

Australian International Adam Zampa Joins Sharjah Warriorz in Season 3 of ILT20

P-12

Manasbal Lake set to become eco-tourism hub with new scenic pathway

P-2



NEWS BRIEF

3 officers suffer heart attacks in Kishtwar, airlifted to Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

Three officers on Thursday suffered heart attacks in the Kishtwar area, following which they were airlifted to government medical college Jammu.

An official told news agency that assistant director fisheries, chief

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Arms, ammunition recovered from school in Awantipora

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

Security forces have recovered arms and ammunition from a government school in the Awantipora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district, officials said.

An official told news agency that in a joint operation of police, 42 RR & 130 Battalion of CRPF recovered arms and ammunition from government primary

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Notorious criminal detained under PSA in Sopore: Police

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

Police in Sopore on Thursday said to have detained a notorious criminal under Public Safety Act after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent authority. The notorious criminal namely Rafiq Ahmad

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Unidentified body recovered in Pulwama's Khrew

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

An unidentified body was recovered from the Khrew area of Pampore in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday, officials said.

An official told news agency that locals spotted the body in Khrew this

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

What couldn't be done in 70-years, PM Modi did it in one decade: Amit Shah

Lists abrogation of Article 370, construction on Ram Mandir, scrapping of Triple Talaq among Govt's major achievements

HT NEWS NETWORK
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Terming abrogation of Article 370 as one the major achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi led regime, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that India during the past one decade has completed all those tasks which were pending for the past 70-years.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Hindu Adhyatmik

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2



PM Modi praises J&K, Ladakh for elevating country's sports culture

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh for elevating the sports culture across the country, and showcasing the nation's



beauty and diversity.

In his message at Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 event that commenced in Leh today PM Modi, according to the news agency, reiterated the government's commitment to

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

NDMA issues 'very high forest fire risk' alert for J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a 'very high forest fire risk' alert for forested areas in Jammu & Kashmir over the next seven days.

"Very High Forest Fire Risk

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Day, night temp settle above normal in Kashmir

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The minimum as well as the maximum temperatures across the Valley continued to settle above normal on Thursday while the weatherman has predicted no major weather activity till January 31 across Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the news agency, the maximum temperature settled at 13.3 degree Celsius in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, which was 6.2 degree Celsius above normal while the minimum temperature was also 0.3 degree above normal.

As per the details, CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Why students prefer Pvt Schools over Govt Institutes?

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The government school in Jammu and Kashmir despite having 244 percent extra institutions in comparison to private schools, the Teacher School Ratio (TSR) in public schools is very low.

According to the news agency, in only 5452 private schools, more than 12 Lakh students were enrolled in comparison to the 18,785 government schools wherein only over 14 Lakh students were enrolled—thus raising a question on claims of the

authorities with regard to the influx in student enrolment in government-run-schools.

The official figures reveal that there are a total of 5452 private schools in Jammu and Kashmir wherein at least 70,234 teachers are posted to teach over 12,03,064 students.

However, in a shocking revelation, the official figures reveal that there were a total of 14,21,643 students in 18,785 government schools wherein at least 96,380 teachers were posted.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Heli service to Kashmir's snowbound border areas soon, trail run conducted in Gurez

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The Jammu and Kashmir government is set to launch helicopter services to remote area, including Gurez, Karnah, and Tangdhar, to ensure connectivity to these snowbound areas. An official told news agency

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Rajouri mysterious deaths

Investigations underway, fear among locals; authorities say situation under control

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The situation in the Badhaal area of Rajouri district continues to be grim following 17 deaths due to unknown causes. The government has yet to determine the reason behind these fatalities, which has led to widespread fear and anxiety among local residents. Officials are currently investigating various factors that could be contributing to this troubling phenomenon, while the people remain on high alert.

A government official who spoke to the news agency said the situation remains under control. However, the mystery surrounding the deaths has left

citizens feeling vulnerable. "We are conducting investigations at various levels to ascertain the causes of the deaths," the official said.

There are growing concerns among residents that toxins may be contaminating their food and water supply. Local authorities have begun shifting affected persons to a medical facility where they can receive proper assessments and care. This precautionary relocation aims to break any the chain of infection that could arise from the contaminated resources, the official added.

Principal of GMC Rajouri, Dr Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, speaking to KNO said,

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

Will get answers soon: CM Omar on Rajouri mystery deaths

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday said that the investigation into mysterious deaths in the Badhaal village of Rajouri are going on and the government will

get answers soon.

Speaking to reporters, Omar Abdullah, as per news agency said that as of now they have found that this is not any virus or bacteria. He said that medical team, SIT and MHA led

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

CM Omar Abdullah urges early completion of major hydropower projects in J&K



HT NEWS NETWORK
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a review meeting of the Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Limited (JKSPDC) here at Civil Secretariat to assess the progress made in execution of new hydro- electric projects and the expected enhancement in power generation from these projects.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional

Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Power Development Department (PDD) Rajesh H Prasad, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D Vaidya, Managing Director JKSPDC Pankaj Magotra and other senior officials.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister emphasized the need for timely execution of these projects to ensure their public utility and stressed the importance of tackling

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2

HT BOTTOM STORY

Deaf & mute artisan keeps Kashmir's walnut wood carving tradition alive

HT NEWS NETWORK
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

In a quiet workshop in Srinagar, Mohammad Yousuf Muran, a 60-year-old deaf and mute artisan, is devoting his life to preserving Kashmir's rich tradition of walnut wood carving. For over five decades, Muran has been crafting intricate luxury pieces, ranging in value from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 50 lakh. Despite his personal struggles, he remains one of the last remaining masters of this delicate art form.

Speaking to the news agency

- Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Muran's nephew, Mudasir Muran, said his uncle has been creating walnut wood masterpieces for more than 40 years. He said Yousuf is likely the only artisan still dedicated to producing such high-end handmade items, a craft that is steadily fading into obscurity.

According to Mudasir, there is still a niche demand for hand-carved walnut wood pieces, particularly among customers who value handmade items over machine-made alternatives. However, he lamented that government



efforts to preserve this craft have largely been superficial. "Government initiatives

seem to be confined to photo-shoots and publicity campaigns. Unless serious inter-

ventions are made, this dying art cannot be saved," Mudasir said.

Walnut wood carving, introduced to Kashmir by Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RA) during the reign of Zain-ul-Abideen in the 15th century, was historically promoted as a means to boost the valley's economy. But today, the craft faces challenges from changing market trends, economic realities, and a lack of interest from the younger generation.

Despite these challenges, Mudasir said his uncle has adapted to new designs and

market trends. Muran, along with other artisans at their woodhouse, continues to innovate and meet modern demands. However, Mudasir said that meaningful government support is essential to prevent the craft from disappearing entirely.

"Declaring Srinagar as a 'Craft City' has given some recognition to the art, but the ground reality remains unchanged," he said. "We hope that this recognition will eventually bring positive changes."

Over the years, Mohammad Yousuf Muran has received

several awards for his exceptional craftsmanship, including a state-level award. He was also nominated for the Padma Shri, though he did not receive it.

"Our products have reached every corner of the world, and there is still good demand for them if one knows how to channelise it properly," Mudasir said, adding that success in this field requires persistence. He urged Kashmiri youth to take up handicrafts as a viable source of employment.

Walnut wood carving, once deeply embedded in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 2



FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

What couldn't be...

Aur Seva Mela at Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Shah, according to the news agency said, "There were many tasks that no one had the courage to do for seven decades after independence. But now, India has been able to complete those tasks and stands with the world with full pride and honour."

He said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, many works, which were pending for decades, have been completed in the past ten years."

"The Article 370 was abolished from Kashmir, Ram Lalla's exile was completed and a grand Ram Temple was built in Ayodhya after centuries, Kashi Vishwanath Corridor was built, Somnath Temple is being made of gold and Triple Talaq was abolished," he said.

Shah said that 170 countries of the world propagate yoga and accept its teachings. "PM Modi led government at the Centre has enriched the languages and religions of India. The government has been able to bring back more than 350 idols of gods and goddesses stolen from India during the time of slavery," he said, adding, "The Modi government has taken India's culture to the world and the work in this direction will continue during the tenure."

The Union Home Minister paid tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary. "Netaji is the guiding star of the 90-year-long freedom struggle from 1857 to 1947. He dedicated his entire life to the independence of the country. In the history of the world's freedom movements, Netaji will always be remembered by the world for his efforts to make India free by traveling to several countries to form the Azad Hind Fauj, and leading the nation towards independence."

Shah stated that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will remain a guiding light for generations of India's youth, teaching them qualities like patriotism, character, and dedication. KNO

PM Modi praises J&K...

spread sports activities across India and said, "Ladakh and J&K have not only elevated the culture of sports in our country, but also boosted tourism, showcasing the nation's beauty and diversity."

"The KIWG 2025 will play a crucial role in taking our sporting excellence to the next level," the Prime Minister said, adding,

"Our government attaches top priority to sports development in Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. Through 100 Khelo India Centres in Jammu & Kashmir and three in Ladakh, including a State Centre of Excellence in Leh for athletics, archery, and boxing, our efforts are shaping the region into a hub of sporting excellence."

The Prime Minister congratulated Ladakh and J&K for organising the first major sports meet of the national calendar and demonstrating to the world why these regions are hubs of winter sports.

The Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 kicked off in Leh this morning the opening ceremony took place at the iconic NDS Stadium despite challenging weather conditions.

Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya was unable to attend the event due to a flight cancellation caused by inclement weather.

A statement issued by the Ladakh administration stated that Dr. Mandaviya expressed disappointment at missing the opening ceremony. However, he declared the games open in a message, highlighting India's diverse sporting potential. He described India as a "4D sports destination" with opportunities for winter sports in the Himalayas, adventure sports in the Northeast, beach games in the South, and popular games on the West Coast.

Looking ahead, Dr. Mandaviya expressed optimism for India's sporting future, citing the successes of 2024 in chess, cricket, the Olympics, and Paralympics. He stated that the Khelo India Winter Games serve as a training ground for future Winter Olympians, where dedicated athletes are being prepared to achieve international success.

Nineteen teams representing states, union territories, and institutions like the Army and ITBP are participating.

A total of 594 participants, including 428 athletes, nineteen teams, comprising States, Union Territories and institutional outfits like Army and ITBP, are competing in the Ladakh leg of KIWG 2025. This marks the second time Ladakh has hosted the winter Games, now in its fifth edition. KNO

Investigations underway...

"This is a fight against an invisible enemy, which is why various steps are being implemented to manage the situation. People should not panic." He said the decision to relocate residents to the medical college is not a quarantine measure but rather a precaution to ensure prompt medical attention if symptoms arise.

Dr Bhatia reassured the public that healthcare workers have remained vigilant in the area for over 50 days without any team members falling ill. "I even visited the area without a mask and did not contract any illness," he said, adding that so far, there is no concrete evidence linking the deaths to a viral outbreak.

Even with reassurances, MLA Budhal, Javed Iqbal Choudhary, addressed a press conference where he expressed concern over the Central and J&K governments' handling of the crisis. He said the Omar Abdullah-led government is taking the situation seriously, but added that the public should remain cooperative and patient during this challenging time. "All steps taken thus far are for the safety of the residents, and even the government is ensuring our cattle receive necessary fodder and water on time," he said.

Despite the actions being taken, Choudhary said that traces of toxins have been detected in some water samples. "One person named Aijaz received an antidote at GMC Rajouri and later at PGI Chandigarh. Thankfully, he is responding well to the treatment," the MLA said. He added that three siblings who showed severe symptoms were airlifted to GMC Jammu for further evaluation; however, complications arose in arranging an air ambulance to transfer them to PGI Chandigarh.

Choudhary said systemic failures are a significant barrier to effective action, asserting that the "dual power

system" in Jammu and Kashmir hampers timely decision-making and action. "There is no singular authority, and we need to have a direct line of communication between J&K and Central government to address emergencies like this more efficiently," he claimed.

"Home Minister had sent the team here which took samples, but the samples are still here as they are being sent by vehicle which will take time," he said. "Air ambulance should have been here to take them to the respective institute for immediate analysis so as to ascertain the reasons of deaths but that isn't happening due to dual power system."

He added, "I myself contacted Dr Jitendra Singh, LG, CM for air ambulance but failed that is why people need to wake up and fight to end this dual power system."

Critically, Choudhary accused the Principal, GMC Jammu of causing unnecessary delays in referring the ill siblings to PGI Chandigarh, saying that personal conflicts and "ego clashes" are endangering lives. "If anything happens to these children, the Principal should be held accountable," he said.

The MLA said the situation warrants the declaration of a national emergency. "We must all work collaboratively—this is not the time for politics," he said, adding that playing partisan games could detract from essential public health responses.

Principal, GMC Jammu, Dr Ashutosh Gupta said the hospital was informed at 6:30 pm on Wednesday about airlifting three children exhibiting symptoms of the mysterious illness from GMC Rajouri to GMC Jammu.

"To facilitate their care, GMC Jammu contacted PGIMER Chandigarh to confirm bed availability. Despite repeated requests to the Director and HoD of PGIMER Chandigarh, the administration at PGIMER conveyed their inability to accept the patients due to a lack of available beds," he said.

Dr Gupta said that, in response, GMC Jammu immediately dispatched critical care ambulances to the technical airport in Jammu for potential road transport to Chandigarh. However, considering the urgency of the children's condition, they were transferred to SMGS Hospital, Jammu, where senior pediatric consultants, including the HoD Pediatrics, received them, he said.

"One child's condition deteriorated rapidly upon arrival, requiring immediate ventilator support and advanced ICU interventions. Timely and high-end interventions at SMGS Hospital prevented adverse outcomes that could have occurred during transit to Chandigarh," he added.

Dr Gupta said the GMC Jammu medical team is in constant touch with their counterparts at PGIMER Chandigarh. Experts from ICMR and NCDL Delhi are also providing regular updates and guidance on patient management.

He also acknowledged the efforts of MLA Budhal Javed Iqbal Choudhary for arranging midnight airlifting and for standing by the public of Bhudhal during this critical time.

Dr Gupta praised the dedication of the GMC Jammu medical fraternity, including faculty, paramedics and administrative staff, who he said are working tirelessly to save lives. "We will leave no stone unturned to support the people of Bhudhal and ensure the best possible medical care during these extraordinary times," he said. KNO

NDMA issues 'very...

is likely to occur over forest areas in J&K, in the next 7 days. In case of emergency dial 112," reads an advisory on the NDMA Sachet web portal.

The NDMA alert, as per the news agency, has advised to close windows, vents, and other openings in homes living near forested areas to prevent smoke from entering and further asked to move animals and goods to safer places away from the fire-prone areas.

A senior officer from the Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) confirmed to KNO the alert's authenticity, stating, "This alert is generated through our portal and is scientifically validated. Based on its severity, we activate responders such as the fire and emergency services and the forest department."

He said the residents are urged to call 112 in case they spot a fire, and their teams will take immediate action to contain and manage the situation, stating that their top priority remains to save lives and protect properties.

The advisory stresses the importance of ensuring all fire-related materials, such as campfires or cooking stoves, are completely extinguished after use. People are also advised to avoid forested areas during this high-risk period.

The JKDMA official said that they have set up operation centers to handle any incidents, urging the public to stay vigilant and follow safety protocols to prevent environmental damage, loss of wildlife, or human casualties.

Notably, such alerts come in response to dry weather conditions, rising temperatures, and reduced humidity, which significantly increase the likelihood of forest fires in the region.

Similar warnings have been issued by the authorities in the past, where residents and visitors near forest areas were urged to exercise extreme caution and avoid activities that could trigger fires, such as lighting campfires or discarding cigarette butts.

As per the current advisory, NDMA has advised to stay calm if a sudden fire occurs and to avoid panic and follow emergency protocols.

The advisory strongly advises not to enter forest areas during such a high-risk period.

The NDMA, including JKDMA, has been highlighting the importance of vigilance during such critical periods to prevent any such incidents that could lead to environmental damage, loss of wildlife, or risk to human lives. KNO

Day, night temp...

Gulmarg recorded a day temperature of 3.0 degree Celsius against the normal of 0.1 degree while the night temperature settled at minus 7.5 degree Celsius against minus 8.4 degree Celsius normal.

The maximum temperature in Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir settled at 13.4 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature settled at minus 2.6 degree Celsius. Pahalgam, recorded a day temperature of 9.6 degree

Celsius against the normal of 4.8 degree while the night temperature settled at 5.6 degree Celsius.

Kupwara recorded a day temperature of 13.7 degree Celsius while the night temperature settled at minus 2.2 degree Celsius and Kokernag in South Kashmir recorded a day temperature of 9.8 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature settled at minus 1.6 degree Celsius.

Meanwhile, the Director Meteorological department (MeT) has predicted mostly dry and cloudy weather conditions till January 31.

However, he stated that there is a possibility of light rain and snow at isolated places in between January 29 and 30. KNO

Why students prefer...

According to the updated official figures, the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in government schools as of now is 14:75 while the PTR in private schools remains 1:17.

The figures further reveal that the Teacher School Ratio (TSR) is 1:5 in government schools and 1:13 in private schools.

It also states that there are a total of 1,67,046 teachers in Jammu and Kashmir with at least 29,616 teachers posted or deployed at Primary level, 61,045 at Upper Primary level, 43,789 at Secondary level and 32,596 teachers were posted or deployed at Higher Secondary level. KNO

Heli service to Kashmir's...

that a private Jet Serve Aviation company conducted a trial run for a helicopter service to Gurez Valley today.

He said that the trial run was conducted in the Bagtore area of Gurez and helicopter service to Bagtore, Baduaab, Dawar, and Badugaam villages will start soon. Similar trials will be conducted in other snowbound areas, including Karnah and Tangdhar, he said.

The official said that the service has been introduced to assess the feasibility of providing aerial connectivity during emergencies.

The helicopter service will primarily cater to emergency evacuations of patients, government employees, and students, among others, the official added.

Heavy snowfall has left these areas out of bounds as Bandipora-Gurez, Kupwara-Tangdhar, and Karnah-Chowkibal roads remain closed. KNO

Deaf & mute artisan...

Kashmir's culture, now faces a grim reality. The allure of mass-produced, cheaper alternatives has overshadowed the intricate beauty of hand-carved creations.

Other artisans said the younger generation's focus on instant gratification through online platforms has diminished the appreciation for the patience and skill required for this craft.

As master carvers age or pass away, the lack of successors puts the knowledge and techniques passed down through generations at risk of extinction.

Economic considerations also play a role, with mass-manufactured goods proving more cost-effective than labour-intensive hand-carving, further reducing demand for handmade artefacts. KNO

3 officers suffer...

medical officer and naib tehsildar suffered heart attack during Republic day celebration preps.

He said that the officers were airlifted to GMC Jammu for treatment and their condition is said to be stable. KNO

Arms, ammunition...

school Larmooh.

He said that the arms and ammunition includes a grenade, UBGL, electric denotator, non-electric denotator, 10 bullets, a pistol magazine.

"Further investigation in this regard is going on," the official said. KNO

Notorious criminal...

Khan, son of Mutawali Khan, a resident of Khudwani Ladu Ladoora Rafiabad, was detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA) after receiving a formal detention order from the competent authority. He has been taken into custody and is now held at District Jail Udhampur, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency.

Pertinent to mention here that, many criminal cases are registered against Rafiq Ahmad Khan, yet he continued to engage in illegal activities. The general public of Sopore has commended the police for their decisive action. Police remains committed to taking strict legal measures against such criminals, police said. KNO

Unidentified body...

afternoon, following which they informed the local police. He said the body was shifted to a hospital for identification and other legal formalities, while further investigation has been taken up. KNO

Will get answers...

inter-ministerial teams are ascertaining the reasons behind the deaths and they will get the answers soon.

17 persons have died due to "mysterious illness" in the Badhaal village, while four including three siblings are undergoing treatment. KNO

CM Omar Abdullah...

challenges such as contractual issues, time and financial over runs in case of projects under construction and operation and maintenance issues of commissioned projects.

The roadmap for the next five years was presented showing substantial capacity addition to meet growing energy demands which would gradually reduce reliance on power imports, and boost the state's energy self-sufficiency. Upcoming projects, Detailed Project Report (DPR) formulation and appraisal were also discussed and JKSPDC was asked to focus on strategic project plan-

Manasbal Lake set to become eco-tourism hub with new scenic pathway

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, JAN 23

The Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department has unveiled an ambitious project aimed at transforming Manasbal Lake, located in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, into a premier eco-tourism destination.

The centerpiece of the initiative is a 1.8-kilometer scenic pathway encircling the lake, offering visitors' unparalleled views of its breathtaking beauty and surrounding landscapes, while preserving the region's delicate environmental balance.

As per the news agency, the project, which comes with a cost of Rs 9.82 crore, will be built using eco-friendly materials and sustainable construction practices.

The pathway will include walking trails, observation points, and designated rest areas designed to provide panoramic vistas of the lake and its serene surroundings. The careful design ensures minimal environmental impact, safeguarding the natural ecosystem of the area.

In addition to enhancing the visitor experience, the project is expected to stimulate the local economy by attracting tourists, thereby benefiting local hospitality businesses, artisans, and agricultural sectors.

The emphasis on sustainable tourism is intended to promote a deeper appreciation for the area's natural and cultural heritage, ensuring that Manasbal Lake remains a pristine and cherished destination for generations to come.

The R&B Department's initiative reflects a commitment to balancing tourism development with environmental preservation. By fostering sustainable growth, the project aims to benefit both the local community and the region's ecology, positioning Manasbal Lake as a premier eco-tourism hub.

Beyond enhancing the visitor experience, this project is expected to boost the local economy by attracting more tourists, thereby benefiting local hospitality businesses, artisans, and agricultural sectors.

The emphasis on sustainable tourism is designed to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the area's natural and cultural heritage, ensuring that Manasbal Lake continues to thrive as a pristine and beloved destination for future generations. KNO

Traffic Police, HC lawyers unite for road safety in Sgr

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, JAN 23

In a bid to enhance road safety awareness, the Traffic Police Srinagar and a group of High Court Lawyers Thursday held a joint traffic awareness march in Srinagar.

The march started from the Srinagar High Court premises and later culminated at Moulana Azad (MA) Road Srinagar.

According to the details collected by the news agency, the initiative aims to make the public aware about the importance of adhering to traffic rules and regulations.

Officials from Traffic department Srinagar, present during the march, noted the need to curb traffic violations and asked for public support and curbing violations.

"We believe that by working together with the community, we can significantly improve road safety," said a senior official from the Traffic department.

He said this march is also important and hopes it will encourage citizens to be more responsible.

Meanwhile, local residents also expressed their comments for joint effort, saying this is commendable initiative. "We often witness reckless driving and disregard for traffic rules. Such awareness campaigns are crucial to instill a sense of responsibility among road users," said Wahid, a local.

Notably, the march saw active participation from both Traffic Police personnel and High Court Advocates, who talked about the awareness of traffic and reckless driving. KNO

ning for development of hydropower assets on Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi and Indus rivers.

Highlighting the government's commitment to sustainable energy, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah urged officials to study revival plans for stalled projects and execute them efficiently.

He called for a proactive approach to address the challenges faced by JKSPDC and stressed that enhancing J&K's hydropower capacity is essential for meeting our energy demand.

"The timely execution of hydropower projects is essential to unlocking Jammu and Kashmir's potential as a power-surplus state. I urge all stakeholders to address challenges proactively and expedite ongoing works to serve the public interest," Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said. Earlier, Principal Secretary PDD provided a comprehensive update on the status of hydroelectric power development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Of the region's estimated 18,000 MW hydropower potential, 15,000 MW has already been identified, making it a key driver for future energy initiatives.

A detailed review of commissioned projects, including the Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project (Stages I & II) on the Chenab River, Upper Sindh Hydroelectric Project (Stages I & II) on the Sind River, Lower Jhelum Hydroelectric Project in Baramulla was carried out during the meeting. The meeting also deliberated on projects under construction, including the New Ganderbal Hydroelectric Project (93 MW) on the Sind River, the Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project (1,000 MW) under the Chenab River cascade, and the Ratle Hydroelectric Project (850 MW), which has been revived through a joint venture between NHPC and JKSPDC.

Discussions highlighted the importance of expediting work on these projects to ensure these become operational at the earliest.



DC Srinagar finalizes arrangements for observance of upcoming Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW)

Directs Departments to ensure special arrangements for smooth observance of the religious occasion

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 23:- In connection with observance of upcoming Meraj-un-Nabi(SAW) 1446 Hijri, the Deputy Commissioner(DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din today Bhat chaired a meeting here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to review the arrangements being made by all line Departments for smooth conduct of the auspicious religious occasion.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners, RTO, Kashmir, Superintendents of Police, Traffic, Security, Joint Commissioner SMC, Superintending Engineer R&B, PDD, SDM East, Chief Medical Officer, besides senior Officers of Information, Fire & Emergency, PHE, JKRTC, and other line Departments, besides Executive Magistrate of J&K Wakf Board and Management members of Hazratbal Shrine and Jenab Sahib Soura.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner sought a detailed action plan from concerned Departments regarding the



arrangements being put in place during auspicious days of Meraj-un-Nabi(SAW) with regard to electricity, water supply, sanitation, cleanliness, fire service, transport, parking and medical facilities etc. The DC directed the Officers of all line Departments to ensure special arrangements for smooth observance of the religious occasion at the Shrine for the Devotees particularly during the intervening night(Shab) 26-27th Rajab 1446

Hijri, which falls on intervening night of 27-28 January 2025 and on Friday following that falls on January 31, 2025.

To ensure adequate availability of transport facility, the RTO was asked to make better transport arrangements particularly during night and wee hours for the devotees during the auspicious days of Meraj-un-Nabi(SAW) and make availability of e-Rickshaws from parking slots to Shrine for old age and physically chal-

lenged people.

With regard to power supply, the DC asked the PDD Engineers to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the Shrine during the auspicious days of night prayers as well as on the day of display of Holy Relic and keep proper power backup to tackle any power breakdown. In this regard the DC was informed that in addition 400 KVA Genset and 20 KVA UPS has been kept as backup to provide power supply during any failure so that devotees do not face any difficulty. Similarly, the DC directed the PHE authorities to ensure adequate water supply at the Shrine so that devotees do not face any inconvenience. He instructed them to keep a sufficient number of water tankers at the premises to cater to the demand.

Likewise, the DC asked the SMC Officers to deploy sufficient men and machinery at the venue to ensure proper cleanliness in and around the Shrine. They were also asked to take measures for establishment of mobile toilets besides a concrete mechanism to contain stray dog menace in and around the Shrine.

Srinagar Police Seize 290 Bottles of Codeine Phosphate in Panthachowk Raid

HT News Network

Srinagar, Jan 23, ANB: In a significant crackdown on drug trafficking, Srinagar Police recovered 290 bottles of Codeine Phosphate during a search operation in Panthachowk.

According to Associated News Bureau, acting on credible information, a team from Panthachowk Police Station, accompanied by Tehsildar Panthachowk (a Gazetted Officer), conducted a raid at the residence of Irfan Ahmad Ganie, son of Manzoor Ahmad Ganie, in Athawajan. The operation led to the seizure of the banned substance.

A case has been registered under FIR No. 05/2025, invoking Sections 8/21 of the NDPS Act, and further investigation is underway to trace the source and network involved.

Newborn's Body Found Near Islamia College Graveyard in Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, Jan 23, ANB: A heart-wrenching discovery was made near the graveyard adjacent to Islamia College downtown in Srinagar, where the lifeless body of a newborn was found on Thursday.

According to the Associated News Bureau, the body was subsequently shifted to SMHS Hospital, where medico-legal formalities are being conducted as part of the ongoing investigation.

Police have meanwhile taken cognizance of the incident and registered a case in this regard.

40% Funds at Risk To Remain Unspent Due to Slow Progress in Engineering Depts: JKCCCE

HT News Network

Srinagar, Jan 23, : General Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Central Contractors Coordination Committee, Farooq Dar, has urged the authorities to ensure the full utilization of allocated funds in the current financial year to prevent them from being wasted.

In a press conference, he expressed concerns that due to the current trends and slow progress, there is a risk of 40% of the funds being unspent.

Dar stated that out of the budget of 1.18 lakh crore rupees for this financial year, approximately 22,600 crore rupees were allocated for developmental works. However, this amount has not been fully utilized so far. He blamed the sluggish pace of work on the inefficiency of officers, particularly the officers in charge and those holding additional charges in the engineering departments.

According to the Associated News Bureau, Dar said the officers with additional charges often have excessive workloads and cannot dedicate their full attention, leading to delays in development projects and causing hardship to the public. He emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir received the highest budget allocation this year, but due to non-utilization of funds, the developmental vision of the Lieutenant Governor has been impacted.

Dar further highlighted that several departments, including Irrigation, Jal Shakti, Public Works, and Urban and Rural Development, have assigned additional charges to engineers. He pointed out that there is no shortage of capable engineers, but their promotions have been delayed, and they are not being appointed with full authority. Additionally, transfers in engineering departments have not taken place for years.

NIT Srinagar Hosts Workshop to Bridge Research, Innovation Gaps

HT News Network

Srinagar, Jan 23, ANB: The Department of Electronics & Communication Engineering, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar successfully organized a one day workshop titled "Research Reimagined: From Ideas to Impact" under the Scientific Social responsibility head of the DST-SERB Project.

According to the Associated News Bureau, the workshop was graced by In-charge Director NIT Srinagar and Dean Research and Consultancy Prof. Roohie Naaz Mir and Associate Dean Research and Consultancy Dr. G.R. Begh. HOD ECE Dr. Gausia Qazi, Head, IIED Centre Prof. Najeeb-ud-Din and workshop coordinator Dr. Bisma Bilal among other dignitaries also were present on the occasion. The event brought together



er researchers, academicians, and students eager to explore the latest methodologies in research and innovation. The workshop featured expert sessions on key topics including Research Methodology Mastery, the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in Research, and the essential steps involved in the Patenting Process. In her inaugural address, Prof. Roohie Naaz Mir highlighted the significance of the workshop's theme, "Research Reimagined: From Ideas to Impact", emphasizing its relevance in today's rapidly evolving research

landscape. "There is importance of critical thinking in research and participants should approach their work with a mindset that challenges conventional ideas and fosters innovation," she said.

Prof. Roohie also encouraged attendees to thoroughly analyze the problems they select and consider the bigger picture in their research endeavors. Meanwhile Dr. Jagwinder Singh Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Management, NIT Jalandar, Dr. Sadbhawna Assistant Professor, Department

of Computer Science & Engineering, MNIT Jaipur and Mr. Jawaaz Ahmad Design Fellow, Design Innovation Centre, Islamic University of Science & Technology, Awantipora were the key speakers of the event.

HOD ECE Dr. Gausia Qazi, who also served as the Co-Convenor of the workshop, stated that the event was designed to help researchers, academicians, and students transform their ideas into impactful innovations.

"The workshop included sessions on Research Methodology, offering insights into effective research techniques; Harnessing AI for Research, exploring how AI can enhance research outcomes; and Patent Filing, where participants learned essential steps to protect their innovations and navigate the patenting process," she added.

KVIB Srinagar organizes awareness camp at Panzinara

HT News Network

Srinagar, January 23: The District Office Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) Srinagar today organized an awareness camp cum interaction program at Panzinara to sensitize the general public about the various government schemes.

The Program was attended by Deputy CEO KVIB, Lead District Manager Srinagar, Director RSETI, Officers of Line Departments, Branch Heads of various Banks and other stakeholders.

The event also witnessed enthusiastic participation from the local community, entrepreneurs, and aspiring businesspersons.

The camp aimed to educate participants about the wide range of opportunities available under the flagship programs of KVIB, including the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and Jammu & Kashmir Rural employment Generation Program (JKREGP) designed to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship in urban as well as rural areas.

Addressing the gathering, KVIB officials emphasized the importance of utilizing these schemes to boost local industries and empower com-



munities. The session included detailed presentations about the financial assistance, subsidies, and technical support provided under these schemes to facilitate the establishment of small and medium enterprises.

It was informed that in the Qamarwari area under PMEGP scheme District Office KVIB Srinagar has got sanctioned 800 number of cases involving Margin Money of Rs 1535.95 lacs. Besides, 286 cases involving Margin Money of Rs 585.97 lacs for generating Employment among 1716 persons were also disbursed.

Moreover, it was informed that in the Qamarwari Block under the JKREGP scheme, District Office KVIB Srinagar has sponsored 27 number of cases involving Margin Money of Rs 87.32 lacs and has disbursed 15

number of cases involving Margin Money of Rs 40.95 lacs generating employment among 120 number of persons.

During the event, special emphasis was laid on the production of eco-friendly products and leveraging traditional crafts to enhance economic sustainability. Participants were also guided on the application process, eligibility criteria, and necessary documentation required to avail these benefits.

The event featured interactive sessions during which experts addressed queries and provided personalized consultations to attendees.

Moreover, success stories of beneficiaries who have established thriving businesses under KVIB schemes were also shared to inspire and motivate others.

Centerfruit's new campaign refocuses the brand on irresistible taste

Iehangir Malik

SRINAGAR, Jan 23: Centerfruit, from the house of Perfetti Van Melle, is making waves with its iconic campaign that glorifies taste with an entertaining execution and memorable tagline "Kaisi Jeebh Laplapayee". Breaking new ground in communication, the campaign focuses on the brand's core promise—an irresistible taste of fruity flavor that leaves consumers craving for more.

The campaign introduces an exciting new TVC, directed by the celebrated director Praseon Pandey, showcasing Centerfruit's unique ability to delight consumers with its distinctive taste. The tagline "Kaisi Jeebh Laplapayee" perfectly encapsulates the irresistible and playful experience that Centerfruit delivers with every bite.



Centerfruit has long been recognized for its distinctive flavour and engaging communication. And this new campaign builds upon the brand's core strengths, bringing them to life in a contemporary, fresh manner that aligns with the preferences of today's consumers.

In this brand-new execution for "Kaisi Jeebh Laplapayee", the focus is all about the irresistible taste of Centerfruit, with a

tures the essence of Centerfruit's promise of irresistible taste. With this campaign, we're bringing the focus on our signature product functionality and taste, delivering a fun and irresistible experience that leaves consumers coming back for more. It's a true reflection of our dedication to turning every bite into a burst of joy."

Commenting on conceptualising the campaign, Anurag Agnihotri, Chief Creative Officer, Ogilvy West, said, "Centerfruit is one of the most loved brands in India. And its tagline, 'Kaisi jeebh laplapayee' has been iconic. Over the years, we've created wildly funny stories on the simple premise of yummy taste. This time, we're back with yet another crazy, memorable story. With it, we hope to get tongues wagging, both literally and figuratively, again."

Commenting on the launch, Gunjan Khetan, Chief Marketing Officer, Perfetti Van Melle India, said, "Kaisi Jeebh Laplapayee" is more than a tagline; it's an expression that cap-

EDITORIAL

Identity of Jammu at stake more than that of Kashmir

Other day National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah while addressing his party leaders and workers at Jammu said that Article 370 was meant to preserve the identity of people living in Jammu division more than those living in the Kashmir valley. If the statement is viewed in a broader sense then it is quite appropriate and reflects the aspirations of the intellectual class of Jammu division. This is despite the fact that people of Jammu were over the moon when Article 370 was abrogated.

Since the Jammu division has better connectivity with the rest of the country as compared to Kashmir the people of different parts of India would visit this place on a regular basis. It was due to this reason that Jammu saw a tremendous development of infrastructure and as such there has been economic progress. Not only this, the big business houses of the country set up their units in the different industrial estates of Jammu and the industrial landscape saw a positive transformation.

Given the fact that Jammu has round the year connectivity with the rest of the country the raw material needed for the industrial houses is available readily and that too at a cheaper rate. As Kashmir is all set to be connected with the rest of India through the rail network one can hope that there would be a fillip in the industrial activities in the Kashmir valley. Since the Jammu division was visited by non-state subjects many among them settled down there and purchased property.

On August 5, 2019 when Article 370 was abrogated a huge population of Jammu division welcomed the move and said that with this integration of Jammu & Kashmir with the Union of India is complete. However, with the passage of time these people changed their opinion and said that Article 370 was necessary for the identity of Jammu & Kashmir and the people living in the erstwhile state. As the practice of darbar move was also stopped there were people who got dejected over this move.

It is an established fact that Jammu business to a great extent depended on the darbar move and once the practice was stopped it was bound to harm the interests of the business community. It was due to this fact that the demand for the revival of darbar move has been made by most of the people of the region and they have urged chief minister Omar Abdullah to restore the practice at the earliest.

Delhi University: How Will It Gain Global Recognition?



PROF. MAHESH CHAND GUPTA

Centuries ago, universities like Nalanda, Takshashila, and Vikramshila established India as a global center of education. These institutions were not only hubs of knowledge and research but also attracted students and scholars from across the globe. Today, the situation is entirely different. Indian universities lag behind in global rankings. Foreign students rarely aspire to study here, while our students are heading abroad for higher education. To make India a leader in education once again and bring worldwide acclaim to our universities, it is essential to understand the ongoing efforts at Delhi University (DU).

With the ambitious goal of securing a top spot in global rankings, the Delhi University Foundation was established two years ago as part of broader reforms. This foundation aims to connect and build a network of millions of DU alumni scattered across the globe.

DU, a century-old institution, is one of India's most prestigious universities. It operates over 80 academic departments, more than 80 colleges, and over 500 courses, serving over 700,000 students annually. DU boasts a network of more than 8 million alumni worldwide. However, despite these achievements, DU's global ranking is below world-class standards, standing approximately 300th among the world's top 500 universities. Concerned by this ranking, the government, university admin-



istration, and DU's stakeholders aim to shine DU's name on the global stage.

To achieve this, efforts are being made to enhance DU's infrastructure, introduce world-class facilities like smart classrooms, libraries, auditoriums, academic blocks, and advanced laboratories. The DU Foundation Endowment Fund, established under the university's auspices, is mobilizing financial resources. Not only have DU alumni worldwide stepped forward to contribute, but various sectors of society have also joined this noble cause.

Although these efforts are still in their infancy, the dedication involved promises positive outcomes. The Modi government deserves credit for fostering a positive environment at DU. After DU was granted the status of Institute of Eminence (IoE) in 2019, strategic planning for its future began. Under this status, DU's Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Yogesh Singh, and his team resolved to improve areas where DU was lacking. The IoE status has paved the way for introducing new academic activities in teaching and research. DU man-

agement is now actively seeking external talent to strengthen its stakeholder base.

Following the IoE status, the central government committed to providing DU Rs 1,000 crore over five years, while DU initiated efforts to raise an equal amount. To this end, the DU Endowment Fund was established about 18 months ago. Alumni fundraising and efforts to emotionally connect various societal groups with DU have resulted in contributions of Rs 15 crore so far.

While temples, cow shelters, and dharamshalas have long been supported, higher education centers have been neglected. If society were more connected to higher education institutions, these "temples of learning" would be in much better shape. Prominent universities globally thrive on alumni funding, a practice not common in India. If even 500,000 of DU's 8 million alumni contribute, it could transform DU. Encouragingly, DU alumni, their families, and major organizations like LIC Golden Jubilee Foundation and Reliance Power are now showing interest.

Recently, at the first dedication and recognition ceremony of the foundation, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched initiatives like Sashakt Beti and E-Drishti, aimed at empowering women and differently-abled individuals. As part of Sashakt Beti, 400 female DU students were provided laptops. Under E-Drishti, 400 tablets were distributed to visually impaired students to enhance their learning and research capabilities. The minister also inaugurated a fully equipped ambulance donated by LIC Foundation, ensuring better healthcare and emergency services for DU's faculty, staff, and students.

Despite these exemplary efforts, the foundation's ultimate goal is to make DU a globally recognized institution in academic and research excellence, innovation, and internationalization, ultimately achieving a top world ranking.

From my extensive experience as a teacher, I firmly believe education and development complement each other. Education is the ladder to reach every milestone of development. If we

envision India as a developed nation by 2047, this dream can only be realized through education. However, achieving this is neither simple nor easy. It requires immense effort from the country's universities.

The plight of children enduring exploitation in private universities underscores the need to improve UGC-funded universities. Changing this scenario depends on elevating our universities to world-class standards and establishing them as leading global brands. Over the past five years, over 3 million Indian students have gone abroad for higher education and settled there. The primary reason is our poor standing in global university rankings. Notably, 50 major global corporations are led by Indian CEOs educated in foreign universities, whose combined market value exceeds \$5 trillion—more than India's current economy. The Modi government is striving to change this, which could position India as the world's third-largest economy.

The central government, DU management, and the foundation aim to enhance DU's global reputation. Recently, Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stones for DU's East and West Campuses and Veer Savarkar College. This expansion is expected to create 10,000 new jobs and provide quality education to 15,000-20,000 new students, aligning with the vision of universal education. These efforts will help DU emerge as a world-class institution, contributing to PM Modi's vision of a developed India while setting an example for other Indian universities.

(The author, who served as a professor at DU for 44 years, is a renowned educationist, thinker, speaker, and the Coordinator for Fundraising at Delhi University Foundation.)

From Chalkboards to Chatbots

VIJAY GARG

From Chalkboards to Chatbots: The Evolution of Education Technology

The journey of education technology reflects humanity's constant drive to innovate and improve learning processes. From simple tools like chalkboards to cutting-edge AI-driven chatbots, the transformation has been remarkable. Here's an overview of this evolution:

1. The Era of Traditional Tools (19th - Early 20th Century)
Key Technologies:
Chalkboards (1801): Revolutionized group learning by providing a visual aid for lessons.

Printed Textbooks: Standardized curriculum and provided access to consistent information.
Impact: These tools laid the foundation for structured, formal education by enabling teachers to share knowledge with large groups.

2. The Age of Analog Innovation (Mid-20th Century)
Key Technologies:
Overhead Projectors (1930s): Allowed dynamic presentations with slides and annotations.
Radio and Television: Educational programming reached remote learners.
Typewriters: Aided in developing writing and

documentation skills.
Impact: Education expanded beyond classrooms, enabling distance learning through radio and television broadcasts.

3. The Digital Revolution (Late 20th Century)
Key Technologies:
Personal Computers (1980s): Introduced interactive learning through educational software.
The Internet (1990s): Gave access to global knowledge and online courses.
Interactive Whiteboards (1991): Combined the functionality of chalkboards with digital tools.
Impact: Learning became more engaging and acces-

sible, fostering self-paced education.
4. The Mobile and Cloud Era (2000s - 2010s)
Key Technologies:
Laptops and Tablets: Made learning portable and flexible.
Learning Management Systems (LMS): Centralized educational content and assessments.
MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses): Democratized education for millions worldwide.
Cloud Computing: Enabled real-time collaboration and storage of educational materials.
Impact: Education shifted towards personalized,

collaborative, and on-the-go experiences.
5. The AI and Chatbot Age (2020s - Present)
Key Technologies:
AI-Powered Chatbots: Offer instant feedback, personalized tutoring, and 24/7 support.
Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR): Create immersive learning environments.
Gamification: Uses game mechanics to make learning more engaging.
Data Analytics: Tracks student progress and tailors lessons accordingly.
Impact: AI and chatbots are revolutionizing education by providing adaptive,

efficient, and highly personalized learning experiences. Tools like ChatGPT enhance accessibility and foster creativity in problem-solving.

Conclusion
From chalkboards to chatbots, education technology has consistently aimed to make learning more effective and inclusive. As we look ahead, the integration of AI, VR, and other emerging technologies promises to shape an even more innovative and accessible future for education.

Vijay Garg Retired Principal
Educational columnist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

Empowering panchayats: The key to achieving Viksit Bharat 2047 through community actions

MANMOHAN SINGH

India's development trajectory has been shaped by significant contributions from the office of Prime Minister (PM), Chief Minister (CM) and District Magistrate (DM). To achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 empowering Panchayat leadership, headed by Village Mukhiya (VM) is a critical strategy.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 mandated the transfer of authority of 29 functions, underscoring their vital role in delivering services directly to the communities. Despite this mandate, Gram Panchayats (GP) lack functionalities and have limited infrastructure and capacity for planning and implementation. This often leads to either underutilisation of allocated funds or prioritising local infrastructural projects decided by either the

district or state. Addressing these challenges is crucial for India to meet its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improve its Human Development Index (HDI) ranking. It requires building the capacity of GPs to adeptly identify, plan, and implement projects that align with the needs established through Gram Sabha.

The Panchayat Raj System established panchayats as the foundation of decentralised power, emphasising that sustainable development must begin with our smallest unit of democracy: the Panchayat, led by the VM (Sarpanch). Elevating the role of the VM akin to the PM and CM at the centre and state, supported by a strong administrative structure, can drive effective grassroots decision-making. The Ministry of Panchayat Raj has grouped the 17 SDGs into nine themes, demonstrating India's commitment to achiev-



ing these goals through the implementation of Localised SDGs (LSDGs) by Panchayats. GPs across India, are tasked with creating Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs) that align with LSDG priorities. However, a survey of 800 panchayats revealed that only 7 per cent of Sarpanches independently chose their LSDG themes using the Gram Pan-

chayat Planning Facilitation Tool (GPPFT), while 34 per cent of themes were decided by Block officials, 22 per cent by Sarpanches or Sachivs, and 16 per cent were directed by the state, reflecting a need for strengthening planning at the panchayat level.

To develop Viksit Panchayats, four key actions are proposed: Support panchayat for

last-mile convergence: When a 13-year-old girl drops out of school, the responsibility extends beyond the education department, requiring collaborative efforts across health, social welfare, and community development. A central coordinating body at the village level, led by the VM can drive such convergence. For instance, Anita Devi, Village Mukhiya of Bhetaura Panchayat in Gaya, Bihar has embraced the 'Healthy Panchayat' LSDG theme. Collaborating with ASHAs, Anganwadi Didis, and Gandhi Fellows to achieve 'Zero Home Delivery' eventually boosting institutional delivery rates from 25 per cent to nearly 90 per cent in just one year. Replicating such successes requires empowering panchayat through convergence of funds, and functional and administrative support.

Reimagine development of Panchayat Leaders: India has

2.6 lakh elected VMs, dedicated to strengthening panchayat governance. Prime Minister's call to bring 1 lakh youth into politics is a great encouragement for local youths. To unlock their full potential, we need to reimagine the institutional framework that focuses on capacity building for elected 'VM and Ward Members'. For example, Jyoti Behar Devi, Mukhiya in Gumla, Jharkhand, banned alcohol in her panchayat, focused on livelihood opportunities and also started the "Siti Bajo aur School Aao" campaign to boost school attendance, effectively transforming her community.

Democratise data through Panchayat: Village Mukhiyas, as key information providers of government schemes, need real-time access to comprehensive beneficiary data and scheme details. Implementing technology solutions that provide such access is paramount

for informed decision-making and efficient governance. The Ministry of Panchayat Raj and the Ministry of Rural Development has taken some initiatives which need further integration with planning and execution at the panchayat level.

Revitalise Village Committees
Village-level committees such as School Management Committees, Village Health and Sanitation Committees, Jan Arogya Samitis, and Village Water and Sanitation Committees, play a pivotal role in fostering decentralised governance and community participation in development efforts. To achieve Viksit Bharat, these committees need to align to avoid duplication of efforts and promote community ownership.

(The writer is Co-Founder and CEO Aspirational Bharat Collaborative; views are personal)

We have lost a gem

'PROFESSOR REHMAN RAHI SAHAB'
(May-1925-Jan-2023)

Legend of the 21st century



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI
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We were blank like an A4-sized paper page when we came to this world. In fact, this world is full of fun, sorrows, excitements, emotions, and sentiments; it is full of strange things and lofty objects, and the world is full of mysterious stories as well, and all that we have to observe and notice with the passing of every moment. In our surroundings there are a number of stories related to a particular person. It depends on how much we are taking things seriously and how much we observe them keenly.

Every event, every happening, every serendipity, every accidental hazard. Behind all this there is a superpower/force of almighty Allah. So everything is being controlled by some spiritual power. Life, death, health, and any disorder are the blessings of almighty Allah. We humans are dependent even on a little piece of food, a drop of water, and a breath of oxygen, and in short, this world is full of observation for those who look at them carefully and keenly.

9th of January, 2023, we have lost a gem. We have lost a scholar, poet, critic, translator, writer, a good teacher, a great patriot, and a renowned, prominent poet professor, Rahman Rahi Sahib. Rahman Rahi Sahib was born in Srinagar's Downtown (Nowshera) area on the 6th of May, 1925. Rahi sahib contributed to Kashmiri literature and bestowed the heights to it. As the Kashmiri language is getting certain heights day by day throughout the globe because of the dedicated work of our great educationist. Rahman Rahi is one among them and has an immense role in boosting the Kashmiri culture through his poetry.

Rahi sahib was awarded a number of prestigious national awards for his unforgettable contribution in various fields, and every Kashmiri will remember him forever and promote his literary work among every single individual. Rahman Rahi is the only Kashmiri writer awarded the "Jnanpith Award", one of the highest literary awards awarded in the country, for his poetic collection, "Siyah Rood Jaeren Manz". Rahi Sahab was also awarded a number of prestigious awards for his great contribution to literature, poetry, etc.

But unfortunately we lost him; his great contribution always helps us in various ways. I salute Rahi Sahab's work, contribution, and dedication, which he has dedicated to the country. May almighty Allah grant him the highest place in Jannah (Ameen). With the grace of almighty Rahman Rahi Sahab, literature will be available in school libraries, colleges, and public libraries, and every bit will be kept under safe hands. As our

new generation lacks the knowledge of our towering, prominent, and great scholars who have done great roles in uplifting the education sector in several ways, we are getting benefits today because of their great contribution to their country.

During the school period, most of us get motivated through our teachers and friends towards some extraordinary work. Some are trying to become poets because they get inspired by renowned poets like Allama Iqbal (RA), Mirza Asad Ullah Khan Ghalib, Mir Taki Mir, Arsh, etc. Every poet has contributed for the sake of humanity and for the sake of their motherland, where they spent their childhood days, spent their great memories, and lived their life.

In childhood days, Rehman Rahi Sahab showed little interest in studies, but fortunately one day, when he was in 9th standard, he opened an Urdu textbook and got inspired by the Allama Iqbal (RA) poetry "Maa Ka Khawb" source (recorded in Rehman Rahi's interview with Radio Kashmir). Rehman Rahi used the poetic title as "RAHI, as every poet does.

Suggestion: In our Kashmir valley, our present generation is full of potential, full of positive energy, so it is our turn to mold our youth towards the right path and motivate them towards righteous activities so that our future will be in safe hands. We have observed the interest of our young buds and molded them accordingly. As there is great scope in a number of fields like poetry, literature work, etc., we are supposed to make things very convenient for our young generation so that they will get good results in the future and play pivotal roles for their country. Rahman Rahi made his name a brand in the Kashmir Valley for the last couple of decades, and everyone knows him by his great contribution towards the literature, his write-ups, and his critical poetry nature. But again, it is very unfortunate that Kashmir has lost its crown, and it will take centuries to produce such a great, towering poet in the valley. Insha Allah, we hope for the best and wish to the Almighty that every gap may fill soon and bestow us with immense patience so that we will contribute to the upliftment of our nation in all aspects.

Rahi sahib's loss is quite irreparable, and it will take us centuries to fill this gap. Day by day we are lacking the grip. We are heading away from our culture. These days, Western culture prevails due to our negligence, and the day is not far away when the Almighty will save us. The day is not far when we lose our real identity and adopt the culture of the West. It will be so destructive for us, and we will lose our real ethics, morals, and so many things. Our culture is safe because of the great, towering personalities like Rahman Rahi Sahb and other great personalities who left us very soon. May Almighty grant them the highest place in Jannah.



BY MOOL RAJ

Nestled in the picturesque landscapes of the Indian sub-continent, Kashmir has long been celebrated for its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Among the region's most prized treasures is saffron, known locally as Kesar. Revered for its unique flavour, colour, and aroma, Kashmir's saffron has earned global acclaim as one of the finest varieties in the world. The annual saffron harvest in Kashmir, which takes place during the fall, is a tradition steeped in history, with the flower's cultivation playing a crucial role in the region's economy, culture, and identity.

The history of saffron cultivation in Kashmir dates back over a thousand years. It is believed that the saffron plant, *Crocus sativus*, was introduced to the region by Persian missionaries or traders, though some accounts suggest it was brought by the Mughal emperor Akbar during the 16th century. Regardless of its origin, Kashmir's climate and soil conditions proved ideal for saffron cultivation, particularly in the high-altitude plains of Pampore, a town in the Pulwama district, which is considered the heart of Kashmir's saffron-

producing belt. Kashmir's saffron is renowned for its distinct characteristics—long, deep red threads with a powerful aroma, and a flavor profile that is both subtle and rich. The saffron grown in the valley is considered superior to other varieties due to its purity, color, and potency. In fact, Kashmiri saffron is one of the most expensive spices in the world, prized for its medicinal, culinary, and aesthetic qualities.

Saffron is a delicate and labor-intensive crop, requiring precise climatic conditions to flourish. It thrives in the cool, dry climate of Kashmir's high plains, where the altitude, well-drained soil, and seasonal temperature variations create the perfect growing environment. The saffron plant is grown mainly in the region around Pampore, though it is also cultivated in other parts of Kashmir, including Pulwama, Srinagar, and Budgam. The process of cultivating saffron is both meticulous and traditional. Saffron flowers bloom during the autumn months, typically in October and November, marking the beginning of the harvest season. Each flower produces three vivid red stigmas, which are the actual saffron threads. Harvesting saffron is a painstaking task, as the flowers must be hand-picked with great care before the sun rises. The delicate nature of the flower makes it essential that each one is collected individually, avoiding any damage to the precious stigmas. After the flow-

ers are picked, the saffron threads are carefully separated and dried. This drying process is crucial to preserve the aroma and flavor of the spice. The threads are spread out in the shade to dry naturally, which helps retain their color, fragrance, and medicinal properties. It takes approximately 150,000 flowers to produce just one kilogram of saffron, making it one of the most labor-intensive crops to harvest in the world.

The saffron harvest in Kashmir is not just a seasonal event; it is an essential part of the region's cultural fabric. For generations, families in Kashmir have been involved in saffron cultivation, with entire communities coming together to harvest and process the spice. The harvest season is a communal activity, where farmers, often working together, engage in the delicate task of picking the flowers and extracting the saffron threads. Saffron cultivation has traditionally been a source of livelihood for many farmers in the Kashmir valley. The harvest season is a time of economic importance, as it provides an income for thousands of families who rely on saffron for their livelihood. Women, in particular, have played a vital role in the saffron harvest, from picking the flowers to processing the threads. The craft of saffron picking is often passed down through generations, with younger members of the family learning the techniques from their elders.

The harvesting process is also linked to several cultural and religious practices. The fields where saffron blooms are often revered, and the arrival of the saffron season is celebrated with enthusiasm. It is common to see saffron being offered as part of religious rituals, and in some cases, the harvest is accompanied by local festivals or gatherings.

Kashmir's saffron industry holds significant economic value. For centuries, saffron has been a primary export product, with traders from across the world seeking the precious spice. The export of saffron provides vital income to the local economy, especially in rural areas where it is a primary source of income. It is often sold in the form of threads, powders, and essential oils, with international markets in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia accounting for a substantial share of its demand. In recent years, however, the saffron industry has faced several challenges. Political instability, climate change, and competition from synthetic or lower-quality saffron have posed threats to the industry. The rise of artificial coloring agents and chemically treated saffron has made it difficult for Kashmiri saffron to maintain its unique identity and market value. Additionally, the impacts of climate change, such as erratic rainfall patterns and rising temperatures, have threatened the delicate conditions required for saffron cultivation. Despite these challenges, efforts have been made

to preserve and protect Kashmir's saffron heritage. In 2005, Kashmiri saffron was granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, which helps protect its authenticity and ensures that only saffron grown in specific regions of Kashmir can be marketed under the name Kashmir Saffron. This certification has helped safeguard the legacy of Kashmiri saffron, promoting its unique qualities and protecting it from counterfeiting.

Kashmiri saffron is widely revered for its exceptional culinary and medicinal properties. In Kashmiri cuisine, saffron is a key ingredient in traditional dishes such as Kashmiri Pulao, Yakhni, and Gushtaba. It imparts a rich, aromatic flavor and a golden hue, making it indispensable in the region's culinary traditions. Beyond its

use in cooking, saffron has also been used for centuries for its medicinal properties. It is believed to have several health benefits, including improving digestion, reducing inflammation, and acting as a mood enhancer. Saffron is also used in traditional beauty treatments, with its extract believed to promote healthy skin and improve complexion.

The future of Kashmir's saffron industry depends on several factors, including the preservation of traditional farming methods, the adaptation to changing climatic conditions, and the protection of the region's unique saffron heritage. There is a growing recognition of the need

to support the farmers and artisans who rely on saffron for their livelihoods.

One potential avenue for the future of Kashmir's saffron is the promotion of Agro-Tourism, where visitors can experience the saffron harvest firsthand. Educational initiatives, sustainable farming practices, and increased awareness about the authenticity of Kashmiri saffron could also help boost the industry's resilience. Moreover, the GI tag has opened doors for better marketing, allowing Kashmir to compete on the global stage against other saffron-producing regions. Increasing demand for organic and high-quality saffron, as well as international recognition of Kashmir's saffron, could help revive and strengthen the industry for future generations.

Kashmir's saffron harvest is more than just an agricultural event; it is a cultural tradition that symbolizes the region's deep connection to its land, its people, and its history. Despite the challenges faced by the industry, the legacy of Kashmiri saffron remains a testament to the resilience of its farmers and artisans, who continue to produce one of the world's most cherished spices. The golden threads of Kashmir's saffron are woven not only into the fabric of its cuisine and culture but also into the hopes for the valley's economic and cultural revival.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST FREELANCE WRITER

Mera Gaon Phir Aana' - A remarkable initiative by the Indian Army

MSNAZKI

"Nation First, Always" - Indian Army Paves the Way for Service and Care 'Mera Gaon Phir Aana' - A remarkable initiative by the Indian Army that highlights the significance of villages and their residents. The Indian Army, known for its unwavering commitment to the nation, has launched yet another transformative project, designed to improve the lives of people residing in remote and underserved areas.

In line with the #WeCare campaign, the Army has recently undertaken the restoration and upgrad-

ing of four gates at the Line of Control (LC) fence in Poonch. This project represents a comprehensive effort to enhance both infrastructure and essential services, reflecting the Army's deep dedication to the welfare and well-being of the citizens, particularly those in distant regions.

The revitalized gates not only boast of upgraded infrastructure but also incorporate visually appealing structures, designed to blend harmoniously with the surrounding environment. Special attention has been given to improving facilities for female visitors, with newly renovated washrooms that



ensure better hygiene and convenience.

Recognizing the importance of offering a seam-

less and comfortable experience to all visitors, the initiative also includes the establishment of a

well-equipped waiting area, complete with comfortable seating. Furthermore, provisions for clean and safe drinking water have been significantly increased, ensuring visitors' needs are met with utmost care and responsibility.

One of the standout features of this project is the introduction of RFID card facilities. This technological upgrade is aimed at reducing wait times and streamlining the entry process, contributing to an efficient and hassle-free experience for everyone. This innovation not only enhances operational efficiency but also

demonstrates the Army's commitment to integrating modern solutions for the betterment of the community.

With initiatives like #WeCare, the Indian Army is reaffirming its role as more than just a defender of the nation. It is a compassionate force dedicated to improving the lives of citizens, particularly in remote and underserved areas. The renovation and enhancement of infrastructure serve as a testament to the Army's enduring commitment to the principles of service, care, and inclusivity—values that continue to guide their efforts in nation-building.

IIT Baba 'Abhay Singh' exposes the fake world

DR. SATYAWAN SAURABHI
POET, FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND COLUMNIST, RADIO AND TV PANELIST.

One day, my perspective completely changed when I saw a video of IIT Baba Abhay Singh. Imagine you have everything: a degree from IIT Bombay, a promising aerospace engineering career, and a life that most people can only dream of. But instead of going on as usual, he made a choice that shocked everyone. He gave up everything to live a more spiritual life. At first, I couldn't believe it—why would someone give up such a bright future?—but as I listened to him talk, everything started making sense. He discussed the importance of finding a real purpose, peace, and meaning in life—things that no amount of money or success can ever buy. It was

a powerful story. It made me realize that life is not just about meeting society's expectations or following the crowd but about finding your own path. I first thought, "How can an IITian be so stupid to give up his high-paying, cushy job? How can he waste his two degrees?" And then I realized that the term "childhood trauma" carries a lot of negative connotations. I felt even worse reading the comments on his interview video. While many people were praising him, others were ignoring him. My aim here is not to defend him in any way. Let's move on.

There is a lot of noise that IIT Baba wasted a government-funded seat. In my opinion, those who say this need to understand some basic things. After studying a lot, Abhay Singh got admission to IIT and completed his degree. He did not interrupt

the course. Then, by this logic, those who did an MBA and UPSC after IIT wasted seats. So, tell me, how did he waste seats? Even if he had not completed the course, this logic would have been somewhat valid, but since he completed Aerospace Engineering, no one should claim that he wasted his seat. Look at how great his attitude is. He had everything: the best formal education, the best job, foreign travel, girlfriends, and relationships. Then he felt a void inside him and decided to take the path of sanyaas. I must say he seems to be an honest person. He is a native of Haryana. He was born in Jhajjar, Haryana. His mother is a stay-at-home mom, while his father is a lawyer. He studied in Jhajjar for his education. He was an exceptional student from an early age. He earned a degree in Aero-

space Engineering from IIT Bombay. He then got a package of Rs 3 lakh and moved to Canada for his job. He got stuck in Canada due to the lockdown. This time he started reflecting more on his life.

After coming to India, he embarked on a new spiritual path. He went on many pilgrimages. He was not satisfied with his current lifestyle. So he became very spiritual. He always wanted to leave his home. He insisted that not all parents are divine beings. He rightly says that many parents only give birth to their children and do not think much about their upbringing. In spiritual terms, the thing that transcends everything is called "Truth." He even said that everyone just refers to my IIT degree. I do not want to draw attention to that. Personally, I am much more than that. His parents were blocked six

months ago. He turned away from all worldly pleasures in search of truth. He started his journey towards spirituality by encouraging the youth. Since he lived and left life consciously, his thoughts are very pure. So, please stop calling him a hypocrite. In his spiritual journey, he is incredibly sincere and committed. It is only through the constant search for truth and purpose in life that the average person becomes enlightened by spirituality. The YouTuber interviewed Baba Abhay Singh. After this, he revealed that he was pursuing an aerospace engineering degree at IIT before leaving everything to pursue spirituality.

Abhay Singh could have used his IIT name to start a successful business and become a baba if he wanted to. We have seen many spiritual gurus who use the IIT,

IIM tag to market themselves. During the interview, Abhay Singh did not even tell the first reporter that he is an IITian. In response to the reporter's question about his educational background, Abhay Singh replied, "Yes, I am from IIT Bombay." Abhay Singh has really set an example by seeking the truth. You can see how knowledgeable he is by visiting his Instagram. Praise is indeed for a person who has renounced everything and is walking on the spiritual path. He turned away from all worldly pleasures in search of truth. He started his journey towards spirituality, encouraging the youth. "Jo Shunya Hain Wahi Shiv Se Mile Sakte Hain" is one of his two quotes that I will always remember. Kahan jaoge chalte chalte? Yahi Aaoge Yahi." Finally I found someone true in this fake world.

DC Shopian assesses progress under HADP, Daksh Kisan portal, KKGs

Sets weekly goals for farmer registrations and completion of courses

■ HT News Network

Shopian, January 23: The Deputy Commissioner of Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, convened a meeting today with representatives from the Agriculture and allied departments to assess the registrations related to HADP, Daksh Kisan portal, and Kisan Khidmat Ghars.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner expressed concern regarding the sluggish progress in farmer registrations and course applications under the Daksh Kisan initiative, urging for a swift enhancement of efforts to achieve the target.

The departments and Krishi Udhayamis associated with Kisan Khidmat Ghars were tasked with

raising awareness among farmers about the operations of KKGs throughout the district and the agricultural services available for their benefit.

He emphasized that KKGs should serve as the central hub for agricultural activities within the panchayats moving forward and encouraged all stakeholders to collaborate in bolstering the agricul-

tural economy of the district.

Additionally, the meeting included an evaluation of the units established under the HADP initiative within the district.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, heads of allied agricultural departments, Tehsildars, and Krishi Udhayamis.

DC Budgam lays foundation of Revenue court room

■ HT News Network



Budgam, January 22: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam Akshay Labroo, today laid the foundation for a state-of-the-art Revenue Court Room at the District Headquarters today.

The event was attended by Officers of District Administration including ADC, ACR, SE R&B circle Budgam, CPO, Executive Engineer R&B, AEE R&B besides representatives of District Bar Association, Budgam.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC underscored the critical role of revenue courts in addressing land and property disputes effectively besides emphasized the need for adequate infrastructure to facilitate smooth functioning and timely resolution of revenue cases.

The DC stated that litigants and advocates had projected the need to have a dedicated court room for smooth & seamless adjudication of revenue cases at the district HQ in Budgam.

Foundation laying event is a step in realising the objective, he added.

He said that the Court Room is being designed to meet contemporary standards, incorporating modern amenities to provide a comfortable and efficient working environment for litigants, officers & lawyers. A single storey complex will serve as a hub for revenue related cases/ issues pertaining to District Budgam, he added

اطلاع عام

غلطي سے اپنے ذاتی سروس بک میں رقم کا نام Mohd Yusef Bhat کے بجائے Mohd Yousuf Bhat درج ہوا ہے، جسکی درست کرانی مطلوب ہے، حالانکہ سکول ریکارڈ میں رقم کا نام Mohd Yousuf Bhat ہے جو درست ہے، اس ضمن میں اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر دفتری اوقات کے دوران متعلقہ دفتر میں پیش کریں بعد گذرنے معیاد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

المشتر
Mohd yousuf Bhat
S/O Gh Rasool Bhat
R/O Akhal kulgam

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Aabid Mohi Ud din R/o Khrew Pampore Want to Correct my Minor Son's Name From Khubaib bin abid s/o Abid Mohi ud din To Khubaib bin abid s/o Aabid Mohi ud din on All the Documents for All Future Purposes.

NAME.....Aabid Mohi Ud din
R/o Khrew Pampore

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR kreeri
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MIR ABU BAKAR S/O MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL MIR R/O DAULATPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 27/08/2019 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class kreeri

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in Driving Licence as JAVED AHMAD GUROO S/O MOHAMAD ISMAIL GUROO while my correct name is JAVID AHMAD GUROO S/O MOHAMMAD ISMAIL GUROO R/O KHAWAJA BAGH as per my Aadhar card which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact with ARTO SRINAGAR/BARAMULLA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....JAVID AHMAD GUROO
S/O MOHAMMAD ISMAIL GUROO
R/O KHAWAJA BAGH MALOORA SRINAGAR

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR kreeri
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SHABIR AHMAD GANAIE S/O AB REHMAN GANAIE R/O KALANTRA PAYEEN Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 10/04/2002 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class kreeri

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR ANANTNAG
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer PAHALGAM)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of OWAIS SHAFI WANI S/O MOHAMMAD SHAFI WANI R/O LIDROO PAHALGAM Tehsil ANANTNAG Distt. ANANTNAG having verified the date of Birth as 02/03/2011 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of death certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class ANANTNAG

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR PAHALGAM
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE The Registrar Births and Deaths (EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL PAHALGAM) has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of QUBRA JAN D/O FAYAZ AHMAD WANIB R/O GANISHBAL PAHALGAM Tehsil PAHALGAM Distt. ANANTNAG with verified the date of Birth, as 29/04/2007 and event has been to be occurred at Home. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of said registration shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class PAHALGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son's date of birth DOB has been wrongly written as 16/02/1985 in Aadhar card while his correct date of birth DOB is 25/04/1980 which needs to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of TEHSILDAR WAGOORA/BDO office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....MUSHTAQ AHMAD GANIE
S/O MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL GANIE
R/O JAHANGIRPORA

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR kreeri
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of FATIMA TUL ZAHRA S/O MUSHTAQ AHMAD WANI R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 03/02/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class kreeri

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for issuance of Pesticides License in this connection if anybody has any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the office of concerned PLANT PROTECTION OFFICER LAL MANDI SRINAGAR (PPO) within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

NAME.....ZAHOR AHMAD LONE
S/O.....LATE AB AHAD LONE
R/O THINDIMA KREERI
CONTACT ...962272764

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR kreeri
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ZAKIR AHMAD KHAN S/O KHURSHED AHMAD KHAN R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 11/01/2023 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class kreeri

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR kreeri
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SADIYA FAROOQ, MEHAK JAAN, FAZIYA FAROOQ, MUNEEB AHMAD TANTRAY & RAVEES AHMAD TANTRAY S/O FAROOQ AHMAD TANTRAY R/O NAGBAL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 13/11/2014, 15/02/2011, 27/01/2017 & 07/12/2020 & 01/01/2013 and event has been shown to be occurred at Home for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class kreeri

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for issuance of FERTILIZER License in this connection if anybody has any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the office of CHIEF AGRICULTURE OFFICER BARAMULLA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

NAME.....WASIM AHMAD SHEIKH
S/O.....GHULAM MOHAMMAD SHEIKH
R/O KREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that I, Umer Ahad Bhat, intend to apply for a Fertilizer Licence for "Bhat Fertilizers" situated at Kalantra Payeen, Kreeri. The application will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla. Any person having any objection in this regard he/she may file their objections in writing to the Office of the Chief Agriculture Officer, Baramulla, within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received after this period will not be entertained.

UMER AHAD BHAT
Son of AB AHAD BHAT
Residen Of Kalantra Payeen, Kreeri, Baramulla.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that my name has been wrongly written in (Electric bill) power connection as MOHAMMAD AMIM LONE S/O MOHAMMAD AKBER LONE R/O NOWPORA JAJIR while my correct name is MOHAMMAD AMIN BABA S/O MOHAMMAD AKBAR BABA R/O NOWPORA JAJIR bearing ID No 0212040009653 which needs to be corrected. If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....MOHAMMAD AMIN BABA
S/O ... MOHAMMAD AKBAR BABA
R/O NOWPORA JAJIR

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as GHULAM.MOHAMMAD GANAIE S/O KHAZIR MOHAMMAD R/O DURHAMA in Aadhar card while my correct name is MOHD GANAI S/O KHAZIR GANAI R/O DURHAMA which needs to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of TEHSILDAR WAGOORA/BDO office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....MOHD GANAI
S/O KHAZIR GANAI
R/O DURHAMA

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR kreeri
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of FATIMA TUL ZAHRA S/O MUSHTAQ AHMAD WANI R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 03/02/2021 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class kreeri

PUBLIC NOTICE

My daughter's and SON'S name has been wrongly written as SEHRAAN UMAR SHEIKH & ADAAN UMAR SHEIKH R/O TARZOO while his correct name is SEHRAAN BHAT & ADAAN BHAT S/O UMAR RASHID BHAT R/O KREERI which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of HANFIA MODEL HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL KREERI within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name.....UMAR RASHID BHAT
F/O ...SEHRAAN BHAT
F/OADAAN BHAT
R/O ...KREERI Zone.....WAGOORA

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Zahoor Ahmad Ganie S/O Late Gulam Mohi ud din R/O Kawoosa Khalisa Budgam (J&K) having electricity Connection under consumer code 0206050003578 installation no. KK 2/271 want to change name the name in the electricity Bill/ Agreement name from Gh Mohi din Ganie S/O Gh Mohammad to Zahoor Ahmad Ganie S/O LATE Gulam Mohi ud din. Anybody having any objection may contact the said office within seven days of publication of this notice. In case of any objection proven right, I shall be personally responsible for consequences what so ever.

Name :-Zahoor Ahmad Ganie
S/O Late Gulam Mohi ud din
Consumer code :- 0206050003578

Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER CONVENOR DISTRICT HEALTH SOCIETY KULGAM

National Health Mission (NHM)
NHM/KGM/1306-13 10 Dated: 21-01-25

FINAL NOTICE

Dr Farooq Ahmad Wani
MO ISM PHC Pahloo
Block Kolgam

Subject: Final notice for Resumption of Duties

Whereas, you had been rendering duties as Medical Officer AYUSH under National Health Mission from 2008 till September 2015 Whereas, you suffered a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) with intracerebral haemorrhage (CH) while on duty at the Primary Health Centre Mohammad Whereas, the chairman of District Health Society Kulgam approved a recuperation period in your favour to aid your every Whereas, due to the significant shortage of Medical Officers, particularly from the ISM sector in the Block, latter was previously issued reg repeating your return to duty. Fut neither you responded to the communication nor you reported to the office of the R.M.O Kulgam Whereas, there is a gap of Medical Officer at PHC Pahloo from the last nine years which puts impediments in rendering the health services to the people. Whereas, your absence adds to the difficulties while providing health services where there is ainsady dearth of Medical Officers Whereas a notice was issued to you by BM.O Kulgam to resume your duties within seven days vide No. BMOK/NHM/80-13 dated 23-01-2024 but you did not report to your duties. Whereas again, another notice was issued to you by BMD Kulgam to resume your duties with seven days vide No. BMOK/NHM/118-22 dated 21-08-2024 but you did not report to your duties Whereas, you were served final notice by the office of the Block medical Officer Kulgam vide letter No. BMOK/NHM/37-42 dated 04-09-2024, through the medium of newspapers (Daily shaherbes dated 5 September 2024 published by department of information JK, but still u did not report to your duties till date. Keeping in view the terms and conditions of contractual nature of hiring and in the interest of improving the health services of masses, you are hereby gives a final opportunity through the medium of this Notice to report to the office of the undersigned within seven days failing which action shall be initiated accordingly in terms of the termination of your biring as Medical Officer (AYUSH).

SD
Cheif Medical Officer
Kulgam

DIPK-11136/24
Date: Jan 23 2025

Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION AWANTIPORA

NO:T-1/EEA/9041-44 Date:22/01/2025

CANCELLATION NOTICE.

Subject: 01. Construction of road from Khrew Ada Pampore to Meebagh including road from Befina Malik Kul Iqbal Colony Frestabal, Interior links at Frestabal Pampore and Noorani colony including extension of culvert at Malik Kul..

Reference: 01.e-NITNo. 68/EEA/RNB of 2024-25/5413-23 DATED: 18/10/2024

It is for the information of all registered contractors/Firms/Agencies that the above subjected work advertised vide this office above referred NIT is hereby cancelled due to technical reasons.

SD
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

DIPK-11146/24
Date: Jan 23 2025

DC Pulwama reviews arrangements for Shab-e-Meraj observance

Directs ensuring seamless services & hassle-free arrangements

■ HT News Network

Pulwama, January 23: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, chaired a meeting to review and ensure foolproof arrangements for the observance of Shab-e-Meraj (SAW) and Friday following. The Deputy Commissioner directed officers to ensure the availability of essential services at shrines and prominent mosques across the district during these auspicious occasions. The discussions centered on key areas, including the uninterrupted supply of electricity and water to shrines and mosques, the establishment of medical facilities and relief camps and the

availability of essential commodities. Measures to streamline transportation and parking facilities were also thoroughly deliberated upon, alongside a comprehensive traffic management plan aimed at ensuring smooth vehicular movement and conducting special sanitation drives to maintain cleanliness and sanctity during events. During the meeting Dr. Qayoom stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the public during the events. He directed officials to adopt a proactive approach to address potential challenges and deliver a well-organized and efficient system for the



occasion. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Pulwama and Tral, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Pulwama along with other concerned officers. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, chaired a meeting to review and ensure foolproof arrangements for the observance of Shab-e-Meraj (SAW) and Friday following. The Deputy Commissioner directed officers to ensure the availability of essential services at shrines and prominent mosques across the district during these auspicious occasions. The discussions centered on key areas, including the uninterrupted supply of electricity and water to shrines and mosques, the establish-

ment of medical facilities and relief camps and the availability of essential commodities. Measures to streamline transportation and parking facilities were also thoroughly deliberated upon, alongside a comprehensive traffic management plan aimed at ensuring smooth vehicular movement and conducting special sanitation drives to maintain cleanliness and sanctity during events. During the meeting Dr. Qayoom stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the public during the events. He directed officials to adopt a proactive approach to address potential challenges and deliver.

DDC Baramulla reviews physical, financial progress under District Capex

■ HT News Network

Baramulla, January 23: In an effort to ensure the efficient and timely implementation of the District Capex Budget for 2024-25, the District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, chaired a comprehensive review meeting today at Dak-Bungalow, Baramulla. The meeting focused on assessing both the physical and financial progress of ongoing developmental projects in the district. The Joint Director Planning Baramulla, Javed Ahmad, delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation, providing a sector-wise analysis of project achievements, financial expenditures and the status of various ongoing projects. The presentation highlighted key metrics, including funds allocated, utilization rates, physical targets achieved and challenges encountered during project execution.



This data-driven approach helped guide productive discussions among the officials. The DDC emphasized the need for timely project execution, optimal utilization of funds, and adherence to quality standards in all sectors. He

also stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination and directed officers to resolve any bottlenecks hindering project progress. Additionally, the DDC urged officials to expedite the clearance of pending bills to ensure smooth project continuation. DDC Minga Sherpa directed all department heads to prioritize the removal of bottlenecks, speed up the implementation of ongoing projects, and ensure timely completion of tasks. He emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts across departments and urged officials to work towards achieving the set goals for the fiscal year to benefit the people of Baramulla. Officers from departments, including R&B, RDD, Hydraulic, KPCL, ICDS, Education, and others, provided updates on their respective sectors. The DDC reiterated the need to enhance monitoring mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient execution of developmental projects.

DC Shopian reviews dev works of Superbazars

■ HT News Network

Shopian, January 23: The District Cooperative Development Committee (DCDC) meeting was today held at Mini Secretariat, Shopian under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar in order to approve the calendar of activities for International Year of Cooperatives-2025 (IYC-2025) & to review the ongoing infrastructure works. During the meeting, Deputy Registrar, Cooperative Shopian presented the overall scenario of the cooperative sector in the district with particular focus on ongoing infrastructure development works of Super Bazar at Shopian & Keller.

It was given that diverse activities shall be undertaken to celebrate the year, including awareness & training camps in collaboration with agriculture allied departments, inauguration of superbazars at Shopian and Keller, micro food processing units at CMS Kachdoora and PACs Rahmoo among others. The DC Shopian directed for expediting the development works of Superbazars at Shopian and Keller and instructed on strengthening the cooperative sector in the district by involving the local communities in diverse economic activities. The meeting was attended by ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, officers of RDD, Cooperative & J&K Bank, NABARD, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Health and other concerned departments.

DC Kulgam flags-off couple from DH Pora on Kartavya Path tour

■ HT News Network

Kulgam, January 23: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan today flagged off a couple- Rais Ahmad Rather & his spouse for Kartavya Path tour to New Delhi for special guests at Republic Day Celebrations. During the flag off program, DDC was apprised by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti DH Pora that the special invitee is the chairman of village Water & Sanitation Committee who belongs to village DH Pora. DDC while flagging off the tour appreciated the efforts of the committee for making Har Ghar Jal a reality by actively involving in planning & execution of drinking water supply under Jal Jeevan Mission in DH Pora village. It is worth to mention that Kulgam is the lone district in the entire valley who has achieved this feather. During the four days tour, logging, boarding & other expenses of guests will be endured by Jal Shakti department under Jal Jeevan Mission govt of India.

DC Kulgam reviews status of change in land use cases

Directs timely issuance of NOCs to the applicants

■ Farooq Rather

Kulgam, January 23: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan who is also Chairman of District Level Committee on Thursday chaired a meeting of Officers of various departments to review the progress achieved in the disposal of change of land use cases. At the outset, DC enquired about the status of NOCs being issued in favour of the applicants and applications received till date besides their reporting and follow up status by the concerned departments. Six cases were put by the Committee today in which 04 cases were approved. The Deputy Commissioner directed concerned members



to ensure timely issuance of NOCs to the applicants after proper verification of documents and rules under land conversion. The meeting was attended by ACR, GM DIC, DFO, Executive Engineers from PHE, PDD, R&B, PMGSY, Irrigation and Flood Control, CAO, CHO, Tehsildar Kulgam/Yaripora/DH Pora, Devsar, EO MC Kulgam, Devsar and other Officials.

DC Budgam reviews digitization of revenue records; provision of services as per PSGA timeline

■ HT News Network

Budgam, January 23: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo, today chaired a meeting to review the functioning of Revenue services across all tehsils of the district. The meeting was held at the DC Office Complex, Budgam, and attended by ACR Budgam, all Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs), all Tehsildars, and other Revenue officials. The DC reviewed the progress made under complete digitization of revenue records of the district to enhance transparency and efficiency in land records management. He also conducted Tehsil



wise review of the disposal of revenue services as per PSGA timelines to ensure timely provision of revenue services to the citizens. The DC also reviewed the

Office, Pakherpora. He directed the concerned officers to maintain close coordination with executing agencies to ensure timely completion of these projects. The DC reiterated the importance of responsive governance and emphasized that Revenue officials must remain proactive in addressing public grievances. He directs for timely redressal of grievances of the public. He further stressed on regular monitoring and imposing penalties against those failing to provide revenue services within the timeline to uphold the standards of service delivery.

DLSA Ganderbal holds monthly review meeting for Legal Aid Defense Counsels

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, January 23: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal organized a monthly review meeting today to evaluate the performance of Legal Aid Defense Counsels. The objective was to uphold service delivery standards, identify challenges encountered by the counsels, and discuss strategies for enhancement. The meeting was presided over by Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary of DLSA, Ganderbal, and was attended by Sajid Irfan, Deputy LADC, and Tanveer Ashraf, Assistant LADC. During the session, the Legal Aid Defense Counsels reported on the status of their assigned cases, while the Secretary assessed their performance and reviewed case files. Resolutions were passed to improve the operations of the counsels, focusing on punctuality, the provision of thorough and competent legal services, and the maintenance of accurate records. The Secretary committed to addressing the issue of insufficient supporting staff with the J&K Legal Services Authority for a swift resolution. The purpose of the meeting was to enhance the provision of legal aid services and ensure equitable access to justice for all.

DDC Kupwara reviews progress achieved under JJM

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, JANUARY 23: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today chaired a review meeting of concerned officers to assess the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district. The mission, aimed at providing functional household tap connections (FHTC) to every rural household, is one of the flagship programs of the Government of India to ensure universal access to safe and adequate drinking water. During the meeting, the DDC reviewed the ongoing work in the district under JJM, including the status of water supply schemes, the number of households covered under FHTC, and the progress of the infrastructure being developed to ensure the sustainability and quality of water supply. It was informed in the meeting that 1.28 lakh of the total 1.56 lakh targeted households have been connected with functional tap connections. It was also informed that out of 247 allotted Water Supply Schemes, 115 works have been completed in PHE Divisions of Kupwara & Handwara and SSD Tangdar and work is in progress to complete the rest of the schemes.



Regarding Dug well works, it was informed that 14 works were allotted in the district out of which 11 stands completed, besides, 10 bore-wells were also completed. Besides, 15 water supply schemes in PHE Division Kupwara, 10 schemes in PHE Division Handwara and 5 schemes in SSD Tangdar have been commissioned under JJM. The DDC also reviewed the progress of Rapid Sand Filtration Plants, Over Head Tanks, Pipe Networks, Electro-Mechanical schemes and Pipe availability. The DDC directed the concerned officers to ensure that all the ongoing water supply schemes and other allied works are completed within the stipulated time frame. She expressed her dismay over the

laxity of the officers in fulfilling the targets of several schemes in their jurisdictions and warned them about strict action if the projects are not accomplished well within the timeline. District Superintendent Engineer PHE, ACD, CPO, Executive Engineers of PHE Division Kupwara & Handwara; AEEs, AEs and other concerned officers attended the meeting. The DDC also reviewed the progress of Rapid Sand Filtration Plants, Over Head Tanks, Pipe Networks, Electro-Mechanical schemes and Pipe availability. The DDC directed the concerned officers to ensure that all the ongoing water supply schemes and other allied works are completed within the stipulated time frame.

DLSA Budgam convenes first quarterly UTRC meeting

■ HT News Network

Budgam, January 23: In compliance with the directions of Justice Atul Sreedharan, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority (J&K LSA), and as per the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting schedule issued by NALSA for the year 2025, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam convened its first quarterly UTRC meeting on January 22 at District Court, Budgam. The meeting was chaired by O.P. Bhagat, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA) Budgam, and brought together key stakeholders from the judiciary, police, administration, and medical fraternity to address the significant issue of ensuring fair and expedited trials for under trial prisoners. This collaborative forum underscores the importance of a collective approach in safeguarding the rights of individuals awaiting trial. Eighteen cases involving under trial prisoners were meticulously reviewed. Each case underwent thorough discussion and deliberation to understand the specific circumstances. The committee formulated recommendations aimed at streamlining the judicial process and upholding principles



of equity and justice. O.P. Bhagat emphasized the vital role of UTRC meetings in strengthening the criminal justice system and protecting the fundamental rights of under trial prisoners. He stressed the importance of ongoing initiatives to ensure a fair and efficient legal process, promoting justice and transparency. The meeting was attended by several distinguished dignitaries, including Nusrat Ali Hakak, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Budgam; Nikhil Borkar, SSP Budgam; Mehraj Ud Din Shah, Additional District Commissioner Budgam, Shahbaz Hussain, DySP Central Jail Srinagar; Sheikh Muzafar, Public Prosecuting Officer, Budgam; Dr. Zeenat, Senior Medical Officer, Central Jail Srinagar.

DC Reasi reviews working of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department

HT News Network

REASI, JANUARY 23: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Reasi Nidhi Malik convened a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department.

The meeting focused on evaluating the progress and impact of key schemes and projects in rural areas, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), and initiatives under the Aspirational Block Development Programme (ABDP), Area Development Fund (ADF)



and the Capex Budget.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed assessment of ongoing works. She directed the Block Development Officers (BDOs) to remain stationed in their respective blocks, actively inspect projects, and coordinate with Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs) to ensure timely comple-

tion. She laid Special emphasis on accelerating progress under MGNREGA, with instructions to compile detailed work reports.

To enhance rural infrastructure and connectivity, the DC emphasised strict adherence to quality standards and called for actionable plans to address gaps in implementation.

The DC further directed

BDOs to work closely with Tehsildars to expedite recovery from defaulters under the PMAY-G scheme. Additionally, the Executive Engineer (XEN) of the Roads & Buildings Department was tasked with developing durable and cost-effective solutions for PMAY-G beneficiaries and taking strict action against contractors failing to execute assigned works. She reiterated the administration's commitment to fostering sustainable rural development through efficient implementation of government schemes and proactive field monitoring. ACD Pardeep Kumar, CPO Narinder Kumar and all BDOs were present. Kathua Administration unveils Spectacular Lighting at Atal Setu Basohli

Income Tax Dept Holds Outreach program To Raise Awareness About Filing IT Returns

HT News Network

JAMMU, Jan 23, : The Income Tax Department Jammu, in coordination with Higher Education Department of the J&K UT organised an outreach program at Govt. College for Women, Parade. The program aimed to raise awareness about filing of correct refund claims and making taxpayers aware of the consequences of filing fraudulent claims of Income Tax refunds of persons working in different departments. According to the Associated News Bureau, Principal Commissioner of the Income Tax Department in J&K, Vikram Sahay addressed a pressing issue regarding the incorrect filing of income tax returns by several taxpay-



ers. Speaking on the matter, he emphasized that education and awareness have a significant role to play when it comes to understanding the importance of lawful tax practices. "It is disturbing to see that many income tax returns are filed incorrectly and a large number of gullible taxpayers fall prey to external agents promising full TDS refunds. Even higher officials have been found to fall victim to these

scams, unaware that these actions are not only immoral but also criminal," Sh. Sahay said.

The Principal Commissioner pointed out that fraudulent deductions, including those related to loans, donations and medical premiums, were being falsely claimed by some individuals. Sh. Sahay emphasized the need to spread awareness about these malpractices in order to eliminate them com-

pletely. He assured that strict action would be taken against those found guilty of such offenses. "We must work together to restore the faith of the citizens in the tax system, and this responsibility begins with education and awareness," he said.

He also informed taxpayers that the window for updating income tax returns for the Financial Year 2023-24 is open until March, providing an opportunity for individuals to correct any mistakes made in their returns. Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Mohd Noor Siddiqui, highlighted that till 31st December, 2024, IT Department has identified as many as 90,000 salaried taxpayers who had wrongly claimed deductions amounting to 1,070.

Sakeena Itoo visits GMC Jammu, SMGS Shalamar, enquires about health of Budhal patients

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 23: Minister for Health and Medical, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu and SMGS Hospital, Shalamar to enquire about the health and well being of patients of Budhal village of Rajouri district.

MLA Banihal, Sajjad Shaheen; Principal GMC Jammu; Medical Superintendents of both the hospitals and other concerned medical professionals were also present on the occasion.

During her visit, Sakeena Itoo interacted with the patients of Budhal and assured them of all possible assistance and support from the government. He



assured the affected families that a detailed investigation is underway to determine the cause of the tragedy. "Health department, police department and district administration is working tirelessly 24*7 to ascertain the real cause behind this tragedy", the Minister stated.

While personally reviewing the ongoing treatment and care of these

patients, the Minister asked the hospital administration to monitor their health conditions on regular basis. She directed them to keep ample number of doctors and paramedics available for their continuous monitoring. She also asked them to keep the ministry updated about the well being of these patients.

Kathua Administration unveils Spectacular Lighting at Atal Setu Basohli

HT News Network

KATHUA, JANUARY 23: The iconic Atal Setu at Basohli received a dazzling transformation making it even more tempting for locals and tourists.

MLA Basohli Darshan Singh, Director ACB Shakti Pathak and Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Rakesh Minhas, formally inaugurated the newly installed lights.

This initiative of the District Administration, fulfilling a long-pending public demand, aims to enhance the bridge's visual charm and solidify its status as a key tourist attraction in the region.

Speaking at the occasion, MLA Basohli Darshan Singh appreciated the district administration's efforts in fulfilling this demand, adding that the facade lights would elevate the aesthetic appeal of Basohli town and attract more visitors to



the region. Director ACB Shakti Pathak, who is Son of the Soil, said that the lighting added a new dimension to the Atal Setu's appeal. He also lauded the initiative of the Administration for spearheading the unique "Basohli Art on House Buildings", which has transformed the town into a vibrant hub of traditional art and culture.

Deputy Commissioner Kathua,

Dr. Rakesh Minhas, highlighted the significance of the Atal Setu as a symbol of engineering excellence and regional progress. "The Atal Setu is more than a bridge; it is a landmark of connectivity, development, and architectural brilliance. The facade lighting amplifies its grandeur, particularly during the night, making it a must-visit destination. This initiative will

undoubtedly boost tourism and place Basohli prominently on the global tourism map," he said.

Dr. Minhas further reiterated the district administration's dedication to developing Basohli into a hub for art, culture, and adventure tourism.

Pertinently, the Atal Setu, North India's first cable-stayed bridge in Jammu and Kashmir, spans the Ravi River, linking the union territory with Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

The newly installed facade lighting system uses energy-efficient LED lights, offering a dynamic range of colors and patterns while minimizing energy consumption. The eco-friendly system enhances the bridge's magnificence without compromising sustainability.

Local residents and visitors expressed their delight at the new lighting, calling it a "spectacular addition" to the town's charm.

DDC Kulgam reviews RDD sector works, asks for developing durable assets

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, January 23: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting of Officers and Officials of Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR) at Mini-Secretariat here to review the functioning, progress and implementation status of various schemes in the district.

During the meeting, ACD Kulgam Syed Naseer apprised the chair about the progress made under various schemes like MGNREGA Convergence plan and PMAY-G.

The DDC instructed the concerned to expedite the process of works under MGNREGA Convergence plan with different departments so that durable assets can be built in villages.

He urged the officers for better coordination in convergence plan so that targets be achieved well in time.

DDC called for timely completion of the works which are in public interest with judicious utilization of funds, while ensuring quality of work, in order to create durable assets.

The meeting was attended by ACR Mushtaq Rasool, ACP Nazia Hassan, Exen, Rew, CEO, BDOs and other officers and officials.

DC Kulgam visits Ziyarat Shareef Mir Syed Ali Hussain Simnani RA

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, January 23: 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 Assistant Direc-



tor, CA&PD was directed to make available essential commodities in all the food stores, ensuring quality of all essentials in the market during festival days.

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 ACR Mushtaq Ahmad, Executive Engineers from Jal Shakti and KPDC, EO MC Kulgam and other officers.

Industrial Association Bari Brahmana meets CM's Advisor Highlights demands to boost industrial growth in J&K

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 23: Ahead of the first budget to be presented by Omar led government, a delegation of Bari Brahmana Industries Association today met Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, presenting a comprehensive list of demands to make their units lucrative. The association emphasised the need for extending implementation of turnover-based incentives to support and encourage existing operational industrial units of J&K. It also sought a dedicated budget for working capital interest subvention without any capping, ensuring financial relief to

industrial units.

Other demands raised by the association included introduction of price and purchase preferences for local MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness and market share. The delegation also demanded steps to convert leaseholder rights into freehold rights for existing industrial units in J&K. In addition, they asked for Infrastructure Upgradation at Industrial Estate Bari Brahmana, GST-Linked Incentives, adoption of ease of doing business principles by all government departments, including onboarding on a single-window system to streamline approvals and processes. The delegation stressed that these measures are vital for indus-

trial sector's growth and attracting more investments into the region.

The Advisor to Chief Minister listened attentively to the delegation's concerns and assured them of government's commitment towards resolving their genuine issues. He made out that the Omar Abdullah led government is focused on creating a business-friendly environment and ensuring that the industrial sector thrives.

The delegation was led by Association President, Lalit Mahajan, with other members including Senior Vice President, General Secretary and several Executive Committee members of the association accompanying him to meet the Advisor.

Close Contacts shifted from Village Badhaal to Nursing College for preventative care DC meets relocated individuals to inquire about their wellbeing

HT News Network

RAJOURI, JANUARY 23: To provide them instant and better preventive care, the close contacts of affected families of village Badhaal have been shifted to Nursing College in Rajouri on the direction of Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma.

The decision was taken to ensure better preventative care and close monitoring of their health, as tests revealed the presence of certain toxins, not bacterial or viral infection.

"Close contacts and High risk individuals have been shifted to the Nursing College to expedite care, as the

distance from Badhaal to Rajouri causes delays in responding to medical needs" the DC said.

To review the arrangements at the Nursing College, the DC chaired a meeting and inspected the accommodation facilities. He also interacted with the relocated individuals, inquiring about their well-being. Addressing their concerns, the DC assured that their domestic animals will be taken care of at Badhaal by the Animal Husbandry and Agriculture Departments.

Key measures taken by the district administration included the Installation of CCTV cameras to monitor meal preparation and distribution,



with all activities videographed for transparency and deployment of female officers for the welfare of

women.

In addition, directions were issued to the Chief Education Officer to

facilitate regular classes for the children.

An awareness camp was also held by the Labour Department to educate the affected individuals and issue e-Shram cards. The District administration is also going to organise Daksh Kisan courses and skill development programs for the relocated individuals through ITI.

Additionally, four patients were airlifted yesterday for advanced treatment to different hospitals. One patient Ajaz was shifted to PGI Chandigarh and is now stable. Six other individuals are being treated at GMC Rajouri, including one critical patient whose condition has now stabilized.

The DC visited the hospital this morning to inquire about the condition of the patients.

Additional District Development Commissioner Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa is closely monitoring the centers to ensure seamless coordination among all departments. The district administration is diligently implementing the directions issued by the Chief Secretary and Divisional Commissioner Jammu.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed to the general public to stay calm, reiterating that the issue is not due to a bacterial or viral disease. Preventative measures are in place to address the situation effectively.

MLA Ramban leads "Swachhtra" Sanitation Drive ahead of Republic Day

HT News Network

RAMBAN, JANUARY 23: In a significant initiative to promote cleanliness and patriotism, MLA Ramban Arjun Singh Raju today led a special sanitation drive themed "Swachhtra - Gantantra Ki Shaan, Swachhta Se Bane Mahaan."

The drive, aligning with the spirit of Republic Day, aims to underscore the importance of cleanliness as a fundamental pillar of national progress and development.

Republic Day marks the adoption of the Indian Constitution and celebrates values such as justice, equality, and responsibility. Cleanliness, being central to these principles, was highlighted as a collective responsibility of every citizen. The sanitation drive was envisioned as a community-driven initiative to inspire action towards a cleaner and healthier environment across Jammu & Kashmir.

The campaign, organised by the Municipal Council Ramban under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary, included special sanitation activities in and around District Hospital Ramban and other health institutions. These efforts brought together various sections of society, including local citizens, Swachhta ambassadors, hospital staff, and attendants. The participants showcased great enthusiasm and solidarity in making the event a success. Prominent officials present on the occasion included Chief Medical Officer Dr Kamal Ji Zadu; Medical Superintendent District Hospital Vrinder Trishal; CEO Municipal Committee Sudarshan Jamal and other district officers, health workers, and prominent citizens. Their active participation reinforced the significance of collaborative efforts in achieving the vision of a clean and healthy Ramban.



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DC reviews arrangements for Republic Day 2025 at DPL Rajouri

HT News Network

RAJOURI, JANUARY 23: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today conducted an on-site inspection of arrangements being made for the Republic Day 2025 celebrations at the District Police Lines (DPL) Rajouri. Accompanying him were Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, and other senior district officers.

During the visit, the DC took a comprehensive review of the preparations, including seating arrangements, stage setup, security measures, and logistical arrangements for the smooth conduct of the event. He emphasized the need for meticulous planning to ensure the event is organized with grandeur and discipline, reflecting the spirit of the occasion. The DC directed the concerned departments to work in coordination to finalize arrangements well in advance. He stressed ensuring public convenience, especially for dignitaries, school children and participants in the cultural programs. The administration is committed to making the event a grand success, highlighting the district's unity and patriotism.

Dy CM inspects Smart City works; asks to fast pace Jammu beautification

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 23: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today inspected the ongoing smart city works at Residency Road, Jammu.

The Dy CM was accompanied by Municipal Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Devansh Yadav and other senior officers.

While inspecting the ongoing works, the Deputy Chief Minister directed for strict quality monitoring and fast paced execution of the project. He asked the officers for expeditious completion of beautification works being executed in Jammu city, so that the people get benefitted from these development initiatives.

"Instructions have been already given to the executing agencies for taking the work in accordance with the already approved plans and there



should be no compromise with the quality of works. Strict action would be initiated in case of any deviation and low quality works", maintained the Deputy Chief Minister. While asking for undertaking developmental

works in consonance with the local needs and aspirations, the Deputy Chief Minister said that developmental plans should be formulated in consonance with the demands and convenience of people of the area.

Labour Commissioner inspects factory units at SIDCO Industrial Estate Samba

Underscores importance of complying with Labour regulations regarding Workers' Welfare

HT News Network

SAMBA, JANUARY 23: Labour Commissioner J&K Charandeep Singh Thursday visited the SIDCO Industrial Estate in Samba and inspected various factory units including M/S Jai Beverages (Unit III) and M/S Modern Papers, with a focus on evaluating the adherence of these factories to labour laws and their commitment to workers' welfare and safety.

Accompanied by Inspectors of Factories Jammu, Ravinder Krundu and Imran Khan, the Labour Commissioner conducted an on-ground review, interacting with both workers and the management. The visit centered on various aspects of workers' conditions, safety and overall welfare practices. These units were permitted to run on three shift basis and the visit was also to check the compliances regarding



the same on ground.

In his interaction with the management of the factory units, the Labour Commissioner emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate and transparent records to ensure accountability in fac-

tor operations. He stressed to ensure strict adherence to the provisions of the Factories Act, 1948, which safeguards the health, safety, and welfare of workers, and sets standards for working conditions, wages, and leave. The Labour Commissioner further highlighted that maintaining a safe working environment and ensuring timely disbursement of wages are not only legal obligations but also vital for the well-being and morale of the workforce.

He reiterated that the department's role is not only to enforce compliance but also to work closely with industrial units to foster a culture of mutual respect and transparency.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to promote a safe and healthy work environment, the Labour Commissioner stressed the need for maintaining harmonious industrial relations while prioritizing workers' safety and well-being.

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GGHS Domana students join DIPR to promote Nasha Mukta Bharat campaign

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 23: A Cultural program on Nasha Mukta Bharat campaign was organised by Cultural Unit Jammu today at Government Girls High School Domana.

Artists of the Cultural Wing of the Information Department and students presented a scintillating cultural programme.

Incharge Headmaster Rajesh Singh shared his views on the topic and also appreciated the Cultural Unit of Department of Information and Public Relations for organizing the program to aware the future of the nation.

Among others staff members, officials of the Information Department and a large number of audience witnessed the program.

The whole programme was conducted under the direction of Joint Director Information Jammu Atul Gupta and supervision of Cultural Officer Mukesh Kumar Sharma.

Republic Day celebration Screening Committee finalises cultural items at Poonch

HT News Network

POONCH, JANUARY 23: The Screening Committee constituted to finalize the Cultural items for district level Republic Day function met here today.

Comprising PO ICDS Khalid Hussain Wafa, Additional SP Mohan Sharma, DYSSO Mool Raj Uttam, DEPO, Mukhtar Manhas, Prof. Shamim Bandy, Anchor Pardeep Khanna and Principal Anjuman Shaheen, the Committee conducted a thorough review of presentations by the school students representing various educational institutions.

All participating schools showcased remarkable talent and creativity. The committee acknowledged the hard work of each institution and encouraged them to engage in further practice to enhance their presentations for the celebration.

District Employment & Counseling Centre Samba hosts Job Fair

HT News Network

SAMBA, JANUARY 23: The District Employment & Counseling Centre Samba successfully conducted a comprehensive Job Fair today, bringing together job seekers and prominent employers to address local employment challenges.

As many as 10 private companies including Jamkas Pharmaceuticals, Uflex Ltd, Kandhari Beverage Pvt Ltd, LIC, Guru Ji Placements, Agile Herbals participated in the fair. Over 300 job seekers registered for the event of which 62 candidates were shortlisted by participating companies.

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma inaugurated the job fair and engaged with employers. He emphasized the importance of continued collaboration of government departments and the private sector.

Assistant Director Employment Naresh Kumar encouraged youth participation and facilitated employer-interactions.

Beyond job interviews, the event also provided crucial support to attendees including counselling on self-employment schemes including Mission YUVA, Mumkin, Tejeswini and information about government-sponsored entrepreneurship programs. On-the-spot registration on the J&K state employment portal (<http://jakemp.nic.in>) was also provided.



Transport Department, JMC launch first-of-its-kind initiative integrating road safety with cleanliness

HT News Network

JAMMU, JANUARY 23: In a pioneering effort to combine road safety with cleanliness, the Transport Department J&K and Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) jointly launched an initiative as part of the ongoing National Road Safety Month 2025.

A meeting was convened at Warehouse, which was jointly chaired by the JMC Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav and Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Paul Mahajan. The meeting was attended by senior officers of JMC, Transport Department, Pollution Control Board and drivers of pas-



senger vehicles, and locals.

During the meeting, the Transport Commissioner emphasized the dual importance of adhering to road safety protocols and maintaining cleanliness within the transport sector. He urged drivers to strictly follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for road safety, avoid rash driving, and ensure vehicle fit-

ness to safeguard passengers and themselves.

Raising concerns about the litter generated by passengers and drivers on the roads, the Transport Commissioner said that such practices negatively impact Jammu's cleanliness and its Swachh Survekshan rankings. To address this, small dustbins were distributed to drivers of pas-

senger vehicles for installation in their vehicles. The drivers were encouraged to sensitize the passengers about using these bins instead of littering roads.

In collaboration with JMC, the Transport Commissioner proposed installing large dustbins at bus stops and bus stands to collect wastes from the smaller bins in vehicles. The Commissioner JMC assured that the required infrastructure would be promptly set up, ensuring proper waste disposal.

Highlighting the unique initiative undertaken by the JMC to clean the Transport Yard Narwal, the Commissioner informed.

District Administration Poonch celebrates 10 years of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme

HT News Network

POONCH, JANUARY 23: The District Administration Poonch hosted a vibrant event today to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative, aimed at supporting girls and promoting gender equality. The celebration took place in the Auditorium Hall of Government Degree College.

Organized by the District Social Welfare Department under the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer Wakeel Ahmed Bhat, the event



featured Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal as the Chief Guest. The gathering included District Education Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, AD FCS & CA, the College Vice Principal, along with the officers, officials, and students from numerous educational institutions.

Under the slogan "Beti

with the lighting of a lamp by Chief Guest Vikas Kundal, followed by reciting of the National Anthem. Attendees enjoyed a variety of cultural performances, including skits and dances presented by students, all centered on BBBP theme.

The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the significant strides made in women's education, empowerment, and improvements in child sex ratios over the past decade. The Deputy Commissioner urged all citizens to actively participate in these efforts, reinforcing the programme's message to protect and empower

The event commenced

No Event Conveys More Powerful Message Of Harmony And Unity Than Maha Kumbh: Shah

■ HT News Network

AHMEDABAD, Jan 23: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said no other event in the world conveys a more powerful message of harmony and unity than Maha Kumbh where anyone can take a dip in the Ganga irrespective of identity.

People across the world are in awe after watching the scale on which the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj has been organised, he said, speaking after inaugurating the Hindu Spiritual & Service Fair, also known as Hindu Adhyatmik Seva Mela, at the Gujarat University grounds here. Ambassadors of various countries requested him for "invitation cards", said the senior BJP leader.

"I told them there is no formal invitation for this mega gathering, because crores of people converge here on their own at a specific time as per the alignment of the planets," Shah added. They could not



believe that 40 crore people gather at a place without any invitation, he said. When asked who organises the whole thing, "I

told them what the government does is very small in comparison to what religious leaders, saints and their organisations do

for the people going there," said the minister.

"Kumbh gives a message of harmony and unity because no one asks which religion, sect or caste you belong to. You will get food without any discrimination and go back home after taking a holy dip. No other event in the world conveys a more powerful message of harmony and unity than Maha Kumbh," Shah said.

Despite such a large number of pilgrims gathering, no one lives in hotels because everyone gets accommodation in the tents on the banks of the Ganga, noted the Union minister. Such arrangements have been there for ages, even during the Mughal and British rules and when Congress was in power, he noted, while urging the people of Gujarat, especially the younger generation, to visit Maha Kumbh. He himself will visit Maha Kumbh on January 27 to take a holy dip in the Ganga, Shah said. (Agencies)

Foreign Secretary Misri to begin 2-day China visit on Jan 26

■ HT News Network



NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri will travel to Beijing for a two-day visit beginning Sunday. Misri is visiting China for a meeting of the foreign secretary-vice minister mechanism, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

The resumption of this bilateral mechanism flows from the agreement at the leadership level to discuss the next steps for India-China relations, including in the political, economic, and people-to-people domains, it said. (PTI)

Dhankhar recalls Bose's patriotism on his birth anniversary

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday recalled the unyielding spirit of Subhas Chandra Bose towards the cause of the country on his birth anniversary.

The birth anniversary of Netaji, as the iconic leader was popularly called, is observed as Parakram Divas (day of valour).

In a post on X, Dhankhar said Bose's exemplary dedication to India's Independence and the formation of the Azad Hind Fauj stand as testament to his extraordinary vision and valour.

"Netaji's valour, nationalistic fervour, and monumental contribution to freeing India from foreign rule continue to inspire countless Indians. He personified selfless devotion to the cause of the motherland," the vice president said.

He hoped that Netaji's unyielding spirit and determination continue to inspire people to work tirelessly for a strong, self-reliant and united India. (PTI)

People angry with AAP, win 50 per cent votes in every booth: PM Modi to BJP workers

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged Delhi BJP members to target winning over 50 per cent of votes in every booth in the upcoming assembly polls, and exhorted the AAP for its "unfulfilled" promises, "fake" announcements and "corruption". People are openly expressing anger with the AAP government during the party's campaign, he said, claiming that it is making new announcements every day as it is aware that it is losing ground across the national capital. In an online interaction with Delhi BJP members, Modi reiterated his "aapda" (disaster) barb against the AAP and asked them to gather photographic and video evidence of the city's poor roads, sanitation and other problems in their outreach to voters ahead of the February 5 polls.

Calling for defeating the AAP, which has been in power since 2015, the prime minister said the BJP will pave the way for fulfilling the resolve of making Delhi the developed capital of a developed India.

He accused the city government of not tabling CAG reports, which reportedly highlight the losses caused to the exchequer by its policies, for the fear of being exposed.

The reports will be tabled by the new BJP government, he said, asserting that people have made up their mind to oust the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Modi said the common man is saying, "aapda ko hata kar rahenge. BJP ko laakar rahenge (We will surely remove aapda and bring BJP)".

Central govt's 1,200 electricity buses running in Delhi, more to be introduced: PM Modi

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that over 1,200 electric buses provided by the central government are running in the national capital as part of the wider efforts to reduce carbon footprint. He cited the programme to promote rooftop solar panels as another initiative to this effect.

Modi made the remarks during an interaction with students at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan (old Parliament building) where dignitaries, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge besides the prime minister, paid tributes to iconic freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary.

When Modi asked a student which slogan of Bose motivates her most, she cited "Give me blood and I promise you freedom", according to an official statement.

She said Bose demonstrated true leadership by prioritising his country above all else and this dedication continues to inspire the students greatly. It motivates her to reduce the carbon footprint of the nation, which is a part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), she added.

Asked about the initiatives taken to do so, she said electric vehicles and buses were introduced, it said.



"The prime minister emphasised that over 1,200 electric buses provided by the Union government were operating in Delhi and more would be introduced," the statement said.

He also explained to the students about the "PM Suryagarh Yojana" as a tool to tackle climate change. As part of the scheme, solar panels were installed on house rooftops to produce electricity, eliminating the need to pay electricity bills.

The electricity generated could be used to charge e-vehicles, cutting down on the spending on fossil fuels and curbing pollution, he added.

Modi told students that any surplus electricity generated at home could be sold to the government, which would provide monetary compensation, the statement said. (Agencies)

Delhi wants Sheila Dikshit's development model, not 'false propaganda' of PM Modi, Kejriwal: Rahul

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said Delhi now wants the "real development model" of former chief minister Sheila Dikshit and not the "false propaganda and PR model" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal.

Gandhi shared on Facebook a video montage highlighting issues such as inflation, unemployment, pollution and corruption. "Bad construction, dirt, inflation, unemployment, pollution and corruption – the truth of Delhi is in front of the public," the former Congress chief said in his Facebook post in Hindi.

"Delhi now wants the same real development model of Sheila Dikshit ji, not the false propaganda and PR model of Modi and Kejriwal," Gandhi said ahead the Assembly polls. Gandhi could not address a public meeting in the Sadar Bazar Assembly constituency on Wednesday as he was unwell and appealed to people via a message read out at the rally to ensure the party's victory in the polls.

Due to his ill-health, Gandhi could also not travel to Karnataka's Belagavi for the 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' rally on Tuesday and earlier, his political programme in the New Delhi constituency could not be held.



Earlier this month, Gandhi had launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying there is no difference between the two leaders and they do not want backwards, Dalits, tribals and minorities to get their due share.

Specifically targeting Kejriwal at his first public meeting for Delhi assembly polls, Gandhi had said that the AAP convener was following "Modi's strategy of propaganda and false promises" despite rising pollution, corruption and inflation in the national capital.

He also promised a caste survey in Delhi if the Congress formed the Government in the national capital.

Gandhi had hailed the work done under three successive Sheila Dikshit-led Governments and asserted that neither Kejriwal nor the BJP can match the Congress' track record. (PTI)

Delhi: People enthralled with IAF's fly past during full dress rehearsal for Republic Day

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: The audience was enthralled with Indian Air Force IAF's fly-past during a full dress rehearsal for Republic Day on Thursday. Audiences watched the captivating performance as the sound of roaring jets echoed in the atmosphere ahead of India's 76th Republic Day celebrations.

According to a press release, 47 aircraft from the Indian Air Force will be taking part in the Republic Day celebrations. The aircraft will be part of the flypast, which will be showcased during the end of the celebrations.

This year Sukhoi Su-30 MKI, Rafale, Dornier transport aircraft, Mi-17 transport helicopters and Apache attack helicopters

will take part in the Republic Day celebrations. The flypast will take place after the national anthem, and the official logo of the 75th year of the Indian Constitution are released. Prior to this, there will be a parade of 31 tableaux from various states, union territories, and central government ministries showcasing the theme "Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas."

The Republic Day Parade 2025 is all set to be a spectacular celebration of India's cultural diversity and military prowess, with a special focus on 75 years of the enactment of the Indian Constitution and Jan Bhagidari.

This year's parade will be graced by the presence of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, as the chief guest.

CEC Rajiv Kumar sounds caution against fake narratives, points to role of technology in shaping future of elections

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Sounding a note of caution against fake narratives which erode trust in electoral processes, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar has said that such narratives are typically timed at crucial junctures of the election process to target its very vitals.

The CEC was speaking at a two-day international conference 'Global Election Year 2024: Reiteration of Democratic Spaces; Takeaway for EMBS' in New Delhi. The Conference began on Thursday ahead of the National Voters Day.

The conference brings together representatives from Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of nearly 13 countries and international organizations.

In his keynote address, Rajiv Kumar reflected that 2024 was a defining

year as a test for EMBs for reaffirmation of democratic values amidst challenges and complexities. He emphasized the critical role of technology and digital innovations in enhancing efficiency, transparency and voter confidence. He added that while Technology offers significant opportunities, it also brings challenges like cybersecurity threats and misinformation.

According to an Election Commission release, he urged EMBs to streamline strategies for addressing these technological challenges to effectively mitigate the risks.

Nearly 30 representatives from the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of 13 countries including Bhutan, Georgia, Namibia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Ireland, Mauritius, Philippines, Russian Federation, Tunisia, and Nepal are attending the two-day international



conference. CEC Kumar also outlined key trends shaping the future of elections, including AI-driven processes, online and remote voting, biometric authentication and increased global collaboration and called all participants to explore the opportunities with tech-

nological advancements in making elections more transparent, inclusive and accessible. He underscored the role of EMBs in not only safeguarding electoral processes globally but also expanding their reach and impact, the statement added.

Election Commissioner Gyanesh

Kumar, in the first session on major learnings, presented the case of Lok Sabha Elections 2024 underlining the scale, complexity and quality of the polls. Speaking in the session on the role of technology in elections management – opportunities and challenges, Dasho Sonam Topgay, CEC of Bhutan, thanked India for providing EVMs and lauded the process efficiencies brought in by EVMs since their use in the election in Bhutan.

He added that EVMs have won the trust of people in Bhutan. Speaking on Digital IDs, Topgay said that Bhutan has a biometric Unified National ID which is used for voter authentication. He added that Bhutan is exploring the possibility of online voting in future elections.

Election Management Bodies from Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Indonesia, Kazakhstan which made presentations on their electoral expe-

rience in 2024, placed their concerns regarding disinformation, misinformation and fake narratives on social media affecting electoral integrity in live elections. CEC of Mauritius, Abdool Rahman, also stressed on the menace of fake news to undermine the electorate's trust in the EMBs. Highlighting a particular case of fake online applications for the recruitment of election staff, Rahman expressed concern on use of technology and social media in intensifying the menace of misinformation and disinformation during elections. A representative of the Electoral Commission of Namibia, while expressing concern about the rising trend of fake news, sought suggestions on tackling fake news on social media. Commissioner, General Election Commission of Indonesia, Idhan Holik spoke about their experience of using a dedicated What's App channel.

Nail Care in Winters

Do you have dry, cracked, splitting brittle fingernails during the winter months?



Shahnaz Husain

It's not just your skin that dries out during the winter months; your nails do too! As soon as there's even a hint of chill in the air, your nails start to chip and flake. If you are experiencing slow nail growth, brittle nails, nail breakage, nail splitting, and other nail problems nowadays, winter is to blame here as well. People often take special care of their hair and skin during chilling weather, but forget to take care of their nails.

Nails are part of the integumentary system (skin) of your body and they develop from the outer layer of your skin called the epidermis. The exact same cells that form the outer layer of your skin also form your nails. These cells harden more in your nails, but structurally they share many common fea-

tures and needs. Natural oils hold together the different layers of your nails, so cold and dry winter months and lots of hand washing with harsh soaps will dry out this natural "glue." It's very similar to the dry skin you experience during the winter months. The same concept to fix dry skin can be used for dry nails, but different formulations are recommended because of the unique structural properties of your nails. Here are easy winter nail care tricks to make sure your nails stay long and strong.

One easy way to counteract cold weather? With a nice warm pair of gloves. Protect your nails by wearing a nice warm pair of rubber gloves for your washing chores. This is when you are gardening, house cleaning, washing dishes, or using harsh chemicals. When you wear gloves, you protect your nails from getting dry and at the same time, keep dirt out of your nails. Massage a cream, oils, or ointments to dampen nails and the skin around the nails after washing chores.

Doing so can protect your nails from breakage and help locking in moisture to help preserve the cuticle seal and strengthen the nail itself. For dry hands and nails, massage almond oil on the hands and around the



nails too, in order to soften the cuticles. The cuticle (skin surrounding the nail) should be kept soft and smooth. Otherwise, it sticks to the nail and gets dragged as the nail grows. This causes the skin to get stretched and torn. The skin can even become infected if this happens. Daily massage is even more important during the dry winter season.

For moisturizing your nail, take 1 tablespoon of almond and castor oil, and mix a little hand cream in it. Massage the mixture into your hands. Follow up with moisturizer and treat yourself to a weekly hand at-home treatment mask. Never cut, push back, or try to get rid of cuticles altogether. In fact, the

cuticle is the nail's natural protective seal. Moisturizing the cuticles with cream or oil helps protect and strengthen your nails helping stimulate nail growth, and bringing blood and nutrients to maintain healthy nails. Cuticle oils will penetrate into the deeper layers of the skin and hydrate the cuticle, skin, and nail area, and help in preventing breakage of the nails.

Once a week soak the nails in lukewarm water for a few minutes and afterwards apply the cream to the nails. Massage them, so that it helps to soften the skin and lock in the moisture by wearing cotton gloves for at least an hour. Then push the cuticles back gently using a cotton bud. Never use sharp instruments to clean under the nails. For strong and healthy nails, include adequate protein and calcium in your diet. Take skimmed milk, yoghurt, cottage cheese (paneer), fish eggs and sprouts. Follow a ten-day programme of taking gelatin. Dissolve one teaspoon of gelatin in a little boiling water. Cool the water and add it to fruit juice. Have this daily for ten days.

A weekly manicure keeps nails in good condition. For a home manicure, first, remove old nail varnish. To cut nails, use a nail clip-

per. Then shape them with an emery board. File in one direction only. Soak the hands in lukewarm water for 5 minutes after adding a few drops of shampoo. Use a soft brush to clean your nails. If you have nails which break easily, avoid frosted nail polish. If there is any infection or pain, avoid filing the nails and using nail polish. Get medical attention first. Fungal infection of the nails is quite common. Sometimes, the nails acquire a yellowish tinge, due to wearing nail polish constantly. Sun exposure and some pastel colours can leave a yellowish tinge.

For protection, use clear, transparent nail polish as a top coat. UV-resistant top coats are also available. To protect the nails apply a transparent base coat first and then apply the colour of your choice.

To get rid of the yellowish tint on the nails, scrape the surface of the nail with the finest-grain side of an emery board so that the nail is not damaged. Then apply UV-resistant or clear polish for protection. The nails can also be "buffed" or rubbed with a piece of chamol leather.

The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

Oyster Blood Protein Could Help

Fight Against Antibiotic-Resistant Superbugs

A protein found in the blood of Australian oysters could help in the fight against antibiotic-resistant superbugs, according to a study published on Tuesday.

The study led by a team from Australia's Southern Cross University (SCU) discovered that a protein in the blood of the Sydney rock oyster is capable of killing bacteria as well as increasing the effectiveness of some antibiotics against a range of bacteria, Xinhua news agency reported.

In laboratory tests, they found that the protein was effective at killing *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Streptococcus pyogenes*, the bacteria that cause pneumonia and strep throat, respectively.

When used with antibiotics, the protein made them between two and 32 times more effective at killing the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*



and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. The researchers said that the study supported the potential use of natural products from oysters to treat bacterial infections.

They found that the protein is not toxic to human cells, indicating that it should be possible to optimise a

safe antibiotic from oyster blood. Antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) superbugs, bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites that no longer respond to antibiotics designed to kill them, have been identified as a major threat to global public health.

According to the World Health

Organization, infections that have developed AMR can be difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, disability, and death.

The research team found that the oyster protein can kill bacterial pathogens in biofilms, communities of organisms that stick together, enabling them to evade antibiotics and the human immune system.

"The oyster hemolymph proteins were found to prevent biofilm formation and disrupt biofilms, so the bacteria remain available to antibiotic exposure at lower doses," said co-author Kirsten Benkendorff from SCU's Faculty of Science and Engineering.

She said that the discovery provided a great opportunity for researchers and the aquaculture and pharmaceutical industries to collaborate on developing a new antibiotic.

NEWS

Why does the risk of kidney stones increase in winter?



Vijay Garg

Kidney stones or renal calculi are a common health problem. Which can cause serious problems if not cured in time. Yellow urine, burning sensation can be caused by stones. When stones are formed, these small hard minerals start accumulating inside the kidneys. Do cases of kidney stones increase during winter? We have seen many research papers to understand the reasons behind the increase in kidney stones in winter. So that the truth can be conveyed to you. Symptoms of kidney stones can cause severe pain, nausea and vomiting. If not treated on time, they can even affect kidney function. Due to this reason kidney stones start forming in winter. Winter brings with it many lifestyle and physical changes that cause kidney stones. People are less physically active during the cold months. Due to which digestion and bowel movements can slow down. Due to which the risk of kidney stone formation increases. Difficulty in going to toilet due to drinking less water and being less physically active. There is a problem with this pattern also. Which causes formation of stones in the kidney. Dehydration: According to a research published in the Journal of Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine, dehydration occurs more in winter because people drink less water. Often underestimate your body's hydration needs. This makes the toilet thick. Which creates an ideal environment for kidney stones to form. Diet can also cause kidney stones: Some food items like nuts and nut products, peanuts, spinach, red meat, chicken. Eating too much cheese and other dairy products can increase the risk of stone formation during winter. These food items are high in oxalates and proteins. Which helps in stone formation. Symptoms of kidney stones Decrease in the amount of toilet: Frequent toilet visits and decrease in the amount of urine leads to reduction of kidney stones. Severe pain in the back or lower abdomen: If your pain starts suddenly in these parts and this pain can sometimes be intense and sometimes less. Bleeding: Due to kidney stones. Bleeding is also common. Burning sensation and infection in the urinary tract: If there is burning or pain while urinating, it could be due to kidney stones and infection. Causes of kidney stones lack of minerals in the body When minerals like calcium, oxalate, uric acid start forming in the toilet, it can cause stones. Excess calcium and oxalate form stones. Lack of water in the body: One must drink 8-10 glasses of water every day. It controls urination and prevents the formation of kidney stones. If there is lack of water in the body if the toilet becomes thick, the minerals build up and form stones. Kidney stones can occur due to eating too much salt, protein, sugar, obesity, diabetes can cause kidney infection and problem of stones.

Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational Columnist Street Kaur Chand MHR Malout Punjab



Boost Your Health In Winter With These Nutritionist-Approved Food Swaps



As we work towards improving our health, the decisions we make in the kitchen can greatly impact our overall well-being. By making simple yet effective food swaps, we can set ourselves on the path to a healthier, more energetic life. Not sure where to begin?

Nutritionist Palak Nagpal shares five nutrient-dense food options to incorporate into your diet:

1. Replace packaged energy bars with homemade besan ladoos. They are packed with protein, and fibre and contain zero preservatives.
2. Ditch refined oils in favour of cold-pressed ones, which retain more nutrients.
3. Swap regular pasta for millet noodles. These are a gluten-free, fibre-rich alternative that supports gut health.
4. Choose peanut chikki over chocolates. It is naturally sweet, energy-boosting and full of healthy fats.
5. Say goodbye to packaged fruit juices and opt for fresh sugarcane juice. It is a natural hydration booster without added sugars or chemicals. "These swaps not only nourish your body but also reduce your exposure to unnecessary additives. Make eating clean delicious and satisfying," concludes Palak Nagpal.

In her previous Instagram post, Palak Nagpal shared how to cook sweet potatoes perfectly. She said, "If you want them to taste perfectly like those street-style sweet potato, here's what you got to do -- Wash and place them in a heavy bottom pan. Now switch the side after 5 minutes. Cook them on low flame for about 20 minutes. Poke with a knife, if it comes out smooth and clean then they are ready." The nutritionist added that the best way to serve them is by garnishing them with lemon juice, salt, pepper and cumin powder.

Why You Need To Add A Handful Of Nuts To Your Winter Diet

Eating nuts during winter can significantly boost health due to their dense nutritional profile. Nuts like almonds, walnuts, pistachios, and cashews are rich in healthy fats, protein, vitamins, and minerals that provide energy and help maintain warmth in cold weather. They support immune function, improve skin health, and combat winter dryness. Additionally, their antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties help protect against seasonal illnesses like colds and flu, making them an essential part of a winter diet. Keep reading as we share a list of benefits you can achieve from consuming a handful of nuts daily this winter.

1. **Provides energy and warmth**
Nuts are calorie-dense and rich in healthy fats, which provide sustained energy during winter when the body needs more fuel to stay warm. Omega-3 fatty acids in walnuts and almonds help regulate body temperature and keep you feeling cozy.
2. **Boosts immunity**
Nuts like almonds and Brazil nuts are packed with vitamin E and selenium, which are powerful antioxidants. These nutrients strengthen the immune system, helping your body fight off colds, flu, and other winter ailments.
3. **Improves skin health**
Cold weather often leads to dry and flaky skin. Nuts like almonds and cashews are rich in vitamin E, zinc, and essential fatty acids, which nourish the skin, prevent dryness, and promote a healthy glow during winter.
4. **Supports brain function**
Walnuts, known as "brain food," contain omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants that enhance cognitive function and protect against mental fatigue, which is common during the darker winter months.
5. **Aids heart health**
Nuts like almonds and pistachios help reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) and increase good cholesterol (HDL), improving heart health. Their magnesium and potassium content



also supports healthy blood pressure levels during winter.

6. **Reduces inflammation**
Winter can exacerbate inflammatory conditions like arthritis. Nuts such as walnuts and pecans contain anti-inflammatory compounds and omega-3 fatty acids that help reduce joint pain and stiffness.
7. **Promotes digestive health**
The high fibre content in nuts like almonds and pistachios aids digestion and prevents constipation, a common issue during winter due to reduced physical activity and water intake.
8. **Helps maintain healthy weight**
Despite being calorie-dense, nuts promote satiety, reducing hunger and preventing overeating. A handful of mixed nuts can act as a satisfying snack, curbing unhealthy cravings during the colder months.
9. **Enhances bone strength**
Nuts like almonds and Brazil nuts are rich in calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus, which strengthen bones and teeth. This is particularly beneficial in winter when the body's Vitamin D levels might drop due to limited sunlight exposure.

Australian International Adam Zampa Joins Sharjah Warriorz in Season 3 of ILT20

AGENCIES

SHARJAH, JAN 23

Sharjah Warriorz on Thursday announced the signing of Australian international cricketer Adam Zampa, who will replace the Sri Lankan wicket-keeper batter

Kusal Mendis, for the remainder of the Season 3 of the DP World ILT20.

Zampa, who has had a short stint in the ILT20 in its inaugural season, has played close to 400 T20 games in his career.

The Australian has an economy rate of less than 8 runs per over, and has bagged 117 wickets in 95 T20s and 355 wickets in 291 T20s.

He has also registered four five-wicket hauls in T20 cricket. The 32-year-old, who is inspired by the legendary Shane Warne, is also the first Australian bowler to bag 100 wickets in T20s and is currently the most prolific bowler for his national team.

He was also a key figure in Australia's T20 World Cup triumph in 2021,



finishing second on the wickets chart with 13 from 7 games at an economy of 5.81, and best figures of 5/19, which was also the best bowling performance in the overall tournament.

Interestingly, the 2021 T20 World Cup was played in UAE and Oman, and Zampa's experience from those matches will surely be beneficial for the Sharjah Warriorz at the ILT20.

The spinner joins the side with plenty of experience in T20 cricket and franchise leagues, and has turned out in the Big Bash League in Australia, the IPL in India, the Caribbean Premier League, The Hundred and the Vitality Blast in UK, and in Major

League Cricket in USA.

In the Sharjah Warriorz squad, Zampa will join the likes of Adil Rashid, Harmeet Singh, Mohammad Jawadullah, captain Tim Southee and Adam Milne, among others in the bowling unit.

"I am delighted to be returning to the UAE and joining the Sharjah Warriorz for the Season 3 of the DP World ILT20. The Warriorz are among the best franchises in the tournament and I am looking forward to working alongside the likes of Adil Rashid, Tim Southee and JP Duminy. I am confident that, we will do well as a team and produce some fantastic performances for

our fans in the second half of the tournament," said Adam Zampa.

"Adam Zampa is a brilliant bowler, and a player that every team would love to have. We are delighted to have him join our squad, and believe that he will be crucial to our progress in the tournament this season. He is one of the most dangerous bowlers in the format, and we are confident that can have a solid impact for the Sharjah Warriorz in the UAE, a country that has happy cricketing memories for him," said JP Duminy, Coach, Sharjah Warriorz.

"The Sharjah Warriorz is elated to have Adam Zampa join the squad for the third season of the ILT20. His never say die attitude is something that always uplifts any team, and the Warriorz would definitely not mind more of the fighting spirit. We look forward to seeing Adam Zampa causing all sorts of problems for the opposition batters," said Kshemal Waingankar, COO, Sharjah Warriorz.

Sabalenka beats Badosa to reach Australian Open final

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, JAN 23

Aryna Sabalenka will have the chance to become the first woman in 26 years to win three successive Australian Open titles after reaching the Melbourne final with a commanding win over Paula Badosa.

Belarusian top seed Sabalenka, who previously described Badosa as her "soulmate", recovered from an early setback to win 6-4 6-2, the BBC reported.

Badosa, contesting her first major semi-final, quickly went 2-0 up but the Spanish 11th seed would win just four of the next 16 games.

Sabalenka will face Iga Swiatek or Madison Keys in the final, where she will aim to emulate Martina Hingis' three straight titles between 1997-99.

"Just saying that, I have goosebumps. I am so proud of myself and my team that we were able to put ourselves in such a situation," Sabalenka said.

"It's a privilege and if I will be able to put my name in the history books it's going to mean the world to me," she said.

"At first I was dreaming to win at least one Grand Slam and now I have this opportunity and it's incredible," Sabalenka



The three-time major winner then took charge, reeling off four games in a row and was unrelenting from there.

Despite their off-court relationship, both players gave little away, barely exchanging a glance as they stayed focused on their respective tasks.

But, in a rare glimpse into their friendship, they shared relieved smiles after Badosa fell at the start of the second set before raising a reassuring thumb as she lay on the court.

What started as a fiercely-contested match began to drift away from Badosa when she gifted Sabalenka control of set two, conceding a break of serve with back-to-back double faults

Another double fault in the fifth game gave Sabalenka a chance for a second break, which she grabbed with one of her 32 winners before serving out victory in one hour and 26 minutes. Sabalenka, who was later seen consoling Badosa in the players' area, said: "It was a super tough match against a friend, I'm super happy to see her at her highest level."

"After a couple of battles against each other we have spoken and decided to put it aside, and here we both wanted it badly," she added.

Badosa was within a point of taking a 3-0 lead before Sabalenka switched up a gear.

since 2018 that the Australian Open women's final has featured the top two seeds.

Badosa, having stunned American third seed Coco Gauff in the quarter-finals, benefitted in the early stages as a tense Sabalenka conceded an immediate break of serve with four unforced errors.

Badosa was within a point of taking a 3-0 lead before Sabalenka switched up a gear.

Australia issue Ashes fitness & name 13-strong Test squad

AGENCIES

SYDNEY, JAN 23

Australia have named a 13-player group to play the Ashes Test and have made an adjustment to their T20I squad in the Women's Ashes against England due to ongoing injury issues for two of their key players.

Australia have already retained the Ashes thanks to victory in the first four matches of the series - the three One Day Internationals and the first T20I.

But the world's top-ranked team across all formats will be forced to fall back on their squad depth for the remainder of the Ashes due to injuries to two key players, an ICC report said.

Australia Test Squad: Alyssa Healy (c), Tahlia McGrath, Darcie Brown, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll, Georgia Wareham

Captain Alyssa Healy



sat out Thursday's second T20I with a foot injury that will also keep her out of the third and final T20.

The veteran batter has not yet been ruled out of the series-ending Test match, which is due to start on January 30, but Cricket Australia say that "her availability for the Test match will be determined in due course".

"Alyssa has got a stress response in her foot," national selector Shawn Flegler told local media.

"We're going to try and get a little bit more infor-

mation before we make a call on her. It's a big call for Alyssa."

Australia also have ongoing concerns over the fitness of all-rounder Ash Gardner, who currently tops the ICC Women's ODI all-rounder rankings and sits third in the T20I rankings.

Gardner also missed Thursday's second T20I and Cricket Australia have not put a timeline on her return to action, saying: "Ash Gardner will continue to be assessed daily, and her availability

for the 3rd T20I remains uncertain."

Both Healy and Gardner have been included in a 13-strong squad for the Test match.

With two such important players nursing injuries, Australia have opted to call up all-rounder Heather Graham to the T20 squad.

The selectors named an unchanged XI for the second T20I, but Graham could feature in the third and final 20-over contest. She is not part of the squad for the Test.

India to take on Syria in Mandiri U20 Challenge Series opener

AGENCIES

SIDOARJO (INDONESIA), JAN 23

The India U20 men's team will begin their campaign in the Mandiri U20 Challenge Series, a four-nation friendly tournament, against Syria on Friday at the Gelora Delta Stadium here.

Head coach Biby Thomas and his 23-member squad of

youngsters, consisting mainly of under 17 and under 18 players, arrived in their team hotel in the city of Surabaya on Wednesday morning and held their first training session in the evening at the Gelora 10 November Stadium.

India will meet Jordan on January 27 and hosts Indonesia on January 30.

It is obvious that the

tournament will be a mountain to climb for the Blue Colts, who are the youngest lot among the four participating teams.

Syria, Jordan and Indonesia are using these friendlies to prepare for next month's AFC U20 Asian Cup with 2005-born players. Thomas has 2007 and 2008-born players at his disposal for the Indonesia tour. This batch is

preparing for the SAFF U19 Championship to be held from May 8 to 18.

But there's no lack of international experience in the Indian team. A dozen of the 23 were part of the India U17 squad that won the SAFF U17 Championship 2024 in Bhutan and narrowly missed their spot in the AFC U17 Asian Cup in the qualifiers in Thailand last year.

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