needs to activate its men and machinery so that the Kashmiri apple, which has a good reputation across the world, is not affected quality-wise. We are sure that Kashmir will have enhanced production of apple if the substandard pesticides and fertilizers are banned," he said.

Pertinently, last year, the government seized a large quantity of substandard pesticides in valley markets during its regular raids.

In December, 200 quintals of

organic fertilizers were seized in Shopian district, which were found without specifications on the bags.

Last month, authorities seized 400 bags of spurious fertilizers in J&K's Kulgam.

Officials told KNO that both agriculture, as well as the horticulture department, were conducting surprise checks across the valley to seize spurious pesticides and fertilizers.

"Both these departments have their enforcement teams at the district level, which tour to various places and act against the sale of spurious pesticides and fertilisers," they said.



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## Commissioner Secretary Tourism reviews projects under Swadesh Darshan 1.0, PMDP, UT Capex Budget

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 05: Commissioner Secretary, Tourism Department, Yasha Mudgal, today chaired a meeting to review execution of projects under Swadesh Darshan 1.0, PMDP and UT Capex Budget.

The meeting had threadbare discussion on various issues including smooth transfer of records from Tourism department to concerned executive engineers, prioritizing completion of development projects being executed under Swadesh Darshan scheme, status of Parmandal Utterbehni DPR sanctioned under PARSAD scheme, resolution of issues related to funds disbursement for project entrusted to JKPC, opening and mapping of zero balance accounts by



R&B divisions besides other matters. Commissioner Secretary asked the concerned officers to assess the current pace of work execution and identify areas for improvement. She also asked them to review submission of revised estimated UT Capex budget project. Yasha Mudgal directed the officers for ensuring completion of all

projects being executed under Swadesh Darshan 1.0, PMDP and CAPEX budget within the stipulated timeframe. She asked the HoDs and executive agencies to submit a status report regarding the present status of all their projects with complete details of physical and financial achievement. Commissioner Secretary instructed

the engineers to review the status of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) preparation for UT CAPEX budget projects. She emphasized the importance of completion of DPRs, processing of approvals and tendering before the working season. Yasha Mudgal asked the officers to withdraw the projects on which work has not started yet.

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 03: In a proactive move to uphold the integrity of the electoral process, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Om Prakash Bhagat today conducted a comprehensive inspection of multiple polling stations, including Rajal-A, Bagnoti, Lamberi Lower, and Bakhar.

The visit aimed to oversee the ongoing special summary revision, aimed at refining the electoral rolls and ensuring a fair and transparent electoral system.

During the inspection, Deputy Commissioner emphasized the paramount importance of accurate voter enrollment. He directed the officers involved to



meticulously scrutinize and verify the eligibility of individuals to ensure their inclusion in the voter list. Stressing the significance of this special summary revision, he underscored that every eligible person should be enrolled as a voter, leaving no room for oversight or exclusion. One of the key directives

issued by Deputy Commissioner was the meticulous alignment of the panchayat and assembly electoral rolls. He emphasized that any variations should be rectified promptly to maintain the consistency and accuracy of the electoral database. The directive is crucial in fostering a robust electoral framework that

reflects the true representation of the electorate in Rajouri. Deputy Commissioner reiterated the commitment of the District Administration to uphold the democratic values of free and fair elections. He highlighted the proactive measures taken to ensure that the electoral process remains transparent.

## Snow Safety campaign gains momentum in Baderwah

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 05: In a laudable move to boost road safety in winter, the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) carried out a special campaign in Seri Bazar Baderwah.

Led by ARTO, Rajesh Gupta, and guided by Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh the endeavor aligns with the ongoing National Road Safety Month and Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, focusing on safe driving practices amidst snow. The initiative sought to educate drivers on navigating challenges posed by snow-covered roads. ARTO Doda stressed caution and readiness, stating, "Given the winter conditions, it's vital for drivers to adjust their habits for everyone's safety." The drive witnessed workshops and awareness campaigns, enlightening drivers about snow-driving challenges like reduced visibility and slippery surfaces. Practical tips on safe driving in snow are provided, emphasizing maintaining distance, using winter tires, and reducing speed. Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, expressed optimism about the initiative's impact, noting, "Promoting safe snow driving aims to minimize accidents and ensure a secure winter driving experience." The MVD's efforts mark a significant stride in fostering responsible driving culture during challenging weather, contributing to the broader goal of safer roads for all. Additionally, MVD instructions remind drivers about safe driving practices and the importance of wearing helmets. The MVD's efforts mark a significant stride in fostering responsible driving culture during challenging weather, contributing to the broader goal of safer roads for all. Additionally, MVD instructions remind drivers about safe driving practices and the importance of wearing helmets.

## Skill Development Program Launched Under Mission Youth AVSAR Scheme in Reasi

### District Administration, IIT Jammu ink MoU

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 05: District Administration Reasi, in association with Centre for Essential Skills (CES) of IIT Jammu, launched a Skill Development Program, here today.

The program, under the Mission Youth AVSAR scheme, aims to impart vocational training on skills specific to cater to the Job Market demands and enhance Entrepreneurial Skills of the youth of Reasi district.

The program paved the way for the commencement of the innovative program aims to develop soft and technical specific skills related to Tourism, Videography, Agriculture, Electrical and marketing to equip the youth of Reasi with the necessary skills to give



wings to their entrepreneurial ambitions and contribute to job creation & economic development of the region.

District Development Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan interacted with the candidates, assuring advanced courses to the best performing individuals.

Highlighting the importance of skill development, the DDC said such innovative programs under AVSAR scheme would help to create an illustrious skilled workforce.

Dr Manoj Gaur, Director IIT Jammu along with Dr. Amitash Ojha, faculty and HOD CES IIT Jammu emphasized the importance of skill development in empowering the youth and promoting self-reliance and shared the road map and objectives of the skill development program.

They highlighted the job opportunities that the youth would have in various industries after gaining essential skills.

The Director promised the candidates that they shall be given access to all

State of art labs of IIT to promote innovation amongst the talented youth.

The District Administration Reasi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Centre for Environmental Science, Indian Institute of Technology Jammu (CES IIT Jammu). The signing ceremony took place at the Auditorium Mini Secretariat Reasi, marking a collaborative effort to implement the AVSAR Scheme.

Prof Rakesh Singhai, Senior Faculty IIT, Ishan Verma, President, Jammu Kashmir Startup Association, GM DIC Mohd Anwar Bandy, CPO Sunita Kanchan, ACR Anshumali Sharma, CEO, Principal GDC Katra and Pouni,

Superintendent Polytechnic Reasi and other district officers were also present on the occasion.

## Manoj Kumar assumes office as ACD Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 05: Manoj Kumar has officially taken over as the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) in Doda.

The Rural Development Department (RDD) staff extended a warm welcome to the incoming ACD, expressing optimism about his leadership.

As the new ACD assumed his responsibilities, expectations were high for collaborative efforts aimed at fostering progress and welfare in Doda. The RDD staff and the local community eagerly anticipate the positive changes he will usher in, heralding a promising era for the district's development journey.

## DIPR hosts Symposium cum Cultural program on 'Uses, abuses of social media' held at GHSS B-Nagar

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 05: Cultural Unit, Department of Information and Public Relations, Jammu today organised a Symposium cum Cultural program on the topic "Uses and abuses of social media" at Government Mixed Hr. Sec. School (Bakshi Nagar) Camp Durga Nagar Jammu. The objective behind organizing the event was to educate the young generation regarding the uses and abuses of social media.

The students presented valuable information on the topic, highlighting the bright and dark aspects of Social Media.

Students were judged on parameters of Pronunciation, Modulation of Voice, Factual Representation, confidence etc. Sanjana Ganjoo, Ravi Raina and Sunita Dhar were the Judges for the day. A total number of 10 students participated in the competition. First Position was bagged by Kashvi Pandita, Second Position was secured by Aren Suri, Third Position was secured by Vedanshi Khajuria.

Later, the Artists of Cultural Wing of Information Department Jammu presented a colorful Cultural program which was highly appreciated by students and staff of the school.

## Progress of PWD(R&B) Sector projects reviewed at Rajouri; DC calls for timeline completion of works

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 05: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Om Prakash Bhagat, presided over a meeting to assess the progress of the developmental projects being executed by the Public Works Department (R&B) in the district, here today.

The projects under review included those funded by the District Plan, Potholes, NABARD, City and Towns, CRF and

bridges. It was informed that out of 339 projects, 240 have been completed. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner meticulously examined the physical and financial advancements under each project. The purpose of this comprehensive review was to ensure that the projects were progressing as planned and that the allocated funds were being utilized effectively.

Recognizing the importance of timely

completion, the Deputy Commissioner Om Prakash Bhagat directed the concerned officers to closely monitor the progress in their respective divisions. He emphasized the need for expeditious completion of the projects while maintaining high-quality standards.

He asked the officers to continue their diligent work and maintain a proactive approach to expedite the completion of these projects. The review meeting pro-

vided a platform for constructive discussions, allowing the participants to exchange ideas, address challenges, and identify solutions.

The district administration Rajouri is determined to prioritize the welfare and progress of its citizens. Through efficient execution and close monitoring of these developmental projects, the district administration aims to foster sustainable growth, improve infra-

## Secretary Cooperative visits Cooperative Complex Bantalab

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 05: Secretary, Cooperative, Babila Rakwal, today visited Cooperative Complex, Bantalab and reviewed functioning of the department.

During the visit, the Secretary had an exclusive interaction with the employees regarding working of their respective units. She emphasized the pivotal role of cooperatives in community development while highlighting various centrally sponsored schemes, with a special focus on "Computerization of Registrar Offices and ARDBs". The Secretary instructed the concerned officers to ensure cleanliness and proper hygiene



within the complex. She emphasized the commitment towards creating a conducive working environment for the cooperative society workforce. She asked for auction of dead stock and condemnation of obsolete vehicles to enhance operational efficiency and resource optimization.

Later, the Secretary listened to the grievances and concerns of the employees assuring an early redressal of the same.

## Sheen Mubarak: 4000 participate in magnificent Snow Mela hosted by Kishtwar admin, Tourism Directorate Jammu & JKAACL at Historical Chowgan Ground

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, JANUARY 05: Season's first snowfall has transformed Kishtwar district into a winter wonderland, setting the stage for a spectacular Snow Mela organized by the District Administration Kishtwar in collaboration with the Directorate of Tourism Jammu and Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages.

The event unfolded here on the iconic Chowgan Ground under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Devansh Yadav and involvement of other stakeholders.

Deputy Commissioner was the Chief Guest, while SSP Abdul Qayoom was guest of honour. ADDC Ghulam Rasool and ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak were special guests.

Among other government functionaries present were Dy. SP Hqrs Ishan Gupta, Dy SP DAR Sajjad Khan, EO Municipal Council, Ninad Sen, DYSSO Kharati Lal Sharma, Chief Education Officer Prehlad Bhagat, I/C JKAACL Gulab Saifi and other officers and officials of Civil and police



were also participated in the event.

The programme was well coordinated and managed by the Nodal Officer/State Tax Officer Circle Kishtwar Maneet Sharma.

The Snow Mela, a celebration of the enchanting snowy landscape, attracted a massive turnout of about 4000 locals and visitors alike. The sprawling Chowgan Ground became a hub of activity, offering a myriad of attractions for the attendees.

Cultural performances by local artists and musicians like Touqeer Ali of Baderwah, Kishtwar Idol fame Mamta Shan, Janveer Aryan, Rohan Bhandari, Kishtwar Art production added a vibrant touch to the event, with locals showcasing their talents in dance, music, and traditional arts. The stage came alive with the rich cultural heritage of Kishtwar, captivating the audience and fostering a sense of community spirit.

Thrill-seekers reveled in the excitement of zorbing, rolling down snow-covered ground in giant transparent spheres, creating laughter and joy.



EDITORIAL

Munnabhai MBBS: Vigilance  
Crucial for Safeguarding  
Healthcare Integrity...

Although this is not the maiden incident of fake doctors being exposed over the Social Media platforms, however the harsh reality is that the concerned authorities have failed to weed out this menace.

The recent revelation of a fake / pseudo doctor and the subsequent sealing of his clinic in south Kashmir's Anantnag district underscores the critical need for vigilant oversight within Kashmir's healthcare system.

Such incidents, though unsettling, serve as potent reminders of the delicate balance between public trust and the integrity of medical services in the region.

Kashmir's healthcare landscape is not just a matter of convenience, it is a lifeline for thousands of patients whose well-being hinges on timely and competent medical attention. The implications of compromised healthcare services extend far beyond individual cases, they erode public confidence and endanger lives.

The apprehension of an alleged doctor sends ripples of concern throughout the community, raising questions about the robustness of regulatory mechanisms and the extent of oversight within the healthcare sector. The closure of the clinic is not merely an administrative act, it is a signal of accountability and a commitment to safeguarding the health and welfare of the populace.

The incident underscores the imperative for continuous monitoring and stringent enforcement of regulations to weed out unscrupulous practices and safeguard the sanctity of healthcare delivery. It demands a collective effort from regulatory bodies, law enforcement agencies, and healthcare professionals to uphold the highest standards of ethics and competence.

While the majority of healthcare practitioners in Kashmir are dedicated professionals committed to upholding the Hippocratic oath, the presence of outliers underscores the need for constant vigilance. The safety and well-being of patients must remain paramount, transcending individual interests and institutional complacency.

As guardians of public health, it is incumbent upon authorities to fortify regulatory frameworks, enhance surveillance mechanisms, and foster a culture of transparency and accountability within the healthcare ecosystem. Only through unwavering diligence and collective resolve can Kashmir ensure that every patient receives the care and compassion they deserve.

In the wake of this incident, let us reaffirm our commitment to a healthcare system that prioritizes integrity, empathy, and excellence, recognizing that the stakes are nothing less than the lives and well-being of our fellow citizens.



■ Mool Raj

Students often face a formidable challenge to strike a delicate balance between achieving academic excellence and maintaining physical and mental health in a fiercely competitive environment. This balance becomes particularly vital during exam periods when students face academic pressure and performance anxiety, deeply impacting their mental health and overall well-being. Exam preparedness is, no doubt, important. But much more important is to maintain a reasonably good balance between study and a healthy life.

Today, exam 'performance' remains so central to the students' over all mental make-up that they do not see anything beyond academic results. This overbearing notion consumes our students and stifles their creativity and talent. We all know far too well that every child is uniquely endowed and all cannot excel academically. Through the prism of exam result, we cannot possibly fathom the talent of a child.

Exam results must not be the only barometer of the success in a student's life. All of us – parents, teachers, friends and family – should work in tandem and togetherness to provide the child with a congenial environment to realise his full potential. Exam performance is not only contingent on innate talent but also on several things such as healthy body and agile mind that enhances the physical endurance and sharpen the cerebral focus.

Students bear the burden of expectations of the family, teachers, and society, to excel academically. This leads to an unenviable situation that makes them mentally vulnerable and physically draining. At times, with fatigue, their energy gets sapped and it takes toll on their health and well-being. Excessive stress has been construed to be a factor increasing the risk



of mental health problems like anxiety, depression and sleep disorders. Nurturing mental well-being is, therefore, imperative.

To overcome these challenges, students should remain ever positive, embrace exercise, meditation and deep-breathing to enhance the level of concentration and focus on their studies, establish a well-organized study routine, break down tasks into manageable chunks, and set realistic academic goals to achieve. Providing access to counselling services and open communication about mental health also create a supportive environment for those grappling with anxiety or other mental health concerns.

It would be edifying to note the following comprehensive ways as to how students' physical health and mental well-being can be maintained during exams:

**Small Breaks and Physical Activity:** Physical health is one of the fundamental elements in maintaining our overall fitness and agility. Regular exercise not only improves the cardiovascular health but also serves as a stress-buster. It enhances cognitive function, and the ability to recall information, both of which are crucial to enhance exam performance. While preparing for the exams, students invariably attach priority to their stud-

ies over their health. We should encourage them to incorporate some sort of physical activities like stretching, walking, jogging, or yoga that can significantly alleviate stress, helping students recharge their minds.

**Balanced Diet and Nutrition:** Nutrition plays a crucial role in dealing with the demands of rigorous study and staying healthy. Food is a fuel that nourishes both our body and mind. The quality of food that we eat significantly determines our overall health and mental well-being.

A common mistake that students often make during this crucial period is to eat poorly or take unhealthy food such as junk fast food, chocolates, energy drinks and chips in place of nutritious home-made food. Sometimes they also skip meals during exams because of anxiety and stress or to save their time for exam preparation. Eating a balanced diet rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre provides the necessary fuel for optimal brain function. Adequate hydration is often overlooked but is equally important, as lack of it can substantially impair cognitive abilities and concentration.

**Adequate Sleep for Good Health:** Quality sleep is equally vital during exam time. There is a direct correlation between sleep and cognitive function, memory retention, and emotional

resilience. Students should maintain consistent sleep patterns by going to bed and waking up at the same time, each day. Students who take proper amount of sleep at night are always able to recall better and perform better. Good sleep is also an irreducible minimum for good health.

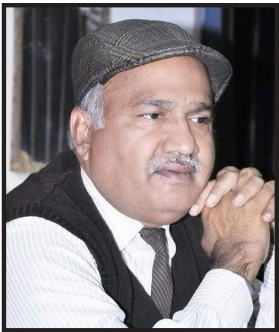
**Supportive and Encouraging Environment:** We should create a conducive environment where students can discuss their concerns and seek support from their parents and teachers. Providing access to counselling services for dealing with stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges should remain a top institutional priority. We should encourage open communication about the pressures of exams and deal with it effectively without getting psychologically entangled.

**Exercise and Meditation Practices:** Meditation can be a secret weapon to manage exam stress effectively. Students should practise techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga which can help calm the mind, improve concentration and reduce anxiety. These practices can help alleviate stress and enhance mental well-being.

**Time Management:** Students should adopt strategies to manage study timings to reduce last minute rush. We all know, how the screen time for the students has gone up due to excessive dependence on electronic medium. We understand that in the present time, electronic medium has become a necessity. But, our students need to strike a balance. Perhaps a digital detox will be essential to free some quality time for exam preparation.

In conclusion, nurturing students' physical health and mental well-being during exams is integral to their overall success. Taking care of students' well-being enhances their academic performance. It prepares them for the challenges they may face beyond the exam hall. We call upon the students to prioritize health and follow a regimen of physical exercise and meditation, digital detox, mental well-being, quality sleep and a healthy diet, besides effective time management strategy. By effectively handling the exam stress, our young students will perform to their potential and emerge as confident and forward-looking youth committed to realising the goals of Vikasit Bharat @2047.

Use of Unfair Means (Cheating) in Examinations



■ Vijay GarG

Education System is a tool that enables people to lead productive lives according to their talents and interests. For Education systems to be fully effective it must give an individual the training of a independence and leadership. At the same time, it should provide for the development of all the vocational abilities needed for the creation of a progressive and democratic society. The quality of education that is imparted to youths contribute largely to the formation of their attitudes. So whatever kind of education is imparted will determine the quality and nature of the educated youth coming out of the schools, colleges and universities. Education is a great builder and if it is deficient or decadent it can be a destroyer too. History is proof of such deficiencies or lack in education. Greece and Rome were once world leaders owing to the fact that these were great centres of learning and education. But when these centres ceased to exist it resulted in the downfall of these empires.

If current education systems are to be evaluated they too suffer from various shortcomings and faults, though there are still many exceptions. Nonetheless, there is a need to address and end the

malpractices that are commonly committed during examinations. These malpractices are at the pre-conduct, conduct and evaluation stages and range from leakage of question papers to copying, changing answer books, impersonation, misconduct in examination centre, approaching invigilators/examiners, making false entries in award list/ examination registers and issuing fake certificate/degrees etc. The use of unfair means in the examination is a trend that isn't going to end soon.

The whole system of education revolves around Examinations which play a pivotal role in the success or failure of the system. They are also the barometers of the success or failure of students. The resort to copying and use of other unfair means/ malpractices in examinations is a serious problem which needs an immediate solution. This problem is like a disease in our educational system which is messing up the future of the youth and the society as a whole as well.

Why do Students Resort to Unfair Means?

Fear of Failure:

The fear of is one of the top reason for some students to cheat in exams. Some students anticipate a lot of problems if they fail the exams. Their fear dwells in their parents complain about bad grades, their friends mocking and a possible dark future too. They get stressed and the end result is cheating in exams.

Lack of Ability:

There are few students who have no potential of taking up the challenge of exams. Low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence cause them to cheat. Instead of studying hard, paying attention to classes, reviewing lessons and doing exercises they cheat in exams.

Lack of Interest:

Some students have no interest in studies at all. They find it useless as they know that they are going to take over their father's business or follow traditional family business after their studies. For them, school is just a formality and a pass time. They find no need to study and cheating seems to be an easy way out.

Cheating for Fun & Show-off:

Some students cheat in exams is because enjoy taking risks. It sounds ridiculous but in reality, there are certain students who get thrilled and excitement in doing such malpractices. They want to be popular by showing-off their ability. For some, it is an ego issue and for some, it is a dare for a bet or otherwise.

Availability of Sources:

Technology and money facilitated cheating tools in the form of elements such as ex-students, co-students, parents, teachers, examiners, invigilators, examination staff and outside elements. They are readily available either due to money or otherwise.

Easy Approach:

Using unfair means in the form of chits, guides, paid candidate, question paper leak, bribed teachers or examiners etc. appears to be a shortcut to hard work. When there are shortcuts who wants to make efforts to study.

Habitual Use:

For successful cheaters, it becomes a bad habit which gives them the confidence to do it again. Such students just can't do without cheating in spite of the fear of getting caught as the fear is overshadowed by tasted success.

Poverty:

Some students come from poor families and they are working too many hours in paid employment to cope with schoolwork. They can either study or work so an easy way out is using unfair means.

Substance Addiction:

Some have developed an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Such students have only one thing in mind and that one thing sways them away from studies.

Anti-social Elements:

Students from families having a history of violence and psychiatric problems tend to be influenced by their environment. They indulge in crime and other anti-social activities which alienates them from studies

Good Grades:

Some students are ambitious and want good grades at all cost to get admissions in reputed college or university. Though many of them are bright students, they want to leave no chance to top and the temptation to cheat to get the coveted admission or scholarships becomes very powerful.

By Hook or by Crook:

The prevalent attitude of getting things done either By Hook or By Crook in present times is becoming acceptable and sort of norm. Corrupt officials and governments are leading examples. In such an environment cheating is no big deal.

How to deal with the Problem of Use of Unfair Means in Exam?

Purpose of Examinations:

When the purpose of examinations becomes a method to gain grades rather than for it's learning value, there is degradation in the value of examinations in the eyes of the students. It becomes a formality then.

Legal Consequences:

Strict laws regarding cheating should be implemented to prevent cheating.

Incentives to Informers:

Students who are aware of cheaters should be given incentives in secret to prevent this malpractice.

Video Surveillance:

Using cameras even if they are dummies instils a fear of being taped and 100 % chance of getting caught which itself will prevent cheating.

Tracking School Staff:

School staff can be tracked bu hired detectives for the possible perpetrator.

Extra Stress on Policies and Guidelines Regarding Cheating:

These need to be fully communicated to students in various ways like the bulletin board, verbal announcement before the exams, warning on the exam sheet etc. This induces a fear and rejection of cheating.

Fair Exams:

There is a need to create a test that is fair to the students. Some students use an instructor's reputation for giving "unfair" tests as an excuse to cheat. "Fair" means that the exam tests the material that you said it would cover, that students have enough time to complete the exam and that there is a reasonable grade distribution.

Pre-coded Sheets:

Use of Pre-code answer sheets and test booklets that use a numbering system so that the number on each test booklet matches the one on each student's answer sheet is also an effective way to prevent cheating.

Clever Marking:

To eliminate cheating after the exam has been returned to students, mark the answer sheets in such a way that answers cannot be altered (such as using a permanent felt-tip pen).

Seating Arrangements:

Number seats and tests and then assign students to sit in the seat with the same number as the number on their test.

Vijay GarG Retired Principal  
Educational columnist malout



# The Crests And Troughs Of My Life



■ [Mool Raj](#)

Life is a tapestry woven with threads of choices, opportunities, and the silent architects who shape our destinies. As I reflect upon my journey, I am reminded of the indelible influence of my mother, a guiding force whose absence casts a shadow on my triumphs.

In the early chapters of my life, I was characterized by a potent mix of determination and naivety. Hard-working yet directionless, I traversed a path filled with uncertainty. It was during these formative years that my mother emerged as my moral compass, financial anchor, and psychological support. She was the unseen hand that steadied my course, providing the essential elements for my growth.

Today, I stand as a testament to her unwavering belief in my potential. Competent and capable, I have weathered life's storms and scaled its peaks. However, there exists a profound void – an emptiness that lingers in the absence of her physical presence.

Life, as it unfolds, is a constant battle, a series of choices that shape our narrative. What makes this journey particularly intriguing is the concept of opportunity cost. Every decision we make comes with a price, a sacrifice of one possibility for another. Yet, the fascinating aspect lies in the fact that, for certain things, we are not the sole decision-makers.

My mother's support, a pillar of strength that shaped my character, was not a choice I consciously made. It was a gift bestowed upon me, an irreplaceable presence that now exists only in memory. In the grand tapestry of life, some threads are beyond our control, woven by forces unseen.

Philosophically speaking, life's choices often lead us down paths we did not foresee. The intricate dance of fate and free will creates a mosaic of experiences, each contributing to the complex tapestry of our existence. The unseen architects, like my mother, play a crucial role in shaping the patterns of our lives, their influence

extending far beyond the choices we consciously make.

As I navigate the intricate web of life, I am acutely aware of the opportunity costs that come with each decision. Some costs are tangible, and measurable in material gains or losses. Others, like the absence of a loved one, carry a weight that transcends the material realm.

In the face of such profound loss, the question arises – how do we reconcile the choices we make with the costs we bear? The answer lies in embracing the unpredictability of life, and acknowledging that some decisions are not ours to control. We may not always choose our circumstances, but we can choose how we respond to them.

In conclusion, life is a symphony of choices, an ever-evolving narrative shaped by the interplay of fate and free will. The unseen architects, like my mother, leave an enduring legacy in the choices they inspire. As I continue my journey, I carry with me the lessons learned from the profound opportunity cost of her absence, a cost that underscores the unpredictable nature of life's unfolding drama.

The writer is a freelance columnist.

# Dost Achha Toh Hum Chalte Hain.....



■ [By M S Nazki](#)

Love is the only brick that hits you on the head and gives you a smile instead of tears!

The world is in your smile, the universe is in your laughter.

The line I got to write this story was 'Smiles - the universal language that brings unity in the hearts!' (With of course a picture that depicted an Army Jawan along with a man civilian perhaps sharing a joke!) this was not a kind of scene that could be imagined say two and a half decades back but now it is a common phenomenon and it has been all due to the combined efforts of the Indian Army, the Police and th civil administration! Everyone in the Nation who wants Kashmir should be smiling and that is what is happening today and the picture with the story says it all!

This is a small little incident from the mid nineties when I was posted to Rajouri! We were on a patrol and it was time to heat up our tiffin's! The innovative fireplace was lit up and mesh tins were out to eat up the food! Suddenly a kid, later on I was to her name and it was Mehak along with her mother came along with the flock of sheep and goats! A little away from us they began grazing their cattle! While the boys ere heating their food i got up and walked up to the couple who too were preparing to have their food! it was maize bread along with green vegetables (Saag in local parlance) I td the mother, Shamshad Begum, "Why are you having cod! My boys will heat it up for you! I called Hitesh (now no more as he died in a tragic accident in Dehradun) to take Mehak along with Mehak so that they could have warm food! The necessary was done and as Mehak walked back I handed over a packet of toffees! She smiled and gave a



small wave of her hands! That was the first meeting but it as not going to be the last! A week later we landed up at their small mud made hamlet and there I saw Mehak plating with her kid sister Sameera and brother Samad! It was that Shamshad told me that her husband had been shot dead by militants as they wanted him to act as a guide as they wanted to reach Kotaranka! My husband Tabrez flatly refused and killed him! Samad was in my womb at that time! We used to rear up sheep and goats since that is our family profession and till date we are doing! I could understand the grief and the only thing I could say at that time to her was, grief gives you a hundred reasons to cry; hope gives you a thousand reasons to smile, joy gives you a million reasons to laugh, and love gives you a billion reasons to rejoice. Just keep going young lady! I picked up Mehak in arms and planted a kiss on her forehead and she instead gave me a hug! After a few days I was to proceed with posting to the North East! Before I moved out of my post I decided to visit the family! i had bought for them a few gifts in the form of clothes and shoes! I gave it to them. They had arranged a lunch for me that included rice, maize bread chicken curry, mothi (Rajmah along with curd and song and that was the last time I was to meet Mehak! She was still smiling perhaps not knowing that I was to leave the next day! After the lunch she came to me gave me a hug and plated a kiss on my forehead! Thereafter I handed over the chocolate box and left. That was the last time I met her! I till date (almost 28 year later I miss her voice because it was

a symphony; her scent because it was a treasure; her smile because it was a jewel; her last hug because it was a masterpiece; and her kiss on my forehead because it was a miracle. But at least I had made an effort to bring a smile back to a frief ridden family! A genuine smile is one of the world's rarest treasures. May god keep giving them smiles and all his blessings! The officer who took over kept letting me know through letters that Meehak misses you a lot sir! But that's what an army man is all bout! In uniform to bring smiles on the faces of others!

Some said it rightly a smile is made up of 1% muscles and 99% happiness!

Joy is God's smile; love is God's laughter.

I remembered a beautiful song from Mahesh Bhat's film Naam. The lyrics went like this, 'Tooh Kal Chala jayega To Main Kya Karoo Ga' when I saw the picture with the story where a soldier and a local seem to be smiling together! The lyrics fit in perfectly on the still photograph! Then about the second line I thought as to what the soldier would have told the man laughing, I'm sure he must have told, 'Hum Kahan Jayenge, Main Nahin Hoonga Toh Koi Aur Hoga, Chehra Badalta Hai Pae Wardi to Wahi Hai Indian Army'.....adding to this the soldier must have said.....'Dost, Achha Toh Hum Chalte Hain'.....! And perhaps after that they had a heart laugh! The white enamel under the lips shows that!

A smile is an affordable way of giving someone an expensive gift. Finally I will say that one smile speaks louder than a hundred words! A smile costs you nothing but gains you everything. I gained Mehak!

## How To Avoid Common Mistakes In 2024 Board Exams



■ [Vijay GarG](#)

Students appearing for the board examination for session 2024 should keep these things in mind so that they do not make these mistakes in their examination and score well.

### 1- Not Reaching The Exam Centre On Time

The board examination is the first step of a student toward their future or we can say career after 12th, whereas, not reaching the exam centre on time can cause trouble for the student as they are not allowed to enter the exam centre.

To ensure a smooth verification process for the board examination 2024, students should reach the exam centre at least 15 minutes before the exam's scheduled time.

### 2- Ignoring Certain Subjects/Topics

Another mistake made by students is to neglect certain topics from different subjects. It is to be noted that every subject and every chapter has weightage in the board examination 2024, so skipping a topic or chapter will not be beneficial for the students.



Ignoring any specific topic can significantly impact their board exam scores and percentages. So the candidates are advised to study every topic from each subject to score well in their 2024 board examination.

### 3- Relying On 1 Study Material

Sometimes candidates think that studying from only 1 source is good and beneficial for them but this is not true. Students should explore many kinds of study material i.e. online or offline while preparing for the board examination in 2024.

Every source such as books, questionnaires, exam ideas, and sample paper

books offers a unique perspective and a depth of knowledge. So a candidate should study from more than 1 source and you should also revise well from the NCERT books.

### 4- Not Answering As Per The Word Limit

At times candidates think that the answer they have written for a particular question is enough to justify their points but sometimes it might not be enough. Students are advised to limit their answers as per the word limit given by the authority and revise before going to the next question.

Students should not overwrite the

information and also avoid writing less than required in the board examination 2024.

### 5- Lack Of Time Management

Lack of time management happens when a candidate gives extra time to solve a question. As all the students know the board examination 2024 has a duration of 3 hours and each question takes a particular amount of time to solve.

In such situations, when students have limited time to solve a question, giving extra time to a single question will turn into a disadvantage.

### 6- Leaving Questions In Exam

When it comes to board exams, leav-

ing a question unanswered can have a negative impact on your overall score. It's better to attempt every question, even if you're not completely sure of the answer.

Keep in mind that exams are designed to challenge you, and it's normal to encounter questions that you may not know the answer.

If you find yourself struggling with a question, try breaking the question into smaller parts and see if you can answer any of them.

### 7- Neglecting Health & Well Being

While preparing for the board examination, students start ignoring their health, proper meals, and their sleep schedule. This would cause health issues and a lack of concentration while preparation.

Students should take a healthy and balanced diet along with proper sleep and regular exercise to keep their body healthy and fit. A healthy body and healthy mind can boost the student's memorising power, concentration, and performance.

Students who are appearing for the 2024 board examinations can keep in mind that stress is the major negative factor among the students that prevents them from scoring well in the board exams.

If you have any queries regarding the board exam 2024, feel free to ask below in the comment section. We will give you a response as soon as possible.

Vijay Garg Retired  
Principal Educational Columnist  
Malout Punjab



# "Our 3rd Term Is Not Far Away, It Will Be One Of Big Decisions": PM Modi

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his last speech in parliament before the general elections reiterated his promise of pushing the Indian economy forward. This time, instead of putting a figure to it, he said the economy will be the world's third largest in his third term.

The BJP has exuded confidence that the Narendra Modi government will be back for a third consecutive term with a massive mandate.

Responding to the Motion of Thanks on President Droupadi Murmu's speech last week, PM Modi contrasted his development agenda with what he called the Opposition's naysaying culture.

"The world is influenced by India. G20 summit is a testament to this. In our third term...India



will be the third largest economy in the world and this is Modi's Guarantee,' the Prime Minister said.

"When we say that we'll become the third largest economy, the Opposition says it will

happen on its own, nothing big. I want to tell the youth how it is done and what is the government's role in this," PM Modi said.

"In February 2014, when the Interim Budget came, then Finance Minister said and I quote, 'I now wish to look forward and outline a vision for the future... I wonder how many... that India's economy in terms of size and strength is the 11th largest economy. There are great things in store. There is a view that in the next three decades, India's nominal GDP will take the country to the 3rd rank after US and China.' In 2014, they said by 2044 India will be the 3rd largest economy. That was their vision," PM Modi.

His government's promise to take India to the third spot in the third term should "make the Opposition happy," PM Modi said, "since they were happy with the 11th spot".

# 344 Antiquities Have Been Returned To India Since 2014: Centre Tells Parliament

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: A total of 344 antiquities have been returned to India from other countries since 2014, the government informed the Parliament on Monday.

Union Minister of Culture G Kishan Reddy said this in a written response to a query in Lok Sabha.

Only one antiquity had been returned to India during 2004-13, according to the data shared by him in his response. A total of 115 antiquities were returned to India in 2023, and 344 antiquities have been returned since 2014, he said. On a query regarding smuggled antiquities, he replied that 314 antiquities have been repatriated during the last five years, and he also shared the country-wise data. From the US, 262 such items were repatriated in the last five years, 15 from the UK, 35 antiquities were returned from Australia and one from Italy in the same period.

The issue of repatriation was attempted to be addressed in the Culture



Working Group event during the G20 Summit. The subjects was "Re(ad)dress: Return of Treasures", he added. Mr Reddy, in response to another query, said the Ministry of Culture celebrated the life and sacrifices of socialist leader Karpoori Thakur on the occasion of his 100th birth anniversary on January 24, 2024.

"His contribution to the freedom struggle and his honest public life as a politician were portrayed through an exhibition and a commemorative stamp and coin were released. On the eve of his birth centenary, the Government of India announced that Shri Karpoori Thakur Ji will be

conferred with the highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna, posthumously," Mr Reddy said.

On a query on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, he said, a Digital District Repository has been compiled to discover and document the stories of people, events, and places linked to the freedom struggle at the micro level of the district.

"As on date, about 14,500 stories have been compiled and uploaded on the portal. These stories are broadly classified under the heading - People & Personalities, Events & Happenings, Hidden Treasures -- Built & Natural Heritage, and Living Traditions & Art Forms," he said.

# Delhi High Court Refuses To Quash Summons To Arvind Kejriwal In 2018 Defamation Case

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday upheld summons issued to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal as an accused in a criminal defamation case for retweeting an allegedly defamatory video circulated by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in May 2018.

Retweeting a social media post carrying defamatory content will amount to defamation under Section 499 of the IPC, Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma said while refusing to quash the trial court's 2019 order summoning Mr Kejriwal.

The court also said that some sense of responsibility must be attached while retweeting content on social media about which a person does not have knowledge. The AAP leader had challenged two orders of the trial court on the refusal to quash the summons. The high court had earlier stayed trial court proceedings in the case.

A magistrate's court had summoned Mr Kejriwal to appear before it in August 2019 after a criminal complaint by the founder of social media page, "I Support Narendra



Modi", alleged the AAP leader had retweeted the defamatory video.

Retweeting, the high court said on Monday, must attract penal, civil as well as tort action. And when retweeting is done by political persons, including the chief minister, with bigger social media presence, the retweets become public endorsement which can be believed by the public, it said.

The high court said the concept of a publication, which was earlier limited to only printed material, must be examined in the context of virtual platforms and that the legal system must remain in tune with social media.

It said online interaction on social media and sharing any post with others by retweeting it attracts the liability for the offence of defamation.

The court said if the AAP leader wishes to justify his act of retweeting the video, it can be done at the stage of trial. The chief minister had earlier challenged the magistrate's order before a sessions court, which dismissed his plea.

He then challenged the sessions court's order in the high court, saying the trial court failed to appreciate that his tweet was not intended or likely to harm complainant Vikas Sankrityayan.

The plea said the trial court erred in not providing any reasons for issuing the summons and the orders were 'ex-facie' devoid of judicial application of mind.

Sankrityayan claimed the YouTube video with the title "BJP IT Cell Part II" was circulated by Rathee, who lives in Germany, "wherein a number of false and defamatory allegations were made".

Regarding Mr Kejriwal, he said the chief minister retweeted without checking its authenticity.

# 27 New Sites Identified For Development Under Central Scheme: Government

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: Twenty-seven new sites have been identified for development under the Centre's PRASHAD scheme, the government informed Parliament on Monday.

Union Minister of Tourism G Kishan Reddy said this in a written response to a query in the Lok Sabha.

He said 57 destinations have also been identified for development under the Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme.

The Union Ministry of Tourism launched the Pil-

grimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) and the Swadesh Darshan schemes in 2014-15 for developing infrastructure at tourist destinations, including religious sites.

The primary objective of the PRASHAD scheme is to develop tourism infrastructure at pilgrimage and heritage sites, ensuring a more enriching experience for pilgrims and heritage enthusiasts. The Swadesh Darshan scheme aimed to develop theme-based tourist circuits, Mr Reddy said.

The ministry has now revamped Swadesh Darshan 2.0 with the objective to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations by following a tourist and destination-centric approach, he said. "A total of 46 projects are sanctioned at a cost of 1,631.93 crore and 76 projects are sanctioned at a cost of 5,294.11 crore under PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan schemes, respectively," the minister said in his response.

The ministry promotes tourist destinations and tourism products of the country in a holistic manner.

India as a preferred tourism destination in tourism generating markets, under the Incredible India brand, to promote various tourism products and destinations in the global tourism market through an integrated marketing and promotional strategy and a synergised campaign in association with the travel trade, state governments and Indian missions overseas, Reddy said in response to another query. In response to another query, the minister shared data on foreign tourist arrivals in Goa.

endeavours to position

# "Bhanumati Ka Kunba, Alliance's Alignment Is Off": PM Modi Shades INDIA Bloc

■ HT News Network

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's last speech in parliament before the national election this year, turned out to be another occasion for massive Congress bashing. The party, he alleged, was responsible for not fulfilling the role of a strong opposition which vital for a democracy. The current disarray in the Opposition bloc and "launching the same product (Rahul Gandhi) over and over" were counted among the other shortcomings of the party.

"The Congress cannot think beyond a single family. A few days ago, they put together a 'Bhanumati ka Kunba (Bhanumati's clan, meaning a group of disparate people)' but then they started 'Ekla chalo re (Walk alone)'," he said, quoting a famous poem by Rabindranath Tagore, in a jab at the INDIA Bloc and the current rift within it over seat sharing.

"The Congress has recently learnt the work of an auto mechanic, so they should by now know what alignment is. But they have managed to throw the Opposition alliance out of alignment... They do not trust each other. How can they have faith in the country," he added, responding to the Motion of Thanks on President Drou-



padi Murmu's speech last week.

The Congress, he added, never credited India with any potential. This, he said, was true even in the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first Prime Minister.

Nehru in his Red Fort speech, had said, "In India, there's no habit of working hard compared to Europeans, Americans," PM Modi said, insisting that it proves he considered Indians were "lazy and lacked intelligence".

His daughter, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, had a similar opinion, he said. Again from the Red Fort, she said, "it is our habit that when a good work is approaching completion, we become complacent. And when

an obstacle comes, we lose hope. Sometimes it seems the whole nation has accepted defeat," PM Modi said.

Then came the next barb at the Opposition. "Looking at Congress today, it appears that Indira ji may have underestimated the countrymen, but she evaluated the Congress well," he said. Taunting the Opposition that they have "lost the will to fight," PM Modi said they will "sit there (in the opposition benches) for more time to come". PM Narendra Modi said, "A few days ago, they put together a 'Bhanumati ka Kunba (Bhanumati's clan, meaning a group of disparate people)' but then they started 'Ekla chalo re (Walk alone)',".

# Caste Census, Removal Of 50% Cap On Quota: Rahul Gandhi's Big Promise

■ HT News Network

Ranchi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday promised a nationwide caste census and removal of the 50 percent cap on reservation if the INDIA bloc forms the government at the Centre after the Lok Sabha polls.

He also alleged that the BJP tried to topple the JMM-Congress-RJD government in Jharkhand as the chief minister was a tribal.

"Want to congratulate all alliance MLAs, (Champai) Soren ji as that they stopped the BJP-RSS conspiracy and protected the government of the poor," Mr Gandhi said at a rally at the Shaheed Maidan in state capital Ranchi. Fullscreen

Mr Gandhi claimed that Dalits, tribals, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) were made bonded labourers and their participation was lacking in big companies, hos-



pitals, schools, colleges and courts.

"This is the biggest question before India. Our first step would be to get a caste census in the country," the former Congress chief said.

Noting that more than 50 percent reservation cannot be given under existing provisions, Mr Gandhi promised that an Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance government will "throw out" the 50 per cent cap on reservation.

"There will be no reduction in reservation of Dalits and Adivasis. I am giving you a guarantee that the backward sections of society will get their rights. This is the biggest issue - social and economic injustice," Mr Gandhi said. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi used to say that he is an OBC but when the demand for a caste census was made, he stated that there are only two castes -- the rich and the poor.

"When the time came to

give rights to OBCs, Dalits, tribals, Modi ji says there are no castes and when it is time to get votes, he says he is an OBC," Mr Gandhi claimed.

Slamming the BJP soon after the Champai Soren-led government won the trust vote in the Jharkhand assembly, Mr Gandhi alleged that the BJP tried to remove the government as it cannot accept that there is a tribal Chief Minister. The Congress, the JMM stood against them together and government was saved. They do this in all opposition-ruled states through probe agencies and money power. They (BJP) are attacking democracy, Constitution and want to suppress the voice of the people. The INDIA coalition will not let voice of democracy be suppressed," the Congress leader asserted at the rally held during his Manipur-to-Maharashtra Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.



# DC Bandipora reviews targets and achievements under Jal Jeevan Mission

Fixes timeline of March end for completion of all the projects which are at the advanced stage of completion

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 05: The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Shakeel Ur Rehman, Chairman District Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), today convened a meeting to take appraisal of the works being executed under JJM in the district. The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, ADC Bandipora Umar Shafi, CPO, Executive Engineer(s) Jal Shakti Department and all other members of District Jal Jeevan Mission Bandipora.

The meeting was informed that in Bandipora District 122 Water Supply Schemes have been taken up for achieving cent percent saturation of households in Jal Jeevan Mission. Under the Har Ghar Jal initiative of JJM, 38 Rapid Sand Filtration Plants, 22 Over Head Tanks, 18 Bore wells, 149 pipe networks, and other allied works are under execution. district Bandipora has 47358 FHTCs, out of which 38871 households have been provided tap water connections.

Out of 122 schemes taken up under JJM, 28 Water Supply Schemes have been completed so far, which are pres-



ently under different stages of testing, commissioning, and operation. The Deputy Commissioner also took a detailed review of works taken up under various schemes of JJM viz. construction of filtration plants, OHTs reservoirs and laying of pipelines and auxiliary works, and the bottlenecks being faced by the executing agencies at the

various levels. It was given out that some schemes were facing delays in construction due to delay in resolution of the inter-departmental issues/permissions. Some of these issues have been resolved in recent weeks by the Coordination Committee headed by ACR Bandipora. Instant directions were issued to all the concerned departments to work in close coordination so as to ensure expeditious and time-bound completion of all projects.

During the course of the meeting, it came to fore that some projects in PHE Division Bandipora are facing unnecessary and unwarranted hindrances from some locals. Strict instructions were issued for initiating legal action against such persons by revenue officers in coordination with police. While taking the review of the progress of projects of PHE Sub Division Sumbal, it was apprised that the major portion of works comprises of construction of OHTs (Overhead Tanks). The chair observed that the delay in the completion of the works has been on part of the contractors. The Executive Engineer PHE Division Sopore was directed to hold a meeting with all the contractors to ensure timely completion of these works and in case of unreasonable delays, the notices be issued to the concerned contractors for cancellation.

## Kashmir bat manufacturers to take legal action against SONY TV, Shark Tank India participants

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 05 (KNO): The Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association of Kashmir (CBMAK) on Monday announced its decision to pursue legal action against SONY Entertainment Television and the participants of Shark Tank India's Season 3 episode aired on January 30, 2024. The association alleged that contestants Hamad Tramboos and Saad Tramboos, representing Tramboos Kashmir Willow cricket bats, made false claims about the Kashmir Cricket Bat Manufacturing industry, thereby damaging its reputation.

Fawzul Kabiir, spokesperson of CBMAK and owner of Gr8 sports, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said they will not allow anyone



to make false claims that could harm the industry.

He said the false claims made on the show, particularly by participants who allegedly misrepresented themselves as pioneers in the industry, are unacceptable. "We have continued this industry despite witnessing ups and downs, and now, those who don't have anything to do with this industry are claiming to be its forefathers," Kabiir said.

We don't have any issue

with anyone but nobody should make such claims that put its impact on the bat industry as we have our blood and sweat for it, he added. Fawzul criticised SONY TV for not verifying information before broadcasting "misleading" claims and announced the association's decision to take legal action against both the channel and the participants. "We will seek justice and ensure accountability from both the show and the participants," he said.

## Keran to be developed as border tourist village as border tourism soars in valley

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 05 (KNO): With border tourism flourishing in the valley, the administration has decided to develop Keran as a border tourist village.

As per a copy of Jammu and Kashmir interim budget 2024-25, available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the government will develop infrastructure and basic amenities in 20 off-beat tourist destinations, 10 each in Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

The interim budget copy said that Keran, which has opened recently for tourists, will be developed as a border tourist village of north Kashmir's Kupwara district. The development of Keran as a border tourist village has been appreciated by the tourism players, who said the village has a huge scope

of attracting domestic as well as international tourists.

"Keran is a beautiful place and has successfully attracted tourists during the last two years. With the development of Keran as a border tourist village, infrastructure will come up in the village, which will include homestays and other amenities for tourists," said Umar Ahmad, a travel agent.

He said border areas of Keran and Tangdar require immediate development as tourists have been constantly expressing their desire to visit such places.

"We often get requests from tourists to visit Keran and Tangdar. So far accommodation has been an issue for the tourism players. If the government develops both these areas, we will get to see a lot of tourists visiting these areas in coming years," Ahmad said.

Keran, a border tehsil of Kupwara district, nestled along the banks of the Kishenganga River (Neelum River), has long been a hidden gem, unknown to many.

Due to the tension prevailing across the border for the last many decades, the area was not being explored for tourism promotion.

To put border regions like Keran, Gurez, Tangdhar, Machil, and Bangus on the tourism map, the Indian government made a big decision. The locals are happy about this decision since it promises prosperity, and economic growth to the area.

As per the interim budget copy, the government is also going to develop Tosamaidan and Sitharan circuits.

It said the revival and restoration of 75 identified heritage sites, cultural sites will also be completed—(KNO)

## GDC Neeli Nallah organizes poster making, slogan writing competition to promote National Road Safety campaign

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 05: Road Safety Club Government Degree College Neeli Nallah Udhampur organised poster making and slogan writing competition under "National Road Safety campaign" under able guidance of Prof. Hans Raj, Principal of the college.

More than thirty students participated in the competition. The students made posters and slogans pertaining to Do's and Don'ts with respect to Road Safety Rules. Simran Roy, Bhoomika Sharma and Aayushi Sharma got 1st, 2nd and 3rd Position in Slogan Writing competition respectively.

Mebish Akhter, Shahina Akhtar and Taniya Sharma got the 1st, 2nd and 3rd position respectively in Poster Making competition respectively. The students were awarded with certificates on spot. The competition was judged by Dr. Maansi Sharma, Dr. Sunil Tanoch and Prof. Rekha Sharma.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal of the college impressed upon the teachers and students to wear helmets seat belts not driving under the influence of alcohol and drive within the permissible speed limits. He further emphasized that to avoid chance of collision, a safe distance is to be maintained while driving. The event was organized by Prof. Shaista Yasmeen, Convenor of Road Safety Club of the college. The organizing committee members Dr. Akhter Hussain, Dr. Mahima Bhagat, Dr. Zahoor Mir, Dr. Muntazir Wani & Mrs. Swati Sharma were present on the occasion.

## Ghulam Rasool assumes office as ADDC Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 05: Ghulam Rasool, today assumed the charge as Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kishtwar.

He received a warm welcome from all the officers and officials of the district administration.

While taking the new responsibilities as ADDC, Ghulam Rasool expressed his commitment to fast track the developmental initiatives besides ensuring efficient governance in the Kishtwar district in coordination with various line departments.

He emphasised upon all to work with the utmost dedication and zeal to ensure prompt delivery of public services to the populace of the area. He stated that all endeavors will be taken to ensure transparency and efficiency in all spheres of public administration of the district.

On the occasion, senior officers of district administration were present besides officials from various departments to welcome the officer.

## Prompt action taken against overloaded Minibus for endangering lives of students

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 05: Motor Vehicle Department Samba has filed an FIR against operator of a Matador (Mini Bus) for blatant overloading and endangering lives of Students. In a highly concerning incident that garnered public attention, a viral video captured an overloaded minibus, bearing registration number JK21C0093, plying on the Vijaypur-Ramgarh road on February 3, 2024. Shockingly, students were found seated on the back stairs of the vehicle, compounding the issue of overloading inside. Immediate action was taken by the Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO), who swiftly acknowledged the severity of the situation. A First Information Report (FIR) was lodged at Police Station Ramgarh under FIR No. 11/2024, citing violations under sections 279/336 of the Indian Penal Code, dated 03/02/2024. Subsequently, the vehicle was seized by the Station House Officer (SHO) Ramgarh.

In a bid to ensure accountability, ARTO Samba has issued a notice to the owner of the vehicle, proposing the suspension of the route permit and the driving license of the responsible driver. This decisive action aims to address the grave safety concerns arising from overloading and negligent driving, emphasizing the commitment to safeguard the lives of innocent passengers.

## Chairperson DDC Ramban meets Banihal fire victims

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 05: In the aftermath of a devastating fire incident at Sabji Market Banihal last night, Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Ramban, Dr. Shamshad Shan, visited the affected area today to assess the situation and extend support to the victims. Tehsildar Banihal, Imtaiz Ahmed and EO Municipal Committee Banihal and other officers were present on the occasion. Expressing deep shock and sorrow over the damage caused to the kiosks belonging to the local vendors, the Chairperson conveyed her heartfelt solidarity. She emphasized the urgency for the administration to ensure swift relief and rehabilitation, underscoring the importance of dignified recovery for those impacted. The Chairperson urged the authorities to take all necessary measures in expediting the rehabilitation process and ensuring adequate compensation for the affected individuals.

## SWD's 3 day awareness program under Mission Vatsalya concludes

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 5: The three day awareness program organised by Social Welfare Department under Mission Vatsalya regarding implementation of Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) of Children Act, 2015 and provisions of Mission Vatsalya scheme concluded here today.

The event, held under the supervision of District Child Protection Officer, Mamta Rajput, aimed to enlighten the stakeholders about the schemes under Mission Vatsalya including working

of CWC, JJB, children in street situation, child rights, adoption regulations, sponsorship, working of Childline, child care institution and related programs for children.

Earlier, the program was inaugurated by Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare, Sheetal Nanda, who stressed upon the significance of such trainings in creating awareness and fostering a collective approach among various stakeholders. She emphasised the need and importance of collective efforts in ensuring the safety and well-being of children

within the community.

Around 750 participants were covered in these three days including PRIs, Judiciary, Police Officials, Principals, Teachers, Anganwadi Workers, Asha Workers, officials from various departments, volunteers and students.

The trainees were trained and educated on Mission Vatsalya guidelines, early detection of disabilities in young children, adoption, Juvenile Justice Act, role of Child Welfare Committees and child rights by Resource Persons Dr Anupa Sharma (Program Manager, UT Adoption Resource Agen-

cy), Shalini Sharma (member of JJB), Sakshi Bali (member of CWC), Pallavi Sharma (Central Administrator, One Stop Centre for Women) and Advocate Mohammad Aleem Beig. Earlier, the program was inaugurated by Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare, Sheetal Nanda, who stressed upon the significance of such trainings in creating awareness and fostering a collective approach among various stakeholders. She emphasised the need and importance of collective efforts in ensuring the safety and well-being of children.

## MVD Ramban spreads road safety awareness at Sangaldan

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 05: In line with the ongoing Road Safety Month, the Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) Ramban today organized road safety awareness programme here at Sangaldan. The aim was to highlight the importance of road safety practices and inform the public about the department's initiatives. DCR Ramban, Baseer-ul-Haq Chaudhary, commended the Motor Vehicle Department's proactive steps in enhancing road safety. He emphasized the collective responsibility in ensuring safer roads and encouraged continued support for such initiatives. A road safety pledge, highlighting the shared responsibility for safer roads was taken during the programme. ARTO Ramban, Samrinder Singh sensitised participants about various online services and schemes provided by the Motor Vehicle Department for public convenience. This interactive session aimed to familiarize attendees with these schemes and enhance understanding of the department's efforts to improve road safety. Addressing the gathering, ARTO Singh stressed the ongoing need for road safety awareness and encouraged everyone to follow traffic rules.

## Climate change causes alarming impact on Kashmir's vegetation, fruit, pollination: Experts

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 05 (KNO): Even though the climate change is a global phenomenon, Kashmir has started to witness the vast impact on vegetation, fruit and the pollination to mention the least.

There has been early plant flowering in Kashmir this year. However, over the past few years, it has been noted that the flowering cycle has been interrupted by January blossoming, which affects fruit yield.

In an exclusive interview with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Akther H Malik, field Botanist and a scientist at the Department of Botany, Kashmir University said: "Earlier also, we have seen snowfall in late March in Kashmir but from the past few years this is



not happening and the cause is climate change. So what will happen if the plants don't get the chilling period the flower petals will fall when the flower production will be affected with the result pollination will not happen or pollination will not happen properly as a result the fruit production pollination service is provided by insects will be affected with the result the production of fruits."

"January is the favourable season for precipitation and in this month we were getting precipitation, so it was recharged with the result rain-fed crops, particularly our horticulture sector their production will get hit with the result their production of apple harvest will be very less like apple and many other crops like apricot, cherry, plums, pears, and even almonds they will also get affected," he said.



## DDC Baramulla chairs DLTC meeting, approves SoF for Agriculture & allied sectors

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 05: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today held a meeting of District Level Technical Committee (DLTC) to finalise the Scale of Finance (SoF) for the year 2024-25 for Agriculture, Horticulture, Floriculture, Fisheries, Animal and Sheep Husbandry at DC Office, here. During the meeting, the DC, who is also the chairman of DLTC, took comprehensive appraisal of the credit issuance schemes run by the



government towards the farmers to enhance accessibility of agricultural loans through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) in a hassle free manner. The meeting held a detailed discussion to determine and fix the SoF for providing loans to farmers for Short Term (ST) in

the shape of working capital for the maintenance, food, fertilizer, pesticides, labour and manure etc for growing crops in the area in order to achieve sustainability. The DC was informed that for the first time Fishermen have been covered under the ambit of KCC in

Baramulla District and they can avail the benefits of SoF upto Rs 33000 to purchase fishing gears and upscale their businesses. DLTC, during the course of the meeting, finalized the SoF to determine the eligible credit for each crop and farmer for the financial year 2024-25 which will be forwarded to the State Level Technical Committee for approval. Speaking on the occasion, the DC highlighted that the fixation of finance for the Agricultural and allied activities shall help the farmers of the District to take maximum advantage of various types.

## DC Pulwama chairs meeting for implementation of SAHYTA scheme

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, FEBRUARY 05: A crucial district-level committee meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom for implementation of the SAHYTA scheme in the district. The SAHYTA scheme, with its overarching objective to extend financial assistance to distressed youth, particularly those who have lost family members in insurgency-related incidents, cross-border shelling, or mine blasts, is poised to make a substantial impact on the lives of affected individuals in District Pulwama. The meeting delineated the roadmap for disbursing financial aid amounting to



1 lakh rupees to eligible beneficiaries. A key focus of the deliberations was the meticulous identification and verification of candidates from the police database who qualify for assistance under the SAHYTA

scheme. Dr Basharat underscored the paramount importance of accurate beneficiary identification, stressing the need for thorough verification processes to ensure the scheme reaches those most in need. The chair directed the concerned authorities to meticulously gather information from the police database and conduct comprehensive verifications to ascertain the eligibility of potential beneficiaries. Moreover, recognizing the pivotal role of awareness in reaching out to eligible candidates.

## DC Pulwama chairs district level meeting for HADP

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, FEBRUARY 05: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom Monday chaired a pivotal district-level committee meeting aimed at finalizing beneficiaries for various components of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). The comprehensive meeting involved a meticulous review of projects under the Agriculture, HPMC (Horticulture Produce Marketing Committee) and Animal Husbandry Departments. During the deliberations, DC emphasized the need for transparent beneficiary selection, seeking clarification on qualifying criteria to ensure fairness and eligibility. The review covered a wide array of projects within the Agriculture department, spanning seed distribution, saffron nursery creation, promotion of exotic vegetables, area expansion of vegetables, beekeeping and other vital initiatives.

A detailed scrutiny of 26 Agriculture department projects, with a total subsidy amounting to 108 lacs, was conducted. The DC approved several projects, emphasizing



the importance of narrowing the gap between targets and applications. In some instances, draw of lots was employed to ensure impartial selection. Turning attention

to the HPMC department, the DC urged for increased application submissions to enhance transparency and foster healthy competition. Directives were issued to organize awareness camps to inform a wider audience about available opportunities. In the Animal Husbandry department, the DC stressed the necessity of expanding awareness about schemes and advocated for the implementation of draw of lots to ensure a fair selection process. The meeting concluded with a commitment to advancing the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme's objectives, promoting inclusivity, and maximizing the impact of agricultural initiatives in the district. The meeting was attended by ADDC Pulwama, ACD Pulwama, ACR Pulwama and various District officers. A detailed scrutiny of 26 Agriculture department projects, with a total subsidy amounting to 108 lacs, was conducted. The DC approved several projects, emphasizing the importance of narrowing the gap between targets and applications. In some instances, draw of lots was employed to ensure impartial selection. Turning attention to the HPMC department, the DC urged for increased application submissions to enhance transparency and foster healthy competition.

## Road Safety Month: Free Medical Camp held at Madumati Sumo Stand Bandipora

■ HT News Network



BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 05: In observance of Road Safety Month, Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) Bandipora Monday organised a free medical camp at Madumati Sumo Stand Bandipora.

The initiative, aimed at promoting safe driving practices through vision health awareness, witnessed active participation from drivers operating out of the stand.

The camp provided eye examinations and consultations to drivers. Additionally, drivers received educational handouts on the importance of regular eye check-ups and maintaining optimal vision for safe driving.

The drivers appreciated the opportunity, provided by MVD Bandipora, to access healthcare services specifically tailored to their needs.

## DC reviews status of works under JJM at Kulgam

### Instructs concerned to ensure timely completion of all works

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 05: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today convened a meeting of concerned Officers to review status of works under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district.

During the meeting, the DC took detailed review of physical and financial progress made on various JJM Works.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, the chair was briefed about the current status of all works and was informed that there are a total of 143 schemes comprising 222 works and 53 schemes are completed.

While reviewing financial progress, the chair was briefed that 89 percent expenditure has been made on releases as on date. It was also shared that there are 61079 households and 49772 households were connected with tap water connections.

The DC emphasized that every effort has to be made to ensure that the goal of tap water to all households must be achieved as per the projected timeline in the district.

He directed all the concerned officers to scale up pace on works



under JJM so that the target can be achieved within the stipulated period.

He asked the officers to regularly monitor the quality and progress on all allotted works for time-bound completion.

The DC said that information dissemination is an important component of the mission and stressed to make a comprehensive IEC plan to conduct widespread IEC activities.

He also instructed to scale up

water testing to ensure quality drinking water is provided to the people.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, Showkat Ahmad Rather; JD-Planning, Zahid Sajad; SE Hydraulics, Fango Ram Bhagat; Executive Engineers from Qazigund, Kulgam, AEEs and other concerned Officers. The DC said that information dissemination is an important component of the mission and stressed to make a comprehensive IEC plan to conduct.

## Traffic Rural Department & MVD Anantnag organize Awareness camp on "Road Safety & Traffic Awareness" at Bijbehara

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 05: Under the aegis of National Road Safety Month 2024, the Department of Rural Traffic and Motor Vehicles Department Anantnag Monday organised an awareness camp on Road Safety at Bijbehara.

SSP Traffic Rural R.P. Singh was the chief guest. Besides DySP Traffic Rural Anantnag and MVD officials, the programme was attended by a large number of commercial drivers. The main objective of the programme was to sensitize the drivers about road safety and traffic rules so that the graph of fatalities can be minimised.

On the occasion, SSP Traffic Rural Srinagar R.P. Singh presented a holistic picture of road accidents before the participants and highlighted the role of discipline driving as key to avoid traffic crashes on roads.

He appealed to the drivers to follow the traffic rules in letter and spirit and avoid overspeeding and overloading in passenger vehicles to avoid Uri like incidents.

## Director Sericulture visits Seed Station, New Theed Harvan & various Mulberry Nurseries, Farms of Ganderbal

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 05: The Director Sericulture, J&K, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat today undertook an extensive field visit to Seed Station, New Theed Harvan, Srinagar and various Mulberry Nurseries/Farms in Danihama, Noubough, Bakura, Dadi Noubough and Alastang of District Ganderbal to take stock of the ongoing up-gradation of the Seed Station and preparations for upcoming rearing season.

During the inspection, Director Sericulture interacted with Silkworm Rearers/ farmers and reiterated his commitment for extending his unwavering support for development of the sericulture sector in the region.

Besides, he emphasized that relentless efforts need to be made for strengthening and augmenting the Silkworm Seed production so that the department will embark towards the journey of self-sufficiency in Silkworm Seed in J&K. Addressing the Silkworm Rearers/ Farmers, the Director assured them of the full support of the department vis-a-vis technical guidance and providing of a whole lot of facilities which include rearing kits, disinfectants and financial support for construction of rearing sheds in a phased manner. He emphasized the significance of Silkworm Rearing in the agricultural landscape and highlighted the pivotal role played by farmers in the sericulture sector. The ongoing up-gradation work at the Seed Station was a focal point of the visit, showcasing the department's dedication to modernizing infrastructure and providing state-of-the-art facilities for sericulture enthusiasts. The Director expressed his satisfaction with the progress of the up-gradation work and his commitment for creating an enabling environment for sericulture activities in J&K. He exhorted the officers to complete all the development projects well in time and work on mission mode to achieve all the targets envisioned in Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

## Arshid Ahmad Khan takes over as ACR Baramulla

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 05: Arshid Ahmad Khan (JKAS 2011) today assumed the charge of Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Baramulla. It is apt to mention that Khan has served as revenue officer on various sensitive positions including as Tehsildar Pahalgaon, Tehsildar Kunzar, Tehsildar Srinagar and Sub Registrar Handwara, showcasing his expertise and commitment to public service. Having in-depth knowledge of revenue matters and people friendly approach, the people of Baramulla have very high expectations from him. He was warmly welcomed to his office by various officials of DC office and other civil society members.

## Shab-e-Meraj: DC Kulgam takes stock of arrangements at Ziyarat Shareef Mir Syed Ali Hussain Simnani RA

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 05: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today visited Shrine of Mir Syed Ali Hussain Simnani RA, at Kulgam and took stock of arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of celebrations of Shab-e-Meraj.

During his visit, the DC also interacted with management committee members of the shrine and enquired about the facilities available for devotees here.

The DC also directed the KPDC, PHE authorities to ensure smooth power and water supply to the Shrine and other mosques where large gatherings of devotees are expected.



He also instructed the Municipal authorities to continue sanitation in and around the Shrine to keep the area clean and to lift the snow from Ziyarat road to ensure smooth movement of devotees.

Accompanying the DC were ADC, Viqar Ahmad

Giri; Executive Engineers from Jal Shakti and KPDC, EO MC Kulgam and other officers. During his visit, the DC also interacted with management committee members of the shrine and enquired about the facilities available for devotees here.

## Arrangements for Meraj-Un-Nabi (SAW) reviewed at Shopian

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 05: In connection with the celebration of upcoming Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW), the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz today chaired a meeting of officers at Mini-Secretariat, here to finalize the arrangements being made by all line departments for smooth functioning of the auspicious day. The ADC sought feedback from concerned officers regarding the arrangements of electricity, water supply, cleanliness, transport, parking and medical facilities etc. being put in place for the celebration of Shab-e-Meraj at various shrines and mosques of the district.

He directed the officers of all line departments to ensure adequate arrangements for smooth conduct of the pious day at the shrines of Asar-i-Sharif Pinjoora, Shopian, Arhama Shopian and other prominent religious places for the devotees particu-



larly during the night of Shab.

With regard to adequate supply of water, the ADC directed the Jal Shakti department to ensure adequate water supply. Similarly, Ex. Engineer of KPDC was directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the auspicious day.

The ADC directed the MC officials to ensure proper cleanliness in and around the shrines and Mosques. The concerned officers of MC Shopian were also directed to arrange heating arrangements keeping in view the cold winter. He directed concerned departments to ensure clearance of snow on roads.



# Exam Stress: Amid News Of Student Suicides, Psychiatrist Shares Dos And Don'ts For Students And Parents

Niharika Solanki, 18, had a few last words for her parents and the world before she ended her life. The teenager, who had been preparing for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) in Rajasthan's Kota, wrote in what seems to be a suicide note: "I am a loser. Worst daughter... This is the last option." According to reports, the National Crime Records Bureau 2022 annual report, released in December last year, showed that students constituted 7.6 per cent of the total number of suicides. Experts say it's important for parents to ensure that they don't pressurise their children, but it's easier said than done. In a country where employment can be a struggle and everybody is hustling for a better life, a certain amount of pressure seems inevitable. Dr Viddur Arya, Associate Consultation - Psychiatry, Metro Hospital, Faridabad shares some practical tips for students looking to ace competitive exams and their parents.

From March, competitive exams begin, right from the school level. Whether it's the boards, or the JEE following that and other big tests which can decide the course of your career, it's exam time for students and parents, quite literally. There can be no alternative to hard work and while preparation and preparedness are key, you also need to realise perfectionism isn't possible and avoid comparing yourself to others. Dr Viddur Arya shares tips for students - what they should and should not do.

## Dos For Students

- Time Management: Plan your study time effectively and set realistic goals.
- Organisation: Keep your study materials well-organized for easy access.
- Reward Yourself: Celebrate small



## Victories during your study sessions.

- Prepare: Thoroughly study the material beforehand.
- Practice: Regularly engage in mock exams to build confidence.
- Breaks: Take short breaks during study sessions to avoid burnout.
- Healthy Lifestyle: Maintain a balanced diet, exercise, and get enough sleep.

## Don'ts For Students

- Isolate Yourself: Avoid complete isolation; interact with friends or family for support.
- Negative Comparisons: Refrain from comparing your progress to others negatively. Everyone has a different pace; don't compare yourself to others.
- Aim For Perfectionism: Accept that perfection is unrealistic; focus on doing your best.

- Last-Minute Changes: Avoid making significant changes to your study routine right before the exam.
- Skipping Breaks: Don't skip breaks; taking short breaks can enhance productivity and reduce stress.
- Procrastinate: Avoid last-minute cramming; plan your study schedule.
- Overload: Don't overwhelm yourself with excessive information.

## Dos For Parents

- Open Communication: Encourage your child to express their feelings and concerns about exams.
- Provide Support: Offer emotional support and reassurance that you believe in their abilities.
- Create A Positive Environment: Foster a calm and positive atmosphere at home during the

exam period.

- Help With Planning: Assist your child in creating a study schedule and setting realistic goals.
- Healthy Lifestyle: Ensure they maintain a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and engage in physical activity.
- Celebrate Effort: Praise your child for their effort rather than just focusing on grades.
- Create A Quiet Space: Provide a quiet and comfortable study space for better concentration.
- Offer Rewards: Consider small incentives or rewards for reaching study milestones.
- Celebrate Completion: Celebrate the end of exams, regardless of the outcome, to reduce post-exam stress.

## Don'ts For Parents:

- Pressure and Criticism: Avoid putting excessive pressure on your child and refrain from constant criticism.
- Comparison: Do not compare your child's performance to that of other children.
- Overinvolvement: Give your child space to study; avoid micromanaging or doing their work for them.
- Negative Talk: Steer clear of negative language or instilling fear about exams.
- Ignoring Concerns: Don't dismiss your child's concerns; address them and offer constructive solutions.

## NEWS

# Feeling Gassy? Avoid These Foods And Drinks For Breakfast



Breakfast is an important meal of the day. It helps you kick start the day and provides optimal energy to perform different activities throughout the day. Therefore, it is crucial to eat a healthy, wholesome breakfast. Not eating the right foods for breakfast can trigger several digestive issues. As a result, you might end up feeling uneasy throughout the day. Gas and flatulence are common issues that many experience after consuming breakfast. These issues can contribute to some unpleasant symptoms.

## Foods and drinks to avoid for breakfast

In a recent Instagram post nutritionist Nмами Agarwal shared a list of foods that you should be avoiding to prevent gas and flatulence.

"Experiencing excessive gas and flatulence can be uncomfortable, but making dietary adjustments can contribute to relief," she wrote in the caption of the video.

### 1. Excess tea or coffee

No doubt, tea or coffee are irresistible. However, for breakfast, they should not be consumed in excess. Overconsumption of these beverages can stimulate the production of stomach acid, leading to increased gas. You can switch to herbal teas and limit your coffee intake.

### 2. Cauliflower and cabbage

Cauliflower and cabbage are nutritious and healthy. But they should not be a part of your breakfast. According to the nutritionist, cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower and cabbage contain complex carbohydrates that are hard to digest. This can trigger gas production in the stomach. If you want to add veggies to your breakfast, opt for alternative veggies like spinach or zucchini.

### 3. Apples and pears

For breakfast, it is wise to choose low-fructose fruits like berries or melons for easy digestion. On the other hand, apples and pears are high in fructose and fibre, which can cause bloating and gas.

### 4. Raw cucumber and onions

Raw vegetables are hard to digest. It is not a good idea to consume raw vegetables with high fibre content for breakfast. Raw cucumber and onion can be difficult to break down and cause gas. Instead, choose cooked vegetables like steamed carrots or bell peppers.

### 5. Corn

Corn is loaded with a type of fibre called cellulose. It can be challenging for the digestive system to process cellulose. So, avoid corn for breakfast and replace it with alternative grains like quinoa or rice.

# Avoid These 6 Foods For A Healthy Gut

Poor gut health is associated with several issues. The gut microbiome consists of microorganisms living in your intestine. Some of these microorganisms are harmful while others are extremely beneficial for your overall health. For a healthy gut, it is essential to maintain a healthy balance between the good and the bad bacteria in the gut. A healthy gut helps support your immune system, digestive health, mental health, cardiovascular system, hormones, weight and much more. However, some unhealthy habits can interrupt the functioning of your gut and cause unpleasant symptoms. To help you maintain a healthy gut, here we've a list of foods that are your gut's biggest enemy.

## 1. Fried foods

Fried foods can trigger gut-related issues and are hard to digest. Consuming fried foods can damage healthy gut bacteria.

## 2. Caffeine

Caffeine should be consumed in moderation. Overconsumption can affect your heart health and cause digestive issues such as heartburn, indigestion and acid reflux.

## 3. Highly processed foods



It can be very convenient to have ready-to-eat meals. However, your gut health pays the price. Such foods are loaded with sweeteners, preservatives, artificial flavours and many other components that are harmful to your gut.

## 4. Artificial sweeteners

From candies to soft drinks,

artificial sweeteners are present in numerous products. Artificial sweeteners can disrupt your gut microbiome and contribute to several other health issues.

## 5. Red meat

Regular consumption of red meat can cause indigestion. It also triggers the development of gut bacteria that may clog arteries and increase the risk of heart disease. Therefore, it is wise to rely on lean protein sources.

## 6. Alcohol

Too much consumption of alcohol can disrupt the balance of bacteria in the gut. It can also help bad bacteria to grow. There-

fore, remember moderation is the key.

Here are some simple tips: Eat more probiotics such as yogurt, kimchi and other fermented foods.

You should also focus on prebiotic foods such as garlic, oats, bananas, legumes and more. It is also crucial to stay physically active for a healthy gut.

Ensure good quality and quantity of sleep.

Stress management also plays a crucial role in maintaining gut health.

Make these simple diet and lifestyle modifications for a healthy, happy gut.

# Brain changes that cause pain sensitivity impact older women more: Study

According to a new study, as we age, the brain mechanism that allows us to block pain changes. Also, gender differences in these changes may cause females to be more sensitive to mild pain than males when they are older. Researchers used fMRI images to examine brain reactions in men and women who rated the severity and unpleasantness of pain while being exposed to increasing quantities of heat.

The study sample included 27 females and 32 males between ages 30 and 86 who were asked to report when applied heat reached levels of just-noticeable, weak and moderate pain and to rate how unpleasant each level felt. Researchers used the fMRI imaging to observe DPMS activity that corresponded with each participant's individual pain response.

"There are different brain regions involved in those distinctions between perception of pain intensity and unpleasantness, so we thought it was important



to look at both and see how those brain regions are recruited during pain," said Failla, also an investigator in the Center for Healthy Aging, Self-Management and Complex Care in Ohio State's College of Nursing.

Results showed that a few regions within the brain's pain modulatory system did indicate a gender-by-age difference: At the moderate pain level, men showed an increased DPMS response with older age, while as women aged, the DPMS response decreased. A decreased response in the brain is presumed to translate into

a lower ability to harness our own physiological functions to reduce our pain. Discover the thrill of cricket like never before, exclusively on HT. Explore now!

The findings revealed that long-standing gender disparities in pain perception might be linked back to this brain network, and they provided additional evidence that those gender differences may become more pronounced as people age. The study was published recently in The Journal of Pain. "The most novel part of this study is looking at gender by age,"

said lead study author Michelle Failla, assistant professor in the College of Nursing at The Ohio State University. "Most of the work characterizing which regions in the brain respond to pain have been done in people aged 18 to 40. We want to understand what's happening between the ages of 30 and 90 years old because that's when people are beginning to experience chronic pain." Plenty of previous research has shown that females are more sensitive to pain than males, but the brain regions and functions behind the gender differences in pain perception have mostly remained a mystery. And in later adulthood, when risk for chronic pain is higher and our tolerance for pain drops, even less about the brain's role in pain perception is known.

In this study, the researchers specified that they holistically examined gender-based differences that may relate not just to biological sex, but also to social factors that influence how people respond to pain.

# Rare Disorder Behind Extra Fingers And Toes: Study

Researchers have identified a rare disorder that causes babies to be born with extra fingers and toes and a range of birth defects. The disorder, which has not yet been named, is caused by a genetic mutation in a gene called MAX. As well as extra digits -- polydactyly -- it leads to a range of symptoms relating to ongoing brain growth, such as autism, said the team from the University of Leeds, UK.

The research marks the first time this genetic link has been identified. It has also found a molecule that could potentially be used to treat some of the neurological symptoms and prevent any worsening of their condition. However, more research is needed to test this molecule before it can be used as a treatment. Published in The American Journal of Human Genetics, the study focuses on three individuals with a rare combination of physical traits, namely polydactyly, and a much larger than average head circumference -- known as macrocephaly. The individuals share some other characteristics, including delayed development of their eyes which results in problems with their vision early in life. The researchers compared the DNA of these individuals and found they all carried the shared genetic mutation causing their birth defects.

"Currently there are no treatments for these patients. This means that our research into rare conditions is not only important to help us understand them better, but also to identify potential ways to



treat them," said Dr James Poulter from the University of Leeds. "In this case, we found a drug that is already in clinical trials for another disorder -- meaning we could fast-track this for these patients if our research finds the drug reverses some of the effects of the mutation."

"It also means that other patients with a similar combination of features can be tested to see if they have the same variant we have identified in our study," Dr Poulter said.

The study team has highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary research

into rare diseases in giving understanding and hope of treatment to families who often face many years of uncertainty about their child's condition and prognosis.

"These are often under-represented conditions that have a huge impact on patients and their families. These families go through a long and complex diagnostic odyssey. The time from their first doctor's visit as babies to getting a diagnosis can take more than 10 years," Dr Poulter said.

"It is important that these patients and their families discover the cause of their condition -- and if they can access a therapy based on their genetic diagnosis, that could be life-changing."

The researchers now plan to look for additional patients with mutations in MAX to better understand the disorder and investigate whether the potential treatment improves the symptoms caused by the mutation.





## 'The Choice Is His'

### Dravid happy to wait for Kishan to return to cricket

**NEW DELHI:** At the end of India's series-levelling victory over England in Visakhapatnam, Rahul Dravid touched on the issue of Ishan Kishan, who recently opted for a break from cricket, saying that the management wasn't "forcing him to do anything".

Kishan was with India's T20I squad in South Africa in December 2023 but did not play any of the three games. He was India's Test wicketkeeper on their tour of the Caribbean in July, but was not considered for this series, or the

previous one in South Africa, because he had requested the BCCI for some time off. His last competitive game was in the T20I series against Australia at home in November last year - he hasn't turned out in the ongoing Ranji Trophy so far.

When asked about the situation after the Visakhapatnam Test win, Dravid said, "There's a way back for anyone and everyone. It's not that we rule out anybody from anything. I just don't want to go on labelling about the Ishan Kishan point. I've tried to explain it as best

as I can. The point was that, you know, he requested a break. We were happy to give him the break and whenever he was ready... I didn't say he has to play domestic cricket. I said, whenever he's ready he needs to play some cricket and come back, and the choice is his.

"We're not forcing him to do anything and we are in touch with him. It's not that we're not in touch. We know what it is, but he hasn't yet started playing, right? So, at the moment, it's not something that we would consider because, you know,

he's maybe not ready. He decides when he wants to be ready and we've got options obviously with Rishabh [Pant] injured and stuff. So I'm sure the selectors will weigh all the options."

India had picked KS Bharat, KL Rahul (who kept in South Africa), and Dhruv Jurel as wicketkeepers for the first two Tests against England. Bharat played both Tests, taking six catches making scores of 41, 28, 17 and 6. He took India closer than they might have expected to in the chase in Hyderabad after the

top order struggled to deal with Tom Hartley's left-arm spin.

In Visakhapatnam, however, Bharat fell on the stroke of stumps on the first day after getting a start. The pitch was fairly flat at that point and India had Yas-hasvi Jaiswal at the other end playing a blinder. India went to stumps at 336 for 6 and were eventually bowled out for 396. In the second innings, he played a bit of a loose shot, opening up the tail for England to target. India's lead at that point was 371. They were bowled out with a lead of 398.

## Kashmir Bat Makers Sue Over "Shark Tank India" Claims, Seek ₹100 Crore Compensation



**SRINAGAR:** The Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association of Kashmir (CBMAK) has swung into legal action against Sony Pictures Networks, the makers of the popular reality show "Shark Tank India" and Tramboo Sports Pvt. Ltd. The dispute stems from claims made on the show during an episode that aired on January 30th, 2024.

A delegation of CBMAK, the recognized amalgam body of all cricket bat manufacturers in the Kashmir Valley while talking to Kashmir-based news gathering agency Kashmir Dot Com strongly refuted the portrayal of Tramboo Sports as the sole manufacturer of Kashmir willow cricket bats.

They expressed deep concern about the claims made by Tramboo Sports on "Shark Tank India," alleging they have misled the public and caused significant harm to its mem-

bers' businesses.

They claim these misrepresentations have resulted in a "severe jolt" to the sales of their members' bats and tarnished the image of the entire indigenous Kashmiri bat-making industry.

"The bats manufactured by CBMAK members are highlighted for their superior quality, with various star cricketers endorsing and utilizing them. This sets the stage for the association's claims against Tramboo Sports," the delegation said.

"We express astonishment at the claims made by Tramboo Sports on the 'Shark Tank India' Season 3 episode dated 30th January 2024," they said.

They alleged that Tramboo Sports falsely presented themselves as the sole manufacturers of Kashmir willow bats, causing harm to CBMAK members.

"We contend that Tramboo Sports'

false assertions have led to a severe jolt in the sales and supply of CBMAK members' bats. The claims have also misled the public and purchasers, tarnishing the image of the indigenous industry," they said.

"CBMAK emphasizes its role as the true and only representative of Kashmir's cricket bat manufacturers," the association said while claiming unequivocal support from its members, portraying itself as the guardian of the prosperity and welfare of the local bat manufacturing industry.

The Association through its counsel has also sent a detailed legal notice demanding an on-air apology within 15 days from both Sony Pictures Networks and Tramboo Sports. Additionally, the association through legal notice have sought compensation of Rs. 100,00,00,000 (One Hundred Crores) for damages, loss, and mental agony suffered by CBMAK. (KDC)

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