



Water Crisis in Offing : Rainfall Deficit of 80% Recorded in first 50 days of 2025

Contingency Plan being Devised to Tackle any Eventuality due to Crisis : Govt



HT NEWS NETWORK

Srinagar, FEBRUARY 19: In the first 50-days of the year 2025 Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a rainfall deficit of 83 percent thus posing a risk of severe water scarcity in the coming months. According to the official data accessed by the news agency— from January 1, 2025 to February 19, 2025, J&K has

recorded a rainfall of just 29.8 mm against the normal precipitation of 175.8 mm. i.e. only the 17% precipitation.

Kargil in Ladakh has recorded zero percent precipitation in 2025 with the data revealing that the district has witnessed 100 per cent deficit as against the normal rainfall of 18.5 mm.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Kathua has witnessed the highest deficiency with 98 percent as a

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Omar Abdullah Warns of Worsening Water Shortage, Pitches for Proactive Conservation

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 19 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir is heading towards a severe water crisis due to an alarming precipitation deficit. While an active Western Disturbance is expected to bring rain and snow on February 20, experts warn that this will not be sufficient to reverse the ongoing trend of declining winter precipitation. Chief minister Omar Abdullah said J&K is staring at a water crisis this year. "It's not a recent phenomenon, actually it's been building up for a few years now. While the government will have to adopt a more proactive approach for water management & conservation, it can't just be a government-centric approach. All of us residents of J&K will have to change the way we take water



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Will make changes in J&K tourism policy if needed to attract more investment: CM Omar Invites tourists to explore J&K at SATTE 2025

HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today urged people to visit Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing that J&K has something for everyone and is a year-round destination.

He made these remarks while addressing the opening ceremony of SATTE (South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange) at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who was the guest of honour at the inaugural event, said: "Whether you're looking for a pilgrimage or religious tourism, whether you're looking for a destination for a wedding or engagement, whether you simply want to be an Instagram or TikTok influencer, or you want to visit for adventure tourism, or just to sit back with a book and enjoy beautiful and natural surroundings, Jammu and Kashmir has it all for you."



Jammu & Kashmir is participating in SATTE 2025, showcasing J&K's breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality.

This year's SATTE event would host over 2,000 exhibitors and is expected to attract more than 40,000 visitors from across the globe.

It provides a comprehensive platform for domestic and international buyers and professionals from the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries, along with

National and State Tourism Boards.

Talking about the background of the famous Persian couplet by poet Amir Khusrau in Kashmir, the Chief Minister said: "It is inscribed in the Red Fort from the 13th-14th century, basically saying that if there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here, talking about Jammu and Kashmir."

Reflecting on Kashmir's past as a favorite leisure and

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Journalist Majid Hyderi's PSA Detention Quashed by Court

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 19, : The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday nullified the Public Safety Act (PSA) detention order against journalist Majid Hyderi, nearly five months after his arrest. Justice V. K. Chatterjee struck down the PSA order, paving the way for Hyderi's release. The journalist was arrested in September 2023 on charges of 'extortion' and defamation before being shifted to Kot Bhalwal Jail under PSA detention.

The Incarcerated Journalist was represented by the Advocate Muhammad Yousuf Bhat. [KNT]

Man Accused of Burglary Dies in Police Custody, Inquiry Ordered in Ramban

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 19, : A 27-year-old man, detained for his alleged involvement in multiple theft cases, died at a health centre after falling sick while in police custody in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

The incident has prompted authorities to launch a magisterial inquiry to determine the cause and circumstances leading to his death.

The deceased, identified as Muhammad Abid, a resident of Thopal village in Batote, had been in police custody for several days before he reportedly complained of uneasiness in the lockup on Tuesday. According to officials, he was immediately shifted to Community Health Centre (CHC) Batote, where he later passed away.

Ramban District Magistrate Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary took swift action by ordering a magisterial inquiry into the incident, appointing Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Rizwan Asgar as the inquiry officer. The officer has been tasked with thoroughly

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J&K ACB books Ex- MD of Cooperative Housing Corporation

HT News Network

Jammu, Feb 19 (UNI) The sleuth of Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday booked the then Managing Director of Cooperative Housing Corporation and others for illegal allotment of the state land.

As per the official spokesman, a Preliminary Enquiry was conducted to look into allegations that the J&K Cooperative Housing Corporation Ltd. (JKCHC) purchased 392 kanal of land from private persons for establishing a Housing Colony at Village Bain Bajalta, District Jammu and for that purpose, also illegally occupied Kah Charai, Maqbuza Sarkar and JDA land. It was alleged that the Board purchased 392

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A splendid aerial view of Srinagar's iconic Dal Lake clicked from the Shankaracharya hills in Srinagar on Wednesday. UNI PHOTO

Political Nepotism? MLA's Son Attends High-Level Official Meeting in Father's Absence

HT News Network/KNT

Srinagar, Feb 19, : In a development that has sparked widespread concerns over governance protocols, the son of an MLA attended a high-level government meeting in place of his elected father. During a crucial review session chaired by Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare, and Education, Sakeena Itoo, Waleed Karra, son of MLA Tariq Hamid Karra, participated in the meeting, despite his father being in Doda at the time. The meeting, convened to assess



developmental projects and the implementation of government-sponsored schemes in Srinagar district, was

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Political Nepotism? MLA's Son Attends High-Level Official Meeting in Father's Absence

HT News Network/KNT

Srinagar, Feb 19, : Waleed Karra, son of Congress leader and legislator Tariq Hamid Karra, has clarified that he attends

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Team Jammu wants death penalty for drug mafia

HT News Network



Jammu, Feb 19 (UNI) In a fervent appeal to all the elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to cut their party lines and unanimously hold deliberation on increasing

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CS for framing incentive based policy for digitization of manuscripts lying with public Reviews efforts for revival, restoration of heritage in J&K

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 19: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high level meeting to assess and expedite efforts for revival, restoration, preservation and maintenance of the rich heritage and architectural legacy of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting focused on key heritage projects besides working out modalities for ensuring promotion and preservation of the region's unique blend of cultural and traditional legacy in the form of exquisite manuscripts.

Present in the meeting were Commissioner Secretary, IT Department; Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu; Commis-



sioner Secretary, Culture; Secretary, PWD; Commissioner, JMC; Director, Archaeology &

Archives; Chief Engineers and other concerned officers.

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Breathtaking Relief: Students Who Missed Papers Being Allowed to Appear in Exams: Edu Minister Sakina Itoo

Admit Card of GHSS Khanyar Student being issued Tomorrow: BOSE Official

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 19: In a major relief for students, the government has directed Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) to allow all those students who were earlier denied admit cards due to technical errors or other issues to sit in the ongoing Class 10th annual regular examinations.

Earlier, Education Minister Sakina Masood Itoo, in a post on X wrote, "As already assured, the government has directed JKBOSE authorities to issue admit cards to the remaining candidates for appearing in Class 10th, 11th, and 12th board



examinations." Meanwhile, when contacted Joint Secretary in JKBOSE, Suraj Rathore, told JKNS, "Missed out student of GHSS Khanyar (Toiba Yaqoob) will be allowed to sit in the exams, and her roll number slip

will be issued tomorrow." The decision comes as a sigh of relief for affected students and parents, who had expressed anger over the uncertainty surrounding the exams.

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

WATER

rainfall of only 3.6 mm was recorded against the normal of 152.4 mm.

Jammu and Udhampur stations have recorded a deficit rainfall of 95 per cent each in the last 50 days while 92 per cent deficiency was recorded in Samba district.

Ramban and Kulgam districts have recorded a deficiency of 90 per cent each, the data shows. It adds that Shopian and Reasi have witnessed the deficit rainfall of 88 per cent while Doda and Budgam districts have seen the deficiency of 87 per cent and 86 per cent respectively.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, has recorded the deficit rainfall of 85 per cent in the last 50 days while Anantnag, Bandipora and Pulwama have recorded the deficiency of above 80 per cent rainfall during the period.

The other stations including Baramulla, Ganderbal, Kishtwar, Kupwara, Poonch and Rajouri districts have recorded a deficit rainfall in between 72-78 per cent.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that J&K is staring at a water crisis this year, and he will be reviewing the measures the Jal Shakti (PHE) Department intends to take to address the situation.

A top official in the Jal Shakti Department (JSD) while talking to KNO said that the department is ready to tackle any such situation. "We have already formulated a contingency plan if such a situation arises," he added.

The official also appealed to the people to use the water judiciously and not to waste it to ensure that all the people get adequate drinking water facilities. "Besides, if the dry spell persists, the department will ensure that the people don't face difficulties," he said—

CM

for granted," Abdullah said in a post on X. "I'll be reviewing the measures the Jal Shakti (PHE) Dept intends to take to deal with the developing crisis & I'll also be talking to the people of J&K over the next few months about what we can do collectively," he added

Earlier, Kashmir's independent weather analyst Faizan Arif has raised serious concerns over the crisis, emphasizing that the current precipitation deficit stands at over 80%.

"Over the past four years, I have closely monitored and highlighted this situation, and the trend is clear: winter precipitation is decreasing, and we are now in the sixth straight year of this decline. This is a catastrophic situation. How will our rivers survive if glaciers don't receive the snowfall they need?" Faizan said.

Director Meteorological Department Srinagar Mukhtar Ahmad said that there are chances of water scarcity as the precipitation this winter was very less during the winter season.

"There is no snow on the mountains and glaciers have dried up is a matter of concern", he said.

The temperatures in the month of January and February were unusual and have dried up the springs of Kashmir valley.

However, Ahmed is hopeful that with the approaching Western Disturbance chances of good rainfall fall and snow are there.

Kashmir's ongoing dry spell has led to drying of water bodies, frequent forest fires, and deteriorating drinking water crisis across the region. The famous Achabal Mughal Garden in South Kashmir has completely dried up and according to locals it is for the first time in history that such a thing has happened.

River Jhelum, the lifeline of Kashmir, is witnessing one of its all-time lowest water levels.

The inadequate snowfall forced authorities to postpone the Khelo India Winter Games in Gulmarg, originally set to begin on February 22.

"We must adapt to climate change, devise strategies to mitigate its impact, and prepare for the future. The leadership must urgently convene and treat this developing crisis with the seriousness it deserves," Faizan adde

TOURIST

film shooting destination, Omar Abdullah remarked: "What does one say about Jammu and Kashmir that hasn't already been said? No honeymoon in India was considered a honeymoon unless it was planned in the houseboats of Dal Lake. No movie in India was considered complete unless it had at least one sequence from our mustard fields or the snow-capped mountains, and no holiday was a holiday unless it was spent somewhere in Jammu and Kashmir."

Addressing the challenges J&K faced over the last three decades, he stated that the region is emerging from difficult times.

"Could we have this concept of nazar, evil eye. All that beauty had to result in something going wrong. 30-35 years of a very difficult time from which Jammu and Kashmir is now emerging."

He highlighted the revival of domestic tourism, saying there can be no denying that Jammu and Kashmir is once again one of India's pre-eminent destination for domestic tourism.

"International tourism is picking up in spite of the difficulties that we have with travel advisories issued by various embassies and consulates."

He further emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir is not resting on its laurels, not trying to sell you a soft story because, as was amply clear in the very warm introduction that I got before coming up here, Jammu and Kashmir has something for everyone. Touching upon

the region's investment potential, the Chief Minister remarked: "Jammu and Kashmir today is also a destination ripe for investment in any and every sector to do with the tourism industry, and that is why for us, for the team that has accompanied me, it's a pleasure to be back at SATTE. We understand the importance that SATTE as an event holds in the annual calendar for tourism and travel promotion events."

Speaking about new and emerging tourist destinations in J&K, he said: "Jammu and Kashmir is beyond Pahalgalam or Gulmarg in Kashmir or other locations. When you talk about Jammu and Kashmir, similarly when you talk about Kashmiri wazwan food, you talk about culinary dishes Gushtaba and Rista, and those are the two things everyone has heard about. When we talk about tourism in Jammu and Kashmir, immediately Pahalgalam and Gulmarg as destinations spring to mind. But Jammu and Kashmir is more than that."

He highlighted Jammu's heritage tourism, saying: "For heritage tourism, Jammu is the city of temples, starting from Raghunath Mandir and going beyond. Jammu has more to offer in terms of border tourism that is often not projected but something that we believe offers great opportunity as new places to visit. Kashmir is more than just Gulmarg and Pahalgalam."

The Chief Minister emphasized new tourist destinations such as Sonamarg as a year-round destination, thanks to the newly inaugurated tunnel. Gurez, which was once unheard of but is now among the fastest-growing tourist areas. Border tourism at Tangdhar, Machhil, Karnah, and Keran, attracting increasing visitors.

Meadows like Bangus and Doodhpathri, which are gaining popularity in J&K.

Highlighting J&K's adventure tourism potential, he said: "Jammu and Kashmir is about adventure tourism, rafting on our rivers, skiing down our mountains, water skiing on the Dal Lake or Mansar."

He further added: "I truly believe that a holiday is not a holiday unless it's spent in Jammu and Kashmir. And therefore, I am here with a whole host of people from Jammu and Kashmir to remind you that we are there. And tongue firmly in cheek, I've often said that Jammu and Kashmir was heaven on earth long before Kerala became God's own country."

Inviting SATTE 2025 attendees to J&K, he said: "For your next visit, for your next conference, for your next seminar, or for just time on your own. If you just want to come and sit and relax, Jammu and Kashmir is now increasingly becoming a destination for wellness, for health. We have a number of events on our calendar."

Speaking about sports tourism, he noted: "Last year, it had the inaugural Kashmir Marathon, both a half marathon and full marathon. This year, we intend to start with the Jammu Half Marathon and the Jammu Ultra Marathon while continuing with the Kashmir Marathon." J&K's enhanced connectivity, he said: "Gone are the days when you had a flight once or twice a day from Delhi, and that was the only connectivity that was available to you. Today, you have direct flights from Amritsar, from Chandigarh, from Bangalore, from Ahmedabad, from Mumbai, from Delhi, and of course, countless connections."

He added: "And in the not-too-distant future, in fact, we are hoping to be counting that time on the fingers of our hands, we will have Jammu and Kashmir connected to the rest of the country by a rail link that has been a few decades in the making."

Concluding his speech, the Chief Minister extended a warm invitation saying that it is much easier to get to Jammu & Kashmir as opposed to other mountainous and hill destinations.

CM invited the participants to see for themselves and enjoy the locales and hospitality on offer which would clear the negative image that was being projected by some to dissuade travel to this place with J&K getting mentioned for the wrong reasons.

"So please come and visit and see what it is all about. And I assure you, we will send you back with the best of memories and the best experience."

ACB

Kanals of land at scattered places, he said adding that the management of JKCHC in connivance with officers and officials of Revenue Department illegally occupied about 584 Kanal land which includes state land.

The JKCHC then allotted the same to different persons by making plots, he said as per the investigation.

The spokesman said that during preliminary enquiry, it was found that JKCHC acquired land at village Bain Bajalta for the establishment of a housing colony, adding, "during the process of taking possession of land, the Corporation illegally occupied state land measuring 111 Kanal and 17 Marlas.

Apart from this, the Corporation also occupied 100 kanal 15 marla land from the owners vested with proprietary rights of the land under J&K Agrarian Reforms Act 1976 and Govt. Order No. S-432."

"During the course of enquiry, it was surfaced that the officers and officials of JKCHC and Revenue Department in furtherance of a well-knit conspiracy hatched among themselves and the beneficiaries, by abuse of their official position, paved way for transfer of rights of the land for establishing a housing colony by the JKCHC

in violation to the government provisions dishonestly and fraudulently by misrepresenting facts, thereby conferring undue benefits upon themselves, the corporation and the beneficiaries," he added.

He said that these omissions and commissions on the part of officers and officials of the JKCHC and the Revenue Department including Bharat Bhushan Sharma the then Managing Director J&K Cooperative Housing Corporation, Shesh Paul Salgotra, the then Tehsildar Jammu, Sanjay Badyal, the then Tehsildar Jammu, Mahesh Chander the then Naib Tehsildar Sidhra, Farooq Hussain the then Patwari Halqa Bain Bajalta Jammu, Nek Mohd then Patwari Halqa Bain Bajalta Jammu, the beneficiaries and others constitute offences punishable under Prevention of Corruption Act Svt. 2006 and other relevant sections under which the FIR has been registered in Police Station ACB Central.

Further investigation in the case is going on, said the spokesman.

CS

The Chief Secretary issued several key directives regarding framing of incentive based policy for digitization of valuable manuscripts lying with the public. He emphasized for acknowledging the contributors by returning their original manuscripts post-digitization to encourage wider participation in this heritage preservation initiative.

Observing the current status of different architecture and heritage conservation projects, the Chief Secretary asked the department of Archaeology & Archives to intensify the restoration efforts, ensuring visible progress on ground. The department was also impressed upon to utilize released funds effectively to meet project deadlines.

As far as the cultural revitalization of Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex (MMHC) is concerned, the Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, was directed to transform MMHC into a culturally vibrant space by organizing cultural evenings in collaboration with the Academy of Art, Culture & Languages.

The Chief Secretary also emphasized upon the need for adaptive reuse of restored structures at MMHC. He tasked the Department of Archaeology with developing a robust reuse plan for restored structures at MMHC. He noticed that failure to repurpose these structures would undermine the restoration efforts made so far. He maintained that keeping such structures idle would render them into dilapidation which is highly unacceptable.

Regarding engagement of Transaction Advisor (TA) for heritage hotel at MMHC, the Chief Secretary advised the concerned to approach the Finance Department seeking their guidance on engaging TA for the adaptive re-use of this valuable heritage property. This included the proposed heritage hotel, to be developed under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model on a Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis for development of sustainable tourism in the Jammu city.

In order to promote the region's cultural heritage, the Chief Secretary called for instituting awards recognizing outstanding contributions in preserving J&K's cultural identity. He also suggested holding painting competitions highlighting the lives and contributions of saints like Lalla Ded to educate younger generations and inculcate in them the aesthetic value of our significant heritage and traditions prevalent here in the past.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the progress made in formulation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for modernization of SPS Museum, Srinagar, and instructed its finalization within 15 days. He emphasized upon taking up this work for execution in the upcoming summer season.

The meeting also included an assessment of major heritage-related projects including restoration and development of Shergarhi Palace, construction of Tehzeeb Mahal, construction of a 250-meter span flyover bridge connecting Jullaka Mohalla with MMHC at a cost of Rs. 23.50 crore and installation of a vertical lift between the Cable Car Project (Peerkho) and Mubarak Mandi Complex besides creation of exclusive parking for heritage complex by JMC.

The Chief Secretary directed the IT Department to create an online portal for documenting and showcasing activities held across all the districts during celebration of Constitution Day and the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

In his presentation, Commissioner Secretary, Culture Department, K. Ramesh Kumar, informed the meeting about the pace and progress on projects being executed under different phases of Revival, Restoration, Preservation and Maintenance of Architecture and Heritage in Jammu and Kashmir.

He apprised the meeting that under the first phase 33 projects had been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs 64.25 crore. Under phase second, a total of 73 projects had been identified, of which, DPRs for 65 projects stands prepared while administrative approval has been received for 61 projects by the Department.

Director, Archives, Archeology & Museums, K.K Sidha, informed the meeting about the status of works accomplished to modernize the SPS Museum, Srinagar and the scope of works to be taken up in the newly formulated DPR. He also threw light on the status of projects including the upcoming Tehzeeb Mahal, restoration

works going on at Shergarhi Palace and those at Mubarak Mandi Complex.

Additionally, the Commissioner JMC highlighted the status of the works being taken up under Smart City Mission inside MMHC. He revealed that operationalization of Library cum Cafe on PPP mode inside this heritage complex would be done by April this year as the structure is nearing completion. He also laid out a plan for construction of a parking lot for nearly 200 cars and around 150 two wheelers near the main gate of the complex.

SAKINA

(Mean while Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the performance and functioning of Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education departments in Baramulla district.

The meeting was attended by MLA Uri, Sajad Ahmad; MLA Wagoora-Kreeri, Irfan Hafeez Lone; MLA Sopore, Irshad Ahmad Kar; MLA Pattan, Javid Riyaz Bedar; MLA Tangmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah; MLA Baramulla, Javed Hassan Beigh; District Development Commissioner, Baramulla, Minga Sherpa; Director Coordination, New Medical Colleges; Heads of Departments of Health, Social Welfare and School Education departments besides Colleges; Director SKIMS, Soura; Principal GMC, Baramulla; CMO, Baramulla and other senior officers from Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education departments.

While reviewing the status of healthcare facilities, availability of medicines and infrastructure in hospitals, CHCs and PHCs across the district, Sakeena Itoo stressed on the importance of strengthening healthcare services, ensuring adequate medical staff and expediting work on ongoing projects to enhance patient care. "Address gaps in rural healthcare accessibility and ensure timely availability of life-saving drugs as well as other healthcare facilities to the public", the Minister said.

She called upon the officers of health department to fill the vacancies of paramedics and doctors to address the staff constraints on health facilities.

The Minister further directed the officers of health department to conduct drug audit of all the medical and chemist shops to control mal-practices, if any. She asked them to ensure that the establishments are complying with regulations like installation of CCTV cameras, implementation of computerized billing systems and maintenance of psychotropic drug records.

While reviewing performance of Social Welfare department in the district, the Minister assessed implementation of various beneficiary oriented schemes for senior citizens, differently-abled individuals and women. She called for transparency and efficiency in disbursing financial assistance, ensuring that beneficiaries receive their entitlements without delays. She also highlighted the need for creating awareness among the masses regarding schemes so that maximum people can take benefits.

Regarding Education sector, the Minister emphasized on improving the standard of education, ensuring accountability among teaching staff and bridging gaps in digital learning resources.

During the meeting, the Minister underlined that Omar led government is committed towards development of all areas, highlighting that efficient service delivery is paramount for the government. She directed the officers to maintain close coordination with the MLAs and ensure they are taken into confidence for successful implementation of projects and schemes in their respective constituencies.

The Minister called upon the officers to ensure that all issues raised by the public representatives are addressed in a time bound manner and ensure proper follow up of the issues flagged by the public representatives.

During the meeting, the MLAs projected issues regarding Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education departments of their respective constituencies.

RAMBAN

investigating the circumstances surrounding Abid's death and submitting a report within a week.

"The inquiry officer shall look into the cause and circumstances that lead to the death of the individual and shall fix the responsibility of the same. He shall submit his report within a week's time positively from the date of issue of this order," Choudhary stated in his directive issued Tuesday evening.

Officials further revealed that Abid was allegedly a drug addict and had a history of theft-related offenses. [KNT]

KARRA

attended by several MLAs, senior officials from the district administration, police, and department heads. However, Waleed Karra's presence raised eyebrows as he had no official mandate to be part of such a high-profile discussion.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the growing trend of MLAs' sons, relatives, and associates attending official meetings on behalf of or along with elected representatives has raised serious con-

cerns about the blatant violation of protocols and democratic principles. "Such instances reflect a troubling disregard for institutional norms and accountability," a senior politician told the news agency Kashmir News Trust.

Earlier, a video had gone viral showing Waleed Karra inspecting a health facility on the outskirts of Srinagar, further fueling debates about nepotism in governance. A Congress leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated that neither Sakeena Itoo nor any official dared to question Waleed Karra's presence or authority in the meeting.

"This practice not only undermines the credibility of governance but also erodes public trust in the system, as political positions appear to be treated as personal legacies rather than public responsibilities," he said.

Another leader called for strict adherence to official protocols to prevent further dilution of democratic norms in the region. [KNT]

MLAS SON

official review meetings not in a personal capacity but as an officially nominated representative of the Shalteng Assembly segment.

Responding to reports about his participation in a recent official meeting, Waleed Karra stated that his father, who was in Doda at the time, had designated him as in charge of the Shalteng constituency, a decision communicated to all relevant departments.

He emphasized that he has attended multiple official meetings in his father's absence, including one in Srinagar presided over by Education and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo.

"This is a normal practice and has been unnecessarily turned into a controversy," he said, adding that other legislators also send representatives when they are out of station.

He further clarified that he receives formal invitations for such meetings, including the one he attended yesterday. [KNT]

DRUGS

drug menace and number of unreported deaths of youth due to suspected drug overdose in Jammu and Kashmir, Chairman, Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal on Wednesday demanded death penalty for those who are proved guilty for smuggling and selling Narcotics and ruining lives of future generation.

Addressing a presser here at Press Club of Jammu, Team Jammu chief flanked members Dr Ashish Gupta and Rajesh Kapoor voiced concern over increasing drug menace and despite the number of initiatives taken by Jammu and Kashmir Police and other allied agencies.

Jamwal however, urged the Jammu and Kashmir administration to fulfil its commitment of dealing drug peddlers with iron hands.

The Team Jammu chairman observed that ahead of the upcoming Assembly Budget Session in Jammu and Kashmir, a fierce debate is unfolding over the proposed liquor ban.

Several MLAs from the PDP and National Conference are preparing to introduce a private member's bill advocating for a state-wide prohibition on liquor, he noted.

Jamwal, who is heading an organization that has been fighting against drug abuse for over a decade, stated that if the government introduces a clear policy on liquor prohibition, Team Jammu will welcome it and appealed to all the MLAs, to hold series debate on Drug Menace in Assembly and unanimously pass a resolution that includes death penalty for those who are proved guilty for smuggling and selling Narcotics and ruining lives of future generation.

However, Team Jammu has also raised serious concerns about the government's stance on the rising drug abuse in Jammu.

He pointed out that hundreds of young lives have been lost due to drug addiction, and the crime rate has surged as a result of the increasing prevalence of drugs in the region.

He has urged the government to address both liquor prohibition and the worsening drug crisis simultaneously and demanded that authorities identify and take strict action against those responsible for the spread of drug abuse.

Expressing concern over the growing addiction among youth, Jamwal, emphasized the need for constant police surveillance at known drug-selling hotspots in Jammu and called for a comprehensive crackdown on drug smugglers.

Coming down heavily on those "black sheep" in administration Jamwal pointed out that "Despite years of law enforcement efforts, the drug mafia remains deeply entrenched in Jammu and Kashmir."

"Why authorities have been unable to completely dismantle drug networks and urged the government to ensure transparency by maintaining accurate records of drug-related deaths. We call for concrete measures to break the supply chain and intensify anti-narcotics operations," he stated.

A key issue highlighted during the press conference was the lack of reliable data on youth affected by drug addiction. Many cases go unreported due to social stigma, while drug-related deaths are often misclassified under other causes, such as accidents or health conditions. Furthermore, inadequate coordination between law enforcement, healthcare institutions, and social agencies makes it difficult to assess the true extent of the crisis. Without a dedicated tracking system, policymaking remains ineffective.





Commissioner SMC Reviews Capex Plan to Drive Urban Development in Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 19: In a proactive effort to enhance urban infrastructure and public services, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmed chaired a comprehensive review meeting today to evaluate the Capital Expenditure (Capex) Plan. This initiative is a key component of SMC's broader strategy to address urban challenges and ensure the timely execution of projects aimed at significantly improving the quality of life for Srinagar's residents. The meeting began with the commissioner underlining the critical role of the Capex Plan in transforming urban landscape. "Our Capex Plan is not merely a financial blueprint; it is a commitment to the people of Srinagar. We are dedicated to implementing projects that will elevate their quality of life," said Dr. Owais. During the meeting, officers from various departments presented detailed progress reports on ongoing projects. Key focus areas included the development of city



roads, improvements in waste management systems, upgrades to drainage networks, installation of streetlights, enhancements to public parks, and advancements in water supply infrastructure. Each department highlighted achievements, identified challenges, and proposed strategies to address bottlenecks, ensuring projects are completed

within the stipulated timelines. The Commissioner stressed the importance of accountability and transparency in project execution. "We must ensure that every rupee spent is accounted for and that our projects genuinely reflect the needs and aspirations of our citizens," he said. Dr. Owais urged all SMC departments to foster open communica-

tion, enhance collaboration, and streamline processes to minimize delays. In addition to reviewing current projects, the meeting also laid the groundwork for future initiatives. Dr. Owais reiterated SMC's commitment to integrating sustainable practices into all upcoming developments. "It is imperative that our growth is environmentally responsible. We will prioritize projects that promote sustainability and resilience," he asserted. The SMC remains steadfast in its mission to transform Srinagar into a modern, sustainable urban hub that meets the evolving needs of its residents while preserving the city's unique cultural heritage and natural environment. The meeting began with the commissioner underlining the critical role of the Capex Plan in transforming urban landscape. "Our Capex Plan is not merely a financial blueprint; it is a commitment to the people of Srinagar. We are dedicated to implementing projects that will elevate their quality of life," said Dr. Owais. During the meeting, officers from various departments presented detailed progress reports on ongoing projects.

State Taxes Department Kashmir Intensifies Inspection Drive to Curb GST Violations

HT News Network



SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 19: Following the directions of Commissioner State Taxes J&K, P.K. Bhat, State Taxes Department Kashmir has intensified its enforcement efforts against taxpayers involved in sale suppression and tax evasion by launching a large-scale inspection drive across the Kashmir division. Based on intelligence inputs generated through advanced AI tools such as Business Intelligence and Fraud Analytics (BIFA), E-Way Bills Portal, Field Enforcement teams, information received from various wings of the department and extensive taxpayer scrutiny, the department, under the supervision of Additional Commissioner, State Taxes (Administration & Enforcement) Kashmir, Parvaiz Ahmad Raina, conducted massive first of its kind inspection, search, and seizure drive in Srinagar, Budgam and Anantnag districts of the valley. The drive aims to curb fraudulent activities, including fake Input Tax Credit (ITC), willful tax evasion, tax fraud, fake invoicing, and non-compliance with GST provisions with an aim to safeguard the revenue of state exchequer.

DLSA Srinagar, Budgam organized a legal awareness prog for LSUC, LSUM

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SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 19: District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) Srinagar in collaboration with DLSA Budgam organized a legal awareness programme aimed at enhancing the understanding and implementation of the NALSA Scheme 2024. The programme was held under the guidance of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman of the DLSA/Principal District & Sessions Judge Srinagar, & Om Prakash Bhagat, Chairman DLSA Budgam/Pr. District & Sessions Judge Budgam and under the supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Sub-Judge/Secretary of DLSA Srinagar. The programme was attended by the members of the Legal Services Unit for Children (LSUC) and the Legal Services Unit for Mentally ill individuals and persons with intellectual disabilities (LSUM) from both districts. Participants engaged in comprehensive discussions to deepen their understanding of the NALSA Scheme 2024 and strategize its effective execution. Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) & Pr. District & Sessions Judge Srinagar inaugurated the programme on the Legal Service Unit for Children (LSUC) and the Legal Services Unit for persons with Mental illness and intellec-



tual disabilities (LSUM) at the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centre, DLSA Srinagar. The event marked a significant step in promoting legal aid and awareness for vulnerable groups, focusing on ensuring that children and individuals with mental health conditions or intellectual disabilities have access to justice and support mechanisms tailored to their unique needs. During his address, the Chairman emphasized the critical role of these units in

safeguarding the rights of the marginalized and fostering an inclusive legal environment. He urged participants to actively engage with the programme's objectives and take steps to spread awareness within their communities. Highlighting the importance of empathy, sensitivity, and legal literacy, he encouraged legal professionals, para-legal volunteers, and stakeholders to collaborate and strengthen the support system for these vulnerable populations. Nusrat Ali Hakak, Sub-Judge/Secretary DLSA Srinagar and Budgam highlighted the significance of the NALSA Scheme 2024 in safeguarding the rights of children and individuals with mental illnesses and intellectual disabilities. She emphasized the necessity of a collaborative approach to ensure the scheme's successful implementation.

State Taxes Department Kashmir Intensifies Inspection Drive to Curb GST Violations

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SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 19: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar is going to hold 1st National Lok Adalat of the year 2025 at District Court Complex Srinagar on March 08. Lok Adalat will be held for Pre-Litigation cases including bank recovery matters, labour disputes cases, electricity and water bills (excluding non-compoundable) and other criminal compoundable, matrimonial, civil disputes etc. Besides cases pending in courts including criminal compoundable offence, NI Act cases under Section 138, bank recovery matters, MACT cases, labour disputes cases, electricity and water bills (excluding non-compoundable), matrimonial cases (except divorce matters), land acquisition cases, other civil cases including rent, easementary rights, injunctions suit, specific performance suit etc. Accordingly, all concerned parties & advocates who desire to get their cases, disputes & claims settled through this 1st National Lok Adalat are asked to approach District Legal Services Authority Srinagar or concerned courts by or before March 01 for amicable settlement of through National Lok Adalat.

Training Prog for Haj Pilgrims on Feb 26 who missed training in districts

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 19: All those selected Haj Pilgrims of Kashmir Division who could not attend first phase of orientation cum training programme held at district headquarters or at Haj House, Bemina, are hereby informed that an orientation cum training camp is being organized at Haj House, Bemina, Srinagar on February 26, 2025. Accordingly, all the concerned pilgrims are informed to attend the said scheduled orientation programme which shall commence at 11:00 am. Those Haj Pilgrims who have already participated in training programme in their respective districts need not to participate in the aforementioned scheduled training camp.

J&K LBDBC Commission assesses implication of backwardness of OBC's in South Kashmir districts

HT News Network

Srinagar, February 19: The Jammu & Kashmir Local Bodies Dedicated Backward Classes (J&K LBDBC) Commission chaired by Justice (Retd.) Janak Raj Kotwal, and its Members; R.K. Bhagat IAS (Retd.) and Professor M.S. Bhadwal visited District Headquarter Anantnag as a part of their outreach and met the stakeholders from different panchayats and Urban Local Bodies of Districts Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian to assess the implications of backwardness among OBC's in direct elections to the local bodies.

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan CUKashmir, JK Police collaborate to organise debate competition

HT News Network

Ganderbal, Feb 19: To provide a platform for students to critically analyse the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to drug addiction and to strengthen prevention measures within the community, Directorate of Students Welfare (DSW) Central University of Kashmir CUKashmir in association with the Jammu and Kashmir Police (JK) Department organised a debate competition on "Drug-Free India for a Viksit Bharat: A Collective Responsibility Under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan" at Varsity's Tulmulla Campus here Wednesday. Addressing the participants, Vice-Chancellor,



Prof. A Ravinder Nath, in his presidential address, underscored the need to combat the growing menace of substance abuse. "Substance abuse is not just an individual problem, but a societal challenge that requires collective action. Through this debate competition, we aim to engage young minds in meaningful dialogue and encourage them to be part of the solution. The university remains

committed to creating a safe and drug-free campus," Prof. A Ravinder Nath said. He said the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), is a flagship initiative aimed at eradicating drug abuse from the country. "This nationwide campaign focuses on awareness, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation to create a healthier and more productive society," Prof. A Ravinder Nath said. He said

the progress, growth and development of the country depends on the youth and the Abhiyan is a commendable initiative that reflects India's commitment in combating substance abuse among the younger generation. He said the CUKashmir is committed to create socially responsible and knowledgeable individuals, having leadership skills, who will play a pivotal role against the prevalent drug abuse menace. Addressing the gathering, Senior Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal, Mr. Ragav S, described the youngsters as the torch bearers of the nation and highlighted the need of channelizing their energy into positive things. About the menace of substance abuse, he said "

100 Days TB Intensified Campaign Srinagar Admin Organizes TB Awareness and Screening Camps at major Cement Manufacturing Plants

HT News Network

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 19: Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, a team of the District TB Centre (DTC) Srinagar conducted multiple TB Awareness and Screening camps at major Cement Manufacturing Plants and sites a part of the 100 Days TB Intensified Campaign. The team inspected various Cement Manufacturing Plants including Khyber Cement Factory, Trambo Cement Factory, and Saifco Cement Factory in the District. During the TB Awareness and Screening Camps, District TB Officer, Dr. Abdul Rouf accompanied by Medical Officer DTC, Dr. Maheen Latif, emphasized



the importance of early TB detection among vulnerable populations, particularly construction workers, who are at higher risk due to occupational exposure. He highlighted the role of AI-based spot X-ray screening, which enables rapid and accurate diagnosis, ensuring timely intervention and treatment.

Additionally, MO JESIS, Dr. Rubina and Senior Treatment Supervisor HQ DTC Musadiq Rafiq spoke about the community's role in combating TB. They stressed that collective efforts and public awareness are crucial to achieving the goal of a TB-free Srinagar. On the occasion, the camps provided free TB

screenings, AI-based spot X-ray facilities, and expert consultations. Workers were educated on TB symptoms, prevention measures, and the importance of completing the full course of treatment. Suspected cases were immediately referred for further medical evaluation and treatment under the National TB Elimination Program (NTEP). This initiative aims to strengthen TB elimination efforts by expanding outreach, promoting early detection, and ensuring treatment accessibility for high-risk groups. The District TB Centre Srinagar urges individuals experiencing persistent cough, unexplained weight loss, night sweats, or prolonged fever to come forward for free screening and TB treatment services.

EDITORIAL

Wetlands across J&K gasping for breath

In a landmark judgment the Supreme Court of India had ordered for the protection of additional 30,000 wetlands, significantly expanding the existing protected wetland network from 2, 01,503 to over 2, 31,503 across the country. This groundbreaking judicial intervention came in response to a Public Interest Litigation filed by environmental activists Anand Arya, advocate M K Balakrishnan and NGO Vana-shakti. The Supreme Court has mandated the state and union territory governments to complete the demarcation of wetlands within three months.

The intervention from the highest court of the country is more than welcome and it has come as a great relief since the wetlands are in a bad shape and need immediate attention. The environmentalists have been urging the government to intervene in the matter but the lackadaisical attitude from the people at helm has forced the environment loving people to knock at the doors of the judiciary. The Supreme Court has directed suo motto monitoring of 85 Ramsar sites. The judicial intervention comes at a crucial time, particularly for ecologically sensitive regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where wetlands are facing multiple existential threats.

The Hokersar wetland is facing critical challenges despite huge sums of amount having been spent on the construction of inlet and outlet gates to regulate the required water level. The wetland is experiencing severe restoration challenges that may compromise its ability to host migratory birds this season, potentially disrupting crucial ecological cycles. The wetland is experiencing illegal earth excavation under the camouflage of some tendered allotment. The operation of machines and the movement of trucks round the clock and the noise pollution caused thereof has shooed away the birds which had started to arrive at the wetland.

The Haigham wetland presents an alarming scenario of environmental degradation. The wetland is battling extensive silt accumulation, widespread encroachment, and illegal conversion of wetland areas into orchards and paddy fields. Shockingly, some of these encroachments involve retired and serving employees of the wildlife department, directly violating the Ramsar convention's protection mandate. Shallabugh wetland has been left in a state of neglect, with flood-related breaches from the early this year remaining unrepaired. This has resulted in large parts of wetland becoming dry land.

The Mirgund and other wetlands suffer similar fate. The progressively drying up of wetlands raises serious questions about the wildlife department's commitment to ecological preservation. Narkara wetland represents another critical concern. Despite status quo orders issued by the High Court, land mafias continue to encroach upon this important flood absorption basin. The situation is further complicated by land allocations to educational institutions, necessitating a thorough investigation.

Unprecedented Dry Spell in Kashmir

ZAHOOOR AHMAD LONE

Kashmir is currently experiencing an unprecedented dry spell during the winter of 2024-2025, leading to significant concerns about a potential drought. The region has recorded an 80% deficit in precipitation for January and February, with temperatures soaring up to 12 degrees Celsius above normal. This anomalous weather pattern has resulted in the drying up of numerous water bodies, including the historically perennial Achabal spring, which has left over 15 villages without drinking water.

The agricultural sector, particularly horticulture, is facing severe challenges due to the lack of snowfall and rainfall. Kashmir, known for producing 2.5 million metric tons of fruit annually, primarily apples, relies heavily on consistent water sources. The current water scarcity threatens these crops, as well as the livelihoods dependent on them.

Tourism, another vital component of Kashmir's economy, has also been adversely affected. The national winter games, scheduled from February 22 to 25 in Gulmarg, have been postponed due to insufficient snowfall. This event was expected to attract around 300 athletes competing in skiing and snowboarding. The postponement underscores the broader impact of the dry spell on winter tourism and related activi-

ties.

Environmental experts attribute these drastic changes to global warming, which has significantly altered weather patterns in the region. The lack of precipitation has not only dried up springs and rivers but has also led to frequent forest fires, further exacerbating the ecological imbalance. The situation is dire, with the Jhelum River, a crucial water source, flowing at its lowest levels in recent history.

In response to the crisis, local authorities are closely monitoring the situation and have postponed major events like the Khelo India Winter Games. The Meteorological Department predicts a potential shift in weather patterns around February 26, which may bring significant snowfall and alleviate the current precipitation deficit. However, the long-term implications of this dry spell necessitate proactive measures to address the underlying causes and mitigate future risks.

In conclusion, the present drought in Kashmir serves as a stark reminder of the immediate and tangible impacts of climate change. The convergence of environmental, economic, and social challenges calls for comprehensive strategies to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the region's natural resources and communities.

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Poultry farming has been a cherished tradition in Kashmir Valley for generations. In earlier times, almost every household kept chickens and other domestic birds, serving multiple purposes. These birds not only beautified courtyards but also provided a reliable source of fresh eggs and meat. Moreover, they played a crucial role in the household economy, as they could be sold when financial needs arose. Unlike commercial poultry, home-raised birds were known for their superior taste and nutritional value, free from artificial additives and growth hormones.

Among domestic poultry, chickens, ducks, turkeys, and geese hold significant commercial and nutritional importance. However, chickens and their eggs remain the most widely consumed due to their easy availability and high nutritional benefits. The consumption of chicken meat, when done in moderation, can greatly benefit health. Experts suggest that an average adult can safely consume around 200 grams of

chicken per day to maintain a balanced diet without risking excessive weight gain. Chicken is a rich source of protein, essential for muscle growth and body repair, and contains tryptophan, an amino acid that enhances serotonin levels, promoting a sense of well-being. Additionally, chicken is packed with selenium, a powerful antioxidant that helps combat aging, supports heart health, and improves cognitive function. It is also an excellent source of vitamin B3, which aids in lowering cholesterol and reducing the risk of heart disease. Furthermore, vitamin B6 in chicken supports metabolism, helping in weight management and overall well-being. However, the method of preparation significantly impacts its nutritional value. Grilling, baking, or boiling chicken retains its benefits, whereas frying or cooking with excessive oil can reduce its health advantages.

Eggs, often considered a superfood, have been a staple in diets worldwide for thousands of years. They are an economical and high-quality source of protein, packed with essential nutrients like vitamin D, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, selenium, lutein, zeaxanthin, choline, and minerals such as zinc, iron, and copper. Regular consumption of eggs offers numerous health benefits. They support liver function due to their choline content and slow down the aging process with their antioxidant-rich composition. Egg whites are

particularly beneficial for weight management as they provide high-quality protein with minimal fat. The presence of biotin, vitamin B12, and protein in eggs contributes to healthy skin and hair, while omega-3 fatty acids help in maintaining cardiovascular health. Additionally, eggs contain essential vitamins that support vision, reduce inflammation, and strengthen bones by providing adequate vitamin D and calcium. Pregnant women benefit from eggs as they are rich in folic acid, which plays a crucial role in preventing birth defects and ensuring proper fetal development. Furthermore, eggs contribute to brain function, improving memory and cognitive abilities.

The advantages of consuming eggs extend beyond just physical health. They enhance brain function, protect against age-related vision problems, aid in muscle recovery, and even help in maintaining a balanced mood. Their rich antioxidant content lowers the risk of certain cancers, while their protein composition supports strong nails and healthy hair. Including eggs in a balanced diet helps maintain an ideal body weight and improves metabolism.

Government Poultry Department: A Wasted Potential

Despite possessing substantial infrastructure and manpower, the government poultry department has failed to utilize its resources effectively. While

poultry farms operate under government supervision, their productivity remains minimal, offering little to no contribution to the market. The department's inefficiency is evident in its limited operations, as government-produced poultry and eggs are sold only twice a year—on major festivals like Eid—while the local market remains underserved throughout the year.

This lack of consistent supply not only forces consumers to rely on external poultry suppliers but also cripples the growth of local poultry farming. Instead of fostering self-sufficiency, the authorities have allowed a system of dependency to flourish, undermining the region's potential for homegrown poultry production. The absence of government poultry shops further highlights the administration's negligence, leaving small-scale poultry farmers struggling to compete with large-scale external suppliers.

The government's failure to create sustainable poultry policies reflects a broader pattern of mismanagement and lack of vision. Despite having the necessary framework to support local poultry businesses, there is no initiative to streamline production, ensure fair pricing, or establish proper distribution channels. The department's inaction not only leads to economic losses but also deprives consumers of healthier, locally sourced poultry options.

If the authorities truly intend

to support domestic poultry farming, they must take immediate corrective measures. Establishing government-supported poultry shops, ensuring year-round market availability, and implementing policies that encourage self-reliance are essential steps. Without such reforms, the government poultry department will remain an example of wasted potential, failing both farmers and consumers alike.

Eating mindfully is crucial for maintaining good health. Being aware of the food we consume and making healthier choices can have a lasting impact on overall well-being. Incorporating domestic poultry products, especially home-raised chicken and eggs, into daily meals ensures a natural and nutrient-rich diet. These foods not only provide essential nourishment but also contribute to a healthier lifestyle.

Health is the greatest blessing from God.

Taking care of your body through nutritious and wholesome foods is a step towards a better, healthier life. Choosing natural food sources like domestic poultry can significantly enhance well-being and overall health.

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A strong and constructive opposition is essential for a healthy democracy



PRIYANKA SAURABH

To strengthen democracy, the government and the opposition must work together constructively. But the quality of legislative deliberation in India has deteriorated further due to growing polarization in parliamentary debates, frequent disruptions, and the dominance of rhetoric over substantive debates. Inadequate policy debate hinders genuine dialogue between the government and the opposition. Partisan issues are often used to derail discussions on important subjects that require broad national consensus, such as foreign policy and technological development. The effectiveness of parliamentary debates is diminished when political animosities lead to

chaos rather than debate. The government's legislative agenda and its unwillingness to meaningfully engage with the opposition show that it is unwilling to take responsibility for its actions. Parliamentary processes should facilitate debate and policy reform, but growing partisanship has weakened these processes. Pre-legislative consultations and discussions on important policies are not taking place with much effort.

Government needs a strong opposition to maintain checks and balances. Recognizing this, the American Founding Fathers established multiple levels of government. They were very wary of big government, which is why they thought it was difficult and complicated to run. They were unaware of other members using legitimate but unethical means to prevent legislation from being passed. "Talking over a bill" or "not talking over a bill" refers to unnecessary speechmaking and time-wasting aimed at preventing a meaningful bill

or law from actually being passed. The opposition can sabotage the government and prevent laws from being passed, rendering them ineffective. In the absence of a strong opposition, the current government becomes autocratic and unaccountable and can create laws that benefit a few people or a specific tribe or group. As the saying goes, "Power corrupts," and sadly, this does happen. The so-called "benevolent" kings of the past were not actually in positions of authority. Before the first Nigerian military takeover in the 1960s, there was a strong opposition in the country. However, divide-and-rule tactics and imprisoning leaders on charges of treason succeeded in crushing it.

As a result, people killed all those they considered corrupt because they felt their complaints were not being heard and the government had become irresponsible and corrupt. This resulted in coups. Civil wars broke out after politicians belonging

mainly to a particular tribe were assassinated. Even if the leader believes he is acting in the best interest of the people, people will feel oppressed if they have no say in the matter. The ability of a current or former leader to address representatives of the people and hold them accountable for their actions is amazing. All dictators start by suppressing any form of dissent in the press, which is another important element. This then gives them the opportunity to attack non-governmental organizations.

One way to improve parliamentary functioning is to focus on policy rather than political rhetoric. Parliamentary debates should prioritize governance issues rather than old-fashioned blame games or election campaigning. Frequent, organized contact between the opposition and the ruling party can promote issue-based dialogue and help avoid confrontation. Mechanisms such as parliamentary committees should be strengthened to ensure that

policy debates remain fruitful.

Explaining the government's actions through regular discussions on urgent national issues is something the Prime Minister and other important ministers should do. It is possible to guarantee accountability by reviving forums like Question Hour and organized policy discussions. Instead of creating political divisions, foreign policy, development, and economic transformation should be seen as party issues that require long-term consensus. Parliamentary disruptions should be reduced by establishing more stringent rules and ethical norms for discussions. It is necessary to enhance the role of the Speaker and parliamentary committees in maintaining decorum and guaranteeing equitable participation. Constructive criticism should be the role of the opposition party. Issues and bills are more debated and discussed because of the opposition; otherwise, they will be passed without any discussion or consideration

of the needs of others, which would be fatal to democracy and could turn it into autocracy. On any important issue, it is the opposition party that will go to war.

Effective governance requires constructive cooperation between the government and the opposition. Since the government is the main body in charge, it is its duty to lead efforts to reach a compromise and ensure that debate in Parliament focuses on solving India's problems rather than widening political divides. In a democracy, the vigor and strength of the opposition is often an indicator of its health. Strengthening the opposition in India requires strengthening not just political parties but the overall democratic system. Important policies include promoting internal democracy within parties, providing equal access to the media, and allocating state funds. A strong and successful opposition is essential to make democracy dynamic, responsive, and accountable.

BJP sets its sights on West Bengal and Bihar after Delhi triumph

KSTOMAR

buoyed by its sweeping success in Delhi, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has now turned its focus towards the crucial state elections in West Bengal in 2026, where it aims to dethrone Mamata Banerjee. What once seemed like an uphill battle is now a tangible possibility for the party. Emboldened by the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) debacle in Delhi, BJP leaders are proclaiming, "Delhi ki jeet hamari ho gayi, ab 2026 main Bengal ki baari hai" (We have won Delhi; now it's Bengal's turn in 2026).

Bihar, too, is set to witness an intense electoral showdown. With recent victories boosting the party's confidence, BJP and its allies plan to enter the battle with renewed aggression to retain power. The fragmented INDIA alliance, which was evident in Haryana and

Delhi, provides the BJP with an additional advantage. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which has maintained a strong presence in West Bengal for decades, is expected to play a pivotal role in BJP's bid to oust Mamata in the upcoming assembly elections.

Modi's Appeal: BJP's Trump Card Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains the BJP's strongest electoral force. His leadership, credibility, and mass appeal, especially among the middle and lower-income groups, were decisive in Delhi's outcome. Welfare schemes like free ration under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana directly strengthened BJP's voter base. Modi's ability to project governance stability ensured that BJP's campaign resonated powerfully across the capital.

Modi's credibility as a vote magnet and his guarantee to

implement manifesto promises worked like magic for the BJP, which continues to heavily rely on him even for state elections. In his characteristic style, Modi remarked, "Congress has achieved a double hat-trick of defeats with zero seats," predicting its further decline. Meanwhile, he celebrated BJP's string of victories in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi, reinforcing his status as the party's ultimate campaigner.

Decoding JBP's Triumph in Delhi: The Modi Factor Several key factors contributed to BJP's victory in Delhi, with Modi playing a central role. His strong stance on national security, Hindutva, and governance stability shaped the electoral landscape, particularly among urban and middle-class voters.

Modi's National Security & Hindutva Image As the national capital, Delhi is heavily influenced

by nationalistic narratives. Modi's firm policies on Pakistan, terrorism, and Hindutva solidified BJP's core voter base. By framing the election as Modi vs. Kejriwal rather than a contest over local governance, BJP ensured that Modi's persona resonated strongly with voters.

PM's Welfare Schemes vs. AAP's Freebies

While AAP is known for its populist freebies, the Modi government strategically countered this with large-scale welfare initiatives such as PM Awas Yojana (housing for the poor), Ujjwala Yojana (free LPG connections), and Ayushman Bharat (health insurance). By shifting the narrative from Kejriwal's localized welfare model to Modi's broader national schemes, the BJP successfully attracted lower-income and migrant voters. A masterstroke was Modi's assurance that AAP's welfare schemes

would not be discontinued but rather enhanced, promising to elevate Delhi into a world-class city. This neutralized Kejriwal's traditional advantage and reassured voters. BJP also aggressively targeted AAP over corruption allegations, particularly the liquor scam, altering voter perception. Modi's leadership was positioned as a guarantee of cleaner governance, contrasting sharply with AAP's tainted image.< Impact of BJP's Victories in Other States: BJP's recent wins in Haryana, Maharashtra, and other key states created a momentum effect, reinforcing voter confidence in Delhi. Haryana's proximity made its results particularly influential, given the shared demographics.

The party's national winning streak also boosted cadre morale, creating a perception of electoral invincibility, which further weakened

AAP's positioning as an alternative force.

Why AAP Lost:

AAP's defeat was not solely due to BJP's strategic campaign but also its political miscalculations. Kejriwal underestimated Congress's relevance, assuming it was a non-factor. This resulted in AAP's defeat in 14 assembly segments where the victory margin was lower than the votes secured by Congress candidates.

AAP had previously employed a similar strategy in Haryana, splitting Congress's votes and aiding BJP's gains. However, this tactic backfired in Delhi, as the ignored Congress vote share ended up damaging AAP more than BJP. One of the biggest takeaways from AAP's crushing defeat is the blow to Arvind Kejriwal's national ambitions.

(The writer is a senior political analyst; views are personal)

Cracking CUET: A step-by-step guide to smart preparation

PANKAJ DHINGRA

Preparing for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) can feel overwhelming, especially when juggling schoolwork and other responsibilities. However, CUET has transformed the university admissions process and a well-structured preparation plan can help you cover the syllabus effectively while boosting your confidence. By following a strategic approach over a few months, you can significantly enhance your chances of success.

Step 1: Understand the CUET Exam Structure

Before diving into preparation, familiarise yourself with the exam format. CUET typically consists of Language, Domain-Specific Subjects, and a General Test. It is essential to obtain the official syllabus for each section and review it thoroughly. Understanding the types of questions, including multiple-choice and short-answer formats, is crucial. Be mindful of the marking scheme, particularly any negative marking.

Step 2: Assess Your Readiness: Start by evaluating your current knowledge and preparedness. Ask yourself whether you have covered the syllabus for all sections, how confident you feel about scoring well on a scale of 1 to 5, and which section you find most challenging.

Step 3: Set Clear Goals Define your objectives based on your preferred university and course. Research the CUET score requirements for institutions like Delhi University, Banaras Hindu University and JNU. Having a clear goal will keep you motivated and focused throughout your preparation journey.

Step 4: Allocate Study Time Using insights from your self-assessment, create a balanced study plan. If you are strong in certain subjects, spend less time on them but focus on regular revision. Dedicate more time to weaker subjects to better understand concepts and solve practice questions. For example, if the General Test is particularly challenging, allocate 1.5-2 hours daily to this section

while spending an hour on Language or Domain-Specific Subjects.

Step 5: Weekly Study Schedule A well-structured timetable ensures consistency. A practical approach is to focus on one major subject per day from Monday to Friday. Saturday can be dedicated to taking mock tests and analysing performance, while Sunday should be reserved for reviewing the week's progress, revising difficult topics, and taking time to relax and recharge. Using time-blocking techniques by dividing the day into study, practice, and relaxation slots can be highly effective.

Step 6: Right Study Resources Relying on quality study materials is essential. NCERT textbooks provide conceptual clarity, while CUET-specific guides and reference books offer targeted preparation. Online platforms that provide mock tests and video lectures can be valuable resources. Practicing with previous years' question papers helps in identifying important topics and understanding question trends.

Step 7: Regular Mock Tests Mock tests play a crucial role in CUET preparation. Aim to take at least one full-length test per week and gradually increase the frequency as the exam approaches.

Step 8: Exam Logistics Since CUET is a computer-based test, familiarising yourself with the technical requirements is necessary. Marking significant dates on a calendar will help in avoiding last-minute surprises.

Step 9: Maintain a Balance

Avoiding burnout is vital for effective preparation. Incorporate short breaks into your study routine and engage in activities like exercise or meditation to stay refreshed. Ensuring you get seven to eight hours of sleep daily will help in maintaining focus and energy levels.

Step 10: Stay Positive Consistency is the key to achieving success in CUET. Sticking to your study plan while remaining adaptable to changes will be beneficial.

(The writer is Managing Partner, FinTram Global LLP; views are personal)

Modernity, Technology and the Evolving Society



ABID HUSSAIN RATHER

Modernity is both a philosophy of life and a way of living. Technology is one of its manifestations. Their relationship is akin to that between a mother and child. In the world of knowledge, this is not a new subject. Scholars have been discussing it since the 19th century. Now, both influence each other. Modernity has provided new ways of thinking, which gave birth to technology. When the technology matured, it developed the ability to create wonders which resulted in the emergence of new ways of living.

Modernity took the form of a philosophy of life when humans accepted that they are essentially rational beings. Even before modernity, humans were rational, but their reasoning was constrained by various forces. One of these forces was superstition, which in Europe was presented under the guise of religion by the Church. Whenever a person sought to resolve an issue through reason, religious authorities (the church) would intervene. As a result, people could not dispel the darkness in their lives with the light of reason. Some individuals showed courage and tried to dismantle the barriers that stood

between humans and reason. They paid a price for their efforts but ultimately succeeded.

The result of this success was that humans accepted reason as the authority for solving social, economic, and political problems. This marked the beginning of modernity. Humanity continued to accept the rulings issued by the court of reason. There were two main sources of reason: observation and experience. To be precise, let's refrain here from addressing the question of whether the absolute authority of reason is right or wrong. It suffices to know here that humans accepted the rule of reason. Now, if religion or any other force wished to survive, it had to submit to the authority of reason; otherwise, it would be exiled from society.

The most significant outcome of the authority of reason was the rejection of the divinity of natural phenomena—in simple terms, liberation from polytheism. Humans refused to believe that diseases were caused by the displeasure of a deity. They no longer regarded the sun and the moon as gods and instead focused on conquering natural phenomena. It was reason that pointed them in this direction. Reason not only transformed human thinking about the universe but also altered concepts and perceptions about humans and humanity. As the perception changed, the structure of society also began to transform. Ways of living evolved. The means of production changed as well, and humans transitioned from an agrarian society to an industrial

one. The change in the means of production meant a change in technology. This new technology influenced social structures and forced man to adapt new way of life.

In an agrarian society, human life depended on farming. The way of life was tribal. During that era, physical strength was the most crucial factor in the means of production and for protection. Societies with stronger, more capable arms would prevail in the struggle for survival. Men, being physically stronger than women, were considered more significant, and having male offspring was highly valued. A larger number of people symbolized greater strength, which reinforced the joint family system.

Humans listened to reason and began thinking about improving the means of production. They invented the steam engine, marking a transition from the agrarian age to the "industrial era." Technology transformed their way of life, replacing villages with cities—a necessary consequence of this major shift. This leap, guided by reason, led to the recognition of the mind's superiority over the body. During this time, it became evident that while women might be physically weaker than men, they were intellectually equal. In the industrial age, women could play a valuable role in the progress of society, just like men. As a result, the social status of women began to change, and the desire for male offspring gradually diminished. Urban life completely transformed human

thinking and lifestyle.

The wonders of reason did not remain confined to just one area. With the help of reason, humans began solving their various political, economic, and social problems. Old social, political, and economic institutions were replaced by new ones. The world transitioned from monarchy to democracy. Knowledge, once a unified field, began moving towards specialization and divided into multiple disciplines. As the hidden secrets of the universe were uncovered, new concepts about it emerged, and the desire to conquer it became difficult to restrain. Technology created not just one but many marvels. Humans began flying in the skies and exploring the depths of the oceans. Technology started shaping society, and women now stood side by side with men.

Just as humans have always been rational beings, they have also possessed an aesthetic nature. Additionally, they have a moral existence. Under the authority of reason, when they sought to satisfy their aesthetic sensibilities, the fine arts transformed. Technology showcased its potential, and from painting to music, the tools of every art form changed. Calligraphy, once the marvel of the human hand, is now often produced with the aid of computers. Even the treatment of physical ailments is now facilitated by technology.

In this journey, modernity and technology walk hand in hand. Both men and women have contributed to human suc-

cess. There is no field of life in which women lag behind men. Women make up approximately fifty percent of every society. It defies common sense to think that the journey of progress can continue while keeping half of the population away from the functioning of society. If women are not educated, every task will depend solely on men. If only men are physicians, then men will treat women as well, altering traditional concepts of gender segregation. Otherwise, women would be left to die, disrupting gender balance in society. Such an imbalance would prevent society from surviving under the laws of nature.

A society that wants to accompany humanity on the journey of civilization must accept the progress made thus far and join it. It can not proceed on its own terms but must follow material advancement as a learner. In this journey, modernity and technology support each other and cannot be separated. However, there is a gap in this civilizational journey—one that is spiritual and moral. If someone has a remedy for this gap, they can make the journey more pleasant, though they cannot change the path of this caravan. Those unwilling to accept this must then continue on a separate path, embarking on a different experiment. There is no guarantee that their caravan will not reach its destination. However, the destination of both caravans will not be the same.

(The author teaches Geography at GDC Kulgam and can be reached at: rather1294@gmail.com)

World Language Day And Our Responsibility



BY/GULFAM BARJI

On February 21, the World Language Day is celebrated worldwide every year with the aim of promoting awareness and cultural diversity. The first time a year is to celebrate the mother tongue day by UNESCO on November 17th. It was announced in 1999 and with the approval of the UN resolution in 2002 the UN General Assembly formally recognized. The mother tongue is part of a broader move. The protection of all languages used by people around the world as the UN General Assembly adopted the

UN resolution on May 16, 2007 in 61/266, which also established 2008 as an international year of languages. - The idea of celebrating World Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. Now on February 21, the World Language Day is celebrated around the world every year and celebrations and seminars are organized worldwide. Speakers in these ceremonies and seminars highlight the importance and utility of the mother tongue by speaking for hours on the mother tongue and swear to protect it. The importance and utility of the mother tongue are urged to take steps to come to the generations to come but if seen these steps are practically limited to the files and wait for February 21 next year. Then once again the same ceremonies and seminars are being held. The question also arises here do we restrict it to our responsibility by celebrating the World Language Day,,,? or do we work

for the spread and protection of the mother tongue throughout the year? Here I only mention my own country. When we go to any state of the country we will see the people there speak in own native language but here is the opposite. All the people in Jammu speak Dogri language but the majority of Kashmir are of Kashmiri language speakers and the point of regret is that the common Kashmiris are ashamed to speak their native language while their mother tongue is read when the child is the mother. He is born with his mother who teaches his baby first language and the mother tongue that the child learns in the lap of the mother, but sadly when a mother gives birth to a baby she is a mother. Whether it is educated or illiterate she is proud to teach her child a another language in return for her language while this mother does not know anything about the pronunciation and words

of the other language and thus the mother first embraces her own mother tongue. He sighs as well as other than the other language. Our new generation today neither speaks their native tongue well nor do they do justice to the other language though nowadays is the time of Competition and every parent has the desire that their children will come to the fore. It is also permissible in today's time to know the child's language but be careful that our children first prefer their mother tongue and the other languages later. You should enroll your child in the bigger English school, but make a habit of speaking to the child in your native language at home. It has also been observed that a child's grandfather, grandmother, or grandparents are illiterate. And when the child speaks out of his native language in a non-language, they have a lot of difficulty in speaking and understanding this language. Want to

give that child loses this love. How can we hope that our native language is safe for upcoming generations? Or we will wait for the next year on February 21 that on that day we will celebrate the World Language Day with Dhoom Dham and with loud claims that we will say that we are working day and night to promote and protect the mother tongue. Are Whereas in practice and on the ground level if we have such thinking then the day is not far when we will be forced to say that our mother tongue used to be before we see this day. Let us all make a promise that we can enlighten our children with the importance and usefulness of our mother tongue and give them the synthesis of speaking in the mother tongue and to convey this language to the coming generations as well as promote it. But work in practice to ensure the protection of the mother tongue for which we are all responsible.

Nudity and reels environments are ruining the social fabric



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

The whole country blames films for nudity, but today there is so much nudity on social media that even our Indian films should feel ashamed. Today no social platform is untouched by vulgarity and nudity. In this blind era of social media, the women of our society are being targeted to get some likes and views, and they have to serve nudity and fly in the sky of likes and views; they are easily trading their self-respect and self-esteem by serving

nudity. Some slipper-coated YouTubers put such obscene thumbnails on our faith just to get views. What to say to whom? The ultimate happiness of life has now become dependent on getting followers and comments. By sharing nude pictures on platforms like Facebook, girls today seem to be grateful to themselves by getting likes and comments, as if they have reached the most important and necessary height of life. We call this nudity a new fashion in this era of modernity. When fashion started raging on social media, the young generation found themselves lagging behind beautiful women on social networks, and then the young men started dancing naked

and said, How am I behind? The youth are roaming around showing their youth; I am no less than anyone. It is even more surprising that such spoiled YouTubers are being interviewed. In earlier times, the elders used to put a check on such acts. Well, the times are modern, so society accepts and enjoys it.

But this is a matter to think very seriously about—in which direction are the small children of our homes going? Why are parents deliberately ignoring this? Why don't they want to give time and values to their children? Why are they pushing their children into the quagmire with their own hands? Today's parents are very modern, and they are very attracted to

nudity, boyfriends, and modern environments. This will prove fatal for the coming generation and society. The mind-set of teenage girls is being molded according to their special purpose. Now social media platforms have become the hubs of virtual nudity. Vulgar reels and videos are now being made by teenagers of every household. Now it seems that the hubs of prostitution have also become available for lustful men with new options. The nudity that is being served on social media these days to increase followers. Are the ones who serve it guilty? Are those who like and share it not guilty? According to me, they are more guilty. If we stop liking and sharing such posts or videos,

can't this stop? Today, social disorder is at the most successful stage of its journey. There is no scope for prevention. Now only an apocalypse can stop its pace. It is requested of the daughters who are doing the drama of naked and obscene dance on social media reels that do not tarnish the respect of your family and religion for a few pieces of paper. Today, you are not being given money for dancing but for serving nudity so that one day the entire society can be pushed into the abyss and humiliated.

If our culture is not saved, then no one can save our nation and the coming generations from being destroyed by vices. Understand now what culture is and why it is

important to save it. It is the self-respect of our nation. We need a society free of obscenity and nudity. Protect our civilization and culture, which is getting destroyed. Boycott Bollywood's films and web series full of obscenity, nudity, and abusive language. Boycott obscene songs and obscene films. Twitter, Facebook, etc., are such platforms in social media through which people send important information along with their thoughts and expressions. But at present, these platforms are full of obscene, objectionable, and nude messages and advertisements, and social pollution is being spread by encouraging people to play games like gambling. Our children, sisters, and daughters

also use these platforms a lot. To curb this pollution, everyone will have to think and take initiative themselves. Awareness is needed today; otherwise, there will be an orgy in the streets tomorrow. You are the future of the country; do not become a puppet. Vulgarity in the name of freedom is at its peak in this era of social media. In our culture, women were given the title of wealth, that too precious and not worth a penny. That is why even the dances held in royal courts were held within four walls. The truth is that obscenity cannot be justified from any point of view. It is a drug shop that leads young children towards sexual crimes, and today social media platforms are pro-

ducing it in collaboration with the women's community. According to brain science, one of the four types of addiction is obscenity.

Acharya Kautilya has described 'lust' as the biggest addiction and disease in Chanakya Sutra. If this nudity is a symbol of modernity, then why don't women show complete modernity by becoming completely naked? Just as opening liquor shops in every street and locality has a bad effect on children, similarly obscenity gives rise to sexual crimes in the society. This cannot be justified in any way. Think and discuss or remain silent.

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



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 FAIZA MUSHTAQ S/O MUSHTAQ AHMAD RATHER R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 10/06 /2012 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine d

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 ABRAR MANZOOR GANAIE S/O MANZOOR AHMAD GANAIE R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as ,12 /10 /2013 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

ازنیابت پھلگام

دخواست منجانب زیر احمد ماگرے ولد خضر محمد ماگرے ساکن نون پھلگام
بجسول وارث جایز سرنگٹ

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی

زیر احمد ماگرے ولد مرحوم خضر محمد ماگرے ساکن نون پھلگام نے ایک
دخواست دفتر حرائین پیش کی ہے جس کے مطابق سائل کا والد خضر محمد ماگرے
18/01/2025 کو فوت ہوا ہے اور مندرجہ ذیل افراد وارث جایز افراد یہ
مکمل ہے

زیر احمد ماگرے پسر متوفی

دوڑی جان دست متوفی

اس کے علاوہ او کو بی افراد وارث جایز میں موجود نہیں ہے زیر کا دینی سرنگٹ اہل
کرنے میں کسی کو کو بی عذر ہو تو وہ سات کے اندر اندر دفتر حرائین پیش کرے بجا
از معاد کو بی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار

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 occurred at SDH KREERI for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE (G&P) DEPARTMENT KASHMIR

Tel-0194-2474234 Fax -2482032 – email: - kashflori@rediffmail.com

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: - Outsourcing of Entry ticketing system of Tulip Garden Cheshmashahi,
Srinagar (Tulip Show-2025) – Corrigendum thereof.

Reference: - e-NIT No.06 of 2025 Dated.12.02.2025.

Please read:-

"The garden shall remain open from sunrise to sunset on all days during the period of contract" instead of "The garden shall remain open during say time on all days within the period of contract" mentioned at Condition No.18 of concerned e-NIT.

"Period of contract will be from the date of opening the garden to the visitors up to the official date of closing" instead of "Period of contract will be from the date of opening the garden to the visitors up to the official date of closing not more than 25 to 30 days" mentioned at Condition No.20 of concerned e-NIT.As the same was inadvertently mentioned in the concerned e-NIT.

Other terms & conditions of the concerned e-NIT shall remain same.

DIPK-12205/24
Date: Feb 19 2025

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

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL& HOSPITAL DIVISION ANANTNAG

GIST of e-tender

NIT No: MHDA/TS/102 Dated: 19-02-2025.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT, e-tenders in two-cover system on are invited from registered/reputed firms having relevant experience for the work mentioned below:

S. No	Description of work	Project Authority	Estt	AAA/ TS	Earnest Money Deposit	Cost of tender document	Time of compl etion	Eligibility Criterion for Bidder
1	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of split type ACs (conference Hall) at Anti-Corruption Bureau Police station Anantnag Awantipora.	Police Construction Division Srinagar	10.02	ACCORDE D LACS	Rs. 20000.00 in the Shape of CDR/FDR/TRD valid for 12 months pledged to the Executive Engineer MH Division Anantnag	Rs. 1000.00	15 days	Registered firms having sufficient experience in similar nature of work as per Annexure "C"

Position of funds: Available with the intending department

1.Download of Bids: The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 19-02-2025 (15.00hrs) and can be downloaded from 19-02-2025 (16.00hrs).

2.Upload of Bids: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site 19-02-2025 (16.00hrs) to 27-02-2025 (14:00hrs) in two (02) covers.

3.Opening of Bids: The bids received up to due date and time shall be opened on 28-02-2025 at (14.00hrs).

DIPK-12185/24
Date: Feb 19, 2025

Sd/
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical and Hospital Division Anantnag

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT DEGREE COLLEGE TRAL

KASHMIR-192123

No: DCT/2024-25/ Admin/1695-96

Dated: 19-02-2025

AUCTION TENDER NOTICE

All registered and experienced agencies/parties/firms/individuals are invited to participate in the auction process scheduled on 25-02-2025 at 02:00 PM sharp in the college premises regarding disposal of obsolete and unserviceable items (furniture, lockers, wooden chairs, furnishing, tables, scrap material etc.) from the college stores. Interested parties may inspect the items on any working day before the fixed auction date. The bidding of the obsolete items shall start from Rs. 42250/-. The participating bidder shall be required to pay advance amount of Rs. 3000/- as cash in the office of undersigned against proper receipt upto 25-02-2025 (01:00 PM).

Terms and Conditions:

The auction will be conducted on 25-02-2025 in the college premises at 02:00 PM.

The highest bidder shall be required to pay 100% of the bid amount immediately.

The undersigned reserves the right to reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.

The successful bidder shall remove the items from the college premises within a three days time in presence of the College Auction Committee.

DIPK-12187/24
Date: Feb 19, 2025

Sd/
Prof. (Dr.) Mushtaq Ahmad Malik
Principal

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on name MOHAMMAD SUBHAN GANAIE S/O .GH RASOOL R/O JAHANGIRPORA ..Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 021204000712 wants to be registered on my name SAJAD AHMAD GANAIE S/O MOHAMMAD SUBHAN R/O JAHANGIRPORA ..If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....SAJAD AHMAD GANIE
S/O ... MOHAMMAD SUBHAN
R/O JAHANGIRPORA

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar Baghi-Ali-
Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar

E-mail:- phegwd@yahoo.com,

Tel./Fax/No:-0194-2411285

Extension Notice 1st

- Subject: 1. Construction of Production Bore Well at Below Dargund District Pulwama.
2. Construction of Production Bore Well at Madina Sanzwatroo District Pulwama.
3. Construction of Production Bore Well at Kharbatpora Ratnipora District Pulwama.
4. Construction of Production Bore Well at Banura Bandzoo District Pulwama.

Due to "No/Poor Response" for the work advertised vide e-NIT No.60/J5-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25 issued vide this office endorsement No: --JS-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Corrs./ 11844-54, Dated: 10-02-2025. Bearing Tender ID No. 2025_PHE_272229_1, 2, 3 & 4. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 19-02-2025 Up-to 01:00 PM are extended as per the details given below: -

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	03-03-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	04-03-2025 11.00 AM

NOTE: All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

DIPK-12188/24

Dated: 19-02-2025

Sd/=
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

CPO Chowk, Pant, Jammu Zeman Complex Rambagh, Srinagar

Subject: Provisional Selection List for the post of Research Assistant (Science & Technology Department), advertised vide Notification No.05 of 2020 dated 24.12.2020,

NOTIFICATION

Whereas the JK Services Selection Board, wide Indent ST/Adm/12/2019 dated 10.12.2020, 05 posts of "Research Assistant were received from the Science & Technology Department (UT Cadre), which were advertised by the Board vide Notification No. 05 of 2020 dated: 24.12.2020 under Item No 128, as per the following category wise breakup Whereas, the requisite qualification for selection against these posts, as per the Indent advertised, was mentioned as under:

OM	SC	ST	OSC	ALC/IB	RBA	PSP	EWS	Total
5	0	01	0	0	1	0	0	5

First Class Master's Degree in any branch of Science/Mathematick/Statistics or First Class Mastor's Degree Engineering from any recognized Institution /University

One year experience recognized Design and Innovation from recognized Institution /University.

Whereas, the cut-off/last date for applying for these posts, and for determining the eligibility of the candidates for purpose of educational/category and other benefits 27.02.2021. The Computer Based Written Test (CBT) was conducted on 06-02-2023, and

Whereas, the Board, vide Nufication No, JKSSB-COEEXAM(UT)/6/2023-04 (7110979) dated 31.05.2023, notified the Result/Sicare-sheet of the Computer Based Written Test (CBT) Examination held the these posts. This was followed by the Document Verification of the candidates falling in the consideration zune Jammu and Srinagar, and 15.06.2023, both atm Jammu and Srinagar.

& Technology Department wherein, it was requested to convey as to whether the Period of Experience acquired during pursuing Ph.D can be considered as valid experience in Research in the relevant field for the posts of "Research Assistant"; and Whereas, the Science & Technology Department, vide their communication dated 10.12.2024, conveyed that the experience acquired by the candidate during Ph.D be considered as valid experience in Research in the relevant field for the aforesaid post or separately; and

Whereas, vide Office Order No. 153-SSB of 2023 dated 14.08.2023, a Selection Committee was constituted for preparing the Selection List for these posts. The said Selection Committee, while preparing the selection list faced an issue related to experience acquired by the candidates during Ph.D can be considered; and Whereas, vide letter dated 03.12.2024, the matter was taken up with Science & Technology Department wherein, it was requested to convey as to whether the Period of Experience acquired during pursuing Ph.D can be considered as valid experience in Research in the relevant field for the posts of "Research Assistant"; and Whereas, the Science & Technology Department, vide their communication dated 10.12.2024, conveyed that the experience acquired by the candidate during Ph.D be considered as valid experience in Research in the relevant field for the aforesaid post or separately; and

Whereas, the matter was again placed in 293rd Board Meeting h 26.12.2024, wherein the board deliberated upon the clarification provided by Science & Technology Department, and decided to reconstitute the Selection Committee in the first instance due to transfer of officer from pervious committee; and Whereas, in light of the above decision the JKSSB, vide Order No. 10-SSB of 2025 dated 09.01.2025, Re-constituted the Selection Committee, which accordingly, prepared Provisional Selection List for the post of Research Assistant (S&T Department), advertised vide Notification No. 05 of 2020, dated 24.12.2020 (Item No., 128) UT Cadre; and Whereas, the Provisional Selection List, as prepared by the aforesaid Selection Committee for these posts of Research Assistant, Science & Technology Department, was placed before the Board in its 296 meeting held on 03.02.2025, which, after due deliberations and consideration of the matter, approved its notification.

Now, therefore, the Provisional Selection List of the candidates for 05 posts of Research Assistant of Science & Technology Department, advertised vide Notification No. 05 of 2020, dated 24.12.2020 (Item no., 128) UT Cadre, Is hereby notified as per Annexure-A to this Notification. It is further notified that: This Provisional Selection List shall be subject to outcome of the OAs/Writ Petition(s), if any, pending in the competent mod II. This shall also be subject to the outcome of any pending enquiry, Involving candidate(s), figuring in this Provisional Selection List.

III. This is a Provisional List and shall be subject to the change(s) as per the objections as may be received against it and mere figuring in it shall not confer any right to selection, which shall be finalized after examination of the objections based on merit. Iv. In case any candidate(s) is aggrieved with this Provisional Selection List, or intends to furnish any document/clarification regarding his withheld candidature, he/she may represent through the e-mail address researchchassistantst2025@gmail.com within fifteen days from the date of this Notification, beyond which no representations whatsoever shall be entertained. The representations in this regard shall necessarily include complete details of the candidate Including Name, Address, Roll Number and Contact Number.

DIPK-12113/24

Date: Feb 18 2025

(Atul Kumar) JKAS

Secretary

J&K Services Selection Board

Annexure-A to the Notification No. JKSSB-Scry/13/2023-03(E-7279610) dated 14.02.2025													
Provisional Selection List for the post of Research Assistant, UT Cadre, Science & Technology Department, advertised vide Notification No. 05 of 2020 Dated 24.12.2020, ITEM No. 128													
Sr.	D.V No	Roll No.	Candidate's Name	Father's Name	DoB	Catego ry	Total Score	Selecti on Catego ry	Address	Qualification Possessed	Year of Passin g	Name of the Institute	REMARKS/EFFICIENCY
Selection List under Open Merit													
1	01-KMR	4660232017	Peerzada Shoaib Hamid	Peerzada Abdul	03-09-1999	OM	61.5	OM	Peerahwal, Pattan Baramulla-193121	M.Tech (Communication & IT)	2015	NIT Snnagar	
2	02-KMR	4660231014	Mohsin Suhrawardi	Manzoor Ahmed	01-07-1988	OM	60.75	OM	H.No.37, Gert Housing Colony, Sanet	M.Tech (Electronics & Communic ation	2015	Shri Mata Velabno Devi	
3	03-KMR	4660230042	Abdida Akhter	Asadullah Shioakh	05-12-1994	OM	59.25	OM	Stk-67, Ward No.5, Raseyapora Pattan, Baramulla-193121	M.Tech (Electronics & Communicat ion	2019	Pandicherry University	Recommendation withheld subject to production of Experience Certificate in the relevant field from competent authority.
Waiting List under Open Merit													
1	04-KMR	4660230029	Aadil Hussain	Gulzar Ahmad Ganai	02-04-1993	OM	58.75	OM	Her, Banderpora, Bijbehara Anantnag-192334	M.Tech in (Electronical)	2019	NIT, Srinagar	Recommendation withheld subject to production of Experience Certificate in the relevant field from competent authority.
2	05-KMR	4660231099	Jawaaz Ahmad	Ishtiaq Ahmad	16-03-1992	OM	58	OM	H.No.191, Lane-02, Pidoos Colony,	M.Tech in (VLSI Design & Embedded System)	2018	Vivekvaraya Technological University, Belagavi, KARNATAKA	
3	07-KMR	4660231124	Junaid Farooq	FAROOQ AHMAD	25-08-1994	OM	56.5	OM	Model Town-B, Nowpora Kalam,	Model Town-B, Nowpora Kalam,	2019	NIT, Srinagar	Recommendation withheld subject to production of Experience Certificate in the relevant field from competent authority and also production of PRC
Selection List under ST Catagorey													
1	16-KMR	4660233002	SUHAIL ANESS	PERVEZ IQBAL	01-01-1990	ST	44.25	ST	H.No.46, Anrohi, Karam, Kogwara-	M.Sc Bio Chemistry	2013	Kashmir University	
Waiting List under ST Catagorey													
1	17-KMR	4660231012	Amjid Ali Khan	Ghulam Nabi Khan	01-04-1990	ST	40.5	ST	Saderbagh, Ganderbal-191204	M.Tech in (Electronics & Communicat ion)	2020	Desh Baghat University	Recommendation withheld subject to production of Ex perience Certificate in the relevant field for
Selection List under RBA													
1	19-KMR	4660231069	MOHD SHAKIR	GULAM NABI	10-02-1989	RBA	44.25	RBA	Nagbal, Chitragam, Shopian-192336	M.Sc Mathematic s	2014	Jiwaji University,	
Waiting List under RBA Category													
1	23-KMR	4660229155	MUHAMMAD AHMAD	BASHIR AHMAD	16-08-1989	RBA	40	RBA	405 16-08-1989 RBA 40 RBA, Batwina, Wana, Ganderbal-191131	M.Tech in Computer Science & Engineering (Information Security)	2017	NIT, Sikim	Recommendation withheld subject to production of Experience Certificate in the relevant field from competent authority.

Sd/-
(Atul Kumar), JKAS
Secretary,
J&K Services Selection Board

DC Kupwara reviews progress of ICDS Department Directs for saturation of E-KYC, Adhaar, ABHA within a week's time

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 19: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today took a comprehensive review of the functioning of ICDS Department in a meeting of concerned officers and officials held here at Conference Hall of D. C Office Complex Kupwara.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner said that the ICDS is a major sector which is linked with the welfare and upliftment of children and women and impressed upon the officers and field function-

aries to work with added dedication and coordination to ensure saturation of all targets under the Poshan Schemes.

She stressed upon the concerned officers to ensure saturation of the targets which include E-KYC, Adhaar/Mobile linkage and ABHA verifications.

She directed the officers to mobilize their field staff to intensify the door to door survey and ensure coverage of all pending beneficiaries so that the benefits under different schemes are timely disbursed to them.

On the occasion, District Programme Officer Kupwara,



Hakeem Tanveer presented a detailed powerpoint presentation and briefed the chair about various targets and achievements made by the department in the district. He informed that 90147 beneficiaries are enrolled by the department for E-KYC including Adhaar verification, mobile verification and ABHA verification. Under PMMVY, it was informed that 5806 beneficiaries (both 1st child & 2nd girl child) have been enrolled by the department during the current year which constitutes achievement of 97.51% target.

DPO Kupwara, Hakeem Tanveer; CPO Kupwara, Parvaiz

Ahmad; CDPOs, Supervisors and other field functionaries of ICDS department were present in the meeting. Chief Education Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, Tehsildars and other concerned officials. She directed the officers to mobilize their field staff to intensify the door to door survey and ensure coverage of all pending beneficiaries so that the benefits under different schemes are timely disbursed to them. On the occasion, District Programme Officer Kupwara, Hakeem Tanveer presented a detailed powerpoint presentation.

DC Kulgam presides mega public grievance redressal camp at Yaripora

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 19: As the part of weekly Block Diwas initiative, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan presided over a mega public grievance redressal camp at Yaripora to address public issues, grievances and demands.

The event witnessed massive participation from residents of Home-Shalibug, Yaripora, Nunmai, Yamrach, Dasen, Munadguffan, and other adjoining areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Viqar Ahmad Giri, Joint Director Planning (JDP) Zahid Sajjad, Tehsildar, Executive Engineers from various executing agencies, and other officers were also present at the grievance redressal camp.

During the camp, public delegations and individuals raised various developmental needs including the installation of solar lights, construction of car parking in Yaripora, staff augmentation at the Sub-District Hospital (SDH), desilting of irrigation



canals, augmentation of drinking water supply and various other developmental requirements of the area.

On the occasion, DC passed directions to the concerned departments for addressing the issues of immediate nature at the earliest.

He assured the gathering that all concerns and demands were duly noted for further necessary action as per feasibility and norms.

He stated that the purpose of these

grievance redressal camps is to directly engage with the public, ensuring precise and on-ground assessment of issues for timely resolution.

Regarding the ongoing works in the area, DC directed concerned officers for completion of works within given timelines. Meanwhile, he also reviewed the action taken to resolve issues highlighted by locals during last Block Diwas.

DC Gandarbal presides over weekly Block Diwas at Manigam

■ HT News Network

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 19: Deputy Commissioner Gandarbal, Jatin Kishore today presided over a public outreach program as a part of weekly Block Diwas program here at Community Centre Manigam.

The outreach program focused on addressing public grievances focusing on fostering inclusive development and ensuring time-bound redressal of issues.

The residents of Block Lar apprised DC regarding various developmental issues pertaining to their areas and sought intervention for timely redressal of the genuine concerns.

The public representatives demanded creation of Zonal Education office in Lar, Horticulture zone office, creation of Tehsil



Social Welfare office, dredging and repairment of irrigation canals, upgradation of PHC Lar, Fire Service Station, completion of lift irrigation at waliwar, completion of play ground at Chountwaliwar, verification of Units established under PMEGP, cleanliness of water bodies and upgradation of grounds and parks.

DC had a patient hearing to all the issues raised and gave necessary directions to the concerned depart-

ments for timely redressal of genuine grievances as per their competence.

DC while speaking on the occasion said that the district administration is continuously monitoring the resolution of grievances raised at various levels by the general public and emphasized that the district administration remains accessible to the people and is dedicated to addressing their grievances effectively.

Regarding the repair of

irrigation canals, the Irrigation & Flood Control department informed that several projects, including work on Baba and Dab canals, have been approved and will commence soon.

Addressing the issue of garbage collection, the Block Development Officer Lar informed that the door-to-door garbage collection service has been outsourced for which tendering process has been completed and will be awarded to the successful bidder soon. Regarding release of subsidy of cases sponsored under PMEGP, GM DIC briefed the audience that the verification process is ongoing through a third party agency and till date, 242 cases were found eligible for subsidy out of which 190 cases are disbursed and subsidy for rest cases will be released soon.

Traders Union President Langate Meets CM's Advisor, Seeks Compensation & Rehabilitation for Shopkeepers

■ DR.AB QAYOOM



Kupwara, Feb 19: Traders Union President Langate, Lateef Ahmad Ganie, who also owns A-One Modern Bakery, met Chief Minister's Advisor, Nasir Aslam Wani, to discuss various issues affecting the Langate market, particularly concerns regarding the upcoming New Bypass near Jamia Masjid Shareef Langate. During the meeting, Ganie highlighted the distress faced by shopkeepers whose establishments fall within the alignment of the proposed bypass. He urged the Advisor to ensure adequate compensation and proper rehabilitation for those affected by the project. Additionally, he appealed to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to direct the district administration in Kupwara to allow shopkeepers to continue their businesses until the bypass bridge is completed, ensuring their livelihoods are not disrupted during the transition. Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani assured the Traders Union President that their concerns would be prioritized, and all genuine demands would be addressed in the coming days. Expressing gratitude, Lateef Ahmad Ganie thanked the Advisor for his positive response and commitment to resolving the traders' concerns.

Molvi Imran Raza Ansari Warns Against DeepFake Menace, Urges Ethical Use of AI

■ HT News Network

Srinagar February 19 (KNS): Molvi Imran Raza Ansari, President of the All Jammu & Kashmir Shia Association, has issued an urgent call to address the escalating threat posed by DeepFake and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, emphasizing the need for ethical responsibility in the digital age. In a strongly worded statement, he warned against the unchecked sharing of personal images on social media, stressing that such practices enable malicious actors to exploit technology for harm. "Islam teaches us to uphold the dignity of every individual, and it is our collective duty to ensure technology does not become a tool for oppression," Ansari asserted. He highlighted the alarming rise in AI-



generated content that distorts reality, urging immediate action to protect societal values and individual privacy.

Molvi Imran Raza Ansari expressed profound concern over the targeted misuse of these technologies to create and circulate non-consensual explicit imagery, particularly of women, which violates both religious principles and universal human rights. He further condemned such acts as "a gross affront to morality and a betrayal of the trust placed in

technological progress." He emphasized, "The creation of fabricated, indecent content targeting women is not only a cybercrime but a sin that erodes the fabric of our society. We must stand united to shield our sisters, daughters, and mothers from such digital exploitation." Ansari underscored the irreversible psychological and social trauma inflicted on victims, calling for compassion and solidarity in combating this menace.

To address these challenges, Ansari outlined a multipronged strategy, demanding stricter legal penalties for perpetrators, enhanced cooperation with tech firms to develop detection tools, and nationwide campaigns to educate users on identifying and reporting AI-generated fraud. "Laws must evolve with technology to deliver justice."

KVIB Shopian organises awareness programme on JKREGP, PMEGP schemes

■ HT News Network

Shopian, February 19: Khadi & Village Industries Board (KVIB) Shopian today organized an awareness programme at Government Upper Primary School Chek-i-Saidpora Bala Shopian to educate the public especially youth about prominent livelihood generation schemes of Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP). Member Legislative Assembly, Shopian, Shabir Ahmed Kullay while speaking at the event said aimed of such programmes is to make the people aware about the benefits of the schemes which offer financial assistance for self-employment ventures in manufacturing, ser-

vices and trading sectors.

Other speakers also urged youth to avail the benefits of schemes for self-employment generation for their economic upliftment.

On the occasion, Divisional Officer J&K, KVIB KD, Srinagar, Raashid Qadri provided insights into the application procedures and the support available under these programmes and encouraged the youth of the area to take advantage of KVIB's schemes to promote entrepreneurship. He said that under PMEGP and JKREGP during the last three years, margin money of Rs. 11.49 Crores has been released by J&K KVIB Shopian for establishment of 529 units creating employment opportunities for 3968 persons. Among others, DDC members, LDM, Cluster Head, J&K Bank, Xen R&B, ALC, DPM, NRLM, officers and officials of KVIB.

Agriculture Minister inaugurates Mother Block; launches plantation drive at Horticulture Fruit Plant Nursery, Bandipora

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 19: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, today inaugurated Mother Block besides launching the plantation drive at Horticulture Fruit Plant Nursery Bandipora. The Minister was accompanied by MLA Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat; MLA Gurez, Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi; Deputy Commissioner Bandipora; Director Horticulture Kashmir and Chief Horticulture Officer Bandipora.

The Minister said that presently agricultural advancements have become indispensable to navigate the farming sector towards progress and prosperity. "Our primary responsibility is to make agriculture sector more vibrant, produc-



tive in order to encourage and promote agricultural practices and activities on

modern patterns with scientific and technological orientations", added the Min-

ister. Javid Dar said that after introducing High Density farming in Horticulture sector, it has become imperative to propagate true to type quality fruit plant material at par with the imported fruit plant material locally. In this direction, it is of paramount importance that we must possess dedication and commitment along with scientific and technological knowhow to deal with the challenges, he said. The Minister said that High Density farming is a game changer and it will uplift the socio-economic status of the farming community in terms of better returns. Besides, it will upgrade quantity manifold with quality production.

As a growing demand of establishing High Density orchards, the Minister said we have to cater to the demand by providing quality high density fruit plant material.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of general public that i have correction in my school documents now I want to change this correction as per adhaar card I want change my name from masooma hussain to masoma hussain. If any body has any objection regarding this please contact shabir memorial school khandpeth within 7 days no objection accepted after the stipulated time period .

Name. Masoma hussain
D/o. Gh hussain joo
R/o. Baliharan

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public through the medium of notice that I mohd afzal rather s/o gh hussain rather R/o matipora. That my son namely furkan afzal s/o mohd afzal R/o matipora born on 19-06-2017 I want to obtain D-O-B certificate. If any body have any objection regarding this please contact us within seven days of time

DC reviews progress of renovation work at Sports Stadium Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing beautification and renovation works at the Sports Stadium Doda, here today. The visit aimed to assess the current status of various projects designed to enhance the stadium's infrastructure and aesthetics.

During the inspection, the DC evaluated key components of the renovation, including the development of the cricket pitch, improvement of the drainage system, pavilion refurbishment, and the installation of Kota stone in the seating areas. He emphas-



sized the importance of adhering to quality standards and completing the projects within the stipulated timelines.

The DC issued directives to the executing agencies to expedite the pace of work while ensuring high-quality construction. He high-

lighted the necessity of installing the main gate of the stadium before the upcoming Republic Day celebrations to ensure security and facilitate smooth access during the event. Additionally, he instructed officials to renovate the main stage in the

pavilion area and complete the railing work around the stage to enhance safety and aesthetics.

Accompanying the DC during the visit were officials from the Public Works Department (PWD), Power Development Department (PDD), the stadium's management team, contractors, and representatives from the Youth Services and Sports Department. Their presence underscored the collaborative efforts being made to upgrade the sports infrastructure in Doda, aiming to provide improved facilities for athletes and spectators alike. During the inspection, the DC evaluated key components of the renovation, including the development of the cricket pitch, improvement

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 19: On the second day of his tour to district Ramban, Prof. (Dr.) Ravi Jyee, Former Vice President and In-pro to Vice Chancellor of International University-School of Medicine (TUSOM) and Chairman of the Afro-Eurasian Chamber of Commerce, Education, Development, and Employment (ACCED), visited the land subsidence area at Parnote to assess the situation and suggest preventive measures.

Prof. (Dr.) Ravi Jyee was accompanied by Tehsildar Ramban Deep Kumar, ARTO Kuldeep Singh and various other officers.

At the high-risk sinking area of Parnote, Prof. Jyee



interacted with Brigadier Chirag Ghura, Chief Engineer Beacon, discussing possible stabilization strategies to mitigate future disasters. Emphasizing the need for long-term solutions, he suggested several measures, including massive plantation drives with prescribed tree species to

prevent soil erosion. He also highlighted the importance of water source management and strengthening of the drainage system, which he identified as crucial in minimizing the risks of further land subsidence.

During his visit, Prof. Jyee interacted with local residents, sensitizing them

about disaster and environmental management while encouraging them to adopt sustainable agricultural and horticultural practices. He stressed the significance of allied activities in boosting the region's economic resilience and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters.

A globally recognized expert in disaster management, Prof. Jyee has made significant contributions in the fields of disaster mitigation, risk reduction, and emergency response strategies. His visit to Parnote underscores the importance of proactive disaster preparedness and collaborative efforts between experts, authorities, and local communities in addressing environmental challenges in the region.

DC Ramban addresses public grievances at Block Diwas program

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 19: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary today chaired a mega public outreach programme here under the aegis of Continuing Block Diwas to listen to public grievances and ensure timely redressal of the same. The event witnessed the participation of PO ICDS Zahngir Hashmi; ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak; ACR S. Harpal Singh; CPO Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Zargar; ACP Mohd. Ashfaq; GMDIC Ravinder Anand and other officers. The Deputy Commissioner addressed over a hundred grievances projected by the people by issuing on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers for immediate action. Public concerns



ranged from issues related to road connectivity, power and water supply, healthcare services, education infrastructure, and welfare schemes. The DC also sought action-taken reports from officials to ensure that grievances were addressed in a time-bound manner. Furthermore, the DC assured the public that the administration is committed to strengthen services delivery and improve civic amenities, reinforcing a citizen-

centric governance approach. Taking note of infrastructure concerns, the Deputy Commissioner directed the ACR, Executive Engineer PWD to visit the ITI construction site and explore possibilities for road connectivity to the location. The DC also instructed concerned departments to expedite pending works and complete all necessary clearances for the speedy execution of the project.

Govt undertakes comprehensive program for imparting modern skills to youth: Dy CM

Visits Govt ITI, Women's Polytechnic, interacts with students

■ HT News Network

Kupwara, Feb 18: In a sign JAMMU, FEBRUARY 19: Maintaining that the Government is committed for honing the technical abilities of the youth, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that a comprehensive program has been undertaken for imparting the modern and market based technical skill education to youth so that they can create employment opportunities for themselves and other aspiring ones as well.

The Deputy Chief Minister was interacting with the students during his comprehensive visit to Government Industrial Training Institute and Government Polytechnic for Women at Akhnoor road Jammu. He was accompanied



by the senior officers of administration.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the present government is aware of the challenges being faced

by the youth and several schemes have been launched for ensuring their economic and social empowerment. He said that they should not get carried away by tendencies

and resort to substance abuse but instead should channelize their energies and efforts for making a strong and prosperous country.

The Deputy Chief Minister inspected the facilities being provided to the students pursuing their courses in different streams. He directed the faculty of the institutes to ensure that the students don't face any inconvenience viz a viz laboratories, workshops, library, hostel and other related facilities.

While inspecting the pace of work on the ongoing infrastructural works, the Deputy Chief Minister directed for speedy construction of these assets. He said that due care should be taken for using quality materials and also adhering to the timelines set for construction of these meant to augment the existing facilities being provided

Kathua Admin hosting Mega Job Fair on Feb 21 Event likely to offer over 1,000 Job opportunities

■ HT News Network

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 19: In a landmark initiative aimed at bridging the gap between local talent and industry needs, the Kathua administration is set to host its biggest job fair on February 21st. The marquee event will offer over 1,000 vacancies to skilled and qualified youth, with participation from major industrial players such as Godrej, Varun Beverages, Cream Bell, LIC, and several other reputed organizations.

Addressing a press Conference here today, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rakesh Minhas outlined the extensive employment opportunities available. He stated, "This is a first-of-its-kind event in Kathua that brings together a diverse range of industries under one roof. We are happy to announce that the Kathua-based industries and establishments are offer-



ing over 1,000 job openings, catering to different qualification levels and expertise, and we encourage all eligible candidates to make the most of this opportunity."

Dr. Minhas further highlighted that the job fair is an integral part of the administration's broader strategy to boost local employment and stimulate economic growth in the region, emphasizing the importance of skills develop-

ment and continuous training to ensure the local workforce remains competitive in a rapidly evolving job market. He also noted that the event is designed to serve as a comprehensive platform for both fresh graduates and experienced professionals to interact with industry leaders and secure sustainable career opportunities, reaffirming the administration's commitment to fostering local talent and enhancing the region's industrial capabilities through innovative initiatives like this job fair.

The vacancy breakdown includes 500 posts for candidates with a minimum qualification of a 10th pass, 200 posts for candidates who have completed their 12th grade, and 300 posts for graduates from various streams and experiences. Job openings span across multiple sectors, with roles ranging from Civil, Mechanical, and Electrical Engineers to Wellness Advisors, Plant Managers, Accounts and Purchase.

SHEW Doda, JKRLM collaborate to promote Women empowerment initiatives

■ HT News Network

DODA, FEBRUARY 19: The Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women (SHEW) Doda, in collaboration with the Jammu Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) on Wednesday organised an awareness program at the Block Development Office Assar.

The event aimed to educate Women about different empowerment and protection schemes available through the Social Welfare Department.

The District Mission Coordinator SHEW Doda welcomed the attendees and engaged with women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs), providing insights into the department's initiatives focused on women's and children's welfare.

The Centre Administrator of the One Stop Centre Doda detailed services offered

under the One Stop Centre scheme, while the District Coordinator of Child Helpline discussed the Mission Vatsalya Scheme's provisions.

The Block Development Officer highlighted the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), emphasizing that SHGs play a crucial role in sustainable livelihood development, ensuring the groups' long-term prosperity. In addition to the informative sessions, sanitary pads were distributed to promote menstrual hygiene among participants. Concluding the event, the District Mission Coordinator of SHEW Doda expressed gratitude to the attendees and collaborating departments for their support in making the program successful. Concluding the event, the District Mission Coordinator of SHEW Doda expressed gratitude to the attendees and collaborating departments for their support in making the program successful.

Rana co-chairs session on "Flood Plain Zoning" in All India State Ministers' conference Emphasizes effective flood management, sustainable development

■ HT News Network

RAJASTHAN, FEBRUARY 19: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today co-chaired a session on 'Flood Plain Zoning' in the second All India State Ministers' Conference on Water at Udaipur, Rajasthan.

While speaking on the occasion, Javed Rana emphasized the need for adoption of flood plain zoning approach for comprehensive flood management and minimizing flood damage, ensuring a safe and more resilient region for the people.

"In Jammu and Kashmir, work on Flood Plain Zoning is being pursued vigorously aligning with the guidelines issued by

the Ministry for Water Resources. It is a big step towards achieving the goal of effective flood management through a combination of structural and non-structural measures," maintained the Minister.

The two-day conference from February 18 to 19 themed "Water Vision@2047- A Water Secure Nation," was organized by the National Water Mission, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The session deliberated on the need for integrated river and coastal areas management highlighting strategies for basin level planning, integrating water and land use planning besides flood plain development and other measures

Rana highlighted that Jammu



and Kashmir witnesses recurrent floods which gave rise to formulation of a comprehensive flood management plan to tackle the problem. He said that

there is a need for judicious use of land, reducing the impact of floods and balancing the risk with the need of land for public good simultaneously. "Flood

plain zoning" is not just about restrictions but regulating so that protecting people, property and nature is accorded top most priority," he said. "The

Governments both at the Union and at the UT level have to keep a focused approach on basic objectives of flood management like minimizing damage, protecting natural flood defense, encouraging sustainable development and lowering economic costs," he added.

He also highlighted the initiatives being taken up by the government of Jammu and Kashmir for mitigating the impact of floods. He said that the government has installed modern gauge stations which transmit real time flood data to all stakeholders including the general public through a mobile app. Another, important forecasting tool known as the Integrated Operation Forecasting

System (IOFS) has also been developed under the World Bank funded JTFRP. It also provides forecasted flood inundation maps with extent and depth that help identify vulnerable areas so that the administration can take proactive actions, including evacuation of communities, if necessary.

Rana also expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Water Resources for holding this important conference to strengthen the collaboration with the states and UTs. "We can collectively work towards a future for minimizing the devastating impact of floods and achieving the vision of Water Secure India @ 2047", asserted the Minister.

DC Ramban discusses preparations for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra -2025

■ HT News Network

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 19: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to discuss the Action plan for the smooth conduct of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2025.

The meeting was attended by SSP Kulbir Singh; ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak; ACR S. Harpal Singh; CPO Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Zargar; SDM Ramsoo Ghansham Basotra; AD Fire and Emergency Services, ACP, CEO, CMO, AD FCS&CA, Executive Engineers, and other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasised meticulous planning and interdepartmental coordination to ensure seamless arrangements for the Yatra. He directed all departments to formulate a foolproof plan covering accommodation, langar, sanitation, power and water



supply, road connectivity, health facilities, and security arrangements. To facilitate pilgrims, the PWD, JPDCL and Jal Shakti Departments were tasked with ensuring adequate power and water supply, along with execution of necessary civil works at Yatri Niwas, Langar sites, and other designated lodgment centers. The PWD was also instructed to implement sanitation and safety measures for safer Langar sites and accommodations. The ACP was directed to submit a detailed sanitation plan, focusing on proper waste disposal and maintenance of toilet facilities at key locations in Ramban and Banihal. The Fire and Emergency Department was asked to devise a contingency plan for tackling emergency situations at Yatri Niwas Chanderkote, Langar site Chanderkote, Yatra Camp Lamber, Banihal, and other vulnerable locations.

The status of road connectivity along NH-44, from Nashri to Banihal, was reviewed, with necessary directions issued to ensure smooth vehicular movement. Planning for health and ambulance.

Chatroo, Nagseni KV Schools all set to start classes DC reviews Operational Readiness

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, R.K. Shavan on Wednesday conducted a comprehensive review of the operational preparedness of Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV) at Chatroo and Nagseni to ensure their timely functioning.

After detailed discussion with the stakeholders, the meeting decided that the classes for KV Chatroo (At Mughal Maidan) will commence at the Girls' Hostel building, which will serve both as a school and hostel facility.

This arrangement aims to facilitate a smooth start to academic activities while ensuring adequate accom-

modation for students. Furthermore, for KV Nagseni, the DC has already identified a rented building to house the school temporarily. The DC reiterated that the district administration is committed to providing the best possible learning environment to the students.

The meeting was attended by CPO Shahnawaz Bali; SDM Chatroo Nayeem Ur Rahman; CEO Kishtwar Javed Ahmed Kichloo; CHO Sajid Mustafa and representatives from the working agency. The DC reiterated that the district administration is committed to providing the best possible learning environment to the students.

The meeting was attended by CPO Shahnawaz Bali; SDM Chatroo Nayeem Ur Rahman; CEO Kishtwar Javed Ahmed Kichloo; CHO Sajid Mustafa and representatives from the working agency.



JMC organises Public Samvaad at Rehari Colony

■ HT News Network



JAMMU, FEBRUARY 19: Under the Public Samvaad initiative launched by the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), a program was organized today in Ward No. 25, Rehari Colony.

Member of Legislative Assembly, (MLA) Jammu West Arvind Gupta and Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation Dr. Devansh Yadav presided over the function.

Addressing the gathering, the MLA emphasized the importance of community involvement in shaping the future of Jammu. Appreciating the Jammu Municipal Corporation for launching Public Samvaad in the Municipal limits, the MLA said that Jammu Municipal Corporation continues to encourage active citizen engagement through such initiatives, ensuring that development efforts align with public needs and aspirations.

Dr. Yadav said that the program served as a platform for open dialogue between citizens and officials, focusing on ensuring public participation in developmental initiatives. He said that all the demands projected by the locals in the Public Samvaad would be looked into and focused attention would be given for their redressal in the budget.

Weekly Block Diwas: Public outreach program held at Panchayat Dradhu of Block Bhaderwah

■ HT News Network

BHADERWAH, FEBRUARY 19: A Weekly Block Diwas program was today held at Panchayat Ghar Dradhu in Block Bhaderwah, aiming to address public grievances and enhance grassroots governance. The event witnessed the participation of local residents, public representatives, and senior officials who actively engaged in discussions on developmental issues and service delivery mechanisms.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar, presided over the program, emphasizing the significance of Block Diwas in bridging the gap between the administration and the public. He assured timely redressal of grievances and directed



officials to expedite pending developmental works, particularly in sectors like water supply, rural infrastructure, and social welfare. Discussions also included strategies to improve public service delivery and enhance coordination between government departments.

The event was attended by District Development

and upcoming initiatives to ensure effective governance at the grassroots level.

The Weekly Block Diwas program continues to serve as a vital platform for direct dialogue between citizens and the administration, fostering participatory development and efficient resolution of public issues in the Bhaderwah region. Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar, presided over the program, emphasizing the significance of Block Diwas in bridging the gap between the administration and the public. He assured timely redressal of grievances and directed officials to expedite pending developmental works, particularly in sectors like water supply, rural infrastructure, and social welfare.

46 vehicles challaned in Rajouri amid massive enforcement drive by ARTO team

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 19: A team from the Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Rajouri today conducted a rigorous enforcement drive on the Rajouri-Poonch National Highway (NHV) and adjoining routes today.

During the drive, the team checked both commercial and non-commercial vehicles and challaned 46 vehicles for violation of different provisions of Motor Vehicles Act. The violators were booked for various infractions, including riding without safety helmet, driving without seat belts, overloading in goods and passenger vehicles, Driving without Registration Certificate (R/P), Uninsured vehicles, using mobile phone while driving, Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate violation & Driving without a valid license.

A team imposed Rs. 1,09,700 fine on traffic offenders. Additionally, two driving licenses were recommended for suspension for serious violations.

The ARTO emphasized that such enforcement drives will continue to ensure road safety and strict compliance with traffic regulations. Vehicle owners and drivers were urged to adhere to traffic laws to avoid penalties and ensure safer roads for all.

Not only Congress, every individual is fighting for restoration of Statehood: Rattan Lal Gupta

■ HT News Network

Jammu, February 19: Asserting the unwavering commitment of the National Conference (NC) towards the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of J&KNC emphasized that the issue of statehood is not just a political slogan but a fundamental concern that directly impacts the future of J&K's youth and the overall democratic structure of the region. In a press release issued here today, the senior NC leader made it clear that not only Congress but every individual in J&K is fighting for the restoration of statehood, as it is intrinsically linked to the aspirations of the people. "The people of J&K have revived democracy by electing a popular government and actively participating in the democratic process. In the past, voter turnout in elections remained abysmally low, with participation barely reaching 10-15%. However, with the National Conference's assurance and steadfast efforts, the people have wholeheartedly reposed their faith in democracy, leading to greater electoral participation," he remarked.

DC conducts comprehensive inspection of key development projects in Poonch

■ HT News Network

POONCH, FEBRUARY 19: In a proactive effort to monitor ongoing development initiatives, Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal conducted a comprehensive tour of various projects in Poonch town today. The inspection included critical infrastructures such as the Flood Protection work at Nangali Sahib under UT Capex, the Dingla University Campus, the Magpie Small Hydel Project in Mandi, Chandak - Mandi Hydel Project, the construction of Panchayat Ghar Kalani, among others.

Accompanied by senior officials, including SE PHE, CPO, Xen PWD(R&B), Xen JPDCL and CEO Education and other officers, the Deputy Commissioner evaluated the progress of each project. He emphasized the need for expediting work on the Dingla University Campus, flood protection measures at Nangali Sahib, the Panchayat Ghar Kalani construction etc.

During the tour, the Deputy Commissioner also engaged with local residents who projected their demands. He listened attentively and assured the public that their genuine demands would be addressed promptly.

Kishtwar Admin hosts awareness event, plantation drive to mark Int'l Year of Cooperatives-2025

■ HT News Network

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 19: To celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, an awareness-cum-plantation drive was today organized in Kishtwar Town under the supervision of Deputy Registrar, Cooperative Societies Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal.

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Pawan Kotwal was the Chief Guest. He inaugurated the drive by planting saplings at a prominent park in the heart of the township, emphasizing the critical role of coop-



eratives in promoting environmental conservation and sustainable practices.

The awareness initiative focused on educating the public about environmental conservation and the importance of sustainability in long-term develop-

ment. Attendees, including officials from the Department of Cooperatives, the Municipal Council, as well as representatives from various cooperative societies and the general public, actively participated in the event. A significant high-

light of the drive was the collaboration with The Chenab Walnut Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) Cooperative, which contributed flower saplings for plantation. The initiative underscored the power of cooperatives as key drivers of social and environmental responsibility. The event was held as a part of a series of activities planned across the District as part of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 celebrations. The initiatives aim to reinforce the impact of cooperative societies in fostering sustainable development and community engagement.

Chief Justice inaugurates Lawyers Chambers at Court Complex, Katra

■ HT News Network

REASI, FEBRUARY 19: Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Tashi Rabstan, today inaugurated Lawyers Chambers at Court Complex, Katra, in presence of Justice Mohd Akram Choudhary, Administrative Judge for Reasi district.

While speaking on the occasion, the Chief Justice said that the Bench and Bar have a huge role in reposing faith in judiciary and justice delivery system. He said "people come to the court with high hopes considering the courts as 'Temple of Justice' where justice would be meted out to them".

While interacting with the members of Bar and Bench, the Chief Justice said that the chamber practice is a platform that provides legal



services and are helpful for the younger advocates in putting their career as successful lawyers. He also asked the concerned to focus on maintenance of the court as well as the lawyer's chamber and road towards Katra Court.

While inaugurating the Lawyers Chambers, the Chief Justice laid

emphasis on the bar being the equally important wheel in the chariot of Justice. He said that equal infrastructure would be provided to the respective Bars that would not only boost their morale but attract the best talent on the other side of the bench.

The Chief Justice also inspected various sections of the Court Complex and gave certain on spot directions regarding further streamlining of the entity.

Principal Secretary to Chief Justice, M. K Sharma; Principal District and Sessions Judge Reasi, Suresh Chander Katal; CJM Reasi, Geeta Kumari; Secretary DLSA Reasi, Pooja Gupta; Sub-Judge Katra, Sidhant Vaid; Munisiff Katra, Vishal Bharti; President and members of Bar Association Reasi and Katra were also present on the occasion.



Maha: 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blasts convict Abu Salem moves court seeking premature release

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, FEB 19 (UNI)

Gangster Abu Salem, a convict in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts case, has moved the Bombay High Court seeking remission of his sentence and premature release, his lawyer Farhan Shah said here on Wednesday.

The petition, filed before a division bench of Justices Sarang Kotwal and S M Modak, is listed for hearing on March 10.

Salem in his petition said that as per terms of the extradition treaty between India and Portugal, he has already completed 25 years in prison and hence, he should be released from prison.

His petition further contended that he has spent 11 years, nine months and 26 days as an undertrial from November 2005 to September 2017. As a convict in 2006 TADA case, he has spent nine years, 10 months and four days between February 2015 and December 2024. In addition, he has earned three years and 16 days jail remission for good behaviour in the 2006 case and another one-month relaxation given by the apex court for the time he spent as an undertrial in Portugal.

If all these periods are added, he has already served over 24 years and nine months in total, by the end of 2024, the court was informed.

Moreover, his plea has raised concerns about the breach of assurances made during his extradition from Portugal.

Salem was brought to India in 2005 following an extradition treaty with Portugal. Terms included that his detention would not exceed over 25 years in line with the "principle of specialty".

The gangster had moved the court after his plea was rejected by the special Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (TADA) court on December 10, 2024.

US SEC seeks help from Indian authorities in alleged Adani bribery case

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 19 (UNI)

After a brief lull, the US Securities and Exchange Commission has sought help from Indian authorities in its investigation of Adani Group founder Gautam Adani and his nephew over alleged securities fraud, a court filing showed on Tuesday.

The regulator told a New York district court that the defendants are located in India and the SEC's efforts to serve them there are ongoing, including through a request for assistance to the Indian authorities to effect service under the Hague Service Convention for Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters. The SEC had filed its complaint in November last year alleging that Defendants violated the antifraud provisions of the federal securities laws by knowingly or recklessly making false and misleading representations concerning Adani Green Energy Ltd in connection with a September 2021 debt offering by Adani Green.

In a related criminal case arising from many of the same alleged facts, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York charged Defendants with, among other things, conspiracy and securities fraud.

Last week, during his state visit to the USA, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he did not discuss the Adani case with US President Donald Trump, describing it to reporters as an individual issue never discussed by leaders. Earlier, Adani Group had called the accusations "baseless" and vowed to seek "all possible legal recourse".

India, Malaysia agree to enhance cooperation in defence industry, maritime security

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 19 (UNI)

The 13th Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM) meeting took place in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday, where both sides identified ways to deepen existing collaboration, particularly in the defence industry, maritime security, and multilateral engagements.

The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Secretary General of Ministry of Defence, Malaysia Lokman Hakim Bin Ali, a Defence Ministry statement said here.

Both sides expressed happiness at the growing bilateral defence cooperation with regular engagements between the two Armed Forces in recent years.

The two sides held wide-ranging discussions on effective and practical initiatives to further expand bilateral defence engagements and regional and global issues and also identified steps to further enhance cooperation in emerging areas such as cyber security and AI.

Central govt approves Rs 1554 cr of additional assistance to 5 states

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 19 (UNI)

A high-level committee, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday approved Rs 1554.99 crore of additional central assistance under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to five states, affected by flood, flash flood, landslides, cyclonic storm during the year 2024.

The HLC approved central assistance of Rs 1554.99 crore to five States from NDRF, subject to an adjustment of 50 percent of the opening balance for the year available in the SDRF, a Home Ministry statement said.

Out of the total amount of Rs 1554.99 crore, Rs 608.08 crore has been



approved for Andhra Pradesh; Rs 170.99 crore for Nagaland; Rs 255.24 crore for Odisha; Rs 231.75 crore for Telangana and Rs 288.93 crore for Tripura.

This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by the centre to the states in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), already placed at the disposal of

the states.

During the financial year 2024-25, the central government has released Rs 18,322.80 crore to 27 states in SDRF and Rs 4,808.30 crore from NDRF to 18 states, Rs 2208.55 crore from the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) to 14 states and Rs 719.72 crore from National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF)

to eight states.

The central government had deputed Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) to these states, immediately after the calamities, without waiting for the receipt of a formal memorandum.

Meanwhile, Amit Shah on his social media handle said that the Modi government always stood like a rock in support of the disaster-affected people.

"Today, the MHA approved additional central assistance of Rs. 1554.99 crore to Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana, and Tripura under the NDR fund. This is in addition to the Rs. 18,322.80 crore released by the centre to 27 states under the SDR fund," he said.

BJP top leadership likely to announce Delhi CM today

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 19 (UNI)

The suspense over the new Chief Minister of Delhi is likely to end today as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is scheduled to hold a legislative meeting here on Wednesday.

The names of several newly elected MLAs are doing the rounds for the posts of chief minister, however Rekha Gupta, Parvash Verma, and Vijender Gupta are considered the frontrunners for the Chief Minister post.

In the recently concluded assembly elections, the BJP secured 48 out of 70 seats, while the outgoing Aam Aadmi Party managed to win 22 seats. Meanwhile, for the third consecutive time, Congress failed to secure a single seat.

Preparations for the swearing-in ceremony are underway, overseen by BJP leaders Tarun Chugh



and Vinod Tawde.

The oath-taking event is scheduled to take place tomorrow at Ramlila Maidan, scheduled to be held at around 4:30 pm.

BJP may opt for a leadership structure featuring one Chief Minister and two Deputy CMs, similar to its approach in other states.

As per sources, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, chief ministers from BJP-ruled states, NDA leaders, Union ministers, and other prominent figures are expected to attend the ceremony.

The Delhi Traffic Police has released a travel advi-

sory outlining restrictions for commuters in the national capital on Thursday, February 20. "Due to the swearing-in ceremony of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi on February 20, 2025, at Ramlila Ground, special traffic arrangements have been implemented," the Delhi Traffic Police stated while providing details on road closures and diversions.

More than 5,000 security personnel, along with over 10 paramilitary companies, will be stationed in and around Ramlila Maidan to maintain law and order during the oath-taking ceremony.

Punjab: Police apprehend drug smuggler with 10 kg heroin

AGENCIES

AMRITSAR, FEB 19 (UNI)

In an intelligence-based operation, Punjab police apprehended an alleged drug smuggler with links to a Pakistani criminal and recovered 10 kilos of heroin valued at Rs 70 crore from the border district of Amritsar, a top officer said on Wednesday. State Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said Harmandeep Singh was nabbed from Mahal village in the district.

Yadav said on X that the arrested accused was constantly in touch with Pakistan-based smuggler Chacha Bawa, who sent Heroin via drones in the Attari sector for further distribution.

He also said that an FIR has been registered, with further investigation underway to identify others associated with the accused.

Gyanesh Kumar takes charge as CEC



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 19 (UNI)

Former bureaucrat Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday took charge as India's 26th Chief Election Commissioner, succeeding Rajiv Kumar who served in the post for over two years.

In his first address as CEC, he said, "The first step for nation building is voting."

"Therefore, every citizen of India who has completed 18 years of age should become an elector and should always vote. In accordance with the Constitution of India, electoral laws, rules and instructions issued therein, the Election Commission of India was, is and will always be with the voters," he added.

Kumar assumed charge as Election Commissioner on March 15, 2024. Gyanesh Kumar has served as secretary in the

ministry of parliamentary affairs. He belongs to the 1988-batch from the Kerala cadre. The government also appointed Vivek Joshi, a 1989-batch Haryana-cadre IAS officer, as Election Commissioner.

Gyanesh Kumar was appointed as the CEC by the President upon the recommendation of the Selection Committee chaired by PM Modi.

LoP Rahul Gandhi, however, presented a dissent note during the committee meeting as the law regarding the appointment process is under consideration in the Supreme Court.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led panel recommended Kumar's name, and he was appointed as the new CEC on February 17 following a presidential order. He is the first CEC to be appointed under the new law on the appointment of Election Commissioner.

Kharge flays PM Modi for "failing" to defend Indian interest during US visit



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 19 (UNI)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "failing" to defend India's trade and business interests during his recent visit to the United States.

In his opening remarks at a meeting of AICC general secretaries and in-charges here, Kharge said, "He (the PM) had failed to protect India's trade and business interests. The PM did not protest the imposition of tariffs by the US on Indian goods".

"They are forcing a loss-making deal on us, which our government is silently accepting. This is clearly an insult to India and its people", he said, while adding, "America is hurting us deeply even in economic matters".

Kharge said despite Modi's visit, America was sending back Indian citizens handcuffed as before.

Alleging that vegetarian passengers were given non-veg food, Kharge said, "Our government also failed to protest this insult properly".

Referring to his party, Kharge said those in-charge of different states will be accountable for the organisation and the electoral performances in their respective states.

"I would like to tell you one very important thing about accountability. All of you will be accountable for the organisation

and the future election results of the states under your charge", he told the general secretaries and in-charges.

Referring to the new challenge of alleged "voter list manipulation", he claimed that it was happening on a large scale in elections, and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi had also raised the issue in the Lok Sabha.

Asserting that this "rigging" has to be stopped at all cost, he pointed out how the names of Congress supporters were deleted from the voter list or the names were removed and added in a different polling booth at the last moment.

He accused the BJP of adding fresh names just before the elections.

During the meeting, the Congress president also referred to the manipulation of the selection process of the Chief Election Commissioner by the government by excluding the Chief Justice of India from the selection committee.

He said the Chief Justice of India was also included in the selection committee of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) by the order of the Supreme Court, but Modi removed him.

"The government does not even trust the impartiality of the Chief Justice of the country", he added, while referring to Rahul Gandhi questioning the purpose of the committee, where the government was trying to use the Leader of the Opposition merely for "certification".

If organising Kumbh with grandeur a crime, we will commit it again and again: Yogi

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, FEB 19 (UNI)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday accused the main opposition party, Samajwadi Party (SP), of baseless 'blabbering' about the Maha Kumbh and said that if organising this event of Sanatan tradition with grandeur is a crime, then his government would like to commit this crime again and again.

During the discussion on the Governor's address in the Assembly, the CM said that more than 56 crore devotees have taken a holy dip of faith in the Sangam in Prayagraj Maha Kumbh, but some people are making baseless 'blabbering' against Sanatan Dharma, Maa Ganga, India's faith.

He said, "They say that organising Maha Kumbh is a waste of money. This will be considered as an opposition to India's Sanatan faith. These people should know that Maha Kumbh is not an event of any particular party or government but of the society. The government is in the role of a servant in this event. The baseless 'blabbering' against faith is



actually against the faith of 56 crore people who have taken a dip so far."

Yogi said, "Our sympathies are with all those devotees who became victims of the stampede on Mauni Amavasya festival or became victims of a road accident while coming to Maha Kumbh. The government stands with their families but politics should not be done in this."

He said that the opposition members left no stone unturned in defaming Maha Kumbh. "False propaganda about Kumbh was spread through social media. The public was misled by calling the old videos of stampede in Cairo and arson in Nepal as that of Maha Kumbh, but there was no decline in the enthusiasm of the people towards Maha Kumbh. People of every religion and caste participated in Maha Kumbh. Cricketer Mohammad Shami also took a holy dip in Kumbh," he said.

The CM said that it is the habit of 'Samajwadis' to oppose every good thing. "They bite the hand that feeds them. These are the values of Samajwadi. The social media handle of SP confirms their values in which such language is used which does not suit any civilized society," he said.

He said that SP President Akhilesh Yadav does not even know the name of Akshaya Vat. "He calls Saraswati Koop as the Saraswati River. He says that there is no word like Maha Kumbh. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav thinks Maha Kumbh is useless, while SP leader Jaya Bachchan says that the bodies of the people who died in the stampede were thrown into the Ganga river, which has further polluted it," he said.

Yogi said, "Trinamool Congress leader Mamta Banerjee even called Maha Kumbh as 'Mrityu Kumbh'. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge says that more than a 1,000 people died in the stampede. We do not mind your propaganda because we know that your mindset is infected. There is a treatment for an infected person but there is no cure for the

infected mindset."

He said that a great work has to go through three stages, ridicule, opposition, and acceptance. "Maha Kumbh was first ridiculed and later opposed but it was accepted. What can be a bigger proof of acceptance than the fact that the SP president, who was opposing, went and took a bath secretly. Leader of Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey also reached to take a dip in Maha Kumbh, but Akhilesh did not take his uncle Shivalpal along," he said.

Pointing towards the Leader of Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey, he said, "Pandey ji, you must take uncle (Shivalpal Singh Yadav) to Kumbh."

The CM said that before 2017, UP was facing an identity crisis. "After the organisation of Maha Kumbh, now a person from UP will get respect wherever he goes. I will request the Speaker of the Assembly to make all the members take a dip in Maha Kumbh, but as SP would oppose this too, that is why we stayed away from this," he said.

An Expert Explains Everything You Need To Know About Dermaplaning



SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Dermaplaning is fastly gaining popularity among young professional ladies seeking cleanest and clearest complexion without hassle of down time. Dermaplaning aka Dermablading is a gentle non ablative shaving like technique in form of physical exfoliation that uses a butter blade to remove built up dead skin and baby hairs from the face and neck , leaving the skin smooth, bright and glowing with or without make-up. It is hot beauty treatment extremely popular, especially among models , cine actresses and stage artists in metropolitan

cities that consists of using a butter blade to gently scrape off the top layer of dulling dead skin cells in order to reveal a smoother, brighter,younger and radiant skin eliminating pesky peach fuzz or vellus hair from face .It is extremely useful for those who suffer from dry skin, fine lines and dullness but persons with inflamed acne must wait till skin clears up. Exfoliation has become an integral part of skin care, where grainy substances are used for the removal of dead skin cells, in order to improve skin texture and make the skin clearer, smoother and brighter. It also helps to produce an even colour tone. Many such treatments have been devised, like microdermabrasion, peeling, use of AHAs, as well dermaplaning. However, before using any procedure, it is best to know all about it. Exfoliation of the skin is done with scrubs or cleansing grains, which have an abrasive effective



when applied and rubbed on the skin. In certain methods of dermabrasion, rotating brushes are used on the skin to remove build-up on the skin and dead skin cells. According to dermaplaning experts, it suits all skin types and is particularly suited to skin that has suffered damage, like acne scars or pits in

the skin. However, if you have acne or a rashy condition, it is better not to go in for dermaplaning and wait for the condition to subside. Some doubts have been expressed regarding dermaplaning, because a scalpel is used and skin is actually scraped. The increase of facial hair, after dermaplaning, is one of the doubts, because the

hair is actually cut. Also, soon after such procedures, it is better to protect the skin from sun exposure.As far as skin damage is concerned, the removal of scars is done by a plastic surgeon and is a surgical procedure. For instance, chemical peeling is used to remove scars. It can be a painful procedure and some risks

may be involved, as chemicals are used. There are chemical exfoliants too. In some salons, AHA or alpha hydroxyl acids are used for peeling, which also helps to exfoliate the skin. These are obtained mainly from fruit acids. Similarly, there are glycolic peels and others. Considering the risks of chemical peeling, Vegeta-

ble Peeling is only recommended to minimize skin damage and smoothen the skin. In vegetable peeling, plant extracts are used, along with certain procedures, to dermabrass the skin. This is done by rubbing the skin gently. The effect is both gentle and safe on the skin. In fact, the plant extracts actually help to restore beauty and health to the skin. In the case of acne scars, the treatment is given only after the acne condition subsides. Vegetable Peeling is a clinical procedure and professional training is essential to carry out the treatments. Several sittings are required and the number of sittings depends on the extent or kind of scarring. Pits or tiny depressions in the skin are common in acne scars. The pits in the skin may also become pigmented (dark), making the scars more apparent. So, these various factors have to be taken into consideration, while deciding on the treatment and the number

of sittings. The exponents of dermaplaning say that facial hair growth does not really increase, but the hair may look different. According to them, the plus points are that it does not take much time to do dermaplaning. They also say that the effect lasts much longer than other hair removal methods. It seems after dermaplaning, the skin's absorption ability improves and skin care products are better absorbed. They, however, advise that after dermaplaning, the skin should be protected from sun-exposure by applying sunscreen. There is also a word of warning.....do not try it at home. It is a clinical procedure. Find a reputed clinic and speak to those who have had it done before trying it. **The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India.**

1 in 5 newborns with neonatal seizures to develop epilepsy by age one: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

One in five or 20 per cent of newborns with neonatal seizures will go on to develop epilepsy by age one, finds a study on Wednesday. Seizures in newborns are one of the most frequent acute neurological conditions among infants admitted to neonatal care units. Researchers from the Copenhagen University Hospital - Rigshospitalet in Denmark showed that after neonatal seizures, the risk of epilepsy is persistently increased throughout adolescence. The team analysed data on all 1,998 children born in the country who experienced neonatal seizures. The results, published in the journal Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology showed that the cumulative risk of epilepsy was 20.4 per cent



among children with neonatal seizures compared with 1.15 per cent among children without. Among these children, epilepsy was diagnosed before 1 year of age in 11.4 per cent of children with neonatal seizures, in an additional 4.5 per cent between 1 and 5 years, 3.1 per cent between 5 and 10 years, and 1.4 per cent between 10 and 22 years. Stroke, haemorrhage, or structural brain malformations in newborns, as well as low scores on the Apgar test (Appearance, Pulse,

Grimace, Activity, and Respiration), were associated with the highest risks of developing epilepsy. Neonatal seizures are often caused by acute cerebral injury or stress, such as hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy, stroke, and cerebral infection, as well as transient and reversible brain alterations of metabolic or toxic origin; however, congenital brain malformations and genetic disorders are also recognised causes. Furthermore, the study showed that the risk of

epilepsy after neonatal seizures was highest among those with cerebral malformation or perinatal brain injury, although children with perinatal asphyxia (lack of oxygen) alone also had an increased risk. In addition, the risk of febrile seizures (convulsions caused by a fever) was also significantly higher in neonatal survivors with neonatal seizures, although not to the same extent as the risk for epilepsy. "Our study highlights that there are risk factors that may be used to identify infants for tailored follow-up and preventive measures," said Jeanette Tinggaard, from the varsity. "Importantly, four out of five neonatal survivors with a history of neonatal seizures did not develop epilepsy, and we suggest future studies to explore a potential genetic predisposition," Tinggaard added.

Life insurance sector to get booster shot with FDI limit at 100 per cent

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

While the high capital intensity of the life insurance sector necessitates substantial investments to sustain growth, the increase in FDI limits will provide the much-needed capital boost to the sector, enabling insurers to expand their mortality coverage and increase penetration, according to a report released by rating agency ICRA on Wednesday. ICRA expects growth in sum assured in the retail segment for insurers to continue to outpace the growth in retail new business premiums (NBP). Private insurers saw a surge in retail sum assured by 41 per cent YoY in 9M FY2025 (30 per cent in FY2024), higher than the retail NBP growth of 17 per cent (7 per cent in FY2024). Given the shift in product mix from the high



value of new business (VNB) margin non-participating (non-par) products to low VNB margin unit-linked investment plan (ULIP) products, the pressure on the VNB margins is likely to continue, resulting in increased sum assured and rider attachments in a bid to offset the negative impact of the product shift, the report states. As the capital requirements for life insurers are also a function of the

sum assured in force, with higher growth in sum assured, the capital intensity for incremental growth is expected to remain high, resulting in elevated incremental capital requirements for the sector. The recently proposed increase in the foreign direct investment (FDI) limits to 100 per cent could boost the inflow of capital to the sector and reduce the protection gap in India, the report states. While historically, the growth in life insurance premiums has been driven by investment considerations, with increased consumer awareness, the industry has seen an uptick in demand for the coverage of mortality risks. While the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) continues to dominate the market with a substantial share in retail and group NBP, however, private insurers lead in terms of sum assured, the report further states.

With a market share of 84 per cent in terms of retail sum assured and 80 per cent in terms of group sum assured in 9M FY2025, private players have a relatively higher share when compared to their market share of 63 per cent and 28 per cent in terms of retail NBP and group NBP, respectively. ICRA Vice President Neha Parikh said: "Mortality protection demands significant upfront capital, risk management and reinsurance tie-ups, resulting in concentration of the sum assured market. Within the retail and group sum assured, the capital requirement is even higher in the retail segment, given that the risk is underwritten for a much longer tenor. Some large private insurers benefit from their long operating history, resulting in backbook surplus, hence, partly supporting their ability to underwrite a higher sum assured."

Study explains why youth are more vulnerable to nicotine addiction

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Young adults are more susceptible to the impact of nicotine, as their bodies are more sensitive to the dangerous and highly addictive chemical than middle-aged adults, according to a new study. In a mice study, researchers from the Pennsylvania State University in the US showed that the effects of drugs on the body -- both medication and misused substances -- change as per age. They stressed the need to consider this factor when developing and prescribing treatments against nicotine. The findings, appearing in the journal Behavioral Pharmacology, showed that nicotine lowers the body temperature of young adult mice more quickly and reduces their movement more significantly than middle-aged mice. Further, young adult



mice -- aged two months -- were found to respond more acutely to a nicotine dose of the same strength relative to their body size than middle-aged mice -- aged eight months. These results indicate how the effects of nicotine change as people age, said the researchers. "People continue to

develop and change across their entire lifespan, and this affects how our bodies respond to medications and other chemicals, including nicotine. This research adds one piece to the puzzle of all the factors -- age, biological sex, genetics, and many others -- needed to create effective medical treat-

ments and policies for all people," said Thomas Gould, Professor of Biobehavioral Health and head of Penn State Department of Biobehavioral Health. In the study, both young adult and middle-aged study subjects displayed decreased movement after receiving nicotine, but young adults reduced their movements more than middle-aged subjects. This indicates that the young adult subjects experienced the effects of nicotine more intensely, the researchers said. The study shows that the younger a person is, the more acute is the response to nicotine. This has implications both for prevention messages and for supporting young nicotine users who want to quit. Increased susceptibility to nicotine may also spike the risk of developing an addiction that can have serious health implications, said the team.

HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Senegal stands at 0.3 pc

AGENCIES DAKAR

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Senegal stands at just 0.3 per cent, Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Fight Against AIDS Safietou Thiam said. The low prevalence is attributed to the 70 per cent access to antiretroviral therapy (ARV) for people living with the disease, as well as a collective commitment from the population, particularly Senegalese youth, and the efforts of the Senegalese government, Thiam said during the launch ceremony of the Youth Mobilisation Week Against AIDS held in Dakar. However, she pointed out disparities in HIV prevalence among young people, noting a growing number of new infections in the 15 to 24 age group. In Senegal, "seven out of ten new infections have occurred among young people under the age of



35," Thiam said, stressing that the silence surrounding the sexual health of young girls and boys makes them vulnerable to infections such as HIV/AIDS, Xinhua news agency reported. According to the World Health Organisation, HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) occurs at the most advanced stage of infection. HIV targets the body's white blood cells, weakening the immune system. This makes it easier to get sick with diseases like tuberculosis, infections, and some cancers. HIV remains a major

global public health issue, having claimed an estimated 42.3 million lives to date. Transmission is ongoing in all countries globally. There were an estimated 39.9 million people living with HIV at the end of 2023, 65 per cent of whom are in the WHO African Region. In 2023, an estimated 630,000 people died from HIV-related causes and an estimated 1.3 million people acquired HIV. There is no cure for HIV infection. However, with access to effective HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care, including for opportunistic infections, HIV infection has

become a manageable chronic health condition, enabling people living with HIV to lead long and healthy lives. WHO, the Global Fund and UNAIDS all have global HIV strategies that are aligned with the SDG target 3.3 of ending the HIV epidemic by 2030. By 2025, 95 per cent of all people living with HIV should have a diagnosis, 95 per cent of whom should be taking lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, and 95 per cent of people living with HIV on treatment should achieve a suppressed viral load for the benefit of the person's health and for reducing onward HIV transmission. In 2023, these percentages were 86 per cent, 89 per cent, and 93 per cent, respectively. In 2023, of all people living with HIV, 86 per cent knew their status, 77 per cent were receiving antiretroviral therapy and 72 per cent had suppressed viral loads.



Wrestling Association of J&K to host senior championship at JU on Feb 23

AGENCIES

JAMMU, FEB 19 (UNI)

The Wrestling Association of Jammu and Kashmir will be hosting the 32nd Senior Men and 18th Women J&K-UT Wrestling Championship in the Wrestling Hall of University of Jammu on February 23.

As per the official communiqué, Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma will declare open the championship while Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to the CM of J&K will also attend the event.

The winners of each weight category will represent J&K in forthcoming Federation Cup which is scheduled to be held at LPU Punjab on March 8 to 9, the communicate said.

The release said that the championship will be held in collaboration with the Directorate of Sports and Physical Education University of Jammu under the auspices of Wrestling Federation of India, J&K Olympic Association and J&K Sports Council.

No wrestler will be allowed to take part in the competition after 9 AM on that day, the communicate added.

10th J&K UT Handball Championship Starts on 21th to 23th February

HT NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, FEB 19

The 10th J&K UT level Handball Championship for Men and Women starts on 21th to 23th February at Playing field Shastri Nager-Jammu. Organized by the J&K Handball Association in Collaboration with J&K Sports Council, The event. Follows a league-cum-knockout format. All the affiliated unit of JKHA is informed to send the teams on 20th February 2025.

Gill seizes top position ahead of ICC Champions Trophy

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 19 (UNI)

India batter Shubman Gill seizes the top position ahead of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 as the top-ranked ODI batter after overtaking Pakistan's Babar Azam in the latest weekly rankings update carried out on Wednesday.

Gill's 112 off 102 balls opening the batting against England in the third ODI in Ahmedabad last Wednesday put him 23 rating points ahead of Babar with an aggregate of 796 points in the ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings.

The India vice-captain regains top position after first clinching it for the first time in November 2023, during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

Shreyas Iyer, who struck 78 in that match, has also moved up one slot to ninth position as India go into the eight-team tournament with four batters in the top 10. Captain Rohit Sharma is in third position and star batter Virat Kohli is sixth.

Pakistan, who open their campaign in the Champions Trophy against New Zealand in Karachi, see captain Mohammad Rizwan progress six places to 15th after a couple of fine knocks in the Tri-Nation series played in Pakistan - 122 not out against South Africa and 46 in the final against

New Zealand.

Salman Agha, Player of the Series with an aggregate of 219 runs, has galloped 24 places to 48th after scores of 134 against South Africa and 45 in the final against New Zealand over the past week.

Other players to gain in the update include Aiden Markram (up one place to 25th) and Temba Bavuma (up five places to 30th) of South Africa while New Zealand players Daryl Mitchell (up two places to fifth), Devon Conway (up five places to 35th), Glenn Phillips (up six places to 41st) and Tom Latham (up four places to 42nd) have also made notable progress.

In the bowling rankings, Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan has conceded top position to Sri Lanka's Mahesh Theekshana while South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj returns to the rankings in sixth position. Spinners Mitchell Santner of New Zealand (up five places to seventh) and Adil Rashid of England (up three places to 22nd) are others to make inroads, while Pakistan fast bowler Naseem Shah has moved up from 48th to 45th position.



Manzoor Ahmad Dar Charismatic Sports Icon From Baramulla



HT NEWS SERVICE

BARAMULLA

Manzoor Ahmad Dar is a trailblazing gold medalist in physical education from Kashmir University, whose remarkable journey is a testament to his unwavering dedication and passion for excellence. He laid the foundation of his academic success at Government Middle School Khanpora and later at Higher Secondary, where he excelled with flying colors. Dar's outstanding academic record and impressive football skills make him a shining inspiration, showcasing a unique blend of intellectual prowess, athletic talent, and a compassionate heart. From a young age, he displayed a natural flair for football, which he nurtured through relentless hard work and perseverance. As a talented footballer, he represented his team in two national tournaments and played exceptional football for several clubs, including Friends Foot Club and Elites Club.

Ponting backs Arshdeep as replacement of Bumrah at Champions Trophy

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 19 (UNI)

ICC Hall of Famer Ricky Ponting has nominated Arshdeep Singh as the pacer that should receive the first opportunity to replace injured quick Jasprit Bumrah and partner Mohammed Shami with the new ball for India at the ICC Champions Trophy.

India suffered a huge blow to their title chances when they lost Bumrah to a back injury earlier this month and the Asian side have little time to settle on their preferred lineup ahead of their tournament opener against Bangladesh in Dubai on February 20.

Inexperienced seamer Harshit Rana performed admirably during India's recent ODI series at home against England, but Ponting believes Arshdeep has done enough in the past at T20I level to get first crack with the new ball.

"I would go with the left-arm and I'd go with Arshdeep (to replace Bumrah)," Ponting told host Sanjana

Ganesan on the most recent episode of The ICC Review.

"We know how good he's been in T20 cricket and if you think about the skill set, he probably provides a similar skill set to what Bumrah does with new ball and death overs and that's what India will miss," Ponting said.

"That's taking nothing away from Harshit Rana because I think he has got a lot of talent and we know what he can do

with the new ball, but I don't think his death skills are as good as what Arshdeep Singh's are," he said.



UEFA: Benfica hold off Monaco in six-goal thriller

AGENCIES

LISBON, FEB 19 (UNI)

A below-par Benfica held off a spirited comeback from Monaco in a thrilling draw in Lisbon to seal their place in the Champions League last 16.

Vangelis Pavlidis' superb goal in Monaco last week gave the Portuguese side a 1-0 lead in the play-off first leg, but it was the Ligue 1 side who were superior at the Estadio da Luz, the BBC reported.

Monaco's appeals for an early penalty were denied before Krepin Diatta forced Benfica goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin into a superb save.

Despite their slack start, the hosts were gifted a 22nd-minute opener.

Monaco defender Wilfried Singo slipped under pressure and presented the ball to the in-form Pavlidis,



who fired across the face of goal for Kerem Aktürkoglu to convert on the slide.

To Monaco's credit they bounced back and almost equalised when Breel Embolo's header bounced off the post and rolled across the face of goal.

Less than a minute later they got the goal they deserved as former Liv-

erpool attacker Takumi Minamino squeezed a shot inside Trubin's near post.

Monaco should have levelled the tie at 2-2 in first-half injury-time, but Embolo spooned his effort over after Maghnes Aklouch put him through.

The second half began with Eliesse ben Seghir

forcing Trubin into another fine save, but minutes later the Ukrainian goalkeeper could only watch as the Moroccan curled a strike into the bottom corner.

Yet just like earlier, Monaco handed Benfica another chance to retake the lead. Captain Thilo Kehrer kicked the back of Fredrik Aursnes' leg and Pavlidis converted the resulting penalty for his seventh goal of the campaign.

Monaco made it 3-2 on the night with nine minutes left through substitute George Ilenikhena, but three minutes later Orkun Kokcu flicked Alvaro Fernandez's pin-point cross past visiting goalkeeper Radoslaw Majecki to level and secure a remarkable 4-3 aggregate win.

Benfica will face either Barcelona or Liverpool in the last 16.

Tennis: Raducanu loses to Muchova in Dubai Championship second round

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 19 (UNI)

Emma Raducanu was beaten by Karolina Muchova in a hard-fought match in the second round of the Dubai Tennis Championships. There were concerns for the British wildcard early in the match as she appeared to be crying and breathing heavily after Muchova broke for a 2-0 lead, the BBC reported.

Raducanu continued playing and was able to



fight back from 4-0 down and force a tie-break, which she lost after miss-

ing a set point.

Having secured an early break in the second,

Muchova held off the 2021 US Open champion to seal a 7-6 (8-6) 6-4 victory.

Raducanu, who reached the third round of the Australian Open last month, climbed back into the world's top 60 last year after missing most of the 2023 season following surgery on both wrists and her left ankle. In the first round in Dubai, the 22-year-old ended a four-match losing streak - the worst of her career - with a straight-set win over Greece's Maria Sakkari.

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Chief Patron of LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS Group: SYED SAD UD DIN BUKHARI (SAIDI), Printer Publisher, Owner and Editor - SYED JAHANGIR BUKHARI,

Printed at : LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS, Radio Colony Gund Hassibhat Lawaipora Srinagar -190017, Gen. Manager - SHEIKH MUSHTAQ AHMAD - Cell No - 9697071471,

Editorial Section- 7006846797, Multimedia Section-9419008414, Advertisement Section - 9697071471, RNI NO- JKENG/2011/39231