



## Under the leadership of PM Modi J&K is Witnessing Unprecedented Development : Kiran Rijiju

### Union Minister Says, No Deadline for Statehood Restoration

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, Feb: Union Minister Kiran Rijiju Saturday reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir's statehood will be restored but stopped short of providing a definite timeline for the process.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Kashmir, Rijiju said that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have previously assured that statehood will be reinstated "in due course of time." However, when pressed for a concrete timeframe, he declined to comment.

"The prime minister and the home minister have already made their position clear that statehood will be restored at the appropriate time, with well-defined powers and functions," Rijiju said.

The minister, who holds the parliamentary affairs and minority affairs portfolios,



emphasized that his visit was focused on discussions related to the Union Budget rather than political or governance matters. He refrained from addressing questions on the division of powers between the lieutenant governor and the elected chief minister, stating that Jammu and Kashmir remains a Union Territory for now.

"The lieutenant governor is currently the administrative head of the UT, but we also have an elected

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### Several Muslim MPs Back Waqf (Amendment) Bill: Kiran Rijiju

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 15: Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiran Rijiju on Saturday said that JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar and TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu, both allies of the BJP in the NDA government, have expressed their support for the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar on the Union Budget 2025-26, Rijiju claimed that several Muslim MPs also back the bill. "Even Muslim MPs are okay

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## Art 370 was temporary provision, Ambedkar refused to draft it: Vice-Prez Dhankar

### J&K no longer story of conflict

■ HT News Network/UNI

Jammu, Feb 15 (UNI) The Vice-President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said, "Jammu and Kashmir, which had the highest voter turnout in 35 years during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, witnessed a 30-point increase in participation in the Kashmir Valley. Democracy has found its real voice, its real resonance. The region is no longer a story of conflict; Every investment proposal in New Kashmir isn't just about capital, it's about trust being restored, faith being rewarded. The change is not imperceptible; it is perceptible. Perception has changed, ground reality is changing, hopes of the people are soaring," he stated.

The opportunity basket in Jammu and Kashmir is expanding and continues to balloon. There is no need now to leave the region, the call is to be the



architects of its new dawn! "I am happy to share with you that private investment proposals worth Rs. 60,000 crores were received," he said addressing the gathering at the 10th Convocation Ceremony of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi

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## J&K Police raids Bookshops, seize banned literature

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 15 (UNI) Police on Saturday conducted stringent checks across various bookshops in the police district of Handwara in north Kashmir and seized banned literature belonging to Jamaat-e-Islami. Police said in a well-coordinated and legally supervised operation, the checking was conducted as per the provisions of the law, with special emphasis on sensitive areas such as Kralgund, Villgam, Qalamabad, and Handwara town.

During the intensive search, several bookshops were inspected, and multiple copies of banned books were recovered and subsequently seized, police said. These books were found to be in violation of legal regulations, and strict action is being taken against those found in possession of such material.

"The operation was aimed at curbing the spread of unlawful content that could disturb public order", police said. Police teams carried out the operation in a meticulous and systematic manner to ensure compliance with the law.

"Bookshop owners were categorically warned against stocking, selling, or distributing banned literature. They were also sensitized about the legal implications of engaging in the circulation of such material and were

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## Our Youth are Competent Enough to Make India World's Largest Economy : LG Sinha

■ HT News Network

KATRA, FEBRUARY 15: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed the Convocation Ceremony of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU).

The Lieutenant Governor expressed gratitude to Hon'ble Vice-President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar for blessing the graduating students of SMVDU at University's 10th Convocation. Today's moment will remain etched in students' memories for a lifetime, he said.



Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor called upon the youth to carry forward the country's development and make it the largest economy of the world.

"The strength of our nation will be determined by the values, innovation and knowledge and I strongly believe the young men and women graduating in this Amrit Kaal will shape the destiny of our nation. Those stepping out today into the real world have a unique opportunity of nation building," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the advances in humanities, arts, science and technology have opened new

areas of opportunities and the knowledge and learning of the graduating students will help them achieve success.

"Today our youth are equipped with special knowledge and skills that can be properly utilised to transform rural areas. This mission calls for dedication and determination. Above all, our youth needs to be rooted in ancient culture and must have faith in their abilities and wisdom of our culture," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the skills and knowledge must con

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## J&K govt. terminates services of three more employees for 'terror links'

Omar Advocates Due Process, Mehbooba Decries Unchecked Sackings

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 15 (UNI) The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday terminated the services of three government employees including a policeman, for alleged terror links, officials said. They said the employees terminated included Firdous Ahmad Bhat, a police constable; Moham-

mad Ashraf Bhat a school teacher and Nisar Ahmad Khan an orderly in the Forest Department.

The trio were terminated under proviso (c) of sub-section of Article 311 of the Constitution of India. The Article empowers the government to dismiss employees without seeking an explanation or conducting an inquiry into their conduct.

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## IGP Kashmir stresses for integrity, fairness and accountability in all police actions

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 15 (UNI) Inspector General of Police Kashmir Range VK Birdi on Saturday stressed the importance of integrity, fairness and accountability in all police actions. He said this while chairing an orientation programme of probationary Deputy Superinten-



dents of Police of 2023 batch in Srinagar. The officers were also briefed upon the ethical standards and expectations of their behaviour. Birdi outlined the core values and mission of the J&K Police stressing the importance of integrity, fairness and accountability in all police actions. The officers were advised on the aspects of

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## Court Orders JKBOSE to Allow 22 Islamic Global School Students in Exams

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 15: In a significant relief for students of Islamic Global School, Padshahi Bagh, Srinagar, the Civil Judge (Senior Division), Srinagar, has directed the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) to allow 22 students of the school to appear in the upcoming Class 10 board examinations.

The order was issued in response to a petition filed by the school, represented by its manager Moied Manzoor, through Advocate Aquib Hussain Bhat, against the Union Territory of J&K and concerned education authorities. The petition sought a temporary injunction to ensure that the students, who had not been issued admit cards, were allowed to sit for their exams scheduled to commence on

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## NEP-2020 opens more avenues for innovation in universities: Sakina Itoo

■ HT News Network/KNO

New Delhi, February 15: Education Minister, Sakina Itoo on Saturday said that the implementation of New Education Policy (NEP-2020) has opened more avenues for innovation in the universities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the gathering at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Itoo



as per the news agency said that "Today, we did not come only to celebrate the convocation of the university but also the remarkable development of the institute which has itself established as a beacon of excellence in India."

She said that under the leadership of former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah, SMDU has grown naturally since its inauguration

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## Doctor Suspended for Extracting Healthy Tooth Instead of Infected One

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 15: Principal, Dental College Srinagar, Dr. Ajaz Shah, has suspended a doctor for extracting a healthy wisdom tooth instead of the infected one, following a shocking incident that left a patient in distress. Dr. Ajaz Shah told that a three-member inquiry committee has been constituted to investigate the matter. The committee, headed by a senior professor along with the Medical Superintendent and Administrative Officer, has been tasked with submitting its report within three days.

"Till the report comes, we have suspended the doctor in question," Dr. Shah stated.

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## Liquor Ban in J&K? Tanvir Sadiq Calls for Stakeholder Involvement

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 15: National Conference legislator Tanvir Sadiq has called for broader consultations before imposing a ban on liquor in Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the need to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Speaking to reporters, Sadiq highlighted that Jammu and Kashmir is a tourist-driven economy, and any blanket ban on liquor could have repercussions on the tourism

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## Ahead of Ramadan, preparations begin in Kashmir markets

■ HT News Network

Srinagar :-Ahead of the holy month of Ramadan, the shoppers have started placing pre-Ramadan orders in the Valley, keeping the markets abuzz once again.

As the holy month approaches, the demand for the essentials, especially the fasting items has surged across Srinagar and other parts of the valley with the traders struggling to keep up with the rising number of orders.

Pre-orders have already started being placed just thirteen days in advance.

As per the details obtained by the news agency— in the bustling markets of Koker



Bazar Srinagar, the commercial hub of Lal Chowk, the pre-booking of orders began thirteen days prior and is expected to increase in the coming days, especially within a week before Ramadan.

Shopkeepers are busy attending to a flood of calls from customers eager to secure their supplies for the holy month.

Amidst the crowd, Ajaz Ahmad, a shop owner in Koker Bazar, Lal Chowk, Srinagar, told that the sale of dates gains momentum during Ramadan compared to other months.

"The sale of dates at our shop happens year-round, and we sell almost all types of dates, but in the month of Ramadan, our sales touches

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# Deputy CM reviews development projects in Anantnag

## Calls for ensuring the benefits of welfare schemes percolate to grassroots level

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 15: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today directed the officers to ensure that the benefits of welfare and development schemes percolates to the grassroots level.

"The district is having a diverse topography and officers should ensure that the benefits of welfare initiatives and infrastructural development percolates to the grassroots level and the last habitable hamlets", emphasised the Deputy Chief Minister.

The Deputy Chief Minister was addressing the officers during a review meeting to assess the progress on developmental activities in Anantnag district.

The meeting was attended by MLA Dooru, Ghulam Ahmad Mir; MLA Kokernag, Zafar Ali Khatana; MLA Anantnag West, Abdul Majeed Bhat; MLA Bijbehara, Bashir Ahmad Shah

Veer; MLA Shangus-Anantnag East, Riyaz Ahmad Khan and MLA Pahalgam, Altaf Ahmad Wani besides District Development Commissioner, Syed Fakhruddin Hamid; Heads of Departments (HODs) and sectoral officers.

During the review of progress on various works, the Deputy Chief Minister was informed that the district administration has focussed on transforming the infrastructure, grievance redressal, heritage protection and priority based planning. He was apprised that as per standard practice, the district administration undertook quality analysis of grievances received in the district on JK Samadhan-Raabta to ensure that people's grievances are addressed in a timely and quality manner.

While reviewing the status of proposed projects of public importance such as Mini Secretariat, district level auditorium and flyovers for traffic management, the Deputy Chief Minister noticed that these



works have the potential to transform the district profile, ensuring ease of living for the people. The Deputy Chief Minister also reviewed the works being executed in the infrastructure sector through a comprehensive assessment of Public Works Department (PWD), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Jal Shakti, KPCL and others.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised the importance of maintaining high quality stan-

dards and adhering to project deadlines. He directed the officials to prioritise the pending projects and ensure early completion in all sectors. He instructed the officers to adhere to technical specifications and safety standards as well. The Deputy Chief Minister, while assessing the social sectors such as health, education, social welfare, ICDS, POSHAN, emphasised that deliverables under these developmental initiatives needed to be made

accessible to the beneficiaries to ensure effective implementation. In this regard, he issued specific directions with regard to functioning of hospitals, health care centres, Jan Aushadhi stores, Samagaram Shiksha, PM SHRI, National Social Assistance Programme and POSHAN Abhiyan, among others.

The Deputy Chief Minister assessed working of various departments and sectors including Labour, JKRLM, Rural

Development (MGNREGA), Fisheries, Agriculture, Dairying and others. He directed the officials to ensure that the enrolment under such schemes is done timely, as these sectors have potential to create employment opportunities for the youth.

With reference to the mining sector, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasised sustainable and judicious utilisation of mineral wealth of the district. He stated that the government has zero tolerance policy towards illegal mining.

Meanwhile, the Legislators highlighted the issues of public importance concerning their respective constituencies.

Among others, these included construction of approach roads in their areas, road connectivity in the Scheduled Tribes and remote habitations, upgradation of healthcare facilities including Sub District and Trauma hospitals, construction of Dak Bungalow in Dooru, drinking water and irrigation augmentation,

desilting of water canals, enhancement of Tourism activities in Pahalgam and Kokernag besides establishment of Industrial Training Institutes.

While highlighting the importance of elected representatives in ensuring speedy socio-economic transformation, the Deputy Chief Minister asked for considering the suggestions and feedback of the elected representatives while formulating development schemes so that these could reflect the local needs and demands. He assured the officers of government's full support in addressing challenges, if any.

The Deputy Chief Minister called for holding regular meetings with the elected representatives for effective monitoring and evaluation of all ongoing works to ensure transparency and accountability.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner presented a detailed overview of the developmental scenario of the District.

## CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

### DOCTOR

The incident came to light when 27-year-old patient Nadeem Ahmad from Srinagar was left in shock after realizing that the wrong tooth had been removed during his dental procedure.

KNT had reported the incident on Thursday, prompting swift action from the Dental College administration.

"The outcome of the inquiry will determine further action against the suspended doctor," the Principal said.

### KIREN RIJJU

government that was formed recently," he added, without elaborating on any potential roadmap for statehood restoration. Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has emphasized the remarkable development in Jammu and Kashmir under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, attributing this growth to the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Rijiju noted that the J&K has entered a new era of growth, with significant infrastructure projects completed and centrally sponsored schemes effectively implemented. He praised the efforts of the local administration in driving these initiatives.

Speaking about the Union Budget 2025-26, Rijiju described it as "pro-people," highlighting key measures such as raising the income threshold for the nil tax slab to ₹1.2 million per annum, reducing the middle class's tax burden.

He further mentioned a six-year mission to boost pulses production and a five-year plan to enhance cotton output, along with a ₹20,000 crore "Deep Tech Fund of Funds" to support innovation and startups.

### MUSLIM

with it, and they have privately conveyed their support to me," he said.

Rijiju further stated that his ministry has received representations from the Muslim community regarding the bill. He emphasized that the proposed amendments would enhance transparency in Waqf properties and ultimately benefit the community.

Hailing the Union Budget, the minister highlighted that it offers significant benefits, particularly for artisans and farmers.

He also expressed optimism about Kashmir's economic future, stating that the region is poised to become the most prosperous and sought-after tourist destination in India.

Responding to a question, Rijiju reiterated the Modi government's commitment to zero tolerance against corruption.

### DHANKAR

Dhankhar said, "In just two years, Jammu and Kashmir received investment proposals worth ₹65,000 crores, signaling strong economic interest in the region. For the first time since 2019, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has entered Jammu and Kashmir, with multiple international companies showing interest. The region is a confluence of confidence and capital," he stated.

"The aspirations of generations found wings when the constitutional walls of separation crumbled in 2019 with the historic abrogation of Article 370. To the young minds present, I would like to emphasize that Article 370 was a temporary provision. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar,

the architect of the Indian Constitution, refused to draft it. Sardar Patel, who integrated most princely states into the Indian Union, was unable to integrate Jammu & Kashmir. In 2019, a new journey began on this sacred land—one from isolation to integration," said Shri Dhankhar.

The aspirations of generations found wings when the constitutional walls of separation crumbled in 2019 with the historic abrogation of Article 370! In the sacred land of Mata Vaishno Devi, a new pilgrimage began: the journey from isolation to integration.

He further said, "In 2023, over 2 crore tourists visited Jammu and Kashmir, giving a tremendous boost to the local economy. What was once called heaven on earth is now a symbol of hope and prosperity," said the Vice-President.

The Vice-President further said, "A great son of the soil once voiced the demand for 'Ek Desh Mein Ek Nishan, Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan.' That dream has been accomplished. Where there was once disorder, we now witness real order and stability."

"Nationalism is our identity. It is our supreme duty to always prioritize national interest above everything else. No political or personal interest is greater than the interest of the nation," he urged.

Highlighting the importance of duties, the Vice President said, "Every individual has certain duties. Our culture teaches us what our duties are. We must discharge our civic duties diligently, and when we do so, the results will be remarkable. We must march ahead, fast-tracking our journey toward a developed Bharat. One significant step in this direction is the transformation from the Danda Vidhan to the Nyaya Vidhan—unshackling the colonial mindset."

"You are living in a confident and resilient India. Today, Bharat is being celebrated globally as a favorite destination for investment and opportunity. Never before in our history since independence has the voice of an Indian Prime Minister been so resonant with global leaders," he added.

"I first came to Jammu and Kashmir in early 80s, when I visited Gulmarg, Sonamarg and other places along with my family," he said adding, "the second visit was a very painful experience. I was elected to Parliament in 1989. I came to Srinagar as a Member of the Council of Ministers."

He emphasized that the transformation in Jammu and Kashmir is not just a regional phenomenon but a significant part of India's national renaissance.

"The winds of change have brought peace and progress. Let us be the architects of a new dawn for Jammu and Kashmir and for Bharat," he concluded.

Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of UT of J&K, Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of UT of J&K, Sakeena Masood, Minister of Education UT of J&K and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

### LG

tribute in improving the lives of people. To seize future opportunities in science and technology, we need to take a fresh look at our teaching-mentoring system because it will have a direct bearing on the journey of Viksit Bharat, the Lieutenant Governor further said.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the teaching community to focus on harnessing the capacities of our students and transform the educational institutions into the most potent

instrument to build a prosperous India.

It is the responsibility of our teachers and educational institutions to initiate innovative educational programmes and nurture curiosity, promote critical thinking, creativity, innovation. Teachers should share their own life experience to inspire students for Lifelong Learning Skills that will shape the future, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his best wishes for a productive and a bright future to all the graduating students. He also congratulated the girl students for outshining the boys in the medal tally, and also remained ahead in Certificate of Distinction and Infosys Foundation Prize.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University also conferred Honoris Causa degrees on writer & historian Padma Shri Pt Shiv Dutt Nirmohi, and former CEO National Health Authority Dr Ram Sewak Sharma.

Dr Sudesh Dhankhar, wife of Hon'ble Vice President; Sh Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister; Ms Sakina Itoo, Minister for Higher Education; Sh Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament; Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor SMVDU; Vice-Chancellors of various Universities; HoDs of different educational institutions, senior officials of Civil and Police administration, faculty members, students and their parents were present.

### IGP

professionalism, impartiality and respect for all regardless of race or ethnicity.

The officers were also briefed with regard to acquiring investigative skills, operational skills, criminal laws, use of IT, adherence to police rules and procedures and importance of documentation and reporting, which are crucial for legal and departmental accountability.

IGP Kashmir welcomed the probationers and acknowledged their commitment and honour of joining the police force.

The programme was attended by Range DIsG, JDP ZPHQ, SSP Srinagar, SSP PCR Kashmir, SO to IGP Kashmir, SP PC Srinagar and virtually by district SSSPs of Kashmir Zone.

During the inaugural session, DySP probationer Ishwar Dev briefed the officers regarding the batch strength, composition and training done so far.

Range DIsG also briefed the officers with regard to acquiring technical skills and soft skills which will help them grow professionally. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar/PCR Kashmir and other officers also briefed the participants with regard to building positive relationships with the public in their effort to prevent crime and solve critical problems and challenges arising during the course of their service. The district SSSPs were directed by the chair to take periodic assessment and feedback from the officers during their period of probation and take keen interest during their on-the-job training. The session concluded with the cumulative resolve by all the probationary officers to be responsible, dedicated and committed to serving and protecting the nation.

The orientation programme instilled a sense of pride and responsibility in the new officers, ensuring they are well equipped, trained and motivated to serve in J&K Police.

### GOVT

This is the second instance of such dismissals since Omar Abdullah assumed office as

Chief Minister. However, Abdullah's government has no role in these terminations as the law and order comes directly under Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

Over the past four years, more than 75 government employees in J&K have been dismissed under Article 311(2)(C), with the latest action reflecting the government's stringent stance on ensuring state security.

Reacting to the latest terminations, CM Abdullah said that every accused is innocent until anything is proven.

He said such steps are taken without hearing the dismissed employees.

"The law says that every person accused of any crime is considered innocent until proven guilty," Abdullah said.

Former Chief Minister and PDP President Mehbooba Mufti hit out at the government over the latest dismissals, saying the people had pinned hopes on the popular government expecting such actions will come to an end.

"Arbitrary & summary dismissals of government employees have become a daily occurrence since 2019. What is perhaps most surprising & puzzling is that it continues unabated despite an elected government in power that had promised to put an end to such practices once in office. People had pinned their hopes on the new government expecting at least some relief through vigorous advocacy of these issues with the LG," she said in a post on X.

Kashmiri separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq termed the dismissals as highly condemnable.

"The termination of three more state employees in such an authoritarian manner is highly condemnable. Do the rulers want to remove all Kashmiri's slowly and steadily from government services and render them jobless? It is the duty of the elected representatives to take up this issue urgently with the concerned as they have committed in their manifesto, and stop this harassment," Mirwaiz said in a post on X.

### SAKINA

with a motive to revive the higher education sectors that have been severely affected due to turmoil in the past.

"The establishment of this university and others like IUST, BGSU have ensured the higher education opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir and in addition a culture of innovation and research among the qualified youth," she said.

She also commended the university for securing 31st position in the architecture in 2024 NIRF ranking.

The education minister further said that the implementation of NEP-2020 has opened more avenues for innovation in the universities—(KNO)

### BAN

sector. "This is a tourist state, and we have to assess how such a ban would impact tourists. Many Arab countries also have regulated systems for alcohol," he noted.

He stressed that all concerned parties, including travel agents and tourism industry representatives, should be taken on board before any final decision is made. "Overall, we stand against liquor trade, but we must ensure that stakeholders, particularly those from the tourism sector, are consulted," he said.

Sadiq's remarks come at a time when two legislators including PDP's Fayaz Mir and NC's Ahsan Pardesi have submitted private member

bills seeking a ban on liquor in Jammu and Kashmir. The bills are likely to be introduced in the upcoming budget session.

### MARKETS

sky," he said. He added, "We are also introducing many new varieties of dates this year, and our bulk order bookings have already started."

Ajaz said that with approximately 13 days left for Ramadan, he has already started receiving bulk and regular orders.

As Ramadan draws closer, traders and shopkeepers anticipate further increase of demand in the coming days—

### COURT

February 17, 2025.

During the hearing, counsels as per the news agency Kashmir News Trust representing various defendants, including JKBOSE and the Directorate of School Education Kashmir, were present.

A large number of affected students, accompanied by their parents, also attended the court proceedings, expressing urgency over the matter.

The school's counsel argued that failure to grant relief would render the students ineligible for the examinations, defeating the purpose of the suit.

Supporting this argument, the counsel presented attested forms from the Principal of Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Natipora, confirming the students' eligibility.

The counsel for defendants including Commissioner Secretary to School Education Department, Chief Education Officer, Srinagar, and Joint Director, Directorate of School Education Kashmir, did not oppose the relief sought, stating that both the Chief Education Officer, Srinagar, and the Principal of Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Natipora, had recommended the registration renewal of these students. However, representatives of JKBOSE contended that the school had been engaged in irregular admissions, leading to previous penalties.

After hearing the arguments, the court observed that a prima facie case existed in favor of the plaintiffs. The court noted that delaying the matter could jeopardize the academic careers of the students.

Consequently, the court directed JKBOSE to accept the registration renewal and examination forms of the 22 students and permit them to appear for all subjects in the 2024-25 Class 10 examination.

The court further ruled that the order would be subject to objections from the defendants, who may seek its modification or revocation before the next hearing scheduled for February 28, 2025.

Notably, the dispute arose after Board of School Education reportedly refused to issue admit cards to 22 students of the Islamic Global School, citing irregularities in their admission process. The school management challenged the decision, arguing that the students fulfilled all necessary academic requirements and should not suffer due to administrative lapses.

With the court's directive, the students can now appear in the board exams while the case continues to be heard.

With the court's directive, the students can now appear in the board exams while the case continues to be heard.







## EDITORIAL

Give due respect  
to legislators since  
they represent  
public

The General Administration Department (GAD) last week issued an order asking the bureaucrats to give due regard and respect to the legislators as and when they visit them with respect to a particular issue. In the order it was mentioned that some complaints about the maltreatment of the public representatives has come to the fore and the same needs to be stopped at the earliest. The order was somewhat unique and unprecedented as in the past no such thing has happened.

It would be in place to mention here that the legislators are public representatives and they have been sent to the legislature for mitigation of the problems being faced by them. Since Jammu & Kashmir is a union territory at present there are many people who opine that the legislators have a limited role and the bureaucrats are ruling the roost. The issuance of the GAD order seems to be issued only after such apprehensions by the common masses.

Not long ago the speaker of legislative assembly and legislator from Charar-I-Sharief constituency, Abdul Rahim Rather had said that he is not aware about the amount that has to be paid to the legislators as their monthly salary. Last time when there was an assembly in place in Jammu & Kashmir it was not a union territory but a full-fledged state. As on date most of the people want that statehood should be restored to Jammu & Kashmir so that there is no more confusion.

There is a general perception that the importance of a legislator will be restored only after Jammu & Kashmir becomes a state yet again. In other words it can be said that common masses opine that public representatives would not be able to do much as long as Jammu & Kashmir is a union territory. It is the responsibility of the legislators to dispel this notion and make the people aware that they are there to solve their problems whatever be the title of Jammu & Kashmir.

Basic problems being faced by the people have to be solved by their respective legislators and on their part the public representatives need to go an extra mile in this regard. A legislator is no less than a messiah for the people of his or her constituency and as such the legislator has to be on the toes every time. This has to be understood by the legislators of Jammu & Kashmir so that they deliver to the best of their potential.

## The Indian Army unveiled the Kargil Kaleidoscope, The tribute to the region's culture and art, and is also a sustainable initiative

BY M S NAZKI

Someone asked me what is a kaleidoscope is an optical instrument with two or more reflecting surfaces (or mirrors) tilted to each other at an angle, so that one or more (parts of) objects on one end of these mirrors are shown as a symmetrical pattern when viewed from the other end, due to repeated reflection.

These reflectors are usually enclosed in a tube, often containing on one end a cell with loose, colored pieces of glass or other transparent (and/or opaque) materials to be reflected into the viewed pattern. Rotation of the cell causes motion of the materials, resulting in an ever-changing view being presented.

Now again the question was asked what is mural art about!

The word mural is a Spanish adjective that is used to refer to what is attached to a wall. The term mural later became a noun. In art, the word mural began to be used at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1906, Dr. Atl issued a manifesto calling for the development of a monumental public art movement in Mexico; he named it in Spanish pintura mural (English: wall painting).

In ancient Roman times, a mural crown was given to the fighter who was first to scale the wall of a besieged town. "Mural" comes from the Latin muralis, meaning "wall painting". This word is related to murus, meaning "wall".

The story which we got to write upon was, 'Kargil Kaleidoscope: Ladakh's Longest Roadside Artistic Mural Unveiled on Republic Day'!

Indeed a wonderful thing to happen

On Republic Day, the Indian Army unveiled Kargil Kaleidoscope transforming a 600m stretch of NH 1A into Ladakh's longest roadside mural—a stunning tribute to art, culture and sustainability!

Spearheaded by the Indian Army, with support from Team Stringmo, BRO, NHIDCL- National Highways & Infrastructure

Development Corporation and civil administration, the mural reused over 600 discarded coal tar barrels from Zaskar Valley. These recycled canvases now depict Kargil's rich culture, national pride and environmental themes.

-What else do we want?

-Kargil is a city in Ladakh! It is also the headquarters of the Kargil district. It is the second-largest town in Ladakh after Leh. Kargil is located 204 kilometres (127 mi) east of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, and 234 kilometres (145 mi) to the west of Leh. It is on the bank of the Suru River near its confluence with the Wakha Rong river, the latter providing the most accessible route to Leh

On January 26, 2025, the Indian Army unveiled the Kargil Kaleidoscope, a 600-meter-long roadside mural in Ladakh. The mural was painted on NH 1A by a group of local girls called Team Stringmo. The Kargil Kaleidoscope is a tribute to the region's culture and art, and is also a sustainable initiative.

How was the mural created?

The mural was painted using recycled CGI sheets.

The mural was created under the guidance of the Indian Army.

The mural was dedicated to the people of Kargil.

-What was the event like?

The mural was inaugurated by a senior Indian Army officer.

The officer praised the creativity of Team Stringmo.

Team Stringmo presented their paintings to the chief guest and other army officials.

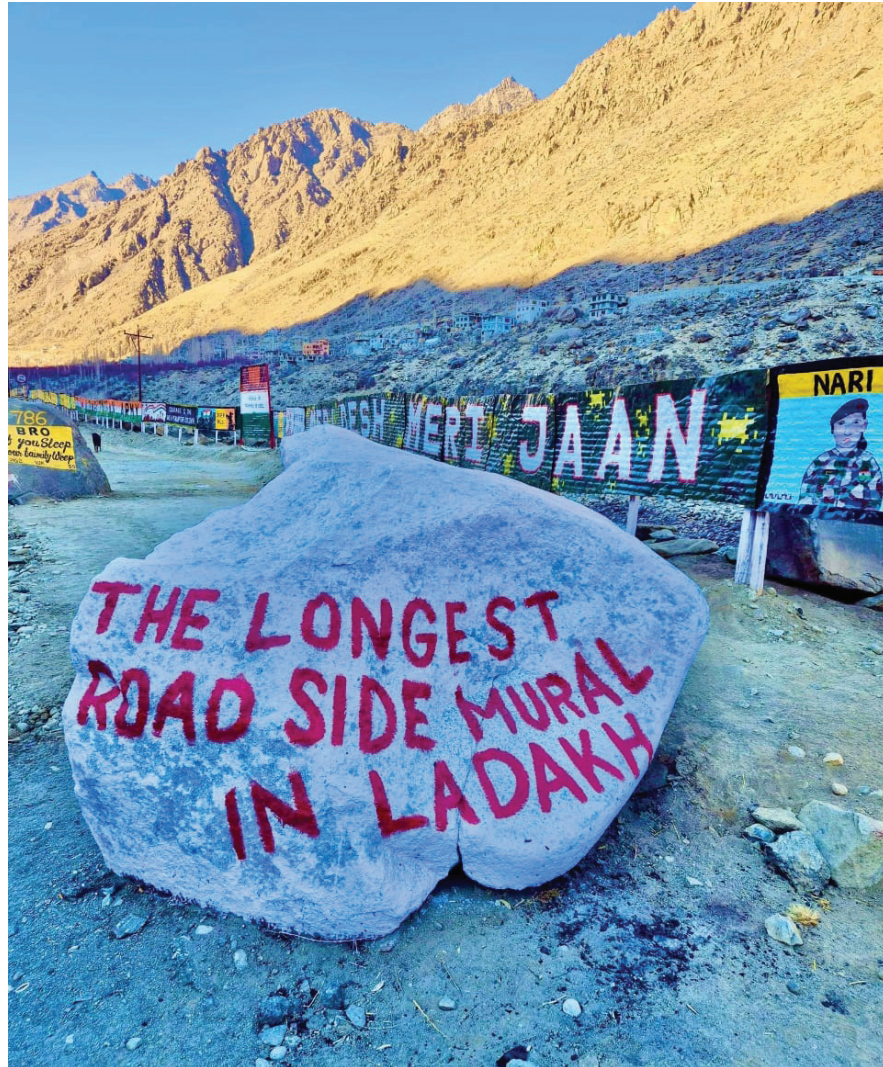
Team Stringmo expressed gratitude to the Indian Army for their support.

-Why was the mural created?

The mural was created to celebrate the rich local culture of Kargil.

26 Jan 2025 – Republic Day 2025 “Kargil Kaleidoscope: Ladakh's Longest Roadside Artistic Mural Unveiled on Republic Day” On Republic Day...

On Republic Day, the Indian Army unveiled the artistic initiative “Kargil Kaleidoscope”. Kargil, January 26, 2025: On



Republic Day, the Indian Army unveiled a one-of-a-kind artistic initiative titled “Kargil Kaleidoscope”, which features a stunning 0.6 km-long artistic canvas made from recycled CGI sheets along NH1A

Remember it is all about colors and designs, artistically created by the artists who are expert at it and they all happen to be from Kargil!

Arid Enchantments – The Road from Kargil to Leh!

Kargil was nice and laidback and the stay at the wooden cottage was a bliss after the rugged road from Srinagar. But a long road to Leh lay ahead.

Sleep was hard to come by but we managed 3-4 hours of it before getting ready for the road to Leh ahead.

After moving ahead towards Leh for 50 kms there is a landmark near the town of Mulbek which distinctly welcomes you to Ladakh-the Land of lamas. The cross over is complete with the twin Buddhist monasteries of Mulbek, standing high on hill tops. By the roadside stands the statue of

Chamba/Buddha, carved out on a huge rock face and surrounded by a small monastery at its feet. As per the description given there, this is the future Buddha or Buddha-yet-to-come. He will be known as the Buddha of friendship or Maitreya Buddha. The chanting of mantras in the monastery and the morning sun giving warmth to cold soaked souls....we were in the land of lamas indeed. A group of monks who were travelling to Leh from Mcleodganj (Himachal) informed us that the Dalai Lama would be in Leh in first week of July for the Kalachakra Festival (a Buddhist festival held in Ladakh that has Tantric roots). Unfortunately we would be out of Ladakh by 15th June. After having a satisfying breakfast near the monastery, we were off for the breathtaking Ladakh landscape ahead, all 260 kms of it.

The majestic Zaskar Range that separates Ladakh from rest of India rises before you. The name Ladakh means a “land of high passes” as it houses some of the highest moun-

tain passes in the world which were once used by traders and travelers from China, Mongolia, Central Asia and Middle East to gain access to Indian sub-continent. Ladakh is also the gateway to the far reaches of Himalayas called as Trans-Himalayan region. After massive political upheavals in Tibet in 1950s and further friction between Mao's Red Guards (members of the cultural revolution by the Communist Party) and the Tibetan Monasteries, many Tibetans fled their homeland for India, including the 14th Dalai Lama who still lives in exile in India. They found a home in the mountains of Ladakh and have thrived there because of their hardworking and simple nature. As per travelers who have been to Tibet, Ladakh is the last repository of Tibetan Buddhism and culture....and what Tibet has been losing over the years, Ladakh has stored them diligently.

As the road slowly climbs up the plateau, the 1st high pass in the land of lamas comes to be Namik La (12800 feet)...a place unlike anything you would

have seen. It's almost like standing on a roof and you can see the white range of mountains, looming on the horizon. As is typical of such passes, Buddhist prayer flags adorn the pass as it is believed that the wind high up will carry the prayers down to the valleys and beyond. And the wind is strong here. Many biker gangs zoomed through the pass as over recent years Ladakh has allured adventurous bikers all over the world. Though we did not have the heart to leave this vista, the road ahead was equally delirious and the landscape filled us with anticipation for things to come.

The Road from Kargil to Leh:

The land stretched into spectacular barrenness all around and you could see black serpentine roads spread on the brownish rocky surface...all the way leading upto Leh. After passing the loops in the Moonland, much of the late afternoon was spent climbing further up the Ladakh plateau and then suddenly we were on plain roads and we could see a vast stretch of road laid out on the desert plateau. The Zaskar range looms brilliantly on the horizon behind and the Ladakh range lies straight ahead and you get the hint of Leh somewhere down the straight highway. We were on the last lap on the Srinagar-Leh highway and it was late afternoon with the sun rays slanting on the vast Ladakhi landscape.

Nestled between huge copious mountains, Leh stands starkly isolated from the world outside. Military barracks line the entrance to the town which was once in history, a major thoroughfare in the Silk Route. The sun had set on the gorgeous white peaks adjacent to the city and the one feature that defines Leh stands above everything else in the city-The majestic Leh Palace.

But now this road has added to the glory of Kargil! It is an open theater of human manifestation! What humans create none else can and there are several in the Indian Army! It has all been due to the Fire and Fury Corps

## "U.S. - India Compact" Challenges and Opportunities



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

U.S. President Donald J. Trump Jr. welcomed Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Washington, DC, for an official working visit on February 13, 2025. President Trump and Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed the strength of the India-US partnership as leaders of independent and dynamic democracies that respect freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and pluralism. Mutual trust, shared interests, goodwill, and active civic participation serve as the foundation of this comprehensive global strategic partnership. President Trump and Prime Minister Modi intro-

duced a brand new program called the "U.S. India Compact," which stands for "Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerating Commerce, and Technology," which aims to revolutionize several critical areas of cooperation in the twenty-first century. The strategic and economic environment is constantly being reshaped by international alliances. In many areas, India's growing innovation and America's technological superiority complement each other. Bilateral trade topped \$118 billion, with India benefiting from a surplus of \$45 billion. Through progressive economic ties, this partnership reshapes international cooperation, improves security, and promotes mutual growth. Trade, defense, and technology have all grown between the United States and India.

Important agreements such as the Communications Com-

patibility and Security Agreement and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement, which guarantee close cooperation in technology transfer and defense logistics, have been signed by the US and India. The 2020 Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement improved situational awareness in the Indian Ocean region by providing India access to US geospatial intelligence for targeted military operations. Initiatives such as the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies have strengthened cooperation in critical technologies such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. India and Micron Technology worked together to build a \$2.75 billion semiconductor plant that will enhance supply chain resilience. As a significant importer of US hydrocarbons, India seeks to help switch to green energy sources. In terms of oil imports, the United States

ranked fifth with \$413.61 million in 2024. Resilient supply chains, especially for essential commodities, are a goal of both countries' efforts to reduce their dependence on China. India and the United States are part of the Quad nations. The main obstacle in trade talks between the US and India is the tariff dispute. India's imposition of high tariffs on US goods, especially in the agricultural and tech sectors, affects the trade balance and often disrupts talks.

The 150 percent tariff imposed by India on alcoholic beverages has drawn criticism from the US for restricting US exporters' access to markets. The generic drug industry in India favors a more balanced strategy to guarantee accessible medicine, while the US wants stronger intellectual property protection. The US Trade Representative placed India on its "priority watch list" due to concerns about intellectual prop-

erty protection. India's divergent positions on e-commerce regulations and proposed data localization laws are contrary to US interests. Concerns were raised by US corporations such as Google and Amazon about how India's Personal Data Protection Bill would restrict cross-border data flows. The \$45 billion trade deficit between the US and India prompted US pressure to increase market access and reduce tariffs. The United States sought to reduce the trade imbalance by requesting lower tariffs on medical devices such as knee implants and stents. India's phytosanitary regulations that restrict US agricultural products hinder the expansion of bilateral trade in the sector. As trade talks have not resolved the issue of animal feed containing blood meal, India has restricted US dairy imports.

Cooperation in the LNG and renewable energy sectors is

made possible by the US's position as a major producer and India's growing energy needs. For example, such partnerships will help India reach its goal of increasing the proportion of natural gas in the energy mix from the current 6 percent to 15 percent of the total primary energy mix. Co-production of defense hardware on beneficial terms can reduce India's dependence on other countries while strengthening strategic ties. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and General Electric signed a Memorandum of Understanding for joint manufacturing of fighter jet engines in India. Closer ties in critical technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and space exploration provide opportunities for collaborative innovation. India was accepted as a partner in the Artemis Accords for cooperative space exploration and lunar missions. India's efforts to increase

domestic production complement the US "China+1" policy, which promotes shared objectives in strong supply chains. By increasing production in India through the production-linked incentive scheme, Apple and Samsung reduced their dependence on Chinese factories. An agreement that is more comprehensive could be facilitated by a limited trade agreement that focuses on improving market access and settling tariff disputes.

India and the US agreed to reduce tariffs on several industrial and agricultural products, indicating the possibility of a comprehensive agreement. A strong India-US alliance can be the foundation of global stability by resolving trade imbalances.

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



## Let’s Celebrate This Exam Season

HILAL BUKHARI

This write-up is dedicated to all the students who have chosen hard work and perseverance over shortcuts, embracing the true path to success. These are the great minds who understand that dedication and effort shape their future. However, it is equally important for our exam warriors to take things in stride. Building excessive pressure and stress can be detrimental, especially for young, developing minds.

With board exams around the corner and the countdown already begun, elders take pride in seeing the younger generation immersed in preparation. Many students aspire to achieve top positions and distinctions. Those who burn the midnight oil with sincere effort are undoubtedly on the path to success.

However, students must learn to celebrate the exam season in a way that fosters better results. The intense pressure associated with exams can sometimes overwhelm young minds, leading to unnecessary stress. Board exams, in particular, tend to create heightened anxiety among students. This extreme pressure can negatively impact their mental well-being. Instead, students should focus on managing stress effectively and approach this period with confidence and resilience.

### Exams: A Means, Not an End

Examinations are an essential part of our education system, but they are merely a means to progress, not an ultimate goal. Their true purpose is to help students advance, not to hold them back. Exams should not feel like an ordeal but rather an opportunity for growth. Students should not view them as a fearful challenge but as a stepping stone toward greater achievements. If approached with the right mindset, exams can be a source of empowerment rather than anxiety.

### The Role of Parents and Teachers

Elders, including parents and teachers, play a crucial role in encourag-

ing students. They must teach children that no exam is the final exam of life. The difference between hard work and smart work is vital—students who know how to study efficiently can tackle any exam with ease. Additionally, in this digital era, students must learn to use technology wisely. While mobile phones and digital resources are helpful, excessive screen time can be counterproductive. Instead, printed books often prove more effective for focused learning.

### Conceptual Learning Over Rote Memorization

Students should prioritize conceptual clarity over rote memorization. Understanding concepts deeply leads to long-term retention, whereas mechanical memorization often results in forgotten information. True learning comes from grasping ideas and presenting them in one’s own words. Those who study with a strong foundation from the beginning have little to fear when exams arrive.

### Education: Beyond the Race for Marks

Education is not a mad race for grades and degrees. Its true purpose is to gain knowledge, understand new concepts, and cultivate excellence. When students focus on excellence, success follows naturally. Instead of searching for last-minute shortcuts, they should embrace a steady, well-structured approach to learning.

### A Positive Approach to Exams

Students must learn to enjoy the exam season with a positive and calm mindset. If you are well-prepared, there is nothing to fear. If you have doubts, trust your potential. And if you feel unprepared, embrace the experience and learn from it. As the saying goes: “Hope for the best but be prepared for the worst.” Even failures should not be feared—they are stepping stones to greater success. As someone wisely said, “If you try and fail, try again. Fail better.” Learning from mistakes builds resilience and a stronger foundation for future success.

MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI

Jammu & Kashmir is celebrated for its breathtaking beauty, lush valleys, and rich cultural heritage. However, hidden within the heart of Kathua’s Bani tehsil lies Sarthal, an unexplored paradise often overshadowed by the likes of Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg. Known as the “Mini Kashmir,” Sarthal boasts pristine meadows, snow-clad mountains, and an unparalleled natural charm. Yet, due to lack of infrastructural development and governmental negligence, this potential tourism powerhouse remains in obscurity.

At the suggestion of my Facebook friend Mudasir Ali, I delved into the beauty and challenges of Sarthal, realizing that its untapped potential, if harnessed properly, could transform it into a world-class tourist destination. This article highlights Sarthal’s natural splendor, cultural richness, and economic potential, while also urging government intervention to develop it into a thriving tourism hub.

### Sarthal: A Paradise Yet to Be Discovered

Situated about 50 kilometers from Baderwah, Sarthal is a haven for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and cultural enthusiasts. Unlike the crowded tourist spots of Kashmir, it offers visitors a tranquil escape—a place where one can truly connect with nature.

### Summer Bliss

As the snow melts, Sarthal transforms into a lush green paradise. The cool, pleasant climate provides a perfect retreat for those escaping the scorching summer heat of the plains. The meadows, gushing streams, and serene landscapes make it an ideal spot for family vacations, photography, and relaxation.

### Winter Wonderland

During winters, Sarthal is draped in a pristine



white blanket of snow, making it a dream destination for winter tourism. Snow-covered forests, frozen streams, and breathtaking views create an enchanting spectacle. However, due to lack of proper infrastructure, skiing, snowboarding, and other winter activities remain underdeveloped.

### A Region Rich in Culture & Traditions

Beyond its scenic landscapes, Sarthal is a cultural treasure trove, deeply rooted in Dogra, Pahari, and Kashmiri heritage. Traditional Attire: Men wear Pherans, woolen coats, and turbans, while women adorn ghagras and embroidered Kashmiri Pherans, often carrying Kangris.

Authentic Cuisine: The flavors of Rajma Chawal, Kasrod ki Sabzi, Sarson ka Saag, Kalari Cheese, and Noon Chai reflect the rich culinary traditions of Jammu & Kashmir.

Music & Dance: Folk performances like Dogri &

Pahari songs, Kud & Gaddi dance add vibrancy to the region.

Despite its rich culture, Sarthal lacks dedicated platforms for cultural tourism, festivals, and heritage preservation. This cultural wealth, if properly promoted, could attract tourists from across the country and beyond.

### The Challenges Holding Sarthal Back

1. Poor Infrastructure & Road Connectivity  
The Baderwah-Basohli-Pathankot highway often remains closed for months, cutting Sarthal off from major tourist circuits.

The long-awaited Chatergala Tunnel remains a dream despite its potential to boost tourism and reduce travel time. Unstable electricity and mobile networks make it difficult for tourists to stay for extended periods.

### 2. Lack of Tourist Facilities

No Hotels & Restaurants: The absence of gov-

ernment-backed accommodations forces visitors to limit their stay.

No Public Amenities: Lack of public toilets, resting areas, and passenger shelters makes travel inconvenient.

No Recreational Spaces: The region lacks parks, benches, and designated entertainment zones.

### 3. Environmental Neglect & Lack of Cleanliness

The absence of waste disposal systems leads to littering, threatening the ecological balance.

Urgent implementation of a garbage management plan is required.

### 4. Missed Adventure & Eco-Tourism Opportunities

Despite its ideal geography for adventure tourism, Sarthal has no provisions for: Trekking & Camping, Skiing & Snowboarding, Paragliding & Rock Climbing

Developing adventure tourism could attract thrill-seekers and sig-

nificantly boost the local economy.

### 5. The Underappreciated Annual Wrestling Festival (Chinj Mela)

Sarthal hosts the historic Chinj Mela, a wrestling competition attracting participants from across North India. However, lack of government sponsorship and promotional efforts has kept this grand event from achieving its full potential. With proper funding, this could become an international sporting attraction.

### A Call for Immediate Government Action

Sarthal’s tourism potential is undeniable, yet it remains ignored. If the government takes the right steps, this hidden gem can become an economic catalyst, generating employment and reducing hardships for local communities.

### Key Demands for Development:

1. Completion of Chat-

tergala Tunnel - To improve accessibility and economic opportunities.

2. Year-Round Road Connectivity - Keeping Baderwah, Basohli, and Pathankot connected.

3. Establishment of Government Hotels & Guest-houses - To encourage longer stays.

4. Installation of Basic Amenities - Mobile networks, electricity, toilets, parks, and garbage disposal facilities.

5. Development of Adventure & Eco-Tourism - Introducing trekking, skiing, and adventure sports hubs.

6. Promotion of Cultural Festivals (Chinj Mela) - Elevating its status to an international level.

7. Sarthal Gondola Project - A cable car attraction similar to Gulmarg’s to boost tourism.

### Appeal to Authorities

We urge the following officials to take immediate action:

Dr. Jitendra Singh (Union Minister, J&K)

Manoj Sinha (Lt. Governor, J&K)

Omar Abdullah (Former CM, J&K)

Director, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism

Sarthal’s Future Lies in Our Hands

Sarthal is a sleeping giant in Jammu & Kashmir’s tourism industry. If given proper attention, investment, and policy support, it can emerge as a tourism hub, a cultural hotspot, and a beacon of economic prosperity.

It is time for authorities to break the cycle of negligence and unlock Sarthal’s true potential. This is not just about boosting tourism—it is about revitalizing the economy, creating jobs, and ensuring a better future for the people of the region.

Let us stand together and ensure that Sarthal receives the recognition it deserves. Let’s turn it into the “Crown Jewel of Kathua”—not just a forgotten paradise but a globally recognized tourist destination.

**Note: Mohammad Arfat Wani, a passionate writer, social activist, and medical student, hails from Kuchmulla Tral. His email address is wania6817@gmail.com)**

## Why is the courtyard shrinking every day?



PRIYANKA SAURABH

Today there is a dire need for everyone to think and understand about family values and family as an institution and also to find out the reasons for the decline of these values and correct them. For this, the leaders of society, poets/writers/singers/heroes/heroines/teachers, and other social workers as well as politicians should write and think about the implications of the decline of the family as an institution. There should be discussions on open forums as to what are the reasons for this decline. And how can we recover from this decline? The young poet Dr. Satyavan Saurabh has rightly written this situation in his own

words-

“Families are breaking up, moods are changing.

Expressing love to strangers, separation from loved ones.

All the stoves are falling apart, the courtyard is shrinking every day.

This is what the new century is making, Saurabh what kind of discovery.”

Family, in Indian society, is an institution in itself and has been a distinctive symbol of India’s collective culture since ancient times. Along with moral strength, it provides the individual with the flexibility to rely on his family members, and relatives in difficult times without any hesitation. It prevents the use of unethical means to deal with difficulties. Family helps people to develop a feminine approach towards worldly problems. But in the present times, we are facing the bitter experience of the decline of family as an institution.

There is discord in every

home, there is no love left now.

Division and strife have drawn walls in every courtyard.

There is a conflict between love and blessings.

The garden of desires is filled with the bitterness of jealousy.”

Today, as a symbol of degradation, the family is breaking up, marital relations are breaking up, there is an increase in enmity between brothers, and legal and social disputes in all kinds of relationships. Today, individualism has taken over collectivism. In the present situation, a promiscuous attitude is the main reason for the disintegration of families. Higher-income and less responsibility to other family members have divided the extended families. Today, most of the social functions, such as child rearing, education, vocational training, care of the elderly, etc., have been taken over by outside agencies, such as creches, media, nursery schools, hospitals, vocational training centers, hospice institutions, as contrac-

tors, which were once the responsibility of the elders of the family.

Elders don’t talk, younger ones have the rights.

Leaving the feet and touching the knees, what kind of tradition is this?

Where is the bond of love now, where is the essence of union?

The family members themselves have become the enemies, they attack secretly.”

The collapse of the institution of family has disrupted our emotional relationships. The unifying bond in a family is mutual affection and blood ties. A family is a closed unit that holds us together because of emotional ties. Moral degradation is a major factor in the breakdown of families as they fail to inculcate in children a sense of self-respect and respect for others. The blind race for position and money has today wiped out socio-economic support and assistance. Families have become limited to providing financial and material support necessary for

the growth and development of their members, especially infants and children. Every day we hear and see the collapse of the incapable and weak family system to take care of the elderly and other dependents when they need utmost care and love.

In the future the decline of the family as an institution will bring structural changes in society. On the positive side, Indian society may see a decrease in population growth and this may be the effect of the decline of the family as an institution. However, there is a need to understand the structural changes of the family from joint family to nuclear family, in some cases, it cannot be called the decline of the family system. Where the family system changes from a joint family to a nuclear family for any positive change. Anyway, Indian society also inhabits the unique feature of fusion and fragmentation of family in which even if some members of the family live sepa-

ately in different places, still live as a family.

If the family is saved then harmony is maintained.

Everyone is together in sorrow, and everyone is fond of happiness.

If someone third person attacks, Saurabh whenever.

Stay with the family and leave all disputes behind.”

The family is a very fluid social institution and is in a process of constant change. Modernity is witnessing the emergence of same-sex couples (LGBT relationships), cohabitation or live-in relationships, single-parent households, a large proportion of divorcees living alone or with their children. Such families do not necessarily function as traditional kinship groups and may not prove to be good institutions for socialization. In this materialistic age, competition for each other’s comforts has scorched the relationships of the mind.

The high walls of houses

changing from kutchha to pucca have made conversation disappear. Every courtyard turning into stone is witnessing the orgy of discord. Mutual differences have created deep divisions in the minds. In the absence of good teachings from the elders, people have started making decisions by ignoring small relationships in the house. As a result, today the family members themselves are bent on cutting their own people. On one hand, the neighbors are enjoying happiness while we have to bear the sorrows alone. We have to think and understand that if we want to live a meaningful life, then we have to understand the importance of family and stand with the family leaving aside the mutual disputes, only then we will be saved and this society be worth living.

**Research Scholar in Political Science Poetess, Independent journalist and columnist.**







# MLA Anantnag West Advocate Ab Majeed Larmi Flags off Watershed Management Campaign Van at Block Vessu

■ HT News Network

Anantnag, February 15: In a major step towards water conservation and sustainable management of water resources, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Anantnag West Advocate Ab Majeed Larmi flagged off the Watershed Management Campaign Van today at Block Vessu of Anantnag.

The initiative aims to raise awareness about responsible water usage and conservation practices among communities across various districts.

The event was attended by Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP)

Anantnag, who also serves as the Project Manager for the Watershed Management Development Program; Block Development Officer (BDO) Block Vessu, along with a large gathering of farmers, civil society members and local residents.

The Watershed Management Campaign Van, which began its journey from Jammu reached Vessu Anantnag today and will now proceed to Srinagar and later to Baramulla.

Throughout its route the van will engage with communities to emphasize the importance of water conservation, soil erosion prevention and sustainable agricultural practices.



Speaking on the occasion, MLA highlighted the urgent need for collective efforts in water conservation, calling for active collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and the farming community. He stressed that protecting water resources is a shared responsibility that demands participation from all sections of society.

ACP Anantnag elaborated on the objectives of the Watershed Management Development Program, emphasizing its role in addressing water scarcity and promoting sustainable agricultural techniques. He urged the community to take responsibility of

conservation efforts to ensure a secure water future for generations to come.

BDO Vessu reiterated the significance of awareness campaigns in educating the masses about the benefits of water conservation. He encouraged local farmers and residents to adopt water-efficient practices and actively contribute to the campaign's success.

During the event, students of various educational institutions presented skits and other cultural programmes displaying messages of watershed management and water preservation.

## Awareness programme on New Criminal Laws organized in Ganderbal

■ HT News Network



GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 15: The District Administration Ganderbal, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, and District Police Ganderbal organized a mass awareness programme today to educate the public about India's newly enacted criminal laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023.

The event, held at the Auditorium Hall of Govt. Boys Hr. Secondary School Ganderbal, was aimed at informing stakeholders about the key provisions and implications of these laws. The programme was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, as the Chief Guest. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Gulzar Ahmad, Dy.SP HQ Aftab Bukhari, and other district officers were also present. A large gathering, including officers, officials, lumberdars, chowkidars, and members of the general public from various villages across District Ganderbal, participated in the awareness session.

Speaking at the event, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the key reforms introduced in the new laws, emphasizing that they prioritize justice over punishment and are designed to ensure speedy justice, strengthen judicial and court management systems, and enhance accessibility to justice for all. He stressed the importance of public awareness in facilitating a smooth transition to the new legal framework.

ADC provided a comprehensive overview of the three new criminal laws, elaborating on their role in protecting citizens and ensuring transparent and expeditious justice. Dy.SP delivered an insightful presentation, explaining each law in detail. He outlined the significant changes in the existing legal framework and raised awareness about their implications. The awareness programme was part of a broader initiative by the District Administration Ganderbal to familiarize the public with legal reforms and empower them with the knowledge to navigate the new judicial landscape effectively.

## Distt Admin Kupwara conducts awareness programmes on New Criminal Laws

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 15: In a significant move to promote legal awareness, District Administration Kupwara in collaboration with the Home Department launched a comprehensive awareness campaign across the Kupwara district to inform and educate the public about the newly introduced legislations including Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. The main event was held at Town Hall Kupwara and was attended by Dy. SP Hq Kupwara, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Assistant Commissioner Development, Tehsildar Kupwara and other Officers from line departments, besides, large number of stakeholders including Numberdars, Chowkidars, Anganwari Workers/Helpers, Heads of Schools, SHGs and general public were present in awareness programme. On the occasion, resource person and officers from administration highlighted the impor-



tance and provisions of the new legislations. The officials emphasized the importance of these laws in enhancing public safety, improving the justice delivery system, and adapting to evolving technological advancements.

Similarly, awareness programme on the three newly enacted criminal laws was organized at Town Hall, Handwara and was attended by senior law enforcement officials and administrative officers including Dy. SP DAR, Ab Majid, SHO Handwara, and Naib Tehsildars.

During the session, speakers emphasized the significance of the new laws in strengthening the justice system and ensuring a more effective legal process.

## DC Baramulla Reviews JK Samadhan Grievance Redressal System

■ HT News Network

Baramulla, February 15: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today reviewed the implementation and progress of the JK Samadhan grievance redressal portal in the district.

The review focused on ensuring swift and efficient resolution of public grievances, reinforcing the administration's commitment to transparent and accountable governance.

During the review, the DC assessed the status of grievances registered under the JK Samadhan portal and directed all concerned departments to expedite their resolution. He emphasized the need for a citizen-centric approach, urging officials to ensure that complaints



are addressed within stipulated timelines to enhance public trust in governance.

The discussions covered key areas, including clearing pending grievances, strengthening departmental accountability, and increasing public awareness about the platform.

DC instructed departments to facilitate easy access to the JK Samadhan

portal, particularly for residents in remote areas, ensuring that all citizens can effectively register and track their complaints.

To improve the efficiency of the system, the DC directed the designation of nodal officers within departments for close monitoring of grievance redressal. He also stressed the importance of regular reviews to assess the per-

formance of each department in resolving issues raised by the public.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr Zahoor Ahmad Raina, General Manager District Industry Center Baramulla, Assistant Commissioner Development, SDMs of Pattan, Gulmarg Superintending Engineer R&B, Chief Education Officer and other senior officers from various other Departments were present during the meeting. The discussions covered key areas, including clearing pending grievances, strengthening departmental accountability, and increasing public awareness about the platform. The discussions covered key areas, including clearing pending grievances, strengthening departmental accountability.

## Celebration Of The Birthday Of The Hujjat-ul-Qa'im-al -Muntazir-al -Mehdi(a.s) At Imam Bargah Barji Harwan

■ HT News Network

Srinagar/15: February On the occasion of the birthday of Hujjat-ul -Qa'im-al -Muntzir-al -Mehdi "a.s" a ceremony was held at Imam Bargah Barji Harwan Srinagar in which a large number of students from local religious schools participated. Aaga Syed Arshad Hussain al -Mosavi al -Safvi attended the ceremony as a chief guest while renowned poet Ahlulbat Syed Abbas Jowhar attended the ceremony as a guest of honor. Syed Abbas Jowhar read the tales in the glory of Hazrat Imam Mehdi "a.s" while Aga Syed Arshad Hussein al -Mosavi al -Safvi highlighted the appearance of Imam "a.s" and maintaining a unity and unity of the Muslim Ummah. He emphasized to set up mutual brother-



erhood. Earlier a rally was also organized from the Masjid Rasool "s.a.w." to Imam Bargah Barji. At the end of the ceremony local seminaries, Imam Jamaat Syed Zafar, renowned writer and actor Gulfam Barji and young volunteer Sohail Qasim were awarded the credentials. While the Shia Association unit Barji Harwan Hazrat

Shah Muslim 'a.s' Khadmatgar Committee Karwan-i-Mihdi "a.s" The organizers of were given a specific certificate for their outstanding performance. It should be noted that on this spirit the ceremony was organized by Hazrat Shah Muslim 'a.s' Khadmatgar Committee Carwan-i-Mehdi "a.s" Barji Harwan Srinagar.

## AMGDC Kilam Organizes Cleanliness Drive.



■ FAROOQ RATHER.

Kulgam: 15, February, The AMDGC Kilam organized cleanliness drive in the college campus with the help of NSS Volunteers. A statement issued to CNS stated that faculty of college both Teaching and Non-teaching along with NSS volunteers carried a cleanliness drive in the college campus to make campus free from all sort

of waste which may have adverse impact on health of students. The garbage collected was dumped at proper dumping site in the college. The students were instructed as to how to 'dispose off' waste. The principal of the college Dr. Shabir Ahmad Padder underlined the importance of such cleanliness drive. He urged participants not to restrict cleanliness to campus only but always volunteer yourselves to keep your surroundings clean.

## DC Doda flags off "Watan ko Jano" Youth Exchange Programme

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh flagged off the "Watan ko Jano" Youth Exchange Programme from here today.

The programme, organized by the District Social Welfare Officer, aims to provide students with an opportunity to experience and appreciate the rich social and cultural diversity of India. A group of enthusiastic students from Parisha and Palaash Doda are participating in this initiative. The programme is designed to enhance their understanding of the nation's varied cultural heritage, foster unity, and instill a sense of pride in the country's diversity. The DC Doda encouraged

the students to make the most of this opportunity by embracing the diverse experiences they will encounter during the programme. He emphasized the significance of such initiatives in broadening horizons and nurturing young minds.

During the flag-off ceremony, the DC Doda also interacted with the students from Parisha and Palaash, inspiring them to be ambassadors of their region and to share their unique cultural heritage with others.

The District Social Welfare Office has meticulously planned the programme to ensure that the students gain valuable insights and exposure, thereby contributing to their overall personal and social development. Among those present



during the event were Assistant Commissioner Revenue Doda Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, Chief

Planning Officer Doda Manesh Kumar, District Social Welfare Officer Doda Tariq Qazi, and other staffs of Parisha and Palaash. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh flagged off the "Watan ko Jano" Youth Exchange Programme from here today.

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## DC reviews achievements of Fisheries Department in Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 15: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal today reviewed the achievements of the Fisheries department here at a meeting held in the conference hall of DC Office Complex.

The meeting discussed fishery department schemes under the Holistic Agriculture Development Plan (HADP) and the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

At the outset, AD Fisheries Bharat Bushan presented an overview of scheme-wise progress, highlighting key initiatives such as the construction of low-cost houses for fishermen, the establishment of trout raceways, and the provision of three-wheeler autos to support fishermen's livelihoods during lean periods. The discussion also included the issuance of fishing licenses.

The Deputy Commissioner empha-



sized the need to enhance expenditure and increase the number of licenses issued to fishermen. The AD informed that the department's successful achievement in constructing low-cost houses and trout raceways in the district. Furthermore, Deputy Commissioner urged the AD Fisheries to be actively aware the public about the available schemes, ensuring

that fishermen can fully benefit from the initiatives aimed at improving their livelihoods and nutrition. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to enhance expenditure and increase the number of licenses issued to fishermen. The AD informed that the department's successful achievement in constructing low-cost houses and trout raceways in the district.

## Former Corporator discusses water issues with Jal Shakti Minister

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 15: A delegation led by former Corporator, Rama, from Resham Ghar Colony today called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, at Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

She raised various issues related to water supply in ward number 13 of the area and called for augmentation of water supply in the area. She said that the supply hours are insufficient to meet the demand and requested for an increase in the duration of water supply hours.

Keeping in mind the increasing population of the area, Rama also requested for installation of a tube well in the area as a sustainable measure to



ease the water woes of the area.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to the issues raised by the delegation and said that the government is abreast with the problems faced by the people and corrective measures are being taken up wherever required.

The Minister issued on the spot directions to Chief Engineer PHE for ensuring prompt redressal of the issues raised by the former Corporator.

Likewise, other delegations and individuals also met the Minister and raised various developmental issues of their localities.

The Minister assured the delegations that all their grievances and demands would be taken up for prompt redressal. He said the present government is committed to ensure equitable development of Jammu and Kashmir with special emphasis on neglected and unreachable parts.

## JMC Commissioner inspects Surya Putri Tawi Arti Ghat

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 15: Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), Dr Devansh Yadav today conducted a comprehensive tour of the Surya Putri Tawi Arti Ghat to assess the area and plan for its development so that it could be developed as religious and tourist attraction.

During the visit, the Commissioner directed the concerned to formulate a detailed plan of development activities to be carried out by JMC on priority.

Among others, President of Tawi Bachao Andolan, Chander Mohan Sharma, Joint Commissioner (Revenue & Enforcement) Rakesh Gupta, and Health Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma accompanied the Commissioner during the tour.

The inspection focused on improving the ghat's infrastructure, cleanliness, and overall beautification to enhance its cultural and environmental significance.

Highlighting the importance of the Tawi River and its conservation, Dr. Yadav emphasized that all necessary steps would



be taken to develop the Arti Ghat as a prominent religious and tourist attraction. He further instructed the officials to ensure the timely execution of development works while maintaining environmental sustainability.

JMC remains committed to the beautification and preservation of public spaces in Jammu, he said and added that this initiative aligns with its broader efforts to enhance urban infrastructure and promote eco-friendly development.

## District Administration Kishtwar set to launch Panchayat-Level IEC Campaign against Drug Abuse

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 15: To combat drug abuse at the grassroots level, the District Administration Kishtwar, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner (DC), Rajesh Kumar Shavan is set to launch a Panchayat-Level Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign.

A crucial meeting chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kishtwar, Pawan Kotwal was held today to strategize and finalize the campaign's implementation plan.

The initiative, which will be conducted under the direct supervision of DC, will witness his active participation in upcoming events, reinforcing the administration's commitment to eradicating drug abuse from the district.

The meeting was attended by



ASP Kishtwar, ACD Kishtwar, all Tehsildars, all BDOs, all CDPOs, all BMOs, and others via virtual mode.

The discussions focused on the execution of an action plan to curb drug abuse. The campaign is set to commence on 17th February 2025 across all blocks of the district.

The plan aims to ensure effective awareness at the grassroots level, with its implementation to be rep-

licated in panchayats every Monday.

The ADC directed all concerned departments to collaborate at the Panchayat level, actively engage local influencers, religious leaders, and youth organizations in awareness drives, and utilize digital platforms for broader outreach.

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to address-

ing drug abuse through a multi-sectoral approach, aiming for a drug-free and healthier future for the youth of Kishtwar.

The meeting was attended by POICDS Rishi Kumar Sharma, ACR Kishtwar Idrees Lone, DIO Kishtwar Dr. Kuldeep Kumar, TSWO Kishtwar Rajesh Sharma, along with other concerned officers and officials who joined via virtual mode.

## DC announces development of Kuriya as model Village Launches massive Plantation Drive

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today launched a Massive Plantation Drive here at Village Kuriya.

The initiative aims to achieve 100% plantation under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

During the visit, the DC announced to develop Village Kuriya as a Model Village. He further emphasized the importance of making the village 100% Nasha Mukta (Drug-Free) and pledged unwavering support for sustainable agricultural and horticultural advancements under HADP.



He also encouraged women and

young girls to avail economic empowerment schemes such as

mushroom farming, establishment of self employment ventures.

Addressing the gathering, he highlighted the awareness initiatives regarding three newly introduced laws that will soon be discussed in the Panchayat, urging residents to understand their benefits.

Later, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Kishtwar, Phulail Singh, provided detailed insights into various RDD schemes, urging villagers to take full advantage of them.

Other dignitaries present during the visit included Chief Horticulture Officer (CHO) Kishtwar, Sajid Mustafa, along with several other district officers and officials.

## Doda Administration gears up for Shivratri celebrations

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 15: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Sudarshan Kumar on Saturday convened a meeting to discuss preparations for the upcoming Shivratri festival.

The ADC directed the PHE Department to take measures to ensure uninterrupted water supply during the festival. The Power Development Department was instructed to ensure stable electricity supply, minimizing disruptions. The Municipality was tasked with maintaining cleanliness and sanitation in markets and public areas. Furthermore, the Assistant Director of Food was assigned to conduct market inspections ensuring compliance with safety standards. The ADC also directed the officers to ensure



adequate facilities for the public during the Shobha Yatra procession. The ADC Doda was accompanied by Superintendent of Police (SP), Doda, ACD Doda, XEN PHE Doda, Tehsildar Doda, AD Food Doda, concerned officer/officials and other concerned officers/officials were attended meeting Virtually.

## Farmers' capacity building workshop held at Fruit Plant Nursery, Chakroi

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 15: The Department of Horticulture Jammu organized one day workshop on "Capacity Building of Farmers & Extension Workers" at Mega Fruit Plant Nursery, Chakroi under the chairmanship of Director Horticulture Jammu C. L Sharma.

The Director Horticulture Jammu felicitated Deepak Singha, Founder President, Stone Fruit Association, Himachal Pradesh and acquainted him about the various activities being carried out at MFPN Chakroi. Singha hailed such a big public sector nursery with latest technologies & infrastructure established in northern India.

Addressing the large gather-

ing of farmers, including women, C. L. Sharma elaborated in detail the Central and UT schemes of the department especially Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) launched to enhance the farmers' income. He urged the farming community to adopt modern and scientific agricultural techniques, which would significantly enhance production of horticulture and allied sectors. He advised the farmers to frequently interact with the field functionaries of the department regarding the new technologies and to seek solutions for the problems being faced by them in the fields.

The event saw a large number of participants, with a notable presence of unemployed youth, from Jammu, Samba & Kathua district underscoring the com-



munity's keen interest in agricultural development.

Speaking on the occasion, Deepak Singha, an expert in Stone Fruit from Himachal Pradesh laid stress on area expansion with good planting

material free from any pest diseases. He was of the opinion that this area has good climatic conditions, suitable for cultivation of Stone fruits.

Dr. Rakesh Sharma, Prof. from SKUAST-J also delivered a lec-

ture to the gathering on the occasion.

Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu Rakesh Kotwal appealed the farmers to come forward, associate with the horticulture department and avail the ben-

efits on different components viz: Bore Well, water harvesting tanks, Drip irrigation, Custom Hiring Centres, vermicompost units, protected cultivation, tools & implements etc. under various schemes for upliftment of their socio-economic status.

Later, fruit plants of different crops viz: Guava, Citrus, Bael, Aonlawere also distributed among the farmers who participated in the programme.

Among others, Vijay Rana, I/c MFPN, Pawan Thakur, DTO, Ajay Gupta, HIPO Jammu, Sandeep Gupta, DLSMS, Arvind Verma, DLSMS, Puvinder Gupta, HDO, Pardeep Dingra, HDO and other officers/officials were also present in the programme. Addressing the large gathering of farmers, including women, C. L. Sharma elaborated in detail the Central and UT schemes of

the department especially Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) launched to enhance the farmers' income. He urged the farming community to adopt modern and scientific agricultural techniques, which would significantly enhance production of horticulture and allied sectors. He advised the farmers to frequently interact with the field functionaries of the department regarding the new technologies and to seek solutions for the problems being faced by them in the fields.

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# DC reviews progress on implementation of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH FEBRUARY 15: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Poonch, Vikas Kundal today chaired a meeting here in the Meeting Hall of DC Office complex to assess the implementation & progress of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in the district.

At the outset, the Executive Engineer of Electric division JPDCL Poonch briefed a detailed PowerPoint presentation outlining the scheme's objectives and benefits. It was informed that 572 applications have been received on the portal out of which 310 applications were accepted, 29 units have been installed and 48 units installations are under progress till date. It was further informed that as per J&K Bank out



of 73 applicants, 10 have successfully availed bank loans for the scheme

The DC directed the vendors to start the installation of Solar Rooftop Systems

(SRTs) for sanctioned applicants in a paced manner.

Emphasizing the importance of public awareness and participation, the DC

directed the Executive Engineer, JPDCL, to actively engage stakeholders and sensitize them about the scheme's benefits and incentives.

The initiative aims to facilitate consumers in availing the benefits of the government's solar energy scheme, promoting clean and sustainable energy solutions in the region. DC Vikas Kundal stressed the need for collaborative efforts to ensure maximum outreach and successful implementation of the scheme across the district.

The meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer JPDCL, Executive Engineer JPDCL, LDM J&K Banks, Cluster Heads J&K Banks, AEEs, and other concerned officials.

## Five-Day Training Programme on Women's Safety Concludes at SKPA Udhampur

■ HT News Network

Srinagar February 15: The five-day training programme on Women's Safety for police investigators, sponsored by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) New Delhi, concluded today at the Sher-I-Kashmir Police Academy (SKPA), Udhampur.

The programme, which commenced on 10th February 2025, was attended by 23 police officers of various ranks, from Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) to Inspector, including three female officers.

The training aimed to enhance investigative skills and familiarize officers with the latest legal provisions, particularly those under the Information Technology (IT) Act. The sessions were conducted by Dr. Kavita Suri (University of Jammu), Dr. Vikas Vaibhav (AIIMS Jammu), Riaz Ahmed (Senior Prosecuting Officer, SKPA), Supriya Chouhan (Advocate, High Court of Jammu), Meena Kumari (One Stop Centre, Udhampur), and senior police officers from SKPA, including Inspectors Sandeep Mahajan, Anil Raina, Mehmood Ahmed, Paramjeet Singh, Kuldeep Krishan, and PSI Rakesh Kumar (Cyber Police Station, Jammu).

The valedictory function was presided over by Rajinder Kumar Gupta, IPS, SSP SKPA, who served as the Chief Guest. In his address, Shri Gupta emphasized the importance of sensitivity and professionalism in handling women-related cases. He urged investigators to adhere to established guidelines, ensuring thorough and empathetic case handling. The primary objective of the training, he noted, was to strengthen investigative capabilities and foster a victim-centric approach among police officers. The programme was coordinated by Inspector Vikas Manhas, with ASI Zareena Malik assisting in its smooth execution.

## Director Sericulture J&K Inaugurates Mulberry Plantation Drive in Anantnag, Reviews Developmental Projects

■ HT News Network

Anantnag, February 15: Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, IAS, Director Sericulture J&K, today visited District Anantnag and inaugurated a plantation drive by planting a mulberry sapling, marking the commencement of the mulberry plantation season across the Kashmir Division. The initiative is aimed at enhancing the availability of quality mulberry foliage, a crucial factor in boosting the sericulture sector.

During his visit, the Director inspected various development projects undertaken by the department and took stock of the ongoing works. He issued on-the-spot instructions to the District Sericulture Officer, Anantnag, emphasizing that all components and works should be completed within a week's time. He stressed the need for strict adherence to timelines to ensure smooth execution of departmental programs.

Addressing officers and officials present on the occasion, Mr. Bhat underscored the importance of proactive and concerted efforts in accomplishing extensive mulberry plantation drives, strengthening silkworm seed production, and enhancing silk cocoon output during the ensuing rearing season. He urged the field functionaries to redouble their efforts in mobilizing farmers and stakeholders to actively participate in sericulture activities for sustainable growth of the sector.

The Director also reiterated the government's commitment to providing necessary support to silkworm rearers and ensuring that all developmental initiatives of the department are effectively implemented on the ground. He further directed the concerned officers to identify potential areas for expanding mulberry plantations and make full use of available resources to maximize production.

The visit concluded with a review meeting where the progress of various ongoing projects was assessed, and strategies were discussed to further streamline operations in the field. The officers assured the Director of their full commitment to achieving the set targets within the stipulated time frame.

The Director Sericulture J&K was accompanied by the District Sericulture Officer, Anantnag/ Kulgam and other officers/ field functionaries of the department.

## IIAS-DARPG India International Conference 2025 concludes

■ HT News Network

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15: The IIAS-DARPG India International Conference 2025, convened in New Delhi, concluded here today with senior policymakers, administrators and experts from 55 countries discussing the future of governance. Inaugurated by Union Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh, the prestigious event focused on innovative strategies to redefine public administration and last-mile service delivery under the theme "Next-Generation Administrative Reforms: Reaching the Last Mile."

Jammu and Kashmir was represented by Secretary ARI & Trainings, Shabnam Shah Kamili; Secretary Technical ARI & Trainings, Dr. Abdul Kabir Dar and Tasaduq Hussain Mir, Special Secretary, ARI & Trainings Department. The conference served as a vital platform for knowledge exchange, addressing critical governance priorities such as empowering citizens by strengthening last-mile service delivery for more inclusive and accessible governance, leveraging technology through artificial intelligence, digital tools and automation. With over 350 research papers presented, the mega event facilitated in-depth discussions on administrative modernisation, policy resilience and best practices, fostering global collaboration among governance leaders. Delegates from various regions spread across the globe actively participated in the five day event, contributing towards discussions on governance innovation. Reflecting on the conference's impact, Dr. Abdul Kabir Dar highlighted the significance of integrating digital advancements and global best practices into governance frameworks. "This forum has provided invaluable insights into global best practices in administration explaining how technology and innovation can drive administrative efficiency.

## Int'l Year of Cooperatives Mega Awareness Camp organized at Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 15: As part of the celebrations for the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, the Department of Cooperatives successfully hosted a Mega Awareness Camp here at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI).

The initiative aimed to educate ITI faculty and students on the formation, registration, and operational mechanism of Service Societies/Cooperatives, fostering self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and cooperative development among the youth.

The camp was inaugurated with a keynote address by Assistant Registrar, Cooperative Societies (ARCS), Amit Sharma.

He provided an in-depth overview of the Cooperative Department, detailing the importance of cooperatives in economic empowerment, the procedural steps for registration, and the pivotal roles of cooperative societies across various sectors. His engaging presentation demystified cooperative operations, making the concept accessible to young aspirants.

Highlighting the scope of cooperatives in skill-based trades, he emphasized the potential in fields



such as plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, welding, cutting, and tailoring—areas directly relevant to ITI students. He elaborated on how forming service-based cooperative societies can generate employment, enhance skill application, and promote financial independence. Additionally, students were provided with comprehensive insights into various government schemes and initiatives that support entrepreneurial endeavors in these trades.

The session witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who actively engaged in discussions and displayed a keen interest in exploring cooperative-based career paths. Faculty members played a crucial role

in facilitating the event, ensuring its objectives were effectively conveyed and achieved. The Camp was organized under the able guidance of Deputy Registrar Cooperative Kishtwar Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal.

The camp was graced by the presence of key officials, including Sanjay Singh (Assistant Registrar) and other concerned staff. Their insights and expertise further enriched the discussions, offering valuable guidance on the operational and financial support available within the cooperative framework. The event concluded on an encouraging note, with many students expressing a strong interest in establishing their own cooperative societies.

## Rajouri Administration, Police Department organize Awareness Program on New Criminal Laws

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 15: The District Administration Rajouri, in collaboration with the Police Department, organized a daylong awareness program today at the Conference Hall of the PWD Dak Bungalow to educate the public about the three newly enacted criminal laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA). These laws, which came into effect on July 1, 2024, replace the colonial-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and



Indian Evidence Act (IEA).

The program aimed to generate awareness among the masses regarding these transformative laws and their role in modernizing the criminal justice system.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, emphasized the need for public awareness

about these legal reforms, highlighting their significance in ensuring justice and transparency. He encouraged participants, especially students, to read and understand these laws and help spread awareness in society. DIG Rajouri-Poonch, Tejinder Singh, underscored the importance of technology-driven

reforms in the new laws. He pointed out key provisions, such as the requirement for Investigating Officers (IOs) to visit crime scenes and upload findings to a central server, mandatory videography of statements, and the introduction of community service as a punishment for first-time offenders in cases of petty offenses. DySP Satish Sharma also shared his insights on the new legal framework, elaborating on its victim-centric approach and enhanced provisions for evidence collection.

Key highlights of the new laws discussed during the session included Strengthening the legal standing.

## Judicial Academy organises training prog on "Hardware & Software maintenance"

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 15 : Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Tashi Rabstan, guidance of Chairperson, Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the J&K Judicial Academy organised one day training programme on "Hardware & Software maintenance, Data Replication, Data monitoring, VCequipment, LAN connections" (ECT\_10\_2024 and



ECT\_11\_2024) for the technical staff, NIC coordinators, District System Administrator and System Officers of Jammu Province at J&K Judicial Academy, Janipur, Jammu.

In the first technical session, Jagdish Chhailkar, Scientist F, e-Courts Division NIC Pune, joined the

session virtually. He explained the introduction to concept of CIS 4.0 and improvements in comparison to CIS 3.2. He discussed that CIS 4.0 is a giant move under the initiative of e-committee to make the Indian Judiciary more transparent and litigant friendly. He also discussed

the data center VMs, transfer of physical data centers into digital data centers (i.e., virtual) using a cloud software platform, enabling companies to remotely access information and applications.

The Resource Person explained the replication methodology which helps in creating and maintaining multiple copies of the same data to help ensure data availability, reliability and resilience. He also gave a hand on demonstration of various concepts.

The second technical session of the day was conducted by Anoop Sharma, Registrar Computer (IT), High Court of J&K.





# EAM Jaishankar meets Ukrainian FM, German Def Min, Bavarian leader in Munich

## AGENCIES

MUNICH/NEW DELHI, FEB 15

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is in Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference, met the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, the German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, and the Bavarian Minister-President Markus Soeder on the sidelines.

In a post on X, the EAM spoke about his meeting with the Ukrainian FM Sybiha.

"Good to meet FM @andrii\_sybiha of Ukraine on sidelines of #MSC2025 today.

"Discussed ongoing efforts towards resolution of the Ukraine conflict.

"Also spoke about further advancement of our



bilateral cooperation."

The Ukrainian FM Andrii Sybiha in a post said:

"I thank @DrSJaishankar for our meaningful meeting.

"We are interested in developing relations with India and advancing cooperation in trade, technology, agriculture, security, and other areas.

"We also rely on India's

strong global voice to bring a just and lasting peace closer."

The EAM, on his meeting with the Bavarian leader said:

"Delighted to meet Minister - President @Markus\_Soeder of Bavaria again in Munich today.

"Discussed our economic and technology cooperation. Exchanged views about the interna-

tional situation.

"Look forward to welcoming him to India."

On his meeting with the German Defence Minister, he posted:

"Pleased to meet Defence Minister Boris Pistorius of Germany.

"Our talk revolved around bilateral cooperation and the Ukraine development."

The EAM also participated in discussions in the Munich Security Conference.

"Participated in the @AnantaAspen Session at MSC 2025. Theme was 'Coming of Age: Evaluating Rising India's Security Challenges'

"Shared India's thinking on global engagement, regional strategy and key bilateral partnerships."

# PM Modi to inaugurate Bharat Tex 2025 in Delhi on Sunday

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Bharat Tex 2025 at Bharat Mandapam here on Sunday.

PMO in a statement said Bharat Tex 2025, a mega global event, brings together the entire textile value chain from raw materials to finished products including accessories under one single roof.

Bharat Tex platform is the textile industry's largest and most comprehensive event comprising a



mega expo spread across two venues and showcasing the entire textile ecosystem.

"It will also feature a Global scale conference featuring over 70 confer-

ence sessions, Roundtables, Panel Discussions, and master classes, the statement said.

It will include the exhibition that shall feature Special Innovation and

Start up Pavilions.

Bharat Tex 2025 is expected to attract policy-makers and global CEOs, over 5000 Exhibitors, 6000 international buyers from over 120 countries.

Over 25 Leading Global textile bodies and associations from across the world, among others will also participate.

It will also include hackathons based Startup Pitch Fest and innovation fests, Tech tanks and design challenges providing funding opportunities for startups through leading investors.

# Ten killed in collision between bus and SUV in Prayagraj

## AGENCIES

PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 15

Ten people were killed when an SUV collided head-on with a bus in the Meja area of Yamuna Nagar of Prayagraj here in Uttar Pradesh, a police officer said here on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Yamuna Nagar) Vivek Chandra Yadav said that the incident took place late on Friday night when devotees from Korba in Chhattisgarh were going to take bath in Prayagraj



Maha Kumbh in the SUV.

"On the national highway, the SUV collided head-on with a bus going towards Prayagraj," he said.

He said that all 10 people travelling in the SUV died in this accident. "The people travelling in the bus have suffered minor injuries. There were

devotees in the bus going from Prayagraj as well," he said.

He said that further details are awaited.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognisance of the road accident in Prayagraj district and expressed condolences to the bereaved families.

He has directed the officials to immediately reach the spot and expedite the relief work and directed the district administration officials to provide proper treatment to the injured.

# Security Forces arrest 10 militants in crackdown on extortion, crime

## AGENCIES

IMPHAL, FEB 15

Manipur Police and security forces nabbed ten militants involved in extortion and other criminal activities across Manipur's Imphal East and Thoubal districts, and recovered large numbers of arms and ammunition in separate operations, police said here on Saturday.

Manipur Police arrested four active members of KCP (PWG) from Khabeiso 7 MR Gate Imphal East.



In another incident, Security Forces arrested four active members of KCP (Noyon) from the

Heirol Pt-II Chingdompok area under Heirol-PS, Thoubal District.

In another operation,

Manipur Police arrested an active member of UNLF (Pambei) from Nungoi Awang Leikai, near Tera Makhong under Lamlai-PS, Imphal East District. In yet another operation, a cadre of PREPAK was nabbed from Luwangsangbam, Imphal East District.

Police said in an operation at Hiyanglam, Kakching district, a single-barrel gun, a modified sniper rifle, a pistol, a hand grenade, four IEDs weighing about 4 kg and other ammunition were recovered.

# India, Sri Lanka discuss cooperation in securing critical minerals

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 15

Union Minister of State (MoS) for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey and Sri Lanka's Industry and Entrepreneurship Development Minister Sunil Handunnett on Saturday discussed bilateral cooperation in mineral exploration and mining, particularly in securing critical minerals essential for economic and industrial growth.

"A key focus was placed on Sri Lanka's vast graphite and beach sand mineral resources, which hold immense potential in supporting the global shift towards clean energy, advanced battery technologies, and high-tech industries," an official statement said. During the meeting, both leaders acknowl-



edged the importance of strengthening collaboration in mineral exploration and mining opportunities for Indian companies in Sri Lanka.

MoS Dubey emphasized during the meeting that India's National Critical Mineral Mission is aimed at securing a steady supply of essential raw materials like lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt, and copper to meet the country's ambitious renewable energy target.

As per the statement, Dubey also stated that India is actively working towards granting mining rights for critical minerals, forging international partnerships, and encouraging Indian companies to acquire mineral assets globally.

"Both sides engaged in in-depth discussions on exploration opportunities, technological collaboration, and investment prospects in these

sectors. The possibility of mineral exploration on a Government-to-Government (G2G) basis was also discussed, with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) expressing its interest in conducting mineral assessments in Sri Lanka.

Additionally, Sri Lanka requested India to encourage Indian companies to participate in the exploration and development of its beach sand and graphite resources," the statement said.

India and Sri Lanka are in the process of finalising a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on "Cooperation in the Field of Geology and Mineral Resources" to provide a strong framework for deepening collaboration in capacity building, mining exploration, and advanced mineral processing.

## AGENCIES

AGARTALA, FEB 15

Tripura Legislative Assembly Speaker and senior BJP leader Biswabandhu Sen tendered an apology for his remark against former Chief Minister and veteran communist leader Manik Sarkar and Leader of opposition, Jitendra Chaudhury.

Addressing a BJP rally on Feb 12 in his constituency North Tripura's Dharmanagar Sen described Sarkar as 'cheater No 1 and Chaudhury, also State Secretary of CPI-M as cheater No 2', which earned a sharp criticism in the political circle. Sen was report-



edly put under pressure in his constituency and the party following adverse reactions across the state.

Sen is known for losing comments and derogatory remarks, even from the Speaker's chair. Just after the assembly elections in

2023, in a rally at Dharma Nagar, he called for mass beating of government employees for dereliction of duty and for raising demands for higher pay and allowances at frequent intervals. Besides Television bites, Sen wrote in a

Facebook post, "At a party rally in Dharmanagar, I used derogatory words against former CM Manik Sarkar and LoP Jitendra Chaudhury. I apologize for those remarks; they were unintended."

Reacting to the development, Jitendra Chaudhury said, "As the Speaker of the assembly, we have high regard for him because CPI-M leaders maintain discipline set by the party and continue to honour him. I do not know why he made such a remark. People of the state will judge who is the cheater. Maybe he lost mental balance."

# Tripura all set to establish Aqua Park boosting fish production

## AGENCIES

AGARTALA, FEB 15

Tripura government decided to establish an integrated aqua park with Rs 100 crore investment in Unokoti district to bridge the existing annual gap of fish demand and supply of around 32 MT, Minister of Fisheries Sudhangshu Das said here on Saturday while addressing the annual fish festival here.

"Since Tripura lacks coastal areas or deep-water bodies, artificial aquaculture infrastructure is inevitable for increasing fish production, and a natural abandoned water body in the Dolugaoan area of Kailashahar has been projected to make an aqua park, which will also open a huge employment opportunity," Das stated.

The state had submitted a Rs 100 Cr proposal to the central government, which has already been sanctioned, and the ministry has disbursed the first installment of Rs 43 Cr. The aqua park is expected to produce 2.5 MT of fish annually, reducing the state's dependence on fish imports from West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Bangladesh.

Highlighting the state's focus on integrated fish farming, Das emphasised



that fisheries and animal resources would provide logistical, technical, and financial support to farmers. The agriculture and allied sectors have been a key contributor to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and played a crucial role in stabilising India's economy during the COVID19 pandemic.

Tripura, where 98% of the population consumes fish, has an annual production of around 85,000

MT, while the demand stands at 1.17 lakh MT, creating a deficit of 32,000 MT. To address this, the government has undertaken various measures under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), which follows a 90:10 funding model between the Centre and the state. Under PMMSY, the state is actively digging new water bodies while providing free fingerlings, fish feed, and scientific training in pisciculture. Additionally, the Mukhyamantri Matsya Vikash Yojana (MMVY) allocated Rs 160 Cr in the last state budget to boost fish production.

The government is also reviving old ponds and water bodies, offering one-time assistance, free fingerlings, feed, and lime to sustain fish farming.

# Kharge appoints Bhupesh Baghel as Punjab general secretary

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 14

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday appointed former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as general secretary of Punjab and Syed Naseer Hussain of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.



According to a statement issued by party general secretary KC Venugopal these appointments have been made with immediate effect.

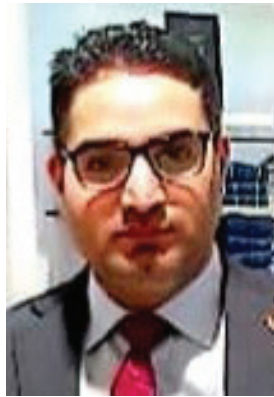
Besides general secretaries, Kharge also appointed in-charges for several states and Union Territories.

Senior Congress leader Rajani Patil has been made in-charge of Himachal

Pradesh and Chandigarh; BK Hariprasad for Haryana; Harish Chaudhary for Madhya Pradesh; Girish Chodankar for Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; Ajay Kumar Lallu for Odisha; K Raju for Jharkhand; Meenakshi Natarajan for Telangana; Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka for Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim and Nagaland; and Krishna Allavaruru for Bihar.



# Kashmiri medico honored with IDF Fellowship award



Kashmir-based medico and noted columnist Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo has been honored with the prestigious International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Fellowship award.

The IDF Fellowship is a distinguished honor that acknowledges Dr. Itoo's contributions to the field of diabetes care, education and advocacy at global level. As a Fellow, Dr. Itoo demonstrates his



leadership and advocacy in promoting awareness and education about diabetes, and supporting policies that improve diabetes care.

The title of Fellow of International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow) is an honorary title and fellows may be called upon to participate in the activi-

ties of the Federation, from conferences and research to education and advocacy.

Dr Itoo will be presented the Fellowship Honour and Award during the IDF World Diabetes Congress 2025 in April in Bangkok.

Dr. Itoo is a highly accomplished medical professional with a strong

educational background and prestigious certifications.

In addition to his academic credentials, Dr. Itoo is a member of several prestigious organizations, including the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI) and the American College of Physicians (ACP).

# Study shows antidepressants can fight infections, sepsis

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

While antidepressants are commonly used to treat mental health disorders, new research showed their potential to prevent serious infections and life-threatening sepsis.

Scientists at the Salk Institute showed that antidepressants can regulate the immune system and defend against infectious disease. The findings, published in the journal Science Advances, may lead to a new generation of life-saving treatments and enhance global preparedness for future pandemics.

The team found that the antidepressant Prozac -- also known as fluoxetine -- can protect tissues and organs while killing bacteria or virus.

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"It's essentially playing offense and defense, which is ideal and especially exciting to see in a drug that we already know



is safe to use in humans," said Professor Janelle Ayres, from Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

In the study, the researchers studied mice with bacterial infections and separated them into two categories: one pretreated with fluoxetine and the other not.

They found that the mice pretreated with fluoxetine were protected from sepsis, multi-organ damage, and death. In further tests, the number of bacteria was measured

in each mouse population eight hours after infection. Treatment with fluoxetine led to fewer bacteria, signifying a less severe infection.

The findings demonstrated that fluoxetine had antimicrobial properties, which allowed it to limit bacterial growth. Next, the researchers measured the levels of different inflammatory molecules in each group.

They saw more anti-inflammatory IL-10 in their pretreated populations

and deduced that IL-10 prevented sepsis-induced hypertriglyceridemia -- a condition in which the blood contains too many fatty triglycerides.

This enabled the heart to maintain the proper metabolic state, protecting the mice from infection-induced morbidity and mortality.

The team found that fluoxetine can kill pathogens and also alleviate infection-induced damage to the body.

# US FDA-approved diabetes drug shows promise against heart attacks, strokes: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

A team of researchers, led by one of Indian origin, has found that a drug recently approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat type 2 diabetes can also reduce heart attacks and stroke.

The international clinical trial involving more than 10,000 participants showed that the drug -- Sotagliflozin which is also approved to treat kidney disease -- can additionally also reduce cardiovascular risk among these patients.

Sotagliflozin is a sodium-glucose cotransporter (SGLT) inhibitor. It blocks the function of two proteins, known as SGLT1 and SGLT2, which move glucose and sodium across cell membranes and help control blood sugar levels.



Other SGLT2 inhibitors do not as significantly block SGLT1.

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"These results demonstrate a new mechanism of action -- combined blockade with sotagliflozin of the SGLT1 receptors (found in the kidney, gut, heart, and brain) and SGLT2 receptors (found in the kidney) -- to reduce heart attack and stroke risk," said Deepak L. Bhatt, Director of Mount Sinai Fuster Heart Hospital and Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, US.

"The benefits seen here are distinct from those seen with the other very popular SGLT2 inhibitors in widespread clinical use for diabetes, heart failure, and kidney disease," Bhatt said.

The randomised, multicenter trial included 10,584 patients with chronic kidney disease, type 2 diabetes, and additional cardiovascular risk factors; and analysed the ability of sotagliflozin to reduce the risks of life-threatening cardiovascular outcomes. The participants were followed for an average of 16 months.

The results, published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology, showed that people in the sotagliflozin group had a 23 per cent reduction in the rate of heart attacks, strokes, and deaths from such cardiovascular causes compared with the placebo group.

Bhatt said that sotagliflozin was approved to reduce the risk of deaths from cardiovascular causes, hospitalisations for heart failure, and urgent heart failure visits for patients with either heart failure or type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and other cardiovascular risk factors.

"The new data show that it additionally reduces the risk of heart attacks and strokes, and we could see more widespread use as a result."

# H5N1 bird flu silently spread from animals to some humans: US CDC

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

H5N1 bird flu has silently spread from animals to some humans who treat animals, according to a study, by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that suggests bird flu cases may be undercounted.

The study showed that veterinarians didn't have any symptoms, and thus did not seek medical care, unlike the infected poultry workers. The findings, come as the US is battling bird flu, and reported about 68 human bird flu infections last year.

The new study is more evidence that the number "is likely a significant undercount", said Dr. Gregory Gray, an infectious disease researcher at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

"This means that people are being infected, likely due to their occupational



exposures, and not developing signs of illness and therefore not seeking medical care," Gray added.

The researchers said tracking medical clinics that report bird flu cases may not be enough to fully understand bird flu transmission.

For the study, the team examined blood tests of 150 vets from 46 states in the US. While none of them suffered red eyes or other symptoms common

with bird flu, the tests revealed about 3 or 2 per cent of the vets had antibodies of H5N1 infection.

Although the three worked with dairy cattle, as well as other animals, none were infected. One reported working with a flock of infected poultry. Previous studies suggest some dairy farmworkers experienced symptoms but were never properly diagnosed.

Being small-scale stud-

ies, they could not give a proper estimate of undiagnosed human infections.

But these can translate to hundreds or thousands of infections, Gray said. Currently, there is nothing to be alarmed about, but changes or mutations in the virus can potentially make people very sick, or boost the spread of the H5N1 virus, said Jacqueline Nolting, an Ohio State University researcher.

# Monkeypox: Karnataka govt declares free treatment for all

AGENCIES BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has declared free treatment for all persons affected with the monkeypox disease.

Earlier, the free treatment facility was only for the Below Poverty Line (BPL) cardholders.

The monkeypox or Monkey fever is also known as Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD).

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State Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said: "Our government is making every effort to control KFD, which is spreading extensively in the Malenadu (hilly) region. Treatment for those affected by the disease is being provided free of cost, and this benefit has now been extended to APL (Above Poverty Line) families as well."

"Members of APL families affected by KFD in the state will receive free



treatment at hospitals registered under the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust. This initiative will benefit hundreds of families," he stated.

"Our government has taken a decisive step against monkey fever and has held discussions with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Following clinical trials, the KFD vaccine is expected to be available by 2026. Our government is committed

to safeguarding the health of the people of the state," he emphasised.

The districts adjacent to the Western Ghats are severely affected by the disease.

As per the statistics, since 2003 more than 59 persons have succumbed to the disease.

"The patients need to get immediate treatment, failing which, they face the threat of multiple organ failure and death. However,

er, if treated at the initial stages, the disease is not fatal. The decision is taken to help the lower middle and middle classes," Minister Rao said.

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao had earlier met with the Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Rajiv Bahl in New Delhi to discuss the KFD vaccine.

Minister Rao had stated that human trials for the vaccine were set for April 2025.

He said the first phase of trials for the KFD vaccine has shown promising results, and the second phase is set to begin soon. Human trials are scheduled for April 2025, and the vaccine is expected to be available for public use by 2026.

During the meeting, Minister Gundu Rao emphasised the importance of ICMR's support in speeding up this process.

# Is Desi Ghee Ideal for High-Temperature Cooking? The Answer Might Surprise You

Desi ghee has been an essential part of Indian cuisine for centuries. It is valued not just for its rich, milky aroma but also for the way it enhances even the simplest meals. Whether slathered over freshly made roti, drizzled over dal, or used to prepare traditional sweets, its role in Indian kitchens is undeniable. Beyond flavour, ghee is widely used for everyday cooking. Many rely on it for frying, sauteing, and even deep-frying their favourite foods. But is desi ghee really suitable for high-temperature cooking? Does it offer the same benefits when heated? Here are the experts' answers.

How Desi Ghee Benefits Your Body

Ghee is a staple in Indian households and offers several health benefits. Here are some of them:

1. Aids DigestionIf you experience digestion issues like constipation, ghee may help. It is one



of the most easily digestible fats used in cooking and can naturally balance the body's heat element.2. Supports ImmunityGhee has antimicrobial and antiviral properties that help strengthen immunity. It is also rich in fat-soluble vitamins, which contribute to its health benefits.3. Good for Heart HealthAccording to nutritionist Rupali Datta, ghee is a safer option for heart health than refined oil. When consumed in moderation, it serves as a good source of saturated fats.4. Aids Weight ManagementStruggling to lose weight? Ghee can help. It contains short-chain fatty acids that may assist in reducing

stubborn fat and boosting metabolism.5. Provides EnergyA spoonful of ghee can enhance energy levels. Meals rich in ghee can also help you stay full and satisfied for longer.

Photo: Canvals

Desi Ghee Ideal For High-Temperature Cooking?Not quite. According to nutritionist Shalini Sudhakar, ghee must be used correctly in cooking to retain its benefits. Ghee has higher levels of cholesterol and saturated fats than many cooking oils. When exposed to high heat, its cholesterol oxidises, forming oxysterols-compounds that are not beneficial for heart health and may contribute to cardiovascular

diseases. How Should You Consume Ghee? While ghee is a valuable source of dietary fat and has been consumed traditionally for centuries, experts recommend adding it to dishes after cooking to maximise its health benefits. Avoid using it for high-temperature cooking.

Should You Use Ghee for All Your Cooking? Not entirely. According to nutritionist Amita Gadre, ghee has several benefits, but relying solely on it is not ideal. Oils like peanut oil, olive oil, and safflower oil offer distinct fatty acid compositions and nutrients that ghee alone does not provide. Ghee is high in saturated fats (SFA), while other oils contain monounsaturated (MUFA) and polyunsaturated (PUFA) fats, which are essential for a balanced diet. Experts suggest rotating your cooking oils each month to maintain overall health and fill nutritional gaps.





# ICC announces Broadcast details of ICC Champions Trophy 2025

## AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 15

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the details of its broadcast arrangements for the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025, where eight teams will put it all on the line across 19 days in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

The event where every match counts kicks off on 19 February as hosts Pakistan face New Zealand, with the Final taking place on March 9 where the victorious team will claim the iconic white jackets.

The ICC, through its direct broadcast partnerships with world class broadcasters will bring the thrilling 15 match, two-week competition to fans across the globe.

In India, the JioStar network will be the home of the Men's Champions Trophy 2025, offering fans a never-seen-before presentation of an ICC event.

For the first time ever on digital, an ICC tournament will be streamed live across 16 feeds, including nine languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, Haryanvi, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. The live streaming on JioHotstar will be complemented by four multi-cam feeds. On TV, in addition to the



English feed, the network will provide coverage in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, across Star Sports and Sports18 channels.

Two of the most popular innovations enhancing ICC cricket coverage on digital return for the Men's Champions Trophy 2025: the Indian Sign Language feed and Audio Descriptive Commentary, ensuring an inclusive experience for all audiences. This groundbreaking initiative by the JioStar network won a National Award in the Category of Institutions Engaged in Empowering Persons with Disabilities 2024.

The hugely successful vertical feed (MaxView), produced in collaboration with the ICC, will also be available in Hindi and English, providing fans with an easier and more intuitive mobile viewing experience, allowing them to consume content on the

go.

In the host country Pakistan, fans will be able to watch the first global tournament on home soil since 1996 via linear partners PTV and Ten Sports, and digitally through the Myco and Tamasha apps. In the United Arab Emirates and the entire MENA region, all matches will be broadcasted on CricLife MAX and CricLife MAX2, with streaming available on STARZPLAY.

For cricket fans in the UK they can catch all 15 matches live on Sky Sports Cricket, Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Action and digitally via the SkyGO, NOW and Sky Sports App.

In the USA and Canada, WillowTV will be the home for Champions Trophy coverage and the 15 matches will also be available via the Willow by Cricbuzz app with Hindi coverage also available. Fans in the

Caribbean can watch all the action live via ESPN Caribbean on TV and stream through the ESPN Play Caribbean app.

Amazon is the home of ICC Cricket in Australia, with coverage of the returning Men's Champions Trophy available on Prime Video. For the first time ever Amazon will also be broadcasting an ICC event in Hindi. In New Zealand, Sky Sport NZ continues to be the go-to broadcaster for ICC events, with coverage also available via the Now and SkyGo app.

Fans supporting South Africa can watch all the action live via SuperSport and its app which will be available across South Africa and to the 52 Sub-Saharan Africa territories.

Nagorik TV and T Sports will be the linear TV broadcasters in Bangladesh, with Toffee making the entire two-week competition available on their app and website. In Afghanistan, the Men's

Champions Trophy will be available on linear via ATN.

Maharaja TV in Sri Lanka continue their coverage of ICC's events through TV1 on linear and Sirasa via digital.

The ICC's commitment to taking cricket to more fans across the world is

highlighted again through ICC.tv. Fans in cricket loving markets such as Sri Lanka and Afghanistan will also be able to watch all 15 Men's Champions Trophy matches on ICC.tv.

In more than 80 territories, all matches from the tournament will be live and free on ICC.tv, including in Nepal, Japan, and Malaysia. This will enable more fans in these markets to enjoy the sport whilst building ICC.tv as a cricket destination

For fans wanting to listen to coverage directly from the ICC Men's Champions Trophy, the ICC will live radio broadcast all matches free globally via the match centre on the ICC website and app.

In the UK, BBC Radio 5 Sports Extra will provide audio coverage on all 15 ICC Men's Champions Trophy matches.

In India, audio coverage will be available on All India Radio and in host country Pakistan HUM 106.2FM will be the destination for fans.

Talk 100.3FM and Big 106.2 will be the home of the Men's Champions Trophy in the UAE, whilst fans in Bangladesh can listen via Radio Shadhin 92.4 and Radio Bhumi 92.8, with Lakhandia Radio providing coverage in Sri Lanka.

## I love his attitude: Priyansh Arya excited to play under great leader Shreyas Iyer

## AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, FEB 15 (UNI)

Punjab Kings' new addition and blazing young batter Priyansh Arya is all set for the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Arya, who has been playing cricket since the age of 9, was picked by the Kings in the 2025 mega auction and will be playing his first-ever IPL season.

"I am really excited to meet head coach Ricky Ponting. I love his pull



shot. Apart from that, I am also excited to meet Shreyas. I love his attitude and the way he walks. I have never met Shreyas earlier. I think he is a great

leader, he has won IPL and all domestic trophies as a captain. So I feel he is the best leader," the 24-year-old said.

Arya took the nation by storm when he hit six sixes in an over, in Delhi's domestic T20 league in August 2024, becoming the fourth Indian cricketer to do so. Recalling the moment, he revealed that a special message came for him, after he achieved the feat, from India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav.

## East Bengal FC square off against Mohammedan SC in ISL on Feb 16

## AGENCIES

KOLKATA, FEB 15 (UNI)

East Bengal FC will play Mohammedan SC at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Kriangan (VYBK) in the Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Sunday.

East Bengal FC are currently placed 11th with 18 points from 19 games, having won once and lost thrice in their previous five matches. However, four goalless games in their last five fixtures has dented their progress and the Red & Gold Brigade would

want to regain their scoring touch and solidify their position with 15 points still to play for them in the league.

At the bottom of the standings, Mohammedan SC have gone through a difficult debut campaign in

the ISL, earning 11 points from 19 encounters. The team has scored just nine goals in the competition, conceding 34 and are coming into this game on the back of a three-game-long losing streak.

In the earlier fixture between these two sides in November, both sides had

settled for a goalless draw.

As of now, East Bengal FC are 13 points behind sixth-placed Mumbai City FC (31). Bridging that gap and entering the playoffs might be slightly difficult, but it is in their hands to continue to push for a strong finish to the season.

After parting ways with Carles Cuadrat, the team went through a slight transition and their cause has not been bettered with a dry patch upfront, scoring the second-least goals (18) in the competition.

## Odisha FC defeat Hyderabad FC 3-1 in ISL

## AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, FEB 15 (UNI)

Odisha FC defeated Hyderabad FC by 3-1 at the Kalinga Stadium in the Indian Super League (ISL) match here. The Juggernauts are seventh in the table now with 29 points, two behind the sixth-placed Mumbai City FC (31) as Sergio Lobera's team continues to be a formidable contender for the playoffs.

They entered the half-time in this game trailing by a goal but produced a remarkable turnaround in the following 45 minutes to seal all three points - holding 54.6% possession in the game and taking five shots on target as compared to three of the opponents.

Odisha FC thus recorded



their fourth straight win at home in Bhubaneswar against Hyderabad FC on Friday night.

Hyderabad FC drew the game momentarily in their

favour by exerting pressure on the Odisha FC defence from a set-piece situation in the 30th minute.

The visitors worked in tandem to dissect the Jug-

gernauts' backline, winning over second balls before Muhammed Rafi placed a headed pass from the left post in the path of Stefan Sapic for the latter to tap into the centre of the goal from extremely close range.

The Juggernauts turned to Mourtada Fall to secure the equaliser in the 47th minute with a slightly unique take to their corner routine this time around.

Hugo Boumous launched in a quick cross on the far post but Fall was distant from the net at the time of the delivery. The centre-back made a dash of a sprint before thumping in a powerful header into the top left corner, bringing the Sergio Lobera-coached side back into the game.

## Muthoot FA, Kickstart & Sreenidi Deccan progress to RFDL National Group Stage

## AGENCIES

KOCHI, FEB 15 (UNI)

In an eventful conclusion to the Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) Zonal Group Stage in Kerala on Friday, Muthoot FA, Kickstart FC & Sreenidi Deccan FC qualified for the National Group Stage.

The three sides will join Dempo SC, FC Goa and Mumbai City FC in the next phase of the competition.

On the final matchday of the tournament, league leaders Muthoot FA and second-placed Sreenidi Deccan FC played out a 1-1 draw at the Maharajas College Ground, to end their RFDL Zonal

Group Stage campaigns on a high.

Muhammed Siyas' 26th minute strike for Muthoot FA was cancelled out within five minutes by Lamgunlal Kipgen of Sreenidi Deccan FC. The scoreline remained 1-1 till the full-time whistle as both sides confirmed their spots in the RFDL National Group Stage.

After finishing on top of the group, Muthoot FA head coach Anees K, quoted, "Competing at this level helped the players develop composure, teamwork, and an understanding of high-pressure football."

"Qualifying for the RFDL National round for the third consecutive year

shows that the academy has built a solid foundation and gained valuable experience in high-pressure games. The National round brings together the best teams from across the country and Muthoot FA will face more diverse playing styles and higher levels of skill and physicality. If we maintain current momentum and execute our strategies well, we could challenge for a top spot in the RFDL National Group Stage," he added.

In another enticing encounter, Kickstart FC Karnataka came from a goal behind to salvage a point against Kerala Blasters FC, eventually knocking them out of

the competition with a 1-1 draw. Devo Athokpam had given the Blasters a lead in the 25th minute at the Maharajas College Ground. But Premish T left it late with an 87th minute equalizer as Kickstart FC held on to a draw.

The third match of the day between Gokulam Kerala FC and Roots FC ended in a goalless draw as both teams concluded their RFDL 2024-25 campaigns with several positives.

With six sides confirmed for the RFDL National Group Stage, all eyes will be on how the next phase of the competition will shape up as teams from Meghalaya & Kolkata await to join.

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