



Peace prerequisite for development, prosperity: LG Sinha

People have to play their role for establishing secure environment
Inaugurates first edition of Sikh Cricket Premier League



■ HT NEWS NETWORK

Jammu, Feb 17 (UNI) Stating that peace is the top priority in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday that anti-terrorism operations will continue and there will be no pause.

"Indian troops are effectively responding to the situation on the border," Sinha replied to a query on recent spurt in violence along the Line of Control (LoC). "Our Army is fully capable and providing an appropriate response on the border," he said and informed that the security forces are also working in close

synergy with the police to address the security challenges. "Clear instructions are issued to eliminate and root out terrorism," he said. Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Sinha on February 13 also chaired a high-level meeting and reviewed the security scenario

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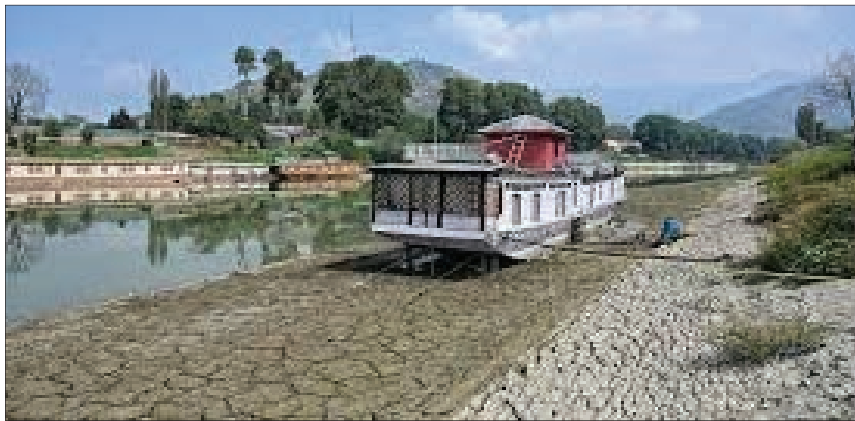
Snowless winter deters recharging of Kashmir water reservoirs

Jhelum, streams flow below 'zero level'; Sangam touches -1.01 ft Jal Shakti Deptt says 'situation manageable'

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar:-The snowless winter and prolonged dry spell have deterred the recharging of water reservoirs with majority of the streams and river Jhelum flowing at below 'zero level'. According to the news agency—, river Jhelum, the lifeline of Kashmir, continues to witness the receding water level. At Sangam, the Jhelum's water level has touched -1.01 ft, which is below the Reduced Level (RL) of zero of gauge while at Ram Munshi Bagh, it stood at 3.52 feet and at Asham,

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Amid snowless winters, hydro power generation dips by 84% in JK

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, FEBRUARY 17: Owing to the less snowfall and low water level, in the past one month, the hydel power generation from the power plants across Jammu and Kashmir has further reduced by five percent. Overall, the hydro power generation

from the local plants in Jammu and Kashmir has reduced by 84.17 percent. In the month of January, the Power Development Department (PDD) was generating nearly 250 Megawatts of power from the local hydel projects that amounts to 20 percent of the total generation capacity. However, in the ongoing month, the power generation has

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Fresh Western Disturbance to hit J&K, 2-day wet spell likely from Tuesday

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 17: Amidst the deficit rainfall, the weatherman here has predicted a two-day wet spell in Jammu

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Appropriate funding couldn't be released due to lack of coordination with J&K Admin: Rijiju

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 17 (UNI) Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju on Monday said that there were some issues in coordination between his Ministry and Jammu and Kashmir administration so that that appropriate funding could not be provided.



He said due to this, the appropriate

ate funding which was supposed to be released could not be provided. Rijiju was talking to media persons in Gulmarg on Monday. The Minister said there have been issues when it comes to coordination between Jammu and Kashmir administration and Ministry of Minority Affairs. "The Ministry is ready to help to augment the health sector, educa

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After 9-yrs of trial, CJM Sopore convicts self-proclaimed faith healer in sexual assault case

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 17: After nine years of trial Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Sopore on Monday convicted a self-proclaimed faith healer in a sexual assault case. According to the details available with

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Class 10th Exams Begin in J&K, Adequate Arrangements in Place Across 1313 Centers

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 17: The much-awaited Class 10th board examinations commenced across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, with 114413 of students appearing for their first major academic test. In Srinagar, a heavy rush of students was witnessed at various examination centers as they arrived early in the morning, accompanied by their parents and guardians.



As per the official figures, as many as 114413 students were registered for the class 10th annual regular examination. The JKBOSE has set up

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Two Found Dead Under Mysterious Circumstances in Kathua

CM Omar Abdullah Orders Probe into Unexplained Deaths

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 17 :- Two men were found dead under mysterious circumstances in an open field in Batheri village of Billawar in Kathua district. The bodies were discovered with agricultural tools such as a spade, hoe, and mattock lying nearby, raising suspicions about the cause of death. According to police sources, they received information about two unidentified men lying unconscious in the field. A team was immediately dispatched to the spot,

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Combat terror ecosystem, narco-smuggling with an iron fist: DIG Pande

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 17 (UNI) Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Central Kashmir, Rajiv Omprakash Pande on Monday instructed officers to combat terror ecosystem and narco-smuggling with an iron fist



in Budgam district. The DIG said this while chairing a comprehensive security review meeting in central Kashmir's Budgam, focusing on the prevailing security scenario and counter-terrorism strategies in the district. The meeting was attended by SSP

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CS thoroughly scrutinises 'Sehat App' before its formal launch

Terms initiative as 'One Stop Solution' for both patients, professionals to avail all health services

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today had an in depth analysis of the features and functioning of the 'Sehat App' before it is being dedicated to the public.

The application, which was developed by BISAG-N on the request of the Health & Medical Education Department, would serve as a single stop solution for availing all patient and health practitioner related services in J&K.

During live demonstration of this application, the Chief Secretary assessed



several of its features and appreciated both the Health Department and BISAG-N for making it a reality. He observed that this first version is itself a comprehensive application offering certain better services to the patients and health practitioners through their

smart phones.

The Chief Secretary further enjoined upon the concerned for onboarding all the health practitioners on this portal in order to make the application more comprehensive and useful for the users. He also advised them to look into

making certain up gradations regarding registration of doctors/ paramedics for home support and tele consultation.

Regarding other services, the Chief Secretary asked for adding information about the high-end services of chemotherapy, dialysis available in both public and private sectors here. He also directed for offering the insurance services extended through schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima yojana.

The Chief Secretary also asked to introduce an

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Pilot Project: NAKSHA To Cover 04 ULBs of J&K, Bishnah, Katra, Awantipora & Pattan

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 17, : Union Minister of Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) in 152 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across 26 States and 3 Union Territories (UTs) at Raisen, Madhya Pradesh tomorrow.

According to the Associated News Bureau, the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, has initiated this pilot program.

Union Minister of State for Rural Development & Communications, Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. Mohan Yadav, Revenue Minister, Madhya Pradesh, Karan Singh Verma, Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Prahlad Singh Patel, Narayan Singh Pawar, State Minister (Independent Charge) for Fisheries and Fishermen welfare and Minister In-charge, District Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, MLA, Sanchi, Prabhu Ram Chaudhary, Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Government of India, Manoj Joshi and other officers from Government of India and Madhya Pradesh State Government will attend the event.

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J&K Govt Constitutes Committee for Addressing ULB Devolution Issues

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 17: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday constituted the committee to address issues related to the devolution of functions, functionaries, and funds to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in J&K.

As per an order issued by General administration Department a copy of which lies with news agency JKNS reads, Sanction is hereby accorded to the constitution of a Committee, comprising the following, for identification and resolution of the issues faced by the departments in devolution of functions, functionaries and funds to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir, as set out in the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.

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Arms License Scam: Court Seeks MHA's Decision on 3 IAS Officers' Prosecution,

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 17: The Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh High Court has directed the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to submit its final decision on the prosecution sanction of three IAS officers allegedly involved in the arms license scam.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice M.A. Chowdhary ordered the MHA to file an Action Taken Report regarding Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Niraj Kumar, and Yasha Mudgal, all former District Magistrates of Udhampur, before the next hearing.

The J&K government had forwarded their prosecution sanction request to MHA on December 27, 2024.



CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

LG

in Jammu Division.

He said, "Our focus should be on complete wipe-out of terrorism from Jammu Division."

"We should not even have remnants of terrorism in the Jammu region. Take effective steps to wipe-out

terrorism and ensure complete dismantling of the infrastructure and local support for terrorism," the Lt

Governor added. : Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha inaugurated the first-edition of Sikh Cricket Premier League in Jammu.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations and best wishes to all the players participating in the tournament.

"It is not just a sporting event but a cultural and social initiative that reflects the commitment to holistic community development and aims to build a brighter future for the youth of Sikh community in J&K," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He congratulated the All J&K Sikh Coordination Committee for playing a vital role in empowering the Sikh community and preserving its rich heritage, through such innovative programs, while fostering a sense of pride and responsibility towards the society and the nation among its youth.

"Today, Jammu Kashmir is working for inclusive growth, which means socio-economic growth of all sections of society. Such initiatives holds the key to equitable growth and socio-economic change. It also promotes the ideals and values of unity, discipline and harmony," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised the role of Public-Private Partnerships to empower youth by improving infrastructure, providing opportunities and opening up new avenues in diverse sectors.

"I strongly believe that socio-economic goals of development and empowerment of youth should be made through public-private partnerships. It can provide us an extensive network of skilling and entrepreneurship projects and we can take these facilities to the grassroots levels.

In 2020 I had initiated public-private partnership projects. Even today, we are also creating an enabling policy environment in which youth's concerns can be reflected, and redressed in a speedy manner," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted his resolve to develop a robust ecosystem where the Sikh community members, especially the youth have access to opportunities and make meaningful contribution to the society.

"Our youth from Sikh community represent the very pivot around which socio-economic growth and transformation of the society takes a new shape and to ensure this we are working with dedication for mainstreaming of Sikh youth into the development process," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He further asked the Youth to follow the footsteps of their great ancestors and make the entire Sikh community and the nation proud.

The Lieutenant Governor said, "Indian Army is capable and is giving a befitting reply. J&K Police and Security forces are working in coordination and they have been instructed to crush terrorism and its ecosystem". He said this during his interaction with media persons.

S. Ajit Singh, Chairman, All Jammu Kashmir Sikh Coordination Committee; presidents of District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committees, heads of various sikh organisations, players, coaches and youth in large number were present.

Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, Jammu University, senior officials of Police and civil administration were also present on the occasion.

SNOW

the level has fallen to 0.75 feet.

As per the Irrigation & Flood Control Department's 'Kashmir Flood Watch', some of the nullahs including Lidder, Rambiyara, Ferozpora (Drung) and Pohru (Seelu) are also flowing below the RL of zero of gauge.

The officials from I&FC Department stated that the water level is low due to the snowless winter. "The persistent deficit rainfall has affected the recharging of the water reservoirs across the Valley," they informed.

Notably, Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a total deficit rainfall of 29 per cent so far with the highest deficiency recorded in the month of January 2024 at 91 per cent.

Also, in the first two months till February 12, all the districts across the Union Territory have recorded a large deficit of rainfall.

The Union Territory has recorded a deficit rainfall of 79 per cent as against the normal precipitation of 140 mm, the rainfall of just 29.8 was recorded from January 01 to February 12, 2025.

SITUATION MANAGEABLE, SAYS JALSHAKTI DEPARTMENT

In the meantime, the ongoing situation has landed Jal Shakti Department (JSD) in a manageable position to provide drinking water facility to the households of Kashmir region.

A top official of Jal Shakti Department informed KNO that "We are in a situation wherein I cannot say that we have sufficient or insufficient drinking water availability for the consumers of Kashmir region."

"As of now, we are in a good position to manage the supply of drinking water to almost

all areas of Kashmir region," he said.

Asked about the backup plan or alternative in case of any water scarcity, the official said that the government has ensured every backup for the PHE and consumers—

POWER

further reduced by five percent.

A top official of the department informed the news agency—said, "In the month of January, PDD on an average was generating nearly 250 MWs of power from the power plants across Jammu and Kashmir."

"However, the power generation has further decreased with the officials saying that the department was able to generate only 190 MWs of power in the ongoing month," the official said.

It also said that in the month of February, the department was facing less production. "As of now, we are generating around 190 MWs of power across Jammu and Kashmir out of a total generation capacity of 1200 MWs."

The official further admitted that the department was not able to generate power as in previous years during the peak time. We are reeling under global warming and climate change.

"Over a period of time, we have not been able to generate the normal power that we used to generate in previous years because of less water availability. Water availability period is also shortening," the official said.

It also said that the generation capacity cannot be measured in one day only. "The power generation varies. We reserve the water in the daytime to generate power during the peak hours. In the peak time, we are generating 50 MWs of power from the lower Jhelum and 5 MWs during the regular time. Besides, we are able to generate only 8 MW of power from the Kangan and 6 MWs from Sumbal power projects respectively," the official said.

In Jammu and Kashmir we have a total of 1200 Megawatts (MWs) hydel power production capacity of which 900 MW is from the Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project.

"Across Jammu and Kashmir, as far as snowfall occurrence and early winters are concerned, last year we were in the same situation with regard to the power generation in the month of February," the official said. Adding, "This year we look forward to at least generating what we did last year. If the snow occurs now onwards there will be the added advantage of power generation."

The official also said, "We have made some of the machines functional that were earlier defunct in the shut-down period. We are hoping that we get good outcome of it."—

WEATHER

and Kashmir from Tuesday.

Director Meteorological (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that amidst generally cloudy weather conditions, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at many places during 19th evening to 20th late afternoon. "The fresh Western Disturbance is all set to hit the Union Territory," he added.

Dr Ahmad said that the plains of Kashmir & Jammu may receive light to moderate rain and thunder with gusty winds at few places, adding that the higher reaches of Chenab Valley & South Kashmir may receive moderate snowfall up to around 10 inches while the higher reaches of north & Central Kashmir may receive snowfall up to 8 inches.

Meanwhile, an Independent Weather Forecaster, Faizan Arif Keng said that a fresh Western Disturbance is set to develop over Afghanistan on February 19 and quickly move towards Jammu and Kashmir by February 20, bringing widespread rain and snow across the Union Territory.

"The first signs of the disturbance will be felt in the higher reaches from late night on February 19, with precipitation gradually intensifying as it spreads across the region. Most parts of Jammu and Kashmir are likely to witness a moderate spell of rain/snow, along with the possibility of a heavy spell in some parts," he said.

"Overall, on average, Jammu region may record higher precipitation than Kashmir Valley. The Chenab Valley districts - Ramban, Kishtwar, and Doda - are also expected to receive moderate to heavy precipitation. In Kashmir Valley plains, rains may dominate on that day, but a sharp drop in temperature could trigger a transition to snowfall, especially under prolonged heavy precipitation," Keng added.

Temperatures, which will remain in the range of 15 - 18°C on February 19, are expected to drop below 7°C on February 20. The Pir Panjal range is expected to receive heavy snowfall, affecting areas such as Gulmarg, Sinthan Top, Peer Ki Gali, and other parts of Mughal Road, Keng added.

Due to higher temperatures, lightning and thundershowers may remain a common feature on that day, especially in Jammu region. There is a risk of shooting stones/landslides on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on 20th February. Weather is expected to improve from 21st February onward," he said—

RAJIJU

tion, sports, local handloom and handicrafts through various schemes in the coming period", he said.

The Minority Affairs Ministry will also provide support to construct water projects at various places of Jammu and Kashmir. Besides there are provisions of providing skill training in the Ministry also.

He said he held a review meeting with officers of the Social Welfare Department, Jammu and Kashmir to accelerate the Schemes under PM Jan Vikas Karyakram in the state.

Rijiju said that there are two main schemes-- Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) by which there is a provision to release funds under major infrastructure and another is Pradhan Mantri Vikas (PMV) focusing on training and skilling.

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister said that the officer here said that schemes of 18 districts have been put forth and those will be put in priority list for their sanction by the Ministry. The Chief Secretary will clear the projects and will discuss with the ministry for their perusal.

"We are ready to provide a record number of schemes to Jammu and Kashmir this time", Rijiju said.

He said there are provisions with the ministry for the upliftment and training for the expert craftsmen in Kashmir including Carpet weavers, furniture, Shawls and Pashmina shawl weavers and their families.

In reply to a question, he said "India is itself a big market for Kashmir traders and various articles could be exported to other countries".

SPORE

the news agency—the said case was registered in 2016 under FIR No. 22/2016 U/S 377 of the erstwhile Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) at Police Station Bomai after the victim's father lodged a complaint with the then SSP Sopore, alleging that his son had been subjected to "unnatural sexual assault" by the accused, Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh, also known as Aijaz Molvi of Mundji village.

Given the sensitivity of the matter, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted under the supervision of Ashish Mishra, who is now serving as Superintendent of Police (SP).

Following a thorough investigation, statements of witnesses were recorded, and a charge sheet was filed before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Sopore.

The trial proceeded with the prosecution presenting all relevant evidence, while the defence produced six witnesses in its attempt to counter the charges.

After extensive arguments from both sides, the court delivered its verdict today, convicting the accused.

The case has now moved to the stage of determining the quantum of punishment, for which further arguments will be heard.

Speaking on the development, prosecuting officer, Mirza Zahid Khalil told KNO that the conviction serves as a significant step toward justice, encouraging victims of such crimes to come forward and seek legal recourse.

Authorities have urged the public to make use of legal avenues to report such crimes, stressing that timely action can help curb social offenses and bring perpetrators to justice.

Meanwhile, the court has directed the Superintendent of Police, Sopore, to immediately facilitate the registration of separate FIRs concerning other victims, ensuring that each victim's claims are adjudicated separately.

Additionally, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) has been requested to provide immediate legal aid to these victims to safeguard their access to justice.

A compliance report must be filed within 90 days, detailing the steps taken for separate FIR registrations and investigations, the court said—

10TH

1313 exam centers for students to write their exams.

Authorities had made elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of exams. Examination centers across the city were abuzz with activity as students, some anxious and others confident, gathered to take their first paper.

Officials confirmed to Associated News Bureau that all necessary arrangements, including security measures, seating arrangements, and invigilation staff, were in place to facilitate a hassle-free examination process.

"We have ensured that all exam centers are equipped with proper facilities, and necessary staff has been deployed to oversee the smooth conduct of exams," said an official from the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE). "Strict guidelines have been issued to prevent any unfair practices, and surveillance has been enhanced to maintain the integrity of the examination process."

Students appeared at their respective centers well before the scheduled time, as anxious parents waited outside, offering last-minute words of encouragement. Many students expressed a mix of excitement and nervousness. "It's a big day for us. We have prepared well, and we are hoping to do our best," said Mehak, a student from a local Srinagar school.

"All Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) have been directed to inspect schools, both private and government, in their respective areas to

monitor the examination process," said an official from the Education Department. "We are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that students do not face any issues during their exams."

Meanwhile, parents outside the centers hoped for the best for their children. "We have seen them work hard for months. We just want them to perform well and succeed in their future endeavors," said a parent waiting outside an examination center in Srinagar.

With the first day of exams concluding smoothly, officials remain optimistic that the rest of the schedule will also be conducted without any hurdles. Security personnel, education officers, and school authorities will continue their efforts to ensure a fair and transparent examination process across Jammu and Kashmir.

DIG

Budgam, Nikhil Borkar-IPS, along with the Senior Prosecuting Officer, SDPOs, and SHOs of the district.

Pande issued directives for the strict implementation of new criminal laws and also instructed field officers to combat the terror ecosystem and narco-smuggling with an iron fist.

The senior police officer underscored the importance of effective counter-insurgency strategies and proactive law enforcement measures.

During the meeting, a detailed assessment of the security situation was conducted, with a particular emphasis on recent developments and emerging challenges.

He highlighted the need for continuous review and enhancement of security plans to ensure imposition of law and order in the society.

Pande emphasized the need to strengthen the security of vulnerable targets, ensuring robust security arrangements to maintain public safety.

The DIG directed officers to closely monitor social media platforms to prevent the spread of misinformation that could disrupt law and order.

He stressed for incorporation of technology during investigation and laid emphasis on strengthening police public relations through PCPG meetings.

The SSP Budgam provided a comprehensive presentation outlining the security arrangements in place for anti-terrorist operations, maintenance of law & order, and the measures undertaken to combat drug-related crimes and other unlawful activities in the district.

The meeting concluded with a firm commitment to enhancing coordinated security efforts to uphold peace and order in the district.

CS

inventory of professionals certified in providing 'Basic Life Support (BLS)' support in case of emergencies and those of Advanced Life Support (ALS) givers also to build the capacity of BLS givers in order to enhance their number and reach in different parts of the UT.

The Chief Secretary underscored the need of enriching it with the details of blood donors besides having API integration with other applications like e-WIN, ABDM and other relevant ones. He called on them to further augment it with services like home delivery of drugs, activity calendars of different Medical Colleges and National Institutions for the benefit of medical students and practitioners.

The Chief Secretary also asked for introduction of payment gateway in the same application so that users do not have to look helter-skelter to complete their appointments or carry out diagnostic tests in medical facilities. He asked for sending health alerts to the users at times of need or any emergency.

Secretary, H&ME, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah, gave detailed description of the features embedded in the 'Sehat App'. He revealed that the application has been developed on the lines as envisaged by the Chief Secretary himself. He gave out that it is a comprehensive one-stop solution for different services offered by the Department in addition to extending resources to the medics for building their capacity and training.

He further gave out that the app offers patient services, facilities for general public, facilities for healthcare professionals, medical students, their skill development, health insurance and helpline assistance to people for different purposes together with a chat bot to ask queries and seek customised answers.

Explaining further Dr Yashpal Sharma, Ex Director (Coordination) Medical Colleges disclosed that services like seeking of appointments, online registrations in outside hospitals as that of PGIMER, Chandigarh and AIIMS along with other ABDM empanelled ones and some major private hospitals existing outside the UT can be secured through this application which was appreciated by Chief Secretary for it would be pivotal in transforming healthcare system here in the UT.

Moreover, it was added that a detailed information, contacts and GIS based locations had been provided about thousands of health institutions, Ayush Centres, diagnostic facilities (MRI/CT Scan etc), dental centres, phys-

iotherapy centres, drug de-addiction centres, blood banks, immunization centres and pharmacies is available over this application.

Medical practitioners available for tele consultation over the country especially from AIIMS is also available with provision for registration of others. It was divulged that registration forms of practitioners would be forwarded to concerned CMO for their authentication so that only genuine professionals are available to serve public.

The meeting was apprised that the application offers IEC material for dealing with different diseases and emergency situations like neglected tropical diseases, snake bites, seasonal threats, health advisories to be issued from time to time.

GOVT

Order reads, Chief Secretary, J&K has been appointed as Chairman of the committee, while Administrative Secretary, Finance Department, Administrative Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Administrative Secretary, General Administration Department, Administrative Secretary of the concerned Department Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation/Jammu Municipal Corporation have been appointed as member of the committee.

The Committee may co-opt any member, as required, and shall submit its report at the earliest. Terms of Reference, The committee may recommend any other measures that may help to financially optimize the devolution of functions, functionaries and funds, it reads.

ARMS

The court's directive came in response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL No. 09/2012) filed by Sheikh Mohammad Shafi and others, highlighting delays in granting prosecution sanctions against eight IAS officers allegedly involved in the scam. The petitioners' counsel, Advocate S.S. Ahmed, argued that both MHA and the J&K government were deliberately stalling the process to shield high-profile officers, despite the CBI's recommendation for prosecution.

Earlier, the MHA had granted prosecution sanction against Rajeev Ranjan, former DM Kupwara, in a related case. However, Ahmed pointed out that the J&K government had advised against prosecution in its status reports dated December 5 and December 20, 2023, exposing what he termed a "malafide intention" to protect bureaucrats.

Senior Additional Advocate General (AAG) Mohsin Qadri, representing the J&K government, stated that the status report from the General Administration Department (GAD) was yet to be considered by the court. The Division Bench, however, referred to a hard copy of the report previously submitted in open court.

Directing the MHA to clarify its stance, the court scheduled the next hearing for March 20, next month. [KNT]

CM

and the duo was rushed to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival.

The deceased were later identified as Shamsher (37), son of Krishan Chand, and Roshan (45), son of Shankar Dass, both residents of Kohag Billawar. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the circumstances leading to their deaths.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed sorrow over the incident and directed officials to conduct a thorough inquiry. "The deaths are tragic, and I have asked the concerned officers to ensure a proper investigation," he stated. [KNT]

PILOT PROJECT

The occasion will be marked by flying of drones, launch of Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) booklet, Video and flyer on NAKSHA Programme, flagging of WDC Yatra, screening of WDC video and playing of Watershed Anthem.

The NAKSHA program aims to create and update land records in urban areas to ensure accurate and reliable documentation of land ownership. This initiative will empower citizens, improve ease of living, enhance urban planning, and reduce land-related disputes. The IT-based system for property record administration will foster transparency, efficiency and support sustainable development.

The Survey of India is the technical partner for NAKSHA programme which is responsible for conducting aerial surveys and providing orthorectified imagery, through third party vendors, to state and Union Territory governments. The end-to-end web-GIS platform will be developed by the Madhya Pradesh State Electronic Development Corporation (MPSED) and storage facilities will be provided by the National Informatics Centre Services Inc. (NICSI). States and Union Territory governments are scheduled to conduct field surveys and ground truthing using the orthorectified imagery, ultimately leading to the final publication of urban and semi-urban land records. The NAKSHA pilot program is expected to cost approximately 194 crore, fully funded by the Government of India.



Waheed Parra to Introduce Bill for Legalising Houses on State Land in J&K

PDP Revives Roshni-Style Law to Grant Ownership Rights to Longtime Occupants

■ HT News Network

Srinagar February 17: People's Democratic Party Leader and Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Pulwama Waheed Ur Rehman Parra, will introduce a Private Member Bill titled "The Jammu and Kashmir (Regularisation and Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Public Land) Bill, 2025" in the upcoming session of the Legislative Assembly. The proposed legislation aims to legalise and confer property rights upon residents who have constructed and lived in houses on state-owned, common, and other lands for decades. Recognising the need for a humane and pragmatic approach to the long-standing issue of unauthorised residential constructions, Parra's bill seeks to provide security of tenure to thousands of families, ensuring their right to shelter as enshrined under Article 21 of the Con-



stitution of India. "The population of Jammu and Kashmir has significantly increased over the decades due to urbanisation, migration,

and socio-economic changes. Many people have been living in residential structures on state land for years without legal ownership. This bill is a step towards

recognising their rights and providing a legal framework for regularisation," said Parra. The bill proposes granting ownership or transfer rights to residents who have been in continuous physical possession of such land for over 20 years. It also seeks to regularise houses built on state land, Kahcharai land, common land, and Shamilat land, in accordance with the Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976. Furthermore, the bill proposes the registration of these properties, enabling residents to access financial services such as bank loans. Meanwhile, the bill mandates a structured process through which eligible residents can apply for property regularisation, ensuring transparency and accountability. Special provisions will also be made for economically weaker sections, widows, and persons with disabilities.

Commissioner SMC Chairs Revenue Committee Meeting

■ HT News Network



Srinagar, February 17: Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed convened a pivotal meeting today with the revenue Committee members to discuss strategies for enhancing the organization's financial performance. The meeting was attended by the Joint Commissioner (Adm), FA/CAO, Joint Commissioner Planning, Chief Revenue Officer, Additional Law Officer, Estates Officer, and other senior officials of the Corporation. During the meeting, the Commissioner underscored the critical challenges and opportunities faced by corporation's revenue streams. Committee members engaged in productive dialogue, sharing valuable insights and proposing innovative solutions to boost efficiency in revenue generation. The committee reviewed current revenue reports and explored best practices, alongside discussing potential policy changes that could enhance revenue collection and management processes. The Commissioner emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in all financial operations, ensuring that the SMC remains committed to responsible governance.

Darul Uloom Gulshan Raza, Pathan Toli Charuye Par Noor Sarai, Nalanda District, Bihar Hosts Dastaar Bandi Ceremony

■ HT News Network



Srinagar, February 17: A grand Dastaar Bandi (turban tying) ceremony was held at the Madrasa Darul Uloom Gulshan Raza, located in Pathan Toli Charuye Par Noor Sarai, Nalanda District, Bihar. The event was graced by a distinguished guest, Mr. Mohammad Sabir Niyaz Khan, who is the General Secretary of the Bazaar Committee, Musalapur Yard. During the event, Mr. Khan emphasized the importance of educating children in both worldly and religious knowledge. He encouraged the parents to ensure that their children receive a balanced education, focusing not only on secular subjects but also on religious teachings that would help them grow up to be responsible individuals in society. The ceremony witnessed the participation of numerous attendees who were inspired by Mr. Khan's speech, which highlighted the significance of imparting moral and spiritual education alongside academic learning.

J&K Sericulture Development Department Participates in International Conference on Emerging Technologies in Silk Sector at Bharat Tex-2025

■ HT News Network

New Delhi, February 17 A high-level delegation from the Sericulture Development Department Jammu and Kashmir, led by Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, IAS, Director Sericulture J&K participated in the International Conference on Emerging Technologies in Silk Sector today at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, as part of the Bharat Tex-2025 (Global Textile Expo). The event also featured a theme pavilion, "INDIA'S SILK SAGA," showcasing India's rich silk heritage, innovations, and advancements in the sector. The participation of the J&K Sericulture Development Department in this global event underscores the commitment to explore sustainable solutions, foster collaborations, and enhance the growth of the silk industry in Jammu and Kashmir.



Speaking at the event, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, IAS, Director Sericulture J&K, emphasized the significance of such global expos, stating that they provide immense opportunities for business expansion, networking, and brand recognition for manufacturers and stakeholders in the silk sector. He further remarked that such events allow J&K's silk industry to gain international exposure, attract investments, and boost the economic prospects of local silkworm rear-

ers, farmers and entrepreneurs. The conference also witnessed active participation from national and international delegations, fostering discussions on emerging technologies, sustainable practices, and the future roadmap for the silk industry. In recognition of his dedication and relentless efforts in the development of the sericulture sector in Jammu and Kashmir, Shri P. Sivakumar, IFS, Member Secretary & Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Central Silk

Board (CSB), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, Bengaluru, felicitated Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, IAS, Director Sericulture J&K, with a memento and certificate. Expressing his gratitude, Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (IAS) highlighted the department's vision to organize similar expos in Jammu and Kashmir, which would act as a catalyst for the revival and growth of the silk industry in the region. He reiterated the department's commitment to revitalizing the sericulture sector in J&K through various strategic initiatives, including awareness campaigns for silkworm rearers, farmers, and youth to encourage wider participation in sericulture activities, capacity-building programs across all districts of J&K to train farmers and entrepreneurs in modern sericulture practices, financial assistance for the construction of rearing sheds,

DLSA Srinagar organizes awareness prog on Senior Citizens' Rights, Benefits under NALSA

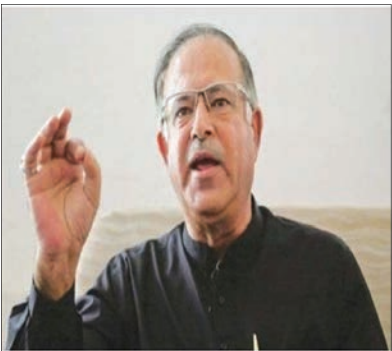
■ HT News Network

Srinagar, February 17: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, organized an awareness programme at AhateWaqar, a day care and recreation centre for senior citizens, focusing on the legal rights and benefits under the NALSA Senior Citizens Scheme. The event aimed to empower senior citizens by providing them with comprehensive information on their legal entitlements and welfare benefits. The programme was held under the chairmanship of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman DLSA Srinagar and Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Srinagar. The program commenced with a soulful tilawat of the Quran by Qazi Abdul Rashid, who also captivated the audience with a few lines from his latest poetry. His recitations set a reflective tone for the proceedings. Urba Rashid, Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel & the resource person emphasized the importance of spreading awareness about the schemes offered under the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) for senior citizens, which are designed to ensure their protection, dignity, and access to justice.

Karra blamed BJP of running the affairs by proxy BJP disrespecting people mandate - Karra Ramban, Feb.17

■ HT News Network

Srinagar February 17 (KNS): JKPCC Chief Shri Tariq Hameed Karra along with Working Presidents Shri Tara Chand, Raman Bhalla, Former M.P. Ch. Lal Singh, Former MLAs Dina Nath Bhagat and Ashok Dogra, DCC President Pravezh Ahmed Wani, Former Natinal President NSUI Feroz Khan, Zahida Khan, Rashid Malik, along with other senior leaders of Ramban Dist. today launched the party's mission "Himari Riyasat Hamara Haq" to pressurize the Centre Govt. for early restoration of statehood besides awareness for safeguarding the constitutional values in the country. Addressing District Congress Workers Convention at Ramban today as part of the party's provincial campaign Shri Karra questioned BJP for its refusal to obey its commitment to the people of J&K on the floor of Parliament and before the Hon'ble Supreme Court and repeated public announcements regarding early restoration of statehood even after more than four months of taking over by the elected Govt. in Jammu and Kashmir. It was not only disrespect of the Constitution and Supreme Court but



to the people of Jammu and Kashmir who were denied from its identity, status & alike. He said it is betrayal of BJP with the people of J&K for which the BJP leadership in J&K and at the National level should answer the people for the delay being deliberately caused. Karra said that congress will intensify the struggle for restoration of statehood if the commitment is not fulfilled within shortest possible time. JKPCC Chief blamed BJP and Central Govt. of disrespect the mandate of people of Jammu and Kashmir and by delaying the restoration of statehood in order to run the affairs of J&K by proxy. He further said that the people have voted the NC-Congress

coalition to power with great hopes and to get rid of the sufferings of the bureaucratic regime but unfortunately BJP does not transfer full powers to the elected Govt. in order to deliver to promises. He said that the common people, unemployed youth, daily wagers, need based, casual workers, adhoc, consolidated and other temporary workers like NHM, Anganwar, Ashas, SPOs, NYCs data annalists and other youths working in different departments for years have been deceived by the BJP Govt. and awaiting justice from the Govt. but due to Centre and BJP's attitude they all are suffering. Similarly the unemployed youth are suffering because of record unemployment in the last 45 years, bungling in selection lists, slow pace of recruitment through thousands of vacancies, abolishing of selection of regular teachers, RET etc. and it is our duty to deliver the commitment to the youth. The delay in the restoration of statehood is exacerbating the problems of common people especially unemployed, semi-employed besides farmers and others are facing difficulties of power tariff and huge rise of prices of essential items of life.

Kupwara Electrical Contractors Threaten Boycott Over 850 Crore Pending Liabilities

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Kupwara, Feb.17: The Electrical Association Kupwara has sounded the alarm over an alarming financial crisis stemming from the prolonged delay in clearing pending liabilities of electrical contractors, which have accumulated to a staggering 850 crores. The Association has warned that if the payments are not released immediately, contractors will be forced to halt all ongoing and future electrical works in the district. In a statement issued to HEADLINES TODAY, the Association emphasized that despite completing their contractual obligations, contractors have not received their dues for several months. The payment files, pending in various treasuries for over four months, show no indication of clearance, raising serious concerns over their fate. The contractors fear that if these funds are not released before March, they will lapse, further exacerbating their financial distress. The delay in payments has left contractors struggling to sustain their businesses, pushing them to the brink of financial collapse. Many of



them have invested heavily in electrical projects, expecting timely payments, but the ongoing crisis has placed them in severe economic distress. "The delay in payments has put our members under immense financial pressure. With mounting debts and no source of income, many contractors are unable to even pay their workers. If the pending liabilities are not cleared immediately, we will have no choice but to boycott all electrical works in Kupwara," the Association stated. The Association has urged the concerned authorities, including the district administration and treasury officials, to expedite the release of funds. They warned that any further delay would not only impact the

contractors but also disrupt essential electrical services in the region. "If these payments are not made in time, key government projects will be stalled, and the general public will suffer. We urge the authorities to take immediate action before the situation spirals out of control," the statement added. With no positive response from the authorities so far, the Electrical Association Kupwara has made it clear that they will not hesitate to take drastic measures if their demands are ignored. The planned boycott of electrical works in the district could delay ongoing projects, disrupt power infrastructure upgrades, and even affect rural electrification programs.

EDITORIAL

Tanvir Sadiq stirs controversy by opposing ban on sale of liquor in Kashmir

National Conference leader and legislator from Zadibal assembly segment Tanvir Sadiq stirred a controversy by saying that ban on alcohol in Kashmir valley will not go well. The NC legislator said that since Kashmir is visited by tourists round the year the ban on liquor will impact the same. He said that there are chances that the number of tourists coming to Kashmir will come down and as such there would be a negative impact on the Kashmir economy.

The statement of the NC legislator came after his party colleague and legislator from Lal Chowk Ahsan Pardesi proposed to move a bill to ban sale of liquor in Jammu & Kashmir. The same proposal through a separate bill has also been mooted by legislator from Langate constituency Khursheed Ahmad Sheikh. People across the political, religious, social and economical spectrum in the Kashmir valley hailed both Pardesi and Khursheed for their bills and said that bills are quite in tune with the culture and heritage of Kashmir.

The statement from the Zadibal legislator came in for sharp criticism from the people and barbs were aimed at him by the people belonging to varied hues. Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Moham-mad Umar Farooq took pot-shots at Tanvir's statement and said that MLA Zadibal wants to make Kashmir a place where liquor is readily available for the people both the locals as well as tourists. Mirwaiz Umar and many others minced no words in castigating Tanvir and at the end of the day the legislator from Zadibal cut a sorry figure.

The reason put forward by the MLA Zadibal in not enforcing a ban on sale of liquor was that the same is available to the people visiting places like Dubai and other Arab countries. The reason came in for sharp criticism from his detractors who said that if anybody does a wrong it does not give precedence to others to follow suit. Interestingly there are many people from the Jammu division who are in favour of a ban on liquor.

Not long ago there was only a single shop selling liquor in Srinagar and the same was located in the highly fortified Sonwar area. As on date many liquor shops have opened in Srinagar and there are some others that are functioning in other places of Kashmir. Tourism boom should not be at the cost of causing harm to a particular place's culture and heritage and Kashmir is no exception in this regard.

Awareness with Regard Schemes for Educated Unemployed Youth in J&K

DILSHADA PARVEEN

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been grappling with the challenge of educated unemployment, a pressing socio-economic issue that demands immediate and sustained attention. In response, the government has introduced a range of initiatives aimed at providing financial assistance, skill development, and employment opportunities for the youth. These schemes are meticulously designed to equip young individuals with the necessary resources and skills to secure livelihoods and contribute to the region's overall development. This article delves into the various schemes available for educated unemployed youth and the ongoing efforts to raise awareness about these opportunities. Mission Youth stands as a flagship initiative launched by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to engage and empower the youth through employment, skill development, and career enhancement programs. With nearly 69% of the population below the age of 35, this initiative aims to place youth empowerment at the centre of policymaking. Mission Youth comprises several sub-programs, each tailored to address specific needs and opportunities within the community. One nota-

ble program under Mission Youth is the 'Mumkin' Livelihood Generation Scheme. This scheme facilitates unemployed youth in acquiring small commercial vehicles at subsidized rates, enabling them to establish sustainable livelihoods in the transport sector. The entire implementation process is managed digitally via the JK-e Services portal to ensure transparency and efficiency. Mission Youth contributes either Rs 80,000 or 10% of the on-road price of the vehicle (whichever is lower) for each beneficiary. Additionally, an equivalent amount is provided by vehicle manufacturers partnering with the program, while beneficiaries retain the autonomy to select the type of vehicle. Another significant scheme under Mission Youth is 'Tejaswini', launched on International Women's Day to foster entrepreneurship among young women. This scheme provides financial assistance of up to Rs 5 lakhs to women aged 18 to 35 who have completed at least their 10th-grade education. The financial support empowers women to establish self-employment ventures aligned with their skills and the prevailing local conditions. The initiative also places substantial emphasis on skill development. Through various vocational training programs and certification courses, the scheme seeks to bridge the

gap between formal education and practical employment skills. By equipping youth with industry-relevant skills, Mission Youth enhances their employability and prepares them for diverse career opportunities. The PMEGP is a central government scheme implemented in Jammu and Kashmir to encourage the establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) serves as the nodal agency at the national level, with implementation carried out through State KVIC Directorates, Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs), District Industries Centres (DICs), and various banks. Financial assistance is provided in the form of subsidies routed through designated banks, enabling educated unemployed youth to start new ventures and contribute to local economic growth. The Seed Capital Fund Scheme, managed by the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), supports aspiring entrepreneurs in launching their ventures. By providing seed capital to eligible candidates, the scheme facilitates the establishment of micro and small enterprises. This initiative is particularly beneficial for youth with innovative business ideas who face challenges in accessing traditional

credit facilities. Under the Youth Start-up Loan Scheme, loans are disbursed to young entrepreneurs at subsidized interest rates. This scheme promotes self-employment and encourages a start-up culture within the region. By transforming job seekers into job creators, the YSLs aims to create a more dynamic and self-sufficient local economy. Recognizing that the success of these schemes hinges on public awareness and accessibility, the government has launched extensive information dissemination campaigns. These efforts involve multiple platforms, including print, digital, and social media, to ensure that potential beneficiaries are well-informed about the available opportunities. Career counselling sessions and job fairs are regularly organized at educational institutions, skill development centres, and district administrative offices. These events serve as interactive platforms where youth can engage directly with employers, scheme coordinators, and representatives from financial institutions. Additionally, digital platforms such as mobile applications and online portals have been developed to provide easy access to information regarding various schemes. Dedicated helplines and grievance redressal mechanisms further simplify the process of seeking assistance

and resolving concerns. The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) plays a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial spirit across the region. Through workshops, training programs, and personalized mentorship sessions, the institute helps aspiring entrepreneurs navigate the complexities of starting and running a business. JKEDI also facilitates access to government schemes and financial support. To date, the institute has trained over 38,000 youth, resulting in the successful establishment of more than 14,000 enterprises across the Union Territory. JKEDI also implements the Term Loan and Educational Loan Schemes of the National Minorities Development Finance Corporation (NMDFC) under the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India. The institute continues to promote innovation by setting up incubators, fabrication labs, and entrepreneurship development cells. Such initiatives provide a conducive environment for nurturing creativity and practical problem-solving abilities among the youth. Despite the availability of numerous schemes and proactive outreach efforts, certain challenges persist. A significant obstacle is the lack of awareness among eligible beneficiaries, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

Additionally, the application processes for some schemes can be cumbersome, deterring potential applicants. Delays in loan disbursement by financial institutions further complicate the situation. To overcome these challenges, the government must strengthen inter-departmental coordination, streamline application procedures, and expand awareness campaigns to cover all regions comprehensively. Introducing more user-friendly digital interfaces and enhancing the capacity of financial institutions to process applications swiftly will also contribute to the success of these initiatives. Thereby, The government of Jammu and Kashmir, through various schemes and awareness programs, is making commendable efforts to address the issue of educated unemployment. Mission Youth, PMEGP, SCFS, and YSLs are some of the key initiatives providing the youth with the necessary resources and opportunities to secure employment and explore entrepreneurial ventures. Continued focus on awareness, streamlined processes, and proactive support will be essential in realizing the full potential of these schemes and paving the way for a more prosperous and self-reliant Jammu and Kashmir.

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Dying Springs: A wakeup Call



NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

Kashmir, often called the "paradise on Earth," is renowned for its natural springs that have sustained life for centuries. These springs, fed by underground aquifers, have provided fresh drinking water to countless villages, forming the backbone of rural water supply. However, the recent trend of these springs drying up, especially during winter, signals an impending crisis.

Kashmir, the land of springs and rivers, is wit-

nessing a silent catastrophe—its water sources are dying. Once pristine and abundant, the natural springs that have quenched the thirst of generations are now vanishing. The Aripal Spring, which supplies drinking water to nearly 25 villages, is at the brink of death, its dry bed a painful testament to the worsening crisis. Similarly, the Achabal Spring, known for its historical and ecological significance, is showing disturbing signs of depletion. Recent videos of the spring's weakened flow evoke a sense of urgency, much like the hair-raising chill of an impending disaster.

This environmental crisis, however, is not just a warning about nature—it is a reflection of our

own spiritual and moral decline. As we watch our springs dry up, we must ask: Have we strayed from the path we were meant to follow? Have we abandoned the teachings that once ensured harmony between man and nature?

The drying of springs in Kashmir is not a sudden occurrence; it is the result of years of neglect, unchecked greed, and a reckless departure from our traditional ways.

The Aripal Spring, which supplies potable water to nearly 25 villages, is now at the brink of death. This once-gushing source of life has been reduced to a mere trickle, leaving thousands of people desperate for alternatives. Similarly, the Achabal Spring, famous for its historical and ecological

significance, is showing alarming signs of decline, as evident in recent videos where the once-booming water flow has dwindled to a level that sends shivers down the spine.

Just as we have polluted our water, we have also polluted our hearts. Once, our ancestors took only what was needed and ensured sustainability. Today, dishonesty, and greed govern our actions. We exploit resources without gratitude or responsibility, forgetting that every blessing misused will one day be taken away.

As Muslims, we were sent to this world as caretakers, entrusted with the duty of protecting what Allah has given us. Yet, we have deviated from this path. The Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of the con-

sequences of corruption and misguidance:

"Venality and taibting as appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned, so He may let them taste part of what they have done, that perhaps they will return (to righteousness)." (Surah Ar-Rum)

Today, it seems even the devils have stopped whispering to mislead us, for we have become enough to lead ourselves astray. We have replaced Islamic principles with selfish desires, forgetting the value of community, gratitude, and responsibility. When we forsake righteousness.

The drying of Kashmir's springs is not just an environmental issue; it is a test, a wake-up call to turn back before it is too late.

The solution lies not only in scientific efforts but in moral and spiritual revival.

We must seek forgiveness for our negligence—towards both our faith and our environment. Tawbah (repentance) is the first step towards change, both personally and collectively.

The dying springs of Kashmir are more than an environmental disaster; they are a reminder of how far we have strayed. The land cries out, and so should our hearts. We have been given a chance to return—to both our faith and our duty as stewards of this Earth. If we ignore this call, we risk losing not just our water, but our very purpose. The time to act is now—before our springs run dry, and with them, our souls.

What Bharat Tex 2025 brings to the Indian Textiles Industry's table

MITHILESHWAR THAKUR
SECRETARY GENERAL,
APPAREL EXPORT PROMOTION
COUNCIL

The Indian textiles industry has always been the cornerstone of the country's economy, tradition, culture and heritage. It stands tall as one of the topmost employment-generating sectors, next only to agriculture, and a significant contributor to India's GDP and export basket. But somehow it did not perform to its potential over the years, particularly in the global market, on account of variety of factors. Indian apparel industry particularly, which is the most important element of the textile value chain, found itself losing the race of cost competitiveness to some

of the least developed and under-developed countries enjoying tariff advantage in important markets, and thereby not realizing its true potential.

There was thus a pressing need for a total rejig and an urgent capacity augmentation to realign product offering with the global import pattern. This was largely addressed by PLI and PMMITRA initiatives of the government. The emerging confident India was inclined to go for it whole hog and unleash the animal spirit. That's what gave birth to the idea of Bharat Tex in 2024.

In a very short time, Bharat Tex emerged as a transformative platform driving innovation, collaboration and global outreach. Bharat Tex 2025, the second edition of this flagship event, is set to con-

tinue this legacy and elevate India's textiles sector to greater heights. Riding on the resounding success of the inaugural Bharat Tex held in February 2024, the upcoming edition promises to be bigger, better and even more impactful. Let us delve into what Bharat Tex 2025 will bring to the table for India's textiles industry.

Bharat Tex 2025 is poised to bring cutting-edge technologies, business opportunities and strategic partnerships to the forefront. It will serve as a convergence point for stakeholders from across the globe. Manufacturers, exporters, designers and policymakers from India and abroad will put their minds together to exchange ideas and foster collaborations. This will be the most appropriate plat-



form to showcase India's diverse textile offerings, from traditional handlooms to advanced technical textiles.

The presence of high-profile international delegations will further strengthen India's positioning as a reliable, stable and dependable partner in the global textile market. MoUs and strategic partnerships forged during the event will pave the way for increased foreign investments, joint ventures and technology transfer in the

sector.

Sustainability has become a central theme in the global textiles industry and Bharat Tex 2025 is committed to promoting eco-friendly practices. Kas-turi Cotton brand promoting home-grown organic cotton—an important milestone in India's quest for sustainable fibre—will be in full display in all its glory. The event will also showcase sustainable innovations, including organic fabrics, recycled materials and energy-efficient

production technologies. Green and sustainable story presence at Bharat Tex is closely aligned with India's national strategy on decarbonisation and net zero emission. As India advances its leadership in sustainable textiles and responsible clothing, the sustainability pavilion will provide a roadmap for businesses to integrate sustainability into their operations and supply chains.

Knowledge sessions during the event will serve as a forum for policy advocacy, bringing together industry leaders and policymakers to discuss critical issues and ideas. These will touch upon even emerging complex architecture of global compliances and ways and means to navigate them. The key takeaways of these discussions will influence future

policy frameworks, benefiting the textiles industry in the long run. Bharat Tex 2025 will encourage Indian textile manufacturers to not only be abreast of the latest global trends but also help them stay ahead of others.

As the textiles industry embraces Industry 4.0, Bharat Tex will highlight the role of technology in shaping the future of textiles through display of the state-of-the-art machinery, smart manufacturing solutions and digital tools. Artificial intelligence for fashion forecasting and blockchain technology for supply chain management, among others, will be key highlights.

Bharat Tex 2025 will provide Indian textile exporters with an unparalleled platform to connect with international buyers

and retailers. Dedicated B2B matchmaking sessions and export-focused seminars will enable exporters to showcase their products to a global audience, opening doors to non-traditional markets and expanding existing ones.

Bharat Tex 2025 most appropriately embraces and enshrines the idea of "Make in India and Make for the World" and "Vocal for Local and Local for Global" amply showcasing the true spirit of "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

As India aspires to become a \$5 trillion economy, the textiles sector will play a pivotal role in achieving this goal. Bharat Tex 2025, with its comprehensive agenda and vision, is set to be a catalyst for this transformation and position India as a global textile powerhouse.

Climate Change in Kashmir: A Catastrophe in the Making



JAVAIH BHAT

Kashmir, known for its breathtaking landscapes and snow-capped mountains, is experiencing an alarming climatic shift. This year, the region has recorded one of the lowest snowfalls in recent history, raising serious concerns about its fragile ecosystem and the livelihoods of millions. The decreasing snowfall is not just an anomaly; it is a clear indicator of the worsening climate crisis. If this trend continues, Kashmir may face an environmental catastrophe that could have far-reaching consequences.

For centuries, Kashmir has relied on its winter snowfall to sustain its rivers, lakes, and agriculture. However, in recent years, snowfall has been erratic and significantly lower than usual. This winter has been particularly dry, with major parts of the valley receiving little to no snow. Even higher-altitude areas, which usually witness heavy snow accumulation, have reported unusually low levels.

The reasons behind this decline are linked to global climate change. Rising temperatures, changing wind patterns, and decreasing moisture levels in the atmosphere are disrupting Kashmir's traditional weather cycles.

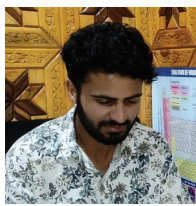
Snowfall acts as a natural reservoir, gradually melting in the summer to provide a steady supply of water to Kashmir's rivers, including the Jhelum and its tributaries.

With less snowfall, the region is likely to face severe water shortages in the coming months. This will impact on agriculture. Kashmir's farmers depend on snow-fed rivers for irrigation. A dry winter means reduced water availability in summer, leading to poor crop yields. Besides, many villages and towns rely on glacial meltwater for drinking and household use. A decline in snow levels threatens this critical resource.

Kashmir's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture and horticulture, particularly apple farming. The lack of snowfall disrupts the natural dormancy period of apple trees, leading to lower yields and inferior fruit quality. Saffron cultivation, another key industry, also requires sufficient moisture from snowfall. A dry winter spells disaster for thousands of farmers who rely on these crops for their livelihood.

The declining snowfall in Kashmir is a wake-up call. Immediate action is needed to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects. The decreasing snowfall this year is not just a seasonal irregularity—it is a sign of an impending environmental crisis. If urgent steps are not taken to address climate change, the region could face severe water shortages, agricultural decline, and economic distress. Protecting Kashmir's environment is our responsibility. The time to act is now before this paradise is lost to climate change.

The Book Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal: A Radiant Star of Urdu Fiction (A Profound Literary Review)



Book: Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal (Short Story Collection)
Author: Fazal Shafi Bhat
Pages: 158
Price: 350 (Discounted Price: 300)
Publisher: GNK Publications
Contact: 7006738304
MOHAMMAD ARAFAT WANI

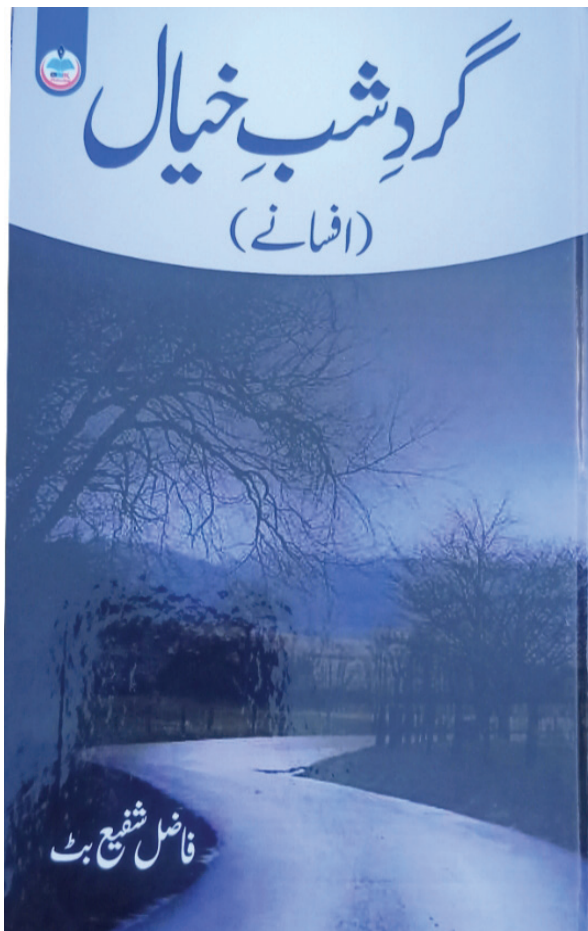
The esteemed Fazal Shafi Bhat, a distinguished short story writer and literary figure from Achengam, Anantnag, has recently published his masterpiece, Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal...a literary treasure trove comprising an exceptional collection of short stories. Each story captivates the reader with its unique depth and beauty. The language of these stories is simple yet profoundly touching, offering both entertainment and deep reflection on various aspects of life. These narratives explore human emotions, social issues, and the enchanting landscapes of nature with such artistic finesse that each tale feels like an entirely new world. This book is not only an ideal choice for literature enthusiasts but also a compelling read for audiences of all ages.

A Monumental Contribution to Urdu Fiction

Among the luminaries of Urdu fiction, Fazal Shafi Bhat stands out as a writer who not only mesmerizes readers with his storytelling but also delves into the complexities of human emotions, social realities, and psychological intricacies. His short story collection, Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal, is a rare masterpiece—a precious gift to lovers of Urdu literature.

The Intellectual and Philosophical Significance of the Book

This collection is not merely a compilation of short stories but a reflective mirror showcasing societal truths and the profound spectrum of human emotions. Fazal Shafi Bhat's writing is so powerful and deeply insightful that each story compels the reader to view their emotions, surroundings,



and realities from a novel perspective.

With 25 short stories, this collection presents a distinct reality, an emotional universe, and an intellectual panorama in each narrative. These stories are not just pieces of fiction but exemplars of literary excellence that provoke thought, stir emotions, and leave an indelible impact on the reader's soul.

Fazal Shafi Bhat: A Visionary Wordsmith

What sets Fazal Shafi Bhat apart is his extraordinary vision and unparalleled ability to portray the complexities of human psychology. Through his stories, he not only highlights the authenticity of human emotions but also exposes the bitter truths of society. His profound observational skills and distinctive writing style reflect the true strength of his pen.

Key Features of the Book

1. Depth of Stories and Diversity of Themes
Each short story reflects various aspects of life, addressing issues such as social injustices, the tragedy of human emotions, and moral and religious dilemmas.

2. Simplicity and Elegance of Language

Bhat's writing style is simple yet profoundly impactful, drawing read-

ers in and leaving a lasting impression on their minds and hearts.

3. Mastery in Characterization

His characters, drawn from everyday life, are imbued with such depth and realism that readers find glimpses of themselves or their surroundings within them.

A Closer Look at the Stories

1. Trailer

This story intricately explores the spiritual and social significance of a beard, exposing the paradox of how it has become a mere fashion statement in contemporary times.

2. Zabeeha (Sacrifice)

A deep reflection on the philosophy of sacrifice, emphasizing that true sacrifice should stem from sincerity and faith rather than mere ritualistic display.

3. Kufraan-e-Nemat (Ingratitude)

A poignant tale underscoring the sacred status of daughters, conveying the message that daughters are divine blessings and deserve the same honor as sons.

4. Barrenpur ka Qabristan (The Cemetery of Barrenpur)

A narrative that exalts the simplicity and warmth of village life over the artificial glamour of cities, proving that true love and sincerity always remain closest to the heart.



5. Kamaai (Earnings)

This story glorifies hard work and honesty, encouraging readers to reflect on the consequences of corruption and bribery.

6. Shab Khoon (Night Attack)

A gripping tale that sheds light on inheritance disputes through the lens of Islamic principles, emphasizing the importance of justice and rightful claims.

7. Tareek Lahad (The Dark Grave)

A profound exploration of the loneliness and neglect faced by disabled individuals, highlighting how even their own families often fail to show them love and compassion.

8. Bazaar-e-Ganan Marg (The Market of Hopelessness)

A powerful narrative conveying that despair is akin to disbelief, urging readers to maintain faith in God despite life's adversities.

9. Reengta Jahannum (Crawling Hell)

A chilling story that exposes the catastrophic impact of broken trust, demonstrating how blind faith in others can turn one's life into a living hell.

10. Roghan-e-Shifa (Healing Oil)

An eye-opening story about street-side medicine vendors deceiving innocent people, serving as a stark warning against compromises in healthcare.

11. Imaan ki Hararat (The Warmth of Faith)

This story reinforces the idea that acts of goodness often face societal resistance, but one must never abandon righteousness.

12. No Objection... My Lord

A harrowing depiction of the devastating effects of drug addiction, illustrating how it not only ruins an individual's life but also devastates their family.

13. Shikast-e-Arzoos (Shattered Dreams)

A deeply emotional narrative emphasizing the importance of valuing parents and understanding the weight of their dreams.

14. Gand ke Keeray (Maggots of Filth)

A story exploring the concept of poetic justice, illustrating how every action inevitably leads to consequences.

15. Ristay Nasoor (Festering Wounds)

A tragedy that exposes the harsh reality that a person's true worth is often only recognized after their death.

16. Raddi Kaghaz (Discarded Papers)

A reminder for those who undervalue books, highlighting the significance of knowledge and literature.

17. Manhoos Charkha (The Cursed Spinning Wheel)

A cautionary tale about the perils of blind trust, emphasizing the impor-

ance of prudence in life.

18. Maya ka Khel (The Illusion of Wealth)

A story that unmasks societal hypocrisy and the relentless pursuit of material gains.

19. Jurm-e-Zacefi (The Crime of Weakness)

An exposé on those who exploit religion for deceitful gains, demonstrating that true faith is a blend of intent and action.

20. Rahai (Liberation)

A powerful narrative that underscores the significance of human freedom, asserting that enslavement in any form is an affront to humanity.

21. Kaali Kokh ka Dukh (The Sorrow of the Dark Womb)

A deeply moving tale addressing the struggles of illegitimate children and the injustices they endure.

22. Khwab Shehar (Dream City)

A story that contrasts the peaceful and loving life of a village with the artificial dazzle of urban existence.

23. Aakhri Jazira (The Last Island)

An emotionally charged story that vividly portrays the toxic impact of drug addiction.

24. Tilsmi Kangri (The Enchanted Kangri)

A tale that beautifully illustrates the essence of sacrifice, simplicity, and honesty.

25. Nakarada Gunah (The Uncommitted Sin)

A striking narrative about the perils of social media misuse, shedding light on a prevalent contemporary issue.

Conclusion

Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal is not just a book but a literary gem that reflects the multifaceted realities of life. This collection is an invaluable gift for every reader, from Urdu literature students to general audiences. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Fazal Shafi Bhat on this remarkable achievement and pray that his pen continues to illuminate the world of literature.

Undoubtedly, Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal is a masterpiece that will remain an eternal part of Urdu literary history.

Literary writer & insightful columnist

Mohammad Arfat Wani

Kuchmulla Tral, Pulwama, Kashmir

wania6817@gmail.com

Increasing cases of rape due to false promises of marriage



PRIVANKA SAURABH

The new report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) states that every year, several thousand rape cases are registered under the guise of false marriage vows. The judgment given by the Allahabad High Court in the Atul Gautam case in 2025 raises the question of how judicial interpretations affect the autonomy and legal protection of women. Rape and consenting to sex are clearly different. In these situations, the court must carefully consider whether the complainant had a genuine desire to marry the victim or if he had any ulterior motive and made a false promise to this effect only to satisfy his

lust, as the latter is considered deception or fraud. Additionally, there is a difference between not keeping a false promise and breaking it. A promise made by the accused without the intention to entice the prosecutrix to engage in sexual activity will not be valid as rape. The prosecutrix may consent to sexual relations with the accused based on her love and passion for him rather than on a false impression created by the accused. Alternatively, the accused may be unable to marry her despite having the intention to do so due to unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances. These situations need to be handled differently. A case of rape is clear only if the complainant has a malicious intent or ulterior motive.

The Atul Gautam v. Allahabad High Court decision violates the Supreme Court guidelines. This decision is in contrast to the Aparna Bhatt v. State of Madhya Pradesh decision of 2021, which

forbids the accused and the victim from communicating while on bail to avoid secondary trauma. The Supreme Court ruled that to guarantee a fair trial, bail requirements should not compel communication between the accused and the survivor. The idea that marriage is a remedy for rape and not a punishment for the crime is reinforced by such bail requirements, which put the social compact ahead of the rule of law. Similar words were used while granting bail in Rama Shankar v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2022), which weakened the prosecution's case against the defendant. The survivor may be forced into marriage by the accused in order to obtain bail, resulting in continued abuse within the legal system. Abhishek v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2024) created a coercive dynamic by granting bail to the accused in exchange for a promise of marriage, rather than guaranteeing justice. Which forces the survivor

to depend on the accused instead of getting proper rehabilitation support. The state's obligation to provide housing, education, and counseling to survivors and children was highlighted by the Court in the Juvenile's Right to Privacy (2024). The purpose of bail is not to enforce social duties but to guarantee temporary freedom while the case is pending.

Women's autonomy and the continuation of the "honor" ideology are affected by these judicial decisions, which also reinforce gender stereotypes. Such decisions make rape less of a crime and more of a loss of chastity, reinforcing the patriarchal notion that a woman's dignity is tied to marriage. Courts have, in many past decisions, equated a victim's rehabilitation with marriage, failing to acknowledge rape as a violation of bodily autonomy. Courts undermine women's autonomy by pressuring victims to marry offenders and promoting abuse and

control under legal protection. Courts that consider marriage as a remedy ignore the victim's lack of consent, which means that coercion can be legally justified. Women are often forced to stay in "compromise marriages" with their abusers despite continued trauma and safety risks. Violating Article 21, which protects women's autonomy and dignity, such decisions violate women's constitutional rights by forcing them into relationships against their will. According to the Supreme Court, forced marriages violate Article 21, causing victims to face more exploitation instead of justice.

These judgments perpetuate the notion that marriage can resolve sexual violence, turning these incidents into civil disputes rather than serious crimes. Victims in conservative rural areas are often pressured by courts to marry the accused. To ensure that justice is not compromised by social pressure, courts should

follow established rules that prohibit marriage from being a condition of bail. In the Aparna Bhat case (2021), the Supreme Court ruled that bail requirements that force victims into relationships or perpetuate gender stereotypes should be avoided. The state should improve welfare programs by providing monetary support, counseling, legal aid, and skill-building courses to help victims become self-reliant. Integrated support services are provided by the One Stop Centre scheme; however, for maximum impact, this needs to be improved and expanded. To ensure that judicial discretion does not threaten victims' rights, legislative amendments should specifically prohibit the practice of granting bail on the condition of marriage. Provide gender-sensitive training to judges to ensure that legal interpretations uphold constitutional principles rather than patriarchal biases. Victims' rights and gender justice should

be incorporated into judicial training courses, such as those conducted by the National Judicial Academy.

To ensure speedy justice, speedy trials will eliminate the need for lengthy legal battles to force victims into settlements. Although the 2019 Nirbhaya Fund was set aside for fast-track courts, many of them still remain underutilized as a result of a lack of resources and administrative bottlenecks. Such judicial decisions risk undermining women's rights and thus reinforcing patriarchal norms. A well-thought-out legal strategy is needed to distinguish between the complexity of the relationship and the intent to defraud. Justice can be delivered by strengthening legal protections and providing gender-sensitive judicial training, in line with India's commitment to gender equality.

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

MLA Dr. Bharat Bhushan reviews Industrial Development, Employment Generation scenario in Kathua District

HT News Network

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 17: Member Legislative Assembly Kathua Dr. Bharat Bhushan on Monday convened a meeting with key stakeholders here in the Conference Hall of the SIDCO Complex to review the industrial scenario, address challenges faced by local industries, and explore opportunities for employment generation.

The meeting was attended by General Manager, District Industries Centre Mohammed Ashraf; President Kathua Industrial Unit Association, Ajeet Bawa; Functional Manager, DIC and several industrialists representing different industries established across Kathua District. During the meeting, the MLA emphasized that the pri-



mary objective was to evaluate the human resource needs and skill sets required for the absorption of local unemployed youth in industries. He underscored the importance of aligning the industrial workforce requirements with the skill development of local youth to enhance employment opportunities. To facilitate this, he directed the GM DIC to appoint a Nodal Officer responsible for collecting resumes of unemployed

youth, enabling a centralized system for job applications and placements. A detailed discussion was held regarding the necessary infrastructure improvements to make the industrial estates more viable for new ventures while also consolidating the existing infrastructure. Industrialists raised pressing issues demanding renovation of roads within the industrial estates, upgradation of sewerage system and the establishment

of a fire station to facilitate smooth industrial operations. The MLA Kathua also took stock of the workforce composition in local industries, assessing the ratio of local and non-local employees. He assured the stakeholders of the government's commitment to addressing these concerns while ensuring that the local population benefits from increased employment opportunities.

The MLA reiterated that the primary goal of the meeting was to foster effective two-way communication between industries and the government. He reaffirmed the government's dedication to creating an industrial environment conducive to business growth while simultaneously generating employment for local youth.

Rajouri Admin finalises arrangements for JKPSCE Exam

HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 17: Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Rajiv Khajuria today finalized the arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) exam being held in two shifts on February 23, 2025. Chairing a meeting, the ADC directed the concerned authorities to install proper signages near all designated examination centers to facilitate candidates. He instructed the Principals of the identified exam centers to ensure proper seating arrangements, cleanliness, adequate ventilation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on Two names MEHRAJ U DIN BHAT S/O GH MOHAMMAD BHAT R/O BADAM BAGH SOPORE & MOHAMMAD AYOUB GANIE S/O ABDUL SAMAD GANIE R/O WAGOORA BARAMULLA ..Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212010015905 division BARAMULLA wants to be registered on only one name MOHAMMAD AYOUB GANIE S/O ABDUL SAMAD GANIE R/O WAGOORA ..If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.
Name.....MOHAMMAD AYOUB BHAT
S/O ... ABDUL SAMAD GANIE
R/O WAGOORA BARAMULLA

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of FURKAAN GULZAR LONE S/O GULZAR AHMAD LONE R/O TILAGAM Tehsil PATTAN Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 19/12/2020/ and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ABDULHAD CHOPAN S/O MOHAMMAD CHOPAN R/O KALANTR BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,03/12/1975 / and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of IFAT BASHIR , SADAF BASHIR , DAWOOD AHMAD CHOPAN S/O BASHIR AHMAD CHOPAN R/O NAGBAL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/10 /2013 , 04/03/2018 & 12/12/2014, and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) PEER ZADA FAYAZ AHMAD to(New name) FAYAZ AHMAD PIR in future I will be known as (New name) FAYAZ AHMAD PIR if anybody is having any objection he/ she may contact passport office SRINAGAR within 7 days .After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

Name. ..FAYAZ AHMAD PIR
S/O NIZAM U DIN PIR
R/O PUTUKHA MUQAM
PIN 193201

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL AND HOSPITALS DIVISION SRINAGAR

(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)

Subject: - Rate contract for SITC of Inverter Series Hot and cold Air Conditioning Units at vital locations of Govt.

CD Hospital , LD, Children Hospital & BJ Srinagar

Ref :- This office e- NIT no: M&HDS/TS/2024-25/143/e-tendering Dated 06.02.2025

CORRIGENDUM

In view of representations from various firms/OEMs the intending Bidders shall kindly read the following changes in the tender document 1. TECHNICAL PARAMETERS for 1.76/2 TR capacity (annexure B)

Coefficient of performance (COP) be read as :-

≥3.15 Instead of ≥3.3

2. Accordingly the critical dates are extended as follows:-

S.No	Description	Date and Time
1.	Last Date of Bid Submission	20.02.2025 (14:00 hrs)
2.	Date of Bid Opening	20.02.2025 (16:00 hrs)

The changes are applicable everywhere in the tender document . All other Terms and Conditions of the NIT shall remain the same.

Sd/-

DIPK-12094/24

Date: Feb 17 2025

Executive Engineer,
Mechanical & Hospitals Division,
Srinagar

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ABIRO HILAL S/O HILAL AHMAD BABA R/O LADOORA RAFIABAD Tehsil WATERGAM Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,05/08/2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of MOHD ABSAR WANI S/O TARIQ AHMAD WANI R/O DADIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,07/09/2023 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR (UT)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Machinery Division Kashmir, Mechanical &
Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir

Corrigendum 07
For Date Extension.

Name of work: - SITC & ITC of sprinkler irrigation System including HDPE pipe/LLDPE pipeline /DGSet/Horizontal Pumping unit including allied fittings for Saffron Crop cultivated area at Bore well No. 124 and Bore well No. 109 under implementation of National Mission on Saffron
Reference: This office e-NIT No: - MDSK/TS /2024-25/83 Date:12-12-2024 1. (Tender ID: 2024_PWDJK_267800_1)
2. (Tender ID: 2024_PWDJK_267800_2)
Due to no response, the critical dates of the above referred e-NIT are hereby extended as under: -

S.No.	Description	Previous Dates	Extended Dates
01.	Last date of downloading/ submission of bids	15-02-2025 upto 06:55PM	22-02-2025 upto 06:55PM
02.	Date of opening of bids online	17-02-2025 at 02:00 PM	24-02-2025 at 02:00 PM

All other terms, conditions and specifications as stipulated in the e-NIT shall remain unchanged.

DIPK-12088/24
Date: Feb 17, 2025

Sd/
Technical Officer
With Executive Engineer
Machinery Division, Kashmir.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM, KASHMIR

Tel:0194-2315378, Fax 0194-2479548, e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com

Subject: - Application for change in location of the excursion agency under the name and style “Kashmir Surprise” located at Mustafaabad Zakura.

Public Notice.

Whereas, proprietor of the excursion agency under the name and style “Kashmir Surprise” has approached this office for change in location of his Excursion Agency from Mustafaabad Zakura, Srinagar to Syedpora Hamchi, Srinagar as per Section 39 of the J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/2011;

Whereas, the said excursion agency is registered with this department under the name and style “Kashmir Surprise” in the name of Ms. Rohina Akhter D/o Mr. Ashaq Hussain Mir R/o Syedpora, Hamchi, Hazratbal, Srinagar bearing registration No. JKEA00002655 dated 01.01.2024 which is valid upto 31.12.2026;

Whereas, the applicant has submitted Rent deed (Notarized) dated: 05.02.2025 along with supportive affidavit dated 05.02.2025 duly authenticated by 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, NOC from J&K Bank Branch Unit Beehama, Ganderbal issued vide No. JKB/GBL/2025 dated 03.02.2025, photocopy of Registration Certificate and affidavit for change in location duly authenticated by 1st Class Judicial Magistrate;

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/2012, before the request of the applicant for change in location of his Excursion Agency “Kashmir Surprise” from Mustafaabad Zakura, Srinagar to Syedpora Hamchi, Srinagar is considered, the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Financial Institutions/ Banks/ Development Authorities/ PHE Department/ Electric Department that in case of any objection, the same should reach the office of undersigned within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections beyond a period of 07 days will be entertained and the request of the applicant will be considered under rules, after submission of requisite documents.

DIPK-12079/24
Date: Feb 17, 2025

Sd/
Assistant Director Tourism,
Registration

Deputy Chief Minister reviews development landscape of Baramulla Issues directives for expeditious completion of ongoing projects

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 17: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today chaired a meeting at Baramulla held to review the developmental landscape of the District with emphasis on assessing progress on ongoing projects, addressing challenges in implementation and ensuring timely execution of key initiatives across the various sectors.

Present in the meeting were Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Elections, Javed Ahmad Dar, MLA Uri, Sajad Ahmad, MLA Wagoora-Kreeri, Irfan Hafeez

Lone, MLA Sopore, Irshad Ahmad Kar, MLA Pattan, Javaid Riyaz Bedar, MLA Tangmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah (who joined virtually), District Development Commissioner, Minga Sherpa, Heads of Departments and sectoral officers.

The Deputy Chief Minister conducted a comprehensive review of projects being executed by Public Works (PWD), Health, RDD, Education, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry departments besides Jal Jeevan Mission, KPDCL and other key departments.

Legislators from the concerned constituencies projected their grievances and demands including issues related to mining in Uri sub-division,



development of Parihaspora, Pattan, as a heritage village, expediting work on drainage work in Sopore, macadamization of roads in Wagoora-Kreeri and other development related issues.

While addressing the concerns raised by the Legislators, the Deputy Chief Minister issued directions to the concerned officers to expedite the work on ongoing projects to ensure timely completion.

The Deputy Chief Minister underscored the need for strong collaboration between elected legislators and the officers, urging them to work in close coordination to fulfill aspirations of the people and transform the district into a thriving economic hub. Earlier, the DC apprised the Deputy

Chief Minister regarding development scenario of the district and highlighted various long pending demands. These included establishment of mini secretariat in Sopore, Tangmarg, Baramulla and Uri; Multi Level Parking in Sopore and Baramulla; additional hospital and upgradation of GMC Baramulla, availability of specially skilled doctors; Gulmarg road upgradation; provision for ecotourism in places like Mund Daji, Kitar Daji, Shrunz Fall; boundary wall and road upgradation around SKAUST Wadoora, upgradation of sewage network in towns besides upgradation of stadium with installation of flood lights.

DC Budgam launches solarization of Government Buildings Under PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

■ HT News Network

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 17: The District Administration Budgam in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA), Department of Science & Technology, has launched the solarization of government buildings in District Budgam under the PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

The initiative was launched by Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Akshay Labroo at DC office Complex. On the occasion, 50KW capacity panels were installed on both old & new buildings of DC Office.

More than 90 government buildings across District Budgam shall be covered under this initiative in the next 3 months, the district administration said.

Speaking at the occasion, DC highlighted the benefits of the scheme, emphasizing its role in reducing the financial burden of electricity bills for government institutions, decreasing reliance on conventional energy sources, and promoting environmental sustainability.



tal sustainability.

He stressed upon the agency to ensure the smooth and timely implementation of the project while maintaining efficiency of the project.

Labroo said all major government buildings have been identified for solarization. These buildings will be connected to the utility grid through the Net-Metering mechanism facilitated by KPDCL, ensuring accurate energy accounting through solar power.

On the occasion, GM DIC, ACR, CPO,

Executive engineer KPDCL, AEE JAKEDA and officers of JAKEDA were present. He stressed upon the agency to ensure the smooth and timely implementation of the project while maintaining efficiency of the project.

Labroo said all major government buildings have been identified for solarization. These buildings will be connected to the utility grid through the Net-Metering mechanism facilitated by KPDCL, ensuring accurate energy accounting through solar power.

DC Bandipora Reviews Wullar Project; Multi-Departmental Strategy Finalized

■ HT News Network

Bandipora, February 17: The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Monday convened a meeting to review the progress and challenges of the Wullar Project.

During the meeting, different aspects of Rs. 350 crore Wullar project were deliberated upon including resource management, regulatory compliance, and multi-departmental coordination to ensure seamless execution.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of addressing material identification delays, ensuring regulatory compliance, and maintaining sustainability while executing the project. He



directed all stakeholders to work diligently towards effective project execution while upholding regulatory and environmental safeguards.

He emphasized that all activities must be conducted in strict adherence to government instructions, SROs, and notifications.

On the occasion, the DC

said that a multi-departmental committee will be convened to deliberate and finalize action plans. He said that opinions from all concerned departments will be sought before further implementation and will be incorporated in the action plan.

MA Qadri urged the concerned officers to take measures that will minimize ecological impact,

with basic costs maintained at reasonable levels besides urged concerned officers to ensure necessary facilitation for smooth operations.

Deputy Commissioner directed key departments, including I&FC, Fisheries, and R&B, to jointly oversee project execution to ensure compliance.

He also emphasized the need to prevent any damage to Fisheries, Public Health Engineering (PHE), or other departmental infrastructure during the process.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Executive Engineer R&B, Tehsildar Bandipora, Assistant Director Fisheries, DMO Bandipora, representative from Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) Department and other concerned.

National Lok Adalat in Anantnag on March 08

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 17: The District Legal Services Authority Anantnag in collaboration with Tehsil Legal Services Committees of District is going to hold 1st National Lok Adalat of the year 2025 at District Court Complex Anantnag as well as Taluka courts on March 08, 2025.

The cases regarding pre-Litigation and post Litigation Cases, NI Act cases under Section 138, Bank Recovery matters, Labour disputes cases, Electricity and Water bills excluding Non-compoundable, Criminal Compoundable, Matrimonial and other civil disputes were taken up during this National Lok Adalat for amicable settlement.

Accordingly, it is informed to all concerned parties, advocates who desire to get their cases, disputes and claims settled through this National Lok Adalat may approach District Legal Services Authority Anantnag/Concerned Tehsil Legal Services Committees by or before 28th of February 2025, so that their cases, claims and disputes can be settled amicably through this National Lok Adalat.

Orientation cum Training prog for selected Hajj Pilgrims held in Shopian

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY, 17: District Administration Shopian organised an Orientation cum Training Programme for 132 selected Haj Pilgrims of district for Haj-2025 at Jamia Masjid Shopian today to provide proper guidance and information to the pilgrims. The training programme was held under the supervision of experienced trainers and was attended by both male and female pilgrims. Various experts including Khursheed Ahmad Deva delivered brief lectures on Manasik-i-Hajj while authorities distributed special pamphlets of guidance for the pilgrims. Participants were educated & information regarding various matters including immigration checks, boarding, lodging, travelling, accommodation, currency change and other activities.

Sat Sharma nominates BJP district presidents for Kashmir

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, FEBRUARY, 17: Jammu & Kashmir BJP President, Sat Sharma (CA), in consultations with Sh. Tarun Chugh, National General Secretary, BJP & Prabhari J&K-UT, Sh. Ashok Kaul, General Secretary Organization & Sh. Sunil Sharma, LoP and Kashmir Prabhari, has nominated district presidents for ten districts of Kashmir.

DC Ganderbal chairs review meeting of Health Department

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Health Department to assess the overall performance and progress of various healthcare initiatives in the district.

At the outset, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. B. A. Khan highlighted the physical and financial status of health programs, including the progress of civil works and their completion under different schemes through a presentation.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the timely completion of civil works, efficient utilization of financial resources, and ensuring quality health-



care services to the public.

He directed all concerned officers to expedite the execution of ongoing projects and address any bottlenecks hindering progress.

Further, discussions were held on strengthening healthcare infrastructure, immunization coverage, and implemen-

tation of NCD programs to enhance service delivery in the district.

DC stressed interdepartmental coordination and urged all stakeholders to work collaboratively for the smooth execution of health projects, ultimately benefiting the residents of Ganderbal.

Awareness Camp on SBM-G II Held in Pulwama

■ HT News Network

Pulwama, February 17: An IEC awareness camp under Swachh Bharat Mission, Grameen Phase 2 (SBM-G II) was successfully organised today at the Meeting Hall, RDD Complex, Pulwama.

The event was chaired by Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Pulwama and Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Pulwama and focused on strengthening waste management strategies and ensuring the sustainability of sanitation initiatives across the district.

The programme covered key aspects of Solid Waste Management (SWM), including the operation and maintenance of SBM(G) assets, door-to-door (D2D) waste collection and scientific disposal methods. Officials deliberated on the challenges in waste manage-



ment and explored strategies for effective implementation to enhance sanitation coverage in rural areas.

A major highlight of the programme was the selection of five panchayats from each block as pilot panchayats to establish a sustainable Solid Waste Management system in the district. This initiative aims to serve as a model for efficient waste collection and disposal, setting the groundwork for a cleaner and healthier Pulwama.

Agri depts organizes two-day awareness prog on "Scientific Beekeeping" at Kulgam.

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 17: The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Department Kulgam today organized a Seminar cum Awareness programme on "Scientific Bee Keeping", under National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM) at Community hall here at DH Pora Kulgam.

This programme was inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan. The programme was attended by Sub Divisional Magistrate Bashir-ul-Hassan, Tehsildar DH Pora, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Coordinator, Scientists from KVK Pombay and other officers besides farmers, beekeepers and unemployed youth.



Addressing the occasion, the DC stressed upon the concerned authorities

to extend their range of operation and involve more farmers especially the unemployed youth under various welfare programmes sponsored by the department so that they can avail benefits for their sustainable livelihood.

He emphasized to disseminate awareness among the people regarding various new and scientific beekeeping cultivation methods so that productivity is increased.

He also urged the concerned to ensure handholding of farmers not only in increasing the production but to work on marketing aspect to fetch best prices of their products. DC also spoke at length regarding the support available under HADP and National Mission for Honey and Beekeeping for the potential beekeepers in the district.

Satish Sharma for evolving robust mechanism to ensure prompt delivery of DLs

Reviews functioning of MVD, Instructs to intensify road checking

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: Minister for FCS& CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Information Technology, Science and Technology, ARI& Training, Satish Sharma, today chaired a meeting to review the functioning of Motor Vehicles Department here.

Secretary Transport Department, Neeraj Kumar; MDJKRTC, Rakesh Kumar Srangal; Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Paul Mahajan; RTO Jammu, Pankaj Bhagotra; RTO Kashmir, Kazi Irfan besides ARTOs from different districts and senior officials were present in the meeting. The Transport Commis-



sioner gave a brief presentation on e-challaning, establishment of RTDCs/ DTCs and ICC, action against traffic violators, RSVF, VLTP, printing of Driving Licenses, rules related to E-rickshaws and other allied matters. The Minister emphasised the need for evolving a robust mechanism to ensure prompt

delivery of driving licenses to the general public. He also asked for raising the Driving Training Centres (DTC's) in far flung districts both in Jammu and Kashmir division so that the facility is made available to the desirous applicants at their doorstep. Regarding traffic violations, the Minister emphasised upon MVD and

traffic police to work together in order to curb this menace. Regarding e-rickshaws, the Minister exhorted that persons with only valid driving licence should be registered and given the e-rickshaws and strict action should be initiated against those violating the rules. Satish Sharma also issued instructions for intensifying road checking in all the districts. He asked the officers to ensure that the offenders are booked as per provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act.

The Minister asked the RTOs/ARTOs to make road checking a routine feature with focus on speed limit devices, overloading, overcharging of passenger fare and route violations.

Chairman DDC B'pora holds council meet, reviews progress of developmental schemes

■ HT News Network

Bandipora, February 17: The chairman District Development Council Bandipora Ab Gani Bhat, on Monday chaired DDC council meeting at Mini secretariat Bandipora to review the progress of developmental schemes implemented in District Bandipora. The meeting was attended by Vice Chairperson Kousar Shafeeq, DDC members, ADDC Mohammad Ashraf Bhatt, ACD Irfan Bahadur, and senior officers from various departments.

The meeting focused on assessing the progress of developmental works and threadbare discussed various issues of developmental schemes of district Bandipora. Chief Executive Officer District Develop-



ment Council Bandipora/ ADDC Mohammad Ashraf Bhatt presented a detailed powerpoint presentation outlining schemes and projects currently underway besides their physical and financial status.

The meeting was informed that, District Capex Budget for the year 2024-25 has been fixed at Rs 6800.64 Lakhs for which

works/activities have been identified for improvement of Rural Infrastructure, Electrification networks, drinking water facilities, Augmentation of infrastructure in educational institutions and other works of public importance. During the meeting, DDC members raised a number of issues concerning their respective con-

stituencies, urging for quick resolutions and the timely completion of ongoing projects.

DDC members collectively urged the concerned departments to prioritize and expedite the pace of developmental work, ensuring that the people's needs are met without delay. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman DDC, Ab Gani Bhat emphasized the importance of ensuring the timely and efficient completion of all developmental schemes in the district.

He urged the concerned departments to maintain coordination and ensure that the benefits of these schemes reach the public as early as possible besides stressed the need for accelerating the pace of work on developmental projects.

DC Kulgam reviews preservation of Geoheritage site at Aharbal

■ Farooq Rather

Kulgam February 17: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan on Monday chaired a meeting regarding preservation of Panjal Trap Geological heritage site at Aharbal.

The meeting was attended by ACR, SDM D.H, Director (Geology), Tehsildar DH Pora, Senior Geologists from Geological Survey of India (GSI), Srinagar.

Director GSI appraised the chair regarding the activities of GSI and its role in identifying the Geoheritage and Geotourism sites.

It is pertinent to mention that the GSI has declared the Panjal Trap-A volcanic rock formed 280-255 million years ago, as an important Geological landmark.

The Panjal Trap, Aharbal hosts multiple volcanoes and scenic landscape of waterfall and balanced rocks.

On the occasion, DC directed the concerned revenue officer to select a suitable site for the installation of Geoheritage sign board developed by GSI. The meeting was attended by ACR, SDM D.H, Director



(Geology), Tehsildar DH Pora, Senior Geologists from Geological Survey of India (GSI), Srinagar.

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On the occasion, DC directed the concerned revenue officer to select a suitable site for the installation of Geoheritage sign board developed by GSI.

7 Day Training on Scientific Beekeeping concludes at Krishi Bhawan Jammu

Agri Dir felicitates participants

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: The seven-day training program on Scientific Beekeeping organized by the Apiculture Development Scheme, Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department Jammu, under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) ended today here at the Conference Hall of Directorate of Agriculture Krishi Bhawan Jammu with the felicitation of 50 attendee farmers and beekeepers drawn from across the Jammu Division. The program, held from February 10 to February 16, 2025, was designed to raise awareness and enhance the skills of prospective beekeepers. Participants received training in bee hive operations and colony management at the DCTC, Apiculture Development Scheme Jammu. They were imparted hands-on experience and practical insights into beekeeping. The event was presided over by Director Agri-



culture Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen, who felicitated the beekeepers. He presented them with Tool Kits, bee flora saplings, and certificates of participation, acknowledging their commitment to advancing scientific beekeeping practices.

The Director assured the beekeepers that the department would extend support in the marketing and branding of honey products. He encouraged beekeepers to work in clusters or

form Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to strengthen the marketing and sales of honey. He also pledged the department's technical and financial assistance, particularly to support the migration of bee colonies and optimize honey production. The Director highlighted the economic potential of various hive products such as royal jelly, bee venom, propolis and pollen, which could provide valuable additional sources of income for beekeepers. Deputy Director (Central) Jammu and Liaison Officer for the Apiculture Development Scheme, Dr. Ashwani Sharma, also addressed the gathering, focusing on the migration challenges faced by beekeepers. He emphasized the need for creating a green corridor to ensure that bees do not suffer during migration. Dr. Sharma urged Director Agriculture to consider this initiative to facilitate smoother and healthier migration of bee colonies, thereby supporting beekeepers' mobility without harming their colonies.

Group of 35 Doda Farmers leaves for Inter-UT Agro-Exposure Visit

DC flags off tour sponsored by Agriculture Department

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh today flagged off a group of 35 farmers for an inter-UT agro-exposure visit within Jammu and Kashmir. The initiative is being organised under the Development of Seed & Seed Multiplication Chain by the Department of Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Doda.

The DC interacted with the farmers, emphasizing the importance of such exposure visits in enhancing their knowledge about modern agricultural practices and boosting agro-entrepreneurship. He encouraged the participants to make the



most of the opportunity by learning advanced techniques and innovations that can be implemented in the district to improve agricul-

tural productivity and profitability.

Chief Agriculture Officer Anil Gupta, along with officers and

officials of the Agriculture Department were also present at the flag off event. The participating farmers drawn from different parts of the District expressed enthusiasm for the visit and its potential to positively impact their farming practices.

This exposure visit aims to strengthen the farmers' understanding of progressive farming methodologies and promote the adoption of innovative agro-techniques across the district. The DC interacted with the farmers, emphasizing the importance of such exposure visits in enhancing their knowledge about modern agricultural practices and boosting agro-entrepreneurship. He encouraged the participants.

Multi-Storey Automatic Parking planned for Kishtwar Town

DC inspects proposed Project site

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) R.K Shavan today inspected the proposed site for construction of an Automatic Puzzle-Type Multi-Storey Parking facility in the Kishtwar Town. The project aims at decongesting traffic in the main city.

The proposed project, envisaging a 08 Storey automated parking facility with parking capacity of 240 Vehicles, is expected to significantly ease vehicular congestion and improve urban mobility.

During the site visit near Bun Astan, the DC issued necessary directions to the Mechanical and Hospital Division Kishtwar for the framing and submission of a



Detailed Project Report (DPR) at the earliest.

Tehsildar Nirbhay Sharma, AEE Mechanical Umar Mushtaq, revenue officials and others were present during the visit.

Series of anti-drug IEC campaign events held across Jammu District

ADM underlines crucial role of civil society in combating substance abuse

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: Additional District Magistrate Jammu, Ansuja Jamwal, who is also Executive Secretary of the District Red Cross Society, today inaugurated a drug awareness programme at The Bethel Living Word School Qasim Nagar.

The initiative was part of the three-month-long Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign aimed at combating the menace of substance abuse.

As many as 40 awareness events were held today across different Panchayats of the District, educating the public about

the perils of drug menace and its ill effects on individuals and society. The IEC activities were started on February 10, 2025—with the district administration having planned 305 events in the district to be held every Monday, over a period of three months.

The programme featured lectures by medical experts, enlightening students and parents about drug addiction and its devastating consequences. A former addict also shared his experiences with substance abuse and the challenges of rehabilitation, underscoring the dangers of addiction. The event was also attended by former corporators.



Speaking on the occasion, ADM Ansuja Jamwal emphasised the collective responsibility

of schools and civil society in curbing drug abuse. She further elaborated on the destructive cycle of addiction and its far-reaching impact on individuals, families and society.

The ADM underscored that disrupting the drug supply chain requires public vigilance and commitment. "Drugs are not cool. Any individual luring children under such pretences should be reported," she asserted.

Highlighting the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, ADM Jamwal urged school authorities to report violations, ensuring strict action against non-compliant vendors.

Psychiatrist Dr Manmeet Singh advised parents and teachers to monitor behavioural changes that may indicate substance abuse, while Senior Lecturer Dr Shefali Gupta elaborated on preventive measures. SDPO Jammu East Shazeen Bhat outlined the legal repercussions of drug abuse.

The event also featured recitation of poems by students and a skit on the dangers of drug addiction. It concluded with an awareness rally, flagged off by ADM Jamwal, in which students, teachers, and local residents marched through the neighbourhood, distributing informative pamphlets to spread awareness.

Banihal Farmers Explore Seed Diversity at SKUAST Kashmir

■ DR.AB QAYOOM

Srinagar, Feb. 17: In A significant step towards strengthening agricultural awareness and innovation, a group of farmers from Banihal visited Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Kashmir as part of the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) Seed Project. The exposure visit aimed to educate farmers about the diverse seed varieties available in the Kashmir Valley and introduce them to advanced agricultural practices that can enhance productivity and sustainability. Agricultural research institutions play a crucial role in developing improved seed varieties and farming techniques, but their impact is maximized when this knowledge reaches grassroots farmers. Recognizing this, SKUAST Kashmir, in collaboration with HADP, organized this awareness program to ensure that farmers from Banihal receive firsthand exposure to cutting-edge agricultural innovations. During the visit, Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director of Extension at SKUAST, interacted with the farmers and emphasized the importance of high-yielding and location-specific seed varieties. She highlighted ongoing efforts under HADP projects that focus on ensuring livelihood security and sustainable agricultural development. "Selecting the right seed varieties based on the region's agro-climatic conditions is crucial for enhancing productivity. Through this initiative, we aim to equip farmers with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed decisions about their crops," said Prof. Kanth. The awareness program featured key insights from Prof. Purshottam Singh, Prof. Farahanaz Rasool, Deputy Director of Extension, and Prof. Liyaqat Chaudhary, along with a team of scientists from SKUAST's Directorate of Extension. The presence of senior extension officials from Banihal's agriculture and allied departments further strengthened the exchange of knowledge between researchers and



the farming community. Farmers were introduced to various improved seed varieties of cereals, fodder, and other crops, helping them understand their benefits in terms of yield, resistance to diseases, and adaptation to local conditions. Experts also provided practical demonstrations and discussions on innovative farming techniques, climate resilience, and soil health management. For many farmers, the visit provided valuable exposure to modern agricultural research and technology. Discussions focused not only on seed diversity but also on best practices for seed selection, storage, and usage to maximize productivity.

"This visit has been very informative. We learned about seed varieties that can give us better yields in Banihal's climate. Meeting experts directly and

understanding how research can help us has been an eye-opening experience," said a farmer participant. The exposure visit is part of a broader initiative to bridge the gap between research and practical farming. By facilitating direct interactions between farmers and scientists, such programs empower rural agricultural communities with knowledge that can lead to better crop yields, improved income, and long-term sustainability. As SKUAST Kashmir continues its mission to extend its research to the fields, initiatives like the HADP Seed Project serve as a catalyst for agricultural transformation in Jammu and Kashmir. With better access to scientific knowledge and modern technology, Banihal's farmers are now better equipped to face agricultural challenges and optimize their productivity.

5-Day HRD Programme on Integrated Pest Management takes off at Kisan Kendra

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: A Five-Day Human Resource Development (HRD) Programme on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was inaugurated today at Kisan Kendra, Talab Tillo. The event, organized by the Central Integrated Pest Management Centre Jammu, was inaugurated by Director Agriculture Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen. The participants included Joint Director (Extension) Agriculture, Satish Sharma; Professor & Head of Plant Pathology, SKUAST-J, Dr. Vishal Gupta; Deputy Director (Training), Alok Pandotra; Plant Protection Officer (PPO) Jammu, Madan Lal; Assistant Director Law Enforcement (ADLE), Kuldeep Singh; and Deputy Director (Plant Protection) CIPMC Jammu, Dr. Mithilesh Kumar Arya.

The HRD programme has been designed to enhance participants' understanding of the safe and judicious use of pesticides, promote the use of CIB&RC- approved pesticides, and highlight the role of botanicals in agriculture for achieving sustainable agricultural practices. Specifically, the programme aims to provide practical insights and technical knowledge to 40 pesticide dealers and progressive farmers from the Jammu Division.

In his inaugural address, the Director emphasised the crucial importance of adopting best practices for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to maintain environmental sustainability and enhancing crop productivity. He stressed the need to educate both farmers and pesticide dealers on the correct application of chemicals and the long-term benefits of using approved and safe pesticides. He elaborated on the role of IPM in maintaining a balanced ecosystem while safeguarding crop health. He highlighted several IPM techniques, including biological control, cultural practices.

District Capex Plan 2024-25 :Progress of RDD Sector works reviewed in Ramban

ADDC asks for expediting newly taken up projects

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 17: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Ramban Roshan Lal chaired a comprehensive review meeting today here in the Conference Hall to assess performance of Rural Development Department (RDD) in the execution of works taken under the District Capex Plan 2024-25.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Srinath Suman; Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Mohd. Ashfaq; besides Block Development Officers (BDOs) and other concerned officers.

The ADDC evaluated the physical and financial progress of each project and asked the Department to expedite completion of new works and ensure 100% expenditure. The Rural Engineering Wing (REW) officers were instructed to get the allotment of works and ensure proper documentation, with allotment orders emailed to all BDOs without any further delay.

Given the time constraints and limited working season, the ADDC



emphasized double-shift execution to accelerate progress. Additionally, he directed that all billing processes be completed and submitted to the respective treasuries before March 15, 2025. The CPO provided a block-wise progress report and urged officers to meet developmental targets and ensure the timely delivery of services under the District Capex Plan 2024-25. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Srinath Suman; Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Mohd. Ashfaq; besides Block Development Officers

(BDOs) and other concerned officers.

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Given the time constraints and limited working season, the ADDC emphasized double-shift execution to accelerate progress. Additionally, he directed that all billing processes be completed and submitted.

GMC Doda conducts Plantation Drive under National Mission for a Green India

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 17: A plantation drive, under the aegis of National Mission for a Green India (GMI) was organized in the premises of Government Medical College Doda today. The initiative was spearheaded by a renowned environmentalist Prof. Zaheer Abass Hashmi, in collaboration with the Medical College Management.

The event witnessed the presence of the GMC Principal, Prof. Dr. Rakesh Bahl; Deputy Director Planning Jameel Malik; HOD Anatomy, Dr. K.K. Thakur; HOD Paediatrics Dr. Najmus Saqib; Dr. Hamid Parray; Faizan A Tramboos along with faculty members and staff.

Prof. Hashmi donated 35 Chinar saplings, which were planted on the campus in the presence of the GMC authorities.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Hashmi emphasized the importance of trees in maintaining ecological balance and promoting a healthy environment. He highlighted that the Chinar tree, known for its majestic presence and environmental benefits would enhance the campus greenery.

Prof. (Dr) Rakesh Bahl expressed his gratitude to Prof. Hashmi for initiating the plantation drive. He appreciated the gesture, stating that such efforts would significantly improve the environment of the institution and inspire future initiatives for a greener campus.

NDMA to conduct Disaster Management Mock Exercise at Jammu Airport in Non Aviation Domain on 18, 19 Feb

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) will be conducting Disaster Management related Mock Exercise at Jammu Airport in Non Aviation Domain on 18 and 19 February, 2025 based on Earth quake scenario in collaboration with Jammu & Kashmir Disaster Management department- JKDMA and Airport Authority of India at Jammu Airport. The main objective of the Mock Exercise is to highlight the key roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in various simulated hazard situations and institutionalize adoption of the Incident Response System (IRS) in the response mechanism and generating public awareness regarding the Disaster Management. The Mock & TTEs are designed to appraise all key functionaries related to disaster management of the Jammu Airport of their roles and responsibilities on various simulated/other natural & man made hazards, discern areas for further improvement and set the stage for the conduct of the Mock Exercise. This exercise is aimed to gauge the responses of various stake holders to a simulated hazard/emergency. Further, there will be deliberation on various facets of Disaster Management to include preparedness, mitigation, evacuation, relief procedures etc to draw important lessons for further improvement.

DM Jammu issues order for mandatory CCTV camera installation

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya has issued an order for mandatory installation of CCTV cameras at key establishments across Jammu to enhance public security. The directive, issued under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, seeks to improve surveillance through technology. The order applies to banking and financial institutions, business establishments and public spaces with high foot traffic. These include banks, ATMs, jewellery shops, petrol pumps, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, cinemas, liquor shops, Educational institutions, places of worship, transportation hubs, hospitals, offices etc.

Establishments and market associations have been asked to install CCTV cameras within two weeks, covering entry and exit points up to 40 meters. The systems are required to operate continuously with power backup, maintaining a resolution of at least 1920x1080 and store footage for 30 days.

Panchayat level IEC Campaign launched in Kishtwar

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 17: In a proactive step, the District Administration Kishtwar, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan has kick-started a Panchayat/Village Level Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign across all 13 blocks of the district.

The initiative aims to raise awareness about the devastating effects of substance abuse and mobilize community participation in the fight against drug addiction.

As part of this sustained effort, awareness drives will be organized in panchayats every Monday, ensuring continuous engagement with local communities in all 13 Blocks across the District.



The launch event received an enthusiastic response, with active involvement from local residents, students, and community leaders across all blocks.

At the district headquarters, the campaign was kick-started at Revenue Village Kishtwar (ITI Kishtwar) in the presence of Additional Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Idrees Lone, who presided over the event. Addressing the gathering, the ACR underscored the importance of fostering drug control measures to

realize the goal of "Nasha Mukht" (drug-free) society. He urged the youth to play an active role in spreading awareness about the perils of drug abuse.

Many speakers, including Medical Officers from the Health Department, teachers and others shared their insights against drug abuse and awareness of the NASHA MUKT initiative.

A Nasha Mukht Abhiyan pledge was also administered on the occasion to the participants by TSWO Rajesh Kumar Sharma.

He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to tackle the issue through consistent information dissemination and active community engagement.

District Administration Poonch Initiates Panchayat-Wise Anti-Drug Campaign

Drive engages community across all 11 Blocks

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 17: The District Administration Poonch has initiated a comprehensive IEC campaign against drug abuse with the launch of a Panchayat-wise calendar to address the pressing issue. The campaign was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal in Panchayat Bandichechian, marking the beginning of a series of events aimed at educating the community about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Among others present at the launch event were Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, Assistant Commissioner Pan-



chayats Rakesh Sharma; District Social Welfare Officer, Wakeel Ahmed Bhat, besides other officers.

Meanwhile, similar campaigns were conducted in all 11 blocks in collaboration with local leaders engaging over 1,500 participants. The speakers emphasized the detrimental impact of drugs on society

and the youth, urging collective action to combat this crisis.

In his inaugural address, Deputy Commissioner Kundal emphasized the shared responsibility in contributing to the campaign. He encouraged parents to monitor their children closely. He encouraged people to immediately report any drug-related activities to rehabilitation centers to achieve the goal of "Nasha Mukat Panchayat." The campaign is set to run till July 2025, with a call for community involvement in making Poonch drug-free.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner highlighted the initiative as a crucial effort, stressing the importance of community vigilance in controlling drug abuse.

**President Droupadi Murmu accepts credentials from envoys of five nations**

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 17 (UNI)

President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from the Ambassadors/High Commissioners of Cambodia, the Maldives, Somalia, Cuba and Nepal at a ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan today.

Those who presented their credentials were:

Rath Many, Ambassador of Cambodia; Aishath Azeema, High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives; Abdullahi Mohammed Odowa, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia; Juan Carlos Marsan Aguilera, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba; Shankar Prasad Sharma, Ambassador of Nepal, a statement said.

EAM meets with ex-UK PM Rishi Sunak, Italian Deputy FM Maria Tripodi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 17 (UNI)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar today met with former UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Italy Maria Tripodi.

In posts on X, the EAM said he appreciates ex UK PM Sunak's support for strengthening bilateral relations.

"Nice to meet former UK PM @RishiSunak in Delhi today.

"Appreciate his constant support for strengthening India-Great Britain relations."

On his meeting with the Italian Deputy FM, he posted:

"Received Deputy FM @tripodimaria of Italy in Delhi this afternoon.

"Good conversation on India-Italy strategic partnership and ongoing efforts to further build on them."

Two killed, 12 injured as bus collides with trailer

AGENCIES

PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 17 (UNI)

Two persons were killed and more than 12 devotees were injured when a bus collided with a trailer in the Utraon area of Prayagraj district in Uttar Pradesh, police sources said here on Monday.

Police sources said that the incident took place on Gauharpur National Highway when the bus carrying 35 devotees from the Rohtas district of the neighbouring Bihar state was on its way to Prayagraj Maha Kumbh. "Late on Sunday night the bus collided with the trailer parked on the side of the road on the highway," they said.

Police sources said that Ram Saroj Chaudhary (85) and Baijnath Paswan (40), both residents of Dara Nagar in Bihar's Nohta police station area, were killed in the incident and more than a dozen were injured. "The injured have been admitted to the hospital," they said.

Afghanistan expresses protest to Pak over refugee mistreatment

AGENCIES

KABUL, FEB 17 (UNI)

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the self-designation of the state under the current government) on Sunday expressed protest to Pakistan in connection with unfriendly actions against Afghan refugees.

On Saturday, Pakistani police conducted raids on the homes of Afghan refugees in the city of Quetta and some other locations in Balochistan province, subjecting them to ill-treatment and forcing them to leave their homes. Besides men, there were 65 children and 30 women among those detained, according to the ministry.

"The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan strongly protests and condemns such actions, and calls on international organizations to continue providing assistance and cooperation with Afghan refugees in this country [Pakistan] so that they can return home with dignity," the ministry said in a statement, as quoted by the RTA broadcaster.

All of the detainees were immediately deported to Afghanistan through the border crossing in the town of Spin Buldak in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, the ministry specified.

Over the past two years, the Pakistani government has repeatedly carried out similar actions that are contrary to all principles of international and Islamic law, the statement read.

About 3 million Afghan refugees are currently living in Pakistan, according to data of international organizations.

TRAI must regulate telemarketers, OTTs to curb spam calls, messages effectively

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 17 (UNI)

The leading telecom service providers have expressed disappointment on the recent notification issued by telecom regulatory TRAI to curb spam calls and messages without regulating the telemarketers and OTT players.

The apex association of TSPs, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has issued a statement opposing the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) saying a more comprehensive approach is required to resolve the issue of spam communication effectively and the operators have given their detailed recommendations in this regards but unfortunately the TRAI has gone ahead without considering them.

"COAI is disappointed to notice that the TRAI's amendment of the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPCR), 2018 to strengthen consumer protection against Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC), has been issued without addressing all relevant issues. One of the most important demand of the TSPs was that this amendment should be released only after the delivery telemarketers (TMs) are brought under regulation



to manage unlawful communication."

COAI would like to add here that it is in public knowledge that the DoT has already sought TRAI's inputs on the authorization of TMs. "We had submitted to TRAI that the only feasible and optimal approach to handling UCC can be by bringing the Telemarketers under the licensing regime. Moreover, it would also establish that the Government and the Authority have legal control over entities responsible for sending such communications, in compliance with TCCPCR-2018.

It should be noted that the DoT has already sought TRAI's inputs on the authorization of TMs and we have made our recommendations for the same."

Further elaborating on the issue, COAI DG Lt. Gen. Dr. S.P. Kochhar said "We believe that a more comprehensive approach is required to tackle the issue effectively. In the current digital landscape, both

OTT communication providers and telemarketers (TMs) have become major stakeholders in messaging, and thus, it would be critical to establish a regulatory framework to ensure accountability from all stakeholders in the ecosystem, including OTT platforms and Telemarketers/Principal Entities."

COAI expressed concerns that the Second Amendment does not bring OTT Communication Service Providers under the ambit of this Regulation, nor does it address the UCC issues at its source.

While the TSPs have taken ample steps to curb spam calls and messages, there has been a significant increase in the quantum of unsolicited communications as well as legitimate commercial communication, that has moved to OTT communication apps, substantially leading to the rise in financial crimes in the country.

"We earnestly believe that TRAI should take into

consideration our key submission and bring these entities under the ambit of the Regulation, as it would make no sense to regulate one section of the traffic (TSPs) while the other section (OTT Communication Services) has no regulations at all," Kochhar said.

At the same time, it is also concerning that the authority has substantially increased the penalty to be imposed over the TSPs. COAI had submitted that Financial Disincentives (FDs) on TSPs, being only intermediary in this process, do not serve any purpose and have failed to address the issue in TRAI's all attempts to curb UCC. Instead, if at all these penalties are required, it should be directed to TM-D or the PEs who are actual originators and beneficiaries of the commercial communications.

Another important aspect was to reduce subjectivity from the Regulation as well as compliances, which are based on relationship between Principal Entities and their consumers, which has not been addressed. "Since operators have made all the efforts that have considerably reduced their UCC complaints to a very low level, we were of the view that the telecom operators should not be penalized for unwarranted actions of some other subscribers," he added.

Yogi inaugurates UP Vidhan Bhawan main gate

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, FEB 17 (UNI)

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the main gate of Vidhan Bhawan on Monday before the budget session of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature Assembly scheduled to start on Tuesday.

On this occasion, the CM also unveiled various graffiti inside the assembly premises depicting historical events. The work has been carried out as part of efforts to make the assembly both hi-tech and more artistic.

The newly created graffiti depicts historical events and the political system of India. Several incidents from the Geeta are also featured, adding to the grandeur and appeal

of the assembly building.

Previously, the assembly had a wooden gate, which has now been replaced by a state-of-the-art and robust gate made of carved steel. Continuous efforts are being made for the beautification and modernisation of the Assembly.

Along with upgrading the technical infrastructure, special focus is being placed on enhancing its historical and cultural significance.

The programme was attended by Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, CM Yogi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna, Leader of the Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey, and Congress leader Aradhana Mishra 'Mona'.

Northeast border security team attends DG level conference of BSF-BGB

AGENCIES

AGARTALA, FEB 17 (UNI)

Top officials of BSF from Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Assam attended a four-long director general-level 55th border conference between Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in New Delhi began on Monday, BSF sources said.

This marks the first such meeting between the two countries' border forces since Bangladesh underwent a political transition following the ouster of Sheikh Hasina on August 5 last year. The conference was scheduled for November last year but it was postponed for three months due to political unrest in Bangladesh, sources claimed.



While the Indian side is represented by a 13-member delegation, headed by the BSF director general Daljit Singh Chawdhary, along with officials from India's home and foreign ministries, a 14-member Bangladeshi delegation is led by the BGB director general Maj General Mohammad Ashrafuzaman Siddiqui.

Moreover, representatives from Bangladesh's Chief Advisor's Office, home, foreign, and ship-

ping ministries, the Land Record and Survey Department, and the Joint Rivers Commission also participated.

BSF said issues like border fencing and surveillance, border killings, drug smuggling, cross-border movement, and border crimes were included in the agenda for discussion in the meeting till Feb 20. The discussions aim to enhance border security and coordination between the two forces.

CRPF jawans stand guard over devotees safety at Maha Kumbh

AGENCIES

PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 17 (UNI)

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) stands fully prepared to ensure devotees' security, exemplifying unwavering dedication and patriotism amidst the grandeur of Maha Kumbh.

The CRPF jawans ensure round-the-clock security at ghats, fairgrounds, and key routes, leveraging modern technology and vigilance for seamless emergency preparedness. In addition to their security duties, CRPF jawans are playing a vital role in crowd control and providing guidance to the thousands of devotees attending the event.

Their polite behaviour and quick response make the experience comfortable



and reassuring for all. The CRPF's disaster management team is on high alert, prepared to address any unforeseen circumstances with efficiency.

Besides, the CRPF is making significant contributions to reuniting missing children and elderly individuals with their families, reinforcing their commitment to safety and support during the event.

A CRPF officer empha-

sised that every jawan is performing their duty with the spirit of 'Nation First' during the Maha Kumbh. This spirit not only enhances the event's spiritual significance but also instils confidence among the devotees in the security arrangements.

The unwavering dedication and service of the CRPF jawans at Maha Kumbh serve as an inspiring example for the entire nation.

Trump presidency will help Germany become more independent - AfD Lawmaker

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, FEB 17 (UNI)

Lenka White - With Donald Trump being at the helm of the United States, Germany gets a chance to develop more independent policies and "grow up," lawmaker from the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, Kay Gottschalk, told RIA Novosti.

"I think it will accelerate the process to become more independent, in a way, from the protection of the United States," Gottschalk said when asked about Trump's reelection. "That doesn't mean we aren't friends anymore, or we will stop our friendship. No, the friendship



will be very, very close, but I would compare it with children growing up."

After 70 years, it is time for Germany to be more independent and speak up for own interests in front of countries such as Russia and others, the politician stated.

"Another one is to become also ... more independent from China," Gottschalk added, noting that this process was also started by Trump during his first term.

AfD is going against the current German mainstream, with anti-immigration policies and a stance that military aid to Ukraine should be ended and parties should nail down a diplomatic solution.

Germans will vote in a snap federal election on February 23. The latest INSA poll put the CDU/CSU bloc at 29%, AfD at 22%, and Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats at 17%.

Earthquake of 4.0 magnitude jolt Delhi-NCR

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb 17 (UNI)

The National Capital Region (NCR) woke up to strong tremors it was hit by a 4.0 magnitude earthquake early on Monday.

The epicenter was near Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education in south Delhi's Dhaula Kuan.

The earthquake struck at a depth of five kilometers at 5.36 am, the National Centre for Seismology tweeted.

The official said a loud



sound was heard when the earthquake hit Delhi-NCR.

The strong tremors caused residents of high-rise buildings in Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida, and Ghaziabad to rush out of their homes.

There were no immediate reports of any damage or injuries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urges the residents of Delhi to stay "calm" and said authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation.

"Tremors were felt in Delhi and nearby areas. Urging everyone to stay calm and follow safety precautions, staying alert for possible aftershocks. Authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation" he wrote on X.

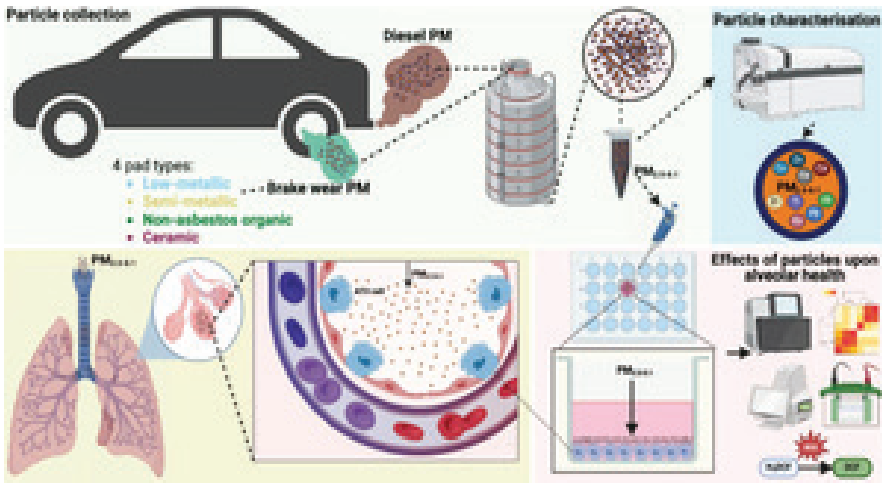
Pollution from car brake-wear more harmful for lungs than diesel exhaust: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Exposure to pollution from car brake wear can prove to be more harmful to the lungs than diesel exhaust, according to a study.

The study, led by researchers from the University of Southampton in the UK, emphasised that focusing on particulate matter (PM) exhaust emissions alone may be inadequate to mitigate the health effects of vehicle-derived pollution.

Airborne PM2.5 is known to reach the alveolar regions of the lungs and is associated with more than 4 million premature deaths per year worldwide. While road traffic -- diesel exhaust emissions -- is a major source of PM in urban environ-



ments, non-exhaust emissions, especially from brake wear, represent an increasing component of traffic-related PM, about which there is a paucity of information.

The researchers argued that car brake wear is also not on the target list in

exhaust emission reduction measures.

In the paper, published in the journal Particle and Fibre Toxicology, the team found that brake-wear particulate matter from copper-enriched non-asbestos organic, and ceramic brake pads induced "the

greatest oxidative stress, inflammation" on lungs.

It also affected a pathway implicated in diseases associated with air pollution exposure, including cancer, and pulmonary fibrosis, as well as causing perturbation of metabolism.

HT-HEALTH

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Direct-to-consumer (D2C) brand The Ayurveda Co suffered a sharp rise in losses in FY24, as its net loss surged over three-fold to Rs 68 crore, up from Rs 21 crore in FY23.

According to the company's financials, the widened loss is primarily due to material costs, which more than doubled to Rs 28.6 crore compared to Rs 12 crore in FY23.

Advertising expenses soared by 73 per cent to Rs 26 crore, while employee benefits increased by 80 per cent to Rs 15.5 crore.

Manpower and recruitment costs also surged, adding Rs 11.3 crore to the company's total expenses.

With overall expenditure rising 97 per cent to Rs 109.5 crore in FY24, The Ayurveda Co reported a negative EBITDA margin of (-) 100.65 per cent and a return on capital



employed (ROCE) of (-) 700 per cent.

On a unit level, the company spent Rs 1.84 to earn a single rupee, which underscores its financial struggles.

Despite securing Rs 100 crore in a Series A round led by Sixth Sense Ventures in 2023, the company's financial health appears weak.

It ended FY24 with current assets worth Rs 45 crore, but its cash and bank balance stood at just

Rs 52 lakh, which raised concerns about its liquidity.

Despite the losses, the company's revenue grew by 66 per cent to reach Rs 59.6 crore in FY24 as compared to Rs 36 crore in FY23.

The firm's total income, including Rs 2.4 crore from interest earnings, stood at Rs 62 crore in FY24.

The Ayurveda Co, backed by Sixth Sense Ventures, specialises in

ayurvedic beauty and personal care products, including skincare, hair-care, makeup, and wellness items.

In a competitive market dominated by brands like Ayurveda Experience, Wow Skin and Sugar, The Ayurveda Co faces mounting pressure to improve its financial performance.

According to reports, the next fiscal year will be critical in determining the company's long-term viability.

Eating veggies may reduce risk of liver cancer by 65 pc: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Eating vegetables can help reduce the risk of liver cancer by 65 per cent, according to a study.

The study, led by researchers from the INSERM, the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research, focused on patients diagnosed with cirrhosis -- scarring (fibrosis) of the liver caused by long-term liver damage.

They examined the benefits of eating vegetables and or fruits among these patients. Of the 179 patients analysed, 20 were diagnosed with hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer).

The team found that a total of 42.5 per cent of patients with cirrhosis had insufficient fruit and/or vegetable consumption.

"A 65 per cent reduction in the incidence (new cases) of liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinoma) was observed in



patients diagnosed with cirrhosis consuming more than 240 gram per day of vegetables," the researchers said.

The researchers, however, found no evidence of an association between fruit consumption and hepatocellular carcinoma. The team said that the association between fruit and vegetable consumption and the risk of HCC is poorly documented in the population of cirrhotic patients. However, "such

knowledge is crucial for adapting HCC prevention messages," they noted, in the paper published in the journal JHEP Reports.

Liver cancer is the sixth most frequent cancer worldwide, mainly represented by HCC, accounting for about 85-90 per cent. HCC occurs when a tumour grows on the liver. HCC most commonly occurs in those with chronic liver disease especially those with cirrhosis or fibrosis, which occur in the setting of chronic liver

injury and inflammation.

Main causes of disease of underlying chronic liver disease are alcohol and viral hepatitis, while it also includes overweight and obesity, consumption of foods contaminated with aflatoxins (that is, toxins produced by moulds).

The researchers called for larger studies "to assess the benefits of fruit regarding the risk of HCC", and to provide evidence for promoting fruit and vegetable consumption in patients with liver cirrhosis.

Africa's progress against malaria in 'jeopardy' amid need for renewed commitments

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Officials and experts on Sunday called for renewed commitments in Africa's fight against malaria, as they warned that the continent's progress against malaria is 'in jeopardy' due to a combination of natural and man-made challenges.

This came during a high-level briefing on malaria that was held Sunday on the sidelines of the 38th African Union (AU) Summit at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

Addressing the event, Duma Boko, president of Botswana, stressed that Africa's positive progress in the fight against the deadly disease has been hampered by a combination of factors, including inadequate financing, and natural and man-made catastrophes.

"The task before us is both challenging and urgent. Our progress has



stopped, and the hard truth is that we are not on track. A perfect storm of threats, including insufficient resources, climate change, biological risks, and humanitarian crisis, threatens to undermine our efforts," said Boko, who is also the incoming chair of African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA).

He said as the African continent is threatened by a growing number of malaria outbreaks, the Southern Africa region is currently bracing for an upsurge as heavy rainfall creates mosquito breeding sites.

"Securing the resources necessary to combat malaria and fill these critical gaps with renewed energy is imperative. Africa must urgently rise to the challenge by mobilising domestic resources, including by drawing down on the resources in our emergency funds and increasing our health budget allocations," he added.

A new report on the state of malaria in Africa, which was launched on the margins of the AU Summit, revealed that despite preventing 1.8 billion malaria cases and saving 11.9 million lives since 2000, Africa's progress against malaria has now stagnated.

Noting that the continent is "at a defining moment" in its fights against malaria, the report said the interim targets for 2025 are slipping out of reach, and the dream of eliminating malaria by 2030 is in jeopardy.

Chikwe Ihekweazu, the World Health Organization (WHO) acting regional director for Africa, said African countries have continued to grapple with challenges obstructing the elimination of malaria. He said such challenges include fragile health systems, weak surveillance, chronic funding shortfall, and anti-malarial drug resistance, Xinhua news agency reported.

Noting that 11 African countries bear about two-thirds of the world's malaria burden, Ihekweazu said the burden of malaria and the challenges of addressing it are most acute in Africa.

A blood test could improve Alzheimer's disease diagnosis

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A new blood test may have the potential to transform Alzheimer's disease diagnosis, patient care, early interventions and more targeted treatments, say researchers.

Researchers at Trinity College Dublin, the Talaght Institute of Memory and Cognition and St James's Hospital, Dublin are exploring the ability of a new blood test to detect Alzheimer's Disease (AD).

This test could potentially replace the current diagnostic method, a lumbar puncture/spinal tap (which is invasive and poses risks and challenges) in over half of patients with early symptoms, thus allowing more patients to be diagnosed more accurately and with greater efficiency.

The study, published in the journal Alzheimer's & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment and Disease



Monitoring, is one of the first in Europe to examine the "real-world" performance of one of the leading automated blood tests for Alzheimer's Disease, plasma p-tau217, in patients with mild symptoms undergoing assessment in a specialist memory service.

About 148 patients generously donated blood

and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) samples, enabling researchers to directly compare new blood tests to established CSF biomarkers.

The study found that measuring plasma p-tau217 using a fully-automated system, was more than 90 per cent as accurate as results obtained from LP. Integrating the blood

test into clinical pathways could potentially avoid the need for over half of diagnostic LPs. This has clear implications for the diagnosis and management of early Alzheimer Disease.

From their results, the research team believe that this new blood test could replace over half of the 150-200 diagnostic LP procedures that they currently carry out in the Talaght Institute of Memory and Cognition every year.

This blood test is not available currently in Ireland and the findings from this research will lend support to making it available in the future.

"This 'translation' from a research to a diagnostic test is dependent on the scientists, the clinical teams and the support from hospital management," said Dr Jean Dunne, Chief Medical Scientist, Department of Immunology, St James's Hospital and Trinity Translational Medicine Institute (TTMI).

Heart has 'sweet taste' receptors, can sense artificial sweeteners: Study

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

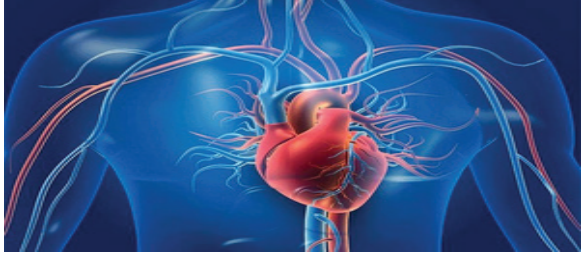
Researchers have found that the heart possesses "sweet taste" receptors, similar to those on our tongues, and stimulating these receptors with sweet substances can modulate the heartbeat.

The discovery opens new avenues for understanding heart function and potentially for developing novel treatments for heart failure.

The new research found that these receptors are not just present on heart muscle but also functional.

When the researchers stimulated these receptors in both human and mouse heart cells using aspartame, a common artificial sweetener, they observed a significant increase in the force of heart muscle contraction and accelerated calcium handling -- key processes for a healthy heartbeat.

While taste receptors are traditionally associ-



ated with the tongue and our ability to perceive flavours, recent studies have shown that these receptors exist in other parts of the body, where they likely play different roles.

This new study is the first to identify specific "sweet taste" receptors, known as TAS1R2 and TAS1R3, on the surface of heart muscle cells.

"After you eat a meal, it's been shown that your heart rate and blood pressure actually are increasing," said Micah Yoder, a graduate student in the lab of Jonathan Kirk at Loyola University Chicago.

Previously, this was thought to be a neural axis that's being signaled.

"But we're proposing a

more direct consequence, where we have a spike in our blood sugar after eating a meal, and that's binding to these sweet taste receptors on the heart muscle cells, causing a difference in the heartbeat," he added.

Intriguingly, the researchers also found that these receptors are more abundant in the hearts of patients with heart failure, suggesting a possible link to disease.

Further investigation revealed that stimulating the receptors triggers a cascade of molecular events within the heart cells, involving key proteins that control calcium flow and muscle contraction.

Additionally, their research may explain why high consumption of artificially sweetened beverages is linked to arrhythmogenesis, or an irregular heartbeat.

Not only are these sweet taste receptors particularly stimulated by artificial sweeteners like aspartame, overstimulation of these sweet taste receptors lead to a an increase in arrhythmic like behaviour in the heart cells, researchers found.

However, further research is needed to fully understand the long-term effects of stimulating these receptors in the heart as well as how these receptors might be targeted to strengthen the heart in the case of heart failure.

The work was set to be presented at the 69th Biophysical Society Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. The Biophysical Society has been established to lead development and dissemination of knowledge in biophysics.



کشمیری زبان کو پارلیمنٹ کے بروقت ترجمہ سروس میں شامل کرنے کی مانگ

جموں میں ادبی مرکز کمراز کی ۴۵ ویں کانفرنس منعقد



جمیل انصاری

جموں/ادبی مرکز کمراز جموں و کشمیر کے اہتمام اور جموں و کشمیر کچلر ایجنسی کے اشتراک سے اہل ہنگ ہال جموں میں 45 ویں کشمیری کانفرنس کا انعقاد کیا گیا کانفرنس کا موضوع: 'جموں صوبے میں کشمیری زبان کی صورتحال: امکانات اور خطرات' تھا کانفرنس میں جموں و کشمیر کے اطراف و اکناف سے آئے ہوئے ادیبوں، شاعروں، قلم کاروں اور دانشوروں نے شرکت کی۔ کانفرنس کئی نشستوں پر مشتمل رہی۔ کانفرنس کا آغاز ادبی مرکز کمراز کے نائب صدر ایڈوانس ماموری نے کامیاب خطاب اور کلام لہ دید سے کیا۔ جبکہ نئی طور کشمیری ژرار کالجی میں اہمید جلا کر کیا گیا۔ افتتاحی نشست کی صدارت معروف شاعر و ادیب پروفیسر شاد رمضان نے کی جبکہ ایوان صدارت میں معروف ڈوگری قلم کار پروفیسر لیت گپتا، جموں و کشمیر اکادمی آف آرٹس چھاپہ اینڈ پبلیکیشنز کے ایڈیٹر سکریٹری راجو رانا اور اہم فنون فروغ اردو جموں و کشمیر کی صدر زینب مغل اور ادبی مرکز کمراز کے صدر محمد امین بٹ بھی موجود رہے۔ خطبہ استقبالیہ پیش کرتے ہوئے صدر مرکز محمد امین بٹ نے مہمانوں کا استقبال کرتے ہوئے کہا کہ ادبی مرکز کمراز کشمیری زبان کے ساتھ ساتھ جموں و کشمیر میں بولی جانے والی دیگر زبانوں کی ترقی و ترویج کی خواہاں ہے انھوں نے کہا کہ ہندوستانی پارلیمنٹ کی جانب سے حال ہی میں ڈوگری اور دیگر چند ہندوستانی زبانوں کی Simultaneous ٹرانسلیشن سسٹم میں شامل کرنے کا ہم جہاں غیر مقدم کرتے ہیں وہیں کشمیری زبان کو ایک تاریخی زبان ہونے کے باوجود نظر انداز کرنا دکھ اور افسوس کے مترادف ہے لیت گپتا نے اپنی تقریر میں کہا کہ ادبی مرکز کمراز کے اس ایوان صدارت میں ایک ڈوگری قلم کار کی موت افزائی کا ناس بات کا غماز ہے کہ ادبی مرکز کمراز کا دامن تنہا پنجاب العربیہ سے جھک کر زیر مغل نے اپنی تقریر میں کہا کہ اس وادی کشمیر سے بچنے رکھنے والے ادیبوں اور شاعروں کی اس کھیناں میں شرکت کرنے سے

آرٹل مقبول فائیل، ساگر سرفراز، بشیر مگنوال پوری، رشید روشن، گلفام بارجی، غلام حسن حقنواز غلام نبی غافل منشور بانہالی، ضمیر انصاری، عبداللہ فراد، ذوق مغل ضیا طاہر بانہالی، غلام الدین بہار، برج ناٹھ، بیتاب الیاس ارمان، پروفیسر شاد رمضان، بدیم ناٹھ شاد، سید محمد الدین سعدی، عادل اشرف لولائی شامل ہیں کانفرنس کے اختتام پر مرکز کے سرکردہ کارکن ٹھہر پانچگی نے تحریک شکر ادا پیش کیا۔

دسے کانفرنس کی آخری نشست میں شاعرے کا انعقاد کیا گیا۔ جس کی صدارت معروف کشمیری شاعر اور ادیب بدیم ناٹھ شاد نے کی۔ ایوان صدارت میں ادبی مرکز کمراز کے بزرگ ممبر سید محمد الدین سعدی اور مرکز کے جنرل سیکریٹری شبنم تلگامی کے علاوہ جی آحسرت گڈا بھی موجود رہے اس نشست کی نظامت معروف نوجوان شاعر جناب ساگر سرفراز نے انجام دی۔ شاعرے میں جن شعراء کرام نے حصہ لیا ان میں ارشد ماکاٹی، سید مسعود شاداب، ڈالی ٹکو

تھے اس نشست میں دو کتابوں جن میں مشعل سلاطین پوری کی اردو کتاب 'اردو میں ترقی پسند تحریک' اور سید مسعود شاداب کا شعری مجموعہ 'کشتہ سہران ہنزہ' کی رسم رونمایی انجام دی گئی۔ شاعر شبنم تلگامی نے اردو میں ترقی پسند تحریک کتاب پر تبصرہ پیش کیا اس نشست میں سید اختر حسین منصور نے بھی کشتہ سہران ہنزہ کتاب کے حوالے سے اپنے خیالات کا ظہار کیا۔ نشست کی نظامت کے فرائض ادبی مرکز کمراز کے سیکریٹری فاروق شایین نے انجام

نشست میں معروف ادیب اور قلم کار اسیر نکٹواری، برج ناٹھ بیتاب اور منشور بانہالی نے متناظرہ بالا عنوان کے حوالے سے اپنے مقالات پیش کیے اس نشست کی نظامت کے فرائض نوجوان قلم کار شاد شبنم تلگامی نے انجام دیے۔ تیسری نشست کی صدارت اردو اور پنجابی زبانوں کے معروف قلم کار جناب خالد امین نے کی جبکہ ایوان صدارت میں پروفیسر ایاز رول نازی، سرکردہ ادیب اور براڈ کاسٹر عبداللہ فراد اور ڈاکٹر بہار احمد امین مشعل سلاطین پوری موجود

ایمانیت اور اپنے پن کا احساس جاگ رہا ہے۔ اپنے صدارتی کلمات میں صدر نشست پروفیسر شاد رمضان نے کہا کہ ادبی مرکز کمراز کی کارکردگی محنت اور لگن کو دیکھ کر اس بات کا برملا اعتراف کیا جاسکتا ہے کہ کشمیری زبان زندہ رہی اور زندہ رہے کی اس نشست کی نظامت کے فرائض ادبی مرکز کمراز کے جنرل سیکریٹری شبنم تلگامی نے انجام دیے۔ دوسری نشست کی صدارت سرکردہ کشمیری انشائیہ نگار ادیب اور شاعر پروفیسر محمد زمل آرزو نے کی اس

New Zealand skipper Devine to remain on sidelines for Sri Lanka series

AGENCIES

WELLINGTON, FEB 17 (UNI)

New Zealand have confirmed Sophie Devine will not play in the upcoming white-ball series against Sri Lanka.

It's been revealed Devine will continue to prioritise her wellbeing.

The news comes after the White Ferns captain opted to withdraw from the Dream11 Super Smash and 2025 Women's Premier League last month, off the back of receiving professional advice.

"We are fully supportive of Sophie's decision to not take part in the upcoming series," Head of Women's High Performance Liz Green said in a release from New Zealand Cricket.

"Player wellbeing is our highest priority and it's important Sophie feels fit and well before returning to professional cricket."

The White Ferns' series with Sri Lanka starts on March 4, featuring three One-Day Internationals and then two T20Is - all in New Zealand, an ICC report said.

NZC will announce their squad for the white-ball series later this month.

Khelo India Winter Games postponed due to insufficient snowfall: J&K Sports Council

AGENCIES

JAMMU, FEB 17 (UNI)

The much-awaited fifth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games scheduled to begin on February 22 at renowned ski resort Gulmarg has been postponed due to insufficient snowfall, informed Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council.

"The Fifth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, initially set for February 22-25, 2025, has been postponed due

to insufficient snowfall," Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council posted on X.

"A new assessment will be conducted once snow conditions improve, and the revised update will be announced accordingly," it further posted.

Rauf Tramboo, President of, Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir when contacted told UNI, "The snow was not sufficient to smoothly go with the event."

"A meeting was held on

Monday in which officials from all the stakeholders participated and it was unanimously decided to postpone the Games as of now," Tramboo, who is also competition Manager of the event, said.

He said, "Athletes are disappointed but we are quite hopeful of successfully hosting the prestigious event for the fifth time in a row given the forecast of good snowfall in coming days with an announcement of fresh dates."

Indian Women Hockey Team gears up to face Spain in FIH Pro League

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, FEB 17 (UNI)

The Indian Women's Hockey Team is eager to get back to winning ways as they prepare to face Spain in their next set of matches on February 18 and 19 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium here.

After a promising start with a thrilling 3-2 victory over England in their opener, the Salima Tete-led side narrowly missed out on a bonus point in their second game, losing 2-1 in a

dramatic shootout after the match ended 2-2 in regulation time.

Despite showing resilience, India currently sits in eighth place in the standings with four points from two games and will be looking to climb higher in the points table as they face a confident Spanish side.

India's performance against England offered glimpses of their potential, particularly in penalty corner conversions, where they scored twice from three attempts in their

opening match. However, they failed to replicate that success in the second game, going 0 for 3 in penalty corners.

Vice Captain Navneet Kaur, the team's top scorer so far, has been in fine form, scoring a goal in each of the two games and providing stability to the Indian forward line. The team is focused on sharpening their skills in key areas like set-piece execution and defensive coordination as they prepare to take on Spain.

Adbi Markaz Kamraz Demands Inclusion of Kashmiri Language in Parliament's Translation Service



Jammu, Feb 17: The 45th Kashmiri Conference, organized by Adbi Markaz Kamraz Jammu & Kashmir in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Academy, concluded in Jammu with a strong demand for the inclusion of Kashmiri in the Indian Parliament's Simultaneous Translation System.

The conference, themed "The Status of the Kashmiri Language in Jammu Province: Possibilities and Challenges," was attended by prominent writers, poets, scholars, and intellectuals from across Jammu & Kashmir.

The event opened with a traditional Kashmiri ceremony, featuring verses from Sheikh-ul-Alam and Lal Ded, recited by Jawed Iqbal Mawarri, Vice President of Adbi Markaz Kamraz.

The inaugural session was presided over by Professor Shad Ramzan, with panelists including Professor Lalit Gupta, Sanjeev Rana (Additional Secretary, J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages), Fadia Mughal (President, Anjuman-e-Farogh-e-Urdu J&K), and Muhammad Ameen Butt (President, Adbi Markaz Kamraz).

In his address, Muhammad Ameen Butt welcomed the inclusion of Dogri and other Indian languages in Parliament's Simultaneous Translation System but expressed disappointment over Kashmiri's exclusion, calling it an oversight of the language's historical and literary significance.

The conference featured multiple sessions chaired by renowned scholars such as Professor Muhammad Zaman Azurda, Khalid Hussain, and Professor Ayaz Rasool Nazki. Scholars including Aseer Kishiwar, Brij Nath Betab, and Manishor Banihali presented papers on

Kashmiri language and literature. Two books were launched during the event: "Urdu Mein Taraghi Pasand Tehreek" by Mishaal Sultanpuri and "Kath Mazban Hanz" a Kashmiri poetry collection by Syed Masood Shadab.

The concluding session featured a grand Mushaira (poetry symposium), presided over by renowned poet Prem Nath Shad, with a distinguished panel that included Syed Saaduddin Saadi (father of Editor-in-Chief Daily English Newspaper Headlines Today/Syed Jahangir Bukhari), Shahnam Tilgami, and G.R. Husrat Gadda. Notable poets such as Irshad

Magami, Syed Masood Shadab, Maabool Fakir, and Professor Shad Ramzan captivated the audience with their verses.

Senior member Zahoor Haigami delivered the vote of thanks, reaffirming Adbi Markaz Kamraz's commitment to preserving and promoting the Kashmiri language and culture.

The exclusion of Kashmiri from Parliament's translation service remains a key concern, with the literary community urging authorities to rectify the issue and ensure the representation of Kashmir's linguistic heritage at the national level.