



DC Kupwara reviews
implementation of
"Zimadari 2.0" initiative

PJ07

Poonch admin resolves to
expedite cooperative
development projects

PJ8



Deep-rooted relationship between J&K, Ladakh can't be altered: CM

LAHDC Kargil calls on Omar Abdullah to discuss issues

HT News Network

Jammu, Feb 08: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday chaired a high-level meeting with a delegation from the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil and senior officers of Jammu and Kashmir to discuss and resolve various concerns of students, patients and residents of Ladakh.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Minister for Jal Shakti Javed Ahmed Rana, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Education Shatmanu, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, and administrative secretaries from the departments of Social Welfare, Health & Medical Edu-



cation, and ARI & Trainings.

Representing LAHDC Kargil, the delegation was led by Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, alongside Feroz Ahmad Khan and other councillors.

The delegation also included Member of Parliament Ladakh Haji Mohd Haneefa Jan and

senior National Conference leader and former Minister Qamar Ali Akhoun.

Addressing the delegation, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, urged the visiting delegation to take up the matter with the Ladakh administration to ensure the posting of senior

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Two months on, no breakthrough in identifying cause of 17 deaths in Rajouri

Patients remain under observation, await government nod for return

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 08 (KNO): More than two months have passed since the mysterious deaths in Rajouri's Badhaal village, yet authorities remain unable to determine the exact cause of the tragedy. Despite extensive investigations, locals are still waiting for answers.

Since December 7, 2024, a total of 17 people—including 13 children—have died from an unidentified illness. While no new cases have been reported in the last 20 days, and all previously admitted



patients have recovered, the fear and uncertainty continue to grip the village.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), local residents said that while the government's preventive measures have helped contain the crisis, they remain deeply concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the cause of deaths. They urged authorities to expedite the investigation so that appropriate safety measures can be put in place and normal life can resume without fear.

Expressing frustration over the slow pace of the probe, locals said the issue should have been treated as a health emergency

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NH-1 signboards to feature Urdu language alongside English, Hindi in J&K

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 08: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has decided to update signboards along the National Highway by incorporating the local language, Urdu, alongside English and Hindi. As per the news agency—

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Sakeena Itoo attends CAC meeting of PM-AJAY at New Delhi

HT News Network

New Delhi, Jan 08: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, attended the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting of Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) here on Saturday. The CAC meeting was



held under the Chairmanship of Union Minister

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Firing Incident Near LoC in Rajouri as Soldiers on Patrol Come Under Attack

HT News Network

Rajouri, Feb 8: Indian soldiers on patrol near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district came under fire from a forested area across the border on Saturday, prompting retaliatory action, security officials reported. Although no casualties were reported in the brief exchange of fire, security forces have been placed on high alert to ensure strict surveillance in the region.

According to officials, the soldiers were patrolling a forward

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Dr Jitendra Singh, Javed Rana inaugurate 7 WWSs in Kathua

HT News Network

Kathua, Feb 08: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana and Union Minister of State, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Saturday inaugurated 7 Water Supply Schemes (WSS) in Jasrota, Kathua.

Legislators, Rajiv Jasrotia and Vijay Kumar along with other officers from Jal Shakti Department were also present on the occasion.

The WSSs have been completed by Jal Shakti Department with an amount



of 25 crore under JJM which will provide potable drinking water to thousands of souls.

While e-inaugurating the projects, Rana said that

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Authorities should ensure Er Rashid's condition doesn't deteriorate: Tarigami

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 08 CPI (M) leader Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami on Saturday said that authorities should ensure Er Rashid's health does not deteriorate after he was reportedly shifted to a hospital following his hunger strike.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Tarigami said



that Er Rashid is a public representative, representing a par-

liamentary constituency, and his case should be handled fairly and given a just trial.

"Until the court reaches a conclusion on his bail plea, we urge the authorities to ensure he receives proper medical care. We are deeply concerned about his health after being shifted to the hospital," CPI(M) leader said.

He added that a fair trial, bail consideration, and other legal rights

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

SED delivers 60% free textbooks to Govt schools in Kashmir

Says all public institutions will receive 100% free textbooks before reopening of schools

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 08 The School Education Department (SED) Kashmir on Saturday said it has delivered nearly 60 per cent of free textbooks to government schools across the region.

Besides, the Director School Education Kashmir, G N Itoo said that the government was examining the infrastructure and academic gaps highlighted in the ASER-2025 survey.

Speaking to the reporters, DSEK as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observ-



er (KNO) said, "The restoration of Nov-Dec academic session upto 9th standard was taken in a very shortest span of time. JKBOSE

did not get enough time for the ground work but as of now at least 60 per cent of free textbooks have reached the government schools and the distribution process is going simultaneously."

Itoo assured that all the government schools will receive 100 per cent free textbooks prior to reopening of schools after the winter vacations.

"We have book bank in the schools wherein we store the sets of old books. As of now, we have nearly 200 winter tutorial centers in Kashmir division in which 33,000

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Hygam Wetland bustles with nearly 3 lakh migratory birds this winter

Illegal hunting drops drastically, 98% poaching curbed, aiming for 100%: Official

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 08: The Hygam Wetland in north Kashmir has once again become a haven for migratory birds, with around 3 lakh avian visitors from more than 25 species flocking the area this winter, even as anti-poaching squad is on high alert, officials said.

Wetland serves as a seasonal home to thousands of migratory birds including White Heeled Duck, Shoveller, Red-Crested Pochard, White-Eyed Pochard, Pintail, Mallard, Gadwall, Coot and Graylag. It spans over 7.25 kilometres and has around 1,400 hectares of land and is designed Ramsar site.

Speaking with the news



agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the officer concerned with Hygam Wetland, said, "During peak winter, when the water tends to freeze, the movement of birds helps keep some pathways open. However, we intervene where necessary to ensure their survival, particu-

larly in terms of food availability."

Approximately 3 lakh migratory birds are there, however, the exact count will be determined and rounded up at the end of the season, he said, adding that the final figures will be compiled through a detailed

field and comprehensive surveys.

Historically, poaching was rampant in the region, posing a severe threat to migratory birds. However, officials have taken strong measures to curb illegal hunting.

"During the tenure of Maharaja Hari Singh, hunting was allowed under a licensing system. However, after the Supreme Court ruling and the enactment of the Wildlife Protection Act in 1972, hunting was completely banned," Mohammad Iqbal Wani, an official said.

To further tighten regulations, the Wildlife Protection Act was amended in 2022, introducing stricter penalties for poaching. Wani said, adding,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

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J&K will follow Delhi's lead in rejecting NC's deceitful politics: Sunil Sharma

Omar Abdullah mocks INDIA Bloc's infighting

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 08 (KNO): Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma Saturday said that the party's victory in the Delhi Assembly polls is a reflection to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, predicting a similar rejection of the National Conference (NC) in J&K.

Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma, while speaking to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The people of Delhi have rejected corruption and Arvind Kejriwal's betrayal, choosing instead to place their trust in PM Modi's guarantees." He further said that people now realise that real opportunities lie under Modi's leadership.

"Similarly, in J&K, the National Conference



(NC) will face the same fate, as its deceitful politics no longer resonate with the people. Despite making lofty promises in its manifesto, NC has consistently failed to deliver on its commitments," said Sharma, who actively campaigned for the BJP in the Delhi elections. Meanwhile, J&K Chief Minister and NC Vice-President Omar Abdullah took a swipe at the ongoing turmoil within the INDIA bloc following BJP's lead in Delhi.

Responding to a post showing early trends,

Omar posted a GIF on X with the caption, "Aur lado aapas mein!!!"—mocking the alliance's internal strife.

According to the Election Commission, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a decisive victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, winning 48 out of the 70 seats.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) managed to secure 22 seats, while Congress once again failed to open its account, repeating its performance from the last elections—(KNO)

DC Kishtwar holds public outreach camp at Binoon, addresses public grievances

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 08: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan today convened public outreach camp here at village Binoon, Block Bonjwah, where he listened to public grievances and assured time-bound redressal of the same.

During the camp, several delegations raised demands, seeking development of infrastructure to improve basic amenities, Upgradation and repair of schools, sanctioning of a Government Degree College in the area, timely payment and work completion under MGNREGA, replacement of damaged electric poles, augmentation of power sub-stations, and timely completion of ongoing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) schemes.



Besides, people demanded the Staff rationalization in schools, hospitals, and government offices, filling of potholes on roads, repair of the Pashala-Tipri and other roads, and expediting PMGSY projects to connect left-out villages with a population over 250 households.

Other Public issues projected included up-dation of ration cards, enhancement of tourism infrastructure and legal action

against those responsible for forest fires.

The DC directed concerned departments to take immediate action and submit compliance reports. He emphasised public participation in governance and assured that the district administration remains accessible to address any service-related grievances.

Highlighting key developmental initiatives, the DC urged locals to partici-

pate in the ongoing PMAY survey to ensure all left-out eligible beneficiaries are registered. He also directed PMGSY authorities to expedite work on sanctioned road projects for timely completion and blacklisting of those contractors who fail to execute work.

Recognizing the tourism potential of the region, he assured to organize the Summer Festival at Bonjwah to boost local tourism. The DC also informed the public about the month-long sports activities to be held under ongoing Sansad Khel Yojna in the Devigol area of Bonjwah.

"Besides, Health camps for free medical checkup will be hosted at the doorstep of Bonjwah people."

He also discussed the Model Panchayat initiative, talking about the 85 schemes being implemented in 13 designated.

District Level Seminar on Scientific Beekeeping concludes at Ramnagar

HT News Network

RAMNAGAR, FEBRUARY 08: A two-day District Level Seminar cum Awareness /Workshop on Scientific Beekeeping, organized by the Department of Agriculture Udhampur, under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM), concluded today at Ramnagar, Udhampur District.

Over 200 local farmers, beekeepers, progressive farming organizations, and rural women participated in the seminar.

The seminar was inaugurated by Sub-Divisional Magistrate Rajinder Singh Rana, as the Chief Guest.

In his address, the SDM emphasized the role of scientific beekeeping in improving agricultural productivity and income, urging young, educated farmers, particularly those



associated with Farmers Producer Organizations and Self-Help Groups, to leverage government schemes under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) for beekeeping integration with agriculture.

Chief Agriculture Officer Udhampur Sanjay Anand delivered a detailed presentation on various government initiatives for

promoting beekeeping under HADP. He discussed the significant role of beekeeping in enhancing crop pollination and boosting farm productivity. He encouraged participants to utilize the Daksh Kisan Portal for practical training and capacity building.

The seminar featured expert lectures and training sessions, including top-ics on hive management,

disease prevention, and honey extraction. Experts from SKUAST-Jammu and District Level Subject Matter Specialists (SMS), including Sukhbir Singh and Arun Samyal, delivered lectures on scientific beekeeping techniques and practical demonstrations. Pawan Talwar, Apiculture Development Officer, also contributed by guiding participants through various beekeeping practices.

The event also showcased stalls by progressive beekeepers, where SDM Rana interacted with participants and encouraged them to view beekeeping not just as an additional income source but as a full-fledged entrepreneurial venture. He stressed the importance of women's involvement in the beekeeping sector and urged them to explore this profitable occupation.

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

CM

officers in Jammu and Srinagar, enabling them to address the challenges faced by Ladakh UT residents in J&K more effectively.

He assured that space would be provided at SKIMS and other super-specialty hospitals in Kashmir for the establishment of a help desk, which will be managed by Ladakh administration staff to facilitate immediate assistance for patients from Kargil and Leh.

He further urged the delegation to create awareness among Ladakh students about the quota available in J&K, noting that many seats remain unutilized.

Stressing the historical ties between Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, he reaffirmed that administrative reorganization would not alter the deep-rooted relationship between the two regions.

"Maps may change, but changing maps will not affect our relationship with you. Our bond with Ladakh is centuries old, and it will remain strong," the chief minister said.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and Minister for Jal Shakti Javed Ahmed Rana assured the delegation that all their concerns related to roads, drinking water and other essential services would be addressed on priority.

Earlier, the Kargil delegation highlighted several pressing issues, including the appointment of nodal officers for patients referred to SKIMS Soura and other super-specialty hospitals in Srinagar.

They also raised concerns about the selection and training of paramedical students in J&K's paramedical training institutes, the extension of existing student hostels in Srinagar and Jammu, and the need for more admissions of Ladakh students in various colleges and universities of J&K.

Additionally, they sought tourism promotion for Kargil and other areas of Ladakh UT through events organized in Srinagar.

Expressing their gratitude, the delegation thanked Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for his patient hearing and proactive approach in addressing their concerns.

They appreciated the commitment of the J&K government towards ensuring better facilities and opportunities for the people of Ladakh—(KNO)

DEATHS

and resolved on priority. "More than 20 days have passed since high-level teams, including an inter-ministerial delegation, visited the area, yet no concrete findings have been shared," they said.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) consti-

tuted by the police has questioned multiple individuals but has not uncovered any leads.

Meanwhile, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has ruled out infectious agents as the cause and is focusing on the possibility of toxic substances.

Experts from AIIMS Delhi and PGIMER Chandigarh have visited the affected village, collected samples, and are currently analysing them for possible toxins.

A senior doctor told KNO that all patients at GMC Rajouri have now recovered and have been shifted to observation wards. "The antidotes administered to the affected individuals have been effective, but we still lack conclusive evidence about the exact cause of deaths. We are awaiting the final reports from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)," the doctor said.

He added that investigators had already narrowed down their focus to toxins such as Aldicarb, Cadmium, and other salts, but official confirmation is still pending.

The district administration continues to monitor the situation closely, and the village remains under strict surveillance to prevent any further incidents.

An official told KNO that there has been no further development, and authorities are waiting for government approval before allowing the people of Badhaal to return home.

"The recovered patients are currently being kept in hospital observation wards, along with their immediate family members. We expect the final reports from premier health institutes soon, after which the government will take a decision," the official added—(KNO)

URDU

Kashmir News Observer (KNO), this change will be implemented in the upcoming working season to ensure better accessibility for travelers.

Notably, Urdu was one of the official languages of Jammu and Kashmir, recognized alongside Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi, and English.

The J&K Official Languages Bill, 2020, passed by the Indian Parliament, granted official status to these languages for administrative and communication purposes in the region. Currently, the signboards installed in the Area of Responsibility (AoR) of BRO's Project Beacon are written in English and Hindi.

In response to an RTI query, BRO has confirmed that corrections will be made to include Urdu, considering the linguistic demographics of the region.

The decision is part of an effort to improve communication and clarity for all commuters, it said.

"The inclusion of Urdu aligns with the

guidelines of the Indian Roads Congress (IRC:67), which emphasize the importance of bilingual or multilingual road signs for improved safety. By adding Urdu, BRO aims to make road signage more user-friendly for residents who primarily use the language," it added.

"Future signboards within the jurisdiction of Project Beacon will follow this multilingual approach," it added. "Urdu will be incorporated as a standard language alongside English and Hindi on all newly installed signboards," the BRO said.

This measure is expected to assist local commuters, making directions and road instructions more accessible to a broader section of the population.

BRO has outlined that the necessary corrections will be made in the next working season. The project will ensure that new signboards conform to this policy, helping travelers navigate roads more efficiently. The initiative reflects an effort to enhance road safety and improve ease of travel for local residents.

The updated signboards will be placed along NH-1 in accordance with the planned schedule, ensuring that all necessary modifications are completed in a timely manner—(KNO)

YATOO

of Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar to review progress on the scheme and formulate strategies aimed at the socio-economic upliftment of Scheduled Castes (SC) communities across India.

During the meeting, the CAC held extensive discussions on three components of the scheme i.e; Adarsh Gram, Grant-in-aid and Hostel component. The committee further deliberated on strategies to expand the scheme's reach to larger SC population and enhance its effectiveness. Emphasis was placed on strengthening collaboration at the States and District levels, fostering greater community participation, ensuring timely project implementation, and monitoring the outcomes to achieve maximum impact.

While presenting the status of Jammu and Kashmir in the meeting, Sakeena Itoo highlighted that 91 CSCs, 4993 Solar lights, 63 Smart classes, 21 Gyms (Open/ Indoor), 11 Smart Libraries and other infrastructure has been established at various locations across J&K under the scheme. She also informed that 1715 students were trained under various trades like Data Entry Operator, Beauty Therapist, CCTV and Solar Panel Installation Technicians under this scheme.

The Minister, during the meeting, underscored the importance of this scheme for

enhancing the livelihood, education and empowerment opportunities for SC communities. She emphasised the need for effective grassroots implementation, ensuring that the benefits of the scheme reach the intended beneficiaries in a transparent and efficient manner.

Additional Secretary, Social Welfare department J&K Government and Nodal Officer coordination PM-AJAY, Dr. Rehana Akhter Bijli also accompanied the Minister for the meeting—(KNO)

TARIGAMI

are entitlements of every undertrial.

The CPI(M) leader also reiterated that every jailed individual deserves to be heard and that justice should not be delayed. He further added that, according to their families, the health of other Kashmiri detainees has also been deteriorating. He said that they too deserve a fair trial and urged the authorities to ensure proper care for their health—(KNO)

DR JTINDRA

the schemes will cover a dozen villages, benefitting 15881 souls covering 2584 households. He said that the aim of the scheme is to enhance the rural drinking water infrastructure for the general public. He further said that the scheme will provide more than 2500 Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC).

Under these schemes, four tube wells, two bore wells and four overhead tanks have been constructed to provide potable water as per JJM guidelines.

Rana said that the Omar Abdullah led government is giving primacy to people's needs and that people should not face any difficulty.

Maintaining that the government was steadfast and committed in completing all the projects in close coordination and consultation of local representatives, Rana praised local legislator, Rajiv Jasrotia, for effectively following completion of the schemes.

The Minister further informed that a total of 303 water supply schemes, with an estimated cost of Rs 1369.57 crore, are being taken up in district Kathua under Jal Jeevan Mission.

He asked the officials to strictly adhere to set timelines and also fast track the land acquisition and forest clearance on priority basis so that developmental works continue unhindered—(KNO)

SED

are being taught. We have provided them all those old books," he said.

The Director further said that the department was examining the recent gaps highlighted in the ASER survey.

"DSEK have constituted a special teams in this regard. Besides, an administrative level meeting in this regard was also conducted," he said.

Itoo further said that the directorate will soon submit a comprehensive roadmap to the government to overcome these challenges.

"At certain levels we have done extremely well in comparison to national level," he said—(KNO)

LOC

village in the Keri sector when unidentified gunmen, suspected to be terrorists, opened fire from across the LoC. The attackers are believed to have been attempting to infiltrate into Indian territory.

In response, the Army troops returned fire and reinforced the anti-infiltration security grid to prevent any breach, officials added. [KNT]

WET LAND

"Now, even an attempt to hunt birds is treated as a serious offence. The law mandates fines up to Rs 1 lakh and imprisonment of 3 to 7 years for violators." To enforce the law effectively, the Wildlife Department has established anti-poaching squads, comprising members from the Forest Protection Force and Wildlife Department. These teams conduct regular surveillance operations, particularly during peak poaching hours—early morning and evening.

The official said they have carried out several operations/seizures, and those caught are facing legal action under the Wildlife Protection Act. Despite repeated awareness campaigns, some individuals still believe poaching is permitted. However, strict action is being taken against violators, he added.

Wani claimed that poaching has been reduced by 98%, and a 100% target is in sight. He said the ongoing efforts have yielded significant results. "We are now working towards achieving a 100% poaching-free wetland," he added.

The official said they have been conducting awareness drives to educate locals about the legal implications of hunting migratory birds. "We urge people to mend their ways and respect the law to avoid legal consequences. These birds are a vital part of our ecosystem and must be protected at all costs," he said—(KNO)



EDITORIAL

Listen to public demand and increase number of green coloured buses

As part of the Srinagar Smart City project the Srinagar Smart City Limited introduced red coloured long distance buses so as to improve the transport system across the different areas of the city. The introduction of the buses has eased the transport problems for the people living in most of the areas of the Srinagar city. Since the buses are comfortable the people making use of the same feel relieved and are more than happy.

The people are also happy that the buses run in the evening hours and as such they are not forced to look for alternate means of transport in the late hours of the day. The introduction of the bus service has eased the problems of the people but there is a glaring discrepancy that needs to be corrected. Since the bus service was meant for the Srinagar smart city these should not be allowed to ply to other districts of the valley.

It has been observed that many of the Srinagar smart city buses ply to districts like Budgam and Ganderbal. These buses could have been easily operated on the city routes and as such the frequency of buses on different routes of the city would have been increased. On many routes of the Srinagar city it has come to the fore that the frequency of buses is less and the same needs to be increased. Once buses in good numbers are operated on all the routes of the city then the smart city bus service can be said to be a success.

The Jammu & Kashmir Road Transport Corporation introduced environment friendly green buses for the different districts of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir. These green buses have somewhat revolutionized the transport system across the length and breadth of the union territory. There is a need to increase the frequency of such buses so that more and more people benefit from the same. Once more buses are operated there are chances that smart city buses ply on routes of Srinagar city only.

The people at helm should try to acquire more and more buses for both the Srinagar smart city and the other districts of the valley. Once this happens then the people of Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir would feel relieved. This would give a new meaning and dimension to the public transport system of Kashmir valley and the people will be entitled to a world class transport system.

The Race that taught the World Integrity



AUBAID AHMAD AKHOON
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From childhood to young adulthood, we go through countless lessons, chapters, and stories that shape our understanding of life. Some of these lessons fade with time, while others leave an everlasting imprint on our minds and hearts. Among these, certain stories stand out—stories that teach us about honesty, kindness, and integrity. One such inspiring tale is that of Iván Fernández Anaya and Abel Mutai, a real-life example of true sportsmanship that continues to inspire the world.

A Race That Defined True Victory

In December 2012, a cross-country race in Navarra, Spain, witnessed an extraordinary moment of integrity and fair play. Abel Mutai, a Kenyan Olympic bronze medalist, was leading the race with ease. His athletic excellence had already proven him to be one of the finest runners. However, just before the finish line, Mutai made an unfortunate mistake—he miscalculated the endpoint and stopped, believing he had already won.

Right behind him was Iván Fernández Anaya, a Spanish runner with a

golden opportunity to claim victory. He could have easily overtaken Mutai in those final moments and secured a win for himself. But instead of exploiting the situation, Iván chose a different path—one that showcased the true essence of sportsmanship.

Realizing Mutai's error, Iván slowed down, gestured toward the actual finish line, and encouraged his opponent to keep running. Mutai, initially confused, followed Iván's direction and crossed the finish line first—rightfully winning the race.

When journalists later asked Iván why he didn't take advantage of Mutai's mistake, his response was simple yet profound:

"He was the rightful winner. He had created a gap that I couldn't have closed if he hadn't made a mistake. So I didn't deserve to win. What would have been the merit of my victory?"

This act of pure sportsmanship stunned the world. In a time when athletes are often driven by competition and personal gain, Iván's selfless act became a shining example of integrity in sports.

The Impact on Today's Sporting World

The lesson from this story becomes even more relevant today, as we witness increasing corruption, match-fixing, and unsportsmanlike behavior in various sports. The fierce competition between teams and nations sometimes fosters hatred, where players are not only rivals on the field but also targets of online abuse, media criticism, and even personal threats.

HT-EDIT

The 8+8+8 Rule: A Vital Framework For Kashmiri Students' Well-Being

FIRDOS AHMAD MALIK

The 8+8+8 Rule is a time-management approach that divides the 24-hour day into three equal segments: 8 hours of study, 8 hours of rest, and 8 hours of recreation. This balanced routine is designed to enhance productivity, improve mental well-being, and maintain a healthy lifestyle, especially for students.

Eight hours of study ensures focused learning, helping students grasp concepts effectively without feeling overwhelmed. 8 hours of rest, including proper sleep, is essential for memory retention, cognitive function, and overall health. 8 hours of recreation involves activities like exercise, hobbies, social interactions, and relaxation, reducing stress and enhancing creativity.

For Kashmiri students facing academic pressure and external challenges, this structured approach can help in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. By following this rule, students can achieve academic excellence while prioritizing their mental and physical well-being. Ultimately leading to a more productive and fulfilling life.

Kashmiri students face unique challenges, including academic pressure making a structured routine essential for their success and well-being. A balanced lifestyle ensures they can excel academically while maintaining mental and physical health. This rule helps students stay focused, refreshed, and stress-free. Without a proper routine, excessive study hours lead to burnout, while neglecting recreation and rest can cause anxiety, fatigue, and reduced productivity.

A structured approach fosters discipline, better time management, and overall personal growth. It helps students cope with stress, stay motivated, and

enhance their learning efficiency. In Kashmir, where uncertainty often disrupts education, following this balanced schedule can provide students with stability, resilience, and a sense of control over their academic journey and future aspirations.

Dedicating 8 hours to focused learning is key to achieving academic excellence and improving providing. When students allocate a fixed study period, they can engage in deep learning, and better understanding of concepts rather than resorting to last-minute cramming. This structured approach helps in time management, ensuring they cover all subjects effectively.

A well-planned 8-hour study routine includes breaks, revisions, and interactive learning, preventing burnout and enhancing retention. Instead of aimlessly studying for long hours, focused study sessions improve concentration, problem-solving skills, and analytical thinking.

For Kashmiri students, who often face disruptions like unpredictable schedules, a structured study plan ensures consistent progress. By setting clear academic goals and following a disciplined study routine, they can maximize productivity, stay motivated, and achieve better results. When combined with adequate rest and recreation, this approach leads to a balanced and effective learning experience.

Quality sleep plays a crucial role in cognitive development, especially for students. Eight hours of rest allows the brain to process and store information effectively, improving memory retention, concentration, and problem-solving skills. During sleep, the brain strengthens neural connections, making it easier to recall learned material. Lack of sleep, on the other hand, leads to fatigue, reduced focus, and impaired decision-making,

negatively affecting academic performance.

Beyond academics, mental health depends on proper rest. Sleep regulates stress hormones, enhances mood stability, and reduces anxiety and depression. For Kashmiri students, who often experience academic pressure and external challenges, quality sleep is essential for emotional resilience and overall well-being. A structured routine that includes adequate rest helps students wake up refreshed, energized, and ready to learn. Prioritizing sleep is not a luxury but a necessity for achieving both educational success and a healthy mind.

Recreation is essential for stress management and overall personality development, especially for students dealing with academic pressure. Engaging in extracurricular activities, sports, and social interactions helps refresh the mind, improve focus, and reduce anxiety. Physical activities like sports enhance fitness, discipline, and teamwork, while creative hobbies such as music, painting, or writing boost creativity and emotional expression. These activities provide a much-needed break from studies, preventing burnout and enhancing overall productivity.

Beyond relaxation, recreational activities shape personality by fostering confidence, leadership skills, and social adaptability. Social interactions help students build communication skills, emotional intelligence, and a sense of belonging, which are crucial for mental well-being. For Kashmiri students facing academic and external challenges, recreation acts as a stress reliever and a source of motivation. A well-balanced routine that includes both academics and recreation ensures holistic growth, resilience, and a positive outlook on life.

Kashmiri students face unique challenges that disrupt their education and daily routines. Poor internet connectivity hinders access to online learning resources, making it difficult to keep up with studies, attend virtual classes, or conduct research. The lack of proper educational infrastructure and resources further limits opportunities for academic growth. Many students struggle to maintain a structured study routine due to power cuts, poor connectivity, and uncertainty in their academic schedules. These disruptions create gaps in learning, forcing students to rely on outdated materials or wait for classes to resume.

Beyond academic hurdles, stress and anxiety are major concerns. The pressure to perform well despite these obstacles, coupled with limited recreational outlets, affects students' mental health and motivation. The lack of a balanced lifestyle due to external uncertainties makes it difficult to follow a structured 8+8+8+ routine. Addressing these challenges requires better educational policies, improved internet access, and mental health support to ensure a stable learning environment for Kashmiri students.

Implementing the 8+8+8 rule requires careful time management and discipline. Students should start by creating a daily schedule, allocating 8 hours for focused study with short breaks to maintain concentration. Using techniques like the Pomodoro method (25-minute study sessions with 5-minute breaks) can enhance productivity. Prioritizing difficult subjects early in the day and setting realistic academic goals ensures efficient learning. Keeping distractions, like excessive social media use, in check also helps maintain focus.

For the remaining hours, students must prioritize 8 hours of

sleep for better memory retention and mental well-being. The final 8 hours should include recreation, such as physical exercise, creative hobbies, or social interactions, to reduce stress. Practicing mindfulness, engaging in outdoor activities, and maintaining a healthy diet can further improve focus and energy levels. By maintaining this balance, Kashmiri students can enhance their academic performance while ensuring mental and physical well-being.

Conclusion

A holistic approach to education goes beyond academics, emphasizing mental well-being, physical health, and personal development. Schools and colleges should integrate the 8+8+8 rule into their academic structures by ensuring manageable workloads, promoting extracurricular activities, and encouraging a healthy study-life balance. Institutions must provide better infrastructure, psychological counselling, and internet accessibility to help students overcome challenges like stress and educational disruptions. A supportive learning environment enables students to thrive academically while maintaining overall well-being.

Parents also play a crucial role in fostering a balanced routine by encouraging students to prioritize rest, recreation, and self-care alongside studies. Policymakers should focus on educational reforms, mental health initiatives, and technological advancements to create a stable and inclusive academic atmosphere. By working together, institutions, parents, and policymakers can ensure that Kashmiri students receive a comprehensive education that prepares them for both professional success and fulfilling life.

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The Forgotten Scholars: PhD Holders Left In The Lurch

DR AASIF AHMAD

In any progressive society, educated youth are regarded as valuable assets. They are expected to drive innovation, contribute to knowledge creation, and guide future generations. However, it is unfortunate that in our society, a particular class – the PhD holders – finds itself marginalised and neglected despite years of rigorous education and professional dedication.

These scholars, who have spent their prime years pursuing advanced education, aspire to secure positions in colleges and universities where their expertise can benefit students and academia. Unfortunately, many of them face the grim reality of unemployment or precarious, temporary jobs. While other states recognize the value of PhD holders and offer them permanent employment, the same cannot be said for many

regions, including ours.

A large percentage of these scholars are currently teaching in government colleges, contributing significantly to education. Yet, they are deprived of the rights and stability enjoyed by their counterparts elsewhere. Many have been working for over a decade – some for as long as 15 years – without being regularized or granted the respect their qualifications deserve. The frustration and despair

among these scholars are palpable. As they cross the age bar for employment eligibility, their dreams are shattered, and the path forward becomes increasingly dark. Despite their immense capability, dedication, and contributions, their voices remain unheard by policymakers and educational authorities.

What makes the situation even more disheartening is the reluctance of these highly educated individuals

to seek jobs outside the education sector. Their specialisation and passion lie in teaching and research, yet they are forced to contemplate strikes and protests to demand what should be rightfully theirs.

The question remains: How long will this educated class have to endure neglect and struggle? How long will they remain invisible to those in power? It is high time for ministers, especially the education minister,

to acknowledge their plight and take meaningful steps to address their grievances.

These scholars deserve permanent employment, recognition, and dignity for their invaluable contributions. They have miles to go, but the burden of uncertainty and neglect weighs heavily on them. Society must stand with them, for a society that disregards its intellectuals is one that undermines its own future.

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Akhal Village: A Hidden Gem In Kulgam

NASEER MAJEED LONE

Nestled in the heart of nature's splendour, Akhal Village, located in district Kulgam, is a serene haven that boasts unmatched natural beauty. Surrounded by a lush forest with thick vegetation, this village is a symbol of tranquillity and untouched wilderness.

At the heart of Akhal lies the famed PAPHAR spring, a serene and sacred site that draws both the faithful and the curious alike. The 'ziyarat' of Sufi saint Sheikh Noor-u-Din Noorani adds a layer of spirituality to the already majestic landscape.

Akhal is more than just a picturesque village; it holds within it the essence of cultural and historical richness, making it a true gem of the region. Its serene environment, coupled with the spiritual aura of PAPHAR, makes it a place of immense potential for both tourism and

community growth. Yet, despite its undeniable charm, Akhal has remained largely ignored by political administrations. It is unfortunate that despite its vast potential, successive MLAs have failed to pay adequate attention to the village's needs.

Had the village received the support and infrastructure it deserves, it could have blossomed into a thriving tourist destination, providing livelihoods for countless unemployed youth and enriching the lives of its residents. Tourism could have created avenues for employment, further highlighted the region's natural beauty, and ultimately improved the standard of living for the community.

However, despite this oversight, the village has not been without its blessings. The legacy of the late ex-MLA Noorabad, Abdul Aziz Zargar, will forever be etched in the hearts of the people of Akhal. Through his foresight and dedication, he

implemented a water-lifting scheme, bringing the pure, life-sustaining waters of the PAPHAR spring to the village. This remarkable initiative has ensured that the people of Akhal no longer have to worry about access to water, providing a lifeline for all.

Akhal also prides itself on its educated populace, which has produced an impressive number of teachers, doctors, engineers, and even IAS officers who have gone on to serve the nation. The village's contribution to the educational and professional sectors is a testament to the dedication and hard work of its people, despite the challenges they face.

Yet, the village is not without its struggles. One glaring issue is the absence of a proper playground or recreational space for the youth. Despite the growing enthusiasm and craze for cricket in Kashmir Valley, Akhal lacks the basic sports infrastructure. In an era where cricket fields and

playgrounds are ubiquitous, Akhal stands in stark contrast with no such facilities for the younger generation. This lack of recreational spaces leaves the youth with fewer healthy distractions, and in the absence of positive engagement, they may sometimes turn to illegal or harmful activities. A simple playground could redirect their energy into sports, teamwork, and personal growth, providing them with a much-needed escape from the pressures they face.

Furthermore, what is even more disheartening is that children in many areas have designated spaces, such as parks, where they can play, learn, and grow, but unfortunately, Akhal has been left behind. A children's park is more than just a place for play; it is an essential part of a community that fosters physical health, social bonding, and overall well-being. As the village develops, creating a safe and engaging recreational space

for children has become the need of the hour.

In a region where the need for political attention and infrastructural development is urgent, it is disheartening to see Akhal left behind. A village with such potential, both in terms of natural resources and human talent, deserves more than mere neglect. It is time for the administration to recognize the true value of Akhal and invest in its growth. By doing so, not only would the village thrive, but it could also set a shining example of how natural beauty, culture, and education can come together to uplift an entire community.

Akhal deserves better. It is time for the authorities to look beyond politics and recognize the immense potential that the village holds, ensuring that its beauty and promise are nurtured for generations to come.

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Social media as bad as cancer?



VIJAY GARG

The worst of the ills of social media are coming home to roost. While there's no denying the positive effects it has had on communication, businesses, networking and content accessibility to people, its equally powerful negative impacts have come under great scrutiny in recent years. Children, more than any other cohort in society, have been showing the negative impacts

with a drop in their attention spans, difficulty in reading texts and books, and issues with anxiety and depression, among other psychological setbacks. There have been recent calls for banning social media access and availability to children below a certain age, especially when they are in schools.

Now, The Times in London reports that the British head of counter-terrorism has called for a more encompassing ban on the grounds that the harm created by social media is similar to 'cancer caused by smoking.'

He grounded his rather extrem sounding call in the casework of British MI5 and counter terrorism policing

in Australia on the noticeable surge in young people radicalised, isolated, and falling prey to various damaging tendencies leading to even rapes, homicides, and suicides. Australia was among the boldest in taking action on such worldwide amending its Online Safety Act to severely restrict, near-ban, social media use by under-16s last year. This aspect should be of particular concern in India given the high penetration of internet and social media usage and a considerable cohort of

young people. Statistics vary depending on the source chosen but at the minimum between 751 and 900

million Indians used social media in 2024, that's more than six of every ten Indians, and they spent an average of two-and-a-half hours every day on social media platforms. The Annual Status on Education Report released

last month showed that 82.2 percent of all children in the 14-16 age group know how to use a smartphone; of these, 57 percent reported using it for education while 76 percent said that they had used it for social media. Parents and teachers have already pointed to excessive screen time of young children, besides their access to inappropriate content, unsafe contact by strangers, the pressure to conform to some undefined standards, and the resulting mental health problems. It is also true that education and basic messaging, especially in nonurban areas, could suffer if there was complete ban.

The Digital Privacy and Data Protection Act in the making suggests parental consent for children below 18 opening or using social media accounts, but this is hardly going to make a difference on the ground when millions of children have been online for years. While the concerns are legitimate, a ban may be too extreme and counter-productive. Highly regulated and restricted use, with parental control made stronger by social media companies, would be the way out

Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational columnist street kour Chand MHR Malout



SAHIL MANZOOR

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Deforestation refers to the cutting of different tree species on a large scale. Deforestation leads to soil erosion, flash floods, risk of high intensity natural calamities, and decrease in the concentration of oxygen (o2) level in the atmosphere and increase in the co2, which causes increase in temperature during summers. In fact forests play a necessary role in balancing natural phenomena. It includes co2 & o2 this very phenomenon is necessary for the survival of life on this earth and utterly has no alternative for it.

I agree that in our system every subject is important and has an eminent influence in our society like economics, education, political science, mathematics, history and all the remaining ones. But one thing is true and has been experienced by the experts that "when there comes environ-

ment related issues, to resolve them/sort out them, we need scientific experts because in this universe, the science field has a colossal influence by several means.

In our society there are selfish kind folk, they are damaging, destroying and smuggling the forest assets for their personal means. Actually the fact is that forests are not the trees upright there, forests are the golden assets of the nation. There are intellectual classes in our society as well but they are bound under certain limits.

Forests are the gold like assets for the country and in the state and play an immense role in the environmental balance. Government administration or the concerned forest department should come out from their nests and should initiate the counselling programmes for the general folk, advertisement hoardings should be displayed at the centrally focused place for the awareness and feed backs. For last couple of years, I have visited several forest areas in different districts like Budgam, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, it is very heart wrenching and painful that in past deforestation has taken place at very large quantum and forests look like deserted and explains the ruthless act done by the selfish

people for merely the sake of few countable currency notes.

As we know and are utterly aware that there are documentary movies, poets circulate in their poems, film industry mentioned in the songs, singers sang in their songs every bit in the forest beautifying nature. The ravishing green tipped leaves, cylindrical upright trunk of the pine trees, and mesmerising, whispering, roaring buzzing sound of the dragon fly. In fact forests beautifies our motherland, caters us to exciting movements, and bestows us with exceptional recreational scenes.

In India 7, 12,249 Sq. Km of the total geographical area are under the forests and in Jammu & Kashmir 20,230 sq. km total geographical area under forests. Pir Panjal forest range in Jammu and Kashmir is rich in different kind's forest trees and plays a pivotal role in terms of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir and provides shelter to several animal species there. Pir Panjal is a group of mountains in the lesser Himalayas region, running from east-southeast to northwest across the Indian territories of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir and then Pakistan's Azad Kashmir. The average elevation varies from 1400 m

to 4100 m. The Himalaya's show a gradual elevation towards the Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal ranges. Pir Panjal is the largest range of the lesser Himalayas, near the banks of the Suttlej River it dissociates itself from the Himalayas and forms a divide between the Beas and Ravi rivers on one side and the Chenab on the other. The renowned Galyat Mountains are also located in this range. The region is connected to the valley of Kashmir via Mughal road and used to be the historical connection of Kashmir with other states of India.

Forests used as recreational activities: since centuries forests have been used for the recreational activities like for the summer camps during the scorching heat of the July-August. Forests are used for trekking purposes, mountaineering purposes, hunting etc.

Forests are being used for the research means by researchers as well since long, the students of the higher levels who are pursuing their doctorate degrees from the universities are fond of the forests, as they get, what they don't get anywhere else that's too on large quantity (herbs, shrubs, grass, trees, plants and several other varieties they want).

Uses of forests: As already

mentioned in this article, the importance of the forests besides it forests helps the balance in the food chains, food webs, provides shelter to the wild animals, birds, acts as the hub of medicinal plants, providing the grazing space to the Tribal nomads and in some places where people who are living nearby the forests also get several benefits without harming them.

What causes the deforestation: deforestation takes place when there is an external involvement that disturbs the forest-curbed areas for the means of smuggling, constructional purposes, urbanization, timber demand for the bridges, buildings, etc.

Suggestion; afforestation is the best alternative for the areas where trees have been cut down. But it takes too long to get into its original shape. So we should be aware of the people who try to harm the forest through local bodies and government administration should pay attention towards this section frequently and should hold public awareness programmes regularly and deploy sufficient man force during night hours until our society gets vigilant and educated regarding the importance of the forests and its uses.

AI tools a double edged sword; Its Impact on Students' Critical Thinking in Writing



JAVOID BHAT

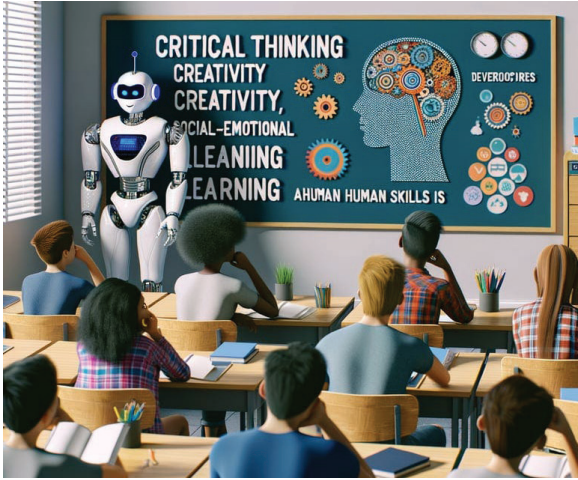
Artificial Intelligence has become an integral part of modern education, assisting students in writing, research, and problem-solving. While AI-powered applications like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot provide convenience, they also pose a significant challenge: the decline of critical thinking in writing. Over-reliance on AI tools is making students dependent on automated content generation, weakening their ability to analyze, reason, and express ideas independently.

One of the biggest drawbacks of AI-assisted writing is that students often rely on generated content

instead of forming their own arguments. Critical thinking involves analyzing information, forming opinions, and presenting logical reasoning. When students copy AI-generated responses without questioning their validity, they miss the opportunity to engage in deep thinking. Now the biggest absurd is that everyone has become a content writer, relying on these AI generated apps.

Writing is not just about structuring sentences correctly; it is also a form of creative expression. AI-generated content often follows predictable patterns and lacks originality. Students who depend on AI may struggle to develop their unique voice and creativity in writing. Over time, this can result in bland, uninspired writing that lacks personal insight. This may definitely dismay them in the job oriented competitive exams, where writing skills have a definite weightage.

Traditionally, writing



requires research, brainstorming, and synthesis of information. AI tools, however, provide ready-made answers, discouraging students from actively engaging with the material. Instead of critically analyzing different viewpoints and constructing well-reasoned arguments, they passively accept AI-generated content, limiting their intellectual growth.

Writing involves identifying problems, analyzing different perspectives,

and presenting solutions. AI tools, however, present pre-packaged solutions without requiring students to go through the thought process themselves. This weakens problem-solving abilities, which are essential not just in writing but in real-life decision-making.

A balance of AI is required with critical thinking in Education.

While AI is a powerful tool, it should be used wisely to enhance rather

than replace human thinking. Hence

Teachers should design assignments that require students to evaluate AI-generated content, compare it with human-written work, and assess its strengths and weaknesses. This will help them develop analytical skills instead of blindly accepting AI responses.

To promote original writing Students should be encouraged to write drafts without AI assistance before using these tools for refinement. This ensures that their ideas and reasoning remain their own while still benefiting from AI's grammatical and structural assistance.

Educators should teach students about AI's limitations, including biases, factual inaccuracies, and lack of deep understanding. By fostering AI literacy, students will learn to critically assess AI-generated content instead of relying on it blindly.

Finally handwritten

essays and classroom discussions can help students develop their writing and thinking skills without AI interference. Engaging in debates, oral presentations, and group discussions can also strengthen their ability to construct and defend arguments.

AI is a remarkable advancement that can enhance learning, but it must not replace critical thinking in writing. Over-reliance on AI tools leads to a decline in independent thought, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The key is to use AI as a supportive tool while ensuring that students develop their own analytical and writing abilities. Education should focus on nurturing minds that can think, question, and create rather than simply generate AI-assisted content. The future belongs to those who can use technology wisely without losing their ability to think critically and write effectively.

If you don't save your daughter, then where will you get a daughter-in-law from?

PRIYANKA SAURABH

There is a saying in Haryana, "If you don't save daughters, then where will you get daughters-in-law from?" While it is wrong to assume that all daughters are future brides, the phrase is effective in drawing attention to the dire consequences of sex-selective abortion in a state that has struggled with a "daughter shortage" for decades. India's sex ratio at birth (SRB) remains low despite advances in healthcare, education, and income. The SRB was put at 929 girls per 1,000 boys by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21). This is a slight improvement over NFHS-4 (2015-16: 919 girls per 1,000 boys), but it still shows a persistent gender bias. Historically, some states have had more skewed ratios, particularly in northern and western India.

Despite the Pre-Conception

and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act of 1994, sex-biased sex selection has been made possible by prenatal sex determination techniques. Wealthier economic groups and higher castes have higher rates of SRB skewed towards males, indicating that monetary incentives alone may not be a sufficient deterrent. SRB has improved in states such as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana since the implementation of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao. SRB is declining in southern and eastern states, which are generally known to have better sex ratios. This is a worrying trend. Although states surrounding Delhi have improved, Delhi too has seen a decline in SRB. While here were the basic goals and strategies for the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign.

The PCPNDT Act must be enforced more stringently to prohibit sex selection on the

basis of gender. Girls' education, safety, and survival must be enhanced. Delaying child marriage and increasing women's educational attainment is important. Efforts must be made at the state and national levels to tackle patriarchal beliefs. To prevent sex-selective abortions, the PCPNDT Act must be strengthened. Financial incentives such as Haryana's Ladli and Apaki Beti Hamari Beti programs encourage families to help girls. Providing funds for girls' education through educational empowerment, scholarships, and infrastructure support are effective steps. Limited effectiveness outside high inequality areas The impact of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao varies; some southern and eastern states are seeing a decline in SRB. This means that focused interventions in high-inequality states are not enough.

Social norms that favor sons

include the statement that "raising a daughter is like watering a neighbor's garden." Changing attitudes requires more than just financial incentives. Low female labor force participation is still one of the lowest in the world, even with improved educational standards. Women who experience economic insecurity are less able to resist patriarchal systems. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2024, India ranks 127th globally in terms of pay equality, with women earning only Rs 39.8 for every Rs 100 earned by men. Conditional cash incentives (e.g., conditional cash transfers) are the focus of policy rather than systemic change. The underlying causes of gender bias are not addressed by the Ladli scheme. To achieve structural change in the areas of employment, property rights, and financial autonomy, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao must go beyond catchphrases.

Gender-sensitive policies are being strengthened. Instead of "saving girls," Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao needs to focus on "empowering women" in leadership, financial inclusion, and employment. Encourage more women to pursue entrepreneurship and careers by offering incentives. Address employment gaps and pay disparities. Enforce equal pay laws to reduce the gender pay gap. Encourage more people to work by providing maternity benefits, flexible work schedules, and childcare assistance. Increasing enforcement of the PCPNDT Act, monitoring diagnostic clinics, and taking strict action against illegal sex determination are all ways to strengthen legal and social reforms. Strengthen accountability systems at the local level of government. Ensure women's rights to property and inheritance.

Make inheritance rights

equitable, especially in areas where daughters are still not given equal property ownership. Encourage women to own property together within families. Drive community-driven behavior change and engagement. Increase grassroots participation through local leaders. Encourage teachers, religious leaders, and influential members of the community to oppose patriarchal traditions. Involve more men in conversations about gender equality. Campaigns that change the narrative of the value of daughters need to shift their focus from "protecting girls" to "empowering girls." Encourage uplifting messages about daughters as assets for the success of the family. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao program has successfully raised awareness on the issue of son preference, but due to inadequate implementation and monitoring, it has failed to achieve its main goal in its current form.

The scheme is losing the momentum it has built up over the years due to the lack of district and state-level meetings. Therefore, the working committees at the district and state level should be represented by community-level workers, aware of the difficulties faced by female students, such as lack of toilets, and have effective monitoring and evaluation systems to show how well the schemes are working towards their goals. In India, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao has been a notable policy intervention to address gender-based discrimination. Although it has contributed to the improvement of SRB in some areas, its impact is still limited due to inherent patriarchal beliefs and structural barriers to women's economic advancement.

To ensure that women have equal access to economic, social, and legal opportunities

as men, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao must replace its protectionist strategy with one focused on rights-based empowerment. Only then will we be able to move beyond conditional incentives and achieve lasting equality, thereby reducing the gender gap. Deeply ingrained cultural beliefs often make it difficult to implement laws that empower women, such as the right to property ownership, requiring community participation led by local leaders and influencers to question and change patriarchal norms. While this requires more subtle efforts than sloganeering and conditional cash incentives, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme has certainly been a positive step. Negotiating gender equality under patriarchal norms may not be of any use. Slowly but surely, we must change our approach.

Research Scholar in Political Science, Poet, freelance journalist, and columnist

DC Shopian chairs District-level NCORD meet

■ HT News Network

Shopian, February 08: District Level Narco Coordination (NCORD) meeting was held here today in Mini-Secretariat Shopian, under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta.

On the occasion, department wise action plan were assessed and directions were issued to strengthen the fight against drug abuse.

DC emphasized the critical role of departments, including police, education, excise, drug control & health, in combating the rising menace of drug abuse and directed the departments to take more cogent measures against the menace.

Importance of keeping close vigil on poppy cultivation areas and taking strict action against the cultivation



tors and the dispensing of scheduled drugs in the district was deliberated for action.

Additionally, the police department was instructed to implement stringent measures against individuals involved in drug peddling, and efforts were highlighted to identify and rehabilitate victims of drug abuse through institutional support of Addiction Treatment Facility and Drug De addiction Centre.

Deputy Commissioner focused on enhancing

counseling services and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities to raise awareness about drug abuse, aiming to formulate a comprehensive action plan to curb drug abuse and ensure effective grassroots-level awareness, ensuring that the anti-drug message reaches all corners of the district.

Among others, ACR, Shakkor Ahmad Dar, SDM, Zainapora, Nisar Ahmad, Additional SP, Showkat Hussain Wani, ACD, Man-

zoor Ahmad, Tehsildars, other district officers and other concerned were present. DC emphasized the critical role of departments, including police, education, excise, drug control & health, in combating the rising menace of drug abuse and directed the departments to take more cogent measures against the menace. Importance of keeping close vigil on poppy cultivation areas and taking strict action against the cultivators and the dispensing of scheduled drugs.

Handwara Police Nab Drug Peddler, Seize Contraband

■ DR.AB QAYOOM



Handwara, Feb 08: In a continued effort to combat the menace of drug trafficking, Handwara Police have arrested a drug peddler and seized contraband substances from his possession. Acting on specific input, a police party from Police Post Langate, led by I/C Police Post Langate, set up a checkpoint at T Junction Kargam. During the operation, they intercepted a suspect identified as Javid Ahmad Sheikh, son of Abdul Ahad Sheikh, a resident of Hanga Handwara. Upon searching him, the police recovered 7.67 grams of a brown sugar-like substance. The accused was immediately taken into custody and shifted to the police station for further investigation. A case under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Handwara, and further probe is underway. The police have urged the public to report any instances of drug peddling or other crimes to their nearest police unit or dial 112 for immediate action. They assured strict measures against those involved in drug trafficking to safeguard society from this growing menace.

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed travel unit under the name and style " Trip Ozen Holidays Tour & Travel." Situated at Sangrama National Highway Sopore.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Where I Asha un Nisa D/o: Naseer Ahmad Ganai R/o: Sangrama Sopore Intends to apply in the Department of Tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under Name and style "Trip Ozen Holidays" Tour & Travel. " Situated at Sangrama National Highway Sopore. under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will, submit State Subject/Domicile Certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan Card, Experience Certificate (Minimum of 5 years), Character Certificate (Police Department) Bank Statement (Minimum Balance 10,000), Site plan, Affidavit, Rent deed duly attested by Sub-Registrar, Printing Material (letter Head/visiting Card), photographs of the unit (Indoor and Outdoor) and Two passport size photograph to the Department of Tourism as per prescribed checklist prior to Registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency.

Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is nearby notified for information of the General public/Financial Institutions Bank/Organization, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the Deputy Director Tourism Registration (email id: ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this Notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained.

ازنیابت پهلگام

درخواست منجانب سال سجاد احمد ملک ولگرد احمد ملک وعشرت جان زو پیر سجاد احمد ملک سائنس مڈل پهلگام برادر حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ بحق پسر

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان میں درخواست سال دفتر میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری ملحقہ سے رپورٹ منظور مطلوبہ نقوالا ریکارڈ طلب کے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے سال موضع سال مڈل پهلگام میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ بذیل افراد متعلق ہے

1. بگزار احمد ولگرد احمد پسر 56 سال تجارت 19000
2. شہزادہ گزار زو پیر گزار احمد 56 سال گھریلو کام
3. ... سجاد احمد ولگرد احمد پسر 35 سال //
4. ... عشت جان زو پیر بھاد 34 سال //

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نہیں بتایا گیا ہے نزدیک سال آمدنی مطابق سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ دے کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاہدہ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار

PUBLIC NOTICE

I am applying for change of site/premises of my Pesticides / insecticides License bearing No.2912 PUL dated:31.03.2021, titled M/S Phytocare Agri Services, from Pulwama to Pinglana. If any body has any objection he/she may submit his/her objection(s) to the Plant Protection Officer, Department of Agriculture Lalmandi Srinagar within 7days from the date of issue of this notice, after that no objection will be entertained.

Mrs Sakeena Akhter
W/O: Nazir Ahmad
R/O: Pinglana Tehsil: Pulwama
District: Pulwama

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the location of my Pesticides shop M S Sunrise pesticides tapper Waripora to Kreeeri under licence no 3025-BLA if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact Agriculture Extension officer Kreeeri within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

GULZAR AHMAD PARA
S/O MOHD RAMZAN PARA
R/O TAPPER WARIPORA PATTAN

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 hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of AB HAMEED AHANGER S/O DAJIM AHANGER R/O kreeri Tehsil KRRERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 20/07/1979 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 Directorate of Floriculture (G&P) Kashmir

Subject: - CANCELLATION OF TENDER.
In view of decision taken by the DLPC in its meeting held on 18.01.2025, the tender for Outsourcing of Fast Food Point at vacant space as is where basis at Pratap Park near water body invited vide e-NIT No.39 of 2024 Dated.16.12.2024 under Tender Id. No.2024_FLOD_268122_1 is hereby cancelled due to Administrative reasons due to non-qualification of participating bidders.

By Order

DIPK-11760/24
Date: 08 Feb 25

Sd/-
Accounts Officer
(Member Secretary)
Floriculture Department
Kashmir.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

CPO Chowk, Panjtirthi, Jammu/Zam Zam Complex Rambagh, Srinagar www.jkssb.nic.in

Notice

Subject: Issuance of Admit Cards to the candidates for Written Examination for various posts scheduled to be held from 13.02.2025 to 20.02.2025.

1. The Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) is conducting the Written Examination for various posts mentioned below:

S.No.	Name of the post	Notification No	Item No.	Date of Examination
1	Laboratory Assistant	02 of 2021	417	13.02.2025
2	Laboratory Assistant		421	
3	Animal Keeper		417	
4	Medical Record Technician	02 of 2021	179	
5	Medical Record Technician		225	
6	Computer Instructor/ Operator	07 of 2020	309	
7	Electrician Grade-II	04 of 2022	80	
8	Film Production Assistant	01 of 2021	123	06-02-2025
9	Junior Laboratory Technician		182	
10	Junior Laboratory Technician	06 of 2020	193	
11	Assistant PTI		187	
12	Child Psychologist	02 of 2021	210	
13	Drug Control Officer	03 of 2021	600	
14	Food Safety Officer	02 of 2021	414	17.02.2025
15	Junior Librarian	04 of 2021	637	18.02.2025
16	Assistant Food Analyst	03 of 2021	601	20.02.2025
17	Assistant Food Analyst		602	

2. Admit Cards for the Candidates, whose examination is scheduled from 13.02.2025 to 20.02.2025 shall be hosted on JKSSB's Official website (www.jkssb.nic.in) w.e.f. 08.02.2025 from 10:00 AM onwards.

3. Candidates can download their Admit Cards from the website using their E-mail ID and Date of Birth. They must read the instructions contained therein, carefully.

4. In case of any difficulty in downloading/issues related to Admit Card, Candidate(s) may contact the JKSSB Help-Desk at 0191-2461335 (Jammu)/ 0194-2435089 (Srinagar) or write to JKSSB at helpdesk.jkssb@gmail.com. Help Desk will be active from 08.02.2025 to 20.02.2025 during office hours only.

5. The candidature of candidates claiming eligibility by misrepresentation/concealment of any material facts, impersonation, fraud, etc. shall be liable for cancellation and disciplinary action, as deemed appropriate.

6. The Board reserves the right to cancel the candidature of any candidate at any stage at which he/she is found ineligible.

7. The candidates are intimated that there shall be negative marking for wrong answer (1/4th of allotted marks for each answer) attempted in the said examination. The detailed criteria of selection and syllabus for the said posts has already been notified and are available on the official website of the Board (www.jkssb.nic.in).

8. The candidates are also advised to be in touch with the JKSSB's Official Website (www.jkssb.nic.in) for the latest updates on the examinations and Admit cards will not be sent by post.

9. Stepwise procedure to download JKSSB E-Admit Card:

To download E-Admit Card, first visit the official website of JKSSB, i.e. www.jkssb.nic.in

On the homepage, there will be an option to download E-Admit Card. On that page, click on the link/button- "LOGIN"

Enter log-in credentials, i.e. E-mail ID and Date of Birth.

Username will be your E-mail ID & Password will be your DOB in DDMMYYYY format.

vi. On successful completion of above step, your basic details will be shown, kindly verify the details, in case of any mismatch, please contact helpdesk via call or email.

. Click on the "View and Print E-Admit Card" button.

The JKSSB E-Admit Card will appear on the screen.

Download and print your JKSSB E-Admit Card.

Candidate must bring the clear printed copy of E-Admit card on the day of examination.

DIPK-11736/24
Date: Feb 8 2025

(Reyaz Ahmad Malik)
JKAS, Controller of Examinations
J&K Services Selection Board

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir

e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com

Subject: - Inclusion of Partner in the Registration Certificate of Excursion Agency running under the name & style "Axis Venture".

Public Notice.

Whereas, Mr. Subash Chander S/o Mr. Beij Nath has applied this office for inclusion of partner namely Mr. Sajad Yousuf Lone in the registration certificate of their Excursion Agency under the name and style "Axis Venture" under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas, the unit is registered with this office vide Registration No:- JKTA00000792 dated 27.12.2017 and was renewed upto 31.12.2027.

Whereas, the applicant along with the application has submitted the requisite documents as mentioned below:-

Registered Partnership Deed.

Qualification (12th).

Aadhar Card.

Domicile Certificate.

Recently issued Passport (issuance date 06/01/2025)

PAN Card.

Registered Rent Deed.

Registration certificate.

Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management.

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before the request of the applicants is considered for inclusion of partner, the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Financial Institutions/Bank/Organization, etc. for objection if any. The same should reach this office within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in the local newspaper. No objections beyond period of 7 days will be entertained and request of the applicant will be considered as per rules.

DIPK-11750/24
Date: Feb 8 2025

Sd/-
Asstt. Director Tourism,
Registration

DC Shopian flags off 32 farmers on 6 day exposure visit to Punjab, Jammu

■ HT News Network

Shopian, February 08: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, today flagged off a group of 32 farmers of the district from Shopian to Jammu & Punjab for a six-day exposure visit. The exposure visit is organized under the Sub Mission on Agriculture Extension (ATMA-2024-25). The programme, facilitated by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shopian, aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of farmers & agripreneurs by providing them with first-hand experience of advanced agricultural practices.

The exposure visit includes training sessions, covering modern & innovative farming techniques,



sustainable agriculture and value-added farming practices along with visit to several research centres and universities and on field exposure in the state of Punjab.

They will also visit SKUAST Jammu for one day training on Mushroom Cul-

tivation practices.

During the flag-off ceremony, DC Shopian emphasized the importance of such initiatives in empowering the farming community and boosting agricultural productivity in the district.

He lauded the efforts of

the Agriculture Department in facilitating farmer education and capacity-building programmes.

CAO, Farooq Ahmad Reshi, officers, officials of agriculture department and numerous farmers were present on the occasion.

Police arrests drug peddler in Pulwama, contraband substance recovered

■ HT News Network

Pulwama February 08: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police in Pulwama arrested a drug peddler and recovered psychotropic substance from his possession.

A police party of Police Post Newa during patrolling at Parigam apprehended a suspicious person roaming in the area. During search, heroine-like substance weighing 11 grams was recovered from his possession. The accused has been identified as Solihat Bashir son of Bashir Ahmed Wani resident of Parigam and was subsequently arrested.

Accordingly, a Case FIR No. 33/25 under section 8/20-29NDPS act stands registered in Police Station Pulwama and investigation has been set into motion.

We urge the general public to come forward in fight against the drug menace and feel free to contact nearest police station or PCR Pulwama if any drug peddling gets noticed in their area.

SSP Budgam chairs PCPG Meeting at Khag

■ HT News Network

Budgam February 08: In an effort to bridge the gap between police and the public, a Police Community Partnership Group (PCPG) meeting was organized at Police Station Khag. The meeting was chaired by SSP Budgam Shri Nikhil Borkar-IPS and was attended by SDPO Magam Shri Mohd Ashraf and SHOPPS Khag Shri Mudassir Naseer. The meeting witnessed a significant turnout, with 400-500 people from various areas, including Khag, Poshker, Sitharan, Drang, Nowgam, Shopian, Shunglipora and Kokerbagh etc. Respectable persons and civil society members actively participated in the discussion.

During the meeting, participants raised several public issues, including concerns related to transport, electricity, road infrastructure, and drinking water supply. SSP Budgam assured the attendees that genuine concerns will be taken up with the relevant authorities for immediate redressal, while police-related matters will be resolved at the earliest.

DC Gandarbal chairs Public outreach program

■ HT News Network

Gandarbal, February 08: In a bid to address concerns and aspirations of locals, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Gandarbal, Jatin Kishore today convened a public grievance redressal camp here at Boys Higher Secondary School Gandarbal.

The grievances camp focused on addressing public issues & demands besides fostering inclusive development and ensure time-bound redressal of matters.

During the camp, residents raised various issues ranging from development of roads, health care, and development of playgrounds. Other issues included upgradation of drainage systems and augmentation of transportation facilities in peripheral areas of the district.

Regarding development of playground at Tulmulla, DC assured locals that once the land is identified, administration will expedite development work at an earliest.



DC reaffirmed administration's commitment to resolving issues at district level promptly while taking up other matters with higher authorities.

He also said that the district administration will remain accessible to the people and is committed to address public grievances effectively. Among others, event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Gulzar Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Development, GM DIC, Executive Engineers of various engineering wings and other district and sectoral officers. The grievances camp focused on addressing public issues & demands besides fostering inclusive development and ensure time-bound redressal of matters.

BJP Holds Meeting on Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Birth Anniversary Preparations.

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, 08, Feb 2025 : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) J&K held an important meeting today, presided over by Ashok Koul, General Secretary (Org), J&K, to discuss preparations for the upcoming birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji. The meeting focused on organizing a series of programs across Kashmir to honor the legacy and vision of the former Prime Minister.

During the meeting, Ashok Koul emphasized



the importance of strengthening the party at the booth level and constituency level, urging BJP leaders and workers to enhance grassroots connectivity and organizational structure.

He stated that Atal Bihari

Vajpayee Ji's leadership and contribution to the nation remain an inspiration for all, and the party will ensure his ideals reach every corner of Kashmir.

Several BJP leaders and functionaries participated in the meeting, discussing

strategies to mobilize workers and ensure maximum participation in the events.

The programs will include public outreach, social initiatives, and tributes to Vajpayee Ji's contributions towards nation-building.

The BJP leadership reaffirmed its commitment to expanding its presence in Kashmir and working for the welfare of the people, following the principles of good governance and development laid down by Vajpayee Ji.

District administration Kupwara conducts Sugamya Yatra-2025

Teams visit public offices & health institutions to assess accessibility measures for PWDs

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 08: District Administration Kupwara today conducted "Sugamya Yatra 2025" across the district to raise awareness and sensitivity among the masses towards the accessibility of specially abled persons. "Sugamya Yatra 2025" is a special initiative aimed at creating awareness regarding accessibility challenges faced by Persons With Disabilities (PWDs).

The main Yatra event was held at D.C Office Complex Kupwara which was led by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, Mohd Rouf Rehman.

The event which saw participation of large number of stakeholders including District officers and employees was collaborated with Department of



Social Welfare, Health and Education departments.

Speaking at the occasion, the ADC said that the aim of holding the "Sugamya Yatra 2025" is to raise mass awareness about the accessibility challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities and to sensitize stakeholders about their responsibilities under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 and Constitution of India. He

impressed upon the officers and employees to visit key public places including government offices, educational institutions and healthcare centers to assess the accessibility for the PWDs.

He directed them to take feedback from the PWDs about their problems and challenges facing them while getting services to foster improvements in accessibility across public infrastructure.

On the occasion, the ADC along with CMO, DSWO and other functionaries visited different offices including Election Office, CEO Office and others and assessed the accessibility measures.

Meanwhile, "Sugamya Yatra" was also conducted in sub divisions of Handwara, Lolab and Karnah during which the teams of officers and officials visited various public offices, health and educational institutions to assess the facilities for PWDs.

Earlier, orders were issued by the District Administration under which teams of officers/officials were constituted for conduct of the "Sugamya Yatra". The teams were assigned various Government offices, Banks, Hospitals, Police Stations and Bus Stands to check the accessibility for the specially abled persons.

Government Identifies Land for Playground in K.Kot Awantipora, Residents Celebrate

■ HT News Network

SPulwama, Feb 08: In a significant development, the District Administration of Pulwama has identified government land (Measles Number 996) in K.Kot Awantipora for the construction of a much-needed playground. This decision has been met with enthusiasm, particularly among the youth, who have long been advocating for a dedicated space for sports and recreation.

The move has been widely appreciated by local leaders and residents alike. Suhaib Ayoub, District President Minority, hailed the decision as a "landmark



step" in boosting sports infrastructure. "This playground will greatly benefit the youth of K.Kot Awantipora. We are committed to ensuring better facilities for our future generations," he stated.

Aftab Ahmad Yatoo, District Vice President of BJP, also welcomed the decision, acknowledging the role of the administration and BJP leadership in addressing community

concerns. "Providing recreational spaces is crucial for community well-being. We sincerely thank the administration for fulfilling this long-standing demand," he said.

The announcement has sparked celebrations among locals, who see the playground as a positive step towards youth engagement and development. Many believe the initiative will provide a constructive

outlet for young people, keeping them engaged in productive activities.

Community elders also praised the decision, emphasizing the role of sports in shaping the younger generation. "Engaging youth in sports will keep them away from distractions and contribute to their overall development," one elder remarked.

With the government's focus on enhancing local infrastructure, residents of K.Kot Awantipora are optimistic about further advancements in community welfare. The identification of this land is seen as a significant milestone in the region's ongoing development.

DC Kupwara reviews implementation of "Zimadari 2.0" initiative

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 8: The Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, today convened a meeting with concerned officers to review the implementation of the "Zimadari 2.0" initiative, a transformative program aimed at revolutionizing the education sector in the district. The "Zimadari 2.0" initiative is designed to ensure better accountability, enhance the quality of education, and promote a more inclusive and efficient educational environment in Kupwara district. During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner impressed upon all the stakeholders to work with

concerted efforts and added zeal for successful implementation of the ambitious "Zimadari 2.0" program which is aimed for overall transformation of education sector in the district. She enjoined upon them to target those schools located in far flung areas which need enhancements in terms of human resource and infrastructure so that the students especially underprivileged get an edge to improve their learning outcomes under the program. She emphasized the importance of timely and effective implementation of the program, focusing on key areas such as improving student enrollment, ensuring better teaching standards, and providing a conducive learning

ICC Jammu Engages with Hon'ble CM Omar Abdullah on Budget 2025-26 for Holistic Development of J&K

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: Rahul Sahai Chairman Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Jammu Chapter, extends its sincere appreciation to Hon'ble Chief Minister Jenab Omar Abdullah Sahab for reviving the longstanding tradition of budget consultations, which had been halted for an extended period. This initiative is a significant step towards making Jammu & Kashmir a revenue-positive Union Territory and ensuring the prosperity of its citizens.

During the stakeholder interaction on Budget 2025-26, the Rahul Sahai Chair ICC Jammu Chapter presented key recommendations spanning industries, MSMEs, education, social welfare, tourism, and sports. These proposals aim to foster industrial growth, enhance social infrastruc-

ture, and position J&K as a premier destination for investment and tourism.

Industry and MSMEs: A key proposal highlighted the necessity of a special incentive package for local industries, aligning them with the NCSS 2021 scheme to ensure a level playing field. The Indian Chamber advocated for GST incentives, capital subsidies, and interest reimbursements at par with NCSS Package to sustain and promote local businesses. Additionally, a call was made to implement a toll tax on certain imports to protect local industries such as flour mills, brick kilns, tiles, steel, and edible oil manufacturing. Rahul Sahai Chairman ICC also urged the government to streamline SGST reimbursements by treasuries, implement freehold rights for old industrial estates like gangyal, Digiana, Birpur, Bari Brahman, and provide price preference for local industries in government procurement.



Sports and Exhibitions: Recognizing the economic potential of sports and exhibitions, Chair ICC proposed budget allocations for the construction of two new stadiums in Jammu

and a state-of-the-art indoor sports facility. An annual sports calendar featuring key sporting events was suggested to encourage youth participation and tourism. Additionally, the Indian Chamber recommended Budget for organizing golf tournaments to promote golf tourism. To

further boost economic activity, ICC called for the establishment of a modern exhibition ground in Jammu and the organization of Surajkund-style melas to showcase products from various states.

Social Welfare Initiatives: ICC stressed the urgent need for structured parking solutions on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to address congestion, alongside provisions for developing new housing colonies to support planned urban expansion. Addressing land-related issues, the Indian Chamber urged swift resolution of lease deed renewals and simplification of procedures related to Gair Mumkin Khad land clearances.

Moreover, it proposed a dedicated budget for skill development programs to equip the local workforce with industry-relevant skills, ensuring better employment opportunities

within J&K.

Tourism and Hospitality: To enhance J&K's appeal as a tourism destination, Rahul Sahai Chairman ICC recommended easing liquor licensing processes for bars in hotels, establishing robust tourist facilitation centers at entry and exit points, and leveraging digital platforms for tourism promotion. The Chamber emphasized the need for vlogs and social media influencer campaigns to showcase J&K's tourism potential. Additionally, it proposed an online booking system for tourist destinations and a comprehensive review of the homestay policy to encourage rural tourism. Rahul Sahai Chair ICC also advocated for improved inter-UT connectivity, including the introduction of Vande Bharat trains between Jammu and Srinagar and the initiation of a metro project linking Jammu to Katra and Kathua.

Div Com Jammu inaugurates Winter Festival at Lal Draman

Over 2500 people attended gala event showcasing Doda's Tourism Potential

HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 08: The much-awaited Winter Festival was organised today here at Lal Draman (Doda) filling the sprawling meadows with fun and festivity.

The festival witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large gathering of around 2500 people including tourists, locals, officials and media personnel.

Organized by the District Administration & Department of Tourism J&K, in collaboration with Tejas Ek Pahal Foundation (NGO) and the Indian Army, the mega fair was inaugurated



by Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar in presence of District Development Council (DDC) Chairman Dhananther Singh; DDC Vice Chairperson, Sangeeta Bhagat; DIG Police Doda/Kishtwar/

Ramban Range, Shridhar Patil and Deputy Commissioner, with the plantation of saplings, symbolizing a commitment to environmental conservation.

Speaking on the occasion, Divisional Commis-

sioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, emphasized the government's vision of transforming the region into a major tourist destination by exploring new locations. He highlighted that the Chenab Valley, with its blend of winter and summer attractions, religious sites, and adventure tourism spots, holds immense potential to boost the local economy. "The Winter Festival at Lal Draman is a key initiative in unlocking Doda's tourism prospects. Such events not only attract visitors but also contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region," he stated.

ADDC Jammu inspects psychiatric clinic for drug regulation compliance

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh conducted inspection of a psychiatric clinic to ensure compliance with drug regulations. The inspection was carried out in pursuance of an order issued by District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya, which mandated a committee to oversee the regulation of drugs and medicines in psychiatric clinics.

The inspection team included the committee members, Superintendent of Police (Hq) Irshad Husain, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Harbaksh Singh, Medical Officer Dr. Arti Sharma, Assistant Drugs Controller Arvind Sharma, Tehsildar



Nazool Athira Jamwal and Accounts Officer Kamal Bhagat.

During the visit, the team reviewed patient records from past years, scrutinising documentation and treatment histories. They also examined invoices, purchase orders and stock

pliance with legal standards and helps prevent irregularities in the handling of psychotropic and Schedule H drugs.

During the inspection, the team closely examined records related to psychotropic substances and Schedule H drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. The Chief Medical Officer and other officials assessed these records to verify adherence to regulatory guidelines.

Additionally, the team inspected the staffing structure of the clinics, verifying the presence and qualifications of doctors and paramedical staff to ensure that medical services were being provided by certified professionals.

DC reviews physical, financial progress of Tourism, BADP projects in Poonch District

HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 08: District Development Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal today reviewed progress of Tourism development Projects and the Border Area Development Plan (BADP) works here at two separate meetings.

The Deputy Commissioner meticulously reviewed the status of ongoing Tourism projects, including development of Eco parks, Gardens, viewpoints, construction of cafeteria and Toilet Complex, children's parks, the beautification of key tourist sites etc. He emphasized the need for timely completion of these projects.

To further improve tourist amenities, the Deputy Commissioner instructed



the Tourism department to focus on developing potential tourist destinations to attract more visitors. Additionally, he directed the Department to prioritize the installation of a solar panel on the upcoming cafeteria to promote sustainability.

The meeting also provided an overview of the financial achievements related to these tourism projects. The Accounts Officer presented the details of both ongoing and new initiatives under the Capex budget Plan.

Later, taking block-wise review of BADP works, the

Deputy Commissioner urged Executive Engineers to ensure the timeline completion of ongoing projects while emphasizing the goal of achieving 100% expenditure before the end of the financial year. He also sought updates on the physical status of current projects, the number of schemes completed, and the advancements made in the current fiscal year.

The meeting was attended by SE PWD, ACD, CPO, XEN PWD, besides other concerned executive engineers were present in the meeting.

Director RDD reviews implementation of key schemes in Rajouri District; Sets deadline for completion of PMAY-G survey

HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 08: Director of Rural Development Department (RDD) Jammu Mumtaz Ali today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of the developmental schemes across all blocks of Rajouri district.

The meeting focused on key initiatives, including MGNREGA, CD&PYT, CAPEX, and other schemes aimed at strengthening rural infrastructure and improving livelihoods.

A major focus of discussion was the survey and registration process for the left-out eligible households under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G).

The Director emphasized the need for expediting the door-to-door survey to ensure that no eligible household is overlooked. He directed all concerned officials to complete the registration process strictly in compliance with PMAY-



G guidelines and set March 31, 2025, as the deadline for achieving 100% coverage. The Block Development Officers (BDOs) were instructed to intensify efforts to achieve set targets under PMAY-G and other rural development schemes. Stress was laid on working in synergy with other departments to overcome bottlenecks

and ensure seamless execution of projects. Reaffirming the department's commitment to rural development, the Director urged officials to work proactively to achieve set targets within the stipulated timeframe. He stressed that the benefits of government schemes must reach every eligible beneficiary, ensuring inclusive growth and sustainable

rural progress.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Panchayats Sheraz Ahmad Chouhan; Assistant Commissioner Development Vijay Kumar; EXEN REW Zaheer Ahmad; DPO Mohammad Nawaz along with BDOs, Panchayat Secretaries, PAAs and JEs from Rajouri and Dhangri Blocks.

DD News Jammu presents Coffee Table Book on Assembly Elections to Transport Commissioner

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: The Regional News Unit of Doordarshan News Jammu (DD News Jammu) today presented a specially curated coffee table book on Assembly Elections to Transport Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir Vishesh Mahajan.

Vishesh Mahajan, who previously served as the District Election Officer (DEO) of Reasi, was felicitated at a formal event organized to acknowledge his significant contributions to ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections in the district.

The coffee table book, an initiative of DD News Jammu, offers a comprehensive visual and narrative account of the Assembly elections. It captures pivotal moments, key milestones, and behind-the-scenes efforts of various stakeholders in conducting elections in



Jammu and Kashmir. This meticulously designed publication is aimed at preserving the legacy of the democratic process and recognizing the dedication of those who played a vital role in its successful execution.

Speaking on the occasion, Vishesh Mahajan expressed his gratitude to DD News Jammu for the thoughtful gesture and praised the initiative. He highlighted the importance of documenting electoral processes as a means of preserving institutional memory and fostering greater public awareness of democratic practices. "This coffee table book is not just a collection of photographs and narratives—it's a testament to the hard work and commitment of everyone involved in the election process, from the officials to the voters," Mahajan said.

During his tenure as the District Election Officer in Reasi, Mahajan played a crucial role in managing the electoral process efficiently. His efforts were instrumental in achieving high voter participation and ensuring that the election was conducted in a peaceful and impartial manner, setting a benchmark for future electoral exercises in the region.

ARCS inspects Cooperative Public School Deeli, Super Bazar Jammu

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: Additional Registrar Cooperative Societies (ARCS) Jammu Bal Krishan today conducted a maiden visit to Cooperative Higher Secondary School, Deeli and Jammu Cooperative Wholesale Limited (JCWL) Super Bazar, Jammu to assess their working.

At Cooperative Higher Secondary School Deeli, the officer interacted with the students, teachers and staff members. He emphasized the importance of quality education and strong foundational learning, urging the staff to work with zeal and dedication to enhance the educational standards of the institution.

At JCWL Super Bazar, Jammu, the Additional Registrar inspected the records and sales performance of the institution,

including status of the ongoing civil work.

General Manager Tabina Sheikh briefed him on the revenue, sales figures and other financial metrics of the establishment. The Additional Registrar encouraged the employees to take proactive measures for improving the financial standing of the institution and exploring new avenues to boost sales.

Additional Registrar was accompanied by District Audit Officer (DAO), Meenakshi Jasrotia; Assistant Registrar HQ Atin Sharma; Assistant Registrar Counsel Akhilesh Sharma and Sr Auditor Cooperative Societies Shahaba Khanam.

The visits served as an important exercise in reviewing the functioning, financial health of these key cooperative institutions in Jammu Division.

Poonch admin resolves to expedite cooperative development projects DDC discusses proposed initiatives at District Development Committee meeting

HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 08: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Poonch, Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting of the District Co-operative Development Committee here, at the Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex. The meeting aimed to address key issues and initiatives related to Co-operative development and agricultural practices.

The DDC enquired agenda-wise details regarding Cooperative development like the adoption of the calendar of activities for the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, Food Processing schemes for Cooperative societies, Pilot projects under the world's largest grain storage plan in

the cooperative sector, Computerization of Primary Agricultural credit societies (PACS), adoption of Model Bye-Laws, Development of National Database, registration of dairy PACS and fisheries in uncovered areas.

The meeting planned a range of activities and awareness programs for farmers and strengthening Cooperative Infrastructure across the district.

Emphasis was laid on promoting Co-operative societies and supporting farmers' producer organizations to enhance agriculture production.

The meeting concluded with a resolution to expedite all cooperative development initiatives and ensure seamless coordination among departments for the effective implementation of cooperative schemes.



The meeting was attended by ACR Poonch, ACP, Deputy Registrar Cooperative Society Poonch, CAO, CAHO, Chief inspector F&CS, AD Fisheries, District Lead Bank Manager, AD Handloom besides other Officers and representatives from the agricultural sector, members of the District Co-operative Development Committee and Farmers Producer Organization. The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Poonch, Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting of the District Co-operative Development Committee here, at the Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex. The meeting aimed to address key issues and initiatives related to Co-operative development and agricultural practices.

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The meeting planned a range of activities and awareness programs for farmers and strengthening Cooperative Infrastructure across the district. Emphasis was laid on promoting Co-operative societies and supporting farmers' producer organizations to enhance agriculture production.

ACS Education holds meeting with College Principals of Jammu division

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Shantmanu, today chaired the maiden meeting of Principals of colleges of Jammu division at GCW Parade Ground, Jammu.

Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, provided a comprehensive overview of the colleges functioning in Jammu division, highlighting their strengths, achievements and accreditation status. He further detailed the current state of the colleges and outlined the necessary steps being taken up for successful implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in its fourth year in J&K.

During the meeting, Shantmanu emphasised the importance of promoting moral education among the students while taking due care of their mental health. He stressed the need to closely monitor the health and emotional well-being of students, recognizing that a holistic approach is essential for their overall development. He also encouraged the Principals to work on strategies for supporting students' mental health, particularly in challenging times.

ACS further discussed the roadmap for NEP implementation in its fourth year and desired that the Universities have to take immediate steps in terms of identification of courses to be adopted by the students in online format as envisaged by the NEP 2020. This will immensely address the issues of implementation by colleges as three batches have been enrolled in all colleges of J&K, he added.

Shantmanu asked the Director Colleges to take up the matter with the universities in right earnest to address the challenges of NEP 2020.

Listening patiently to the issues raised by the Principals, ACS asked the Director Colleges for a comprehensive account of their issues, particularly with regard to infrastructure, staffing and resources, for further consideration and resolution at the departmental level.

Recognizing the need for analysing enrolment challenges, he sought the views of Principals who highlighted the difficulties faced by the students with respect to conduct of CUET and prolonged admission process through SMARTH portal.



Shantmanu asked the Director Colleges to take a comprehensive view from all stakeholders and come up with corrective measures needed in this regard.

The Principals shared their insights, discussing the achievements of their colleges in academics, sports, NSS, NCC and research. They assured the chairperson that the vision of the department to deliver quality education shall be fulfilled. The meeting provided a valuable platform for open dialogue, where challenges were discussed, efforts were acknowledged, and solutions were explored.

The Principals appreciated the opportunity given to them to bring forward their concerns, with the hope that these discussions would lead to effective resolutions.

ACS exhorted upon all the attendees to maintain a positive mindset, emphasising the importance of continuous self-improvement and a service-oriented approach in tackling challenges. He expressed confidence that by working together, higher education in JK can reach new heights. During the meeting, Shantmanu emphasised the importance of promoting moral education among the students while taking due care of their

mental health. He stressed the need to closely monitor the health and emotional well-being of students, recognizing that a holistic approach is essential for their overall development. He also encouraged the Principals to work on strategies for supporting students' mental health, particularly in challenging times.

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DIPR artists promote Sparsh campaign through impactful Nukkad Natak

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: A Nukkad Natak underlining the theme of "Sparsh" - the Leprosy awareness campaign was today staged by artists of Cultural Unit of Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Department Jammu at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar, Zonal Leprosy Office.

The 15 day long campaign is being spearheaded by the Directorate of Health Services and will conclude on February 13, 2025.

Artists, through their impactful performance, highlighted the core idea of the campaign to educate the public about leprosy and encourage early detection and treatment.

Speaking on the occasion Zonal Leprosy Officer Dr Sushma Mattoo, lauded the Cultural Unit, Department of Information and Public Relations for organizing the event.

Among others, Assistant Director Schemes Dr. Ila Gupta, Medical Superintendent Dr. Hamid Zargar, staff members of Zonal Leprosy Office and a large number of audience witnessed the program.

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

Achievements under HADP reviewed at Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 08: Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting today to review the implementation and achievements made under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

Officers from stakeholder departments of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Sericulture, Fisheries, Floriculture etc presented a detailed update on the current status of program registrations across varied components, departmental approvals and project deployments.

The Deputy Commissioner asked the departments to enhance data quality on the DAKSH Kisan portal and encourage maximum acceptance of applications under the Kisan Samridhi Abhiyan (KSA). He urged the officials to improve the registration under Kisan Sathi and increase the enrollment of farmers under KKG.

The DC directed the concerned officers to improve the awareness among farmers and stressed upon the officers to gear up the work to achieve the set targets.

The DC set clear timelines for achieving specific targets under HADP and demanded regular progress reports from concerned departments. He assured all possible support from the district administration to facilitate the success of HADP.

Sale, consumption of liquor, non-vegetarian food prohibited in Katra, adjoining areas

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 08: Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Katra by virtue of powers vested under section 163 Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), prohibited sale/possession/consumption of liquor and non-vegetarian food such as eggs, chicken, meat, mutton, sea food, fish, prawns, lobster etc in Katra and other areas in the territorial jurisdiction of Sub-Division, Katra.

The prohibition would be applicable on the track from Katra to Holy Cave and in villages within a distance of up to 02 Km on either sides of the track; Arli, Hansali and Matyal villages; within 200 meters on either sides of Katra-Tikri Road, including villages Chamba, Serli and Bhagta; Within 200 meters on either side of Katra-Jammu Road including villages Kundrorian, Kotli Bajallian, Nomain and Maghal; Katra-Reasi Road from Katra to Nau Devian and Aghar Jitto and Nau Devian markets; within 200 meters on either side of Railway Station Katra-Sool Road and within 100 meter on either side of Panthal-Domail Road.

Tribal Women sensitized about PCPNDT Act, Menstrual Hygiene at Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 08: SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) Kishtwar, under the directions of District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Kishtwar, Zubair Ahmed Lone, organized an awareness program on the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, menstrual hygiene and women-centric schemes here at AWC Phaguwara. Majority of women participants were from Tribal Community.

District Mission Coordinator Roohie Shamma sensitized the women about the economic and social impact of menstrual health. She stated that menstrual hygiene is not just a health concern but an economic issue as well. "Lack of awareness and access to hygiene products can lead to serious health risks and hinder women's participation in education and employment," she said adding "By spreading awareness and providing resources, SANKALP is ensuring that women can lead healthier and more confident lives." To address accessibility challenges, free sanitary napkins were distributed among the attendees. Financial Literacy Specialist, Anwar-ul-Haq educated the gathering on the significance of the PCPNDT Act in promoting gender equality. "Female foeticide remains a grave societal concern, and the PCPNDT Act serves as a crucial legal measure to curb this unethical practice," he said. The women were informed about their legal rights and the need to report any violations to ensure a balanced society where both genders are valued equally. In addition, attendees were provided information on the women-centric government schemes such as SMAS, Ladli Beti, PMMVY, Old Age Pension, Widow and Disability Pensions, PMEGP, Tejaswini, and skill development programs under RSETI.

Com Secy Culture inaugurates Neena Sood's 3 day exhibition at Kala Kendra

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 08: Commissioner Secretary, Culture, K. Ramesh Kumar, inaugurated a three day art exhibition titled "Art Chronicle" by renowned artist Neena Sood at Kala Kendra this afternoon.

The exhibition is being organised by the Kala Kendra Society, Jammu which showcases a collection of 22 artworks by the artist.

The event was graced by several distinguished personalities including Padma Shri Rajinder Tickoo; Secretary, JKAACL, Harvinder Kour; Secretary, Kala Kendra Society, Dr. Javaid Rahi and eminent artist Bhushan Kesar, who were part of the presidium.

In his inaugural address, K. Ramesh Kumar commended Neena Sood for her outstanding artistic contributions and expressed confidence that the exhibition will inspire and engage budding artists. He highlighted Jammu & Kashmir's rich artistic legacy, naming eminent artists like G. R. Santosh, Master Sansar Chand, Triloki Koul and Ratan Parimoo. He reaffirmed the government's commitment towards promoting visual arts.

The Commissioner Secretary also announced plans to develop Kala



Kendra into a vibrant hub for art and culture, ensuring that it becomes a premier venue for artistic activities in the region.

Responding to artists' concerns, he assured that the long-awaited revival of the art studio for local artists would be initiated soon.

Speaking on the occasion, Padma Shri Rajinder Tickoo, highlighted the immense artistic potential in Jammu & Kashmir and urged stakeholders to create more national and international opportunities for artists to showcase their work.

Harvinder Kour, reiterated JKAACL's efforts to revive annual art exhibitions in Jammu & Kashmir. She stressed the significance of such

platforms in preserving and promoting artistic traditions.

Dr. Javaid Rahi emphasized that the primary objective of the exhibition is to promote local artists in the field of visual arts. He lauded Neena Sood's artistic vision and expressed Kala Kendra Society's commitment to supporting emerging talent.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Sanjeev Sood on behalf of Neena Sood, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries, guests and participants for their support.

The exhibition was graced by the presence of several prominent personalities, including Vishesh Paul Mahajan, Commissioner, Transport Department; Seema Shekhar Kajuria, Former Advocate General; Sanjeev Rana, Additional Secretary, JKAACL; Sangeeta Sharma, Deputy Director, Archives; Prof. Poonam Dhawan, Dean Academic Affairs, Cluster University of Jammu, along with several art enthusiasts and dignitaries from various fields.

The Art Chronicle exhibition will be open to the public for three days from 8th to 10th February, 2025 from 12 noon to 5.00 p.m., offering art lovers an opportunity to experience the rich and diverse artistic expressions showcased by Neena Sood.

Wings Ek Udaan, Sunya IAS Institute Felicitated as Most Trusted Brand in Civil Services Coaching

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

Jammu, Feb 8: 'Wings Ek Udaan', in collaboration with 'Sunya IAS Institute', has been conferred with the title of "Most Trusted Brand in the Field of Education for Civil Services Exam Preparation" at the prestigious Big Impact Awards. The award was presented by the Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir Omar Abdullah at a ceremony held at Radisson Blu, Jammu. The function was attended by a host of dignitaries including a former DIG, several MLAs, prominent industrialists and entrepreneurs. A commu-



nique in this regard stated that the accolade reflects the commitment of 'Wings Ek Udaan' and 'Sunya IAS Institute' for providing top-tier educational services and their consistent efforts in preparing aspirants for civil services

examinations. "We are truly honored to receive this recognition," said Shoaib Farid, Director of Wings Ek Udaan. "This award is a testament to our team's dedication and the trust our students have in us. Our mission remains to

make quality education accessible to all aspirants and to equip them with the skills required to succeed in competitive examinations," he further added.

Over the years, 'Wings Ek Udaan' and 'Sunya IAS Institute' act as the pioneers in Civil Services coaching by incorporating innovative teaching methodologies, structured study materials and result-oriented strategies to meet the evolving demands of aspirants. Pertinently, the Big Impact Awards recognize excellence across various sectors highlighting institutions that demonstrate innovation, reliability and quality.

MLA Kathua chairs Rogi Kalyan Samiti meeting Several projects proposed to foster patient care services

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 08: A preliminary meeting of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) was held today in the Conference Hall of the Associated Hospital of Government Medical College Kathua. Dr. Bharat Bhushan, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Kathua chaired the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Medical Superintendent Dr Sangeeta; Dy CMO Dr Neeraj Nagpa; District Ayush Officer Dr Rakesh Kumar and other heads of departments of the Medical College, besides Executive



Engineer, PDD, EOMC and other officers of line departments.

The meeting aimed to discuss and address the issues related to the healthcare infrastructure and services in Kathua.

During the meeting,

several key issues were discussed including the renovation of the radiology department of Associated Hospital (Old Block) GMC, expansion and upgradation of MGPS System for SNCU Ward and construction of a waiting shed

for Obstetric & Gynaecology patients.

Other issues discussed included the laying of wires and cables for X-ray machine installation, replacement of electrical cables, renovation of the labour room and mortuary and cleaning of septic and water tanks. The MLA appreciated the efforts of the administration and stakeholders for the achieving outstanding ranking in Public Health Facilities as per NHM. He emphasized the need to maintain this position and directed all stakeholders and line departments to address the discussed issues on priority.

**Two die, dozen suffered injuries as traveller collides with truck****AGENCIES**

HAMIRPUR (UP), FEB 8

Two pilgrims were killed and a dozen others were injured when the vehicle in which they were travelling rammed into a stationary truck in the Rath area of Hamirpur district in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, police sources said here.

Police sources said that the incident took place when the pilgrims were on their way back to Himachal Pradesh after taking a holy dip in Maha Kumbh in Prayagaraj.

The vehicle of the pilgrims collided with the truck parked on Bunderkhand Expressway.

Police sources said that on receiving the information, the police reached the spot and admitted the injured to CHC Rath, where doctors declared Nirmala (60) and Surendra Rana (54) dead.

"The doctors referred Tambo Devi and Sheela Rani to Medical College Orai for treatment in a serious condition," they said.

Home Minister Amit Shah praises narcotic seizure in Mumbai

MUMBAI, FEB 8

Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on the seizure of 11.540 Kgs of high-quality cocaine, 4.9 Kgs of hybrid strain of hydroponic weed, and 5.5 kgs of cannabis while busting an alleged drug syndicate operating in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

He said that it is a testament to the success of the top-to-bottom approach to investigation adopted to make PM Narendra Modi's vision for a drug-free India a reality.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Amit Shah hailed the success of the operation, stating, "A major breakthrough in Mumbai in seizing very high-grade cocaine, ganja, and cannabis gummies and arresting four people. It is a testament to the success of the top-to-bottom approach to investigation adopted to make PM Narendra Modi's vision for a drug-free India a reality."

Good coordination between RBI, Govt on issues like growth, inflation: Sitharaman**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 8

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said there is good coordination between the Government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and no one encroaches on the other's territory and that is always good for the economy.

"There has been good coordination between



RBI and the Government. Whether it is growth or inflation, monetary and fiscal policies going in

tandem would benefit the economy," Sitharaman said while addressing the media along with

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra post Union Budget and also RBI's policy decision yesterday wherein the key policy (repo) rate was cut for the first time in five years by 25 bps to 6.25 per cent.

The Minister said that industry is seeing signs of possible recovery of consumption, and many of them maybe looking at reviving capacity utilisation.

Delhi election result reflects referendum on Kejriwal and AAP: Cong**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 8

Congress on Saturday said that the mandate given by the people of Delhi reflects nothing more than a "referendum on Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)".

On his social media handle X, party spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said, "After all, at the height of the PM's popularity in 2015 and 2020,



AAP had won decisively in Delhi. This shows that, rather than being vindication of the policies of the PM, this vote is a rejection

of Arvind Kejriwal's politics of deceit, deception, and vastly exaggerated claims of achievement".

He said that the Congress always took the lead in highlighting the various scams that have occurred under Arvind Kejriwal and voters have pronounced their judgement on his twelve years of misrule.

Ramesh said, "The Congress was expecting to do better. It has, however, increased its vote share".

Odisha Cabinet approves three projects for Hirakud Dam at a cost of Rs.1,066.38 Cr**AGENCIES**

BHUBANESWAR, FEB 8

The Odisha Cabinet on Friday approved a proposal to undertake three projects for Hirakud Dam under the Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project (DRIP-III) at an estimated cost of Rs 1,066.38 crore over a period of six years, starting from the financial year 2025-26.

The projects will be executed with financial assistance from the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) under the Externally Aided Project (EAP).

Briefing the media, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi stated that



the projects include the construction of an additional spillway on the left dyke of Hirakud Dam, underwater, ground, and aerial surveys to assess the dam's distressed conditions and implement necessary rehabilitation measures, and the automation of the existing gates and the proposed additional spillway gates using the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition)

system.

The construction of the additional spillway will ensure the safe passage of excess floodwater.

Additionally, advanced surveys, structural analysis, and the selection of modern materials for rehabilitation—utilising state-of-the-art machinery and videography—will enhance the dam's longevity.

Majhi further stated that replacing the manual gate operation with a remote-controlled system using SCADA technology, under DRIP-III, and under the supervision of national and international experts, will improve monitoring and control efficiency.

EOS-06 satellite captures phytoplankton concentration on global scale : ISRO**AGENCIES**

CHENNAI, FEB 7

In an yet another significant breakthrough, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday announced that one of the payloads on board the EOS-06 Earth Observation Satellite has captured phytoplankton concentration on a global scale in two days frequency.

In a post on X, ISRO, sharing the images, said the Ocean Colour Monitor (OCM) sensor onboard the EOS-06 satellite has captured phytoplankton concentration on a global scale.

The Ocean colour observations helps in gathering valuable information on bio-geo chemical variability of oceans in a global scale.

"OCM sensor in EOS-06 captures Phytoplankton concentration on global scale Ocean Colour Monitor (OCM) sensor of EOS-06 captures chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) concentration in global scale at a frequency of 2 days, it said.

"The below image shows global product generated at 1km resolution using data for the period Jan-Dec 2024", it added.

"Ocean colour observations helps in gathering valuable information on bio-geo chemical variability of oceans in a global scale", the Space Agency said.

EOS-06 was launched successfully on November 26, 2022, using PSLV-C54.

EOS-06 is part of the Oceansat series of satellites, which are designed to

monitor and study various aspects of the Earth's oceans and coastal zones.

EOS-6 is the third-generation satellite in the Oceansat series.

This is to provide continuity services of Oceansat-2 spacecraft with enhanced payload specifications as well as application areas.

The payloads are Ocean Color Monitor (OCM-3); Sea Surface Temperature Monitor (SSTM); Ku-Band Scatterometer (SCAT-3) and ARGOS.

The Mission objectives is to ensure the data continuity of Ocean colour and wind vector data to sustain the operational applications; to improve the applications, some additional datasets such as Sea Surface Temperature and more number

of bands in Optical region for florescence and in Infra-red region for atmospheric corrections are accommodated and to develop/improve related algorithms and data products to serve in well-established application areas and to enhance the mission utility.

The PSLV-C54 along with EOS-06 (Earth Observation Satellite-06) also launched eight Nano-satellites into two different SSPOs.

The Primary satellite (EOS-06) was separated in Orbit-1 and subsequently Orbit change was planned by using two Orbit Change Thrusters (OCTs) introduced in the Propulsion Bay Ring of the PSLV-C54 Vehicle and the Passenger Payloads (PPLs) were separated in Orbit-2.

No files to be removed from Secretariat without GAD permission: Delhi Govt**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 8

The Delhi Government on Saturday ordered that no file will be removed from the Delhi Secretariat, without appropriate permission, apparently apprehending that classified documents will be taken out in the wake of defeat of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

According to the order issued by the Joint Director General Administration Department, Government of Delhi, "To address security concerns and the safety of records, it is requested that no files/documents, Computer Hardware etc. may be taken outside

Delhi Secretariat complex without permission from GAD".

"It is therefore directed that necessary directions may be issued to the concerned Branch In-charges under the Departments/Offices situated in Delhi Secretariat to ensure safety of records, files, documents, electronic files etc. under their section/branches", the order said.

The direction comes as counting to the 70-member Delhi assembly is underway and the trends and results declared so far showed that BJP is all set to form the government in the National Capital.

Ruling DMK set to win Erode East Assembly bypoll by record margin**AGENCIES**

CHENNAI, FEB 8

In a one-horse race, the ruling DMK candidate V C Chandrakumar is all set to win the Erode East Assembly constituency seat by a record margin, as the counting of votes polled in the February 5 by-elections, continued on Saturday.

As per the latest reports, Mr Chandrakumar has secured more than 50 per cent of the votes polled and was leading by more than 70,000 votes over his only rival Ms M K Seethalakshmi of Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK).

After 13th round of counting, which began at 0800 hrs amid tight security, Chandrakumar polled 89,931 votes as against



19,078 by Ms Seethalakshmi.

With four more rounds of counting remaining, the NTK candidate needed a further 6,700 votes to retain her deposit, reports received here said.

With the major political parties, including the main Opposition AIADMK, its ally, the DMDK, the BJP-Led NDA and its allies, including the PMK and the nascent Tamilar Vettri Kazhagam of Kollywood actor Vijay, boycotting the polls, the outcome of

the bypoll was a foregone conclusion.

Having established a big lead, which kept swelling with every round of counting, Chandrakumar, who was the clear favourite to win the bypoll, was leading right from the first round and is all set to win by a record margin.

With Mr Chandrakumar assured of a landslide victory, DMK cadres, carrying party flags, in the constituency celebrated it by bursting crackers, distributing sweets and dancing to the beating of drums.

It was celebration time at the DMK headquarters 'Anna Arivalayam' in Chennai, also where enthusiastic party cadres burst crackers and distributed sweets to celebrate the bypoll success.

Modern medical facilities will be available at IGIMS: Nitish**AGENCIES**

PATNA, FEB 8

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said that all modern medical facilities would be available at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS).

After inaugurating the A and B Block of the Hospital with a capacity of 200 beds, constructed at an expenditure of Rs 280 crore, Kumar said on Saturday that it is a prestigious Hospital where all modern facilities would be available for providing better treatment to the patients.

Outlining the steps initiated by his government to improve the medical facilities across the state,



Kumar said that the treatment facilities have been improved right from Primary Health Centre up to Medical College Hospitals.

He said that the medicines were being distributed free of cost and the government was working in the interest of the common people.

While inspecting the newly constructed building, the Chief Minister instructed the authorities concerned to install solar plates on the rooftop to provide solar energy in the hospital.

Vaccum Ignition trial of indigenous Cryo engine success: ISRO**AGENCIES**

CHENNAI, FEB 8

As part of preparations for inflight re-ignition, the Vacuum ignition trial of Cryogenic engine with Multi-element Igniter was conducted successfully in LVM-3 launch vehicle, which would be used for the maiden human flight mission Gaganyaan.

ISRO said on Saturday that it successfully carried out the ignition trial of the indigenous CE20 cryogenic engine powering the upper stage of LVM3, with a Multi-element



igniter under vacuum conditions, which simulates the engine ignition in the vacuum condition of space.

This test was carried out in the High Altitude

Test Facility at ISRO Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu on Friday.

During this test, the ignition of the engine Thrust Chamber was car-

ried out with a multi-element igniter in vacuum, under the tank pressure conditions that are expected to prevail at the time of restarting the cryogenic engine in flight.

The performance of the engine and the facility during the test was normal and as expected.

Restarting a cryogenic engine is inherently complex and as part of the studies related to the restart operation, ISRO is exploring the initiation of turbopumps in bootstrap mode rather than the stored gas system.

MP Anurag Thakur and wife take holy dip in Sangam**AGENCIES**

PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 8

Former Union Minister and MP from in Himachal Pradesh Anurag Thakur, along with his wife, took a holy dip in Sangam calling it the 'Maha Kumbh of unity', he praised its divine and grand spirit.

Sharing pictures of his holy dip on his official X handle, MP Anurag Thakur quoted the sacred verse, "Gange cha Yamune chaiva Godavari Saraswati, Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jalesmin Sannidhim Kuru."

He worshipped at the confluence of the divine rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, praying



for the welfare of all. Wishing happiness, prosperity, and good fortune for everyone, he described Maha Kumbh as the 'Maha Kumbh of Unity' and a symbol of Indian culture and faith.

It may be noted that over 40 crore devotees

have taken a holy dip in Mahakumbh 2025 so far. Sadhus, saints, politicians, social workers and devotees from across the country are participating with deep faith in this historic event. This grand Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj is showcasing the eternal

essence of Sanatan culture on the world stage.

Several prominent leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, have taken a holy dip in the Sangam. Other notable figures who participated include Governor Anandiben Patel, Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini, Manipur CM N. Biren Singh, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, and Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Arjun Ram Meghwal and Shripad Naik.

Human breast milk may heal corneal wounds: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Using human breast milk may enhance the healing of the cornea -- the clear outer layer at the front of the eye, which helps the eye to focus light to help one see clearly, finds a study.

Corneal wound healing is a complex process involving cell death, migration, proliferation, differentiation, and extracellular matrix remodeling.

The study by ophthalmology researchers from the University of Colorado showed that when used on wounded corneas in animal models, human breast milk led to an increase in re-epithelialisation -- a part of the wound healing process.

The wounded eyes treated with human breast milk showed higher levels of Ki67 -- a protein that's



produced in cells that are actively dividing. Quick recovery is crucial in these kinds of eye injuries because it prevents infection that may cause further damage to the eye.

"The sooner that wound can heal, the better. Human breast milk seems to stimulate that process,"

said Mark Petrash, Professor of ophthalmology, from the varsity.

While it remains unclear how breast milk contributes to a quick recovery, the team believes that it has similar properties as serum tears -- a medication made from centrifuging a patient's

own blood to separate the serum, which is then sterilised and bottled.

The serum contains components, including proteins and growth factors, that are similar to natural tears, making it an effective treatment for some patients with severe dry eye and inflammatory eye diseases.

Although the findings, published in the journal Current Eye Research, are promising, it may just be "the tip of the iceberg," Petrash said, calling for more research.

"Breast milk itself is very complicated. There are sugars, carbohydrates, and lactose. There are a lot of proteins that have human growth factors and different kinds of biological properties. It would be really good to know what is it about breast milk that makes it so therapeutically promising."

CSIR-NIIST develops tech for converting biomedical waste into soil additives

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The CSIR-NIIST (National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology) Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday announced an automated biomedical waste conversion rig that can disinfect pathogenic waste and convert it into soil additives.

The rig, christened as "S-janam" will be formally launched by Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh, and commissioned at a function at AIIMS, New Delhi on February 10.

The rig can disinfect pathogenic biomedical waste such as blood, urine, sputum, and laboratory disposables, without the use of costly and energy-intensive incinerators. It also imparts a pleasant fragrance to the foul-smelling toxic waste.

"With its potential to transform treated waste into value-added soil addi-



tives with minimal human intervention, our technology provides a safer solution for healthcare facilities, avoids the risk of spills and occupational exposure, and assists in preventing uncontrolled spread of infectious microbes," said Dr. C Anandharamakrishnan, Director, CSIR-NIIST.

Soil studies have confirmed that the treated biomedical waste is superior to organic fertilisers like vermicompost. India produces 743 tonnes of biomedical waste daily, according to the 2023 annual report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

It presents a significant

challenge for proper management and disposal. Improper segregation, open dumping, open burning, and inadequate incineration lead to severe health hazards, such as the release of harmful human carcinogens, particulate matter, and ash residues.

Increased biomedical waste generation demands more transportation facilities, increasing the risk of accidents and spills. The new prototype equipment, with a daily capacity of 400 kg, can handle 10 kg degradable medical waste per day in the initial phase.

The technology, once validated, will be ready for full-scale implementation after securing approval from competent authorities.

Through this technology, CSIR-NIIST aims at an innovative and alternative solution for the safe, inexpensive and environment-friendly disposal of pathogenic biomedical waste.

More screen time may lower language development skills in toddlers: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Increased exposure to screens such as television and smartphones may lead to lower language development skills in toddlers, according to an international study.

The findings led by researchers from 20 Latin American countries found that book exposure and shared screen time with adults could boost language skills in toddlers.

The researchers analysed data from 1,878 toddlers aged 12 to 48 months across Latin America between August 2021 and March 2023. The toddlers were evaluated based on parent-reported surveys of screen use, shared media engagement, book exposure, language skills, and developmental milestones.

The team also screened the socioeconomic status of the participants to



understand basic needs, parental education, and occupation.

The results, published in the journal PLOS ONE, showed that TV and background TV were the most frequently used media, with average daily exposure exceeding one hour.

This lowered language development skills in toddlers.

The team also found that entertainment content was the most consumed by toddlers. It was followed by music and educational programming. Further, families

with lower socioeconomic status reported less use of books and fewer educational resources.

Children with more screen exposure had lower lexical density and delayed language milestone achievement.

On the other hand, those with more exposure to books or had screen engagement with adults had better language skills.

The relationship between screen use and motor development was not significant.

The findings support previous research that excessive screen use negatively impacts early language development. Shared engagement with adults and appropriate content types may mitigate some of these effects.

With screen use poised to increase and become more complex, the researchers suggest future experimental designs control variables and isolate their impact.

Type 2 Diabetes in Telangana: 56.7% of People Above 45 at Risk

AGENCIES
TELANGANA

India currently ranks second after China in the diabetes epidemic. Often referred to as the "Diabetes Capital of the world", the disease has been widely prevalent across all age groups. While the disease can be maintained without becoming a threat with lifestyle changes, it has become impossible to find a way to prevent the disease in the first place.

Risk studies on Type-2 diabetes are quite common and a latest study done by Central University of Kerala assesses the risk of Type-2 diabetes in people aged above 45 in this country. Published under the title, "Assessing type-2 diabetes risk based on the Indian diabetes risk score among adults aged 45 and above in India", the study assesses the risk of diabetes in non-diabetic adults aged above 45 and



identifies the correlates for diabetes risk.

Conducted on 51,315 non-diabetic adults, the study was based on the Indian Diabetes Risk Score (IDRS) and the results were tabulated. A score of more than 60 was considered a high risk for diabetes. About 41.2% of 51315 adults were found to be at a high risk of getting diabetes in the future.

Coming to the states across the country, Kerala leads with 64.4% of its

adults aged above 45 at a high risk of diabetes. Jammu and Kashmir takes the second spot with 64.9% of its adults at high risk. The state of Telangana also has 56.7% of its people at high risk of getting the disease.

The study also makes clear the need for local governments across states to come up with educational programs on diet and physical activity, create public spaces so that people can willingly

participate in activities, etc., promote more fruit and vegetable intake, and discourage ultra-processed foods as part of diet.

The risk of diabetes can be due to modifiable or non-modifiable factors or both. Studies across decades suggest that age, family history, genetics, ethnicity, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, high body mass, and blood lipid levels are major risk factors for diabetes.

Study shows how PM2.5 raises health, economic costs for elderly

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

While air pollution is becoming a growing health issue worldwide, a new study focussed on its health and economic costs in the elderly.

The study led by researchers from the University of Tokyo in Japan highlights how fine particulate pollution, or PM2.5 worsens health outcomes, as well as creates significant socioeconomic challenges in regions with ageing populations and limited medical resources.

PM2.5 refers to microscopic particles of pollution small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, leading to severe respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

The particles are small enough to evade the body's natural defences in the nose and throat, making direct prevention difficult. This becomes especially problematic in

elderly populations.

"As we age, our immune systems weaken and our bodies are less able to defend against pollutants. Even moderate exposure can exacerbate pre-existing conditions, leading to higher hospitalisation rates and premature mortality," said lead author Associate Professor Yin Long.

"Our study provides new insights into impacts of PM2.5 in ageing regions, with a particular focus on the mismatch between those impacts and regional medical resource distribution."

The team focuses on Japan -- a country where almost 30 per cent of the population is aged 65 or older. Examining the relationship between PM2.5 exposure, health care disparities, and economic impacts, the team found that elderly people living in rural regions suffer more from PM2.5 pollution.

They also have less comprehensive medical infrastructure than the urban areas, which are much better equipped and staffed. As a result, their economic costs compared to urban regions are higher.

"Many rural areas lack the specialised hospitals and trained professionals needed to treat diseases exacerbated by PM2.5, such as strokes and heart attacks," said Long.

The researchers noted that in some elderly people, PM2.5 exposure leads to severe illnesses, "forcing many to leave the workforce earlier than planned. This not only affects their financial independence but also places additional pressure on younger generations to support them."

The study's economic analysis reveals that PM2.5-related deaths and illnesses contribute to rising socioeconomic costs that exceed 2 per

cent of the gross domestic product in some regions.

The intergenerational inequality PM2.5 impacts pose a challenge for policymakers aiming to ensure both economic stability and equitable access to health care.

The researchers emphasise these issues are not limited to Japan. Countries with ageing populations and rising pollution levels, including China and parts of Europe, might face similar challenges. Long urged governments to identify the most vulnerable populations and regions and allocate resources more effectively. The team also suggested stricter pollution controls, investments in healthcare infrastructure, and international cooperation to address transboundary pollution.

In addition, expanding green infrastructure in urban areas and access to telemedicine may be crucial.

After amla, moringa, Ayush Ministry to campaign for Shatavari plant to boost health

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

After successful campaigns for medicinal plants such as amla, moringa, giloe, and ashwagandha, Ayush Ministry has launched a new campaign for the Shatavari plant to boost health.

The species-specific campaign titled "Shatavari -For Better Health" was launched by Prataprao Jadhav, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush on Thursday.

Jadhav emphasised the relevance of Shatavari in achieving the Panch Pran Goal outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech on August 15, 2022.

"The Prime Minister envisioned making India a developed nation by its 100th Independence Day in 2047. As part of this mission, the Shatavari plant has been identified as a key resource



for enhancing women's health in India. This aligns with the broader goal of holistic well-being of citizens," Jadhav said.

He also highlighted the significant progress made by the Ministry of Ayush over the last decade and lauded the efforts of the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), for launching this new initiative to promote awareness about Shatavari. Lauding the previous successful campaigns he said, "These initiatives have contributed to spreading knowl-

edge of the health benefits of medicinal plants across the country."

Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, elaborated on the activities and achievements of NMPB in promoting medicinal plants. He also shared insights into the Central Sector Scheme for the Conservation, Development, and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants, an initiative to ensure the long-term preservation and cultivation of important medicinal species, including

Shatavari.

"Shatavari is especially beneficial for women's health," said Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich, CEO, NMPB, highlighting its medicinal importance. He also discussed the agro-economic potential of this plant.

"Financial assistance amounting to Rs 18.9 lakh will be provided to eligible organisations to support the campaign, fostering greater awareness and wider adoption of Shatavari in the public health landscape," Dadhich said.



2nd ODI: India eye series win, Eng push for decider

AGENCIES

CUTTACK, FEB 8

Buoyed by a clinical performance in the series opener, India will look to seal the three-match ODI series when they take on England in the second match at the Barabati Stadium here on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the visitors will be eager to bounce back and keep the series alive.

After securing a comfortable victory in the first ODI at Nagpur, India enter the contest with momentum on their side. However, concerns remain over skipper Rohit Sharma's form, as his return to international cricket has not gone as planned. With just two games remaining before the ICC Champions Trophy, the opener will be keen to rediscover his touch.

"I just want us to keep ensuring that we do the right things as often as possible. There is nothing specific that we want to achieve. We just want to check all the necessary boxes in terms of bowling, batting, and other aspects," Rohit stated ahead of the match.

Young pacer Harshit Rana, who impressed on debut in Nagpur, will



look to build on his performance. Although England's openers put him under pressure early on, he staged a strong comeback, picking up three key wickets to restrict the visitors to 248. His battle against England's top order will be a key factor in the second ODI.

India's batting order could see a change, with Virat Kohli's availability remaining uncertain. The veteran batsman missed the first ODI due to a sore knee, and his participation in this fixture is yet to be confirmed. If he returns, the team management will face a tough call on who to leave out, as Shreyas Iyer, who replaced him, scored a fluent half-century in the

successful run chase.

"As we all know, unfortunately, a player got injured, and then I got the opportunity. But I kept myself prepared. I knew that at any moment, I could get a chance," Iyer remarked, reflecting on his performance.

England, on the other hand, will be eager to stage a comeback. Their batting faltered in the series opener, and they will need a stronger effort from their middle order. The visitors will also rely on their bowlers to contain India's formidable batting lineup, which chased down the target with ease in Nagpur.

With both teams having much at stake, an exciting contest awaits cricket

fans at Barabati Stadium. A win for India will seal the series, while England will be desperate to push the series into a decider.

Team India: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Varun Chakaravathy.

Team England: Jos Buttler (c), Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Philip Salt, Jamie Smith, Jacob Bethell, Brydon Carse, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Saqib Mahmood, Adil Rashid, Mark Wood.

National Games: I am still CDM for J&K contingent, claims JKOA official Wattal

AGENCIES

JAMMU, FEB 8

Refuting the allegations of his "ouster" from the 38th National Games underway at Uttarakhand, a senior official of Jammu and Kashmir Olympic Association (JKOA), Kiran Wattal has claimed that he is still the "Chef de Mission" (CDM) for Jammu and Kashmir contingent and will soon be returning to the venue.

Wattal, the Vice President of Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI) and also the President of Jammu and Kashmir Gymnastics Association (JKGA) setting aside the controversy while speaking to UNI asserted, "allegations about my removal as CDM of J&K contingent are baseless rumours."

"I am still the CDM and returning back to Uttarakhand very soon as gymnastics events are also commencing from February 9."

"I have been nominated



by the president of GFI at the National Games vis-à-vis I am also the representative of the government and the Jammu and Kashmir Olympic Association (JKOA)," he said, adding, "some elements are intentionally trying to malign my image at the national podium but I want to make it clear that I am still the CDM."

"I had prior commitments in Jammu and Kashmir including the conduct of the first ever District Gymnastics Championship at Shopian because of which I had to rush to Jammu," he said.

Claiming of being nominated by the JKOA and the J&K Sports Council, Wattal said, "I had already informed my Deputy CDM (Rajesh Dutta) about my occupancy and also told him to manage all contingent related affairs/arrangements at the National Games."

"Moreover, I am in constant touch with the officials and regularly making all the correspondences with the organisers of the National Games and very soon I will be in Uttarakhand," cleared Wattal, who also holds the post of vice president in the JKOA.

However, contrary to this, a letter (accessed by the UNI) dashed to the Jammu and Kashmir Olympic Association by Sunaina Kumari, Chairperson, Games Technical Conduct Committee (GTCC), 38th National Games, under subject, "Relief of Duties for the CDM, J&K Olympic Association," read, "Dear Sir/Madam, this letter serves as formal notice that, due to repeated instances of misbehavior with other agencies and multiple complaints received, the decision has been made to relieve your CDM of his duties for the 38th National Games."

"Effective immediately, the Deputy CDM will be appointed as the new CDM for the event and will assume all responsibilities associated with the position," the letter's content further read.

It also said, "We believe this decision is necessary to ensure the decorum of the Games."

South Korea wins opening gold at Harbin Asian Winter Games

AGENCIES

HARBIN, FEB 8

South Korea claimed the opening gold at the Harbin Asian Winter Games in the short track speed skating mixed 2,000m relay here on Saturday.

South Korean quartet of

Kim Gil-li, Choi Min-jeong, Park Ji-won, and Kim Tae-sung finished first in two minutes and 41.534 seconds.

Kazakhstan took the silver in 2:42.258, while the bronze went to Japan, 1:800 seconds further back.

"We were trailing behind when there were only two laps left in the race, but I wasn't as anxious as I had imagined I would be. I told myself to stay as focused as possible - anything could happen, and it was worthy for a try," Park noted.

"The first final went quite smooth, so I think I might achieve good results in the following competitions as well. Let's wait and see," said Park, who continued the momentum to claim his second gold in men's 1,500m later on Saturday.

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