

DC inaugurates Didi Ki Rasoi canteen at GDC Boys Udhampur

DC Doda flags off group of officials on Educational Exposure visit to Gujarat



PJ08

PJ9

UNION BUDGET 2025-26

PM Modi Hails 'People's Budget', Says Will Make Citizens Partners In Development

HT News Network



New Delhi, Feb 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lauded the Union Budget, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as a "people's budget" that puts more money in the hands of people and said it is a force-multiplier that will increase investments and lead to growth.

In televised remarks on the Budget, Modi said the government has opened up many sectors for the youth, who will drive the mission of "Viksit Bharat" (developed India). "This Budget is a force multiplier. This Budget will increase savings, investment, consumption and growth," the prime minister said, congratulating the finance minister and her team for presenting a "people's budget".

He said a budget usually focuses on increasing the income of the government, but the budget presented by Sitharaman seeks to put more money in the pockets of people, increase savings and make citizens partners in the development journey.

"The Budget lays a strong foundation to increase savings and make citizens partners in development," he said. Modi said welfare measures for gig workers underscore the government's commitment to the dignity of labour.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Big Budget Boost For Middle Class: No Income Tax Up To Rs 12 Lakh, KCC Limit Increased to 5 Lakhs : FM

HT News Network

New Delhi, Feb 1: Individuals earning up to Rs 12 lakh annually will not have to pay any income tax under the new tax regime as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday gave relief to middle class by raising exemption limit and rejigging slabs. For salaried employees, this nil tax limit will be Rs 12.75 lakh per annum, after taking into account a standard deduction of Rs 75,000.

Higher exemptions and rejigs have been effected under the new income tax regime. "I am now happy to announce that there will be no income tax payable up to income of Rs 12 lakh (i.e. average income of Rs 1 lakh per month other than special rate income

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



NC satisfied, Congress, PC, CPI(M) criticises

HT News Network

Srinagar, : The ruling National Conference on Saturday expressed satisfaction over some of the announcements made in the Union Budget 2025 while the other parties including Congress, Peoples Conference and CPI (M) criticised the financial plan.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

'Pragmatic' Budget Reflects India's Growing Aspiration To Stimulate Private Sector: LG Sinha

HT News Network

JAMMU, Feb 1: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday called the Union Budget "pragmatic", and said it reflects India's growing aspiration for accelerated growth and to



stimulate the private sector. Jammu travel guide

Sinha also said the revised tax structure is a historic move to bring change in the lives of the middle class.

"My heartfelt thanks

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K Gets Rs 41,000 Crore In Union Budget, Separate Allocation Of Rs 9,325 Crore For J&K Police

HT News Network



New Delhi, Feb 1: The Centre has allocated Rs 41,000.07 crore to Jammu and Kashmir in the Union Budget for 2025-26, which is almost the same as the revised estimate for the 2024-25 fiscal. Jammu travel guide. Additionally, the Jammu and Kashmir Police — directly controlled by the Union home ministry since the abrogation of Article 370 and the reorganisation of the erstwhile state — will receive Rs 9,325.73 crore, up from Rs 8,665.94 crore in 2024-25. In the budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha on Saturday, Rs 40,619.30 crore has been allocated as central assistance to meet the resource gap in Jammu and Kashmir. Rs 279 crore has been allocated as

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K Budget: Business community reacts cautiously

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 01: The Centre proposing allocation of Rs 41000.07 crore to Jammu & Kashmir in the 2025-26 Union Budget evoked a mixed response from the business community in the Union Territory.

Some traders welcomed key initiatives like tax relief and MSME support, while others voiced concerns over reduced financial allocations and the absence of a special economic package to revive the struggling industrial sector. The Kashmir Trade Alliance (KTA)—expressed its strong approval to the Union Budget highlighting the enhancement of the income tax slab

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Union Budget 2025-26 Time for Omar Abdullah to seek return of Shawls, revise cloudless weather commentary: Sajad Lone

HT News Network

Srinagar, In his stinging remarks on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah over Jammu & Kashmir's allocation in the Union Budget 2025-26, Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone on Saturday said that it is time for him to seek the return of shawls gifted by him to Union Ministers and revise his cloudless



weather commentary made at Sonamarg in Ganderbal district.

In a post on X, Lone, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), pointed out that there has been a reduction in J&K's allocation in the Union Budget. "The proposed allocation to J&K in the Union Budget is approximately 41,000 crores. It is approximately 1,000 crore less than the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NEWS BRIEF

1 dead, 3 injured in Ramban truck accident

HT News Network

Ramban, Feb 01:- One person died while as three others were injured in a road accident in Ramban district of Jammu division on Saturday.

An official told news agency JKNS that a truck bearing registration no JK013G-2103 rolled down in deep gorge at battery Chachma Ramban in which one died and three persons were injured who were shifted to district Hospital Ramban for treatment.

He said that the deceased driver has been identified as Yasir Ali and three injured persons have been identified as as Rafiqat Hussian, Zakir Hussain and Junaid Hussian. Meanwhile police have taken cognizance and started an investigation—(JKNS)

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Authorities Crack Down on Unhygienic Food Practices, Vendor's Shop Dismantled in Hazratbal

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 1: The Food Safety Department, in coordination with Hazratbal Police, took swift action against a street vendor accused of endangering public health by using contaminated oil for cooking. The vendor's makeshift shop was dismantled after locals raised concerns about food hygiene and the risk of infection.

According to reports, the vendor was found using oil from a tin in which dead mice were discovered. The alarming revelation had sparked widespread concern a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Nearly 99% JK schools sans digital library

HT News Network



Srinagar, Feb 01: In Jammu and Kashmir more than 98 percent of educational institutes sans digital library services—raising a question of limiting students' access to a wide range of restructured and efficient information.

The total number of schools having less than two percent of digital libraries does not remain

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

World Wetlands Day: DoWP to conduct 'Paddle for Wetland Conservation' on Sunday

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 01: As a part of awareness and conservation efforts to preserve the wetlands of Kashmir, the Department of Wildlife Protection, Jammu & Kashmir, in collaboration with the Wular Conservation & Management Authority, is conducting a cycling event, 'Paddle for Wetland Conservation' on Sunday.

The event, as per the officials, is part of awareness for this year's World Wetlands

Day that falls on 2 Feb 2025. The event aims to raise awareness about the wetlands in the region.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the cycling event will begin at the Hokersar Gate at 9 AM and proceed to the Narbal crossing before returning to the starting point.

Following the cycling event, participants will embark on a walk towards the Hokersar wetland, culminating in a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

J&K: January 2025 records 3 killings, lowest in more than 2 decades

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 01: January 2025 recorded the lowest number of killings over the past two decades, with just 3 fatalities—1 security force personnel and 2 terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, official data revealed on Saturday.

According to official data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in previous years, the number of killings in



January varied significantly.

In January 2024, 3 killings were also recorded, with 2 security force members and 1 terrorist among the victims. No civilian casualties were reported in January 2024.

In January 2023, the

total number of killings was 11, which included 7 civilians, 4 terrorists, and no security forces.

In January 2022, 24 people were killed, all of whom were terrorists, with no reported civilian casualties. Security forces suffered 2 fatalities.

The trend continued with fewer killings in subsequent years. January 2021 saw 11 killings, with 10 terrorists and one security force personnel among the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Digital addiction among Kashmir's children has reached 'pandemic' level, say doctors

Dr Sushil Razdan & Dr Kaisar Ahmed call for collective action to prevent devastating impact of screen addiction

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 01: Digital addiction among children in Jammu and Kashmir has reached alarming levels, with medical experts calling for urgent intervention to curb its impact.

Renowned neurologist Dr Sushil Razdan, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said early mobile phone use has harmful effects on brain development. He strongly advised against exposing children under the age of five to mobile devices saying that after this critical period, screen time should be carefully regulated to prevent dependency and ensure healthy cognitive growth.

Dr Razdan called upon parents to be proactive in monitoring their children's screen habits. "The parents must encourage their children to participate in enriching activities



that inculcate learning and creativity," he said. Similarly, noted paediatrician Dr Kaisar said that internet overuse has become a widespread issue. He called it a "pandemic"

that requires collective action from parents, teachers, doctors and society as a whole.

"Children should be engaged in alternatives that provide them with more joy and fulfill-

ment than mobile phones, while parents must take responsibility by investing quality time with their children to prevent addiction," Dr Kaisar said.

Both experts said that mobile phones should be completely avoided for children up to five years of age, and beyond that, strict content filtering and time restrictions should be implemented. They compared mobile phone usage to electricity—essential in today's world but something that should only be used when necessary. The doctors called for limiting mobile use to half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening to ensure that children do not develop an unhealthy attachment to digital devices. Another crucial point they raised was the behaviour of parents themselves, saying that excessive mobile use by adults in front of their children

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

FM

such as capital gains) under the new regime," the finance minister said.

"The new structure will substantially reduce the taxes of the middle class and leave more money in their hands, boosting household consumption, savings and investment," Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

As per the rejig, for people earning more than Rs 12 lakh per annum, there will be nil tax for income up to Rs 4 lakh, 5 per cent for income between Rs 4 and 8 lakh, 10 per cent for Rs 8-12 lakh, 15 per cent for Rs 12-16 lakh.

A 20 per cent income tax will be levied on income between Rs 16 and 20 lakh, 25 per cent on Rs 20-24 lakh and 30 per cent above Rs 24 lakh per annum.

A tax payer in the new regime with an income of Rs 12 lakh will get a benefit of Rs 80,000 in tax. A person having income of Rs 18 lakh will get a benefit of Rs 70,000 in tax. A person with an income of Rs 25 lakh gets a benefit of Rs 1.10 lakh.

SUMMARY OF UNION BUDGET 2025-26
- NO INCOME TAX ON AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME OF UPTO RS 1 LAKH; TO BOOST MIDDLE CLASS HOUSEHOLD SAVINGS & CONSUMPTION

- SALARIED CLASS TO PAY NIL INCOME TAX UPTO 12.75 LAKH PER ANNUM IN NEW TAX REGIME

- UNION BUDGET RECOGNISES 4 ENGINES OF DEVELOPMENT - AGRICULTURE, MSME, INVESTMENT AND EXPORTS

- BENEFITTING 1.7 CRORE FARMERS, 'PRIME MINISTER DHAN-DHAANYA KRISHI YOJANA' TO COVER 100 LOW AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY DISTRICTS

- "MISSION FOR AATMANIRBHARTA IN PULSES" WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON TUR, URAD AND MASOOR TO BE LAUNCHED

- LOANS UPTO Rs. 5 LAKHS THROUGH KCC UNDER MODIFIED INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME

- FY-25 ESTIMATED TO END WITH FISCAL DEFICIT OF 4.8%, TARGET TO BRING IT DOWN TO 4.4% IN FY-26

- SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENT OF CREDIT WITH GUARANTEE COVER TO MSMEs FROM 5 CR TO 10 CR

- ANATIONAL MANUFACTURING MISSION COVERING SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE INDUSTRIES FOR FURTHERING "MAKE IN INDIA"

- 50,000 ATAL TINKERING LABS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN NEXT 5 YEARS

- CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EDUCATION, WITH A TOTAL OUTLAY OF 500 CRORE

- PMSVANIDHI WITH ENHANCED LOANS FROM BANKS, AND UPI LINKED CREDIT CARDS WITH 30,000 LIMIT

- GIG WORKERS TO GET IDENTITY CARDS, REGISTRATION ON E-SHRAM PORTAL & HEALTHCARE UNDER PM JAN AROGYA YOJANA

- 1 LAKH CRORE URBAN CHALLENGE FUND FOR 'CITIES AS GROWTH HUBS'

- NUCLEAR ENERGY MISSION FOR R&D OF SMALL MODULAR REACTORS WITH AN OUTLAY OF 20,000 CRORE

- MODIFIED UDAN SCHEME TO ENHANCE REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY TO 120 NEW DESTINATIONS

- 15,000 CRORE SWAMIH FUND TO BE ESTABLISHED FOR EXPEDITIOUS COMPLETION OF ANOTHER 1 LAKH STRESSED HOUSING UNITS

- 20,000 CRORE ALLOCATED FOR PRIVATE SECTOR DRIVEN RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION INITIATIVES

- GYAN BHARATAM MISSION FOR SURVEY AND CONSERVATION OF MANUSCRIPTS TO COVER MORE THAN ONE CRORE MANUSCRIPTS

- FDI LIMIT ENHANCED FOR INSURANCE FROM 74 TO 100 PER CENT

- JAN VISHWAS BILL 2.0 TO BE INTRODUCED FOR DECRIMINALISING MORE THAN 100 PROVISIONS IN VARIOUS LAWS

- UPDATED INCOME TAX RETURNS TIME LIMIT INCREASED FROM TWO TO FOUR YEARS

- DELAY IN TCS PAYMENT DECRIMINALISED

- TDS ON RENT INCREASED FROM 2.4 LAKH TO 6 LAKH

- BCD EXEMPTED ON 36 LIFESAVING DRUGS AND MEDICINES FOR TREATING CANCER, RARE AND CHRONIC DISEASES

- BCD ON IFPD INCREASED TO 20% AND ON OPEN CELLS REDUCED TO 5%

- BCD ON PARTS OF OPEN CELLS EXEMPTED TO PROMOTE DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING

- TO BOOST BATTERY PRODUCTION, ADDITIONAL CAPITAL GOODS FOR EV AND MOBILE BATTERY MANUFACTURING EXEMPTED

- BCD EXEMPTED FOR 10 YEARS ON RAW MATERIALS & COMPONENTS USED FOR SHIP BUILDING

- BCD REDUCED FROM 30% TO 5% ON FROZEN FISH PASTE AND 15% TO 5% ON FISH HYDROLYSATE.

PM

He said the measures presented in the Budget for the manufacturing sector will allow Indian products to shine globally.

The tax relief will provide big benefits to

the middle class and salaried employees.

The announcements in the Budget for farmers will revolutionise the agriculture sector and rural economy.

"In terms of reforms, many important steps have been taken in this Budget. Encouraging the private sector in nuclear energy is historic. It will ensure a big contribution of civil nuclear energy in the development of the country," the prime minister said. (Agencies)

J&K

grants towards contribution to the Union Territory Disaster Response Fund and Rs 101.77 crore as support for capital expenditure.

The Centre had allocated Rs 42,277.74 crore to Jammu and Kashmir for the 2024-25 fiscal that was later revised downwards to Rs 41,000.07 crore. In the 2023-24 fiscal, the allocation for Jammu and Kashmir was Rs 41,751.44 crore.

The allocation for the Jammu and Kashmir Police for the upcoming 2025-26 fiscal is Rs 659.79 crore higher than in 2024-25.

The Union home ministry said the fund was for meeting administrative expenditures.

The Jammu Kashmir Police is responsible for maintaining and enforcing law and order and traffic management in the Union Territory.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha called the budget "pragmatic" and said it reflected India's growing aspiration for accelerated growth and to stimulate the private sector.

The Congress' Jammu and Kashmir unit and senior CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami, however, called the budget allocation "disappointing".

"My heartfelt thanks to (Union) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for a pragmatic budget for 'Viksit Bharat'. Grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for putting the economy on a fast-track and for bold development initiatives for the poor, youth, farmers and women," the lieutenant governor said in a post on X, Jammu travel guide

Referring to the Income Tax exemption up to Rs 12 lakh under the new regime, Sinha said it was a big boost to the middle class.

"The revised tax structure is a historic move to bring change in the lives of the middle class. The prime minister has also provided huge relief to the taxpayers by raising the TDS limit on rent, enhancing social security and formalising the gig economy," Sinha said.

"The focus on agricultural growth with various initiatives, including the agri district programme, seeks to translate the vision of rural prosperity and social equity," he added.

India is the fastest-growing of all major economies and this budget will further boost the infrastructure sector; micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); the energy sector; innovation; employment generation; and push transformative reforms in key fields for more inclusive and sustainable growth, he further said.

Reacting to the budget, Kulgam MLA Tarigami said it was "highly disappointing" as far as Jammu and Kashmir was concerned.

"Instead of providing more assistance to Jammu and Kashmir, the Centre has lowered the allocation compared to the actual budget of 2024-25, without taking into account the high inflation, growing unemployment, distressed business and other vital sectors of livelihood," he said.

"The purchasing power of the people including the so-called middle class has alarmingly come down in Jammu and Kashmir over the years," he added.

NC

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), NC Spokesman and MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq while speaking to the media persons here said that some of the reforms in the Budget were positive.

However, he said that Jammu and Kashmir should be included in the 50 new tourist destinations and medical tourism. "We are expecting J&K to be included in it," he said.

Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief Tariq Hameed Karra said it has ignored the genuine case of youth of J&K for special attention.

"The union budget has ignored J&K in terms of the special focus needed here to give relief to worst suffering people especially the youth in special circumstances prevailing in this border region and rather the budget focussed more on Bihar & Delhi for political considerations," he said.

In his stinging remarks on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah over Jammu & Kashmir's allocation, Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone said that it is time for him to seek the return of shawls gifted by him to Union Ministers and revise his cloudless weather commentary made at Sonamarg in Ganderbal district.

In a post on X, Lone, as per the Kashmir News Observer (KNO), pointed out that there has been a reduction in J&K's allocation in the Union Budget. "The proposed allocation to J&K in the Union Budget is approximately 41,000 crores. It is approximately 1,000 crore less than the previous allocation. When adjusted for inflation, it is reduced by another

2,000 to 3,000 crores," he said.

The CPI (M) said that the Union Budget 2025-26 is a "cruel betrayal" of the requirements of the people of India. "Instead of addressing the root cause of the demand problem being faced by so many sectors of the economy, the lack of purchasing power in the hands of large sections of the population because of mass unemployment and shrinking wages, the Modi government through the budget is seeking to stimulate the economy by giving tax cuts to the small minority with higher incomes even as expenditures are cut."

"While the Economic Survey shows the desperate plight of India's labour force, pointing out the decrease in earnings over the last five years, this budget with its emphasis on cutting government expenditures while giving concessions to the rich will only increase the huge inequalities in India. Instead of mobilising resources by taxing the rich and the big corporate houses and pushing up public investment that would help generate employment and ensure a minimum wage for our people, it has chosen to do the opposite."

BUSINESS

to Rs 12 lakh. KTA President Aijaz Shahdar in a statement, said, "The KTA believes that this increase will provide much-needed relief to taxpayers, allowing them to retain a larger portion of their hard-earned income."

President of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCC&I), Javid Tenga, while speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), voiced concern over the Rs 1,200 crore 'reduction' in the budget compared to the previous year.

He said the trade body had expected an increase of at least 20-25% to support development and fund inflows in the region. "We are disappointed because we were expecting a boost in financial allocations. This reduction raises serious concerns about how development will take place and how funds will be generated for various sectors," Tenga said.

However, he acknowledged some positive aspects at the central level, particularly the increase in the Credit Guarantee Fund for MSMEs from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore and the enhancement of the Prime Minister's Mudra Scheme from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.

He said these steps would benefit young entrepreneurs, especially given J&K's high unemployment rate.

In the tourism sector, Tenga welcomed the government's plan to develop 50 new destinations, exuding hope that at least 8-10 of them would be in Kashmir, given the region's prominence in the industry.

On the ground level, however, Tenga noted that the budget lacked direct relief for traders and industrialists in J&K. "There is no special package for our industrial sector, which has been our long-standing demand. We have represented this issue multiple times before the Finance Minister and the J&K administration, and we will raise it again," he said, adding, "We need a relief package and the restoration of the Rs 1,200 crore cut."

Meanwhile, in a statement, a KCCCI spokesman said, "The budget includes several commendable initiatives that promise to enhance economic activity. However, there is a pressing need for a special revival and infrastructural development package tailored to the unique challenges faced by Jammu and Kashmir, more so considering the huge unemployment problem being faced by the youth in the Union Territory."

The KCCI spokesman while listing the "steps in right direction" said, "Provision for an increase in medical seats by 10,000, an increase of 7500 seats in ITIs, the availability of 36 cancer drugs free of charge, the introduction of Mudra loans for homestays to boost tourism, tax exemption on interest on savings of senior citizens, and the Atal Tinkering scheme covering 50,000 schools will enhance the quality of life and economic prospects in the region."

Mohammad Yaseen Khan, another prominent trade leader, while speaking to KNO, said, "The budget lacks the elements to address the specific economic challenges of J&K."

However, he appreciated the changes in tax slabs and some central schemes but was quick to add that "there is nothing in the budget for middle-class traders on the ground."—(KNO)

HAZRATBAL

mong devotees.

Following the outcry, Food Safety officials and Srinagar Police, acting on the directions of SP Hazratbal Hilal Khaliq, along with DO Hazratbal and SHO Nigeen, dismantled the shop. Additionally, an FIR (10/2025) was registered at Nigeen Police Station under Section 271 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for negligence and posing a potential public health hazard.

Food Safety Department and police inspected other makeshift shops too and advised them to follow the hygienic standards. [KNT]

WETLAND

pledge-taking ceremony to reinforce com-

mitments toward wetland conservation.

Officials said that in preparation for the event, extensive cleanliness drives have been conducted throughout the past week across multiple wetlands.

"These efforts, carried out twice a day, have focused on clearing solid and floating waste from the wetland areas. NGOs, local volunteers, and other stakeholders have actively participated in these initiatives to ensure the wetland remains ecologically viable," the official said.

Notably, the department also hosted a bird photography competition, inviting nature enthusiasts and photographers to visit designated wetlands across Kashmir and capture stunning avian moments between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on 1 Feb 2025.

Participants were asked to explore Shalabugh, Hokersar, Pampore, Hygam, and Wular Wetlands, which are rich in biodiversity and serve as crucial habitats for migratory birds.

The officials said that this initiative aligns with the global theme of "Ecosystem Restoration" under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, highlighting the importance of wetland conservation for ecological balance and sustainable futures—(KNO)

SAJAD LONE

previous allocation. When adjusted for inflation, it is reduced by another 2,000 to 3,000 crores," he said.

Lone said it is time for Omar Abdullah to seek the return of shawls gifted by him to BJP ministers. "I think it is time CM sahib asks for the return of those shawls, which he so slavishly gifted and wrapped around the shoulders of top echelons of BJP. I think CM sahib should also revise the cloudless weather commentary that he made in Sonmarg," he said.

Lone added that people have voted for a deliverer and not a delivery boy. "On a serious note dear CM sahib—Chief Ministerial duties go much beyond skiing and selfies. It is a serious and pious business. Do what it takes to deliver. People have voted for a deliverer, not a delivery boy," he posted on X—(KNO)

SCHOOLS

confined to government-run schools only but the majority of the private schools of Jammu and Kashmir also lack the vital services for the students. According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), only 373 schools across Jammu and Kashmir were having digital library services available for the students. The recent official figures reveal that "Among the total 24,296 government and private schools of Jammu and Kashmir, only 373 institutions that amount to 1.53 percent were having the digital libraries."

It also reveals that in 5452 private schools of Jammu and Kashmir, more than 12 Lakh students and in the case of 18,785 government schools, over 14 Lakh students were enrolled. The official figures further reveal that among the total schools in Jammu and Kashmir, 26 percent of private and government educational institutions were either lacking libraries, books banks or reading corners.

According to the recent official figures, only 18,000 schools out of 24,296 institutions of Jammu and Kashmir were having libraries, books banks or reading corners.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir earlier used to have a total of 28,805 government and private schools. However, as per the official figures, the count had reduced to 24,279 schools. An official had said that the count of overall public schools in Jammu and Kashmir reduced because of having zero or extremely low students enrollment. Those schools were merged with the nearby public schools.

The official figures previously had revealed that the primary schools category of public schools was hit badly wherein the count of overall public schools in Jammu and Kashmir reduced by nearly 30 percent—(KNO)

JANUARY

victims, and no civilian deaths. January 2020 had 26 killings, including 4 security forces and 22 terrorists, but no civilians were killed.

Earlier years such as 2019 and 2018 showed similar fluctuations in the number of fatalities, with a mix of terrorists and security forces among the casualties, but relatively fewer civilian deaths.

The pattern indicates that while terrorist killings remained high over the years, civilian and security force deaths significantly decreased in recent years, especially after 2017.

In 2017, there were 16 reported killings. The number remained low in 2016 with 6 killings. In 2015, the total was 15, followed by 8 in 2014.

The trend continued with 4 killings in both 2012 and 2013, and 6 in 2011. In 2010, the total was 24, and it dropped to 26 in 2009.

The numbers decreased further with 34 in 2008, 43 in 2007, and 70 in 2006. In 2005, the killings were down to 120, and 2004 saw 136 total killings.

The numbers started to surge in 2003 with 176 killings, continuing to 288 in 2002. The year 2001 recorded the highest fatalities at

203, including 64 civilians, 41 security forces, and 98 militants. In 2000, there were no reported killings.

HEIGHTENED SECURITY VIGILANCE

Meanwhile, a security official stated that heightened security vigilance in Jammu and Kashmir has contributed to maintaining law and order stability.

He also stated that the Union Home Ministry has passed clear instructions to prevent any civilian or security forces personnel killings. Additionally, the MHA has ordered large-scale operations against terrorists.

In a recent high-level meeting, Union Home Minister Amit Shah instructed all security agencies to work together in a coordinated effort to eliminate terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir. He emphasized the urgent implementation of the Area Domination Plan and Zero Terror Plan.

"The Union Home Minister assured that all necessary resources would be made available to security agencies in J&K to achieve a terror-free region," he added.

Another official stated that there is a strict vigil along the Line of Control across Jammu & Kashmir. "Terrorists attempting to disrupt peace by crossing into this side are being eliminated. Our border security grid is conducting round-the-clock patrols, closely monitoring everything, leaving no room for any lapses in security," he added.

The official further said that the latest technology is being deployed along the borders, including CCTV surveillance, drone jammers, and other advanced equipment. These technological measures are enhancing border security, ensuring real-time monitoring and quick response to any potential threats—(KNO)

DIGITAL

normalises screen addiction. Parents need to set an example by limiting their own screen time, promoting interactive family activities, and encouraging outdoor play, they said.

Beyond personal responsibility, both doctors highlighted the need for a societal approach to addressing digital addiction. They said the government, in collaboration with educators, healthcare professionals, the media and other stakeholders must take an active role in spreading awareness about the responsible use of mobile devices.

This includes ensuring that children are primarily exposed to educational and informative content while keeping them away from harmful and non-productive digital influences, they added.

Dr Sushil and Dr Kaisar said the psychological effects of prolonged screen time on children are concerning. They cited studies showing increased risks of anxiety, poor attention spans, disrupted sleep patterns and social isolation.

To combat this growing crisis, they said the focus should be on creating a balanced environment where children can benefit from technology without falling into its trap—normalises screen addiction. Parents need to set an example by limiting their own screen time, promoting interactive family activities, and encouraging outdoor play, they said.—(KNO)

LG

Tarigami said the central government should have responded to the situation and offered some relief to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "It seems they are punishing the people of Jammu and Kashmir for the mandate of the 2024 assembly elections, which did not suit them." Jammu travel guide

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee also reacted sharply to the budget and said it had ignored the region in terms of the special focus needed to provide relief to the "worst suffering" people, especially the unemployed youngsters.

"The budget was more focused on Bihar and Delhi for political considerations in view of assembly elections," the Congress' Jammu and Kashmir chief Tariq Hameed Karra said.

Jammu and Kashmir is grappling with the worst kind of unemployment, which is the second highest in the country, while a large number of youngsters working on meagre wages are awaiting regularisation, he said.

"Except for a long-overdue minor relief for the salaried class in Income Tax slabs, .

اطلاع عام
بجلی کنکشن کا نام تبدیل کرنا مطلوب ہے۔
راقم گوہر حسین میر سالکن اشاجی پورہ پل
باٹی پاس روڈ کے نام پر بجلی کنکشن زیر مینٹر
نمبر 10355 چل رہا ہے اور بل بھی وقت پر
اداکر تھو اب متذکرہ کنکشن عمر اقبال راٹھر
کے نام کرنا مطلوب ہے اس ضمن میں اگر کسی
بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی بھی عذریا
اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر دفتر
اوقات کے دوران متعلقہ دفتر میں پیش کریں بعد
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گوہر حسین میر سالکن اشاجی پورہ
مینٹر نمبر 10355



Multi-disciplinary Research Unit, GMC Srinagar's 4th LRAC meeting highlights achievements

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 01: The fourth Local Research Advisory Committee (LRAC) meeting of the Multidisciplinary Research Unit (MRU) was held at Government Medical College Srinagar (GMC). The meeting aimed to review the progress of research projects being carried out in MRU-GMC Sgr, which is funded by the Department of Health Research (DHR), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. Khurshid Iqbal and Co-Chaired by Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmad Ganai, Director CORD Univ of Kashmir, with Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan, Principal/Dean GMC Sgr, as the observer and Chairperson of the Executive Committee, MRU-GMC Sgr. ICMR nominee Dr. Tanu Anand was also present. Prof. Dr. Sabhiya Majid, Nodal Officer, MRU, and Scientist C MRU-GMC Sgr, Dr. Younis Rather, presented notable achievements and modulated the proceedings. The meeting highlighted the dedicated efforts of the MRU team in advancing the MRU scheme and providing broad-based



research and infrastructure support to various departments of GMC Srinagar and its associated hospitals. Principal Investigators (PIs) from various departments, including Psychiatry, Physiology, Chest Medicine, Dermatology, Biochemistry, Endocrinology, Gynaecology & Obs, Surgery, Paediatrics, Neurology, and Medicine, presented reports on eight

recently completed or ongoing collaborative research projects. These projects focus on understanding the molecular and pathological basis of diseases, developing targeted treatment approaches, improving diagnostics, and advancing medical technology for better disease management and patient outcomes. The research has led to 12 recent

publications in peer-reviewed indexed journals with an impact factor of 4-5. Research proposals were presented by PIs from various departments for approval, and four proposals from the Departments of Dermatology, Microbiology, and Medicine were approved by LRAC with concrete suggestions. Additionally, it was decided that a compendium of research carried out in MRU-GMC Srinagar would be published annually. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. Khurshid Iqbal and Co-Chaired by Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmad Ganai, Director CORD Univ of Kashmir, with Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan, Principal/Dean GMC Sgr, as the observer and Chairperson of the Executive Committee, MRU-GMC Sgr. ICMR nominee Dr. Tanu Anand was also present. Prof. Dr. Sabhiya Majid, Nodal Officer, MRU, and Scientist C MRU-GMC Sgr, Dr. Younis Rather, presented notable achievements and modulated the proceedings. The meeting highlighted the dedicated efforts of the MRU team in advancing the MRU scheme and providing broad-based research and infrastructure support to various departments of GMC Srinagar and its associated hospitals.

Family of Deceased Nowgam Youth Stages Protest, Seeks Justice for Mysterious Death

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 1.: The family of a young man from Nowgam, Srinagar, whose dead body was found inside his vehicle at Digidol, Ramban, last month, staged a protest on Saturday, demanding a thorough investigation into his death. The protesters, carrying placards, gathered at Railway Colony, Nowgam, urging the authorities to probe the matter and deliver justice. The deceased, Umar Yaseen, was a Railway Colony, Nowgam resident. His body was discovered under mysterious circumstances in his vehicle in the Digidol area of Ramban district. While the exact cause of death remains unknown, his family firmly believes that it was not a natural death but a case of murder. Speaking to the news agency Kashmir News Trust, the father of the deceased expressed deep anguish and called for a fair and transparent probe. "We do not suspect anyone in particular, but we strongly believe that our son did not die a natural death. We urge the police to investigate thoroughly and bring the truth to light," he said. The protestors held banners and placards seeking justice for Umar Yaseen, appealing to authorities to expedite the investigation. The bereaved family demanded that law enforcement agencies uncover the circumstances leading to his tragic death. [KNT]

Muslims in Tral Help Perform Last Rites of Sikh Neighbor, Showcasing Communal Harmony

HT News Network

Pulwama, Feb 1.: In a moving display of communal harmony and brotherhood, local Muslims in Chandrigam Tral came together to assist in performing the last rites of their Sikh neighbor, Suraj Singh, who passed away suddenly due to a brain hemorrhage. Locals of the area set aside religious differences and stood in solidarity with the grieving Sikh family, offering both emotional and logistical support during their time of loss. Eyewitnesses recounted and told the news agency Kashmir News Trust how Muslim neighbors actively participated in the funeral arrangements, ensuring that all rituals were carried out respectfully. "Suraj Singh was not just a neighbor; he was family to us. His loss is deeply felt by the entire village," said one of the locals who assisted in the rites.

Stray Dogs Kill 12 Sheep in Budgam, Farmer Appeals for Compensation

HT News Network

Budgam, Feb 1, KNT: An attack by stray dogs resulted in the death of 12 sheep and left many others injured late last night in the upper reaches of Sail Beerwah in Budgam district. The incident took place in the livestock shed of Ghulam Rasool Reshi, the owner of the sheep, who recounted the terrifying ordeal. Reshi told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that the stray dogs managed to barge into the shed, causing chaos among the animals. "On hearing the noise, I rushed to save my sheep, but the dogs were aggressive and even tried to attack me," he said.

J&K Bank gives a warm send off to General Manager Tabassum Nazir

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Feb 1: The Jammu & Kashmir Bank bid a warm farewell to its General Manager Tabassum Nazir, who superannuated after serving the institution with dedication for over 35 years in various key capacities. Executive Director (ED) Sudhir Gupta chaired the farewell function held at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters, which was attended by General Managers, Deputy General Managers and other senior officials. In his message on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee lauded her contribution to the Bank's growth and success. "Her commitment and unique leadership will leave a lasting impact on the institution. She has been an inspiration to many, and we deeply appreciate her dedication over the decades. We wish her the very best in her future endeavours," he said. Commending her contribution, ED Sudhir Gupta said that Tabassum Nazir has set high benchmark of performance for younger staff especially women officers of the Bank. Expressing her gratitude, Tabassum Nazir thanked the Bank's leadership and colleagues for their support throughout her journey. "I carry with me countless cherished memories from this beloved institution, which I consider the most precious gift of my life," she said. The event concluded with heartfelt wishes for her future from her colleagues, acknowledging her valuable contribution to the Bank's rich legacy.



District Information Centre B'pora organizes interaction-cum-Felicitation for Media Persons

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 01: The District Information Centre (DIC) Bandipora, in collaboration with the District Administration Bandipora, organized an Interaction-cum-Felicitation Ceremony for media persons on Saturday at the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora. The event was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, and attended by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Mohammad Ashraf Bhatt, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Zaffar Husson Shawl, District Information Officer (DIO), Aadil Manzoor Wani besides media persons. Addressing the function, DC acknowledged the pivotal role of the media in highlighting public issues,



disseminating information, and fostering awareness among the masses. He lauded the role of media in highlighting developmental, social, and administrative achievements & progress. He emphasized the impor-

tance of constructive collaboration between the District Administration and the media, highlighting that such synergy is essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and public welfare. He stated that the felicita-

tion ceremony is aimed to recognizing the media as a vital stakeholder in the district's development. On the occasion, media persons from various outlets were felicitated & presented mementos for their remarkable contributions in the implementation of developmental works & schemes. The event was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, and attended by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Mohammad Ashraf Bhatt, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Zaffar Husson Shawl, District Information Officer (DIO), Aadil Manzoor Wani besides media persons. Addressing the function, DC acknowledged the pivotal role of the media in highlighting public issues, disseminating information.

BJP J&K spokesman Altaf Thakur hails union Budget 2025-26 as pro-poor, farmer-friendly, Inclusive

Says no income tax upto Rs 12 lakh income a revolutionary Announcement

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 1: Senior BJP leader and Jammu & Kashmir party spokesman Altaf Thakur today welcomed the Union Budget 2025-26, calling it a transformational and inclusive roadmap designed to uplift the poor, destitute, women, and farmers while propelling the nation towards sustainable economic growth.

Thakur stated that the budget reflects the government's unwavering commitment to social welfare and inclusive development, ensuring that the benefits of economic progress reach every corner of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir. He said that raising the income tax limit from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 12 lakh a year is a great and revolutionary announcement by the Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman.

In a statement issued here, Thakur highlighted that the increased allocation for rural development, enhanced support for farmers, and focused initiatives aimed at women empowerment showcase the government's



dedication to addressing the concerns of the common man. "This budget is aimed at lifting the spirits of the marginalized and boosting grassroots development," he said, praising the Centre and Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman for her people-centric approach.

Thakur praised the 20% hike in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), which will accelerate affordable housing for rural families. He also welcomed the increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for key crops and the introduction of a Rs 1.5 lakh crore Agricultural Infrastructure Fund to

support irrigation, storage, and logistics. A new crop insurance scheme with reduced premiums and a Rs 50,000 crore push for organic farming were also highlighted as crucial steps toward ensuring farmers' prosperity.

Thakur underscored the Rs 50,000 crore allocation for women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), stating that this will empower rural women economically and foster entrepreneurship. The launch of the 'Nari Shakti Vikas Yojana', focusing on skill development and leadership training, and the extension of maternity benefits were also seen as landmark initiatives. Calling it a budget for the common man, Thakur applauded the extension of the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which will continue providing free food grains to over 80 crore people. The budget also includes enhanced pensions for senior citizens, widows, and differently-abled individuals and the launch of 'Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan 2.0' to generate 50 lakh new jobs in rural areas.

Er Aijaz Hussain Resolves Long-Pending Issue of Traditional Mining in River Jhelum, Boosting Local Economy in Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, January 30, 2025: Er Aijaz Hussain, DDC Lalchowk and Senior BJP Leader, today successfully inaugurated the long-pending initiative for sand mining extraction from the River Jhelum in Srinagar, addressing an issue that has affected hundreds of local miners for years. The initiative revives traditional or customary mining practices, which were halted in 2019 despite receiving permission.

Through his persistent efforts, Er Aijaz Hussain has facilitated the identification of six key spots for traditional mining along the river, providing a lifeline to the local community dependent on this industry. The move is set to ensure sustainable mining practices while benefiting hundreds of people involved in the trade. To mark the occasion, Er



Aijaz Hussain personally saw off the first vehicle carrying sand from Padshahibagh, symbolizing the official reopening of the mining operations. The local community expressed deep gratitude to him for his dedication in resolving the issue and making this long-awaited initiative a reality. Er Aijaz Hussain also extended heartfelt thanks to Honourable Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha Ji, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin, Chief Engineer Irriga-

tion and Flood Control, Director of Geology and Mining Department, DMO Srinagar, and all concerned line departments for their unwavering support and efforts in mitigating the challenges faced by the local mining community. His appreciation highlighted the collective commitment of the administration in making this initiative possible.

During his address, Er Aijaz Hussain emphasized the importance of not only reviving an age-old industry but also ensuring the

extraction process is environmentally sustainable. He acknowledged the significant role that traditional mining plays in the livelihoods of the people in Srinagar and reaffirmed his commitment to supporting initiatives that benefit the local community and foster sustainable development. "This initiative has been a long time coming, and I'm proud to have played a part in ensuring that our traditional mining practices are not only revived but also managed in a way that supports both our people and the environment," said Er Aijaz Hussain. The reopening of sand mining operations is expected to provide much-needed economic support to the region, ensuring a steady supply of materials for local construction projects.

EDITORIAL

Time to regulate consultation fee of doctors at private clinics

Hundreds of doctors are carrying out private practice at the different clinics in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir, but it is quite surprising that there is no fixed consultation fee for the same. The doctors charge according to their own wish and they are least bothered about the affordability of a particular patient. At times the patients could be seen pleading with the owner of the clinic over this issue, but at the end of the day they fail to convince the other side.

Some years back the health & medical education department had fixed consultation fees for the different levels of medics carrying out practice at the private clinics. However, it has been observed that the consultation fee charged by a doctor is according to the wish of that particular doctor. At times the consultation fee of a particular medico is decided by the owner of the clinic and the people are more than willing to pay for the consultation fee fixed by the clinic owner.

It seems that the health & medical education department has limited its mandate in this regard to the mere issuance of the order since no follow-up action was taken. No raid was carried out on any clinic and this inaction from the people at helm emboldened the doctors and the clinic owners to fix consultation fees of their own. At the end of the day it is the common man who suffers and there are very few people who are concerned about the same.

It is very important that the consultation fee of a particular doctor is fixed according to his or her experience in that particular field of medicine. At the same time it is important that strict vigil is carried out on the doctors working in the government sector. Many of such doctors usually leave the hospitals earlier and can be seen rushing towards their clinics in order to earn quick bucks. This is a serious matter and needs immediate action from the concerned authorities.

In places other than Jammu & Kashmir a medico has to choose between a government job and a private one. The union territory of Jammu & Kashmir has its own set of rules in each and every sphere of life and medicine is no exception. There is no harm in earning more but the doctors should remember that medicine is a noble profession and people consider a doctor no less than a God.

From the Mahakhumbh's crowd to winning hearts worldwide!

BY M S NAZKI

Garlands are one of the many props that are put up for sale during the Hindu festivities and Maha Kumbh is one of the biggest festivals which comes after every twelve years! This is the year of the Maha Kumbh!

People have gathered from all over the Nation and internationally too to take the holy dip in the Sangam of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati!

-But before we come to the festival's such let us talk about the history of Prayag-

Prayag in modern-day Allahabad is believed to be the most important pilgrimage centre for Hindus. Traditionally river confluences are regarded as auspicious places, but in Sangam, the significance of the confluence is most pious because here, the holy Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati meet to become one.

According to legends, Vishnu was carrying a Kumbh (pot) of amrit (nectar), when a scuffle broke out and four drops were spilled. They fell to earth at the four Tirthas of Prayag, Haridwar, Nasik and Ujjain.

A tirtha (pilgrimage center) is a place where the devout can attain salvation. The event is commemorated every three years by the Kumbh Mela, held at each tirtha in turn; the Sangam is known as Tirtharaj, the 'King of Tirthas' and here the Kumbh is held once in every twelve years, which is the greatest and holiest of all.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is the largest religious congregation in India, attended by millions. The over month-long fair is marked by the construction of a massive tented township, complete with cottages, huts, platforms, civic facilities, administrative and security measures. It is organized immaculately by the government, the local authorities and the police. The mela is especially renowned for the presence of an extraordinary array of religious ascetics - sadhus and mahants - enticed from remote hideaways in forests, mountains and caves. Once astrologers have

determined the propitious bathing time or Kumbhbayog, the first to hit the water is by legions of Naga Sadhus or Naga Babas, who cover their naked bodies with ash and wear hair in long dreadlocks. The sadhus, who see themselves as guardians of the faith, approach the confluence at the scheduled time with all the pomp and bravado of a charging army. The most recent Maha Kumbh Mela was held in 2013 and the next is due in 2025.

-Sangam

This is the point where the brown water of the Ganga meets the green water of the Yamuna, along with the mythical Saraswati, which remains unseen but believed to run underground. It is located about 7 km from Civil Lines, overlooked by the eastern ramparts of the Akbar Fort.

Wide flood plains and muddy banks protrude towards the sacred Sangam. At the mid-river point priests perch on small platforms to perform puja and assist the devout in their ritual ablutions in the shallow waters. A dip in the Sangam water is supposed to be the holiest of the holy pilgrimages for the devout Hindu. Boats to the Sangam can be rented by pilgrims and tourists alike at the ghat near the fort. It is during the Maha Kumbh/Kumbh that the Sangam truly comes alive, attracting the devout from all across the country.

-Kumbh:

The main festival is celebrated among four sacred sites in India, each located along the banks of a holy river, in a 12-year cycle. These sites are: Haridwar on the Ganges River in Uttarakhand, Ujjain on the Shipra in Madhya Pradesh, Nashik on the Godavari in Maharashtra, and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh where the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers converge. Each site's celebration is based on a distinct set of astronomical positions of the Sun, the Moon, and Jupiter, the holiest time occurring at the exact moment when these posi-



tions are fully occupied.

-Types of Kumbh Melas

The Kumbh Melas, each lasting several weeks, are observed at various times and locations according to the Hindu tradition. These gatherings hold great spiritual significance and attract millions of devotees from across the world. The frequency of the melas varies, some occurring annually and the Maha Kumbh Mela ("Great Kumbh Festival") taking place every 144 years in Prayagraj.

The girl in picture selling garlands is just one of the many props that are put on show on the Kumbh:

Tradition ascribes the Kumbh Mela's origin to the 8th-century philosopher Shankara, who instituted regular gatherings of learned ascetics for discussion and debate. The founding myth of the Kumbh Mela attributed to the Puranas (collections of myth and legend) recounts how the gods and demons fought over the pot (kumbha) of amrit, the elixir of immortality produced by their joint churning of the milky ocean. This churning of the ocean is widely known as the Samudra Manthana or Sagara Manthana.

To prevent the demons from winning the elixir, enchantress Mohini, an avatar of Lord Vishnu, seized the pot and carried it to heaven. As she did so, drops of the elixir fell on the Kumbh Mela's four earthly sites (Haridwar, Nashik, Prayagraj, and Ujjain). At the climactic moment of each mela, it is believed that the rivers at those holy sites transform into vessels of that primor-

soldiers and traders. Although the Indian government now enforces an established bathing order, history records bloody disputes between groups vying for precedence.

-Akharas

The term akhara is derived from the Hindi word for a wrestling arena and reflects the focus on both spiritual growth and physical discipline. Historically, akharas were centers of learning and defense, safeguarding Hinduism during societal changes and invasions. They protected sacred sites and provided structure for ascetics renouncing worldly life.

-Peshwai procession

The commencement of the Kumbh Mela is marked by the Peshwai procession, a ceremonial entry of the akharas (traditional Hindu monastic organizations that blend spiritual and martial disciplines) into the festival grounds. Riding on elephants, horses, and chariots, adorned with traditional regalia, the saints and seers proceed through the streets, blessing onlookers. Rooted in ancient traditions, akharas preserve religious practices, philosophies, and physical training.

The evening arti is a devotional ritual that involves the offering of light to the deities by waving lit oil lamps, accompanied by hymns and chants. Performed on the riverbanks during the melas, the arti creates a spiritually charged atmosphere and exhibits the devotees' veneration of the sacred rivers.

Snan (bath)

Devotees from all over the world travel to the sites of the mela to take a bath (snan, or snanam) in the holy rivers. The act of bathing is believed to cleanse the soul of all the impurities and sins and help attain moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). At the heart of the Kumbh Mela lies the Shahi Snan (Royal Bath), considered the pinnacle of the festival's rituals. During this ceremony, the akharas lead grand processions to the river-

banks. The naga sadhus, recognizable by their ash-covered bodies and renunciation of clothing, stand out strikingly, especially given their typically reclusive lifestyle. Their presence creates a remarkable spectacle amid the throngs of Hindu devotees. Their dip sets a sanctified precedent for millions of pilgrims who follow.

-Yajnas (fire ceremonies)

Yajnas are sacred fire rituals conducted by priests and spiritual leaders. Offerings such as ghee, grains, and herbs are poured into the consecrated fire amidst the chanting of mantras from the sacred Vedic texts. These ceremonies aim to purify the environment, seek divine favor, and to maintain the natural order of nature.

-Deep daan

As dusk descends on the most auspicious day of the festival, the ritual of deep daan (lamp offering) illuminates the riverbanks. Devotees light earthen lamps and set them afloat on the waters; this symbolizes the dispelling of darkness and ignorance while inviting divine blessings and inner enlightenment.

The festival draws millions of pilgrims, and inevitably a large number of people become lost. The melas now run lost-and-found camps to aid those who have become separated from their companions. Operated by volunteers, these camps serve as a sanctuary for those who find themselves disoriented, offering not just logistical help but also emotional support. The scenes at these camps are a poignant mix of anxiety and hope. Some centers use modern methods such as computerized records and face recognition technology to manage the influx of missing persons. Some camps dedicated to women and children ensure the safety of the youngest and most vulnerable attendees.

The girl in the picture may not be the only one selling garlands! There are many like her who sell unique things so that one can keep them as a memoir at their homes! A reminiscence of the fact that they too attended the Maha Kumbh!

Why are the health services of state governments weak during the pandemic?

DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

The importance of state and local governments in managing public health is highlighted by the recent Guillain-Barré syndrome outbreak in Pune. In Guillain-Barré syndrome, the immune system targets the peripheral nervous system, a rare autoimmune disease that results in weakness and paralysis. As demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments were empowered to oversee health and sanitation through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, making them important partners in outbreak response. Local and state governments have a role in controlling public health outbreaks by ensuring clean water and sanitation. Since these are often the origin of bacterial infections such as Campylobacter jejuni, local

governments are in charge of maintaining a clean water supply and adequate sanitation. The need for proper water treatment and safety precautions is highlighted by the likelihood that the Guillain-Barré syndrome outbreak in Pune was caused primarily by water contamination.

Effective surveillance systems should be established by local authorities to promptly detect and track cases of unusual diseases and enable rapid responses. To enable early intervention, Pune's rapid response teams are already collecting water samples and monitoring the situation to track the spread of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Education of the public about health hazards and protective measures, particularly with regard to food safety and hygiene, is greatly supported by the local government. Local health departments should

ensure that the public is aware of safe food and water practices during Guillain-Barré syndrome outbreaks to prevent additional infections. State governments should work with federal health agencies, such as the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, to exchange information, resources, and experience during outbreaks. Providing plasma exchange and immunoglobulin therapy to Guillain-Barré syndrome patients, which is most effective within two weeks of symptoms, requires close collaboration between local hospitals and health authorities in Pune. Local authorities need to monitor eateries for compliance.

Government management of public health outbreaks is hampered by inadequate healthcare infrastructure. Inadequate medical facilities, a shortage of medical personnel, and outdated diagnostic equipment make

it challenging to effectively control unexpected disease outbreaks. The World Health Organization recommends a doctor-to-student ratio of 1:1000, but in India the ratio is currently 1:900. India experienced severe shortages of oxygen cylinders, ventilators, and hospital beds during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in delayed treatment and increased deaths. When outbreaks are not promptly identified by inadequate disease surveillance systems, they spread rapidly and cause more cases before corrective action can be taken. The 2018 Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala drew attention to the importance of early identification due to the high mortality caused by initial delays in identifying the source. Management of outbreaks is further worsened by public resistance to health advice due to misinformation and lack of knowledge about

diseases and preventive measures. The separate operations of multiple agencies handling urban planning, sanitation, and healthcare lead to inefficient and delayed outbreak response. During Delhi's 2017 dengue outbreak, poor coordination between health officials and municipal bodies led to a surge in cases and ineffective mosquito control measures. Providing clean drinking water and adequate sanitation is still very difficult, especially in urban areas with high population densities.

To improve urban health surveillance systems, urgent action is needed. Systems for monitoring urban health should include detailed data collection methods that monitor risk behaviors, environmental variables, and disease trends. Detecting new health risks can be aided by a central database that compiles current information on diseases such

as Guillain-Barré syndrome, as well as environmental data on sanitation and water quality. The effectiveness of disease surveillance and warning systems in urban areas can be improved by implementing smartphone apps, digital dashboards, and sensor technologies. If residents can use mobile applications to report health symptoms or water contamination, it may be possible to identify potential outbreaks more quickly and implement targeted interventions. Urban health systems should include specialized surveillance networks targeting foodborne diseases, vector-borne diseases, and important diseases such as Guillain-Barré syndrome. Guillain-Barré syndrome outbreaks caused by contaminated food or water can be monitored by a specialized surveillance network for foodborne diseases, just as is done for dengue or malaria.

For a comprehensive approach, urban health surveillance systems should work with community organizations, municipal entities, environmental agencies, and health departments. Joint task forces of sanitation and health departments can monitor food safety and water quality to prevent outbreaks caused by GBS. Effective outbreak management requires local and state governments to prioritize early detection, deploy real-time surveillance, and improve collaboration. Future health emergencies like GBS will be less severe, and public health will be protected by strengthening urban health systems, investing in data analytics, and increasing community awareness.

Dr. Satyawan Saurabh is a Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist.

Kunchouth-The Festival Of Love And Affection



BY MOOL RAJ

Today on 01st February 2025 this historical festival of Bhaderkashi is being celebrated with great zeal & enthusiasm around Jammu and Kashmir.

Like Karvachouth in other parts of the country, Kunchouth and Gauri -Tritya a local festival of Women is celebrated with enthusiasm and Religious Fervour in three Hilly Districts Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban of Jammu Province and District Chamba of Himachal Pradesh every year During the Shukla Paksha of Magh Month in January/February praying for long life of their husband's.

The style of both festivals almost same, the only difference is the timing, where as the kunchouth falls in winter and the karwachouth is celebrated during summer. Also that on "karwachouth" women breaks their fast when moon appears, while in case of "kunchouth" the fast is broken after 'Gouri pooja' during the day. Ladies clad in their best suits ornaments gather at near by water body (water chashma), reform Pooja and the sing "Gouri" song and dance one by one.

The festival though is of one day yet the festivity remains for three days. During the three days, women's go in the neighbourhood to offer the "respect" to one and all irrespective of Creed colour and caste, age and sex and get in turn their blessing "SUHAAGAN BHO" means (live long your husband).

The women are supposed to take food in every house the visit. In some cases it so happens that they have to take their meals in scores of houses each day. In the night ladies gather, sing "Gouri" and dance at their tune.

During three days

the "Chull"(kitchen) is managed by husband's. On hilly terrain covered by snow when ladies dressed in colourful traditional dresses and ornaments moves in a line from one village to another, it gives a feeling as if fairies from sky had descended on the earth.

Latest Positive Change : Even Many Husband's Fast on this auspicious day

To celebrate marriage of Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati, ancient Kanchoth festival was observed across erstwhile district Doda. The festival is revered as one of the most religious and colourful events for the followers of Nag Culture.

The age-old festival is celebrated as locals mainly Nag followers believe that on this day of Gouri tritriya, Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati got married and the latter insisted on a throne made of snow as her wedding gift. Thus, snow during the festival is considered a good omen.

Like Karvachouth in other parts of the country, Kanchoth or Gauri-Tritya a local festival of women is celebrated with enthusiasm and religious fervour in erstwhile Doda district every year during the Shukla Paksha of Magh month in January and February.

Karwachouth is celebrated mostly in wider geographical area in plains, Kanchoth and Gauri-Tritya is celebrated in hilly areas of Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Ramban and Doda districts of Jammu Province.

Both the festivals are celebrated by women to pray for long life of their husbands. On the festival day women clad in crisp new elegant bridal suit, donning matching jewellery with henna painted hands pray for the long lives of their spouses. The occasion has great significance in the life of every married woman. The day is considered pious for women when they can pray to Goddess Gauri for the long and healthy lives of their husbands.

Jammu travel guide
The author is a regular columnist and freelance writer

Are Cats Dangerous During Pregnancy? Dispelling Myths and Facts

IRFAN ATTARI KASHMIRI

With the present digital era, social media websites have become strong sources of information but are also utilized equally as strong sources of misinformation. Of late, some videos have been trending on various websites with scary reports claiming that pregnant women should not touch cats lest some harm may result due to toxoplasmosis, a parasitic disease. Such reports, which are largely propagated by unverified sources as well as by self-styled journalists, are spreading unnecessary fear among pregnant women who might not be well-informed. How much of the above is founded on established fact and how much of it is pure fear-mongering? Let us examine the same in some detail and dissect it logically.

The Misinformation that has Gone Viral: Fears Over Facts

Over the past few weeks, various videos surfacing on widely-used websites like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram have caused huge panic among pregnant women. The videos have sensational and scary reports, claiming that even contact with a cat, even without

touching them, may result in catastrophic outcomes in the form of miscarriage or that all the cats around possess *Toxoplasma gondii*, the causative organism liable for the development of toxoplasmosis. A vast majority of such sensational reports have no solid scientific foundation and are based mainly on sensationalism to attract their viewers. All such reports only aim to create unnecessary fear but do not proceed further to inform people about actual risks.

Toxoplasmosis: Fact and Science Behind

Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by a parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*. The parasite mentioned above is present in huge quantities in several sources including:

- Soil contaminated by them
- Raw or undercooked meat
- Dirty and raw vegetables and fruits
- Feces of cats

In otherwise healthy people, the disease persists with flu-like signs or even remains asymptomatic altogether. However, in a woman, if she happens to develop toxoplasmosis for the first time ever during pregnancy, it results in various critical dangers like miscarriage, still-

birth, or even possible birth deformities which may go on to impact the offspring.

Do Cats Really Infect You with Toxoplasmosis?

While it is true that cats are the usual hosts of the parasite in question, the actual risk of transmission from a pet cat to a human is regarded as low. For there to be any risk, a cat needs not only to be infected with the parasite but also actively shedding it in the feces. Additionally, it needs to be noted that the parasite itself is not infectious until 24 hours have elapsed, and therefore the daily cleaning of the litter box can do much to eliminate the risk of exposure. On the other hand, there are other routes of potential infection, such as consuming undercooked meat or unwashed vegetables, which are more at risk than having household cats.

How to Remain Safe Without Having to Give Up Your Cat

Medical experts strongly advise that there is absolutely no necessity for pregnant women to even consider giving up their beloved pets. By adopting a few easy yet effective measures, safety can be ensured without going to the extreme of giving up the cat:

- Someone else has to

clean the litter box. If this is not possible, make sure that you wear gloves and wash your hands thoroughly afterward.

- Make sure that you take the trouble to avoid raw or undercooked meat.

- Make sure that fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed before consumption.

- When gardening, ensure that your gloves are on.

- Keeping cats indoors is advised in order to prevent them from hunting, which might infect them.

By using these simple precautions, pregnant women can quite easily stay safe without resorting to extreme measures like abandoning their dearly beloved pets.

The Role of Unprofessional Journalism in Creating Panic

There are now more individuals who present themselves as journalists on social media, and they are creating unnecessary panic without bothering to verify important facts. Instead of getting facts from experts, these self-proclaimed journalists employ sensational headlines and emotional tales as a publicity-generating tool. This unprofessional approach misleads the public and generates panic that is unnecessary. For instance, some viral videos

inaccurately claim that medical experts advise keeping cats out of homes during pregnancy. However, it needs to be noted that no reputable health organization endorses such sensational headlines.

Medical Experts Speak Out

Top health organizations, for example, recognized institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) have gone ahead to state that the risk of toxoplasmosis can be effectively avoided by following simple hygiene practices.

Dr. Anjali Sharma, a gynecologist, asserts categorically:

'There is no medical reason whatsoever for pregnant women to get rid of their cats from their households. The real risk of transmission of any disease from a pet cat is very low. These fake and sensationalized videos are inducing undue levels of stress and anxiety for pregnant women.'

Veterinary expert Dr. Khalid Wani explains:

'A healthy well-cared-for cat does not pose any risk to a pregnant woman. The overall fear about this matter is largely driven by myths and

misconceptions and not scientific facts.'

Education Over Fear

As much as the fact is that toxoplasmosis is a real health issue and must be taken seriously, the idea that all cats by nature carry a risk to pregnant women is largely an exaggeration. Recent social media trends have largely fueled unnecessary fears and anxieties, largely spreading information poorly supported by science. Pregnant women should rather make their decisions based on established and verifiable medical facts and not be influenced by fabricated viral content on the internet. By following good hygiene rules and guidelines provided by experts in the field, they can be sure of their safety while still being able to enjoy the companionship of their pets. As social media keeps on expanding and influencing public opinion, it is equally essential that good journalism pay attention to facts and not create fear among the public.

(The Author is a Renowned Social Activist/ Writer, President of Foundation For Youth Web & Student Of Cybersecurity)
Email- askirfanattari@gmail.com

Budget 2025: A big gift for the middle-class



PRIYANKA SAURABHI

In the recently presented budget, the finance minister has given a big relief to the middle class by eliminating income tax for those earning up to Rs 12 lakh under the new tax system. Individuals earning Rs 18 lakh will get the benefit of a tax exemption of Rs 75,000, which means those earning up to Rs 12.75 lakh will not have to pay any income tax. However, anyone earning more than this limit will still be taxed.

Individuals with an annual income of Rs 18 lakh will get a tax exemption benefit of Rs 70,000, while those with an annual income of Rs 12 lakh will get a tax exemption of Rs 80,000. These changes are scheduled for the financial year 2025-26, which corresponds to the assessment year 2026-27. Additionally, the budget for 2025-26 proposes to extend the time limit for filing updated income tax returns from the current two years to four years. In addition,

the budget includes a plan to double the limit of tax deduction on interest income for senior citizens to Rs 1 lakh. The government also suggested revisions in income tax slabs and rates. According to Sitharaman, the new tax structure will have no tax on income up to Rs 4 lakh, 5% tax on income between Rs 4 lakh 1 to 8 lakh, 10% tax on income between Rs 8 lakh 1 to 12 lakh, 15% tax on income between Rs 12 lakh 1 to 16 lakh, 20% tax on income between Rs 16 lakh 1 to 20 lakh, 25% tax on income between Rs 20 lakh 1 to 24 lakh, and 30% tax on income above Rs 24 lakh.

The government is planning to simplify the tax deduction at source (TDS) system by cutting down the number of rates and thresholds, making it easier for taxpayers. The limit for tax collection at source (TCS) on money sent abroad under the Liberalised Remittance

Scheme (LRS) has been raised from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Additionally, the TDS limit for rent payments has been raised to Rs 6 lakh, bringing some relief to people and businesses earning rental income. In terms of education loans, the budget suggests abolishing TCS on loans up to Rs 10 lakh from certain financial institutions, which will help students and their families navigate the process more smoothly. The government has reduced the tax burden on citizens from time to time. After 2014, the zero tax limit was raised from Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 5 lakh in 2019 and then to Rs 7 lakh in 2023. Additionally, under the new tax system, individuals with income up to Rs 12 lakh will not have to pay any income tax.

However, this does not apply to capital gains and similar income. The benefits of the revised income

tax slabs and rates can be summarized thus: Taxpayers earning Rs 12 lakh will have their tax liability reduced to zero, saving them Rs 80,000. Those with an income of Rs 16 lakh will benefit by Rs 50,000. Taxpayers earning Rs 18 lakh will save Rs 70,000. Individuals earning Rs 20 lakh will benefit by Rs 90,000. Taxpayers with an income of Rs 25 lakh will get a benefit of Rs 1,10,000. Those earning Rs 50 lakh will also get a benefit of Rs 110,000. The minimum income limit for tax deduction at source (TDS) has been increased in the Union Budget 2025-26. The limit of TDS on interest income for senior citizens has been raised from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh per annum. The minimum income limit for TDS on rental income has been raised from Rs 2.40 lakh to Rs 6 lakh per annum. Also, under the

Reserve Bank's liberalized remittance scheme (LRS) for sending money abroad, TCS will now be applicable on amounts exceeding Rs 10 lakh instead of Rs 6 lakh. The Union Budget 2025 comes at a crucial time when India's economic growth has fallen to its lowest level in four years. Global uncertainties, including US tariff threats and rising geopolitical tensions, are creating new challenges. In response, the budget outlines a plan to strengthen the economy, with an emphasis on tax breaks, infrastructure development, and reforms across various sectors. By introducing significant income tax cuts, increasing exemptions, and providing new incentives for startups and small businesses, the government hopes to raise middle-class incomes and boost sustainable growth in the long run.

Accumulating knowledge



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

How can we accumulate knowledge during free time or in winters? There are thousands of beautiful quotes related to the importance of knowledge. One of them I have quoted here is short and simple: Knowledge is power". One thing is clear: muscle power is not the real power. Muscle power may help you in trouble-shooting your day-to-day tasks. Like lifting things, farming, and other physical activities.

Knowledge is something that makes one powerful in any society and enhances your confidence. Knowledge prevails always. Knowledge has no alternative; knowledge has no limitations, no enemies, and no barriers, and knowledge can be accumulated whenever you are willing and interested.

Willingness plays an important role in accumulating the knowledge.

There are people who spend their hours studying new concepts and experiences, observing, and learning new things from different mediums like books, the internet, newspapers, and electronic media like news channels and from friends.

Accumulating knowledge through newspapers: newspapers have been the great and interesting

source of acquiring knowledge. There are great minds who are related to this profession. Media has always played a great and vital role in the upliftment of voiceless people and encouraged millions of people by providing them news from all corners of the world and from our surrounding country and from the globe.

Newspapers contain authentic and interesting information about all the happenings, like current or dynamic parts of the world. These days teachers suggest their students read newspapers for a minimum of one to two hours and learn what is happening and note on diaries for future use.

Developing your vocabulary:

The editorial part is very interesting, and it

takes us a few minutes to complete. There are new and advanced words used while going through the selective issue by editors. We should have a grip on the advanced world in all fields, but first we have to learn basic things. When we have knowledge, we can get confidence and will stand for ample time by cracking bits and pieces in front of audiences.

Book reading can boost our confidence.

Book reading is very vital and has great and effective benefits. Reading books may help you to minimize your stress level. Today we have thousands of renowned and suggested books that can help us accumulate knowledge and be powerful personalities in the nation.

Books, religious books

like the holy Qur'an, may help us to be patient and keep us focused.

Benefits of book reading:

- Enhances our knowledge.
- Making us happy.
- Induces interest among us.

- Builds our level of confidence.

- Keeps us updated.
- Providing us a gallery of knowledge.

- Providing us a great chance to learn proverbs, idioms, sayings of great people, etc.

Boosting our patience.

Reading books may help to reduce anxiety and depression.

Providing us a great chance to change your personality and enhance your overall development. One thing that is very

unfortunate is that today we can see renowned and best-selling books of past times are selling on foot-paths. People who have no respect for the books will never achieve great and progressing results.

Accumulation of knowledge through the internet: today the whole world is interconnected through the internet. The internet has spread its web and covered every single individual. We can accumulate knowledge from internet sources and may boost our confidence and accumulate a gallery of knowledge.

Learning knowledge from print media. Today in every household, there are premium-quality smart televisions and set-top boxes installed. Satellite systems have made things very convenient for every

household, even those who are living in remote areas. Through satellite it is possible that every village in our country can enjoy the facilities of maximum channels on television. Watching news channels keeps you updated on what is happening in our surroundings and keeps you updated on all fields like science and technology, business, education, politics, share markets, etc.

Taking an interest in different issues in our nation and other parts of the world may help you to develop your vocabulary and confidence.

Accumulation of great and authentic knowledge may troubleshoot your problems. Being a vigilant and educated citizen makes you aware regarding each and every thing.

You must have the knowledge of law that what is wrong and what is good. Always follow the law and make decisions for yourself, for your family, and for your nation.

Be vigilant, be smart, be educated, and rule the world under law and order.

There is nothing small and big in front of law. Constitutional rules prevail in our country. We believe that after almighty Allah, the constitutional body will be the apex body in the nation and will prevail always. Every individual has the power to raise his voice against any unlawful activities in the nation.

Acquire knowledge, be confident, be smart, and be vigilant.

sahilmanzoorbhatti786@gmail.com

Chief Secretary visits Kathua Industrial Estates, Pledges infrastructure enhancement Chairs stakeholders' meeting, assures augmentation of essential facilities

HT News Network

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 01: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today visited the Industrial Estates Kathua, including Ghatti and Bhagthali.

He was accompanied by a team of senior officials including Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Vikramjeet Singh; MD, JPDC, Mohd. Yasin Choudhary; Director, Industries and Commerce, Jammu, Arun Manhas; Managing Director, SIDCO/SICOP Inderjeet; Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rakesh Minhas; SSP Kathua, Shobhit Saxena; ADC Kathua, Ranjit Singh and GM DIC among others.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary inspected various industrial units, including Devyani Food Industries Pvt. Ltd., an ice-cream manufacturing plant and Varun Beverages Ltd. at Ghatti. He interacted with the officials of the industries and enquired about the facilities they are being extended in the units besides assessing the challenges faced by them.

Atal Dulloo also visited the Kandhari Global Beverages Pvt. Ltd. at Bhagthali, where he was briefed by the officials about the plant and its functioning. While briefing the media, the Chief Secretary highlighted the key features of Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy, which aims to provide a conducive environment for



industrial growth in J&K. He emphasized that the policy is part of Rs. 28,400 crore package from Government of India to attract industries in JKUT besides generating employment opportunities and boost the local economy. The Chief Secretary stressed that the government is committed towards providing all necessary support to the industries including incentives, infrastructure and single-window clearances. Atal Dulloo also emphasised the importance of environmental sustainability in industrial development. He directed the industries to adhere to environmental laws and norms and adopt eco-friendly practices in their operations. The government, he assured, will

provide all necessary support to the industries to ensure that they comply with environmental regulations.

Later, the Chief Secretary chaired the meeting with Industrialists Ghatti, Kathua and Bhagthali Industrial Estates at DC Office complex.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on the present status of infrastructure and facilities in these estates besides underlining the issues to be taken up on priority to facilitate Industries in the region. Atal Dulloo also emphasised the importance of environmental sustainability in industrial development. He directed the industries to adhere to environmental laws and norms and adopt eco-friendly practices.

ازدفتر نیابت واگورہ

عنوان درخواست منجانب محمد رمضان ولد علی محمد وانی ساکنہ ولنگر
نسبت اجرائی نیگ بیئر (وارث جائز) سرٹیفیکٹ

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی

ماملہ مندرجہ ذیل کے متعلق پورٹ طلب کی گئی۔ مطابق رپورٹ
پٹواری و ڈیپنٹنڈر ٹیکسٹ سائل کا باپ محمد رمضان ولد علی محمد وانی ساکنہ
ولنگر مورخہ 2024/10/17 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے۔ متوفی اپنے چچے
مندرجہ ذیل وارثان جائز چھوڑ گیا
رشتہ برائے متوفی

1. علی محمد ولد محمد رمضان 48 سال کھرہ پلوکام
2. فیاض احمد 43 سال
3. محمد اشرف 45 سال / امردوری
4. دریاں احمد 41 سال
5. شہزاد احمد 32 سال / امردوری

اس طور کنڈیگ (5) افراد پر مشتمل مطابق رپورٹ پٹواری مندرجہ وارثان جائز کے
علاوہ اور کوئی وارثان جائز نہیں ہے۔ سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے سے نمبے اگر کسی
شخص یا شخصوں کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ دن کے
اندیشوں کے ساتھ معاد گورنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار واگورہ

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 FARHAAN FIRDOUS MIR S/O FIRDOUS AHMAD MIR R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KTEERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/01/2017 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 entertained

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 ZAIN BIN SAREER S/O SAREER AHMAD TANTRAY R/O MIRANGUND Tehsil BARAMULLA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 05/11/2020 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 death 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 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 IMAD IRFAN KHAN D/O MOHD IRFAN KHAN R/O MIRANGUND Tehsil BARAMULLA Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/08/2022 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 death 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 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 RUTBA AIJAZ D/O AIJAZ AHMAD YATOO R/O TILAGAM Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 20/01/2021 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 death 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 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 ARIFA AKHTER D/O HABIBULLAH MIR R/O KOHLINA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 09/04/1995 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 entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

اطلاع عام

مجھے ہوم سٹے بنام Kinza I Home Stay
Laripora Phlanggam کی رجسٹریشن محکمہ نورازم پھلگام میں کرانی مطلوب ہے اس بارے میں کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر اسسٹنڈ ڈیرکٹر نورازم پھلگام کے دفتر میں پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہر
فردوس احمد بٹ
ولد اسد اللہ بٹ ساکن لاری پورا پھلگام

DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KISHTWAR

+911995-259353 (Phone) +911995-261439 (Fax)

LOOK OUT NOTICE

As intimated by SHO P/S Kishtwar vide letter No. 271/5-1/PSK dated 25-01-2025 that one lady namely Mangla Devi W/O Rakesh Kumar R/O Tulsu Nagar Matta A/P Kuleed Kishtwar, District Kishtwar has gone missing since 22-01-2025. On this information a missing report vide DDR No. 24 dated 22-01-2025 got entered in the daily diary of Police Station Kishtwar. The photograph/descriptive roll of missing lady is as under:-

Photo	Description
	Parentage/Spouse: Rakesh Kumar Resident of: Tulsu Nagar Matta A/P Kuleed Kishtwar Age: 33 Years Complexion: Wheatish Height: 5' 6" Wearing: Blue Salwar & Kameez

It is therefore, requested that kindly have a sharp look out, if traced out/any clue leading to the above said missing lady, immediate information may kindly be sent on the below mentioned Email Address/Fax/Telephone numbers:-
Email: sspkishtwar@jkpolice.gov.in
Fax: 01995-261439
Phone: 01995-259353
PCR Kishtwar: 01995-259193, 9906154 100.

DIPK-11450/24
Date: Feb 1 2025

Sr. Superintendent of Police
District Kishtwar

Health & Medical Education Department

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG

College Campus, Dialgam Anantnag J&K-192210
Email ID: admsection.gmca@gmail.com | gmcanantnag2018@gmail.com

Subject :- Engagement of candidates as Senior Resident/Tutor/Demonstrator on Academic Arrangement Basis under S.O-364 (Non-PSC) in various disciplines of Govt. Medical College Anantnag.
Ref:- Advertisement No. 07 GMCA (RA) of 2024 dated 06-12-2024. ORDER NO: 81 GMCA of 2025 DATED: 10-02-2025

Pursuant to the recommendations of selection committee, the candidates annexed in Annexure 'A' to this order are hereby engaged as Senior Resident/Tutor/Demonstrator in various disciplines of Govt. Medical College, Anantnag on Academic Arrangement basis under S.O-364 of 2020 dated 27-11-2020 initially for a period of one (01) year which is extendable up to (03) years on the basis of good performance to be certified by the concerned Head of the Department.

The engagement of doctors is subject to the following terms and conditions:
1. Before joining the Department, the selected candidate shall submit an affidavit in the office of the Registrar Academics, Govt. Medical College Anantnag duly attested by the Judicial Magistrate to the effect that:
a. If the information furnished by him/her in the application form is found wrong at any point of time, he/she shall be liable to be punished under rules including confiscation of the Registration of the Doctor.
b. He/she have not completed the tenure in the same college or any other college strictly as per advertisement notice.
c. He/she will not participate in any kind of strike during the period of his/her tenure engagement. In the event he/she proceeded on strike, his tenure engagement shall be terminated without any notice as this service is covered under ESMA Act. d. He/she shall remain disciplined during the tenure period, any kind of misconduct shall make him/her liable for termination without any prior notice.
e. He/she is not involved in any criminal activity nor is there any FIR/Court case pending/registered against him/her in any criminal department or police station/Hon'ble Court nor there is any criminal/civil case subjudice in any court of law against him.
f. His/her engagement is strictly provisional till the recipient of verification of documents/ testimonials and CID Verification. In case adverse report is received from CID, J&K, he/she shall not claim for engagement which shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio.
g. He/she shall not claim any Experience Certificate in case he/she leaves Senior Resident-ship before completion of first six months.
h. The selected candidate shall have to execute an agreement as mentioned in S.O 364 of 2020 dated 27.11.2020 and that he/she will not leave the Department before the completion of tenure (six months), however abandoning/terminating after six months of the engagement in the specialty will require one-month prior notice on either side falling which the salary shall not be paid for one month to the incumbent and shall be released on completion of sanctioned term.
i. He/she will not indulge in any private practice. In case he/she is found doing private practice his/her appointment shall be liable for termination without any notice.

2. The above doctor shall have to execute an agreement with the institution on a prescribed format (Form A) with regard to the various terms and conditions applicable during academic arrangement.
3. In-service (PSC confirmed) candidates shall be paid salary as per their LPC. The PSC confirmed appointees are required to furnish the NOC from Director Health Services concerned before their joining, failing which they will not be allowed to join.
4. The appointee(s) is/are required to join in the office of Registrar Academics, GMC Anantnag within 14 days from the date of issuance of this order falling which the order shall be deemed to have cancelled.
5. The Senior Resident appointed on Academic Arrangement basis shall be paid as per S.O 364 of 2020 dated 27-11-2020.
6. The salary of the appointed candidate shall be drawn/dispensed only after recipient of verification of character & antecedents and documents/ testimonials from the concerned quarters.
Note: The engagement is strictly provisional till the recipient of verification of documents/ testimonials and CID Verification.

Annexure 'A' to Order No. GMCA of 2025 dated 02-2025
Selection List of candidates for the posts of Senior Resident/Tutor/Demonstrator in GMC Anantnag advertised vide Advertisement Notice No. 07 GMCA (RA) of 2024 dated 06.12.2024.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Office of the Executive Engineer, (Jal Shakti) PHE, Mechanical Rural Division, Sgr.

GIST for e-Tender.
Short Term E-N.I.T. No:- PHE/MRD/TS/ 98 of 02/2025

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Short term e-tenders are invited in two cover system from approved and eligible Contractors having GST registration/registered with J&K Govt., Railways and other State/Central Government Organizations for the following work:-

Sr.	Nature of Work	Location	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Doc.	Time of Completion	Programme
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Electrical works to be carried out at various WSSs	Sub-Division Budgam	0.945	50/=	07 days	M&R

Critical Dates/Information.

1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Publishing Date	01-02-2025 (5:00 PM)	2. Period of Downloading of Bids	01-02-2025 (5:00 PM) to 07-02-2025 (11:00 AM)
3. Period of Submission of bids	01-02-2025 (5:00 PM) to 07-02-2025 (11:00 AM)	4. Date of opening of Tender/Timing	07-02-2025 at (12:00 P.M)

5. Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer, (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar
6. Document Cost : Non-Refundable in the shape of Treasury Challan/receipt shall be deposited to Account Head 0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar (The firm shall specify the e-NIT No. & name of work for which applied)
7. Bid Validity Period: 90 Days
8. The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www. Jktenders.gov.in
9. Instead of EMD the firm has to furnish "Bid Security Declaration", format of the declaration is enclosed in the Bid Document

Note:- The tenderer who is declared as L1 after opening of price bid will deposit 5% of the Estimated cost of the work in shape of CDR/FDR before allotment is issued in his favour.

DIPK-11451/24
Date: Feb 1 2025

Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Rural
Division Srinagar.

DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

Selection List

S. No.	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Address
01	Dr. Irfan Hussain Dar	Ali Mohd Dar	Kharbrari, Yaripora Kulgam

DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

Selection List

S. No.	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Address
01	Dr. Muzaffer Hussain Mir	Mohd Hussain Mir	Kamad, Dialgam Anantnag

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

Selection List

S. No.	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Address
01	Mr. Muzamil Mustafa Wani	Gulam Mustafa Wani	Malipora Brawari, Devsar Kulgam

DEPARTMENT OF DERMATOLOGY

Selection List

S. No.	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Address
01	Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Bhat	Mohd Yousuf Bhat	Krangsoo Mattan Anantnag

DIPK-11467/24
Date: Feb 1 2025

Principal/Dean,
Govt. Medical College,
Anantnag.

DC Gandarbal chairs introductory meeting with District, Sectoral officers Inspects offices housed in Mini Secretariat Gandarbal

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 01: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Gandarbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired an introductory meeting with district and sectoral officers at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat, Gandarbal. During the meeting, officers from various departments briefed the DC about the initiatives undertaken and the status of implementation of government schemes in the district. While addressing



the officers, the DC emphasized the importance of providing hassle-free public services and urged them to perform their duties with dedication and transparency to meet public expectations. He also stressed the

need to accelerate the pace of ongoing projects to ensure their timely completion. He further directed officers to identify and resolve any bottlenecks hindering development projects and assured them

of his full cooperation in addressing such issues. Seeking support from all departments, Kishore urged officers to work in close coordination to achieve the district's development goals efficiently and effectively. The meeting was attended by SSP Gandarbal, Ragav S; Additional Deputy Commissioner Gandarbal, Gulzar Ahmad; GM DIC, Bilal Mukhtar; Chief Planning Officer, Shah Nawaz Ahmad Khan; Executive Engineers of various engineering wings, and other district.

Awareness cum seed distribution prog on potato cultivation held at KVK Shopian

■ HT News Network

Shopian, February, 01: The Division of Vegetable Science, SKUAST-Kashmir in collaboration with KVK Shopian organized an awareness cum seed distribution Program under the TSP of AICRP (Potato) at KVK Shopian.

The program aimed to promote scientific potato seed production among the farming community witnessed the participation of 40 tribal farmers.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Zaffar Afroz Badri, Senior Scientist & Head,



KVK Shopian, who highlighted various opportunities in the potato production sector and emphasized the importance of adopting improved cultivation techniques. Dr. Syed Faheema Mushtaq, Principal Investigator of the project, pro-

vided detailed training on scientific methods for potato seed production, ensuring that farmers acquire practical knowledge for enhanced yield and quality. During the program, 12.5 quintals of quality potato seed along

with other agricultural inputs were distributed among beneficiaries to support and encourage sustainable potato farming in the region. The program aimed to promote scientific potato seed production among the farming community witnessed the participation of 40 tribal farmers. The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Zaffar Afroz Badri, Senior Scientist & Head, KVK Shopian, who highlighted various opportunities in the potato production sector and emphasized the importance of adopting improved cultivation techniques.

DC Kulgam for making Samadhan portal an effective tool for resolution of public grievances.

■ Farooq Rather.



KULGAM February 01: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan (IAS) today held a meeting with District & Sectoral Officers to review the progress of Citizen Registration on Samadhan portal. DC Kulgam reviewed the status of Public Grievance Redressal in different departments. He sought the the action taken on the grievances registered by citizens on Samadhan portal. Directions for timely disposal were given to all departments.

DC emphasized for ensuring more citizen registrations on the Samadhan portal. All departments were directed to ensure reaching out to citizens and making them aware about the JK Samadhan portal and facilitating their registration.

The meeting was attended by ACD Syed Naseer Ahmad, all Tehsildars, BDO's, CEO, all ZEO's, AD CAPD, DIO NIC, DYSSO, all Executive Officers of Municipalities & District Manager CSC Kulgam.

ABRSM welcomes Union Budget 2025, reiterates demand to spend 6% of GDP on education

■ HT News Network

Jammu :The Akhil Bharatiya Rashtriya Shaikshik Mahasangh (ABRSM) has welcomed the allocation of 1,28,650 crore for the education sector in the Union Budget 2025 presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, an increase of 6.65% over the previous year. The Mahasangh has termed this budget as an important step towards expanding education infrastructure, promoting digital education, promoting research and innovation. However, the Mahasangh also made it clear that the government should take concrete steps towards spending at least 6% of GDP on the education sector so that the goals of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 can be fully achieved. ABRSM has described the allocation of 7,500 crore for PM Shri Yojana, 12,500 crore for PM Poshan Yojana and 50,077.95 crore for higher education sector in the budget as positive. Along with this, announcements like 6,500 new seats in 5 IITs of the country, 75,000 new seats in medical colleges in the next 5 years, 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs and establishment of Center of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence are important steps for the future. ABRSM said that the provision of 10,000 new PM Research Fellowships (PMRF Scheme) by the government to promote research and innovation, 5 National Centers of Excellence for Skillling in partnership with global experts and 20,000 crore for private sector-driven research, development and innovation is commendable. The increase in the PM Internship Scheme will help youth gain work-experience and broadband connectivity in rural government schools under the BharatNet project will promote digital education.

Monabal Village in Langate Achieves Major Milestone in Education Infrastructure

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

Kupwara, Feb. 01: The remote village of Monabal in Langate, Kupwara, is set to witness a major milestone in education infrastructure with the near completion of a new school building under the Samagra Shiksha scheme.

Monabal, located in the foothills of Kaji Naj, is home to a predominantly Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) population, most of whom lead a semi-nomadic life. For decades, the lack of proper educational infrastructure had hindered literacy growth in the area. However, under Samagra Shiksha's Annual Work Plan & Budget (AWP&B) 2021-22, a new school building was sanctioned at an estimated cost of 38.92 lakh, with a final tendered amount of 36 lakh. The initiative was taken following a visit by the then Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kupwara, Ab Hamid Fani, along with Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Mawar, Mohammad Maqbool Lone, in 2022. During the visit, officials found 45 children studying in a rented building that had become unsafe due to structural damage. Recognizing the urgent need for



better facilities, a new school construction was approved on the spot. With the active efforts of the Education Department, R&B Division Langate, and District Administration Kupwara, along with the hard work of contractor Sajad Ahmad Khan, the construction is now at its final finishing stage.

Local residents, led by social activist Choudhary Ilaq Khas, have expressed gratitude to the district administration, then CEO, Deputy CEO Kupwara Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, and ZEO Mawar for ensuring quality educational facilities for the children of Monabal. The villagers are now eagerly awaiting the official inauguration of the new school building, which will be a historic step toward improving literacy and education accessibility in this far-flung region.

Illegal Mining Pushes Rambli Ara to the Brink of Disaster, Massive Protests Erupt

Locals Demand an Immediate Halt to NKC's Operations Amid Environmental Catastrophe

■ Mushtaq ul Islam

Pulwama, Feb 01 : Rambli Ara, a lifeline for thousands, is facing an unprecedented ecological disaster due to rampant illegal mining. The unchecked extraction of resources has triggered massive protests, with furious residents demanding an immediate shutdown of operations by NKC, the company accused of devastating the region.

The crisis has reached a boiling point as locals, environmentalists, and activists unite against the reckless exploitation of Rambli Ara. Protesters, chanting slogans, accused authorities of turning a blind eye to the blatant destruction of their land, aras, and livelihoods.

In response to the escalating unrest, Rajpora's Member of Assembly, Gh Mohi-ud-Din Mir, visited the site to assess the large-scale destruction firsthand.



Expressing grave concern, he assured the protesters that he would escalate the matter to top officials to ensure immediate action against illegal mining.

"The reckless mining has wreaked havoc on Rambli Ara. We will not allow this devastation to continue," declared one of the angry demonstrators.

Despite repeated pleas for intervention, authorities have yet to take concrete steps, further fueling public outrage. Protesters blame government inaction

for the crisis, warning that continued neglect could lead to irreversible environmental damage and the displacement of local communities.

People warn that if illegal mining is not curbed immediately, Rambli Ara could face severe ecological collapse, including soil erosion, water contamination, and loss of biodiversity. The region, known for its rich natural resources, is now on the verge of destruction due to relentless greed and negligence.

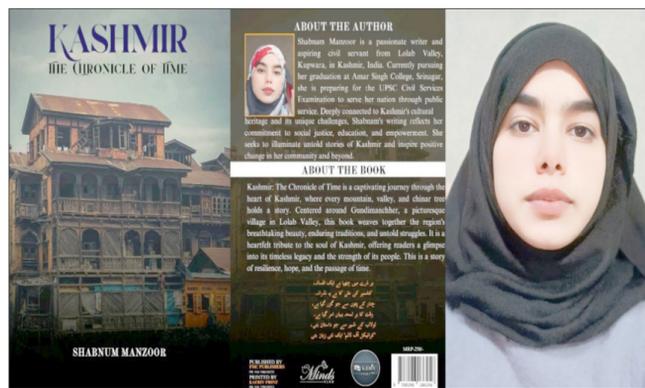
With mounting pressure, all eyes are on the administration. Will the government take decisive action to protect Rambli Ara, or will it allow corporate interests to dictate the fate of the region? The people have spoken—now, it's time for the authorities to act before it's too late. The crisis has reached a boiling point as locals, environmentalists, and activists unite against the reckless exploitation of Rambli Ara. Protesters, chanting slogans, accused authorities of turning a blind eye to the blatant destruction of their land, aras, and livelihoods. In response to the escalating unrest, Rajpora's Member of Assembly, Gh Mohi-ud-Din Mir, visited the site to assess the large-scale destruction firsthand. Expressing grave concern, he assured the protesters that he would escalate the matter to top officials to ensure immediate action against illegal mining.

Young Kashmiri Writer Shabnam Manzoor from Kupwara Pens Kashmir: The Chronicle of Time

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

Kupwara, Feb. 01: In a significant literary milestone, Shabnam Manzoor, a budding writer from Gundimanchher, Lolab, in North Kashmir's Kupwara district, has authored Kashmir: The Chronicle of Time, a book that captures the untold stories of her homeland. Overcoming numerous challenges with determination and the unwavering support of her parents and elder sister, Shabnam has brought her vision to life.

Currently pursuing her graduation at Amar Singh College, Srinagar, while preparing for the UPSC Civil Services Examination, Shabnam's journey is a testament to perseverance and resilience. Her love for literature began at a young age, and she soon realized that writing was not just a passion but a powerful medium to reflect the realities of Kashmir's history, struggles, and



strength. Speaking about her book to HEADLINES TODAY, Shabnam shared, "Kashmir has always been a land of stories—some told, some buried, and some waiting to be discovered. Through this book, I wanted to give voice to the unheard narratives of my people."

Coming from a middle-class background, Shabnam faced financial and societal challenges in her journey as a writer. How-

ever, she remained steadfast in her dream. "In our society, writing is often seen as an unrealistic career path. But I believe passion and perseverance can break any barriers," she emphasized.

With Kashmir: The Chronicle of Time, Shabnam aims to provide readers with an insight beyond mainstream narratives, offering a deeply personal and historical perspective on Kashmir. She also hopes



to inspire aspiring writers, especially those from modest backgrounds, to chase their dreams despite societal hurdles.

"My journey may have been tough, but if even one person finds inspiration in my story, I will consider it a success," she said. This book marks just the beginning of Shabnam Manzoor's literary journey, as she continues to write, speak, and advocate for the truth through her words.

IUST shines in All India Inter-University Winter Sports

■ HT News Network

Awantipora, February 1: The Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST) bagged the Winner's Trophy in the All India Inter-University Winter Sports Championship in Snow Skiing. The university also clinched the Runner-up Trophy in the Boys' Category and achieved an impressive third-place finish in Ice Stock, marking a significant milestone in its sports journey.

The felicitation ceremony was attended by Shri Satish Sharma, Honourable Sports Minister of J&K, as the Chief Guest, along with Guests of Honour, including Farooq Ahmad Shah (MLA, Gulmarg), Prof. Shakil Ahmed Romshoo (Vice Chancellor, IUST), Prof. Nilofar Khan (Vice Chancellor, KU), and Prof. Prof Ravinder Nath (Vice Chancellor, CUK).

Prof. Shakil Ahmed Romshoo emphasized that this victory reflects IUST's dedication to promoting athletics and nurturing young talent, further strengthening Kashmir's reputation as a premier destination for winter sports. Dr. Hilal Ahmad Rather, Assistant Director Physical Education and



Sports at IUST, expressed immense pride in the athletes' dedication and resilience and reiterated IUST's commitment to fostering sports excellence and encouraging students to compete at national and international levels.

IUST's athletes delivered outstanding performances in various categories. In Ice Stock, the men's team, consisting of Abdul Moiz Qadari, Abdul Qadeer Khanday, Mohd Taif Khanday, and Mohd Azim, won gold, while Teyebah Tariq secured a silver medal in the women's category. In Snow Skiing, Sadiya Ayyaz dominated the women's category, winning two gold medals. Rayaan Hassan Khan secured a silver medal in Slalom, while Haadi Hassan Khan and Jamid Yaqoob won bronze medals in Slalom and G-Slalom, respectively.

Budget solidifies expectation of 6.6% GDP growth in 2025-26: Mrs Sakshi Gupta

■ HT News Network

Srinagar: Addressing concerns around slowing demand from the middle class, the budget rationalised personal income tax slabs across the board along with revision in

the limits of the tax deducted at source. This is likely to spur consumer demand and savings by the middle class that has faced challenges from elevated inflation and lower income growth, said Principal Economist HDFC Bank Mrs Sakshi Gupta. "Beyond the



sops for the common man, the budget focuses on improving the ease of doing business through a "light touch" regulatory approach. The next five-year fiscal strategy has been geared towards promoting agriculture, MSMEs, exports and promot-

ing greater participation from the private sector in India's capacity building going forward." Mrs Sakshi Gupta said that the FM's fiscal strategy has tilted towards boosting consumption while the capex target has been kept broadly unchanged from the

2024-25 budgeted plans. "The counter-cyclical push provided by the budget is within its broader strategy of fiscal consolidation, targeting a fiscal deficit of 4.4% in 2025-26. Despite the revenue foregone due to the income tax changes, fiscal consolidation.

Sidha inspects restoration works on heritage sites in District Samba

HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 01: Director Archives, Archaeology and Museums J&K Kuldeep Krishan Sidha along with Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma today inspected Preservation and Restoration works being executed by the Department at different heritage sites in the District Samba.

Additional District Development Commissioner Samba, Champa Devi, Assistant Director Archives Archaeology and Museums Jammu, Dr. Sangeeta Sharma, concerned Executive Engineer PW (R&B) Department Division Samba, Curator, Dogra Art Museum Jammu and Sta-



tistical Officer Planning also accompanied the Director.

The Director along with Deputy Commissioner inspected restoration of Bamchak Temple being executed by the Department at the cost of Rs. 1.76

crore and revival and restoration of Mohar Garh Fort being restored at the cost of Rs. 91.54 lakh, both works are nearing for visible completion.

The Director advised the executing agency to install public information boards

and sign boards at the sites for information of those who visit these places.

During the tour, the Director AA&M, Deputy Commissioner Samba and Additional District Development Commissioner Samba had a detailed discussion on the assessment of the Phase-III works, which the Department intends to undertake. The department has already requested for framing a comprehensive plan for these works in consultation with Stakeholders and Elected Representatives.

The Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums J&K conveyed that the Department is committed towards restoration of rich cultural heritage and architecture in the region.

Poonch: District Committee reviews plan for export of local specialty products

HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 01: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting of the District Export Promotion Committee to discuss strategies aimed at enhancing export potential in the region.

The meeting was attended by General Manager DIC, CPO, CAO CHO, CAHO, AGMO, LDM and other concerned.

The session commenced with a briefing by General Manager of DIC (Convener District Level Export Promotion Committee) Khalid Hussain Wafa, who outlined the agenda for the meeting.

Key discussions included the promotion of the "One District, One Product" initiative, focusing on local specialties such as pecans, walnuts, and the tourism sector.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of collaborating with e-commerce platforms like



Amazon and Flipkart to enhance awareness and facilitate registrations for local products.

Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner directed JKTPO to incorporate Rajmash and Wool from Poonch into the District Export Action Plan. He also told the JKTPO to provide a comprehensive list of upcoming events both free and paid, scheduled for the next six months.

To further bolster local businesses, the Deputy Commissioner proposed

a workshop on packaging to enhance product presentation. He also called for an updated presentation from JKTPO within 3-4 days, detailing actionable activities for implementation.

The meeting saw participation from various stakeholders, including representatives from JKTPO, MSME Jammu, AD Handicrafts and Handloom, and the District Officer KVIB Poonch, with some attending through virtual means.

DC Doda flags off group of officials on Educational Exposure visit to Gujarat

HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 01: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh today flagged off a group of education department officials on a 15 day educational exposure visit to District Mehsana, Vishwagram Trust Gujarat. The visit aims to provide valuable learning opportunities to the officials of the education department.

During the visit, the officials will engage in interactive sessions and discussions with experts from Vishwagram Trust, gaining insights into advanced teaching techniques, infrastructure development, and student-centric learning approaches. The exposure will enable officials to study successful education models and explore their



implementation in Doda. Deputy Commissioner emphasized the significance of such exposure visits in fostering professional growth and transforming the educational landscape of the district. He encouraged the officials to utilize this opportunity to bring progressive changes to local schools and

institutions. Deputy Commissioner emphasized the significance of such exposure visits in fostering professional growth and transforming the educational landscape of the district. He encouraged the officials to utilize this opportunity to bring progressive changes to local schools and institutions.

Several projects coming up under PMJKV scheme in Rajouri ADDC reviews progress of ongoing works

HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 01: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Rajouri Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa chaired a meeting to review the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJKV) here in the Conference Hall of the DC office.

The meeting focused on assessing the progress of projects proposed by the Education, Health, Sports, PHE, and PDD departments.

During the meeting, the ADC reviewed the number of projects for which Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) have been prepared and approved by the Block Development Committee (BDC). Emphasizing the need for expeditious implementation, he directed the concerned departments to submit all pending DPRs and ensure their approval at the BDC level within one week so that they can be further approved by the District



Level Committee (DLC).

Furthermore, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa underscored the importance of financial transparency and instructed officials to submit audited Utilization Certificates

(UCs) at the earliest.

Among those present in the meeting were Chief Planning Officer Maqsood Ahmed, Chief Medical Officer Manohar Rana, Assistant Commissioner Development Vijay

Kumar Verma, District Social Welfare Officer Abdul Raheem, Executive Engineer PHE Rajiv Khajuria, Executive Engineer PDD Abdul Rasheed, Administrative Officer GMC Adnan Rather, and other district and sectoral officers. During the meeting, the ADC reviewed the number of projects for which Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) have been prepared and approved by the Block Development Committee (BDC). Emphasizing the need for expeditious implementation, he directed the concerned departments to submit all pending DPRs and ensure their approval at the BDC level within one week so that they can be further approved by the District Level Committee (DLC).

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Training on Integrated Farming System for Livelihood Security Concludes at SKUAST-K's FoA Wadura

DR.AB QAYOOM

Sopore, Feb.01: The six-day training programme on "Integrated Farming System for Livelihood Security" under HADP (IFS) Project No. 13 successfully concluded at the Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, SKUAST-K. Held from January 27 to February 1, 2025, the event aimed to equip farmers with the necessary knowledge and skills to adopt integrated farming systems (IFS), promoting sustainable livelihoods and boosting farm productivity. On this occasion, over 20 farmers participated in the programme, which featured lectures, interactive sessions, and practical demonstrations by renowned experts and faculty members from SKUAST-K. Topics covered includ-



ed Vermicomposting technology for organic farming, High-Density Apple Plantation-based IFS models, year-round mushroom cultivation strategies, and the role of apiculture in income diversification. The programme also highlighted the importance of soil health and innovative approaches to enhancing rural livelihoods.

Field visits showcasing success-

ful IFS models were included, providing participants with firsthand insights into practical applications. Dr. Ashok Narulla, former Director ICAR ATARI Ludhiana was the chief guest at the valedictory session. He emphasized the need for adopting integrated farming practices to boost agricultural income while maintaining ecological sustainability. Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth,

Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, was the Guest of Honor and spoke about the benefits of integrated farming systems in optimizing farm resources, increasing profits, and generating rural employment.

The programme, coordinated by Dr. M. Salim Mir (YP-III) and Dr. Ummaisa Rehman (YP-II), concluded with the distribution of certificates to participants. The initiative aligns with the broader objectives of HADP Project No. 13, aiming to promote sustainable livelihood systems and empower farmers for long-term socio-economic growth in the region. The Faculty of Agriculture, Wadura, reaffirmed its commitment to conducting similar initiatives in the future to support the farming community's growth and development.

ADDC Reasi flags off 100 students to Patnitop for trekking camp

HT News Network

REASI FEBRUARY 01: The Department of Youth Services & Sports (DYSS) Reasi today organised a five-day residential trekking camp at Patnitop, with 100 students from different schools of District Reasi participating in the adventure.

The trekking camp was flagged off by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Sukhdev Singh Samyal, who praised the efforts of DYSS in promoting adventure sports and outdoor learning.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, the ADC emphasized that trekking not only builds physical endurance and resilience but also fosters teamwork, leadership, and environmental awareness among students. He further highlighted that such initiatives provide a platform for youth to explore nature, develop survival skills, and appreciate different cultures by interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds. The trekking camp is overseen by DYSSO Tarsem Singh, with experienced

trek leaders and officials ensuring the safety and well-being of the participants. The students will participate in guided treks, cultural exchange activities, environmental awareness sessions, and team-building exercises, making it a holistic learning experience.

The initiative has been widely appreciated by students and parents, as it provides young participants with a unique opportunity to explore the scenic beauty of Patnitop while gaining valuable life skills. DYSS Reasi continues to remain committed to organizing such events that contribute to the overall personality development of students. The camp is being escorted by Kuldeep Kumar, Ashoka Kumari, Devinder Kour, Balwan Singh, Jagdev Singh, Arun Dev Singh, Mohd. Raiz, Anoop Jyoti, and Sushil Kumar. The initiative has been widely appreciated by students and parents, as it provides young participants with a unique opportunity to explore the scenic beauty of Patnitop while gaining valuable life skills.

World Wetland Day 2025: GDC Vijaypur hosts students visit to Gharana

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: On World Wetland Day, Department of Environmental Sciences and Ecoclub of Government Degree College Vijaypur organized a students' visit to the Gharana Wetland under the guidance of the Principal Dr. Vandana Verma.

The visit was aimed at making students aware about the vital role that wetlands play in supporting biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance. The field visit is the part of their practical coursework that combines environmental education with traditional agricultural practices.

Prof. Poonam Kundan (HOD Environmental Sciences and Convener

Ecoclub) shared her insights on the significance of such field visits. She emphasized the need for integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern scientific practices to create a more sustainable agricultural framework. She further explained that by understanding and respecting indigenous practices, students can contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and promote sustainable farming methods that are essential for the health of our planet.

Students of the college enthusiastically enjoyed Bird watching at Gharana Wetland and they used high-power binoculars to observe the activities of the birds in the wetland. Students were acquainted with different varieties of resident and migratory birds visiting the area.



During the visit students not only explored the wetland ecosystem but also took the opportunity to visit

traditional farms in the area. They were able to witness age-old farming methods that have been passed down

through generations, focusing on sustainable agricultural techniques and the cultivation of indigenous crops. Additionally, the students documented indigenous knowledge related to farming practices, recognizing its relevance in modern agriculture. The students, along with faculty members, interacted with local farmers and learned about the importance of crop diversity, organic farming, and the use of natural resources in a sustainable manner. This knowledge is increasingly significant in today's context of climate change and environmental challenges, making traditional wisdom a crucial component of future agricultural practices.

The students also interacted with the locals to understand their perspective regarding the management

measures taken by the Department of Wildlife Protection, Government of J&K and sensitized them regarding the importance of the wetland in the area.

Overall, the celebration of World Wetland Day by GDC Vijaypur students not only highlighted the importance of wetlands but also fostered a deeper appreciation for traditional agricultural practices and their relevance in contemporary agriculture. This experience is a step towards bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and modern sustainability efforts.

The one day tour was coordinated by Prof. Poonam Kundan and co-coordinated by Dr. Radhika Rasyal, Prof. Mazid Malik and Prof. Shukoora Nazir.

DC inaugurates Didi Ki Rasoi canteen at GDC Boys Udhampur Run by women SHG, Eatery offers variety of home cooked food

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 01: Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai on Saturday inaugurated the "Didi Ki Rasoi" canteen at Government Degree College Boys Udhampur in the presence of Project Officer DUDA, Udhampur-Reasi Jaffar Abass Batt, Principal of the College Dr. Sanjay Verma.

The canteen provides an assortment of home-cooked meals at reasonable prices and is managed by women Self-Help Groups constituted under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Urban Livelihoods Mission.

This initiative serves two key objectives: providing a steady source of income for women Self-Help Groups and offering affordable, nutritious meals to college staff, students, visitors and the general public, thereby promoting health and well-being in the district.

While briefing the media, the DC commended the initiative, emphasizing its pivotal role in women's empowerment in the region. She praised Project Officer in launching the canteen, which provides a sustainable source of income and support



to Self-Help Group members. The Deputy Commissioner has been a strong advocate for women's empowerment and community development initiatives. Her recognition of the canteen's impact underscores the importance of such initiatives in promoting economic independence and social growth among women.

The canteen, established under DAY-

NULM, serves as a platform for Self-Help Group members to showcase their culinary skills and entrepreneurial spirit. By providing a sustainable income stream, the canteen empowers women to take charge of their financial lives, contributing to the district's overall development.

Project Officer stated that this marks the latest installment of the Didi Ki Rasoi

Canteen initiative launched under DAY-NULM in Udhampur district, with this being the newest addition to the existing two canteens. Previously, canteens had been established at DC Office Complex Udhampur and Government College for women Udhampur with plans underway to open additional canteens. He expressed his gratitude to Deputy Commissioner for her unwavering support and highlighted the canteen's potential to provide sustainable income for self-help group members.

He also thanked the College Principal for providing space to the Self Help Group members in the college premises.

The initiative empowers women by providing a livelihood platform, aligning with DAY-NULM's objectives to uplift urban poor communities through sustainable livelihood opportunities.

This "Didi Ki Rasoi" canteen marks a significant milestone towards women's empowerment and self-sufficiency in Udhampur.

To mark the occasion, Silver Oak and Sukh Chain trees were planted at the 'Didi Ki Rasoi' Canteen event, symbolizing harmony, prosperity and community well-being.

GDC Bishnah hosts Alumni meet

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: Government Degree College Bishnah successfully hosted its Alumni Meet 2025 which served as a remarkable reunion of all batches.

The event started with the lighting of the lamp as invocation of Goddess Saraswati on the auspicious occasion of Basant Panchmi. The meet kicked off with the welcome address of the convener followed by an insightful speech from the Principal in which she encapsulated the journey of college over the years, prompting the Alumni to reflect on their personal and professional growth.

As a part of Alumni Meet, a colourful cultural bonanza was presented for the Alumni which created a nostalgic ambience among them. They expressed their joy and gratitude by sharing their experiences during the program. The program concluded with a vote of thanks and a group photograph followed by Lunch. The principal applauded the effort of the Alumni Committee.

Telecom Services boosted up in Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH FEBRUARY 01: Deputy Commissioner of Poonch Vikas Kundal, convened a meeting of the District Telecom Committee today to evaluate the current state of telecommunication services and address issues related to network connectivity and mobile tower installations in the district.

During the meeting, the SDO of BSNL Poonch provided an overview of the ongoing projects in the area, noting that six mobile tower sites have been successfully completed and are now operational, with additional sites currently under development.

The Deputy Commissioner underscored the urgency of completing the remaining installations by March and directed the SDO to facilitate E-Service at the Tehsil Office Mankote. He emphasized the critical need for tower installations in remote areas to improve connectivity, particularly in regions facing significant network challenges.

The meeting was attended by various officials, including the SSP Poonch, SE PWD(R&B), CMO, Xen JPDC, DIO NIC, CEO Municipality, SDO BSNL Poonch, and other concerned officers.

J&K Sports Council, KNVB Dutch Football Association launch Refresher Football Coaching Course in Jammu

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: The Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council (JKSC), in collaboration with the KNVB Dutch Football Association, has launched a Refresher Football Coaching Course in Jammu, marking a significant step towards the development of football in the region.

For the first time, the International Football Coaching & Life Skills Program has been introduced in Jammu & Kashmir, with 35 local coaches getting the opportunity to participate in the KNVB World Coaches Program. The initiative is a major step in enhancing football coaching standards in J&K.

The World Coaches Program, established by the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB), has a strong presence in India and its various states and union territories. The program aims to develop football at the grassroots level by providing structured training and knowledge sharing with local coaches.

The five-day course commenced on February 1, 2025, at Mini Stadium Parade, Jammu, under the guidance of Dutch instructors Roger Schouwenaar and Raimond Massop. Both instructors, holding UEFA-A Coaching Licenses, bring over 20 years of international coaching experience across 40+ countries.

This initiative is expected to strengthen football coaching in J&K, and future collaborations between the Dutch Football Federation and the J&K Government are anticipated to sustain and expand such exchange programs.

The World Coaches Program, now in its 15th year, has been instrumental in developing football coaching worldwide, with nearly 20,000 coaches trained across 65 countries—over 30% of whom are women, a per-

Dy CM visits Jammu Polytechnic College, interacts with faculty, students

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01:- Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today visited the Government Polytechnic College Jammu and reviewed functioning of the institution.

He was accompanied by senior faculty members of the college.

During his extensive visit to the college premises, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected the classrooms, labs and other

facilities being provided to the students pursuing their studies in different faculties.

While interacting with the faculty members, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has undertaken a holistic programme of imparting different skills to youth and making them trained in various industrial trades.

Surinder Choudhary said that this will make them technically skilled, so that they can imbibe entrepreneurial

skills and start their own income generating units. This would make them job creators and contribute their bit in providing employment avenues to others as well, he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the College Administration for providing all the requisite facilities to the students. He said that youth has crucial role in shaping nation's future and they should not face any difficulty in teaching facilities and related services.



Animal Husbandry Department Jammu bids farewell to outgoing Director

■ HT News Network



JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: A farewell programme for outgoing Director Animal Husbandry Jammu Dr. Waheeda Parveen was held today here at the Meeting Hall, Directorate of Animal Husbandry, Talab Tillo.

Dr. Waheeda expressed appreciation to all the officers and staff of the department for their cooperation and support. She said that the department of Animal Husbandry has a vital role in betterment of farmers' lives for which she called upon the officers and staff to continue to work with the same zeal and commitment.

Dr. Waheeda retired from active service after serving the department for more than thirty-five years. She first joined the department as Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Bhandarwah and took over as Director on April 4, 2024 after holding various important positions in the department. Deputy Director (AH) Dr. Adris Ahmed described the outgoing Director as an approachable and hardworking person. He lauded her for playing a proactive role in development of infrastructure and overall working of the department. He wished the outgoing Director good health and fruitful post-retirement life.

Labour, Industries Department organise awareness, registration camp at Sanasar

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 01: In line with the directives of the Deputy Chief Minister during his visit to Sana Panchayat, the Labour Department Ramban organized an awareness and registration camp at Sanasar. The camp, held under the leadership of Assistant Labour Commissioner Amit Kumar, covered labourers from Panchayats Sana, Upper Sanasar, and Lower Sanasar, witnessing participation of around 150 workers.

To streamline the registration process on the JKBOCWVB portal, the Labour Department is working closely with Common Service Centres (CSCs) across the district. During the camp, ALC Amit Kumar briefed workers on key labour laws, including the Payment of Wages Act, Workmen Compensation Act, Child Labour Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Contract Labour Act, and Payment of Gratuity Act. He also highlighted the welfare schemes of the J&K Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (JKBOCWVB).

The workers were encouraged to register on the JK Samadhan App, a dedicated grievance redressal portal, and sensitised about PM-Surya Ghar



Muft Bijli Yojana, being implemented by JPDCL under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary. A helpline number (9419192398) was shared for further assistance.

The ALC also informed the workers about E-Shram, Mission Youth schemes like Mumkin and Tejaswini, the ESI scheme, and the Mission YUVA Survey. Project Manager Kuldeep Singh from the District Industries & Commerce Department provided details on PMEGP and PM Vishwakarma Schemes, and a PM Vishwakarma Training Completion Certificate was distributed.

As many as 30 on-the-spot registrations were done on the JK Samadhan

App, facilitated by CSC VLE deputed by District Manager CSC, Nawaz. Additionally, 15 labour card renewals and 5 new registrations were approved, with new labour cards distributed. Information brochures on various Labour, Employment, and Industries Department schemes were also distributed.

The Labour Inspector elaborated on JKBOCWVB schemes and stressed the importance of digital literacy, as all Labour Department services are now provided online. On-spot grievance redressal was carried out, addressing worker queries. The Labour Inspector elaborated on JKBOCWVB schemes and stressed the importance of digital literacy.

Dr. Nuzhat Bashir Shah assumes office as Director Ayush J&K

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: Dr. Nuzhat Bashir Shah today took over as the Director of Ayush, Jammu & Kashmir, becoming the first woman to lead the Directorate. With a distinguished career in the Ayush sector, Dr. Nuzhat has served the department in various capacities, including as District Ayush Officer, Anantnag, and Deputy Director Ayush, contributing significantly to the promotion and strengthening of traditional medicine in the region. Dr. Nuzhat

Bashir has played a pivotal role in several landmark initiatives. She was one of the key officers instrumental in organizing the International Day of Yoga at SKICC, Srinagar, in 2024, a historic event graced by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. Her dedication and leadership was also evident in her role as the Nodal Officer for the Shri Amarnath Yatra since 2021, ensuring the successful establishment of Ayush Medical Camps and Yoga Camps along the yatra route to provide holistic healthcare to pilgrims. Additionally, her contri-

butions to organizing Yoga and Ayush camps during the G20 Summit in Srinagar in 2023 were widely appreciated, reinforcing J&K's commitment to traditional wellness practices on a global platform. As she assumes office, Dr. Nuzhat has outlined a progressive vision for the Ayush sector in Jammu & Kashmir. Her focus will be on expanding Ayush healthcare services across the Union Territory, strengthening Ayush Health and Wellness Centres, and enhancing the integration of Ayush with mainstream healthcare. She is committed to pro-

moting yoga, naturopathy, and other traditional healing practices among the masses while ensuring their accessibility at grass-roots levels.

A strong advocate for the development of the medicinal plants sector, Dr. Bashir aims to facilitate the cultivation and sustainable extraction of high-value medicinal plants, supporting farmers and entrepreneurs engaged in this field.

Accordingly an Introductory meeting was held at Directorate of Ayush, J&K Office Jammu which was attended by Deputy Director Ayush, Jammu.

JMC organises Public Samvaad to address public issues, ensure grievances redressal

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) organized a Public Samvaad, an outreach initiative designed to address the concerns of the general public, encourage active community participation, and provide solutions to their grievances. The event was held at Bharat Mata Patoli Park in Ward No. 35, Janipur and was led by JMC Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav.

The event saw active participation from ex-councillors, prominent citizens, Swachhata Cham-



pirs, NGOs, members of Mohalla Welfare Committees, and the general public. A range of JMC officers, including the Joint Commissioner (A), Joint Commissioner (W), Secretary JMC, Deputy Director (Planning), and others, also attended the program.

During the event, the

speakers highlighted concerns related to streetlight maintenance, road and park upkeep, water supply, and other essential amenities. Public demands included the beautification of Janipur's main road market, repair of streetlights, improved water supply, resolution of sewerage blockages, development of smart mohallas, installation of road dividers with reflectors, gym equipment at parks, additional sanitation workers, upgrading of footpaths, the opening of a public toilet on High Court Road, and the establishment of a public dispensary in Ward No. 34.

Responding to the public demands, JMC Commissioner Dr. Yadav assured the public that all concerns and grievances would be promptly noted and addressed. He emphasized that the primary aim of this initiative was to understand the genuine demands of the public to ensure budgetary.

Constitution of Makhana board, historical: Mangal

AGENCIES
PATNA, FEB 1

Bihar Agriculture Minister Mangal Pandey hailed the announcement for the constitution of Makhana (Fox Nut) board and said that it would benefit the farmers.

Reacting to the budget presented by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Parliament on Saturday, Pandey said here that Makhana is the major produce of Bihar and due to its nutritious value it is popular worldwide. He said that the centre has initiated the step to further boost its production.

Constitution of Makhana board would not only help in providing a commercial platform to the produce but will also improve the financial status of the farmers cultivating it.

He said it is a historical step which was in the interest of the farmers for which he expressed his gratitude towards the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan.

Maoist Kothehonda Ravi surrenders in Karnataka

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, FEB 1

In a major development, Maoist Kothehonda Ravi has surrendered before authorities in Karnataka, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Saturday.

Expressing happiness over the development, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said: "The last underground naxal Kothehonda Ravi (UG Naxal) has surrendered at Nemmar Forest IB, four kilometres away from Sringeri in Chikkamagaluru district."

The authorities are transporting Ravi to Chikkamanglu to complete the surrender process.

"The long-absconding underground Naxal Thombattu Lakshmi will surrender on February 2 at Chikkamanglu or Udipi. She is on the way," the authorities stated.

The officials said that the operation 'Naxal Surrender' is complete now.

Siddaramaiah has announced the Chief Minister's Medal for the team of 22 police officers and men who made relentless efforts to make the state "naxal free".

On January 8, when some Maoists surrendered, Siddaramaiah welcomed them to the mainstream by offering them roses and copies of the Constitution in Bengaluru.

Earlier, with the six Maoists laying down arms, the Congress-led government had then declared Karnataka as a Left Wing Extremism-free state.

Mundagaru Latha from Mundagaru in Sringeri Vanajakshi from Balehole in Kalasa; Sundari from Kutluru near Mangaluru; Marappa Jayanna Aroli from Raichur; Vasantha T. aka Ramesh from Tamil Nadu, and N. Jeesha from Kerala surrendered in presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Addressing the media after the surrender of the Maoists, CM Siddaramaiah said: "To eliminate Naxalism in Karnataka and address their demands, we are committed to taking all necessary measures within the legal framework."

"There is no room in democracy or the Constitution for achieving justice through armed struggle," CM Siddaramaiah underlined.

Karnataka BJP President B. Y. Vijayendra had termed the surrender of Maoists before Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as a "sheer act of drama".

ICG is formidable guardian of our seas ensuring safety of people, waters: PM Modi on Raising Day of force

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, FEB 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lauded the Indian Coast Guard on their raising day and remarked that ICG is a formidable guardian of the nation's seas ensuring the safety of its waters and people.

Taking to social media platform X, PM Modi wrote in a post on Saturday, "Today, on their Raising Day, we laud the Indian Coast Guard for safeguarding our vast coastline with bravery, dedication and



relentless vigilance.

"From maritime security to disaster response, from anti-smuggling operations to environmental protection, the Indian Coast Guard is a formidable guardian of our seas, ensuring the safety of our waters and people."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also extended greetings to the ICG on its foundation day praising the force's unwavering courage and patriotism that shield India against any aggression on its maritime boundaries.

MUDA case petitioner complains to police about black magic against him

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, FEB 1

In an interesting development, Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case petitioner Snehamayi Krishna complained to the Mangaluru Police Commissioner Anupam Agarwal on Saturday alleging black magic against him by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's supporters.

Snehamayi Krishna claimed that black magic was performed to "control" him.

He said, "The black magic is conducted to ensure that I and another activist Gangaraju, should come under the spell and withdraw the case against CM Siddaramaiah and his wife B. M. Parvathi."



the Mangaluru Police Commissioner had stated that they got information that the black magic was done to empower Snehamayi Krishna and Gangaraju.

Barke police had booked Ram Sena leader Prasad Attavar under the Karnataka Prevention and Eradication of Inhuman Evil Practices and Blackmagic Act. The videos of animal sacrifice and black magic were found on his phone.

The video showed a series of animal sacrifices and blood offered to deities. It also showed a piece of paper mentioning the names of Prasad Attavar, Snehamayi Krishna, Gangaraju, Srinidhi and Suma Acharya.

14-year-old girl molested in Assam University, FIR lodged

AGENCIES
GUWAHATI, FEB 1

A 14-year-old girl, belonging to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, was allegedly molested by an employee of Assam University in Silchar, after which a First Information Report (FIR) was lodged, police said on Saturday.

The varsity's officials called this incident "very unfortunate" and the internal complaints committee (ICC) was asked to submit a report within a week.

According to police, the accused, identified as Faruk Ahmed is at large, and a manhunt to nab him was on.

The complainant said that the victim went to the Law Department of Assam University on Friday accompanying a relative who works there.

According to the complainant, Ahmed dragged her to the toilet of the department when she was alone and tried to undress the victim there.

Numal Mahatta, the Superintendent of Police (SP) said that an FIR was lodged at the local police outpost on the university campus.

Pradosh Kiran Nath, the registrar of Assam University, said that the ICC is looking into the matter, and the committee has been coordinating with the police in the investigation since an FIR has already been lodged in the police outpost.

He said, "We have a zero-tolerance policy against any criminal act, particularly the crime against women. The matter is being investigated and proper action will be taken."

Pragati Yatra: Nitish Kumar to visit Bhagalpur today to review development projects

AGENCIES
PATNA, FEB 1

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is set to visit Bhagalpur on Saturday as part of his Pragati Yatra to review development works and inaugurate or lay foundation stones for the projects.

Extensive preparations have been completed to ensure a smooth and secure visit.

After the one-day gap, he will resume the 'Pragati Yatra' with a visit to Bhagalpur.

In Bhagalpur, the chief minister will inspect paved roads, electricity, water taps, animal sheds, goat sheds and Indira Awas housing.

He will also inaugurate or lay the foundation stones of



various projects worth crores of rupees.

Kumar will also inspect Jivika stalls and visit key facilities, including the health and wellness centre, school, Anganwadi centre, pond, river, Playground, and the Panchayat Government Building.

Administrative and security arrangements are in full swing, with local officials and JD(U)

Mahakumbh: Devotees take selfies with cutouts of PM Modi, CM Yogi; praise arrangements

AGENCIES
PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 1

The fourth Snan Parv of the Mahakumbh has brought a massive crowd of devotees to the Sangam ghats. There is a frenzy among people to take selfies and photos with cutouts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The cutouts are placed outside the media centre, where people gather in large numbers to capture pictures and take selfies.

Dr. Shailesh Thakkar, a devotee from Kutch, Gujarat, spoke to IANS and praised the arrangements, saying that this year's Kumbh is truly remark-

able.

"The arrangements are excellent. We can see Digital India here. The Internet services and food arrangements are also great. The arrangements at the Maha Kumbh are incredible, and I thank PM Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath for this."

Dr. Chandrakant Thakkar, also from Kutch, Gujarat, said: "The arrangements here are extraordinary. I visited the Kumbh in 2019 as well, and compared to that, the crowd is much larger, and the arrangements are much better. We had seen on TV that there were issues with traffic and huge crowds, but there are no problems here."

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, FEB 1

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge sheet against Akash Kumar, the younger brother of notorious gangster Aman Sahu, in connection with the 2020 Tetariyakhar coal mine terror attack in Jharkhand. The charge sheet, filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UA(P) Act), accuses Akash Sahu of playing a pivotal role in the criminal conspiracy behind the attack.

Akash Kumar, also known as Akash Sahu, a resident of

Ranchi, Jharkhand, has been charged under Sections 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 384 (extortion) of the IPC, along with Sections 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, and 22 of the UA(P) Act. The charge sheet is the fifth filed by the NIA in the case RC-01/2021/NIA/RNC, which now involves 26 accused individuals, says the agency.

The Tetariyakhar coal mine attack, which occurred in December 2020, was part of a larger conspiracy orchestrated by the Sujit Sinha and Aman Sahu terror gang. The attack was aimed at extorting money and disrupting operations at the Latehar coal mine in Jharkhand.

Investigations revealed that Akash Sahu, who is currently in jail for his involvement in multiple criminal activities across Jharkhand, played an active role in the planning and execution of the attack.

The probe by the NIA revealed that Akash Sahu was instrumental in financing the terror gang's operations. He was involved in the collection of extortion money through various channels, laundering the funds through shell companies and other financial entities, and channelling the money into assets belonging to his brother Aman Sahu and other gang members.

Enraged by property dispute, son sets house on fire in Kerala

AGENCIES
ALAPPUZHA, FEB 1

In a fit of rage over a property dispute, a son set his house on fire in which his 92-year-old father and 90-year-old mother were burnt alive on Saturday morning.

The tragic incident occurred in Mannar near Thiruvalla in Kerala.

The son Vijayan, was soon taken into custody by the police and he owned up to the horrific crime.

For a long time Vijayan had been fighting with his aged parents and siblings over the property.

Two days ago Vijayan had even assaulted his old parents in a fit of rage amid an

argument surrounding the property.

Following the assault, the matter was reported to the local police who had asked Vijayan to appear before it on Saturday.

Locals said that he was enraged over this development and early on Saturday morning, the neighbours saw smoke emanating from Vijayan's house.

Even though the neighbours rushed to the scene they could not save the aged parents who were surrounded by the fire and died in the blaze.

Vijayan was soon taken into custody by the police and he has confessed to the crime.

The locals and neighbours are enraged that the police, despite getting a complaint about the misbehaviour of Vijayan towards his aged parents, failed to take quick action against him.

With Vijayan always behaving very rudely and being in a combative manner most of the time, the neighbours and his siblings used to keep away from him most of the time.

With Vijayan owning up to the crime of pouring petrol in the house and setting it on fire, the police have registered a case and charged him with murder.

Vijayan's relatives and neighbour Soman have also vouched that this was done by Vijayan.

Manipur signs MoU with National Dairy Development Board to boost milk production

AGENCIES
IMPHAL, JAN 31

To increase the milk production a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Friday, between Manipur government bodies and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

In presence of Chief Minister N Biren Singh Manipur's Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department, Manipur Milk Producers' Co-operative Union Ltd and NDDB signed the MoU.

Officials said that the tripartite MoU was signed for handing over the management of Manipur Milk Pro-



ducers' Co-operative Union Ltd. to NDDB.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated the signing of the MoU was a long-awaited development and expressed happiness on it. Mentioning the importance of milk in the human diet, he stated that Manipur has more

requirement of milk than its current production.

In a state like Manipur, which has produced 19 Olympians and many other successful sport players, milk is an excellent supplement since many players are not financially able to afford more expensive diets, he added.

How might soft drinks lead to type 2 diabetes?

A new study, which appears in *Cell Metabolism* Trusted Source, concludes that sugar-sweetened beverage consumption is linked to increased levels of nine specific bacteria in the gut microbiome.

As these microbes break down food, they produce certain compounds, or metabolites. Scientists found that these chemicals were associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes.

How does soda consumption impact health?

Previous research has shown that people who drink large quantities of sugar-sweetened beverages are more likely to have type 2 diabetes Trusted Source.

While consumption of these beverages has declined in recent years, they were still the leading source of added sugar intake in the United States between 2017 and 2018.

The mechanism by which soda intake influences health is likely to be multifaceted. For instance, experts believe these factors all play a part:

- excessive weight gain
- insulin resistance – when cells no longer respond adequately to insulin
- inflammation
- atherogenic dyslipidemia – unhealthy levels of blood fats.

Also, the sugar in soda “might be more easily absorbed because they’re just sugar and water,” explained senior author Qibin Qi, PhD, from Albert Einstein College of Medicine, NY, in a press release.

More recently, evidence has

emerged that soda consumption may alter the gut microbiome, which could contribute to diabetes risk.

According to the authors of the new study, evidence from animal studies suggests that consuming the main sugars in soda – fructose and glucose – is linked to:

- reduced gut bacteria diversity – one marker of a less healthy microbiome

- reduced levels of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) – these are metabolites produced by “good” gut bacteria that support overall health

- increased levels of bacterial species linked to inflammation.

Similarly, a small study on 12 females found that high-fructose syrup reduced the number of “good” bacteria that produce a SCFA called butyrate.

Other human studies have also found that sugar-sweetened beverages are associated with changes to the gut microbiome Trusted Source.

Similarly, a Chinese study showed that people who drank soda had certain bacterial metabolites in their blood that are linked to poorer health.

The latest study, however, is the first to investigate links between soda consumption, the gut microbiome, bacteria metabolites in the blood, and type 2 diabetes risk.

As Lucy McCann, MD, registered associate nutritionist and clinical academic researcher told Medical News Today: “Assessing these associations is crucial considering that the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages is increasing worldwide Trusted Source. The current average intake



is 2.7 serving per week.”

In particular, the scientists accessed data from more than 16,000 Hispanic/Latino individuals in the U.S. They chose to focus on this population because they have both high soda consumption and a high prevalence of type 2 diabetes.

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Soda consumption linked to gut microbiome changes

The researchers found that soda consumption was linked to changes in nine species of gut bacteria. For instance, four species of bacteria that produce beneficial SCFAs were reduced in number in those who drank two or more sodas per day.

higher levels of blood sugar, higher body mass index (BMI), and lower levels of “good” cholesterol.

On the other hand, increased levels of AAA derivatives and phenylsulfate were linked with better metabolic traits.

Changes to gut microbiome may predict diabetes

This is one of the few studies to investigate these complex relationships between gut microbes, their metabolites, and diabetes. Much more research is needed to fully understand the links, but the authors hope that, in the future, the metabolites they measured might help predict and perhaps even treat diabetes.

“Our study suggests a potential mechanism to explain why sugar-sweetened beverages are bad for your metabolism,” said Qi in the press release. “Although our findings are observational, they provide insights for potential diabetes prevention or management strategies using the gut microbiome.”

Qi also noted that these metabolites might serve as an early warning system: “We found that several microbiota-related metabolites are associated with the risk of diabetes. In other words, these metabolites may predict future diabetes.”

The team of scientists plan to continue this line of investigation by testing “whether the bacteria and metabolites can mediate or at least partially mediate the association between sugar-sweetened beverages and risk of diabetes,” Qi says.

These compounds are associated with the metabolism of: glycerophospholipid – these fats are major building blocks of cell membranes, changes in whose levels appear to be linked to diabetes

branched-chain amino acid (BCAA) – essential amino acids that may play a part in insulin resistance.

aromatic amino acid (AAA) – Animal studies show that reducing levels of AAA alleviates diabetes symptoms

phenylsulfate – produced when gut microbes breakdown the amino acid tyrosine, this compound is linked to diabetes-associated kidney disease.

In this study, the scientists found that compounds associated with glycerophospholipid and BCAA were linked to raised diabetes risk and poorer metabolic traits, such as

What to drink instead of soda

We asked McCann to provide some healthier options to standard sodas.

“There are plenty of healthier swaps we can make to avoid or reduce sugar-sweetened beverage consumption,” she said. “Ultimately, when it comes to drinks, water is always the healthiest pick.”

“However, if you’re craving something fizzy, it’s better to choose options low in sugar and sweeteners, such as sparkling waters or kombucha,” McCann advised.

Because kombucha is fermented and naturally contains live microbes, it may support the health of the gut microbiome. However, it is important to look for a product that contains live microbes and no added sugars.

The trouble with microbiome research

“It’s difficult to find an aspect of health that hasn’t been associated with the gut microbiome,” McCann told MNT – it is a fascinating topic.

However, it is almost infinitely complex: The gut microbiome varies significantly between geographical regions and between individuals – even identical twins. It fluctuates throughout the day and it can change swiftly and drastically Trusted Source in line with dietary changes.

Each species produces a range of compounds as it metabolises food. And each of these compounds has the potential to be converted into other compounds either by other microbes or gut enzymes.

‘Hidden hunger’ with diabetes: Deficiency in these vitamins, minerals may be culprit

Eating a healthy diet plays a large role in both the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes – a chronic condition where the body does not use insulin properly.

Wholesome eating includes getting the right amount of micronutrients – including vitamins and minerals – needed to keep the body functioning properly.

“Diet, dietary habits, and consumption of micronutrients play an essential role in the causation of the disease and development of long-term complications,” Daya Krishan Mangal, MD, adjunct professor at IHMR University, Jaipur, India, and senior affiliate in the Department of International Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health told Medical News Today.

Mangal is the corresponding author of a new study recently published in the journal *BMJ Nutrition Prevention & Health* that found micronutrient deficiency Trusted Source is common in people with type 2 diabetes, especially vitamin D.

Researchers believe this “hidden hunger” may provide a new target for nutritional interventions to be used in conjunction with existing diabetes treatments.

45% of people with type 2 diabetes are micronutrient deficient

For this study, researchers analyzed data from 132 studies that had been published between 1998 and 2023. The pooled data was formed by a total of more than 52,000 study participants with type 2 diabetes to look for micronutrient deficiencies, including vitamins, minerals, and electrolytes.

Upon analysis, scientists found the pooled prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies among people with type 2 diabetes was about 45%.

“(This) indicates that every second person with type 2 diabetes has one or the other micronutrient deficiency,” Mangal explained. “These micronutrients are essential at the cellular level and in glucose metabolism. We found that micronutrient deficiency is common among diabetics.”

“We must look for more robust



research findings to incriminate the deficiency of micronutrients with causation and glycemic control and inform diabetic management protocols on routine screening for these deficiencies and supplementation,” he added.

The researchers also reported the amount of micronutrient deficiencies was higher in women with type 2 diabetes than men.

“This variation could be due to differences in lifestyle and dietary practices,” Mangal said. “However, no causation has yet been established.”

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Vitamin D most common micronutrient deficiency in type 2 diabetes

Of all the micronutrients studied, Mangal and his team found that vitamin D was the most common missing micronutrient, affecting 60.5% of participants.

“Vitamin D deficiency is the most common deficiency found among diabetic patients. Vitamin D plays a role in insulin production and utilization at cellular levels. However, we must gather more information on the causal association between vitamin D deficiency and the causation of diabetes and its complications,” Mangal said.

After vitamin D, 42% of partici-

pants were deficient in magnesium, 29% in vitamin B12, and 28% in iron.

“Additionally, identifying and correcting micronutrient deficiencies may open avenues for preventative strategies, particularly for individuals at high risk of developing complications amongst those having type 2 diabetes,” Mangal added. “However, further research is needed to establish causal relationships and determine the effectiveness of such interventions in both prevention and treatment contexts.”

Type 2 diabetes micronutrient deficiencies not uncommon

MNT spoke with Toni Isabella, RN, BSN, CDCES, manager of The MOLLY Diabetes Education and Management Center for Adults and Children at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey about this study.

Isabella said it’s not surprising that micronutrient deficiencies are common in people with type 2 diabetes for several interconnected reasons, including increased urinary excretion, medication side effects, insulin resistance, and increased oxidative stress.

“Understanding the role of specific nutrients in the development of type 2 diabetes can lead to targeted dietary recommendations and interventions to prevent or delay the onset of the disease, especially in high-risk individuals,” she continued. “This could have a significant impact on public health, given the growing global prevalence of diabetes.”

How a Mediterranean diet might protect the brain’s white matter

A preliminary study suggests that closely following a Mediterranean diet may enhance brain health among Hispanic/Latino adults.

The study’s abstract will be presented in February at the American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference 2025 Trusted Source in Los Angeles, CA.

The Mediterranean diet prioritizes wholesome, nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, and olive oil, and moderate amounts of dairy, eggs, fish, and poultry.

Researchers propose that this diet may support brain health beyond its ability to help manage traditional cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, smoking, or lack of physical activity.

Specifically, a Mediterranean diet may directly enhance the integrity of the brain’s white matter—which supports efficient communication between brain regions.

While more research is needed, the findings suggest the diet might help protect cognitive function, partly independent of cardiovascular health.

How the Mediterranean diet affects brain health

Researchers analyzed data from the Study of Latinos-Investigation of Neurocognitive Aging Magnetic Resonance Imaging (SOL-INCA-MRI).

This analysis included 2,774 participants with an average age of 64 at the time of their MRI. Women made up 56% of the group.

They wanted to find out if closely following the Mediterranean diet could improve brain health in Hispanic/Latino adults in the United States, specifically looking at white matter.

White matter is tissue in the brain that helps different regions communicate with each other, playing a key role in memory and learning. It declines naturally with age, but this process can be slowed through healthy diet and lifestyle choices.

The study also examined whether these improvements in brain health are influenced by cardiovascular health, which was assessed using the Life’s Simple 7 Trusted Source score.

The SOL-INCA-MRI study used 24-hour dietary recalls to calculate



a Mediterranean diet score (0-9), estimating how closely a person’s usual diet follows Mediterranean recommendations.

Brain scans were taken to study white matter health, using advanced imaging techniques to measure abnormalities and structural integrity.

Researchers used a statistical analysis to explore how MRI results are linked to Mediterranean diet scores, accounting for factors like age, sex, and social demographics.

A Mediterranean-style diet may protect white matter

In their final adjusted analysis, researchers observed that higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet was linked to better brain health in Hispanic/Latino adults, particularly in preserving white matter integrity.

More closely following a Mediterranean diet was associated with:

- lower white matter hyperintensity volume, indicating less damage to the white matter in the brain
- increased fractional anisotropy, indicating well-organized and healthy white matter connections.

These positive effects were only partially explained by improved cardiovascular health markers, indicating that the diet may directly benefit brain health through other mechanisms.

“We have observed that cardiovascular health directly impacts brain structures; the effect of the Mediterranean diet on communication between regions of the brain remains somewhat independent of cardiovascular health,” the lead author of the study Gabriela Trifan, MD, assistant professor of neurology at the University of Illinois in Chicago, said in a press release.

When examining the individual components of the Mediterranean diet, researchers found that consuming more than the median intake of whole grains and fish was specifically associated with improved white matter integrity.

While these preliminary results are promising, as an observational study, it cannot establish cause-and-effect. The reliance on self-reported data also introduces the possibility of recall bias.

Additionally, the findings have not yet undergone peer-reviewed publication.

Despite limitations, the authors suggest this research highlights the potential for a culturally tailored Mediterranean diet to protect brain health in Hispanic/Latino adults.

How might a Mediterranean-style diet improve brain health?

While the Mediterranean diet is well-known for its cardiovascular benefits, this study suggests its positive effects on the brain go beyond vascular health.

Medical News Today spoke with Thomas M. Holland, MD, MS, a physician-scientist and assistant professor at the RUSH Institute for Healthy Aging, RUSH University, College of Health Sciences, not involved in the study, to discuss the possible mechanisms behind this connection.

Holland highlighted that, in this study, “only a small portion of the relationship (8-9%) was mediated by the cardiovascular health metrics like blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.”

He said this implies the Mediterranean diet may also support brain health through other pathways, including reducing inflammation and oxidative stress.

Aus women seal historic multi-format Ashes series

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY 1 (UND)

Australia sealed a historic multi-format Ashes series sweep with a resounding innings-and-122-run victory over England in the day-night Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Saturday.

A brilliant spell of leg-spin from Alana King, coupled with Ashleigh Gardner's support, ensured the hosts completed the demolition in just three days.

King's mesmerising 5-53 from the Shane Warne Stand end played a central role in the rout, as England were bowled out for just 148 in 68.4 overs. The Victorian spinner ended the series with 9-98, with her partner Gardner taking 4-39, to dismiss England after they had been set a daunting target.

Beth Mooney, earlier in the day, had cemented her place in Australian cricket history by becoming the first Australian woman to score a century across all three formats. She resumed her innings on 98, quickly bringing up her milestone with a confident two off Sophie Ecclestone, before eventually being dismissed for 106. Mooney ended the series with 409 runs, setting a new record for the most runs in a multi-format Ashes.

This triumph came just 22 days after Australia's vow to avenge their 2023 UK tour, where they had lost a 6-0



THE ASHES

advantage to England, resulting in a drawn series. Alyssa Healy's team, however, turned the tables spectacularly, winning every game across all formats to claim a 16-0 victory, the first of its kind in Ashes history since the points-based system was introduced.

The day unfolded with England in early trouble. Australia's first-innings total of 440 had already placed the tourists on the back foot, with a substantial deficit of 270 runs. Tammy Beaumont (47) and Heather Knight (32) mounted some resistance but were ultimately undone by Australia's spinners. King dismissed Knight with a sharp catch from Phoebe Litchfield, before Gardner's tight bowling saw England's lower order crumble.

Natalie Sciver-Brunt, the key

wicket for England, fell to King for the fourth time this series, trapped lbw for 18, further highlighting the dominance of Australia's spinners. The tail offered little resistance, and with King taking the final wicket of Laurens Filer, England's efforts were brought to an abrupt end.

Australia's triumph, despite missing key players like Healy and Gardner for the T20I leg, demonstrated their strength in depth. King, who ended the Ashes with the equal-highest haul of 23 wickets, was awarded the Peden-Archdale medal as player of the series, edging out Gardner, who also took 23 wickets.

The victory marked a fitting conclusion to an Ashes series that has firmly established Australia as the dominant force in women's cricket.

Aus eclipses SL's heaviest defeat with record-breaking Test win

AGENCIES

GALLE, FEB 1 (UND)

Australia achieved their biggest Test victory on the sub-continent, crushing Sri Lanka by an innings and 242 runs in the first Test of their ongoing series here on Saturday.

The visitors' exceptional all-round performance, bolstered by a dominant display from their spinners and a key contribution from Mitchell Starc, saw Sri Lanka crumble for just 247 runs in 64.5 overs in their second innings, with the final wickets falling swiftly on a rain-affected fourth day.

The Australia earlier enforced follow-on to Sri Lanka after they were bowled out for 165 in the first innings in reply to visitor's mammoth total of 654/6 declared in their first innings.

Australia's remarkable triumph eclipses their previous biggest margin on subcontinental soil—a 2002 victory over Pakistan in Sharjah by an innings and 198 runs. It also surpasses Sri Lanka's heaviest defeat on home soil, a 239-run loss to Pakistan in 2023.

The match, marred by monsoonal rain on day three, saw Australia assert complete dominance. The spin trio of Matthew Kuhnemann (9 wickets), Nathan Lyon (7), and Todd Murphy (1) provided relentless pressure, backed by Starc's incisive seam bowling.

Despite Sri Lanka's hopes of a late resistance, they fell apart



under the weight of Australia's strategic field placements and relentless attack. The hosts' batting, devoid of substance, surrendered meekly, with key players like Dinesh Chandimal and skipper Dhananjaya de Silva contributing to their downfall. Sri Lanka's tail-end resistance was briefly buoyed by Jeffrey Vandersay, who managed a defiant 50 from 47 balls.

Australia's stand-in captain Steve Smith orchestrated

the proceedings with impeccable tactical acumen, rotating his bowlers effectively and maintaining a sharp, proactive field. The collapse began early in the day when Kusal Mendis's sweep shot resulted in an easy wicket for Kuhnemann. The turning point came when Kamindu Mendis, having formed a promising partnership with Angelo Mathews, attempted an ill-advised slog, only to be dismissed in the deep.

The final wickets tumbled quickly, with Kuhnemann finishing the match by claiming the last Sri Lankan wicket just before tea.

Australia now heads into the second Test at Galle on February 6, buoyed by their historic win. With their confidence soaring, they aim to secure only their second series victory in Sri Lanka since their triumph in Sri Lanka in 2011, having only previously won a series in Pakistan in 2022.

FFCI urges AIFF to consider minimum wages & pension for "Unsung Coaches of India"

AGENCIES

KOLKATA, FEB 1 (UND)

The Federation of Football Coaches in India (FFCI) has urged India's supreme football governing body - AIFF - to consider the plight (financial) of the football coaches, who primarily shaped the backbone of Indian football by grooming home grown players but remained unsung and neglected.

"We would like to appeal to the All India Football Federation to consider the plight of these "Unsung Gurus" and formulate a minimum monthly pension structure after assessing their contribution," a memorandum mailed to the AIFF said.

"The AIFF may also consider creating a Coaches Benevolent Fund for this purpose and form a committee to assess applications for financial assistance," the memorandum continued as it was adopted in the resolution, which has approval from the attendees.

The memorandum was sent to AIFF President Kalyan Chaubay, who was a former top class goalkeeper.

The FFCI also pointed out to the AIFF that the existing "poor structure" of remuneration of the current coaches and stressed the need to implement the minimum wages according to the level of the licenses D, C, B and A. "

This is important as most of these coaches have spent a lot of money out of their pocket to get their respective licenses and should accordingly be remunerated as per their qualification," FFCI President Sanjay Banerjee said in the memorandum to the AIFF.

India's concussion sub call leaves Eng camp fuming



AGENCIES

PUNE, FEB 1 (UND)

A fresh debate over the 'like-for-like' principle in concussion substitutions erupted after India's Harshit Rana replaced Shivam Dube in the fourth T20I against England here on Friday.

The decision, made by match referee Javagal Srinath, has drawn sharp reactions from England's camp and former cricketers.

Dube, who was struck on the helmet during the final over of India's innings, showed signs of a delayed concussion and was ruled out of the second innings. Rana, making his T20I debut as a concussion substitute, proved to be a game-changer, claiming three wickets and playing a pivotal role in India's 15-run victory.

England captain Jos Buttler expressed his dissatisfaction with the substitution, arguing that Rana was not a "like-for-like" replacement for Dube. "It does not seem fair when an allrounder is replaced by a specialist bowler," Buttler said in the post-match press

conference, questioning the application of the rule.

Several former England cricketers, including Kevin Pietersen, Alastair Cook, and Michael Vaughan, have also criticised the decision. Cook remarked that replacing an allrounder with a specialist bowler "makes no sense." Vaughan questioned how a full-time bowler could replace a part-time one, adding to the controversy. Dube has bowled in 23 of his 34 T20I matches, but he has completed his full quota of four overs only twice in his career, leading to further scrutiny over whether he qualifies as a genuine all-rounder.

The incident has reignited discussions over the fairness and consistency of the concussion substitute rule in cricket. With questions being raised about its application, calls for clearer guidelines to avoid similar controversies in the future have grown louder.

As cricket's governing bodies review this incident, the debate over concussion replacements and their impact on match outcomes is likely to continue.

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