



Safeguarding Citizen Rights Should be the Top Priority of J&K Police : HM Amit Shah

Directs Administration to Ensure Full Implementation of New Criminal Laws in UT by April 2025

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Feb 18 (UNI) Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a review meeting on the implementation of new criminal laws in Jammu and Kashmir today in the national capital.

The meeting at the North Block was held in the presence of J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The meeting covered the present status



of various new provisions relating to police, jail, courts, prosecution and forensics mentioned in the three new criminal laws—the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023;

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023; and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023—that replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

The meeting was attended by the Union Home Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary, state Director General of Police, Director General of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), and several senior officials from the Union Home Ministry and the

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Security Forces detect and destroy two IEDs in South Kashmir

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 18 (UNI) Security forces averted major tragedies on Tuesday by detecting and safely destroying two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in South Kashmir, officials said.

The two IED were found in Pulwama and its neighbouring district Shopian.

The first IED was detected at Kashuwa Road, Chitragam, Shopian by security forces.

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IGP Kashmir reviews security preparedness in south Kashmir

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 18 (UNI) Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, V K Birdi on Tuesday, assessed the joint security preparedness and operational capabilities of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in south Kashmir.

The IGP visited Anantnag on Tuesday,



where he chaired a high-level joint

security review meeting, focusing on enhanced coordination, joint resource utilisation, and operational efficiency.

A police spokesman said the meeting was attended by senior officers from the Police and CRPF, who deliberated on joint deployment strategies, operational preparedness, and emerging security challenges.

He commended the efforts of both

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Court convicts' faith healer under section 377 for abusing minors

■ HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 18 (UNI) A Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in north Kashmir has convicted a faith healer, under Section 377 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) for repeatedly sexually abusing minors.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate Baramulla at Sopore Mir Wajahat



on Monday convicted Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh under Section 377 for committing unnatural offenses against minors.

"The prosecution has established all ingredients of the offense beyond reasonable doubt, warranting conviction for victimizing PW8 & PW3. The defense has failed to create any substantial doubt that would merit

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J&K police recover cash worth crores from car at Lakhanpur in Kathua

■ HT News Network/UNI

Jammu, Feb 18 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir Police have recovered cash worth crores of rupees from a SUV car at Lakhanpur in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. Lakhanpur is a border town connecting Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

"Acting on specific inputs, a police team laid a

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Kashmir Cast as 'Anti-Muslim Theatre' in BJP's Politics, Says Aga Ruhullah

■ HT News Network/KNT

Srinagar, Feb 18, : Kashmir Member Parliament and National Conference leader Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi has accused the BJP of using Kashmir as the centerpiece of an "anti-Muslim theatre" to cater to its hardcore Hindutva voter base.

Speaking at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi, Mehdi alleged that the BJP has crafted a

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30-Hour Water Supply Shutdown in Srinagar on Feb 22-23

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 18, : The Water Works Division, Srinagar, has announced a 30-hour shutdown of the Sindh Power Canal HEP Old Ganderbal on February 22 and 23, 2025, to facilitate repair work and desilting of the forebay. This will severely affect the raw water supply to the Nishat, Alusteng, and Rangil water treatment plants, leading to a disruption in potable water availability across major parts of Srinagar and adjoining areas.

According to the official notice, in possession with Associated News Bureau read, localities will experience water shortages during the shutdown period, Zakura, Gulab Bagh, Alusteng, Shuhama, Hadoora, Chatterhama, Khalmulla, Habak,

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Criminal Case Alone Cannot Justify Employee's Termination, J&K Hight Court

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 18, : The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has ruled that the withdrawal of an employee's appointment during the probationary period, without conducting an inquiry, is illegal. The court stated that the mere pendency of a criminal case cannot justify the termination of services without giving the employee a chance to defend themselves in an inquiry.

A bench headed by Justice M.A. Chowdhary emphasized that the pending criminal proceedings do not reflect a person's character and cannot serve as grounds for dismissal unless a conviction occurs.

The court referred to a previous ruling in the case of Faheem vs. Union of Kashmir (2003), where it was held that termination

'Chillai Khurd' likely to bring rain, snow on its last day 10-day long Chillai-Bachha to commence from today

■ HT News Network/KNO

Srinagar, Feb 18 After Chilla-i-Kalan--the 40-day harshest winter period--ended on a dry note in Kashmir, the 20-day small cold known as "Chillai Khurd" too failed to bring any major respite. However, as the 20-day small cold is all set to culminate on (Wednesday



February 19), the weatherman has predicted light to moderate rain and snow at many places on its last day.

The fresh rains and snow in Jammu and Kashmir will likely end the prolonged dry spell tomorrow as a two-day wet spell is expected to bring rains and snow in J&K till Thursday.

Notably, after a 20-day long Chillai-

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Doctors Extract Snake-like Worm from Boy's Nose at GMC Anantnag

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 18, : In a rare and unusual medical procedure, doctors at the MMABM Associated Hospital GMC Anantnag successfully removed a large, snake-like worm from the nostril of an adolescent boy on Tuesday.

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H&ME Minister reviews progress on development works, welfare schemes in Srinagar

Emphasizes strong collaboration between legislators, officers to percolate maximum benefits to common people

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 18: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today convened a marathon meeting here to review progress on development works besides assessing implementation of government sponsored schemes across Srinagar district.

The meeting was attended by Members of Legislative Assembly from Srinagar district including Mubarak Gul, Salman Sagar, Tanveer Sadiq, Ehsan Pardesi and Mushtaq Ahmad Guru besides Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat; Commissioner SMC, Dr Owais Ahmad; Director School Education Kashmir; Director Health Services Kashmir and other senior officers of police and district administration.



During the meeting, the Minister held detailed deliberations regarding various ongoing key projects and development works undertaken in the district. She also had a comprehensive review of implementation of various beneficiary oriented schemes.

Addressing the officers on the occasion, the Minister emphasized that the present dispensation led by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, is committed to address the public issues on priority basis and improve their socio-economic conditions at grass

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Those playing with career of students will face action: Education Minister

'70-80% textbooks almost reached district levels'

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 18, : Several students were unable to sit for their 10th class exams after missing their admit cards, causing a disruption in their academic progress. The issue has raised concerns among both students and parents, leading to calls for accountability.

In response to the issue, Minister for Education, Sakina Itoo, stated that an inquiry has been initiated to investigate the cause of the negligence. She assured the public that

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Jal Shakti Minister attends ‘All India State Ministers’ conference on water in Rajasthan

Terms initiative a significant milestone in shaping India’s water security future

■ HT News Network

UDAIPUR, (RAJASTHAN) FEBRUARY 18: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today attended the second All India State Ministers’ Conference 2025 on Water held at Udaipur, Rajasthan.

The two day conference being convened from February 18 to 19 themed "Water Vision@2047, A Water Secure Nation," is being organised by the National Water Mission, Ministry for Jal Shakti.

The Minister, while addressing the conference, shared perspectives on the broad approach of government of Jammu and Kashmir towards sustainable use of water

resources. He highlighted Jammu Kashmir’s Water Policy on the subject of water supply and storage management.

"We have to keep a focussed approach towards augmenting our water sources and ensure sustainable water resource management for future generations," maintained the Minister.

Rana said that change in the weather pattern due to global warming has put extra pressure on our water resources and there is a need to protect and preserve them for the generations to come.

"Effective management of water resources demands a holistic and participatory approach. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us,



to be aware of the value of water and act to preserve this vital resource," asserted the

Minister. He added that there is a need to undertake scientific mea-

sures towards this direction including planting of trees around the water sources and

maintaining cleanliness. He said that the vision of a developed, water-secure India emphasises the importance of sustainable water management to support agriculture, industry and domestic use while preserving our rivers and ecosystems for generations to come. He shared the ideas, vision and the steps being taken up by the Jammu and Kashmir government for integrated and sustainable water management. He also highlighted the initiatives being taken up by the government to provide safe drinking water to people, improve groundwater levels and formulate the plans under Water Vision-2047.

Sharing his thoughts on the Conference, Rana said that this

innovative conference will be a significant milestone in shaping India's water security future. He said that the conference focussed on the concrete actions required to turn the Water Vision@2047 into reality and it is certainly a landmark event, bringing together top policymakers and experts to shape India's water security vision.

The conference will address crucial aspects of water management including effective Governance, Transboundary Cooperation, Innovative Financing and Community Participation. It will also emphasize technological solutions, efficient water use and better coordination across sectors.

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

WATER

According to the official notice, in possession with Associated News Bureau read, localities will experience water shortages during the shutdown period, Zakura, Gulab Bagh, Alusteng, Shuhama, Hadoora, Chatterhama, Khalmulla, Habak,

Naseem Bagh, Busserbagh, Malla Bagh, Pandach, Buchpora, Soura, Anchar, Bohlohpora, Zoonimar, Nowshera, Bagh-I-Ali Mardan Khan, Zadibal, Hawal, Alamgari Bazar, Rajouri Kadal, Nallahmar, Nawakadal, Bohori Kadal, Nowhatta, Lal Bazar, Hazratbal, Sadribal, Nigeen, Saída Kadal, Rainawari, Khanyar, Khayam, Nowpora, Dalgate, Konkan, Gagribal, Nehru Park, Dal areas, Brein, Gupkar, Sonwar, Indra Nagar, Shivpora, Batwara, Pandrethan, Lal Chowk, Court Road, Residency Road, M.A Road, Bishembar Nagar, Babadem, Fateh Kadal, Barbarshah, Fateh Kadal, Habba Kadal, Gow Kadal, Karan Nagar, Kakasara, Balgarden, Chattabal, Kawdara, Eidgah, Mahrajgunj, Zaina Kadal, Saidpora, Bemina, Firdous Abad, Parts of Batamaloo, Qamarwari, ZainaKoot, Noorabad, Umarabad, and adjacent areas.

Authorities have urged residents to store an adequate water supply in advance. Hospitals in and around the city have been advised to stay in close coordination with the PHE authorities to manage water requirements, it reads

In case of grievances regarding water scarcity, the Provincial Control Room will remain functional round the clock. The public can reach out through landline numbers (0194-2477207, 0194-2452047) or WhatsApp numbers (9419431914, 9419431915).

The administration has also instructed media outlets to disseminate the information widely to ensure public awareness. (ANB)

DOCTORS

The extracted specimen will be sent to the forensics laboratory for further examination to determine its exact nature, the spokesman confirmed.

This rare case has garnered attention due to the bizarre nature of the worm's presence inside the boy's nasal passage. [KNT]

LG

UT government.

In February, the Home Minister reviewed the implementation of these laws in a meeting with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra and asked him to implement these laws across all commissionerates as soon as possible.

Shah has held similar meetings with other states in the past few months regarding the implementation of the three new criminal laws. These states include Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Haryana.

During the discussion in a similar meeting earlier with various states and UTs, the Home Minister had said that the essence of the three new criminal laws introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi lay in the provision of delivering justice within three years, from the filing of a First Information Report (FIR) till the highest court.

CM

few weak areas which need to be fixed.

Omar said there was no discussion on J&K's security situation during today's meeting.

"I had discussed security matters relating to J&K during my recent meeting with HM (Amit Shah) on Parliament premises," Omar said.

Omar expresses inability to comment on his exclusion from security reviews relating to the Union Territory.

"There is a difference between this meeting and those meetings. This meeting was about new laws and their implementation. If the decision has been made to exclude representatives elected by the people from security issues, what can we do? That is ok," he said.

On the reaction of Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi over the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner, Omar said, "The LoP has the right to dissent in the selection meeting. Opposition does not need to always agree with the government. The matter (relating to the constitution of the selection committee for picking the CEC and election commissioners) is sub-judice in the Supreme Court."—(KNO)

IGP

forces in maintaining law and order and stressed the need for continued collaboration to strengthen the region's security framework.

The spokesman said IGP Birdi also inspected the Special Operations Group (SOG), reviewing their operational readiness and capabilities.

He expressed satisfaction with their high level of training and professionalism, acknowledging their critical role in counter-terror operations.

Discussions were also held on the summer operation strategy, outlining key security tactics and contingency plans for the upcoming season.

Later, IGP Birdi visited the 90th Battalion CRPF camp, where a joint demonstration of operational tactics was conducted by SOG and CRPF personnel. The demonstration showcased advanced operational skills, coordination, and response strategies, reaffirming the commitment of both forces to maintaining peace and security in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, IGP Birdi praised the dedication and professionalism of the personnel, emphasising the importance of sustained collaboration and proactive measures to counter evolving security challenges.

IED

Initially, a suspicious object was found at Kashuwa Road, Chitragam, which later turned out to be an IED. It was destroyed by the Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS).

Army said the detection of IED averted a major terror incident.

"Chinar Warriors and @JmuKmrPolice averted a major terror incident today by recovering and destroying IED at Kashuwa Road, Chitragam, Shopian. Indian Army remains resolute in its commitment to keep Kashmir terror-free," Army Srinagar based Chinar Corps said.

Another IED was found at Nagbari, Pulwama during a search operation that was launched following a specific input.

"Based on specific intelligence input, a joint search operation was launched by the Indian Army and @JmuKmrPolice. During the search, an IED has been recovered and destroyed in situ at Nagbari, Pulwama. Indian Army remains resolute in its commitment to keep Kashmir terror-free," the Army said.

Last week J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha chaired back-to-back security review meetings in Srinagar and Jammu to devise more effective security measures to tackle the militancy in the union territory.

POLICE

checkpoint near Statue of Maharaja Gulab Singh and intercepted one car with Haryana registration number," police sources said.

They said that during checking, cash worth crores (approx 2.5 to 3 crore rupees) was recovered from the car, adding, "all the occupants in the car were arrested on the spot and were shifted to the Police Station Lakhnampur."

The matter is being investigated, said police.

AGA

political spectacle where the condition of Muslims is showcased for electoral gains. "They show this theatre to an audience that applauds them, and in return, the BJP secures votes," he said at a discussion on 'Political Representation

and Citizenship in Post-370 Jammu and Kashmir' organized by the National Students' Union of India (NSUI).

Mehdi argued that Kashmir is the biggest stage in this "theatre" because of its Muslim-majority population, which, according to him, the BJP aims to disempower. "Since Muslims here hold power, that power must be taken away, and they must be brought to their knees. What bigger theatre can there be than this?" he remarked.

He linked these developments to the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, stating that its revocation continues to be used as a political tool far beyond J&K. "Even in Uttar Pradesh, where people struggle for food, jobs, and basic necessities, BJP candidates still invoke Article 370 in their speeches, and the crowd cheers," he said.

On the role of political parties in the post-2019 scenario, Mehdi stressed the need for elected representatives to lead a united resistance movement. "MLAs must embody the people's resistance and come together for an organized movement. Right now, they are failing in this responsibility," he asserted. [KNT]

SNOW

Khurd (small cold) that occurs between January 31 and February 19, a 10-day long Chillai-Bachha (baby cold) will commence from February 20 to March 2.

Director Meteorological (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) 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—(KNO)

SPORE

an acquittal. Accordingly, the accused, Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh, is convicted under Section 377 RPC for committing unnatural offenses against PW3 and PW8," the CJM order read. "The established legal principles governing

sexual offenses leave no room for doubt regarding the accused's guilt. He subjected PW3 and PW8 to unnatural sexual intercourse during their minority, exploiting their vulnerability under the guise of offering blessings. By dominating their will, manipulating their psyche, and exerting control, he subjected their bodies, minds, and souls to persistent acts of brutality over the years, shrouding his crimes in ostentation while inflicting upon them the unbearable shame of his misconduct. He exploited his position as a self-proclaimed faith healer to manipulate and sexually abuse victims under the pretext of offering spiritual blessings," the order added.

The case surfaced in 2016 when a complainant approached Police Station Bomai Sopore on March 2, reporting that his son studying in 10th-standard had been repeatedly visiting Sheikh, who called himself a pir, but recently refused to go. Upon questioning, the victim revealed that Sheikh had been engaging in unnatural acts with children, including himself.

An FIR under Section 377 RPC was registered, and a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was formed by the Superintendent of Police, Sopore to conduct a thorough probe into the allegations of sexual abuse against multiple victims..

The SIT, comprising senior investigators, child protection officers, and forensic experts, collected evidence, recorded witness statements under Sections 161 and 164-A J&K CrPc, and conducted forensic examinations.

Several victims later came forward, revealing a pattern of abuse from 2012 to 2016. The accused allegedly intimidated them with threats of divine punishment to ensure their silence.

Based on substantial evidence, including victim testimonies, forensic reports, and site inspections, a chargesheet was filed by J&K police on June 15, 2017.

The counsel for the accused claimed that the case was fabricated due to a financial dispute, but the court found no supporting evidence.

The CJM court also identified multiple other victims whose testimonies supported a pattern of systematic abuse.

It also recommended separate FIRs for these cases to ensure procedural fairness

"PW4, PW5, PW7, PW9, and PW11 have courageously recounted harrowing accounts of their suffering. Their testimonies remain unwaveringly consistent; however, this judgment refrains from extensive elaboration or deliberation, solely to uphold the sanctity of the impending investigation, which must proceed after the registration of separate FIRs for PW4, PW5, PW7, PW9, PW11, or PW12—who, though not examined, may also be a victim, alongside any other individual seeking their rightful justice against the accused.", the court remarked.

The court observed that justice should serve as a catalyst for other victims to come forward.

"If this judgment serves as a catalyst for those silent voices—who have long endured unspeakable trauma, struggled in the shadows of despair, and now look toward the law with the last vestiges of hope—then justice has, in some measure, already begun to prevail," the observed.

COURT

for misconduct that carries a stigmatic impact requires a proper inquiry.

In the case at hand, the respondent was appointed to a Class IV position in the PWD under the compassionate appointment scheme. His appointment was withdrawn after a criminal case was filed against him. The court upheld the tribunal's decision to restore his appointment, stating that the employer's action was premature and that the employee should have been allowed to face the trial first.

While ruling in favor of the employee, the court gave the employer the liberty to take

action based on the outcome of the criminal trial. The court disposed of the petition while emphasizing the importance of proper procedure and the employee's right to be heard. [KNT]

SAKEENA

roots level. We are resolute to fulfill public aspirations and ensure better facilities and services to them.

The Minister stressed on choosing priority projects with achievable deadlines that align with the budget cycle and fulfill public needs and their aspirations. She impressed upon the officers to work with added zeal and sense of responsibility and attend public in a compassionate manner, ensuring prompt redressal of their issues and developmental needs.

The Minister underlined that Srinagar is the face of Kashmir and all necessary measures must be taken to make it more beautiful besides ensuring up to mark facilities to its residents and the visitors as well.

She also directed the officers to ensure that all issues raised by the public representatives during the meeting are addressed in a time bound manner so that people of their respective areas are benefitted. She directed all the departments to ensure proper follow up of the issues flagged in the meeting while ensuring prompt redressal of the same before the next meeting.

The Minister also emphasized the need for strong collaboration between the elected legislators and the officers in order to fulfill aspirations of the people and ensure maximum benefit of government schemes percolate to the public.

During the meeting, the MLA's of the district projected issues and development related demands of their respective constituencies.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner gave a detailed presentation highlighting the district's profile, functioning of different sectors and developmental scenario.

CAREER

action would follow once the responsible parties are identified. "We will find out who is at fault. If the mistake is from the school level or any other level, those responsible will face the music," she said, emphasizing that the incident was a serious concern.

The Education Minister expressed her disappointment over the situation, particularly given the hard work students put in throughout the year. "It is unfortunate that students who burn the midnight oil for the whole year are being denied admit cards and disallowed to sit in the examination. Those responsible for this will face action," she added. Sakina Itoo assured that 70-80% of textbooks are currently available for students, and she promised that 100% availability would be achieved by the time schools re-open. [KNT]

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General Public that I, Bashir Ahmad Malla, S/O: Wali Mohd Malla R/O Kultura, Tehsil Langate, District Kupwara, is applying for the issuance of the Date of Birth Certificate (DOB) for my son, Kashif Bashir, whose Date of Birth (DOB) is 07/11/2020. As per School/Anganwadi/Chowkidar records, the mentioned date of birth is correct. If anyone has any objections regarding this, they may file the same with the office of the Block Development Officer (BDO), Langate, District Kupwara within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections will be entertained after the expiry of the stipulated period.

Bashir Ahmad Malla
F/O Kashif Bashir
R/O Kultura, Tehsil Langate,
District Kupwara



DC Srinagar chairs District Level Committee meeting of NCORD

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 18: To review and strengthen ongoing measures to combat drug abuse and its peddling, a meeting of District level Committee on NCORD was today held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex.

The meeting deliberated on key issues, including stricter enforcement actions against drug peddlers, intensified awareness campaigns and enhanced treatment and rehabilitation facilities for those affected by substance abuse.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner took first hand appraisal from officers of all line departments and other stakeholders regarding the progress achieved in ongoing fight against the drug menace in order to curb the drug menace and tighten the noose against drug peddlers in Srinagar District.

Dr. Bilal stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination and com-



munity involvement in tackling the menace of drug addiction. He emphasized the need for sustained awareness campaigns targeting vulnerable groups, particularly youth and directed the concerned officers to intensify the awareness programmes in the district.

Highlighting the need for accessible and effective treatment facilities for individuals battling addiction, the DC stressed on up to mark facilities at drug de-addiction centres like IMHAANS, JVC and SMHS. He also called for early operationalization of the Drug De-addiction & Rehabilitation

Centre at Sanant Nagar.

He underlined the importance of a holistic approach involving prevention as well as education, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of such individuals back into the society, at the same time strict enforcement measures as a strong deterrent.

He added that through a coordinated and multi-pronged approach which includes prevention, enforcement, treatment, rehabilitation and IEC strategies, the menace of drugs will be eliminated from Srinagar soon.

On the occasion, the DC stressed on conducting intensified mass awareness programs to particularly educate the youth against the detrimental effects of drug abuse. Besides DySP Headquarter Srinagar, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Tehsil Headquarter, the meeting was attended by the Officers of Excise Department, Drug Control Organization, Health, IMHANS, Rehabilitation Centers and other concerned departments.

IICT holds Draw of Lots, selects 100 weavers for free modern carpet looms

■ HT News Network



SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 18 – The Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), Srinagar, today organised 'Draw of Lots' for selection of 100 active registered carpet weavers for distribution of free Modified Modern Steel Carpet Looms.

A large number of applicant weavers from various districts assembled in IICT premises at Bagh-e-Ali Mardan Khan, here, for participation in the Draw of Lots, after which 100 beneficiaries were selected by the Designated Committee in a fair and transparent manner.

Sharing details, Director IICT Zubair Ahmad, stated that these looms, which have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Textiles, GoI, at a cost of 43.70 lakh under its 'Wool Processing Scheme' for the current financial year, shall be distributed amongst the selected beneficiaries at a function to be notified separately.

J&K LDBC Commission assesses implications of backwardness among OBC's in Baramulla

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, February 18: The Jammu & Kashmir Local Bodies Dedicated Backward Classes Commission chaired by Justice (Retd.) Janak Raj Kotwal, and its Members; R.K. Bhagat IAS (Retd.) and Professor M. S. Bhadwal visited District Headquarter Baramulla as a part of their outreach and met the stakeholders from different panchayats and Urban Local Bodies of Districts Baramulla, Kupwara and Baniptora to assess the implications of backwardness among OBC's in direct elections to the local bodies. The Commission was apprised by the delegations about the problems faced by the OBC community in getting representation in the local bodies and the circumstances that prevent them in getting elected to the rural local bodies. The delegations expressed their concern about the absence of comprehensive census of OBC classes so far and stressed that the OBC classes survey should be done in light of more castes that have been included in 2024. The Commission gave a patient hearing to the views and grievances of the delegations and, assured to accord consideration to their concerns.



Dir AHK visits Poultry Project cum LPP Hariparabath Srinagar

■ HT News Network



Srinagar, February 18: Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir, Dr. PS Sudan today conducted a comprehensive review of the poultry sector in the region during his visit to the Poultry Project cum LPP Hariparabath Srinagar.

The visit, aimed at bolstering the poultry industry, brought together key stakeholders to discuss current initiatives and future strategies.

Joint Director Poultry, Deputy Directors of Poultry, Livestock Development Officers, Assistant Directors, Veterinary Assistant Surgeons, and stakeholders were present on the occasion.

During the visit, Dir deliberated on programs under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Capex, and various infrastructure development schemes, including those funded by NABARD. On the occasion, he emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to poultry husbandry development & highlighted its potential to double farmers' income.

He reiterated the department's commitment to the successful implementation of the Integrated Poultry Development Project (IPDP) and HADP.

Asian Water bird census to be conducted across 25 Wetlands in Kashmir

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, February 18: The Department of Wildlife Protection, in collaboration with the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA), is set to conduct the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2025 on February 19.

This annual initiative plays a crucial role in estimating the population of migratory birds visiting Kashmir's wetlands and assessing the ecological health of these vital habitats.

Ahead of the census, an orientation program was conducted on Today, at IMPA, where volunteers received specialized training in bird identification, population estimation techniques, and data collection methods.

The session saw participation from scholars from SKUAST, students from various colleges, and members of prominent NGOs



such as Wildlife Conservation Fund, SRDE, Wildlife SOS, WRCF, and SEEDS.

Also, officials from the Forest Territorial Department, Forest Protection Force, Wildlife Department, and WUCMA, along with experienced birdwatchers and conservationists, took part in the training.

Speaking at the event, Rashid Yahya Naqash, Regional Wildlife Warden elaborated on the migratory patterns of birds arriving in Kashmir's wetlands between November and March.

He highlighted the Cen-

tral Asian Flyway, a significant migration route used by birds traveling from Russia, Siberia, Europe, and China, and stressed the importance of Kashmir's wetlands as crucial stopover points.

Tawheed Ahmad Deva, Regional Wildlife Warden, Kashmir, emphasized that the census is a key scientific exercise, as bird migration serves as an essential indicator of wetland health.

He also noted that over the past two years, more than 12 lakh migratory birds have been recorded in Kashmir's wetlands, reaffirming

their global ecological importance.

Altat Hussain, Wildlife Warden, Wetlands Kashmir, and Coordinator of Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA), expressed satisfaction that most of Kashmir's major wetlands currently hold sufficient water levels to sustain migratory birds.

He highlighted that interventions such as the construction of regulatory gates at Hokersar, in collaboration with the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, have significantly improved water retention in the Hokersar wetland.

He further noted that Hokersar's water levels are now higher than they have been in the past decade, ensuring a more stable and suitable habitat for migratory birds.

The Asian Waterbird Census 2025 will cover 25 key Ramsar sites—Hokersar, Haigam, Shallabugh,

IT Commissioner Secretary reviews progress on CSCs, e-Unnat portal

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 18: Commissioner Secretary, Information Technology, Saurabh Bhagat, today held a meeting to review progress on Common Service Centres (CSCs) and e-Unnat portal at Civil Secretariat, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Rupesh Kumar, CEO, JaKeGA; Ajaz Qaiser, Additional Secretary, IT; Manju Gupta, DGM, J&K Bank; Faizan Manzoor, State Head, J&K, CSC e-Governance Service Limited; Malika Raina, Under Secretary, IT and SeMT (State e-Mission Team), J&K besides other officers and officials. Regarding improvements in access to digital services and bridging the digital divide, particularly in remote and challenging terrains of J&K, the Commissioner Secre-



tary directed CSC-SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) to expeditiously complete its target of establishing 940 new CSC touch points. He was informed that, so far, 650 new touch points have already been established in various government offices and institutions. He directed the officers to ensure even distribution of CSCs across the UT while establishing new points in order to achieve saturation.

The Commissioner Secretary had detailed discussion with J&K Bank regard-

ing the steps which need to be taken up by J&K Bank to enable onboarding of CSCs to work as Business Correspondents (BCs). He was informed that 313 CSCs in J&K are already working as BCs for several banks like IDBI, PNB, BOB, HDFC and AXIS. Working as BCs for J&K Bank will further enhance financial inclusion across the Union Territory, he added. Currently, UT of J&K aims at onboarding 700 more CSCs as Business Correspondents to give further thrust to financial inclu-

sion.

It was informed in the meeting that the IT department has notified rates to avail various online services which envisage Rs. 50 per service for government to citizen services and Rs. 75 for government to business services to prevent cases of overcharging by VLEs. In addition to fixation of charges, the department also carries out regular inspection drives to mitigate overcharging instances.

The Commissioner Secretary asked the concerned to integrate all 1166 online services available at e-Unnat Portal of Jammu and Kashmir into Digital CSC Seva Portal, a CSC platform. Pertinently, e-Unnat is the integrated services delivery portal of J&K facilitating citizens with easy access to all government schemes and services under one umbrella.

CUKashmir student invited to attend SOUL leadership conclave

■ HT News Network

Ganderbal, Feb 18: Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) M.Sc Physics student, Mr. Mubashir Riyaz has achieved a major feat after being invited to attend the SOUL Leadership Conclave organised by the School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL), which will be inaugurated by Shri. Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 21st of February, 2025. The two-day Leadership Conclave will bring in several leaders from political, public policy, social and business sectors to talk about their personal leadership journeys to the youth of the country and the world. Extending his congratulations to Mr. Mubashir Riyaz and wishing him continued success in his academic and leadership journey, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath said that his (Mubashir's) achievements serve as an inspiration to students across the region and reinforce the university's commitment to nurturing future leaders. Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid



Rasool, said, Mubashir's journey showcases the immense potential of students from Kashmir in contributing to national and global discussions on leadership, innovation, and youth empowerment. Earlier, Mr. Mubashir was selected to represent Jammu & Kashmir at the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2025, held at New Delhi on 10th and 11th of January, 2025 wherein he presented his idea on "How Technology Can Be Used To Make India Viksit by

2047". The two-day Leadership Conclave will bring in several leaders from political, public policy, social and business sectors to talk about their personal leadership journeys to the youth of the country and the world. Extending his congratulations to Mr. Mubashir Riyaz and wishing him continued success in his academic and leadership journey, Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath said that his (Mubashir's) achievements serve as an inspiration.

EDITORIAL

High Court comes to relief of passport applicants

The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has come to the rescue of the people who have been denied the passport due to the reason that some of their relatives are involved in militancy. The court issued the order in this regard and the same was welcomed by one and all with politicians taking credit for the same. At the end of the day it goes to the credit of judges for issuing such an order that has provided relief to scores of youth.

Over the past many years the authorities would deny passport to a particular person with the reason that some relative of the applicant is involved in militancy. Even though in most of the cases the person seeking passport was directly related to a militant or anti-national element there were many other cases where the relation was remote. The issue was raised by many people including the politicians but in the past the judgment in this regard was not in tune with the expectations of the common people.

The principles of natural justice make it clear that a person should not be victimized for the action not taken by him or her. In other words it can be said that an action taken by a relative, whether close or distant, should not form the basis for denial of that particular person. There is an old saying that justice delayed is justice denied. It may be true for many such persons who could not get the passport due to the reason already spelt out.

Many cases have come to the fore in which students could not pursue higher education due to non-availability of passports. Many of these students rued their luck while there are many others who opined that they are being targeted by the acts of their relatives who in some cases are not even remotely with him or her. There is an old saying that it is better to be late than never and the same aptly fits with the recent court order issued with respect to denial of passports.

There are many instances where the passport applicants have given up hope of getting their passport since the authorities took a lot of time in completing the formalities. Even though the formalities have been eased, still then a lot needs to be done. The court should also take a note of this so that corrective measures are taken.

Raising Gen Alpha and Gen Beta

SHAINY SHARMA

The 21st century has introduced new challenges and opportunities in parenting. As we raise Generation Alpha (born 2012-2024) and Generation Beta (born 2025-2039), it is crucial to adapt parenting strategies to their digital upbringing, rapid technological advancements and changing societal norms.

Ensuring these children grow up healthy, happy, and disciplined requires a balance of traditional values and modern approaches. There is no denying that, unlike previous generations, Generation Alpha and Generation Beta are growing up with easy access to technology, which affects their lifestyle habits.

It is of utmost importance that parents/guardians take proactive steps to ensure their children's well-being such as providing balanced nutrition such as a diet rich in proteins, vitamins, and fibres while limiting processed foods and sugary snacks; reducing screen time and promoting physical activities such as cycling, swimming, and team sports to improve fitness and social skills; setting screen-free bedtime routines to ensure quality sleep, which is crucial for the cognitive and emotional development and encouraging children to spend time offline by engaging in hands-on activities like painting, gardening and DIY projects.

Not only these, but in an era of social media influence and fast-paced life-

styles, parents/guardians need to support their children by creating a strong emotional connection; encouraging resilience and a growth mindset; guiding them in reducing digital overload, and engaging them in mindful activities such as yoga, meditation, journaling, or simple relaxation exercises to help them cope with stress. Above all, what matters the most is the art of discipline. With instant gratification becoming a norm in the digital age, parents/guardians must realise that these generations will grow up in an AI-driven world, requiring skills beyond academics. Parents/Guardians can help prepare them by encouraging critical thinking and creativity and providing problem-solving challenges, STEM activities, and artistic outlets along with proper guidance on responsible internet usage, cybersecurity, and online ethics followed by developing social skills in a hybrid world. Raising healthy, happy, and disciplined Gen Alpha and Gen Beta children requires a thoughtful blend of love, guidance, and adaptability.

Parents/Guardians must embrace new-age parenting by integrating digital awareness with traditional values while fostering emotional resilience and self-discipline. By prioritising wellbeing, education and strong moral foundations, one can ensure these generations grow into responsible, fulfilled, and future-ready individuals.



In the ongoing era, the whole globe is fighting and making their hard efforts to eradicate the drug menace. Drug menace, or I can say drug curse, is everywhere throughout the globe.

In our society, there are two kinds of people.

Number one are those who are kind, like your parents, your siblings, your teachers, your relatives, and your friends. Such people are the nation builders and society defenders. They always have concern regarding their nation and society. Such people always

come out agitated against any evil in society and fight for the societal causes.

Kindly people as your parents: there is no other relationship than the parents. Parents are your real heroes and your well-wishers. Always follow your parents; I hope you will be among the great ones.

Kindly people as you teachers: it is quite bizarre and true that after your parents, teachers are your true well-wishers and always have something best for you. Your teachers always want to see you at the top in any successive field, like your teacher wants you to see. more successful than they are.

Kindly people as your siblings: your siblings are your blood bonds; they never want your destruction in any situation; they always want to attend the

top.

Who are the bad and our enemies?

Sometimes it hurts, but it is real that our enemies are very close to us. They never care for you, they never have any concern for you, they always want your destruction, and they always keep you hanging when you have a bad time.

Where is the home of bad people? Such people have no unique identification. Such people will be roaming here and there and are among your society. Such people are the nation destroyed and are the cancer for the society. Such people have no age; they stay their destruction at any time and storm the whole nation.

How can we identify and punish such scoundrels? When anyone offers you an

illicit drug-like substance like cigarettes, alcohol, brown sugar, cannabis, etc., such people can be identified easily, and behind the bars is their deserving place. Such people should never be forgiven under any circumstances without teaching them a great lesson.

Such people are arrogant, scoundrels, dishonest, selfish, and always harming society, and their final consequences are dreadful.

How do our young buds get involved in drugs?

At any age, in any environment, your buds can be involved in drug curses, like at school level, college level, in friendship circles, etc.

Most importantly, we have noticed their routine habits, like their sleeping style, eating habits, behav-

ior, temperament, etc.

Whenever any parent or teacher caught any untoward or unusual behavior, they should have their eyes on his or her every task.

There are parents who are ignoring and avoiding the usual behavior of their children and regret it after a gap of time.

Drug peddlers should be identified and informed to nearby police, where they get better treatment and are punishable under different sections.

One thing is very impressive and appreciable: police authorities seizing the property of drug peddlers and booking them under law.

Such people are the cancers and storms for the society and nation.

To eradicate the drug menace, it is everyone's responsibility to identify people who are related to

it and should be punished under law.

How can we eradicate?

Parents should provide their children a little budget for their routine tasks. Counseling is very important. The concerned department should come forward and let the people know its harmful effect on their health and hygiene. Never ask a passive smoker to get such substances from the shop, like parents send their children to go and get cigarettes for them. It will make a huge impact on their behavior towards such. And motivate them to do so. Never smoke cigarettes in front of passive smokers and always tell them the dreadful consequences of taking such dreadful drug items.

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The Rise Of Fake Peers And The Betrayal Of True Faith

NASIR BHAT

Kashmir has a rich spiritual heritage—one that was built on knowledge, sincerity and devotion to Allah alone. We must not let this legacy be destroyed by the rise of fraudsters and the negligence of those entrusted with religious guidance. The responsibility to change this situation lies with each one of us.

Kashmir, once a land illuminated by the spiritual wisdom of revered Sufi saints like Makhdoom Sahib (RA), Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Noorani (RA), and Baba Dawood Khaki (RA), is now witnessing a tragic decline in religious integrity. The teachings of these noble saints, rooted in the Quran and Hadith, were meant to guide people toward a pure and sincere connection with Allah. But today, their legacy is being tarnished by a growing culture of fake peers—self-proclaimed spiritual leaders who exploit faith for personal gain.

Figures like Razak Bab and countless others have turned religion into a marketplace, preying on the desperation of the masses. They claim to possess divine powers, offering solutions to worldly problems in exchange for money and blind loyalty. Their followers lost in ignorance, place their trust in rituals, amulets, and baseless superstitions rather than the teachings of Islam. This alarming situation raises serious questions: How did we reach this point? And who is responsible?

The Failure of Religious Scholars

One of the biggest reasons

behind this crisis is the failure of our religious scholars. Those who should have been the guardians of true faith have instead become entangled in personal and sectarian disputes. Instead of focusing on teaching the Quran and Hadith, many scholars have prioritized defending their own school of thought, dividing the Ummah in the process.

Social media has worsened this situation. Many scholars now focus more on promoting their own sect (firqah) rather than guiding people toward true Islamic teachings. Their debates, often fueled by ego and the desire for followers, create confusion rather than clarity. As a result, the common person is left uninformed about the fundamental principles of Islam. In this vacuum of knowledge, fake peers step in, offering easy solutions to life's struggles, drawing people further away from true faith.

The Forgotten Warning Against Shirk

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) repeatedly warned against shirk (associating partners with Allah), yet today, it has become widespread in the name of faith. People believe in the so-called powers of fake saints more than they trust in Allah. They offer sacrifices at the feet of impostors, believing that these individuals can change their fate. They forget that Islam teaches direct reliance on Allah, not intermediaries who manipulate religion for profit.

The tragedy is that our scholars, instead of addressing these

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issues, remain silent or distracted by sectarian battles. Instead of warning people about the dangers of fake peers, they are busy proving the superiority of their own firqah. This negligence has left people spiritually vulnerable, unable to distinguish between true faith and fabricated practices.

Consequences of Ignorance and Blind Following

The consequences of this crisis are dire:

Loss of True Faith - When people place their trust in fake peers rather than in Allah, they drift away from Islam's core teachings. The message of Tawheed (oneness of God) is replaced by superstition and dependency on individuals.

Exploitation of the Poor and Desperate - Fake peers thrive on the suffering of others. They extract money from those who seek hope, offering false prom-

ises and performing meaningless rituals that have no basis in Islam.

Division of the Ummah - Instead of uniting under the common teachings of the Quran and Hadith, people are now divided based on sectarian identities. This division has weakened our collective faith and left us more susceptible to exploitation.

Moral and Social Decay - When religion is reduced to the blind following, moral values decline. Honesty, sincerity, and personal accountability—key teachings of Islam—are replaced by a culture of dependency on fake spiritual leaders.

The Way Forward: Returning to the Teachings of True Saints

The teachings of saints like Makhdoom Sahib (RA), Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Noorani (RA), and Baba Dawood Khaki (RA) were never about the blind following. They emphasized knowledge, self-purification, and a direct connection with Allah. Their legacy must be revived to counter the rise of fake peers and religious exploitation.

Education and Awareness - Religious scholars must focus on educating people about true Islamic teachings rather than engaging in sectarian debates. The Quran and Hadith should be made accessible to all, so people can learn to differentiate between faith and fabrication.

Rejecting Fake Peers - People must be encouraged to question and verify religious figures instead of blindly following anyone who claims to have divine powers. The Prophet

(PBUH) himself never sought personal gain from religion, and neither did the true saints of Kashmir.

Unity Among Scholars - Instead of dividing people, scholars must come together to address real issues, such as the spread of superstition and ignorance. Their duty is to unite the Ummah, not to gain popularity by promoting their own sect.

Strengthening Personal Faith - Every individual must take responsibility for their own faith. Islam does not encourage blind following; it calls for reflection, knowledge, and sincerity in worship. People must be guided to seek solutions in the Quran and Hadith, rather than in the empty words of self-proclaimed spiritual leaders.

A Call to Action

If we continue on this path of ignorance, we risk losing the essence of our faith. The presence of fake peers is not just a sign of their deception; it is a reflection of our collective failure to uphold true Islam. It is time to return to the teachings of the Quran, reject superstition, and demand better from our scholars.

Kashmir has a rich spiritual heritage—one that was built on knowledge, sincerity, and devotion to Allah alone. We must not let this legacy be destroyed by the rise of fraudsters and the negligence of those entrusted with religious guidance. The responsibility to change this situation lies with each one of us.

It is time to wake up. It is time to reclaim our faith.

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Drug, menace, and role of society

Mother: A Kitchen-Scientist

morning and evening, our mothers engage in cooking, which is nothing but a practical demonstration of chemistry. Most of the time, they unknowingly perform basic chemistry experiments. Cooking is not just a daily chore; it is a process deeply connected to the person who plays the key role in the kitchen—our mother.

She eagerly waits in the kitchen to prepare multiple cuisines with the help of her loyal friend—chemistry. She learns chemistry by sharing her social learning experiences with it. As we know, cooking consists of both physical and chemical processes, which follow a series of steps. For example:

Washing rice - A physical process involving cleaning.
Boiling rice - A chemical and physical process where heat causes water absorption and softens the rice.

Decantation - The process of separating the boiled water from rice after vigorous heating.

Similarly, cooking vegetables and meat involves several chemical changes that occur when food is heated and prepared for consumption.

Another common process in the kitchen is the dissolution of sugar in water to form a sugar solution. Our mothers perform this task effortlessly, combining two different substances—a solvent (water) and a solute (sugar or salt)—to create a solution. Although they may not be aware of the scientific terms, they instinctively understand the process.

Dilution is another simple physical process where the concentration of sugar or salt is reduced by adding more water. This process helps adjust the taste of food.

In chemistry, concentration refers to the amount of solute in a solution. This is a fundamental concept that connects chemistry with kitchen chores, especially cooking.

Teaching Chemistry to our mothers

We, as students, can help our mothers learn basic chemistry terms in a simple and engaging way. Teaching them about solvents, solutes, dilution, concentration, and decantation can enhance their understanding of what they already do daily. There should be no hesitation in introducing them to scientific concepts.

Cultivating a habit of learning in the kitchen can make cooking a more scientific and insightful process for our mothers. Basic chemistry knowledge can help them understand solutions, mixtures, sieving, and decantation—all of which involve physical and chemical changes. These concepts are fascinating and easy to grasp when connected to real-life kitchen activities.

Mothers as kitchen-scientists

Our mothers are truly kitchen-scientists, engaging in daily experiments without realizing it. Every day, they handle chemical reactions while cooking, just as a laboratory

scientist performs experiments in a lab. While a lab scientist follows scientific procedures, a kitchen scientist carries out experiments through simple steps, using heat, mixing, and separation techniques.

The kitchen is like a mini-laboratory, where chemistry plays an essential role in food preparation. An educated son or daughter can greatly assist their mother by teaching her basic chemistry terms and concepts.

Let's expose our mothers to the vibrations of chemistry! There is no hard-and-fast rule for learning scientific concepts, but daily practice and observation can make a difference. Chemistry is a loyal friend to our mothers, guiding them in their cooking journeys. We should not hesitate to teach them new scientific terms. Providing them with scientific awareness in cooking will not only make their work more meaningful but will also enhance their learning experience.

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Who Am I?

NOWSHEENAMUSHTAQ

There are nights when I lie awake, staring at the ceiling, feeling an unbearable weight settle over me—a weight of unfulfilled dreams, of missed opportunities, of a life that hasn’t turned out the way I once imagined. I wonder, When did I stop trying? When did I become this person who is too afraid to fail, so much so that I don’t even take the first step?

I once was different - louder, fearless and always upfront when something wrong happened. My friends knew that version of me—the one who never hesitated to raise their voice, who fought against injustice, who had the courage to stand alone if necessary. I used to believe that words had power and that standing up for what was right mattered. I was never the one to stay silent. But the people I have met in the past year have seen a different side of me. A submissive side. The fire that once burned within me has faded. No more awaaz uthana (raising a voice), no more questioning what is right or wrong, no more standing up against the things that used to make my blood boil. I have turned into someone who observes but does not react, someone who listens but does not speak.

When I see people now discussing the very things I used to engage in—debating, questioning and resisting passionately - but I remain silent. Not because I don’t care, but because I am tired; tired of fighting battles that seem to lead nowhere; tired of pouring my energy into things that never change. Reality has hit me hard, and it has left me with the bitter realisation that maybe, just maybe, none of it mattered in the end.

And if none of it mattered, then what does that make me?

I used to believe I was capable of great things. I had dreams that burned brightly and ambitions that felt within reach. But somewhere along the way, that fire dimmed. Was it because of fear? Because of the voices—inside me and around me—that whispered, What if you fail? What if you make a fool of yourself? Over time, I let those voices dictate my actions, or rather, my inaction. I convinced myself that it was better to not try at all than to risk failing. And so, I became stuck.

I see people around me chasing their goals, pushing past obstacles and embracing life with open arms. And I sit on the sidelines, watching, pretending it doesn’t bother me. I tell myself that I am content with the little I have, with the simple things in life. Ironically, this is something I once associated with people who had no other choice—people who, in my eyes, had failed and settled for less. But now, I am doing the same. I call it gratitude, I call it acceptance, but deep down, I know the truth. It is fear. It is surrender.

To the world, I am happy. I smile, I laugh and I go about my day as if nothing is wrong. People think I have it together. They see me and assume that I am at peace with my life. But they don’t see what happens when the day ends when I am alone in the darkness of my own thoughts. They don’t see the weight I carry, the quiet tears, the self-doubt that creeps in like an unwelcome guest. Even those closest to me, the ones I trust the most, have no idea how I truly feel.

Every day, I put on a mask. I wear it so well that even I sometimes believe it. I wake up, get dressed and go about my routine, all while pretending that this is enough, that I am okay. But in the stillness of the night, when I have no one to fool but myself, the mask slips. And I realize that this is not what I wanted. This is not who I am.

The question haunts me: Who am I?

Am I the person who once believed in my own potential? Or am I the person who has let fear dictate my life? Have I truly failed, or is it just a story I tell myself to justify staying in my comfort zone?

I don’t know the answers. But I do know this—I don’t want to live like this forever. I don’t want to spend my life wondering what if. Maybe it’s not too late. Maybe there is still a version of me, buried beneath the fear, waiting to be found. Maybe the first step is acknowledging that I have been hiding from myself for too long.

Maybe, just maybe, I can find my way back.

The writer holds a Masters degree in English from the Central University of Kashmir and is currently an educator at Birla Open Minds International School Pampore.

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Education Tour experience 2025



PROFESSOR DR. BILAL AHMAD,
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Traveling is an enriching journey undertaken for various purposes such as research, knowledge acquisition, studying, leisure, or business. Travel offers a unique experience by helping individuals unplug from the stresses of daily life. During our travels, we experience life from a new perspective—exploring diverse places, cultures, cuisines, traditions, and ways of living—experiences that are not accessible within the confines of home. This makes travel an invaluable experience. One transformative experience is the educational tour. These tours offer students a unique blend of learning and fun while offering new perspectives on various subjects. During our journey, we experience life in different ways. We explore new places, cultures, cuisines, traditions, and ways of living. We could never experience these things at home. This is why travel is such a unique and invaluable life experience.

This article focuses on education tour benefits and experience shared by students of Faculty of Agriculture, SKUAST-K after taking part in all India Education Tour 2025. The benefits of educational tours are vast and significant. Here are some key

1. Interactive Learning:

Educational tours help students engage with the concepts they are studying in a hands-on, interactive way. These trips take students beyond textbook learning, enabling them to observe, manipulate, and participate in real-world scenarios. Whether visiting a historical museum or a science center, these experiences allow students to explore and learn directly from professionals and guides, making learning more engaging and memorable.

2. Entertainment and Fun:

In addition to learning, educational tours offer plenty of entertainment, making them enjoyable for students.

3. Social Interaction:

A change of environment offers students an opportunity to bond with their peers in a more relaxed setting. Without the structure of the classroom, students have the chance to interact on a personal level.

4. Exposure to New Experiences:

For many students, an educational tour offers access to destinations and experiences that they may not otherwise have had the chance to encounter due to financial or logistical constraints.

5. Better Exposure:

Educational tours give students the chance to visit new places, which is especially valuable for those who don’t have many opportunities to travel. For curious learners, these tours serve as practical extensions of their studies, enabling them to test their knowledge and apply it in real-world contexts.

6. Fostering a Passion for Travel:

An educational tour can spark a passion for travel. Since students are accompanied by teachers and guides, and are traveling with peers, they experience the world in a safe and structured way. Often, the cost is lower than if they traveled alone, which makes it an accessible introduction to the joys of travel.

7. Cultural Observation and Awareness:

Educational tours allow students to experience different cultures firsthand. These experiences can cultivate empathy and inspire students to consider



global issues and work toward positive change.

8. Independence and Self-Reliance:

Being away from home during an educational tour gives students a chance to step outside their comfort zones. In an unfamiliar environment, students develop important life skills such as independence, discipline, and self-awareness.

9. Enhanced Academic Performance:

Educational tours expose students to different teaching styles, which often sparks greater interest in the subject. In brief, educational tours offer a multi-faceted approach to learning, combining knowledge acquisition with cultural exploration, personal growth, and fun.

I would like to share the experiences and details of the All India Academic Tour 2025, organized by the Faculty of Agriculture, SKUAST-K. The 28-day tour was a transformative journey for all participants, offering valuable learning opportunities at various institutions and research centers. This tour, as part of 4th-year education program, began on January 15, 2025, and was led by Professor Bilal Ahmad Bhat, tour incharge, accompanied by 52 students and 4 faculty members.

The journey began on early morning on January 15, 2025, from the College of Agriculture, Wadura. Students gathered at the Sopore railway station and boarded a train to Banihal. Upon reaching Banihal, we captured the moment with a group photograph. Dr. Bilal Ahmad then took the opportunity to brief students on the objectives, rules, and regulations of the tour, ensuring everyone was on the same page. He divided students as well as staff into groups and appointed group leaders to oversee specific responsibilities, aiming for a smooth and organized journey. After the briefing, we continued our journey towards Jammu, with a stop at Peerah for a delicious lunch of Rajma Chawal, which was a treat for everyone. As we made our way through the stunning landscapes of Jammu and Kashmir, the breathtaking views left us in awe. After a satisfying dinner, we arrived in Jammu on the same day, where we spent the night, marking the beginning of an unforgettable experience filled with exploration, learning, and the joy of camaraderie. On January 16, we hired bus and visited SKUAS-Jammu, Jammu University and some historical places in Jammu. Prof S.E.H.Rizvi, Dean (Basic Sciences) and Professor Manish Kumar, HoD, Statistics & CS shared their knowledge with visitors and hosted Professor Bilal Ahmad (Ex Faculty member of SKUAST-J) alongwith staff for lunch. In evening, we boarded the bus from Jammu to Delhi and arrived in Delhi on January 17, at 11:45 am, where we enjoyed lunch before preparing for our next journey. On January 17, 2025 we embarked on the Duroto Express from Delhi, arrived Hyderabad next day. Our four-day adventure in Hyderabad was filled with excitement and discovery. Despite some initial seating challenges, we quickly settled into our sleeper class berths. This journey provided us with the chance to interact with fellow passengers from diverse backgrounds, adding to the adventure. Along the way, we

savored delightful train meals like masala chai, samosas, Biryani, and Thali, which added to the charm of the trip.

Besides visiting educational institutions ICRISAT etc in the area, we marveled at the iconic Charminar, explored the grandeur of Golconda Fort, and enjoyed tranquil moments by Hussain Sagar Lake. A visit to Wonderla added some adrenaline, with thrilling rides and unforgettable experiences. Our time in Hyderabad was a perfect mix of education, history, culture, and adventure, leaving us with treasured memories. On 22 January 2025, we boarded SRF Pune Express from Hyderabad to Pune (Hadisapur) reached Pune on the following day. Next day we get fresh and our fresh journey starts by visiting many prestigious Educational institutions like Agr College Pune, Pune University, Amity University Symbiosis International as well as historical places in Pune. Pune Known as the "Oxford of the East," is a hub for education, technology, and culture. Pune city is a blend of traditional Maharashtrian culture and modern urban development, offering attractions like Shaniwar Wada, Aga Khan Palace, and the vibrant FC Road area. Pune's food scene is also diverse, with a strong emphasis on local Maharashtrian dishes like Vada Pav and Puran Poli, along with many cafes and restaurants. We also want to express our Heartfelt thanks to Mr. Zahid Sarfaraz Bhat, Sarhad school Pune for his incredible hospitality and for generously providing us with free accommodation. Mr. Zahid your kindness made our stay truly special, and we are deeply grateful! On the request of tour incharge Dean FOA, allowed to have visit to Mumbai's ICAR-CIFE (Indian Council of Agricultural Research- Central Institute of Fisheries Education) located in the heart of Mumbai, offering an enriching experience, especially for anyone interested in fisheries science, aquaculture, and marine biology. Upon arrival, students and faculty members were welcomed by the faculty and staff members of CIFE. Professor S.P. Tiwari, Dean, old colleague of Dr. Bilal, extended his full support. His guidance and assistance made the experience smooth and truly enriching.

Professor Bilal provides an insightful lecture on the importance of fisheries science, emphasizing its critical role in sustainable food production, environmental conservation, and supporting livelihoods in coastal and inland communities. On January 26, 2025 tour incharge Professor Bilal Ahmad was honoured and was invited as chief guest on function in Sarhad School Pune. Dr Bilal in his speech discussed the importance of the constitution as the foundation of a nation's legal and political framework. He emphasized how the constitution ensures justice, equality, and the protection of fundamental rights for all citizens.

On the same day, we boarded the Kerala Express from Pune to Ernakulam Town, Kerala, embarking on a two-day train journey. It was such an amazing experience! Throughout this train journey, Dr. Bilal Ahmad tour incharge alongwith his staff displayed immense dedication to our safety, often sacrificing his own comfort to ensure we were well-rested. His selflessness made the journey smooth-



er for all of us. Upon arrival in Kerala, we refreshed ourselves after the long train ride, then set out to explore various agricultural institutions. Our visit to CMFRI and CIFT were particularly enlightening, where we had engaging discussions with scientists and scholars about their ongoing research. We stayed in Kerala for 5 days, and those 5 days passed by so quickly that I didn't even realize how time flew. In addition to academic pursuits, we took time to explore Kerala's rich culture and natural beauty. We visited popular tourist spots like Marari Beach and local forts, enjoying the serene surroundings.

On February 1, we departed from Kerla to Chennai (Tamil Naidu). Chennai, the vibrant capital of Tamil Nadu, we were immersed in its rich cultural heritage, bustling markets, and modern attractions. The city blends tradition with contemporary life, offering experiences like visiting the iconic Marina Beach, exploring the ancient Kapaleeshwarar Temple, and wandering through the bustling streets of T Nagar. The warmth of the people and the mouth-watering South Indian cuisine, especially dosa, idli, and filter coffee, made the trip unforgettable. Chennai's historical landmarks and the blend of modern infrastructure with old-world charm left a lasting impression. A tour visit to UNOM Madras (University of Madras) is an exciting experience that allows us to explore one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in India. Located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, the university was established in 1857 and has a rich history of academic excellence and cultural significance. Professor Sidhumol, HOD, Statistics, UOM and her staff provided their full support shared her experience and interacted with every students.

As we enter the University of Madras campus, we're immediately struck by the grandeur of the heritage buildings. The main campus is spread across a sprawling area, with several buildings designed in the colonial architectural style. The atmosphere is calm and academic, and one can feel the historical significance of the place.

One of the most iconic buildings on campus, the Senate House is a beautiful piece of architecture that often leaves visitors in awe. Its red-brick structure and grand dome are visually stunning. This is where significant university meetings and events take place. The university boasts one of the best libraries in the country. With an extensive collection of books, journals, and research materials, it's a paradise for book lovers and researchers. The library is a hub of knowledge and is often buzzing with students and scholars. The university has several artifacts and works of art that reflect the cultural and academic heritage of the institution. The central area of the university is a peaceful spot surrounded by trees, sculptures, and historical buildings. It's a great place for a leisurely walk while taking in the surroundings.

A tour visit to Madras Veterinary College (MVC), located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, is a wonderful opportunity to explore one of the premier veterinary institutions in India. Established in 1903, MVC has been at the forefront of veterinary education, research, and extension

services. It is now a part of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS).

The campus is located in the heart of Chennai, yet it maintains a calm and peaceful vibe, perfect for focused academic and research activities. The area is surrounded by greenery, making it an ideal environment for students, researchers, and animal lovers. One of the standout features of MVC is its Veterinary Teaching Hospital, where students gain practical experience in diagnosing, treating, and caring for animals. Visitors often see the hospital in action, with veterinarians working diligently to treat a variety of animals.practices. The Veterinary Museum at MVC showcases a variety of animal specimens, educational tools, and models that depict the evolution of veterinary sciences. It's a fascinating spot for anyone interested in learning more about animal health and the history of veterinary practices.

On February 6, we boarded the MGR Chennai CTRL from Chennai to Delhi. During our 3-day stay in Delhi, we began with a visit to the prestigious ICAR institution, where we delved into agricultural research.

In addition to exploring Educational institution, days were spent discovering Delhi's iconic landmarks, including Jamia Masjid, Humayun's Tomb, Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine, Qutub Minar, and the imposing Red Fort. We were captivated by the splendor of Mughal architecture, admiring the intricate designs and towering minarets that reflect the city's cultural richness. Our exploration of these wonders was truly awe-inspiring, as we marveled at the enduring beauty of Mughal Architecture. In Delhi, on Sunday, we indulged in shopping at bustling markets such as Sarojini Nagar, Chandni Chowk, and Karol Bagh, rounding off our stay with a mix of cultural exploration and leisure.

On February 10, 2025, evening we began our journey back to Jammu and Kashmir from Delhi via sleeper class bus. On next day i.e., on February 11, in morning 10-30am, we reached Jammu, after taking breakfast and rest an hour, we departure from Jammu to Banihal, on reaching Banihal, we immediately we caught a train at 4:25 pm, and everyone safely reached their nearest stations,

grateful for the journey. This trip was transformative, filled with unforgettable experiences and awe-inspiring moments. From iconic landmarks to cultural immersion and natural beauty, every part of the journey left a deep impact on us. As we made our way back home, we cherished the memories of this life-changing adventure.

Students extend their heartfelt thanks to Professor Raihana Habib, the esteemed Dean of FoA, Present Director Extension SKUAST-K, Honorable Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-K, Professor Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Tour Incharge Professor Bilal Ahmad and everyone who supported for the success of this tour. Finally, upon reaching Kashmir, the tour incharge and supporting team expressed their gratitude to the university administration, students, parents, and experts from various institutions for their support in making this journey a success.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of SABREENA JAAN D/O NAZIR AHMAD DAR R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,05/08/2012 and event has been shown to be ocured 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.

SAD DEMISE

Haleema Mir, wife of former JKAS officer Ghulam Nabi Mir, passed away after a brief illness in Srinagar. She was a retired government school teacher and was widely respected for her dedication to education and community service.



Her funeral was held in her native village, Khelan in Pulwama, where thousands of mourners gathered to pay their last respects. No Rasm-e-Chahrum will be observed.

Grief Stricken

Ghulam Nabi Mir (JKAS), Dr Mir Samiullah
Dr Aabida, Dr Rafia , Zahida (JKAS)
Abdul Rashid Elahi, Muzaffar Elahi
Neyaz Elahi, Cell: 7780864410, 9906255154

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.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Waasi Mohammad to (New name) Wassi Mohammad in future I will be known as (new name) Wassi Mohammad if any body having objection he/she may contact passport office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objections will be accepted.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of ANZAR IRSHAD S/O IRSHAD AHMAD RATHER R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,15/10/2015 and event has been shown to be ocured 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 hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of MUSTAFA MUSHTAQ & MUDIYA MUSHTAQ S/O MUSHTAQ AHMAD HAJAM R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,10/03/2016 & 12/02/2017 and event has been shown to be ocured 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 hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of SANA ASHRAF & BAYIZA ASHRAF D/O MOHD ASHRAF DAR R/O WARIPORA BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,21/06/2014 & 02/02/2016 and event has been shown to be ocured 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

NAME CHANGE

In passport bearing no. J7212321 my name is wrongly written as Khan Masrat Nabi, D/o: Ghulam Nabi Khan while as my real name is Masrat Nabi D/o: Gh Nabi Khan. Now I want to correct the same in this regard if anybody has any objection he/she may contact Regional passport office Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection shall be entertained .

Name: Masrat Nabi
D/o: Gh Nabi Khan
R/o: Haihama, Bonagam, District Kupwara

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as RUKHSANA BEGUM in my Adhar card bearing Adhar no .283395757613 while my correct name is RUKHSANA BASHIR W/O TARIQ GANI R/O THINDIMA KREER which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his/her objection in the concerned Adhar authority within Seven. days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name:.....RUKHSANA BASHIR
W/O TARIQ GANI
R/O THINDIMA KREERI
TEHSILKREERI
DISTTBARAMULLA

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of MUNTAZIR RASHEED, IRTIZA RASHEED, FURKAN AH BHAT S/O ABDUL RASHEED BHAT R/O BANDIBALA (NAGBAL) Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 20/03/2022 & 28/03/ 2020 & 15/12/2014 and event has been shown to be ocured at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

JMC Commissioner interacts with Swachhata Ambassadors / Champions

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 18: Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation Dr. Devansh Yadav today met with the Swachhata Ambassadors, Influencers, Champions & Volunteers here in the Conference Hall of the Corporation.

During a the interaction, the Commissioner sought their support in promoting the initiatives of Jammu Municipal Corporation for maintaining sanitation in the city and reaching to the public through social media handles.

The Commissioner welcomed their feedback and views on further improving the sanitation conditions and promoting Swachhata campaign.

The JMC Commissioner informed them about Swachh Survekshan 2025 launched by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Development & Urban Affairs, Government of India, which is scheduled to start shortly in the Jammu .

He also mentioned about initiatives launched by JMC to redress the grievances pertaining to sanitation in a time bound manner. "Recently an initiative viz

"Garbage Hotspot Challenge" has been introduced by the Jammu Municipal Corporation wherein the citizens have to spot the garbage vulnerable area and report it on http://myjammu.in. The grievances shall be disposed of within 24 hours of the report," he said.

The Ambassadors, Influencers, Champions & Volunteers were asked to provide their comments / views regarding the unique initiative of JMC and share on their social media handles such as X account, Instagram & Facebook for wider publicity of the initia-

tive among the public.

They were also asked to share the feedback link https://sbmurban.org/feed-back among their followers for maximum participation by the public in the feedback component of the Swachh Survekshan 2024.

Certificates of appreciation were also distributed among the winners of UT Level Painting competition held on waste segregation on the eve of Republic Day 2025.

The meeting was attended by Joint Commissioner (H&S) Abdul Star, Health officer Dr. Vinod Sharma and other officials of JMC.

Satish Sharma inaugurates recovery vehicle at SMG office

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 18: Minister for Transport, FCS & CA, Youth Services and Sports, Information Technology, Science and Technology, ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, today inaugurated recovery vehicle of State Motor Garages at SMG office.

Director SMG, Tahir Malik along with other senior officials and staff members were present on the occasion.

After inaugurating the recovery vehicle, the Minister conducted a round of the office premises and inspected facilities like



washing, servicing, tuning and repairing of vehicle.

The Minister also interacted with the staff members and drivers of SMG and enquired about their issues and grievances.

The Minister was apprised that the recovery vehicle would play a piv-

otal role as it could be used as towing vehicle and aslo will help in transporting damaged vehicle from one place to another.

While speaking on the occasion, the Minister congratulated the SMG for taking initiatives towards further strengthening the

department's functioning. He asserted that this recovery vehicle will be proved as an asset for the department being a revenue generating utility.

He suggested the department to rent out the vehicle to general public for towing and transferring their damage vehicle from one place to another as private players charge heavy amount for the purpose.

He reiterated that government is committed for welfare of the employees especially driver fraternity and will leave no stone unturned to redress their genuine demands and issues.

Naksha Pilot scheme launched in Katra Town to facilitate Advanced Urban Land Management

HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 18: The historic town of Katra today witnessed the formal inauguration of the ambitious NAKSHA Pilot Scheme, a groundbreaking initiative designed to enhance urban land management through cutting-edge technology.

The launch event was graced by the esteemed presence of Baldev Raj

Sharma, MLA of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMVD), who served as the Chief Guest and emphasized the transformative potential of the scheme in his keynote address. The event saw the participation of key government functionaries including Tej Krishan Bhat, Commissioner of Survey and Land Records Jammu and Kashmir; the Director Geo-Spatial J&K Inam Amil; ADC Reasi Rakesh Kumar;

and SDM Katra Piyush Dhotra. Their collective presence reinforced the collaborative efforts of various government bodies in ensuring the successful implementation and scalability of the NAKSHA Pilot Scheme. In his address, MLA Baldev Raj Sharma highlighted the scheme's vision to integrate advanced technology with urban governance, promoting a more structured and efficient

approach to land management. He commended the synchronized efforts of both central and state agencies, acknowledging the scheme's potential to serve as a model for other urban centers across the country.

Providing further insight into the initiative, T.K. Bhat, Commissioner of Survey and Land Records, elaborated on the technical facets of the NAKSHA Pilot Scheme.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR (UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Machinery Division Kashmir, Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir

Corrigendum 06 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 areaat Bore well No. 79 under implementation of National Mission on Saffron
Reference: This office e-NIT No:- MDSK/TS /2024-25/89 Date:24-12-2024 (Tender ID: 2024_PWDJK_268833_1)
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	17-02-2025 upto 06:55	24-02-2025 upto 06:55
02.	Date of opening of bids online	18-02-2025 at 02:00PM	25-02-2025 at 02:00PM

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

DIPK-12149/24
Date: Feb 18, 2025

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

ازنیات پہلگام

درخواست منجانب سائل میرت جان دختر محمد اشرف شیخ سائنہ صملن پہلگام بمرا دصول RBAA سرٹیفکیٹ بحق دختر تاباش انجاز

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان میں درخواست سائل دفتر ذمہ امین زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ فتوالاٹ ریکارڈ طلب کے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے سائل موضع سائل شیخوہہ کریری میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ سائل کے کمنبر کی سالانہ آمدنی 3560000 تکتے سیے سال دھرم کوڑکا مشعل باغہہ ہے۔ سائل کا کمنبر ذیل افراد مشعل ہے

1. محمد اشرف ولد عبدل سلام 51 سال مزدوری آمدنی 8000
2. سید محمد زوچہ محمد اشرف 48 سال گھریلو کام
3. میرت جان دختر محمد اشرف 17 سال // زیر تعلیم
- اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد میں بتایا گیا ہے کہ نہ کی سالانہ آمدنی 106000
- مطابق سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سائل کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول میں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار

ازدفتر نائب تحصیلدار کلسترہ

درخواست منجانب سائل انجاز احمد دین خان پسر قلاب الدین خان سائنہ شیخوہہ ر ضلع بارہمولہ۔ بمرا دصول RBAA سرٹیفکیٹ بحق دختر تاباش انجاز

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان میں درخواست سائل دفتر ذمہ امین زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ فتوالاٹ ریکارڈ طلب کے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے سائل موضع سائل شیخوہہ کریری میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ سائل کے کمنبر کی سالانہ آمدنی 3560000 تکتے سیے سال دھرم کوڑکا مشعل باغہہ ہے۔ سائل کا کمنبر ذیل افراد مشعل ہے

1. انجاز احمد دین خان 44 سال مزدوری
2. حبیبہ بیگم زوجہ 43 سال گھریلو کام
3. تاباش انجاز دختر 18 سال زیر تعلیم
4. ... ابنہ انجاز 15 سال //
5. محمد قمر الدین پسر 12 سال //

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد میں بتایا گیا مطابق سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سائل کے اندر اندر پیش کریں معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول میں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار

DC Ganderbal reviews Drug Abuse control measures at NCORD meeting

HT News Network

Ganderbal, February 18: Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, today convened a meeting of Narco Coordination Committee (NCORD) to assess the effectiveness of the district's anti-drug initiatives and reinforce efforts towards a drug-free environment.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed appraisal from concerned members of NCORD Committee regarding the present scenario of drug related occurrences, various issues related to menace of drug addiction, its control and rehabilitation.

Emphasizing the significance

of a coordinated approach, the DC highlighted the need for a robust monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the success of anti-drug measures. He stressed the importance of regular awareness campaigns, particularly targeting the youth, to educate them about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

During the discussion on measures taken to combat drug abuse, the meeting was informed that 100% of medical shops in the district have installed CCTV cameras, and over 82% have transitioned to computerized billing systems.

DC directed the concerned department to conduct regular prescription audits, especially in non-computerized medical



shops, to prevent the sale of banned drugs.

Furthermore, the meeting was informed that 64 Panchay-



ats have been declared 'Nasha Mukht', and wild cannabis spread

over 300 kanals of land was destroyed last year. Farmers were encouraged to cultivate alternative crops on such land to discourage illegal cultivation.

The DC urged all departments to intensify their efforts against drug abuse and work collaboratively to address drug-related concerns effectively. The Police Department was instructed to maintain strict surveillance on drug peddlers, ensuring that all movable and immovable property of offenders is seized immediately.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Gulzar Ahmad, Dy.SP (HQ), SDM Kangan, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Chief Agriculture Offi-

cer, District Social Welfare Officer, Tehsildars and other concerned officials. At the outset, the DC took a detailed appraisal from concerned members of NCORD Committee regarding the present scenario of drug related occurrences, various issues related to menace of drug addiction, its control and rehabilitation.

Emphasizing the significance of a coordinated approach, the DC highlighted the need for a robust monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the success of anti-drug measures. He stressed the importance of regular awareness campaigns, particularly targeting the youth, to educate them about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

DC B'la Felicitates Teachers, Volunteers at Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation Celebration at Pattan

HT News Network

Baramulla February 18: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, attended the 16th anniversary celebration of the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India in Pattan today, where he honored teachers and volunteers for their exceptional contributions to education in remote areas.

The Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, supported by Seva Bharti J&K, operates 180 education centers across Baramulla, bringing free education to children in far-flung areas with limited access to learning. The event also featured cultural performances by students, highlighting the rich heritage and talent of the region.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Baramulla praised the combined efforts of Ekal Vidyalaya and Seva Bharti J&K in making education accessible at the grassroots level.

He stressed the importance of education in shaping a brighter future for society and reaffirmed the administration's commitment to supporting



initiatives that improve literacy and empower youth.

He also assured that the administration will continue to strengthen educational outreach, ensuring that every child gets access to quality education.

The celebration saw active participation from students, educators, and community members, reflecting the shared commitment to enhancing the education sector in Baramulla.

DC Kupwara chairs Multi Department DLTF Meeting Reviews measures for regulating mining activities

HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 18: The Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today chaired the Multi Departmental - District Level Task Force (DLTF) meeting to review various measures for curbing illegal mining activities across different mining blocks of district Kupwara.

SSP Handwara, Mushtaq Ahmad; ADC Kupwara, Mohd Rouf Rehman; Dy. SP Kupwara, District Mineral Officer, Executive Engineers of I&FC, DFOs, AD Fisheries and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner stressed upon the officers to work with added dedication and utmost coordination for monitoring and strictly restricting the illegal mining activities across the district.

She said that it is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders to make efforts towards the protection of the environment by preventing illegal and unlawful mining and directed the officers to conduct joint



visits to the mining sites to monitor the mining activities.

DMO was directed to ensure that the CCTV Cameras are installed across river beds by the block owners.

It was given out in the meeting that a Control Room under the supervision of District Mining Officer will be established which shall be responsible for monitoring the feed of these

CCTVs. It was also given out that the block owners shall follow the guidelines strictly which include installation of cameras, pegging and other conditions.

The meeting also discussed various other measures including Constitution of Tehsil Level and Sub Level Committees to intensify the regulation of the mining activities.

DC Kupwara inaugurates Live Fish Vending Centre at Chowkibal

HT News Network

KUPWARA FEBRUARY 18 : In a significant step towards boosting the Fisheries sector in Kupwara, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, inaugurated a Live Fish Vending Centre at Chowkibal, Kupwara, under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The initiative aims to promote hygienic fish marketing, enhance income generation for fish farmers, and ensure the availability of fresh fish to consumers. The Live Fish Vending Centre is expected to strengthen the local fisheries sector, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the Blue Revolution in the region. Speaking at the event, DC Kupwara Ayushi Sudan emphasized the importance of fisheries as a key sector for economic growth and food security.

She appreciated the efforts of the Department of Fisheries Kupwara in implementing the PMMSY & HADP schemes effectively and encouraged local entrepreneurs to explore opportunities in the fisheries sector.

MLA Hilal Akbar Lone conducts extensive tour of Sumbal Subdivision

HT News Network

Bandipora February 18: The Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Sonawari Constituency Advocate Hilal Akbar Lone on Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of various areas of Sumbal Sub-division to assess the preparation ahead of irrigation season. The MLA accompanied by Exen I&FC Sumbal, Mutayib Bashir, Exen MID Shadipora and other concerned visited various areas including MID Shadipora, Wasikhan, Prang, Asham, Madwan, Rakhai Hajin and other areas. During the visit, MLA Hilal Akbar Lone discussed the progress of irrigation infrastructure, assessed the condition of canals and water distribution systems, besides interacted with locals and officials to address any concerns or challenges.

DC Kupwara Inaugurates Critical Care Ambulance Services at Quality Health Care Hospital Bramri

HT News Network

Kupwara, February 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today inaugurated critical care ambulance services at Quality Healthcare Hospital, Bramri to strengthen emergency medical response in the region.

Equipped with advanced life-support systems, including ventilators, cardiac monitors, and oxygen supply, the ambulance will provide timely and specialized care for critically ill and trauma patients.

Skill Dev Prog on “Entrepreneurship Development through Mushroom Cultivation” begins in Shopian.

HT News Network

Shopian, February 18: Krishi Vigyan Kendra Shopian today inaugurated week long programme on “Entrepreneurship Development through Mushroom Cultivation” at Berthipora, Shopian.

The programme was attended by team of Scientists from KVK-Shopian, Dr. Zaffar Afroz Badri, Senior Scientist & Head, KVK-Shopian, Dr. Bilal Ahmad Pandit, Scientist Horticulture, Dr. Mir Shabir Ahmad Scientist Animal Sciences and participants from Berthipora villages of the district have actively participated in the programme.

The experts on the occasion urged youth to earn livelihood through these programmes and asked them to become job



providers instead of job seekers. Further, they deliberated upon the use of integrated approach to improve the soil health and different ways and means to cut down the input cost by adopting latest university recommended technologies for the betterment of the district. A power point presentation on Scientific Methods of Button Mushroom Cultivation and it's Economics – A way for prosperity of entrepreneurs for profitable enterprises in mushroom industry and other practices to harvest the better dividends, improve the socio-economic status of the farming community was presented by Course Coordinator.

Participants were informed that raising of Button Mushroom can be a profitable enterprise wherein an entrepreneur can earn up to 40 to 60 thousands in a space of 10x10sqft room by adopting scientific practices to take care of the crop in the leisure time.

DDC Shopian reviews implementation of PMJVK scheme in district

HT News Network

Shopian, February, 18: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta convened a meeting to review the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) here, today.

The meeting deliberated on initiatives aimed at the socio-economic development of minority communities, with directives issued to ensure timely initiation and effective implementation of key projects. DC reviewed the number of projects for which Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) have been prepared and emphasized the need for expeditious implementation in sectors of Social Welfare, Health, Agriculture allied and skill development. He directed the concerned departments to submit all DPRs

and ensure their approval immediately so that they can be further approved by the District Level Committee. In the dairy sector, the DC emphasized for the implementation of milk processing projects under public-Private partnership model within the PMJVK framework.

Regarding Handicrafts as the Nodal Department for skill development, DDC suggested establishing integrated infrastructure comprising training centres alongside dedicated selling facilities.

PMJVK aims to develop minority concentration areas by improving infrastructure and basic amenities by reducing gaps in socio-economic parameters between minority concentration areas and the rest of the country with special focus on women development.

DC Budgam approves electricity hotlines for several healthcare centres

Also approves toilet facilities for Primary Schools, buffer stock of Power Transformers

HT News Network

BUDGAM, February 18: In a move towards optimal utilization of available resources, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Akshay Labroo today chaired District Mineral Fund (DMFT) meeting to deliberate on the judicious allocation of the District Mineral Funds for developmental schemes in district.

At the outset, District Mineral Officer (DMO) Budgam provided an overview of the available funds.

The meeting encompassed a detailed discussion on the utilization of funds for critical developmental projects in district.

Key proposals approved during the meeting included the provision and augmentation of 24 by 7 Electricity Hot Line system for SDH Kremshore, SDH Chattergam, SDH Pakherpora, PHC Ompora,



PHC Soibugh, and PHC Khag.

Also, a buffer stock of 15 additional

Transformers was approved in favour of KPDC. Budgam which shall improve the

power infrastructure in district and will also improve provision of electricity to the people by reducing the time taken to repair the damaged transformers.

The meeting also highlighted the need for upgradation of basic amenities, such as electricity and toilet facilities in educational institutions and approved the same for Primary schools of Kuzwera, Bagh-e-Sail, and Gopalpora schools.

These initiatives are aimed at enhancing local & critical infrastructure and shall improve the overall quality of services.

DC also directed DMO for the meticulous and effective implementation of the approved plan for its timely implementation on ground.

The meeting was attended by CPO Budgam, CMO, CEO, ACD, DMO, DSWO, Executive Engineer R&B, KPDC, PHE Budgam besides other members of the Committee.

Mission YUVA accomplishes base-line survey of over 1.1 cr people

CS terms exercise crucial in shaping roadmap to tackle unemployment

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today convened a meeting with all the stakeholders to assess outcomes of a month long baseline survey conducted under Mission Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan (YUVA) aiming identification of potential entrepreneurs and challenges faced by the existing enterprises in J&K. The survey, carried out digitally from 1st of January this year, encompassed whole adult population of the UT residing in both rural and urban areas. The mammoth exercise was accomplished with the help of nearly 18,000 inves-



tigators and 800 supervisors who visited around 23.64 lakh households in different districts of J&K to identify the potential entrepreneurs (PEs). Dulloo, while making observations about this survey, remarked that carrying out such a massive exercise in record time is commendable. He termed it crucial for determining a roadmap to deal with the unemployment

issue in the region. He impressed upon the concerned to come up with a comprehensive report based on the insights made in the survey. He advised for stacking the data so that the relevant stacks are used by the Universities and research institutions for completing research papers over the same subject matter. The Chief Secretary also advised the developers to

separately categorise the self employment schemes from social security and others. He stressed on making provision of scheme advisor in the YUVA application so that the potential entrepreneurs are guided as per their strengths and area of interest.

He reiterated the significance of augmenting the institutional structure envisaged under this scheme so that the hand-holding of applicants is done to transform them into successful entrepreneurs. He directed the bank authorities to make a customised loan product to be offered under YUVA scheme.

Commissioner STD directs GST enforcement officials to chase tax evasion, monitor e-way bills

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 17: Commissioner, State Taxes Department (STD), PK Bhat, on today directed enforcement officers of GST to focus on real evasion of taxes, identify fake firm and constant monitoring of e-way bills for movement of goods.

The Commissioner made these remarks while chairing a meeting to review the functioning of the department here today.

Additional Commissioner State Taxes Administration & Enforcement, Jammu, Namrita Dogra; Deputy Commissioners of Jammu Division attended the meeting while as all outstation DC's attended meeting through virtual mode.



Addressing the officers, the Commissioner emphasized on the importance of finely balancing enforcement actions with the ease of doing business. Bhat called for enforcement teams to focus on identifying fake registrations, beneficiaries of fake input tax credit (ITC) and track-down fake e-way bills. He called

for strict action against such entities to ensure that these steps create the necessary deterrence effect among the tax evaders.

The Commissioner also emphasized on the need for enforcement agencies to stay ahead of the evaders so that the sanctity of the GST system is preserved. He advised the enforce-

ment officers to constitute special units for round the clock monitoring of different analytical tolls in the system and e-way bills from the backend. He asked them to flag any possible evasion case with concerned field unit for its interception.

The Commissioner also underscored that tax officials must be continuously connected with trade and business in the field reducing the need for intrusive enforcement action and enabling proactive compliance. The Commissioner made these remarks while chairing a meeting to review the functioning of the department here today.

Additional Commissioner State Taxes Administration & Enforcement, Jammu, Namrita Dogra; Deputy Commissioners.

DC Kulgam flags-off group of farmers on exposure tour

Farooq Rather

Kulgam February 18: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today flagged-off a group of 50 progressive farmer entrepreneurs on exposure cum training programme for a period of six days under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

During the tour, farmers will visit Punjab Agriculture University Ludhiana for upgradation of skill & technical know-how regarding cultivation of year round mushroom and floriculture on commercial scale to generate employment opportunities among the unemployed youth.

Chief Agriculture Officer Ravinder Kumar, District Agriculture Officer, Agriculture Extension Officers



and other concerned officers and officials were present on the occasion.

While interacting with the farmers, DC said that the objective of the tour is to make the farmers aware about the latest technical advancements & knowledge and besides progressive farming practices being adopted in mushroom and Floriculture sectors.

District Agriculture Officer, on the occasion advised the progressive farmers to share and disseminate the knowledge gained during the tour among the farmers back home, so that they can also adopt the latest agriculture techniques to improve their farm yields and income in the said sectors.

District Admin Kupwara Launches Watershed Yatra to Promote Awareness on Watershed Development

HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 18: District Administration Kupwara today launched the Watershed Yatra, a nationwide outreach campaign aimed to encourage people's participation (Janbhagidari) and raise awareness about watershed development activities under the Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana 2.0 (WED-PMKSY).

In this connection a Mega Event was organized by the District Administration Kupwara in sports stadium Magam Handwara.

The Watershed Yatra is a nationwide outreach campaign designed to inform and engage local communities about the importance of watershed management and its role in sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and ecosystem preservation. The campaign is centered around Janbhagidari (people's participation), aiming to empower local communities to actively contribute to the success of watershed development initiatives. The event saw participation of MLA Langate, Khurshid Ahmad Sheikh; DDC Member Nutnussa, Zahoor Ahmad; DDC Rajwar, Mir Suliman; Assistant Commissioner Panchayats Kupwara, Mudassir



Ahmad, besides, senior officials from administration, farmers and community members attended the programme.

During the event, key highlights of the PMKSY 2.0 were discussed, along with the benefits of watershed development, such as improved soil health, increased water availability for irrigation, and enhanced agricultural pro-

ductivity.

The Watershed Yatra will travel to various locations across the district, creating a platform for interactions between farmers, experts, and local authorities to discuss challenges and solutions related to water management and sustainable farming practices.

The Representatives and Officers emphasized the importance of active community participation and collaboration for the success of watershed programs, which are pivotal in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, improving agricultural resilience, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of water resources.

Meanwhile, Certificates of Appreciation were distributed among the functionaries of Watershed Management.

A plantation drive was also conducted at the venue in which MLA Langate and DDC members took part.

Jal Jeevan Mission achieving steady progress in J&K

Kulgam's Lanker Pombay village, for first time, gets tap water connections within premises

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 18: Jammu and Kashmir has made significant strides in improving access to clean water in the rural households through "Jal Jeevan Mission" with many far flung and hilly areas getting tap water supply for the first time in history. The latest example of this achievement under the mission is Lanker Pombay village of Panchayat Khaloor in Kulgam district, comprising about 80 households. This habitation was not having any sustainable water supply scheme and inhabitants were finding it very hard to meet their water needs. The locals would mainly depend on hand pumps and water tankers supplied by the department, for meeting their daily domestic water needs on bare minimum basis. With the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission, a water supply scheme with dug-well as source worth Rs. 187.68 lakh, was conceived for this habitation for providing



potable water supplies as per prescribed standards. The land for construction of 0.60 Lakh Gallons RCC SR was provided by the villagers unhindered. The people centric and inclusive approach adopted in conceiving this water supply scheme rekindled their hope and the public reposed faith in the department for having a sustainable water supply system. Now, this scheme with a rising main length of 2000 m, distribution pipe network of about 6000 m

and Reinforced Cement Concrete Service Reservoir, stands completed and the water supply through household level tap connections is being provided to this habitation. Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide every rural household with a Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) within their premises, capable of delivering a minimum of 55 liters of water per capita per day while adhering to set quality standards. More than 3200 water supply schemes have been taken up across the UT at an estimated cost of about Rs. 13000 crore, against which Rs. 7000 crore (approx.) have been expended, so far, with completion of about 1400 schemes and the remaining schemes being at advanced stages of completion. To ensure transparency and accountability in implementation of the Mission, a robust monitoring mechanism under the overall supervision of Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission with various units like UT level experts/consultants, District Project Management Units.

Ist National Lok Adalat in Budgam scheduled on March 08

HT News Network

Budgam, February 18: District Legal Services Authority Budgam has scheduled Ist National Lok Adalat on March 08, 2025 for pending/pre-litigation at District Court complex Budgam and all Tehsil courts of district Budgam for expected amicable settlement. Accordingly, all concerned Ld. Advocates as well as Persons/parties who desire to get their cases settled through the Lok-Adalat have been informed to approach concerned courts for their amicable settlement by or before March 01, 2025. The Pre-Litigation cases including Commercial/Money Recovery cases, Labour and Employment disputes cases, Electricity and water bills and other bill payment cases (excluding non-compoundable) and Maintenance Cases will be taken up in Lok Adalat. The Post-litigation

cases including Criminal Compoundable Offences, NI Act cases, under section 138, Commercial/Money Recovery cases, Motor Accident Claim cases (MACT), Labor dispute cases, Disputes related to Public Utility services such as Electricity & Water Bills cases etc. (excluding non-compoundable), Matrimonial disputes (except divorce), Land Acquisition cases, Services matters relating to pay and allowance and retrieval benefits, Revenue cases, Other civil cases (rent, easementary rights, injunction suits, specific performance suits etc.) will be also taken up in the Lok Adalat. Besides Parties/Persons, whose cases/matters are not pending in any court but desirous to settle their disputes at Pre-litigation stage can also approach office of the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Budgam personally or through email id. dlsabudgam2020@.

DC Kupwara Ayushi Sudan Inaugurates Critical Care Ambulance at Quality Health Care Hospital, Bramri

DR. AB QAYOOM

Kupwara, Feb 18: In a significant step towards strengthening emergency medical services in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan, inaugurated a state-of-the-art Critical Care Ambulance at Quality Health Care Hospital, Bramri, on Tuesday. The initiative aims to enhance the region's medical response system by providing advanced life-saving support to critically ill and trauma patients.

Equipped with ventilators,

cardiac monitors, oxygen support, and other advanced life-support systems, the newly launched ambulance is designed to bridge the gap between primary healthcare centers and tertiary hospitals, ensuring timely medical intervention for patients in need. Addressing the gathering, DC Kupwara Ms. Ayushi Sudan emphasized the importance of efficient emergency medical services, particularly in remote and underserved areas. She stressed the need for well-equipped ambulances and trained medical personnel to provide rapid and effective healthcare support



during emergencies. The event was attended by Principal GMC Handwara, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Kupwara, and SSP Kupwara Kh Jeelani, who all lauded the initiative. They acknowledged that the introduction of the Critical Care Ambulance will significantly improve healthcare accessibility, ensuring that patients receive the necessary treatment without delay.

Dr. Ab Majeed Wani, Managing Director of Quality Health Care Hospital, assured that the ambulance service would be operational 24/7, ensuring that critically ill patients receive

immediate medical attention, especially in life-threatening situations. Following the inauguration, DC Kupwara inspected the ambulance, interacted with medical staff, and reviewed its facilities, reaffirming the administration's commitment to improving emergency healthcare infrastructure in the district. The launch of this Critical Care Ambulance Service marks a crucial milestone in Kupwara's healthcare landscape, promising enhanced medical response capabilities and better patient outcomes for the people of the region.

DC reviews progress of power infrastructure development projects in Poonch

Installation of 500 Transformers, 11,000 poles, LT cables among other works taken up under RDS scheme

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 18: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Poonch, Vikas Kundal, chaired a meeting today in the Meeting Hall of the DC Office complex to review the progress of ongoing works under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in the district.

During the meeting, the concerned executing agency presented a detailed PowerPoint briefing on the current status of the RDSS projects. The scheme aims to strengthen the power distribution infrastructure in Poonch, with key components including the installation of 11,000 poles, laying of Low Tension Aerial Bunched Cables (LT ABC), and the addition of 500 new distribution transformers to augment and replace outdated equipment. This initiative is expected to significantly reduce Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses in the



district.

DC Vikas Kundal thoroughly inquired about various components such as material supply status, feeder wise current status of work, feeder-wise erection status of

major items like poles, conductors, LT AB cables, and the augmentation and replacement of transformers, along with other progress related to the scheme.

He instructed the concerned Junior Engineers (JEs) to conduct onsite checks for the installation of poles and other major electricity items, emphasizing the importance of geo-tagged photos for maintaining records of the ongoing work. Furthermore, he directed a crackdown on electricity theft and the illegal bypassing of meters, stressing the need to impose penalties on defaulters under relevant laws.

Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal also instructed the executing agency to ensure that all ongoing works under the scheme are completed within the established timelines, aiming for the overall improvement of the power scenario in Poonch.

The meeting was attended by SE JPDCL, EXEN JPDCL division Poonch, along with all AEEs and JEs.

DC reviews heritage site restoration and Phase-III Project identification in Udhampur

■ HT News Network



UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 18: A meeting of the District Level Coordination-cum-Implementation Committee for the revival, restoration, preservation and maintenance of architectural and heritage sites was today held here under the chairpersonship of Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai.

The meeting focused on identifying heritage projects for execution under Phase-III and reviewing the progress of previously approved heritage sites in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rajinder Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Singh, DFO Udhampur, Assistant Commissioner Development, Dr Ranjeet Singh Kotwal and other senior officers.

During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on various aspects of heritage site development, including the provision of essential amenities such as toilets, drinking water and lighting facilities.

The committee also reviewed plans for the restoration, preservation and renovation of existing structures, as well as the cleaning and rejuvenation of water bodies and other related works.

DC directed the concerned officers to expedite the process and ensure timely completion of the projects. She instructed them to conduct site visits and prepare the DPRs within a week's time. She emphasized the need to accelerate the ongoing civil works at these heritage sites to enhance their historical and cultural significance.

JKB & OCWWB Over Rs 48 lakh disbursed among workers at Samba

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 18: The District Administration Samba has disbursed Rs 48.38 Lakh (Forty Eight Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand and One hundred) under different schemes of J&K Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. As per Assistant Labour Commissioner, Himani Jerath the amount has been disbursed among 800 registered construction workers (Card holders) by Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma under different schemes of J&K Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. At the event, the Deputy Commissioner impressed upon the workers engaged in any construction activity in district Samba to enroll for the scheme and avail all benefits which is provided by the construction workers Board, JKBOCWBB.

School Safety Programme: Disaster Management awareness imparted to Students at GDC Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 18: In a proactive effort to enhance community preparedness and safety, the District Administration Poonch, in collaboration with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), organized a comprehensive day-long disaster rescue training program for students her in the Auditorium Hall of SKC Government Degree College.

Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal was the chief guest. Other notable attendees included the host College Principal, Tehsildar Haveli, other officers, and a large number of enthusiastic students.

CPI(M) Holds 13th State Conference in Jammu, Calls for Restoration of J&K's Statehood.

■ Farooq Rather

Jammu: Feb 18, The Communist Party of India (Marxist), Jammu & Kashmir, concluded its two-day 13th State Conference in Jammu on February 18, with senior party leaders and hundreds of activists participating in the event. The conference witnessed fervent revolutionary slogans as CPI(M) members welcomed senior leaders Comrade Prakash Karat and Dr. Ashok Dhawale, inaugurating the open session, CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Prakash Karat strongly criticized the Modi-led govern-

ment for the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and its bifurcation into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. Terming the move "unconstitutional," he said it was a betrayal of the assurances given by national leaders to the people of J&K in 1947. "Abolishing one state out of the existing 28 was a direct assault on India's Constitution and federal structure," Karat asserted. He emphasized that CPI(M) had organized nationwide protests against the decision and urged all secular and democratic forces to join the struggle for the restoration of J&K's statehood. Karat also took aim at the BJP and



RSS, accusing them of threatening India's secular ethos. He condemned the central government for allegedly curbing financial support to non-BJP-ruled states like Kerala, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, saying such actions hinder developmental progress.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Ashok Dhawale, President of the All India Kisan Sabha and Polit Bureau member, slammed the government's pro-corporate policies, which he said benefit a select few at the expense of the working class. He lauded the farmers' struggle under the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which forced the government to withdraw the controversial farm laws after over a year of protests.

Senior CPI(M) leader and former J&K legislator M.Y. Tarigami denounced the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A, calling it a "brazen assault" on the constitutional rights of the people. He

argued that the historic state of Jammu and Kashmir, shaped by Dogra rulers, was unjustly bifurcated, disregarding the aspirations of its people. Tarigami highlighted that the 1927 and 1932 land laws enacted by Maharaja Hari Singh, later incorporated as Article 35-A, were meant to safeguard J&K's residents from outside encroachment—a protection dismantled by the BJP government. Tarigami also raised concerns over the alarming unemployment rate in J&K and called for urgent measures to address it. He demanded the release of political prisoners and journalists, as well as the rehabilitation.

GCOE pays tributes to Sardar Patel Students compete in Role-playing of freedom fighters

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 18: In a tribute to the 'Iron Man of India,' Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Government College of Education, Canal Road, celebrated his 150th birth anniversary with great zeal and patriotism by organizing a Role-Playing Competition on Patriotic Heroes.

The event aimed to inspire students to learn about and embody the values of Indian freedom fighters. The event was graced by the presence of the college Principal, Dr. Jyoti Parihar, who highlighted the significance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's contributions to the unity and integrity of India. In her address, she encouraged students to follow the footsteps of such legendary figures to build a stronger nation.

The competition was organized under the guidance of NSS Programme Officers Professor Sarita Dogra and Dr. Shubhra Jamwal, who worked diligently to make the event a grand success. Their efforts were supported by Professor Sunanda Rani and Professor Kiran Thapa, whose presence added to the event's significance.

Participants enthusiastically portrayed various patriotic heroes, bringing history to life through their powerful performances. Their enactments paid tribute to the courage and patriotism of India's freedom fighters. The competition was judged by Professor Roopa Kumari and Dr. Sonam Gandotra, who commended the participants for their outstanding performances and their deep understanding of the characters they portrayed. After a close contest, the winners were announced as follows:

First Position was bagged by Shabnam Kumari, the second Position was clinched by Manpreet Singh, while Damini stood at third.

Interaction and Q&A Sessions on Disaster & Environment Preparedness held in Ramban

■ HT News Network

Ramban, February 18: Former Vice President and In-proto Vice Chancellor of International University-School of Medicine (TUSOM) and Chairman of the Afro-Eurasian Chamber of Commerce, Education, Development, and Employment (ACCEDE), Prof. (Dr.) Ravi Jyee, today presided over various interactive sessions during a seminar on disaster and environment management, as well as the promotion of agriculture, horticulture, and other allied activities.

A globally recognized expert in disaster management, Prof. Jyee has made significant contributions to the field, focusing on disaster mitigation, risk reduction, and emergency response strategies.

On the initiative of Chief Secretary J&K and Divisional Commissioner Jammu, the District Administration Ramban, under the



leadership of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, organized this event for the first time in Ramban to enhance preparedness for natural, contemporary, and anthropogenic disasters.

Among the dignitaries present were ADC Ramban Varunjeet Singh Charak, ACRS, Harpal Singh, Dy.SP Omparkash, Tehsildars, ARTO, senior officers, members of NGOs, and other key stakeholders.

During the session, Prof. Jyee provided valuable insights into disaster risk reduction, sustainable

infrastructure development, and climate resilience. He emphasized the importance of safe construction practices for hospitals and essential infrastructure to withstand disasters. He also highlighted the significance of mass plantation drives to address climate and environmental challenges.

Prof. Jyee suggested that the government implement an Aromatic and Medicinal Plant Cultivation Scheme and explore ways to utilize natural resources to create job opportunities for youth. He also urged the Health

Department to develop dedicated disaster-resilient infrastructure in hospitals to ensure uninterrupted medical services during emergencies. Additionally, he discussed the causes and preventive measures for forest fires, stressing the need for proactive strategies to mitigate their impact.

Notably, Prof. Ravi Jyee's contributions to global peace-building have earned him the prestigious World Peace-Building and Promotion Award.

Addressing the youth, Prof. Jyee urged them to stay away from drug addiction and unlawful activities, emphasizing the importance of personal development and contributing to national progress. He also noted that Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor UT of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha is keen on curbing the menace of drug addiction among the youth.

Fisheries Department organises awareness camp under PM-MKSSY scheme at Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 18: An awareness camp on Applications Mobilization Campaigns was organised today here at Regional District Offices by the Fisheries Department Poonch to promote initiatives under Pradhan Mantri-Matasya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojna (PM-MKSSY).

The central Sector Scheme launched by Government of India in 2023-24 shall continue till 2026-27. The scheme aims at on the spot registration of fishers, fish farmers, fish vendors at NFDPP portal,



submission of application for aquaculture insurance, submission of loan request through NFDPP, Availing performance grants for enhancing value chain efficiencies, availing incentives for Adoption & Expansion of Fish and Fish Product

Safety & Quality Assurance Systems.

A large number of Fishers including fish farmers, Fishermen, vendors and Fisheries Cooperative Society Poonch participated in the camp and availed benefits of registration under

NFDPP and evinced keen interest in Aquaculture Insurance and other value chain projects.

Addressing the fishers, Fisheries Development Officer Bharat Bushan shared an overview of scheme, highlighting key initiatives such as registration on NFDPP portal, submission of application for Aquaculture Insurance, availing performance grants for Value Chain and other components of the scheme and urged to avail benefits of the scheme. Further the Officer thanked the CSC operator for conducting the onspot registration of the Fishers.

STD intensifies inspections against sale suppression, fake invoicing, GST violations across Jammu division

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 18: State Taxes Department (STD), Jammu and Kashmir has intensified its drive against menace of sale suppression and launched massive inspection drive across Jammu division to check GST violations.

Based on inputs generated by various AI tools including Business Intelligence And Fraud Analytics (BIFA), E-way Bills Portal and other components of enforcement wings, the inspections were carried under the guidance of Commissioner State Taxes J&K, PK Bhat and under the



supervision of Additional Commissioner (Enforcement and Administration) Jammu, Namrita Dogra.

Led by State Tax Officers, specially constituted teams visited various business units in Rajouri, Kishtwar and Kathua simultaneously to investigate violations under GST Law

by verifying documents, physical stock position, bill books etc. While giving details on these drives, Additional Commissioner (Enforcement and Administration) Jammu, Namrita Dogra said, "The inspections are part of enforcement activity. 13 teams have been constituted to

carry out inspections across the division". She added that teams specifically targeted dealers who were found engaged in sale suppression and fake invoicing. The State Taxes Department urged the dealers to follow the fair-trade practices and avoid indulging in tax evasion activities or fraudulent practices involving fake ITC. Furthermore, the department also appealed all taxpayers to practice invoice-based business and report their actual sales and pay the necessary amount of GST in their monthly/quarterly returns to avoid enforcement actions and penalties.

**Punjab: 6 killed as bus falls into drain in Faridkot****AGENCIES**

FARIDKOT (PUNJAB), FEB 18 (UNI)

At least six people, including a child, were killed and 25 others injured when a bus collided with a truck and fell into a drain in Punjab's Faridkot district on Tuesday morning, police said.

Two of the injured are in critical condition. Faridkot Senior Superintendent of Police Pragya Jain said that six people, including a child, were killed when the bus fell into a ditch after colliding due to deep fog on the drain.

He said 25 people have been sent to the hospital for treatment. Two of them are in critical condition. It is being told that locals immediately reached the spot to rescue the passengers till the rescue team arrived. The campaign continues.

4 militants arrested in Manipur: Police**AGENCIES**

IMPHAL, FEB 18 (UND)

The Manipur police has arrested four cadres of different underground outfits and seized a large number of arms, ammunitions, and explosives from various areas of the strife-torn state within the last 24 hours, officials said here on Tuesday.

He said that security forces arrested one Lamkhogin Dimngel of Kangchup at Churachandpur district with 24 gm brown sugar, Rs 34 lakh and other documents.

In another incident security forces arrested one Manglemjao, Self Style Chairman of KCP (KK Nganba) and another active cadre identified as Manglenba from Langol Ningthou, Lamphel, Imphal West on Monday.

En otro incidente , la policía arrestó a un cuadro activo de RPE/PLA, identificado COMO B. Sharma de Imphal East.

In another operation held at Kangpokpi district police recovered one Automatic Rifle , Mechanism Rifle, Barrel Bolt Action Rifle, 32 Pistol .22 Pistol , Mortar (Pumpi), Mortar Bomb Handsets , sniper ammunition and other war like materials.

Tripura court remanded 7 job seekers to jail for proxy and cheating in exam**AGENCIES**

AGARTALA, FEB 18 (UND)

A local court on Tuesday sent altogether seven persons to 12 days of judicial custody for impersonating job seekers and adopting unfair means in the recruitment exam in Tripura (Central) University for the post of Lower Division Clerk (LDC) and Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) on Sunday.

Accused were included one from Bihar, two from Rajasthan, two from Haryana, and two from West Bengal. Police initially detained them from the exam hall based on the complaints from the university authority and later after prima facie charges were established all of them were arrested.

Officer-in-Charge of Amtali Police Station of the city Himadri Sarkar said two accused persons identified as Pankaj Kumar hails from Bihar and Ram Bir Meena from Rajasthan were found writing exams on behalf of others while Mrinmoy Biswas, Liton Biswas, Mitran Mondal, Rajbir Singh, and Rahul Kumar were found cheating using electronic devices.

"During routine verification of candidates and their admit cards, invigilators notice abnormalities in their behaviour. In closer monitoring, all of them were caught by a group of teachers and later, they were handed over to police. But we took little time to ascertain the crime and detail of their network before arresting them formally," Sarkar said.

Mobile phones were recovered hidden inside their shoes, connected via Bluetooth from five of them and they got the solved paper. Using a micro hearing device they were hearing the answers and writing them. The authorities confiscated their answer sheets, and they were expelled from the examination.

The Police official said that in another instance, authorities detected two candidates whose identities did not match those registered for the exam. Upon interrogation, it was found that two candidates, one each from Haryana and Rajasthan, were absent, but Pankaj Kumar and Ram Bir were proxy candidates for them.

Their answer sheets were immediately seized, and the university administration canceled their candidature. Written tests were held for 17 LDC and 16 MTS positions. While hearing the case, the court allowed police to interrogate them in jail, and police added that they will be produced again on March 2 with an update on the investigation.

SC grants interim protection to YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadia**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 18 (UND)

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted interim protection from arrest to YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadia in connection with multiple FIRs filed in Mumbai, Guwahati, and Jaipur over alleged obscene remarks made by him during an episode of the online show India's Got Latent.

A bench comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh issued the interim order while seeking a response from the authorities on Allahabadia's petition challenging the multiple FIRs.

The court also directed that no further FIRs be registered concerning the same YouTube show. However, the relief is conditional upon Allahabadia - popularly known as Beer Biceps - cooperating with the investigation. Additionally, the bench granted him the liberty to seek police protection in case of threats.

The court ordered that Allahabadia and his associates must refrain from airing any shows until further orders. He has been instructed to surrender his passport as part of the conditions of relief.

Despite granting interim relief, the apex judiciary Supreme Court harshly criticised Allahabadia's language, calling it "dirty" and "perverted."

Justice Kant confronted Allahabadia's counsel,



Advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, questioning, "Are you defending this kind of language?" In response, Chandrachud admitted that he found the remarks "disgusting" but argued that the issue at hand was whether they amounted to a criminal offence. He cited the Apoorva Arora judgment, which held that profanity alone does not constitute obscenity.

However, Justice Kant remained unconvinced, stating, "If this is not obscenity, then what is? Does the Apoorva Arora judgment give a licence to say anything?"

The bench also engaged in a discussion over the multiple FIRs lodged against Allahabadia. When Chandrachud argued that multiple FIRs for the same offence were legally untenable, citing the TT Antony case, Justice Kant coun-

tered that the nature of the complaints differed, with one FIR specifically concerning alleged derogatory remarks about Arunachal Pradesh.

The court expressed serious disapproval of the YouTuber's statements, stating, "There is something very dirty in his mind, which has been vomited in this programme... He is insulting his parents. Why should courts favour him?"

Chandrachud also informed the bench that Allahabadia had been receiving death threats, prompting Justice Kant to remark, "If you seek cheap publicity by making such remarks, others may seek cheap publicity by making threats."

The court criticised the presence of Allahabadia's lawyer at the police station, questioning its

legality and stating, "Just because you can pay, lawyers will start rendering these services? This insults the legal profession."

The controversy stems from an episode of comedian Samay Raina's YouTube show India's Got Latent, featuring Allahabadia alongside fellow YouTubers Ashish Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh and Apoorva Makhija.

The episode contained explicit conversations and sparked a social media uproar when clips went viral. Raina later issued a public apology and deleted all episodes, while Allahabadia also apologised, acknowledging the inappropriateness of his comments. Following the outrage, on February 10, Guwahati Police registered an FIR against five YouTubers for allegedly "promoting obscenity and engaging in vulgar discussions." Reports indicate that Mumbai Cyber Cell and Jaipur Police have also lodged cases.

On February 14, Chandrachud mentioned Allahabadia's petition before the Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, expressing concerns about possible coercive action by Assam Police. However, CJI Khanna did not intervene at that stage.

Meanwhile, Ashish Chanchlani has moved the Gauhati High Court seeking anticipatory bail regarding the FIR filed against him over the same controversy.

India, Qatar elevate ties to Strategic Partnership after talks between PM Modi, Qatar Amir**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 18 (UND)

India and Qatar decided to elevate their ties to a Strategic Partnership with focus on trade, energy, investments and innovation, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Qatar Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani in Hyderabad House here today.

The MEA spokesperson said in a post on X that the two leaders held wide-ranging talks.

"Further cementing the deep & traditional relationship."

"PM @narendramodi & HH Sheikh @TamimbinHamadAlThani, Amir of the State of Qatar held wide-ranging talks at Hyderabad House today.

"Both leaders decided to elevate India-Qatar relations to a Strategic Partnership with focus on trade, energy, investments, innovation, technology, food security, culture & people-to-people ties. They also exchanged views on regional and

global issues of mutual interest."

Ahead of the talks, Prime Minister Modi welcomed the Qatar Amir to Hyderabad House for the bilateral talks.

In the morning, the Qatar Amir was accorded a ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

PM Modi and President Droupadi Murmu welcomed the Qatari Amir to Rashtrapati Bhavan where he was accorded a guard of honour.

On Monday evening, in a special gesture, PM Modi went to the airport to receive the Qatar Amir, where the two leaders exchanged a warm embrace.

"Went to the airport to welcome my brother, Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani. Wishing him a fruitful stay in India and looking forward to our meeting tomorrow," the PM said on X.

Later, EAM S Jaishankar also called on Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on Monday evening.

Indian economy likely grew at 6.4 pc in Q3, estimates ICRA**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 18 (UND)

India's gross domestic product (GDP) likely grew at a relatively accelerated pace of 6.4% in the October-December quarter (Q3) of the current financial year 2024-25 from seven-quarter low of 5.4% in the previous quarter on the back of enhanced government spending, research and rating firm ICRA said in a report on Tuesday.

Further, the growth in the gross value added (GVA) is estimated to record a relatively broad-based improvement to 6.6% in Q3 from 5.6% in Q2 FY2025, driven by the industrial, services and agricultural sectors.

"On a sombre note, the GDP and GVA growth in Q3 FY2025 is foreseen to continue to trail the NSO's initial growth estimates for Q1 FY2025 (+6.7% and +6.8%,

respectively), which had seen some sectors affected by the Parliamentary elections, the Model Code of Conduct, and also the heat wave in some states," ICRA said.

National Statistical Office (NSO) will release the official GDP growth estimate for Q3FY25 on February 28, 2025.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head-Research & Outreach, ICRA said that India's economic performance in Q3FY25 benefitted from a sharp ramp-up in aggregate government spending (Centre and state) on capital and revenue expenditure, high growth in services exports, a turnaround in merchandise exports and healthy output of major kharif crops among others.

"Some consumer-focused sectors saw a pick-up during the festive season, even as urban consumer sentiment

dipped slightly, and other sectors such as mining and electricity saw an improvement after weather-related challenges in the previous quarter. Overall, while we expect the pace of GDP and the GVA expansion to rise in Q3 FY2025 relative to the seven-quarter low prints for the previous quarter, marking an upturn, the performance may remain inferior to the NSO's initial estimates for Q1 FY2025," she said.

ICRA has projected the industrial GVA growth to record a broad-based pick-up to 6.2% in Q3 FY2025 from 3.6% in Q2 FY2025, led by manufacturing (to +5.0% from +2.2%), construction (to +9.5% from +7.7%), electricity (to +5.0% from +3.3%), and mining and quarrying (to +2.5% from -0.1%), with the latter two sub-sectors partly benefitting from the easing in rainfall.

SP is against cultural heritage of UP: Yogi**AGENCIES**

LUCKNOW, FEB 18 (UND)

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday launched a strong attack on the Samajwadi Party (SP) leaders, accusing them of double standards on the opening day of the Uttar Pradesh budget session.

The CM said that while SP leaders send their children to English-medium schools, they oppose government efforts to improve education for the general public, instead pushing for Urdu. He alleged that the SP aims to lead the country toward fundamentalism, a move which will not be tolerated.

Welcoming the inclusion of local dialects such as Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Braj and Bundelkhandi in proceedings of the Assembly,



he emphasised the government's commitment to preserving and promoting these languages, recognising them as daughters of Hindi.

Yogi said, "Our government is setting up separate academies for these languages to ensure their growth. They are daughters of Hindi and deserve their rightful respect.

This House is not just for scholars, every section of society must have its voice heard."

Accusing the SP members of opposing Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Braj, and Bundelkhandi, he said they are, in essence, against UP's cultural heritage. He asserted that they have dual character and double standards.

Midnight selection of new CEC is disrespectful, discourteous: Rahul slams govt**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, FEB 18 (UND)

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday slammed the government's "midnight decision" to select Gyanesh Kumar as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and called it "disrespectful and discourteous".

On his social media handle X, Rahul Gandhi said, "By violating the Supreme Court order and removing the Chief Justice of India from the committee, the (Narendra) Modi



Government has exacerbated the concerns of hundreds of millions of voters over the integrity of our electoral process".

He further said that he had presented his "dissent note" to Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah during the meeting of the committee

to select the next Election Commissioner.

In the dissent note, Gandhi stated, "The most fundamental aspect of an independent Election Commission free from executive interference is the process of choosing the Election Commissioner and Chief Election Commissioner".

Indian graduates show strong aptitude for AI, ML roles: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Indian graduates are demonstrating a strong aptitude for roles in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), according to a report on Tuesday.

The report by talent assessment firm Mercer Mettl showed that Indian graduates had a 46.1 per cent employability rate in the fields of AI and ML -- the highest among all technical roles.

The report, encompassing data from more than 2700 campuses and over 1 million learners, reveals a complex landscape of both promising adaptability and persistent skill gaps.

It also found that 50 per cent of graduates in India possess soft skills needed for AI/GenAI collaboration, but they needed improvement in creativity



(44.3 per cent employability).

Communication skills (55.1 per cent), critical thinking (54.6 per cent), and leadership skills (54.2 per cent) were found to be strong areas. With a 46 per cent employability rate, learning agility is vital for navigating the evolving tech landscape.

Further, the report showed that Tier 1 college graduates are the lead in employability (48.4 per cent), followed by Tier 2 (46.1 per cent) and Tier 3

(43.4 per cent) institutions, but the potential exists across all tiers, especially in specialised tech areas. Tier 2 college graduates were found to excel in UI/UX developer roles (58.3 per cent employability).

Delhi showed the highest employability (53.4 per cent), followed by Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (51.1 per cent). Uttarakhand and Jharkhand also performed well (50 per cent and 49.6 per cent respectively).

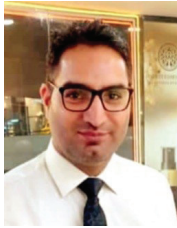
Notably, the report

found equal employability for male and female graduates in AI and ML sectors as well as in data science, but disparities were seen in software testing.

"In 2025, the employability rate for Indian graduates stands at 42.6 per cent, reflecting a slight decline from 44.3 per cent in 2023, primarily due to evolving industry expectations. However, there has been significant progress in employability for technical roles as colleges and students increasingly focus on developing skills that meet market demands," said Siddhartha Gupta, President of Mercer India.

"On the other hand, the development of certain non-technical and soft skills presents a more complex learning curve, often requiring additional time to cultivate. This data clearly underscores these trends," he added.

Epidemic of 'Metabolic Syndrome'



DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITTOO

'Metabolic Syndrome' is increasingly common and emerging as a global epidemic with increasing incidence and prevalence. The incidence of metabolic syndrome often parallels the incidence of obesity.

According to global survey of obesity done recently in 195 countries -- approximately 604 million adults and 108 million children were obese. Since 1980, prevalence of obesity doubled in 73 countries and increased in most other countries. In India, the obesity has risen to a concerning extent.

Metabolic Syndrome is a cluster of conditions including increased blood pressure(hypertension),

high blood sugar levels(insulin resistance), excess body fat around the waist(abdominal obesity), and abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels(dyslipidaemia/hyperlipidaemia) -- that occur together and thus increasing one's risk for heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes.

The diagnosis of metabolic syndrome requires the presence of 3 or more metabolic abnormalities:

- A waist circumference of more than 40 inches in men and 35 inches in women.
 - Serum triglycerides level of 150 mg/dL or greater.
 - Reduced high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, less than 40 mg/dL in men or less than 50 mg/dL in women.
 - Elevated fasting glucose of 100 mg/dL or greater.
 - Blood pressure values of systolic 130 mm Hg or higher or diastolic 85 mm Hg or higher.
- While adopting

unhealthy routines like eating poorly, exercising less, deprived sleep or leaning more heavily on substances such as alcohol, smoking and drug abuse including taking stress -- could increase the potential risks of landing into serious health problems -- there are healthy ways to adopt for reducing the risk.

Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, taking less salt in diet, getting adequate sleep, avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption; monitoring blood sugar levels and keeping that under control; besides monitoring one's cholesterol and triglyceride levels and keeping them under control are crucial hallmarks in prevention of metabolic syndrome.

Moreover, the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is a healthy diet plan which is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and low-fat dairy

products. Besides that it is also low in sodium, saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol.

Having said, focus on to consume more fruits and vegetables each day, choose whole grains over refined grains, and opt for protein-rich sources such as poultry, fish, beans, and nuts. As adopting the DASH diet in one's life has been shown to lower blood pressure and hence reduce the risk of hypertension, which is one of the important components of metabolic syndrome.

More to say, there is need to avoid unnecessary stress in our lives by following a good health routine as research has shown that the depression including stress could increase a person's risk for developing serious health problems including heart diseases, stroke and diabetes.

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Study finds new subtypes of fat cells in human body

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

A new international study has for the first time identified unique subpopulations of fat cells.

Researchers from Israel's Ben Gurion University (BGU) noted that the study could pave the way for personalised medicine in obesity, Xinhua news agency reported.

The study, part of the international Human Cell Atlas project, mapped fat cell populations in various human fat tissues, focusing on subcutaneous and visceral fat.

Using technologies mapping RNA molecules, the team attached unique "barcodes" to RNA from individual cells, allowing them to identify distinct cell types within fat tissue.

The research, published in the journal Nature Genetics, revealed the previously uncharacterized subtypes, including



fat cells involved in regulating inflammation, blood vessel formation, extracellular protein deposition, and fibrosis. In addition, one of the unique types of fat cells, identified for the first time in this research,

appeared only in the intra-abdominal tissue.

Over the past 30 years, the understanding of fat tissue has evolved from merely an energy storage site to recognised for producing proteins that regu-

late appetite, eating, and energy expenditure, such as leptin, which influences brain control centers.

While most fat cells in subcutaneous and visceral fat were similar, subtle differences were found in their intercellular communication. Visceral fat cells were more engaged in pro-inflammatory processes, interacting with immune cells, whereas subcutaneous fat cells focused on anti-inflammatory processes. The team also discovered that the prevalence of these unique fat cells was related to the metabolic complications of obesity, with their relative proportion in the tissue higher the more severe the insulin resistance. According to the researchers, if unique fat cells predict personal risk for obesity complications or treatment response, the findings could significantly advance personalised obesity treatments.

Cities at highest risk as climate change increases heatwave mortality: Study

AGENCIES
SYDNEY

Human-induced climate change has caused an increase in heatwave-related deaths, with people in cities at a much higher risk of mortality, according to research published on Tuesday.

In two separate studies, researchers from the University of Queensland (UQ) examined the mortality burden of heatwaves in Australia, Xinhua news agency reported.

The first of the studies -- a collaboration between UQ and The Australian National University (ANU) -- analysed mortality rates during a severe heatwave that hit southeastern Australia in 2009 as well as decades of heatwave data to examine the impact of climate change on heat deaths.

Melbourne recorded its highest-ever temperature of 46.4 degrees Celsius during the heatwave and



parts of the state of Victoria recorded 12 consecutive days over 40 degrees Celsius.

There were an estimated 374 excess deaths in Victoria during the five-day peak of the heatwave.

The study found that

climate change increased heatwave-related mortality during the event by 20 per cent. The second study analysed two decades of data to determine which areas of Australia are more vulnerable to heatwaves.

It found that city dwell-

ers with low income, low education, diabetes, and limited access to health services were at the highest risk of heatwave-related deaths.

Patrick Amoatey, a UQ doctoral candidate and co-author of the study, attributed the higher risk in cities to the existence of more heat-absorbing surfaces such as roads, buildings, and railway lines.

"Our results suggest heatwaves with associated periods of higher mortality will occur more often than they did in the past," said Nicholas Osborne from UQ's School of Public Health. He added that the researchers are hopeful that their work will help communities better prepare for heatwaves.

Heatwaves are known to raise several health and economic risks, including increased human mortality, drought and water quality, wildfire and smoke, power shortages, and agricultural losses.

Maternal paracetamol use may raise ADHD risk in kids by age 10: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Children, especially females, born to women who took acetaminophen (paracetamol) during pregnancy may be at a higher risk of developing childhood attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) by the time they age 10, claimed a study.

The study, published in the journal Nature Mental Health, showed that children whose mothers had biomarkers of acetaminophen present in their plasma had a 3.15 times higher likelihood of an ADHD diagnosis.

The findings showed that the link was stronger among females than males. Girls of APAP-exposed mothers showed a 6.16 times higher likelihood of ADHD. However, the association was found to be weaker and nonsignificant in males.

Paracetamol is widely used during pregnancy,



accounting for an estimated 70 per cent of pregnant individuals in the US, Europe, and Asia.

Even though paracetamol has been classified as a low-risk medication by regulatory agencies such as the US Food and Drug Administration and the European Medicines Agency, evidence is mounting to suggest that it can potentially increase the risk of adverse neurodevelopmental outcomes, including ADHD and autism spectrum disorder.

For the new study, researchers from the

University of Washington, US, analysed plasma biomarkers of acetaminophen (APAP) exposure in a cohort of 307 African American mother-child pairs.

Detection of APAP in second-trimester maternal blood samples correlated with increased odds of ADHD diagnosis in children by age 8-10, they said in the paper. In the study, APAP metabolites were detected in 20.2 per cent of maternal plasma samples.

Placental gene expression analysis of a subset of

174 participants indicated sex-specific transcriptional changes. In females, APAP exposure was associated with upregulation of immune-related pathways, including increased expression of immunoglobulin heavy constant gamma 1 (IGHG1).

Increased IGHG1 expression was statistically linked to ADHD diagnoses, with mediation analysis suggesting that APAP's effect on ADHD was partly mediated through this gene's placental expression, the researchers said. The findings align with prior epidemiological studies and experimental animal research linking prenatal APAP exposure to neurodevelopmental disruptions.

The current study eliminated the bias concerns raised in previous studies where APAP use was self-reported by using objective biomarker measurements, they said, while calling for further studies.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Every sixth parent in the US is in support of their teenage children indulging in non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as laser hair removal, chemical skin peels, teeth whitening and dermal fillers, according to nationwide study published on Monday.

The study led by the University of Michigan Health CS Mott Children's Hospital, based on a national poll showed that more than 16 per cent parents believe that teenagers should be allowed to receive these types of aesthetic treatments for any reason as long as they have approval from their guardians.

But, half of parents only support teenagers getting non-surgical cosmetic procedures if there's a valid reason. While 50 per cent said the reason should not be "being bullied about appearance", less than 40 per cent say improving



mental health is a good reason.

"Parents were conflicted about the circumstances under which non-surgical cosmetic procedures are appropriate for teenagers," said Mott Poll Co-Director and Mott pediatrician Susan Woolford.

"Interestingly, similar proportions of parents rated the validity of teenagers wanting to look good for a special occasion on par with wanting the procedures due to mental health or bullying," Woolford added.

The nationally representative poll is based on responses from 989 parents of children ages 13-17 surveyed in August 2024. The increased popularity of these procedures may be associated with social media content that exposed teenagers to idealise images of faces and bodies, Woolford said.

"Teenagers are susceptible to feeling insecure about their appearance when compared to digitally altered pictures depicting an appearance that is probably unattainable

naturally," she said. "This problem is exacerbated by the pressure to post pictures of themselves to garner validation."

However, it's important for parents to find ways to help teenagers understand the distortions presented in the media while also exploring their reasons for wanting to change their appearance, she said.

"If a teenager asks for a non-surgical cosmetic procedure, parents should consider the emotional and mental health implications," she said.

Further, the poll showed that parent opinions of the age at which youth should be able to obtain such services also varied. More than half selected 18 years of age or older, 27 per cent said ages 16-17 was old enough and 17 per cent said 15 or younger was also fine.

But, nearly a third of parents think teenagers should be prohibited from these procedures under any circumstances.

Jarry reaches Rio Open last 16

AGENCIES

RIO DE JANEIRO, FEB 18 (UNI)

Chile's sixth seed Nicolas Jarry recovered from a set down to beat Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo and advance to the last 16 of the ATP 500 Rio Open. Jarry served 12 aces and won 73 percent of his first-serve points to prevail in two hours and 26 minutes on the outdoor clay of the Jockey Club Brasileiro on Monday. "I got better as the match progressed," said the world No. 38. "But I'm still a long way from the level I know I'm capable of and the way I'm training. I'm doing everything within my control to regain my confidence and winning matches like this one certainly helps me." The 29-year-old will face Francisco Comesaña in the next round on Wednesday after the Argentine defeated Brazil's Gustavo Heide 7-6(2), 6-7(7) and 6-3. The biggest surprise of Monday's matches was a 6-2, 7-5 victory by Chinese Taipei competitor Tseng Chun-hsin over third seed Alejandro Tabilo of Chile. Others to progress to the round of 16 on Monday.

Colombian forward Palacios joins Wuhan Three Towns

AGENCIES

BEIJING, FEB 18 (UND)

Chinese Super League (CSL) club Wuhan Three Towns has announced the signing of Colombian winger Manuel Palacios. The 32-year-old moves to Wuhan from fellow CSL team Chengdu Rongcheng, where he spent two seasons, scoring 10 goals and laying on seven assists across 48 appearances. "Boasting excellent physical abilities and outstanding running speed, Palacios will be a sharp blade in the team's attack, enriching the head coach's tactical options," the Wuhan club said in a statement issued on Monday night. Palacios' first match for Wuhan may well be against his former club, with the two teams set to play each other in Saturday's 2025 CSL season-opener.

Shikhar Dhawan predicts Champions Trophy 2025 winner

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 18 (UNI)

2013 Champions Trophy hero Shikhar Dhawan knows what it takes to claim one of ICC's most prized pieces of silverware.

The former batting sensation believes this current India side has what it takes to deliver the proud cricketing nation their first Champions Trophy since their breakthrough win 12 years ago.

Dhawan, who scored 17 ODI tons to go with 39 fifties between 2010 and 2022, believes there's enough firepower in the Indian ranks to cover the absence of key bowling contributor Jasprit Bumrah, who will miss the tournament with a back injury.

"I can't look past India. I am quite confident," he said.

"They have a solid team and played very well against England in their recent ODI series. The obvious concern is that they will miss Jasprit Bumrah. There is no doubt he will be a big absence and I think they will feel it very strongly," Dhawan said.

"For me, he is the best bowler in the world, and his accuracy is hard to replicate. He is also a very



calm character and that is crucial in a huge ICC event like this," Dhawan said.

Without Jasprit, India will need other pace bowlers to stand up. And Dhawan likes what he sees from emerging 23-year-old right-arm Harshit Rana, an ICC report said.

Harshit has played just three ODIs, all this year. His best figures came in his debut, taking 3/53 against England in Nagpur. Across India's 3-0 series win over England, he took six wickets, at an average of 24.33, bowling at under runs seven per over.

"Harshit has come into the side and I think that is really exciting - keep an eye on him, I think he could have a breakout tournament," he said.

"I like his attitude. He is a go-getter and not afraid of anything. He accepts challenges and we have seen from the England

the first game against South Africa and it was a huge relief because it was my comeback match in ODI cricket," Dhawan said.

"I can still feel what it was like to open up my arms after I scored that century. It was like I was telling the world that I had arrived - and it was one of the most important moments in my career," he said.

"Scoring big runs at the start of a tournament gives a player so much confidence that carries through and I just kept on scoring runs after that. My self-belief went up and I knew I belonged on that stage. It was a great feeling and my life changed," Dhawan said.

India batted first in the Final against England, before successfully defending 129/7 to win by just five runs in a nail-biter at Birmingham, inside enemy territory.

"I still remember my hands were getting sweaty from the pressure - but then Ishant Sharma came on and took two wickets and the whole game shifted towards us," he said.

"Good teams do that - they keep their emotions in check, their body language stable and find a way to win. It's what teams will need to do in Pakistan," Dhawan added.

"I scored a century in

Shooting: Manu Bhaker named as BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year


AGENCIES

LONDON, FEB 18 (UND)

Olympic shooter Manu Bhaker has been named BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year for 2024 after a global public vote.

The 22-year-old was recognised for her historic achievement in becoming the first Indian woman to win two medals at a single Olympic Games, the BBC reported.

Bhaker became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in shooting when she won bronze in the women's 10m air pistol in Paris.

Two days later she won a second bronze - alongside Sarabjot Singh in the mixed 10m air pistol.

Bhaker has previously won the BBC's ISWOTY Emerging Athlete of the Year award.

On accepting her latest award, Bhaker said: "I have had a journey of ups and downs. I hope I can inspire women, all athletes and people with big dreams."

"Your journey doesn't end if you are struggling. You write your own story,"

Her fellow shooter Avani Lekhara was presented with the BBC ISWOTY Para-sportswoman of the Year award.

The 23-year-old is the first Indian woman to win three Paralympic medals, with gold in Paris following a gold and bronze at Tokyo 2020.

President Droupadi Murmu said: "I appreciate the entire team of the BBC for the praiseworthy initiative of organising BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year."

Pakistan take on New Zealand in Champions Trophy opener


AGENCIES

KARACHI, FEB 18 (UND)

Pakistan kick off their Champions Trophy campaign with a firm test against New Zealand here.

The hosts have a stacked squad with talent in all departments with Mohammed Rizwan leading the charge. Rizwan's side was tipped by former Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Khan, who won the competition in 2017, to defend their title in 2025.

"Pakistan have a really good chance of defending that title and I think they have a strong team. Some of the boys from 2017 are still there and we're talking about some of the best - especially Babar Azam," Sarfaraz said in his exclusive column for the ICC.

On the other hand, New Zealand have been plagued with injury issues especially in the bowling department, with Lockie Ferguson (foot injury) joining Ben Sears in being ruled out of the tournament.

The experienced Matt Henry will now be at the helm of the pace attack, with the onus on replacements, Kyle Jamieson and Jacob Duffy, to take their opportunity and help the Kiwis make their mark on

the event. Squads:

Pakistan: Mohammad Rizwan (c), Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir, Faheem Ashraf, Khushdil Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Usman Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi.

New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (c), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Kyle Jamieson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Nathan Smith, Kane Williamson, Will Young, Jacob Duffy.

The two sides recently met in the Tri-Nation Series in Pakistan in the leadup to the Champions Trophy.

The Mitchell Santner-led New Zealand showed great form, winning all their fixtures including the final to take the trophy.

In the two games that the Men in Green faced off against the Black Caps, the latter came out on the top by five wickets in the group encounter and by 78 runs in the final.

While this gives a much-needed boost to New Zealand, it leaves Pakistan with some work to do

Lockie Ferguson ruled out of Champions Trophy on eve of Pakistan contest

AGENCIES

LAHORE, FEB 18 (UND)

New Zealand have suffered a major blow on the eve of their ICC Champions Trophy 2025 campaign with key pacer Lockie Ferguson ruled out of the tournament due to injury.

Ferguson will miss the eight-team tournament due to an injury to his right foot, with the right-arm replaced in New Zealand's squad by fellow pacer Kyle Jamieson.

While Jamieson has played 45 international matches for New Zealand and won the Player of the Match award for the Black Caps in their victory at the inaugural ICC World Test Championship Final against India in 2021, he hasn't featured in an ODI since he played against Bangladesh in Mirpur in September 2023.

The loss of Ferguson will further dent New Zealand's hopes at the Champions Trophy, with the side also forced to replace pacer Ben Sears due to injury earlier this week. Seamer Jacob Duffy came into their squad on that occasion.

New Zealand coach Gary Stead was disappointed to lose Ferguson for the event, but is confident Jamieson can perform well as his replacement, an ICC report said.

"We're really disappointed for Lockie," Stead said.

"Lockie is a key part of the bowling group and brings a lot of major tournament experience and we know how much he was looking forward to representing New Zealand at another major event," he said.

"We wish him well for his recovery and hope he is back firing soon," Stead added.

All teams finalised their squads of 15 to the ICC earlier this month and changes can only be made with approval from the Event Technical Committee.

ahead of the Champions Trophy opener.

All-rounder Salman Ali Agha has been in incredible form with the bat as he finished as Pakistan's top run-getter in the Tri-Nation series against New Zealand and South Africa. Agha scored 219 runs

across three innings at an average of 73 and a strike rate of 100 with a highest score of 134, which came in Pakistan's highest-ever ODI chase. Along with Mohammed Rizwan, Salman helped his side chase down 352 against South Africa.

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